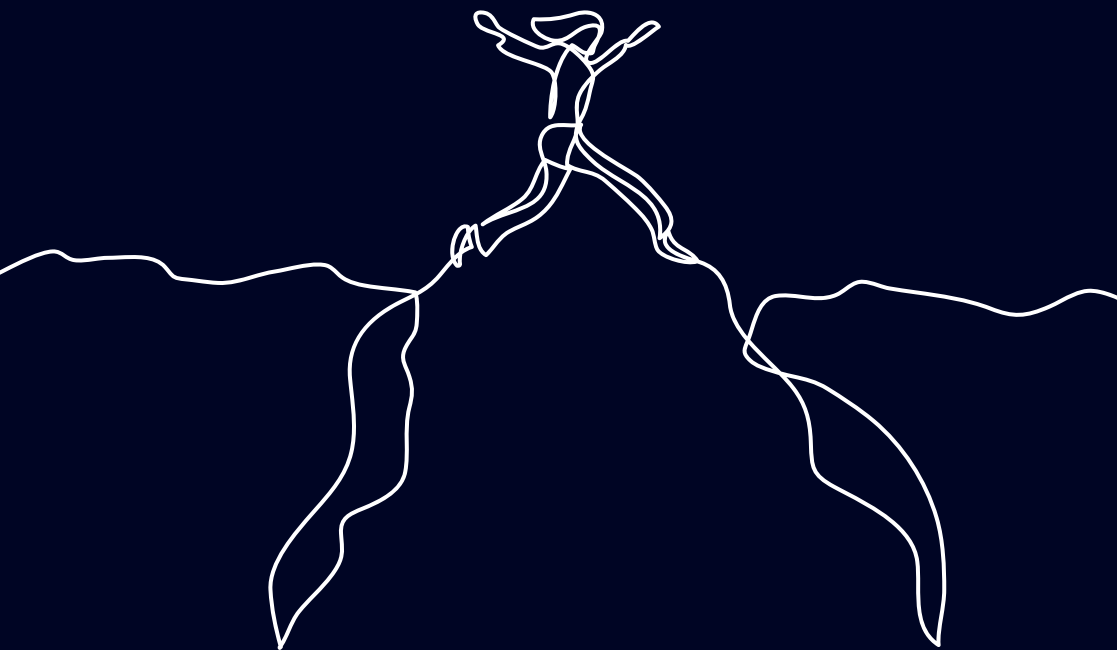


Saxton Bampfylde

MIND THE GAP

Leadership and succession planning in
the UK's arts and culture sector



INTRODUCTION

Saxton Bampfylde has been engaged in finding the leaders to drive forward the UK's thriving arts and culture scene for the past 30 years. This work has involved advising and partnering with a huge cross-section of organisations and institutions, from the iconic and world leading to the small and distinctive.

It is with this in-depth knowledge of the sector and a keen eye on its future and those people who will lead the way forward that we have undertaken this research into leadership and succession planning in arts and culture.

This sector is thriving, both domestically and internationally, and subsequently its leaders are increasingly placed on a world stage. In a time of global uncertainty however, the sector is facing a myriad of challenges. Financial, political and social pressures are mounting, bringing with them a stronger desire for change to the sector than has been seen previously.

With challenge there comes opportunity, particularly for those emerging into leadership roles. Our aim with this report was to gather the opinions of those who are currently driving the sector forward, asking them to consider where the future leaders will come from, the skills and attributes they will need to bring to the role, and what challenges and opportunities they will be faced with.

We are passionate about continuing to support arts and culture organisations into the next generations. The issue of finding the leaders of the future is fundamental to the sector's success and that is why we have chosen to explore the topic through this piece of research.

We hope that you will find this insight piece thought-provoking and an initiator of conversation. We have thoroughly enjoyed conducting this piece of work and would warmly welcome any feedback on this fascinating subject.



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MIND THE GAP

LEADERSHIP AND SUCCESSION PLANNING IN THE UK'S ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR

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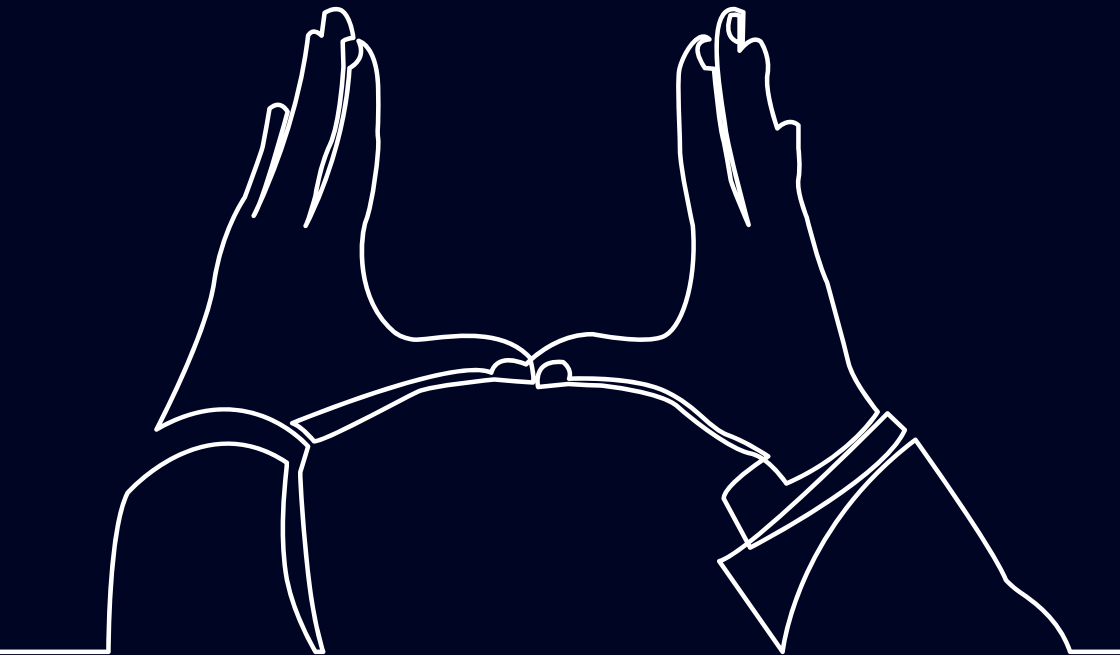
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OVERVIEW

THE BIG PICTURE

“Leadership is much more important than it was”

“The cultural sector is a secret missile and collectively we need to do a lot more.”



To produce this report we have been very lucky to have spoken to chief executives, directors, chairs and leading executives from 40 organisations across the UK and internationally. Our contributors represent different geographies, both urban and rural; varying creative disciplines; and opinions from wider sectors connected to arts and culture, including government, governing bodies and higher education.

We asked a series of questions focusing on the topic of leadership and succession planning within the sector. We looked for their opinions on various aspects of their current or previous roles, and how these leadership positions were evolving. We looked at the challenges leaders in the sector are facing and discussed how best to equip new generations of leaders to address these. We also explored the extent to which training or succession planning exists in these organisations and the impact of national bodies or government in supporting or driving this. Finally, we talked about the impact of geography and remuneration on fulfilling future leadership requirements.

A number of key overarching themes recurred through many of our conversations, including Brexit, diversity and governance. While these weren't addressed explicitly in the questions posed to those we interviewed, they were topics that were drawn out repeatedly in conversations.

To allow our leaders to speak for themselves, we assured anonymity. This ensured we were gathering their honest thoughts, observations and predictions for the future. We have incorporated anonymous quotes that reflect these conversations and give an indication of thought and response. Our questions were open-ended to encourage elaboration and give a clearer view of today's arts and

culture world in the eyes of its most senior leaders. Each interview lasted between 30 and 55 minutes and the conversations were mainly conducted by telephone, due to disparate geographic spread.

“Throughout Brexit it is vital that we keep morale up. Leaders need to demonstrate that they are doing more than coping, that they are thriving, reassuring people.”

