

General Observations

The Museum has built a great record of success led by strong visionary leaders and a highly committed supporting staff.

The Museum has developed and pioneered a unique educational system that makes its tours highly differentiated.

- The interaction between the educators and the visitors makes the tours come alive in a manner that is significantly different from tours in other museums.

With the renaissance on the Lower East Side and the increased political debate about the role of immigration in the U.S., the Museum is likely to continue to grow and enjoy success.

However, we do see some issues that we believe should be considered.

- While the Museum receives 80% of its revenues from visitors, it does not have a strong capital base or endowment.
- Communications within the museum, especially between silos is not as effective as it could be.
- There are many excellent and dedicated employees, but some feel frustrated and do not see a long-term career path from their current roles.
- The Board of Directors is focused on fundraising, but is not available as a resource to assist in solving day-to-day problems in the Museum.

Observations - Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is very engaged, especially on fund raising, the capital campaign, and major projects, such as the construction of 103.

- However, contact between the Board and Museum executives is light may not as effective as it could be.
 - Many Directors have limited knowledge of the organization and the people below the top level.
- Further, many in the organization could utilize the knowledge base and guidance of Board members.
- The Board could consider identifying new potential Directors who could fill particular needs.
 - i.e. Someone with merchandising experience who could help product design and selection for the store.

Observations - Communications

Communications is a key organizational issue.

- The pulse survey indicates that information does not flow between departments and that people feel they cannot speak up.
- Interviews have indicated that management meetings are not that effective.
- Board meetings are also scripted, so there is less involvement of Board members.
- Many people are very nervous about their futures and are uncertain as to how they will fit in the direction of the Museum.
- Financial communication is not emphasized. Managers continually do not really know or understand the impact of program decisions on financial results.
- Policies also do not appear to be well communicated.
 - i.e. confusion over the cancellation of a tour because of temperatures.
- Perhaps the most interesting comment about communications came from Annie Polland who said she was less concerned about the transition than what would happen before the transition because of the lack of strong communications.

Recommendations - Board of Directors

We recommend The Board of Directors embrace the best practice of providing counseling to specific executives and teams, especially during the transition period.

- This will increase the involvement of the Board, add skills to the executives, increase the flow of communications, and better align the interests of all the parties in the museum.
- In addition to its existing committees, the Board consider forming committees around the highest potential and risk functions of the Museum. Potential committees could include:
 - Transition Committee
 - Education Committee
 - External Affairs Committee
 - Finance Committee
 - Visitors Service Committee- including Member Services
 - Operations Committee
 - Digital Initiatives Committee
 - Immigration Debate Committee
 - Evening Programs Committee
- Each Board member should serve on one of these Committees and interact with the management of these silos in the organization.

Recommendations - Board of Directors

- To accommodate specific needs, the Board should consider recruiting people with specific skill sets even if those people can not contribute the minimum \$25K per year.
 - For example the Board should recruit someone with social media experience to assist with new digital initiatives, someone with retailing experience to assist with the store, or someone with government experience to assist with grants.
- Having Board members interact and communicate with managers would help to solve many of the communications issues currently impacting the museum and would insure a far smoother transition.