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Creative Management and Museum Marketing Strategies

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Abstract

This article envisages programmes and policies developed by museums to make them educationally and functionally dynamic. For this purpose museums evolved marketing as an adequate tool for market research and bringing a desirable change in museums. One of the most important examples in this respect in the Gleubow Museum, Canada that adopted a policy for 'total quality management' ad revolutionized the entire spectrum of its academic and curatorial activities.

Keywords: Marketing, Gleubow Museum, National Japanese American Museum, Creative Management.

Marketing is often confused with the term 'shopping' by a commoner. However, museum marketing involves various means and ways to promote the cause of a museum. "It aims at bringing museum close to the people and making its presence felt in the society". It is a new addition in the field of Museology. In managing a museum, one of the aspects is the marketing. It involves the process of identifying, anticipating and satisfying visitor's requirements. Museum marketing is about developing galleries or programmes which will satisfy the needs of the visitor, communicating the benefits of the galleries or programmes on offer to the existing and potential visitor, and ensuring that the demands are fulfilled to the satisfaction of both the visitor and the museum.

Museums and other cultural institutions are continuously developing new ways to promote the cultural products. The publicity and public relations are one aspect of promoting the cultural heritage. However, the advertising the cultural products of the museums can be increased by getting to know the market of cultural products, their quality and properties.

Since marketing is the concept of new age, the parameters that are essential in the marketing includes the consumers, which are identifies as the visitors to the museum. Consumer overall satisfaction in response to the museum's product is essential to record for further improvement. The crucial element in marketing of the

museum is the product which is offered to the visitors. The product can be exhibits, buildings, facilities and everything that contributes to the experience of the visitors. The delivery mechanism of the museum regulates the method of reaching people through your marketing such as the advertisement, leaflet or special offer, etc. Approaching directly to a specific market or a group by mail/phone or other methods related to the direct marketing of the museum. The market that is approached through various methods is another main component of the museum marketing.

Marketing is a very large planning and analytical process with a considerable input from research and developmental activities. Market research should be a continuous exercise and it is not a specialist's job. Every museum can develop its own market research plan based on the market intelligence i.e. using external information derived from published and unpublished sources.

