



# Western Museums Association

*Strengthening museums to serve diverse communities*

## **Vendor Session Proposal Tip Sheet**

Vendors are essential for museums and nonprofits to achieve their visions, as well as, for Western Museum Association to host successful Annual Meetings year after year. Sessions are a great way for vendors to share knowledge, expertise, and project insights, and we do encourage and accept proposals from for-profit entities. In most cases, we prefer to have a museum professional moderate, however each session must be judged on a case-by-case basis. In every case, we prefer not to accept sessions where there is a business relationship between the vendor on the panel and the other panelists. There should always be a non-client included on the panel to address the topic. Furthermore, in no instance can a session include promotion of a business. The vendor must limit themselves to addressing the issue.

Here are some tips for making your session proposal one that shines!

### **1. Look at successful past sessions**

Review past annual meeting programs to see examples of vendor-supported sessions. This is a great jumping off point to see what the program committee hopes to see in session proposals and a good way to start thinking about how you'd like to structure your session.

### **Elevate 2025 Reno**

**Where Do SEOs Go to Cry? Maximizing Free Marketing Tools** (Pre-Conference Workshop)

This workshop invites both the novice and experienced marketer to evaluate how you use free marketing tools to maximize your message.

*Presenters: Amy Oppio, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Director, Nevada Art Museum / Chad Hallert, Chief Marketing Office, Good Giant*

### **Exhibits with Intent: Designing Exhibits as Platforms for Programming**

How can you help your exhibits deliver “more” for your visitors? We will explore case studies of how exhibits have been developed as platforms for both unfacilitated and facilitated learning opportunities. We will then break into mediated roundtables with participants to explore exhibit/program scenarios suggested by attendees.

*Presenters: Devon Hamilton, Experience and Learning Director, Blue Rhino Design / Uri Griner, Director of Experiences, SMUD Museum of Science and Curiosity / Daniel Guyton, Traveling Exhibit Manager, Oregon Museum of Science & Industry / Amelia reising, Founding Director, Adventure! Children’s Museum*

### **Balance 2024 Tucson**

**The Environmentally Conscious Museum: Strategies for Sustainability**

Museum professionals and sustainability experts will share the latest ideas and advancements in museum policy, design, and operations in environmental sustainability. Participants will learn how they can engage in sustainability programs or take these ideas back to their institutions and begin or advance their own initiatives.

*Presenters: Michael Fiegenschuh, Principal, EDX Exhibits / Dana Whitelaw, Executive Director, High Desert Museum*

### **Elevate Your Giving: Balancing Data & Relationships**

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In the realm of philanthropy, while data offers invaluable insights, it's the human touch that truly ignites support. We'll delve into the delicate dance of blending data-driven strategies with the cultivation of genuine donor connections, elevating both annual and capital giving. *Presenters: Aashika Patel, Managing Director, CCS Fundraising | Karie Birch, Director of Development, Portland Art Museum*

## **2. Focus on takeaways for attendees**

Sessions are a great way for you to engage attendees around their areas of interest and need while the exhibitor hall is the ideal platform for you to showcase your product. Of course you will share your expertise and examples of your work as part of the session, but these are places for dialogue, connection, and engagement.

Consider what you can share that will deliver value to museum professionals and a wider museum audience. What is at least one tangible takeaway you can provide that your audience can utilize or begin applying upon leaving you session?

## **3. Build out your session panel based on your topic**

One way to structure your sessions is considering a challenge or a problem museum professionals face. "How do I travel my exhibition?" "How do I design cheaply with a high quality outcome?" "What are ways to maintain institutional knowledge as employees retire?" "How do I meet my mission while addressing community needs?"

Many of the most successful sessions feature a panel of museum professionals representing diverse perspectives from a variety of museum or business types to speak to the identified problem or challenge. Focus on inviting not only a client to be part of your panel, but other vendors or firms as well as 1-2 museum professionals who you have not worked for directly in the past.

Successful sessions styles have included:

- Project management 101 - a panel of both planning vendors and museum project managers discussing their approaches and tools
- Emergent museum planning and capital campaigns - key strategies and lessons learned from those who have been there
- Prototyping 101 - testing exhibit ideas and messaging while sharing tools and strategies for not breaking the bank

## **4. Attend a WMA session chat(?)**

Virtual programs hosted by WMA provide an opportunity for you to share your session idea as well as connect with potential co-presenters.