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## University of New Orleans [Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum]

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**University of New Orleans**

**A Master's Report  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Arts Administration**

**By**

**Anna María Grand**

**December 2009**

**Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum—New York, New York**

**May 18 – August 14, 2009**

From mid-May 2009 to mid-August 2009, I served as an intern in the Marketing department of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. As an intern at this museum, I examined its daily operations, organizational structure, and program planning through the lens of a graduate student in the program of Arts Administration at the University New Orleans. Based on my internship at the Guggenheim, I have written a comprehensive report outlining my experiences and observations at the internationally renowned arts organization. The following report includes a brief history of the organization and description of its mission and organizational structure; details of the projects and tasks I was assigned as an intern; an analysis of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; best practices for the industry and competitor analysis; and a description of my contribution to the Museum.

## ***Introduction***

In theory, I have always been a planner. I set the framework and a timeline for major milestones and determined a general direction to pursue. But as I have matured, I have realized that some of my greatest experiences have not come from my detailed life plan, but rather from a handful of whims I have been smart enough, and lucky enough, to pursue. Searching for a new direction and buying myself more time post-grad, I applied to the Master's in Arts Administration at the University of New Orleans immediately following a spirited conversation with a former photography professor. Two years later, I applied for an internship with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum because it was the first museum I could think of when asked where I was planning to intern after declaring to my family that I was moving to New York. Shortly after my public declaration, I found myself rushing to make the postmarked deadline for this particular internship. In front of the post office on January 10, 2009, I made a silent plea for things to work in my favor, placed my resume and cover letter in the mail slot, and forgot about the Guggenheim entirely until an unexpected call for an interview months later.

Following my interview with Francesca Merlino, Marketing Associate, and subsequent acceptance to the program, I felt that an internship at Guggenheim Museum presented the most relevant and exciting opportunity for me to apply my knowledge of arts administration in a museum setting in one of the world's largest cultural centers. The Guggenheim Museum offered unparalleled opportunities for me to widen the breadth of my experience and my skill set was a great fit for the needs of the Marketing department.

My internship ran from mid-May 2009 through mid-August 2009 and offered extensive insight into the marketing activities of an organization of international renown. While the typical internship semester at the Museum runs three months, I was viewed as an integral part of the Marketing department and trusted with projects that carried importance beyond my tenure as an intern. As an intern, I was

included in departmental and committee meetings and asked to voice my ideas regarding Museum programming and marketing efforts. I was trusted to complete projects without constant supervision or micromanagement, a stark contrast to my experience in other organizations. Over my three months with the Guggenheim, I did not feel like just another intern, but as a valued contributor to the organization's success.

This report serves as a comprehensive examination of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, with an emphasis on my experience in the Marketing department, and analysis of the organization from the perspective of an arts administrator. The following report includes:

- An overview of the organization including a brief history, its mission, and organizational structure
- Details of my internship experience, including projects and tasks
- An analysis of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- Best practices for the industry as they apply to the Guggenheim, as well as a competitor analysis and recommendations for the organization
- A description of my short-term and long-term contributions to the Museum

## ***Overview of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation***

### *History*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, a 501(c)3, non-profit art organization, was chartered in 1937 as an “educational corporation for the...promotion and encouragement of art and education in art and the enlightenment of the public, especially in the field of art,”<sup>1</sup> and opened its doors to the public as the Museum of Non-Objective Painting. In 1959, the Museum’s collection moved into its Frank Lloyd Wright-built home, which is now recognized the world over as one of the premier museums for contemporary art. The Museum and Foundation are under the direction of Richard Armstrong, who was appointed to his position of Director in November, 2008. The Museum and Foundation are managed by an executive staff and board of directors, which strive to operate within the parameters of the Foundation’s mission statement:

*“The mission of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is to promote the understanding and appreciation of art, architecture, and other manifestations of visual culture, primarily of the modern and contemporary periods, and to collect, conserve, and study the art of our time. The Foundation realizes this mission through exceptional exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications, and strives to engage and educate an increasingly diverse international audience through its unique network of museums and cultural partnerships.”<sup>2</sup>*

In the fifty years since the doors on Fifth Avenue first opened, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum has built a reputation based on its focus on art, architecture, and innovation. Individual collections exist

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<sup>1</sup> *Guggenheim Employee Manual*. New York, NY: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1998

<sup>2</sup> *“Mission Statement.” Guggenheim Museum*. 16 Sep 2009 <<http://www.guggenheim.org/guggenheim-foundation/mission-statement>>

within the network of museums, fostering exchanges between the affiliated institutions and broadening of the artworks' audiences. The established Guggenheim network helps facilitate loan agreements between institutions. Exhibitions travel from one museum to another with greater ease, furthering the museum's mission to "promote the understanding and appreciation of art, architecture, and other manifestations of visual culture."<sup>3</sup>

#### *The New York Museum and Its Affiliates*

Solomon's niece, Peggy Guggenheim, began her own art collection in the 1930s, and established the Peggy Guggenheim Foundation in 1949. Ownership of the Peggy Guggenheim Foundation was transferred to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in 1976, with the stipulation that the works in the collection would remain in Venice, in the Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, following Peggy's death. The relationship between the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection was the first in a network of museums that would grow under the direction of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

Furthering the mission of the Foundation, additional constituent museums were added to the Guggenheim network. In the early 1990s, agreements were signed between the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and the Basque government in Spain to establish a constituent institution in Bilbao, fully funded by the Basque administration. The Guggenheim Bilbao is administered under the direction of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, but counts on yearly operational support from the Basque government.

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<sup>3</sup> "Mission Statement." *Guggenheim Museum*. 16 Sep 2009 <<http://www.guggenheim.org/guggenheim-foundation/mission-statement>>

The third constituent museum, Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, opened in 1997, forging a unique partnership between the Foundation and Deutsche Bank. The Berlin museum is funded entirely by the German banking corporation, and its primary focus is to commission new artworks by contemporary artists, that will eventually enter the Guggenheim collection. As with the Bilbao affiliate, the German museum adheres to strict guidelines set forth by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, and is part of the museum network. Deutsche Guggenheim is staffed and run by Deutsche Bank.

Despite successes with constituent museums, there have been several missteps in growing and enhancing the Guggenheim Museum experience. The short-lived Guggenheim SoHo opened in 1992, bringing many small, but important, exhibitions to this satellite museum space in New York City, but closed in 2002 due to poor attendance. The Guggenheim Hermitage Museum at the Venetian Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada, a partnership with the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, opened in 2000 and enjoyed a seven-year run. Small exhibitions of works from the permanent collections of the Guggenheim and Hermitage Museums were featured at the Las Vegas museum.

While the two “destination” museums, SoHo and Las Vegas, were not successes for the Guggenheim Foundation, the newest addition to the Guggenheim museum network is underway in Abu Dhabi. The latest affiliate is scheduled to open in 2013 and will feature its own collection of modern and contemporary art, as well as exhibitions of art from the Guggenheim’s permanent collection. Along with the Louvre’s Abu Dhabi museum, the Guggenheim will be central to the Saadiyat Cultural District, under development in the United Arab Emirates capital city.