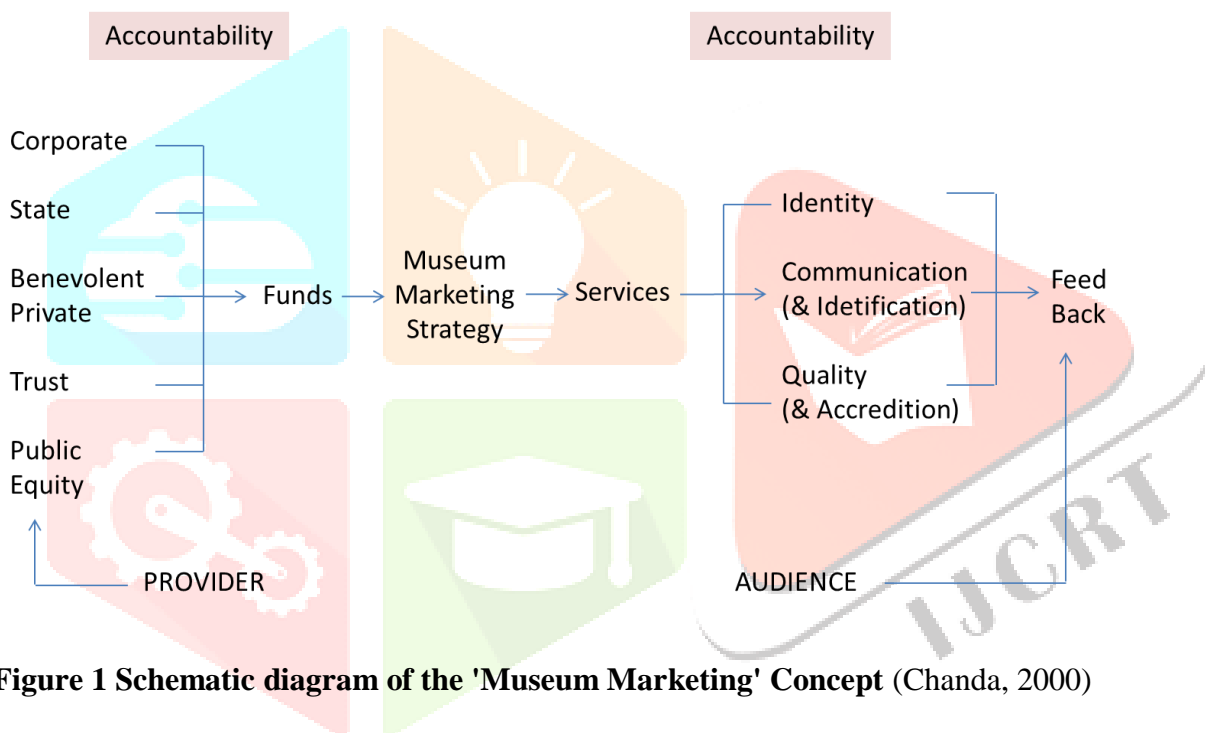


Figure 1 Schematic diagram of the 'Museum Marketing' Concept (Chanda, 2000)

We can see in the diagram, at one side is the component of museum marketing aimed to gather provisions for its vital existence, i.e. 'marketing' for funds. On the other side, is the other vital component – the audience, for which the museums are meant for. The delicate balance depends entirely on the successful marketing strategy.

The main marketing activities involve: (Rajasundaram, :2000)

1. **Marketing Planning:** Planning deals with the specific areas of research, exhibit development, advertising and achievements. Programmes of marketing research through visitor's survey to obtain data on visitor behavior and reactions. Visitors may be different types, from hospitality users, to asking for information, to those attending special programmes or members of friendly organizations. Each group of the visitors will need to be considered as a part of the planning.

Plan to develop and launch new exhibits or to improve the existing exhibits on the basis of the input received from research and analysis of the data obtained through visitor's survey.

2. **Gallery Development and Planning:** Examination of existing exhibits through visitor survey. Analyzing the visitors' response as to what they think about the exhibits. Then re-assess the displays and programmes to improve their utility and effectiveness, thereby pulling in more visitors.
3. **Media Planning:** Most of the museums usually advertise through guide books. Wider publicity campaign is necessary for a museum. Article written by journalists is more effective to cover visitors. TV and Radio can be excellent media of publicity. Variety of opportunity are there to advertise in and around transport systems, because people using these systems, may be exposed to such advertisements repeatedly.
4. **Marketing Research:** The assembly of information on visitors to the galleries or programmes marketed by the museum. They can be assessed by Visitor surveys, Non-visitor surveys, Demographic information about the locality of the museum. Information about tourists and tourism policies of the area, Information about the public transport services to the museum and knowledge of any development plans in the area, which may be such as parks, recreational zones and even shopping complex.
5. **Target:** After considering who is and who is not using the museum and considering objectives, decisions can be taken as to which types or groups of people should be the subject special efforts on the marketing front.
6. **Benefits:**
 - a. Museums will adopt a systematic approach to assessing the visitor requirements of different group.
 - b. View and organize its exhibits and programmes from the visitor's point of view
 - c. Identify, serve and satisfy a defined set of needs of a defined set of visitors.
 - d. Continuously develop and improve the exhibits and programmes presented to the visitor.
 - e. Operate on the basis of clearly defined plans and targets.
 - f. Exercise control to ensure that the required results are achieved.

According to Peter Lewis, "Marketing is the management process that confirms the mission of a museum. (Lewis: 1994)

Creative Management

Creative management as a dynamic principle was evolved in the Western world to safeguard the interest of industrial capitalism. It was adopted by the industries to check economic recession and revitalize the overall economic functions of the industries. Creative management, in fact is a method applied for optimum utilization of human as well as economic resources. The result of such a pragmatic and dynamic process was highly beneficial for the Western economies. This method was adopted by many non-commercial ventures as well.

Primarily, the creative management principle was taken as an idea dichotomical to social and heritage institutions. However, museums facing economic recession and budgetary deficit decided to incorporate the methods of creative management for improving museum functioning and making museums more accountable to the society.

Unlike India, in the countries of European Union and USA majority of museums are financed and governed by private organizations. These museums are actually the grand structural creations of philosophical and scientific societies. Therefore, during economic recession their survival becomes difficult.

Government funded museums also face acute financial problems. In general, these museums get mainly budget for salary of staff and general maintenance of the museum premises. Therefore, it becomes difficult to maintain the functional dynamics of a museum. In Canada, the lack of government fund and meagre resources purchased by museums created great problem for some of the best known museums including the world famous Glenbow Museum. (Dempsey: 1991)

In context of creative management, the story of Glenbow museum is often quoted. The Glenbow faced a typical problem that was lack of funds for a corpus of objects and salary for the staff members. There was another important problem noticed in this reputed heritage organization. It was the huge staff structure which was not required for official work in the age of computer. The economic crises also lower down the popularity of this great cultural hub.

