Meet the players:

- GSM Project: An experience design firm based in Montreal.
- A Science Centre: Located in a large urban center, this medium sized museum was working on a new exhibition about human life.
- A researcher and technology company: a researcher at a university in the same city, working with a technology firm to develop a product out of her unique sensor system.

Type of partnership:

Design firm – Museum – Technology Researcher
(The researcher had the tech, the firm designed the exhibit, the museum sourced the content)

The situation:

In this partnership, the museum was interested in including some special technology that was in development by a researcher in their exhibition. The researcher was working with a technology firm to bring the sensor system to market. The museum offered to include the technology in an exhibit and allow the researcher to collect anonymized data from the visitors (with their informed consent). The design firm was working with both the museum and the researcher to develop an interactive exhibit that would communicate the key content messages of that part of the exhibition and that would collect useful data for the researcher’s work. The design firm was responsible for the final production and effective integration of the technology into a functional and fun exhibit.

After some very exciting discussions, several meetings with the researcher, two visits to with the technology firm and considerable design work, the GSM team was shocked to learn that the technology worked for only 30 minutes at a time, before requiring a reboot. The museum team agreed that this was untenable for their exhibition, and suddenly an exhibit we had all been very excited about was not working out.

The BIG questions:

- How can this partnership be saved?
- How could GSM or the Museum have discovered this issue earlier in the process?
- How can the museum make use of the work done collaborating with the researcher and the design work already completed by GSM Project?
Meet the players:

- Mississippi Children’s Museum (MCM): a still ‘new’ facility with an entire new education team
- Children’s of Mississippi (CoM): state’s only children’s hospital – less than a mile from MCM

Type of partnership:

Museum – Hospital
(Program Sponsorship)

The situation:

*Question It? Discover it!* (QIDI) is a once a month Saturday program designed to provide children and families with opportunities to learn about healthy habits through fun, engaging activities, with the support and guidance of medical professionals from Children’s of Mississippi.

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<td>MCM Opens</td>
<td>Beginning a 2 yr Partnership with Children’s of Mississippi for QIDI program - GRANTED $45,000</td>
<td>Renewal ask by MCM for $45,000 and 2 yr Partnership with Children’s of Mississippi for QIDI program - GRANTED</td>
<td>91% turnover in staffing of the Development and Education &amp; Programs teams at MCM</td>
<td>Renewal ask by MCM for $45,000 and 2 yr Partnership with Children’s of Mississippi for QIDI program</td>
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It’s August of 2015 and the Development Team wants to reapply for a continuation for QIDI.

Development wants to secure repeat funding. The Education & Programs team is not happy with the level of programming and educational information provided by our experts from Children’s of Mississippi. What has been presented by the medical professionals from Children’s of Mississippi is often not in depth and not engaging. There are handouts of sunscreen, coloring sheets, and the occasional cut and glue. Little time for explanation or inquiry-based learning. Internally, MCM staff discusses the legitimacy of the presentation of the material for the proposed outcome. Education & Programs does not want to renew the program at the same level of expectation by the departments at Children’s of Mississippi.

The BIG questions:

- Should MCM continue a partnership with different departments at Children’s of Mississippi?
- How deeply should the MCM staff dictate the CoM staff’s chosen activities?
Making the bet

Meet the players:

- Sietecoleores: A museum and exhibit development firm based in Mexico City. (The people involved: CEO, Project leader, designers, content experts)
- CENTRO: A college of design in Mexico City. (The people involved: Dean, professors, students)

Type of partnership:

*Design firm – University*
(The firm partnered with college students and professors to design elements of a new museum’s environment)

The situation:

The team that currently constitutes Sietecoleores invited CENTRO College of Design to have their students work on a project, guided by a couple of professors: they would design and produce specific elements of a new children’s museum’s environment (Laberinto de las Ciencias y las Artes in San Luis Potosí, Mexico), including graphics, walls, and floors. While the firm would get fresh and new ideas, students would receive real-world experience as well as a certain amount of tuition scholarship. Although Sietecoleores had previously worked with college students doing internships or volunteer work in museums, they had never hired a group of them as actual suppliers in the museum-making process, so this would be a first on this type of partnership for the team. Sietecoleores adapted their timeline to the school term, did previous work with their professors, and planned for providing content guidance from experts, so the students would deliver creative, viable, and unique solutions.

While the students did have innovative ideas that suit the project well, as the months went by, it became clear that they lacked experience in other areas, mainly in the ones concerning materializing those ideas: for instance, it was hard for them to find feasible fabrication solutions or stick to the budget. This learning curve delayed delivery, increased some costs, and forced Sietecoleores to do a part of the job they had not planned to do initially.

Years later, for another project (Bebeleche in Durango, Mexico), someone suggested they should try the partnership again.

The BIG questions:

- How could Sietecoleores work with CENTRO students again for a new a project, considering that it would be with a new group of students?
- What could Sietecoleores do differently in order to optimize student performance and results?