



Building Resilient Leadership in a Changing Arts World

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Purpose

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Recognize how constant change affects leadership choices
- Use a practical framework to remain grounded, adaptive, and connected
- Identify one real leadership challenge that needs a different response
- Leave with a focused 30-day leadership commitment



How today works

01

WELCOME

5 min

02

CONTEXT

10 min

03

FRAMEWORK

20 min

04

PRACTICE

10 min

05

COMMIT

5 min

06

Q&A

10 min

Notice what is changing. Choose what matters. Practise a response. Commit to action.

The arts leadership environment is changing

01

RESOURCE PRESSURE

Costs, funding
volatility, and capacity
constraints

02

AUDIENCE CHANGE

Shifting habits,
expectations, and
definitions of
participation

03

WORKFORCE CHANGE

New expectations about
flexibility, wellbeing,
voice, and growth

04

PUBLIC TRUST

Greater scrutiny of
relevance, access,
impact, and
accountability

The challenge is not simply more change. It is more change with less recovery time.

Resilience is capacity, not endurance

ENDURANCE

Absorb more
Keep going
Return to the old normal



RESILIENT CAPACITY

Anticipate
Adapt deliberately
Renew people and systems

Resilient leaders protect purpose while changing the path.

Why resilient leadership matters

Change is increasing the demands on leaders while their influence on people remains substantial.

69%

of managers report
additional responsibilities
during disruption

55%

report team restructuring

70%

of the variation in team
engagement relates to the
manager or team leader

Adaptability helps leaders preserve direction, make informed choices, and sustain capacity through change.

Four capacities of resilient leadership

01

GROUND

Protect purpose

What must remain true?

02

READ

Sense the environment

What is changing?

03

ADAPT

Test the path

What can we try?

04

CONNECT

Distribute capacity

Who needs to be involved?

Resilience strengthens when all four capacities work together.

Let's take the ACG Resilient Leadership Quiz!



Arts
Consulting
Group

1. Ground in purpose before choosing a response

Pressure creates urgency. Purpose creates direction.

MISSION

What impact are we here to create?

VALUES

How will we behave while navigating change?

NON-NEGOTIABLES

What must we protect?

TRADE-OFFS

What are we willing to pause, stop, or redesign?

A clear 'yes' requires an equally clear 'not now.'

2. Read signals before reacting to noise

Not every urgent input is a meaningful signal.

SIGNAL

A repeated pattern
Supported by evidence
Relevant to mission or viability

NOISE

A single loud opinion
A short-term fluctuation
Activity without strategic meaning

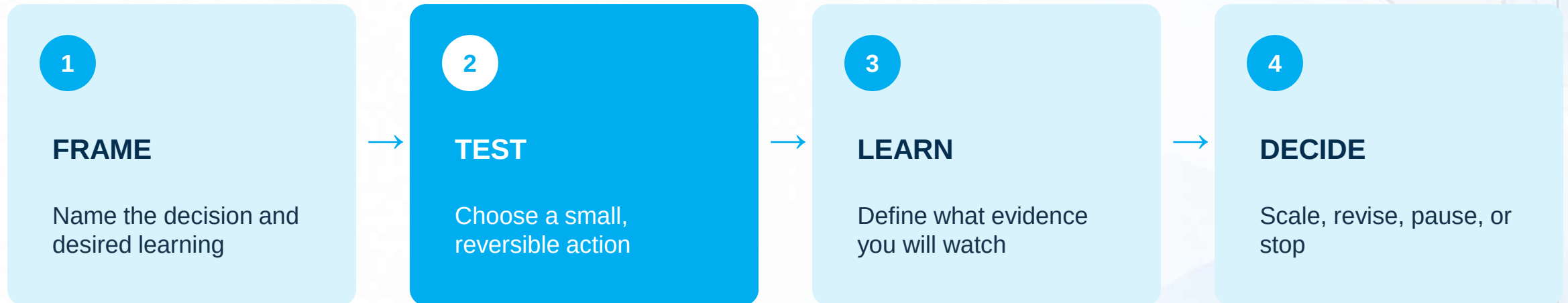
BLIND SPOT

A voice not in the room
An assumption left untested
A risk nobody owns

Ask: What do we know? What are we assuming? What would change our mind?

3. Adapt through disciplined experiments

When certainty is unavailable, design the next useful test.



Strong adaptation is not constant reinvention. It is structured learning tied to purpose.

4. Connect people, information, and authority

Resilience becomes fragile when every decision depends on one person.

LISTEN

Bring affected voices into sense-making

CLARIFY

Name who recommends, decides, and acts

SHARE

Move information to the people closest to the work

RENEW

Create space for recovery, reflection, and learning

Distributed leadership is not diluted accountability.

Apply the framework to a real leadership challenge

YOUR CHALLENGE

Choose one live issue that requires judgement, not just task completion.

GROUND

What purpose or value must remain true?

READ

What is a signal, assumption, or blind spot?

ADAPT

What small test could create useful learning?

CONNECT

Whose insight, authority, or support is needed?

A resilient decision passes four checks

PURPOSE

Does this protect the impact that matters?

EVIDENCE

What supports this choice, and what remains uncertain?

PEOPLE

Who carries the impact, knowledge, and work?

LEARNING

How will we know whether to continue or change course?



Your 30-day leadership commitment

Complete one sentence:

In the next 30 days, I will strengthen our resilience by...

STOP

One response that
drains capacity

START

One practice that
improves learning

SHARE

One decision, insight,
or responsibility

What is one resilient leadership practice you will strengthen after today?



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Waiting for participants



Building Stronger Arts Organizations Together



ACG would like to support 50 arts and cultural organizations strengthen their strategic direction by June 2027

Could yours be one of them?

If your organization or one you know is preparing for its next chapter, speak with Nagham or Lauren after the session.

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Questions & Discussion

What feels most useful for the leadership challenge in front of you?



Please share your feedback on
today's session

