Cleveland Museum of Natural History

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Executive Summary:

Despite being an first class science and research institution, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History has become a museum for children. Nearly all patrons are children on field trips, or adults with children. The challenge issued is to determine how to make the Museum more appealing for adults. In exploring this issue, exhibit design and adult interests were explored. In understanding adult interests, it was determined that there is a big opportunity in wellness. The proposal is that the Cleveland Museum of Natural History should develop a wellness exhibit. This is in line with the mission statement of promoting health, the 2007 merger with the Cleveland Health Museum, growing interest in wellness among adults, and the proximity to the top notch medical institutions in the area.
The Challenge

Despite being an institution that has:
- Millions of Specimens
- Some of the World’s Best Curators
- Made some of the most important finding in natural history

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History has become:
- A slightly older “Childrens’ Museum.”

Can the Museum Experience be Enchanced to Attract a Broader Audience?

Focus: Adults without children:
- Recently retired.
- Recent empty nesters
- Baby Boomers

In order to address this challenge, the decision was made to understand and explore:

Exhibits Adults
Each exhibit must have a key learning point or mission.

While exploring exhibit design, an excellent insight came from experienced designer Jeanne Vergeront. Vergeront has a framework she uses to design exhibits. At the base of that framework is the learning point or mission of the exhibit. (Vergeront, Layering and Unlayering Exhibit Experiences)

On top of a clear learning point, the following four traits should be considered in exhibit design:

- **History**: What is the *historical significance* of the facts, culture, and artifacts involved?

- **Interact**: How will the exhibit be *experienced*? What will a patron see, hear, and do?

- **Research**: Are there significant recent discoveries, studies, or experiments related to the exhibit?

- **Why does it Matter to me?**: Why is the exhibit *meaningful* to the patron? Is it *useful*, *interesting*, *fun*?

Ensuring a clear learning point or mission, and considering the four traits above can assist in keeping exhibits relevant and meaningful.
Adult Interests

Popular interests of recent empty nesters, retirees, and Baby Boomers include:

Based on the IBIS report showing sustained growth in the Yoga and Pilates industry, and the number of fitness related activities that shows up in various lists of hobbies among Baby Boomers, it can be concluded that wellness is a key interest among adults.

Whether it be dancing, yoga, cooking, competitive and extreme sports, new languages, or music, many Baby Boomers are very active in developing new skills and abilities.

Baby Boomers, who tend to be recent empty nesters, actively seek out social interaction. Common outlets include mentoring, coaching, and volunteering. As reported by Marianne English, compared to other generations, Baby Boomers prefer public, face-to-face interaction as opposed to staying at home.

As defined by Merriam-Webster

Hot Button: an emotional and usually controversial issue or concern that triggers immediate intense reaction.

By their very nature, hot button issues are interesting to adults.

Information shown about comes from the following: IBISWorld, askMen, howstuffworks, The Feminine Woman, and Merriam-Webster. Full citations in appendix A.
Taking into consideration many factors, including adult interests and the location of the Museum, a key opportunity has been identified:

**Wellness Exhibit at the CMNH**

**Goal**

Educates and enables individuals to improve their physical, social, and mental health through diet, exercise, and social engagement.

Ideally, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History would accomplish this goal through two parts.

- First, there will be a wellness exhibit in the Living Wing of the Museum.
- These exhibits should include the traits discussed earlier.

- Second, will be programming that accompanies the goals of the Wellness Exhibit.
Why a Wellness Exhibit?

It fits in with the Mission statement of the Museum: To inspire, through science and education, a passion for nature, the protection of natural diversity, the fostering of health, and leadership to a sustainable future.

A connection to health and wellness already exists. In 2007, the Cleveland Health Museum merged with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

The Museum is in proximity to some of the top hospitals and medical research facilities in the world. Joe Sweet, Director of Operations for the Cleveland Clinic Wellness Institute, expressed that the Clinic may be very interested in a partnership with the Museum if a Wellness Exhibit is implemented.

Interest in wellness is growing, especially among adults. Adults, particularly Baby Boomers, are seeking out opportunities to stay physically fit, active, and socially engaged.

Health care is changing. Health care is in a state of transformation. The Affordable Care Act has realigned certain incentives. Health care is moving from reactive to preventive. Trends are moving from fee for service, to bundled payments, to population health incentives.
Why a Wellness Exhibit?

The knowledge gained from the exhibits and programming can be applied to daily life.

Key features of the wellness exhibit and its accompanying programming will be applicable to daily life. By presenting information from modern research done in the areas of nutrition, fitness, and mental health, the Museum will be in a position to transmit information that could ‘nudge’ individuals to change their daily behavior. This could result in large changes for some individuals, but will more likely result in smaller changes. Examples could include buying healthier ingredients, or using the stairs instead of an elevator.

