SURVIVAL METHODS: ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES
FOR SUCCESSFUL MUSEUMS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
San Diego State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Anthropology

by
Elyssa Decker Figari
Summer 2016
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Undersigned Faculty Committee Approves the

Thesis of Elyssa Decker Figari:

Survival Methods: Anthropological Approaches for Successful Museums

__________________________
Todd Braje, Chair
Department of Anthropology

__________________________
Frederick Conway
Department of Anthropology

__________________________
Larry Beck
School of Hospitality & Tourism Management

__________________________
Cindy Stankowski
San Diego Archaeology Center

Apr 10, 2010
Approval Date
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my husband, Kevin Decker. He has been at my side since the very beginning, helping me study for the GRE, making sure food was on the table when I came home exhausted from a full week of work and class, doing the lion’s share of the laundry, and encouraging me when I was ready to throw in the towel. It’s been a long road but I was successful because of his support, confidence in me, and love. There aren’t enough words to truly convey my thanks and appreciation, but I can say with absolute certainty that I would not be writing this dedication today if it weren’t for him. Honey, we did it!
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Survival Methods: Anthropological Approaches for Successful Museums
by
Elyssa Decker Figari
Master of Arts in Anthropology
San Diego State University, 2016

From the time of the first mouseion in the third century Before the Common Era (BCE), the prominence and importance of museums in society has steadily risen. Through the centuries, as societies and public interests changed, so too did the very purpose and nature of museums evolve from houses of curiosities to finely organized depositories of historical and archaeological explorations and, finally, to cultural institutions promoting education and learning. Significant political, societal, economic, and cultural changes in the United States in recent decades have once again caused a major shift in the structure and role of American museums. My study takes an anthropological approach to analyzing the changes in the public’s interests and motivations surrounding museums, as well as the challenging economic environment faced by these institutions. Based on this information, my study identifies innovative cultural and economic survival methods that museums can implement as part of museum best practices in order to thrive. Using the San Diego Archaeological Center (SDAC) as a case study and built on my research findings, I offer a detailed plan for the implementation of these best practices. Ultimately, this case study offers a roadmap for the application of my research findings at other museum around the United States and the world.
 TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ...............................................................................................................................v
LIST OF TABLES ............................................................................................................... viii
LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................................ ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................. x

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................1
   Organization of the Thesis .......................................................................................2

2 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION ................................................................................4
   New Museology ......................................................................................................4
   Business Economics ................................................................................................6
   The Intersection of New Museology and Business Economics ...............................9

3 HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND MODERN LANDSCAPE ......................................11
   The History of Museums .......................................................................................11
   Museums in the 21st Century ................................................................................16
      The Great Recession ........................................................................................16
      Underlying Problems .......................................................................................21
   Shifting Paradigms – The Future of Museums ......................................................23

4 METHODOLOGY .......................................................................................................25
   Data Collection ......................................................................................................25
   Data Analysis .........................................................................................................28

5 RESULTS ....................................................................................................................33
   Survival Methods ...................................................................................................33
      Engaging the Community ................................................................................34
   Clear Mission Statement ......................................................................................38
   Strong Leader and Board of Directors ..............................................................40
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1. Summary of Key Literature Sources</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2. List of Interviews Conducted</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

PAGE

Figure 1. Example of components in a business model...........................................................8
Figure 2. Percentage of U.S. adults who attended benchmark arts activities since 1982..............................................................................................................................19
Figure 3. Percent of U.S. adults who visited an art museum or gallery by selected demographic variables. ........................................................................................................20
Figure 4. Example of survival method ranking system. ..........................................................29
Figure 5. Example differentiator analysis showing all institutions.........................................30
Figure 6. Example differentiator analysis showing how the heritage of the Americas Museum compares with the SDAC..............................................................................31
Figure 7. Results of survival method ranking system.............................................................54
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

So many people made my thesis possible and I am indebted to each and every one. First and foremost, I want to thank my advisor, Dr. Todd Braje, for his unyielding support over the last five years. He was always quick to respond to my numerous questions, provided sage advice on my thesis, and was my advocate throughout my entire graduate career. He truly is the best advisor I could have ever hoped for and I am deeply grateful to him. I am also grateful for the specialized expertise of the other members of my thesis committee – Dr. Fred Conway, Dr. Larry Beck, and Ms. Cindy Stankowski. Their insightful comments on my draft thesis were extremely helpful in bringing it all together. I want to thank my "editor in chief" (e.g. my father) who helped me refine several rough drafts, and my mother who helped me prepare for my thesis defense. I greatly appreciate the help from my mother in law, a retired teacher, whose sharp eye caught several grammatical and consistency issues. I also want to thank my supervisors and co-workers for putting up with my non-traditional work schedule for five years. And, of course, my husband, without whom, none of this would have be possible.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the time of the first mouseion in the third century Before the Common Era (BCE) (Lee, 1997a), the prominence and importance of museums in society has steadily risen. Through the centuries, as societies and public interests changed, so too did the very purpose and nature of museums evolve from houses of curiosities to finely organized depositories of historical and archaeological explorations and, finally, to cultural institutions promoting education and learning. Significant political, societal, economic, and cultural changes in the United States in recent decades have once again caused a major shift in the structure and role of American museums (Helicon Collaborative [Helicon], 2009; Light, 2008; Novak-Leonard, Wong, & English, 2015). Today, museums are learning that business models and exhibition strategies based upon the economic and cultural environment of the 20th century are no longer effective. The public’s appetite for the arts and preferences for what kind of experience they want at museums have changed dramatically. In addition, with recent worldwide economic events, particularly the “Great Recession,” flaws in traditional practices of museum financial management have been exposed. While officially the Great Recession ended in 2009, museums and other nonprofits continue to reel from the effects more than six years later.

Despite current challenges, museums can and should continue to play a unique and critical role in our society. It is clear, however, that museums must rethink their business and exhibition practices to remain an integral thread in the fabric of our lives. Museums are more than buildings that house artifacts or works of art; they play a critical role in helping people understand their “roots,” historical relationships to other cultures, and contributions to the world. For these reasons, it is worthwhile to explore how to help museums survive tough times and thrive in the years ahead.
My study takes an anthropological approach to analyzing the shifts in the public’s interests and motivations surrounding museums, as well as the challenging economic environment faced by these institutions. Several applied anthropological methods will be used to obtain information, including interviews and literature research. After laying a foundation in the evolution of anthropology and museology and examining business economics strategies, my study will identify innovative cultural and economic methods that successful museums can implement as part of their museum methods and practices in order to thrive.

The San Diego Archaeological Center (SDAC) in Escondido, California, provides an example of a museum hit particularly hard by the combination of changing public interests and the Great Recession. Using SDAC as a case study, my study will also provide a detailed plan for SDAC to implement the most relevant and practical aspects of the various survival methods. In order to develop this plan, the following three research questions guided my study:

- In today’s cultural environment, what are the public’s interests and motivations in museums?
- Are there innovative cultural and economic methods being implemented by museums currently that help them thrive in these tough and changing times?
- Can I identify patterns in how successful museums are surviving culturally and economically and apply these methods to other museums, specifically SDAC?

My thesis is not intended to provide lofty theoretical concepts that sit on a shelf gathering dust; it is an applied anthropological study that has real-world application and provides practical recommendations to SDAC. It is my hope that this study also will serve as a repository for successful methods that other museums can implement in order to thrive in a very challenging world.

**Organization of the Thesis**

My thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter 2 presents a discussion of new museology, the theoretical framework that guides my anthropological research. An overview of modern economic strategies related to museums is also provided. Chapter 3 provides a background on the history of museums and society and includes a summary of current cultural and economic challenges (particularly the Great Recession) that museums face. A
description of the methodology conducted for this study is presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 discusses the results of the background research and interviews, identifies a number of survival methods, and includes the analysis of cultural and economic methods most applicable to the SDAC. Chapter 6 presents a detailed implementation plan for the SDAC.
CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

New museology is a burgeoning theoretical approach in museum anthropology and provides the framework for my anthropological research. I summarize the evolution of new museology, specifics related to the key tenants of new museology, and how new museology relates to my thesis. I also provide, for contextual reasons, a brief overview of business economics. While anthropology is the focus in my thesis, business economics works hand in hand with new museology’s response to cultural challenges. In this way, I establish a starting point for exploring both cultural and economic innovations in later chapters.

NEW MUSEOLOGY

In the early 1980s, a group of museum professionals who were dissatisfied with established museum practices organized the First International Workshop on Ecomuseums and the New Museology (Mayrand, 1985). The purpose of this workshop was to explore solutions to what they viewed as the shortcomings of traditional museology. They defined traditional museology as involving object-oriented exhibits that focus on aesthetics, content, and presentation, and ignore the perceptions and background of the museum visitors (Hauenschild, 1988). Practitioners of traditional museology were concerned primarily with using good methods and practices, and implementing business models that focused on increasing attendance and recognition (Hauenschild, 1988), rather than thinking about the wider, cultural roles museums play in society (Vergo, 1989). As a result, exhibitions at traditional museums would often showcase only artifacts or other objects in vitrines devoid of their original context (Vergo, 1989).

The result of the workshop was the formation of “an association of museum workers called the International Movement for New Museology (MINOM)” (Hauenschild, 1988, p. 2) and a new paradigm in the museum practice dubbed “new museology.” Very simply, new
museology was defined as “widespread dissatisfaction with the ‘old’ museology” (Vergo, 1989, p. 3). Proponents of new museology intentionally did not wish to enforce strict guidelines or theoretical concepts, or develop a precise museological model to shape the paradigm: "There are no established rules or models, just theories that have been immediately belied by practice” (Hauenschild, 1988, p. 4). Therefore, new museology can be considered a theoretical and a methodological orientation (Krouse, 2006; Schultz, 2011). As a result, philosophy and ideals surrounding new museology have been developed and refined over the years, and the features of new museology can vary among practitioners (Krouse, 2006). There have been, and will continue to be, different definitions of new museology and interpretations of its methods.

Most agree that new museology can be thought of as a normative theory, or a general framework that directs the way museum practice ought to be conducted. This new museum practice is driven by the idea that a museum’s purpose should be focused on the people it serves, and not established museum methods. The objectives of new museology encourage museums to offer a global view of reality, provide an avenue for the positive development of an individual and community, and maintain integral relationships with the local community (Hauenschild, 1988). According to new museology, museums should be concerned with achieving social meaning and making “concrete contributions to everyday life” (Hauenschild, 1988, p. 2). A “new” museum should be a place of empowering marginalized populations by showcasing and strengthening their identity as a community, instilling confidence in the population to move upward, and providing a community “an active role in shaping and participating in the museum” (Hauenschild, 1988, p. 2).

Many proponents of new museology have emphasized the anthropological perspective inherent in the theory. These researchers note that “new museology represents a particularly anthropological approach to museum work” (Krouse, 2006, p. 169) because of how it seeks to involve the community and distance museums from the colonial bias that has shadowed its past. This perspective relates to the use of participatory action research (PAR), a method employed in applied anthropology (Ames, 2005, p. 49). Another anthropological perspective on new museology relates to the “ethnography of representation” (Vergo, 1989, p. 21). The timing of new museology within the museum community does not appear random - postmodern theories were introduced to anthropology in the mid-1980s (Clifford & Marcus,
1986; Fabian, 1983; Geertz, 1988; Marcus & Fisher, 1986) and brought about a “self-reflexive, self-critical, unhinging critique, which highlighted issues of representation” (Kahn, 2000, p. 57). Museums, as obvious places of representation, began to face criticism from the anthropology community, which enhanced interest in new museology.

Others see new museology as providing guidance for museums to become places of learning and investigation about the individual and other communities (Mieri, Freidenberg, Tracey, & Qiu, 2006; Vergo, 1989). This view stresses that individual visitors can have different interpretations of the museum based on their personal and cultural background, which in turn can expand the “epistemological environment” of a museum (Vergo, 1989, p. 19). Museum professionals have noted that the ways museums can “restructure their activities to relate more closely to” (Vergo, 1989, p. 19) this changed environment include displaying an object in a way that involves the audience, and altering the nature and purpose of museum scholarship to become “active centers of investigation into the nature of the relationship between the individual and the physical environment” (Vergo, 1989, p. 21). Related to this is a shifting away from the traditional object-centered emphasis to a more community-based, people-centered emphasis (Mieri et al., 2006, p. 63). By having the community and audience actively involved in a museum, they become excited about what they are learning and more likely to retain new information.