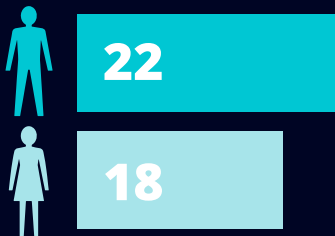
Few sectors are as broad in their focus, not just culturally and creatively, but also in terms of geographical spread and the breadth of their engagement and interaction with audiences. This presented a hugely interesting group to interview, but also meant that we had to be focused in our questions to find commonality on themes and thinking around leadership and how it can thrive in the future.

We were certainly not disappointed in or despondent about what we discovered. The passion oozes from these leaders; it is almost infectious. It is a contagious passion for art, culture, music, dance, film, the overall experience, and ultimately the prosperous evolution of this sector.

However, it comes against a backdrop of challenges, both from internal and external forces, that are greater than most have seen before. This has formed the focus of this report: how to address, learn from and ultimately embrace the challenges and changing world in which we live and bring to the fore successive generations of excellent future leaders.

OVERVIEW

WHO WE SPOKE TO

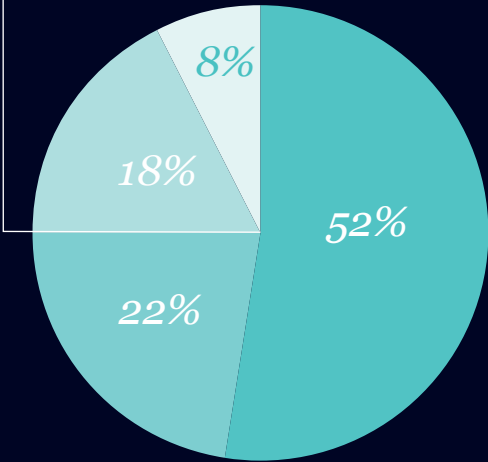


TENURE

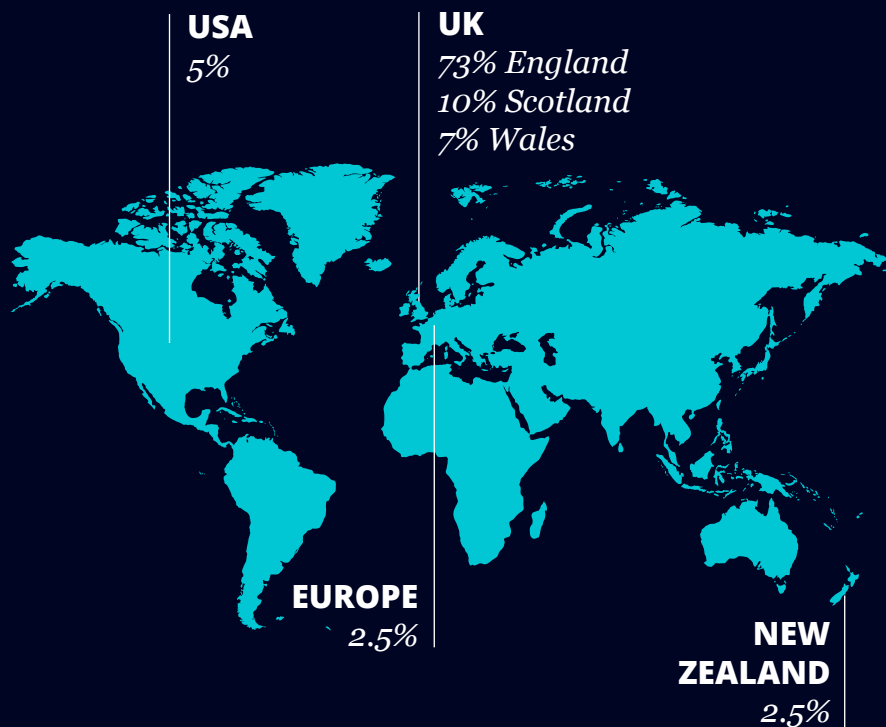


INSTITUTION

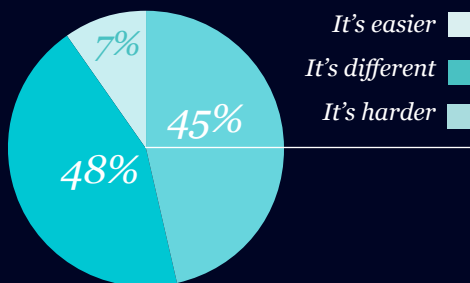
- Museums & Galleries
- National/Member bodies or Government
- Performing Arts
- Higher Education



11 *Joined from outside the arts & culture sector*



WE ASKED: HOW HAS THE LEADERSHIP ROLE CHANGED?



CHAPTER 1

A TIME FOR CHANGE

If asked to use one word to encapsulate the insights shared during our conversations about the arts and culture landscape, it would be 'change'. The leaders to whom we spoke shared a collective feeling that the continual existence and engrained expectation of change had become a new normal.

In such a broad and multi-faceted sector, it is hardly surprising that this feeling of change is observed so keenly. The prevalence of a sense of continual change is however also keenly reflective of much of what is felt across the world in which we live. In itself this demonstrates the depth to which the arts and culture sector reflects broader society: politically, economically, culturally and digitally. How people interact has changed, how people participate has changed, how people view has changed, how people communicate has changed, and what people can access or afford has changed.

Significantly, the vast majority of those to whom we spoke suggested that the impact of this change, and subsequently the responsibility for adapting to accommodate it, is felt most acutely across the leadership function. While this certainly brings questions and opportunities for the current cohort of leaders, it is to the group coming up through the ranks as the leaders of the future for whom the gauntlet has been laid down.

“The leadership role is very different – it is much more about money and fundraising than it was 10 years ago”

GONE ARE THE GOOD OLD DAYS: A FOCUS ON FUNDING

One aspect of the arts and culture sector in which there is no escaping change is finance. Reduced funding, greater competition, and increasing capital costs are also being compounded by the need for a diversified skill base, particularly in highly sought-after areas of digital, fundraising and communications.

With a focus on funding, it is plain to see that the ‘good old days’ are gone. This has changed permanently. However, while institutions face an internal battle to combat the impact of this shift, externally there is a sense of needing to put on a face for audiences who either aren’t aware or don’t want to know about cuts to funding, let alone feel its impact. One interviewee stated: *‘the public don’t make allowances for less money – they still want 100 per cent experience’*, illustrating the level of the challenge being faced.

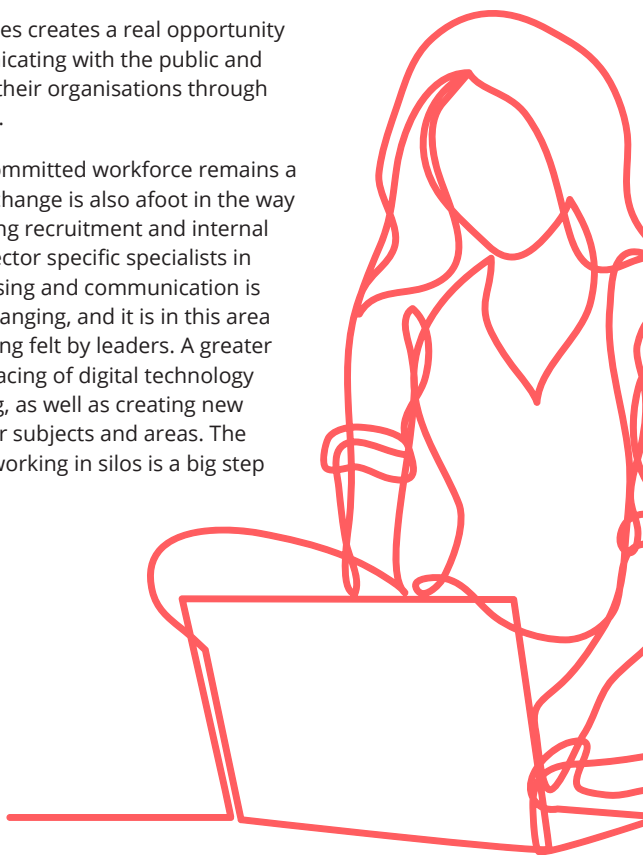
Leadership roles are increasingly preoccupied by money, with some suggesting that half to two thirds of their time are spent on this function. Fundraising, more than ever before, has become integral to the role and according to one interviewee this is *‘a big deterrent’*. It is a task that requires not only some commercial understanding, but also creativity in terms of how to fundraise, and an ability and a generous portion of time to be networking and engaging with stakeholders.

