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## **Changes in museum management**

### **A custodial or marketing emphasis?**

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#### **Abstract**

In recent years museums have changed from being predominantly custodial institutions to becoming increasingly focussed on audience attraction. New emphasis is placed on museum-audience interactions and relationships. This change in the purpose and priorities of museums has impacted upon the nature of museum management. The recognition of new roles for museum directors and the need to appeal to differentiated audiences has created new challenges for previously traditional, custodial directors. This paper presents a conceptual framework for managing museums, taking account of the museum service context and the delivery of the museum service product. It then examines two museums, one in Ireland and one in Australia, both of which have a similar cultural history. The paper considers the different management styles for museum directors and how these different styles illustrate the changes in professional perspective from the traditional (a focus on custodial preservation) to the more current (a focus on educating and entertaining the public).

**Keyword(s):** Management; Organizational change; Museums; Service; Ireland; Australia.

#### **Introduction**

Traditionally the prime function of museums has been to gather, preserve and study objects. The director was perceived as the keeper of objects, as one who performed the custodial role for the cultural capital of the institution: its creative works. Today managing museums entails understanding both the custodial role and the need to attract visitors. As museums are part of the not-for-profit sector and depend on government for up to 70 percent of their income, they must be seen to offer value to government by attracting increasing visitor numbers. Government funders are asking for greater accountability for money granted. One way accountability can be documented is by sound marketing approaches (Lacznik and Murphy, 1977). Marketing approaches have been used to increase visitor numbers and to encourage, change and expand the museum role from one of custodial emphasis to one of marketing. Hence, museums are developing marketing techniques to help them become more successful.

Changes in museum marketing reflect the changing directorial role. Museum marketing has been conceptualised in three main periods (Rentschler, 1999). Research on the foundation period (1975-1983) has found that articles on museum marketing were dominated by issues of educating visitors; raising staff awareness of the benefits of visitor studies; and, occasionally, the economic impact of the arts on the community. The articles in the first two groups have a data-collection focus rather than a strategic action-oriented focus. The modus operandi operating during this time was beginning to be challenged from a number of sources that herald the beginning of a more professional period, in which cultural change occurred in museums. Museums became more democratised in the professionalisation period (1988-1993). These changes forced the recognition of the applicability of marketing to non-profit arts organisations and marketing departments were added to museums (Ames, 1989). Restructuring of the public sector also had an impact, with a shift in power and authority from producer to consumer, funders' demanding greater accountability and the contracting out of services occurring at the local level. All of these elements empowered "a new managerial elite", less focused on "cultural gate keeping" and more engaged with the "celebration of entrepreneurship" (Volkerling, 1996, pp. 202-3). Currently, marketing in museums is in transition, heralding the beginning of an entrepreneurial period (1994-present). Recently, collaborative marketing models and a new view of

visitors are evident, which diversify revenue sources by obtaining new audiences, products, venues and multi-art experiences (Radbourne, 1997). In tandem with this shift has been added focus on identifying the nature of the relationship between the visitor, the museum and the market (McLean, 1997).

These transitional changes have impacted upon the internal cultural organisational factors such as museum structure, complexity and diversity of services. Together with the drive toward formal accountability, these changes have increased the need for museum directors to have the orientation and skills of marketing managers, in addition to their custodial skills. Rentschler (2001) identifies four types of museum director, two of which are relevant to this paper. Each type brings a different emphasis to aspects of museum service. For example, the entrepreneur focuses on the furtherance of the organisation through creative programming. The generation of funds – through changing exhibitions, identifying donors, personally contacting major donors, developing efficiency measures, using consultants strategically, and preparing market analyses – is a consequence of this outlook. The entrepreneur also uses relationship-marketing programs to encourage visitors to become members and then donors. In contrast, the custodial manager focuses on the traditional activities of research and collections. Custodians are less involved in business activities. For example, they do not use consultants or prepare market analyses, survey non-visitors, or encourage visitors to become members and donors. The key issue for this paper is how the style of the director impacts on the performance of the museum, given that there may be a gap between the desired performance and actual performance, due to the nature of museums as professional bureaucracies (Griffin and Abraham, 1999). In professional bureaucracies, individuals are influential in setting the agenda of the organisation, often by appeal to colleagues outside the organisation rather than those within. As such, directors' styles and managerial preferences may not be applied evenly across the museum.

