

# Employee Engagement Workbook Series

## Corporate Art Activations

This series of workbooks centers on employee engagement, or using the arts to foster and improve the work environment in businesses. Written by practitioners in the field, this series will help arts groups gain inspiration and practical tips to guide the creation and growth of employee engagement in local communities.



## **About Americans for the Arts Business Volunteers for the Arts®: Employee Engagement**

Business Volunteers for the Arts® (BVA), a national skills-based management consulting program created in 1975, has been overseen by Americans for the Arts since 2005. In recent years, we have seen a multitude of changes in the corporate volunteer environment, with shifting interests from both the employees who volunteer and the businesses in which they work. As a response to this shift, Americans for the Arts Business Volunteers for the Arts® Network now includes employee engagement resources on programs such as virtual volunteering, corporate arts challenges, skills-based volunteering, arts-based training, consultant events, mentoring, hackathon events, team-based volunteering, and more. This workbook on arts incubators is one in a series written by practitioners in the field who have successfully designed and implemented such programs. Find out more at [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/BVA](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/BVA).

Americans for the Arts recognizes that engaging business professionals and employees through the arts is key to fostering a desirable work environment, increasing efficiency and morale, and building the competitive advantage of a business. Employees can be engaged through the arts in a number of ways, and Americans for the Arts serves as a resource, guide, and hub for all the information needed to start, sustain, or transform a successful employee engagement program.

## **About Art Activations**

This workbook focuses on one of the many ways arts organizations can work with businesses: corporate art activations. This concept lives under employee engagement as culture building or creativity training as well as physical space transformation. Brooklyn-based limeSHIFT has developed a methodology for delivering this type of engagement through visual or experiential art focused on increasing employees' capacities to work collectively and collaboratively with empathy, from a heightened state of attention and observation, and with a newfound ability to innovate and change. limeSHIFT's art activations work at the intersection of people and place, stimulating both through purpose. Underlying this work is a client-driven service solution that aims to help organizations achieve their goals.

## **About This Workbook**

Each workbook in this series is based on a specific organization's programs, philosophy, and tactics to generate positive employee engagement programs for the business community. This workbook focuses on limeSHIFT, a creative agency that activates people and place with purpose through art. By bringing art and artists into communities, limeSHIFT transforms spaces into a reflection of community vision and an inspiration for creativity, productivity, and connection. This workbook chronicles the origin of this Brooklyn-based organization and the founding case study that established how it engages with businesses.

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## PROGRAM BASICS

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limeSHIFT, a Brooklyn-based and MIT-founded creative agency, activates people and place with purpose through art. By bringing art and artists into communities, we transform spaces into a reflection of community vision and an inspiration for creativity, productivity, and connection. One way we do this is by merging employee engagement with physical space transformation. According to Gallup, 87 percent of professionals worldwide feel stuck and crave a creative outlet. limeSHIFT offers a comprehensive approach that provides employees with the skills, community, and environment to be creative.

### Offerings

limeSHIFT's services aim to build long-lasting connections between organizations and their internal and external communities, including employee networks and local arts communities. Our offerings include opportunities to bring local artists into businesses either as educators, contractors, or creators.

Our services cover two buckets: people and place. Our two programs, *Be the SHIFT* and *See the SHIFT*, have different goals and outcomes. *Be the SHIFT* focuses on the people side of creativity, offering creative skills-building through workshops and artist engagements or residencies.

*See the SHIFT*, the highest-touch and most complex client service we offer and the focus of this workbook, targets physical space transformation to infuse creativity throughout an environment. We collaborate with clients to create art that reflects their organizations' cultures, promoting understanding of and alignment with the organizations' values. Specifically, we provide co-created and curated office art.

The result of our work is a purposeful and meaningful environment, permeated with vibrancy and creativity, that values diverse expression and openness.

### ***See the SHIFT***

Our core offering, *See the SHIFT*, involves a cultural discovery for the organization, an artistic engagement with either or both the internal and external communities, and a final art piece which serves as a physical reminder of the engagement. A *See the SHIFT* engagement involves numerous stakeholders and drives at creating ownership and inclusion across an organization or community. A typical engagement can include the home community (e.g., the employee base), the local arts community (e.g., a local artist) and the external community (e.g., outside community members invited to participate in a specific part of the engagement). limeSHIFT compiled expertise in social

practice art, community and employee engagement, and creativity training to craft this program structure. To understand how these engagements, or what we call art activations, unfold, follow along in the side bars for limeSHIFT's activation with Life is Good, the apparel and accessories company.

This workbook will dive into the structure of the activation from planning to evaluation:

1. **Site Visit:** limeSHIFT visits the office to meet the team, assesses the office environment for values articulation, and determines the engagement scope.
2. **Artist Selection:** limeSHIFT offers a curated selection of local artists depending on the clients' values, budget, aesthetic, and type of artwork possible (e.g., sculptures, murals, digital, etc.).
3. **Cultural discovery & ideation:** Employees undergo a limeSHIFT workshop, ideally with the artist acting as facilitator or observer. Our workshops are designed to align individual and organizational values allowing artists to directly interact with the community members. This serves as a starting point for artists and community to work together on a co-created artwork. You can find the full description list of limeSHIFT workshops in the supplemental materials.
4. **Implementation:** Working in collaboration with the artist(s), limeSHIFT submits design concepts from the artist based on the organization's values. limeSHIFT facilitates in the build process and encourages employees to participate.