**Business Economics**

While new museology provides valuable insights into meeting modern cultural challenges, it does not offer specific guidance in the economic or business realm. Modern museums are struggling economically in ways that the original founders of new museology perhaps did not anticipate or address. Some of these struggles are due to the changing cultural landscape, but economic struggles are causing museums to rethink their approach to administrative and operational costs, development, and marketing. It is important, then, to provide a cursory overview of business economics and business models, and how they relate to museums and my research. Analyzing the relationships among business economics, microeconomic theory, and museums is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, understanding how museums can and should “run like a business” is beneficial.
Business economics employs microeconomic theories and concepts to show how efficiency and understanding target consumers are essential to running successful businesses. A key component of business economics is the concept of product and service value. The value of a firm is based on “the particular products or services being sold, the degree of product/service customization, and the relative depth and breadth of product/service mix” (Morris, Schindehutte, Richardson, & Allen, 2006, p. 34). A firm’s product or service becomes valuable when it is needed by their target audience, is easily customizable depending on the consumer’s needs, and not available elsewhere (e.g., “value chain concept” à la Porter, 1985). If a product or service is valuable, the firm providing that product or service can earn a profit. Profit is another important concept in business economics. In order for for-profit businesses to maximize profits, they must produce goods or services as inexpensively as possible, while maintaining value to attract consumers and creating earnings for shareholders and further growth. This can be done by productive efficiency, allocative efficiency, and “capturing the full share of the value it creates by means of effective marketing and pricing strategies” (Rickard, 2006, p. 4). Productive efficiency is when a business ideally consumes resources and ensures “that individual resources are utilized in ways that maximize their contribution.” (Rickard, 2006, p. 3). Allocative efficiency is when a business produces high demand goods or services (Rickard, 2006, p. 4). Productive efficiency, allocative efficiency, and successful marketing and pricing strategies are the foundations of business strategy and are incorporated into most company business models.

There are numerous definitions and explanations of what business models entail (Amit & Zott, 2001; Dubosson-Torbay, Osterwalder, & Pigneur, 2001; Mahadevan, 2000; Mayo & Brown, 1999). In a nutshell, a business model centers around value and profit, focusing primarily “on the integration of revenue sources, pricing methodologies, cost structures, margins, and volumes” (Morris et al., 2006, p. 31). In other words, a business model provides a theoretical pathway for a firm to follow in order to make the most profit and sustain it over time. The core components of a business model typically include identification of how the firm creates value and to whom, why their service or product is unique and better than the competition’s, how they can make money, and their goals (Morris et al., 2006). One example of these components is provided in Figure 1.
While museums, as non-profit organizations, are not necessarily concerned with maximizing profits for shareholders or for fueling growth, they share the same goals of financial stability and providing value to their audience over the long term. Indeed, “even a not-for-profit organization must have a profit objective: namely, to avoid a negative profit, i.e. a loss by breaking even.” (Rickard, 2006, p. 3). Integrating the concepts of business economics into their strategic plan and developing a business model can help museums achieve this. Common business economic concepts in a typical strategic plan for museums include the mission and vision statements, the service they provide their audience, and their long term plan for growth and/or stability. The focus of a non-profit business model emphasizes utilizing internal resources effectively, identifying their target audience’s needs, and successfully marketing their services to both their target audience and prospective donors.

THE INTERSECTION OF NEW MUSEOLOGY AND BUSINESS ECONOMICS

New museology theory offers new paths in museum practice that museum professionals should consider following to better meet the cultural challenges they face. I believe this theory promotes a reflexivity that compels museum professionals to be more aware of the impact that museums and their history have on visitors, as well as the relationships among the curator, visitors, and society at large (Vergo, 1989). This includes embracing “the idea of the museum as an educational tool” (Mieri et al., 2006, p. 63), while realizing the role of museums in society. Some museum researchers may limit their view of new museology to being a theory for empowerment, new exhibition design, education, or community involvement; however, my thesis sees value in all facets of new museology. The adaptation of new museology gives birth to valuable survival methods for bringing museums into the modern world.

Similarly, implementing lessons from the economic or business realm are helpful to the survival of museums. Museums must develop a strategic plan and business model that includes strategies for running efficient operations that provide a necessary service and are marketed appropriately, just as for-profit businesses do. If museums are under-utilizing resources (i.e., staff, collections, physical space, etc.), they are adding unnecessary cost or
not fully collecting on potential revenue. If museums are not providing a service that is recognized as valuable by the communities they serve, why should they exist? And if a museum is providing a valuable service but no one in the community knows about it, what good does it do?

The current reality for museums is that they can no longer count on being beneficiaries of a vast and ever-replenishing public trust. That is, museums must shake the conception that they are cultural institutions automatically subsidized by public funding, whether that be state or federal tax dollars or charitable giving. Modern museums are compelled to not only rethink how they interact with and educate the public, but how they market themselves and compete with other leisure, entertainment, or educational activities for private dollars.

Many modern survival methods are a combination of the practical applications of new museology principles and business economic practices. Both help bring cultural and economic success to museums. My thesis investigates how new museology theory and business economics can be molded into a unified set of practical survival methods and offers an implementation plan of these survival methods for the SDAC.
CHAPTER 3
HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND MODERN LANDSCAPE

To understand the future of museums, we must understand the history and role of museums in society, the evolution of the museology discipline, and the different theoretical or practical paradigms that have been prevalent since their inception. This section is not meant to include an exhaustive history, but rather to provide enough of the historical highlights to gain an appreciation of how historical changes influence the approach of museums to modern challenges. In addition, this chapter presents a summary of the current cultural and economic environment for museums in the 21st century, critical to consider for successful museums.

THE HISTORY OF MUSEUMS

The etymology of the word “museum” is from the ancient Greek mouseiou or mouseion, which means “shrine of the Muses” (Tufts, 2013). The term was first used in reference to the “Musaeum of Alexandria,” which was a group of esteemed scholars provided with housing and a library by the Ptolemies in the third century Before the Common Era (BCE) (Lee, 1997a). There are no archaeological remains for the Musaeum of Alexandria (it mysteriously disappeared in the fourth century Common Era [CE]) and “its memory was almost entirely preserved through its Latin name, musaeum” (Lee, 1997b, p. 10). The actual terms “musaeum” or “museum” were not used until much later but researchers have investigated the evolution of how spoils from war, exploration, and conquest (such as Romans pillaging Greek sites for sculptures or explorers bringing objects from the New World back to Europe) became collections of private, wealthy owners, often royalty (Abt, 2008). By the late 1500s, these collections were arranged in “cabinets, cases, drawers, and other specialized furnishings, often in specially designated rooms in the homes and
workplaces of amateurs and scholars” (Abt, 2008, p. 119). “Musaeum” was once again used, becoming the preferred nomenclature for these collections. Walter Benjamin (1978, p. 492), a German philosopher and collector at the turn of the 20th century, wrote that each collector was personally involved in his collection, “not that they [collections] come alive in him [the collector]; it is he who lives in them.” In other words, each piece in a collection had personal meaning and can be seen as a manifestation of the memories (vis-à-vis Crane, 2000) of the collector. As a result, the collector had complete control over the display of the objects and, therefore, the meaning that viewers took away from their experience.¹

The museum as a public space was conceptualized in the mid-17th century and a shift to a more systematic way of organizing collections occurred. The Ashmolean Museum founded in 1683 is often cited as the earliest public museum (Abt, 2008). This museum displayed the private collection of a man named Elias Ashmole and was located within Oxford University, open to the public every day except Sundays and holidays from eight to eleven and two to five (Abt, 2008). Royal collections were eventually opened to the public as well, such as the Medici’s paintings and statuaries being displayed in the Uffizi starting in 1743. Following the French revolution, a selection of the royal collection was displayed in 1793 in the Grand Gallery of the Louvre Palace, newly renamed the Museum Français. It was also at this time that people began emphasizing systems of classification and organization of collections: “objects were judged empirically… Categories, though socially constructed, were seen as naturally determined and intrinsic to the physical world. Displays were linear and embraced an ideology of progress” (Marstine, 2006, p. 24).

Museums displaying archaeological and historical artifacts were one type of institution that particularly began emphasizing organization and classification of objects. The Danish amateur scholar, Christian Thomsen, often seen as “a founder of modern ‘scientific’

¹ These collections have been termed more recently as “cabinets of curiosity,” and modern scholars have criticized them as being “fetishized” (Marstine, 2006:9) or isolated displays of curiosity, devoid of context or relationship to one another.
archaeology,” was one of the first to embrace this movement in archaeological collections (Eskildsen, 2012, p. 24).

Thomsen is well-known in archaeology for introducing the Three-Age System, which divided “prehistory into the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age, which established a relative chronology and a foundation for comparative studies of ancient artifacts” that is still referenced today (Eskildsen, 2012, p. 24).² He is particularly relevant to my study because his theory of the three-age system was inspired by his work with objects and collections in museums: “he not only based his conclusions on objects instead of texts; he also presented these conclusions to a larger audience through the arrangement of objects in his museum” (Eskildsen, 2012, p. 26). Thomsen was the curator of the Royal Museum of Nordic Antiquities in the early 1800s, which held a varied collection of cultural objects important to the history of northern Europe. Thomsen began organizing the collection chronologically by separating objects into typological categories. By doing this, he treated the cultural objects as scientific specimens, analyzing their characteristics to create methods and typological schemes that could be replicated (Eskildsen, 2012). His work was incredibly important in the field of archaeology and helped pioneer a new purpose for museums as places of scientific exhibition.

These early museums transitioned into larger, mainstream museums displaying a myriad of objects and artifacts from excavations and expeditions around the world. Museums such as the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the National Museum of Natural History (part of the Smithsonian Institute and where many of the cultural artifacts are held), and the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology (previously the Lowie Museum of Anthropology) curated impressive exhibits from their extensive collections. The focus of these exhibits included educating the public (Vergo, 1989) and, as a result, visiting a museum

² During this time, many scholars held written text in high regard, with some believing there was no history of humans before the introduction of writing (Eskildsen, 2012). Thomsen noticed the great wealth of information that could be found in objects and worked to “challenge the cultural dominance and interpretative authority of historians and philologists” of the time (Eskildsen, 2012:32). He was eventually successful and his three-age system played a key role in the foundation of the modern archaeology discipline.
was considered a “cultured” activity. Visiting museums became commonplace activities for the general public. Despite the changing role in society, these kinds of exhibitions were as eclectic, individualized, and lacking in cohesive themes as the earliest collectors’ displays - “fragments wrested from their pasts and elsewhere to be exhibited and categorized” (Boon, 1991, p. 256) - and have been described as “synoptic, curator-authored, culture-area displays” (Kahn, 2000, p. 58).

The 1960s and 1970s in the United States saw massive uprisings that fundamentally changed the future of our nation in every way. People rose up against numerous injustices, which gave birth to multiple social and political movements including civil rights, feminism, gay rights, anti-war, and Hispanic and Chicano movements. Museums, borne of waning Old World tradition, also came under fire for “serving a cultural elite, staffed primarily by whites, reflecting white values” (Simpson, 1996, p. 9), and excluding cultural groups from being involved in the representation of their own culture. Just as the collectors in the early days of museums controlled what was presented, museums as educational institutions in the 20th century wielded great power and authority in emphasizing one culture or art over another. Many cultural groups were not happy with how their cultures were being represented, including Native Americans.

The American Indian Movement (AIM) was born out of the upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s and had a major impact on the future of museums. AIM was founded to reject the colonialist policies in the United States and abroad, and to promote a renewal of spirituality, opportunities, connectedness, and awareness of all American Indians (Wittstock & Salinas, 2016). Protests were staged in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the decades beyond to promote their cause. For 18 months, beginning in November 1969, American Indians occupied Alcatraz Island in San Francisco to protest broken treaties, unjust policies, and lack of representation (Simpson, 1996, p. 8). Another group of protesters at the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles chained themselves to the doors in 1972 demanding the removal of the Peruvian mummy that was being displayed (King, 2009). In 1992, on opening night of the exhibit, First Encounters, at the Science Museum of Minnesota, a member of AIM staged a powerful protest by splashing a container of blood on the sail of a replica of Columbus’ ship, the Niña (Simpson, 1996). Members of AIM and other individuals were unhappy with museums because they argued that they represented colonizing spaces, constructed
dichotomies between “us” and “other,” and encoded “an agenda that effectively unifies white (male) citizens of imperial powers (the self) against conquered peoples (the other)” (Marstine, 2006, p. 14). The classification of objects in exhibits resulted in relegating ethnographic objects to curiosities, specimens, or categories, at the expense of investigating the cultural meaning and context behind the object (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991).

Some of the most significant criticisms of museums from the Native American community are around the display and collection of human remains and sacred objects. Prior to the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), thousands of museums, universities, and other institutions in the United States maintained collections of Native American skeletal remains and other funerary objects that are incredibly sacred to their descendants. These remains were acquired mostly through approved archaeological excavations, pot hunting, or salvage operations during construction. To archaeologists and other scientists, they offered insights into the lives of ancient cultures. But to the descendant communities, this was further “evidence of colonial and racist attitudes, reminders of nineteenth-century European attempts to prove the superiority of the white race over others” (Simpson, 1996, p. 175). The display of the remains was even worse – it conveyed a total disregard and lack of respect for someone’s ancestors and pointed toward the undiminished attitude that Native American communities were the “other.” One example of this attitude came when the “remains of 28 American soldiers killed during the War of 1812” were found in 1987 and reburied with a full military ceremony (Simpson, 1996, p. 179). Many Native American soldiers did not receive this same honor. Another example came in 1971 when the construction of a highway disturbed a white cemetery, as well as the human remains of a Native American. The white remains were reburied but the Native American remains were removed for scientific study (Simpson, 1996). Members of AIM fought this and were eventually successful in compelling the US government to rebury the remains. These protests and activism helped push the passage of NAGPRA in 1990, which requires, among other mandates, that federal agencies or institutions receiving federal funds return Native American “cultural items” to descendant communities and culturally affiliated tribes. As a result, the number of skeletal remains, funerary objects, and other sacred objects in museum collections has been significantly reduced. The display of these items in museum exhibits in the United States has all but disappeared.
While some argue that colonialist displays still exist in museums, the 1960s protests brought to museum professionals a new awareness and desire to change. The discipline of anthropology was also plagued with similar outcries of social injustice, and so, both museums and anthropologists wrestled with issues of representation (Kahn, 2000). The earlier viewpoint of museums as places for cultural education was replaced with museums as places for promoting social inclusivity (Schultz, 2011). Museum professionals began to realize that displaying artifacts and objects in a display case “divorced from their original context of ownership and use, and redisplayed in a different context of meaning . . . is regarded as having a superior authority” (Vergo, 1989, p. 2). As a result, by the 1980s, museum professionals started promoting museums that were “transparent in its decision-making and willing to share power” (Marstine, 2006, p. 5). New museology emerged and included ideals related to “decolonizing, giving those represented control of their own cultural heritage” (Marstine, 2006, p. 5) (see Chapter 2 – Theoretical Standpoint).

