

REINVENTING THE MUSEUM

This *Reinventing* tool is an excerpt from *Reinventing the Museum Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, edited by Gail Anderson of Gail Anderson & Associates, and published by AltaMira Press in 2004. This chart is also featured in *Museum Mission Statements: Building a Distinct Identity*, written and edited by Gail Anderson and published by the American Association of Museums in 1998.

The parallel terms provided below capture the essence of the paradigm shift that has been occurring in museums over the past 100 years and into the 21st century - from an inward-looking, collection-centered museum (the traditional museum) toward an audience-responsive and community-connected museum (the reinvented museum). Use this tool for a conversation with trustees and staff to identify where your museum stands today between the traditional museum and the reinvented museum. Mark with an x. Follow that discussion by determining what would be ideal for your institution on the continuum. Mark with an *. Please remember that the target for your institution may be part way on the continuum for some terms, and far right for others. There is no right or wrong, or set formula. This exercise is about an honest and open assessment.

Discuss the implications and determine how to set about laying out the path for change. Undertaking fundamental change on any scale requires strong, visionary leadership supported by a realistic assessment both internally and externally given the specific challenges of your institution and its community. Institutional assessment, strategic planning, community engagement, and a holistic approach are just part of the tools for institutional transformation.

TRADITIONAL MUSEUM

REINVENTED MUSEUM

Governance

Mission as document	.....	Mission-driven
Elitist	.....	Equitable
Exclusive	.....	Inclusive
Reactive	.....	Proactive
Ethnocentric	.....	Multicultural
Internal focus	.....	External focus
Singular vision	.....	Shared vision
Single visionary leader	.....	Shared leadership
Top-down management	.....	Bottom-up management
Assumed value	.....	Earned value
Good intentions	.....	Public accountability
Social activity	.....	Social responsibility
Paternal	.....	Mutual respect and stewardship
Managing	.....	Governing

Institutional Priorities

Management	.....	Leadership
Various activities	.....	Mission-related activities
Collection-driven	.....	Audience-focused
Limited representation	.....	Broad representation
Internally-based	.....	Community-based
Open to the public	.....	Visitor-oriented
Business as usual	.....	Institutional assessment
Voice of authority	.....	Multiple viewpoints
Focused on past	.....	Relevant and forward-looking

TRADITIONAL MUSEUM

REINVENTED MUSEUM

Management Strategies

Inwardly driven
Isolated and insular
Selling
Assumptions about audiences
Hierarchical structure
Unilateral decision-making
Compartmentalized goals
Cautious
Fund-development
Individual work
Static role

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Responsive to visitor needs
Participant in marketplace
Marketing
Knowledge about audiences
Learning organization
Shared decision-making
Holistic, shared goals
Informed risk-taker
Entrepreneurial
Teamwork
Strategic positioning

Communication Style

Privileged information
Suppressed differences
Debate/discussion
One-way communication
Keeper of knowledge
Protective

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Open communication
Welcomed differences
Dialogue
Two-way communication
Exchange of knowledge
Welcoming