A DIGITAL REVOLUTION

Like any other sector operating in the modern world, arts and culture cannot help but be impacted by the development of new and innovative technology, from access to the internet to social media. While the evolution of technology brings with it an unprecedented number of opportunities to engage with new audiences in interesting and creative ways, it has also introduced a significant challenge in demand for transparency, communication and interaction at all levels of an organisation. It brings with it new platforms for public opinion, both good and bad, and a thirst for news and visual content. It was noted that *'audience expectations of art are changing. People used to come much more passively to museums, now they come much more actively. They want relevance to modern and contemporary life.'*

This active engagement from audiences creates a real opportunity for leaders to be talking and communicating with the public and encouraging a new way of looking at their organisations through more creative and innovative content.

A passionate, hugely informed and committed workforce remains a constant across the sector, however change is also afoot in the way in which organisations are approaching recruitment and internal workstreams. The demand for non-sector specific specialists in areas such as digital, finance, fundraising and communication is seeing this workforce evolving and changing, and it is in this area where a great level of challenge is being felt by leaders. A greater need for collaboration, and the embracing of digital technology to improve cross-department working, as well as creating new and innovative ways to approach their subjects and areas. The encouragement to move away from working in silos is a big step change from the past for many.



THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING FOR CHANGE

While external factors such as reductions in funding or the impact of digital technology play a significant role in shaping institutions, it is often the leaders themselves who have the greatest impact. What happens then when a leader chooses to move on?

“We need to put future facing leaders in place so organisations can take up the opportunities afforded them. People are moving away from buying things to buying experiences. The leaders now and in the future need to harness that.”

Succession planning is, by its very nature, driven by a need to anticipate change. When looking ahead to prepare the leaders of the future, a fundamental part of their training needs to be in change management. One current leader stated a wish that it had been introduced to them earlier, saying ‘*I would have liked to have been trained in change management, to learn methodologies and approaches*’. This is seen as a vital part for the future of institutions and how they identify and train their leaders. The handover process needs to be smooth: knowledge sharing and even mentoring, as needed, is vitally important to ensure the future success of an organisation’s leadership.

Of those we interviewed, the average tenure in a leadership role was 8.5 years, however many had been in their role for well over a decade. Those to whom we spoke expressed divergent views on what was the ‘right’ amount of time to spend in one leadership role, however in light of the unprecedented and changing environment, the overall sentiment was summed up by one interviewee: ‘*Organisations need to think long and hard about why they exist*’.

Clearly, in the face of changes that threaten the way arts and culture organisations have traditionally been run, they cannot afford to proceed in the same way as their predecessors. Rather, they need to be looking clearly to the future and at who will be there to run them so they can continue to run successfully in an ever more competitive world.

EMBRACING DIVERSITY IN THE LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

Firstly, the apparent lack of social and economic demographical diversity among the leaders of this sector has traditionally been an area of real challenge, and one that seems to continue to afflict the arts and culture world. Speaking broadly about the sector, one interviewee commented that *'leadership currently does not reflect their audiences or tax payers' money'* and this point chimed with a number of those to whom we spoke. Clearly, a different approach is required to prevent a permanent disconnect amongst certain areas of society. Many of our interviewees clearly felt that now is the time that *'leaders need to come out of their self-affirming lovey bubble'* and stop being *'very myopic'* in their approach towards those who are being identified in succession planning. It was felt that a real and more collaborative approach to this issue of diversity from across the sector and beyond to encapsulate other sectors too was going to be imperative for the future.

Generally in any discussion of diversity in leadership roles, one of the most prevalent issues raised is that of gender. However, we interviewed 18 women (out of 40), all of whom are leaders of their organisations, many of whom expressed few concerns about the pipeline of other females coming through to take on leadership roles. What they did want to ensure however was that more women were being considered for a broader range of leadership positions at large institutions, whether that be in the arts and culture sector or more broadly, and that they are supported to do so.

The other area where the need to change the approach to diversity is in that of disability. In the UK, 19 per cent of the national workforce is disabled, but according to Arts Council England's (ACE) figures for 2015-16, in its report Equality, Diversity and the Creative Case^[1], just 4 per cent of the arts workforce is disabled. There are real efforts being made to address this, through schemes such as the Change Makers programme being driven by ACE with the aim of embedding under-represented groups in the decision-making and leadership process of organisations.

From our interviews it was suggested that there are some areas that are showing forward-thinking attitudes to diversity in the area of disability, particularly within theatre, however it was suggested that there is '*virtually no movement in classical music or opera*'.

Clearly then there is still work to be done to change attitudes within the sector to ensure that the leaders of the future are representative of society more broadly than perhaps they have traditionally been.

CHAPTER INSIGHTS

- The arts and culture sector has undergone rapid transformation over recent years in the face of changes to funding models, digital advances and the expectations of audiences and stakeholders.
- These changes have been most keenly felt by the leaders charged with guiding their organisations forward.
- Increasingly, organisations are having to operate as commercial entities, securing funding through networking and stakeholder engagement. For many leaders, this has become a time consuming job, with some indicating that fundraising occupies half to two thirds of their time.
- In the face of this transformation, succession planning is beginning to come to the fore, driven by a strategic need to anticipate change and ensure the survival of the sector.

CHAPTER 2

THE RISE OF THE POLYMATH – THE MAKING OF A MODERN ARTS AND CULTURE LEADER

Polymath *Noun -*

A person of wide knowledge or learning

Whether they are born, created or evolve, those who are taking on leadership roles in the arts and culture sector now and in the future need to bring something more to the table than their predecessors. The broad changes facing the sector, as discussed in the previous chapter necessitate this. This was a very clear consensus of opinion from all of our interviews.

BALANCING DIPLOMACY WITH ACTION

With so much time dedicated to fundraising and engaging with stakeholders and members of the public, this skill of diplomacy is vital for a leader to be successful. However, this diplomacy and negotiation is not just saved for external engagement, it is considered more important than ever from an internal perspective too, particularly with an increased focus on governance and trustee relationships in the face of increasing accountability for the leader of an organisation. This delicate relationship requires real skill from leaders who need to think more about *'facing out and translating back in'* to the board.

To successfully balance diplomacy with getting the job done, an ability to communicate and provide a context and narrative is fundamental. While there is a growth in the number of specialists being brought in to help shape this communication both externally and internally across many organisations, it is certainly an area that leaders need to embrace as a fundamental part of the day-to-day role.

