Enriching the Experience through Innovative and Creative Exhibitions

National Archaeological Museum Aruba
July 28, 2009
2 – 4 pm
Workshop Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Current trends and practices
3. Practical application of information
4. Case study: National Archaeological Museum Aruba
Who we are

- Maria Piacente, Vice-President, Exhibitions, Lord Cultural Resources
- Yvonne Tang, Creative Art Director, Lord Cultural Resources
- Erich Zuern, Producer, Xibitz
Museums & Cultural Tourism

- **Authenticity**: Museums are ranked as the most trustworthy resource among a list of information sources, including books and TV. *(source AAM survey)*

- **Rise in thematic and interactive museums** – dynamic and complex selection of subject matters and experiences at museums, e.g. tolerance, pop-culture, creativity.

- **Growth**: Overall growth in attendance and number of museums*, but NOT historic sites. There has been a steady decline in attendance. For example, New York Times reported that attendance at Colonial Williamsburg over last 10 years has dropped from 1.1 million to 710,000 and they are hosting fewer families than ever before. The reasons – perception, new museum types, quality of experience, competition, lack of funding.

*Interruption in growth immediately after 9/11
What would you do in your museum if you had no constraints?
Exploring current trends and practices in:

- Learning Styles
- Use of Collections
- Interpretation and Exhibition Design
Learning Styles
Scientific research by Howard Gardner, of Harvard University, has identified 7 ways that people learn:

- Visual
- Verbal
- Logic
- Movement
- Reflection
- Social
- Sound
How We Learn – Visual

• Enjoys... looking at pictures, watching movies, drawing, designing and creating

• Learn best by... visualizing, dreaming, working with colors and pictures

ZOOM Kindermuseum

Frist Center for the Visual Arts
How We Learn – Verbal

- Enjoys... reading, writing and telling stories
- Learns best by... saying, hearing and seeing words
How We Learn – Logic

• Enjoys... experiments, asking questions, exploring patterns and relationships

• Learns best by... classifying, working with abstract patterns, categorizing
How We Learn – Movement

• Enjoys… moving around, touching and talking

• Learns best by… touch and movement, physical activity
How We Learn – Reflection

• Enjoys... working alone, pursuing their own interests

• Learns best by... self-paced instruction, reflecting and individual projects
How We Learn – Social

• Enjoys … being with friends, talking to people and being part of a group
• Learns best by… sharing, cooperating, interviewing and comparing
How We Learn – Sound

- Enjoys... singing and humming, listening to music, playing instruments
- Learns best by... rhythm, melody, music
Use of Collections
Aesthetic Mode

• Focus on object
Context Mode

- Understanding culture and history by interpreting material culture
- Building context around artifacts
- Storytelling / Themes
Processes Mode

- Using material culture to understand processes
- How things are made, how they work, or how something is done
Interpretation and Exhibition Design
Visible or Themed Storage

- Integration of research and programming – the public has access to process, collections and staff

Provincial Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador, The Rooms

Natural History Museum of LA County

Darwin Centre at the Natural History Museum, London
Personalized Visits with Devices

- Present exhibitions in alternative formats – cell phones, audio tours, comment stations
Integrated Media

- Creatively adapted media presented in multiple formats – interdisciplinary and inclusive

Tafelmusik at the Beijing Museum of Natural History

Smithsonian Institutions, *Ghost of a Chance*

Constitution Hill, Johannesburg
Outdoor Interpretation

- Beyond interpretive signage
- Pathways with interpretation

Shepherd Wetlands,
Outdoor Interpretive Materials
Helping Visitors Connect

- Intimate, personal stories can help institutions come alive and create deeper connections with visitors
- Focus on human aspect, relevance
- Comparative strategies – gender and age roles, processes today and in the past

(left) Canadian Museum for Human Rights, (right) National Museum of African American History and Culture
Multiple Perspectives and Experience Routes

- Providing exploration through different viewpoints or themes – history, perspectives or entry

Royal Ontario Museum, Family Focus Panels

Singapore History Museum

CSI Traveling Exhibit
Learning Through Interaction

- Use of hands-on / minds-on activities
- Well-programmed technology
Sustainability

- Learning from the past, preparing for the future
- Environmental stewardship

Children’s Museum Jordan – Educators and School Groups

Balls Falls Centre for Conservation, LEED Gold Certification
Direct Dialogue

- Engaging visitors by presenting issues and a place for their voice
- Exhibition as a forum

Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, South Africa
Power of Place

- The site as a powerful, immersive artifact
- History where it happened

(left) Eastern State Penitentiary, (right) Sawai Man Singh Town Hall
Strategic Alliances

- Leveraging local industries, community groups, heritage groups, societies
- Partnerships and collaboration with other institutions, events, collections, resources
- Media – social networks, print, television
Tourism

- Heritage Tourism
- Cultural Tourism
- Creativity Tourism
- Eco-Tourism
- Agri-Tourism
- Culinary Tourism
- First Voice
- Special Events

The Waterloo County & Area Quilt Festival draws over 35,000 quilters a year. The Festival was started by local quilt shop owners, museums and quilt guilds and now has over 40 events (such as workshops, fashion shows, teas, lectures, quilt auctions, merchant mall and exhibits) in 10 local communities. Over 4,000 volunteers work year-round to put the WCAQF together.
Building as a Portal

- As a hub, gateway or orientation
Now what? How do you apply all this information?

