

The Role of Museum Marketing Departments during the Exhibition Development Process

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Abstract

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This research study explores the role of museum marketing departments during the exhibition development process. Literature suggests a trend of museum marketing departments becoming increasingly involved in the exhibition development process. For-profit internal marketing strategies provide strategic comparison to the best practices and benefits attributed to the increased involvement of the marketing department during the exhibition development process. The Museum of History & Industry, Pacific Science Center, Henry Art Gallery, and Museum of Flight serve as case studies for the role of museum marketing departments during the exhibition development process. Interviews with museum marketing professionals at each institution shed light on how marketing is involved with the exhibition development process, the best practices of that role, steps to achieve the best practices, and the benefits of achieving the best practices stated. Analysis and discussion reveal increased marketing involvement during the exhibition development process. Emerging trends include; involvement of the marketing department from concept to launch, recognition of benefits to good communication throughout the exhibit development process, and an alignment of the interviewed museums' best practices of marketing departments during the exhibit development process.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“Collaboration, it turns out, is not a gift from the gods but a skill that requires effort and practice” (Reeves, 2010). A substantial body of literature suggests a positive correlation between the effectiveness of an organization and the collaboration of its employees (Dougherty, 2000; Dutton & Walton, 1969; Hoegl, Gemuenden, & Weinkauff, 2004). It is assumed this positive correlation, has led a variety of for-profit sector service industries, which include: investment banking, hospitality, retail, and medical services; to create business strategies and theories that strive for increased collaboration amongst their departments (Ballantyne, 2004; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). These theories and strategies have come to be filed under a strategy known as internal marketing. Mulhem & Shultz (2008) best synthesize this strategy as:

Internal marketing is an emerging discipline that is practiced under many names. Whether called internal marketing, employee engagement or internal communication, the concept is the same: to align, motivate and empower employees, at all functions and levels, to consistently deliver positive customer experiences that are aligned with the organizational goals.

The guiding principle for internal marketing first started in retail banking when Berry (1981) advocated treating employees as internal customers (as cited in Ballantyne, 2004). Several studies concluded that internal marketing creates an environment allowing for increased organizational function both internally and externally (Ballantyne, 2004; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000; Snell and White, 2009).

Recently, museum literature has noted a transformative change in institutional priorities as museum missions have shifted to focus on being more impactful to their community (Hill & Wild, 2008). To address these new priorities, museums have embraced organizational shifts in leadership expertise, from curatorial to marketing, and institutional restructuring, from a vertical

orientation to a horizontal one (Gilmore, Audrey & Rentschler, 2002; Hill & Wild, 2008). The literature suggests that very little focus has been placed on collaboration between marketing and the rest of the museum.

That's not to say marketing departments have been entirely neglected in museum literature. Anecdotal evidence at the Exploratorium, San Francisco, and Science Museum of Minnesota suggest that conflict and a lack of communication resided between marketing departments and exhibit departments and that both museums have refocused the role of marketing departments within the exhibition development process to alleviate the tension and increase collaboration (Eastwood, 2005; McClean, 2005). The Science Museum of Minnesota focused on four areas of marketing and exhibit collaboration; the exhibit concept, hook experiences, integrated design, and the exhibit title. The museum found that tension between the two departments decreased and collaboration increased by focusing on those four areas of collaboration during the exhibit development process. The Exploratorium found that much of their tension and lack of communication came from a difference of goals and objectives between the two departments during the exhibition development process. The museum found that tension decreased and collaboration increased by centering both departments around shared goals at the start of the exhibit development process. However, outside of these articles, little is known about marketing's role during the exhibition development process. Are the Exploratorium and Science Museum of Minnesota anomalies in the field? Are others embracing this same approach to increase collaboration? If yes, why? If not, why not? These are the questions that this study is designed to pursue.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to describe current trends in the role of a museum's marketing department during the exhibition development process. Within this context, three questions guide this research:

1. In what ways are marketing departments in Pacific Northwest museums engaged in the exhibition development process?
 - a. What factors influence the nature of this engagement?
2. What do museums in the Pacific Northwest discuss or frame as organizational best practices for the role of marketing during exhibition development?
3. What do museums in the Pacific Northwest discuss or frame as 'steps to achieve' an organization's best practices for the role of marketing during exhibition development?

Significance

This research provides insight into the current status of the role of museum marketing departments during exhibition development. Results could start a conversation on how and why the museum field might move towards a stronger focus on interdepartmental communication throughout exhibit development. By considering greater collaboration and the steps to overcome the “us and them” attitude, exhibits and marketing staff could begin to utilize a focused collaboration and implement successful integrated product development (Eastwood, 2005). Additionally, this study will illuminate possible best practices of the marketing department during the exhibition development process, from a marketing perspective. It will establish current trends during that process, and areas in need of further research and development. Lastly, it will hopefully inspire others to establish additional studies that look into the role of the

marketing department in museums, and ways for museums to best utilize and engage those employees.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the current literature on the role of marketing departments in museums, specifically as it relates to the exhibit development process. Key areas of literature reviewed include: marketing departments' role during the exhibit development process; the role of marketing and museum collaboration, discussing possible applications of internal marketing strategies in museums; and current concepts, trends and theories of internal marketing practice in both for-profit and non-profit institutions marketing departments', discussing possible applications of internal marketing strategies in museums.

The relationship between Marketing Departments and Exhibit Departments

Literature on marketing in museums suggests there is a lack of communication between the marketing department and exhibits department, during the exhibition development process (Eastwood, 2005; McLean, 2005; Yalowitz, 2005). Several studies have looked at the benefits of and issues in collaboration of departments in events and exhibits. Yalowitz (2005) discusses the increasing need for up-to-the-minute research, and his role as an in-house visitor and marketing researcher. At the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Yalowitz conducted both market research, and visitor studies for the museum, and therefor conducted research for both the exhibits department and the marketing department. His position helped inform the museum in three ways. One, to find out what motivates people to visit and what would get them to come back; two, to inform the exhibition development process; and three, to assess the effectiveness of an exhibition once it is open. While working for two departments brought its complications, Yalowitz believes the benefits and crossover of his work outweigh the complications. Among the benefits were

increased collaboration between the marketing department and exhibits department. His work helped show that marketing and exhibits have similar information needs as it pertains to the museums visitors and that by working together to obtain that information, the museum benefits.

McLean (2005) discusses disconnect between the Exploratorium marketing department's goals and the exhibit department's goals. As stated by McLean, despite the marketing team winning awards for their advertising, visitors were often misled, or the message of the exhibit was misconstrued through their advertising techniques. Through years of tension, the two departments lacked communication and trust between each other. Under the leadership of a new marketing director, the museum shifted their ways of operation. The Exploratorium began to create ads that related to the overall museum mission, rather than trying to sell the most tickets. The end result promoted not only the new exhibit and overall brand; it alleviated the conflicts arising between the two departments. McLean noted that the Exploratorium Marketing Director believed that, the key to alleviating conflicts that arose with advertising at the tail end of the project, was to bring marketing and the exhibits together at the onset of a project. After McLean's article showed that existence of conflict between the two departments, she found that the tension could be alleviated through increased collaboration and shared goals. However, McLean's article only noted the benefit of collaboration as a way to create a better advertising campaign. What other benefits are there? And what are the best practices surrounding this collaboration process?

