

111 - Alcatraz Island, San Francisco Bay, California



The background is a dark blue field filled with various shades of blue gears of different sizes, some overlapping. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a colorful, textured pattern of gears in shades of orange, yellow, and brown.

Obstacles to Ovations

Accomplishing cultural
change...one level at a time



Session Overview

- ★ Case studies ~~ cultural change and partnerships in action
- ★ Accomplishing cultural change ~~ field experiences from the executive, mid-management, field and partners levels
- ★ Tools for implementing cultural change

Alcatraz

An ever-changing culture

- ★ 1.3 million people visit yearly
- ★ Site of one of the most notorious historic sites in America
- ★ Home to extensive numbers of migrating and roosting birds
- ★ No running water, must be accessed by vessel, electricity created by generators
- ★ Located in the middle of a park beloved by vocal, powerful constituents
- ★ Difficult balance between natural resources, cultural resources and visitor service



Daily Challenges

- ✦ Meet visitation demands
- ✦ Create dynamic programming with dwindling federal budgets
- ✦ Protect natural and cultural resources
- ✦ Make the island accessible
- ✦ Maintain vision and harmony between partners



Change as a Way of Life

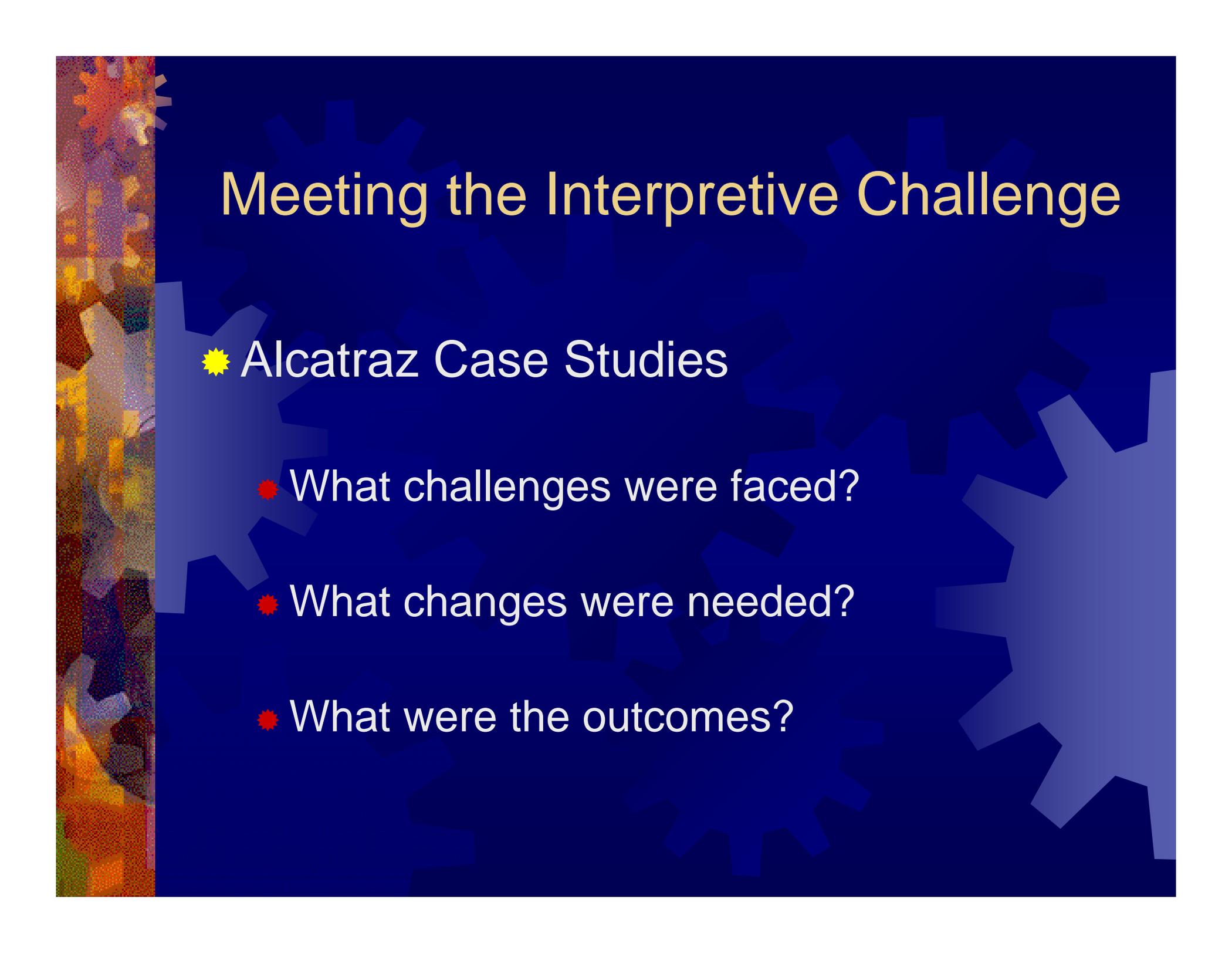
Increased pressure

+

Decreased resources

=

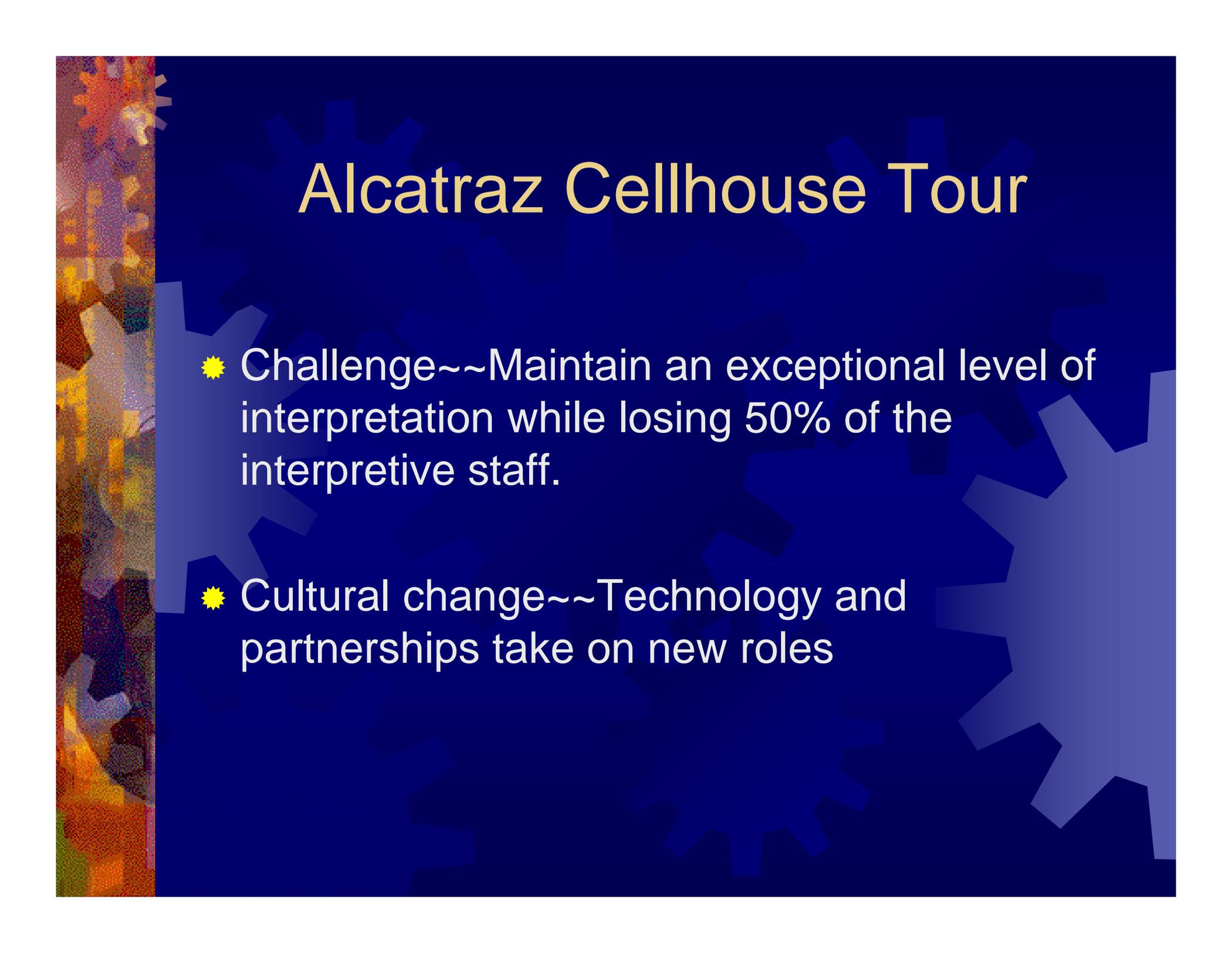
Situations requiring change



Meeting the Interpretive Challenge

★ Alcatraz Case Studies

- ★ What challenges were faced?
- ★ What changes were needed?
- ★ What were the outcomes?



Alcatraz Cellhouse Tour

- ✦ Challenge~~Maintain an exceptional level of interpretation while losing 50% of the interpretive staff.
- ✦ Cultural change~~Technology and partnerships take on new roles

Obstacles....

- ☀ No agency precedent
- ☀ Fierce line staff resistance
- ☀ Untried technology
- ☀ Extreme financial risk for partner
- ☀ Physical challenges



Ovations....

