

Organising For Success In The 21st Century:  
A Challenge For Museum Leadership

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Our conference theme gives us the opportunity to examine changing core purposes and values, and the role of leadership and management. This is particularly pertinent at the time for museums. Indeed, all cultural organisations, face a period of great change and threat. Economic and societal pressures are coming to bear on the cultural industry to the point where some institutions, including museums, are failing. This failure rate might well increase through the next 30 years. A basic tenant of management is that to achieve its purpose an organisation must first and foremost survive. The failed institution is no good to anyone. Failed institutions can no longer serve their public, nor can they maintain their collections or scholastic endeavors.

The challenge ahead is to organise first for survival, then for success, and then to achieve this success despite greater competition for funding.

A structured management process is suggested to assist a new museum, or an established museum undergoing change, to survive and continue to be successful. This structured process is absolutely dependent on a clear understanding, and relentless application, of an organisation's mission and that "thickened brew" of principles, policies and strategies that arises out of mission.

I will approach this discussion with two strong personal beliefs. The first of these is that the best of museums have always been popular. Let us remember that the museums of South Kensington arose out of an event, the Great Exhibition, of unpredicted public appeal and the best of museums have not looked back from this point. They have created public, social and learning environments, including contextualised collections, that have established museums as visitor attractions and even in some cases as events.

My second belief is that the best museums have always been scholarship based. Museums do not use the coded language of the scholar, for even scholars across different academic boundaries might not necessarily understand this code. So increasingly our language is a conversation with the public. However the basis of that conversation, in exhibitions and allied programs, is a strong institutional point of view based on good scholarship.

Our conference theme asks an interesting question – "whether traditional scholarship and research can continue alongside new populist programs and exhibitions". This is a cause for worry. What is "traditional scholarship and research"? I understand the idea of "good" and, therefore, "bad" scholarship, but I question what is enshrined in the term "traditional". Is traditional scholarship somehow different from other forms of scholarship? Is it something immutable that is not subject to change? If so, I must challenge this contention. If any element of our museological activity was not subject to normal review and assessment our profession would be in a dangerous position in respect of its broader service to society. For I will argue here that:

- we exist in a constantly changing societal environment;
- some of these changes can be predicted;
- these changes will influence in some way not just some elements, but every part of what a museum does, including scholarship and research; and
- we can make early and informed responses to these changes.

As for purposes and values I will argue that each museum must define these for itself. There is no “one size fits all” set of truths to which we can attach ourselves. To assist however, I do offer one managed process whereby a museum can define purpose and values for itself and use this as the basis for achieving success.

My main thesis will be that the next three decades, or perhaps even five, are destined to be difficult years for all of us in the cultural industry and that no element of the museum in the future can be immune from the changing circumstances we face. I begin with a fairly gloomy perspective but will end with something quite hopeful – demanding, but hopeful. And I will place a particularly heavy burden on the leader of the future.

I plan to cover:

1. The Societal and Museological Environment;
2. Mission and Planning for Success; and
3. Leadership.

## **1. THE SOCIETAL AND MUSEOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT**

I have learnt from two astute politicians, Dr Peter Tapsell at Te Papa (the national museum of New Zealand) and Professor Michael Blumenthal at the Jewish Museum Berlin, the value of driving major “stakes in the ground” as a means of setting early direction for some endeavour. I have four stakes that I plan to use to set the context for the discussion that follows on the need for statements of mission and their use in organising for success.

### **• Museums as labour intensive operations**

Part of the reality of an increasingly globalised world is the expectation that the costs of production and service will be pared down to the minimum. Services might be moved to a low cost area. Technology is such that when you next telephone a service center you might well be answered by a pleasant and well-trained person in India. Or that piece of software you use was compiled in a village in Bali. Or the same production might be expected from a greatly reduced and more efficient work situation. Recently I visited a steel mill at Eisenhüttenstadt, in former East Germany, where 3,000 people now produce the same output as a workforce of 11,000 a few years back. New Zealand Railways, a once famous social service, went from around 24,000 employees to 4,000 in a short and very painful transition.

Unfortunately, the cultural industry is not like that. There is no way that an orchestra can produce a live performance with its component parts scattered to the cheapest labour sources. Further, the form of the music that an orchestra plays was set by the composer at the time of writing. A Mahler symphony played by an orchestra of 25 pieces or without the horns would not sound right. Similarly in museums, our purposes and

histories mean that we are charged with maintaining vast collections of significant cultural property, with displaying collections and themes to the public and with being scholarship based.

