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Beyond the Battlefield: Finding Common Ground for Developers and Marketers

The Science of Marketing and the Marketing of Science

How Far Do They Travel? Implications of Zip Code Attendance

Marketing and Exhibits: Partners in Audience Research

Marketing's Ally: Measuring the Impact of Public Relations
Bimonthly News Journal of the Association of Science-Technology Centers

IN THIS ISSUE

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When we market science centers, what are we selling? A fun day for the family? Startling and weird phenomena? Meaningful encounters with principles that affect people's lives? An introduction to the scientific method itself? For nonprofit museums, marketing is more complex than the classic "four P's" of product, place (i.e., distribution), promotion, and price. We look to develop long-term relationships with current and potential audiences and funders, and that means addressing the expectations and needs of widely varying groups.

Today's museum marketing professionals, in tandem with evaluators, have increasingly sophisticated tools to do just that. Yet in how many institutions is their knowledge shared consistently, and early on, with planners? At a recent AAM conference, a show of hands at a session on "hot topics in exhibit development" revealed many designers and builders, program staff, and administrators, but no one from marketing. That may have been due to a competing session down the hall, but it was also indicative of a cultural gap. If science centers are to remain successful, both planners and promoters must be aware of, and take into account, each other's primary duties, concerns, and challenges. In this issue, we learn how some institutions are bridging that gap.

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Cover: Two examples from Exploratorium marketing campaigns illustrate the challenge of conveying content to the public through images. Photos by Mike Martin (top), for "For the Curious Ones," and Amy Snyder (lower left), for "Turbulent Landscapes." © Exploratorium.

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Beyond the Battlefield:
Finding Common Ground for Developers and Marketers

By Jane Eastwood

For years, a battle has gone on behind the scenes in many science centers and museums. Voices rise and egos clash, as professionals in the exhibits development and marketing departments struggle to come to grips with what kind of exhibitions to put on the floor, which exhibitions the museum should build, and how best to design, title, and even sell exhibitions.

After years of our own interdepartmental struggles, staff at the Science Museum of Minnesota (SMM) tried to defuse this battle of supposedly contradictory philosophies and attitudes. We started by outlining a formal process that would integrate marketing input with exhibit development and design at the appropriate stages. Ludovico Azzarello, senior staff at the top of the hierarchy, this document has, in practice, largely been ignored... Instead, the reality of SMM collaborations plays out in much more intense, personal, and imprecise ways, but with often rewarding results.

The process is built on trust (or trying to trust). At times we have research to back up what we think; at other times, we go on instinct and personal/professional preference. It all boils down to four major areas on which we try to collaborate, some folks with more success than others. These are the things we all think exhibit developers and marketers should try to see eye to eye on.

1. Compelling concept

It may seem obvious, but the subject of an exhibition must be compelling to a significant portion of the museum's core audience, which generally means families and schools.

"Compelling" is a vague word, of course; research at SMM suggests that a compelling subject is one that is either "one-of-a-kind" (something you can't experience anywhere else) or "highly relevant." To give an example familiar to most readers, the Geology exhibition is both one-of-a-kind (based on a best-selling science book) and highly relevant (since people are inherently fascinated by the workings of their own bodies).

If there is one issue on which it is most difficult to get consensus, that issue may be what makes for a compelling topic. Marketers tend to lean toward popular and easy-to-recognize concepts, while exhibit developers tend to feel the desire or need to take on challenging topics.

Exhibitions based on popular culture seem desirable to marketers and PR professionals because it is easier to get audiences interested in attending. But such projects are successful with audiences only if the science can be presented in an authentic and compelling way.

The Field Museum's A T-Rex Named Sue is an example of the kind of exhibition marketers pray for—a project with big, attention-getting concepts that also comes with high levels of name recognition and advance publicity and marketing.

An intimate "hook experience": A family tries the Jitterbugs in Robots+Us.

Photo courtesy Science Museum of Minnesota

An important factor in determining whether a topic or concept is compelling is the level of emotional attachment audiences have to it. That can also be the most difficult factor to assess. Over the space of more than a decade, SMM created three highly popular exhibitions based on animals: wolves, bears, and birds of prey. These exhibitions were successful at the museum and around the United States in part because people had deep emotional and intellectual attachments to these creatures and were fascinated with the myths and facts of their lives.

Research on a topic can help assess the relative interest in a subject, but sometimes instincts about what will be successful or appealing have to come into play.
describe, visually exciting, and photographable exhibit experiences will create the compelling invitation that gets visitors to leave their homes and come to the museum. That is everyone’s primary goal.