Eastwood (2005) also noted an existing conflict between the exhibit team and marketing, at the Science Museum of Minnesota. Eastwood's museum tried to defuse the situation with a formal process, consisting of set stages of marketing input during the exhibition development process, but it has been largely ignored. Instead, the two departments collaborate in a more

informal, less scheduled way. Through the process, their collaboration has been built on trust. The departments attempt to collaborate in four major areas: the exhibit concept, hook experiences, integrated design, and the exhibit title. Focusing on these four areas for marketing to collaborate with the exhibits team has lessened the conflict between the two departments. Eastwood's article does not provide reasoning behind a focus on these four areas. Additionally, the article does not go into detail on whether the marketing department is a part of any other aspects of the development process or why the formal process failed for their organizational structure. Eastwood's article does provide ways in which the marketing team can be a part of the exhibit development process, and more specifically defines four areas that the two departments can successfully collaborate during the exhibit development process. Because Exploratorium staff rejected a formal process and Eastwood noted success of the process is based in trust between the two departments, it is unclear how the process might be replicated in the case of staff turnover or increased tension.

The Role(s) of Marketing and Museum Collaboration

In a review of current practices in art marketing to general audiences, the Smithsonian Institution (2001) described three patterns of how marketing (and the director of marketing) fits into a museum's organizational structure. The Smithsonian found that the three patterns were dependent on the span of responsibility assigned to marketing. The three patterns, Audience Centered, Service, and Coordination, were described as follows:

In the Audience Centered pattern, marketing typically reports directly to the museum director and has responsibility for functions that interact with the public such as communications, public affairs, and visitor services. Occasionally, membership also falls under marketing. More rarely, protection services (guards) or website managers report to marketing. In the Audience Centered pattern, marketing has become an audience advocate. This pattern

tends to make the museum “outside-in” since potential visitors are more important in the selection, design and promotion of exhibits.

In the Service pattern, marketing is typically a lower level function frequently reporting to communications, public affairs, or development. Marketing plays a support role, rather than a lead role, in handling promotion of exhibitions and research in the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. This pattern tends to make the museum “in-outside” since internal museum constituencies are more important in the selection, design and promotion of exhibits.

In the Coordination pattern, marketing reports to another function, such as communications. It is differentiated from the Service pattern because marketing also provides staff resources to an upper-level task force that meets to discuss (and coordinate) marketing and visitor service across the museum. The Metropolitan Museum of Art represents this pattern (p.5).

The Smithsonian found that the Audience Centered pattern is the newest of these three patterns. Additionally, the Smithsonian’s research into art marketing departments found that marketing enters the exhibit planning process at an early stage when marketing is a senior level department encompassing a broad range of the visitor experience, as seen in the Audience Centered pattern, and that marketing enters the exhibit planning process at a later stage under the coordination and service patterns. The Smithsonian found that the Audience Centered pattern “underlies the operating philosophies of major themed attractions such as Disney World. This approach is often found in for-profit retail operations where it is believed to enhance profitability through customer loyalty” (p.8). However, their research could not outline the major benefits to this pattern partly because few art museums have adopted the philosophy. It is also unknown if this pattern is consistent through all museum types, as the Smithsonian (2001) only looked at art museums. It is also unclear what the best practices of this philosophy are; and whether good communication between departments factors into its success.

In Audrey Gilmore's (2003) book, *Services Marketing and Management*, Gilmore believes "interdepartmental cooperation is a prerequisite of a museum being able to deliver an excellent service in terms of collections availability, accessibility and communications (pg. 153)." She believes that informal and formal communication should occur between all levels of staff. Her book noted that all staff members' views should be taken into account and senior management should respond to them. Her book also discusses the philosophy of internal marketing in service organizations, such as museums. She discussed internal marketing as an idea by which employees represent an internal market that need to be educated and informed about the organization's mission, the benefits of its products and services and the expectations of its customers. Gilmore's book outlined the importance of inter-departmental communication within museums, and described internal marketing as a possible way to formally encourage networking among employees. She believed internal networking, or communication, should be encouraged by managers to, "develop, progress and support all aspects of service activity and responsibility in relation to internal service providers, customers, and potential customers, and industry and business networks (pg. 150)." Still little is known on the level of communication between marketing departments and exhibit departments during the exhibition development process. Also, there is no literature discussing the degree to which internal marketing practices have been adopted by the museum field.

Two cases were found that discuss concepts of multi-departmental collaboration in museums. Ana (2005) described a case within the Reuben H Fleet Science Center, San Diego, CA, where 4-6 weeks before the launch of a film, the marketing department invited the entire staff to help create possible taglines for promotion. It's a warm, welcoming environment with the basic rules "say it loud, say it proud! No negativity! Think big" (pg. 11). Zehner (2005) describes

an important museum practice at Science Central, Fort Wayne, IN, in which daily morning meetings between all departments helps facilitate a team commitment needed to achieve the overall museum mission and goals.

According to Pope Isely & Asamoah-Tutu (2009), non-profit organizations currently struggle with a lack of understanding of the true functions of marketing, difficulties in branding, and an inability to reach out to all of their target markets. In their survey, one hundred percent of all subjects interviewed said marketing was important but tied marketing to fundraising or fund development, and not to communications with clients or volunteers. Additionally, the study showed a lack of brand recognition and target marketing of volunteers. They suggested a first step for non-profit organization, to gain a broader understanding of marketing, and its importance to all aspects of management.

On the whole, the literature on marketing practices within museums says little about the role that the marketing department can play within the exhibition development process. While some literature exists, it is limited to the context of the museum it covers, and it is unclear if these examples are anomalies in the field, or if they represent the current trend and 'best practices' of museum marketing during the exhibition development process.

Gilmore & Rentschler (2002) noted the need for an effective market-oriented museum to possess good internal communication, interdepartmental cooperation, staff that are willing and able to do the job and two-way communication with visitors. Literature discussing for-profit internal marketing strategies provides strategic comparison to the best practices and benefits attributed to creating greater interdepartmental cooperation with the goal of a better customer experience.

Internal Marketing Concept

The literature shows a tension and a lack of communication between the exhibits department and marketing department in museums and suggests various solutions for specific cases. However, there are few studies that look into the best practices to alleviating these problems and collaborating within the museum setting. One approach that has potential relevance for museums, and marketing departments in particular, is the internal marketing approach. The guiding principle for internal marketing first started in retail banking when Berry (1981) advocated treating employees as internal customers (as cited in Ballantyne, 2004). The internal marketing concept literature has grown tremendously since then, but for the purposes of this chapter a brief overview of the guiding principles will be covered. “Internal marketing is an emerging discipline that is practiced under many names. Whether called internal marketing, employee engagement or internal communication, the concept is the same: to align, motivate and empower employees, at all functions and levels, and to consistently deliver positive customer experiences that are aligned with the organizational goals” (Mulhem & Schultz, 2008).

According to Rafiq and Ahmed (2000), there have been three major internal marketing phases. The first phase focused on the underlying principles of employee motivation and satisfaction, and specifically shifting the focus to the employee rather than the customer, as the key to maintaining consistent high quality service. Essentially, this stage of internal marketing believed that a higher quality of service and communication would come about by motivating and satisfying the needs of your employees. The focus began to look at an employee as a customer, however, businesses began realizing employees may not want what you are marketing to them, and secondly the employees may not have a choice.