I am not saying that we cannot achieve more efficient operations. We can always do this. What I am saying is that we are an inherently labour intensive industry. In an environment that expects the same outputs for less commitment of resource, we in the cultural industry will come to the rationalisation party only if we are prepared or forced to abandon some things we currently regard as sacred.

**First stake in the ground** – However focused and organised we might be, museums are labour intensive operations and, therefore, are costly to operate.

- **The economic environment**

Continuing the broadly economic theme, the cultural industry faces particular financial difficulties in the next 30 years, perhaps even 50 years. It is a demographic reality that in this time our populations will age and a relatively fewer number of workers will have to support increasing numbers of pensioners. Further, this is an age typified by the desire to reduce the taxes borne by citizens. Confronting this reality, governments worldwide are striving to reorder budget priorities and to eliminate deficits so as to better cover increasing social service expenditures and accommodate reduced tax revenues. This situation varies from nation to nation depending on how individual countries have chosen to plan and apply various policy options.

Traditionally museums have turned to subventions of funds derived from local, state and national levied taxes. Even in the United States of America, where an enabling tax regime and tradition means that a great deal of support comes out of the private sector, such subventions are an important component in operating many museums. As a director of a regional museum in those heady years in the 1970s and 80s I could expect automatic growth in the funds I received from my city. This is not longer the case. Cultural organisations are now in a much more competitive fiscal environment. There is a discernable constriction in the money channelled to culture or, at best, this money is being made available for focused purposes and projects.

As a result, there have been strong moves for museums to be more fiscally self-reliant with a much greater emphasis being placed on covering a proportion of costs from gate-take, commercial enterprises and sponsorship. Some institutions do this very well and one of the important benchmarks for us in the future is the break-even, or even profit making, cultural institution.

This is happening now and has been for the last decade or two. Earlier this year Kendall Hubert, Director of Corporate Development for the Guggenheim Foundation, demonstrated, at a conference in Berlin, that in the 1990s museums as a corporate whole slipped into a deficit situation and that it is likely that this trend will continue. More and more we hear of museums closing. We like to stress the new openings, but the reality is that museums are closing.

**Second stake in the ground** – The funding environment in which we operate is becoming more difficult and more competitive.

- **Society's needs**

As a profession of museum workers we commonly defined ourselves by reference to our functions: "research, collection, conservation, education and exhibition". Such functions are very close to us, being what we do on a day-to-day basis. I would like to suggest that they are over-used by the museum profession. Reference to these functions as the foundation of museological endeavour can mask the other critical element of our generic definitions, namely, that museums are "in the service of society".

If we are serving society we must know what society requires of us. Indeed, we live in an age of democratisation, a time when our society is increasingly demanding involvement in decision-making. Society tells us what it wants which can be confusing, as different elements of the pluralistic society can have quite different perspectives on an issue.

Discerning society's needs is a complex set of processes.

- Perhaps the most common process is political, that very complex interplay between politicians with their personal beliefs and their constituents who empower them, or refuse to empower them. Here a perceived societal need is subjected to this interplay and decisions might lead towards a museum being established or re-engineered. All but one of the major new museum projects in which I have been engaged has arisen via the political process.
- The political process might involve a citizen's movement. Sometimes such a movement will go it alone. The one exception I refer to above was a children's museum where a group of citizens defined the societal need and decided to establish a museum. Similarly, many of the great art and collection based museums were established by groups of collectors deciding to create a museum.
- The third broad process is an analysis of society's needs through market research. We poll people to determine what they require and respond to what they tell us.

Common to all the above processes is that museums are most usually established, and remain successful, because they answer an important need within their society. They are not established to research, collect, conserve, educate, and exhibit, although these are functions they are likely to carry out. Rather museums are established and maintained because society has a defined need of them. The people of our society will probably agree that saving important collections is a good thing. However, I find they place equal or even greater emphasis on the fact that they are part of a world being changed by information technologies and live in an age of experience.

After intensive consultation, the societal need is written down. This is our mission statement. A mission is not a simple, catchy set of words that anyone can read anything into. Rather it is a structured complex of inspired ideas and treasured values that the society perceives as being generally good. It is thick enough in meaning to give guidance to the actions of the corporate body and individuals within the corporation.