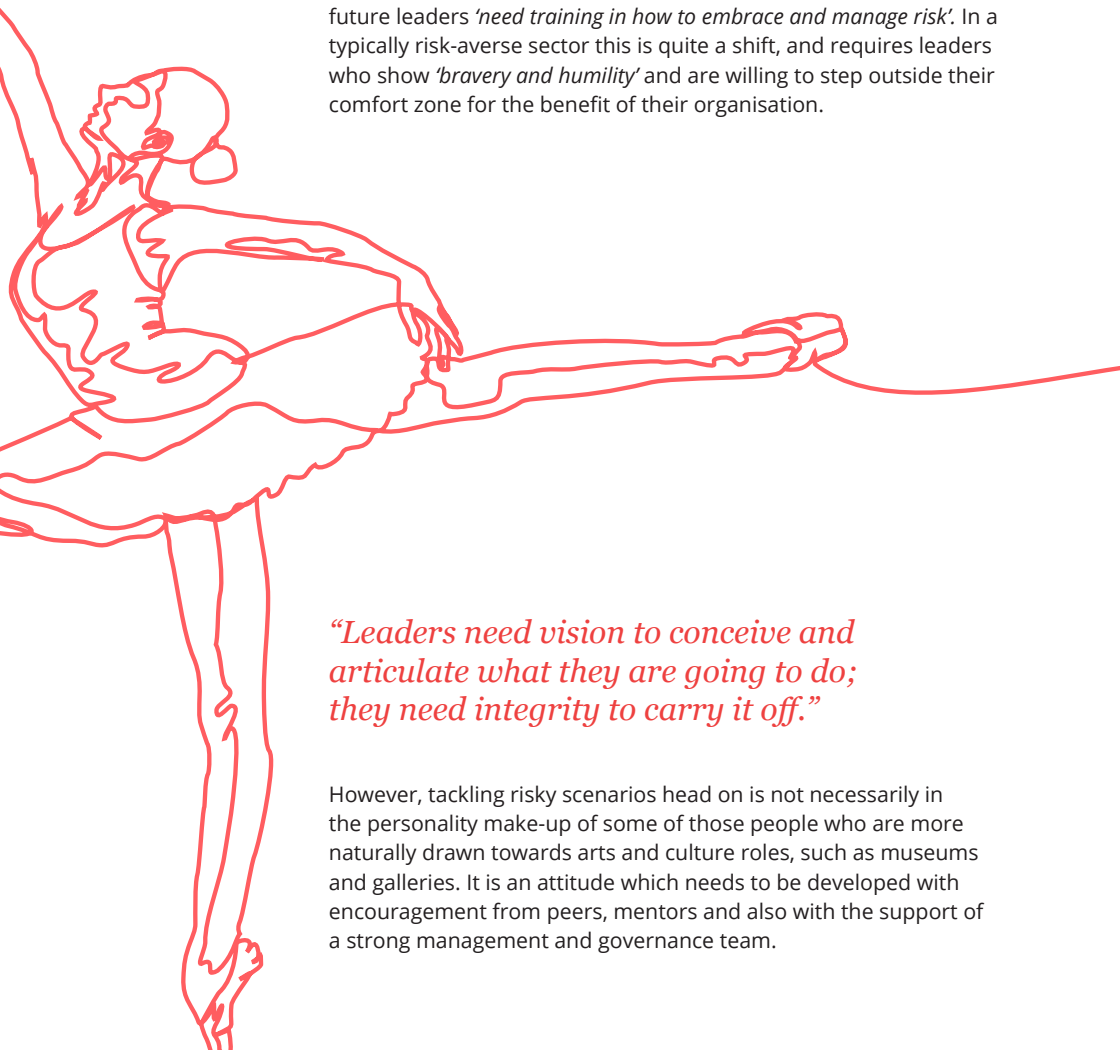
Underscoring all our conversations there was an emphasis on people and how they impact on each organisation, from volunteers through to board level. Being able to understand and engage with their staff was seen as fundamentally important for leaders, but it is an area that is facing a squeeze. One interviewee reflected on the disconnect between leadership and their team: *'we spend two thirds of our budget on people, but we don't spend two thirds of our time on managing them'*. The recognition is that the managing of people and team members often falls to others within the senior management team. This is not necessarily a negative point, and certainly shows a move towards an increasingly collaborative approach.

“Leaders need to be diplomats and negotiators.”

An understanding and ability to identify risk was also considered extremely important, particularly in a sector that for so long has ‘*existed in a public sector model*’. Many we spoke to acknowledged that this attitude has to be cast off and that both current and future leaders ‘*need training in how to embrace and manage risk*’. In a typically risk-averse sector this is quite a shift, and requires leaders who show ‘*bravery and humility*’ and are willing to step outside their comfort zone for the benefit of their organisation.

“Leaders need vision to conceive and articulate what they are going to do; they need integrity to carry it off.”

However, tackling risky scenarios head on is not necessarily in the personality make-up of some of those people who are more naturally drawn towards arts and culture roles, such as museums and galleries. It is an attitude which needs to be developed with encouragement from peers, mentors and also with the support of a strong management and governance team.



SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

Whether it could be described as a skill, behaviour or an attribute, or indeed none of those, the acquisition of what one interviewee termed a *'rhino skin'*, or the ability to immerse, engage and deflect is certainly something beneficial to those stepping into leadership roles. Being able to keep focused, despite depleting resources and competing demands on the time of leaders, with an eye on the long-term strategic direction of an organisation is considered a vital necessity in a leader.

“Resilience is hugely important – the role is more and more demanding with less resources.”

As we touched upon earlier, the increasing importance of digital clearly requires leaders to increase their skill base. One commentator summed this requirement up, saying *'everyone needs to be digitally savvy, not technically brilliant'*. Leaders need to be able to engage, interact and have a comprehensive understanding of digital as an area that is seriously impacting and evolving day-to-day operations and long-term strategic approach. It is in digital that one interviewee recognised the initiation of *'a whole new wave of thought and creativity.'* It was suggested that it is one of the singularly most important things that is responsible for *'changing how the next generation of leaders is thinking, creating new dialects and emergent art forms.'*

“You build around you those skills that you don't have and really need help with – those who know what you don't.”

Looking to the future, there is a real optimism around the millennial generation. One interviewee observed that the *'millennial generation doesn't have that level of compliance as previous generations'*. However, the idea that *'leaders need to be rigorously self-questioning'* could create a slight juxtaposition here with a generation that is considered 'less compliant' than its predecessors.

PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP

So it would seem that the key question is how and where these future leaders are being found and developed. There are a number of programmes both in the UK and internationally that are helping to deliver a consistent approach towards leadership training and preparation. Key examples include The Clore Fellowship programme; the programme at City, University of London; Getty in the US; Scala in Milan; or Elizabeth Easton's course at CCL, geared specifically to curators. With structured programmes targeting a full cross-section of the potential leadership cohort, the value these organisations bring is considerable. The importance in training as part of these external programmes is crucial, and could also be supplemented valuably, it was felt by many, with an increase in opportunities to take up sabbaticals or placements within other organisations, both within and outside the sector as a means of gaining invaluable experience.

However, while the provision of external training and support is undoubtedly a hugely important exercise, it was recognised by most interviewees that organisations need to be looking more closely at their own leadership and succession planning programmes. It was suggested that many institutions across the sector are *'not getting people early enough'*.



This is an issue that needs to be taken more seriously at every level for the sector to thrive, no matter how large or small the organisation, geographical location or art form. One interviewee observed that *'nationals are starting to tackle succession planning. However, it is always the first thing that falls by the wayside.'* The future of the sector is reliant on having the right people in place to guide it forward, however this is something that organisations must act upon themselves, and quickly, or risk the sector falling by the wayside, left behind by the changing face of the modern world.

There is no doubt a recognition then that the leaders of the future need to be polymaths, with a broad skills base and extensive experience to draw upon. However, and in a sector set so frequently on a public stage, the surmising of one commentator about the requirements of a future leader may arguably say it all: *'Leaders can be given all the tools, but they really do need to have that star quality. That can't be taught, I don't believe.'*

CHAPTER INSIGHTS

- More than ever, the leaders of the future need to be multi-skilled and versatile.
- With the challenges faced by the sector increasing as public sector funding becomes ever more restricted, leaders need to be well-rounded and capable of implementing a robust strategy for their organisation.
- A strong leader needs to be skilled in diplomatic negotiation and able to engage both with external stakeholders and with members of staff.
- The ability to balance a more commercially savvy approach to leadership with engagement across their team is essential for success.
- To be digitally savvy, not technically brilliant, is important for leaders.

