

3-Year Strategic Framework for SVCCreates -- June 2017

Vision: A vibrant community fueled by a dynamic and diverse arts and culture ecosystem

Mission: Accelerating Silicon Valley's creative culture

Goals:

- Build the capacity of our arts and culture ecosystem
- Raise the value and visibility of our creative sector
- Increase access to arts and creativity
- Be a model of organizational health, collaborative leadership, and community impact

Target

Markets: *Primary:* Silicon Valley's ecosystem of 'creatives' with special emphasis on arts organizations with <\$2M in revenue in Santa Clara County

Secondary: Silicon Valley opinion leaders and consumers of the arts, mostly indirectly

Values:

- *Community* - creating a sense of belonging and shared emotional connection
- *Diversity* - bringing varying perspectives, people and cultures together
- *Integrity* – living our word
- *Creativity* - stimulating our imagination and inspiring our future
- *Joy* - nurturing delight and well being

Beliefs: The arts:

- Have the power to heal and transform lives
- Connect us to our heritage, humanity and each other
- Help shape and define our community
- Fuel creativity, innovation and self expression
- Are vital to our social and economic well-being
- Are integral to the healthy development of our children

Role: Venture culturist – resource builder, investor, incubator and steward

Operating Principles:

- *Lead by example.* We demonstrate leadership, courage, creativity and resiliency.
- *Embrace innovation.* We are calculated risk takers and open to new ideas and ways of doing things. We experiment and learn from our mistakes.
- *Live at the intersection of possibility and pragmatism.* We dream big, exude optimism and envision a better future, while taking achievable steps forward.
- *Build our team equal to our aspirations.* We attract and nurture a board, staff and partners with the commitment and collective capacity to move us forward.
- *Do the right thing.* We use common sense and integrity to leverage our resources to do what is right.

Current Situation:

What we know about national *arts* industry trends: Technology and demographic shifts are key disrupters. Large legacy organizations are contracting while small and start up multicultural projects and organizations are growing in number, not necessarily size. There is a strong emphasis on equitable funding and access to the arts. The lines are blurring between the offerings of “not for profit” organizations and creative entrepreneurs. Digital culture is changing the ways in which the arts are produced and consumed.

What we know about being in the arts in Silicon Valley: We live in a scrappy start-up culture dominated by engineers and entrepreneurs who, within a few decades, changed the world through technology and innovation. *We are not a traditional “marketplace” for the arts.* Our phenomenal economic success makes our job market the envy of most regions, creates a tremendous amount of wealth, and attracts talent from across the globe while straining our transportation systems, driving up housing costs and widening the income gap. *This is a difficult place to live as an artist or for anyone not directly tied to the success of our technology industries.* Our growing sea of “new money” and global philanthropists makes raising money locally harder as new wealth finds its way and global causes and opportunities prevail. *We have one of the most challenging fundraising climates in the US.* Our cultural diversity and evolving digital culture makes building audiences more complex because they want to curate their own, and often culturally specific, experiences. *Relevance trumps excellence when it comes to the arts.* And lastly, our breadth of diversity, culture of churn and suburban development pattern makes creating a sense of place and community more difficult. *There are several powerful forces that divide us while the arts connect us.*

What we know about our arts ecosystem: We are a highly distributed network of several hundred small multicultural organizations and projects fueled largely by volunteers. What differentiates us from other US regions is that: 1) by national standards, we have no large arts organizations; 2) a high percentage of our ecosystem identifies cultural heritage as a primary focus; 3) our ecosystem reports a higher percentage of revenue from earned income; and 4) the majority of philanthropy leaves our region. We are small (1/10th the size of SF’s arts ecosystem), undercapitalized, broadly diverse, and scrappy. We are also collaborative, industrious, determined and nimble.

What we learned from our SWOT analysis: Overall, our board and staff are closely aligned. The Board believes SVC needs to strengthen our brand and communications, better define our measurements of success, learn how to talk about ourselves, and diversify our funding base. Staff agrees. Some board members feel the need to focus and be more relevant to the corporate community. Staff added concerns about burn out, our database and being one-team (post mergers).

What we learned from the adjacent industry exercise: There is common theme across all industries and *it is all about experiences and mass customization enabled by technology.*

What makes SVC unique and relevant: What makes us unique is our venture culturist approach to strengthening the ecosystem through our investments, partnerships and business planning. What makes us relevant is our ability to strengthen an evolving ecosystem that builds community, fosters cross-cultural understanding, creates a sense of place and contributes to civic dialog and problem solving.

Why our proposed strategies make sense: Our strategies embrace who we are, respond to the challenges facing our ecosystem, leverage our strengths, build on momentum and define and demonstrate our “venture culturist” role.

Strategies:

Goal # 1: Build the capacity of our arts and culture ecosystem

- **Capacity Strategy # 1:** Align all current and future SVC programs and offerings with a defined set of critical success factors for strengthening our ecosystem.
- **Capacity Strategy # 2:** Establish permanent arts spaces and a Shared Services Center in the Creative Center.
- **Capacity Strategy # 3:** Explore the diversification of funding mechanisms and matching sources for investment in the arts ecosystem.

Measurements: Portfolio trends, participation levels, customer survey tools, collection of anecdotal stories, growth in operating and project funds for arts ecosystem.

Goal #2: Raise the value and visibility of our Creative Sector

- **Visibility Strategy # 1:** Broaden distribution of Content across all channels in service to our creative sector.
- **Visibility Strategy # 2:** Leverage the most unique SVC programs (eg Laureates, XFactor etc) to actively promote our cultural ecosystem.
- **Visibility Strategy # 3:** Be the “go to” spokesperson for the arts.

Measurements: Growth in Content subscriptions and participation, social media, media references, speaking engagements, and event participation. Tracking the results of our advocacy work.

Goal #3: Increase access to arts and creativity

- **Accessibility Strategy #1:** Incubate and embed accessibility programs with exit partners capable of scaling their impact
- **Accessibility Strategy #2:** Leverage the ArtsEdConnect technology platform to create additional marketplaces for “creative” consumption.
- **Accessibility Strategy #3:** Build an “equitable access” cohort of investors

Measurements: Number of children and adults served through successful incubation, embedding and scaling of programs. Number of children and adults connected to arts experiences. Dollars invested.

Goal #4: Be a model of organizational health, collaborative leadership and community impact

- **Organizational Strategy #1:** Demonstrate our collaborative leadership and community impact by driving the success of the Creative Center and Imagine VMC.
- **Organizational Strategy #2:** Leverage our board, staff and partners to strengthen SVC’s marketing, communications, and brand.
- **Organizational Strategy #3:** Use a combination of revenue and expense strategies (market gains, Artsopolis spin off, leveraging of major initiatives) to build a 6-month operating reserve.

Measurements: Financial dashboard, number of collaborative partners, dollars raised for investment in Creative Center and Imagine VMC, brand recognition and confidence, and growth in operating reserve.