

Museums+more LLC e-Newsletter

Winter 2003

Helping you create competitive advantage and develop recreational learning experiences.

Contents

1. Silver Lining?
2. Harnessing the Gray Tide
3. Rich Legacy
4. Emerging or Transitioning?
5. Feedback and More

1. Silver Lining?

You know the old saying, “a rising tide lifts all boats.” Unfortunately, when the tide falls, the reverse holds true. It’s clear these are tough times for museums. Attendance, earned income, contributions, public funding, and endowment earnings are all taking hits at the same time. The natural reaction is to cut expenses, hunker down, and hope for the best.

Have you considered using the downturn as a time to reassess? Flaws that may have been previously hidden are now more obvious. Continuing to do the same things may not be the soundest approach. Though it’s hard to think about innovation and the big picture when you’re struggling to meet payroll, now may actually be the best time to reexamine your institution’s competitive advantage. You may well be able to improve your situation in the short-term while repositioning for the eventual upturn.

2. Harnessing the Gray Tide

Did you realize that the U.S. will soon have more older adults (65+) than children and youth for the first time in its history? The impact of this huge demographic shift resulting from the aging of the boomers will be further heightened by an amazing 30-year increase in longevity over the past century. In addition to serving as an audience, these “Third Agers” will be seeking meaningful ways to spend their time. Is your institution prepared to tap this market and source of social capital?

If you’d like to know more, come to the session I’ve organized for the upcoming AAM Annual Meeting in Portland on Tuesday, May 20th (8:45 a.m.). “Harnessing the Gray Tide: Museums and the Coming Waves of Older Adults” will share what several museums are doing already, along with the intergenerational program of the Experience Corps, which might serve as a model. For further information about the session, see <http://www.aam-us.org/am03/searchsessions/index.cfm>. You can explore this topic by reading Marc Freedman’s “Prime Time: How Baby Boomers Will Revolutionize Retirement and Transform America” or checking out <http://www.civicventures.org/>.

3. Rich Legacy

Artist and researcher Rich Gold recently passed away. Among his diverse endeavors, he led the multidisciplinary Xerox PARC group that created the exhibition “Experiments in the Future of Reading.” You can explore his ideas, such as “Notes on the Museum as a Book,” at his web site <http://www.richgold.org/museum-book/html/slide1.htm>. Among other things, he describes the notion of Evocative Knowledge Objects, which create tacit knowledge indirectly through the way that content is embedded. EKO’s make an interesting case for relating form to function, consistent with the value of involving multiple senses in learning. See whether this uncommon perspective gets you to think differently about exhibition design.

4. Emerging or Transitioning?

If you are emerging or transitioning—as an institution, that is—you may want to sign up for the pre-conference workshops on Wednesday, April 30th at the Association of Children’s Museums annual conference in Houston. You’ll get to learn from the experience of museum professionals and consultants, including Museums+more. For the preliminary program, see <http://www.childrensmuseums.org/Prelim%20Brochure.pdf>.

5. Feedback and More

Your feedback is important! Please let us know how we can make this e-Newsletter more useful. Just drop a line to <mailto:ucko@MuseumsPlusMore.com>.

Please feel free to forward this e-Newsletter to others.

To subscribe: http://www.museumsplusmore.com/museums_more_resources.html.

Museums+more LLC can help your organization achieve financial sustainability through mission-driven planning and innovation. Whether starting or renewing an institution, you can benefit from our services of Creating Competitive Advantage, Developing Recreational Learning Experiences, and Leadership Counsel. For further information, visit our web site at <http://www.MuseumsPlusMore.com>.

To explore ways we can assist, contact David Ucko at 202.270.1873 or <mailto:ucko@MuseumsPlusMore.com>.

© Copyright 2003 by Museums+more LLC