## Our Methodology

A limeSHIFT activation is designed purposely to “shift” perspectives and perceptions. They have been particularly useful for clients that are undergoing a transformation internally, whether that means a strategic direction change, office renovation or move, rebranding, etc. Our workshops are guided by theoretical frameworks in the fields of collective leadership, art, forum theater, and peacebuilding. We begin by altering perception, disrupting habitual patterns of seeing and relating. This is a playful process

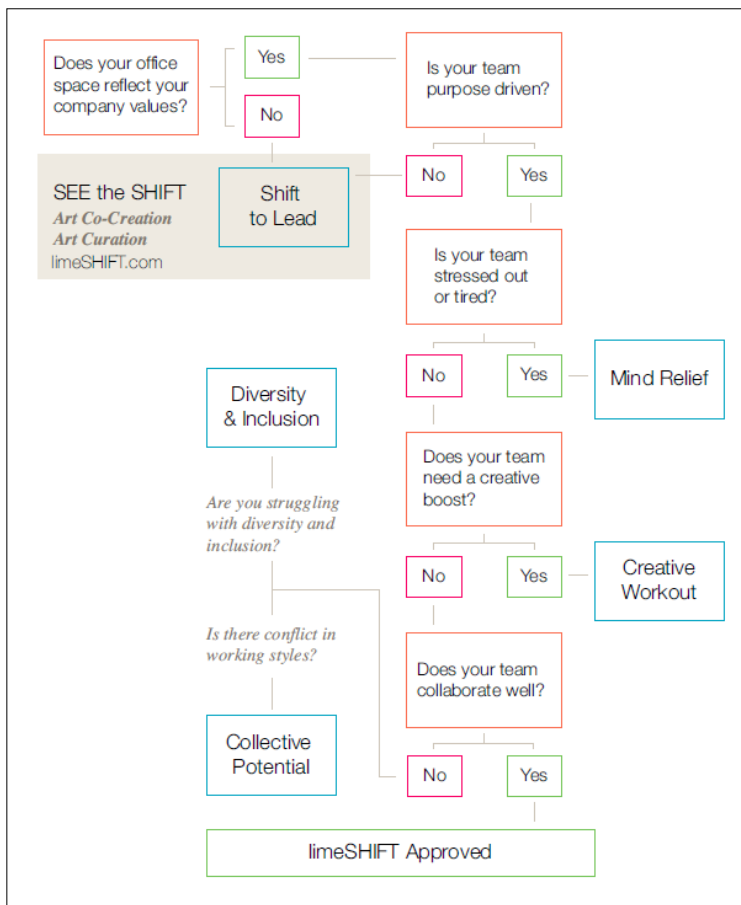


limeSHIFT's Methodology

		Shift to Lead	Mind Relief	Creative Workout	Diversity & Inclusion	Collective Potential
UNIVERSAL OUTCOMES	Improves Communication					
	Team Building	●	●	●	●	●
	Team Rejuvenation					
	Connects Individuals with their Space					
COLLABORATION	Inter-Style Collaboration	●		●	●	●
	Fosters Inclusion	●	●		●	●
CREATIVITY	Generates Ideas	●		●		●
	Makes Art (hands-on creating)		●	●	●	●
	De-Stresses		●	●	●	
COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP	Aligns Values	●	●		●	
	Builds Vision	●			●	●

ABOVE: limeSHIFT's Workshop Comparison

LEFT: limeSHIFT's Workshop Guide



that stimulates vitality and awakens the mind, body, and intuition. Then, group members work together to reconsider the connection between their purpose and the people and spaces around them. From a place of renewed clarity, teams engage in a co-design process that addresses cultural or spatial impediments to evolving. Our workshops include SHIFT to Lead, Mind Relief, Creative Workout, Diversity & Inclusion, and Collective Potential. Each one targets a specific aspect of organizational culture. Art-making is both the problem-solving tool and the visual manifestation of the desired evolution.

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## ORIGIN STORY

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limeSHIFT's founding team met at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the spring of 2015, where the founders were graduate students in the Sloan School of Management and the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP).

We are a mix of artists, community organizers, and business strategists. We coalesced around the following three beliefs: everyone is an artist designing new possibilities for our collective destiny; art, like nothing else in the world, can bring people together; and imagination is essential to creating a better world.

While at DUSP, Nabila Alibhai, a Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS) fellow, introduced Yazmany Arboleda and his social practice art to the MIT community. The history of their work together inspired the founding of limeSHIFT.

In the spring of 2011, Yazmany Arboleda, an artist in public space, launched the "Monday Morning" project in India, then activated it in Japan and Kenya. This public art piece inspires unique moments with simple gestures and color through 10,000 biodegradable balloons. During the installation in Kenya, Al Shabaab bombings almost derailed the project, but the volunteers showed resolve and persisted out of a desire to express normalcy and humanity. The successful outcome inspired Yazmany to pursue another conflict zone for his next Monday Morning site.

Yazmany connected to Nabila Alibhai, a conflict resolution specialist working for the Aga Khan Development Network in Kabul, Afghanistan. Nabila, who holds a Master's in Public Health from Yale University, was thinking about how beauty in public space can influence community healing. Yazmany's "Monday Morning" was a perfect complement to her work in Kabul and the installation took effect in the spring of 2013.

While at MIT, Nabila and Yazmany connected with the Sloan School of Management to create an independent study in the spring of 2015 with co-founder Elizabeth Thys. The purpose of the study was to develop a financially sustainable business model for using social practice art to influence social change. You can find full limeSHIFT team bios in the supplemental materials.

In the fall of 2015, limeSHIFT engaged with its first client, Life is Good. The engagement culminated in the spring of 2016 with two co-created art installations at the company's headquarters in Boston. Both art pieces were co-created with Life is Good's employees and were based on the values and mission of the company. In the summer of 2016, limeSHIFT engaged with its second client, Broder, a real estate developer, to build a community-inspired mural and light installation at a construction site in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago. During the fall of 2016, Yazmany and Nabila launched Colour in Faith in Kenya, an art activation that brings people from different religious groups together to paint their houses of worship yellow in the name of love as

a testament to universal values and humanity. Meanwhile, limeSHIFT formulated and refined its methodology, pulling from leading thinkers in community engagement, leadership development, and creative practice. limeSHIFT built out its product offering in the people and place spaces, targeting specific business solutions and physical space transformation through art. Learn more about limeSHIFT in the introduction to limeSHIFT in the supplemental materials.