- ☀ New partner responsibilities defined
- ☀ Team approach to program production and design
- ☀ Inter-staff training and mentoring
- ☀ Received international recognition
- ☀ A new economic engine





Alcatraz After Dark

- ✦ Challenge~~ Meet drastically increased visitation demands with no additional staff and no impact to the resource.
- ✦ Cultural Change~~ Adopting new operational strategies.

Obstacles...

- ✦ Extensive resource concerns
- ✦ Insufficient communication
- ✦ Staff resentment, fear and vilification
- ✦ Hat thing...



Ovations...

- ✦ Exhaustive field surveys completed
- ✦ Team approach to program design
- ✦ Innovative funding
- ✦ Additional staff support to day program
- ✦ Additional visitors served
- ✦ New opportunity for special events





Take a SEAT

- ✦ Challenge ~~ Transport mobility impaired visitors up a 13-story hill and avoid getting sued.
- ✦ Cultural change~~ New technology, new vision, new partners

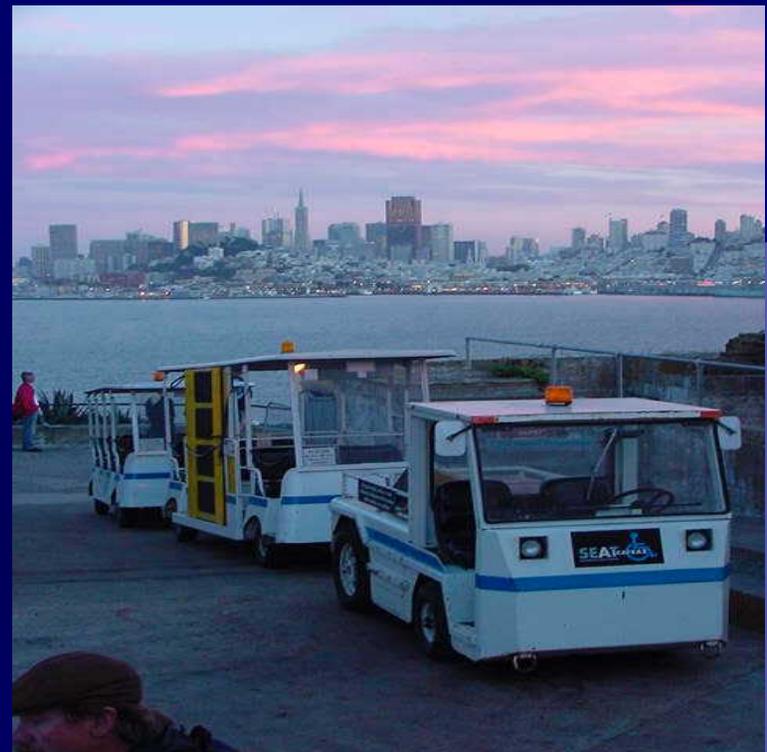
Obstacles....