### **Aim of this paper**

Museums may differ in the types of collections they hold, but they do not differ in their principal aim, education (Griffin and Abraham, 1999). The question then becomes one of how museums and their directors demonstrate the requirements for effective marketing practice, but still meet the needs of their educational mission. Indeed, a rational economic approach to museum management and marketing often dilutes the effectiveness of the educational mission. The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, it presents a conceptual framework for services marketing in museums and how it impacts upon the delivery of the museum service product. Second, it examines two museums, one in Ireland and one in Australia, both of which have a similar cultural history. It considers the different management styles for museum directors and how these different styles illustrate the changes in professional perspective from traditional – a focus on custodial preservation – to the more current – a focus on educating and entertaining the public.

### **Methodology**

There is a considerable amount of museum research. Museums and their agencies are excellent at collecting numbers in relation to museum phenomena. However, much of this research has been criticised for not integrating the results into a coherent framework (Falk *et al.*, 1985; Moscardo, 1996) and for failing to use the results to advance a framework of the nature of the museum service offering (Merriman, 1989; Stapp, 1990; Goulding, 2000). This study is built upon a conceptual framework, based on relevant literature, which is then compared with the key service marketing management issues evident in two case studies.

The empirical research involved observations of the dimensions of museum service delivery carried out by researchers and followed by extensive data recording. Additionally, in-depth interviews with staff and directors were conducted initially to aid the generation of constructs and, later, to add insights to the research issues and, eventually, to contribute to the analysis of each museum's service delivery. In-depth interviews were conducted in a non-directive manner (recommended by Calder,

1977). For example, broad, open-ended questions were used and discussion centered around the experiences and opinions of directors.

All interviews were recorded and extensive transcripts of each in-depth interview were prepared. The constructs and issues identified in observations of the museum service delivery were supported as key issues for museum managers from the detailed responses obtained during in-depth interviews. Interview data were supported by analysis of annual reports, a rich source of hard data for museums and useful for a longitudinal perspective. Methods were chosen to provide a rich portrait of the phenomena under study so that the researchers not only learn about the “inputs and outcomes but also gain an understanding of the texture, activities and processes” (Belk *et al.*, 1988) occurring in the day-to-day operations and activities.

The museums in this study are not-for-profit institutions that have a director on staff, are wholly or partly funded by government, have a permanent collection and are open to the public. The research protocol was designed to explore research issues through qualitative methods and model the key issues discovered. Interviews were conducted with key staff, trustees and volunteers in the museums. Case study museum directors agreed to participate in the study if the names of their museums were not disclosed. In this paper, key findings from this research on two not-for-profit museums, as well as the nature and process of the managerial decision making in relation to the museum service offering, are discussed.

In a wider study, eight case studies of not-for-profit museums have been compiled. However, for the purpose of this paper we focus on two of these cases, one in Australia and one in Ireland. While the study has geographic diversity, the cultural heritage of Ireland and Australia is similar. In these countries, the philanthropic role is one for government, as it is in a number of countries with traditional links to the UK and other European countries (Sauvanet, 1999). The commonality of heritage creates a degree of isomorphism in approaches taken to museum services activity in both countries.

The findings are described below. This is followed by some consideration of the implications for museum managers who want to balance the custodial role with the service marketing delivery role.

### **Museum services marketing offering**

Like most services, the museum “service product” is delivered in a physical environment or site, encompassing land or building space, shape, lighting, means of directing or orientating the visitor, and methods of stimulating interest and involvement. Such inherent characteristics of the nonprofit museum service need to be considered in relation to the citizen as consumer.

The multi-dimensional nature of services is well recognised in the services literature. Often this means that a service cannot be easily specified or presented before purchase. Both the customer and service deliverer need to know what is on offer or what will be achieved as a result of receiving the service in order to understand the scope of the “service package”. In many cases, one of the dimensions of the service package will be clearly predominant, while others are more ancillary to the service. In delivering the service package, the core service can be distinguished from other ancillary or augmented aspects of the service, although they are all part of the overall package.