3. Integrated design

More than ever, I am convinced that the visual style of an exhibition, the materials used, and the spatial arrangement of the elements can make or break the experience even before a visitor steps into it.

Many science centers have one design team to do it all: printed materials, exhibit design, banners, everything. At SMM, we have two design teams, one for exhibitions and one for marketing. This compounds the issue of creating a design that is successful in print, electronic media, and three dimensions. To address all of these factors, our exhibit designers invite marketing designers to join with them early in the design “concepting.”

Together, the group agrees on a general direction that will support the science content, appeal to the core demographic, and be translatable into good design for marketing and publicity materials. More detailed discussion—involving other marketing professionals, exhibit designers, and the project manager—takes place as the project logo and key art are created.

4. The right title

Even when the desire to collaborate is deep and the shared experience with the process is rich, both developers and marketers may experience great angst when naming an exhibition. Tales abound of titles gone bad—titles that nobody really liked, that maybe a funder influenced, or that a stubborn developer or marketer insisted on. Even with a good testing process and many creative minds generating options, choosing a title can feel like a gamble.

Nevertheless, life will be much easier if you can get the real title in place quickly, before the working title gets stuck in people’s heads or someone decides to use the formal scientific word for the concept. In general, simple, clear, and memorable titles—Robots+Us, Grossology, Magic, Special Effects—work best.

As for subtitles, although they are often favored by exhibit developers as reassurance that their content will be clear, marketers tend to resist them. Subtitles take up precious ad space and are rarely used or remembered by the media or museum visitors. And since the first key message of your press release generally removes any doubt as to what the exhibition is about, the subtitle just becomes extra words to fit in a small space.

Always test title ideas with your audiences. This can be done on-site, online, or in another location if you’re lucky enough to have one. (At SMM, we have tested titles at our state fair booth.) Once you fix on a choice, the next step is to create your title block—the graphic that includes the exhibition name—and make sure that it works in every possible advertising medium, and that its colors and design fit the exhibition design.

Focusing on these four key elements has helped exhibits and marketing staff at SMM to overcome the “us and them” attitude that can undermine successful product development. Where so much risk is involved, tempers still occasionally run high, but we try to remember that we’re all on the same team, working toward the same goals.

As a result, the heraldic moments when one side would claim victory over the other have given way. In their place, we have more shared angst, but also more shared celebration, as we all get to stand proudly behind great design and compelling experiences.

Jane Eastwood is vice president of marketing, communications, and sales at the Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul: www.smm.org.
Better Than Anyone: Taking a Chance on In-House Marketing

By Elizabeth Romanaux

If you are involved in marketing, you may have experienced the frustration of hiring an energetic, high-caliber advertising firm, only to find that the results of their campaigns are disappointing and the “return on investment” for your agency fees and media expenses is lackluster.

This was the situation at Liberty Science Center through the 1990s, when we cycled through three advertising firms. Each time a campaign started, there was an air of excitement. But as expected attendance targets failed to be achieved, it became clear that the approaches were not effective.

All of these agencies had suggested that being in the New York market was a major obstacle to our success, and that if we wanted better results we would have to spend more money. It wasn’t until we came across a novel idea, picked up in a series of post-9/11 museum marketing meetings in the New York/New Jersey area, that we were propelled into a new way of thinking about advertising. The result has been improved attendance and increased revenue at Liberty Science Center.

Developing a style
The crux of the idea was that by creating ads in-house, we could redirect our agency retainer of $7,500 per month (the average cost in this area) to buying advertising time. Not only would we be able to buy more ads; we could even afford to buy television.

This was a radical and, to some degree, frightening thought. If campaigns didn’t perform as expected, we would now have only ourselves to blame.

On the other hand, we felt that, when it came to promoting a science center, the agencies had consistently lacked a deep understanding of our emerging brand. We knew our institution better than anyone. And the option of adding television was just too tempting to ignore—so we fired our agency and began thinking about an in-house approach.

Liberty Science Center’s target audience is children aged 5-13, with their adult caregivers. We knew that young kids always look up to older kids, but teens want nothing to do with younger kids. We therefore decided to use models in the 10- to 13-year-old range for our TV and radio advertising.

The ads also had to be edgy, colorful, and exciting. For our booking of the traveling exhibition A T. Rex Named Sue, we borrowed (with her gracious permission) a tagline coined by Amy Chionchio, senior vice president and chief marketing officer at the Milwaukee Public Museum: This is SUE. She’d love to eat you. In the print ad, the word “eat” was crossed out with a crayon and changed to “meet.”