Basically Glenbow required a different approach for economic sustainability and better social functioning. For this purpose adopted principles of creative management. It evolved six significant strategies for economic and cultural rejuvenation. Firstly, the Glenbow developed a plan for liaising with other cultural institutions. It helped in sharing ideas with various schools, colleges and institutions having similar objectives. Secondly, it followed the policy of lay off. For this they adopted the seat of voluntary retirement. The success of this policy reduced the financial burden of the Glenbow museum. As part of strategy, Glenbow also adopted the policy for computerization. It helped in maintaining data and monitoring the collection. Use of a compute based cultural informatics lab also made exhibitions and publications effective. It also reduced the financial burden of designing and publishing display and promotional literature. Deaccessioning was another effective measure adopted by the Glenbow museum. In fact, it remarkably increased the influence of the Glenbow museum. As part of the deaccessioning programme, Glenbow provided very good number of art objects and antiquities to small museums which exhibited the objects of the reserve collection of the Glenbow museum. As part of deaccessioning process, the Glenbow charged huge amount of money. Lastly, a cultural cum commercial venture named Glenbow Enterprises was started by the Glenbow museum. Glenbow Enterprises functioned as a cultural industry and produced commercial objects with heritologically significant motifs and symbols. It was a mega success in financial terms. This was how a museum facing economic recession revitalized its activities and ensured its survival in a period of economic depression. (Jameson: 1978)

Another important museum that adopted principles of creative management is the Japanese American National Museum. This museum was a diplomatic nationalist ideological construction. It was primarily to express sympathy towards the American citizen to Japanese origin. The American government realized that the Japanese people had played a very dynamic role, development of science and technology in America and their social influence had also increased remarkably in American Society. However, the Japanese lived in America with fractured emotion and latened sense of anguish against the Americans due to the atrocities their forefathers has faced during second world war, especially due to attack at Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Yamato: 2014). It was also discovered that the Japanese reluctant approach towards the homogenized American culture created a vast rupture between Americans of European origin and the Japanese. Japanese lacked the sense of appreciation for the western art. Consequently, Japanese participation in American museum was very less.

The National Japanese American Museum was founded with a purpose to abridge the widening gap between American and Japanese community culture in the metropolitan cities of America. It is noteworthy that the opening of this museum couldn't bring a desirable change in Japanese American Society. It happened primarily due to bureaucratic control and the nature of governance the museum had. The visitors to this museum were not happy with the permanent galleries and the static nature of the museum display.

Creative management principle applied to this museum electrified its activities and increased the number of participants in museum activities. The changes that occurred in this museum were mainly due to the democratic approach it adopted for the purpose of governing all cultural activities. The experienced and enlightened Japanese citizens were involved in decision making and making plans for research, display and publication. It was a participatory approach which was adopted for the purpose of involvement of community with the museum. The most praise worthy approach was cultural empowerment of women through museum activities. The museum organized several cultural activities which was based on the idea of community participation. In this way, bureaucratic hegemonic control over the museum was minimized and a cultural democracy in terms of museum functioning was established. This example brings to the fore that creative management principle does not necessarily involve economic measures rather it is application of an innovative idea for better functioning and commendable social service.

Though Indian museums couldn't evolve and apparently designed creative management policy, we have a few museums where creative dynamism is reflected by their approach of academic functioning and community participation. Mention can be made of the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sanghralaya, Bhopal, where within the bureaucratic frame; the policy for community curatorship has been adopted. The mode of exhibition developed by this museum mixed explicit that people's creativity and their cultural life have been created and designed with a purpose to exhibit eco-cultural continuum of the community. For example heritage trail, tribal habitats and archaeological and coastal villages have been designed by the respective communities. (Brochure: IGRMS)

In the recent past Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai restored its aesthetically exemplary building with the purpose to make this museum one of the most important tourist destinations in Mumbai. This work was done in collaboration with INTACH New Delhi. Remarkably, all architectonic designs were restored on the principle of aesthetic conservation. The conservation work focused on retaining and highlighting the European architectural features and motifs and its appearance as a grand symbol of Indo-European architecture in Mumbai. As far as display is concerned, the museum has highlighted the glory of conventional industrial art of India. Another attractive thing is the city history of Mumbai that has been shown through paintings, lithographs, paper prints, photographs and maps. This exhibition narrativizes a substantial contribution of those businessmen and politician who made Mumbai the first mega metropolitan city of India.