The Museum will act as a credible source of information in a subject where various claims are common.

Claims about health can be found everywhere; radio advertising, magazine articles, vitamin shops, the news, and the internet. Often, this information represents the interests of a specific company or industry. It can be difficult to determine the credible information from the poor information. The Museum would be in a great position to be a credible source. This would become even more pronounced if the Museum setup a partnership with one of the prestigious health institutions in the area. For example, the Cleveland Clinic has done clinic trials on many of the supplements that can be found at any drug store, and has done an excellent job of determining which work, and which do nothing. Can the Museum be a credible face to present this type of research?

The Museum can present information in unique ways.

The Museum can present information in a way that is more interesting, more interactive, more fun, and more powerful than typical mediums are capable of. Unlike other mediums, the Museum can present exhibits that allow individuals to use multiple senses, and can incorporate an interactive element that print and electronic mediums are not capable of. For example, exhibits that allow patrons to feel actual human fat, see human lungs of a smoker vs. a non-smoker, and see vein structures of a fit individual vs. an unhealthy individual.
Exhibit Overview

THE CHRONOLOGICAL KITCHEN

The Chronological Kitchen is an exhibit that will display cooking technologies throughout the ages. Also included will be the ingredients typically used, preparation methods, and portion sizes. Research on the advantages and disadvantages of ingredients will be included, and there will be a focus on the health effects of the food and drink options found today.

SPORTS AND EXERCISE

This exhibit will show the history of sports and exercise. Modern research on the effects of exercise on bones, the brain, heart, etc... will be included. Cases of non-human exercise will also be showcased. Finally, there will be an interactive element allowing people to try various exercises. This will include a human hamster wheel. The exercise will monitor the amount of energy the user is able to generate.

A HEALTHY BODY

This exhibit will allow people to see the difference between healthy and unhealthy bodies. Users will be able to see smoker lungs and non-smoker lungs side by side, healthy and unhealthy vein structures, and even touch real human fat! (through gloves of course)

YOUR BRAIN ON...

The Big Brain exhibit is an interactive display that show physical and psychological effects of stimuli on the brain. See how the brain reacts to caffeine, alcohol, depression, stress, sex, exercise, and other various stimuli!
Additional Exhibit Features

**TALK WITH A MEDICAL RESEARCHER**

Meet a featured medical researcher. Learn about their work and discoveries. Have your questions answered.

**SPECIAL DISPLAYS**

A regularly updated showcase of the latest and greatest work and research being done by local organizations, including the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospital, and Case Western Reserve University.

**STAY FIT CHALLENGE**

Try the “Stay Fit Challenge.” Take more than 10,000 steps during your Museum visit, and receive a free pass for your next visit!
Programming is an essential component of the product. Programming can be used to engage adults in wellness activities now, and can act as a build-up to the wellness exhibit. Programming for wellness will include activities based on diet, fitness, and social interaction.

**Examples of programming for wellness includes:**

**Cooking classes at the Museum:**
Take a cooking class that describes the scientific significance of various foods and preparation styles.
Learn which ingredients to use, and which to avoid.

**Hike the Museum’s Reserves:**
The Museum owns several reserves, come and explore them.
Volunteer to help preserve the reserve, and bring native Ohio species back to Ohio.

**Guest Lecturer:**
Meet experts who will discuss latest trends, findings, research, and hot topics in the fields of health and wellness.
The Business Case

Reasons a Wellness Exhibit makes sense.

There is a natural fit with the Museum:
This includes the reasons explained in the “Why a Wellness Exhibit” section. It fits in with the mission of the Museum, there is growing interest in wellness, it makes sense given the 2007 merger with the Health Museum, and the Museum is surrounded by potentially very strong allies.

There is opportunity for a competitive advantage:
The Cleveland Museum of Natural History is surrounded by strong competitors. This includes the Great Lakes Science Center. From a marketing perspective, the Great Lakes Science Center is quick to advertise its partnership with NASA. If the Cleveland Museum of Natural History can formulate a partnership with an organization like the Cleveland Clinic, this can act as a major advertising advantage. Joe Sweet from the Cleveland Clinic expressed that a partnership may be of interest if the Natural History Museum pursues a Wellness Exhibit.

There is an opportunity to broaden the base of donors.
The Museum generates the majority of its revenue through donations. By creating a Wellness Exhibit, the Museum may broaden donor interest to include those working in the health care industry, or those interested in Wellness. It has been established that Baby Boomers, who hold 70% of all disposable income in the US, are interested in wellness. Furthermore, expanding the donor base in this way should have no negative effect on the current donors.
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