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**Selling Our Souls: art museums,
museum shops and their ethical
considerations in the
United States and Britain**

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts in
Candidacy for the degree of M.Phil. in Museum and
Gallery Studies**

**by
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Table of Contents

List of Figures	iii
List of Tables	iii
Abstract	iv
Declaration	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Chapter 1	1
Introduction	1
Museums in the new century	3
The museum visitor	5
The mission statement	7
The museum shop	10
The origins of shops in museums	12
Chapter 2	15
Benefits of museum shops	15
Source of revenue	16
Educational tool	21
Public relations and marketing	25
Image making	27
Personal contact	28
Community involvement	29
The museum as 'experience'	32
Visitor expectations	33
Becoming visitor friendly	35
Public perception	38
Chapter 3	40
Changes in museum management	40
Business minded	40
Marketing focus	43
The Museum Director	45
The Curator	47
The Education Officer	48
Chapter 4	49
Maintaining ethical standards	49
Shop statement	49
Merchandising criteria, purchasing and pricing policies	51
Reproductions	57
Licensing and publications	61
Role of traditional museum staff	66
The Director	66
The Curator	67

The Education Officer	70
Role of Shop Manager	71
Shop staff	74
Funding and revenue	78
Chapter 5	81
Factors of shop management.....	81
Define customer and appropriate merchandise	82
Shop Design	85
Location.....	85
Principles of design and display	87
Retail Consultants	89
Satellite shops	92
Catalogue, mail order and the Internet	94
Chapter 6	100
Examining choices	100
Money over integrity	102
Effects	104
Goals and benefits met.....	106
Development	109
What the future holds.....	111
Appendix A	112
Appendix B	118
Bibliography	122
Special References	130

List of Figures

Figure 1: Heard Museum Advertisement.....	37
Figure 2: Sample Visitor Survey.....	83
Figure 3: Museum Company Advertisement	98

List of Tables

Table 1: Heritage Lottery Funding 1999-2002.....	17
Table 2: National Museum of Scotland Non-Governmental Income 1994-1998	18
Table 3: Metropolitan Museum of Art Merchandise Revenues 1996-1999.....	20
Table 4: Scottish Fisheries Museum Income Report 1997	20

Abstract

In the modern world museums are finding themselves financially constrained by limited government and philanthropic funding. They also have to compete in areas such as the leisure and tourism industry that are previously unfamiliar with little expertise. Because of the need for revenue, more museums are turning to establishing retail operations for museum-related merchandise.

There are many benefits to running a museum shop besides revenue generation. These include utilizing the shop as an educational tool and as a public relations and marketing device. The public has come to expect a shop as part of the 'museum experience'. They also expect the museum to live up to its reputation and offer high quality goods and service.

Because of changes in funding and the immense costs of running these institutions, museums have to alter their approach from organizations meant solely for the preservation and display of cultural objects to businesses with a more commercial approach. Traditional members of staff have had to adapt their roles and talents otherwise unused are now being sought out.

With the push towards financial independence, maintaining ethical standards is difficult. Certain criteria can be adapted to aid in the selection and development of merchandise that is educational and museum-related. Every aspect of shop management should be examined to uphold the values of the museum. This includes the participation of traditional museum staff as well as shop employees.

Unfortunately, not all museums have been the best examples of this philosophy. Most large institutions have chosen to allow the revenue producing potential of shops to overshadow the original museum mission. This has led to a change in the views of museum patrons and we are being judged more by the size of our shops than the size of our collections.

In the future we will have to work even harder at self-generated revenue and it will become more important that we strive to maintain the standards that museums have been admired for. With shop managers pushing into new directions of retailing, it is up to all involved in museum management to work together to achieve the original goals set forth by the museum while addressing the needs of our patrons.

Declaration

I, Sandra I Trant, hereby certify that this thesis, is approximately 34,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

Date 31-12-2000 Signature of Candidate

I was admitted as a postgraduate student in 1998 and as a candidate for the degree of M.Phil. in 1999; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1998 and 2000;

Date 31-12-2000 Signature of Candidate

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of M.Phil. in the University of St Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

Date 15.1.2001. Signature of Supervisor

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The focus of this thesis is to discuss the ethical struggles that art museums in particular are currently involved in, most specifically when it comes to balancing their values and mission statement with the operation of a retailing site as a tool towards financial independence. This branch of the museum community is particularly vulnerable when it comes to involving itself in new areas of funding. Avenues may be limited somewhat due to the collections they possess and the reputation they uphold.

Through detailed study in the United Kingdom and the United States, I plan to show that museums in both countries, and indeed all over the world, are finding it increasingly difficult to sustain their lofty principles when it comes to the need for new sources of funding. Museums can no longer rely on government support, individual philanthropy and admission charges to keep their doors open. As indicated by E. Addison, deputy director for marketing and communications at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, 'Not only are we all competing for audience, there's also more pressure to generate revenue than ever before' (Vogel, 1996, p.2). This is because of the growing trend of governments to restrict current funding for cultural institutions, especially museums. 'As government support decreases in real terms it is clear that such support as is forthcoming will not be fairly distributed, if by "fairness" is meant equal misery for all' (French, 1988, p.31). Museum professionals are unavoidably gearing up for difficult economic times ahead.

My thesis has involved widespread research into books, annual reports and brochures and included extensive travel to museums, their shops, conferences and gift shows. Additionally, I conducted formal and informal interviews with museum professionals (Appendices A and B), artists and visitors in both the UK and the US.

In the last twenty years most museums have become acutely aware of the revenue generating success of museum shops. In accordance with this, David A. Ross, director of the Whitney Museum of American Art states ‘...we all have to be more entrepreneurial...we are slowly learning lessons others have known for years’ (Vogel, 1996, p.1). I will illustrate that through these changes in attitude many museums continue to be successful in maintaining ethical standards while returning a profit, yet there are a number who fail to preserve the honorable principles so sacred to many in the industry. The impact of this failure on the museum community as a whole will also be discussed.

When a museum shop has met the best of standards the benefits are extensive. As will be seen in chapter two, there are several roles a retail venue can play a part in: revenue production, education, public relations and marketing, and enhanced visitor enjoyment. Included within these functions are off-site sales and mail order catalogs, the image making impact on the museum itself and the museum community as a whole, personal contact with visitors and local community involvement. Furthermore, the museum as ‘experience’, visitor expectations, becoming visitor-friendly and public perception will all be discussed at length.

Chapter three will deal with the shifting attitudes in museum management; from institutions meant solely for the display of objects to more business-minded applications with a strong marketing focus. This requires looking at the collection of a museum as an asset to be promoted and offering your patrons/customers value for money. Changes in the traditional roles of museum staff will be discussed including staff that have had to adapt the most with new skills and knowledge: the museum director, curator, and education officer.

The purpose of a shop statement and its relation to the museum mission statement will be examined at length in chapter four. This will set up the fundamental understanding of ethical practices in shop management for museums and how important it is that all aspects of running a shop are considered carefully. Concerns with merchandising criteria, defining the pricing policy, reproductions, licensing and publications will be addressed. Additionally, I will mention the role traditional

museum personnel play in the running of the shop, choosing items for reproduction and sale and their concerns with image, integrity and education along with the functions the shop manager may perform in the running of the museum, if any, and the likely difficulties that occur. Finally, I consider where the funding comes from for a shop and how profits, if any, are spent.

Chapter five will argue the considerations necessary in the running of a retail outlet beginning with knowledge of the customer and appropriate merchandise to accommodate their needs. A discussion on staffing and using volunteers as opposed to paid workers will follow along with the difficulties in perception between retail employees and traditional museum staff. Shop layout and design is next with a discussion on the physical location of the shop within the museum and how this leads to 'destination shoppers'. The growing use of professional retail consultants and others in the trade and business community, the success of off-site, catalogue, and Internet sales will be mentioned as well.

Chapter six will examine what occurs when a museum makes choices some may consider beyond the realm of good taste, as related to art museums, the ramifications on reputation throughout the museum community and the integrity of individual objects and collections.

The concluding chapter, seven, will present an overview of whether or not shops are truly profitable and actually contributing to the museum's stated mission. A look at possible improvements to be considered according to those in the field and visitors and what the future holds for shops and museums will close this investigation.

Museums in the new century

At the beginning of the twenty-first century there are many growing trends in museums all over the world. Since the Second World War there have been staggering increases in the number of these institutions. In the United States alone, there are 1,240 art museums, half of which are less than 25 years old. According to

the Museums Association (MA) in Britain, only 15% of all registered museums in Britain were established before the turn of the century and nearly one-third have been established in the last 15 years (1997). These are staggering numbers when realizing that the population in the areas surrounding museums, although increased, has not jumped as dramatically. According to J. Joll, the chairman of the Museums and Galleries Commission in Britain, 'Many of these new museums have been founded in the last 50 years as a result of enthusiasts with a passion for a particular subject...many of these newer museums, in what is now becoming a crowded field, have always struggled to cover their overhead costs with little if any outside financial support' (Joll, 1999, p.5). With greater numbers of locations opening their doors every day, the competition is fierce to bring in visitors and their money. Institutions like the British Museum, Britain's oldest and largest national museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, founded in 1870, are now competing for attendance and dollars with places like the Welsh Slate Museum and the Gene Autry Museum in California.

Along with this increase in the number of museums there is also a rise in museum attendance. The MA in Britain estimates that there are over 100 million museum visits a year in the U.K, testifying to their immense popularity. According to the Department of National Heritage's Annual Report of 1996, twice as many people go to museums each year as to football matches. In addition, museums must also compete with other leisure sites as a source of entertainment and services for patrons. This is because museum visits are currently viewed by more people as a leisure activity, not necessarily an educational or cultural one. Unfortunately, this increase in attendance has not brought about growth in donations or government funding. As the number of museums increases, they find themselves in competition for dwindling amounts of private and government money.

As G. Lowry states:

'Hidden beneath their growing attendance and civic importance are a number of issues that are cause for concern. How can museums, for example, continue to find the financial support

they need at a time when their costs of operations is rapidly escalating? How are they going to deal with the quandary of the ever-increasing size of their collections and the burden this places on their operations? What will happen when the quest for audience, trustees and money becomes fiercer as museums compete with one another as well as other cultural institutions for what are ultimately limited resources?' (1999, p.2).

The answers to this are not simple nor will they be painless. Many museums will find their institutions closing due to a rise in costs, lack of funds and poor visitor turn out. Only the most knowledgeable, creative and market aware will survive. Assistance from outside our own field and in the business and commercial sectors may be what is required but this will depend greatly on our acceptance of their help.

The museum visitor

The average age of the American patron is down from 50 years old to 35, while at the same time the average yearly income of visitors to museums has dropped from \$70,000 to \$50,000 (Lowry, 1999, p.2). In the UK, patrons are typically 35-49 years old while those who don't visit museums are typically over 60, living in council housing, retired, housewives or unemployed (Merriman, 1991, p. 3), in addition, most visitors are white. Most people who attend museums in a family group do so with parents between the ages of 30 and 50 years old and children between the ages of 8 and 12 years old (Falk, 1991, p. 20).

Similar statistics can be attributed to museums all over the world and further 'increases in the number of middle class people are expected over the next twenty-five years' (Jarrat, 1997, p.25). Understanding that the middle class are educated and employed, characteristics of average museum visitors, the logical conclusion is that the same growth will continue in museum attendance. However, museums still suffer from a serious image problem, one of being a place for the cultural elite and

therefore unfriendly and inaccessible to those who don't belong to this part of society. In art museums especially G.D. Lowry states;

‘...almost every audience survey I know of still indicates that museums are mainly the preserve of the well educated...For museums are ultimately about a rarefied experience, the discovery, enjoyment and contemplation of art, an endeavor that is and should be accessible to all but by whose definition is limited’ (1999, p.3).

The doors of the art museum still exclude those who are poor and less educated and the attendance of families and young children to art museums is rare, usually comprising less than 10% of all visitors. These groups are more likely to patronize history and science museums. With changes in population and funding it is more important than ever to attempt to include these groups in our institutions.

V. Middleton further expounds on this important point by claiming:

‘In overall terms it is very clear that museums at national and local levels draw on the bulk of their customers from the more affluent sectors of the British population...thus in general terms, visitors to museums are drawn from that section of the population which is more than averagely articulate about its needs and expectations, more that averagely experienced in traveling...and more than averagely capable of assessing the worth of local museums against other attractions in terms of developed standards. They are in other words much more sophisticated as customers than was true a decade ago and this process is unlikely to reverse’ (1990, pp.19,20).

It is important then to inquire as G Lowry does, ‘Can museums ever become truly populist institutions, used and enjoyed by all?’ (1999, p.3). He continues by mentioning, ‘That is a question that needs to be tempered by asking whether such populist yearnings are feasible or desirable’ (ibid). Whether or not these are

feasible or desirable, they are increasingly necessary. Are we deliberately excluding part of the population and yet expecting more than our fair share of government support? Do we ask too much in admission fees and donations from people who can ill afford the costs and are therefore not attending our exhibitions?

Even if we begin to appeal to a broader section of society it is still difficult to inspire repeat visits from those who already patronize our establishments; ‘...the majority of the population can be motivated to visit museums repeatedly only under rather unusual conditions’ (Treinen, 1993, p.86). Attracting new visitors isn’t any easier, ‘...it is often found that museums have to incur extremely high marginal costs in order to win new visitors from outside their own clientele. Such costs arise from advertising and from establishing and maintaining long-term connections to groups and associations’ (ibid). Funds are needed not only to maintain the running of a museum but also to bring in new visitors and bring back the ones that already know us.

Other questions must be asked. Are we educating or merely entertaining? In what ways can we make institutions and their collections more accessible? How can we financially flourish and yet remain true to our main objectives and our reputation as places of scholarship and integrity? The museum shop attempts to be the answer to some of these questions through its commercial operations while the host institution must monitor the ethical concerns.

The mission statement

For museums, the primary mission has always been to benefit the community they serve through exhibition and education. They do this in several ways. The MA in Britain defines a museum in this way: ‘Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society’ (<http://www.infosite.co.uk/masite/annrev.html>). A. Harney further asserts this when he states that, ‘...the mission has always been simply stated. Regardless of size, a museum’s essence is in collecting and preserving our cultural

heritage and educating the public' (1994, p.132). These two statements clarify the main objectives for all museums around the world, however they do not mention the costs of these activities and how those funds are to be obtained. Harney also states that when it comes to a museum's traditional role, 'this laudable task has until late been the guiding force in the dramatic growth in museums in this country (Britain) over the past half-century. But for many museums today, the traditional mission has been joined by a more immediate goal: economic survival' (ibid). Whether or not the two can co-exist without revenue generation overshadowing the original well-serving mission is the real issue that museums must struggle with.

Declining funds has led to an evolution in the role of the museum and because of this its mission statement has been broadened. As museums see themselves entering a commercial minded arena, the mission statement serves as a guidepost for all decisions concerning their operations. Museums must constantly tread a fine line between benefiting their local community and doing well financially. This means that museums must incur costs in order to offer their communities the well-meaning objectives they adhere to. Costs must be covered by other activities and services and as indicated by G. Lowry:

'All of these museums, however, are complex institutions whose primary mission of acquiring, preserving, displaying and interpreting art is supported by a broad range of activities from elaborate fund-raising programs to serving their members and communities, running or managing restaurant and bookstores, and publishing brochures and catalogues' (1999, p.1).

It is easy to see how the original mission can become clouded by the need to offer more services to visitors along with financial independence.

The transition from an exclusively educational institution to one of fundraising and commercial activities is not easy. 'Every step that takes museums away from those areas of curatorial tradition which are outdated will be painful' (Kavanagh, 1991, p.9). According to F. Verbaas, when a museum must make the decision to consider

commercial opportunities basic criteria must be met so that the mission statement is respected;

‘...the museum ought to be able to get down to their original tasks, that is to say, the function to collect, the function to preserve (among which I include conservation and restoration), the function to document or to put it differently, the scientific treatment of the museological collection, not only for the sake of those objects but to make those objects function so that a museum can meet what in my opinion is its primary objective: to confront man with his own existence’ (1992, p.172).

The MA in Britain has found it necessary to develop a list of clear and concise ethical guidelines for museums when considering involvement in any commercial activity. According to their regulations, ‘Trading and commercial activities must be consistent with the museum’s purpose and should not conflict with the Museum Association’s Code of Practice for Museum Governing Bodies. Where possible, they should enhance the quality of the museum. They should not bring it in to disrepute’ (MA, 1997, p.1). It further states ‘wherever possible, trading and commercial activities should aim to enhance public access, education and enjoyment. They must not reduce public access to the collection and information about it’ (ibid). The guidelines make it apparent as to the goals of a commercial endeavor and how museums should behave; however, this isn’t always as easy as it sounds.

It is no wonder that museums find themselves in the position of retailer and caterer, parking attendant and party host.

‘All museums need money – for displays and exhibitions, for remedial and preventative conservation, for marketing, for staffing, for equipment, for building maintenance, for training...for the hundred and one tasks which have to be carried out to meet the

range of responsibilities which comes with running museums’
(Ambrose, 1991, p.5).

Where and how to get this money is the true challenge of any institution. Most individual donors are not interested in giving money for roof repairs or employees’ salaries; they would rather contribute to an exhibition, a new wing with their name or the acquisition of an artwork. These costs need to be met through other means as long as the original purpose is respected and as decided by each museum individually. As the MA in Britain states in their Ethical Guidelines; ‘The extent to which museums need to levy charges directly on the users of their services and engage in trading activities in support of their core role depends on their particular constitutional arrangements’ (1997, p.1).

And K. Moore further adds that ‘...when a museum makes the decision to try and function in the business world, there are many reasons for optimism as long as one does not lose sight of the institutional mission’ (1994, p.133). The idea of a museum being unconcerned with obtaining its own funds in the current economic climate has become a thing of the past.

The museum shop

One of the most successful financial avenues for museums has been the operating of a retail museum shop.

‘Once little more than counters selling guidebooks and catalogues, museum shops are becoming increasingly important. Run by experienced retailers, not only are they a popular part of a museum visit for the public, but they have also become a vital source of revenue for the host institution’ (Norris, 1997, p.39).

Museums can use the opportunities afforded by a shop to accomplish other positive aims besides revenue generation. According to Geoffrey Matthews, managing director of National Galleries Publications, ‘...we wanted an outlet which would

incorporate retail's best practices but which would be faithful to the dignity and honesty of the Gallery and would give our visitors the service they deserve' (National, 1998, p.4). This type of attitude towards retailing complements the role of the museum in its community.

Most museums in some way include at least a small retail effort on their premises. This has been true for many more years than most people, including museum professionals, are aware of. Whether a small counter or a mini department store, the success of these efforts cannot be denied. What starts off as a humble postcard-selling counter can eventually end up as a shop with a wide range of merchandise from its own museum and others.

'Museums have long peddled postcards, posters and books, usually in small spaces off their lobbies. But recently, seeing the moneymaking possibilities in the public's appetite for high culture, museums...have broadened their merchandising efforts. They are expanding retail spaces, opening stores off-site, and developing products based on the collections and selling products wholesale to other stores' (Foderaro, 1997b, p.1).

The evolution of shops has been developed generally by individual museums. There has never been an overall accepted ideal that each institution adheres to. Few give thought to its purposes and goals. As a result, there is a lack of consensus as to what the museum shop should be doing and how. Larger museums with experienced sales staff have had years to fine-tune their retail programs. There is the temptation to look upon these giants as the model for all others, yet what works for one does not always work for another.

The success of larger shops has become so great that at the present there is a growing expectation by the public for all museums to include a shop as part of their services, one that contains a large variety of merchandise. Museums are finding the revenue generated a necessity when it comes to affording the overall costs of running a museum. According to A. Harney,

‘Twenty years ago, museums that were able to boast of having a museum shop at all were confined to peddling reproduction jewelry, fine arts postcards and exhibition catalogues. Today the museum shop has become an essential revenue producer for most large museums, offering everything from coffee mugs to designer fashions’ (1994, p.135).

This success has motivated museums of all sizes to incorporate the shop as part of the services it presents its visitors with in the hopes of bringing in needed funds.

However there is controversy within the museum profession on the topic of retail sites and sales. If it is unclear how the shop fits into the museum’s overall plan there can be no fit at all. Criticisms within the museum community too often lack the solutions to problems they perceive and the temptation is there to do nothing at all.

The origins of shops in museums

The first museum to make retailing a large part of its mission was the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. In 1871, even before the founding trustees had a building for their collection, they shrewdly bought 174 old master paintings in Europe and commissioned an engraver to make etchings of a chosen few. The idea was to present these etchings to museums in Europe to boast of the new collection and museum, but these etchings were also sold to a select minority on consignment. This was such a successful venture that as soon as their doors opened they included a retail site on the premises. ‘By the 1920s, the Metropolitan was issuing mail-order catalogs and selling art books, museum calendars and greeting cards in its shop as well as casts of small sculptures’ (Foderaro, 1997a, p.1).

The Metropolitan is officially a private sector museum with trustees and therefore it controls its own fundraising schemes, including its retail ventures. These efforts have always included the museum shop as a means of maintaining ‘a substantial

part of the curatorial and research staffs and makes it possible to carry out the research activities and the publications which that museum is well known for' (Perrot, 1992, p.151). The development of objects for sale is viewed as an important means of carrying out the educational mission of the museum by supporting it financially. Furthermore, the sale of objects widens the public's awareness of art and objects through inexpensive and readily available reproductions in accordance with the Museum's Charter of 1870 which promotes 'encouraging and developing the study of the fine arts...and to that end...furnishing popular instruction' (Dillon, 1996, p.3).

