Exhibits that Endure the Test of Time

Considering Longevity from Concept Through Close-Out

Start with a concept that will last!
• Consider concepts and topics that remain interesting and engaging over many years despite changes in culture, trends, hardware, etc.
  • Immersive environments draw you to interact
  • Spaces that energize and connect to the story / big idea
  • Moving towards experiential / edu-tainment
• Know who you are you talking to!
• Consider content that can be updated, added to, and built upon to grow into the future

Consider the lifespan of gallery as a whole vs. individual experiences
• Balance different types of experiences - things that don’t break down vs. those that do
• Blend mechanical interactives, digital, and interpretive exhibits for a dynamic experience
• Consider off-the-shelf vs. custom options --> off-the-shelf is cheaper, but may be discontinued or become obsolete...custom is more expensive, but it can always be procured
• Focus on flexibility - consider modular and/or changeable cabinetry can accommodate changes in hardware that will be replaced over time

Consider the questions you need to ask yourself as you develop an exhibit
• Consider a formal evaluation. Is your exhibit meeting requirements?
  • Test in several years to ensure that it’s still meeting goals.
  • How often to evaluate?
• Do you have the staff necessary to maintain the exhibits?
• Have to set aside a budget for ongoing maintenance?
• What kind of use and abuse scenarios should we expect?

Plan for maintenance
• Consider replacement parts, costs associated with maintenance, and staffing required to maintain
• Never forget...maintaining exhibits is less expensive than buying new exhibits!
• Consider the tools the museum shop should have on hand for maintenance and repairs
• Consider the skills your team should have to ensure that exhibits are properly maintained

Know when to ask for help...
Cathlin Bradley, Kubik Maltbie, Inc.
cbradley@kubikmaltbie.com

Sarah Myers, Indianapolis Children's Museum
sarahm@childrensmuseum.org

John Shaw, Museum EXP
john@museumexp.com

Scott Wolfram, Working Studio
scott@workingstudio.com