



# Advocating for the Floor:

## Opening Communication Between Floor and Management

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**How would you describe communication between floor staff and management at your organization?**


① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.


 How would you describe communication between floor staff and management at your organization?


Open text poll  33 responses  30 participants


 Anonymous  
Inconsistent


 Anonymous  
We have decent opportunity for floor staff to share thoughts, feelings, questions and concerns with management but not a lot of opportunity for floor staff to communicate with senior leadership or Board Members

 Anonymous  
Decent but could use some work. Middle leadership has a seat at the table which helps, but more voice support from front line is needed.

 Anonymous  
lacking all around, lots of fear


 Anonymous  
Lots of communication both ways, however not very productive


 Anonymous  
Infrequent

 Anonymous  
Siloed. Floor staff face feel isolated and unheard. Management is not visible on Museum floor.


 Anonymous  
Spotty. There's a big gap between our primarily weekday and weekend staff.


 Anonymous  
Good but could use improvement


 Anonymous  
Disjointed & Broken

 Anonymous  
Strong within VS. Typically non existent between departments

 Anonymous  
Top down


 Anonymous  
Lack of understanding/seeing each other's perspective (sometimes)


 Anonymous  
It can be very siloed with management struggling to disseminate information properly and the floor staff not always communicating their needs (for example, replacing worn signs)

 Anonymous  
Friendly and productive

 Anonymous  
Limited. With managers as the bridge.

 Anonymous  
Patchy at best

 Anonymous  
Rough post Covid

 Anonymous  
Our communication is an open flow of information and ideas from both sides

 Anonymous  
Disconnected

# Today's Learning Objectives

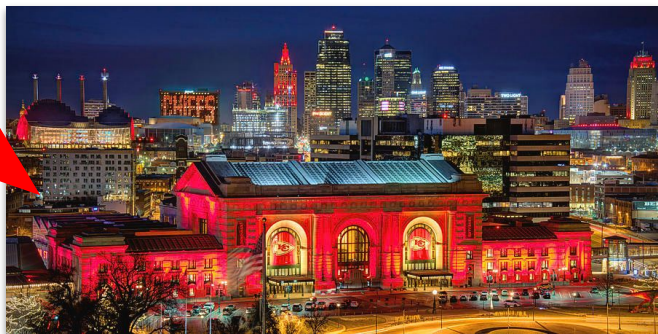
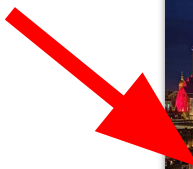
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- Empower attendees (YOU!) to use their voices to speak up about things that they care about within their organizations or encourage others to speak up
- Provide examples of institutional changes that have given staff a voice in their organizations
- Share challenges, successes and failures experienced in pursuit of open communication between museum floor staff and management teams



# Science City at Union Station Kansas City

- 100,000 sq ft, 300+ exhibits and over 300,000 visitors annually
- Serving the Kansas City Metro (2.2 mil people) and the surrounding region
- 20 Full Time Science City Education Staff, 14 Part Time Staff
- Science City falls under the larger nonprofit organization of Union Station KC, sharing office staff and executive leadership





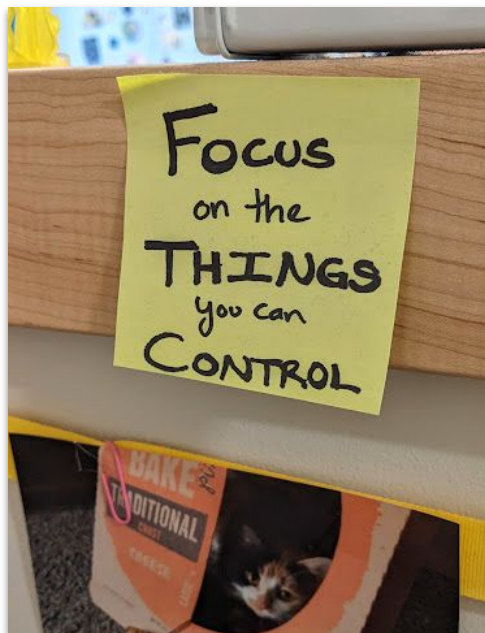
# My Role



- Art Specialist: floor educator & coordinator for artmaking space in the museum
- On the floor for full day with guests 3 out of 5 days a week, started 3 years ago as art educator
- This is the session I wanted, so I made it happen!