As outlined in my introduction, a clearly enunciated mission is the first requirement of a successful museum. I will go into this in greater detail when I look at a couple of case studies. Suffice to say that a mission clearly states the need that has caused a society to establish and/or to maintain a museum. It sets out the scope of the museum and the expected result. It does not specify function.

**Third stake in the ground** – Museums that are “in the service of society” are mission driven, not function driven.

- **Vision and visionary strategy**

In the last section I set out three processes whereby a society’s needs are determined: the political; the citizen’s movement; and through market research. There is one problem here. Sometimes, despite consultation and agreement, the result can be boring with failure written all over it. I now want to add a further process – inspirational thinking.

The man who created the Walkman had an idea that everyone else thought was stupid – a “real dog”. But he was right. Herein is a lesson. In the new competitive funding environment we should not only be seeking out what society needs, but we need also to lead, to reach beyond what is known, for that inspired vision. It is the inspired vision that captures the public imagination and will increase the likelihood of a cultural institution being successful.

Mission and vision are two sides of the same coin. They say the same thing. However, vision is the total being and form of the newness of an institution, writ large and early, to give the broadest understanding to the widest number of people and to guide decision makers in the right direction. Mission, for me, is the beginnings of a structured process that allows a museum, or any other cultural organisation to engage in a exercise that will lead them forward to success.

An inspired vision defies definition for the simple reason that it is “out of the box”. However, a few attributes might be:

- The vision gives early form and clarity to thinking that is currently vague at best. It drives the first major “stakes in the ground”;
- It embodies an inspired idea that is capable of firing the imagination of the potential audience and that can act as a magnet for a range of stakeholders and major players;
- It is clear about the audience and seeks to involve the broadest possible demographic. A great vision is very clear when it comes to that dictum “know your audience”;
- Because it “knows” this broad audience, it will tend to draw heavily on concepts like experience, attraction, event and theatre;
- A great vision frequently comes coupled with an imaginative achievement strategy. It very likely to utilise commercial delivery.

**Fourth stake in the ground** – Inspirational thinking, and the resulting vision, is critical to the success of a museum.

**2. MISSION AND PLANNING FOR SUCCESS**

Some parts of the societal and museological environment we face seem to indicate a pretty depressing prospect. We are all destined to fail, close and see our collections moulder away and our research come to naught. Well, this is not so. It cannot be allowed to be so. The challenge for museums, and those who work in them, is to adapt to new circumstances and to find the opportunities within this new environment. We must seek ways to flourish and succeed.

Over the last couple of decades, I have had the very good fortune to be involved with a number of large museum projects. These have allowed me to work with a wide range of people, including scholars and curators, designers, writers, technologists, tribal elders, community and cultural groups, architects, project managers, commercial entrepreneurs, sponsors, the tourism industry, citizen movements and artists.

These people, when pulling together, form a formidable team working for success. They are a great bunch of teachers. This involvement has given me the opportunity to learn and develop for my own purposes a structured, managed approach to achieving success. Essentially the approach allows a vision and its resultant mission to drive all development, that is, to be translated into a successful, functioning enterprise.

I draw on two case studies to illustrate how this structured, managed approach has achieved success. They are Te Papa and the Jewish Museum Berlin, two new institutions that have emerged as a result of broadly perceived societal need.

[Table]

**The Jewish Museum Berlin  
Managed approach to creating a new institution**

<b>RESULT</b>	<b>MISSION</b>	<b>SCOPE</b>
(present and future populations; benefits of harmonious interaction; high cost to all of intolerance)	(2000 years of German Jewish History)	
<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<b>INTELLECTUAL FRAMEWORK</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cross-generational (children and parents)</li> <li>• younger visitors and school groups</li> <li>• tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• German Jewish people</li> <li>• Relationships</li> <li>• German Jews everywhere</li> </ul>	
<b>VALUES AND PRINCIPLES</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life – Not Just Death</li> <li>• Invention and Creativity</li> <li>• Authority of Scholarship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor Focus</li> <li>• Narrative Approach</li> <li>• Integrated Cultural Institution</li> </ul>	