The first to buy reproductions from the Metropolitan were teachers who used them as examples in studio classes. Sales then spread further to scholars teaching Art History. Today, replicas are still an important part of the Metropolitan's shop. The museum is thoughtful in its consideration for reproduced items and retains extensive workshops for just such enterprises. The curators and retailing staff decide which objects to copy while craftsmen on site make precision molds of the pieces in the museum's extensive reproduction studios. Each piece is then hand finished by museum craftsmen, not by other merchandising companies, so that quality control can be maintained.

In the foreword to *the Publications and Reproductions Program of the Metropolitan Museum of Art: A Brief History* the Chairman of the Board of Trustees 1977-83, D. Dillon, states;

'It is the hope of the Trustees that this booklet will prove enlightening to those who regard the publications and reproductions programs as reflecting a kind of commercialism that is out of place in such an institution as the Metropolitan. Quite the contrary is true: they have been with the Museum from its beginnings, and they have served the institution and its public well' (1996, p.4).

The publication of this specific book is evidence that over the years some have come to question the Metropolitan's merchandising practices and, as will be discussed later, have begun to wonder if this practice doesn't tarnish the reputation of this museum and others.

Chapter 2

Benefits of museum shops

There are several important benefits when a museum chooses to accept the challenges of running a museum shop. When museum professionals were asked why they would include a shop with their operations, they gave several clear answers to H. Blume:

‘Profit, the need for funds, was the most frequently mentioned reason, and the reason which was given top billing. The educational role of the shop, as an extension of the museum’s work, was ranked as the second most important reason for having a shop. Thirdly, the shop was seen as a publicity and public relations tool, a public friendly face of the museum, which would enhance the visitor’s enjoyment. A fourth, unstated reason which neither the museum directors nor shop managers would admit to, but which certainly seems to be important, is the irrational belief that having a museum shop is a sign of a dynamic, modern approach: that “real” important museums have shops, so the shop becomes a status enhancer’ (1987, pp. 2-3).

L. Long and D. Sorrell, authors of *Museum Shops: a powerful force in education*, have different priorities for a shop. Education is the primary reason for having a shop, followed by use as an outlet for research, while income is mentioned last. In interviews, it was clear that most shop managers view the income ability of the shop as its most important advantage, except in the case of the Getty Museum where this is not a factor at all since the Getty is in the unusual position of not needing funds from private or government sources. Motives will be discussed further in this chapter as well as other aspects that are also of importance and should be mentioned: the support of local crafts and the significance of visitor enjoyment.

Source of revenue

As stated best by Sir David M. Wilson, 'a museum, I must insist, is first and foremost about objects. To keep, conserve and display objects is expensive' (1991, p.15).

It is no longer appropriate for museums and their staff to be unconcerned with the economic future of their institution. 'The 1990s have forced museums to begin to restructure themselves not for kinder, gentler times, but for leaner, meaner times' (Moore, 1994, p.133). The realities of a recessionary economy have profoundly affected most institutions that work to enhance cities around the world. For most people, culture is a frill that can and should be abandoned during hard times. New sources of funding have to be found by all members of staff in order to keep the doors open.

It is no wonder then that many museums have been drawn to the idea of a shop and other retail practices.

'Most of the impetus for shops' growth has come from outside the museum world. As federal funding dwindles and new tax laws lessen the attractiveness of private donations, museums find themselves requiring more money than ever before. Increasingly they are turning to retail sales to provide the needed dollars' (Theobald, 1991, p.4).

Visitors are expecting more from museums than ever before. There is a rising demand for specialized programs, classes and other services along with a desire for greater numbers of exhibitions with more variety and better quality. These factors have not been matched by a rise in revenue. The remaining costs of overhead, scholarship and conservation are continuing expenses that grow every year and there is little public understanding of their importance.

Corporate sponsorship is down, philanthropic donations are no longer as attractive to individuals because of changes in the tax laws and pieces that would have at one time been donated to museums are heading straight to auction houses where large profits can be made. In fact, J. Joll calls it a 'revenue famine that has been widespread for many years' (1999, p.5). Even the Heritage Lottery Fund in the United Kingdom is limiting money distributed to museums. As exemplified in Table 1, there has been a consistent decline in the U.K. in Lottery funding for museums over the years:

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Funds for Museums and Galleries	£71,000,000	£66,000,000	£65,000,000
Museum and Galleries Access Fund	£4,000,000	£2,500,000	0

(Source: *Heritage and Lottery Fund*, issue 13, June 1999, p.4)

There are further difficulties involved in corporate sponsorship. This type of giving has been a popular philanthropic tool for big businesses. However, they are currently altering the way they allocate funding and requiring more in return.

Vogel states:

‘by refining their strategies. Just as visitors expect more for the admission price, sponsors are beginning to expect more for their money. “It’s no longer enough to just put a sponsor’s name on a poster and give them thanks at the opening night dinner” said Ben Hartley, a spokesman for the Guggenheim’ (1996, p.2).

In the US especially there is a dependency on corporate backing. In terms of membership revenues and support given to major exhibitions this assistance is considerable. These sponsors can also subversively affect objects and themes chosen for exhibition. As stated by P. Perrot,

‘...there is clear evidence even on the part of those corporations who have played such an enormous role in supporting exhibitions, that these corporations, while they maintain and indeed are totally removed from the selection process, make it quite clear that there are certain kinds of subject or certain kinds of geography that they would not be interested in supporting’ (1992, p.151).

Suddenly museums are finding themselves in the position of having to raise more funds on their own and must begin to look at themselves as a financially independent business, necessitating the activities of marketing and fundraising, relatively new concepts for museum administrators and curators. According to L. Reger, ‘...most museums have placed greater emphasis on earned income. Admission charges, museum shops and restaurant facilities are now the rule rather than the exception’ (1986, p.100).

This can be noticed in the *National Museums of Scotland: Annual Report, April 1997- March 1998*, where there has been a strong push for funding from non-governmental sources and in a four year period, those monies rose by an impressive amount (Table 2).

	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998
Total non-governmental income	£729,000	£1,547,000	£2,293,000	£4,542,000

(Source: *National Museums of Scotland: Annual Report, April 1997- March 1998*, p. 31)

The figures suggest that museum professionals are now finding themselves in the unfortunate position of having to participate in fundraising measures. This has led to a change in attitude towards what services a museums can and should be involved in. ‘Commercial activities such as the selling of goods or services must be considered in forward planning for fundraising’ (Ambrose, 1991, p.86). As the

table above illustrates, museums are becoming more adept over the years at receiving their funding from elsewhere.

It is because shops have been so successful that all museums must consider their possible contributions. The fact that monies raised can be used for general running costs is very attractive to those keeping an eye on expenses. Retail sales provide an extra source of much needed income to help fund new areas of growth and allow a museum to remain a dynamic and creative organization further developing what it has to offer; otherwise, it will stop being a vital provider of culture and education.

Collecting and preserving are a museum's main and most important purposes, and as is their nature, they are constantly working towards increasing the number of objects they are responsible for. Financial support in this area is continually being limited due to new constraints.

‘Indeed, with the Heritage Lottery Fund’s move away from the support of acquisitions, the pressure upon resources which were available for this purpose, including the MGC/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the PRISM (Preservation of Industrial and Scientific Material) Fund and the National Art Collections Fund, became noticeably greater’ (Mason, 1999, p.10).

It is important to museums that they receive money that can be spent where it is of greatest benefit. Revenue from shops is not attached with restrictions on where the money is to be spent. In 1991 *Money* magazine announced that ‘of 8,000 museums in the US, 3,000 operate shops, as compared to 1,600 five years ago. The magazine estimates that the museum retail business brought in \$500 million in that year alone’ (Moore, 1994, p.135). It is interesting to note that ‘in its first 6 months of operation, the newer, larger Getty Museum Shop made \$4 million in gross sales. That number jumped to \$8 million in 1998, up over 800 percent as compared with their previous, smaller location’ (Christopher Jacobs, 1999, personal comment).

The Metropolitan runs the most financially successful retail business through its shops, catalogues and Internet site. Table 3 shows their progress over the last few years:

	1996	1997	1998	1999
Revenue from Merchandise Operations	\$82,669,000	\$87,488,000	\$81,353,000	\$79,302,000

(Sources: *The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Annual Report 1996-1997, 1997-1998, 1998-1999*, p. 48)

If you notice, there is a peak in 1997 when the museum experienced record attendance and a drop in sales in 1998 due to declining attendance. It goes without saying that in the case of the Metropolitan, if patrons are not visiting the museum, they are not visiting the shop and retail revenues suffer. Still, the figures are very impressive and it is easy to see why the museum places such importance on its retail enterprise.

Even in small, local and specialized museums such as the Scottish Fisheries Museum in Anstruther, Scotland, the financial gains can be remarkable. The shop contributes in excess of 20% of the overall income, more than admissions and donations combined (Table 4).

Department	Income
Shop	£60,000
Tearoom	£50,000
Admissions/Guides	£40,000
Subs/Donations	£3,300

(Sources: *Scottish Fisheries Museum: Monthly Trading Report April 1997*, p. 1)

‘In an increasingly competitive marketplace, competition for money has become intense. Museums are having to face up to justifying their existence and arguing for maintaining support from a wide range of sources’ (Ambrose, 1993, p.5). The sources can include the traditional routes of individuals, government and philanthropy and as they keep declining the number of museums keeps rising. The success and profitability of museum shops make them too appealing to any institution facing financial difficulties; retail operations can no longer be considered something that museums should ignore in these economically troubling times.

It must also be stated that money cannot be the only reason for a shop. ‘If the shop’s only reason for being is money, then the museum is operating a gift shop rather than a museum store and it has little justification for existence’ (Theobald, 1991, p.7). A museum’s true concern should be how to achieve the balance between money and education where the educational aims maintain their superiority and the income increases.

Educational tool

According to G. Burcaw, ‘The whole purpose of the museum and all its activities is education. Any expenditure of time, money or opportunities must ultimately be justifiable as contributing significantly to this end’ (1990, p.180). R.G.W. Anderson at the British Museum writes of the museum that ‘...its principle aims today are to be at the center of international scholarship and to disseminate knowledge for the education, in the widest sense of the word, of all’ (1999, p.1). A shop can therefore not only generate income but provide an educational service as well. Through items in the shop, most importantly the publication of catalogues and related books, shops can enhance the public’s access to the collection and information about it. Christopher Jacobs, assistant manager at the Getty, mentions education as the number one reason for their shop, which they refer to as a bookshop since 85% of its stock is publications by Getty staff and others in the art world. Publications for sale should ‘act as a stepping stone to further study and

should be sufficient to attract the widest possible readership' (Hughes, 1977). Here is where shops can make their greatest contribution to the museum's mission.

Merchandise can attempt to 'extend the educational work of museum displays, exhibitions, educational events and services, into the home of the museum visitor, scholar and general visitor alike' (Long and Sorrell, 1977). The shop can also become an outlet for collection research. By providing a means of publishing research related to the museum's collection a shop can serve to promote the scholarship of its own objects and allow for study by those outside the museum. It also acts to promote publications of other museums and scholarly groups it deems appropriate.

Shops can offer information on the items they sell. Stuart Hatta the creative director of the shop at SFMOMA makes sure that each purchase includes an accompanying product information sheet. The purpose is to reinforce the educational merits of the objects and the shop. Written interpretation allows for the use of more senses and a greater retention level by the patron is attained. It also spreads the educational message to a third party if the item is given as a gift.

Being an educational tool is very important for their non-profit status as well. The Internal Revenue Service in the US refers to the educational purpose of a retail shop as the only feature that permits its non-profit standing. It 'requires a museum to sell only items that bear some educational relationship to its collections if it is to maintain its tax-exempt status as an educational institution' (Liles and Roth, 1978, p.10).

Many museums, especially those of history and science, can take the term 'educational' to represent a variety of meanings. The shops in these museums are often filled with games, puzzles, and stuffed toys, all somehow vaguely linked to their theme or purpose. The range of product possibilities is large and some look more like gift shops. In art museums it is much more difficult to have such a variety of merchandise and many are left with posters, postcards, books and catalogues.

The news, however, is good for art museums and their standards.

‘Art museums, fewer in number than their history counterparts and usually larger, have taken the lead in creating ethical, tasteful shops. Progressing from the postcard rack to notecards, posters, prints, children’s coloring books, origami, and colorforms, they, more than any other museum group, are clear about relating the store to their educational mission and defining its parameters. As a group they generally practice what they preach’ (Theobald, 1991, p.5).

The National Gallery of Art in Washington has a very strict policy on its products. They restrict their shops to two-dimensional merchandise. ‘Explained Director J. Carter Brown at the Museum Store Association’s 1990 annual meeting, “That does keep you out of the gee-gaws, and it does emphasize the educational aspect of books, (pictorial) reproductions, slides, and such”’ (ibid).

The majority will agree that the most vital educational merchandise in an art museum’s shop are books and exhibit catalogues that provide information on a range of subjects. Publications can open the museum up to more people and a variety of topics can be covered at all educational levels. ‘Perhaps of even greater significance is the importance given by the museum to the dissemination of that scholarship at many levels and to the widest possible audience, not only within the galleries of the museum but far beyond them’ (R.G.W. Anderson, 1999, p.4).

Through this sharing of information, the needs of teachers and scholars can be met. They ‘make it necessary to be sure that the various aspects of the collection are properly represented’ (Bain, 1986, p.58). Not only are these needs met but those of the public at large who want information about works in a collection or an exhibition. It is not always easy or acceptable for them to look through the museum storerooms for pieces that aren’t on display or even to visit the museum in person.

The shop's publications allow for greater accessibility to these works and answer many questions about the collections, providing a valuable resource and service.

Reproductions carry an instructive aspect and their availability is important to schools. The American Association of Art Museum Directors endorses 'the educational role that reproductions can play as reminders of the original and as a way of making images of art widely accessible' (1992, p.25). The Metropolitan is a case in point with its reproductions studio being one of the first to offer casts of works to schools throughout the world. Little argument can be made for not producing good quality copies and establishing a knowledgeable use of reproductions for teaching purposes. However, there is a controversy looming over this type of work and the possible confusion it creates in the patron's view of the original object; this will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

It is essential sometimes for shops to carry items that are deemed educational yet see little profit, if not a loss. Rosemary Bennett, retail manager at the Tate Britain, claims that some 'obscure' art books are items that she continues to carry for the occasional purchase by scholars, viewing their presence in the shop as an important aspect of its purpose. I. Bain concurs with this view:

'The planning of stock of any shop needs considerable thought...there are other considerations beyond the purely commercial. There will always be considerable temptation if not pressure to stock important materials germane to the collections but of relatively limited appeal' (1986, p.63).

Curators and education officers view the purpose of the shop as strictly a venue for scholarship and support for the exhibits on display and can direct this pressure at shop staff. Publications by museum staff can sometimes be difficult to sell to the average customer but they are crucial to the patron wanting in-depth object research.

Fears arise at the possibilities that although a shop is developed as an educational outlet, it soon becomes overcome by other factors. This is not an uncommon occurrence, as is the case with Britain's National Gallery Shop:

‘The store, originally designed purely as a bookshop, has been transformed into a “destination” shop which while retaining a comprehensive range of art books also accommodates an extensive range of National Gallery products which encompasses...a host of other objects inspired by the collection’ (*Museum Shop and Publishing News*, 1998, p.4).

There is one last thing to mention about the educational aspects of museum shops. As N. Cossons claims, it is ‘important that in its role of education and enlightenment a museum is inevitably setting standards of scholarship but is also making itself an arbiter of taste’ (1977). As we shall see, the image making possibilities of these items is also of benefit to a museum.

Public relations and marketing

It has been stated that museum shops:

‘provide opportunities for visitors to take home a souvenir of their visit, help to provide more information about the collections, serve as a point of personal contact with staff and, of course, generate income for the museum. They therefore have an important public relations role to play for the museum’ (Ambrose and Paine, 1993, p.58).

Patrons may judge the authority of the museum, its collections, its professionalism and values through its shop, the items for sale and how they are displayed. By the appearance and attitudes of some shops and their staffs, it can be assumed that many have forgotten this point.

‘The museum that wishes to communicate accurate information to the public and facilitate positive memories must do so in the gift shop as well as in the galleries’ (Falk and Dierking, 1992, p.91). Art museums specifically have a responsibility to maintain high standards, ‘...each item of merchandise we stock and indeed each of the shops themselves should, I feel, form part of a recognizable image as must the way in which we promote and display our offer’ (Lewis, 1994, p.23). Those who have never before visited your museum can still be informed about a museum or collection through publications and retail objects but they can also be made aware of a museum’s name and how seriously it views the maintaining of its own image.

The publishing and retailing arm of a museum has a great influence on cultivating public perceptions and permits the marketing of an institution outside its own boundaries. It further allows for greater public awareness of the institution, its collections and programs. L. Foderaro mentions in her writing that ‘the strong push into the retail trade serves two purposes: pumping much-needed revenue into programs... and giving an institution added exposure. “It allows us to tell our story,” said William H. Leurs, president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, “and it keeps us in contact with those who already know us”’ (1997b, p.1).

Items that are purchased at the museum shop have a marketing value when displayed in the home or given as gifts. Even a small, inexpensive product with the museum’s name on it is a memento of a visit. This will help to encourage word-of-mouth promotion among friends and relatives. The benefit of items with the museum name and/or logo is that they continue to promote the museum long after they have left the museum shop. The most successful items in this category are postcards, posters, calendars and diaries. Calendars and diaries allow the museum’s name to be prominently displayed over a long period of time and there is great competition between museums in this sector. ‘It is well worth having packaging printed with the museum’s name. In public relations terms, items from a museum shop should continue to promote the museum long after the purchase’ (Ambrose and Paine, 1993, p.59). This is the smartest marketing tool a museum can use since items that serve as a constant reminder are more likely to inspire repeat visits and purchases.

Museums develop a 'brand name' through the products that proudly display their name and logo and by reproducing specific well-known items from their collection. These items serve as constant advertising and are a continual memento of the museum experience. The shop at the Tate Gallery Liverpool believes this 'brand name' power is so vital that it carries 'approximately 3,000 items in stock with a strong emphasis on own brand and Tate Publishing titles' (*Museum Shop and Publishing News*, 1998, p.14). It can be further stated that customers are influenced by the appeal of the museum's name emblazoned on an item. 'It has been proven over and over that customers are willing to pay for a "name", be it a brand name, a designer label, or a museum association' (Theobald, 1991, p.39).

Image making

The image making value of a museum shop cannot be over emphasized. It is a medium by which the public can evaluate the integrity of the entire institution. Cossons (1977) states:

'A trading operation...(has) to be compatible with the museum's main objectives but more important still it has obvious potential for helping to establish the image of the museum. By getting the trading operation right it should be possible to use it as a means of enhancing the museum's public image so that people might judge the quality of the museum by the quality of its shops'.

The museum's merchandising program is a platform for the interpretation of the collection and the institution itself. Added to this is a type of 'taste-making, with strict canons of authenticity and appropriateness...tasteful objects treasured in the museum and suitable for modern living' (Alexander, 1989, p.207). In this sense museums are cornering the market on taste and culture and using this to their full advantage.

Visitors are very shrewd of their opinions on museums. It can be claimed that the most important facilities a museum offers are its lavatories. If a patron makes use of this service and finds paper on the floor, messy sinks and overflowing toilets, their entire view of the museum changes. No longer an impressive building with beautiful objects, what they will remember are filthy toilets and what this says about the museum's standards of care for customers. The same rule applies to museum shops and their appearance as well.

Personal contact

Museum shops are an important point of personal contact for the public; therefore, friendly, courteous, knowledgeable service is essential. Judgments can be made about an institution by the way its staff administers to the needs of its patrons.

‘The museum shop is an important aspect of the museum’s communications policy and has a key role to play in public relations. It may be one of the few points of direct contact with museum staff during a visit. Efficient and courteous service on the part of staff makes for good public relations and will help increase takings. It also provides a further opportunity to learn more about your users’ (Ambrose and Paine, 1993, p.94-5).

According to Christopher Jacobs at the Getty Museum Bookshop ‘the museum views its shop employees as *ambassadors*. Many times they are the only contact the public has with museum staff’ (1999, personal comment). Their attitude towards customers reflects highly on the satisfaction a patron has with their visit. Shops are a source of general information and this service is one of the most vital when it comes to customer relations. Jacobs admits that the most commonly asked question is ‘Where is the bathroom?’ and although this has nothing to do with the collections or policies of the museum, how staff answer this query makes an impression on their visitor.

Community involvement

When museums take a look at the communities they serve it is important to remember that the more services they can provide, the more a part of the community they become.

‘Financial gain from entertainment activities can have a positive impact on a museum’s other programmes. Even when the earned income is modest, the museum can come out ahead on the impact in building community support, showing that the museum is an active part of the local community’s social structure’ (Harney, 1994, p.139).

