**Background:**

Waterloo is home to a vibrant arts, culture and heritage sector that boasts hundreds of independent media and visual artists, performers, and writers. Culture not only contributes to community wellbeing, but ignites collaboration and entrepreneurship ensuring a dynamic workforce and a diverse local economy. In 2013, Waterloo council voted unanimously to approve the City of Waterloo's 10 year culture plan. The recommendations are being implemented through coordinated efforts between the city's economic development department and community stakeholders.

Collaboration can leverage existing resources for community benefit by getting people together and starting to build relationships with a shared focus on common goals. The implementation of the culture plan requires collaboration not only between the city and cultural organizations, but also between business, education and other sectors within the community. Making these connections are critical to economic and cultural development locally. Leveraging collaborations heightens community vibrancy which ultimately supports talent retention and attraction efforts in other sectors.

**Purpose of project:**

This community is known for technology, innovation and entrepreneurship but important growth is happening in the creative sector too. Organized by the City of Waterloo, Amplify is a full day summit celebrating creativity and innovation in Waterloo Region.

Amplify gathers researchers, artists, designers and creative industry members to showcase cutting-edge ideas that explore the fusion between art and technology. Participants discover a unique opportunity for knowledge sharing, networking, and community building. The event begins with three 20 minute themed addresses focused on belonging, innovation and place making, followed by a Q & A. Next Peer-to-peer workshops highlight local success stories. An opportunity to network, dinner and keynote wrap up the event.

**Effectiveness / Meeting Objectives**

In 2018, the third annual Amplify - Culture Summit will be held at the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo. This event is delivered for a cost of $10,000. It attracts over 130 attendees (will scale to 200 by 2021) and has already proven to have built local capacity through inspiration and collaboration:

* In 2016, the Mary Allen Studio Tour retooled and rebranded thanks in part to concepts explored at Amplify that year. Organizers estimate this has resulted in an increase in audience participation by 15% and rise in sales.
* In 2017, Button Factory Arts collaborated with an Amplify presenter to develop a "Memory Cookbook" project. This involved collaboration with participants of the YMCA Healthy Lifestyles program for newcomer women to Canada to create a cookbook of recipes made from memory. More than 180 cookbooks have been distributed and sold.
* In 2018, as a result of Amplify, Art$Pay collaborated with the Centre for International Governance Innovation to deliver Distillation - The Essence of Waterloo. Distillation is an exhibition of projected photographs from nine juried photographers matched with nine local accompanists for a performance of sight and sound. Organizers report rave feedback from ticket holders and increased art sales and performer gigs.

**Challenges & Changes made**

One of the challenges in creating an annual event is keeping the content current and the audience engaged. An annual call for peer-to-peer presenters helps to alleviate this challenge and celebrate local successes. The format for Amplify is afternoon/evening based on feedback from the creative sector.

**Target Audience (demographics)**

* Post-secondary students/young professionals exploring their careers locally
* Amateurs/professionals from culture, tech and education sectors seeking affordable professional development, knowledge sharing and networking opportunities
* Creative sector members from neighbouring communities