**MUSEUMS IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

Modern museums, specifically those in the United States, are in the midst of another major transition, due to shifts in the political, cultural, economic, and social environment; the changing interests of audiences, donors, and public agencies; and recent economic factors. While museums, over the centuries, learned to successfully adapt to changes in the environment, public interests, and economic conditions, today, they are being challenged in ways that threaten their very survival.

**The Great Recession**

The recent economic recession, termed the “Great Recession” caused economic disruptions throughout the United States, and eventually the world, starting in 2008 (Morreale, 2011). The dates of the Great Recession vary with some claiming it occurred from 2007-2009 (Reid, Carroll, & Ye, 2013) or from 2008-2009 (Homburg, 2015), or that it was still ongoing in 2011 (Morreale, 2011). Officially, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that the most recent economic recession began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009 (BLS, 2012). Regardless of the exact dates, the Great Recession severely affected the United States economy and those effects are still being felt today.
While officially the Great Recession ended in 2009, museums and other nonprofits continue to reel from the effects more than six years later. Statistical reports and surveys measuring the impact of the Great Recession on arts institutions are slow to trickle in (Miringoff & Opdycke, 2010) but it appears that the effects are wide-ranging, including not only investment woes, but increased competition for available funding sources, deferred maintenance issues, the inability to keep up with technological changes, and revenue losses from declining attendance rates.

The financial fallout from the Great Recession on nonprofits in general and museums in particular is severe. Reports indicate that, as a result of the Great Recession, nonprofits experienced decreased contributions, including a decline in both the number of donors and the amount of their donations, as well as smaller corporate gifts and private foundation grants (Guidestar, 2012; Morrealle, 2011; Salamon, Geller, & Spence, 2009). Endowments dropped significantly, some as much as 30 percent or more (Miringoff & Opdycke, 2010, p. 158-165; Salamon et al., 2009), ticket sales and admissions generally decreased (Helicon, 2009; National Endowment of the Arts [NEA], 2015b), and other sources of income (such as rental income and shop sales) were also down (Helicon, 2009; Salamon et al., 2009). Another survey found that organizations in the arts and culture field were particularly affected by the recession compared to other nonprofits, with 57% of museums reporting that their total revenue decreased between 2008 and 2009 (Salamon et al., 2009). Additionally, due to the shrinking number of individuals, corporations, and institutions willing to donate, competition for remaining resources increased, which, in turn, requires significant unbudgeted time and expense dollars to be spent on fundraising efforts (American Alliance of Museums [AAM], 2013; Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and Helicon Collaborative [PGAFF & Helicon], 2012; Salamon et al., 2009).

While there are signs of small improvement in the economic outlook for museums and other nonprofits in the years since the recession ended, progress is slow, especially for smaller museums. The AAM conducted an online survey in 2013 that was sent to approximately 2,130 institutional museum members nationwide. The survey found that though “more museums reported an annual increase in total revenues than a decrease in total revenues” in 2012, the majority of museums still reported less revenue than in 2007 or 2008 (AAM, 2013, p. 3). Though donations have increased since the Great Recession ended, they
have not reached pre-recession levels. Additionally, fundraising efforts continue to struggle due largely to lack of once consistent philanthropic support from individuals, government, and corporations. Larger museums (e.g., those with $11 million or more in operating budgets) are recovering more quickly (for example, in 2012 43% of larger museums reported experiencing minimal or no stress), “while museums with budgets below $250,000 were most likely to report severe or very severe stress.” (AAM, 2013, p. 2).

The general financial woes faced by museums and nonprofits since the Great Recession have led to other unforeseen financial difficulties. Because many nonprofits focused their efforts on surviving the recession, general maintenance projects and technological updates fell to the wayside. Over six years later, nonprofits are experiencing building upkeep issues, aging exhibits, and out of date technology (AAM, 2013; Chandler, 2015; Salamon et al., 2009). This ripple effect of the initial impacts of the Great Recession will only exacerbate ongoing financial difficulties facing museums and nonprofits.

Museums and other art institutions also have experienced a decline in visitor attendance over the years. The National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) published two reports in 2015 that explored who participates in the arts, why, and how participation has evolved over the years (NEA 2015a, b). These reports were based on surveys conducted mostly in 2012 (though one included analysis of information compiled in earlier years as well), including the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) (NEA, 2015a) and the General Social Survey (GSS) (NEA, 2015b). A few of the findings from these surveys are provided in the bullets, figures, and tables below:

- In 1992, 41% of the United States adult population attended one or more of the seven “benchmark” arts activities (ballet, opera, musical plays, nonmusical plays, classical music, jazz, and visiting museums or galleries), while only 33.4% attended in 2012 (NEA, 2015b:6).
- In 2002, 26.5% of adults visited an art museum or gallery specifically, compared to 22.7% in 2008 and 21% in 2012 (NEA, 2015a; Figure 2).
- African Americans and Hispanics showed negligible declines in visiting an art museum or gallery from 2008 to 2012 (approximately 12% of African Americans and approximately 14% of Hispanics were museum visitors) (NEA, 2013; Figure 3).
- For non-Hispanic Whites, 26% visited an art museum or gallery in 2008 compared with 24.1% in 2012.
• Americans ages 65 and over were the only age group to experience an increase in
er museum or galley attendance between 2008 and 2012 (NEA, 2013). For
individuals ages 65 to 74, 19.9% attended in 2008 and 22.5% in 2012. For
individuals ages 75 and over, 10.5% attended in 2008 and 15.5% attended in
2012.

• Attendance at art museums or galleries increased exponentially according to level
of education (NEA, 2013). For example, 9.9% of individuals with a high school
diploma visited an art museum or gallery in 2012, compared to 37.2% of college
graduates and 49.3% of individuals with graduate degrees (NEA, 2013).

• Attendance at benchmark art activities also increases exponentially according to
income. For example, 37% of individuals within the lowest income quartile
attended an exhibit or performance, compared to 72% of individuals in the top
income quartile (NEA, 2015b).

These survey results clearly indicate significant decreases in attendance of museums
and other art institutions, and it is also clear that that lower attendance has had a negative
financial impact on these same institutions. However, it is not certain the decline in
attendance is a due primarily to the Great Recession. While it is certain that the Great
Recession had a strong effect on the health of museums and nonprofits, the extent of the
effects won’t be confirmed for many years. Interestingly, some early studies and
investigations indicate that the Great Recession may have played a smaller role in the difficulties than what appears at first glance (e.g., Helicon, 2009, p. 3; also see Kaiser, 2015; Merritt, 2011; Novak-Leonard et al., 2015; PGAFF & Helicon, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISITED AN ART MUSEUM OR GALLERY</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALL ADULTS</strong></td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>21.0%***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>18.7%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race and Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>24.1%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–24</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>18.4%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–44</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>21.2%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–54</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–64</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65–74</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 and over</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>15.5%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Level of Educational Attainment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade School</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>4.3%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>19.7%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>37.2%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

Underlying Problems

The Great Recession may only have exacerbated problems that were already in existence within the museum and nonprofit world, and steadily increasing in magnitude. As identified by several surveys and interviews over the last few years, it now appears that the environmental, public interest, and economic factors affecting museums had already begun to shift even before 2007. It is possible that even if the Great Recession had not occurred, museums and other nonprofits would still be experiencing difficulties in obtaining donations and increasing attendance and interest in their institutions. Some individuals in the industry believe that “shifting patterns of public and private funding; the elimination of arts education in the public schools; [and] changing demographics, technologies and patterns of leisure time behavior” are some potential sources of the growing problems (Helicon, 2009:3; also see PGAFF & Helicon, 2012; Kaiser, 2015; Merritt, 2011; Novak-Leonard et al., 2015). Others have hypothesized that Americans are viewing the arts as a “dispensable luxury rather than a vital part of our national life,” which is supported by the NEA survey results showing individuals with higher income and education attend museums and galleries more often (Miringoff & Opdycke, 2010, p. 142).

These potential problems facing museums today are particularly troubling; if museums cannot encourage more people to visit, how can they convince donors that their institution is worthwhile? If fewer and fewer people are excited about the arts and choose to spend their leisure time enjoying other activities, what does this mean for the future of philanthropy for the arts?

To investigate these problems further, one of the NEA reports evaluated “barriers” that affect attendance at museums and other art institutions (NEA, 2015b:1). This report included the results of a special survey conducted in 2012 as part of the GSS that asked Americans multiple choice questions “to identify not only why and with whom U.S. adults attend the visual and performing arts, but also why individuals decide not to attend, after they identify an exhibit or performance that interests them.” (NEA, 2015b, p. 1). Based on the survey results, NEA published a comprehensive report that presented groundbreaking information regarding the changing role the arts play in people’s lives, how the arts can shape an individuals’ identity, and how the arts can serve as the intersection between an individual and their community or communities.
Some researchers cited in the NEA report believe that the decrease in arts attendance can be tied back to two general types of barriers: practical and perceptual (Keaney, 2008; McCarthy & Jinnett, 2001). Practical barriers tend to be the more commonly cited reasons for not attending an event, such as lack of time, money, and transportation. While practical barriers are important in an individual’s decision to not attend, “it is reasonable to suppose that such barriers come into play only after an individual overcomes perceptual barriers” (NEA 2015b:14). Perceptual barriers are influenced by an individual’s upbringing, family values, and cultural environment. These past and current experiences can and do shape the individual’s perception of and interest in art. The GSS attempted to identify both practical and perceptual barriers.

According to survey respondents, the most common practical barriers for not visiting a museum or gallery were lack of time, exorbitant cost, difficulty in getting to the venue, and not having anyone to go with (NEA, 2015b). Not surprisingly, age, education, ethnicity, and income were predictive of practical barriers to attendance; these demographics were also analyzed in the SPPA and are common in other surveys. The GSS was also able to identify perceptual barriers that are not commonly analyzed; life stages, socioeconomic status and class identity, and personal value and attitudes all play a role in whether the individual attended an art institution or not. For example, the GSS found that parents with young children under six years old overwhelmingly reported that lack of time was the primary reason they did not attend, while “retirees’ greatest barrier to attendance is difficulty getting to the exhibit or performance location” (NEA, 2015b:3). Additionally, individuals who self-identified as working class were less likely to attend than those self-identifying as middle class, even though the actual household incomes of the two groups were very similar. Those individuals that did attend an event reported that devotion, loyalty, and listening to others’ opinions and diverse perspectives were key personal values in their daily lives.

So what does this mean for the future of museums? If museums may not recover just because the Great Recession has ended, what other steps are needed to ensure success in the future? If conditions are to improve, museums should learn to align with the developing paradigm that is shifting due to the changing political, cultural, economic, and social environment, and interests and motivations of the general public. In other words, “it is
critical that the role of the arts in our national life be better understood.” (Miringoff & Opdyke 2010, p. 156).

**SHIFTING PARADIGMS – THE FUTURE OF MUSEUMS**

California’s cultural sector is undergoing massive change, with consequences for the ways in which individuals experience art and for the ways in which organizations and artists deliver their artistic products and engage with participants. California is experiencing dramatically shifting demographics; rapid technological advances offer new opportunities for artistic expression and access; people’s expectations are changing about the structure of work and leisure time experiences --- these are some of the most significant forces that are reshaping the landscape of the cultural sector and how people encounter, engage with, and participate in art. (Novak-Leonard et al., 2015, p. 1)

As the above quote illustrates, researchers recently have identified that the United States is experiencing a major shift in paradigms (Helicon, 2009; Light, 2008; Novak-Leonard et al., 2015). In reality, this shift in environmental, public interest, and economic factors has been slowly developing since the development of new museology in the 1980s. Old business models and methods developed based on the cultural environment of the 20th century are no longer as effective as they used to be because the public’s appetite for the arts is changing. The current population’s new interests and motivations driving the shift in paradigms must be understood if museums and other art institutions are to survive. Fortunately, some individuals and institutions have already begun this hard work (Reidy, 2014; Helicon, 2009; NEA, 2015a, 2015b; Novak-Leonard et al., 2015). Through surveys and interviews, these individuals and institutions have found several new interests and motivations for visiting a museum or other art institution: participating in what is exhibited (not just attending); utilizing technology; experiencing a sense of identity; supporting their community; celebrating cultural heritage; and socializing. In addition, the cultural background of individuals plays an important role in how they engage in art.

