CREATING A STORY-BASED, MULTI-SENSORY MUSEUM CAFE EXPERIENCE
THREE PART PROCESS

• Research
• Design & Branding
• Operations & Programming
THE TEAM

• CAROL GIES DIETZ

• AJ GOEHLE

• KIMBERLY STULL
THE MUSEUM

- Non-profit
- Brand: a Community educational asset
- 325,000 visitors
- 100 schools & 60 community partners
SO YOU’RE THINKING ABOUT A MUSEUM CAFE?

Our best advice....

Ask a lot of questions before you take the plunge....
WILL IT BE WORTH YOUR INVESTMENT?

• That depends on how you measure success
  - Mission vehicle?
  - Visitor amenity?
  - Revenue source?
FIRST THE BAD NEWS...

• Museum admission charge

Then the good news...

• A captive audience

Then the bad news

• Massive competition

Then the good news

• (wait for it)
GOING OVER TO THE DARK SIDE...

The worst case scenario?

- Pro forma errors
- Low demand
- Inefficient operation
- Construction overruns
- Low ROI
- Operational crises: food related illness

Need a “Plan B”—Graceful Exit
HOW WILL THE CAFÉ IMPACT YOUR ENTIRE ORGANIZATION?

• A very different business

• Can eat up resources
HOW BIG SHOULD IT BE?

• Big scale..
• Big costs
• Longer breakeven
• Remember Starbuck’s
SHOULD YOU TRY TO DO IT YOURSELF?

- What outside expertise will you need?
- One broken link...
WHAT MUST THE CAFÉ BE TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS?

• The answers are in your research
  • Statistical Surveys
  • Focus Groups
  • Product & Packaging Testing
  • Competitive Research
IMPORTANT (& SURPRISING) FINDINGS FROM OUR CAFÉ RESEARCH

• Your answers will vary
WHAT IMPACT WOULD THE CAFÉ HAVE ON MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL?

- Longer Stays = More Visits = More Value
- 38% more likely to renew
WHAT IMPACT WOULD THE CAFÉ HAVE ON NON-MEMBERS?

- 63% more likely to join
- 41% would tell others
IS OUR CUSTOMER BASE SUFFICIENT?

Attendance x 20% Capture = Total Customers

- Sufficient ADT of 300-400
- 36% would buy adult lunch (107,800)
- 48% child lunch (122,500)
HOW LONG WILL CUSTOMERS STAY IN THE CAFÉ AT LUNCH?

- Customers want to eat and run
- 20 minutes at the table
- Kids are antsy--or tired
BUT WILL THEY SPEND ENOUGH?

YES!!

- Adult: $5.50-$6.50
- Child: $3.50-$4.50
CAN WE BEAT OUR COMPETITION?

YES!

• 100 eateries within 10 minutes

• Our secret weapon: CONVENIENCE!!
WHAT WILL THEY EAT?

- They say “healthy”... but they don’t mean it
- “Fresh” = “Healthy” (78%)
- Packaging influences perception
- Fast! 10-minute wait
- Low prices
- Child portions
WHAT PERSONALITY AND ATMOSPHERE WOULD WIN THE CUSTOMER AND BE AN EXTENSION OF THE MUSEUM’S MISSION?
CAFÉ BRAND VALUES:

• The only restaurant in the country that is specifically designed for children

• The menu follows the museums mission for early learning, teaching through food
THE CAFÉ EXPERIENCE: WHAT’S THE STORY?

Goals:

• Extend the DCM brand as an educational community asset
• Another museum neighborhood, not just a café
• Enhance visitor experience and be educational
• Improve space for hosting member, donor, and public events
• Platform for Membership and community gatherings and involvement
THE CAFÉ EXPERIENCE: EXTEND THE MUSEUM’S BRAND

What is the Café’s personality?

- How does it match the mission, personality and interactivity of museum?
- Is it more at the adult level or child level?
- How is it kept aligned with mission of DCM?

The Experience

- What does the customer experience?
- How does the personality come alive?
- What do you want people to feel when they come into the space?
- What do you want the café to say to the customer?
- What do you want customers to remember?
THE CAFÉ EXPERIENCE: EXPERIENCE GOALS

1. **Attract museum visitors**, provide a place for them to unwind and extend their DCM experience.