Next came the customer orientation phase, which aimed to motivate employees toward a customer-oriented mindset. This second major step in the development of internal marketing involved training employees to be responsive to customers' needs. During this phase there was still a lack of communication among employees, but the focus allowed organizations to shift employees to a common goal of better customer service.

Today, current internal marketing concepts engage in strategy implementation and change management, in other words, ways of helping an organization shift to a new way of conducting their work, that is more focused on engaging their employees (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). For example, at Wrigley, the GOLD (Goals, Outcomes, Learning, Development) program provides employees an opportunity to "be active participants in the appraisal of their performance against corporate goals." Employees become more engaged when they understood their value in reaching business goals. Wrigley also created the "Breakthrough" program, which enables employees to communicate goals and ideas to management within the safety of the program. At Cisco ideas are sought from all employees to help make organizational change, big and small (Mulhelm & Schultz, 2008). Employee engagement at these companies increases collaboration and communication by eliminating the typical management hierarchy. The latest phase decreased conflict between departments, like we see between museum marketing departments and exhibit departments, by creating a environment of open communication through an integrated organization structure. For example, at Kellogg, biweekly and bimonthly cross-functional team (teams consisting of employees with various job functions) meetings are held to align brand priorities in a team environment across the organization, employees at all levels (front-line to executive) are included (Mulhelm & Schultz, 2008).

Joseph (1996) noted the application of several departments to motivate, mobilize, co-opt, and manage employees to continuously improve service quality. Rafiq & Ahmed (2000) and Ballantyne (2004) saw a needed emphasis on employee collaboration and increased communication to better serve customers. They believed the front-line employees, or those interacting with visitors/customers needed a way to more easily communicate with management on their opinions towards needed changes within the organization, to create a better service. They believed internal marketing was a process to create a more circular (as opposed to hierarchical) organizational knowledge base that challenged internal activities that need to be changed to better serve customers. This school of thought parallels the employee motivation and satisfaction phase, but with valued participation of all employees in the creation, circulation, and diffusion of new knowledge about the customers' needs. Today internal marketing is seen as a way to reduce isolation between departments, reduce overall internal friction between employees, and overcome resistance of change seen in a more bureaucratic system (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000).

Application of Internal Marketing to Service Industries

Mulhem and Shultz (2008) analyzed the best practices of internal marketing management in over 40 companies to create a list of 6 characteristics of highly effective internal marketing programs. The characteristics included: senior management participation, or visible and direct support from executive leaders; a horizontal organizational structure, which provides open communications with all employees to maximize involvement and commitment; a strategic internal marketing approach similar to that of reaching out to acquire and retain customers; a human resources partnership to train, communicate and foster feedback from employees; a focus on employee engagement through work appreciation and well-being initiatives; and internal

brand communication that informs and engages employees to consistently support brand initiatives.

In addition to these characteristics, the study found five values that were in each company's culture one way or another. These values included: people matter; internal marketing drives performance; anyone can make a difference; employee loyalty is crucial; and culture can be a competitive advantage. The study allowed future and current Internal Marketing programs to measure their effectiveness and support further investment of resources.

In 2004, Ballantyne proposed a relationship-mediated strategy for the purpose of an organization gaining new information about their customers and their organization's internal operations. His strategy involves learning phases (what do we know) and innovative action phases (how can we improve it) that challenge organizational knowledge and change it in ways that positively impact performance on external marketing. Ballantyne eliminates the top to bottom management hierarchy, and suggests teams that work on service redesign projects, or ways to increase the way the organization can efficiently and effectively serve their customers. These teams would consist of members from several departments and managerial levels. Providing an environment with equal authority and input among all employees, in practice it would promote strong relationships and strengthen department collaboration. Essentially, Ballantyne calls for the removal of top to bottom decision making, to one that is more circular in nature, with 'team' decisions and changes. Rafiq and Ahmed (2000) and Snell and White (2009) proposed similar strategies but argued a need for leadership capabilities among managers, specifically the manager's ability to communicate strategy to all employees. They stated that it would "increase satisfaction and inter-functional co-ordination," (pg. 458) as well as promote consistency to an overall strategy. In agreement, Snell and White (2009) proposed that for

internal marketing to be effective, an organization must first be market-oriented, or effective in getting all business functions working together to provide customer value.

A successful internal marketing program excels at recruiting the right employees for the job, training those employees, motivating those employees to complete their duties, communicating with employees so that employees understand their responsibilities and the responsibilities of others, and co-opting employees by keeping open and two-way communication (Joseph, 1996). Snell and White (2009) give several implications for management. Management must be able to provide an organizational definition on what is perceived to be internal marketing, why it is important to achieving the organizations goals, and who should be involved implementing it. They also recognized the complex nature of internal marketing management. Current strategies reside under the assumption that management would adopt more generalist skills and competencies. Herein lay the difficulties of internal marketing, especially in the often specialized skills of management in a museum setting.

Summary

The literature has shown a tremendous body of work detailing the concepts of internal marketing. While the current overall concept is generally agreed upon to enhance employee engagement and collaboration in an effort to enhance external marketing factors, the application in a museum setting of such a process is under-researched. None the less the benefits of increased inter-departmental relationships are of notable value.

Independent museums have begun to implement ideas for collaboration between departments. Literature suggests an overall success in recent attempts, yet further research is needed to understand employees overall knowledge of the benefits of marketing concepts and managements understanding of marketing strategies. Additionally, these examples show an

implementation of co-operation on a project by project basis, rather than a restructuring of the organizational behavior.

Literature has shown the importance and value of interdepartmental collaboration within nonprofits. More specifically, literature shows that approaches in internal marketing are a relevant and effective approach to increase collaboration. For the most part, museums tend to work in isolated ways, with little collaboration. Some literature also suggests that tension between the marketing department and exhibits department exist. More research is needed to understand that tension, and ways it can productively be resolved. Further research exploring the factors that contribute to a marketing departments' role is needed. There is also no literature detailing best practices for museum marketing departments during the exhibition development process. Finally, in conjunction with the previous statement, a well-defined 'steps to achieve' the best practices is needed.

Chapter Three: Methods

The goal of this study was to describe how Pacific Northwest Museum marketing professionals describe the role of their department during the exhibition development process, the best practices used by marketing professionals during that process, and the steps taken to achieve those best practices. After identifying a small, focused sample of participants, this study used a qualitative approach to describe marketing's role during the exhibit development process through semi-structured interviews.

3.1. Sampling

The study targeted currently employed museum marketing professionals holding a leadership position within their department, and working in a museum in the Pacific Northwest with 2 or more full-time marketing professionals on staff. Specifically, professionals with titles such as director and manager were targeted. Managers and directors have decision making abilities and are present at or aware of all marketing meetings within the museum. Their knowledge, expertise, experience in marketing was deemed essential for accurate descriptions of the role of the marketing department during the exhibit development process. In addition, the study's selection criteria filtered to have a diversity of type of museum. Preference was given to museums located close to Seattle and their ability to participate in an interview in early April, 2014.

To recruit participants, emails were sent to 10 museum marketing professionals in the Pacific Northwest. The email message briefly described the study, the data collection process via interview and audio recording, and measures to protect confidentiality. The recruitment process yielded 4 participants from 4 institutions in the Pacific Northwest.