### *Organizational Structure*

The Guggenheim operates four constituent museums around the world, each responsible for its own operations. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation controls the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Peggy Guggenheim Collection. The Berlin Museum is staffed and run by Deutsche Bank, while the

Bilbao museum receives a portion of its operational budget from the Basque government, essentially running as a government facility. The Guggenheim in Abu Dhabi's organizational structure will closely follow the model of the Bilbao institution. The Berlin, Bilbao, and Abu Dhabi museums must adhere to guidelines and ethics codes outlined by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, but those museums are not under the direct control of the Foundation and its Board like the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

In New York, an executive staff of five oversees the operations of the Museum, working closely with the Foundation's Board and Mr. Armstrong, the Museum's and Foundation's Director. The Executive Director of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection oversees a smaller staff at that museum, always reporting to Mr. Armstrong and the Board. In addition to being the first international museum in the Guggenheim network, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection presents a unique relationship with the international art world, as it is through this museum that the Foundation owns and operates the U.S. Pavilion of the Venice Biennale. Of the four international Guggenheim museums, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection is the one most directly affiliated with the New York museum. The Foundation provides curatorial and programming expertise and support to the Guggenheim Bilbao, but this museum is not funded in the same way as the New York and Venice museums. Similarly, the Guggenheim Berlin, while creatively supported by the Foundation, is funded entirely by Deutsche Bank. The Abu Dhabi museum's organizational structure will most closely resemble that of the Bilbao affiliate; the Foundation will provide curatorial and programming expertise, but the responsibility of staffing and funding this undertaking lies with the U.A.E. government.

## *Goals*

In preparing my internship proposal for approval by the graduate program in Arts Administration, I worked with Ms. Merlino to determine a set of goals that was relevant to the department where I would be working during my internship. Based on my understanding of the Museum and the department, marketing goals at the Guggenheim Museum include:

- Increasing the reach/appeal to New York market—core audience under age 35, highly educated, museum-going “influentials”<sup>4</sup>
- Engaging larger audiences through new media outlets
- Piquing public interest in Museum programming geared toward promoting the appreciation of art and architecture of the primarily-modern periods
- Developing promotional campaigns for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary exhibitions and programs to appeal to a global audience

Each year, the Director of Marketing is responsible for determining the appropriate objectives the department will strive to meet through its comprehensive marketing plan. The following list outlines the departmental objectives as set forth by the Director of Marketing in the Museum’s 2009 budget.

## *Department Objectives:*<sup>5</sup>

- Attract an additional 40,000+ tourists annually (1,000/wk), driving net incremental revenue of \$502,880+ (898 visitors x \$14 x 40 weeks)
- Fully leverage the recently-completed restoration and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in tourism advertising

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<sup>4</sup> “2009 Budget Input.” 2009 Marketing Budget. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

<sup>5</sup> “2009 Budget Input.” 2009 Marketing Budget. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

- Advertise consistently and prominently in tourism publications during months when the Museum is fully installed
- Invest an incremental \$24,040 in institutional advertising in support of strategic plan initiatives (institutional, development, website)
- Test the most cost-effective way to reach a significant share of the Museum's core constituency that favors online over print media

### *Challenges*

Despite a robust marketing plan and outstanding reputation, the Museum faces a number of challenges to its goals and objectives that include:

- Finding an appropriate institutional voice in emerging online marketing channels
- Implementing new media and other cost-effective initiatives to reach a greater audience
- Developing campaigns that appeal to local as well as domestic and international tourists
- Meeting marketing objectives under budgetary constraints
- Achieving all of the above with a limited staff

### *Management Structure*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is under the direction of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Operating as a 501(c)3, the Foundation is run by a Board of Trustees, which appointed Richard Armstrong as Director of the Museum and Foundation in 2008. Richard Armstrong came to the Museum from the Carnegie Museum of Art and now oversees the executive staff of the Museum and Foundation. The Foundation oversees the five museums in the Guggenheim Museum network, ensuring that each operation adheres to the Foundation's mission and standards.

### *Funding*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum receives its funding through diversified sources including donations, admissions, special events, royalties, investments, and a fundraising gala, which this year raised over \$2.2 million. The Museum maintains a healthy budget, thanks to its diversified funding plan, and, in 2007, reported over \$37<sup>6</sup> million in direct public support for the year. The Museum records are only available through 2007, and the Foundation was forced to make cuts to the budget and staff this year due to the economic downturn. The conservative adjustments to the organization were minimal when compared to other organizations, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which cut 14% of its staff this summer.<sup>7</sup> The Guggenheim finds itself in a strong position to weather this economic storm.

### *Programs*

Throughout the year, the Museum offers a number of different programs in addition to its special exhibitions and permanent collection shows, to entice the public and promote the mission of exhibiting examples of modern and contemporary visual culture. Year round, visitors to the Museum can view exceptional pieces focusing on the contemporary and modern era by visiting the Museum's Thannhauser Collection, featuring works by Cezanne, Gauguin, and Picasso. The public can also visit the gallery exhibiting expressionist painting before World War I, the foundation of Guggenheim's early collection, which is permanently on view.

The Museum also takes an interactive approach in educating its visitors in visual culture of the modern era. The Sackler Center for Arts Education offers programming year round to adults and children, and

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<sup>6</sup> *Nonprofit Report*. Guidestar. 17 Oct. 2009 <<http://www.guidestar.org/finddocuments/2007/135/562/2007-135562233-04a97fdb-9.pdf>>

<sup>7</sup> Kennedy, Randy. "Metropolitan Museum Completes Round of Layoffs." *The New York Times* 22 June 2009. NYTimes.com. 15 Oct. 2009 <[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/23/arts/design/23museum.html?\\_r=1&scp=3&sq=metropolitan%20museum%20budget%20cuts&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/23/arts/design/23museum.html?_r=1&scp=3&sq=metropolitan%20museum%20budget%20cuts&st=cse)>.

often is the home to smaller exhibitions emphasizing arts education, complementing the exhibitions in the Museum's main galleries. The Museum has vast offerings in courses, gallery tours and programs, film screenings, and other events designed to make art more than something to be viewed from a passive standpoint. The Museum's Works & Process series "blends performance, demonstration, and discussion among creative collaborators and explores the creative process<sup>8</sup>" giving the public a greater understanding of the artists' points of view. The emphasis on programming at the Museum, ranging from traditional exhibitions to interactive online forums, is to bring the art of the contemporary and modern era to an accessible level for people of all backgrounds and levels of understanding.