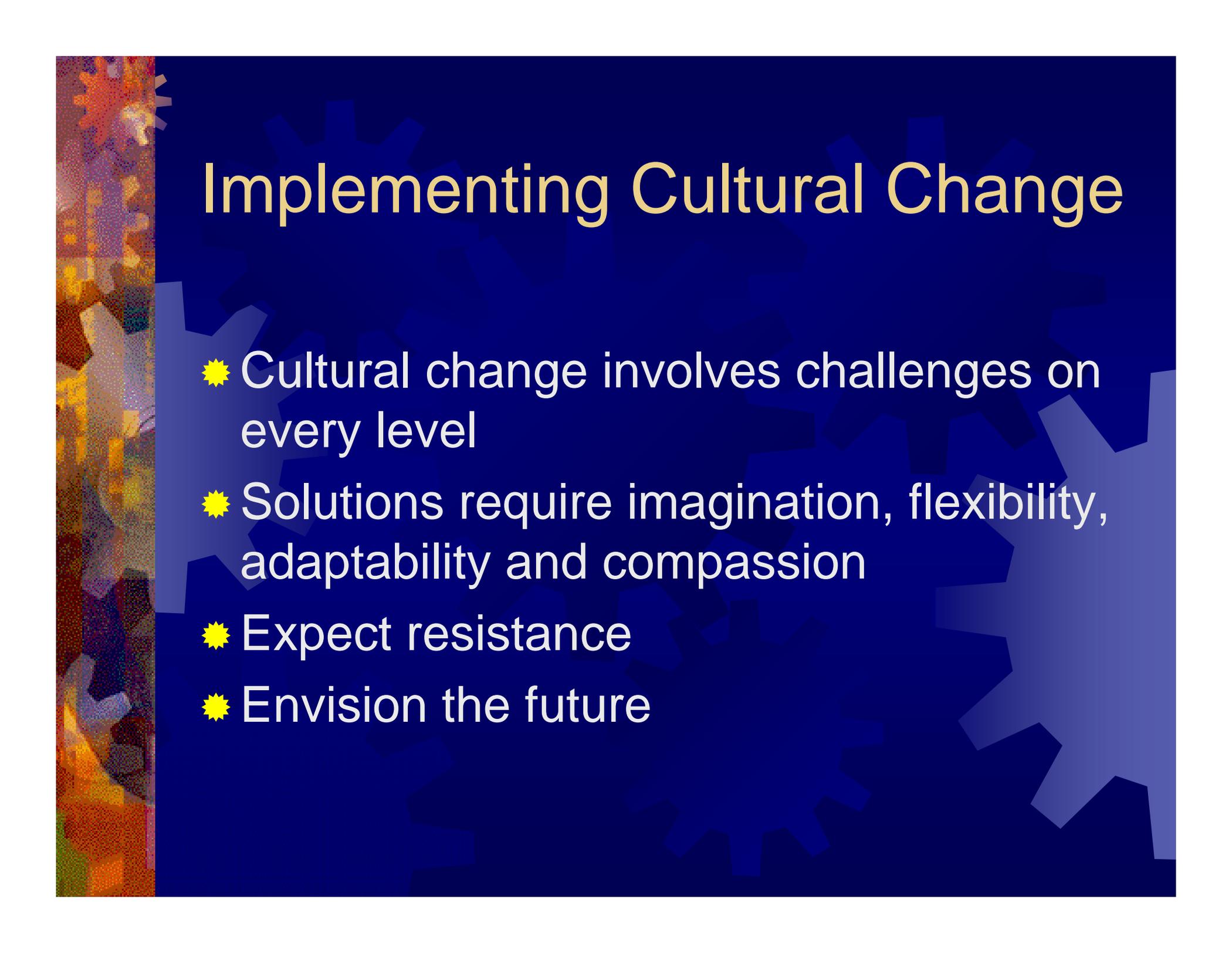
- ★ Fragile historic roadways
- ★ Assisting a community with special needs
- ★ Technological issues
- ★ Funding
- ★ Who?



Ovations...

- ☀️ Advocacy through new partners
- ☀️ Innovative funding
- ☀️ Expansion of trusted partnerships
- ☀️ Safe, sustainable technology
- ☀️ Everyone sees everything, regardless!





Implementing Cultural Change

- ✦ Cultural change involves challenges on every level
- ✦ Solutions require imagination, flexibility, adaptability and compassion
- ✦ Expect resistance
- ✦ Envision the future



Cultivating Cultural Change

✦ Executive Level

- ✦ Often the visionaries, see the “Big Picture”
- ✦ Instituted huge policy shifts
- ✦ Were seen by some as veering from traditional agency philosophy
- ✦ Caused distrust in field staff resulting in polarization and vilification



Cultivating Cultural Change

★ Mid-management

- ★ Responsible for turning the dream into operational reality
- ★ Lived between executive and line staff (ouch)
- ★ Ombudmen~ primary program movers



Cultivating Cultural Change

☀ Line staff

- ☀ Strong philosophical and emotional reactions
- ☀ Feared the loss of their jobs
- ☀ Further erosion of traditional roles: loss of position/ control/ power
- ☀ Lack of appreciation



Cultivating Cultural Change

- ★ Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (Partner)

- Felt lack of acknowledgement for current level of support
- Lack of agency respect and professional confidence
- Resented the false impression of themselves as villains

Four Tools to Implement Change

- ✦ *Tool One: Imagination and risk tolerance*
 - ✦ Don't say "No", say "How"
 - ✦ Look for a way out of the box
 - ✦ Search for examples, improve upon them
 - ✦ Gauge your tolerance for risk, exceed your comfort level

Four Tools to Implement Change

☀ *Tool Two: Team Up!*

- ☀ Develop a “Core” and “Extended” team structure
- ☀ Identify team leaders
- ☀ Identify and recruit outside expertise and partners

Four Tools to Implement Change

★ *Tool Three: Build Advocacy*

- ★ Internal and external
- ★ Replace perceptions with facts
- ★ Acknowledge the feelings, but focus on the goals



Four Tools to Implement Change

- ☀ *Tool Four: Persevere past the discomfort*

- ☀ Recognize that change will be hard
- ☀ Acknowledge that resistance may be fierce
- ☀ Move through resistance to implementation
- ☀ Remember: the success of the project is what eventually gains true acceptance



On doing nothing....

“In challenging times, the inclination is to hit pause, rethink, play it safe. It’s only human to do so. But great rewards await those with the courage to act in a way that is unexpected...unpopular



www.getoutofhell.com



In conclusion...

“Nothing great was ever achieved
without enthusiasm”

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

