

Museum Executive Questions (Alice Ann Schwab, executive director @ SAM)

Class Padlet: <https://padlet.com/cpalmer77/4m7zxpjgy89idqit>

Questions

Museum logistics

What is the demographic like at SAM?

What decisions were considered when deciding on the hours of operation for SAM?

How often do SAM Attract new patrons? How do you track this?

What consideration goes into the choice of interactive stations (such as the puzzle on the first floor and artist collaboration activity on the second floor) in SAM?

What are the classrooms typically used for? How often are they used?

Pandemic Impact

Did the Pandemic cause any changes to the exhibit? eg. were there interactive/ touch installations that had to be taken down due to the social distancing mandate?

What was your patron activity prior to the pandemic compared to now Post pandemic?

Current Interactivity

Has the museum implemented any new patron regulation due to the pandemic that impacts the patron experience?

What kind of contractions for technology are posed by the museum?

Museum Layout logistics & Accessibility

How are pieces selected for the museum's art exhibits?

Are there any substantial considerations you have to keep in mind when selecting art pieces?

Are there concentrations or limitations to what art pieces you display?

How are the art exhibits themes selected?

What decisions are considered when deciding on placement of selected art pieces, information and gift shops?

Are there any structures or pieces being displayed that are not a part of exhibits (piano on 2nd fl. w/no sign)? If so, what do you typically display and what parameters are you considering when you display it? Why is it displayed, is it just used as aesthetics?

Is the museum wheelchair accessibility? Do you offer any other accessibility features for museum patrons? (bathroom all gender)

Are there any other points of in person communication and or help at the museum other than the front desk? (women on 2nd fl. with desk)?

Survey Questions

Head Count Observation

What do ppl typically view at the museum?

How long do ppl view a piece?

How do ppl interact with viewed pieces (are they touching, note taking, pictures etc.)?

Interview Notes

Museum Executive Alice Ann Schwab
12:34pm

Background from Alice

Alice Ann Schwab Contact Info.

ASchwab@sqart.org

SAM phone # ext. 20006

Basic Info.

SAM located in MidTown Harrisburg

Open 5 days a week hours of operation

SAM is a non collected Art museum

- Every 3 months there are usually changes to the exhibit
- 5 exhibition areas, everything is always changing
- Constantly planning for next exhibition

Admission

HU Students + Faculty have free admission (there is a button/ just say you're a HU student)

SAM is about education, new info, tools for appreciation

Charge minimal fees for programs members can have discounts and free admissions

Admission is not a huge portion but donation is a big factor in SAM budget (foundations, gov.

Funding, Federal funds due to COVID)

Museum Mission

Museum based visual art edu- STEAM academy on Tuesdays (6 classes)

About seeing original art, also receive federal funding

Museums art (K-2nd grade)

Combine tech with tradition, increase 10 fold in bandwidth

Team Questions

1. What kind of constraints for technology are posed by the museum ?

Expanding internet capability with Verizon (communication via phone etc.) to increase bandwidth

Very unstable internet

Not equip with newer technology

Doesn't want tech to distract from overall feel of the room
Internet receivers not visible to visitors
Never seeking to make more things visible

Trying to improve sound acoustic in lobby (used to be a 100 year old bank with very detailed ceiling architecture that the museum is trying to keep intact)

Willing to conform to the transition over to partially technological works and exhibits, only under the condition of preserving focus on existing altering exhibits.

2. How has the pandemic affected SAM?

Revenue & attendance aren't parallel due to provided Gov. Funding

- a. Revenue: Did okay (Overall SAM did okay during pandemic)
- b. Patron attendance: down from 20,000 to just under 3,000
- c. Distress money from government/ foundations

Catastrophic \$\$ for museums

Admissions aren't a huge revenue factor (happy to take this feature away if it invited more patrons, but don't think it's a problem)

No groups in the past 2 years

3. What is the demographic like at SAM?

- Single, anecdotal visits
- Groups are typically school group, dead since the pandemic
- Nursing homes, also absent
- VanGo, a moving exhibit, out more and sees group of people
- Traditional where older ppl came, donors are also older
- 7 years opened
- Trying to direct Trend to families and younger people

(midtown Harrisburg environment affect SAM traffic trends)

4. How are pieces selected for the museum's art exhibits?

Due to art being sent via photo, the museum makes it a rule that in order for art pieces to be exhibited in the main gallery of SAM, the artist must have displayed in a previous gallery before (not a solid rule but it seems to help keep the prestige of the Museum)

Are there any substantial considerations you have to keep in mind when selecting art pieces?

Not NYC, or major metropolitan, ppl who went there though

Don't have the luxury of showing crazy stuff, they strive for education. Ppl like the familiar (familiar artist, but also mix in with new or unknown artists.) They want to take the audience and expand them by showing them new and exciting (the new and cool, entertaining stuff (they exhibit education) Don't show the same type of thing with the 3 year cycle

They've done 2 quilts shows in the past 6 years. Meet the artist as well since ppl come out of the woodwork around this time. Conceptual art in the lobby (bring your own interpretation) HAVE different things on each floor/exhibit

5. Are there concentrations or limitations to what art pieces you display?

Patterns of users (foot traffic)

Frequency:

Member have free entrance, see work first, discounts

Likes:

"People like things that they think they already like", aka famous works / artists

Attract more when exhibits change

3 and half times a year

Third in the burg (third friday in a month)

Sometime member come 3rd in a burg (103 ppl a night)

That's crowded

120 school children (on tuesday)

August (tuesday was the busiest days before closing)

More on weekends

Thanksgiving week before

Around christmas (out of town guest)

Dislikes:

- More often than not they don't express their dislikes (but sometimes expressed in SAM guest book)
- Lights set up (blinking lights) sometimes that patrons don't like
- Participated in COVE (visitor experience) collected data on why visitors are there, what they like, etc.)
- Pennsylvania Impressionist exhibit got a complaint about no inclusion of artist of color

Mldtown has changed, skewing younger than use

Don't ask the age of the visitors (not tasteful)

Marketing

The gallery walk pamphlet

Are there other ways to get ppl coming SAM

Not their strongest suit

Advertise in the burg, don't get newspaper

Social media avenue, 70/30 (30% is self-serving, 70% is getting ppl interested)

- Did facebook promo (discount) no one came
- Have stuff for kids
- A prize for the scavenger hunt
- 140 visitors (almost all new) in that one day for the scavenger hunt event

Also gets a grant for advertising in the Burg

They don't have a marketing person on staff. Social Media is usually done by themself. (not comfortable with giving up ownership of of Mueseum's voice)

Does collateral materials, not sm.

What did we learn:

Demographics	Marketing	Covid impact	Constraints	Logistics
Sporadic attendance Significant drop patron attendance Older people or students. Want to attract families and younger folks	Doesn't have a marketing person Social Media managed personally and marketing is not their strong suit	Drop of number from 20,000 to under 3,000	Bandwidth Acoustics The historical significance of the building	Offer community classroom workshops SAM also has requirements for selecting their displayed art in the gallery.

Find the visitor experience survey (COVE)

Palmer (use their feet, so they might just leave)