We were thrilled with the results. Between our new buying patterns (much less newspaper, more radio, and affordable cable TV), the high-quality of the ads created by our freelance filmmaker, and Sue’s already strong brand, the summer of 2003 saw a significant increase in walk-in attendance. We hit 137 percent of our target.

The next exhibition in which we heavily invested advertising dollars was Strange Matter. Again the ads were colorful and took unexpected and interesting turns, and attendance was strong, with walk-in numbers reaching 130 percent of target.

Not all of our in-house ad campaigns have been successes: For reasons that are unclear, our summer 2004 campaign for Magic: The Science of Illusion, achieved only 90 percent of goal. But the following campaign, for Robots + Us, brought us 108 percent.

Balancing the options
Taking on your own advertising is not for everyone. You have to understand what members of your target audience are watching, listening to, and reading. Outlets will continue to evolve. As iPods, satellite radio, and on-demand TV proliferate, crafting a general campaign that will reach large numbers of target audience members will become increasingly difficult.

It can be a frightening prospect to know that you are the only one available to take the heat when things don’t go as planned. But if your campaigns are not producing the results you need, maybe it’s time to think about getting better control of your message and how it is presented. After all, you know your institution better than anyone.

Elizabeth Romanaux is vice president for marketing at the Liberty Science Center, Jersey City, New Jersey; www.lsc.org.
The Science of Marketing and the Marketing of Science

By Kathleen McLean

In his 2000 book Nobrow: The Culture of Marketing—The Marketing of Culture, John Seabrook argues that we live in a time where marketing and culture have converged, where advertising is the content and marketing is the message, and where, if something is popular, it is unquestionably worthy of praise.

Seabrook, who covers technology and culture for the high-brow magazine The New Yorker, dates this transition to the early 1990s, a time when "the old cultural arbiters, whose job was to decide what was 'good' in the sense of 'valuable,' were being replaced by a new type of arbiter, whose skill was to define 'good' in terms of 'popular.'" This change, he says, "made itself felt in virtually every museum, library, university, publishing house, magazine, newspaper, and TV station in the country."

As an example, Seabrook cites the changes that took place a decade ago at his own employer, The New Yorker was a drop in ad revenues; the result was a more populist product—and increasing staff tensions:

"The reason why The New Yorker no longer made money was the subject of much debate.... The editors and writers tended to blame it on the ad sales people, who worked on a different floor, for not being smart enough to translate what we meant by quality into what the advertisers meant. But the real problem was that the culture of the writers and the culture of the ad people were too disconnected from each other to have much in common."

I mention this because a comparable change occurred in science centers in the 1990s, opening rifts among functional groups that are still difficult to cross. Content and exhibits staff felt their projects were compromised by the pressure to create "products" with the singular goal of being popular and widely "consumed." Marketing staff complained that their hands were tied by the serious or content-heavy exhibitions they were responsible for promoting.

In recent years, this tension seems to me to have become more pronounced. One argument expressed by exhibits staff is that museums spend too much energy and money on promoting exhibitions as if they were a form of mass media. Indeed, many of the campaigns I see appear to take an apologetic approach, along the lines of "Science really isn’t that bad (or difficult). In fact, it's downright fun (or weird, or simple)!"

Not that there’s anything wrong with fun or weirdness, but I do think this approach may reflect a more sinister assumption—that in order to be popular, exhibitions must reside within a narrow stratum of cultural norms. If that seems hyperbolic, consider some recent "science" exhibitions: Monster Trucks and Theme Park are two that come to mind. Although science centers exist within the same kind of culture that John Seabrook describes, I don’t think we have to succumb to the marketplace in the same ways that the for-profits do.

Tales from the trenches

When I joined the Exploratorium in 1994, as director of the Center for Public Exhibition and Public Programs, the museum was already enmeshed in what I call the "marketing wars." The conflict had begun in earnest during promotion of a 1992 ASTC traveling exhibition, Psychology: Understanding Ourselves, Understanding Each Other, developed by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Ontario Science Centre.

The Exploratorium’s advertising agency, working with the museum’s first-ever director of marketing, wanted to change the name of the exhibition; they thought it was too dry and academic. When that was not possible, they designed a clever campaign featuring a flying brain diving toward Earth. The APA team was
horrified—they felt the image played into stereotypes they were trying to dispel—but the ad ran.