There are also further considerations for museum shops that relate to the community surrounding them. Being sensitive to the economic needs of local retail businesses should be taken into account for many reasons. ‘It is important to the position of the museum in the community that we should not compete on all sales fronts so other shops have deliberately been left with a free run in areas they can handle better than we can’ (Cossons, 1977). Museum shops are in a unique position in that they can choose items for resale that are not available in other shops. It would not be perceived as appropriate if a museum began a large commercial facility that drove local merchants out of business. However, in interviews, not one shop manager or museum professional felt this was a point they should be concerned with. When non-profit museum shops go head to head with for-profit retailers, there is always controversy that leads to a disgruntled business community and loss in public support.

According to M. Theobald, ‘the Small Business Association lobby perceives the tax-free status of the shops as unfair competition’ (1991, p.7). She further accuses the dealers of a self-serving attitude when she states;

‘The moral indignation of such associations was not aroused until the shops were perceived as competitors; when museum sales

operations were insignificant and threatened no one's pocketbook there was no outcry" (ibid).

Generally, taxes must be paid on any item that only carries the museum's name or logo. To avoid paying a special federal tax that relates to nonprofit establishments, known as the unrelated business income tax, merchandise carried in a shop must be directly connected to the museum's mission and collection. The tax-exempt status of museum activities in the US is most definitely an advantage they have always received for good reason. However, now that they are competing in retail markets and are garnering profits in sizeable amounts it seems only appropriate that the exemption on certain activities be reevaluated. More pressures from the business community will force this issue as museums continue to use this as a promotional tool.

In the UK, shops are not automatically tax-exempt. Unless a museum is run by a charitable trust, it will have to pay tax. Books sold in shops are exempt from tax; however, this is true in any shop in the UK and does not give museums a likely advantage.

Competition with local business is also evident in the leisure and tourism trade. As indicated by V. Middleton, 'Visitors to museums and other attractions are certain to make comparisons on ambiance, welcome, standard of facilities, catering and the overall sense of being treated as valued customers' (1991, p.32). The realities seem to suggest that museum shops are just as aggressive with their retailing neighbors as any other for-profit venture would be.

Another aspect of community involvement is the support of local crafts. Many shops have chosen to play an active role in this type of endeavor. Pollock's Toy Museum in London takes this role seriously. Their shop has two objectives; one of financial support and the other is its special function. That is 'to keep alive the 150 year old tradition of toy theatre performance by providing a well informed and sympathetic retail outlet for the toy theatre and its associated products' (Long and

Sorrell, 1977). The Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut also has a shop, one of the most lucrative and includes a separate retail gallery space that:

‘focuses on contemporary marine art, and encourages artists to work in this field...providing good, contemporary paintings, sculpture, ship models and scrimshaw for collectors. Through this Gallery the museum is able to continually show the work of contemporary artists in a venue where it can be for sale’ (Carr, 1986, pp.48,49).

Problems may occur if an artist is required to produce many of the same items over and over again. ‘...it goes against the creative nature of some craftspeople to reproduce the work of others or to take an interest in the repetitive nature of reproduction crafts...some lose interest after several months of repeat orders’ (Theobald, 1991, p.79). So not all objects or museums may be able to properly make use of this resource.

However, for the most part it is worth a museum’s effort to carry these types of works. Museums can use the opportunity provided by shops to stress that pieces in their own collection are part of an evolving and living tradition. When a museum accepts the role of an agent or patron of living artists it can provide positive affirmation of the continuing vitality and relevance of current craftsmen and their work and at the same time make an impact on visitors. ‘...custom-made, handcrafted products created exclusively for the museum store enhance its image’ (Theobald, 1991, p.77), and that of the artist.

Every museum works relentlessly to form a picture in the mind of the public, an appearance of scholarship and taste. Through items sold, publications produced and the overall appearance of the shop, a museum is trying to project a certain impression.

‘In all your relations with patrons and users, direct and indirect, through the quality of your museum displays, facilities and services, the courtesy of

your staff in answering questions and inquiries, or the corporate image of your museum projected through publicity materials or letterheads, you should seek to build up a positive picture of your museum' (Ambrose, 1993, p.75).

There is no activity a museum participates in that is not held up to high scrutiny in the eyes of the public and museum staff must always be aware of this in their shops. Museums must therefore struggle with the dilemma of how to offer the community more services and more exhibits at lower costs for bigger returns. 'The fine line museums constantly tread is to do good, in the sense of community service, and to do well financially' (Moore, 1994, p.139).

The museum as 'experience'

The modern day museum is not seen as a place to wander into off the street but as a destination or experience, somewhere to spend a lot of time and receive a range of services. Not only do patrons explore exhibits, they can dine and shop all in one location. 'The consumers of yesteryear were traditionally sold "somewhere to go". Then they were offered "something to do". Today's fierce competition for consumers' leisure spending is creating the destination as "somewhere to experience"' (Alexander, 1999, p.7).

This competition spreads to all leisure activities as Alexander goes on to state, 'Destinations can be found in the fields of leisure, tourism, culture and heritage. And in a wide variety of incarnations, from a stand-alone museum or visitor center to a city region, a waterfront or even an entire country' (ibid).

There is much competition between leisure sites for customers and consumers are sure to make judgments based on their experiences. Patrons expect museums to offer the same level of service they receive elsewhere, including a retail location.

'The public are coming to expect a shop in all but the smallest museums and coinciding as this does with the pressure on

museums to generate their own funds, the increased involvement of museums in trading and the development of museum shops seems inevitable' (Blume, 1987, p.2).

'In rating the museum experience, the average visitor deems the quality of the gift shop and food service to be as important, if not more important, as the quality of the artifacts or exhibition design' (Wagner, 1989, p.22). It is true that many visitors do not discriminate between the time they have spent in the galleries viewing objects and the time they spent in the shop. 'For visitor, walking around exhibit halls, visiting the gift shop and eating at the food service are all part and parcel of the same event- the museum experience' (Falk and Dierking, 1992, p.90). This places a lot of pressure on retail venues to live up to the standards of the host institution. However, this can also be viewed as a denigration of the primary work of the museum, that of exhibitions and education.

Visitor expectations

What is it that patrons are looking for when they visit a museum? According to V. Middleton;

'...of the range of consumer needs and expectations, the following...are selected as being broadly applicable to most museums (and shops):

- Value for money and effort.
- To be able to plan a visit. The great majority plan in advance and select a museum as the object of their outing.
- To find visit rewarding. Patrons are looking for stimulation, entertainment and education.
- To find high standards of service. This includes toilet facilities, cafeteria, shops and attendant courtesy and helpfulness.
- To have opportunities to spend money.
- To go away satisfied (1985, pp.20-21).

Taxpayers are looking at museums' collections as assets and these 'owners' expect a return for their investment. Therefore, museums have to be seen as offering value for money in all their services including admission price, food items, and merchandise in shops.

'Visitors do patronize shops and many are willing to pay large sums for high quality gifts and souvenirs. The number of purchases and expenditure per head is related to the siting of the shops, the range and attractiveness of displays and the quality of service provided' (Middleton, 1990, pp.24).

J. Jarrat states that '...middle-class society focuses on quality and durability rather than flash and glitz' (1997, p.25). He further mentions '...the middle classes have a tendency to trust institutions and rely on them to solve problems' (ibid). Patrons are highly expectant of quality goods in shops because of the museum's name and they insist that when there are problems the museum will stand behind its merchandise with guarantees. According to Susan Lewis, exhibitions officer at the Crawford Arts Centre in St. Andrews, Scotland, part of the criteria for choosing one-of-a-kind items to sell in their shop is that the artist stands behind the work and will fix or replaced damages due to poor quality. Being confident in the work that individual artists create is just as important as merchandise from manufacturers and both must be willing to accept returned items. M. Lewis states:

'If we are to be successful our customer must have total confidence in us, in our merchandise and in the knowledge ability of our staff...we must be willing to accept saleable merchandise back if the customer changes his or her mind for any reason. Giving a refund with good grace can and does create a loyal future customer' (1994, p.23).

Are patrons being offered quality items and value for money in shops? Many in the profession question the validity of 'value' in shops. 'The phrase "museum quality" in shops has come to signify "top quality and good taste" to the public at

large, although museum professionals, quite correctly, find the term meaningless,' (Theobald, 1991, p.4).

When S. Norris questioned visitors to museums and galleries, all said they had visited and spent time in the shop. All felt that the shop was an enjoyable experience while some occasionally went only to the shop (1997, p.40). According to H. Treinen, we in the museum profession must face a new fact; '...it seems that the majority of visitors are driven less by interest in the subject, let alone by the desire to learn or educate themselves, but rather by a pressing desire for diversion' (1993, p.89). He also uses the terms 'active dozing' or 'cultural window shopping' when explaining exactly what visitors are engaging in when visiting museums. This is quite a disappointment when the museum's first responsibility is to educate and yet our own patrons are not interested in learning.

'Typically visitor responses to the question "Why did you come here today?" can be grouped into three broad categories: 1) social-recreational reasons; 2) educational reasons; and 3) reverential reasons' (Graburn, 1977, p.5). This means that the museum must work hard to offer more than just an educational benefit to its patrons; it must be entertainment as well.

Becoming visitor-friendly

Most of us admit that museums can be intimidating. As museums struggle to find ways to make their collections more accessible and user-friendly, the museum shop has helped to play a key role. According to S. Norris, 'how else can a wider public, many of whom wouldn't be seen dead in a museum or gallery gain access to our cultural and artistic heritage?' (1997, p.40). There is the perception by patrons that 'the presence of a museum shop made the museum or gallery more user friendly and less elite' (Norris, 1997, p.41). People are more comfortable in a shopping situation because it is something they have done often; visiting a museum is a less regular event.

The shop allows for the publication of an adequate range of its own literature that can assist in guiding its visitors, thus making the exhibits and galleries clearer and more approachable. 'Coupled with a need to raise funds...the establishment of more visitor-oriented museums, ...means that the museum shop is a service meant to enhance visitor enjoyment...' (Blume, 1987, p.1). There is an interaction between the museum and visitor through its exhibits, however, this interaction should not be limited and should include all services and areas of the museum. 'Museums have become more "user friendly" and more sensitive to public wants and needs. The growth of the shop is but one manifestation of this trend' (Theobald, 1991, p.5).

Museum shops are viewed by the public as an opportunity to buy something because they want to be reminded of their visit. They've discovered that the museum shop is an enjoyable experience and a way to spend a little time and money. 'To provide space where visitors can linger and browse is crucial...the area should be easy to find and whenever possible with its own access to the street' (Bain, 1986, p.62). It has even been suggested that shops have extended hours beyond that of the museum, in anticipation of the public's demand for the same extent of service they get from high street retailers.

Additional responses from visitors make it clear that they want to be able to visit the shop without having to view the exhibits in the museum. The fear for museums professionals is that museum shops, while reaching out to the general public, 'could become more popular than the museums that house them' (Norris, 1997, p.41). The end result is that the shop will bring people to the museum and not the other way around. It is assumed that people who frequent the shop will eventually be lured in to view the exhibits. In reality, when museum attendance falls or rises so do sales, as exemplified by the Metropolitan Shop's revenue figures. Understandably this does not put many at ease. There are those who feel that the shop's customer should be drawn solely from the museum's visitors. '...actively recruiting the general public into the shop *alone*, by means of advertising or other promotional gimmicks, does not seem the best course to take' (Theobald, 1991, p.11).

A case in point is the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona. It regularly places advertisements in local papers that highlight the shop and its own events and promotions, above those of the Museum itself.

A Shopping Tradition

An outstanding selection
of Inuit sculpture and one-of-a-kind items are available now in the Heard Museum Shop and Bookstore.
A tradition of shopping. Only at the Heard.

Be sure to chill out with two cool exhibits.
Going on now!

Qanannituaq
Where the River Widens
Carving from Silver Lapis
September 15 - October 15, 2000
10:00am - 5:00pm, Tuesday - Sunday

Canadian Inuit Art
Contemporary and traditional sculpture of the last 100 years
September 15 - October 15, 2000
10:00am - 5:00pm, Tuesday - Sunday

Heard Museum
Native Cultures & Art
1360 North Central Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85004
602.944.2200
www.heard.org

"Caribou"
Kovianaqtuaq Japaungat, Canadian Inuit
Heard Museum Shop and Bookstore

Figure 1: Heard Museum Advertisement

(Source: *The Arizona Republic*, August 5, 2000)

This need not be an issue in museums with shops on-site. Most customers will be regular visitors to and members of the museum.

‘Many shops with unique, top quality merchandise do develop a loyal customer base that drops in periodically for unusual gifts. For the most part, these are active museum-goers for whom purchases at the shop are simply another manifestation of their support for the institution’ (Theobald, 1991, p.11,12).

With all of this information, the museum shop is seen as an essential part of the general museum experience. In accordance with this N. Cossons states, ‘Visitors to museums...like to buy things and indeed their enjoyment can be materially impaired if they cannot’ (1977). Shops have become a necessity that when absent creates a deficit in museum services and the overall enjoyment of a patron’s visit.

Public Perception

An important consideration of the museum shop that the public has come to appreciate is the reality ‘that with the decrease in government funding (having a museum shop) is probably the only way to survive’ (Norris, 1997, p.44). It is therefore no surprise that the selling of reproductions doesn’t bother visitors as long as they are well-done and related to the museum, believing that owning one indicates appreciation, not exploitation. ‘Some fear that the frequently reproduced images could become trite and make people less appreciative of the original’ (Norris, 1997, p.40) and shops should be careful as to what they produce works on, such as posters versus tote bags.

Museum officials and shoppers admit that items sold in museum stores tend to appeal to a certain cultural snobbery. According to Sallie Stutz, Vice Director of marketing at the Brooklyn Museum, ‘When you get a box that says the Metropolitan Museum of Art, it’s an endorsement that what you’re getting has quality and style and history because the people who work in the art world obviously have good taste’ (Foderaro, 1997b, p.1). So in fact, the museum

'benefits from sales and the visitor benefits from the integrity of the museum which acts as the guarantor and arbiter of quality' (Norris, 1997, p.41).

A museum may be judged solely by its retailing business without the customer ever needing to set foot in the door. Because of this, Internet and offsite locations should be careful as to the type of reputation they develop for the museum. Patrons can know very little about the museum itself, yet through purchases of high quality merchandise view the institution with regard. This fact may result in public pressure but it may also serve as a good way to keep museum shops from choosing items that fall outside certain quality standards.

Chapter 3

Changes in museum management

It is now considered a necessity that income generation be the joint responsibility of the entire museum. '...the trustees, the director, his senior team and each individual within the museum whether his or her activities generate funds directly or not' (French, 1988, p.32). Therefore, museum professionals have had to develop additional skills. New arguments must be made to potential sources of funding and with these 'a new professionalism has developed in income generation and fundraising...The key notes have become cost efficiency, cost effectiveness and value for money; museums have become more business-like' (Ambrose, 1991, p.5). There are no longer positions in the museum world that do not in some way deal with revenue generation, no matter how seemingly minor or unrelated the job may be. As art becomes transformed into a cultural commodity to be promoted and sold, all branches of the museum world will be affected.

Business Minded

Museums in both the US and UK have always maintained innovative ways of procuring funding. S. Runyard gives a list of some that have been employed in the past:

'Areas of fundraising to be considered:

- Charitable giving/donations
 - one-off gifts in cash or goods by companies and individuals
 - regular giving through various schemes
 - appeal funds
 - legacies
- Sponsorship in cash or goods
- Support from educational and charitable trusts
 - selling goods or services

- Membership and subscriptions
- Lobbying for increased funding from existing bodies' (1991, p. 88).

Other sources include admission charges, sponsorship, car park and other fees, special events and rental rates, copyright and licensing. Additionally, museums with conservation facilities can open up these departments and charge outside customers, including other museums, for repair work. These income-producing activities allow museums to make the most of their unique attributes.

The Victoria and Albert Museum produces its own magazine, discussing the exhibitions, events, people and special pieces related to the museum. The magazine sells in its shop and revenue is generated to cover the costs of publication. Located within the pages of the magazine are advertisements for auction houses, art and antiques fairs, commercial art galleries, schools and other museums. This inventive form of fundraising is another way to procure additional funds.

Copyright control is another revenue producer. British museums hold the copyright to the items in their collections over seventy years old. This includes literary works and pictorial, graphic and sculptured works. There are exceptions. 'Exact reproductions of two- and three-dimensional objects in the museum's collection cannot be copyrighted because they do not meet the criteria for originality' (Theobald, 1991, p.182). Copyrighting gives the museum an inexpensive form of protection by controlling the use of images that could have commercial value.

'It prevents, or at least discourages, unscrupulous people from copying your successful creation and undercutting your price, your quality, and your good reputation. Copyrighting adds a little prestige to the object and professionalism to your museum by its implication that you are proud of the object and professional enough to recognize its value and commercial potential' (ibid).

Museums can charge fees for copyright permission and hire of transparencies when they are used for publication in any form. It is important that museums secure

adequate control over their copyright so that there is never any use of an image or likeness that the public relates to the museums that is distasteful or unethical. Since more and more museums are opening shops and they need to fill their shelves with inventory, the pressure is on to allow for images of pieces to be reproduced on items and in publications. One significant part of what a museum does is to permit the publication of copies of its own works of art for exchange with other museums for similar publications or for sale to the public. 'This is obviously an important duty and affords a powerful means of imparting instruction' (Kellerman, 1996, p. 95). The reputation of the museum and the object must always be considered when permitting use of an image.

There is a dilemma with copyrighting, specifically in the UK.

'As it stands in the UK museums must clear copyright to use images of their own collection. But libraries are exempt and can make copies for themselves and their public's own purposes. Auction houses have rights to reproduce for sales catalogues' (Heywood, 2000, p.9).

It seems only fair that these entities share the same exceptions to the copyright laws if only for the purpose of increased public access and scholarship.

Some go even further to attain revenue. The Smithsonian has a lucrative mail-order business and has found various ways of adding to its revenues. Through years of hard work it has developed an extensive mailing list that it views as a product it can sell to other businesses. It '...not only sells products from its catalogue, but even markets its mailing list of "affluent, well-educated customers" who "have avidly purchased beautifully crafted gifts and reproductions from the catalogue"' (Harney, 1994, p.136). Since the mailing list is sold on a one-time use agreement, it continually manages to attract new and repeat customers to this service.

But careful thought must go into every venture a museum decides to lend its name to. Programs should attempt to promote the public good, not just the financial

efforts of a particular institution. The MA in Britain is clear on the consequences of making poor choices: ‘Members of the public do not distinguish between services provided by a museum itself and or a subsidiary company, contractor, agent or franchise holder and any contract between a museum and a service agent should take full account of these guidelines’ (1997, p.1). The American Association of Museums (AAM) also directs its institutions with similar advice, ‘revenue producing activities and activities that involve relationships with external entities are compatible with the museum’s mission and support its public trust’ (AAM, 2000, p.10). It also insists that any collections-related activities a museum participates in promote the public good rather than individual financial gain. The reputation of the museum community as a whole can be adversely affected when quality or ethical behavior has not been maintained.

Marketing focus

Marketing is a broad subject and includes everything that makes a public presentation. This consists of not only signs and logos but also everything a museum does that is put before the public, including services. The move to a marketing approach has been difficult for some parts of the museum community to adopt. There are similar problems for those outside this group trying to assist with the commercialization. ‘...within the museum sector too little marketing affinity and know-how is available, while in the marketing world and in commerce in general little feeling for and understanding of culture exists’ (Verbaas, 1992, p.179).

Part of the problem is the feeling those in the museum and non-profit sector have towards commercialism. With past government and philanthropic support, these establishments could maintain an elitist attitude towards ventures of that type. In fact, F. Verbaas claims,

‘Coming from the business community, where broadly speaking the question in the end still is a matter of economic objectives such as profit, increase of market share and, to take another example,

competitiveness, it quickly became clear to me that these were subjects about which little or nothing at all was known within the museum sector. Indeed, it was rather unseemly or “not done” to think about these questions, let alone discuss them among each other openly’ (1992, p.170).

‘The Americans attribute four elements to the marketing mix...Product, price, place and promotion’ (Verbass, 1992, p.176). The product is the museum itself- its exhibitions, services, building and staff. Price is the amount of money required for entrance, food in the cafeteria and shop merchandise. Place is an essential matter when location and access to services is key to visitors. Promotion works for self-advertising through services and products as well as advertising done outside the museum, for example, magazine ads, invitations, etc... If the shop is included in the deliberations of all four of these areas then it has the opportunity to play a large role in the support of a museum.

A further valuable feature of marketing is the notion of thinking and acting with the consumer in mind at all times. This has been central to the business sector and examined carefully. The view is that if you give the customer what they want, they will come back again and again. Museums have developed exhibitions around their collections or those of other institutions or individuals, not necessarily because the public has stated a desire. If a museum keeps the customers’ needs in mind, it allows for the museum to plan its exhibitions and adjust its services and shop inventory to the needs and expectations of its patrons.

Slowly, the conventional mind-set is evolving and being replaced by an approach that more closely mirrors those in the business sector. Marketing is a characteristic of the business world that has long been integral in its commercial success. This same marketing mindedness is beginning to develop in the museum sector under the pressures of declining funds. But even to this day, the view on the relationship between marketing and culture hasn’t been fully developed. There is still the fear that when assuming a marketing focus cultural aspirations are naturally reduced.