So what are the important service dimensions for museum marketing? The core and augmented elements of service delivery in a museum context are briefly described here:

- *Education.* The education of the public on the nature and scope of collections and exhibitions is central to the entire museum service product. The scope and range of the core collection has a direct impact upon the choice and quality of service to visitors. In addition, the relevance,

frequency and quality of special exhibitions are central to the drawing power of a museum, especially for repeat visits by local and regular users.

- *Accessibility.* Accessibility of the museum service includes ease of use of the physical facilities, the proximity of core product for visitors, range of offerings of different markets and availability of museum services.

Offerings for different markets need careful consideration, as museums clearly must offer a variety and range of offerings in terms of both collections and important aspects of service delivery to suit different groups of visitors, for example different services for different interest groups such as school groups, repeat visitors, tourists and new visitors.

- *Communication.* The communication aspect of the museum service includes the nature and scope of interactions, entertainment and interpretation. Interaction and guidance at different points between the museum's staff and its visitors are important contributors to the experience of the visitor. Interpretation is also important in adding value to the collection. It is needed to help visitors understand and appreciate the tangible aspects of the service.

Given the wide range and scope of collections in a museum, visitors need a variety of communication messages to help them decide which parts of the museum to visit. Often there is too much to absorb in any given collection or exhibition, resulting in visitors being overwhelmed by information. For this reason, many visitors look for help in interpreting the collections to help them make sense of what is on offer and to help them plan their schedule for the visit.

All of these dimensions are inter-linked, therefore the effectiveness and quality of the museum service offering depends on the attention to detail of all aspects. These dimensions of museum service delivery can be expanded and adapted to suit different museum service situations and contexts, depending on the nature and purpose of the museum. The design and management of the museum's total offering will depend upon the way it perceives its strengths and weaknesses in relation to the threats and opportunities in the market and the environment within which the museum competes. Museum directors need to focus attention on all dimensions encompassed in the overall offering of the museum service.

### **The impact of “internal” managerial performance on “external” marketing performance**

All museum staff (managers, supervisors and front-line people) are responsible for delivering and implementing the dimensions described above as the total service package (or external marketing performance). That is, marketing activities are delivered to the external market (visitors) by individual members of staff. Given that marketing is carried out by staff at all levels in the organisation (Gummesson, 1991), an organisation needs effective internal communication, interdepartmental co-operation, staff who are able and willing to do the job and two-way communication with visitors for the museum service to be successful. Figure 1 illustrates the services marketing model for museum management.

#### ***Internal communication and interdepartmental co-operation***

Interaction in a museum context implies face-to-face interaction between directors and other managerial networks. Interactions are based on social exchange, involving mutual orientation, dependence, satisfaction, commitment and adaptation. Thus, this type of interaction occurs at an individual level where personal contacts are made, bargaining and information exchange carried out, and individual relationships established. Managing interactions involves handling complex, personal interaction, using internal performance techniques as a vehicle. Success in managing interactions through internal marketing depends on people in a professional bureaucracy putting aside professional values shared with people outside the museum, enabling the development of interactive relationships

and developing interactions between people and various technologies and systems inside the museum. Success highlights such factors as leadership where the focus is on people, teamwork and collaboration rather than on traditional structures (Griffin and Abraham, 1999). Thus, the management of interactions should be guided by having a mutual orientation, and be developed through dialogue and the social exchange processes.

Interdepartmental co-operation is a pre-requisite for a museum to deliver excellent service in terms of education, accessibility and communication. Effective management requires formal procedures and both informal and formal communication to ensure co-operation occurs at all levels. For example, the views of all staff need to be encouraged and be accessible to senior management, and senior management should be seen to take these views into account and respond to them. In this way, interdepartmental communication and co-operation will be more likely to occur. For this to happen, the museum director needs to communicate to staff a shared vision aimed at developing meaning and an appropriate culture.

