3:45 p.m.–5:00 p.m.

**Right-Size for Your Community: It’s About Quality, Not Quantity**

MINERAL HALL BC

Have you ever visited a larger museum and experienced a twinge of museum-envy? There’s nothing to fear about being small and mighty! Presenters from small and mid-sized museums will share stories from their communities and lead a discussion of how to be better, not bigger, by responding to your specific community’s needs. Through consideration of tangible data and your own community knowledge, you will learn how to gauge your institution’s best size. Attendees will share effective practices and considerations for high-quality programs, facilities, and community partnerships through small group discussion, which will be shared with the entire group.

**Deb Johnson**, *Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota*

**Jessica Farr**, *Fairbanks Children’s Museum*

**Melanie Hatz Levinson**, *Kidzu Children’s Museum*

Are you in the right place?
Who are we?

• Deb Johnson, Senior Director of Museum Experiences and Environments, Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota, 8 years

• Jessica Farr, Education and Outreach Manager, Fairbanks Children’s Museum, 4 years

• Melanie Hatz Levinson, Creative Director and Lead Curator, Kidzu Children’s Museum, 11 years
The goal of this session is to share 3 models of what makes our Museums the “right size” and provide you with some tools for considering how you may be the right size for your community. We will have an opportunity to discuss in small groups and also share back to the larger group with some good examples of what right size means for your Museums.

35 Minutes of presentation featuring 3 Museums across the country:
Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota
Fairbanks Children’s Museum
Kidzu Children’s Museum

25 minutes of small group discussion sharing what makes your Museum right sized
Handouts for consideration

15 minutes of large group sharing examples of what makes you right sized
Please use the stickie notes

10 minutes wrap-up and evaluation
Share worksheet data with us so we can distribute it to ACM basecamp
Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota
A quick look at play at CMSM
Right sized numbers worksheet

Is your capture rate where you need it? (Annual attendance/population within 1 hour drive)*100
Goal Range: Between 5% and 10%
Your Museum: ___________________________annual attendance____________________population____________________ %

Is your exhibition space sized correctly? Annual attendance/exhibition space square feet
Goal Range: Between 6 sq ft and 10 sq ft per visitor
Your Museum: ___________________________annual attendance____________________sq ft=__________sq ft per visitor

Are you operating efficiently? Annual operating budget/annual attendance
Goal Range: Between $10 and $20 per visitor
Your Museum: ___________________________annual attendance____________________per visitor

Is your earned income in line with your operating expenses? (Earned income/annual operating budget)*100
Goal Range: Between 55% and 60%
Your Museum: ___________________________earned income____________________budget____________________ %

Who is coming to your museum and what does that mean for memberships? (Annual member visits/annual attendance)*100
Goal Range: Between 25% and 35%
Your Museum: ___________________________member visits____________________annual attendance____________________ %

Are you spending enough on marketing? (Annual marketing budget/annual operating budget)*100
***Do not include staff salaries in your marketing budget for this exercise***
Goal Range: Between 8% and 15%
Your Museum: ___________________________marketing budget____________________ %

Are you spending the right amount on labor? (Annual personnel salaries/annual operating budget)*100
***Extremely high or low mortgages/leases can impact this calculation***
Goal Range: Between 45% and 65%
Your Museum: ___________________________personnel salaries____________________budget____________________ %
What makes us right sized?

VISION

The Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota is the catalyst for building a stronger, more vibrant community around play so that all children in our region share in a bright future of opportunity and well-being.
MISSION

Ignite the natural curiosity of every child through the power of play in a dynamic, awe-inspiring environment.
Background

- 2005 - First meeting of founding Board of Directors convenes
- 2006 - Non-profit status is established
- 2009 - 2014 – Operating three successive temporary **prototype** spaces
- 2010 - Received $1,000,000 pledge
- 2012 - State of MN - first installment of “Legacy Funding”
- 2013 - City donates 17,000 sq ft building on a 2 acre city center lot
- 2014 - Building renovations & exhibit fabrication begins
- 2015 – May 1st, Grand Opening of our permanent Museum

“Cap the Walls” Bottle Cap Mural in progress by 5,000 elementary age students and artist Jamie D'Angelo
How is CMSM right-sized?