The marketing of a shop must be in relation to the museum. This includes its signs, logos, bags, boxes and product information, even the attire worn by its staff. All of these elements should be consistent with the mission and image of the museum, continually reinforcing it. Remembering that the shop is not its own entity but is constantly linked to the museum means that any kind of promotion must be done within the parameters of what is considered appropriate for both and that advertising schemes are linked together much more so than in the earlier example of the Heard Museum.

The Museum Director

At present, museum directors have to reevaluate their role in the management of museums. 'Museum directors are now increasingly thought of as managers, rather than, previously, scholars' (Hudson, 1990, p.55). This is a disillusioning statement. A large part of what a manager must now be involved with is fundraising even with an extensive background in scholarship.

"A typical museum director would probably argue that fund raising is not fun, it is not what he was trained for, it was not why he works in a museum and it is a distraction from the true priorities of the institution for which he works and from his own interests' (French, 1988, p.31).

Yet, continually, directors are being led away from their original objectives to that of income generator. K. Hudson further expounds on the role of museum director/manager and maintains:

'Somewhat ironically, the museum manager became indispensable only when it was realized that museums had insufficient money to allow them to compete in the leisure market, where the bulk of their visitors would be found. (Managers) had to raise their sights in order to attract and hold customers and, as a consequence, the

traditional easy-going, non-commercially minded museum...began slowly to disappear' (1998, p.55).

One of the most successful museum directors is James Broughton, infamous for his 'Wonders of...' shows. These shows have been hugely profitable and central to their appeal are characters like Rameses and Napoleon. Broughton uses advertising and merchandising techniques familiar to promoters of rock concerts and his events tour medium-sized American cities. His first, 'Treasures of the Tsars' brought in \$34 million to the Memphis community alone. This included hotel rooms, car rentals and meals in local businesses while also contributing to tax revenues. It's no wonder that cities are eager to accommodate these extravaganzas in their conference and visitor centers as they are too large for any museum to even consider housing them. Additionally, unless a nearby museum can piggyback the success of these programs with their own, they are left out of the financial explosion of these events.

Perhaps this is an example of a 'promoter' and not a museum director, yet Broughton is clear to refer to himself as a museum director, perhaps as an attempt to lend credibility to his shows. However, without any museum affiliation, these staged events are portrayed as a scholarly experience and visitors perceive them to be the equivalent of visiting a museum.

This recognition typifies the great effort that is taking place to bring visitors into the traditional museum environment. Most directors are becoming more mindful of these types of grand exhibitions. They realize the revenue generating potential and are competing with Monet and Van Gogh exhibitions along with merchandise tie-ins in the shop. There is an understanding that what brings people in the doors will also cause them to buy in the shop and directors are more involved than ever in the selection of merchandise. In a later chapter I will examine their influence on decisions relating to shop products.

The Curator

Curators are called on more and more to participate in other activities outside the function of their primary profession, so much so that the Museums Training Institute mentions the following in their brochure regarding careers for those preparing to become curators:

‘Only the largest museums can afford to employ curators solely to look after the collections and in most museums, curators carry out all sorts of other tasks as well. These might include marketing, exhibitions, visitor services, education, financial management and personnel issues. In the smallest museums the curator may do all of these things’ (1998, p.6).

The need to be proficient in so many areas comes from not only the financial bottom line but from those in the marketing element of the museum as well. It is difficult for curators to maintain their intellectual autonomy when the demand is on for a larger audience and more money. Even in the most popular exhibitions there is a tension between marketing and scholarship, which cannot always be described as creative. Those in the marketing arm deny that they have undue influence over choices made. Yet Andrew Hamilton, chief of public relations at the British Museum states, ‘At the regular planning meetings, if I see a dead duck I make my opinion known, and it is listened to...But the initial ideas come from the curators’ (Vallely, 1996). This statement epitomizes the channels that curators are forced to go through with their ideas on exhibitions and events.

We must be careful that the emphasis on income is not at the expense of scholarship and research. The traditional curatorial proficiency in scholarship is being replaced by business related skills and this may lead to a staff of less ‘museum-knowledgeable’ professionals. A. Borg stresses the need to continue along the path of curatorial excellence through training in history and the arts:

‘It may not be fashionable to talk about the basic curatorial skills today, but the fact is that unless museums curators have and can communicate detailed academic knowledge of their collections, they cannot make themselves usefully available to the public. So we must continue to value the scholarly curators if we are to make our collections truly accessible to all’(Borg, 2000, p.1).

The Education Officer

This role in museums is also feeling the strains of a tightening economy. Under the heading of Education Officer, the Museums Training Institute states that the job includes ‘finding ways to relate the scholarly work of curators to the needs of visitors across a range of subject areas’ (1998, p.14). This includes setting up classes, bringing in school groups and guided tours. All of these are meant directly or indirectly to generate income and bring visits to the museum, increasing outreach numbers and thus increasing government funding.

What is also entailed in this is the publication of exhibition catalogues, teachers’ packs and materials for tour groups. It is up to the education officer to make sure that this information is clear and understandable as well as instructive. But this is not enough, materials must also sell in the shops and as will be seen in chapter four, this department is expected to create works that will establish a flow of revenue for the museum. As mentioned earlier, all museums carry publications that are important for scholarship yet are financially unsuccessful because this is regarded as an important service. Too many publications of this type would be unfeasible for a museum to present; it is therefore the responsibility of the education officer to produce items that are educational and profitable.

Changes in these important roles of museum management are causing confusion and trepidation. It is up to the individual to stay informed of what knowledge will be needed and how best to perform the duties involved. Clearly one can no longer solely focus on a single area of research but must maintain a familiarity with many topics of interest in order to be successful in the museum profession.

Chapter 4

Maintaining ethical standards

When a museum creates its own mission statement it is inevitably making certain decisions determined by opinions pertaining to its own set of values, beliefs and accepted rules of behavior. This system of values may be particular to the institution itself while reflecting those of the community it serves. It should act as a uniting aspect of an institution's customs. It is the foundation upon which all other choices will be based. When a museum performs the duties of its mission statement and daily responsibilities, an obvious sense of these values should be evident. It is therefore vital that when entering into the retail sector the museum hierarchy should take very seriously the inception of standards that are to be maintained throughout. A shop mission statement that works in conjunction with the broader museum statement should be conceived and adopted.

Shop statement

To begin the process of considering a shop statement its objectives should be discussed. How does the shop fit into the museum in terms of purpose? Is it an educational service? Is it meant to bring in revenue? Is it to promote the museum itself or more? Is it a venue for local artists? What are the benefits the museum hopes to receive? It is helpful to include all staff in the development of a shop statement. It will also allow for an insight into the opinions of staff members and their views on the museum being involved in a retail enterprise. This is never an easy or straightforward process and it may be necessary to redefine and rework the statement many times.

The link between the museum and its shop are illustrated in the mission statement. Constant review of the original museum's mission statement must take place throughout this course of action. The shop should never be allowed to work outside the bounds of what has already been established. According to R. Kellerman, the

Metropolitan's trading activities are in accord with its central purpose as expressed in its charter of 1870: '...that of encouraging and developing the study of fine arts, and the application of arts to manufactures and practical life, of advancing the general knowledge of kindred subjects, and to that end of furnishing popular instruction' (1996, p. 84).

The mission statement is the tool by which success is measured and it is imperative that it indicates what is expected so that the best interests of the museum and the public can be served. An important point to consider with the statement is what would have to happen for staff and others to consider the shop a success? The statement should help to sharpen ideas that focus on your museum, its services and visitors and be subjected to continual evaluation. With regular monitoring, any changes can be organized and efficient and keeps staff aware of the need to review periodically. These points should be addressed before further 'decisions relating to planning, management and operation of a shop can have any positive meaning' (Twelves, 1992, p.703).

All subsequent commercial activities should be secondary to the mission statement. These include the planning and operational aspects of running a shop and will be further referenced in chapter five.

In interviews, respondents either did not know their shop statement or were not eager to make them available. Although in theory having a shop statement is a good idea, once written it is soon forgotten. Some museums do not have a statement but rather a 'philosophy' or guidelines they adhere to. Either way, it exemplifies the lack of seriousness and standards with which some museums run their retail enterprises.

Keeping in mind that a shop statement is only part of the equation that makes a retail venture successful, the true measure for success is profit. According to M. Twelves, 'No matter what the stated mission, a shop will only be successful if it sells what the customers believe they want. If it does not do this then it will fail in its role, even if that role has been identified as non-profit making...' (1992, p. 707).

Merchandising criteria, purchasing and pricing policies

Selecting merchandise for sale in a museum-related venue can be a tricky business. Because of their standing in the community, the responsibility placed upon the shoulders of museum officials to select items that are in keeping with the museum's own standards of quality is great. The pressure is on to sell items that will inspire future museum visitors. '...souvenirs and gifts bought by previous generations form part of most museum's collections and therefore the museum shop could appropriately sell what our great grandchildren may assign their collections' (Hughes, 1977).

Decisions on what items to stock can be aided by the presence of a clear purchasing policy. When the mission statement has already been decided on and the purpose of the shop has been defined, it is easier to determine what range of stock will best serve that purpose. Undoubtedly, all items should be of good quality and well designed but this is not a simple task. Those in the position of evaluating objects for possible sale should undertake research into techniques and materials, becoming knowledgeable about the items that are going to represent the museum.

A very commercial minded approach maintains that the three R's of retailing apply to any commercial undertaking 'the right goods at the right time at the right price' (Palmer, 1988, p.125). This seems to oversimplify what is being done in museum shops. Because of the mission statement, this policy must be balanced with the goals of scholarship and education so that certain conditions can be met. In ideal situations there are always some sort of overt connections with the museum and items are of a standard that routinely mirrors the quality of the host museum itself. Choices should never be dictated entirely by the pursuit of profit, although a reasonable profit is expected.

Since museum shops, by their nature, cannot be driven by revenues and profit alone, there are suggestions for merchandise selection. According to M. Theobald

an art museum specifically can take three directions in developing or buying related goods:

1. Products can relate to the museum's collection in terms of the artist(s) or the works of art.
2. Products can relate to the museum's artistic category or categories, such as "twentieth-century art" or "American portraits".
3. Products can relate to the actual structure of the museum if it is historically or architecturally significant (1991, p.37).

M. Theobald continues to ascertain that when choosing items for sale a 'product must make a genuine contribution to the museum's stated educational purposes or overall mission to qualify as related' (1991, p.35). A museum's mission statement makes it possible to evaluate whether or not the products in its shop are contributing to it. R. Bennett the retail manager at the Tate Britain feels strongly that 'all items should be chosen not only on the grounds of quality but that they inform and educate' (Personal comment, 2000).

Some museums expand on these standards and include items that are related to a museum's location or surrounding community and its programs and services. Consequently art museum products can include books and exhibition catalogues, posters, postcards and, in some cases, local guidebooks, and crafts. For most items it is clear the connection they have with the host institution. However, for some it is not as evident.

The Welsh Slate Museum has been able to incorporate its theme and location into a whole line of products. 'The merchandise for the shop reflects the surrounding landscape. The museum represents the industrial, social and cultural history of the area...many of the traditional crafts are still being practiced. The shop stocks exquisite bowls, candlesticks, plates, doorstops, plaques, all made from slate...The museum's own craftsmen contribute to this eclectic mix of slate crafts with their own handmade gifts...' (Humphries, 1999, p.14). It is obvious the greater product possibilities that history or theme museums have over art museums. When an art

museum considers product development it will not have the same field of choices afforded by other museums.

Historic artefacts should never be sold, however some museums do sell items from their collection that they feel are already over represented both in their museum and others and therefore do not serve a scholarly or representational purpose, such as coins. Others refuse to sell even replicas of specimens believing 'that to do so may encourage people to collect indiscriminately or illegally' (MA, 1992, p.3). The MA in Britain and the AAM believe that these types of items may become confused in the public's mind with material previously seen on display in the museum and in the collection.

Art museums are in the position to present items that are original, contemporary works by local artist. As pointed out earlier, museum-related artworks are an important offering when developed and sold in a shop setting. They enhance the reputation of the shop and the artist equally. Meanwhile the public will benefit not only from the high quality of items but also because they are given the opportunity to buy the best. Shops can use their unique attributes to create an environment and product line that is exclusive to them. For example, the SFMOMA Store focuses on Pacific Rim designs when choosing merchandise. J. Hallewell, shop manager at the Dundee Contemporary Arts Centre, selects works from artists at the local school of art. In this way she is able to create a look for her shop that makes it unique while supporting local, up and coming artists.

Some institutions insist on items that were produced within their local area or country. In the UK there is considerable pressure to carry British-made products. Stuart Hata, creative director at the SFMOMA Store has no such parameters and most toys in his shop are from outside the US (Personal comment, 2000).

Additional standards to be considered may include price, creativity and innovation and can be as subjective as the museum wishes to make them. In these ways a shop can truly make itself unique but must be careful that the criteria of museum-related and quality are being met.

Shop professionals will state that there are certain items or materials that will not be chosen because of concerns with standards. This can sometimes be a subjective approach. If a curator or shop manager find products aesthetically unpleasing or consider them ‘tacky’ they won’t make it onto the sales floor. Other negatives are poor reproductions and pricing where an item costs too much for what it is or how it is made or is too expensive for the shop’s customers.

Material for products can be bought in ready-made from wholesalers or specially produced for the museum. The MA in Britain is very specific in what it regards as the proper materials products should be comprised of and with whom an institution should do business. Here are the guidelines that pertain specifically to art museums:

‘When buying products for resale it is desirable to:

- i. Use suppliers that manufacture and trade ethically
- ii. Avoid products that may damage the museum’s public reputation
- iii. Establish a policy regarding naturally finite materials and endeavor to sell products made from renewable sources (MA, 1997).

Products that are inspired by the museum are the best sellers and best in terms of marketing. Of the merchandise sold, 70% of Getty Bookstore stock is directly museum inspired. It has creatively used its building materials as the motivation behind one of its items. ‘Getty products outsell any bought in items; ...with the best seller being little three inch cubes of the Travertine marble with which all the Getty Center buildings are faced’ (Dodsworth, 1999, p.10).

It is beneficial to reflect the theme and identity of the museum in the range of items that are on sale. Branded or ‘logoed’ items work very well as souvenirs that can be linked to the site and experience. This is where items such as mugs, t-shirts and calendars come in. When a museum’s logo or an image of its building is placed on an item it is easier to justify than when we start placing images of artworks on

them. Here is where the issue of ethics becomes involved. The Getty Center is very clear in their approach to this- absolutely no images of art works on anything but posters, postcards, and in publications. The SFMOMA store sets the same standards. Others institutions are not as stringent. You will readily find scarves with details of Richard Doyle's 'Under the Dock Leaves' watercolour in the British Museum's *Gift Catalogue Spring/Summer 2000* (p.21); or placemats and coasters with images adapted from details of lead glass windows designed by Tiffany in the catalogue *Metropolitan Museum of Art Store: Holiday 1999*(p.28).

Most individuals involved in retail ventures and in selecting merchandise will eventually have to visit trade/gift shows and craft fairs. These outlets for products can be small and take an afternoon to peruse or larger ones that can take days to work through. Here will be found wholesalers selling merchandise with your organizations name, retail consultants offering advice and individual artists fashioning original works of art. Of all these types of venues, two stood out as the most popular for shop professionals. In the US, the Baltimore Gift Show in Maryland is a large event comprising hundreds of booths in a large convention center and several hotels in the surrounding area. The Birmingham Gift Fair in the UK is another large-scale show and is the most beneficial for retailers in and around Britain. There is no shortage of venues for museums to go to for items and in most cases these vendors come to you.

Whenever museums charge a fee for their services it is vital that they strive to offer value for money. A shop's pricing policy should reflect this philosophy as well as the museum's fundamental purpose and its overall aims. If educating at all levels is a criterion, then there needs to be present items for sale that are at a variety of price points and 'kept at a range designed to reach the widest possible audience' (Kellerman, 1996, p.39). Small inexpensive items are just as important to carry as large more expensive ones. Items such as these sell well and children with pocket change will be denied the opportunity of purchasing educational items if everything is priced outside their reach. People who haven't come to the museum to shop and aren't carrying much money with them may wish to purchase items.

Both of these visitors need to be considered when including items and evaluating pricing.

Thought should go into the pricing of publications either produced in-house or elsewhere. Care should be taken to balance the need to offer something for every pocketbook yet not under-pricing the publications and therefore undermining their credibility. Items for the serious researcher such as students and scholars should be priced to fit within their budget.

A last consideration should be kept in mind with promotions and sales. Many bookshops offer special prices on books and catalogues pertaining to a current exhibition as a way of promoting the museum's shows. This is a good way to inspire greater sales and link with the activities of the museum. But what message does it send when items are marked down? Were they unpopular or of poor quality? Was the manager not careful enough in their selection? What about other items in the shop? When one in-house publication has been marked down to half-price does this mean that staff are not confident in their own scholarship? Do we pander to the needs of the bargain-hunting shopper while undermining our own merchandise? What does it say to the average shopper that museum members receive items at a reduced price while they must pay full price?

Much importance should be placed on the selection of merchandise and there are clear standards and guidelines. The inclusion of marked down items in a basket by the counter casts a shadow over remaining items and yet most shops participate in this activity. The reality is that some stock may need to be unloaded, cash flow may need to be increased, room needs to be made. Whatever the reason, perhaps for image sake it would be best to remove these items from inventory another way, through donations or employee give-aways perhaps. Unfortunately, both the MA in Britain and the AAM do not cover this controversy in their literature for museums and their retail enterprises and retail experts see it as a necessary tool. With the growth in this field and bigger shops with more inventory, this practice will become more apparent. Perhaps then our associations will address it.

Reproductions

This area of museum activity is rife with controversy. There are those in the museum community who are opposed to the fabrication of reproduced items of any kind. Certain shops refuse to carry any items that are a copy of a work of art or artefact on items other than posters and prints while others are willing to use any means necessary to make a profit.

It would be best to begin with a clear definition of a reproduction. As explained by M. Theobald, a reproduction or replica is 'a copy of the appearance of the original antique or object, accurately duplicating the size, color, and material of the object. It is often, but not necessarily made in the same manner as the original object but its function may not be the same' (1991, p.48). Museums also consider reproductions to be photographic images of any part of their collection that has been produced onto a poster, postcard or catalogue. Theobald also mentions the use of adaptations: 'An alteration to the size color, and/or material of the original object' (ibid). Most reproductions found in museum shops are adaptations of one kind or another.

The manufacture of reproductions began in the US in the nineteenth century with the Metropolitan's program of education. "It was then the practice for art institutions both here and in Europe to purchase casts of the world's most prized sculpture, ornaments, and artifacts of the past, as well as models of great buildings, for inclusion in their permanent collection. Such copies were considered indispensable to the study and appreciation of the evolution of art and culture through the ages..." (Kellerman, 1996, p.11). Reproductions can be a resource to museums faced with incomplete or limited collections and insufficient funds for acquisitions. Museums with inadequate resources faced with 'the hopeless task of building a significant collection of original works of art would do well to fill historical gaps with superior three-dimensional reproductions' (Kellerman, 1996, p.47).

To additionally explain their process and reproduction policy the Metropolitan has set up an addition to their web site. Entitled *Behind the Scenes of the Metropolitan Store*, it aims to clarify any questions visitors to the site may have about how and why items are reproduced for sale:

‘Every product created by the museum is the result of careful research and expert execution by the Met’s staff of art historians, designers, and master craftspeople, who ensure that each reproduction bears the closest possible fidelity to the original... reproducing our collection is part of the original mission of the museum and has been a tradition here for over a century’
(Metropolitan Web Site, 2000).

An important goal of the trustees of the Metropolitan has always been to promote good design and craftsmanship and to promote the practical use of its collections as a design-research source through the manufacture of reproductions.

The Met is very careful with the treatment of the originals it chooses to reproduce. It is important that items in the collection are never put in danger of being damaged for the purpose of generating sales:

‘Prototypes created by Museum staff in the molding studio are sent as guides to manufacturers who reproduce them in larger quantities for sale in the Met Store. (Since original works of art are not permitted to leave the Museum for reproduction purposes, the likeness of the cast to the original is of critical importance.) The reproductions are then returned to the Museum, where master craftspeople in the molding studio patinate each piece by hand in order to match the original artworks finish and texture’ (ibid).

Most common in art museums are the reproductions of images onto postcards and prints. ‘The choice of a substantial number of commercially successful subjects is particularly important’ (Bain, 1986, p.58). Rosemary Bennett at the Tate Britain

chooses items for reproduction that are popular iconographic images, not obscure objects in the collection but something that people will recognize and associate with the Tate. 'The publishing of single images from the collection, in colour either as slide, postcard or large print, contributes about 30% of the Tate's retail turnover' (Bain, 1986, p.58). Ms. Bennett is not concerned with over-exposure (most shop managers feel the same) and allows for licensed products to be sold in other gift shops but not other museum shops, unless the items are traveling with an exhibit.

Reproductions don't bother visitors as long as they are well done and relate to the museum, believing that owning one indicates appreciation not exploitation. 'Some fear that the frequently produced images could become trite and make people less appreciative of the original' (Norris, 1997, p.40). Caution is required to ensure that copies for sale in shops do not confuse patrons. There is a great rise in the production of art-inspired materials and this coupled with the marketing of copies of original works has created confusion in some. Clarification is imperative to help maintain ethical standards.

