Storytime!
Sharing our stories, building our success

Collaborative
Oriented to Community
Specialized
Innovative
Nimble

Doria Hughes,
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Accreditation - why it doesn’t work

~35,144: number of U.S. museums
34,034: unaccredited museums

1,110: number of accredited museums
(About 3%)

Why Externally-Imposed Standards Fail:
- failure to take into account fewer resources available to small museums
- standards developed from large museum ideals (“best practices”) which do not address the real needs of small museums
- lack of consultation with small museum workers in the development of standards

“Background on Problematic Standards for Small Museums”, Paul Thistle

“Our community does not care whether we have the AAM seal of approval; they care whether our programs, exhibits, collections care, and research and historic preservation assistance are meeting their needs and sparking their interest. And meeting those needs is essential to our survival.”
- Elizabeth Stewart, Director of the Renton History Museum, Washington

92% of accredited museums have a budget greater than $350K

“There are no accredited museums with budgets of under $100,000”
How does the Museum Industry define Small Museums?

- Small Budget
  - Smaller than a large museum

- Small Staff
  - Smaller than a large museum

- Volunteer-Driven
  - Less professional than a large museum

...In relation to large museums!

Large Museums are the default standard in the museum industry

34,034 unaccredited museums

Industry Leadership vs. Small Museums

Unreasonable Demands

Impossible goals
Through Here!!!

Top-Down Leadership

Big is Better

One-Size-Fits-All Standards

THE SAME OLD THINKING  THE SAME OLD RESULTS
Knowledge-Sharing

Small is Great!

Needed Support

Equitable Community of Institutions

Self-Generated Standards

Bigger isn’t Always Better

TEAMWORK

BIGGER or SMALLER
“[M]useums are not like a set of Russian dolls, nested one inside another and all alike except for their scale.”

- Stephen Weil
Philippe Dubé’s “New Museology”

**Communality** - serve local community first

**Communication** - reach out and share

**Commercialization** - get creative with marketing

**Integrated** approach, not siloed and separate.

**Community**  **Innovation**
National Day of Small Museums

Giancarlo Dall’Ara’s “Piccoli Musei” Manifesto

“in harmony with the local community”

“rooted in the territory, with a strong link with the local community, more welcoming, more relational”

“A small museum “is not a shrunken version of a large one, and it is not a minor museum, but a different way of understanding the museum”

Specialization  Innovation  Community
“a radically particular view on something, somewhere, or someone”

Rooted in particular places, communities, and individuals

Staff = “owners, employees, unpaid family members, and volunteers, any of whom may also be a curator.”

Volunteers Self-Sufficient Unbound
“uniquely personal appeal”

“independent zones for the exchange of views and discussion on matters of concern.”

“query, contestation, and explication possible”

Specialization Community Flexibility
COINS: Small Museum Standards

Collaborative

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Nimble
#1 Collaborative
Small museums are community-oriented.

Large museums are object-oriented.
#5 Specialized

**MUSEUM OF BAD ART**

*art too bad to be ignored*

Living In Tough Times:

*From Having a Bad Day to Dystopian Apocalypse*

[Image of museum and surrounding areas]
How to Tell a Story

- Exposition
- Rising action
- Inciting incident
- Crisis
- Climax
- Denouement
- End
Emergency Fund

Solution

Partnerships Between Businesses and Nonprofits

NEW ON BOARD

HELPER