Many of the new interests and motivations of the public align with new museology tenet. For example, one of the tenants of new museology is developing exhibits that offer “the population an active role in shaping and participating in” that exhibit (Hauenschild, 1988, p. 8). Recent surveys and studies have found that “we are currently living in a participatory culture wherein people have come to expect that they will connect, contribute, and create through the arts” (Novak-Leonard et al., 2015, p. 19). People also want to
experience a sense of identity and feel a part of a community, whether it is a cultural, geographic, or common interest community (NEA, 2015a, 2015b; Reidy, 2014). According to new museology, museums can be spaces that appeal to that desire by maintaining integral relationships with the local community. A number of museums have already implemented methods to foster deeper relationships with their target communities and are reporting great success (see Chapter 5 for some examples). This information proves the validity of new museology as a theory and a methodology for museums to be successful as the world experiences this paradigmatic shift.

Knowing that we are currently experiencing a shift in paradigms, what methods and perspectives will be effective in this new paradigm? What new approaches will successfully meet the challenges of the environmental, public interest, and economic factors at work in the new paradigm? The following chapters discuss this further.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

I used a multi-faceted approach to answer the research questions posed for my study in both data collection and analysis. I conducted an extensive literature review and interviews with museum professionals in order to obtain a comprehensive list of survival methods and evidence for their successful application. I also developed two quantitative analytic systems for determining which survival methods were most applicable to implement at the SDAC. This approach allowed me to integrate both quantitative and qualitative measures in my study.

DATA COLLECTION

In order to determine successful cultural and economic museum survival methods and their applicability to the SDAC, I conducted extensive background research into numerous literature sources and 12 interviews with museum professionals. Literature sources included reports prepared by consultants and institutions, master’s theses, and books written by experts in the non-profit world. Table 1 presents a summary of the literature sources that were the most valuable in my research.
Table 1. Summary of Key Literature Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bright Spots Leadership in the Pacific Northwest</td>
<td>This report was conducted with a grant from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation by the consulting firm, Helicon Collaborative, and analyzed why and how some cultural organizations in the Pacific Northwest are still thriving despite the challenging economic and social environment. The report was based on the results of a series of interviews, surveys, focus groups, and a conference conducted and arranged by the authors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of the 2007-09 Economic Recession on Nonprofit Organizations</td>
<td>This report was a joint project of the Center for Civil Society Studies at the Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies in cooperation with several nonprofit institutions. It presented the quantitative results of a series of surveys that identified both the economic difficulties faced by nonprofits due to the Great Recession, as well as their coping strategies and percentage of institutions that reported success as a result of implementing the strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art of the Turnaround (Kaiser, 2008) and Cycle</td>
<td>Michael Kaiser is known as “the turnaround king” for his work at helping numerous struggling performing arts institutions grow from a deficit budget to a surplus one, including the Kansas City Ballet, Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, and London’s Royal Opera House. He has published several books including Art of the Turnaround and Cycle, in which he presents his tips for maintaining successful arts institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Things First (Iselin, 2015)</td>
<td>Tom Iselin is an author, social entrepreneur, and consultant specializing in nonprofit management. For over 20 years he has helped numerous nonprofits thrive as both an executive director and consultant. His book, First Things First, presents a series of principles that can help build and maintain high-performing nonprofits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As part of my San Diego State University (SDSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) exempt study, I collected qualitative data by conducting 12 interviews with museum and nonprofit professionals throughout the United States in February and March 2016 (Appendix A). The semi-structured interviews consisted of several open-ended questions and were conducted primarily over the phone (one interview was conducted in person and one over email). Each interview was approximately 30 minutes. I had two primary interview guides – one for individuals with direct museum experience and one for individuals with specialized experience in social media, fundraising, and community engagement. I took handwritten
notes during the interviews; therefore, the information presented in my thesis is not from direct transcriptions.

I interviewed executive-level employees, consultants with specialties in museum management, and experts in social media, fundraising, and community engagement. Individuals were selected, primarily, based on their experience with museum work, especially museums that had implemented innovative methods that were successful in helping the museum survive the challenging new economic and cultural environment. The definition of “success” in this context is difficult to nail down. Previously, a museum was considered successful if it had a large and increasing membership and attendee base, as well as financial stability (L. Sasaki, personal communication, March 14, 2016). However, the changing cultural environment created a new measure of success – relevancy – and today’s economic challenges have introduced another new measure of success - survival. A museum’s relevancy is difficult to measure, but survival provides a ready, if not cruel measurement. In the past decade many museums have had to significantly reduce operations or file bankruptcy. For the purposes of my study, I chose to define success as a museum that is currently surviving; that is, one that still has its doors open and is offering rotating exhibits and other events to the public on a regular basis.

Table 2 presents a list of the individuals I interviewed, their employers, positions, and the dates of each interview. Signed Informed Consent forms were obtained from each individual and all but one agreed that the information given during the interview could be published in this study. One anonymous interview was conducted at the request of the interviewee. The information gleaned during that interview is generally used in this thesis but the identity of the individual is confidential.
Table 2. List of Interviews Conducted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julie Gay</td>
<td>Bonita Museum &amp; Cultural Center</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>February 29, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen Hicks</td>
<td>Museum of the American Indian</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>March 2, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgianna Lagoria de la Torre</td>
<td>Museum Management Consultants, Inc.</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>March 3, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Kluger</td>
<td>WolfBrown</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>March 4, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becky Carroll</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Social Media Specialist</td>
<td>March 7, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexis Frasz</td>
<td>Helicon Collaborative</td>
<td>Associate Cultural Anthropologist</td>
<td>March 9, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Oatsvall</td>
<td>Heritage of the Americas Museum</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>March 9, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Iselin</td>
<td>First Things First – Nonprofit Consulting</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>March 10, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Inman</td>
<td>Watts Village Theater Company</td>
<td>Managing Director</td>
<td>March 12, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Sasaki</td>
<td>Oakland Museum of California</td>
<td>Director, Audience &amp; Civic Engagement Center</td>
<td>March 14, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April Tellez</td>
<td>San Diego Natural History Museum</td>
<td>Public Relations and Social Media Manager</td>
<td>March 21, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Decker</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
<td>Director of Prospect Research</td>
<td>March 24, 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DATA ANALYSIS**

To analyze data collected from literature sources and interviews, I developed two quantitative analytic systems. The purpose of the first system is to identify which survival methods were cited most frequently by reference sources (e.g. interviewees, literature sources, etc.). Figure 4 provides an example of the survival method ranking system, though the data provided are random (Chapter 5 presents a table with the actual data analysis results). The survival methods were ranked on the basis of importance. If an interviewee specifically stated that a particular survival method was the most important survival method for success, it was coded with a “3” in the cell associated with the source and survival
method. If an interviewee specifically stated that a particular survival method was the second or third most important method of success, it was coded with a “2”. If a survival method was generally referenced by a source but not assigned a level of importance in success, it was coded with a “1”. In this way, the responses were weighted in order to establish a cumulative total that represented the most important survival methods. Totals at the bottom of the table indicate which survival methods were the most commonly cited. Although methods that worked at one institution or for one consultant may not work at another, I surmised that the more frequently a survival method was cited, the more likely it was to be helpful to SDAC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Museum/Interviewee/ Document</th>
<th>Survival Method #1</th>
<th>Survival Method #2</th>
<th>Survival Method #3</th>
<th>Survival Method #4</th>
<th>Survival Method #5</th>
<th>Survival Method #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helicon 2009, 2012</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salamon et al, 2009</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Kaiser</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Iselin</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexis Frasz (Helicon)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgianna (Museum Management Consultants)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Inman (Watts Theater Company)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Kluger (WolfBrown)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Sasaki (Oakland Museum of California)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego Natural History Museum</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen Hicks (MAI)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Oatsvall (Heritage of the Americas Museum)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Gay (Bonita Museum)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Example of survival method ranking system.

The second quantitative analytic system is meant to determine which institutions shared characteristics that are similar to those of SDAC. The greater the similarity in characteristics, the more likely the survival method would also work at SDAC. To compare institutions to SDAC, I created a set of the key financial and demographic differentiators. The differentiators include the type of institution, number of staff, budget, geographical area
(e.g., major city or state), location (e.g., urban or rural area), and subject matter. Since my focus is on SDAC, I used the characteristics of SDAC as a baseline against which to compare the characteristics of other institutions. Figures 5 and 6 provide example diagrams of potential results of the differentiator analysis (note that the data provided are random and for descriptive purposes only). The SDAC is the center point (0) where all lines converge and represent the SDAC’s characteristics. Each institution is represented by a colored-coded ring based on its own differentiators as compared to the SDAC. The closer an institution’s differentiator points and ring are to the center point, the more closely it shares the SDAC’s characteristics. The more different the institution is compared to the SDAC, the further away the points and ring are from the center.

![All Comparative Institutions](image)

Figure 5. Example differentiator analysis showing all institutions.
Figure 6. Example differentiator analysis showing how the heritage of the Americas Museum compares with the SDAC.

These analytic systems were intended to help identify which museums more closely relate to the SDAC and to predict which survival methods might be most successful at the SDAC. I realized in developing a plan for SDAC, however, that my data analysis results required careful interpretation rather than relying simply on analytical results. For example, the San Diego Natural History Museum (SD Nat) is radically different from the SDAC in terms of staff and budget, but only slightly different in terms of location and subject matter. Because SD Nat shares one characteristic with SDAC and is a very successful museum, a common survival method might work at SDAC as well. Therefore, I considered some museums that have high scores even when the shared characteristics with SDAC were minimal. In those cases, I approached the use of their survival methods with more caution, aware that the methods may be difficult to implement into the SDAC and the results may be mixed.

My final step was to use the SDAC as a case study to test my results. Based on my analytical results, I determined which survival methods had the highest probability of success and best matched the characteristics of the SDAC. I then met with the SDAC Executive
Director to share my findings and recommendations and to discuss the feasibility of implementation. Chapter 6 presents the implementation plan I developed based on her input.
CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

My research resulted in the identification of a number of survival methods that appear to be effectively meeting modern cultural and economic challenges. Many museums and other arts institutions are in the process of implementing versions of these survival methods in order to satisfy shifts in cultural values and survive the lingering effects of the Great Recession. Below, I summarize the most significant survival methods, provide the results of my data analysis, and present the methods that I believe are most appropriate for the SDAC.

SURVIVAL METHODS

My interviews and literature research initially showed variety in the recommended survival techniques, but by identifying the common threads that bound these approaches, I was able to whittle the techniques down to eight primary survival methods. I eliminated methods that only cited by one source as being successful, including taking strategic risks, fostering a positive workplace culture, utilizing technology, thinking of out-of-the-box strategies, and ensuring the institution employs staff with writing and public speaking abilities. I also eliminated methods that were recommended by one source as being successful but identified by another source as being detrimental (e.g., utilizing technology or severely cutting administrative costs). I consolidated several suggestions under one survival method title if they were similar. While the eliminated methods still have potential value, the

3 For example, sources identified learning from others and collaborating with other non-profits as methods of success. Though these sources did not specifically use terms related to “community engagement,” learning from others and collaborating with other non-profits are elements of community engagement. Therefore, I included them under the umbrella survival method of engaging the community.
eight primary methods had multiple examples of demonstrated positive impact on museum success. The most significant survival methods include: engaging the community; creating a clear mission statement; employing a strong leader and board of directors; developing a better business model; preparing and maintaining a strategic plan; following an effective fundraising strategy; following an effective marketing strategy; and utilizing volunteers. These eight survival methods are detailed below in no particular order. The ranking of each survival method based on the results of the survival method ranking system are presented in the Applicability to SDAC section.

**Engaging the Community**

Engaging the community was the survival method that consultants, museum professionals, and literature sources cited most frequently and picked as their top recommendation. This method is popular because it clearly addresses the cultural challenges (the issue of changing interests and motivations of the public) in today’s museum environment. Engaging the community generally means taking a bottom up approach (instead of the traditional top down approach) to organizing the museum’s offerings by reaching out to all levels of the local community throughout the process. By offering “the population an active role in shaping and participating in” the programs, exhibits, and overall goals of the museum (Hauenschild, 1988, p. 8), a museum that implements this survival method provides a service to its community (L. Sasaki, personal communication, March 14, 2016). While demographic differences in museums make for tremendous variety in the implementation of this survival method, it is the one most closely aligned with new museology and anthropological theory. As discussed in Chapter 3, the purpose of museums has evolved to the point that merely offering a place of education and learning is not sufficient for survival. This traditional approach feeds the perception that museums serve the values of an old European-based culture whose influence is dwindling. Overwhelmingly, my research indicated that the new role of museums must be to provide an essential service to local communities and serve as a third space for the local population to interpret and participate as they prefer (A. Frasz, personal communication, March 9, 2016; E. Inman, personal communication, 2016). Local communities are made up of new generations that want to feel like they are making a difference, they want to be activists for their cultures, they
want to be connected to their own social circles, and they want to use digital technology (A. Frasz, personal communication, March 9, 2016; E. Inman, March 12, personal communication, 2016; G. Lagoria de la Torre, personal communication, March 3, 2016). Based on my research, it is clear that if museums hope to stay relevant in their communities, they need to embrace the methods that recognize these cultural shifts.