The idea of limeSHIFT is to broaden the application of social practice art across society and, more specifically, into the business world. We see numerous potential applications in industries from technology, architecture, real estate, and fashion to marketing and branding to employee engagement and learning and development. This aligns with the founders' values of integrating community, art, and business.

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## RESEARCH & PLANNING

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Before jumping into *See the SHIFT*, the highest-touch and most complex client service we offer, there is some research and planning to do! The result of *See the SHIFT* is a physical space transformation infused with creativity and reflective of the organization's culture and values. The first step is to understand your local business and arts communities. Businesses survive based on their ability to forecast the future. They need to be nimble to respond to the current business environment, especially if they operate in a competitive market. For a business to undergo a disruptive event, such as a strategic direction change, office move, or rebranding, it can be costly to the day-to-day operations of the business. The investment and value for a business to do this type of project lies in the art activation's ability to ease changing dynamics and build resilient communities so that work can continue as needed.

### Assess Your Capacity and Local Stakeholders

Art activations typically involve a project manager, workshop facilitator, curator, and artist. Depending on individual skill sets, these roles can be overlapping. If you have those skill sets internally at your organization, great! If not, look for local clients and partners. There are most likely artists in your community who offer workshops around their practices. For nonprofits doing interesting work in this space, we point to [The Laundromat Project](#) and [Creative Time](#). To identify appropriate business clients, consider local businesses who are undergoing a change, need an employee morale boost, or want to work closer with their local communities. During this activation, you will be acting as a de-facto broker creating a public-private partnership. Considering your organization's past work, think about finding a small grant to kick off the project from city government



or encourage a business to sponsor a small-scale activation. Some clients may be able to easily supplement in-kind support (i.e., press and communications, IT), which may further entice them to undergo an activation.

Partnerships can be helpful to securing the success of the project, particularly if the client is looking to reach out to the community and establish deeper connections. Think about the stakeholders with whom your client is attempting to connect and create a list of organizations and communities for outreach. Look for partners who share your goals and vision. Some examples include arts councils or local arts agencies; chambers of commerce; local government planning, community, and economic development departments; community foundations; higher education; social service organizations; and local business incubator and entrepreneurial development service organizations. Identify and connect with local galleries and art residencies to identify potential artists for the engagement. Once you have a strong understanding of your own abilities and what's available in your community, you can move forward.

## **Build Leads**

The first step in doing outreach for leads is to look at your own network either personally or professionally. Do you have board members from companies with large employee bases? What about local businesses that you have collaborated with in the past? Remember to consider businesses undergoing a change (internally or a physical move), need an employee morale boost, or want to work closer with their local communities. Make a list of potential businesses, starting with your most well-connected relationships. Ask for a meeting to pitch your idea for an art activation as a tool for employee engagement. Engage company leadership and build their excitement and support for the engagement. Identify internal supporters, the person or people who will plan and execute the engagement.

## **Consider the Leadership**

An art activation is not appropriate for every organization. We have found that our message resonates strongest with leaders who are mission-driven and put their employees at the core of their strategy. This is apparent where organizations have clear and well-defined values and culture is a strategic selling point internally and externally. Do not move forward with any organization without meeting with the CEO or Executive Director.

Involvement from top leadership is pivotal to orchestrating an art activation that addresses cultural shifts. When a company undergoes significant changes, there are emotional implications for employees and the need for self-reflection among employees is high. The CEO needs to see an art activation as a strategic investment to ensure employee retention, promote organizational values, and re-energize employees. It is vital that CEOs are aware and supportive of this process of discovery because it can be disruptive in the short term, but beneficial in the long run. It requires a visionary CEO to understand the value of an arts activation and unless he/she is on board immediately, it is unlikely a CEO will change his/her mind to this type of work. Meet with top

leadership early, get to know them on a personal level, understand their vision for the organization, and see if your work can complement the vision.

Once you have confirmed interest from all internal counterparts and received buy-in from senior leadership, request a site visit as the first step in the process to building out a more formal proposal. Let the client know that if and only if the deal goes through, then the site visit will be included in your budget. This gives you more time to build your case and put together a more complete and personalized package for the company.

## Set Expectations

While it may seem obvious, setting expectations for employee time commitments, budget, and check points is essential for a smooth engagement. Clearly communicate and document the goals and ownership for the art activation with your client: who is doing what? When? How much time do you expect from employees? What are employees doing? What are the learning goals? Begin this conversation as soon as possible and finalize the engagement scope after the site visit (next step). Expect to check in on the engagement scope weekly/bi-weekly with your counterpart to ensure that you are progressing the project appropriately.

### LIFE IS GOOD: Introduction

limeSHIFT completed its first art activation with Life is Good, the Boston-based lifestyle brand, in April 2016. Throughout this workbook, we highlight this case study to demonstrate how art activations are practically applied.

**Company: Life is Good**

**Location: Boston, MA**

**Employees: 70 in Boston office**

**Background:**

- 23-year old lifestyle brand
- Rebranded in 2015
- Moved headquarters, consolidating three offices into one

**The In:** limeSHIFT was introduced to the leadership of Life is Good (CEO, CCO, HR, etc.) through a direct personal connection. After an initial meeting with the company's leadership, the CEO agreed to the art activation under the stipulation that all employee activities would be optional. The main contact within the company was Colleen Clark, Head of Optimistic People (Human Resources). Together, we coordinated project management and employee communication to ensure buy-in for the project and appropriate activities for this specific community.