Both internal communication and co-operation are vital to the evolution of a cultural change in the museum and essential for the achievement of effective external marketing. It inherently entails “selling the staff” their role in providing service delivery and allows them to see how their role impacts upon the overall museum experience. Directly related to this is staff knowledge and ability to deliver service.

### ***Staff knowledge and ability to deliver service***

The development of key skills and competencies is crucial to the cross-functional dimensions of internal management performance and service delivery. In a museum context, the competencies of communication and knowledge will be particularly important. Front-line staff deliver the service package, from providing the knowledge and educational value of the collections, to interaction with visitors, encouraging participation, providing interpretation and the information needed to contribute to all aspects of service delivery (education, accessibility and communication).

### ***Feedback and communication between managers, staff, volunteers and visitors***

Given the importance of repeat visits in any local marketplace, there is a need to establish long-term commitment (and build relationships) with visitors. Therefore, it is important for a museum to undertake activities that will encourage longer-term relationships with visitors. To achieve this, useful market information is required. Regular visitor feedback is a valuable means of evaluating the success of collections and effectiveness of the overall service delivery. Supervisors and managers need to be closely involved and encourage feedback from frontline staff, volunteers and patrons. Information gathered in this way can contribute to the development and expansion of visitor interactions. Front-line staff and volunteers also provide useful sources of feedback from visitors. Effective procedures for gathering such information are needed, so that comments can be passed on to senior management. For example, reception staff and clear signage should encourage visitors to complete comment cards or write in a visitor's book and a clearly defined complaints procedure needs to be in place. This allows all museum staff to be visitor orientated and have the potential to develop and strengthen visitor-museum interactions, communications and co-operation.

In summary, effective and successful management in a competitive environment develops and sustains long-term relationships with museum users. To achieve this aim, museum directors need to co-ordinate the museum's resources in order to implement relevant strategies, develop successful communication methods both externally (between the organisation and the visitor) and internally (between management, staff and volunteers) and successfully deliver both core and augmented service dimensions.

### **Case studies from Ireland and Australia**

The two museums in this study are general museums: one a public museum in Ireland (museum A), the other a state museum in Australia (museum B). Both have galleries covering five areas of interest: local history and antiquity (in the case of Ireland) and indigenous art (in the case of Australia), botany and zoology, geology and art. The museum in Ireland is located close to a city centre. It employs 170 staff and attracts around 250,000 visitors per year, apart from those coming to see a special exhibition. The Australian museum is located on a seaboard site and has 80 staff. It attracts around 300,000 visitors per year, excluding special exhibition visitors. A large proportion of visitors to both museums are made up from repeat visits. The museums make a conscious effort continually to provide new attractions, in order to retain the interest and loyalty of this group of customers. Attention is focused on staging and promoting temporary exhibitions, rather than the sole use of the permanent collections to attract visitors. Examples of temporary exhibitions are a dinosaurs exhibition, local artists' paintings, cross-cultural art from Australia and a contemporary textiles exhibition from East Timor.

As part of the Australian museum's development, it has introduced a program of radical change that resulted in leadership change, a refocusing of the image of the museum and cultural and administrative change resulting in significant organisational restructuring. Leadership change in the early 1990s resulted in the development of the museum's first vision and mission statement: "making sense of our world by discovering and interpreting the past and present for the future." The director holds the view that the time is past for directors just to have expertise in particular areas of museum scholarship. He believes that "art museums have gone beyond the powerful aesthetic of an individual to drive them towards a personal vision". The emphasis has been on improving the quality and professionalism of services provided within an integrated framework. The vision has been implemented through the development of a wide range of exhibition programs and special projects.

The mission statement of the museum in Ireland is to increase public understanding of the collections. Current management focus is on communicating the content of the collection to visitors and using promotional material to promote exhibitions. The museum recently employed two education officers and two part-time assistants with responsibility to improve communication, prepare an annual programme of events and make the collections better known to the public.