3.2. Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the 4 participants between March 23 and April 18, 2014 (see Appendix A for the interview guide). Interviews were conducted at participants' museum, in an area of their choosing. Part 1 of the interview covered general background information including: describing their current role, positions held at the museum, and length of employment. Part 2 covered the overall level of communication between the marketing department and the exhibits department. Part 3 covered the exhibit development process as it relates to the marketing department's role. The purpose of this section was to describe the typical exhibit development process as it relates to marketing for each participant's museum. The final interview section included the topic of best practices. Questions asked encompassed opinions on best practices, steps to achieve those best practices, and the internal and external benefits when achieving those best practices.

Interviews lasted between 15 minutes and 35 minutes in length, and were recorded using a digital audio device. All 4 interviews were transcribed to facilitate line-by-line review and analysis.

3.3. Data Analysis

The qualitative data were entered into Excel. Excel was used to identify and track emergent patterns and themes among interview responses. This process of coding interview transcripts was twofold: first, a list of a priori codes was developed in order to track the role of marketing in each museum and their perceived best practices. Each interview transcript was coded using this list, with unusual or exceptional statements flagged for later categorization. During this process, a second set of codes emerged from the participants' responses. These

emergent themes expanded the existing codes with new subcategories and added new themes to be addressed with further analysis.

As an example of this content analysis process described by Patton (2002), research question one was answered by first assessing answers from questions 6 through 11 of the interview guide as they stood for each museum. Once themes from each museum were thoroughly understood, the responses were compared to each other to provide a sense of theme among the 4 case studies. The 4 case studies were then compared to themes discussed in chapter 2, the literature review.

3.4. Participants

To obtain background information on the participants interviewed, a series of questions were asked about their experience and role within the department.

Museum of History & Industry

The staff member interviewed holds the title of Marketing and Communications Director. She has worked at the Museum of History & Industry for five years total, with the first two years being as a part-time consultant. Within her department, there are a total of five full-time employees. Her role within the museum consists of overseeing all marketing and communications functions. For the Museum of History & Industry, this includes but is not limited to, advertising, earned media, website functions, social media, graphic design, brand assets, and membership.

Pacific Science Center

The staff member interviewed holds the title of Vice President of Marketing and Communications. In total, the staff member has worked for the Pacific Science Center for eight years. She was hired as the Brand and Publications Manager, and became the Director of Marketing in 2010. In 2013 she was promoted to her current position. Within her department, there are a total of twenty full-time employees and six part-time employees. Her role within the museum consists of overseeing the marketing and communications division. For the Pacific Science Center, this includes but is not limited to public relations, all marketing and promotions, the website, graphic design, events, and sales.

Henry Art Gallery

The staff member interviewed holds the title of Associate Director of Marketing Communications and Public Relations. She has worked at the Henry Art Gallery for one and a half years. Within her department, there are a total of 2 full-time employees and 1 temporary part-time employee. Her role within the museum consists of overseeing all communications functions within the museum. For the Henry Art Gallery, this includes but is not limited to all communications functions for events, the website, branding, media relations, newsletter, and e-newsletter.

Museum of Flight

The staff member interviewed holds the title of Director of Marketing and Public Relations. He has worked at the Museum of Flight for four and a half years. Within his department, there are a total of 7 full-time employees. His role within the museum consists of overseeing all marketing and public relations functions within the museum. For the Museum of

Flight, this includes but is not limited to overseeing graphic design, public relations, the website, social media, and copy writing.

3.5. Limitations

This study investigates the relational phenomena that a museum's marketing department plays during the exhibition development process. It should be understood that the limitations to the analysis of this phenomena, include opinions from only the marketing department and not from other departments, including the exhibits department. Additionally, the data analyzed was collected from one individual, and the opinions collected may not represent the opinions of all staff at those museums interviewed.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis

4.1. In what ways are marketing departments in Pacific Northwest museums engaged in the exhibit development process?

How do the Museum of History & Industry, Museum of Flight, Pacific Science Center and Henry Art Gallery conceptualize marketing's role within their museum's exhibition development process? In what ways are they involved? In what ways are they not involved? Who do they interact with? How do they interact? When do they interact? Interviews with museum marketing professionals at these museums suggest different ways in which each museum approaches engagement with the exhibition development process. In addition, interviews suggest different levels of engagement with the exhibit development process, and more specifically with the exhibits/curatorial team.

Museum of History & Industry

At the Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI), marketing's engagement with the exhibition development process has been in the course of transition from minimal engagement, to one that is more collaborative with all members involved. The interviewed staff member noted:

We are trying to have a much more coordinated effort than we had in the past [...] in the past, marketing would be brought into the process after the exhibits were selected. Basically, we were brought in at the tail end of the process. We would know the date it was to open and we would market it. We had a limited advertising budget to do so, so we would focus on earned media.

With their newest exhibit opening in June, 2014, the Museum of History & Industry's marketing department is trying a new way to engage with the exhibit development process and staff outside of their department during the process. In the development process of their newest

exhibit, MOHAI created an exhibit committee. The exhibit committee consists of employees from each department including; marketing, education, events, exhibits, public programs, development, and executive. The exhibit committee meets twice a month until exhibit opening, to discuss the ongoing process. The staff member noted, “[with the new committee] we really had a voice in helping to create what the experience was going to look like. We had a lot more lead time to build our marketing plan and put together media buys.” The staff member spoke positively about the committee and added that MOHAI began discussing the possibility of the exhibit committee continuing to meet twice a month after opening, to build out an exhibits schedule for the next five years.

A significant change in the involvement of marketing in the exhibit development process was noted in MOHAI’s move to their new location. “Marketing was not involved in selecting exhibit topics [...] and we only met with them [exhibits team] once a month.” Following their move to the new location, MOHAI’s marketing team became a part of the exhibit topic discussion and meets as part of the exhibit committee, which has allowed them to be brought into the process earlier. In addition, there is a once a month meeting with all of the staff, and an extended marketing meeting, that the exhibit team lead attends. It was noted that marketing is not a part of creating the content in the exhibit, nor are they part of meetings that the exhibits team holds with other departments during the exhibit development process.

During the exhibit development process, the marketing department involves other departments in their work. More specifically, during the creation of collateral for the exhibit, MOHAI’s marketing team seeks feedback from other departments, primarily the exhibits department. The staff member said, “We need to get feedback from them because we need to

make sure the information we are sending out is accurate [...] they [other departments] also help with key messaging and identifying key spokespeople.”

The interviewee was asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being not at all and 5 being completely, how central to the exhibition development process she thought marketing was. The MOHAI staff member rated it a 3, based on the way they currently function. The staff member went on to say, “I would like to see the needle move closer to 5, but I think right now, because we are still learning, and the exhibits team is a little short staffed, [it is a 3].” The response suggests that the exhibits small staff limits their availability. The staff member also suggests that they are still learning how to fully utilize their new exhibit development process. Both of these factors lend to a decrease, from the ideal number.

Responses from the MOHAI staff member suggest that the marketing department’s role during the exhibit development process has transitioned from one that was siloed until the end of the process, to one that involves collaboration between marketing staff and the exhibits team from the beginning of the process through exhibit opening. Collaboration among the departments includes; offering and requesting feedback throughout the development process, meeting to discuss progress and share ideas, and emailing to stay up to date on progress and maintain communication.