Capture rate data
  • example of where we are over achieving at 99%

Rotating exhibits vs permanent water play decided by a 2600 person survey
  • highlights regional interests that focus on co-generation

Rural school group needs

Access has been central from our inception

Quality interactions and play experiences
Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota

• Opened May 1, 2015 after 5 years of exhibit prototyping and program development at 3 interim sites
• 11,000 sf indoor exhibit space
• 10,000 sf outdoor exhibits plus Prairie’s Edge

Is your exhibition space sized correctly? Annual attendance/exhibition space square feet

Goal Range: Between 8 sq ft and 10 sq ft per visitor

CMSM: 97,288 annual attendance/11,000 sq ft = 8.8 sq ft per visitor
CMSM as a regional destination

• Co-generated with 100+ community partners leveraging over $500,000 in in-kind support in 2019
• Founded by early childhood educators who continued to advise
• Learning Experience Master Plan as a guide
• Rotating exhibits highlight regional interests that are co-generated agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, Dakota culture, early childhood, STEAM
• Programs are co-developed and meet curriculum standards

• Uniquely situated in a regional hub
CMSM personnel

- 14 FT museum professional staff positions, 16 PT staff
- $1.2 M annual operating budget in 2019
  - Playwork staff – high turn over
  - Program-heavy museum

CMSM: 2017 data - Are you spending the right amount on labor?
(Annual personnel salaries/annual operating budget)*100

Goal Range: Between 45% and 65%
CMSM: ($626,000 personnel salaries/$949,000 annual operating budget)*100=66%
CMSM as a regional destination

Who we served in 2019:
- 104,000 visitors
- 8,680 school group visitors
- 2200 memberships
- 27% access members

**Capture rate?** (Annual attendance/population within 1 hour drive)*100

**Goal Range:** Between 5% and 15%

**CMSM: 2017 data** (97,288 annual attendance/98,255 population within 1 hour drive)*100= 99% capture rate
How is CMSM right-sized?

We continue to be community made. We create community through our work. Our volunteer sewing group comes every Monday and creates items ranging from manure piles, to walleye, to huskable corn cobs and anatomy dolls.
Our volunteers contributed over 6,768.5 hours in 2019 which is equivalent to 3 full-time positions.
How is CMSM right-sized?

17 community partner organizations contributed time, materials and financial resources to A Healthy Me exhibit – April 2019

Our exhibit process is driven by community need such as in this healthcare exhibit.

“With our community and for our community.”
How is CMSM right-sized?

Healthcare/STEM careers, dental health, mental health and community health were identified by our partnership focus groups.
How is CMSM right-sized?

CMSM develops and designs exhibits in-house bringing in sponsorship dollars and a community voice helping to keep us relevant and connected to our community. Our regional business presence is prevalent but we control content and play experience.
How is CMSM right-sized?

Who is coming to your museum and what does that mean for memberships? (Annual member visits/annual attendance)*100

**Goal Range:** Between 25% and 35%

**CMSM:** (49,600 member visits/ 97,288 annual attendance)*100=51%
How isn’t CMSM right-sized?

Examples of how we under perform:

- Our marketing budget is 2%; the standard is 8-15%.
- Our earned income is below the goal at ??%.
- We are not yet financially sustainable ending 2018 at -$26,000.
- We have had leadership instability.
- We have a large board that is reorganizing and defining their roles.
- We are in year 4 of 5 of a strategic plan that doesn’t guide decision making.
Deb Johnson
Senior Director of Museum Experiences and Environments
Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota
224 Lamm Street, Mankato, MN 56001
www.cmsouthernmn.org info@cmsouthernmn.org