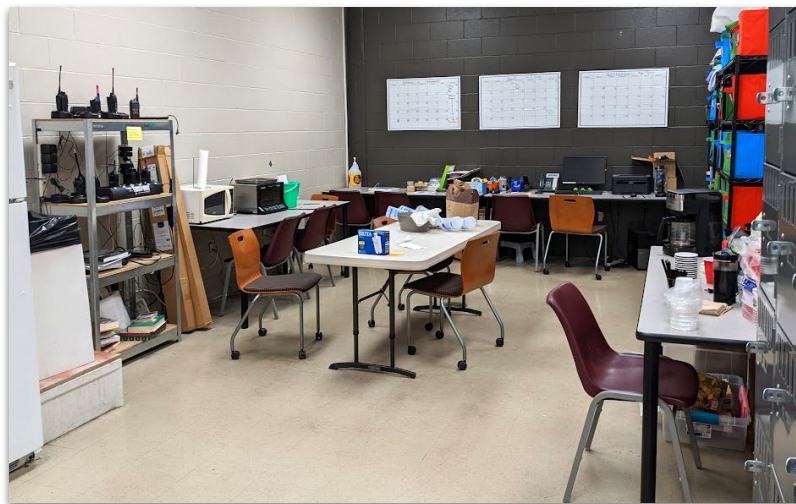
# Lessons Learned Leading from the Floor



- Ask others how they have successfully made changes within your organization
  - Collect data related to your problem
- Seek allies among your coworkers and leaders  
Build positive relationships whenever possible
- Start small, stay patient and persevere



# Break Room Improvement Project







# Break Room Continued

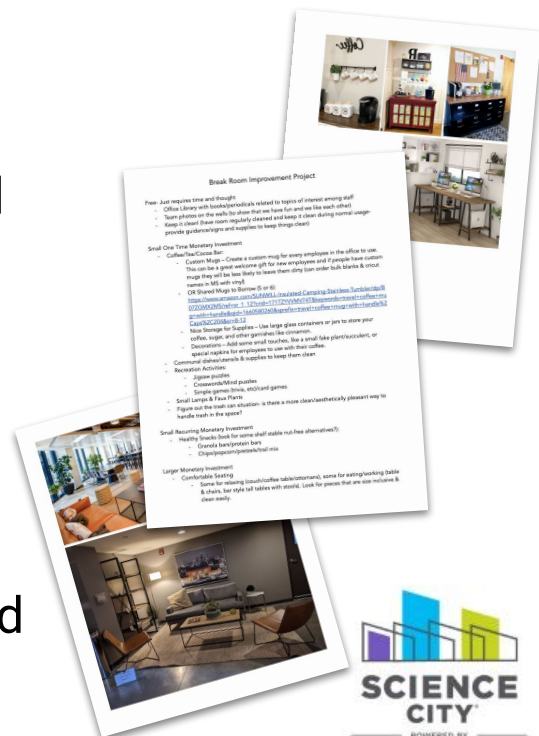
- Added Pawsitivity Wall in 2021





# Break Room Improvement Plan

- Asked education team if they supported the project
- Created a planning document with scaled money and time investments and reference images
- Created a budget for the improvements
- Enlisted co-workers to clean and organize the room during fall closed week
- Project Approved, purchases made, plan implemented







## Restructuring at Science City

- Initially hired as Early Learning Supervisor/Floor lead with in 4 months that position disappeared due to staffing changes.
- Sought approval to make changes to the organizational chart allowing shifting my position to SC Manager and hiring an additional floor lead
- When director retired, I applied for the job and suggested additional changes to org chart to hire two floor leads and eliminate the manager position to allow for more floor support and less managerial support



## Positive Outcomes

- I have worked every position on the floor so am aware of the needs/struggles/challenges
- The team knows that since I came from the floor I am advocate for the floor team in all decisions that are made
- The management team listens to my concerns/thoughts/ideas because they know I can speak for the team
- Management has taken a more proactive interest in SC and our programs
- Decreased the divide between floor team and management team by promoting collaboration and relationship building

## Giving the Team a Voice

- Implemented 360 reviews for the first time
- Involved the team in hiring all positions including floor leads
- Invite team to approach management team members with ideas/suggestions/concerns