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<sup>8</sup> "Works and Process." *Guggenheim Museum*. 19 Oct. 2009 <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/education/works-and-process>

### ***The Internship Experience***

As a marketing intern at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, I worked under the supervision of Ms. Francesca Merlino, Marketing Associate, who has been with the Museum since 2007. The Marketing department, a branch of the External Affairs department, works to develop and implement a strategic marketing plan and budget for the New York City museum. A department of three individuals, the Director of Marketing, Ms. Laura Miller, Marketing Manager, Ms. Meg Liffick, and Marketing Associate, my direct supervisor, manage the museum's \$360,000 + non-exhibition budget. In addition to the non-exhibition budget, this team manages individual exhibition budgets at the Museum that near \$300,000 for a typical three-month run.<sup>9</sup>

During my three months at the Guggenheim, I worked on marketing projects pertaining to the Museum's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. *Frank Lloyd Wright: From Within Outward* was on view during my internship, and the Kandinsky retrospective opened the month after my departure. With such a small department coordinating the marketing efforts of a museum like the Guggenheim, a good deal of administrative support falls on the department's interns. The daily routine, however, allowed for new projects and tasks, providing many opportunities for learning.

At the beginning of the internship, Ms. Merlino outlined the major projects and tasks that would be the focus of my three months at the Museum.

1. *Research and implement cross-promotions tied to museum programming, including the major exhibitions opening this summer/fall, Frank Lloyd Wright: From Within Outward, Kandinsky, permanent collection shows, and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary projects*

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<sup>9</sup> 2009 Marketing Budget. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. 17 Nov. 2008

Each semester—fall, spring, and summer—the department interns work to research upcoming events and exhibitions at local museums and related organizations in the New York area to identify opportunities for cross-promotion. The spring interns follow-up on the fall research, fall interns follow-up on the summer work, and so on. The spring interns identified an extensive list of architecture-related non-profits, membership organizations, and university departments and programs, as well as artists' facilities, and design stores, to research and contact over the course of the Frank Lloyd Wright exhibition. As the next interns in the cycle, my counterpart and I, Ms. Shikha Nandkeolyar, were to contact all organizations listed in the exhibition research to implement the next steps of the promotional plan. The first steps in the cross-promotional implementation were to prioritize the order of contact, depending on the complexity of the promotion.

The main cross-promotion for *Frank Lloyd Wright: From Within Outward*, was discounted admission offered to patrons and members of other organizations, in exchange for displaying Guggenheim Museum promotional materials. Coordinating with other organizations' marketing departments, Ms. Nandkeolyar and I would determine the appropriate number of discount materials to provide to the organizations, based on membership and interest, and then coordinate mailing the materials and follow-up with the participating institutions. The spring interns identified Design Within Reach stores and their customers as targets for cross-promotional activities surrounding the Frank Lloyd Wright exhibition. Design Within Reach offers its customers "clean, simple and well-designed products,"<sup>10</sup> at affordable prices, that employ the same simple utilitarian aesthetic Frank Lloyd Wright used in his designs. The spring interns determined that New Yorkers who shop at Design Within Reach stores were also likely

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<sup>10</sup> "Welcome to Design Within Reach." *Design Within Reach*  
<http://www.dwr.com/category/customer+service/about+dwr.do> 10 October 2009.

interested in the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, and the store managers at several NYC locations were open to and supportive of this cross-promotion.

Coordinating the mailing of these promotions was somewhat involved. The exhibition postcards had to be labeled with the appropriate codes to ensure that the promotions could be tracked as the discounts were redeemed, measuring the success of the collaboration. While the Design Within Reach promotion happened early in the internship semester, coordination between other organizations, such as the Van Alen Institute and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Artists' Space continued through out the summer. The focus of our work was building relationships with organizations whose members had overlapping interests with Guggenheim patrons.

Typically, during the fall and spring, the Marketing department would also contact local university radio stations, seeking public service announcements promoting current exhibitions in exchange for admissions passes to be given out as on-air prizes. As most of the university radio stations are run by students, we did not have much success in scheduling these promotions for Frank Lloyd Wright. The universities selected by the spring interns were added to our list for possible Kandinsky retrospective promotions. The cross-promotional plan varies little from one exhibition to the next, but the current term's interns update the list of organizations with which the Museum collaborates. The universities that we contacted for *Frank Lloyd Wright: From Within Outward* all had programs in architecture and design, while the universities we added to the list for *Kandinsky's* research offered fine arts-based curricula.

## *2. Coordinate market research for summer exhibition*

Each summer the Director of Marketing, Ms. Miller, conducts market research to determine the success of various marketing campaigns for the Museum and to gauge the overall reach and success of the

Museum's promotional efforts. This year, the department conducted market research for *Frank Lloyd Wright: From Within Outward* and I was asked to coordinate the research surveys for the Director. This opportunity proved to be a great learning experience and personal challenge, and is certainly one of the projects from which I gained the most experience. In previous exhibition research efforts, Marketing worked with Visitor Services and the Museum's Volunteer Coordinator, to recruit volunteers to cover several shifts per day at the Museum over the course of two weeks. However, this year's market research period fell just after the Museum announced staff and budgetary cuts, which eliminated 25 positions at the Museum and 8%<sup>11</sup> of its staff, effective immediately, including the Volunteer Coordinator. I was left with two weeks of shifts for which I had to coordinate coverage, a list of names of past volunteers, and notes from the none-too-tech-savvy former coordinator. In the midst of piecing together a volunteer force and assembling the survey packets for distribution, I discovered that despite a relatively active volunteer group for a museum of this scale, there was no central database from which to draw any information. With the support of the External Affairs department interns and Ms. Miller and Ms. Liffick, I was able to fill all the shifts in time for the scheduled research. The challenge was not only in collecting useful and usable data through the surveys, but in also finding a way to organize volunteer information for future use by the department.

In order for the research to be valid, at least 500 completed surveys had to be collected, with 100 coming from New Yorkers, which as it turns out, is a challenge each year. The Museum draws visitors from all over the world, with nearly 70% of its annual visitors coming from outside of New York. Much of the Museum's marketing plan targets these domestic and international tourists through outreach in

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<sup>11</sup> Vogel, Carol. "Guggenheim Will Cut 8 Percent of Its Positions." *The New York Times* 16 June 2009. NYTimes.com. 1 Oct. 2009 <[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/17/arts/design/17guggenheim.html?\\_r=2&scp=3&sq=solomon+r.+guggenheim+museum&st=nyt](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/17/arts/design/17guggenheim.html?_r=2&scp=3&sq=solomon+r.+guggenheim+museum&st=nyt)>.

tourist publications, such as *The Official NYC Guidebook*, partnerships with the New York Travel Advisory Bureau, and collaboration with concierge services at upscale New York hotels. One of the Museum's most successful tourist initiatives is its participation with New York City Pass, which offers admission to more than fifty New York attractions through a pre-paid ticket. The perennial challenge for the Guggenheim, however, is getting New Yorkers into the Museum and then determining what exactly gets them to visit. Exit survey research has consistently shown that New Yorkers are more likely to visit for special events and exhibitions, while the domestic and international tourists come for the permanent collection and the Frank Lloyd Wright building's reputation.<sup>12</sup>

During the two week survey collection period 60-90 surveys were collected each day and delivered via inter-office mail to the Director of Marketing for me to sort through. I kept a rough count of the total number of completed surveys and a count of how many New Yorkers were among the participants. The completion of these surveys had to be monitored daily, in case more volunteers were needed to collect more surveys, and to ensure that volunteers were actually showing up for their shifts, with no major problems to report. At the close of the exit survey collection period, over 540 completed surveys were usable. While we did not collect the 100 surveys from New York City residents, enough visitors came from the metro area, including nearby New Jersey and Connecticut, to still be included with the local visitors' count. The research analysis was not completed in-house, and the surveys were sent out for compilation. By the time I left New York in mid-August, the results had not yet been compiled, but they were expected to be similar to the surveys done during previous years.