Pacific Science Center

At the Pacific Science Center, marketing’s involvement in the exhibit development process begins during the early concept phases, and continues throughout the entirety of the development process. The Pacific Science Center does not typically create exhibits; most of their

exhibits are traveling exhibits created by other museums. However, there is still a development process associated with traveling exhibits and special projects.

The most recent exhibit the Pacific Science Center developed was, Professor Wellbody's Academy of Health & Wellness, which was completed in 2012. In the early phases of the exhibit development process, marketing met with the development team to help with messaging to donors during the initial fundraising stage. As exhibit development progressed, marketing staff attended meetings regularly. Using the Wellbody Academy as an example, the staff member said:

The exhibit manager would have meetings either once a month or once a quarter to brief this core group [department heads] about the progress, budget, things we learned, and things that changed. I would also attend meetings where we would update funders who might ask questions about how we might leverage certain aspects of the exhibit. Any 'update' meetings, I was a part of.

Outside of overall awareness of project progress, the Pacific Science Center's marketing team stays relatively uninvolved in content creation until the ideas are flushed out and brought to them. Additionally, the marketing department is not a part of the content decision making process. The staff member thinks that is because they [the marketing department] are not science educators. She stated:

What we do best is, after the ideas are flushed out and brought to us, we react to them as somebody on the outside, to help give feedback and refine the content [...] a lot of the exhibit development process deals with curriculum development, exhibit fabricators, and things like that, that are more nitty gritty content, that we are not a part of.

The Pacific Science Center's marketing team believes that their marketing materials are stronger if they can learn as much as they can about the exhibit. The interviewed staff member attends all of the exhibit update meetings to look for outreach opportunities, understand who the

audiences are, and explore how they can maximize the investment of funders and the Pacific Science Center.

During the exhibit development process the marketing team also receives supportive feedback. While creating collateral for the Wellbody Academy, the marketing team included the exhibit team lead, to ensure that the messaging was realistic to the experience of the exhibit. The marketing team also works closely with the development team during this process. The staff member noted:

They develop their fundraising messages much earlier than we develop the marketing messages. So we have to work together, because once we start doing a more public focus of the exhibit, it becomes important that both departments are describing the exhibit the same way and with the same intent.

When rating how central marketing was within the exhibit development process, the marketing staff member interviewed for this study offered a rating of 2 on a 5-point scale where 1 was not at all and 5 was completely. The staff member elaborated, “The meat of the work is done by the people who have the minds for it. Where we become important is for the strategic messaging and the timing.” She went on to add, “In terms of successful launch of the exhibit I would rate us much higher, like a 4 or a 5.” The staff member best explained it by saying:

It becomes an issue of understanding the audience. The exhibit team might say, here is the outline of the exhibit, here is the content and here is the age it will appeal to. They may structure it that way, but it doesn’t mean that the audience will see the content is for them, and that is where we can help.

The interview with the Pacific Science Center staff member suggests that their marketing department is heavily involved in anything surrounding the strategic messaging of the exhibit. The marketing department relationship with the exhibit’s team is more of a reactionary role, with

collaboration revolving around possible visitor reactions and visitor experience of the exhibit. The marketing department's collaboration with the development department is more about consistency in message delivery and message intent. The Pacific Science Center staff member noted the importance of maintaining communication with the exhibits team throughout the process despite not being involved in decision making during most of the content creation process.

Henry Art Gallery

At the Henry Art Gallery, marketing's involvement is initiated towards the end of the exhibition development process. The staff member interviewed noted the marketing department's current shift to be involved in the process earlier and sustaining that involvement throughout the process. A typical Henry Art Gallery exhibition is planned two years in advance, however the museum does not typically start discussing how marketing will fit in until much later in the process. Using the upcoming Ann Hamilton exhibition as an example, the staff member noted that they started developing how marketing will fit into that exhibition approximately 6 months prior to opening; by that point approximately 75% of the exhibition development process is completed. "We are not asked to be a part of the process at all," the staff member noted. In general, the marketing department is let known what exhibits are happening and then the marketing department will begin to think about things that they can do.

The marketing staff at the Henry Art Gallery attend the monthly art and education meeting, that include the curatorial department, education, and programs to stay up to date on everything going on within the museum. The meetings allow each department to update co-workers on their current work and upcoming events. The staff member noted that these meetings are often where she obtains information on the upcoming exhibitions. During the process, the

marketing team seeks feedback and assistance from the curatorial team and public programs staff. The staff member stated she commonly asks:

If they have any relevant connections [with an external organization/people], or if there is something interesting in the exhibition that I might not know about, because I don't have an art history background [...] that if I were told about I might be able to capitalize on.

The Henry Art Gallery marketing employee believed that the involvement of the marketing team during the exhibit development process is minimal because, “[...] it is the way it has always been done.” The staff member also stated, “I also believe [...] communications is considered a soft profession, and isn't brought in at the strategic level [...] that communicators are thought of as responders rather than strategic thinkers.” The staff member noted that it is something that she would like to change at the Henry Art Gallery and for communicators in general.

When rating how central to the exhibit development process marketing is, the staff member offered a rating of 3 on a 5-point scale where 1 was not at all and 5 was completely. The employee could not strongly say that marketing was important to every facet of the development process, but she stressed the importance of knowing and understanding what is going on. Being kept in the loop would enable the marketing team to, “think creatively about how to promote the exhibitions in different ways in the community,” the staff member said.

Responses from the Henry Art Gallery staff member suggest that the marketing department's role during the exhibit development process is limited. Responses also reflect a desire, on the part of the staff member, to increase marketing's involvement. Current involvement is purely promotional and often occurs towards the end of the exhibition development process.

Museum of Flight

At the Museum of Flight, marketing begins their involvement at the outset of an exhibit's development. Their involvement is sustained at differing levels throughout the process, with a majority of their workload weighted towards the tail end of the development process.

During a typical exhibition development process the marketing team's role revolves around naming the exhibit, creating the logo, marketing the exhibit to the general public and managing museum merchandise. Using the Space Shuttle Trainer exhibit as an example, the staff member noted that they created TV commercials, a series of billboards, and bus boards beginning 6 months before the launch. The staff member further explained, "With commercials, I like to have a 6 month lead, but print materials, we can usually turn out in a couple of weeks.

Prior to that point, the staff member reportedly attended a bi-weekly meeting with the other senior staff members. The staff member noted,

We get together and go around so we know what everyone is doing, and if we can pitch in with any ideas or help, that is great. There is a real sense of camaraderie around here [...] if our Director of Exhibits has something going on, he will come over and we will chat about it, and vice versa, a lot of it is informal.

The staff member believes a majority of marketing's role leading up to the exhibit launch, is to focus on public relations. "From our perspective, a lot of what we are doing prior to the exhibit is imagining all the problems that might arise after opening." The museum's original plan was to obtain one of NASA's space shuttles. After the original plans fell through, the Museum of Flight was able to come out the same day and let everyone know that they got the space shuttle trainer. "We think we got the better end of the deal, because instead of standing behind the rope, people were going to be able to board it [space shuttle trainer]." The staff

member believed that their ability to tell the story about what the exhibit was going to be like, helped with the success of what was at first, disappointing news.