<p><b>2 POLICY</b>          In the following areas: Research and Collections; Exhibitions (Core and Temporary); Publications; Public Programs, Education, Events, PR and Marketing; Information; Facilities, Security and Services; and Administration and Human Resources</p>	<p><b>2 TOOLS</b>          Such as: Financial Plan; Architectural Brief; Interpretive Plan; Exhibitions Plan; Commercial Plan; Project Management Plan; Institutional Design Manual; Operations Manual; HR Plan; Marketing Strategy; etc; etc</p>
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**3 & 4 BUSINESS PLANS**  
 (At the present moment the Jewish Museum Berlin runs approximately 30 Business Plans)

The preceding Table uses the example of the Jewish Museum Berlin to illustrate how a structured approach allowed a staff to drive their thinking upwards toward the question of why the Museum had been created, as expressed in the mission, and away from the day-to-day functions and worries that threatened to inundate them. In the case of this highly pressured museum project it allowed what had already been achieved to be hung on the structure thereby creating a much clearer picture of what had yet to be achieved. It gave a logical sequence to museum development. The reality is never an ordered, sequential approach in which each step logically follows the one before, but is much more a hectic and dangerous array of parallel activities. The constant revisiting of this structure gave to staff some certainty as to what was happening around them.

- **The Jewish Museum Berlin – the vision**

The Jewish Museum Berlin was created first as a piece of architecture. It is a stunning building of unrelenting physical presence that refuses to be ignored. It is a place that speaks of fraught history, of disorientation and even discomfort. Daniel Libeskind's building occupies anything but neutral ground. It sits fairly in the very heart of Berlin, the capital of re-unified Germany and the former Nazi capital. It is a sculptural intrusion heavily symbolic of the ultimately calamitous relationships of German Jewish history.

The Libeskind building was to have been an extension to a small city museum. It was conceived just as the Berlin Wall had fallen and built amid the political shifts of German reunification and the return of the capital to Berlin. The building became part of the debate engendered by all these shifts and re-alignments. Eventually the debate, led by Michael Naumann, the first German Minister of Culture, and Museum Chief Executive Michael Blumenthal, businessman and ex-Secretary of the United States Treasury, focused in upon the need for a museum of history that confronted the German Jewish relationship and all the lessons that are part of that relationship.

Blumenthal, with Naumann, put a number of “stakes in the ground”. These were important principles on which future planning was to be based. They did not write a mission. That came later. They did establish these important starting points:

- First, this was to be a museum of German Jewish history. It is not a Jewish Museum in that it is not principally about the religious, social and cultural makeup of the Jews of Germany. It was to be a further element in the commitment to continue confronting Germany’s great crime in history by, in this case, humanising that story of expectation, achievement and ultimate calamitous horror that was the relationship between Jews and their German neighbours. It was to be more akin to the Haus der Geschichte in Bonn and the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin than, for example, the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt;
- Secondly, it would be an international museum by which they were suggesting a museum utilising modern communication and interpretive techniques and committed to fund development and marketing;
- Thirdly, it should be a national museum; and
- Fourthly, its exhibitions would be organised via a linear, chronological approach starting at the beginning and ending at the present.

Blumenthal and Naumann set a very tight opening date. Essentially we had 18 months to opening. The Museum had just employed a large group of contract research workers but had few production oriented people. Staff morale was low and there was a feeling that the Museum was going nowhere. In a situation such as this certainty is the first requirement. Staff need to know which direction is “up”, where the project is going, what is required of them and to develop strong personal commitments to their tasks. Further staff need to find the strength which comes from acting in a team devoted to a common purpose.

- **The Jewish Museum Berlin – determining the mission**

I have already proposed that the societal need, when written down, forms the basis of our mission. This had not been done for the Jewish Museum Berlin. So it was that, 18 months out from opening, we stopped work to determine our mission. In a two month period of intensive work, staff drafted a Base Document for adoption by our Chief Executive and Stiftungsrat (Board). This document contained three important components:

- Mission Statement (including high level targets);
- Academic Concept (exhibition segment outline);
- Visitor Experience statement (the tone and style of the Museum).

This was a fast document achieved in very pressured circumstances. Yet it captured the essence of what the Museum would become and was the foundation of all planning to opening on 9 September 2001.

In April 2002, after an international peer review of the Museum, staff went back to this document and reworked it in the light of our experiences in opening the Museum. The mission and guiding principles formulated in that earlier two months proved to be amazingly resilient. However, the project period of driving for opening had taught a great deal and significant additions and refinements were made. In particular, the concept of “result” loomed much larger in everyone’s thinking.



The first part of the mission is a simple statement of scope, what we cover. It reads:

“Our mission is to focus on the history and culture of the Jews in, and originating from, German-speaking lands.”