*Psychology* turned out to be a "blockbuster," attracting large audiences. But because staff never systematically reflected on why it was successful and no one assessed what effect marketing had on that success, an opportunity to compare notes and reach mutual understanding was lost. The chief outcome was that exhibits staff became leery of participating in future marketing endeavors.

"Turbulent" times
My personal introduction to the tension between marketing and exhibits came during the first National Science Foundation project I directed at the Exploratorium.

Our hope for *A Garden of Complexity* was, in the words of the grant proposal, that "the exhibits and their garden environment will weave together to create a contemplative space where visitors can develop and practice the skill of peering deeply into nature—a skill that underlies all of science..." Individual exhibits, all considered artworks, were located within a designed environment of live bamboo and river rocks. The ambiance was gardenlike (or as gardenlike as we could make it in our cacophonous environment).

Ad agency and marketing staff didn’t like the garden metaphor. They thought it wouldn’t attract visitors in the numbers we wanted. Exhibits staff pointed out that San Francisco’s annual three-day garden show attracted visitors in the tens of thousands.

After weeks of negotiations, both groups agreed on a new name for the exhibition: *Turbulent Landscapes.* The campaign featured images of push-button, lever-pulling ignition devices; it won several advertising awards.

But visitors to the exhibition seemed confused. Unable to find the exhibit "where you push the button for the tornado" or "pull the lever for the avalanche," many complained to program staff. The exhibition was nevertheless considered successful and is still traveling today.

Does it have to be fun?
The idea for the 1999 exhibition *Frogs!* came from a visit I made to a similar exhibition at the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. Summative evaluation at the Shedd had found that the strong conservation message seemed to encourage an appreciation of frog diversity, and that the presence of live frogs engaged visitors in looking closely, talking to strangers, and noticing differences and similarities.

People stood in long lines to get in.

*Frogs!* was an unusual topic for the Exploratorium. Staff would be experimenting for the first time with an exhibition that could both promote a message of conservation and attract a potentially different audience. We wanted visitors to understand that frogs, with their sensitivity to environmental degradation,

serve as an indicator species—the canaries in our coal mines, as it were—and that human perturbations of the natural environment might not be life-sustaining over the long run. Although we had no hard data to support our hunches, we felt that in the San Francisco Bay Area an environmental exhibition would interest a broad audience.

As it happened, we had a new ad agency and a new marketing director for this exhibition. Concerned that the conservation message would turn people off, they developed a light-hearted campaign. Ads and posters featured

In *Revealing Bodies*, sculptures, paintings, and photographs were set among scientific models and interactive exhibits. Photo by Amy Snyder. © Exploratorium. Inset: The "zipper arm" bus poster for the exhibition.

Frogs reading the newspaper, knitting, and flashing the peace sign at the corner of Haight and Ashbury streets.

This approach, too, won awards. Assured by some colleagues that the images were clever, I still worried that the ads might undermine our message. After all, if frogs could survive on the streets of San Francisco, they could probably survive a little pollution in their natural habitats. But again, because of time and budget constraints, we did not conduct a follow-up study.

Images of the body
In 2000, we opened one of the most experimental of our temporary exhibitions. *Revealing Bodies* combined strikingly different images of the human body from both scientific and artistic traditions, juxtaposing artworks and artifacts like an 18th-century wax
Venus from La Specola in Florence with a life-size model of the Visible Human digital project. The goal was to reflect the diversity of ways that people have imaged—and imagined—the human body over time.

The marketing campaign, which again garnered awards and collegial appreciation, featured bus ads showing a zipper running down a human forearm. Did visitors feel a disconnect between the ads and the actual experience? I don’t know; there was no follow-up. But about two weeks into the campaign, I got an e-mail from the marketing director of a local art museum: Didn’t we know that the Bay Area was experiencing a weird craze in which young teenage girls were slashing their forearms? She felt the ads played into, and perhaps even aggravated, the problem.

Reaching across the divide

In late 2000, a fourth marketing director, Rosemary Prawdzik, joined the Exploratorium staff. Prawdzik expressed concern that with each new marketing campaign, we weren’t building a message of who we were as an organization, but rather, in her words, “just promoting the new thing in town.” She understood that people come to the Exploratorium because of its mission: “to create a culture of learning through innovative environments, programs, and tools that help people nurture their curiosity about the world around them [author’s emphasis].”

“The key to an integrated representation,” says Prawdzik, “is bringing marketing and exhibition development together at the onset of a project, thus alleviating conflicts at the tail-end of the process.”