When rating how central to the exhibit development process marketing is, the staff member rated it a 3.5 on a 5-point scale where 1 was not at all and 5 was completely central. “They [exhibits team] have a good team, that is terrific at putting together an exhibit and I don’t want to get in their way.” However, the staff member noted that he is aware of every step in the exhibit development process, in case there is anything the marketing team could use for community outreach. In one example he provided, the staff member talked about how the space shuttle trainer was flown to the museum using NASA’s Super Guppy aircraft, and everyone was invited to watch them unload it.

The interview with the Museum of Flight staff member suggests that their marketing department plays an attentive role during the exhibit development process. The staff member maintains current information on exhibit progress, by attending biweekly meetings with department heads and frequent informal conversations with the exhibits team lead. The interview also suggests that the marketing department primarily plays a role of public relations through much of the exhibit development process; being aware of any possible problems from an external perspective, and taking advantage of any possible public outreach opportunities. The interview also showed that the marketing department uses any information about the exhibit to enhance their marketing materials.

4.2. What factors influence the nature of the marketing department's engagement in the exhibition development process?

What factors influence the ways in which marketing engages with the exhibit development process at MOHAI, PSC, the Henry, and the Museum of Flight? What is the level of communication between the marketing department and exhibits department? Is an outside agency a part of the process? The interviews suggest that communication is the dominate factor influencing the nature of marketing's engagement with the exhibition development process. The interviews also suggest a correlation between level of communication and the amount that the marketing department helps in the decision making of the exhibit development process. However, other underlying themes unique to each museum's marketing department and overall museum operations contribute to this relationship.

Museum of History & Industry

As mentioned previously, the museum's marketing department is currently transitioning to be more involved in the exhibit development process. As evident in the information above, MOHAI's marketing department seeks to create a formal and coordinated relationship with the exhibits team during this process. As part of creating a more coordinated effort, the marketing team hopes that the exhibit team will begin to see the value in the marketing team's contribution to the exhibit development process, and become a part of the decision making process. However, the interview data suggests that this does not come without its obstacles.

After MOHAI's move in December 2012, the museum staff was housed in two separate buildings on opposite sides of the city of Seattle. The museum, located on the north side in South Lake Union, is where the exhibit team works. The resource center, located approximately 7 miles south, in the Georgetown neighborhood, which houses the collections, is where the marketing

team works. When asked about the level of communication between the two departments, the staff member said, “Right now communication is pretty good, but it could be better.” When speaking about the museum post-move, the staff member stated, “I would say that communications overall have been somewhat siloed, and that is one of our challenges this year, is to overcome working independently.” The staff member’s responses suggest a need for formalized communication between the two departments, due to the lack of proximity or convenience.

In addition, MOHAI typically involves an outside advertising agency during the exhibit development process. The advertising agency assists in the exhibit messaging and putting together strategic media buys. The advertising agency is brought in after the department has budgeted for it, and after they have all of the ‘dates’ [i.e. grand opening, media day, members preview] determined.

Responses from the MOHAI staff member suggest that staff location and additional collaboration with the advertising agency factor into the museum’s transition to be more involved in the exhibit development process. The staff member believes a more formal and coordinated relationship with the exhibits team will alleviate any possible obstacles to creating good collaboration between the two departments. The staff member noted that it is one of their goals for 2014. She said, “I would say that communications overall have been somewhat siloed and that is one of our challenges this year is to overcome working independently, and come together every couple of weeks.”

Pacific Science Center

The interview with the Pacific Science Center staff member indicated that sustained communication is the dominant factor in the success of marketing's involvement throughout the exhibit development process. When talking about the level of communication between the marketing department and the exhibit department, the staff member noted that communication is:

Fantastic, we work very closely with the exhibits team. We are very involved with the process of which exhibit we are going to rent, as well as communication around exhibits we are going to build. Also, we have a great relationship [with the exhibits team] around our communication plan for an exhibit.

To maintain good communication between the two departments, the staff member interviewed attends all update meetings, and utilizes intra-web communication software provided by the museum.

The Pacific Science Center typically relies on a media buyer to purchase their advertising. Most often, all other marketing operations are conducted in-house. If the Pacific Science Center were to use an advertising agency, they would bring them in about a year out from exhibit launch, and a typical exhibit development process for the Pacific Science Center can take 6-8 years.

The Pacific Science Center marketing team is involved from the early concept of the development process. All of the museum's employees work in the same building. Additionally, the marketing department is often asked for their input throughout the process and given input on their communication materials. The staff member also noted that she helps decide the overall budget, and timing for the exhibit launch. She said, "When we have a three month window of when the exhibit is going to be complete, they turn to us and ask when in that period it makes the most sense to launch the exhibit." The constant feedback and input is one possible factor

motivating the marketing department to sustain communication for the duration of the exhibit development process.

Henry Art Gallery

The interview with the Henry Art Gallery staff member indicated that the marketing department's level of communication is minimal throughout the exhibit development process. In addition, interview data suggests that the level of decision making is also minimal during this process. In regards to the level of communication the staff member noted:

...I would say, adequate. It's not as strong as I would like it to be, and we need to put some protocols in place to figure out the best way to communicate information back and forth. Our department doesn't always know what is going on...

The marketing department at the Henry Art Gallery strives to be at the table during the early phases of the exhibit development process. Outside of deciding how to market the exhibit, the marketing department is not a part of any decisions about the exhibit.

All employees at the Henry Art Gallery are located in the same building making it convenient for the all staff to be included. Additionally, all components of marketing the exhibit are completed in-house.

The interview suggests that adequate communication between the two departments, and minimal decision-making by the marketing department contribute to the low level of involvement of the marketing department during the exhibit development process.

Museum of Flight

The interview with the Museum of Flight staff member indicated that the marketing department's level of communication is good with the exhibits team during the exhibit development process. The staff member suggested that informal collaboration contributes to the marketing department's ability to offer suggestions, and receive suggestions throughout the decision making process of the exhibit development process. One such suggestion was exemplified in the interview:

We have had four straight years of record attendance, but this year we have had a little bit of a lag in attendance, in comparison to the previous year. So, I got together with our exhibits director, and we decided to try and drive more business to the door. But to do that, a museum has to have something to talk about, and because we have a limited budget, we rely on earned media [...] so we went back to the collections to dig out valuable collections that we don't normally show, simply because they are too valuable or too fragile. We are creating this exhibit which will consist of the original papers of the Wright brothers, and hope to drum up some earned media during this time.

In this case, the marketing staff member was able to collaborate with the exhibit director to create an exhibit idea that works towards the museum's strategic goals.

All employees at the Museum of Flight are located in the same building making it convenient for the all staff to meet and discuss the exhibit development process informally. Additionally, all components of marketing the exhibit are completed in-house to reduce overall budget of the exhibit. If the Museum of Flight was going to use an agency to assist in marketing the exhibit, they would typically bring them in 6-8 months prior to launch, and involve them in every aspect of marketing.

Factors surrounding the marketing department's involvement throughout the entirety of the exhibit development process include their ability to offer suggestions on decisions being

made by exhibits, as well as receive suggestions on marketing strategy. The staff member attributes the good relationship between the two departments to an informal environment among all staff members that allows for open conversation.