CHAPTER 3

THE BIG 'Cs'

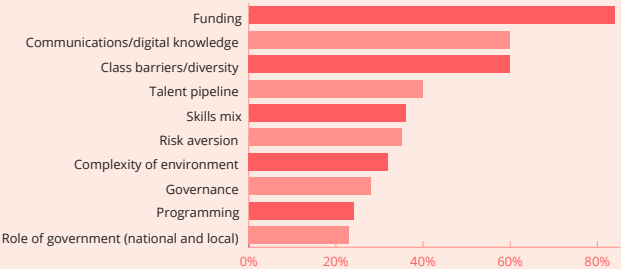
In the previous chapter we provided an overview of the skills, attributes and behaviours current leaders in the arts and culture sector believe are important now, and arguably even more so for those coming up to take on leadership roles in the future.

However, throughout our conversations, what started to become apparent was not just the checklist of leadership qualifications but a broader understanding of the key components that are shaping the sector overall. These areas help to define where the challenges, opportunities, strengths and weaknesses lie, and what can be done to help the sector thrive and grow.

We have identified four core components: the ‘Big Cs’. These are: commercialisation; communication; collaboration; and community.

THE TOP TEN CHALLENGES FACING LEADERS IN THE NEXT 5-10 YEARS

The top ten challenges facing leaders in the next 5-10 years: (assuming that Brexit was taken as a given that it would present some challenge right across the sector), this was based on what an interviewee answered as one of top three issues.



The other challenges which didn't make it into the top ten included salaries, space and storage and also access to good training and mentoring programmes.



COMMERCIALISATION

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the first area is commercialisation. Finance and fundraising were uppermost in the minds of all that we spoke to.

Creativity and finance don't typically make comfortable bedfellows, producing paradoxical visions for most people. In days gone by, these two functions typically existed entirely separately for arts and culture institutions. However, as budgets have tightened and public sector-style funding models become a fading memory, the silos are being broken down and there is an increasing focus on finding and harnessing commercial opportunities right across organisations.

Many of those to whom we spoke recognised that this challenge has begun to be embraced by many organisations in the UK, particularly in comparison to European counterparts. Praise for the approach of many organisations was forthcoming, with comments such as: *'British institutions have done an incredible job to tackle challenges of the financial squeeze';* and *'The UK is the most successful in terms of exploiting assets in commercial sense,'* with a recognition that in Europe it is a very different story.

The acknowledgement that the UK's arts and culture institutions are having to work harder at making their proposition more commercial was consistent across all of our conversations. Whether it be with the buildings themselves as venues, or through diversification and the addition of retail or food offerings, it is apparent that the public is demanding increasingly more of the sector.

The idea that being more entrepreneurial and commercial is the panacea to all the sector's concerns and challenges was not broadly welcomed by its leaders. It is certainly acknowledged as being part of the bigger picture, but there is also a greater need to understand what audiences, visitors, funders and stakeholders need.

A fuller, more holistic sensory experience when visiting or engaging with the creative industries is expected these days and that requires a different approach. Being able to successfully tell the story and communicate that holistic offering can make a huge difference in terms of driving interest, and boosting volumes of visitors, donations and sponsorships.

"This is the toughest set of fundraising circumstances we have ever seen."

"In Europe, public/ government money is much more forthcoming, not just for daily running but also for capital projects."

"Assumption that because funding is reducing that we need to take a business approach. We cannot replace public funding. That is a fact."

"Leaders need to recognise the mixed economy in which they operate. Stakeholders need to be entertained."

COMMUNICATION

Storytelling is an art. It is something that crosses every form and function of the creative industries. It is key to sharing thoughts and ideas and making them relevant to the people you are communicating with. Its place in modern society is no more or less important than it was previously, it is just that the avenues through which these stories can be told have increased dramatically.

These new methods of communication are evolving continuously, and for many organisations this means the introduction, or certainly growth, of a dedicated communications team. This necessitates a more strategic approach to communications, designed to generate consistent delivery, both internally and externally, with a responsibility and 'face' of the organisation required very much at a leadership level. The importance of communications cannot be underestimated.

These dedicated communications teams are not being put in place just to serve one leader however, rather it is about telling the story of the institution. While many did reference specific personalities, great story tellers and communicators, the clear opinion was that individual leaders *'need to recognise that the institution is always bigger than you are'*.

With an increased focus on governance across this sector, there is more than ever a pressure on leaders to be spending time talking and engaging with boards and trustees as well as at a policy and government level. Organisations such as the Creative Industries Federation and Arts Councils in England and Wales, Creative Scotland and the national and devolved bodies are also focusing more heavily on this area.

Being able to communicate effectively the vision and strategy for an organisation is more important than ever. One commentator, talking broadly about arts organisations said *'they exist for the public, they need to benefit the public and show why they are there.'* It is therefore so important that the strategy, vision and brand is regularly reviewed, scrutinised and ensured fit for purpose.

It is also important to manage how this vision and strategy is shared across an organisation, upwards and downwards, as well as externally. This most definitely requires a collaborative approach from all team members to be consistent and representative of their organisations and institutions.

COLLABORATION

As the sector evolves and moves into a more commercial setting, this brings with it an increase in the breadth of specialisms across the team and a more collaborative approach. The growth of specific roles in areas including digital, communications, public policy, retail, event management and fundraising all illustrate this point. The people taking up these positions often do not have a background in creative industries, a fact that brings exciting new dynamics to the sector.

One commentator who came into the sector with a different background offered a very positive perspective on this collaborative approach: *'the cultural sector is much more collaborative and connected. Leaders aren't as isolated.'* However, there was a clear indication from a number of our interviewees that this is better implemented in certain areas than in others. It was suggested that at a leadership level, there was more collaboration, including mentoring and peer-to-peer support within women's leadership groups. Younger leaders and those newer to their roles were also more inclined to support great cross-sector collaboration, as were those who have come into the sector from outside.

Of those we spoke to there were a number of organisations that are established with certain programmes or looking to develop this collaborative approach. The larger percentage of projects are geared towards enhancing educational opportunities and creating better links with the creative industries, but there was a strong recognition that more could and would like to be done. Resource was repeatedly cited as being the biggest hindrance, but it was also suggested that a national strategy could be developed to bring together some of these mutually beneficial sectors such as health, education and arts and culture.

With a more collaborative approach, and increased ways and means to communicate across teams, across publics, stakeholders and sectors, the opportunity to build and grow the cultural community is greater than ever.

“Big fan of peer support, mentoring. Need to have role models, collaborative approach. I believe this is more embedded in women’s leadership.”

“No operation can exist in isolation.”

“We must keep change going to avoid the danger of stagnating in the sector – introducing education and other collaborative programmes.”

COMMUNITY

In a country that appears on the surface to be deeply divided, not just politically or geographically, but also socially and economically, there is a much greater risk of further division through the growth of digital communications and increasingly siloed thinking across different areas of the population.

Creating connections and building and supporting community, in its broadest sense, is an area of significant importance, according to the vast majority of those we interviewed.

This is also where the arts and culture sector has a huge opportunity and indeed, according to some, a responsibility, to be at the forefront of strengthening, bridging and creating communities across the UK.

One interviewee expressed the opinion that it is vitally important for large cultural venues to '*see themselves as leaders within towns and cities*'. That is to say, they should be behaving and regarded as key destinations driving employment, tourism, educational and of course enjoyment for residents and visitors, much in the same way that a football club, arena, university or large employer might.

To ensure this position as one of the key locations or community drivers within an area, it is vital to ensure accessibility. Here, the term accessibility is used in a much broader sense than simply physical. There needs to be access right across the spectrum, and this involves leaders looking at how to improve engagement, enhance social and cultural value and create new experiences for communities.

One of the biggest inhibitors to developing a broader community approach are the social and demographic limitations that the sector has maintained over the decades. With traditionally very tough criteria on entry level qualifications for roles in the sector, often requiring education to at least undergraduate degree level, or certain professional qualifications which take years to achieve, there are boundaries set at an early stage about the demographics who are most likely to apply and succeed. This creates a very real issue, not only in terms of the pipeline of talent, but it also perpetuates a stereotype that the sector and its staff, and of course future leaders, are not reflective of the wider society they are striving to appeal to.