As the coordinator for the market research surveys, I also had the responsibility of sending out the "thank yous" to the volunteers. In appreciation of their service, each volunteer was sent a copy of the

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<sup>12</sup> 2008 market research

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary documentary *Art, Architecture, and Innovation: Celebrating the Guggenheim Museum*, produced by the museum in celebration of its milestone year. Within days of sending out the thank you gifts, I received numerous emails from volunteers expressing how happy they were to help and that they could be counted on in the future, as well. It was a great reminder of what an impact a simple thank you can have in fostering positive relationships with those in a position to help. At the close of the market research period, I felt fortunate to have worked so closely with a project that will determine the museum's marketing efforts for the next year and that will gauge the success of the marketing campaign of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year for such an important institution.

3. *Track, record, and report on promotions and coupon redemptions in Visitor Services, Retail, and Box Office*

Promotions and redemptions are tracked by the Museum on a monthly basis. Promotions include any discounts or specials offered on admission to the Museum, and coupon redemptions include discounts and coupons presented in the Museum's store. Visitor Services is one of the few departments actually housed in the Frank Lloyd Wright building on Fifth Avenue, and this department collects and records all admissions and retail redemptions each month. At the beginning of the month, Ms. Merlino was sent every admissions promotion redeemed at the Museum, which I would review to make sure the Museum was only honoring valid promotions for the month. Around the same time the admissions promotions, whether actual coupons or online printouts, would arrive at the administrative offices on the opposite side of town in the West Village, Ms. Merlino would forward me the spreadsheet outlining the number of coupon redemptions and promotional discounts from Visitor Services. The Marketing department tracks all on-going promotions for each individual month, over the course of the whole year, and it was my responsibility to compile the Visitor Services reports into the Marketing spreadsheet. The Visitor

Services report detailed the monetary value of the redemptions and discounts, and the Marketing spreadsheet was used to determine and track the promotions' success.

More than anything, this ongoing project required attention to detail to ensure each promotion was recorded properly and that the coupons redeemed were valid. The Museum runs several promotions during the year that are valid during exhibition de-installation, or during certain seasons or weeks, and any inconsistencies have to be reported to Visitors Services. All the pieces of the Museum's promotional plan started coming together for me while I was processing June's redemptions and came across the promotions that Ms. Nandkeolyar and I had worked to send out and coordinate just weeks before. Adding our promotion to the spreadsheet was like putting a "check" on my imaginary internship report card—cross-promotions, when executed appropriately, work.

#### *4. Assist Marketing Associate and Manager with social networking and media projects*

Much of my time as an intern was spent supporting Ms. Merlino and Ms. Liffick in managing the Museum's social networking sites, an involved, yet efficient part of the marketing plan, as these efforts carry no direct cost to the department. The Guggenheim has pages on MySpace, Facebook, Flickr, and Twitter, as well as culture sites, such as FlavorPill. While there is no direct cost associated with most of these sites, updating the Museum's information and keeping them current draws quite a bit on the small marketing staff.

##### *Facebook*

Every morning, each account had to be checked, and Ms. Nandkeolyar and I would monitor activity on the Facebook, MySpace, and Flickr accounts. While reports show that Facebook is the world's most popular site for sharing information,<sup>13</sup> many of the Guggenheim's MySpace friend requests still come

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<sup>13</sup> Ostrow, Adam. *Sharing on Facebook Now More Popular Than Sharing by Email*. 20 July 2009. Mashable.com. 1 Oct. 2009 <<http://mashable.com/2009/07/20/facebook-sharing-data/>>.

from abroad and the site remains relevant with the large international fan population. The Guggenheim fan page on Facebook boasts nearly 37,000 fans. The “Insights,” tool available to page administrators, allows the Marketing department to monitor fan activity, track where fans are located, and see how fans are interacting on the page. Each month, I would ensure that the Museum events and exhibitions currently on view were posted to the Museum’s Facebook newsfeed, and Ms. Merlino and Ms. Liffick would make any relevant news posts to the page regarding exhibitions and events.

#### *Twitter*

The Museum’s Twitter account launched within my first few weeks as an intern, coinciding with Frank Lloyd Wright’s birthday, and in anticipation of the Museum’s inaugural online forum. Ms. Merlino and Ms. Liffick were responsible for all tweets on Twitter and posts on Facebook. Ms. Nandkeolyar and I would monitor the sites, update information, and ensure that all information presented on the Museum’s social networking sites matched the information on the Museum’s official website.

#### *Flickr*

The Museum’s Flickr stream is monitored by the Marketing department, but includes images from all events at the Museum and most of the images uploaded are from Education-sponsored programs. Ms. Nandkeolyar and I would sort through images from Museum events and select 15 to 20 photographs for inclusion in a particular event’s photo stream. While most photos we selected were approved, guidelines suggested that the photos include mostly people and less emphasis on the Museum’s architecture. Once photos were selected for a stream, each individual photo had to be examined for any artwork appearing in the image, as each piece of art had to be properly credited if it was recognizable. Ms. Nandkeolyar developed a spreadsheet template that we shared with the departments who were sponsoring the featured events to provide us the names of any individuals

appearing in the images. The artwork was undoubtedly more difficult to identify and properly credit. The Museum's Flickr stream is accessible to the public through the Museum's official website, [www.guggenheim.org](http://www.guggenheim.org), the Facebook page, MySpace, and through Flickr.com.

Having completed the majority of my university coursework in marketing before the Web 2.0 boom, this was uncharted territory for me and I did not fully comprehend the powerful marketing and connecting tool the internet could provide organizations through these social media platforms. Prior to my experience at the Guggenheim, I viewed the internet as a tool useful in connecting people through email and information searches, but never in the way museums and other non-profit organizations are intelligently using them to increase their marketing reach with no direct impact on their budgets. To see how quickly the number of Twitter followers, and countries they represented, grew, certainly revealed how quickly information can travel and how far an organization's reach can extend using these important social media tools.

My newfound knowledge of the internet did not end with social media networking, however. The Guggenheim hosted an architecture symposium in early May, which coincided with the opening of its *Frank Lloyd Wright: From Within Outward* exhibition. The symposium did not receive anywhere near as much publicity as the other events related to the opening. Despite the lack of promotional coverage, the symposium was quite a success, selling out each day and welcoming people from greater distances than just metro New York. In late July, Ms. Liffick prepared a report to present to the Director of External Affairs summarizing the Marketing department's efforts surrounding Museum events and exhibitions. Ms. Liffick trained my counterpart and me in Google Analytics and assigned us the task of identifying the referral sites, which led visitors to the official Guggenheim website to learn more about the symposium. Using Google Analytics, we were able to work backwards through the Museum's web

traffic, sorting through visitor history and web links to sites identifying the top referral sites for the architecture symposium. We determined exactly where visitors were entering the web site, how long they were visiting the symposium page, and where they went after they clicked through.