It is recommended that museums clearly indicate the fact that these items are reproductions. This can be done through the use of labels, integral markings on objects, signs and advertising. It is further suggested that signatures, print edition numbers, and printer's symbols that are not present or occur outside the borders of the original, should not appear in the reproduced item. On sculpture, signatures, edition numbers or foundry marks should not appear at all.

The materials used in reproductions should be offered in materials and sizes other than those utilized by the artist in the original. This may be difficult with some items including those that are functional, however, this further emphasizes the point that these pieces are reproductions. The MA in Britain suggests that 'items for sale made "in the style of" should be clearly marked as such' (1997). It further states that 'replicas and other products derived from items in a museum's collection should be accompanied by information about the object and the museum' (ibid).

The American Association of Art Museum Directors claims in their publication *Professional Practices in Art Museums* that offering ‘reproductions to the public as an adjunct to the work of art is one thing; to offer a surrogate for original works of art is quite another, and could lead to confusion in the public mind as to what constitutes originality in a work of art’ (2000, p.25). Therefore it is up to individual institutions to relay the proper information to customers.

The investment value of this type of production is highly doubtful and art dealers and those in the commercial selling of art prints are correct to voice an opinion about this practice:

‘...the antiques and fine art dealers like the Art Dealers Association of America which, having described reproductions as lacking intrinsic aesthetic worth and resale value, called upon museums to stop making “pretentious” (translate: expensive) reproductions all together’(Theobald,1991, p.7).

When hundreds of copies are made, there is little worth other than decorative or educational. However, some museums flaunt their reproductions as handcrafted and having an artistic importance of their own and when sold across from an item that is an original by a local artist, customers may not outwardly understand the difference. Pricing should be in accord with ethical practices so that in another form this distinction is made evident. The product or its packaging should always contain information on the piece that is educational in content and include the name of the museum or logo allowing for this to be carried outside the shop.

The Getty Center is in a unique position in that it can afford to be very particular with the items it sells in its shop and allows absolutely no reproductions of any kind on items other than postcards and posters while replicas are considered cheap imitations (Christopher Jacobs, Personal comment, 1999). The director of the Center feels that even notepads are suspect. The belief is that not only does this type of merchandise trivialize the image; it can be altered and manipulated through use. When you tear a piece of paper off a notepad, crumple it or fold it, when a tote

bag gets dirty or the image fades; these have the consequence of adversely affecting the original intent of the artist.

Unmistakable information is to be given when advertising these types of objects, on any signage and when staff members are queried. Implying that there is any uniformity in quality between a copy and the original or leading a customer to believe that in any way a reproduction is, in a sense, an original piece is a misinterpretation that will discredit the museum.

Licensing and publications

As pertains to shops, licensing and publications are two popular arenas that museums have found profitable. Licensing allows museums to produce items that incorporate their name and collection without incurring extensive product development costs and provides it with tax-free income. The process of licensing is significant in terms of marketing and public access to collections.

An item, such as a calendar or poster, is produced under license and distributed by a manufacturer other than the museum. The manufacturer incurs all start up costs including inventory investment. If done properly, the museum acts as a control throughout the process, taking care that quality and authenticity are not compromised. The museum then purchases at wholesale only the amount of merchandise it can sell while the item is then distributed by the manufacturer to other museums and gift shops. The original museum receives royalties on each sale made. Royalties can 'range from four to twelve percent depending on the manufacturer, the industry and the museum's bargaining power...The manufacturer is allowed to use the museum's name in its marketing efforts for that museum's product' (Theobald, 1991, p.39).

According to C. Webb, this type of activity is well-liked by more than just shop professionals:

'Licensing programmes are also becoming increasingly popular with museum administrators. The programmes link nationally respected

museums with equally regarded manufacturers and retailers who, under strict control, are empowered to manufacture and market reproductions and other products based on museum collection design. In return for these rights, the licensee pays royalties to the museum for the length of a contract... This new direction in museum merchandising is credited with bringing designs of artistic merit to the American marketplace and a mass audience into America's museums. Income from licensing and marketing can be very substantial indeed' (1986, p.81).

This is an inexpensive way to create an inflow of revenue. However, it should be remembered that manufacturers are self-serving and mainly interested in tying in their own products with the museum's name and image. Museums must be careful as to whom they choose to produce their merchandise. A manufacturer would not enter into a contract with a museum unless there was the possibility of developing goods that will be improved by the prestige of the museum. 'The idea is for manufacturers to identify themselves with the excellent reputation of a well-known museum in order to give their products an edge in today's highly competitive marketplace' (Theobald, 1991, p.39). Intense research by museum and/or shop staff is needed to locate manufacturers who meet the requirements stated by museums associations in the UK and US.

There is a further advantage to licensing 'not only is the product sold by the museum's shop in which collection a particular piece is housed, but that people all over the (world) have an opportunity to appreciate the work and know that it came from that collection' (Harney, 1994, p.137). Licensing can greatly increase access to a museum's collection outside its own walls and thus its outreach and education potential.

A model of this relationship at a large and commercial level is the agreement between the American Museum of Natural History and FAO Schwartz, the toy store conglomerate. The Museum:

‘which has seven stores scattered throughout its building on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, formed a relationship with FAO Schwartz in late 1995 in which the toy store and the Museum design new products that carry the Museum’s name. FAO Schwartz pays the production costs, and the Museum receives royalties on sales and can buy products at cost to sell in its own shops’ (Foderaro, 1997b, p.1).

Though this is an extreme example that not every museum, especially art museums, would be able to take advantage of, the possibilities of tying in products with a museum’s name is a very good idea for merchandisers and can create a competitive edge as well.

It is sometimes better suited to a museum that contract product development be implemented. Drawbacks are that museums pay the preliminary development costs and may be required to purchase an initial order much larger than the shop manager is comfortable with buying. The manufacturer or craftsman is not allowed to use the museum’s name in any promotion and the museum receives exclusivity for the product. This can be a benefit if a change in manufacturers is ever required and museums can make more money in the long run but initial cash flow is usually the main set back to ventures of this kind and research into ethical companies is again a necessity.

Museums can also choose to purchase items that have already been developed in the open market that happen to relate in some way to the museum’s collection or purpose. There are many manufacturers and craftspeople creating items that would fit into the quality standards of a museum shop, but this can be a difficult scenario depending on the expertise of the person choosing merchandise.

‘Publishing programmes are often a profit-making arm of a museum with the materials produced being compatible with the museum’s image and specific area of interest’ (Webb, 1986, p.81). In this area museums can have a great amount of control and quality can be maintained with the production of scholarly works

authored by the museum's own staff. This aids in spreading the educational message that is so vital to the museum and allows museum staff the opportunity to research the collection and related topics.

Again, the Metropolitan has led the field in the US. As mentioned by R. Kellerman:

‘As early as 1913, in addition to publications for the general reader, the museum began to issue works of distinguished scholarship that contributed to the field of art history and related disciplines. Most were written by and embodied the research of the curatorial staff...By 1983, The Metropolitan had become one of the largest museum art-book publishers in the nation, and by the 1990s one of the largest in the world’ (1996, p.52).

The Metropolitan feels it is crucial to maintain its commitment to share with the rest of the community the results of its own scholarly studies by offering for sale a wide range of subjects, not all authored and researched by its own Museum staff. Books by non-staff are chosen with the participation of a full-time book buyer and the curatorial staff.

Besides publications that are written in-house and about the collection of the host institution, many can be chosen that have been produced by other museums and their collections or by publishers within the commercial realm with art-related subjects. It is important to allow staff members in several departments of the museum the chance to scrutinize the selection of publications and make suggestions. The Victoria and Albert Museum is diligent in its selection of publications for sale. Every item in the publications section of the shop has been ‘carefully scrutinized, related to the museum’s collection and recommended by department heads. These stringent selection procedures lead to the sale of commercially produced materials of the highest standards’ (Hughes, 1977).

The Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut has used its shop and the sale of publications to fill a niche in its related field; that of a scholarly outlet for those interested in maritime subjects:

‘Through two aspects in particular, the store is helping to carry out the museum’s educational role. Its book department has developed into the finest maritime bookstore in our region...people around the country can call and order the maritime publications which are very difficult or impossible to obtain from their local book dealers. Clearly the bookstore is providing an important educational service’ (Carr, 1986, p.48).

The service of creating an outlet for specific types of publications can be an important addition to what the shop offers especially in fields where these types of items are difficult to find. The importance of the educational goals of the museum and this reflection on its shop can most perceptibly be seen in its selection of books and magazines. Not all publications produced will be successful or financially viable. According to H. Coutts, ‘...from the commercial point of view, most exhibition catalogues should never be published’ (1991, p.35). This is because the costs involved with exhibition catalogues and developing colour plates is very high and the popularity of a catalogue runs out when the exhibition is over. Another form of publication that is not as cost-effective can be a book written by a staff member or others about very specific topics. Most shops find themselves in the position of having to place these items on their shelves in support of their educational goals as an offering to the occasional scholar.

The role of traditional museum staff

The decisions about actual stock, which might go into shops, are taken after consultation at a number of levels. Usually, but not always, close reference is made to directors, curators and educators. These professionals are often brought into deliberations about particular features of the collection and possible relationships

to sales. It is important that all departments be able to make merchandise suggestions and remain involved in the process of this service.

The Director

Art museum directors have a responsibility to maintain a climate of artistic integrity throughout all museum operations. This is especially crucial when it comes to retailing. It should not be seen as an entity outside museum scrutiny and the director is in the best position to maintain a balance between revenue generation and ethics.

Even back in 1978, directors were already voicing concerns. Former museum art director Sherman E. Lee expressed the fear that many in the museum community were starting to feel:

‘A work is chosen for reproduction, not because of its place within an educational context, or because of intrinsic aesthetic worth, but because of its marketability. Usually the choice is made not by a curator or educator but by persons on a sales staff. Arguments are piously made that the process aids the appreciation of art, and more pragmatically that the sales provide income for scholarly or educational uses when in reality the selection is made because the item is appealing to a large customer base and because modern manufacturing processes are capable of mass-producing at a reasonable cost’ (1978, p.325).

The director of the Getty Center has played a major role in the focus of the Bookstore and all merchandise decisions are overseen and approved through him. As mentioned before, images of two-dimensional art works can only be placed on postcards, posters and in scholarly publications. He strictly forbids any replicas, reproductions or models in the bookstore, believing strongly that their production diminishes the importance of the original work of art. The original intent of the artist is a key factor in all choices concerning the commercial activities of the

Center and any manipulation of an image is unacceptable (Christopher Jacobs, Personal comment, 1999).

It is important that the director keeps in mind the museum's mission statement in all phases of museum operations including the shop. If the director is smart, he or she will instill a *team* attitude throughout the ranks of museum staff. By disseminating information on all levels and encouraging participation from many departments, the museum will maintain a cohesive image in the minds of the public. This will bring about a united museum and retail operations and solidify the reputation of the museum in the minds of its patrons.

The Curator

The curator's major concern is the integrity of the collection. According to S. Norris, 'curators agree that shops serve a purpose giving better access to the collection by making museums and galleries less intimidating' (1997, p.40). Few claim to have any say in what merchandise is chosen and are concerned that the shop did not reflect the seriousness of the collection. Most curators would like to stop using images of originals on unrelated items, such as mugs and tea towels since their understanding is that this trivializes the original. Overall, they would like to see the removal of puzzles and toys and items without a strong reference to the museum and a stronger push into posters, slides, postcards and museum-produced publications. There is also the great concern that if shops are promoted and advertised as an unit unto themselves then the connection between shop and museum will be lost and customers will patronize shops without setting foot in the museum or exhibits. If this is the case will the public then perceive that there is something wrong with the museum itself and whose fault is it if not the curator's?

A. Harney mentions:

'As museums begin to experiment further with entrepreneurship, there is a fear that the marketing tail will wag the dog-that museums will neglect the purpose for which they were founded in favour of doing the "popular" or "lucrative" thing. And the fear is

not entirely unfounded. There are signs of a growing “creative tension” between marketing people and curatorial staffs. But in many museums there is tacit understanding that one cannot operate without the other—that marketing people exist to support the museum’s principle mission’ (1994, p.140).

There are, of course, many problems that underlie the cooperation of curators and shop managers. As H. Coutts states, they may have different reasons behind the existence of a shop and items it should sell:

‘Decisions as to the sort of stock to carry can be the cause of bitter conflict between shop managers and curators. The manager is generally under instructions to maximize profit, by stocking a range of publications and other goods that offer something for all pockets and is loosely relevant to the institution’s role and collections. Curators, on the other hand, tend to view the purpose of the shop from the other end of the telescope, stressing the importance of meeting the needs of scholarship and insisting that it carry publications which are so specialist in their nature there is no likelihood of their selling in any quantity....’ (1991, pp. 34, 35).

H. Coutts goes on to support the views of shop managers and their expertise in retail activities. The approach is much more hands-off than most curators would appreciate. ‘Curatorial vanity needs to be constantly guarded against and we should listen more closely to the commercial advice offered by our shop managers and be less worried about offending our friends by refusing to stock their boring books’ (ibid). No wonder most curators have a dim view of retail activities.

Pressures can be placed upon a curator or exhibitions officer when it comes to designing exhibitions and deciding on which objects to display. It has been shown that sales in shops can be greatly affected by the subject’s position in the gallery. It is interesting to note that shop managers have observed a dramatic decline in sales of items reproduced from original works that have been moved to storage or a less

prominent location in the galleries. Curators can be compelled by shop managers and other members of staff to keep certain objects on display for the purpose of generating sales.

The curatorial staff can be instrumental in attainment of the educational goals of a museum through its shop. The museum's best scholarly interests are served if the shop not only generates income but is also used as a source of additional interpretation, specifically in the form of exhibition catalogues and other publications. Members of the curatorial staff are, for the most part, responsible for the research and writing of catalogues. The necessity for both departments to work together in this sense is crucial. In some cases, this has not been successful. Stuart Hata at SFMOMA has been working to get the curatorial staff to produce exhibition catalogues and museum related publications for years to no avail with the end result creating a rift between departments (Personal comment, 2000).

The best situations are those with a shop manager who works in cooperation with the curatorial staff, where both sides are given adequate consideration. At the Tate Britain, although the curator is not consulted on objects for sale, lists of suggested books are handed over to the shop manager. In this way, there is the positive sense of collaboration and both departments have opinions that are valued. This may not always be the case but it is one which museum should aspire to attain.

The Education Officer

The education officer has two important roles to play in the shop. If one of the shop's priorities is to be an educational outlet then it goes without saying that the input of education professionals should be required. Assistance can be sought out for the choosing of merchandise, from books to games, all that in some way relate to the museum and its educational message.

The education department can additionally serve as a resource for printed material. Most items for sale should have accompanying information in order that the educational message is prominent. The museum store's 'related merchandise cannot contribute to the institution's educational goals without interpretation. While some products, like books, are intrinsically educational, most need some sort of interpretation to perform their educational function' (Theobald, 1991, p.155).

This information can include many topics especially when the items are related to the museum's collection or purpose. When selecting merchandise relevant questions that may be asked by a museum patron are: How was the product made? The original? Where is the original in the museum? Who made the original? What is the cultural, artistic, or historical significance of the original? What techniques did the artist use? Background information on the artist should also be included when possible. These areas are all within the realm of knowledge that the curator and education officer will have in their research and as part of their role it is important to impart these facts to the consumer.

Finally, it should be remembered that, when possible, the involvement of all museum staff is important in the running of a shop. Even gallery assistants may be included in those needed to help operate a shop. Especially in smaller museums, they are required to fulfill a number of tasks. Their knowledge of items and relevance to the collection is equally vital. If assistants or attendants do not work in the shop, they should still understand its purpose and significance in overall museum operations and be able to answer questions posed by visitors as to the location and type of merchandise available.

When everyone in the museum understands the workings of the shop, its purpose and how it is managed the overall impression a visitor can be left with is much more positive than if not all members support the idea of a retail element within the walls of their institution.

The Role of Shop Manager

When searching to fill the role of shop manager there are several factors to consider. Different museums look for certain amounts of experience and qualifications based on the size of the operation, its purpose in the museum and what is expected in terms of goals and benefits. Shop managers have varying backgrounds and levels of expertise since not all museums have the same standards for this position. It is more common for large museums with extensive retail sales to require a background in retail management. 'As the merchandising departments of museums grow more sophisticated, they have begun to bring in staff members who have backgrounds in retailing...' (Foderaro, 1997b, p.1). Christopher Jacobs at the Getty Center Bookstore has a background in publishing and book sales as does the manager. M. Theobald mentions the qualifications of someone searching for a job in this competitive field:

'Larger operations with several shops, mail order programs, wholesaling operations, production facilities...are run by people with a different background, usually a financial one. The heads of such conglomerates usually have an MBA, or a degree in finance, and come with years of experience in the world of big business' (1991, p.23).

But there are exceptions to the rule. With a large museum like the Tate and significant retail operations, Rosemary Bennett, retail manager at the Tate Shop, studied art history and was an artist.

Smaller museums seem to prefer those who come from art history or museum work. Julia Hallewell, the shop manager at Dundee Contemporary Arts has a history as a textile design artist and is also the craft development officer for the Scottish Arts Council. This gives her a unique advantage when dealing with selling craft items in the shop. Susan Lewis at the Crawford Arts Center runs their small retail operation and is also the exhibitions officer. Her experience lies not in sales but in museum and exhibitions work.

If the perfect candidate were chosen he/she would encompass several necessary skills. The position of shop manager ‘...demands a combination of experience and education- experience in retailing and an educational background in (or demonstrable interest in) history, art history, science, education, or museum studies’ (Theobald, 1991, p.22). Unfortunately, not many in the field can meet this requirement.

There are certain duties that the shop manager is responsible for, whatever their experience and it is vital that a professional who is dedicated to the ethical pursuits of the museum guides the shop staff. The manager should be included in museum planning sessions and attend regular museum staff meetings. This allows the manager to coordinate shop activities with museum programs and events. The manager should also arrange for training in museum related areas and instruct staff in interpretation techniques that will benefit the educational goals of the shop. Further, shop staff should be included in the dissemination of all literature on museum exhibits and relating product information. The manager should additionally be able to promote the shop through public relations programs such as advertising and events that complement the host museum.

When the shop manager is included in all aspects of museum management and all departments are working together a museum embodies the ideal working environment. This is seldom the case in real life. T. Shone suggests that ‘shops often have high status within the hierarchy and shop managers are frequently as influential as curators. In some cases they even have enough power to become educational agencies in their own right’ (1977). Throughout my discussions with members in the field, I did not find this statement to be substantiated. Most museum professionals do not consider the shop as on the same level as the exhibitions and educational programs of the museum, while shop staff considers the moneymaking capabilities of the shop more necessary to the museum and its efforts than its exhibits.

When managers are included in regular staff meetings and planning sessions, they are more likely to plan the merchandise and activities of the shop accordingly. Information such as what exhibits are planned, what objects have recently been acquired or deaccessioned, what tour groups are expected and what will be the focus of the guides' interpretation, etc... This all plays a part in the sales and product development efforts of the shop manager.

Stuart Hata, at the SFMOMA Museum Store and whose background lies in retail management, would like to be included in more planning, events and staff publications. Yet at the same time he decides not to allow other members of museum staff, including curators, to assist in selecting objects that are reproduced for sale or other items of merchandise. He has no concerns with over-exposure for items in the collection and will put an image of an artwork on any item of merchandise he and his staff believe will bring a profit. How can shop managers expect to be a part of the museum proceedings when they are not willing to do the same with their own operations? The manager should reciprocate the efforts from other departments. Activities within the shop, special promotions, a new line of merchandise, should be relayed to all museum staff as a way of sharing information.

The manager must be careful to select appropriate merchandise for the shop that is related to the museum's collection and purpose. The shop manager is also responsible for the development of products either through licensing or by other means and it is helpful if he/she works with the traditional museum staff to allow for greater input into the educational merits of such products. The manager should additionally oversee the creation of educational product information for merchandise such as product cards, tags, or package information. It is important that this be done with a uniform approach and in conjunction with the curatorial and education departments.

It must always be transparent how the museum shop, its manager and staff are all included in the image and overall standards of the museum. This needs to be done

through training and exhibition information and participation in the running of the museum itself:

‘The store and the store’s management must also be included in future planning for all aspects of the museum. If successful, a store makes money and becomes part of all your outreach efforts. If unsuccessful, it drains your institution financially and takes management time from other, more productive efforts’ (Virtue and Delgado, 1999, p.2).

Shop staff

According to the Museum Training Institute in Britain and their publication on careers in the museum field, the growing trend in museum sales and publications is as follows:

‘The provision of a shop is becoming more important in all museums and galleries as both a service to the visitors and a source of income. Quite a few museums now employ shop managers as well as sales staff, and some very big museums have their own publishing departments, employing editors and so on’ (1998, p.19).

The qualifications and experience they suggest in this area pertain to backgrounds in retail sales. ‘Applicants for sales and publications jobs in museums usually need to show experience of similar work elsewhere. Managerial and sales experience in the commercial field would be particularly useful’ (ibid).

The training of shop staff differs as well from one museum to the next. They play a key role in the experience a visitor has at a museum and their attitude and training are crucial. As M. Lewis points out:

‘No matter how good the overall presentation of any shop, the entire effect can be ruined by low standards of appearance or behavior of

even one member of staff. He or she is both the first and the last contact the customer has with the shop and the human contact is what the customer remembers for a long time. Smartness, cheerfulness and courtesy are all vital watchwords. A non-committal reply to a question, a surly dismissive comment or totally ignoring a potential customer will bring any museum's reputation down to a very low level, very quickly' (1994, p.24).