The second part is equally, if not more, important. It is the result and sets out the WHY we do what we do and expend so much time, effort and money to have people visit the Museum. This result statement reads:

“The Museum does this so as

- to make the two millennia of German-Jewish experience relevant for the present and future populations of Germany;
- to emphasize the benefits of harmonious interaction between various ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic groups; and
- to call attention to the high cost to all of intolerance. “

The mission and result statement is then backed up with a set of values and principles that guide how we act and behave.

“In all we do we are guided by the following Values and Principles:

Life – Not Just Death:

The Museum is not a Holocaust memorial. Rather we present a view of German Jewish history that is balanced between, on the one hand, celebration of the ordinary and extraordinary lives of all generations and, on the other, the recognition and explication of the darker side of that history.

Visitor Focus:

The museum is focused on and driven by the needs of the visitor. We provide a welcoming and safe environment. We communicate directly and clearly with all visitors. All sections of the Museum have a role in providing an excellent experience for our visitors. Fellow staff members are respected and also served in this spirit – as though they were customers.

Invention and Creativity:

We aspire to be recognized as one of the great museums of the world. The Museum will be a place of innovation that will strive to take bold, inventive approaches to achieving our mission.

Narrative Approach:

The Museum tells stories which present German Jewish history through historical narratives. These stories will challenge our visitors, surprise them, inform them, and promote tolerance. In looking back at German Jewish history, the focus of the Museum will, rather than any special emphasis on Berlin, be on the Jews of the German-speaking lands. Where we focus on contemporary issues, we will broaden our focus so that it becomes “global,” “whole world.”

Authority of Scholarship:

Everything the Museum does is based on the highest standards of scholarship, so that the Museum will stand as a trustworthy place for the presentation of

German Jewish history. The Museum will undertake relevant original research work. It is dedicated to transmitting the information, stories and research that it produces to the widest possible audience.

Integrated Cultural Institution:

The Museum is an integrated entity and all sections work together to achieve the mission. It is a cultural institution which, in addition to all traditional museum activities, will also work to become a multi-faceted center which presents its subjects through a wide range of appropriate media.”

The Museum’s mission makes a commitment to a core audience, the German family.

“The core target audience is:

- cross-generational (children visiting with parents or caregivers)
- non-specialist
- the entire German population, including every immigrant group
- tourists to Germany
- special emphasis on younger visitors and school groups.

We, individual staff members, will devote between 65% and 100% of our activities, budget and outputs to serving this core audience.

Some activities, for example the archive, library, research facilities, some temporary exhibitions and some cultural events, will have other designated core target audiences including:

- scholars
- academics
- interested laypersons
- other specialist groups.

These audiences will be specified as part of the approval for each activity.”

The Jewish Museum Berlin chooses to complete its mission statement with an intellectual framework. Three framing concepts provide a broad sense of direction for the Museum’s intellectual efforts. The framework marks the territory in which the Museum wishes to build its reputation and heads all policy statements that guide the intellectual life of the Museum. Real and achievable museological outputs are suggested by, and arise from, this framework. This framework will eventually delimit the research endeavours of the Museum.

The framework is:

- a) German Jewish people  
Their ordinariness and extra-ordinariness – their place in history – their religious and secular life – their memory and identity
- b) Relationships  
Tolerance, tension and intolerance among the Germans and the Jews and among all peoples of German society
- c) German Jews everywhere – the German Jewish Diaspora – communities in other countries and present day Germany”

This Jewish Museum Berlin intellectual framework moves from: people as individuals and communities in a broadly cultural and historical construct; to these same peoples engaged in the processes of relationship among themselves, with other Germans and among all peoples; to a more contemporary vision of German Jews in a global context.

- **Jewish Museum Berlin – mission summary**

The above mission is no more than four pages. Much discussed and sometimes hotly contested it is the product of a group of disparate people working together in a team situation. In this situation the voice of the exhibition's maker is as strong as the curator, the public relations chief is as important as the publisher and the boss has to listen to the information manager and everyone else. It is a democratic process, except that it is strongly facilitated by the director who as leader will make any necessary calls.

It was also an exercise informed by the intensely practical matters that the Museum was facing on a day to day basis at the highest and the lowest level. The need for a wall in the Library became a mission driven discussion. As a result, in a 20 minute meeting, it was determined that the wall was symptomatic of a problem at an entirely different level. That is, the need to serve staff as though they were customers.