## Sample Timeline

Each project and engagement is different, but a standard timeline might follow these rough steps.

ACTIVITIES	Phase 1: Foundation Setting	Phase 2: Cultural Discovery & Ideation	Phase 3: Implementation
<b>I Site Visit &amp; Artist Curation (~1-2 weeks)</b>			
Visit the office (1 day), meet the team, assess the office environment for values articulation, and determine engagement scope (including timeline and budget)	x		
Curate and select local artists depending on the clients' values, budget, aesthetic, and type of artwork possible (sculptures, murals, digital, etc.)	x		
<b>II Stakeholder Engagement (~4 weeks, depending on level of engagement and size of community)</b>			
Engage with Stakeholders: Which employee teams or communities are you committed to including? What is the best method for communicating the project and generating buy-in? Surveys? Workshops? Do you have champions internally?		x	
Establish a steering committee: Tap into or find champions for the project to formally/informally sit on the Steering Committee		x	
Run workshops to align individual and organizational values and inspire the co-created artwork with the selected artist(s) (if applicable)		x	
<b>III Create a Conversation (~1-2 weeks)</b>			
Clearly communicate purpose and meaning of project to entire Stakeholder community		x	
Engage with print, radio, digital and TV media — locally and nationally (if applicable)		x	x
Set up partnerships and collaborations to continue the conversation through the Steering Committee		x	x
<b>IV Execute Art Activation (~1-2 weeks)</b>			
Outline operations plan: Understand the logistics involved for the activation, figure out insurance needs		x	
Run the activation with the artist			x
<b>V Document the Activation (Ongoing)</b>			
Document entire process		x	x
Share the photographs			x
Edit and post videos to community (if applicable)			x

## LIFE IS GOOD: Timeline

We started our engagement with Life is Good in September 2015. However, because the company decided on the 2016 budget in the final quarter of the year, Life is Good was not able to engage limeSHIFT again until spring 2016. The gap in the engagement impacted the overall momentum of the project. As external vendors who are not on-site every day, maintaining presence at the company became difficult and we lost some of the groundwork that we had established in fall 2015. We completed the project, but lost some employee interest and passion along the way. A shorter and tighter timeframe would have improved the overall enthusiasm and commitment to the project.

## PHASE 1: FOUNDATION SETTING

### Site Visit

During this phase, use the initial meeting to gather as much information about your client's needs as possible and tour the physical space for the activation. Some sample questions include:

1. How do you define community? Are you interested in improving relations with either your internal or external community?
2. What are the values of the organization? What would your employees or customers say your values are? Are you interested in communicating those values clearly? To whom?
3. Are there behaviors that you would like to see amended, adjusted, or added to your workplace culture? How does that relate to your work space? In what rooms are these interactions happening? Inhibiting or conducive?
4. Are you interested in using art to articulate your values? Are you interested in connecting with your local arts community?
5. Are you looking to engage your employees or customers in an art activation or looking for art installations created to communicate those values?
6. Do you have budget to cover this engagement? How much?

The output of this initial visit is the engagement scope, building off your initial proposal, covering both the employee engagement (How many employees included? How much time allotted?) and physical space transformation (How many art installations will be created? How many artists will be involved?). Together with the leadership team, set a clear intention that outlines your client's goals for the engagement and what success looks like, who will be involved in the project, and how much time can be expected for the engagement. Organizations not only commit to a financial investment, but also investments in employee time and physical space. The level of commitment varies depending on the project intention; therefore, it is pivotal to understand the needs upfront and develop an engagement scope collaboratively to ensure buy-in from the

leadership of the community. This process ensures that all parties are aligned on project vision and purpose. An internal counterpart should be identified as your main point of contact to ensure the project rollout internally.

## Engagement Scope Options

Offering a variety of options for the engagement scope ensures that you can service different needs. Not every organization is going to be interested in a high-touch activation (as defined below). Depending on the availability of employee time, the placement of the activation in the overall needs of the organization (i.e., a community outreach opportunity, a learning and development engagement, or a team-building activity) and the budget, be prepared to offer different levels of engagement. The touch element allows employees to feel connected to the creative process and outcome of the art piece. Ask your internal counterparts for guidance on the appropriate engagement scope for their organization using whatever internal tools you have for your organization. Feel free to be creative in this step for gathering ideas and feedback. Examples include:

1. Low-Touch: employee survey; group discussion on community, values and aesthetics; artist talk on creative practice
2. High-Touch: quantitative/qualitative research, employee workshops

### LIFE IS GOOD: Engagement Scope

- Strengthening Life is Good's culture and values internally.
- Life is Good as Arthouse: optimizing creativity as a "superpower."
- Co-creation of beautiful, community-inspired art in Life is Good's new office space.
- Providing language for external engagement.

Life is Good was undergoing a lot of change internally, and the activation by limeSHIFT aligned with its office move and rebranding. While the timing of the project was a fit from a strategic perspective, it also meant that employees were extremely busy with the changes. As an external consultant, this is a fine line to negotiate. Your role is to make the community stronger through a fun and creative activation, but employees may feel stressed about the time involved in the project. Try your best to ensure that the activation structure suits the community and any scheduled activities are easily accessible to employees.

## Sample Budget

Below is a sample budget of an activation. For a workshop that will be done numerous times for a group of employees, you can offer a bundle as a discount to the company. The artist fee varies depending on the artist(s) and the size and numbers of works.