4.4. Describing Best Practices during the Exhibition Development Process

What do museums in the Pacific Northwest discuss or frame as organizational best practices for the role of marketing during the exhibition development process? What benefits do they foresee internally? Externally? How do they discuss or frame ‘steps to achieve’ the best practices stated? Interviews with museum marketing professionals at these museums suggest similar ways in which each museum describes their organization’s best practices and steps to achieve those best practices during the exhibition development process. In addition, interviews suggest similar foreseeable benefits within their organization when best practices are achieved.

Museum of History & Industry

The interview suggests that the marketing team has a lot to offer to the exhibition development process and that by bringing them into the conversation, the museum will benefit. When speaking about best practices, the staff member stated, “We have a feel for what the public wants and are able to help shape ideas that are topical.” The marketing department seeks to continue their survey work to gain customer feedback about the museum exhibits.

The staff member also noted that they will work towards getting the information from exhibits as soon as possible. Ideally, the staff member would like to begin to get information out about the exhibit to possible partners and sponsors a year in advance. She explained that this would possibly help gain more sponsors and partners, and allow them to create a more accurate

annual budget. Having the budget together will “let us know how many people we need to get in the door to account for the cost of the exhibit.” Additionally, “We will know who all our sponsors are, so we can recognize them in all of our marketing materials.” By having more time to create the messaging she noted, “Messaging will be more concise and targeted, which will help brand awareness. It will expand our audience and keep people coming back.”

The staff member believed best practices will also include the ability to sustain open communication with the exhibits team throughout the exhibit development process. The staff member felt there are a couple of benefits to keeping open communication: “Open communication will be great, there will be less frustration [...] in a more collaborative office, people just get along better.”

Pacific Science Center

The Pacific Science Center marketing staff member felt that the role that they currently play in the exhibition development process works well, but that they are always looking for ways to improve. When describing the best practices, the staff member outlined four areas of importance: To know what is going on in the very early concept phase; to keep in constant contact in case of changes being made or new information; to know what the organization’s goals are so you know how big they want the exhibit to be, and who they want to target; and to evaluate the process after completion to look for ways to improve.

When speaking about the importance of knowing the information early on, the staff member noted:

That way when I am going about my business I can read articles about things going on in the world and in other exhibits relating to the topic. It’s just more for me to be thinking about. How does this

fit into the overall plan, and how do I talk about this within the big scheme of what the Science Center is doing.

The staff member also believed that by keeping everyone in the loop, you limit redundancies within the organization and increase employee engagement and morale. She added that knowing the information helps inform their budgeting decisions.

Externally, the staff member saw best practices benefitting both donors and the general public. Through great project collaboration they are able to show that their organization is all integrated, and that they make good with the money donated through a successful exhibit. With the general public the staff member felt that best practices can help create messaging that is consistent with the exhibit experience.

Henry Art Gallery

The best practices of marketing's role during the exhibit development process have not been discussed amongst employees at the Henry Art Gallery. The staff member noted that she is currently lobbying to be at the table during the directors' meetings, and believes the presence of marketing staff at those meetings will benefit the museum both internally and externally. She noted,

I think everything has to track back to the strategic goals of the organization. Exhibitions serve those goals and marketing serve those goals, so if we are all talking together about the direction we are heading then I think we will have a much stronger external communications launch and internally have a better idea of how we can strengthen communication and transparency.

More specific to internal alignment, the staff member said that all staff should know what is going on, all staff should know the mission, and all staff should be able to speak for the

museum, from the “curator to the custodian.” The staff member believed that the shared knowledge to all staff will promote trust in the organization.

By creating ways to increase communication and communicating earlier in the process, the Henry Art Museum staff member believes the museum will garner trust with all staff and the organization, and have much stronger external communications with its community.

Museum of Flight

The Museum of Flight staff member said the role that marketing currently plays in the exhibition development process works well, but he is always looking for ways to improve. He stated, “We have good communication and I think that’s a function of everyone wanting what’s best for the institution and realizing everybody's limitations as far as money and man power.”

The staff member noted that the he would like to see fewer meetings, but overall he likes the system that they have. When speaking about the benefits of good communication he said,

Internally, you don’t end up fighting with each other; a lot of it is about respecting each other’s turf. The exhibits belong to Chris, the promotions belong to me. Anything in the grey area we talk about. It’s a matter of communication and respect. Externally you end up with a better story.

The staff member noted that good communication is maintained by checking in with the exhibits department as much as possible, and also informing them about decisions that the marketing team is making throughout the process.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications

5.1. Conclusions

Marketing's Role

The museums' level of involvement during the exhibit development process ranges from being involved at the end, like that discussed at the Henry Art Gallery to just beginning to be involved at the initial stages, as discussed at the Museum of History & Industry to being involved throughout the entire process, as discussed at the Pacific Science Center and Museum of Flight.

Museum marketing departments are trending towards an exhibit development role that begins during early concept phase and is maintained through completion of the project. The interviews also suggest a positive correlation between having a role in the early concept phase and marketing's input on exhibition development decision-making.

Similar to the Exploratorium (McLean, 2005) and Science Museum of Minnesota (Eastwood, 2005), the Museum of History & Industry and Henry Art Gallery are beginning to move from tail end of the process involvement to involvement that is a part of the decision making process, much like was noted in the Smithsonian's (2003) Audience Centered pattern of marketing Art Museums.

While the Henry Art Gallery currently seeks a marketing pattern consistent with the Audience Centered Pattern, current evidence shows a marketing role like that seen in the Service Pattern described by the Smithsonian (2003). Marketing staff at the Pacific Science Center and Museum of Flight are well established throughout the exhibition development process but continue to make adjustments to their role as they continue to gain experience.

Factors Associated with Marketing's Role

The interviews suggest that the two main factors that attribute to the marketing department's involvement are, level of communication between the exhibits department and marketing department, and whether they are a part of the decision making process. The Henry Art Gallery and Museum of History & Industry are both moving towards increased involvement, and likewise have the smallest level of decision making during the exhibit development process, in comparison to the Museum of Flight and Pacific Science Center. Additionally, the Museum of History & Industry and Henry Art Gallery are least satisfied with their level of communication with their exhibits departments during the exhibit development process.

While the sample given is too small to make generalizations, the factors noted are emphasized in Mulhelm & Schultz (2008) study on internal marketing best practices. They establish a need for transparent communication and horizontally integrated management that would enable all museum departments and employee levels to be involved in a collaborative decision-making process. Further studies are needed to establish best practices for implementing such a strategic management discipline into the museum field, but the interviews suggest a movement towards a communications management system similar to those stated in the Mulhelm & Schultz (2008) study.

Both the Museum of History & Industry and Henry Art Gallery noted currently working towards increased collaboration with the exhibits development team. All four museums interviewed attend monthly meetings with department heads. MOHAI, Museum of Flight and Pacific Science Center attend additional meetings during the development process with the exhibits team.

Success of the current role within these four institutions studied is partly dependent on the relationship and trust formed with employees of the exhibits department. Lack of a defined role during the exhibit development process could lead to confusion and/or unwanted change in that role, in the event of employee turnover in either department. More specifically, lack of a formal process of communication, as seen at Museum of Flight, may lead to the need of regaining trust, after the turnover of key players in the communication role in either marketing or exhibits.