Before launching a new advertising campaign, she recruited staff members from various disciplines to inform the ad agency working on the project and help them understand what makes the Exploratorium unique. The agency presented three concepts for staff review. This time, there was no conflict—everyone agreed unanimously.

“For the curious ones,” hit the streets in 2001. By emphasizing a major aspect of the mission—curiosity—it promotes the brand overall, not just one exhibition. At the same time, it is designed so exhibitions and programs can be incorporated as examples of the brand. The campaign has been expanded since its introduction and now includes two television spots and four radio commercials.

The “For the curious ones” approach seems to me as clever and memorable as any of the previous campaigns. It even has won awards. And I think it is much more honest.

Let’s face it: Despite the title of this article, marketing is not a science. Exhibition and marketing strategies and decisions are based predominantly on opinions, hunches, best guesses, and personal taste. Yes, marketing, exhibits, and program staff need to collaborate much more throughout the planning and design process. But in order for that collaboration to be truly effective, we first must come to a shared sense of our visitors, and a shared understanding of how our missions and values might best provide real public service.

Whereas much of our culture, at least in the United States, defines itself in terms of the marketplace, science centers are founded on deeply held values aimed at real benefits for society. Our marketing and branding must create symbols that represent those benefits and communicate what we want the public to remember when they think about us over time.

We must recognize that science centers are not fundamentally in business to sell something. Our visitors are not consumers. They are creators of their own learning. They are our partners, who share a curiosity about the world and a hunger for meaningful experiences.

Formerly director of the Center for Public Exhibition and Public Programs at the Exploratorium, San Francisco, Kathleen McLean is currently principal of Independent Exhibitions, Berkeley, California. She can be reached at kmclean@ind-x.org.
Marketing's Ally: Measuring the Impact of Public Relations

By Shanon Michael Larimer

For nonprofit institutions with limited marketing funds, effective public relations can help offset a lack of advertising spending. Positive exposure through TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, and other media has been demonstrated to increase sales—or, for museums, "clicks" through the turnstiles.

Integrating your institution's marketing and PR plans is sure to result in a greater return on investment. But how can you document that ROI to management? One way is to quantify it.

Within the public relations field, it is a time-honored maxim that a newspaper article devoted to your business or organization is three times as valuable as purchased advertising space. Marketers measure the "column inches" of the article, find the paper's advertising rate, and multiply by 3. The same principle can be extended to radio or TV news spots: Figure out how many seconds of coverage you received, and multiply the station's advertising rate by 3.

Quality and reach

As the PR field continues to evolve, the trend is increasingly away from volumetric measurement (amount of media coverage) to directional measurement, or "reach" (delivery of messages to target audiences). Practitioners are modifying their measurement systems to include broader assessments of the value that public relations brings to individual organizations.

One currently successful measurement tool is the analysis of "quality" in traditional and new media content—that is, looking past volume to whether the news is positive or negative. Quality measurements are now starting to be combined with reach measurements to determine the effect of media relations.

Here are some impact factors to take into consideration when determining the value of your museum's media coverage. These are the attributes that affect those desirable consumer outcomes of "recall" and "awareness."

- Front cover/front page mention: Is the story listed on the front cover of a magazine or placed "above the fold" (in the top half of the first page) in the newspaper? Is your museum the sole feature on the news or in a radio promotion?
- Prominence: Does your organization's name appear in the headline or subheading? Did you get on the 6 o'clock news? Did you make the evening edition of the newspaper?
- Initial mention: Is your museum mentioned in the first few paragraphs of an article, or up front in broadcast coverage? Did the station run "teasers" about your organization (short clips advertising the program) in advance of the broadcast?
- Dominance: How extensively is your organization mentioned throughout the article or new clip? Is your museum in the spotlight, or is it just a component of another story?
- Visuals: Does the coverage include visual aids—colorful pictures, graphs, or charts? Did you get your B-roll (background video footage of your museum) included in the TV story?
- Tone: Is the coverage positive or negative? This factor will, of course, affect all the others.

Levels of control

Not all types of media exposure call for the same type of evaluation. In public relations, we distinguish three kinds of communications: controlled, semi-controlled, and uncontrolled.

With controlled communications (advertising, direct marketing, websites), your organization directly manages the message exposure, so your evaluation can concentrate on awareness/understanding, attitudes, and behavior. As you move from semi-controlled communication (publicity, event sponsorships, word of mouth) to uncontrolled (news coverage, news groups, competitors' messages), message exposure becomes one more variable in the assessment set.

