

PRAM 101



AAM annual meeting

May 24th, 2011




Crossing the divide

museum professionals coming to PR and marketing from other disciplines

First, a small introduction...

- **Museology:** the discipline of museum design, organization and management*. This means your skills are focused on the museum's operation, social roll and theory.
- **Public Relations:** a field concerned with maintaining a public image for businesses, non-profit organizations or high-profile people, such as celebrities and politicians**.



Your skills are used to build rapport with employees, customers, investors, voters, or the general public.

*American Heritage Dictionary


**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_relations




The perspective from a Mexican museum


- Public museums in Mexico work with a very low budget
- Around 40% of the museum's staff *is formed by unionized employees. Most of them don't have a proper or professional education because usually their position has been inherited. Unfortunately, there is no way to change this situation for now.

*depending on the institution

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- The rest of the staff is configured by professionals that come from different fields, such as philosophers, designers, artists, art historians and media analysts. Very few are specialized in museology or museography.

On the bright side, this forms a very rich environment in which many of the institutions needs are covered.


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- But, on the other hand, these professionals don't have the possibility to fully develop their specialty because they will have to do the work of two or three persons: *wear many hats*.

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- So a good idea is to be ready to adopt a new roll when it's needed, keeping in mind that it's great to learn from as many points of view as possible in order to have a greater picture of such a complex institution.



From Museologist to PR manager in a week


- Which are the abilities you need to have or develop to change from one field to the another, or even interact in both?

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- 1.-First I would say that love for the institution, and a great sense of commitment are essential.
 - 2.- When you go into a new and unknown area you have to be patient and observant. Pay attention to what is or was done before you came, so you will be able to learn. A lot of common sense is also very helpful here.




Speaking about common sense...

3.-Remember, a PR manager is the link between the institution and the outside world, so the way you present yourself is vital, and so are your manners. Usually the first impression you give will stay in the other person's mind for ever.



4.- Even if you don't take care of the marketing department, it is a very good idea to have some knowledge on this topic, because in a way, you're always *selling* your institution. Some points to keep in mind are:

- Create some kind of loyalty to your institution.
- Make it visible and renown.
- Show your board members, sponsors and public you're always there if they need you.
- Be sure to be informed about all the programs, present and future, going on in your museum.
- If you are in charge of the Museum's Friends, make sure you give them all the possible benefits, this will keep them happy.
- Talk to everyone, let them know about all the important things your institution offers.



5.- Stay close to your community, make them feel at home, design special things and keep them informed. They will be your best *clients*!

Ho do we work for, if it's not for the community?



Some other important abilities

5.- Languages: the more, the better. This opens different doors, and give you a better understanding of the world.

6.- Organization:

Events

Guided tours

Presents

VIP lists

Book of comments (be sure to do the follow up!)



And in case you are in charge of grants and fund raising:

- 7.- Be sure to fill out correctly all the information required for a grant, and to include all the requests made. You won't even get to the first part if something is missing.
- 8.- Sponsors are many times hard to deal with, and it is considered that you'll get 30% of the funds you ask for, so keep on with it, and don't be disappointed; you'll get a lot of No's*

*www.sponsorship.com



SPC's

9.- Join groups or committees like AAM and PRAM. You'll get to know other highly experienced professionals, and it's a great chance to make some net working and learn from the experts.

You are not alone!

<http://www.pram-aam.org/>