### ***Internal communications and co-operation***

Museum A has three marketing staff, a marketing officer and three assistants. Marketing staff are a relatively new addition to the museum. However, the marketing officer was appointed from inside the museum. This was thought to reduce any resentment among professional staff who may have traditionally regarded the care of the collections to take preference over visitor needs and may have made it difficult for an outsider to come in to change the emphasis of some staff roles. The marketing officer's responsibilities include all income-generating activities, such as the shop, the café and the sale of art reproductions for commercial use, as well as promotion. However, the role of customer care is the responsibility of the head of museum services.

There is evidence of close co-operation between the various departments. For example, an exhibition is planned from its initial stages to its execution through interdepartmental communication and co-operation. The curator presents the idea for an exhibition to the senior management group. If the go-ahead is given, it goes to an exhibition planning group. A project officer is appointed and he/she draws in people from relevant departments. The marketing officer is also involved at an early stage to give an opinion on what is a good idea, and what is not.

Museum B added marketing staff in the mid-1990s, after the appointment of a new director. In 1995, market research and visitor surveys were undertaken, in order to increase attendance and visitor satisfaction. Co-operation between departments moved from a bureaucratic approach to a team-based approach. Leadership is customer-focused, governed by corporate plans, objectives and key performance indicators, as well as driven by project teams led by curators who are seen as the "creative minds" of the organisation. An assistant director commented that, while displays were once

static, leading visitors to observe that nothing ever changed, now visitors are commenting that they need to visit regularly so that they do not miss something. However, this co-operation is not consistent across the museum, with pockets of resistance, especially among the scientific staff. Their focus remains one of custodial preservation.

### ***Staff knowledge and ability***

In museum A, the director and marketing officer are both aware that they are in direct competition with other attractions for visitors' leisure time and therefore aim to be competitive by offering an excellent service delivery to all visitors. The marketing officer makes a conscious effort to see the museum through the eyes of a visitor by regularly walking round the exhibits, noting any shortcomings, such as missing labels, or light bulbs not working and passing the information on to the appropriate curator. There is also a public liaison officer who is on duty at all times when the museum is open and can be contacted by mobile phone should a visitor need any assistance.

Regular training is provided for front-of-house staff, with particular focus upon how they should approach and interact with visitors. The marketing officer believes that the front-of-house staff are the main communication link between the museum and the visitor and that, ideally, all elements of visitor care and management should fall within the remit of the marketing department. However, this jurisdiction remains under the auspices of the head of museum services, although there is some consideration being given to the possibility of change. For example, changing the emphasis of the front-of-house staff from one of "warding" to one of "interpretation" for visitors is being considered. The marketing officer feels that this would help develop a friendly atmosphere in the museum, strengthen the lines of communication with visitors and lessen the impression that the visitor is being watched over.

The overall strength of museum A's staff knowledge and ability is that recognition is given to the importance of providing a high standard of customer care by the director and staff. The weakness of museum A's staff knowledge and ability is that the front-line staff do not, as yet, have an "interpretative" role.

In Museum B, an assistant director comments in 1997 that: "there are lots of changing exhibitions, interaction with the community and with government agencies, stronger national and international profile, a broadening of horizons, restructuring which sought to professionalise collections management and support areas especially, and linkages with tourism." Such a comment is evidence of staff knowledge and support of public programmes that recognise the distinctiveness of the region.

### ***Feedback/communication with visitors***

Museums A and B make a conscious effort continually to provide new attractions to retain the interest and loyalty of repeat visitors. This is demonstrated by the focus on staging and promoting temporary exhibitions, rather than sole use of permanent collections. Temporary exhibitions are regarded as being a major method of attracting both new and repeat visitors.

In Museum A, although aware of the value of feedback, and plans to introduce a system as soon as resources permit, there are no regular procedures employed for obtaining feedback at present. Currently, consideration is being given to carrying out a survey of visitor opinions on the museum service. Signage is being constantly modified and improved but still visitors become lost (as noted by the marketing officer).

Museums A and B use much of their marketing budget to develop public relations for the promotion of events as the museums do not budget for commercial advertising campaigns. Instead, good links have been established with the media and the marketing officer proactively sustains these relationships. For example, each year Museum A presents the events programme with a press launch.