Engaging the community by developing and maintaining strong community relationships is not just the newest fad in anthropological museology, a fad that will go out of style in a few years; this method has a proven track record for bringing success to the organizations that implements it, regardless of the museum’s physical size, attendance, or budget. Among organizations that reported minimal stress during the Great Recession, 41% reported that they did so with strong community support (Salamon et al., 2009). In addition, several interviewees documented tremendous success based on their community engagement activities.

Julie Gay, Executive Director, is the only paid staff member of the Bonita Museum and Cultural Center and yet, over the last few years, the museum’s annual budget has grown by $30,000, they just received an endowment, and exhibit receptions are attended by 60 to 80 people. That’s quite impressive for a community museum in a town with fewer than 15,000 residents and an annual budget of under $100,000. She cites engaging the community as being a primary reason for the museum’s success and even stated that the museum was not as affected by the Great Recession because of unyielding community support. Why does the Bonita Museum and Cultural Center have such strong community support? The museum provides essential and desired services to the community. A few years ago, Julie began offering free art classes for children every Saturday; the art classes are popular and attendance continues to grow. In fact, they are so well attended that Julie has begun suggesting a $5 donation, and she is receiving it. The museum also offered to host the annual Bonita Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony when the previous host had to back out. This is an extremely popular event for the community and the museum stepped up to provide this service, even though they don’t directly receive financial contributions for their efforts. As a result, the annual Magic of the Magi exhibition that the museum curates has become an essential part of the holiday experience for the residents of Bonita. The museum also provides space for community members such as Kiwanis and Toastmasters, to rent for
various activities and meetings, and offers students a chance to be interns and gain valuable experience in job responsibilities, public speaking, cash registers, etc. Many exhibits at the museum feature art from community groups, such as the Chula Vista Art Guild and young, local artists, which helps broad segments of the community feel connected to the museum.

The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) presents another good example of how building relationships with the community can result in a thriving museum. Partly as a result of the Great Recession, the OMCA went through a massive restructuring and shift towards a community-centric model (L. Sasaki, personal communication, March 14, 2016). OMCA’s goal was to be a community museum that demonstrated relevance and worth to local neighborhoods, which were torn by racial struggles and a widening wealth gap. Based on audience engagement research, OMCA found the four neighborhoods closest to the museum comprised some of the poorest areas in Oakland and the residents living there were the least likely to patronize the museum. Realizing the gap in its relationship with those communities, OMCA conducted a study to better understand the needs and values of the local residents. Based on the results of this study, OMCA embarked on several projects, including the Oakland Rover, public art installations, and Friday Nights at OMCA (The Oakland Rover and Friday Nights at OMCA are explained below). These activities all support the museum’s goal to create relevant experiences that match the cultural interests of the local neighborhoods. OMCA is meeting their goal with wild success. The attendance at OMCA has increased from 120,000 people to 170,000 people annually over the last four years (L. Sasaki, personal communication, March 14, 2016). Before Friday Nights at OMCA was initiated, the area surrounding the museum could be appropriately described as a ghost town after 6pm when neighborhood businesses were closed and commuters had gone home. The few restaurants available in the local area had closed their doors in recent years. Today, several years after the inception of Friday Nights at OMCA, not only are 4,000 to 5,000 people attending the event every Friday night, but new restaurants and bars are popping up in the neighborhood, the local streets are filled with people after 5pm and live music and culture abound for all to enjoy. The Mayor of Oakland publically praised OMCA for revitalizing the area (L. Sasaki, personal communication, March 14, 2016). Lisa Sasaki, Director of the Audience and Civic Engagement Center at OMCA, emphasized that the museum is not conducting these activities for the sole sake of audience development. Her overall goal and
the goal of OMCA is to provide the community with a service that they find to be relevant and essential; one that engages the interests of the local neighborhoods.

How do other museums implement this survival method? According to Ms. Sasaki, engaging the community is not a quick fix solution; it requires long-term commitment to the community. She warns that museums must avoid parachuting into communities, using them until they have served a purpose, and then abandoning them (L. Sasaki, personal communication, March 14, 2016). Instead, museums should embrace engaging the community in a whole-hearted manner, taking a holistic approach that includes concern for the community within the museums’ fundamental management and operations functions (PGAFF & Helicon, 2012; L. Sasaki, personal communication, March 14, 2016). The strategy of engaging the community takes time. The approach requires an understanding of the characteristics of each museum’s local community and an honest assessment of the quality of the existing museum-community relationships.

My research uncovered several general pointers that all museums should take to successfully embark on a campaign to engage the community. The most important step is to develop a true sense of the community’s interests and values; all other steps depend upon this initial information. This process of gleaning community interests and values can be expensive and time consuming; fortunately there are a number of grants available for community engagement projects (e.g., James Irvine Foundation, Kresge Foundation, etc.). Another critical step in engaging the community starts with reaching out to existing organizations. The value in this approach is that local organizations already know the community and have established relationships with residents (L. Sasaki, personal communication, March 14, 2016). Depending upon the spectrum of existing local groups, it may also be necessary to create ethnic or community advisory councils. Whether working with existing or establishing new community organizations, it is essential to avoid saying “this is what we want to work on with you”; instead, the rhetoric should be focused on “what do you need from us” (L. Sasaki, personal communication, March 14, 2016).

Once the community’s interests and values are assessed, a museum can work with the local community to develop programs and exhibits that dovetail with the museum’s mission and purpose. For example, OMCA learned that visiting the museum location did not match with the local population’s interests. So, OMCA brought the museum to the community by
developing the Oakland Rover, “an interactive electric mobile museum whose mission is to bring participatory arts to the community. The art activities foster creativity, art making, and visioning processes that will enrich participants both within and outside of the Museum walls” (Oakland Museum of California [OMCA], 2016). In other museum communities where the museum location is off the radar of the local community, a modified form of Oakland’s Rover may be a useful tool. In another innovative way of engaging the community, the Bonita Museum and Cultural Center brought local artists in to help design a major exhibit which, in turn, led to the an increase in the museum’s attendance.

Other community engagement strategies include developing friendly alliances with other cultural institutions and volunteering for other civic leadership roles in the community (A. Frasz, personal communication, March 9, 2016; G. Lagoria de la Torre, personal communication, March 3, 2016; PGAFF & Helicon, 2012; J. Gay, February 29, personal communication, 2016). One interviewee gave the example of a museum that used to offer summer art camps for children, but faced decreasing attendance when the local YMCA also began to offer competing summer camps (A. Frasz, personal communication, March 9, 2016). Instead of developing various ways to “steal” the children back, the museum offered to teach art classes as a part of the summer camps at the YMCA. It was a win-win result – the museum continued to obtain income from the classes and neither institution had to compete with one another. Other ways museums have successfully established their community value include the offering of the museum location as a space for community gatherings and teaming up with local events, such as farmer’s markets, to collectively serve the community while increasing awareness of museum offerings (J. Gay, personal communication, February 29, 2016).

**Clear Mission Statement**

A mission statement is an aspirational declaration of an organization’s core purpose or function. It represents the foundation on which an organization’s vision, strategic plan, and business model are based. It should have the effect of focusing staff efforts around a core set of principles and providing clarity for the organization and those with a vested interest in its success. A clear and concise mission statement was one of the top methods for success recommended by several interviewees (A. Frasz, personal communication, March 9, 2016; C.
Hicks, personal communication, March 2, 2016; E. Inman, personal communication, March 12, 2016; J. Kluger, personal communication, March 4, 2016; G. Lagoria de la Torre, personal communication, March 3, 2016). A clear mission statement succinctly defines the service the organization provides to the community, which helps identify “an understanding of the contemporary relevance” of the organization (PGAFF & Helicon, 2012, p. 5). As noted earlier, the public’s interests and motivations evolve over time and museums need to continually prove how they are relevant; a clear mission is the first major step in affirming this. One source noted that “it’s not enough to say, ‘we want to survive.’ We have to be able to answer the question, ‘why’” should we survive? (PGAFF & Helicon, 2012, p.5). Having this understanding clearly outlined helps potential donors see the value of the organization and could make them more willing to donate. A clear mission statement also “limits activity and makes it easier for staff and [the] board to separate relevant opportunities from projects that would not further the institution’s goals.” (Kaiser & Egan, 2013, p. 134). Projects that sound interesting but are not related to the mission can take up precious resources to implement, and often not successfully. They can also pull already over-utilized staff in too many directions, which could result in burnout or inefficiencies (PGAFF & Helicon, 2012). Another interviewee insightfully noted that new generations (“Twitter generations”) are accustomed to reading short blurbs (E. Inman, personal communication, March 12, 2016). In order to appeal to this growing audience, mission statements should be short, catchy, and meaningful. Lastly, mission statements should be reviewed frequently so that everyone on the staff and board is intimately aware of the desired role of the organization, and to constantly confirm that the activities being conducted are consistent (A. Frasz, personal communication, March 9, 2016; C. Hicks, personal communication, March 2, 2016). Colleen Hicks, Executive Director at the Museum of the American Indian, stated that she puts reviewing the mission statement at the top of her agenda for every single board meeting.

While the San Diego Natural History Museum (SD Nat) is now a highly successful museum, its success was almost unimaginable 25 years ago. In the 1980s, the SD Nat struggled financially, had nine directors in 13 years, did not have a defined purpose and direction, and had poor attendance and fundraising (SD Nat, 2015). Since Dr. Michael Hager was hired in 1991 as the President and CEO, the SD Nat has experienced an incredible turnaround. Its budget has increased from $2.1 million to $13 million, the staff increased
from 60 to more than 150 employees, and there are over 700 volunteers, a long list of donors, and nearly 500,000 people who visit the museum each year (SD Nat, 2015). How did this turnaround happen? Dr. Hager cites several reasons, but he believes “the most strategic decision we made was to focus on our region of southern California and the peninsula of Baja California” (SD Nat, 2015, p. 1). Once the mission statement was revised to reflect a more limited and geographically relevant area, the SD Nat was able to focus its organizational energy on diverse programs that resonated with the local community and also attracted visitors from around the world.

**Strong Leader and Board of Directors**

There are two parts to this survival method – the necessity for a strong leader, such as an Executive Director or CEO, and an effective Board of Directors. Both parts have individual responsibilities and must work well together in order to be successful. A leader’s responsibilities can vary depending on the specific focus of the organization, but there are a few basic responsibilities that all leaders share. These include developing the strategic direction of the organization, complying with applicable legal and ethical requirements, managing business operations and service delivery, and passionately supporting and promoting the organization. The Board of Directors has two primary duties: support and governance. The guidelines for these duties are outlined by state and federal laws (“fiduciary duties”); additional duties vary according to the life stage of the organization. A board’s fiduciary duties include a duty of care, duty of loyalty, and duty of obedience (Goedert, 2016). Examples of these are that board members must: attend board meetings, failing to do so could be deemed negligent behavior; be loyal to the organization and put the best interests of the organization above any individual interests; ensure the mission is being carried out by following the organization’s bylaws, articles of incorporation, etc.; and oversee the organization’s financial affairs. Paid staff are responsible for running an organization but the board has the “ultimate responsibility and accountability for the organization’s actions” (Cherico, 2014). Depending on the size of the organization, boards may have to carry out duties beyond those required by law. For an organization that is small or newly formed, the board has to be hands-on and perform tasks that would normally be performed by paid staff (G. Lagoria de la Torre, personal communication, 2016; Kaiser, 2008). Organizations that are
more established require greater financial contributions from the board, including providing personal donations and connections to wealthy potential donors (G. Lagoria de la Torre, personal communication, March 3, 2016; Kaiser, 2008). Once an organization has fully matured and its standing in the community is solid, the board’s role can shift to primarily focusing on policy governance and fiduciary duties (G. Lagoria de la Torre, personal communication, March 3, 2016).

The importance of a strong leader was emphasized in nearly every single interview and literature source. Characteristics of a strong leader include: a person that “empowers the team” and inspires others (PGAFF & Helicon, 2012, p. 9); has “a single unified vision for the organization” (Kaiser, 2008, p. 10); is flexible and aware of changing environments and trends (G. Lagoria de la Torre, personal communication, March 3, 2016); thinks about the museum wherever they go (C. Hicks, personal communication, March 2, 2016); understands marketing and fundraising (Iselin, 2015; Kaiser 2008; SD Nat, 2015); can “channel their ego into making the organization great, rather than promoting themselves” (PGAFF & Helicon, 2012, p. 9); and provides an open door policy that is “very welcoming and encouraging to those who wish to contribute by bringing fresh, new ideas to the table” (A. Tellez, personal communication, March 21, 2016). A strong leader must have the experience and confidence to make decisions quickly and efficiently, and know how to work with others to achieve their goals. All of these characteristics are important because an organization needs one person at the helm who understands the organization’s goals and visions and knows the best way to achieve them. Museums don’t have the budget or resources to waste on paralysis by analysis, going after the wrong grant, or infighting among staff. If a museum can hire a strong leader, that leader can diplomatically and effectively steer the museum to success.