Therefore, Creative management theory cannot be defined on the basis of a particular agenda and theoretically designed objectives. It means every museum can have its own creative management policy for itself.

Creativity may be seen as a skill that involves something new to the existing phenomenon. In this new epoch, creativity can be seen as an essential element to be integrated into the management of museums.

Managing museum has a complex process. Every museum has an organizational structure which is complex and multi-dimensional in nature. It encompasses various elements, activities and processes oriented towards value addition to museum services. The conventional processes of management require a transformation for making the primary vision of museums successful i.e., dissemination of information to the masses. For this transformation, creativity in terms of management can be incorporated to the museums. Creative management methods integrated in the management of the museum involve exploration and implementation the innovative concepts at various functional levels. It is inevitable for management to adopt creative methods for providing museum visitors a creative perspective of cultural objects.

Creative management is regarded as the most vital aspect of organizations and institutions which pro-actively responds to the challenges of contemporary society. The combination of established principles and concepts of management and the dynamic of creativity results in the unique algorithm for the new age management of the institutions. In simpler terms, creative management is the value where the established management workforce is motivated to explore their creative energy and providing a platform to nurture innovation while embracing change.

Peter Drucker, a renowned management consultant, explains that essential aspects of management are marketing and innovation. In this, creativity forms the core of innovation which can be integrated in the typical management theory through the conceptualization of the innovative ideas.

Marketing is one the most complicated activity of management. Marketing strategies involve creativity induced activities for the recognition of the brand, or in this case, museums; advertising campaigns; association with media etc. Since the museums' primary goal is to educate people, marketing strategies with this vision requires

creative concepts either by individual or a small collaborative group. Implementing such concepts involve making forecasts and adopting new marketing techniques according to the requirement of the change in the functional aspects of the institution management. Adopting new strategies may involve some risks; however, the attempt to address such risks and deal with them is another part of creative process which invokes techniques to manage uncertainty. (Atkinson: 1994)

1.1. Marketing in India

In India, museums are directly or indirectly funded by the State (Government or alike institutions) and mostly escaped with our notoriety with the way of expenditures. is the best option for the museum because the 'State' does not interfere aggressively in the museum's policy and decisions, which are mostly left to the museum authorities, though **State funding** sometimes irrational bureaucratic interferences occur. The main problem with the State funding is the limitation of funds. Frequent fund-crunch due to some unrelated factors hampers the functioning of the museums very badly.

Corporate sector can be a good source of funds for the museums. But why should the corporate sponsor museums? Scope of museums to establish its link with the social infrastructure, i.e. education, is encouraging to the corporate sector to support the museums. A good source of funding can also be form **private endowments and trusts**. However, the problem here is the limitation of resource. In private museums, including trusts, the will of the benefactor is primary, which often lead the museum to become outrageous in their visitor relationship and the management become highly non-transparent.

Museum marketing depends on a broad spectrum of factors, which are *product (models, casts, publications, etc)*, *price (discount to research scolars, students, etc)*, *place (location of the museum)* and *promotion (advertisements)*, abbreviated as 4 Ps. For fund-development museums adopt tangible (products) and intangible (experience of the museum personnel) type of marketing. Some of the methods of generating funds can be included as:

- Admission fees to the museum
- Entry fees for special exhibitions
- Admission charges to creative and hobby centres
- Paid tours
- Museum can charge fees from students for puzzles, quizzes and games organized by the museums
- Public subscription – membership programme for an individual as a way to establish a relationship with the museum
- Museum Shops

The conceptual ideals of museum promotion through marketing have enough scope for further development in India, assuming to gain its importance in the future. Governments are even encouraging privatization, which may make our heritage hostage to private business financiers. Museums seek support even from philanthropic foundations, entrepreneurial organizations, national and international charitable trusts, corporate sponsors, voluntary donations and local businesses.

Public demands and requirements are always changing as they seek better products and services. This is the basic reason that to stay in the market newer and newer models and brands of the same products continuously are put in, with corresponding advertisements and marketing packages. Museums too will have to learn from the market and have to continuously improve and modify their offerings, whether they are exhibits and/or services. In the context of museums more important is to improve their product and weeding out the improper, inefficient, uncommunicative and ineffective components of both museum exhibits and services.

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