ITEM	COST
<b>limeSHIFT Engagement (ex. Emergency Budget)</b>	<b>\$32,500</b>
Site Visit	\$1,000
Curation Fee	\$1,500
Artist Fee	\$10,000
Project Management Fee	\$10,000
limeSHIFT Workshop	\$5,000
Travel	\$5,000
Emergency Budget	\$10,000

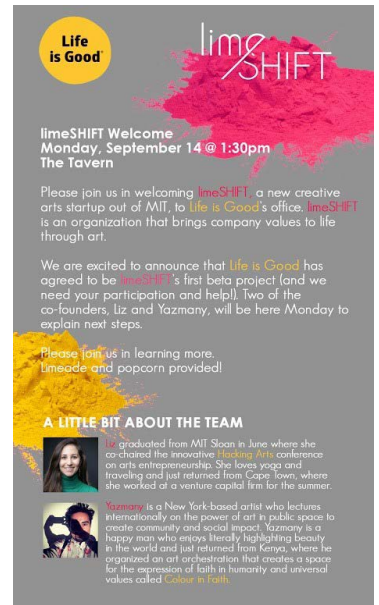
## Assess Client's Stakeholders

Depending on how your client defines community (internally meaning employees vs. externally meaning local community or customers) and hopes to involve different community elements, you can do a stakeholder assessment, which includes:

1. Stakeholder mapping to evaluate influencers and organizations and prioritize them based on impact and relevance in specified areas of focus
2. Facilitated stakeholder engagement planning workshops
3. Ally mobilization for speaking opportunities and media outreach
4. Partnership development and management

## Artist Curation

Recommend a small group of artists to your client for the project. If you already know or work with an artist, that's a good start. Otherwise, consider reaching out to local arts groups or residency programs. Questions to consider include: What is the client's aesthetic? What spaces are they focused on? What is the brand of the organization? Is there a type of artist that the client is interested in working with? Is the artist open to working with groups of people? In what ways can the artist's practice be applied to and inclusive of groups of people? What does each side hope to get out of the engagement? How will the client support and promote the artist? Once the client chooses the appropriate artist, establish a working relationship with the artist, a statement of work, and potentially, a non-disclosure or non-compete agreement.



LEFT: Kick-Off, Life is Good, September 14, 2015.

RIGHT: Welcome Flyer for Opening Presentation, Life is Good, September 14, 2015.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you have contacts in the business community?
2. Do you have access to artists or curators in your community?
3. Is there a program like this in your community?
4. Do you understand and are you able to communicate the value of an art activation to your community?

## IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM

Once the engagement scope, timeline, and budget are laid out, the fun begins: Implementation! A successful project relies heavily on the main point of contact from your client's organization and your job is to support them as much as possible. That person will need to be able to communicate the project internally (with your assistance), gain buy-in from employees, and assist in managing the rollout. Make sure that each person's role is clearly defined so that everyone has a strong understanding of what they are working on to push the activation forward.

## PHASE 2: CULTURAL DISCOVERY & IDEATION

### Present Idea to Employee Community

Share next steps and gather excitement for the project internally by presenting the entire employee community with an overview of the project, projected outcome, timeline, and their involvement. It is best if the project is co-presented with the CEO or organization's leader to establish credibility and encourage participation.

### Build Internal Network of Connectors and Community Partners

Doing community work at a company is like doing community work in neighborhoods. Immediately following the presentation, set up internal alliances with guidance from your internal counterpart and encourage support from disparate teams to ensure broad interest in the engagement. There will be some employees immediately interested in an art engagement who we consider early adopters. These are the employees that may have a creative hobby already and enjoy team-building activities. At limeSHIFT, we aim to activate early adopters and empower them to garner support internally for the project. As external vendors, we are not prepared to understand the ins and outs of a company's culture and the intricate ties between employees. On the other side of the spectrum are the employees who are disinterested in participating in an art project. We learned that it is not our role to convert those disbelievers into adopters of the project. Instead, allowing each segment of the engagement to be voluntary works best. Furthermore, there are some employees who are network nodes (influencers) internally. These are the employees that have taken the time to build friendships within the community and can sway opinion. Identify those employees and incorporate them into the project early either with a role on the steering committee or an activity leader in another capacity.

### Establish Communication Strategy Internally for Employees

Starting with the initial communication through the final reflection, employees should feel included and empowered throughout the process. Figure out what the best method for internal communication is within the organization and activate your steering committee to use those channels. Make sure that all communications are uniform and the message is clear throughout the engagement. Focus on a simple ask during communi-

#### LIFE IS GOOD: Prepping the Employees

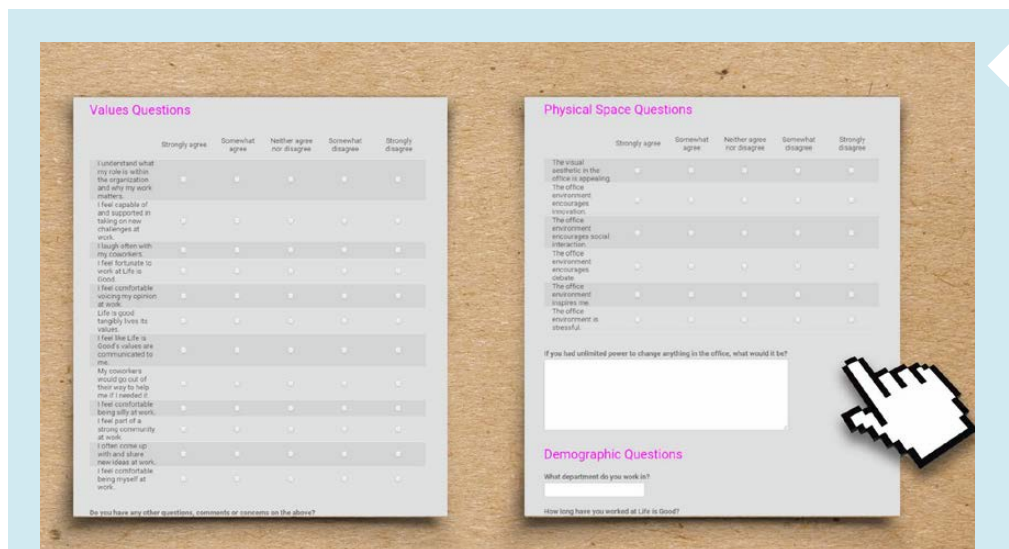
To introduce limeSHIFT to the employees, we co-hosted an event with Colleen Clark, Head of Optimistic People (Human Resources). All employees were invited to attend an office-wide presentation on limeSHIFT explaining the artist Yazmany Arboleda's history of social practice art and introducing the team. By sharing past work, employees understood better who we were and were inspired to participate in the project. We also hosted a team-building exercise to familiarize employees to our active and participatory process. The event lasted one hour, and 70 employees participated.