2. **Drive the DCM extended brand** of being an educator and community asset.

3. **Create a unique experience** that people will talk about to others.

4. **Integration** of the arts, science and math into experience (S.M.A.R.T.).

5. **Promote child-adult learning partnership**, parent engage with child beyond eating (How can we make this an enjoyable educational experience?)

6. **Drive revenues & per-cap spending**: (Range of price-points: bundles and a la carte options)
## THE CAFÉ EXPERIENCE: EXTEND THE MUSEUM BRAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DUPAGE CHILDREN’S MUSEUM</th>
<th>CAFÉ EXPERIENCE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force for early learning</td>
<td>Family Wellness Education (not programming)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful of children’s discernment</td>
<td>Controlled Variety, allow’s for choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic</td>
<td>Fresh authentic food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High energy (vibrant colors, boldness)</td>
<td>Color Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td><strong>Food Personality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventive</td>
<td>Constructivist Food- Interact with your food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong in relation to our peers</td>
<td>Unique in relation to its competitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas in motion</td>
<td>What guests can take home from cafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consciously designed (so it flows)</td>
<td><strong>Comfortable, calm, extension of DCM design</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative</td>
<td>Iconic/visual Messaging (educate for non-readers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td><strong>Consistent with DCM Mission</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensible</td>
<td>Value driven, pricing and consistency with DCM values</td>
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</table>
WHAT'S THE STORY? “FOOD PLAY”
WHAT’S THE STORY? “FOOD JOURNEY”
WHAT’S THE STORY? “FOOD PERSONALITY”
ENVIRONMENT
ENVIRONMENT

let's eat!
start your order here...

Eat, Learn + Grow
Presented by Our Sponsor
ENVIRONMENT
ENVIRONMENT

- food Science: How do carrots grow?
- food Math: How many pieces do you see?
- food Art: What colors + shapes do you see?
- food Reading: B - Broccoli
- food Technology: Where does milk come from?

Counting: How many carrots do you see?
IF YOU BUILD IT... THEY WILL COME.

MAINTAINING AND BUILDING THE BRAND
MISSION RELATED PROGRAMS
(SCIENCE, MATH, ART, READING, TECHNOLOGY)

- Storyreading Series
- Making Munchies
- Café Music Series
- Fine Art Performances
CONVERSATION STARTERS

• S.M.A.R.T. Signs

• Photo Murals

• Uniforms
ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT FOR MISSION

Recycling is as easy as 1 2 3

1. GARBAGE
   - Food, Drinks and Ice, Wax Paper

2. STYROFOAM RECYCLING
   - Styrofoam cups and bowls

3. RECYCLING
   - Plastic, Glass, Paper
      - Including: Straws, lids, yogurt containers, drink bottles, salad bowls and lids

Please put all leftover food, drinks and ice in garbage.
ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT FOR MISSION

Future Additions:

- S.M.A.R.T. Bites Signs
- Program Schedule Sign
- New Children’s Activity Sheets
FOOD:

• Maintain quality product that meets a variety of dietary needs.

• Balancing options people say they want versus what they order.

• Secondary Business
  - Event and Program Catering
CHALLENGES TO MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE BRAND:

- Stand alone for-profit business inside a non-profit.
- Compete with area restaurants
- Compete with brownbaggers
- Museum leadership trained in museums not restaurants
FUTURE PROGRAM PLANS:

Grant and Corporate support to develop additional programming:

• Vertical Garden Wall
• S.M.A.R.T. Choices Advisory Council
• Parents Play Group
• Family Health and Wellness Nights
• Cafe Power Plays
• Health and Wellness Community Partners
• Kid’s “Cooking” Classes
SUCCESS ON ITS WAY...

• Different than the normal museum cafeteria
• Went through a process to ensure museum mission and brand integration
• Unique destination to add value to museum experience
• Members and visitors were part of process from beginning, sense of ownership
• Integrates education into all experience touchpoints
REMEMBER...

• Ask a lot of questions and agree on objectives

• All touchpoints connect in an immersive environment

• Deliver on the promise