# Who we are

- Mid-sized museum (~100,000 visitors/year)
- 27 FTE staff, 18 in the Union
- Service Ithaca (~30,000) and the surrounding counties (~100,000)

## Unionization Timeline

- **Oct 2019:** Unionization announcement
- **Nov 2019:** Vote to Unionize
- **Dec 2019:** Hearing to determine the Bargaining Unit
- **Jan 2020:** Start negotiations
- **April 2020:** switched to virtual
- **March 2021:** signed Collective Bargaining Agreement

# Integrating Staff into Steering

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- Staff on the Board
  - Union Representative to the Board
  - Staff on Board Committees
- Strategic Plan
  - Starting new strategic plan with staff voices
  - Staff is reviewing mission, vision, and values- before Board input
  - Want check offs from both Board and staff



# Speaking as a Collective

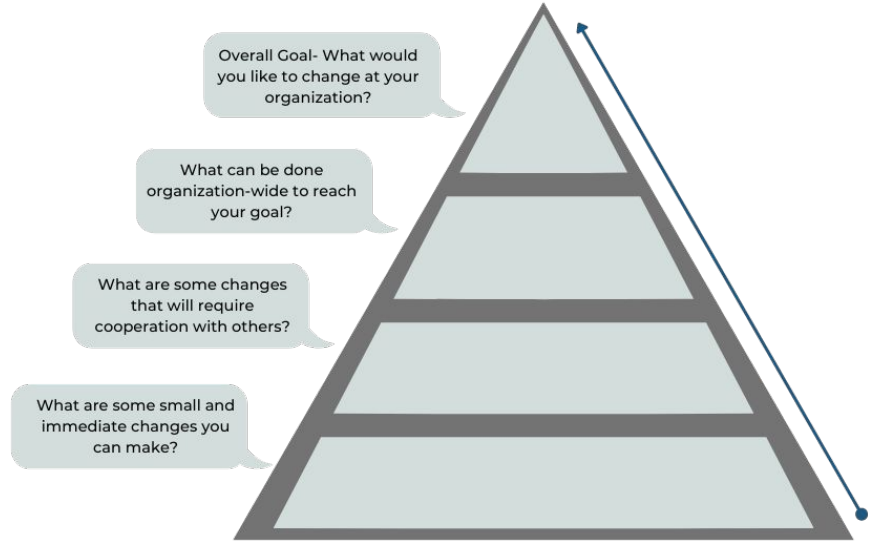
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## Labor-Management Committee (LMC)

- Written into our CBA to meet once a month to discuss operational issues not expressly addressed in the CBA
  - Comprised of 4 union members and 4 management representatives
- A commitment from both parties to ensure that this is a functional communication strategy
- Both Labor and Management can speak as a collective

# Breakout Session

- What would you like to change at your organization?
- What's one strategy you can implement in the next 6 months that will encourage advocacy for your floor team?



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**What is one idea that you will take away from this presentation?**

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



## What is one takeaway you will bring home with you from this presentation?

Open text poll  20 responses 20 participants

- Anonymous  
Start small and persevere. Advocate for staff voices in administrative conversations.
- Anonymous  
Staff on the board and a part of the strategic plan.
- Anonymous  
We are so doing a Paw-sitivity board in the staff kitchen (that i will do a spruce-up of)!
- Anonymous  
Integrate staff voice into larger discussions... on committees, on board.
- Anonymous  
Unionize!!!!
- Anonymous  
"If we agreed on everything it would be an email" — a goal is to get to a point of communication that results in more emails and less meetings
- Anonymous  
Getting frontline team in the room where decisions happen
- Anonymous  
Staff involvement with the board/committees
- Anonymous  
Demystifying the Board of directors is possible.
- Anonymous  
Eliminating management and instead hiring "floor leads" LOVE this idea
- Anonymous  
utilizing 360 reviews
- Anonymous  
Some good feedback questions and methods for part time team
- Anonymous  
Staff participating in board meetings and strategic planning.
- Anonymous  
Better break areas and feelings of support
- Anonymous  
Adding staff to the board!!
- Anonymous  
Build trust!
- Anonymous  
The floor staff should be engaged at every touch point of museum decisions
- Anonymous  
De-mystifying the Governing board
- Anonymous  
I just scheduled a staff review of our strategic plan for June 11!
- Anonymous  
Upgrade the break room