

FUND FOR ARTS AND CULTURE IN CENTRAL AND  
EASTERN EUROPE

SCHOOL FOR YOUNG MUSEUM WORKERS OF THE RUSSIAN STATE  
MUSEUM

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DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING FUNCTION IN  
MUSEUMS

CONDUCTED BY

**JEROLD D KAPPEL CFRE**

**Consultant in Organizational Development  
& Sustainable Tourism**

**Facilitator**

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THE CASE STATEMENT EXERCISE

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Following an overview of developing and writing a fundraising case statement, I presented the following outline of the imagined museum, *The Museum of Ethnic and Traditional Art*, that would be the basis of the breakout groups' work:

- ❖ The museum was founded in 1965
- ❖ Its city/region has a population of 150,000
- ❖ The nearest major city, St. Petersburg, is 60 kilometers away
- ❖ The building is 80 years old and needs major roof repair
  - The HVAC system is 40 years old and is not zoned
  - Lighting is 30 years old
  - The windows are original and only draperies protect collections from damaging solar rays
- ❖ There is 20,000 square feet of exhibit space
  - 300 square feet for museum store
  - 3,000 square feet of collections storage and library
  - 2,000 square feet of administrative offices and storage
- ❖ There is four full-time staff: director, curator, business manager, maintenance
- ❖ There are 6,000 objects in the collection, but no acquisition of new collections since 1985
  - Only 700 objects are on exhibit
  - There has been no major reinstallation of any of the permanent/resident exhibits since 1985
  - There is 1,000 square feet of temporary exhibit space and only two temporary exhibits each year

- ❖ Attendance: 20,000 visits in school groups; 25,000 discretionary visits (families, other community residents, traveling visitors)
  - Unable to track audience or identify local audience vs. traveling visitors
    - Traveling visitors defined as traveling at least 60 kilometers one way to visit the museum
- ❖ Computer system is 10 years old and not networked
  - No website and information about the museum on other websites is static
- ❖ Security system is rudimentary and 35 years old
- ❖ Only first floor is accessible to the disabled
- ❖ There is limited parking and no bus turnaround or parking

The breakout groups were asked to create a case statement in bullet form that built a compelling reason to support the museum. The overview of a case statement I provided them included these significant content areas:

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| ◆ Mission  | ◆ Authentication: current and past leadership of organization and of initiative        |
| ◆ History – of organization and background of initiative                   | ◆ Key personnel and why they can perform the necessary tasks of the program/initiative |
| ◆ Goals, objectives, potentials  | ◆ Invitation to participation and involvement  |
| ◆ Description of programs and services                                     | ◆ Opportunities for committing funding   |
| ◆ Long range plans – what are the plans for improving current capabilities |  |

I did not assign a timeline to the breakout groups for the goals and objectives.

The participants all seemed to be very involved in the development of the case statement, and Tatiana Kolpakova reported that the exercise received high approval in the evaluation.

In general, the groups seemed to embrace the concept of reducing dependence on government funding, increasing earned revenue, and being more responsive to the community. Raising eleemosynary contributions was still a difficult concept, although seeking greater volunteer involvement from the community was considered by every group. Corporate sponsorship was a focus of each group, which led to a discussion of the ethical and mission-related obstacles in soliciting and negotiating a corporate sponsorship.

One of my concerns, which I expressed in my assessment of the groups' work, is that there was a heavy dependence on earned income. Although the Russian economy is far sounder than in the past, and getting stronger annually, many of the earned income objectives were either unrealistic in revenue potential, or the projects had the potential of diverting energy and human resources away from core mission activities. Additionally, there is little chance that increasing earned revenue will raise the revenue needed for

capital projects—in the case of this imagined museum, repairing a roof, updating and networking computer hardware and software, or getting a new HVAC system.

Another concern was the participants' expectations of attendance growth through tourism and the traveling visitor. Interestingly, when the cultural/heritage tourism consortium led by the American Association of Museums began its work in 1996, USA museums had the same unrealistic expectations of tourism audience growth and ensuing earned revenue. Over a three-year period, the average attendance growth from the traveling public is an incremental increase. Also, the prime market for increasing attendance from the traveling public is within a day's drive. Especially in the case of this imagined museum 60 kilometers from St. Petersburg, the easiest reached market would be a resident of St. Petersburg. The most difficult and costliest market to reach is the foreign traveler, yet most groups focused on that market sector.

The groups all added additional programs, and added them within a two-year period. I counseled the participants that NGOs seldom get in trouble by doing too little, but by trying to do too much. I alerted them to be careful that they did not burn out the small staff by adding too much activity. If I was developing a plan and case statement for this imagined museum, I would have advocated for a five-year plan.

I believe that this was an effective learning exercise for getting participants to think strategically about developing resources for their museum. A number of participants noted that they wanted their own museum to initiate this process of developing solid arguments for funding support of their museums.