Importantly, the process of discussing and contesting these high level statements generated ownership and allowed the Museum to step naturally and comfortably into the next level, being a process whereby a "thickened brew" of working principles, policies, strategies, plans and tools were devised.

It also changed behaviour and the environment in which decisions are made. What is encouraging now is that the Jewish Museum Berlin has started to "live the mission". For example, exhibitions that had originally looked book-like, exceedingly unexciting and lacking in dimension became true communication devices, capable of involving the family audience. They touch people's experience, taking into account the needs of younger visitors and try to set up a conversation with visitors rather than instruct them. They are engaging and are attended by a group of visitor hosts trained in pleasant communication and service. All this has been possible because of the mission exercise.

- **The Jewish Museum Berlin - planning for success through policies and tools**

It is at this point that we "define success" and the goal and the targets become actual and real. In a process led strongly by the leader, and the leader's trusted managers, the staff develop and write down detailed policies and tools that determine the way ahead. With constant reference upward to the mission, specific roadmaps are developed that guide every museum activity.

For example, the Jewish Museum Berlin already had its architecture but staff still had to put in place an architectural plan because the original brief was for 150,000 visitors and we were expecting at least 600,000. The plan had to make allowance for increasing the capacity of the air-conditioning, the number of toilets and other facilities and services.

Immediately prior to opening, approximately €4,000,000 was spent on reconstruction work.

In the drive to opening the single critical success factor was Day 1 – the opening achieved. Time was so limited that the definition of the “success” was achieved in face to face meetings with all people contributing to the process: state problem / agree / move on / no reiteration. Every meeting had to be totally productive.

However, after opening there has been time to set up a series of teams, with overlapping memberships, that are now refining policies for research and collections, and exhibitions, both core and temporary. Work has just begun on an Information policy. In coming months, a start will be made on the other major areas including education, events and building management.

The Museum has also begun a series of plans, the “Tools” in the Table. A draft operations manual was in place at opening and the status of other plans ranges from skeletal outlines to fond wishes.

The final step in the process is for a museum to set up the necessary management structures to achieve success. These will be expressed in an integrated set of business plans that set targets and activities for the coming and subsequent years. Back in my first two months at the Jewish Museum Berlin, when all work stopped and the mission was being formulated, simple one page business plans were being written to guide resource allocation and give some structure to a confused budget that did not express the outputs of the Museum. It is a truism that the most likely management scenario for any institution is that it will always be involved in parallel activity, undertaking a series of tasks together with strong cross-referencing mechanisms, rather than being able to adopt a more ordered sequential approach.

- **Te Papa**

The Jewish Museum Berlin process was not dissimilar to that which initiated Te Papa (the national museum of New Zealand). Here a very intelligent politician, Dr Peter Tapsell, established a number of statements of principle for a new museum concept. Like Blumenthal and Naumann, Tapsell drove a number of big stakes into the ground. These stated that the museum should:

- Be for all New Zealanders (an inclusive place that welcomed people of all ethnicities, and educational and socioeconomic groups);
- Tell all our stories (be about all of the peoples who live in the country, their beliefs and values);
- Be bicultural (the Museum will share the governance between the Maori and Pakeha people).

From these stakes in the ground a museum was developed that is a wonderfully mature celebration of New Zealand.

The Te Papa framework is a simple statement of cultures in relation to land:

- Papatuanuku – the land on which we all live

- Tangata Whenua – the people here by right of first discovery
- Tangata Tiriti – the people here by right of the Treaty of Waitangi

In addition, there is a commitment to the expression of New Zealand as a broader and integrated society sharing many common values.

It operates under five broad principles. Te Papa is:

- Bicultural – constitutional requirement to share governance between the Maori and Pakeha people of New Zealand
- Commercially positive
- Visitor focused
- Scholarship based
- Waharoa – the celebration of New Zealand culture

Te Papa is much bigger than the Jewish Museum Berlin but did not suffer the terrible time constraints of the latter. It had 13 years of consistent and logical development from 1985 to opening in 1998. However, Te Papa was organised in a somewhat different way in that concept development and the new building were in the hands of a Project Development Board that was, until 1992, independent of the old museum and gallery organisations and staffs. It could be suggested that as a result the “revolution” that is Te Papa was preserved. Equally, many of the old staff are probably of the belief that the Te Papa concept was imposed on them without the preliminary consultations that might have made of the new concept a more potent change management tool.

