

Museums in Context Assignment 5

SWOT Chart: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

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Current Challenge Facing My Museum: Visitor Experience, Community Engagement, and Financing

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>The collection that we possess is our biggest asset as it will improve the visitor experience.</p>	<p>Permanent Displays have no interpretation material affecting the visitor's experience. We have a self-guided tour book, but it would help to refresh the displays.</p>	<p>By establishing a Visitor Experience Coordinator position, they would be the primary point of contact to visitors to minimize interruptions of staff. When visitors are not present, they can work on an inventory of the permanent exhibits and create content for interpretation material.</p>	<p>Adequate financing is our biggest threat to the Visitor Experience. I have repeatedly asked for a budget line for exhibits, which has never happened. I was given a rough budget of \$1000 per exhibit, which essentially covers text panels costs.</p>
<p>Visitors remember the permanent displays from when they were children and enjoy visiting for a "trip down memory lane".</p>	<p>A lack of human resources means that there is little time to work on enhancing the visitor experience. Existing staff have to drop what they are doing to take care of guests which results in a loss of productivity from staff's projects and timelines.</p>	<p>Expand the facility with a dedicated temporary exhibit gallery. This will allow more flexibility in visitor experience rather than having to do all programming, research, and exhibits in the same room.</p>	<p>Unless staff resources improve, we will not be able to provide a quality experience that our visitors will find value in.</p>
<p>Since the Fall of 2015, we have started producing two "in-house" exhibits a year to enhance the Visitor Experience.</p>	<p>People think that we are a municipal museum and expect to be treated as though we are a municipal museum. Therefore our charges act as a deterrent.</p>	<p>If we filled the position of Executive Director that has been vacant for 2 years, this would result in significant performance improvements to the Programming and Community Coordinator Position.</p>	<p>There have been several previous museum employees who have promised a lot and not delivered. This really hurts our brand and relationship with the community.</p>

<p>Since 2015, we have improved the quality of our programming that we offer to the public. Rather than waiting for people to come into the museum and running 6 events and our walking tour series. We have expanded programming so that there is a dozen events for Museum Month and at least one event every month.</p>	<p>My position is Community & Programming Coordinator. However, Administration takes up about 60% of my time. Programming takes up about 32% of my time with collections work taking up 10% of my time leaving 5% for the Community portion. As a result of being under-resourced, we aren't as effective in the community as we could be.</p>	<p>Being more active in the community has an intangible benefit to the community and the organization.</p>	<p>When the Executive Director resigned, the Board claimed that there was no money to replace the ED position. These responsibilities were downloaded to Program & Community Coordinator with no increase in pay. This limits the incentive of employees to do twice the work for the same pay and is in violation of our Human Resources Policy and Labour Laws.</p>
<p>We have started showing up to community events with a display to advertise the museum to the community. This occurs through about 6 events throughout the year.</p>	<p>No Executive Director or Board Member has attempted to court the Municipal levels of government for increased funding from museums.</p>	<p>A grant was written for using the OMA's Engaging our Community Toolkit, but no approval was given. This would result in financing for staff to make an action plan for improving our community relationship.</p>	<p>The Board's willingness to listen to staff about no resources to carry out our work has fallen on deaf ears. They are responsible for ensuring the financial resources are there for the museum</p>
<p>The week long travelling exhibit during Heritage Week in February has resulted in greater community awareness, although metrics are impossible to collect.</p>	<p>In order to advocate for more funding, it requires an investment that the museum starts doing more in the community.</p>	<p>A delegation to Council during budget deliberations is required with a plan to return us to a more sustainable funding model. This delegation should also have a proposal for increasing the funding that we need to continue.</p>	<p>The Board needs to take a governance workshop so they understand what is their job and what is staff's job. The Board continually interferes with operations which is beyond the scope of their priorities.</p>
<p>We have been systemically underfunded for decades, since the County pulled its funding from the organization. As a result, an increase in any funding is a success (the bar has been set VERY low).</p>			<p>The Board is in charge of fundraising and they have never fundraised a dollar. The dysfunction of the Board is the greatest threat to the institution.</p>

<p>The OMA has produced its Ontario's Museums 2014 profile that showcases that we receive 20% of our funding from the Municipal Government when the average is closer to 60%. This is a tool that be used to demonstrate the need for funding.</p>			
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