

Strategic and Business Plans

Strategic Plans

Museums benefit greatly from a plan based on defined goals, actions and time frames as found in a 3-5 year strategic plan. Through defining and communicating these goals to management, staff, volunteers and the community the museum can become a more effective, efficient and accountable institution.

Strategic planning concerns itself mostly with the leadership and direction of an organization, not the day to day management and operations, which is considered a business plan. Strategic plans focus on longer term direction and goals of a museum. This process should be fairly outcome-oriented and not focused on every aspect of a museum's operation, rather on areas where a new direction is needed. Key directions and strategies and the ways to implement those strategies should be included in the plan. Each action should have a measurable way to assess its progress or success.

Usually, the process follows this approach:

- A SWOT Analysis: An assessment of the current internal and external environment of the museum. A review of the industry, trends, opportunities and challenges as well as an examination of the strengths and weaknesses of the museum within the context of this environment.
- Prioritized Plan of Action: The creation of a prioritized list of actions that are based on the information collected in the assessment and balanced against the museum purpose and the resources available.
- Alignment: Communicate the plan with all the museum stakeholders including staff and volunteers and align the activities of the museum with the plan.
- Implementation and Evaluation: Ensure that the actions are implemented and the plan and the outcomes are evaluated

Business Plans

Business plans are a key element in ensuring a museum's sustainability. A business plan concerns itself with the management functions of a museum such as marketing, finances and the delivery of products and services. Unlike the strategic plan, the business plan does not outline the goals and objects of the museum but rather the means by which these are achieved. In essence, the museum's business plan helps to translate the strategic plan into reality.

Business plans can also be used for a specific purpose, such as applying for sponsorship or a grant. A business plan outlines what you want the sponsorship or funding for, where it fits in with the overall operation of the organization and how the project will be managed.

A business plan should include the following:

- An executive summary which outlines the purpose of the plan.
- An organizational overview which introduces the museum, its purpose, goals and objectives.
- A market analysis which describes the audience and target audience.
- A strategy for action and Implementation. This section should be specific and include management responsibilities, schedules, budgets, marketing plans and related programs.
- An outline of plan benchmarks and plans for evaluations.

For more information on this topic see:

Guidelines for the Operations of Community Museums in Newfoundland and Labrador
Governing Body and the Museum Board – Page 19

Resources for Developing Museum Strategic and Business Plans

Strategic Planning – The Destination and a Journey by Kathleen Brown

http://www.westmuse.org/resources_strategic_planning.htm

Collections Australia Network - Museums Australia 1998 Strategic Planning Manual Strategic Planning Manual for Small Museums

http://discover.collectionsaustralia.net/sector_info_item/67

Western Australian Museum - Business Plans

<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/services/map/musmanage.asp>

reCollections – Planning and Budgets

<http://archive.amol.org.au/recollections/4/pdf/planning.pdf>

Museum and Nonprofit Management Resources:

Developing a Strategic Plan: Museum Marketing Tips.com

http://www.museummarketingtips.com/links/links_nonprofit.html

Examples of Museum Strategic and Business Plans: Available Offline

Textile Museum of Canada Strategic Plan

http://www.textilemuseum.ca/team_strategic.html

Hood Museum of Art Strategic Plan

<http://hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu/about/museum/strategic.html>

Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania Strategic Plan

<http://www.rrmuseumpa.org/whatsnew/RRMPA%20StrategicPlanFinalDraft.pdf>

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Business Plan, 2007–2008

<http://www.artgalleryofnovascotia.ca/en/home/aboutagns/corporateinformation/annualreports.aspx>