The value of a communication is in direct proportion to the level of control you exercise over it. That's why a feature story in the local newspaper (uncontrolled) has three times the value of the same amount of advertising space in that same paper (controlled). With uncontrolled communication, you may be able to massage the message to some degree, but you cannot guarantee the outcome to be positive or negative. The less control you have, the more valuable positive coverage is to your organization.

These are some general guidelines on how to measure and track the results of media coverage. In the future, PR practitioners hope to see an increase in scientific methods that can determine public relations' impact on sales/admissions and customer loyalty.

For now, I recommend monthly updates to your supervisors and cumulative quarterly reports to your president and board members to keep them apprised of your efforts and hard work. Publicity is hard to get for free, and when you do get it, you'll want to place a value on it.

Shanon Michael Larimer is director of marketing and public relations for the Orange County Regional History Center, Orlando, Florida. This article is adapted from a talk he gave in March 2005 at an ASTC RAP hosted by the Orlando Science Center.
Marketing and Exhibits:

Working Together to Understand Our Audiences

By Steven S. Yalowitz

As competition for museum visitors’ leisure time increases, up-to-the-minute audience research becomes even more vital. Many institutions that once depended on consultants are now electing to move visitor and marketing research in-house. The benefits of this strategy extend beyond saving on fees, particularly when that new staff person can serve several departments. This is the situation at California’s Monterey Bay Aquarium, where I am currently employed as an audience research specialist, dividing my time between the marketing and exhibits departments.

The sum of two parts

Opened in 1984, the aquarium has always placed a high value on visitor input, conducting more than 50 audience research studies in its first 11 years—all but one or two led by outside consultants. Most of this work was in the exhibits and marketing departments.

As time went by, exhibits staff grew more knowledgeable about and adept at conducting evaluations, although the majority of the work was still contracted out. In 1996, management added a half-time position to coordinate the marketing research and to conduct some studies in-house. This person worked with exhibits staff as well, which helped to foster an increasing dedication to audience research in both departments.

Formal collaboration began in the late 1990s in connection with a temporary exhibition, Mysteries of the Deep, which ran from 1999 to 2002. Aquarium staff planning the project perceived a gap between what audiences would expect to find in a deep sea exhibition and what the aquarium was able to display. They were concerned that, given the depictions of the deep sea in popular media, visitors might expect to see giant squid and other large animals.

Exhibits and marketing agreed to work jointly on a front-end study, and marketing criteria—such as “influence on visits” and “satisfaction” ratings—were included in the summative evaluation. This project was key because it reinforced the value of collaborating to collect data that were consistent and meaningful for both departments.

Following development of Mysteries of the Deep, communication and sharing of research findings increased, and it became apparent that having someone to formalize the relationship would be useful. When the half-time marketing researcher left in 2000, the aquarium took the opportunity to create a full-time position for an audience researcher who would split his or her time equally between marketing and exhibits, conducting the majority of research for both departments. I have now held this job for four years.

Being the bridge

At the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the basic purpose of marketing research is to find out what motivates people to visit and what would get them to come back. The basic purpose of exhibit evaluation is to use visitor feedback to help inform the exhibit development process and to assess the effectiveness of an exhibition once it is open. Research funds live in each department, so there is no competition for monies. Despite focusing on slightly different aspects of the visitor experience, each department finds opportunities to assist the other, generally by communicating results of pertinent studies or including a few targeted questions in a survey.

A good example of this is our monthly exit survey; this is conducted by (and primarily benefits) marketing, but it also includes many items of interest to exhibits. For example, the survey not only determines which exhibits visitors experienced, but also asks whether they visited a particular exhibition and, if so, how they would rate it. Other relevant items include questions related to who is visiting (demographics), reasons for visiting, where people get their conservation-related information, and whether a visitor speaks Spanish (important for the bilingual labeling in exhibitions). Such information is of utmost importance to anyone designing an exhibition.

Focus groups are another place where marketing and exhibits can assist each other. Marketing staff typically make an effort to include exhibits-related questions in these groups, and exhibits staff may contribute background materials and pictures related to the exhibition being tested. This good working relationship benefits everyone.

Overcoming challenges...

As you might suspect, there are some inherent challenges when one person conducts research in two departments. These are some of the logistical hurdles I have had to overcome:

• Prioritizing the work. Doing research for two departments means meeting two sets of expectations and reporting to two managers. When immediate needs come up for both, it can be challenging to prioritize.
• Keeping current in two fields. Partici-