It is time that the sector started to think about this more holistically. This was a point voiced by many: there needs to be more opportunity, right through from primary and secondary school level, for people to feel inspired, moved and interested in the arts and culture sector. The development of closer ties within education and the creative industries is considered vital to this, however many of those to whom we spoke also highlighted that there needs to be a review of why academic qualifications are so heavily weighted in the recruitment process.

Research additionally suggests that creative subjects can greatly enhance health and well-being and learning in many settings and across many age and social demographics. For example, music in hospitals has been associated with improved vital signs, reduced stress, anxiety and blood pressure.^[2] It has also been found that for young people engaging in art at high school increases the likelihood of voting by 20 per cent and volunteering by 50 per cent.^[4]

We cannot deny there is greater engagement in the creative industries than ever before, with many institutions and organisations concocting new offers to appeal to wider audiences: offering free entry, reduced price tickets, memberships and other incentives. This is beginning to shape whole new audiences, visitors and followers in a way that may not have been achieved previously, particularly in certain areas such as opera. However, much, much more needs to be done to shift the sector away from its current position, still seen by many as the preserve of the middle classes.

“Need to move away from thinking in siloes. We need communities and connected thinking.”

Geographical divisions have a heavy impact on the arts and culture sector and notions of community. While there is still a heavy focus on London and other major cities, the growth of cultural venues and programmes in more rural, coastal and smaller towns is evolving very positively. This is having a very positive impact within these communities, and there are certainly lessons that can be learned from these right across the sector.

However, one area that has helped these more rural areas thrive in some part has been the transference of people, knowledge and skill from Europe and internationally. This has allowed new insights, experience and cultures for smaller or less centrally located institutions to thrive. This has been hugely welcomed in recent years, but there is a fear not only about the potential immigration restrictions Brexit might create, but also a greater perception that the UK is less open for business since the 2016 referendum.

The arts and culture sector is clearly ripe with opportunities for growth and development. While issues such as funding and the need to engage with audiences beyond those traditionally affiliated with the sector will certainly continue to pose challenges, leaders are on the whole optimistic about the future of the creative industries.

INSIGHTS

- As the arts and culture sector shifts away from a public sector model, finance and fundraising are at the forefront of the minds of the sector's leaders as they work to ensure their organisation is commercially viable.
- Diversification and creating a more holistic experience for visitors is often heralded as the solution to this.
- A successful leader needs to be a storyteller. They must have the ability to communicate and engage both stakeholders and visitors with the aims and strategic direction of their organisation.
- Cross-team engagement and collaboration are increasingly essential to ensure that an organisation's team has the skills to cope with the changing landscape of the sector. The leader needs to identify the gaps and ensure the right expertise is available.
- The arts and culture sector continues to struggle against a perception that it is the preserve of the middle classes. Leaders must take responsibility for awareness raising amongst broader communities by engaging with people and at a younger age.

CHAPTER 4

MORE THAN ONE ROUTE



Passion, pride and dedication are present in this sector in abundance. Compared with other sectors, the academic and professional qualifications required to fill a top role in the sector are often challenging; the salaries are generally not as competitive; the hours are long; the exposure to the public is extensive; the financial pressures unprecedented; and the skills and attributes required from middle management to senior leadership are more expansive than ever.

That isn't to say that the role of a leader in the arts and culture is necessarily getting any harder than it has previously been, however. In fact, of those interviewed, slightly less than half thought that the leadership role was more difficult today than in the past. A very small percentage said it was easier, but the slight majority were more inclined to say that the role was just very different today than previously.

This very different role requires a new way of thinking about where to identify future leaders and how and why succession planning is important.

GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE THAT WAIT: THE TRADITIONAL AVENUE IN

Of the 40 interviews we undertook, 28 per cent had come from backgrounds outside the arts and culture sector. This is starting to show a shift that has been atypical in the past. Particularly for the museums and galleries space, the traditional route of a star curator taking on a leadership role is certainly no longer a given. Indeed, many consider that this is far from the best route through which to secure an organisation's next leader.


Curators are essential within their organisations and their expertise is invaluable: this was an opinion universally upheld by all our interviewees. As the sector evolves however, and institutions develop a more commercial approach essential to their survival, the curatorial skill becomes part of a wider mix rather than an attribute valued above all else.



“The traditional curatorial route does not equip leaders.”

It is not to say that all believe great curators cannot make great leaders, and that this traditional route to leadership has changed forever, but there is a recognition that as more is required from leaders, there is a greater demand for individuals with broader skills bases.

“Curators don’t necessarily know about the building; it is a visitor attraction ultimately, we need to keep bogs and boilers going!”



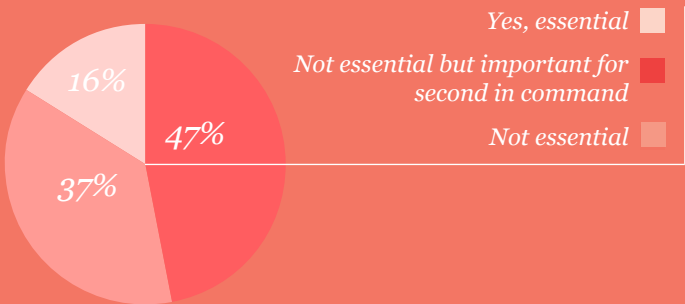
“Curators tend to be classifiers and not thought leaders – however I believe there is room for difference, and there is the potential to teach curators new skills.”

For the majority of those we interviewed a good knowledge, passion and enthusiasm for a subject, the objects and the institution were very important for leaders, but not specific curatorial experience. Many believe that curators *‘make very good second in command’* and the importance of their working closely and collaboratively with leaders was paramount.

One suggestion posed by an interviewee, which may well go against the grain of the traditional approach to curation, was the need for greater fluidity in the role: *‘there could and should be a place for star freelance curators – those who are not rooted to a particular institution.’*

Whilst unlikely to be adopted broadly as a model for curation in the immediate future, this idea of sharing talent and considering new ways of operating and sourcing experts in specific fields reflects the steps the sector is taking forward.

IS CURATORIAL EXPERIENCE ESSENTIAL FOR LEADERS IN THE MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES SECTOR?



EARLIER INVESTMENT IN MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

To ensure the right people are being brought through the ranks towards leadership roles and therefore to properly consider succession planning, the consensus amongst interviewees was that much more needs to be done at the middle management level. The need to provide more training, more money and a stronger platform to be heard is significant at this level. Many of those to whom we spoke expressed a belief that this is where the real opportunities lie. There was the suggestion that it is in middle management that there is the greatest opportunity to identify those who are willing to take risks, think differently and go beyond the more traditional scope of previous leaders.

“Aspiring leaders play to type. We need to look more closely at the middle level. Don’t have to be in a leadership position to lead the charge.”

By offering training, support and mentoring to mid-career, middle management levels, there is a hope that the number of leadership candidates coming through will be boosted. This support would also encourage a greater degree of career planning, both from within and out with the sector.

There were a number of calls for greater levels of relationship-building across the sector as successive generations come forward. Greater encouragement of peer-to-peer support, or mentoring on both a formal and informal basis was an idea that was hugely welcomed.

“To get a better level of leaders I think we need to be providing significant bursaries for middle and lower management.”

Anxiety and stress which is seen as inevitable in a world of change and some increased levels of uncertainty, compounded by a need to have a broader range of skills, talents and attributes, puts a lot of pressure on the leaders of today and tomorrow. Being able to share experiences, share talent and also even spend time in the buildings, departments or spaces of others was seen to be as an opportunity that would be relished. Challenged, no doubt by lack of time and resource, but a vitally important way to push forward and bring out the very best in leaders now and in the future.

“Cannot underestimate the value of peer support, either formal or informal.”

With regards to more formal succession planning programmes, there was an overall feeling amongst the sector’s current leaders that this was important, and something that many organisations are looking at. For the majority however this is still in the early stages of implementation.

“We introduced a management/leadership programme last year. Any organisation worth its own salt should have one.”

