

## CREATING RESILIENT ORGANIZATIONS

### *Strategically Collaborating with Clients to Build Adaptable Organizations*

ACTN Strategies cultivates organizational resilience for clients: helping leaders understand, prepare for, and successfully manage a spectrum of unanticipated disruptions, challenges, and risks. With our solutions, clients thrive before, during, and after adverse operating conditions, like the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a holistic approach of integrating People, Process, and Technology, ACTN Strategies offers services that mitigate risks to operations and sustain cost efficiency models while promoting a strong brand. These integrated solutions increase an organization's ability to thrive and grow no matter the circumstance. Our approach fosters resilient organizations that can ramp up and/or down because they are:

**ACTION-ORIENTED:** Leaders use tools from our design transformation strategies to take decisive action that addresses short- and long-term goals.

**COLLABORATIVE:** Executives bolster collaboration and quickly pivot to drive innovation and operational efficiency while also maintaining core values and minimizing risk.

**TRUSTWORTHY:** Leaders implement trust building techniques that strengthen internal workforce confidence in the core business model and reinforce organizational brands in the marketplace.

**NIMBLE:** Organizations use our tailored solutions—whether analyzing existing business requirements or revamping the operational paradigm—to create business models that can quickly adapt to disruptive events.

ACTN Strategies' approach is comprehensive and forward looking in nature. We assess existing organizational structure—to include the workforce, the physical environment, IT infrastructure and communication processes—as well as organizational culture and the executive decision-making process to move clients from today's circumstances to tomorrow's success. After working with ACTN Strategies, our clients are positioned to seize new growth opportunities and quickly mitigate risks to avoid all-out crises.

Societal disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic remind us all of how critical it is for organizations to be flexible, resilient, and able to quickly adapt. Prolonged impediments to a workforce or management structure will cost an organization dearly across its brand, reputation, and bottom line.

## ACTN STRATEGIES IN ACTION: CLIENT SUCCESSES

ACTN Strategies has proven success with large, prominent organizations that all operate in the public domain and face a myriad of challenges daily. These challenges are significant and represent risks to the reputation of the brand – risks that need to be properly mitigated to before they reach crisis levels.

### **Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture: Thriving Amid Disruption**

By virtue of its prominent location on the National Mall in Washington, DC and the sensitive racial context of its exhibits, the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture

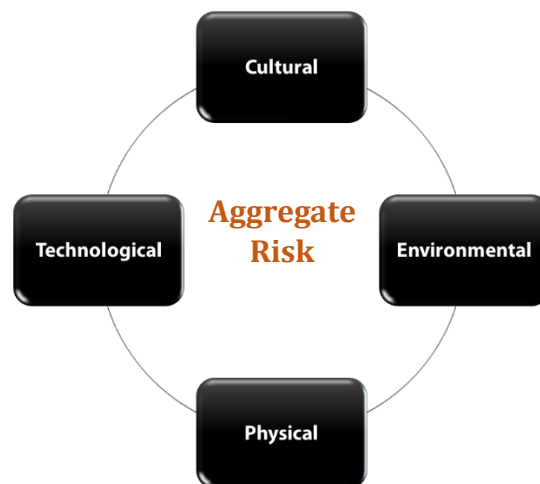
(NMAAHC) has faced a series of challenges that require a highly trained, motivated, and flexible workforce. Since its successful Grand Opening in 2016, NMAAHC has dealt with public protests, marches, and demonstrations that regularly spill onto NMAAHC’s facility and grounds. Furthermore, NMAAHC is a large and often crowded facility—hosting roughly 2 million visitors annually (COVID-19 pandemic notwithstanding). Considering these enduring challenges, NMAAHC’s top priority has been to ensure the health and safety of all visitors.

To address these issues NMAAHC contracted ACTN Strategies to provide an organizational assessment of its workforce planning strategy, training practices, and crowd management protocols.