The events programme is the core method of promoting both museums. Its production and distribution consume the largest single part of the promotional budget. The events programme is distributed to a wide network of outlets and the list is constantly updated. Outlets include hotels, tourist attractions, and local educational and library offices. In addition, single-sheet “flyers” are produced for special exhibitions in both museums.

Special exhibitions are often used to initiate additional events. For example, a series of lectures for different groups of visitors or face painting for children may be linked to the theme and timing of a special exhibition. The purpose of these events is to attract people into the museum who will come back again and in this way build up a broader base of repeat visitors.

The directors of both museums recognise marketing's role in the promotion of the museum in communicating with visitors. They readily accept the use of innovative methods to attract the visitor. For example, Museum A's director comments that he has to be “very opportunistic in marketing..... I need to look at new ideas, and within the bounds of professional propriety, be prepared to do anything that will bring in visitors ... and be adventurous”. This Director feels that by presenting information in an entertaining way, visitors will have learned something and will leave feeling they have had a good experience. If this is achieved, visitors are more likely to come back.

In addition, Museums A and B are both involved with relevant regional activities and events that benefit from shared and free promotion. The museums use a varied range of promotional material aimed at reaching different visitor groups. For example, each year Museum A produces a programme of events, designed in the form of a two-sided poster. They also use a small booklet to provide information about the services provided by the education department aimed at and promoted to schools.

The education pack used for promoting the museum to schools contains a collection of current promotional materials relating to existing and special exhibitions, such as detailed information about the services on offer and the exhibitions planned for the school year, the events programme, the souvenir guide, any “flyers” for special exhibitions, art study sheets (based on current exhibition material), leaflets promoting teaching packs available for sale. Information regarding opening times, ancillary services and facilities for disabled visitors is also included in the education pack.

### ***Summary of findings: the effect of internal performance on external marketing activity***

Museum A's director is predominantly custodial, but museum performance shows some elements of marketing currently being implemented and others being considered and planned for the future. Museum B's director is proactively aiming to be market-oriented, but museum performance shows some elements of custodial preservation, especially in the scientific areas. In museum A, the director plans to become more marketing oriented in relation to communication, developing special exhibitions for different groups and improving staff interactions. In Museum B, the director is market oriented in relation to availability and communication but custodial in relation to protecting and allowing access to some of the museum's collections.

In relation to education, both museums in this study recognise the need to balance their activities by maintaining the safety of collections and also by creating impact and differentiation. Recent special exhibitions have focused on creating differentiation and impact with the chosen themes and quality of exhibition material. The director and marketing managers of both museums are actively aiming to create more impact and differentiation in the museums' service delivery and recognise that they are in a time of change. In particular they aim to focus on becoming more visitor-friendly through a change of front-line staff role emphasis and training. At present, aspects of the interface between front-line staff and visitors need more development; and it is often evident that the value and importance of collections is more important than emphasis on the relevance of collections to visitors.

In relation to accessibility, these two museums operate standard opening hours (9-5 weekdays, with shorter times at weekends). For some collections, there is limited allowance of proximity of visitors where the value of collections dictate how close visitors may come. Staff, in some instances, are more aware of their “warden” role than behaving proactively with visitors, therefore interaction between staff and visitors and proximity to collections are not encouraged.

In relation to communication, visitors are encouraged to engage in predominantly passive observation rather than participating in the experience. Both museums rely on using standardised messages. There is a non-personal approach with little attempt to involve visitors in any aspect of the museum experience. Given the overall lack of individualised messages, attention or personal approach, the emotional involvement of visitors is limited.

### *Different managerial emphasis of the museums*

Clearly, museum management can have different emphases regarding service delivery depending on the prevailing management style. The two different styles evident in this study, even within each of the museums, are custodial management and market-focused management. The different emphases of custodial and market-focused management are illustrated in Table I.

The directors of both museums recognise the need for efficient custodial management and effective marketing management – for both visitors and for public markets. However, the balance is not yet complete. The management dilemma is to become better marketing managers without losing creativity and expertise in custodial management.