- Exhibition Development Process
- Selecting and Hiring an Exhibition Team
- Budgets
Exhibition Development Process

Start-Up

Interpretive Plan & Concept

Content Coordination

Design

Fabrication

Installation

Opening

Project Management
Organizing the Visitor Experience: Four Basic Experience Types

Four broad experience types to achieve a multitude of benefits:

- To add aesthetic variety
- To provide a range of experiences
- To appeal to different learning styles
- To ensure multiple levels of information, meaning and understanding
- To accommodate both the social and individual visitor
- To respond to the budget.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Didactic</th>
<th>Hands-On / Minds-On</th>
<th>Multimedia</th>
<th>Integrated Environment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Museum of the Filipino People, Manila</td>
<td>Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Hong Kong</td>
<td>Peter Rabbit's Garden, Traveling Exhibition</td>
<td>Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Hong Kong</td>
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Process & Deliverables

1. Start-Up
2. Interpretive Plan & Concept
3. Content Coordination
4. Design
5. Fabrication
6. Installation
7. Opening

- APR'07: Visioning Workshop
- MAY'07: Interpretive Plan
- JUN'07: Concept Design
- JUL'07: Advisory Board Consultation & Press Conference
- AUG'07: Case Layouts
  - Graphic Design/Specifications
- OCT'07: Thematic Framework
- NOV'07: Original Illustrations
- JUL'08: Material Board
- AUG'08: Artifact Selection
  - Text Research & Writing
  - Image/Photo Research
  - Special Exhibit & Media Treatments
- OCT'08: Final Design
- NOV'08: Graphic Panel Artwork
- DEC'08: Art Direction
  - Construction Drawings
  - Mount Making
- JUL'09: Production
- Opening
How Can I Get All of This Work Done? Selecting & Hiring an Exhibition Team

• Why hire an Exhibition Team?
  • Limited Staff Resources
  • Expertise
  • Knowledge Building

• Two most common paths
  • Negotiation
  • Request for Proposal
How Can I Get All of This Work Done? Selecting & Hiring an Exhibition Team

Negotiation

1. Seek out a firm that you trust whose work you know and admire.
2. Work together to clearly define roles and responsibilities.
3. Negotiate an agreement.
How Can I Get All of This Work Done?
Selecting & Hiring an Exhibition Team

Request for Proposal (RFP)
1. Create a written document (RFP) with these characteristics:
   - Clear definition of Scope of Work
   - Project background and work completed to date
   - Schedule
   - Budget
   - Defined process for evaluation and selection
2. Pre-select a small number of firms to directly receive the RFP
3. Advertise & distribute RFP additionally as may be required or desired
4. Review Proposals
5. Create short list
6. Interview
7. Negotiate an agreement
Advantages of Turnkey (Design-Build) Exhibit Development

• Enhanced Partnership Throughout Project
• Single Point of Responsibility
• Guaranteed Price
• Fewer Change Orders
• Proven Experience Record
• Saves Time and Money
• You Get the Best Value From Your Team
# Budgeting for the Visitor Experience: How to Get the Results that You Want

## Initial Budget Allocation
Experience types and budget ranges:

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<tr>
<th>Experience Types</th>
<th>Square Foot</th>
<th>Square Meter</th>
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<tr>
<td>Didactic</td>
<td>$200 – $250</td>
<td>$2000 – $2500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td>$250 – $350</td>
<td>$2500 – $3500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimedia</td>
<td>$300 – $500</td>
<td>$3000 – $5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Environment</td>
<td>$400 – $800</td>
<td>$4000 – $8000</td>
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Budgeting for the Visitor Experience: How to Get the Results that You Want

Initial Budget Allocation

- Recommended range:
  - US$200 – $350 per Square Foot
    or US$2000 – $3500 per Square Meter

- Exceptions:
  - Smaller Exhibitions (less than 2,000 sq.ft. or 200 sq.m.)
  - Exhibits of very large artifacts (Planes, Boats, Trains, Automobiles)
Budgeting for the Visitor Experience: How to Get the Results that You Want

Budget Affects

• Level of Interactivity
• Level of Sophistication and Finish
• Level of Media Integration
• Density of Exhibits

Shalom Street at the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit

Kohl Children’s Museum
Budgeting for the Visitor Experience: How to Get the Results that You Want

Budget Allocation (average)

- Installation: 15%
- Fabrication: 63%
- Planning & Design: 22%
Budgeting for the Visitor Experience: How to Get the Results that You Want…

…with the budget you have?

- Anchor or “Wow” experience – spend $$$ strategically, on a few new or flashy components
- Simple Activities – compare & contrast, learn more
- Programming – linked to design and experience
- Effective Design – range of experience types
- Changing Experience – varied or rotating exhibits
Questions?
Lets take a walk ... it’s time to explore!