My interviews and literature sources provided several examples related to the importance of a strong leader. The focused leadership of Dr. Hager helped make the SD Nat the successful institution it is today. Ms. Gay is the only paid staff member of the Bonita Museum and Cultural Center, yet she is able to manage the preparation of a new exhibition every six weeks, free art classes for children every Saturday, a large team of volunteers, grant writing, and much more. As mentioned previously, the Bonita Museum is thriving because strong leadership. Consultant Michael Kaiser is known as “the turnaround king” for his work at helping numerous struggling performing arts institutions grow from a deficit budget to a
surplus one, including the Kansas City Ballet, the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, and London’s Royal Opera House. Author of several books detailing his experiences, Kaiser continually emphasizes that the very first rule is “Someone Must Lead” (Kaiser, 2008, p. 10). His many successes at various performing arts institutions prove the wisdom of his words. Several of the other consultants I interviewed also identified a strong leader as one of the most important components of a successful museum (A. Frasz, personal communication, March 9, 2016; G. Lagoria de la Torre, personal communication, March 3, 2016; Iselin, 2015).

A strong and effective Board of Directors goes hand in hand with a strong leader. While the leader provides a clear sense of direction and focus, board members are ambassadors in the community, touting the organization whenever possible and providing a positive and professional face (Kaiser & Egan, 2013). The characteristics of a strong board include individuals who are motivated to help the organization (E. Inman, personal communication, March 12, 2016) and willing to work hard at whatever is necessary, not merely talk passionately about the organization (i.e. “lip service passion” à la Iselin, 2015). Board members also should bring to the table essential services, such as connections to wealthy individuals, financial expertise, fundraising, community connections, and marketing (E. Inman, personal communication, March 12, 2016; Kaiser, 2008; Kaiser & Egan, 2013). Some consultants and literature sources recommended setting a minimum required financial or time contribution for board members (Kaiser, 2008; G. Lagoria de la Torre, personal communication, March 3, 2016), although smaller museums I interviewed did not require this (C. Hicks, personal communication, March 2, 2016; J. Gay, personal communication, February 29, 2016; K. Oatsvall, personal communication, March 9, 2016). The leader of an organization details the roles and responsibilities of board members, but the board must actually fulfill those duties while staying within the limits of their position. Kaiser (2013, p. 79) recommends aligning responsibilities with a board member’s interests and skills, especially allowing them to “adopt” a project or program. This will keep them excited and enthusiastic about the organization and utilize them to their full potential. For example, a board member with public relations experience should be assigned to work with staff on promoting the upcoming exhibit. Several museums and consultants emphasized the importance of term limits or turnover policies so that the board is always full of fresh and excited individuals who are flexible and open to change (J. Gay, personal communication,

Establishing a strong leader and well-functioning board as a museum survival method has a proven track record of success. Among those organizations that reported minimal stress during the Great Recession (as opposed to severe or very severe), 39% said they did so with extraordinary help from the board (Salamon et al., 2009). In their experience working separately for many different non-profit organizations, consultants Michael Kaiser and Tom Iselin cite this survival method as the number one method (Iselin, 2015; Kaiser, 2008; Kaiser & Egan, 2013). Other interviewees also stated that a strong leader and board were in the top two methods for success (A. Frasz, personal communication, March 9, 2016; E. Inman, personal communication, March 12, 2016; G. Lagoria de la Torre, personal communication, March 3, 2016). The Bonita Museum and Cultural Center, while small, has survived a fire, economic downturns, and changes in the community and, yet, they are still thriving, in no small part due to the incredibly engaged board that are well-connected to the community, donate when necessary, and lend a helping hand if required (J. Gay, personal communication, February 29, 2016).

**Better Business Model**

Only a few sources specifically mentioned the importance of business acumen or employing a business model for museums and non-profits (PGAFF & Helicon, 2012; C. Hicks, personal communication, March 2, 2016; E. Inman, personal communication, March 12, 2016; Salamon et al., 2009), but several other survival methods are intertwined with business economics, even though my sources did not specifically associate the two. These survival methods include a strategic plan, effective fundraising strategy, and effective marketing strategy. I will describe the better business model survival method first and explain how the strategic plan, effective fundraising strategy, and effective marketing strategy are related. Specifics related to these three other survival methods are included in their individual sections below.

Business acumen includes understanding business economics and realizing the importance of developing a business model for almost any organization. As several of my
sources noted, non-profits can and should learn from business models that have been developed by corporations to yield greater income and expense efficiency (PGAFF & Helicon, 2012; C. Hicks, personal communication, March 2, 2016; E. Inman, personal communication, March 12, 2016; Salamon et al., 2009). As mentioned in Chapter 2 and cited by a few sources (C. Hicks, personal communication, March 2, 2016; E. Inman, personal communication, 2016; Kaiser & Egan, 2013), the focus of a non-profit business model should include identifying realistic budgets and continually monitoring them, fostering efficient staff and boards, understanding the unfulfilled needs of their target audiences, and marketing the services they provide to both target audiences and potential donors.

The first steps to an effective business model are establishing a budget and fostering efficient resources. This budget should be realistic and based on the strategic plan of the organization (C. Hicks, personal communication, March 2, 2016; Kaiser & Egan, 2013). Once the strategic plan is established, the costs and incomes associated with each goal can be estimated. The staff and board should review expenses and income from previous years and identify any outliers, such as one-time donations, grants, or exhibit expenses that are not likely to occur again (E. Inman, personal communication, 2016; Kaiser & Egan, 2013). For organizations that have a particularly limited budget, they may want to review the "financial performance against budget" frequently, even weekly if necessary, to catch exceedances early and with enough time to correct them (Kaiser & Egan, 2013, p. 112). If these reviews identify budget exceedances, the institution must figure out a way to correct itself. "Belt tightening" strategies, such as eliminating positions, freezing hiring or salaries, or putting staff on furloughs are methods institutions often go to first. These may be effective in the short term. For example, during the Great Recession, 56% of non-profits tried cutting administrative and overhead costs, and 60% reported successful or very successful financial performance as a result (Salamon et al., 2009). But some argue that this is not a good strategy in the long run because it can affect the quality of the service and marketing (Kaiser & Egan, 2013). The first place non-profits should look to cut back are “unneeded staff, support expenses, travel budgets, and entertainment budgets” (Kaiser & Egan, 2013, p. 112). An option for some non-profits to cut back on staff and support expenses is to share certain employees with other similar institutions. For example, two museums could employ the same administrative staff (each employing the individual part time), volunteer coordinator, or
financial officer. According to one study conducted in 2009 (just after the Great Recession officially ended), of those non-profits who attempted to share staff with other organizations, 80% reported success (Salamon et al., 2009). One way to ensure that staff members and the board are performing efficiently is to clearly define their roles, responsibilities, and expectations (Iselin, 2015; Kaiser & Egan, 2013). This can be done in part by mimicking the orientation tools, checklists, coordination tools, and other guidance documents that corporations use. Yearly performance reviews that include goal setting for the upcoming year can be useful as well.

An understanding of the target audiences’ needs and marketing effectively are also critical to consider in the development of a business model. The Engaging the Community survival method mentioned above provides a framework for how to understand the target audience’s needs and values. Once a museum has identified their target audience’s needs, they can market their services to both the community and potential donors. This is best done by implementing fundraising and marketing strategic plans, which are discussed in separate sections below.

**Strategic Plan**

Generally, a strategic plan identifies implementable ways that an organization can meet its mission. It typically includes measurable goals, policies, and objectives that are revisited on an ongoing basis and adjusted if necessary. The entire staff and board of directors should be involved in the creation, update, and evaluation of an organization’s strategic plan. A strategic plan also typically encompasses or includes elements of a business plan, fundraising plan, and marketing plan.

I asked all museum professional interviewees if they had a strategic plan and all consultants if they recommended the use of a strategic plan. The museum professionals at larger museums reported that they all had strategic plans that were maintained somewhat regularly and all of the consultants emphasized the importance of organizations having a strategic plan. Most of the small museum professionals indicated that time and budget constraints made it difficult to maintain a strategic plan. I investigated the reported small museum dilemma by asking the consultants what value they saw in small museums maintaining a strategic plan, given their limitations and small program (e.g., one or two paid
staff, one new exhibit a year, etc.). The consultants overwhelmingly recommended that small museums create and maintain strategic plans despite the difficulties in doing so and suggested that they focus on finding professionals in the community to help pro bono (J. Kluger, personal communication, March 4, 2016; G. Lagoria de la Torre, March 3, personal communication, 2016). These consultants asked rhetorically how else a museum would be able to outline their goals for the future and a road map for how to achieve those goals. Other consultants also have noted that a strategic plan “provides staff with a clear set of priorities and assignments, and it ensures that nothing is wasted – not one dollar or minute” (Kaiser & Egan, 2013, p. 132). Establishing a strategic plan was one of the first priorities of Dr. Hager at the SD Nat (SD Nat, 2015). His strategic plan outlined steps to take for the next 10 years and focused on a long term plan for exhibits, including planning exhibits three years in advance. A strategic plan does not have to be updated frequently (every five years is a possible time frame) but it should be reviewed to confirm that the steps outlined in the plan are being implemented, or if they need to be adjusted due to new information.

This was the only survival method where I encountered conflicting information from my interviewees. Based on the discussions I had with consultants and museum professionals related to strategic plans, my conclusion is that strategic plans are essential for every organization, no matter how small. When an organizational leader is overwhelmed by staff and financial matters, a strategic plan helps the leader know what to focus on. The board can use a strategic plan to guide them in helping the leader and or in finding others in the community who can help. With a strategic plan, staff work has a specific direction and purpose. If the hired director/leader is competent, having a strategic plan will help them reach their goals. Everyone has to trust the process put in place by the strategic plan. That is why creating a strategic plan is essential for any sized organization, even if it means finding someone in the community to prepare the strategic plan on a pro-bono basis.

**Effective Fundraising Strategy**

Fundraising plays a significant role in the business operations of most museums and non-profits. Fundraising generally includes obtaining donations from individuals, businesses, charitable foundations, or government agencies. Donations can include financial gifts (e.g., one-time donations, endowments, grants, etc.), in-kind gifts (such as providing services for
free or at a discount, e.g., catering food for an event, offering a reduced facility rental, etc.),
or gifts of time (e.g., volunteering). Most organizations survive with a combination of
donation types, and fundraising typically accounts for the primary source of income for an
organization. Several organizations reported success with targeted campaigns, which can
include asking for donations to support a particular program or event (J. Gay, personal
communication, February 29, 2016; K. Oatsvall, personal communication, March 9, 2016;
Salamon et al., 2009). Others accumulate donations from local community corporations like
banks, small businesses and other community organizations (J. Gay, personal
communication, February 29, 2016; Salamon et al., 2009; A. Tellez, personal
communication, March 21, 2016). While endowment money decreased during the economic
recession, those funds can still significantly help the financial stability of an organization and
should be sought. For example, Kathleen Oatsvall, Director of the Heritage of the Americas
Museum, noted that the museum would not have survived the economic recession without an
endowment. Grants, particularly those from government agencies, historically were a
significant portion of an organization’s income. It is becoming increasingly difficult,
however, to obtain grants because the application process is extensive and there is more
competition for fewer resources (C. Hicks, personal communication, March 2, 2016; E.
Inman, personal communication, 2016; Kaiser & Egan, 2013; C. Stankowski, personal
communication, March 26, 2016). In response, many institutions are turning to individual
donations and endowments.

There are copious amounts of information regarding fundraising strategies available
on the internet and in books and print, and in most communities there are professional
fundraisers that can be hired full time or on a contract basis. It is not in the scope of this
thesis to provide an exhaustive summary of successful fundraising strategies but I will
provide a few tips that I identified during my literature research and interviews, the most
significant of which is the importance of having a fundraising strategy. With individual
donations becoming more and more essential to the financial success of an institution,
museums must develop a strategy to obtain the maximum amount of individual donations
possible. For Tom Iselin, hiring a top-notch fundraiser is the second most important position
in a non-profit, second only to a strong leader (T. Iselin, personal communication, March 10,
2016). Another option for cash-strapped organizations is to hire a grant writer, who is an
expert in applying for grants, on a contract basis. Some museums may not have the immediate funds to hire a dedicated fundraiser or grant writer, or their donor pool may be too shallow to warrant a dedicated fundraiser (K. Decker, personal communication, March 24, 2016). Regardless, fundraising in some form must be a priority for any museum and every staff and board member should participate.