cation outreach, whether it is attending an event or workshop or submitting content to the artist. Make all communication clear and actionable.

## Cultural Discovery and Ideation

In a high-touch engagement, we use further research tools to discover cultural practices within the organization. Besides surveying, we do qualitative research in terms of interviews, focus groups, and meeting observations. The research, combined with limeSHIFT's workshops, serves as fuel to inspire the co-created artwork with the artist(s). Working with the organization, assess how many employees will be part of the engagement: how many employees can be interviewed or participate in workshops? Depending on employee involvement, you may lead numerous workshops (make sure to include this layout in the engagement scope and budget). Following the workshops, conduct



Online Survey for Cultural Discovery, Life is Good.

## LIFE IS GOOD: Cultural Discovery and Ideation

At Life is Good, we used a combined qualitative and quantitative approach for our research. First, we sent an online survey assessing the organization's values and physical space in the office. We received 34 responses out of 70 employees from nine different departments. During the survey, we also invited employees to name our engagement, which became electricJOY, inspired by the Life is Good Kids Foundation, which supports those who dedicate their careers to helping children heal from the devastating impact of poverty, illness, and violence. The second phase of research consisted of in-depth qualitative research to understand the existing culture and community based on Life is Good's 10 Superpowers (Gratitude, Creativity, Authenticity, Courage, Compassion, Humor, Fun, Openness, Simplicity, and Love) for spreading optimism. We completed 11 individual interviews, two employee-led office tours, three focus groups, and four meeting observations. The purpose of this research was to address the following questions:

*(Continued on next page)*

Employees participating in limeSHIFT Workshops, Life is Good.

*(Continued from previous page)*

- Do employees embrace the 10 Superpowers and feel Life is Good is living its values?
- Do employees feel Life is Good's office space represents the company's values?

The workshops for Life is Good sought to: 1. engage all employees as artists, build creative and open mindsets, and assess the energy of the physical space; and 2. create an intention for the art pieces by articulating Life is Good's values and brainstorming the physical manifestation of the art.

Considering employee time constraints, we broke the workshops into two separate one-hour sessions.

For the first session, we hosted five workshops attended by 23 total employees. For the second session, we hosted three workshops attended by 17 total employees. The drop-off in employees was the result of a few factors: first, the company was heading into a busy season for product rollout, and second, we lost momentum with the long project timeline.



surveys to pull insights from participants about values, aesthetics, and spaces that the activation should target.

### **Collaborate With and Guide Your Artist**

The results from the cultural discovery and ideation guide the next step for the artist(s) because the workshops assess values and aesthetics. Ideally, the artist can be present during the workshops or pieces of his/her art practice can be integrated into the workshop. If not, share all your findings with the artist, including photographs, videos, survey results, and interview notes from the site visit and cultural discovery. When working with your artist(s), keep in mind the spaces that will be activated and what type of art is the most appropriate to articulate the organization's values (i.e., sculptures, murals, digital, etc.). Having the artist integrate findings into the work creates a connection between the employees and their space and provides employees a sense of ownership.

## Concept Review and Budget Finalization

Working in collaboration with the artist(s), submit design concepts for the art installations for the organization to review. Speak to findings from the cultural discovery and ideation to support your recommendations. At this stage, a final budget with any updates (if necessary) can be presented to and discussed with the leadership team.

## PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION

### Build the Installations

Either with employees or without, schedule and then execute a rollout for the art installations to be created. Depending on the size of the project, this timeframe can last from one to many weeks. To deliver materials to the site, work with the facilities manager



### LIFE IS GOOD: The Installations

To instill a sense of ownership among employees through the physical space transformation, employees were invited to cut, assemble, paste, and paint the art pieces over the course of one week. We worked around employees' schedules to make it as easy as possible to participate. We hosted creation sessions during lunch and after working hours. Employees across different teams participated, giving them a rare opportunity to interact in a fun and creative way. Both installations were directly tied to employees' words and intentions as expressed through the workshops and interviews.

Furthermore, the locations of the installations were intentional to build community. #electricJOY lives in the stairwell between the two floors of the office to encourage flow and movement between the teams separated by the layout. #helloSUNSHINE is in the lobby to welcome employees and visitors into a new and inspiring space completely unique to Life is Good.



TOP: #electricJOY, Yazmany Arboleda, Life is Good, 2016.

Site: stairwell connecting 8th and 9th floor to create cohesive sense of community between floors

Values communicated: love, fun and authenticity

Materials: digital prints on archival paper, adhesive paste, Optimistic Yellow acrylic paint

"It's a beautiful representation of the people at Life is Good and the reality and the authenticity of the moments they go through every day." —Colleen Clark, Director of Optimistic People at Life is Good

BOTTOM: #helloSUNSHINE, Yazmany Arboleda, Life is Good, 2016.