The Getty Center Bookstore employs applicants with backgrounds in retailing, bookstores and publishing. Although an education in art history helps, the belief of management is that employees can learn this type of information as they go along (Christopher Jacobs, Personal comment, 1999).

Some museums take a different approach. '...the Metropolitan concluded that Museum-produced reproductions, because of their specialized nature, were best presented and interpreted to the public by Museum-trained staff' (Kellerman, 1996, p.72). Which means their backgrounds are in art history and museums, product information and sales are taught in training sessions.

It can be said that sales staff are as much educational interpreters as tour guides. Most people don't realize how important the shop staff is when it comes to the spreading of information to the public:

'...salespeople are asked as many or more questions, both substantive and directional, than are tour guides, often by those who hesitate to speak up in a group...For many museum visitors, the salesperson is the first human being they encounter and may provide their first and only opportunity to ask a question' (Theobald, 1991, p.58).

The importance of the shop staff cannot be overstated. Therefore it is vital that they receive the same interpretive training as tour guides, education and other staff. 'Museum shops are an important point of personal contact with visitors.

Friendly and courteous service is essential, and staff working in the shop should be effectively trained in their duties' (Ambrose and Paine, 1993, p.61). Their knowledge not only of the shop and its merchandise but the museum, its collections and history are all essential aspects of creating a positive visitor experience and a cohesive museum image.

This attitude will also be reflected in the expertise and attitude of volunteers assisting in the shop. SFMOMA, the only museum interviewed that makes use of the efforts of volunteers in its shop, employs their services but not on the sales floor. Ten percent of their staff is considered volunteer and they assist behind the scenes processing mail order sales, filling stock requests and developing product information sheets. Most museums, however, do not choose to utilize volunteer help. Since the revenue producing aspects of the shop are so important, it is considered best practice that paid staff be responsible for this activity.

One more important point about employees in shops is the perception towards their work by the traditional museum staff. Many in the field admit that a bias exists against the shop and its operations and the opinion is that the shop as well as its staff are less important than the museum itself. 'Museum professional staff tend to see the gift shop and eatery as revenue generators at best and necessary evils at worst' (Falk, 1992, p.90).

Julia Hallewell at the Dundee Contemporary Arts Centre states that the traditional staff there does not have a low opinion of shop staff, but she is one of the lucky few. This could possibly be because all members of her shop staff have backgrounds in the arts. Most are artists or art school students. While Stuart Hata, whose staff members at SFMOMA all have backgrounds in retailing, claims that the traditional museum staff has a derogatory view of shop employees and the whole retail department is looked down upon. Even though the shop plays an educational role and has been enormously successful financially. He resents the fact that when the Museum finds itself short of funds for exhibits or acquisitions it comes to his department for money, yet the contributions made towards the Museum's operations are never acknowledged (Personal comment, 2000).

Rosemary Bennett at the Tate Britain maintains that the traditional staff are not as difficult to work with as they used to be. Her staff is made up of graduate students and artists without volunteers, and although curators see selling as inferior, most realize that it is a necessary part of the Museum's fundraising efforts (Personal comment, 2000).

Museum staff may feel that choices made in shops are driven by revenues rather than by higher standards. With the running of the shop and product development, it is preferable that the entire museum staff works together.

'Everyone in the museum-director, historians, craftspeople, curators, shop manager, public relations people, interpreters, and others-must be prepared to allocate a portion of their time to this ongoing effort. It is neither possible nor desirable for the shop manager or product developer to accomplish anything alone' (Theobald, 1991, p.37).

At the Getty Center, any staff member can submit an idea for products, including curators and shop staff and although final approval is left with the director, he is supportive of ideas from everyone at the Center. In their Ethical Guidelines, the MA in Britain claims that:

'People who work in museum trading or commercial activities should see their role as supporting the fundamental purpose and aims of the museum and should respect the limitations this may put on their activities; on the other hand, people involved in other areas of museum work should support their commercial endeavors and respect their expertise' (1997, p.1).

M. Theobald suggests that museums develop a committee to handle the difficult task of product development and shop management. Her recommendation is for:

‘...an advisory committee with representatives from many areas of expertise. Six to eight people chosen from the following list might be included: an educator, a crafts person, one or more curators, someone from public relations, a research historian, a fundraiser and any other specialist pertinent to the museum’ (1991, p.37).

The problem is that not all museums have this many people on staff and if they do, not all will have the time or inclination to be involved in the shop’s management.

There are several ways to foster a positive relationship between departments. One is to make sure that museum staff is familiar with merchandise in the shop. It is important that they also understand the educational benefits of certain products and their relationship to the museum. Not only will they be able to refer visitors to the shop but they can also make valuable suggestions for further product development. If there were a newsletter or magazine for members and friends, it would be wise to include shop points of interest. Not only does this add to the museums outreach efforts and possible sales, it also creates an environment of support by the museum. Shop staff should be kept aware of museum activities and events and given information on the collection and exhibitions. By a sharing of information *all* departments will be informed and included in the operations of *all* museum activities and a sense of unity will develop.

Funding and revenue

How shops receive their initial investment can be a varied process and money can be received from several sources. One Five Two, the shop at the Dundee Arts Centre, obtained funds from the Scottish Arts Council while the Metropolitan’s money came from the originating trustees. It’s typical that the museum actually incurs the costs for the set up of its shop but grants and funds can be found elsewhere to assist in this process.

There are risks involved in opening and operating a shop. In the beginning the shop will use more cash than it generates and this will in turn affect the rest of the

museum's financial operations. It must be understood that running a shop will not be an immediate answer to cash flow problems, if anything, it creates more. The money used for the shop is now unavailable for museum operations or emergencies. It is unlikely that the shop will be able to repay these funds soon and in some cases, ever.

The suggestion is to start slowly with a small set up at first and gradually apply for grants and other funding. When small surpluses in cash can be found, use them to begin a venture of this type. Those in management should tread cautiously when making promises or predictions of shop sales and profits. 'Trading and commercial activities must not jeopardize the financial viability of the museum. The museum should not make unrealistic projections of future income' (MA, 1997, p.1).

An important ambition of the shop should be to restore to the museum the greatest potential dollar contribution, but not at the expense of previously declared goals. Since many shops find themselves self-supporting within a few years, when profits start to be made, the question is where is that money best put to use? In its *Ethical Guidelines* the MA in Britain recommends that 'All revenue raised through trading and other commercial activities should be used for the direct benefit of the museum and be additional to its revenue income' (1997).

Profits can be substantial and even when they aren't every care must be taken with where these funds are spent. Shops offer museums a source of revenue that can help pay for the less glamorous aspects of museum operations and it is usual for the proceeds to be allocated to general museum funds covering costs for everything from employee salaries to roof repair. In areas where it is difficult to receive private funding the shop can help to maintain programs, buildings and staff. At the Metropolitan 'all profits, usually 10% to 12% of revenues, are funneled into the Museum's operating budget' (Foderaro, 1997b, p.1).

Museum professionals interviewed claimed that the profits from the shop went back into the general museum funds to cover operating costs. Of those shop managers interviewed, the general understanding was that their revenues were put

into the museum but they were never made aware as to exactly where and how funds were spent. It was assumed that monies went into the education programs but there was no clear evidence of this. Since a large part of their purpose is education it would make sense to assume that funds were used to support these efforts. Because of the lack of information made available to shop managers about how their profits were used, there were feelings of exclusion and animosity towards the museum staff. This is yet another area that needs to be opened up in order to instill respect for shop operations.

The Getty Center is clear to point out that the monies raised from their Bookstore go directly into educational services. The Metropolitan makes the statement that all 'proceeds from the sale of all products in the Metropolitan Store directly benefit the Museum's collection and programs' (Metropolitan Web Site, 2000). However, there are no specific programs or purchases mentioned and there is little accounting to prove both comments.

Chapter 5

Factors of shop management

Today, very few museum shops are the amateurish operations they used to be.

‘No longer are they staffed with genteel ladies in hats and no longer are they managed by untrained enthusiasts. Rather they are increasingly professional operations, professionally managed and staffed and charged with producing an increasing level of profit to help support the parent institution’ (Lewis, 1994, p.23).

Since we have already seen that all subsequent duties are to be subordinate to the shop mission and therefore the museum’s mission, the resultant daily activities of shop management can be divided into two categories: planning and operations. Planning includes research, a business plan, sales forecasting, choosing a site and fittings and the handling of merchandise and storage. Operational responsibilities encompass merchandise selection, employees, product development and sales monitoring.

Under research it is necessary to identify the museum patron and your customer with the intention of structuring your merchandise selection. An assessment of your audience or membership base is critical. The shop will not create an audience by itself; it is dependent on the museum’s existing clientele to make up sales. The shop is but another tool for expanding museum services and can assist in meeting the expectations of museum programming.

A start can be made with information that has hopefully already been gathered by the museum, such as:

- -How many people visit your museum each year?
- -What are their ages, economic status and education level?
- -What items/exhibitions attract visitors the most?

This can give the basis for your own survey to discover who will visit your shop and what they are looking for.

Define customer and appropriate merchandise

It is worth the extra effort involved to assemble a questionnaire and have staff available to implement it. The information it will obtain is meaningful and costs incurred are minimal. It is a necessity to know as much about your customer profile as possible because customers will no longer accept second best from a museum shop simply because it is not the main activity of the museum. If the museum itself is currently conducting a survey it is easy to add a few pertinent questions about the shop. If shops are to offer customers what they want it must first discover what that is. 'We must also recognize that our success is determined by our customer's view of us and this view depends upon us providing a shopping experience which is enjoyable, stimulating and satisfactory in terms of value for money' (Lewis, 1994, p.23).

A survey is crucial to the research phase of development and planning and can help to avert problems in the future such as merchandise selection. Figure 2 is one example of a survey that can aid in answering some of the many questions that need to be addressed when considering retail or trading activities. It can be important to have selections that range in price from something a schoolchild can afford such as pencils or postcards to higher priced items like collectables and one-of-a-kind art works, all of them relating in some way to the collection. The National Portrait Gallery in Britain aims to provide visitors with reproductions and educational information on portraits in the collection. They are also aware of the need to cater to souvenir hunters while maintaining a balance between producing goods of quality at a reasonable price. The Gallery feels comfortable placing reproductions of portraits on tablemats, jigsaw puzzles and paperweights to cater for those seeking a memento of their visit. Even with inexpensive items that are tasteful and distinctive to that museum, a low-priced souvenir suddenly becomes a distinctive gift. Stimulating and capturing the enthusiasm of the young collector is a great benefit of what a shop can attain.

Figure 2: Sample visitor survey

Place of residence _____	
Age (circle one)	0-17 18-25 26-45 46-65 65 and over
Education (circle one)	Primary/Grade School College/High School Some university/college College degree Graduate degree
Employment (circle one)	Child Student Homemaker Employed part-time Employed full-time Self-employed Unemployed Retired Occupation or course of study _____
Annual household income: (circle one)	Under \$15,000 (£10,000) \$15,000-30,000 (£10,000-20,000) \$30,000-50,000 (£20,000-35,000) \$50,000-75,000 (£35,000-45,000) \$75,000 and above (£45,000 and above)
<p>How many times have you visited this museum? _____</p> <p>How many times have you visited this shop? _____</p> <p>Are you here with family and friends visiting from out of town? _____</p> <p>Are you browsing or seriously shopping? _____</p> <p>Did you make a purchase? _____</p> <p>If yes, what did you purchase? _____</p> <p>How much was your purchase? _____</p> <p>How did you pay for your purchase? Cash ___ Credit ___ Other ___</p> <p>Who was the purchase for? _____ What age? _____</p> <p>If you did not make a purchase, why not? _____</p> <p>Did you find what you were looking for? _____</p> <p>What other items would you like to see the shop carry? _____</p> <p>Were the salespeople courteous and informative? _____</p> <p>Were your questions answered? _____</p> <p>Did the salesperson tell you anything about the item you purchased? _____</p> <p>Do you find the item you purchased educational? If so, how? _____</p> <p>Was there product information on any of the merchandise? _____</p> <p>Did you have any difficulty locating our shop? _____</p> <p>Are you a member of the museum? _____</p> <p>Were you given information about becoming a member of the museum? _____</p> <p>Where else would you shop for items such as those seen in the store? _____</p> <p>Are there any concerns or thoughts you would like to share with us? _____</p>	

When questioned about specific types or categories of customers, shop professionals mentioned the following merchandise most often as what they carried to cater for each category:

- Educators: books, exhibition catalogues, information packs, magazines, education packs including CD ROMs and multi media items.
- Scholars: specialty books and exhibition catalogues.
- Students: university course books, sketchpads, art theory books, prints, posters, magazines, jewelry and ceramics.
- Children: Pencils, pens, rubbers, postcards, badges and books.
- Families: Games, cards, books and posters.
- Tourists: books, exhibition catalogues, gifts, postcards, greeting cards, t-shirts and logo products.
- Art collectors: limited edition prints, signed catalogues and posters and one-of-a-kind items.
- Artists: prints, sketchbooks, art materials and one-of-a-kind items.
- Designers: household design objects.

When questioned about pricing, shop professionals mentioned the following merchandise as the most popular in terms of cost:

Most popular merchandise:

- Under £5, \$5 postcards, pens and rubbers.
- £6-20, \$5-20 jewelry, prints, guidebooks and logo items.
- Over £20, \$20 exhibition catalogues and books.

Some are confident in the choices that shops are making when it comes to the merchandise they sell. Others are not so sure. As indicated by M. Twelves:

‘Shops should be developed so that they are exciting and interesting places to visit and allow customers to spend time discovering the goods on offer. This can only be achieved by

offering goods that are of interest to the visitor, yet, historically, museum shops have demonstrated a strong tendency to ignore visitor needs and offer goods which meet the “good taste” of staff. If this taste differs from that of the visitor than the shop will achieve little other than criticism’ (1992, p.707).

Shop design

Museums spend time and money on the displays they present in their galleries. Considerations are discussed as to what exhibitions shall be housed in which rooms, flow of visitors through exhibits and lighting, yet seldom does the same kind of thought go into the inception of a shop. These concerns are just as critical to the shop as the rest of the museum

Location

The location of a retail outlet is as important as what it sells. For small museums beginning to experiment with the idea of a retail project, it may be a table by the admissions counter. Whatever the size of a retail venture there should be a clear boundary between the retail function and the galleries. Visitors must be able to make the distinction between objects on display that are part of a museum’s collection, and items that are for sale. Providing space where visitors can browse is vital. Along with there being a clear distinction, it should also be easy for patrons to locate. M. Twelves suggests several key points for the location of a shop and site preferences:

- It is in an area of high-density visitor traffic, preferably situated near an entrance/exit.
- Has reserve floor and wall space so that future shop extension can be accommodated.
- Is near to adequate stock/storage facilities.
- Provides good and easy access for deliveries.

- Neighboring gallery environment is not sensitive to noise such as that created by school parties or to high visual profile of shop and its displays. (1992, p.704).

A suggestion from some in the business community is that a shop has its own access to the street, allowing it to extend its hours past those of the host museum, permitting patrons the opportunity to simply visit the shop and not the museum. According to T. Ambrose, it is important to 'encourage the use of your shop in its own right if your building and visitor circulation allow it' (1993, p.93). As discussed earlier, this may not be such a good idea to some.

There are concerns worth mentioning when it comes to the best location inside the museum to place a shop. For some museums, the decision has been made to situate the shop at the entrance of the museum. But this can have repercussions. 'In extreme cases, visitors are forced to walk through a maze of gift items and self-guide audio tapes, complete with sales pitching staffers, to gain access to the gallery' (Falk, 1992, p.91). This can be detrimental because the impression visitors may get is that the museum purposely arranged an exhibit to sell a barrage of merchandise, catalogues, tapes, calendars, etc...rather than for educational intentions.

Some sort of retail operation is beneficial at the entrance of a museum although not necessarily a large presence. It gives patrons the chance to purchase interpretive material at the beginning of an exhibit. This aids in giving patrons a full understanding of the exhibits and adds to their enjoyment.

Another position for the shop is at the exit of the museum, where visitors can be encouraged to purchase items without having to carry them through the galleries, a definite security issue. Revenues can be maximized when the shop has been sited at the exit. In the most opportune cases, there is a retail opportunity at the entrance and exit:

‘The most effective location for your shop may be at the museum exit. Most sales on-site are made at the end of a visit, although visitors will need to have guiding literature available at the entrance to the museum...care should be taken not to discourage sales by the movement of visitors entering and leaving through the sales area’ (Ambrose, 1993, p.93).

Planning for shops in large museums has become so important that when designing new buildings for exhibits, staff members are already arranging the location of the shop and the flow of visitors through the exhibits and into the shop. In the opinion of the curatorial staff at the new Tate Modern, when planning their new expansion in London, ‘the maximum opportunity to visit the museum shop was a requirement of the architectural design’ (Mooris, Aird, and Sabbagh, 2000).

Principles of design and display

The overall appearance of a shop should lie within the theme or tone of the host museum. In order for a shop to be genuinely connected with a museum and its image this should be carefully carried out. Since the function is not merely revenue generating but also education, the display too plays a part in reflecting this philosophy. The general identity of all services on or off-site should match that of the museum unconditionally. It is possible in some cases to take advantage of past display cases, pedestals, etc...with minimum expenditure and make the best use of existing features from the museum. In any case, visitors desire a unique shopping experience, one that can be created through a look and setting and not just another gift shop.

When studying shop layout and display there are conditions that should apply. M. Lewis maintains that there are four objectives in terms of layout:

- To attract customers.

- By the power of creative presentation encourage the customer to examine the merchandise in detail or ask staff for advice.
- To generate multiple purchases by coordinating displays of related items allowing the customer to self select or giving the opportunity to suggest add-on ideas.
- To allow the promotion of key lines at the focal point (1994, p.24).

What isn't mentioned and should be added to any sensitive museum display policy is the use of clear signage that allows the customer to know where the original to a reproduced item is on display in the gallery and about its importance to the collection of that museum or another. The educational worth of an item on some sort of signage or product information card is essential. 'Good labeling as part of the personalization of displays also means that the staff's knowledge of stock location is passed quickly to visitors as they enter the shop environment' (Square and Halloway, 1994, p.14). A further benefit of establishing the relevancy of the merchandise to the museum's exhibitions and collection is that it increases sales of the more expensive products in the shop.

It is true that 'how much money your customers spend is greatly influenced by their first impression of the store, by how you move them through the space and introduce them to merchandise categories, and by the encouragement you give them to linger' (Andoniadis, 1998, p.3). As stated by I. Bain:

'Museums and galleries with collections that provide an opportunity to produce high-priced replicas of small sculpture, artifacts and jewelry have good opportunities for creating good profits-but such products need good display and appropriate shop facilities' (1986, p.63).

Retail Consultants

To many, retailing is seen as a specialist's field, something museum personnel should steer clear of. The Scottish National Heritage believes that this arena requires 'expertise in the use of space, design, product range planning, sourcing products, pricing, stock management and staffing' (1996, p.11). If museum staff are lacking in these skills, they can be acquired by involving the help of a private individual or group specifically trained in retail management.

Several retail consultants were included in this research because of their importance in helping to improve the planning and operations of a retail venture. There is cause for concern when dealing with this type of organization because there is clearly not enough emphasis placed on the educational merits of some products and these companies lean towards creating a more commercial atmosphere rather than one that enhances the museum experience and services. Museums should not discount their talents but rather use them with caution.

Retail consultants claim to use the latest and most successful methods in museum shop management. They further assert that they can help to plan and implement these approaches, such as:

- Customer profile and data collection
- Methodical review of shop and business plan
- Interior design and layout including fixtures
- Display and merchandising plans, including product development
- Train volunteer and paid staff
- Design and employ a marketing plan
- Revenue and profit predictions

Andoniadis Retail Services has headquarters in Portland, Oregon and offers comprehensive services to museums wanting to get into retailing or better the operations they already have. According to president Andrew Andoniadis, his company is able to 'furnish (museums) with a comprehensive consulting service

that includes a full operations review program, store layout and design planning and customer service and sales training' (1998, p.2).

At the start of their services is a review process encompassing many steps including the development, completion and review of a questionnaire. The first questions asked are the most important if a museum is to remain focused on its main objective and Andoniadis Retail Services realizes the significance. Therefore, what is the museum's mission statement and what is the store's mission statement are the fundamental questions considered. The review further goes on to ask the question: what are the most significant exhibits and the most popular? Additional queries are made into visitor information and local competition from neighboring businesses.

Part of what Andoniadis Retail Services does is data collection through the use of a questionnaire. As stated earlier, this is a valuable tool for study. After data is collected, it is discussed with museum personnel where financial considerations are brought up including expenses and inventory levels. There is sensitivity to merchandise and pricing, 'focusing on mission-related characteristics of product categories, products in different price ranges and mark-up issues' (Andoniadis, 1999, p.1). When planning displays, there is thought into how they and the merchandise blend into the overall image of the museum. This is also a consideration of their discussions on employee and volunteer-related issues.