The most important components of a fundraising program are a strong leader, solid strategic plan, skilled staff, and an established donor pool (K. Decker, personal communication, March 24, 2016). Organizations with limited budgets must get the most “bang for their buck” (i.e., obtain the most donations with the least amount of effort). The fundraising plan should take a hard look at the prospective donors and prioritize them according to their inclination and ability to give. One on one meetings are widely recognized as an incredibly effective way to obtain donations (K. Decker, personal communication, March 24, 2016; Iselin, 2015; Kaiser, 2008). Providing special “behind the scenes” tours or other opportunities (Kaiser, 2008; SD Nat, 2015) are also valuable techniques for attracting donors, although these events can be labor-intensive. Tracking information can help prioritize and focus fundraising efforts so that these labor-intensive activities are utilized for the highest return. It is critical to catalogue the donor pool with an entity-based database that includes categories for name, address, dates of attendance of an event, type of event attended, who they attended the event with, if they donated and how much, what they are interested in, if they are familiar with museum staff or the board, how they first heard of the museum, and if they are philanthropic (K. Decker, personal communication, March 24, 2016). This information is typically self-reported and can be gleaned from surveys and interviews. A museum should also track how many people attend events and note the days and times. Email open rates should be tracked to see who opens an email and if they click on any links. Information gleaned from social media, such as the number of “likes,” “shares,” “tweets,” etc., should also be tracked. All of these “big data” can be used to understand the audience and effectively utilize internal resources to best accommodate their needs and patterns (K. Decker, personal communication, March 24, 2016). For example, a museum may find that younger members do not read printed mail, while older members do, which should affect the strategy for how these members are contacted.
Effective Marketing Strategy

Having an effective marketing strategy was not specifically cited by most interviewees or literature sources as a method for success, although it was mentioned by a few (B. Carroll, personal communication, 2016; Kaiser & Egan, 2013; Salamon et al., 2009; A. Tellez, personal communication, March 21, 2016). Just as a for-profit business must have effective marketing and pricing strategies (Rickard, 2006), all museums and non-profits must have a way of showcasing the services they provide so they can generate interest. Whether the museum has a budget that is in the millions of dollars or under $100,000, they should still implement a marketing strategy that effectively reaches their target audience and is scaled appropriately to their budget. I am not a marketing expert and will not attempt to outline a successful marketing strategy; however, I will provide several tips that I gleaned from interviews and literature sources.

There are two primary types of marketing campaigns: “programmatic marketing,” which is specific to a particular program or exhibit, and “institutional marketing,” which focuses on the overall institution (Kaiser & Egan, 2013, p. 8). Both are important to implement and there are a variety of ways to do this. An executive director and board members should conduct “grassroots marketing”, which includes face to face meetings with the local chamber of commerce, city government employees, other businesses and organizations in the community, library, school districts, etc. (G. Lagoria de la Torre, personal communication, March 3, 2016). Media exposure was also brought up as a way to generate interest – invite the media to an exhibit opening, annual gala fundraiser, or worthwhile project and you will get, essentially, free marketing (Iselin, 2015; G. Lagoria de la Torre, March 3, personal communication, 2016; Salamon et al., 2009). Ms. Hicks provided an example of how media exposure helped turn a horrible act into a benefit for the Museum of the American Indian. Outside of the museum building there was a replica of a kotcha (the house for the local Miwok tribe) that the museum used in their educational programs. One morning Ms. Hicks came to work to find that the kotcha had been destroyed by vandals. The museum did not have the extra funds to rebuild the kotcha, but, fortunately, the local media outlet published a story, which resulted in an outpouring of community support. As a result of the generosity of the local community, the museum was able to rebuild the kotcha, as well as add a replica of a granary and install security cameras and lights.
Several interviewees stated that paid advertising and print collateral (an industry term for brochures, fact sheets, etc. that market or promote a product or service) for small museums was not a good investment (J. Kluger, personal communication, March 4, 2016; G. Lagoria de la Torre, personal communication, March 3, 2016) but everyone utilizes social media and other electronic media in some capacity. Social media are proving to be an effective and inexpensive way to market and should be an essential component to any marketing strategy. A specific social media plan should be outlined in the marketing strategy and one person should be dedicated to managing it (rather than delegating to several people) (B. Carroll, personal communication, 2016). For museums on a limited budget, it is better to focus on one or two social media platforms (such as Facebook or Twitter) and post frequently and consistently. Sporadic posts on a variety of platforms is not as effective. Posts should have a different focus each week, such as highlighting a member, donor, or exhibit of the month, or providing a behind the scenes look into the museum (B. Carroll, personal communication, 2016). Board members, volunteers, and visitors should be encouraged to post on their personal social media sites reports of what they are doing at the museum (providing them with suggestions on what to tweet or post is often helpful). Social media can also be used to develop partnerships with other organizations by providing each other kudos and positive feedback in comment sections. Videos and photographs are poignant, especially when captured in the moment. For example, snapping a picture (with the parents’ permission!) of children having a blast with a newly installed interactive children’s exhibit and posting it on the organization’s social media platforms can be very effective (B. Carroll, personal communication, 2016).

Volunteers

A robust volunteer network was as commonly cited as other survival methods, but all museums and other non-profits I researched had a core group of volunteers that were essential to their success. For example, the SD Nat estimates that the dollar value for volunteer hours in 2014/2015 was $1.5 million (SD Nat, 2015). Ms. Gay is the only paid staff member at the Bonita Museum and she relies on her dedicated and skilled volunteers for numerous tasks ranging from exhibit set up to managing the cash register to helping with the annual fundraising event. Ms. Oatsvall at the Heritage of the Americas Museum receives
extensive support for field trips, social media, and managing the reception area from her volunteers. Ms. Hicks and Ms. Gay both receive individuals who are required to complete community service for minor infractions (such as DUI or traffic violations); these individuals help the museums with essential (if unglamorous) tasks such as cleaning, inventory, or reception, and sometimes they continue volunteering after their hours are completed.

The best way to take advantage of the full value of volunteers and to encourage others to volunteer is by having an effective volunteer program in place (Iselin, 2015; Kaiser & Egan, 2013). This can be challenging for non-profits with limited budgets; however, there are ways to scale the level of effort required to create this program. Having a dedicated volunteer coordinator is ideal but board members or a skilled volunteer could coordinate the volunteer program, especially if you do not have many volunteers. Important components of a volunteer program include: a dedicated strategic plan and budget; a handbook that outlines expectations and responsibilities, and includes checklists and training manuals; a database to maintain names, skills, and scheduled volunteer days; an email list, blog, or other effective way to keep volunteers informed of events, changes, etc.; and a strategy for encouraging new volunteers (Iselin, 2015). Volunteers should be frequently acknowledged and thanked for their help; volunteer appreciation events and perks or benefits are a great way to accomplish this (Iselin, 2015; Kaiser & Egan, 2013).

**OTHER POSSIBLE METHOD OF SUCCESS – INTERPRETATION**

The eight survival methods listed above are methods that have a proven track record of success in museums. Other innovative methods inevitably are being employed by successful museums, but are so novel or specific to certain kinds of museums or institutions that their implementation is, over the near term, restricted or not widely known. My methods likely would not capture such successful innovations. One such method deserving of mention for its established track record of success at national parks and outdoor interpretive centers, and fledgling success in museums, is “interpretation” (Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 2003). Though originating in a different environment, interpretation clearly has application to the museum setting and is starting to be considered by museum professionals. While the literature sources and interviewees I reviewed did not specifically name interpretation,
several of the eight survival methods contain elements of its tenets. Therefore, I would be remiss to not include a summary of interpretation and provide references for museum professionals to review for applicability to their institution.

In its simplest definition, “interpretation translates or brings meaning to people about natural and cultural environments” (Knudson et al., 2003, p. 3). The interpreter, whether an individual or exhibit, focuses on translating complex, technical information into a format that is more interesting and relevant to visitors. Interpretation can be “personal” (e.g., when an individual guides a visitor through storytelling, tours, natural walks, etc.) or “nonpersonal” (e.g., self-guided trails or exhibits and smartphone apps) (Beck & Cable, 2011, p. xxii).

There are several recognized guiding principles for interpretation, as outlined in “The Gifts of Interpretation” by Larry Beck and Ted Cable (2011). These principles provide guidelines, methods, and practices for successful implementation of interpretation in natural and cultural settings, including museums. These principles include relating the exhibit to the lives and memory of the audience; providing information to reveal deeper meaning; designing presentations or exhibits in ways that are informative, entertaining, and enlightening; stimulating visitors to broaden their personal horizons; presenting themes that speak more to a holistic view of humankind; offering different methods based on audience demographics; bringing the past alive in the present and making it applicable to the future; incorporating technology effectively; focusing on quality and selection of information presented; understanding effective verbal and communication techniques; attracting financial support; sparking desire and interest in audiences; organizing exhibit space effectively; and instilling passion in both the audience as well as the interpreters (Beck & Cable, 2011, p. xxiv).

Literature regarding interpretation suggests its application to a variety of settings, including museums. Interpretation recognizes the importance of understanding the “values, motivations, attitudes, and satisfactions” of the audience member (Beck & Cable, 2011, p. 6). In order to obtain an accurate understanding of the visitor, interpretation principles identify the importance of conducting visitor surveys and informal conversations to determine what is meaningful to visitors, what their barriers to attendance are, their demographics, and what method of learning best suites them. Using the interpretation approach, museum interpreters are provided additional tools for developing programs and exhibits that tug at the visitor’s
heart strings. Visitors potentially become more interested in history when exhibits actively relate to them or provide a sense of discovery. Using personalized questions or using terms like “you”, “we”, “our” (Beck & Cable, 2011, p. 8) are examples of this approach. Interpretation principles also offer methods to develop well-organized exhibits, appropriate flow, eye-catching displays, and effective use of media and marketing materials (Knudson et al., 2003).

Interpretation contains and utilizes several of the eight survival methods and, therefore, provides clear benefits to museums. As I discussed in the Engaging the Community section above, identifying and understanding the target audience and community, and determining their interests and motivations, are a key components of this survival method and are contained within the interpretation approach. Interpretation also stresses the importance of volunteers and developing interesting exhibits that capture the attention of donors, another link between interpretation and survival methods. Further investigation of interpretation would serve museums well because quality interpretation can be a powerful means of developing popular exhibits, attracting donors and volunteers, and providing an avenue for the visitor to investigate their community, other cultures, and themselves as an individual.

**APPLICABILITY TO SDAC**

In order to make this thesis an applied study, I chose to work closely with a small local museum, particularly hard hit by the recent recession, the SDAC. The SDAC was founded in 1998 as a repository for archaeological collections from San Diego County, as well as a museum and educational center. The SDAC continues to maintain the curation facility, upkeep permanent and temporary exhibition displays, provide educational programs to the community, and allow qualified researchers access to their extensive collection. The mission of the SDAC is “to preserve archaeological collections and promote their educational, scientific and cultural use to benefit a diverse public”. The SDAC currently employs four full-time staff and one-part time staff with over 30 volunteers and several student interns.

My original goal after identifying survival methods was to determine which ones would be most applicable to the SDAC based on how similar to the SDAC the museums that
implemented them were. I hypothesized that specific methods related to participatory exhibition design or educational programs would differ depending on the demographics of the museum. However, this was not the case. Instead, the survival methods I identified were basic and fundamental to every museum, no matter the size, budget, or discipline. The only differences were in the scale that the survival methods were implemented – e.g., a large museum would have the resources to hire individual fundraisers, marketing professionals, financial experts, etc. while smaller museums would have to fold those responsibilities into one job description for staff or volunteers. My original plan to run my data through the differentiator analysis is no longer applicable. All eight of the survival methods I identified can and should be implemented by the SDAC, but it would be useful to identify a practical starting point for SDAC.

I utilized the survival method ranking system to determine which survival methods were cited most frequently by reference sources (e.g., museum professional and consultant interviewees, literature sources, etc.). The results of that analysis are presented in Figure 7. The top three survival methods turned out to be creating a clear mission statement, developing local community relationships, and having an effective strong leader/board team in place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helicon 2009, 2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salamon et al., 2009</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Kaiser</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Iselin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexis Frasz (Helicon)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgianna (Museum Management Consultants)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Imman (Watts Theater Company)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Kluger (WolfBrown)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Sasaki (Oakland Museum of California)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego Natural History Museum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen Hicks (MAI)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Oatsvall (Heritage of the Americas Museum)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Gay (Bonita Museum)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 7. Results of survival method ranking system.*
Armed with this information, I met with Cindy Stankowski, the Executive Director at the SDAC, to share my findings, to determine if the SDAC was implementing any methods already, and to discuss the feasibility of developing a plan to implement a few. What Ms. Stankowski reported to me was that the SDAC had already implemented several of the survival methods with varying degrees of efficiency. For example, the SDAC has a mission statement, leader, board, and strategic plan in place and each could be tinkered with according to the survival method principles. However, Ms. Stankowski felt that the survival method that would be most beneficial to the SDAC was engaging the community.

Based on Ms. Stankowski’s inclination and the ranking of the survival methods, I decided to create an implementation plan that focused on the number one survival method (Engaging the Community) and identify specific actions SDAC could take to engage their community. I also decided to provide a list of the key tips and tactics culled from all eight survival methods. Even though my focus would be on engaging the community, I felt it valuable to provide a handy reference guide to other survival methods. This list is not specific to SDAC and can also be used by any museum.
CHAPTER 6

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE SDAC

Based on my research into the community engagement survival method and my conversations with Ms. Stankowski, I came up with a plan for the SDAC to consider. From my community engagement research, I identified four primary actions to improve the process of engaging the community: identify your community, understand your community, determine the service you can provide to the community and, finally, implement your ideas. These four specific actions are what I recommend that Ms. Stankowski and SDAC undertake.

Identify the local community

When I asked Ms. Stankowski about who comprised SDAC’s target community, she indicated professional archaeologists and members of the public who are curious about archaeology. This is a useful general identification, but SDAC should consider more specifically defining this community and expanding it. Specifically, I recommend the following:

- More specifically define the target community
  - Develop and maintain a list of practicing archaeologists in San Diego County, and possibly all of southern California. Populate this list with local members of professional organizations (such as the Society for California Archaeology, Society for American Archaeology, etc.), employees at various cultural resource management (CRM) firms, professors of archaeology at local universities, etc.