These programmes are being driven by individual institutions or organisations, rather than with involvement from national bodies or local or national governments, and our interviewees agreed overall that this was the most effective way to be doing it. However, many did feel that with restrictions to resource, time and experience, there was still not enough focus on developing succession programmes. It was suggested that lessons could be learned from international models, such as US programmes, where they are *‘giving people time away from doing the day to day, spending more time with their cohort’* on a more regular basis.

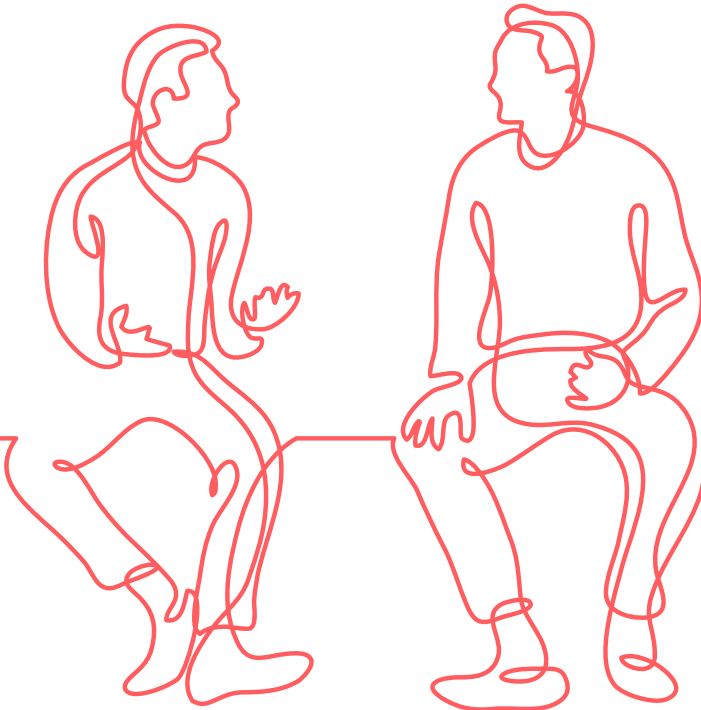
SUCCESSION PLANNING: PIPEDREAM OR REALITY?

The overall consensus was that while succession planning remains in its infancy for the arts and culture sector, it is at least firmly on the agenda. The recognition that they were *'not getting people early enough'*, resonated across the group we talked to, driving the desire for more robust future planning mechanisms.

However, what many felt was more fundamental to identifying future leaders was not down to well-developed succession planning; it had to start much earlier than that.

“Talent pipeline is a problem.”

For many it was the question of what was inhibiting a broader range of talent joining the sector, whether that be as school leavers, from vocational courses, as graduates, or coming into arts and culture later in their careers, having experienced other sectors.



“The world has become obsessed with training, exam results and bits of paper. The creative industries are not cut out to produce good exam papers.”

However, there were examples of those who noted that their specific organisations were investing more in trying to expand where they found new talent: *‘we are getting people through a vocational framework, not through tertiary education’*. For this particular organisation, this was a deliberate approach, and one that was working well to broaden the demography and talent base of its staff, particularly important in more regional or less affluent areas.

The overwhelming focus on educational qualifications is a challenge that needs to be addressed. Not only is it not sustainable for this sector, but it is also restricting the type of people who are entering it by socio-economic background. While many didn’t believe that succession planning programmes ought to be the preserve of the government specifically, there was a wider emphasis on what could be achieved with a closer tie up between the education and the cultural sectors, particularly with the introduction of youth traineeships.

“Youth traineeships. The government could make this a priority. Why wouldn’t we share the sector with everyone?”

A generally received opinion was that *‘in art schools there is a huge dominance of private school pupils’*, and of those leaders we interviewed, the ones who had not been privately educated were more likely to highlight this as a marker that differentiated them as a leader within the sector.

The close alignment between the higher education and arts and culture sector is of real importance and one that could bring significant opportunities to enhance the leadership pool in the future. One interviewee even suggested that there could be more movement between these two sectors.

“The transference of skills between intellectual thought leadership and people management skills would be an interesting one.”

With the routes into the sector's leadership roles ever expanding, it has never been more important for organisations to account for succession planning as a crucial element of their strategic development. It is much easier to put a proactively developed plan into action than to have to act reactively to an issue with leadership succession arising. To have adequate training and support available earlier for those earmarked as future leaders enables a smoother, more effective transition.

CHAPTER INSIGHTS

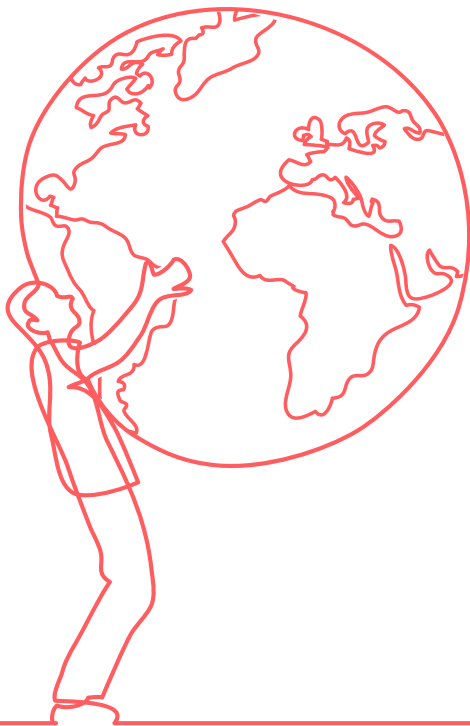
- There is no longer an accepted route into a leadership role in the arts and culture sector. The traditional curatorial pathway is no longer applicable as the role grows into something that requires a broader skills base.
- Leaders coming in from outside the sector are generally perceived as a positive step, bringing new perspectives to the way an organisation is run.
- There is, however, a growing need to think more strategically about the pipeline of future leaders. Succession planning is often not thought about early enough – it is still only a fairly new concept for the sector.
- It is important for organisations to invest in continuing professional development for middle management to highlight career pathways and the opportunities that are available.
- The sector continues to face recruitment challenges however and work needs to be done to increase the diversity of candidates.

CHAPTER 5

FIT FOR THE FUTURE

COMPETING IN A GLOBAL MARKET

The UK's arts and culture sector is worth £27bn according to Economic estimates of DCMS sectors undertaken in 2016 ^[3]. It is vitally important to the UK economy, importing and exporting talent across the country and internationally. Not only is it a large employer, but it also is attracting more people to participate and engage with the sector than ever before. The arts and culture sector in the UK is vast, employing 642,000 people in 2015. While we are leading on a world stage currently, this will continue to become harder. The US for example has much more developed model based on philanthropic giving and fundraising rather than public or governmental grants. European institutions on the other hand receive far more public funding from government. The UK needs to evolve and consider how it balances reduction to public funding with a need to think more commercially in order to remain competitive.



“Generally I am optimistic about the sector. We are developing a wide cadre of leaders, all of whom are hugely impressive.”

“In Europe public/ government money is much more forthcoming, not just for daily running but also for capital projects.”

IF THE SHOE FITS: ENSURING THAT REQUIREMENTS ARE REALISTIC

To continue on this trajectory of success it is important to ensure that the sector is fit for purpose with a strong pipeline, not just in leadership, but right across organisations. As a sector looking to diversify and become more inclusive, not just with its external audiences, but internally, it was outlined by those to whom we spoke that being more realistic about the qualifications needed coming into the sector should be considered.

“Most entry level jobs require one or two degrees. That is not realistic and salaries certainly don’t reflect that level of qualification.”

As well as the pressure on having the right academic results, there is also a relative lack of compensation in terms of salary for roles which in other sectors which may require similar qualifications. For example, comparing the arts and culture sector to Higher Education there is a real disconnect, right across organisations and not just at leadership level. This filters through to pension provision, and the potential lack of compensation in this area. This can inhibit movement and create a backlog of leaders not wanting to leave their roles.

“People are living longer, and pensions are not as great in all organisations. Need more flexible leadership roles, so that people are moving on and not staying in roles for longer than might be expected.”