- **The success of Te Papa and the Jewish Museum Berlin**

Te Papa opened very well with 2.1 million visitors in the first year and over 6 million visitors to date. It has a very high average duration of stay and high satisfaction rates. In its first years it has gathered an audience that is the full New Zealand demographic, cutting across all age, ethnic and socio-economic boundaries. Visitors find the experience to be engaging and empowering in a totally unexpected way

The Jewish Museum Berlin has attracted 740,000 visitors in its first year. Duration of stay is very high and it has achieved a satisfaction rate of 97.5%, particularly for the way in which it tells this difficult story and visitor service. Both these figures are higher than Te Papa.

In one important area it could be said that that the Jewish Museum Berlin has yet to achieve its goal of attracting the German family as its key target audience. While visitors are generally young (under 29 years) only 6% come in family groups with children. Close to 85% of visitors acknowledge that the Museum has been created very much with children in mind, but 63% say that the theme of the Museum is not suitable for children. This is not a reason to change our mission and audience targets. Instead it points to the need for a more determined marketing effort to attract a higher proportion of this key audience into the Museum.

Both Museums are successful. They are excellent examples of organising for success. They demonstrate the importance of a visionary concept expressed through a clearly stated mission supported by a structured approach to achieving that success.

### **3. LEADERSHIP**

The next three or so decades will be difficult. The funding environment will be more competitive. As a person involved in initiating large museum projects, I will seek the following qualities in the future leaders of our profession:

- **understanding the total environment in which a museum operates**

The leader stands for the society that owns and pays for the cultural organisation. The leader intervenes on behalf of that society and maintains the position of the organisation in respect of society. As a result, their main study is the nature of modern society, both local and global. This part of their role is intensely political and involves them in a public role that for most of us must be learnt.

- **having an exciting vision for the museum, one that is both highly relevant to the society it serves and saleable**

I have yet to see a really top class Chief Executive who is not passionately involved in an idea. They know what they want their museum to be and how this can be attained. They are the focus of the mission process, polishing and thickening it so that it is always of relevance. They make sure that the staff understand and act to that mission. The leader also knows that their vision is saleable and will be the major factor in the continuing success of the organisation.

- **being totally committed to the mission and principles of the museum and all its policies**

The leader is consistent. There is never any doubt that he or she supports the mission. Most leaders inherit the mission of the institution, but they do so either fully supporting it, which is unusual, or with an agreement that change will take place in a particular direction. Any ambivalence is out on the table early and quickly. The staff knows that their boss is the most passionate supporter of the museum and gives direction to what they do.

- **leading the drive for success, including the structured processes that allows the museum's mission and values to pervade all elements of policy and planning**

To this point the leader has "owned" the museum in a very real sense and they are seen to lead. But the leader cannot do everything and from this point they will, in varying combinations, structure their organisation to bring people with special expertise into managerial roles, ranging over the scholastic, programmatic, operational and production to the commercial. Acting in concert, this team of managers will drive for success. However, the leader is not a distant presence. It needs to be evident that this person is

able to lead inspirational teams. The leader has the human and facilitation skills necessary to grow and nurture an internal environment and culture that mirrors the mission. Their facilitation skills will be called upon frequently to set direction and get successful action.

- **running an efficient and effective organisation, at least part of which is likely to utilise commercial delivery techniques**

Others might do the work, but the leader has to be closely in touch with all processes and intervenes as is required.

- **being able to maintain a complex series of activities in parallel, and being able to move forward despite changing circumstances, constant review and frequent refinement**

The leader is juggler of priorities and processes, diving through the different management levels to engage opportunities and make judgment calls in the best interests of the whole organisation.