While my three months at the Guggenheim were filled with interesting projects and learning experiences, this particular project stands out as a personal success, because of the triumph I felt in completing it. Ms. Liffick had shown Ms. Nandkeolyar and me how to navigate through the various tools in Google Analytics, but left it up to us to determine how to find the information she needed. We had listed Google Analytics as something we would like to learn more about, and following our tutorial in the software, we were assigned this project as a test. Prior to my Guggenheim internship, I had very little experience in and knowledge of the internet; completing this project felt like acing a final exam. I was piecing together everything I had learned and absorbed over the previous weeks to assist Ms. Liffick in preparing a report that would go beyond the scope of my involvement at the Museum.

##### *5. Maintain advertising binder, marketing and communications samples, and media kit files*

The Guggenheim maintains a healthy presence in tourist and New York-based publications and differentiates between its "Building and Tourism" advertising and its exhibition and program-specific ads. The department archives each advertisement that is published, as well. An extensive collection of binders houses the Museum's advertisements ranging from half-page ads in tourist guidebooks, showing the Museum's famous exterior, to quarter-page black-and-white ads in the *New York Times*, announcing an exhibition's final weeks. Each afternoon the mail was delivered, we were to sort through the various publications that arrived to determine which, according to the budget, had Guggenheim ads. Each ad was tagged and added to the appropriate reference binder for the archives.

## *6. Other tasks as assigned*

The Guggenheim relies on three full-time staff members to implement its extensive marketing plan. However, with so much to accomplish and organize, it is essential that the department rely on its interns to complete many of the necessary administrative tasks that could otherwise get lost between deadlines and projects. The Marketing department maintains the Museum's mailing list and requests for information collected at the actual Museum and online. Each month, stacks of information request cards are delivered from the Museum after visitors, seeking to be included in Museum mailings, leave these cards at the Museum's information kiosks. These cards must all be entered by hand into the Museum's Raiser's Edge database. While the Marketing Associate and Manager do what they can to enter the information as it comes, there is a huge backlog due to the sheer volume each month and the department relies on a data entry volunteer and its interns to help with the processing. The data entry assignments, while not the most stimulating, were necessary, and actually provided a bit of a stress relief sometimes from the other tasks we were assigned.

As an intern, I also helped maintain and update the department's budget spreadsheet. As invoices were received, we would enter them into an Excel sheet and ensure that any pending invoices were processed by Ms. Merlino. Invoices were then passed along to the Museum's accounts payable specialist. The Museum budget was cut again in June, which made attention to detail in this area especially important. My role in this assignment was mostly to help keep the information organized, facilitating the processing by my supervisor. Anything we could do as interns to help relieve the full-time staff of administrative tasks was always welcome.

Each month, the Museum receives a number of donation requests from community organizations. The marketing interns maintain an extensive database, summarizing each request received. The database tracks the date of the request, the organization's cause, the event, and any pertinent details. The

Museum honors a handful of requests each month, depending on how the requesting organization fits in with the Museum's mission. The interns process the requests and they are passed along to the Marketing Associate and Manager to decide which organizations' requests will be granted, and what the donation will entail. Once a donation request was approved, I would write an award letter to the organization, outlining the details of the donation and the monetary value, and would send the donation on to the appropriate contact. During my three-month internship, only a handful of donations were made; however, the bulk of requests we received over the summer months were for events taking place later in the fall.

### *Summary*

According to literature describing the program, "the objective of the internship program is to offer practical museum training experience to individuals interested in pursuing careers in the arts and museums fields. Interns gain an inside perspective on how a particular department functions within the context of a major museum."<sup>14</sup> Heading into my internship with the marketing department of a world-renowned art institution, I was not sure what to expect. From my telephone interview and email exchanges, I felt confident that I would be entering a supportive environment and a commitment with an institution that seemed to value its interns. However, I had no idea of the quality of experience I would enjoy or the depth of knowledge I would gain simply by showing up to work each day. The internship program itself is structured in a way that does not limit the participants to one department and one experience for three months. I worked full-time Monday through Thursday on important, real projects that were not created just to keep me busy. Fridays were reserved for Museum Culture

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<sup>14</sup> "Begin your Career as a Guggenheim Intern"

Seminars, structured excursions and visits with other art organizations, which provided valuable insight to places and departments outside of our Guggenheim assignments.

While I felt valued as an intern most days during my three-month assignment, I was reminded of the importance I had in the department following the Museum's budget cuts. The morning before the Museum's budget and staff cuts were announced, the Marketing Director, Ms. Miller, asked me to accompany her to her office where she explained all the changes implemented at the Museum and how they would affect the working environment. She took this time to stress the value placed on the marketing interns in recognizing the service we provide and our importance to the department's success. In her taking the time to thank me, even just several weeks into my internship, I felt that Ms. Miller gave my position as intern just as much importance as a paid staff member; I know other department directors and intern supervisors did not do the same. Ms. Miller's approach as a leader was a great reminder of how morale and motivation can be driven from the top down, and just how important it is to have a confident and supportive leader when an organization is faced with challenges.

## SWOT Analysis

Below is an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) as I observed during my three months at the Guggenheim Museum. The “strengths” and “weaknesses” section of the analysis is an evaluation of the internal aspects of the organization, while the “opportunities” and “threats” examine the external factors affecting the organization. SWOT analyses are conducted to determine an organization’s position in the market and to give an organization a clearer picture of any obstacles or advantages it may experience in reaching its objectives. In addition to the chart below, an in-depth description of each section follows.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- World renowned reputation</li> <li>- Exceptional art collection</li> <li>- Constituent museums</li> <li>- Diversified programming</li> <li>- Dedicated staff</li> <li>- Landmark architecture</li> <li>- Tech/media-savvy staff</li> <li>- Strong relationship with key media contacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited outreach to New Yorkers</li> <li>- Budget cuts</li> <li>- Staff cuts</li> <li>- Overworked workforce</li> <li>- No central database, re: market survey volunteers</li> <li>- Breakdown in communication/ systems between departments (i.e. problems with Visitor’s Services, volunteers, etc. for exit surveys)</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year</li> <li>- Permanent collection shows</li> <li>- Emerging social media platforms</li> <li>- Abu Dhabi expansion</li> <li>- Partnership with Pompidou, Lenbachhaus for Kandinsky retrospective</li> <li>- New director, Richard Armstrong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economic situation limiting domestic/international tourist visitor base</li> <li>- Major institutions competing for similar international and domestic visitor base</li> </ul>

### *Strengths*

The Guggenheim name is synonymous with modern and contemporary art and architecture the world over. While perhaps unfamiliar with specific pieces of the Museum’s collection, many individuals are at least aware of the Museum’s prestige and its famous architecture—“a building that has become as

famous as the art collection it was designed to display.”<sup>15</sup> Tourists line the sidewalks across from the Museum taking photos outside the landmark building and flood the rotunda floor determining the best angle to capture the building’s famous spiral.