Site: main lobby entrance to introduce company values immediately

Values communicated: openness, compassion, creativity and courage

Materials: magnetic paint, Optimistic Yellow acrylic paint, magnets, plywood, mirrors

"Hello, I see you. You matter. Your time matters. What you do here is valuable. Be inspired to be here and help make Life Good for the world." —Emily Saul, Director of Programming for the Life is good Playmakers, Life is Good

to coordinate the appropriate locations and timings. Make sure to be mindful of the employees so that the build is not disruptive to their work. limeSHIFT suggests that organizations encourage employees to participate in the build process, which is additional employee time, but particularly meaningful to ensure lasting impact.

### Promote Client and Artist

A large part of limeSHIFT's mission is to support artists—giving them access to unconventional sources of income. Therefore, promoting artists through our projects is important. However, it is also important to promote the companies who are making these activations possible. Giving the company an opportunity to share its creative work and employee engagement is a great way to give back to the company.

### LIFE IS GOOD: Promoting the Work

On Friday, April 29, 2016, we hosted a Boston ArtWeek event at the Life is Good office styled as a gallery opening and panel discussion, which gave the company the opportunity to invite outsiders into the space and share the installations with the public. We also submitted the story to local media and were written up on [Brand Union](#) and [Boston.com](#).

The gallery-like setting allowed the employees to interact with the artist and local community members. It was also a final conversation on the experience where we honed in on lessons learned and takeaways:

“Every company including Life is Good is challenged to get their teams to feel united and inspired all the time...Art like nothing else in the world can bring people together.” – CEO Bert Jacobs, Life is Good



Boston ArtWeek event, April 29, 2016, Life is Good. L-R: Elizabeth Segran, Staff Writer at Fast Company (Moderator); Yazmany Arboleda, Artist and Chief Creative Officer of limeSHIFT; Elizabeth Thys, CEO of limeSHIFT; Bert Jacobs, CEO of Life is Good; Colleen Clark, Director of Optimistic People at Life is Good

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## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

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1. When is the best time for employees to participate in the build? If the materials are messy, do they need to bring extra clothing?
2. Will your client support the project with a promotional event?
3. Do you have contacts in the press to get the story of the engagement out?
4. Will the company help promote the work and/or artist either on social media or in other outlets?

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## CHALLENGES & ADVICE

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1. Do your best to establish and maintain a short timeframe to ensure enthusiasm and commitment to the project.
2. Expect delays. As an external consultant, you are working on your client's timeline and it is very likely that your project will get pushed back. Breathe. Don't put all your assets into one client. Diversify your clients. Make sure to insert buffer time into the timeline.
3. There are always hidden costs! Address this early with your client. Decide who will cover additional expenses upfront and potentially establish an emergency budget for overage expenses.
4. Don't expect to understand the ins and outs of a company's culture and the intricate ties between employees. Avoid the political innerworkings of a company and work to activate motivated employees to encourage others.
5. There will be challenges that arise during the engagement (art is a notoriously messy field!). Establish strong communication patterns early and set the expectation to expect changes to the activation at the beginning.
6. You cannot address every problem that arises. Art brings out a lot of different emotions and experiences for people. That's the beauty of what we do, but you cannot expect to fix or address every issue and you should appropriately prepare employees that the company may not move forward on every idea.
7. Define what success means for you and your clients. What do you want to see and feel with each engagement? Use that to guide your work.
8. Be thoughtful about who you work with. You can say "no" to any client that does not align with your vision or mission. Finding the clients that fit with your world view is particularly satisfying and rewarding.
9. Activate your resources. A lot of community organizations will be excited about your work and want to help in any way possible. Use your resources!
10. Schedule regular check-ins with your client to ensure free flowing communication. Ask for feedback frequently from employees. Grateful employees are a great source of inspiration for you and the artists!

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## EVALUATION & MOVING FORWARD

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Evaluation of your engagement is critical to understanding your impact in the community. Use your initial work on vision, mission, and what success looks like to define how you want to evaluate your work. Evaluations may be quantitative, such as surveys, or qualitative, such as interviews.

limeSHIFT evaluates every workshop and engagement with surveys and interviews to implement continuous improvement and refinement. We evaluate the content, the facilitators, the artists, the art, and the overall engagement. Furthermore, we ask for open-ended feedback from participants throughout the engagement.