Using our Aggregate Risk Model (See Figure 1.1), ACTN Strategies completed an organizational review and ultimately offered recommendations for a NMAAHC workforce that is:

- Well versed in security, safety, and de-escalation protocols;
- Skilled in touchless ticketing, capacity analysis, and crowd management logistics; and
- Adept in visitor engagement techniques that build trust in a safe and welcoming environment.

*Figure 1.1 – ACTN Strategies Aggregate Risk Model*



The onset of COVID-19 in early 2020 brought a new set of high-stakes challenges to NMAAHC and its workforce. Overnight NMAAHC went from hosting thousands of people a day to zero. In concert with ACTN Strategies, NMAAHC opted against laying off significant portions of the staff, understanding that mass layoffs would impede NMAAHC’s ability to reopen its doors quickly when the pandemic waned.

Rather than significant layoffs, NMAAHC and ACTN Strategies pursued the creation of a truly resilient workforce able to offer to a revamped visitor experience – one focused on creating a safe, educational, and positive encounter for each person. Critical to this effort was building an infrastructure durable enough to facilitate thousands of visitors a day while maintaining physical safety as the paramount objective. To that end, ACTN Strategies and NMAAHC implemented several measures, including:

- Social distancing protocols and increased signage
- Staffing support to ensure safety compliance among visitors and staff

- Modified crowd management practices
- Extensive training in Visitor Engagement and Aggregate Risk Management (refer to Figure 1.1)

ACTN Strategies understood the value of existing staff expertise and that forward-looking preparations would have been impossible had there been mass layoffs at NMAAHC. As Herman Marigny, Manager of NMAAHC's Office of Visitor and Guest Services, said, "We must always be ready to open the doors because we don't always receive a lot of lead time when we are told it is safe to re-open." ACTN Strategies offered solutions that helped them do just that.

### **DOJ and DOD: Managing Multi-Million Dollar, High Visibility Contracts with Partnering Facilitation**

Partnering facilitation periodically measures an alliance's progress toward a common goal, celebrates successes, and examines any challenges program teams face when working together as partners. The goal of Partnering is to leverage insights to improve overall performance of a given contract. Ultimately, the idea of Partnering is to get people working together to manage tasks and resolve project problems in a mutually agreeable manner before major issues create lawsuits, diminish revenues, etc. There is no mystery about Partnering: it is simply being self-aware of what it takes to succeed in your organization while understanding the needs and operating models of partners. ***When each partner succeeds, the partnership is successful.***

ACTN Strategies' team of experts brings years of combined professional experience in building strategic alliances within our client organizations through executive coaching, federal contract management, project management, team effectiveness, and conflict resolution—usually geared toward avoiding arbitration.

In 2018, the Department of Justice (DoJ) and Department of Defense (DoD) contracted ACTN Strategies to facilitate their executive planning meetings with vendors over the life of various contracts. ACTN Strategies was tasked with course-correcting programs that were close to being "off the rails" and headed toward contractual default and/or potential arbitration. Utilizing sound social science principles and other proven, science-based techniques, ACTN Strategies helped the DoJ and DoD executives, leaders and teams successfully manage change and realize resilient transformation. ACTN Strategies' Partnering facilitation provided:

- An unbiased and impartial forum (a "safe space") to raise issues and communicate challenges and avoid litigation and unanticipated costs due to project delays
- A successful nationwide teaming effort to deliver value-added solutions
- A trusted advisor to senior executives, contracting offers, staff, and technical specialists on strategies, project implementation, team effectiveness, change resistance, and communication techniques

For the clients, the outcome was a strong, strategic alliance focused on action-oriented decision making and a collaborative implementation team, in a trusting partnership, that drove a nimble program plan to fruition. The CEO of BarnAllen Technologies, who participated in the DoJ/DoD Partnering sessions, stated of ACTN Strategies Partnering Service, "Strategic Partnering facilitation should be a requirement for all contracts. It is an unknown jewel in the marketplace!"