## **CONCLUSION**

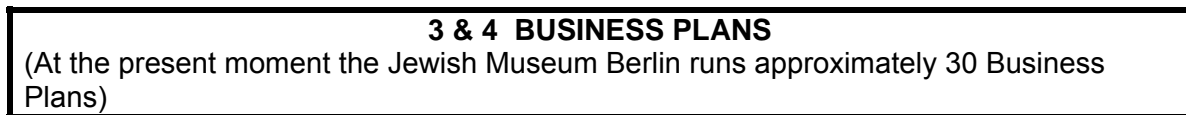
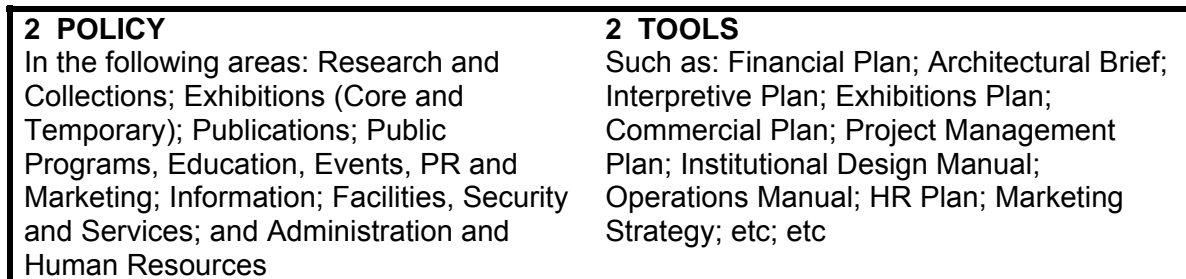
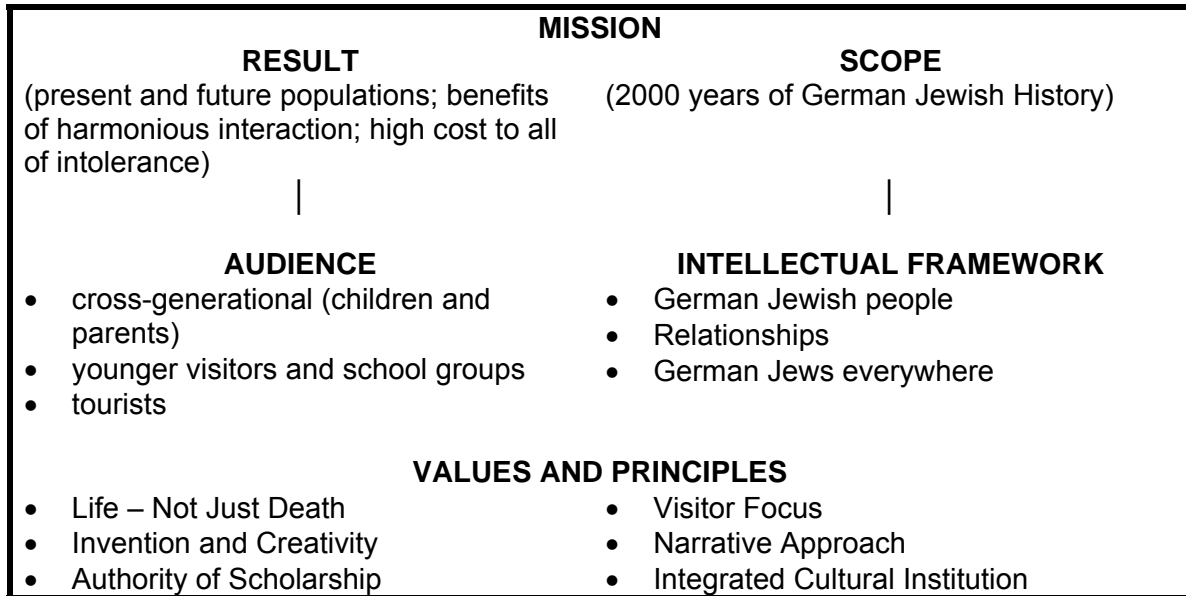
The future, and I define the future as the working life of the younger members of this gathering, will be difficult for cultural institutions. Cultural institutions are failing and are probably destined to fail in greater numbers in the next few decades. However, the future can also be one of great opportunity for those who are driven to answer the needs of their society and who are prepared to organise for survival and success.

Success is dependent on a clear understanding, and relentless application, of an organisation's mission and that "thickened brew" of principles, policies and strategies that arises out of mission.

The principal role of the leader is to guarantee the survival of our cultural institutions. To do this they must lead in understanding and applying mission as well as operating complex organisations. This is a huge call so no wonder "leadership" issues in cultural organizations are frequently in the news. The stress on these people is immense. We cannot do without leadership. So the next time you hear complaint about the boss, a valid response is to remind those who complain that their jobs, and the things we all hold to be important, are dependant on these valuable people.

**OVERHEAD 2 – Long process diagram**

**The Jewish Museum Berlin  
Managed Approach to Creating a New Institution**



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