The museum boasts a collection of exceptional works of art that travel the world through its network of institutions and agreements with other museums. The permanent collection and Museum pieces permanently on view include works by artists whose names and pieces are recognized by many, and do not require the expertise of an art historian to fully appreciate their beauty. A network of constituent museums allows the important pieces in these collections to travel between continents with greater ease and trust, and broadens the audience reach for individual artists and works.

The Museum not only provides opportunities for audiences to view works of visual art, but also to bring performance art, conceptual and interactive works, and education programs and lectures to the public. Educational programming includes family days once a month, special programming for the blind and deaf, and artist led tours. The Museum’s Works & Process series breaks down the creative process and invites audience members to interact with artists. These events provide greater understanding and appreciation of contemporary and modern art of all media and create opportunities for the Museum to build a relationship with a diversified audience.

The Guggenheim is able to accomplish most of what it does through the dedication of its outstanding staff. Museum-wide, there is an appreciation of the magnitude of the charge each staff carries in upholding the Museum and Foundation’s mission. Although morale in several departments dipped following budgetary and staff cuts, Ms. Miller explained that the Museum had learned from its mistakes

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<sup>15</sup> “Architecture.” <http://www.guggenheim.org/guggenheim-foundation/architecture> < 4 Nov 2009 >

in human resource policy following 9/11. Support staff was much more receptive to the cuts announced this summer because they were handled respectfully.

While it might seem that museums of this magnitude need very little promotion to keep visitors coming, the Guggenheim employs a tech-savvy and innovative marketing team to keep the image and programming in the forefront. The External Affairs department includes a public relations team that works to ensure important publications, such as *The New Yorker* and the *New York Times* cover key events, but also garners coverage in international publications, such as *Le Monde*.

### *Weaknesses*

When you have a world-renowned museum with an exceptional collection in your backyard, it is easy to pass up a weekend opportunity to visit the Guggenheim in exchange for a one-time event somewhere else in New York. Museum research has consistently shown that New Yorkers visit the museum for special events and special exhibitions. Other than special exhibitions and First Friday events, the Museum has not figured out how to keep New Yorkers interested in the programs year-round.

Although the Museum strives to provide more opportunities for the public it serves, budget cuts have affected marketing for shows and events and staff cuts have left some of the departments with insufficient work force. Additionally, with cuts to the budget came cuts to the internship program, and many departments now must also rely on fewer interns to implement their plans. The internship program was cut in half over the summer and most Museum departments are now limited to one intern each semester compared to the minimum two to which they are accustomed.

While I was an intern, I witnessed a breakdown in communication between departments, especially between departments housed in different locations in the city. While coordinating the market research survey activities, there was confusion among the Marketing department, Visitor's Services department,

and former volunteers because of the lack of a centralized database and uniform procedures. Ms. Miller conducted a meeting prior to the survey collection period where the collection process and coordination between Marketing and Visitor's Services was discussed; however, the actual execution on the Visitor's Services end was not what was agreed.

### *Opportunities*

The Guggenheim Museum is celebrating a significant milestone in its history this year which has provided multiple opportunities to create a new "buzz" surrounding the Museum. The Museum staged a permanent collection show this summer which opened to rave reviews from *The New York Times*. The Guggenheim should look at more opportunities to highlight its collection as a way to cut costs and remind the public of what makes the Museum so special in the first place. Pieces from the permanent collection can be seen in the Thannhauser and Kandinsky galleries, but the Museum has a vast collection of important artists that extends beyond the household names. Rotating pieces from the permanent collection from various periods in art history gives the Museum marketable opportunities to stage interesting exhibitions at lower costs.

The exploration and use of new social media platforms offer a new way to promote Museum activities with no direct hit to the budget. The Museum can connect with targeted potential audience members instantaneously through electronic communications, and drive that targeted audience to interaction. Emails linking constituents to the Museum's online forums or online store engage potential members, donors, and repeat visitors in ways they might not explore on their own.

The Museum also welcomed a new Director just last year who can offer a different perspective as someone who has not been affiliated with the Museum or its Foundation for decades. Past Directors have had long-standing connections with the Museum and Foundation creating a myopic vision for their

position and the organization. As technology advances and opportunities change, Mr. Armstrong is in a position to shape the next fifty years of the Museum's history.

### *Threats*

The economic downturn has affected prospective visitors worldwide. An \$18 regular admission fee, and up to \$40 for tickets to events such as this summer's *It Came From Brooklyn* series, can be a turn-off for some who are just as happy taking a picture, free of charge, in the famed rotunda. The Museum's admissions pricing remains competitive, however, considering that MoMA and The Met run \$20 each. For visitors to the city aiming to visit multiple museums, the admission prices quickly start to add up.

New York City is considered one of the greatest cultural centers in the world and Fifth Avenue alone is home to a mile stretch of museums, including the Guggenheim. For visitors to the city interested in visiting institutions specializing in contemporary and modern art, the Guggenheim is not the only stop on their list. The New Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, including its P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, the Whitney Museum, and The Met, at times, all compete for the same museum tourist base. For tourists visiting the city from all over the country and the world, the museums with recognizable names all stand as competition for the Guggenheim.

## ***Best Practices as Applicable to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum***

According to the American Association of Museums' *Accreditation Program Standards: Characteristics of an Accreditable Museum*, "[a museum] should always strive to make decisions that keep the mission central and appropriately serve the community which it serves to the best of its abilities. Museums should operate transparently, using ethical decision-making in all areas of operations, and should make its collections and programs available to diverse groups of people."<sup>16</sup> From my experience at the Guggenheim, it is clear that this organization helps set the standards in "Best Practices" for the museum industry.

As a leader in the art world, the Museum's reputation has not been built on its collection alone. Through varied programming and events, the organization strives to serve multiple communities and "to engage and educate an increasingly diverse international audience through its unique network of museums and cultural partnerships."<sup>17</sup> Often during department meetings, references were made to best practices, and discussions regarding mission-driven versus revenue-driven events and programs were frequent. Central to all Museum programming is the Foundation's mission, which keeps the preservation and promotion of modern and contemporary art and architecture as its cornerstone. The Museum is recognized for its innovation in building and exhibition design, but does not appear to place the novelty of innovation above the importance of upholding the vision of the Foundation.

Prior to the Museum's involvement in social media networking, discussions between the department and the other directors took place to determine the appropriate voice for the Guggenheim in the virtual

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<sup>16</sup> *Accreditation Program Standards: Characteristics of an Accreditable Museum*" American Association of Museums. 30 Sep. 2009 <<http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/standards/index.cfm>>.

<sup>17</sup> "Mission Statement." *Guggenheim Museum*. 16 Sep 2009 <http://www.guggenheim.org/guggenheim-foundation/mission-statement>

world. While the Museum is recognized for its innovation, it is also an established organization that serves a wide audience. The Museum's target audience of "influentials" would respond to online marketing, but the Museum had to consider whether a shift to more online marketing would alienate the older, less tech-savvy patrons. The Museum constantly evaluates the success of its online ventures and compares them to past marketing initiatives and more traditional marketing practices.