Best Practices, Benefits, and Steps to Achieve Best Practices

Best practices described by the four institutions include: 1) Communicating with the exhibits team early and often. The four museums stressed the importance of obtaining the information as early as possible and maintaining communication with the exhibits team to acquire information throughout the process, and provide and receive feedback throughout the entire process. 2) Establishing exhibit brand messaging among all employees. The museums interviewed talked about the importance of everyone understanding why the museum chose that exhibit topic, what it means, and how it relates to the mission of the organization. The Henry Art Gallery stressed the importance of everyone in the organization being able to speak about the exhibits, and relate the exhibits back to the bigger mission of the organization, to assumable build a brand around the museum 3) Knowing the organizational goals for the exhibit. It was stressed by the museums, and particularly the Pacific Science Center, that the marketing departments need to understand all measurable goals of the exhibit during and throughout the process, to create a more accurate marketing strategy. 4) Evaluating the process after completion. The museums, in particular the Pacific Science Center and Museum of Flight, talked

about the importance of talking about the development process after it is completed and discussing ways to improve the process for future exhibits.

The best practice elements described by the four institutions are similar to those described in previous literature. The four institutions interviewed relate to 4 of the 6 described in Mulhelm & Schultz (2008) study on internal marketing best practices. Those four elements include senior management participation, integrated organizational structure, a focus on employee engagement, and internal brand communication. The two outlying elements not included in the 4 museums best practice elements include a strategic marketing approach (formal internal marketing approach), and a human resources partnership. Further evidence is needed to establish possible reasons for not including those best practice elements in the museums' elements, or understanding institutional differences among those for-profit organizations studied in Mulhelm & Schultz study.

While the museums studied, gave considerable evidence surrounding their process and how they establish good communication with the exhibits team. Little is known on factors that could attribute to the success of these steps. Further research is needed to establish possible differences in museum type, museum size, and museum budget.

Benefits were foreseen internally and externally. Benefits described by the four institutions include: 1) Increased employee morale and engagement. It is assumed that the museums believe that by creating a more collaborative environment, employees will want to be more engaged with the process, which will increase overall employee morale. 2) Decreased tension among departments. The museums stated that increased communication would contribute to decreased tension among the exhibits department and marketing department during the exhibit development process. 3) Greater content quality. The museums marketing staff

believe that if exhibit information is relayed early, the marketing department will have more time to create the marketing content and get feedback from other departments on the marketing messaging. 4) A more strategic marketing plan. Also attributed to time and communication, the marketing staff believes the best practices would allow them more time to strategize a marketing plan that would contribute to the overall success of the exhibit goals. 5) A more accurate marketing budget. The museums, in particular MOHAI and the Pacific Science Center, related the best practices to a more accurate marketing budget. If the marketing departments knew the scale of the exhibit and goals then they would be able to accurately predict possible costs of marketing to meet those goals. Additionally, MOHAI noted that knowing the information about the exhibit early on would allow them more time to account for the partners and sponsors of the exhibit, which would attribute to understanding where possible external funds will come from, allowing for a more accurate budget. The benefits described by the museums studied are well articulated and match the benefits described by the Science Museum of Minnesota and Exploratorium, as well as the benefits described by successful implementation of internal marketing practices in for-profit service industries

Steps to achieve these best practices encompass the marketing department's ability to stay in close contact with the exhibits department during the development process. Establishing formal means of communication was a commonality with the four institutions. While the Museum of Flight noted a more informal communication process, all four museums noted the need of established formal means of communication. It is assumed that a formal means of communication (via emails, meeting, etc.) would allow for consistency of the development process. Committing time to establish communication would ensure that the best practices are achieved. Establishing departmental value within the development process was also a way to

foster an environment necessary to achieve best practices described above. The museums, in particular MOHAI and the Henry Art Gallery, talked about the need for other departments to understand the benefit of marketing during this process. Again similarities arise between the four institutions studied and the institutions found in the literature.

Themes of this study are consistent with the trends of marketing strategies and the museum marketing role during exhibit development described in the literature. The study expanded the literature by providing insight into the benefits of the marketing department's role, the best practices of that role, as defined by marketing professionals, and possible steps to achieving that role.

5.2. Implications for Further Research

This study provided a look at museum marketing role's during the exhibition development process, the factors that attribute to that role, the best practice, benefits, and steps to achieve that role. Further research on this subject will need to improve measurements of success of that role. A focus on determining the success level of inter-departmental communication in museums will help progress the overall effectiveness of communication among museum employees.

This study has shown a trend in the museum marketing role, which would benefit from the managerial practices of internal marketing. Further research is needed to establish how museum marketing departments can implement internal marketing strategies to benefit the inter-departmental collaboration among departments, and more importantly, help create a better experience for museum visitors.

There is also a need for further exploration into new messaging technologies to better reach employees. Whether it is geographic location of employees, technological skills, or

convenience of face-to-face interaction, managers and future research must investigate the best possible channels to increase communication among employees.

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Appendix A:

The Role of Marketing in a Museum's Exhibition Development Process

Interview Guide

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I am asking you to participate in a research study that is part of my Master's Thesis work at the University of Washington. The purpose of this research is to describe current trends in the role of a museum's marketing department during the exhibition development process.

Your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits, and you may discontinue participation at any time. This interview will be audio recorded. Are you okay with that? Audio recordings will be saved on my password protected computer, and shared only with my thesis committee. They will be destroyed after 3 months. In the final results, the case study museums will likely be identified. If you have any questions now or in the future, you may contact me or my advisor using the contact information I have provided above and will leave with you. Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate in this interview?"

PART I: Background Information / Organization

1. How long have you been with the museum?
2. What positions have you held at the museum during this time?
3. Please describe your current role within your department?
4. How many full-time employees are in your marketing department?

5. How many part-time employees are in your marketing department?

PART II: Communication

6. Please describe how you feel about the following:
 - a. The level of communication between the marketing department and the exhibits department?

PART III: Exhibit Development Process

7. I'm interested in knowing more about the role that the marketing department plays in the exhibition development process.
 - a. During a typical exhibit development process, what are the points at which the marketing department is typically involved? In what ways is marketing typically involved at each of these points?
 - b. What are the points at which the marketing department is typically not involved? Why do you think that is?
 - c. What meetings does marketing typically attend within the exhibition development process? What meetings do they typically not attend?
 - d. What decisions is marketing typically part of within the exhibition development process?
 - e. On a scale 1-5, 1 being not at all and 5 being completely, how central to the exhibition development process is marketing? Please explain.
8. Do departments outside of marketing have input on an exhibits marketing campaign? If yes, how?
9. Does your museum typically use an advertising agency for exhibit openings?

10. If yes, approximately what percent of an exhibit marketing campaign is done in-house?
11. At what point are they brought into the campaign process?

Part IV: Best Practices

12. You've told me about the ways in which marketing works with the exhibits team during the exhibition development process – the reality of how that works. Now, I would like to know more about your opinion on the ideal way of working together. In your opinion how does your organization discuss or frame best practices for a marketing department during the exhibit development process?
13. In your opinion, how does your organization discuss or frame 'steps to achieve' best practices for a marketing department during the exhibit development process?
14. By using the institutions best practices that you stated above, in your opinion, what benefits do you foresee internally? What about externally?