The current climate in museum management recognises the need for a change and a more entrepreneurial approach (Rentschler, 2001). However directors’ roles need to be extended to balance the development and preservation of creative art works with the creative management of the museum as a market-oriented organisation. Further, museum staff need to be prepared to forego the influences of the professional bureaucracy in order to enable management meaning and a new culture of visitor service to develop.

In both these museums, there is a move to change the role of warding staff from one of security to one of interpretation. But are these the “right” staff for this role? It may be quite difficult to achieve a transition from “policeman” to “communicator” or “entertainer”. Some professional staff may be steeped in traditional roles where care of collections takes preference over visitor needs. These staff may find the new focus on marketing alien. At a deeper level, curators may have some distaste for the commercialisation of their traditional “business”. They may appear to give their open support for marketing-related activities, but real commitment is more difficult to achieve. Therefore, managerial actions need to impact on allocations of budget, human resources and museum priorities. While some staff see themselves as custodians and not involved at the visitor interface, others are more receptive to the idea of interacting with visitors. These issues may provide the real agenda for directors involved in marketing museums (Piercy and Morgan, 1990).

The willingness and ability of individual managers to adapt and develop their internal communication and co-operation is a prerequisite for successful development of the service marketing offering. Often any change in the nature of management decision making will necessitate a change in managerial structure and have an impact upon the individual staff roles and competencies required. This has certainly been the case in the museums in this study.

### **Conclusion**

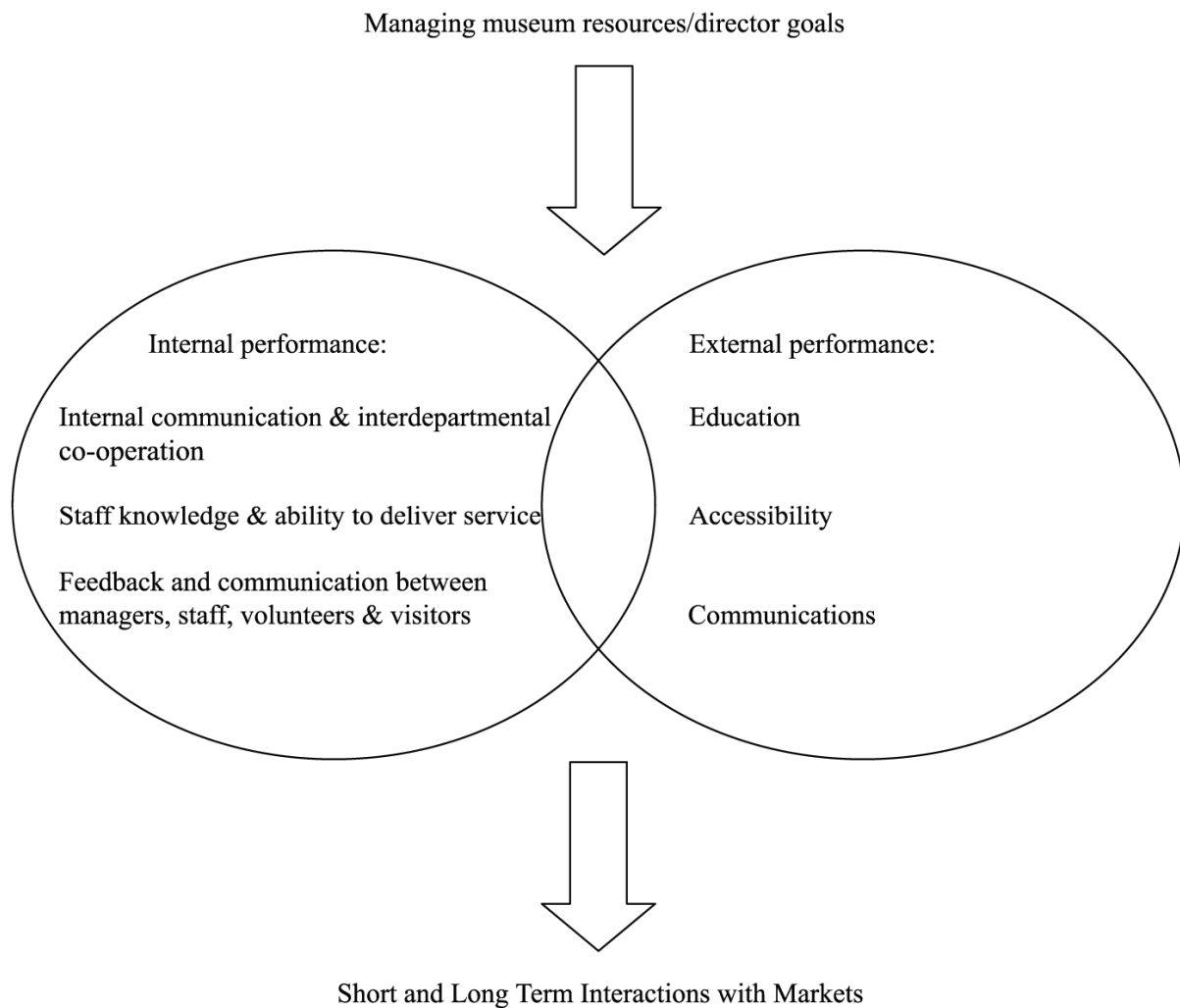
In this study, the museum directors and managers illustrated both custodial and market-focused behaviour at different times in relation to the education, accessibility and communication aspects of museum service delivery. These directors and managers speak of being market-focused but often