Of those we surveyed 55 per cent said that salaries were a challenge for the sector. Many felt that it was not sustainable for the long term, particularly in expensive urban areas such as London, Manchester and Edinburgh where people are attracted to work for large institutions, but the cost of living is comparatively high. However, in the same respect, some jobs are much more challenging to recruit for outside of London, for example heads of fundraising or digital. This was attributed to a perceived shortage of qualified candidates, and lower salary offerings which were unable to provide an adequate draw to encourage people to leave the capital. London also holds the attraction of larger organisations and audiences to engage with, compared with its regional counterparts.

ANSWERING TO THE BOARD: ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNICATION

The emphasis on governance and accountability is very high on the agenda in the arts and culture sector. Despite some believing that *'boards and governance are given too much responsibility'*, the move towards increased accountability, and therefore involvement at board level, is greater than ever before. It is a trend not specific to this sector, but is reflective across almost all areas of business, charitable and public life. It is not going away, and more needs to be done to establish better ways of working, communicating and deriving benefits from this important relationship between the director or chief executive of an organisation and its board.

The role of boards and trustees is hugely valuable across the sector, be they independent, national or charitable trusts. It is vital for the future of the sector that there is a strong pipeline of people wanting to step into these roles. Increased accountability and regulation can make an often unpaid role significantly less appealing, but with such a vital role more does need to be done to maintain interest and engagement.

CROSSING BORDERS

Government's role in the sector remains strong, despite a marked decrease in the financial contributions made to arts and culture across the country. The devolved nations of Scotland and Wales have specific creative agendas which are faring well, but still face many of the same challenges as those institutions at a national UK level. However, London is still considered to be the key by many to the Arts world, and this creates somewhat of an imbalance for other regions and geographies. Certainly when looking at the immediate future of the sector, London is considered the area where institutions will continue to thrive and where successive leaders will be largely identified.

The UK is still most definitely seen to be holding its own on the international scene, with encouragement from national bodies such as Arts Council England, Creative Industries Federation, Creative Scotland and Arts Council Wales. All encourage a greater involvement internationally and see the huge cultural, economic and political impact this can have, creating a positive position for the arts and culture sector on a global stage.

“Visa requirements from Eurozone are much more challenging.”

However, for a sector which overwhelmingly chose to remain part of Europe and is renowned for its internationally diverse workforce from orchestras to film production, museums to opera houses, there is no denying that this is highly likely to change.

Brexit will bring with it many challenges for the sector, many of which will not be realised for some time to come. However in geographies such as Scotland, the political environment is already having a potential impact on those looking north of the border.

“In Scotland it is much more difficult to attract people out of London, the political environment makes it much less appealing.”

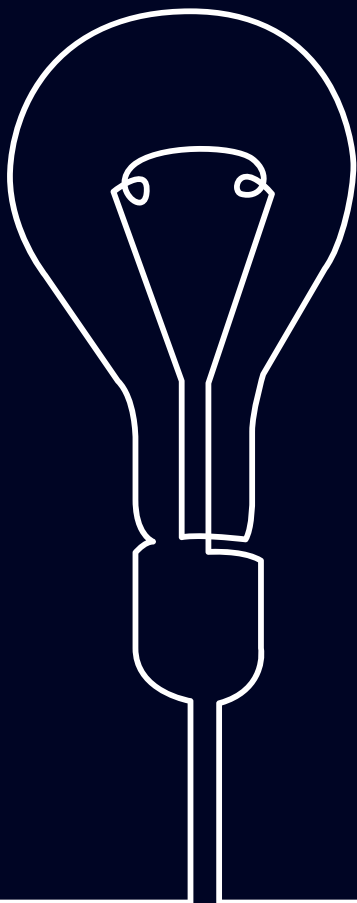
To be truly fit for the future, the sector needs to reflect future generations and embrace the inherent diversity which it brings. Many feel optimistic about this, but recognise this needs to be addressed at a greater pace than it is currently, moving beyond the boundaries which exist at present.

CHAPTER INSIGHTS

- With funding models changing, there is a new challenge to ensure the UK's arts and culture organisations remain competitive in a global market.
- Remuneration for leaders in the sector is often seen as being below par when compared with other sectors. There is a very real need for organisations to ensure that compensation, for example pension provision, available for those leadership roles is competitive.
- A growing emphasis on governance and accountability necessitates greater communication between leaders and board members. A close relationship and better ways of working will ultimately drive forward the success of an organisation.

CONCLUSION

CREATIVE THINKING REQUIRED



"I am massively optimistic for the Arts. We have the power to unpick emotions and talk about what it is like to live. We tell stories in a way that connects with people. That is powerful, it will last and cannot be destroyed."

There is no denying the importance of the arts and culture sector, not just to the UK economy, but also to the social, educational and mental wellbeing of the population. Bringing in £27bn to the UK economy per year^[5], with ever-increasing numbers of visitors, both international and local, travelling to venues across the country. There is a very real and positive growth nationally and regionally, and this is reflected both in increased visitor numbers but also in national funding announcements. The creative industries in the UK set the country apart from many others, reflecting the history, tradition and heritage, as well as the creativity, talent, innovation and ingenuity that is abundant from the largest cities to the smallest towns.

In order to sustain, develop and allow this sector to flourish, it requires strong leadership. However the requirements of the leadership role have evolved so considerably as the economic, political, technological and social landscape has moved in an almost tectonic shift.

The emphasis in leadership going forward relies heavily on teamwork and collaboration. New skills such as digital, communications, business development and public affairs/ policy are required at a senior level and must sit alongside the more traditional creative direction and curatorial functions. The need for respect of each individual function is supremely important as this makes up a modern arts and culture institution. Each of these areas are vital in allowing a greater degree of engagement with a wider community than ever before. This community is vast and includes, although not exhaustively, visitors, politicians, stakeholders, sponsors, local education and health services.

Community is an absolutely essential ingredient to the success of this sector and one that needs to be embraced and acknowledged through a wide range of channels including social media, traditional media, networking and of course visitor experience. Increasingly important skills such as being able to communicate with these communities requires not only the right skills mix from the staff, but also the vision and strategic approach to be able to embrace this fundamental element and understand how it will enhance each institution and the sector overall.

This community is wider and broader than ever before. It needs a greater acknowledgement that the sector is committed to expanding the sorts of people it looks to employ and train. Whilst the curatorial approach and traditional creative arts

background brings with it the unmistakeable and overwhelmingly important levels of passion that can be experienced right across the sector, there is also a strong recognition from many that more needs to be done to attract the less traditional backgrounds and make the creative industries more appealing to those from a wide range of socio-economic circumstances.

In the context of a very tough economic, political and social climate, this sector has much to celebrate, but also to learn when it looks to its future leaders. The importance of nurturing and preserving, learning and supporting, are overriding themes that have come out through this work. There is a wealth of talent coming through, but there is also a significant number of those who are starting to enter the twilight of their tenures in leadership.

“People are your biggest piece of collateral in the arts. More than any sector I have ever been in.”

Now is a time for reflection, but also a time for looking forward. Learning from those who have had great success, but also faced challenges. It can't just all be about the good times, as it is in the challenging times we learn most. We need a sector that is prepared to take risks, look outside itself more, not just for its leaders, but also for those who are just starting out. Widening the pool is essential, thinking creatively about how that is done and how to welcome them in.

“Creative minds produce creative inventions – they will be solving problems of the future. We need to embrace that right across the spectrum.”

APPENDIX

[1] Equality, Diversity and the Creative Case, Arts Council England

www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Equality_diversity_creativecase_2015_16_web_0.pdf

[2] RSPH, 2013 Older People

[3] Source: Economic estimates of DCMS Sectors, 2017

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-sectors-economic-estimates-2017-employment-and-trade

Creative Industries Focus on Employment, 2016, DCMS

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/creative-industries-2016-focus-on

[4] Bennett and Parameshwaran, 2013

[5] Economic Estimates of DCMS Sectors, August 2016

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-sectors-economic-estimates-2016

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