Yaron Meshoulam, the development director of Design Consultants to Museums is quoted as saying about the National Gallery in Britain, 'Above all else, our aim...has been to develop an exciting and stimulating shopping experience which will serve both to provide the Gallery's 4.5 million visitors with a way "into" the collection and to allow them to take away a memory of their experience...' (*Museum Shop and Publishing News*, Autumn 1998, no.9, p.4).

There seems to be minor sensitivity to the philosophy that a venture of this kind must meet certain requirements put forth by the museum- namely the museum

mission statement and the relevance of items to the collection or purpose of the museum. Other consultants do not take these constraints as much to heart either because they don't have to and are allowed by museums to enter with a purely commercial approach or they simply ignore issues that the museums associations in the US and Britain are concerned with.

However, some organizations are questionable in their approach to retailing activities in museums. Based in Rome, Made in Museums is a large company that works with museums all over the world. Not involved in complete museum shop planning, the main focus of this company is offering services aimed at 'creating marketing strategies for the reproduction of works from a museum's collection or enhancing already existing merchandising programs' (Lowenstein, 1999, p.1). One of their services includes developing and supplying a range of 'industrial and artisan products' (ibid), which range in price from \$5 to \$500. These products are then made available for sale inside museum shops and exported to foreign markets. 'We are dedicate to the preservation of the country's artistic and cultural patrimony, producing only items that maintain the integrity of the works of art from which they are inspired' (ibid, p.4). There is a concern for quality in products and maintaining exclusive international production and distribution. 'This is just one way that we protect the museum's moral and legal rights to the works of art in their collections and prevent unauthorized reproductions' (ibid, p.1).

The claims that Made in Museums makes about its objectives in assisting museums and their commercial efforts are:

- To create a merchandising presence.
- To generate additional sources of income.
- To increase public awareness and stimulate interest in both the artwork and the museum.
- To increase the value of the museum's collection via promotional activities.

All goals have been discussed in some form before except for the last one. No one has ever claimed that by selling replicas of an art work the original would actually

increase in value. In fact quite the opposite is what is on the minds of museum professionals. Furthermore, *Made in Museums* fails to mention any educational goals when selecting merchandise for sale.

Consultant businesses can also assist in the selection and training of staff. ‘The choice the museum has in the medium to long term is whether to develop museum staff or whether to recruit from outside. The interim use of consultants helps to avoid the cost of poor recruitment and provides independent expert advice as to the most appropriate choice’ (French, 1988, p.32).

Of all those interviewed only one institution used a retail consultant to begin their efforts, the Tate Shop, during its inception in 1972. Most unusually, Julia Hallewell at the Dundee Arts Centre used the services of a craft development officer to aid in developing the shop concept. It seems that museums are getting better at doing their own research and starting their facilities without the help of specialized professionals.

Satellite shops

Museums often find that their retail exercises work so well that a second location is possible at another site. There are many possibilities such as another shop within the museum, one on the high street of the local town, on the high street of other towns, even in department stores. A benefit of this type of operation is that the museum’s message is spread among those who may not be able to visit the museum regularly. Satellite shops are one of the latest ventures for museums involved in retailing and very lucrative when it comes to further the museum’s image. In these off-site locations information about current exhibitions, events, and membership should always be prominently displayed.

““The satellite shops raise the visibility and viability of a museum as a community entity”, says Detroit Institute of Arts director Samuel Sachs. “By keeping our flag in front of the public, we aid our museum, we provide an opportunity for visitors to the shop to become members, to buy a ticket for a film series, or a ticket to an exhibition”” (Harney, 1994, p.135).

Off-site shops are also a way for some museums to 'suburbanize' and spread the name of the institution.

'By establishing shops in the suburbs of New York or Chicago or Detroit, the inner-city museum has found a way to keep its image in front of its traditional audience and, not incidentally, to increase earned income...' (ibid).

Off-site sales success is best illustrated by the large enterprises of the Metropolitan. Public outreach is what 'figured significantly in the Museum's decision in later years to open...additional satellites' (Kellerman, 1996, p.73). Because of the strong emphasis placed on outreach, the Metropolitan 'has opened fourteen stores in the US in the last decade and nineteen shops through licensing agreements in foreign countries...In that time, merchandising revenues have more than doubled to \$79 million last year (1996), from \$38 million in 1986' (Foderaro, 1997b, p.1). It is no wonder that more museums are looking into the possibilities of off-premises locations.

A commercial off-site retail outlet used by some larger museums is the Museum Company. Although not directly connected with one specific museum it caters to customers who are interested in a museum-quality purchase.

'With museums showing strong sales growth, it was only a matter of time before the concept of art-inspired gifts crossed over to the for-profit retail sector. The Museum Company, founded in 1989 by four partners (one a former retailing executive at the Museum of Modern Art), began with a single store in Arlington, Va. Today, there are 78, including nine in the NY region' (Foderaro, 1997b, p.2).

Museum Company sites can be found in large retail malls all over the US. However, the selection of merchandise is not what most would consider acceptable

when it comes to items not directly related to a museum collection but ‘inspired’ by it. ‘The merchandise is a mix of products that the Museum Company buys from museums through licensing agreements and items that are simply “museumy” said William P. Edwards, vice chairman of the Museum Company in Fairfield, NJ, and a former deputy director of profit-making business activities at the Modern (NY)’ (Foderaro, 1997b, p.2). Museums should once again remember that an association such as this one leaves the institution up for scrutiny. All items in a venue such as this are viewed as museum-quality and the Museum Company is clever in associating its own line of products along side those from respected museums like the Metropolitan.

Catalogue, mail order and the Internet

A large amount of retail business for larger museums is now performed through catalogues and mail order. It is important to note their marketing influence as they allow for the name of the museum and its collection to be broadened. ‘Mail order catalogues have...become a way to bring the museum to those who don’t come to the museum’ (Harney, 1994, p.136). In addition, ‘A good quality publications list with an order form can be distributed widely’ (Ambrose, 1993, p.93). With an extensive mailing list, a catalogue can reach as many people, if not more, as the museum exhibitions and expand the marketing influence of retail sales by allowing for greater outreach of the collection.

Mail order is big business for retailers. ‘In 1989 an estimated 50 billion dollars were spent on mail order purchases- a staggering sum that is expected to increase significantly in years to come. It is not hard to fathom why museums are jumping onto the catalog bandwagon’ (Theobald, 1991, p.163). Although many large museums can afford the financial output necessary to begin a mail order operation, many smaller museums are finding it too expensive. It also requires a five to seven year wait for any profits. According to M. Theobald, there are four basic elements in any mail order program: ‘the list, the products, the presentation (be it catalog, insert, flyer, or postcard), and fulfillment’ (ibid).

A two percent response rate to a catalogue or event invitation mailing is considered good in the industry. This may not sound promising to some but it is the norm. The Smithsonian Institution has an impressive catalogue and a remarkable response rate of five percent but in order to receive this rate they send out over five million catalogues.

Beginning a mailing list isn't difficult. Patrons can be asked to sign up to receive publications in the museum's guest book. The mailing list can originally be made up of museum members and gradually expand to include those specifically interested in shopping through catalogues. Names can be acquired from other museums or arts organizations and additionally purchased from companies specializing in this type of resource.

Mail order can become a profitable method of retailing so long as sufficient time is given to build up sales. If there are adequate supplies of merchandise and a well-organized mailing system, this program can be very successful. Many of the same items that appear in shops also appear in catalogues. Only when a museum is dealing with one of a kind items or very fragile works does mail order not succeed. Smaller museums find the idea of a catalogue unnecessary and too much work and expense. Only if there is a real commitment to the cost of printing, inventory and shipping will catalogue sales be feasible. Usually staffing for catalogue sales consists of order takers and stock personnel, taking this out of the hands of museum employees.

The biggest successes in the US in catalogue sales are:

- The Metropolitan Museum of Art -\$81 million on overall merchandising effort in 1991.
- The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston- \$26 million in merchandise operations revenue for 1990-91.
- The Mystic Seaport Museum Stores- \$1.6 million in sales for the fiscal year ending April 1991 (Harney, 1994, p.136).

An important argument to remember when choosing items to sell through a catalogue is that the customer only gets to see a two-dimensional image of the merchandise. Therefore, items should photograph well. It goes without saying that merchandise should be easy to ship and shipping fees be figured out in advance of sales. Customers do not appreciate a broken glass vase that was truly too fragile to ever ship in the first place. Shoppers rightfully expect the same kind of service and quality they get from other museum services so institutions are wise to be careful of the products they sell through catalogues.

Electronic commerce or Internet sales are another way in which a museum can further its marketing strategy. Museums are only beginning to see the potential of the Internet for sales and public relations. By connecting your museum site with your museum shop and offering items on line you allow shoppers the opportunity to actually view exhibits and items from the collection while purchasing items from their homes anywhere in the world.

‘The Internet has also proved to be popular with those who buy museum merchandise. Orders placed via our existing web site have more than doubled in the last year, as has the revenues produced ‘ (*Metropolitan Museum of Art Annual Report 1998-99*, p.6). The Tate has recently adopted online shopping and this form of retail has become more popular than they anticipated. In 1999, orders had doubled and the service reached customers all over the world. According to Stuart Hata at SFMOMA, their online shopping increased 300% in 2000 after only two years (Personal comment, 2000).

According to the Art Museum Network, an electronic commerce service for museums, ‘Although electronic commerce is only beginning to prove itself, there is no doubt that digital transactions will radically reshape the sale of goods and services’ (Anderson, 1999, p.29).

Through creative means such as offering sizeable discounts on purchases to members and members-only sales, mail order catalogues and Internet sales sites

encourage shoppers to become museum members. Bargain minded shoppers learn that if they join the museum, they not only get special discounts on admission, they also receive discounts available at the shops and through catalogue purchases, aiding in another way the museum's fundraising efforts. Each site makes it easy for visitors to become members and offers the discount immediately. The Victoria and Albert Museum gives a 10% discount to members and recently extended that discount to books. This discount is standard throughout the museum community. Members then receive special announcements of sales and new merchandise, along with information on museum exhibits and events. The Getty Bookstore has another view of offering discounts. The bookstore does not offer discounts to members feeling it is unfair to those who perhaps cannot afford the membership fees.

The valuable purpose of retailing efforts either through satellite shops, catalogues or Internet sales is not only to market its products but to provide the visitor with the means by which they can become a member or donor and be made aware of the museum's full range of services. This can be their most important benefit over and above their revenue generating potential.

The Museum Company has an extensive web site, MuseumCompany.Com, where it sells merchandise licensed through museums all over the world including the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. 'Our goal is to provide you with museum-quality products as well as in-depth descriptions of the items and articles about the artists, art movements, exploration, and history' (Museum Company Web Site, 2000). The Museum Company claims that it generates millions of dollars in revenue for museums worldwide, through licensing, product development, museum memberships, and donations' (ibid). Yet, there is no mention throughout their pages on any museum's location or collections, how to become a member of a museum, how to make a donation, nor can you access a member museum's web page through theirs. Only a small number of items from each museum are highlighted and a slight mention of the artist sometimes accompanies the image.

Following is a portion of a page downloaded off their site from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston:



HOME • MY ACCOUNT • ABOUT US • AFFILIATES • STORE LOCATIONS • CUS



Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

COLLECTION

Home : Museums :






Monet Water Lily Bead Necklace with Sterling Silver Chain

\$75.00

The distinctive aura of Claude Monet's water lily series, with its shimmering water and glorious blossoms, is masterfully evoked by this luminous Museum of Fine Arts, Boston necklace. Iridescent oblong and round glass beads of vivid blue, lavender, and green are interspersed with sterling silver accents. Matching earrings also available.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Dimensions: 30 H x 5/8 W



Monet Water Lily Bead Earrings

\$32.00



Sterling Silver Three Virtues Necklace

\$29.00



Sterling Silver Shakespeare's Pendant

\$35.00



Enamel Lilac Pin

\$35.00

Figure 3: Museum Company Advertisement
(Source: Museum Company Web Site, 2000)

The description of the 'Monet Water Lily Bead Necklace with Sterling Silver Chain', mentions painter Claude Monet's water lily series and that the piece 'evokes the aura' of the paintings by this artist. There is no mention of paintings in the museums collection, a history of Monet and his techniques or who created this necklace.

There have been even greater attempts at marketing a museum and its related merchandise.

'QVC, the home shopping channel, is tapping into the art world. Its three-month old "Museum Tour" – two hour specials on museums and gardens around the country not only sells museum-related products but also includes interviews with curators about exhibitions or permanent collections... "So far we've had an overwhelming response", said William Lane, vice president for new markets at QVC. "It's great advertising for the museum. And for our viewers, all of a sudden a museum becomes a place and the art becomes accessible"' (Vogel, 1996, p.2).

Chapter 6

Examining choices

According to many in the retail industry the function of a museum shop is to attract customers and sell in volume. But this is not in accordance with the mission statements of museums and is cause for concern to members of the museum community. It is unfortunate that the prospect of commercial ventures has always been positioned outside the realm of the museum's true interests and that not much attention has been paid to the existence, purpose or goals of a shop. It is well understood that 'historically, moves towards commercial activity in museums have created feelings of unease. This is still the case for there is a view that such activity heralds the dissolution, or at least the lowering, of established academic standards and levels of service...' (Twelves, 1992, p.702).

Ethically speaking some larger museums have lost their way and the shop is not afforded the same considerations that go into other operations. 'Many museum shops seem to have no qualms about selling things which are aesthetically substandard or indeed come well into the category of kitsch, whereas those same museums would never dream of allowing similar latitude in their displays and their own publications' (Cossons, 1977). Perhaps this is due to the revenues produced and a feeling that the benefits of commercialism far out way the negatives.

And what of museum patrons? Are their needs being met and are they receiving the same quality of service and care that we boast in our exhibitions?

'Most visitors make the connection between museum collections and gift selections and purchase items that will be suitable reminders of their museum experience. Souvenirs have unfortunately fallen into low esteem through indiscriminate proliferation of cheap objects. Yet a copy of an Egyptian relic or a postcard of a famous painting, which some may scorn as "cheap

imitation”, may be the best device available to the visitor to evoke memories of his museum visit’ (Falk, 1992, p.90).

But does offering the customer an inexpensive souvenir of their visit excuse the production of an Egyptian relic? Are not postcards and posters enough or must we put paintings on scarves and coasters? T. Shone maintains that ‘some shops do sell tawdry mass-produced goods which often bear little or no relationship to the museum collection- but happily, these cases seem to be few. Rather, the museums seem to have developed an expectancy in the visiting public for high quality’ (1977). Although we have worked long and hard to build this expectancy of quality, many museums demean it with questionable choices made in their trading activities and Shone is incorrect in her assertions that only a few museums make poor decisions.

Many museums have come to depend on their shops for regular needed income. Because of this dependence, they have in many respects become very influential units within their own museums. When the only members of staff deciding on the direction of commercial activities are retailers or the museum is blinded by profits it is no wonder that we find the items we do for sale. ‘All the retailers were happy to see works of art reproduced on notebooks, mugs, jigsaws and so on, as long as the images were appropriate, good quality and tasteful, and not disfigured or manipulated’ (Norris, 1997, p.41).

S. Norris asks the question that is on the minds of many in the museum community, ‘...is it right that a famous work of art should be reproduced, however tastefully, on a tea-towel or tablemat?’ (1997, p.39). As will be shown, it is usually large museums with the greatest attendance that lead the way in over-commercialism. These museums create the standards that patrons come to demand and other museums aspire to. When they fail to maintain ethical principles everyone suffers.

Money over integrity

The selection of merchandise, though a specialist's activity, is many times passed on to someone with little or no knowledge of museum principles and whose decisions are based purely by the motivation of delivering a profit. According to L. Foderaro, in many cases 'merchandise merely takes its cue from a work of art' (1997a, p.2). The Metropolitan uses the words 'inspired by', 'adapted from', and 'based on' in its catalogue when describing items. Foderaro continues to state, 'The best-selling jewelry design ever, for instance, is a pair of earrings composed of one faux pearl in white, the other in black. They were inspired by a loan exhibition from the mid-1980s, "Liechtenstein: the princely collections". The earrings were copied from a pair said to be worn by Venus, the Roman goddess of love, on a painting by Peter Paul Rubens' (ibid).

The Metropolitan has a whole line of merchandise fashioned after their 'unofficial mascot' William. The original faience hippopotamus sculpture from Dynasty 12 has been used to sell items to children as a cute and cuddly animal and reproduced on t-shirts, beanbag toys and backpacks. An interesting note is that the British Museum carries almost the same image (the head is turned) and claims that it is a figure in Egyptian mythology identified with the god of storms and violence.

One of the most popular artists a museum can exhibit is Monet. His shows continually break attendance records and shops are eager to parallel his paintings with a vast selection of 'inspired' merchandise. As illustrated earlier by the glass necklace on offer from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in the hands of a creative product developer any number of items can be produced. I. Gale discovered this when visiting one such exhibition:

'How do you fancy the Monet t-shirt, notelets and mousemat? Or perhaps the iridescent scarf is more to your taste; or a watch decorated with waterlillies? What about a "stunning hand-blown vase" whose turquoise and cerise tones apparently "draw on the fusion of light in Monet's waterlily pictures"? (You might as well

compare a Turner Sunset to a lava lamp). The most fascinating spin-off though is the Monet Seed Kit. Not the artist's cryogenically-frozen spermatozoa, but "two pots, seeds, growing medium and gardening guide" with which to recreate a corner of Monet's garden at Giverny' (1999, p.8).

It is difficult not to become caught up in the commercialization when much needed revenues can be so substantial. The shop at the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore attracted an unprecedented number of customers during the exhibition 'Monet: Paintings of Giverny from the Musee Marmottan'. Items for sale ranged from Monet posters and postcards to the 'Water Lilly Barbie', part of toy manufacturer Mattel's 'Art Barbie Line'. (Other Barbie creations in the collection include the 'Sunflower Barbie' inspired by Van Gogh with a sunflower hat and the 'Reflections of Light Barbie' inspired by Renoir. Limited editions of 30,000 Barbies were made, each selling for \$80. All three have sold out). With 170,000 visitors and \$890,000 in ticket sales, products such as these allowed the shop at Walters to 'bring in \$900,000 in sales, exceeding their average yearly earnings in just nine weeks' (Hudson, 1998, p.15). The earnings are just too attractive.

For most of these product tie-ins we are unable to get the artist's reaction. Perhaps Renoir might see the humor in a Barbie Doll fashioned after a model in one of his paintings but it cannot be assumed that an artist would understand and accept what has become a crassly commercial and competitive market. These opportunities weren't around one hundred years ago and most artists make no money off items that exploit their work and talents. Still museums seem to have no problems peddling items that have no scholarly or artistic value.

'In 1997 the Tate Gallery mounted a crowd-pulling retrospective on Emile Bonnard. His numerous paintings of his wife in the bath have been seen as both a celebration of their relationship and a spiritual declaration of the eternal power of love. The Tate's reaction? The Bonnard Bath Ball: "A huge bicarbonate ball spattered with invigorating pink, blue and yellow salt crystals.

Drop this artistic ballistic into a pre-run bath and watch it whiz around in a mass of bubbles”. Alternatively watch poor Bonnard “whiz around” in his grave’ (Gale, 1999, p.9).

Is I. Gale correct or would Bonnard be inclined to take advantage of the tragedy of his wife’s painful affliction to make a few dollars? It could be argued that by selling bath products the museum is bringing greater understanding of her plight or reminding patrons that the subject matter of his paintings was a woman in the bath. Either way, the item seems tacky at the least and inconsiderate at the extreme.

‘...the National Galleries of Scotland have hardly been idle in cashing in on the desire to take home a little bit of art. That famous skating minister now decorates more Scottish fridges- and mouse mats- than Raeburn had hot dinners and it still seems open season for Canova’s ‘Three Graces’. The award for the fruitiest spin-off in Scotland though goes to the jars of Seville orange marmalade produced to accompany the Scottish National Gallery’s exhibition “Velasquez in Seville”’ (ibid).

Even the Philadelphia Museum of Art has gone so far as to sell merchandise that has been derived from an original work of sculpture and distorted into something completely changed. The work of art is Rodin’s famous ‘Thinker’ and the image has been re-interpreted into bags of coloured pasta shapes. Already a popular image, is the museum furthering the reputation of the artist’s work through blatant commercialism? What, if any, are the ramifications of a bath ball or pasta noodles? There are many theories as to what damage has already been incurred.

Effects

The effects of poor choices can be grave not only to the museum that makes them but also to the museum community as a whole. ‘The good name of the museum is being carried far outside its walls through purchases and there should be no chance of criticism’ (Sorrell, 1977). With the glaring tendency towards retailing the

consequence is that our hallowed galleries have become nothing more than shopping malls. S. Norris states that 'in this post modern world, museum and galleries are becoming just another place to go shopping' (1997, p.39).

J. Jarrat mentions that one side effect of becoming overly commercial is the public's view of the museum as 'home decorating aid'. 'This is the great influence of the museum shop, and it sort of blurs the line between the museum and the shopping mall. But I think, in most people's homes, there is a really nice piece from one of the museums that is now part of the domestic surroundings, and I have no feeling on whether that's a good trend or not' (1997, p.23).

The collections we have tried to preserve and protect for decades are becoming innocent victims of over-exposure. The Monet exhibition and its overt commercialism led I. Gale to the conclusion that:

'...from the day they were first seen in public, these paintings have gradually become less works of art than sad indicators of what art at the end of the millennium is in danger of becoming. This exhibition, albeit unwittingly, is a homage not to Monet, but to money. It speaks volumes of the way in which we now value art and just how easily we can lose sight of its true meaning' (1999, p.8).