activities are more focused around the custodial role. The challenge for museum directors is to decide what approach best meets the needs of the museum, staff expertise and the nature of the visitor. Recognition of the multi-dimensional nature of the museum experience, and consideration of the value of both roles is vital in any organisational rethink.

Indeed successful museum management may require a combination of different management styles. However, this needs careful consideration in relation to how each aspect should be managed. The custodial style works well with education, the core dimensions of the museum service. All staff should know the value, history and context of education, as it forms the core part of the service delivery. The more augmented dimensions of service delivery such as interaction, interpretation, communications and accessibility need to be addressed, particularly in relation to complex and interactive, staff-visitor exchange service queries. This requires a greater marketing emphasis. Diversity, degree of variability and complexity of individual customer service requirements are valid experiences in museums. This is an inherent characteristic of the multi-dimensional museum service and the varying degrees of customer needs, requirements, perceptions, experience and ability to comprehend instructions and directions. Therefore, recognising the importance of the augmented aspects of the museum service is vital. A key purpose of museum directors is to continually develop and improve all dimensions of service to visitors. This requires staff commitment, as well as staff development and the need for guidelines and measures for both core and augmented service dimensions.

The implication for museum directors is that they become more “hands on”, outwardly focused managers (needing resources) as well as efficient managers of a “collection”. The use and recognition of informal networks are important if internal performance in terms of communication and co-operation are to be successful. The thinking and behaviour of the key managers are also particularly important within museums. The willingness and ability of individual managers to adapt and develop their internal communication and co-operation underpins successful development of the service marketing offering. Often, any change in the nature of management decision making will necessitate a change in managerial structure and have an impact upon the individual staff roles and competencies required.

By recognising the multi-dimensional nature of service delivery, museum managers can ensure that the benefits of both custodial and marketing management styles are used to achieve cohesion. All the aspects of service quality require attention and each interacts with the other and is vital for staff. Participation and involvement contribute to the commitment and co-operation of staff in the evolving work environment. In this context, the continual development of service quality can become the museum ethos.



**Figure 1** Service marketing model for museum management

Product/service dimensions	Emphasis of custodial management	Emphasis of marketing management
Education	Value and importance in aesthetic terms Maintained, designed for preservation of collections	Relevance to visitors Create impact, differentiation, visitor-friendly environment
Accessibility	Standard opening hours, limited proximity of customers to some valuable collections	Proactive staff-visitor interactions and proximity encouraged
Communication	Predominantly passive observation encouraged Standardised messages/attention, impersonal approach, little attempt to involve visitors	Visitors participate in experience More individualised messages/ attention. Personal approach and emotional involvement of visitors

**Table I.**  
Different approaches to the management of museums: custodial managers and market-focused managers

**Table I** Different approaches to the management of museums: custodial managers and market-focused managers

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