### *Competitor Analysis—Brooklyn Museum*

As involved as the Museum is in the Web 2.0 movement, there is still trepidation in moving further in the same direction, as some of the more innovative museums. The Brooklyn Museum, an early adopter in terms of online initiatives,<sup>18</sup> includes blogs, podcasts, and iPhone applications in its arsenal of new media marketing tools. The Guggenheim offers a Director's tour of the Museum, available for purchase on iTunes, and recently launched the Guggenheim Forum, allowing individuals from around the world to engage in virtual discussions with experts in the world of art and architecture, without actually visiting. The Museum works to develop opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds and means to experience Guggenheim art from anywhere on the globe, broadening the reach of its mission. However, the Museum closely measures its activities in new marketing and technology ventures against the practices of its New York neighbors, considered leaders in the museum world.

To track competitors' online marketing and interactive involvement, Ms. Liffick maintained an extensive spreadsheet of all New York museums and their online presence. The database detailed how each institution was involved in the Web 2.0 spectrum, listing any podcasts, blogs, or online forums that were incorporated into marketing and community outreach. With little doubt, the Brooklyn Museum is regarded as the leader in the online museum world, because of its extensive web presence.

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<sup>18</sup> "MW2009 Best of the Web Sites Selected" *Archives & Museum Informatics*. 09 Oct. 2009.  
[http://conference.archimuse.com/forum/mw2009\\_best\\_web\\_sites\\_selected](http://conference.archimuse.com/forum/mw2009_best_web_sites_selected)

The Brooklyn Museum has seamlessly incorporated its virtual community into the Museum's real world community, instituting a level of membership exclusively for its social network fans. 1stFans, a "socially networked museum membership,"<sup>19</sup> offers these members an interactive relationship with the Museum, as well as with other like-minded art fans, both virtually and in person. 1stFans membership, offered at \$20, versus the Museum's \$55 individual membership, includes access to exclusive events and updates regarding the Museum via the "fan's" preferred social networking site. These members are granted access to the Museum's exclusive Twitter Art Feed featuring guest artist tweets that are not included in the Museum's general Twitter feed. For early adopters, this type of access to the Museum and its events offers inclusion in a community that simply does not exist with other museums.

The Brooklyn Museum was also among the first museums to successfully incorporate blogs into its website. With more than 50 bloggers, ranging from the Membership Manager to the Assistant Librarian to various curators, this feature gives Museum enthusiasts and supporters access to behind the scenes information regarding all areas of the organization. The blogs offer one way for an international, online community to become involved with and interested in an organization that might otherwise lose prospective visitors to the bigger-named art institutions in Manhattan.

In 2008, the Brooklyn Museum opened the crowd-curated exhibition *Click!*, which truly combined the Web 2.0 community with the brick-and-mortar Museum in Brooklyn. *Click!* began with an open call for photographs that exhibited the theme "Changing Faces of Brooklyn" that were then juried by an online forum. The photographs were later installed in the Museum, based on their online rankings, to be evaluated by crowds in the Museum as a study in the fields of art, online communities, and crowd

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<sup>19</sup> Cary, Will. "Introducing 1stfans: A Socially Networked Museum Membership." Online posting. 5 Dec. 2008. Brooklyn Museum. 23 Oct. 2009 <<http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/community/blogosphere/bloggers/2008/12/05/introducing-1stfans-a-socially-networked-museum-membership/>>.

theory. The Brooklyn Museum has greater flexibility in exploring new media forums and exhibitions; its smaller size and reputation for online innovation facilitates a changing Museum culture, and its supporters fit into the category of innovators and early adopters. While the Museum may not be counted in the first tier of local competitors for the Guggenheim, it certainly leads the field in the online museum community.

Just about every major museum in New York is working to create its own presence in the Web 2.0 community. The Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art each have their own Facebook fan pages and Twitter accounts that allow fans and followers to interact at their own discretion from anywhere in the world. While the museums may be competing to keep up with each other in the real world, online they follow other museums' feeds and re-tweet happenings that may be of interest to their own followers and fans.

Ms. Merlino and Ms. Liffick often participate in "meetups" in the city for professionals hoping to expand in social media, to gain greater insight to this expanding platform. As new technology in the world of Web 2.0 emerges, information becomes available just as quickly via blogs and websites. Expert literature does not exist on the formal study of social media networking, but members of these online communities often compare notes and learn from each other in a collaborative online environment. Just as quickly as social media initiatives begin, they can be suspended. However, the organization must move forward, bearing in mind any potential fallout that could be longer-lasting than the virtual campaign. Social media marketing allows for quicker dissemination of information, but misinformation can spread just as easily.

## ***Analysis of the Organization***

The following section offers an analysis of the five major areas of the Museum's structure: management, marketing, development, legal, and finance. The analysis is based on the extent of my involvement and interaction with each aspect of the Museum and is followed by my recommendations for improvement in individual areas.

### *Management*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is under the management of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Museum-wide, staff must answer to the Board of Trustees, and the Director, Richard Armstrong. The Museum seems to have open lines of communication among departments, which is essential since the Museum staff occupies several different office locations throughout New York City. While the Museum is located on the Upper East Side, the majority of its administrative offices are across town in the West Village. To facilitate productivity, departments have regularly-scheduled monthly meetings. The Museum's technical infrastructure allows most employees to work from any one of the Museum's offices, while the physical layout of the offices allows for collaboration among departments and an open flow of ideas. A clear hierarchy does exist, however, with each major area—external affairs, developments, legal, finance—overseen by department directors who report to the Director of the Museum and Foundation.

### *Marketing*

The Museum's marketing team exists within the larger External Affairs department, under the direction of Eleanor Goldhar, Deputy Director of External Affairs. The Marketing Director, Manager, and Associate design and implement the overall marketing and promotional plan for the Museum, collaborating with the marketing committee. The marketing committee includes members from Marketing, Public Relations, Visitor's Services, Education, Development, and Graphic Design and Production, and carries

out the Museum's marketing goals. Once a month, the committee meets to discuss overall objectives, check in regarding timelines, and present any new ideas or challenges that arise. A museum should consider its audience, collection, and culture when designing its marketing plan.<sup>20</sup>

In its fifty-year history, the Guggenheim has developed an audience base that includes members who have been fans of the Museum since its opening, standing alongside those visiting the institution for the first time. Many visit simply for the Museum's recognition as a landmark building in one of the largest tourist destinations in the world. However, because of the Museum's reputation and established position in the art world, change is slow to come in the marketing plan, to ensure that all factors—audience, culture, and collection—are considered in the plan. Each addition or adjustment to the Museum's marketing strategy is carefully weighed against its potential negative repercussions.

