How You Do What You Do: Staffing is Key

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How You Do What You Do: Staffing is Key

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The Sandbox Interactive Children’s Museum
Hilton Head Island, SC
Intro

- Who Are We?
  - Map of SC and map of island
  - History of museum

- Stats
  - FT population
  - Tourism to area
  - Sandbox

- Blueprint of museum
Who Are We?

- The Sandbox: An Interactive Children’s Museum is a non-profit children’s museum dedicated to the positive development of young children through play. The museum offers quality educational and family-oriented play centers and programs.

- We believe that children learn about love, trust, and self-worth through interactive play with a parent or caregiver. This is critical for the development of young children under the age of eight.

- Families need spaces in which to foster relationships with one another and other families, thereby forming community. Play provides a natural opportunity for these relationships to form and strengthen. We provide a stimulating, progressive setting for children and their caregivers to play and learn together.
Hilton Head Island, SC
History of Museum

- Early 2000s
  A group of Lowcountry moms realized the need for community space to provide educational play for preschool- and elementary-aged children and their families. A focus group study confirmed the need and the support of the community.

- 2003
  After demographic research and discovery, they determined a non-profit, interactive children’s museum was the best way to meet this need. With the support of the community and business leaders a Board of Directors was formed and The Sandbox’s non-profit status was received.

- 2004
  Newly formed board created development, business and strategic plans and embarked on a capital campaign to make their dream a reality. By the end of 2004 they had secured a desirable location and were on their way to reaching their $255,000 fundraising goal.

- 2005
  Renovation of the current museum began in the spring and by fall they’d reach their campaign goal! The museum was coming to life with design and development underway.

- December 6, 2005: The Sandbox Children’s Museum opened its doors eager to serve the children, families and community of the Lowcountry!

- 2020/21: projected to move to new location
Some statistics.....

- Hilton Head Island
  - 37,000 full time population
    - 21,200 ages 45-85+
    - 3370 ages 9 and under
  - 2.5 million visitors to the island each year

- The Sandbox
  - 2500 ft$^2$
  - 25,000 annual visitors to the museum
  - 300,000+ visitors to date!
**Staffing**

- 1-2 FT employees (Dir of Ops and Exe.Director)

- 5-8 part time
  - We have been fortunate to have the same core staff since almost opening in 2005
  - Mostly grandparents and retired educators looking for flexibility in this stage of their lives

- Seasonal
  - We have also been very fortunate with seasonal staff. ...high schoolers that started as volunteers to fulfil community service hours
Strengths

- Fun Place! (majority of visitors are “on vacation”)
- Retired early learning educators
- Young high schoolers (direction for career path)
- Volunteers (someone with organizational skills on staff as a volunteer)
Retention: we are so fortunate as our staff are mostly retired or they are young high schoolers and this is their first job. With the younger ones, the opportunity to mentor their future growth is extremely rewarding. In our case, these teenagers have 4-5 “bonus” grandparents at any given time when they come to work!
Opportunities

- Technological experience (fear of computers, change)
- Budget
- Rainy days and limited space
- Volunteers, not enough and need to be trained, need a coordinator but budget does not allow
- A more engaged board that follows through with ideas brought up at board meetings to execution and facilitation
Rainy Day staffing: Rainy days are always good for us but hard to schedule since it changes so much. During the summer, the Director of Operations (me) handles the waitlist which can be anywhere from 20 minutes to well over an hour for at least ½ the day. It is a double edged sword in that a rainy day brings in lots of revenue but disrupts any productivity plans! In this case, randomly scheduled volunteers could assist with the visitor experience. We rarely have any complaints about crowds as everyone is informed at check in.
Volunteers: We desperately need a volunteer coordinator. As we all know, everyone, especially volunteers, need to managed and have specific roles and tasks. We have not pursued building a volunteer base due to the sole lack of human resources. In our case, we have just hired an Executive Director and hope to have this role filled soon. We would like for the role to be rewarding and not just “cleaning” or doing menial tasks. Engagement for repeat visitors would be our goal.
Layout of Our Museum
Our New Museum Late 2020!
Children’s Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus

Nicole Ortiz

Leading with a growth mindset
These three values are the foundation upon which we approach our work at the Children’s Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus. We apply these values to how we engage with every member of our community: guests, employees, coworkers, volunteers, board members., and ourselves.
Training for Leaders

Monthly Team Meetings

We create and support museum experiences and environments that are joyful, promote interactions and relationships, and extend learning beyond the museum walls.
CCLI & Master Planning

Internal internships

We focus on the strengths, competence and creativity of our community members.
Conflict
Styles
Training
Reflection
Documents
Performance
Assessment

We support our community members in communicating and thinking, making goal-directed choices, and expressing ideas, feelings, and questions.