  - Refine, develop, and maintain a list of curious members of the public. In order to develop a list of curious members of the public, the SDAC must refine who they are and how to contact them. The “curious public” should be broken down into more manageable and specific components of the population, such as, government, educational, business, and other cultural institutions. This would make the process of identifying possible contacts to include in a database of each of these population arenas easier. From such a database, it will be possible to uncover and cultivate potential connections with local
community groups such as historical societies, schools, local businesses, or public agencies.

- Develop partnerships with similar institutions and organizations that share mission themes. Other museums such as San Diego’s Museum of Man or the Heritate of the Americas Museum, and interest and avocational groups such as the Pacific Coast Archaeological Society (PCAS) and San Diego County Archaeological Society are potential areas for collaboration and partnership.

- Expand the target community

- Due to the limited number of local practicing archaeologists and difficulty in identifying and contacting curious members of the public, I recommend expanding the geographical confines of the target community to include the geographic community near the SDAC facility – i.e., the City of Escondido. Doing so would provide a local focus for the SDAC based on geography. From my research, it is clear that most small museums find success by cultivating connections to the local community.

In each of the above targeting efforts, it is critical to have the goal of creating a database of contacts, potential and known. Potential contacts make up the networking basis for future efforts by the leader, board, and volunteers to reach out and get to know the community. The list should contain, at a minimum, the name, mailing address, email address, and phone number of each contact. Ideally, this list would be merged with the donor database and eventually include the additional information listed under the Effective Fundraising Strategy section of Chapter 5.

**Understand the local community**

Once the target community has been identified and a list of potential contacts created, SDAC should begin the process of uncovering the needs of these community members. This process can be a formal one that involves the hiring of outside consulting help or a more informal one by SDAC leaders, staff, and board members. The process includes:

- Researching community engagement strategies conducted by other institutions, such as the OMCA Neighborhood Identity Report (http://museumca.org/connect), University of Lincoln Our Lincolnshire project (http://ourlincolnshire.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/), The Wallace Foundation’s Building Arts Audiences (Harlow, 2014), and others.

- Preparing a strategy for how to understand your community. At a minimum, the SDAC strategy should include: coordinating with existing community groups, such as schools, public agencies, or business groups; interviews; surveys; and focus groups.
Applying for a grant or asking for a specific individual donation to underwrite efforts to survey the target community. Community engagement is a popular topic for foundations, with groups like the James Irvine Foundation, Kresge Foundation, and private companies all providing grants and funding.

Whether done internally or using consultants, developing an organized approach to getting to know the community through interviews, surveys, and focus groups is critical.

**Determine the service SDAC can provide to the local community**

One of the major outcomes of community research in the previous step will be to gain a sense of the community’s interests. The next task will be to blend the community’s interests with the museum’s purpose and activities. Specific recommendations include:

- When surveying existing community groups, be sure to ask questions such as, what is your community interested in? Would they like to involve archaeology and history into their lives? If so, how?

- Be prepared to offer ideas but also be open to new ideas that the community offers. Integrating archaeology into everyday life is not as easy as integrating art or science and the community may have few ideas.

I have provided some ideas in the next section that are based on experiences of other history-related museums and institutions. Working with community partners, SDAC can develop innovative ideas that creatively address the interests of the local community and continue to address SDAC’s mission goals.

**Implementation**

- Create a strategy for implementing the ideas that SDAC and local community partners generate.

- Continue to involve the community in these decisions and the implementation process. As the community sees SDAC is willing to listen and address their needs, community members likely will offer more ideas for future engagements.

- While there is much a small museum can do with its leader, board, and volunteers, it may be necessary to obtain other grants or individual donations. Increasing fundraising efforts (another survival method) will be key to continued success.

**PRELIMINARY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IDEAS**

Because the community may not have ideas on how to integrate archaeology into their lives, I generated some preliminary ideas. These are just a place to start – SDAC will need to determine which ideas would be most valuable, practical, and likely to succeed.

**Partner with a Cultural Resource Management firm**
• Provide interested members of the community with a chance to see a real excavation in action! With the appropriate permissions from clients, agencies, Native American tribes, and other interested parties, partner with a CRM firm to allow public tours of their project sites.

• Follow a model similar to the SD Nat, where SDAC provides CRM consultant services. Provide opportunities to students and capable members of the community to participate in excavations, surveys, and file searches, where appropriate. The Anthropological Studies Center through Sonoma State University has successfully combined CRM consulting services with student training for years: http://www.sonoma.edu/asc/default.shtml.

Promote similarities between the past, the present, and the future

• Based on a brief search of census data, residents of Escondido include Latinos, non-Latino whites, new families, elderly, and agricultural workers. Each of these groups overlap and experience a variety of challenges, such as racism, immigration, surviving in an increasingly expensive part of the world, assimilation, separation from families or loved ones, and dependence on the climate. Past inhabitants of the area at one time or another experienced related problems. The SDAC “can address the issues of a diverse past, the social relevance of archaeology, and real-world problem solving” (Shackel & Chambers, 2004, p. 9). This can be done with exhibits, education, and outreach programs that show “the historical root of these struggles” (Shackel & Chambers, 2004, p. 9), discuss cultural and social constructs, and promote awareness of connections between the past and present. The specific programs and exhibits should be determined as part of your community engagement strategy.

• Research the following links because they provide valuable ideas implemented by several institutions around the world:
  o Bowne House Historical Society (http://www.bownehouse.org/society_about_us.htm)
  o Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Natural and Historical Resources Division Archaeology Program at the Mount Calvert Historical and Archaeological Park (http://history.pgparks.com/sites_and_museums/Mount_Calvert_Historical_and_Archaeological_Park.htm)
  o University of Lincoln Our Lincolnshire project (http://ourlincolnshire.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/)
  o Museum of Chinese in America in New York (http://www.mocanyc.org/).

• Research concepts regarding public archaeology, such as those outlined in Places in Mind, Public Archaeology as Applied Anthropology (Shackel and Chambers, 2004).
- Develop something similar to OMCA’s Rover – a vehicle that can easily transport portions of the collection to community events such as farmer’s markets, fairs, performances, etc.

**Develop educational programs for students (K-12) that utilize archaeology to satisfy standardized testing requirements**

- First determine what the California standardized testing requires and then build programs around that.
- For example, the Outreach Education Program at the Bowne House includes lessons for fourth and fifth graders on map analysis, primary source documents research, and artifact analysis. This allows students to “extrapolate information from them [artifacts] in conjunction with maps and documents. As a result, archaeology acts as a way to link the units together in order to demonstrate their modern applications” (Moyer, 2004, p. 98).
- The Bowne House example can be applied to the SDAC and scaled as necessary to fit a variety of grades. This would result in short-term increases in costs to develop the program but could be covered by grants or individual donations.

**TIPS AND TACTICS FOR ANY MUSEUM**

Based on the results from my interviews and literature research, I also prepared a summary of essential tips and tactics for all eight survival methods. This list is not specific to the SDAC and can be used by any museum.

**Engaging the Community**

- Identify your community.
- Understand your community by conducting surveys, interviews, and focus groups and by collaborating with existing community groups.
- Determine the service you can provide to your community by asking what your community’s interests, desires, and needs are, and modifying your existing services to them.
- Develop and implement a strategy based on the information gathered.
- Apply for grants for community engagement to cover the cost of these efforts. It is a popular topic and the James Irvine Foundation and others have grants available.

**Clear Mission Statement**

- Review with staff and board frequently.
- Your mission statement should be short, catchy, and meaningful.
- When developing or adjusting a mission statement, think about why your institution is relevant to the community.
Strong Leader and Board of Directors

- Hire a talented executive director or CEO who has fundraising and marketing skills, empowers their team, and is an effective communicator.
- Grow a board filled with passionate members who have varied experiences in fundraising, law, finances, and marketing, as well as connections to wealthy individuals and the community.
- The leader must identify roles, responsibilities, and expectations and the board and staff must follow through.

Better Business Model

- Establish a realistic budget by closely reviewing previous year’s expenses and income.
- Prepare job descriptions for the leader, board, and other staff.
- Consider sharing staff resources with related organizations.
- Develop a strategic, fundraising, and marketing plan.

Strategic Plan

- Develop and maintain a strategic plan, even if you have to find a consultant to work pro bono.
- Consider updating the strategic plan every five years.

Effective Fundraising Strategy

- Develop and maintain a fundraising strategy.
- Consider asking your board to pull together funds to cover a fundraiser’s or grant writer’s salary for two years with the expectation that the staff member will cover their salary and more after two years.
- Develop a list of prospective donors and prioritize that list according to whom has the most ability and inclination to give to your institution. Meet face to face with the highest rated donors.
- Maintain a database that tracks information about your donors and audience.
- Don’t be afraid to make “the ask”!

Effective Marketing Strategy

- Develop and maintain a marketing strategy, including a social media plan.
- Meet with the local chamber of commerce, city government employees, other businesses and organizations in the community, library, school districts, etc.
- Develop relationships with local media outlets and provide them news-worthy stories whenever possible.
Minimize the amount of paid advertising and print collateral and increase your social media presence and other electronic media materials.

Focus on one or two social media platforms and post frequently and consistently.

Encourage board members, volunteers, and visitors to post on their personal social media sites about what they are doing at the museum (you can even provide them with suggestions on what to tweet or post).

Develop partnerships with other organizations by giving each other kudos on social media.

Volunteers

- Develop a volunteer program and either hire a volunteer coordinator or make this the responsibility of a board member or dedicated volunteer.
- Develop a strategic plan, volunteer handbook, and strategy for encouraging new volunteers.
- Provide perks or benefits for volunteers and frequently acknowledge and thank them (such as with a volunteer appreciation event).

CONCLUSION

This thesis took several twists and turns as I progressed further into my research and writing. When I first began, I intended to focus on the effects of Great Recession on museums, but I quickly realized that there were deeper challenges facing museums and other not for profit organizations, primarily the massive change in the population’s relationship with the arts and where they spend their leisure time. While an entire thesis could be dedicated to this, my goal was primarily to provide practical help to the SDAC and other museums. The end result is a thesis that covers a wide swath of issues, consolidating numerous "self-help" books and pieces of advice for museums and non-profits into one handy reference. The research I conducted also built a potential roadmap for the SDAC to follow, a pathway that has its foundation in new museology and anthropological tenants, and has been tested by other institutions of varying sizes and disciplines to great success.

Because I conducted the background research and initial legwork, this thesis also provides opportunities for other, more focused research studies. Museums looking to thrive can decide which survival method best fits their needs and dive into implementation, knowing that the survival method has proven success in some contexts. Students looking for applied anthropological research topics have a place to start as well; my hope is that others
will use this thesis as a foundation to continue investigating museums and community engagement, for example, or the relationships between future generations and the arts.

Museums can still be relevant in today's culture, but they must adapt, as everyone must, to changing cultural and economic tides. The discipline of anthropology is particularly suited to help guide museums towards a new paradigm. In order to be relevant, museums must understand their community and what their interests, needs, and values are. Anthropology provides the theory and methods to do this in an effective and ethical manner. New museology provides the theory and methods for museums, specifically, to take what they learned from the community and implement activities in a museum setting. A dose of business economics and an understanding of how profitable businesses run can help further develop a practical plan of action.

The entire world is changing and this change is affecting all organizations and institutions, not just museums, and some are adapting better than others. Museums should embrace this change, not as a negative, but as a worthwhile challenge that will help to better serve their community and accomplish their mission goals. In this way, museums and applied anthropology are closely entwined. Museums are not just spaces that display objects; they are perfectly poised to be a place of community and identity building, based on values important to new generations. By using the survival methods identified in this thesis, I believe more museums can ensure they will still be around to offer such a space.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

EXAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The list below includes a list of the basic interview questions I asked during my interviews. Depending on the responses or interviewee’s specialty, I asked additional follow-up questions.

Museum Employees

• How many employees work at your museum? Volunteers?
• What are the ranges of positions at your museum? i.e. do you have a marketing director, public relations specialist, community outreach coordinator, etc.?
• Approximately how many people visit your museum each year?
• Are the museum visitors primarily local or do you get national or international visitors?
• What is the museum’s approximate gross and net income each year?
• Do you think your museum has successfully survived the recent economic recession? If so, why?
• Can you pinpoint one or a few specific programs, exhibits, or other methods that were particularly effective for your museum?
• Have there been any programs, exhibits, or other methods that were not successful? If so, why?
• Are there any lessons learned you can share with me?

Consultants

• What size museums have you supported as part of your company or in your career? In terms of budget, visitors, etc.
• What is the scope of a typical project related to helping a museum be successful? E.g. what do you get hired to do?
• Can you identify one or a few projects/methods that were particularly effective at helping museums survive in the economic recession or other tough times?
• Have there been any projects that were not successful? If so, why?
• In your experience, what are the top two or three most important qualities of a successful museum, especially a small one? For example, a strong board and leader, community relationships, strategic plan, etc.

• What are the positions or development/marketing strategies that are most effective for small museums? i.e. where should small museums invest their limited budgets to get the most return on investment?

• Are there any lessons learned you can share with me?