As proactive as the Museum is in cultivating its audiences, a large portion of its outreach does not happen in real-time. With the large number of information cards the Museum collects each day, and only five individuals entering the information into the system, there is a considerable backlog, with no point at which it appears the department will catch up with the influx. Months often pass between the day an individual fills out a card and the day he or she receives the first email. As accustomed as individuals become to receiving information instantaneously, this gap in the marketing cycle puts the Museum at a great disadvantage, leaving time for the enthusiasm and interest following a visit to diminish.<sup>21</sup> The Museum misses crucial opportunities to keep visitors interested in programming. While

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<sup>20</sup> Rentschler, Ruth. "Museum Marketing: understanding the different types of audiences" *Arts Marketing*. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, 2004. Google Books. 19 Oct. 2009 <[http://books.google.com/books?id=wnadn6e7zrec&pg=pr3&dq=arts+marketing&source=gbs\\_selected\\_pages&cad=5#v=onepage&q=&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=wnadn6e7zrec&pg=pr3&dq=arts+marketing&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=5#v=onepage&q=&f=false)>.

<sup>21</sup> Devine, Maryann. "Why Real-Time Marketing Is a Must." Online posting. 8 Sep. 2009. Newcurator.com. 17 Oct. 2009 <<http://newcurator.com/2009/09/guest-post-maryann-devine/>>.

the integration of social media networks allows the Museum to connect to its supporters through real-time communication, there are still hiccups in the Museum's marketing that create a delay in communication for some.

### *Development*

In 2007, the Museum brought in over \$37 million in direct public support largely attributable to the number of campaigns run through the Development department. The department is divided into corporate and individual development teams who work to cultivate sources of support for the many programs and exhibitions hosted by the Museum. The Development team has worked to create enticing incentives to encourage more involvement among the Museum's members, and the Museum has, over the last few years, seen an increase in members who join for the "Art after Dark" Friday evening events. Admission to "Art After Dark" runs \$25 per person and attendance at three of these popular events pays for the individual level membership, and in addition, includes the benefits of Museum membership.

The Museum enjoys a strong membership base and is, no doubt, an organization many want to be affiliated with because of its cachet. The Guggenheim is not, however, immune to lapsed memberships and those who no longer see the benefit in renewing their memberships. The Development department assigned interns to contact individuals with lapsed memberships to urge them to renew. Although these efforts by the department were not a formal telemarketing campaign, the interns were without any sort of script to follow and phone calls often lasted no more than several seconds. This approach to membership development can be effective provided it is executed with adequate preparation.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ciconte, Barbara L., and Jeanne G. Jacob. *Fundraising Basics: A Complete Guide*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2005.

### *Legal and Financial*

Legal application and financial management are certainly applicable to the Museum; however, the scope of my experience did not include exposure to these areas at the Guggenheim. The Museum relies on the guidance of a general counsel and financial department, charged with guiding the Museum in an ethical and responsible manner, according to the best practices outlined by the American Association of Museums, as well as the mission statement of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and the Foundation's Code of Ethics. The Museum's and Foundation's legal and financial practices do not only include the day-to-day operations, but also the long-range plans for growth and sustainability, including partnerships with constituent museums and other art organizations outside of the Guggenheim network.

### *Recommendations*

#### **1. *Install computer kiosks***

Currently, visitors to the Museum can fill out information request cards, leaving an email or mailing address where they would like to receive more information about specific Museum programs. These cards are then delivered at some point to the Marketing department and entered into a database; sometimes months after the visitors have completed them. To contrast, if an individual logs on to the Museum's website and joins the mailing list or becomes a member, his or her information merges with the Museum's database instantaneously. The Museum should install computer kiosks that would allow visitors to complete their information requests electronically. While still in the building, visitor requests become available to the different departments, allowing access to information within a much smaller window of time. Not only would the computer kiosks eliminate a huge time drain on the Marketing department and its interns, they would facilitate interaction with prospective members and return patrons within days of their visit, rather than months later. Visitors could complete market research

surveys online, donate to specific programs of interest, and perhaps plan a return visit to the Museum for a special event during their vacation in New York.

## **2. *Prepare “cheat sheet” or list of scripted prompts for interns to follow***

The Development department should compile a list outlining the benefits associated with being a Museum member. Museum members have access to exclusive “Private View” parties and enjoy discounts to special events like “Art After Dark.” A \$75 membership, comparable or equal to membership at MoMA or the Met, essentially pays for itself if a member visits the Museum at least once during each of the year’s feature exhibitions. While the actual incentives are listed on the website and are available for anyone to reference, a personal call from someone affiliated with the Museum engages that former member in a dialogue that can go beyond “yes” or “no” questions. Interns have access to the Raiser’s Edge database, which lists all of a member’s history at the Museum, as well as that member’s interest segments. Using the information at hand, the caller can identify areas to highlight with the lapsed member, mentioning upcoming events that may be of interest, and again, going beyond simply reminding the individual that his or her membership has lapsed. Interns can also use this opportunity to determine why members have let their memberships lapse and the Museum can script responses to counter the most common reasons members leave.

## **3. *Create centralized volunteer database***

After my inquiries following the market research survey project, we discovered that there was an existing volunteer database, of sorts, in the Education department. The list was then compiled into one spreadsheet and shared with the Marketing department. If the spreadsheet listing all museum volunteer contact information is not saved on the shared server, or emailed to multiple departments, however, it is not accessible to those who may be looking for volunteer support outside of Education. The Museum has a large development database available in Raiser’s Edge, which some departments,

including Marketing, have adapted for mailings. The Museum does not list volunteers as donors unless they have made monetary contributions, in addition to their time. Volunteer information should be added to the Raiser's Edge database, with an identifier indicating the individual's volunteer interests, allowing all departments access to this important resource.

## ***Conclusion***

Through a comprehensive analysis of the Museum exploring its history and mission; organizational structure; my experience as an intern; an examination of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; best practices in the industry; and recommendations for the Museum; it is clear that the Guggenheim stands as a well-developed arts organization, serving as an example to museums world-wide.

Although I only served at the Guggenheim for three months, a great portion of the projects I was assigned carried importance beyond my brief time as an intern. The short-term effects of my contributions as an intern were visible on a daily basis and I was regularly reminded by my supervisor of the importance of my role in the department. As administrative support to the department, Ms. Nandkeolyar and I provided extra hands to complete the daily, sometimes menial tasks, allowing the Director, Manager, and Associate to tend to the more pressing, time-sensitive projects. Over the three months I spent as an intern at the Museum, Ms. Nandkeolyar and I inputted hundreds of information request cards that helped bring the Museum's outreach to visitors closer to real-time and helped shorten the gap in the department's communication cycle. Our management of daily tasks provided relief to the department's full-time staff and allowed the Marketing team to focus on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary marketing campaign and special events schedule for the fall.

Long-term, my efforts as an intern carried importance to me because of the knowledge I gained, but also because I know my projects helped prepare for the next stage of the marketing cycle. The research I completed for *Kandinsky* laid the foundation for the promotional activities for the largest retrospective for this artist in 25 years and the market research surveys I coordinated will shape the department's marketing plan for the coming year. Long-term, I believe there are elements that the Museum could

implement to facilitate some operations, but it is yet to be determined how, or if, my recommendations will be implemented in an institution of this scale.

While several months or years from now my contributions may no longer be attributed to me specifically, I am sure of a few things. The market research I coordinated, the puzzles I helped solve, the promotional plans I researched, and the MySpace friend requests I may have approved, were all integral to the success of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year and beyond.

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