#BetterTogether
Navigating partnership challenges

May 16, 2018
ACM InterActivity
IF YOU WANT SOMETHING DONE RIGHT...

DO IT YOURSELF!

ROLL!

HOW?
Presenters

Eric Demay
Creative Director, GSM Project

Patti Reiss
Director of Museum Experiences, Mississippi Children’s Museum

Guillermo Loza
Associate Director of Projects, Sietecolores Ideas Interactivas

Moderator:
Isabel Diez
Researcher, Sietecolores Ideas Interactivas
Session Overview

- Introducing the challenges
- Analysis and discussion time
  - Results
- What really happened:
  - Eric Demay
  - Patti Reiss
  - Guillermo Loza
- Q&A
The challenges
But... does it work?
The project

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The partnership

Museum

Researcher
Technologist

Design
Firm

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Something to offer

- People
- Technology
- Design

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Something to gain

- Cool Exhibit
- Research Data
- Happy Client
Feelin’ good!
So we start working at it
Wait...
Wait... What?
Knowing when to hold them and when to fold them

Patti Reiss
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Director of Museum Experiences
(For all intents and purposes)
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Knowing when to hold them and when to fold them

- Children’s of Mississippi and the Mississippi Children's Museum
- It’s Autumn of 2015 it is Round 2 of a 2 year program. “Question It? Discover It!”
- $45,000 over 2 years...cha ching!
- I am new to my current position - length at MCM 3 years.
- Education Director - 2 months at MCM
- Development Director - 9 months at MCM

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Knowing when to hold them and when to fold them

Mission Based Work:

Our Mission
The mission of MCM is to provide unparalleled experiences that ignite a thirst for discovery, knowledge, and learning in all children.

The museum accomplishes this mission through hands-on and engaging exhibits and programs focusing on literacy, the arts, science, health and nutrition—the keys to helping our children mature into healthy and productive adult learners.

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Knowing when to hold them and when to fold them

Toted as:

Each month’s Question It? Discover It! (QI?DI!), which is 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. QI?DI! is sponsored by Children’s of Mississippi, a part of the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

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Knowing when to hold them and when to fold them

As an operations worker I had READ what other people had planned for QI?DI!. However I had seen what QI?DI! really looked like in action.
Knowing when to hold them and when to fold them

On a Saturday from 10 to 2 we have:

- Crayons and BLACK LINE MASTERS
- 20 year old teaching about how the brain works
- Put out a box of Neutrogena Sunscreen samples
- The chair of the Children's Hospital sits on our STEM Advisory Board.

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Knowing when to hold them and when to fold them

Chest Puffing and Education and Programs put down some strict guidelines in grant revision.

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Making the bet

Guillermo Loza

Sietecolores Ideas Interactivas
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Working with others is always a bet ...
Getting aligned

Pros

Cons

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The honeymoon stage...

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How? Budget?

I am a designer, not an engineer

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The real thing...

Pros

Cons

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Laberinto de las Ciencias y las Artes, San Luis Potosí, Mexico 2008

Expectation

Reality
One year later...

I’ve got an idea!
Let’s call the college students!

Really?
Analysis and discussion time (15 min)
Who are the main stakeholders?
Who are the main stakeholders?
What is the major problem they are facing?
Who are the main stakeholders?

What is the major problem they are facing?
What might be the cause of the problem?
Who are the main stakeholders?

What is the major problem they are facing?

What might be the cause of the problem?
What could they do differently next time?
Who are the main stakeholders?

What is the major problem they are facing?

What might be the cause of the problem?

What could they do differently next time?
What really happened
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Phase 2!

This time around:

- The museum got to rework the content and make the exhibit fit in another zone
- The researcher had time to get her technology stable enough
- The design firm included considerable user testing and evaluation to integrate the technology
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Lessons learned

1. Take the long view. Each point of view in a partnership understands their own immediate needs best. Long term is often secondary.

2. Strategy. When working with a new partner, time (and stages) mitigates risk. Plan accordingly.

3. Don’t forget! The field of exhibition design is unusual, most products and services are not designed for these kinds of uses, either in terms of usage, robustness or cost.

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Looking back ...

**Pros**
- Fresh ideas
- Latest design trends
- Innovation
- New service supplier
- Satisfied client

**Cons**
- Extra cost
- Extra time
- Extra stress

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Laberinto de las Ciencias y las Artes, San Luis Potosí, Mexico 2008
What we learned

Adding new ideas and people can always be an opportunity. Don’t be afraid to try it!

New partnerships take time and demand a learning curve.

Set clear standards, expectations, and communication channels from the beginning.

Invest in human relationships and prioritize them over mercantile factors.

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IF YOU WANT SOMETHING DONE RIGHT...

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HOW?

ASK FOR HELP.
Thank you!

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