There has been a loss of focus and not enough professionals in the field have taken a close look at what is happening. It is up to museums themselves to practice what they preach and not hide behind the economic pressures faced by many institutions. Art museums must take the lead in creating more ethical shops. Since their range of product possibilities is more limited than history and science museums they can be less easily led down the gift shop path, but this doesn't mean that it isn't happening. 'We hope the public come to our museums for the visual pleasure and understanding, and to tempt them with trash in a shop in order to make money to buy more exhibits for their visual pleasure and understanding is clearly hypocritical' (Sorrell, 1977).

Goals and benefits met

It isn't always easy to surmise whether or not shops are delivering the benefits hoped for. Their financial success can be measured in sales and revenues generated but how do we quantify their effects on education and public relations? Surveys have been conducted and it seems as if the shops are having a positive effect on these areas, but at what cost?

Museum shops did not open with a bang, they developed over the years because institutions without regular sources of funding need to cover the costs of running a museum. This need not be incompatible with the maintenance of high ethical standards. 'As Samuel Sachs puts it, "Museums are money-spending institutions, not money-making institutions"' (Harney, 1994, p.140). The Tate Shop had an income in 1999 of £5 million; this included the Bankside and Liverpool locations (Rosemary Bennett, Personal comment, 2000). C. Webb claims that:

'Additional support for American museums was generated by such things as admission fees, sales from museum shops, licensing programs, and revenues from special facilities such as parking lots and restaurants. All in all, these operating revenues contributed 29% of the total income to museums' (1986, p.78).

Concern that the commercial arm of the museum will overtake the museum's mission may be over-dramatized according to A. Harney. '...most museum shops contribute only 2 to 10% of the total earned income for the museum-scarcely enough to sway the museum's overall direction, but enough to encourage museums to continue to rely on the shop's revenue' (1994, p.136). It can't be argued that shops don't play an important role in the fundraising efforts of museums but the controversy here is whether or not certain principles must be sacrificed for economic gain:

'As museums continue to confront the challenge of financial survival, they will increasingly have to find ways to both fulfill

their principal missions and generate earned income, not necessarily with an eye towards self-sufficiency, but as a means to help in the continuing struggle to defray costs and keep the institution financially solvent in a time of severely reduced funding' (ibid, p.140).

When it comes to merchandise selection, larger museums are not as prudent with their principles as they are in their collection and education programs. 'Some (large museums) have lost their way, ethically speaking, to the point where a product's educational aspect is a mere technicality, a nuisance in the way of improved sales' (Theobald, 1991, p.4).

Most visitors understand that with decreases in government and private funding the only way many museums can survive is with the existence of a museum shop and buying something in the shop allows them to be reminded of a positive event:

'The experience starts with the decision to go to the museum...The experience inside the museum involves the exhibits seen and the items purchased at the gift shop...The museum experience also includes post-visit memories, jogged by related words, events, or souvenirs, and the ways in which these memories influence post-visit experiences...All of these form a single package in the minds of the visitor' (Falk and Dierking, 1992, p.84).

The reminder of a museum is an important benefit of shop services. 'In our research on what visitors recollect of their visits, we found that many people distinctly remembered museum souvenirs they had purchased as many as 20 or more years earlier' (Falk and Dierking, 1991, p.94) and many still had the souvenir in their possession. Perhaps this is a powerful tool for public relations but we must take care that the patron is also remembering the exhibits and galleries and not just the shop and items purchased.

An advantage of a shop is that it can help to make a museum less intimidating. According to S. Norris, visitors felt that 'the presence of a shop made the museum or gallery more user-friendly and less elite' (1997, p.41). This aspect can help to promote museum attendance and membership but there may be detrimental effects of this as well. Visitors 'think it should be possible to visit the shop without having to see the exhibit first and believe that shops could become more popular than the museums that house them' (ibid). This result is troubling especially for those who work so diligently to attain the museum's primary goals of scholarship.

The following is a list of conditions first developed by M. Theobald (1991, pp. 10-13) that I have expanded upon through my research. Shops should attempt to adhere to these suggestions in order to best serve the interests of patrons and the original goals of the museum:

1. **Remain focused on your museum's mission statement.** By concentrating on the objectives of the museum a clear path will evolve for the shop, one balanced by education and profits. Continually re-examine the shop's role and how it is working towards its aims. Understand that the shop exists to support the museum and all its operations must remain subsidiary.
2. **Contribute income to the museum's operations and programs.** This can be attained through professional and responsible retail shop management. It is additionally important to be clear exactly where funds are spent so that the shop staff is proud of its support and the museum staff respects their efforts.
3. **Work to enhance the museum's positive image.** This can easily be attained with good customer service. Educate all shop employees on product information and the museum-related and educational qualities of each. Keep them informed of museum exhibitions, collections, programs and events. Conversely, make museum staff aware of shop merchandise and its role in maintaining the goals of the museum.

4. **Become an integral part of the museum.** Be included in museum planning and operations and allow museum staff input into product and publication development. Sell memberships and admissions through all retail sites and make customers aware of all museum services. Instill a sense of teamwork and unity in all shop and museum employees.
5. **Appeal to museum visitors.** Those coming into the shop should be museum patrons first, shop customers second. A shop should compliment a museum visit and not act as a destination in itself; this includes off-site locations and websites. When participating in advertising and promotions be sure that they tie in with the museum and stress the importance of museum activities over those of the shop.
6. **Research and identify your customers.** Investigate your customer base with the use of questionnaires and address their needs. Make sure there is merchandise for scholars and children alike and that these items are within their budgets. Build an expectation in the minds of customers for items that are museum-related and of high quality.
7. **Remember that every product must be an educational opportunity.** Products that are not directly related to a museum's educational aims **cannot** be considered for display and sale. The assistance of curatorial and educational staff when choosing and producing merchandise should be employed when possible. The educational message should be obvious through informational material and staff knowledge.
8. **Be realistic.** Through a carefully thought out business plan and intensive research it should be possible to make cautious predictions. It is imperative that promises of high profits are not made and that all concerned understand the risks involved.

Development

Retail specialists have several areas they view as needing improvement when it comes to current situations in shops. None are related to the ethical dilemmas facing museum experts. In interviews, the number one complaint from shop professionals was a lack of space, not only for display but for storage as well.

There is no problem with visitor turn out in the shops, the major difficulty with visitors is that most shops have too many for their size. As shops become more popular and more profitable, the pressure is on to build larger areas to accommodate them. The Getty Center realized this deficiency within a few months of opening their new museum:

‘...this was acknowledged by its manager, Greg Hicks, as being too small for the number of visitors: It is 2,500 square feet, yet they are turning over up to \$28,000 a day and it is not unknown for customers to queue for 40 minutes just to get into the shop...The plan is to open a new shop at the bottom of the hill by the light railway station- this will be devoted to souvenirs and products of various kinds, keeping the main shop for books...’ (Dodsworth, 1999, p.10).

Satellite shops will continue to open all over the US and UK and museums in these countries will launch shops in other countries while their drawing power persists. Hopefully the focus will be on access to memberships, admission tickets and other museum programs and services and not just merchandise. Plans to license are most popular in the minds of shop professionals and almost all interviewed mentioned that they foresee a big push into this area. Greater funds can be raised with own brand items and the museum reaps the rewards of opening access to their collection and spreading their image. Large mail order schemes and Internet shopping were definite possibilities for larger museums and shops but not smaller institutions. The popularity of Internet sales has surprised everyone involved and it will take several years before museums can actually catch up with demand.

There is, in addition, the hope that the traditional museum staff will start to value the commercial efforts of the museum and appreciate the contributions made both financially and in terms of education and public relations. This can be possible if shop and museum staff work together to better the efforts of both. The museum as a whole benefits from this approach.

What the future holds

It will be difficult in the coming years to continue to draw crowds with so much competition in the domain of entertainment and leisure. Our audience may be smaller than we hoped. 'If cultural interests in museums and motivation to visit are taken together, then about 15 to 20% of the adult urban population remains as a realistic estimate of the pool from which visitors are drawn' (Treiner, 1993, p.86).

The gaps in funding left by governmental and philanthropic limitations will not be filled unless museums get serious about self-supporting revenues:

'Perhaps the most difficult challenge for museums will be to sustain their momentum as the competition for audiences, leadership and money intensifies. In a world saturated with opportunities, the choice about which events to attend, and which experiences to have, is increasingly difficult. And the competition is not simply from other museums or cultural institutions but also from theme stores and other attractions. No matter how successful museums have become in attracting audiences, there may well be limits to how many people will ultimately want to visit them, not to mention support them' (Lowry, 1999, p.3).

There is no simple answer when it comes to finding a way to acquire funds and museums must be careful in their selection of what ventures to participate in. Currently, in spite of the benefits, retailing has gotten out of hand in large museums and profits are overshadowing principles. 'Culture...ought to attempt to become as broadly based in society as possible, but not at its own expense. That is, museums ought to try to acquire as many visitors as possible, but not, again, at the expense of their standards and values' (Verbaas, 1992, p.177). The challenge set forth for museums is to find suitable means to do both.

We already know that art is big business and museums and galleries 'are the hubs of the new cultural economy' (Vallely, 1996). Therefore, it is up to us to

implement and preserve ethical principles in all our endeavors. If we are to be successful in the retail businesses we must inspire total confidence in our museum and merchandise. The MA in Britain best explains the principles involved in any museum trading efforts.

‘A museum’s fundamental charitable purpose may be supported by activities that are ethically consistent with it, but are not necessarily charitable in nature. A museum must be clear about the way in which its trading and commercial activities contribute to its fundamental purpose. It is important to have explicit principles underlying commercial and trading activities, including the charges levied and the level of surplus or subsidy planned for. While markets are seen as a method of optimizing benefits to the consumer, their application to museums can only be partial, not least because much of a museum’s duty is to the future’ (1997).

Appendix A: Interview Form for Shop Professionals

Institution: _____

National _____ Local _____ Independent _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Phone Interview: _____ Personal Interview: _____

BACKGROUND:

1. How old is your Museum? _____
 When did you first start selling seriously? _____
 How old is your Museum Shop? _____

2. How was the decision to start a Museum Shop made?

3. Does the Shop have a Mission Statement or Policy Statement? Yes ___ No ___
 a. What is it?

 b. If not, what is the main purpose of the shop?
 a. Education ___ b. Public Relations ___ c. Source of Income ___
 d. Other _____

4. Where did the initial investment for the Shop come from?
 a. Donations ___ b. Museum ___ d. Friends Group or Charitable
 Trust ___ e. Grants or Awards ___ (which _____)
 f. Other _____

5. Did you use a Retail Consultant when planning your Shop? Yes ___ No ___ Why?

MERCHANDISE:

6. Does virtually all your merchandise relate to your Museum's collection, building, historical period, or purpose?
 0-50% ___ 51-75% ___ 76-90% ___ 90-100% ___

7. What are your criteria for choosing items for sale in your Shop?

8. What groups do you cater to? And with what type of items?

Educators ___ Items _____
 Scholars ___ Items _____
 Students ___ Items _____
 Children ___ Items _____
 Families ___ Items _____
 Tourists ___ Items _____
 Art Collectors ___ Items _____
 Others _____ Items _____

9. Do you have any exclusive items to your Shop? What are they?

10. How do you decide when something does not meet your standards, either ethically or quality-based?

11. Are there other members of the Museum staff involved in choosing items for the Shop? Who are they?

a. Curator ___ b. Museum Director ___ c. Museum staff ___
 d. Volunteers ___ e. Docents/Tour guides ___ f. Educators ___
 g. Other _____

12. How do you choose what to replicate or reproduce from your collection, and in what form? Is the Curator involved? Yes ___ No ___

13. Do you have licensed products based on your collection or Museum for sale in other Museums or gift shops? Yes ___ No ___

Explain:

14. Are you concerned about over-exposure for some items in the collection?

Yes ___ No ___

15. Do you support local craftspeople and do you purchase their work outright or consign/sale or return it?

Yes ___ No ___ Purchase ___ Consign/Sale or Return ___

Explain: (exhibits/special previews/demonstrations)

16. Do you attend Trade Shows and Craft Fairs and which ones? Yes ___ No ___

17. a. What is your most popular item?

Under L5/\$5 _____

L6-L20/\$6-\$20 _____

Over L20/\$20 _____

Other: _____

b. What is your least popular?

Under L5/\$5 _____

L6-L20/\$6-\$20 _____

Over L20/\$20 _____

Other: _____

18. Do you keep certain highly educational merchandise in your inventory despite its poor turnover? Yes ___ No ___ What items?

19. Do you have a mail order catalogue? Yes ___ No ___

Web site with on-line shopping? Yes ___ No ___

How successful are these venues?

20. Do you offer discounts to Members and Friends of the Museum? Yes ___ No ___

How much? _____

21. Do you participate in special sales or promotions? Yes ___ No ___

What?

STAFF:

22. What is your background?

Art History ___ Retail Management ___ Museum work ___

Artist ___ Publishing ___ Other _____

23. What is the background of the Shop staff?

Art History___ Retail___ Museum work___ Artist___
Publishing___ Other_____

24. Do you use Volunteers? Yes___ No___ How many?___ What percentage to staff?___%
In what positions?

25. Do the Shop's employees receive information about the Museum and its exhibitions and activities comparable to that received by the interpretive staff?
Yes___ No___ Explain:

26. Do Shop employees engage in interpretation of the educational merit of the products? Yes___ No___

27. Is the Shop manager an integral part of the Museum's administrative process, participating in the planning of Exhibits___ Events___ Publications___
Other_____, that have an impact on the Shop?
Explain:

28. Do you feel that the traditional Museum staff has a low opinion of the Shop and its staff? Yes___ No___ Explain:

GENERAL:

29. Where is the Shop located in the Museum?

30. Do you consider the Shop a destination in itself? Yes___ No___

31. Do you feel that the Shop adds to the overall Museum experience? Yes___ No___
How?

32. What are your current main problems?

a. Storage___ b. Staffing___ c. Merchandise___ d. Visitor turnout___
e. Location___ f. Size___ g. Museum support___ h. Other_____
Explain:

33. What are future problems you see for Museum Shops in general?

34. What are your future plans for your Shop?

- a. Mail order ____ b. Internet site ____ c. Expand Space ____
d. Publishing ____ e. Licensing ____ F. Other _____

FINANCE:

This section will remain confidential unless otherwise agreed upon by the interviewed party. _____

35. What is your annual Expenditure _____ Income _____ ?

36. What percentage of the Museum's overall annual budget is spent on the Shop?

37. Do you have a fixed budget or cost centre?

38. If the Shop is self-sufficient financially, how long has it been so?

39. Where are the profits (if any) spent?

- a. Back into Shop ____ b. Education Programs/Publications ____
c. Collections management ____ d. General Museum Funds ____
e. Other _____

Other Comments:
(quest1)

**Appendix B: Example of Completed Interview
Form for Shop Professionals**

Institution: Tate Britain
National Local Independent

Name: Rosemary Bennett
Position: Retail mng'r
Date: 4/18 Time: 3:00pm
Phone Interview: Personal Interview:

BACKGROUND:

1. How old is your Museum? 103yrs
When did you first start selling seriously? 1950's table top then booths
How old is your Museum Shop? 1972 then shop

2. How was the decision to start a Museum Shop made?
combination of publ. mng'r & director & trustee
No curatorial input

3. Does the Shop have a Mission Statement or Policy Statement? Yes No
a. What is it?

b. If not, what is the main purpose of the shop?
a. Education b. Public Relations c. Source of Income
d. Other

4. Where did the initial investment for the Shop come from?
a. Donations b. Museum d. Friends Group or Charitable Trust
e. Grants or Awards (which)
f. Other

5. Did you use a Retail Consultant when planning your Shop? Yes No Why?
In very beginning - doesn't remember much about it.

MERCHANDISE:

6. Does virtually all your merchandise relate to your Museum's collection, building, historical period, or purpose?
0-50% 51-75% 76-90% 90-100%

7. What are your criteria for choosing items for sale in your Shop?

quality
relate to mus. collection
inform & educate
price

8. What groups do you cater to? And with what type of items?

Educators Items book info packs, catalogue

Scholars Items books & catalogue

Students Items univ. course bks, art theory, sketch pads

Children Items books, pencils, badges

Families Items games, cards, board games

Tourists Items books, catalogues, gifts, cards

Art Collectors Items limited ed. prints, signed catalogue

Others exhibition visitor Items catalogue gifts

9. Do you have any exclusive items to your Shop? What are they?

Mugs, branded items
exhibition items - prints, etc. -

10. How do you decide when something does not meet your standards, either ethically or quality-based?

quality, poor reproduction
no permission to use their images
aesthetically unpleasing

11. Are there other members of the Museum staff involved in choosing items for the Shop? Who are they?

a. Curator occasionally b. Museum Director c. Museum staff

d. Volunteers e. Docents/Tour guides f. Educators

g. Other

one curator send book list - list yr.

12. How do you choose what to replicate or reproduce from your collection, and in what form? Is the Curator involved? Yes No

at obscure things. Artists' ^{sometimes} estate, curator, director
chooses piece, then checks that there aren't
any problems

13. Do you have licensed products based on your collection or Museum for sale in other Museums or gift shops? Yes No

Explain: in other general shops

we have things w/ exhibit that travels to another museum
do licensed products.

14. Are you concerned about over-exposure for some items in the collection?

Yes No

Not @ moment

15. Do you support local craftspeople and do you purchase their work outright or consign/sale or return it?

Yes No Purchase Consign/Sale or Return

Explain: (exhibits/special previews/demonstrations)

have had for special exhibits
sale/return. Not a regular thing

16. Do you attend Trade Shows and Craft Fairs and which ones? Yes No

Top Drawer
Birmingham Internet
Harrowgate
Chelsea Craft Fair
some smaller things
Mus & Art. show
Book Fair.

17. a. What is your most popular item?

Under L5/\$5 Neon Pen 99P
L6-L20/\$6-\$20 print or souvenir guide
Over L20/\$20 exhib. catalogue £27.50
Other:

b. What is your least popular?

Under L5/\$5 greeting cards
L6-L20/\$6-\$20 obscure book
Over L20/\$20 obscure book
Other:

18. Do you keep certain highly educational merchandise in your inventory despite its poor turnover? Yes No What items? yes 'cuz public expect books

19. Do you have a mail order catalogue? Yes No specialized catalogue

Web site with on-line shopping? Yes No not gen use cat.

How successful are these venues?

More successful than thought. Doubled in last yr. all over the world customers.

20. Do you offer discounts to Members and Friends of the Museum? Yes No

How much? 10%

21. Do you participate in special sales or promotions? Yes No

What? Not often

exhibits special items

STAFF:

22. What is your background?

Art History Retail Management Museum work

Artist Publishing Other

23. What is the background of the Shop staff?

Art History ___ Retail ___ Museum work ___ Artist
Publishing ___ Other graduate

24. Do you use Volunteers? Yes ___ No How many? ___ What percentage to staff? ___% In what positions?

25. Do the Shop's employees receive information about the Museum and its exhibitions and activities comparable to that received by the interpretive staff? Yes No ___ Explain:

26. Do Shop employees engage in interpretation of the educational merit of the products? Yes ___ No ___ Not all 50/50

27. Is the Shop manager an integral part of the Museum's administrative process, participating in the planning of Exhibits ___ Events ___ Publications Other _____, that have an impact on the Shop?

Explain: will decide what publications are chosen for exhibit.

28. Do you feel that the traditional Museum staff has a low opinion of the Shop and its staff? Yes No ___ Explain: traditional. Not as bad as used to be. Curators etc.. selling inferior.

GENERAL:

liverpool @ Liverpool
exhibit - shop / on left - needs higher profile

29. Where is the Shop located in the Museum? on right hand side
sm shop down stairs - Turner

30. Do you consider the Shop a destination in itself? Yes No ___
recent thing. People come in @ Xmas time.
rare about starting to happen.

31. Do you feel that the Shop adds to the overall Museum experience? Yes No ___
How?

32. What are your current main problems?

a. Storage b. Staffing c. Merchandise ___ d. Visitor turnout too many
e. Location ___ f. Size g. Museum support h. Other _____

Explain: getting better

33. What are future problems you see for Museum Shops in general?

Thinks are going to get better

34. What are your future plans for your Shop?

a. Mail order

b. Internet site expand

c. Expand Space expand

d. Publishing X

e. Licensing X

F. Other refit after 2001

Building program w/ new shop & spring 2001
downstairs

FINANCE:

This section will remain confidential unless otherwise agreed upon by the interviewed party.

two

→ 35. What is your annual Expenditure just retail \$500,000 Income main shop only \$5,000,000 w/ Bankside Liverpool just under

36. What percentage of the Museum's overall annual budget is spent on the Shop?

None self-supporting

37. Do you have a fixed budget or cost centre?

cost center

38. If the Shop is self-sufficient financially, how long has it been so?

since beginning 1972 & before

39. Where are the profits (if any) spent?

a. Back into Shop

b. Education Programs/Publications

c. Collections management

d. General Museum Funds X

e. Other

Other Comments:

(quest1)

How many Tate shops are there? —

Rosemary not in charge of Liverpool venue

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