### **LIFE IS GOOD: Evaluation**

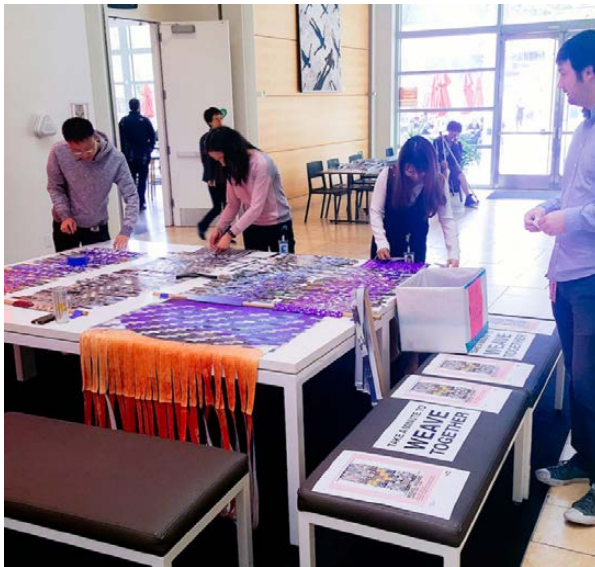
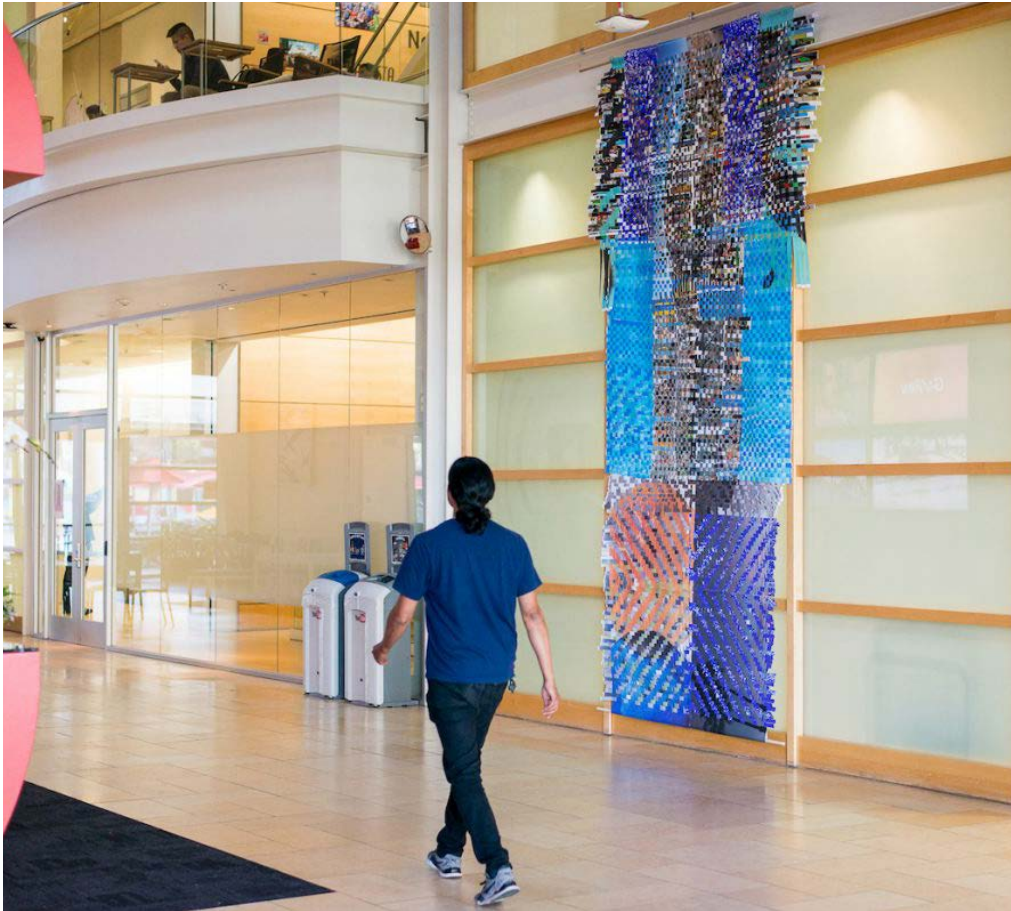
During our first client engagement, which took place over the course of eight months, there were tremendous learnings throughout the process. From the best way to enter a company to building internal partnerships and communicating with employees, we saw both what worked and what did not work.

Overall, we viewed this engagement as a success by the following metrics:

- We engaged over 80 percent of Life is Good's Boston-based employees.
- We received positive feedback on the workshops, installations, and overall process.
- The art itself was a stunning reflection of the conversations and intentions of the employees and their interpretations of the company's values.
- We promoted Life is Good through press and the ArtWeek panel.
- As a startup, we tested numerous types of employee engagement (survey, interviews, workshops, etc.).

For a full look at our evaluation for the Life is Good project, refer to the Life is Good impact assessment in the Supplemental Materials.

limeSHIFT continues to work with a variety of clients activating art in different ways. In April 2017, limeSHIFT completed projects with both YouTube and the Yale School of Management. The YouTube activation lasted one week with artist Miguel Arzabe. YouTube's Culture Club was looking to integrate and represent the diversity of its employees, create art that activated the lobby space, and integrate digital submissions with tangible art making. limeSHIFT recommended that the Culture Club ask employees to submit photos answering the prompt "Show us what makes you smile." During a one-week makerspace, Arzabe used a weaving process to create a 16' x 5' photo tapestry that builds a social atmosphere and creates conversation.



The Yale School of Management (SOM) activation began in October 2016 and culminated with a week-long physical installation in April 2017. As a student-led initiative from two MBA students, SOM hired limeSHIFT to activate the school's mission to educate leaders for business and society. Yazmany Arboleda, limeSHIFT cofounder and artist, created ESPEJISMO: A Festival of Borrowed Reflections, an art installation that invites its audience

Miguel Arzabe, YouTube, April 2017.

to reflect on the perspectives of others and share personal thoughts about seeing and being seen. We asked participants to respond to: "When people see you, what would you like them to know?" on our [website](#) and asked to borrow their mirrors. The website Espejismo.art launched April 3 and over the course of three weeks, we gath-





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# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

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Available on the Business Volunteers for the Arts® page at [www.AmericansfortheArts.org/BVA](http://www.AmericansfortheArts.org/BVA)

- LIMESHIFT WORKSHOPS
- LIMESHIFT TEAM BIOS
- INTRODUCTION TO LIMESHIFT
- LIFE IS GOOD IMPACT ASSESSMENT

## Other Americans for the Arts Resources

For more information on engaging employees through the arts and partnering with the business community:

Visit the [pARTnership Movement](#), an initiative from [Americans for the Arts](#) designed to reach business leaders with the message that partnering with the arts can build their competitive advantage.

View our pARTnership Movement tool-kits, [Bringing the Arts to the Workplace](#) and [Employee Engagement and the Arts](#).

Watch our [on-demand webinars](#), including one on [Engaging Business Employees Through the Arts](#).

Send us an e-mail with any questions: [privatesector@artsusa.org](mailto:privatesector@artsusa.org).





Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. With more than 50 years of service, we are dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts.



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