

Museum Matrix[®] is:

- a method to sharpen analytics
- a tool to determine the structure of comparison between institutions
- a quantified and qualified approach to analysis.

2. Big Data and Cultural Performance²

At the moment, big data is a keyword in many different fields. It is most used in relation to business and consumer research. But why not use potential big data analytics to study the indications for the performance of a museum in the cultural field? If we want to improve the performance of museums, we have to be aware of the environment they're operating in. What factors are we dealing with?

- Complexity and Location
Besides its collection and programs, the success of a museum also depends on the socio-economic background of its surrounding region. Another aspect to consider is the museum's accessibility via public transport.
- Institutional Continuity and Financial Stability
If the museum is part of a company (or corporation), its continuity depends on the success of the company it is linked to.
- Lack of Business Thinking
In the cultural field, the business aspect of an institution is often overlooked.

3. The Objectives

Museums - nowadays - develop beyond simply pedagogical learning; comprehensive knowledge and the teaching of skills are valued more than the delivery of hard facts. Therefore, museums must:

- Improve their extracurricular activities that support learning through discovery.
- Increase awareness of their programs by developing and sharpening their brand-based communication.

²Marvin Carlson: Performance: A Critical Introduction. Second edition. Routledge. New York/London 2003.

<http://www.yavanika.org/classes/reader/carlsonperformance.pdf>

http://writingproject.fas.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/peformance_studies.pdf

- Get people involved; it is necessary for museums to communicate in a way that appeals to visitors' emotions and stay relevant to the everyday life of the audience.
- Think about new cultural formats to reach new audiences: exhibitions are a museum's main product - but not its only one.
- Last but not least: Museums have to explore the digital space as a source and as a new space to be curated in an authentic way³.

4. Museum Matrix[®] - Description of an Action Plan

Step 1 - The Strategy

I will now describe how to get started on the creation of new concepts and development of fresh inspiration for your museum's program:

a) Comparison is Cunning

It is always inspiring to think outside of the box. Improve your own work by comparing it to that of another institution.

b) Select Market Leaders

Keep your eye on the market leader - the museum with an innovative program, strategic development and a communication strategy that closely reflects its brand.

c) Go Sightseeing

Take a closer look at your competitors. Try to see them through the perspective of a visitor. You know the saying: *The worm must taste the fish and not the fisherman*⁴.

³ Matthias Henkel: Intangible Heritage 2.0. How to collect, curate and present the digital landscape as the new public space. Berlin/Milan 2016. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305904613_Intangible_Heritage_20_How_to_collect_curate_and_present_the_digital_landscape_as_the_new_public_space Paper presented at the Joint Session ICFA Museums and Collections of Fine Arts and COMCOL Collecti

⁴ For more information, see Clifford Geertz, Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. http://www.sociosite.net/topics/texts/Geertz_Thick_Description.php

Step 2 - Adequate Parameters Are Key - From the ICOM Code of Ethics to the *Big Five*.

Before you can commit to this project, think about the parameters and aspects you are interested in developing. Define these parameters according to your own personal or institutional objectives. Here are two basic questions to guide you:

- Where do you want to improve?
- What is the purpose of your vision? Hopefully you have one - otherwise it is a good idea to think about this and discuss it with your staff.

Your first attempt to define your parameters may follow the ICOM Code of Ethics: collecting, preserving, researching, presenting, educating. But does this reflect the expectations of your visitors? Consider expanding upon the ICOM Code of Ethics by adding more objectives to the list.

However, I like to follow the *Big Five BCFPS*. That is: Brand, Collection, Facility, Program, Service. These factors account for the entire spectrum of the museum's work from the perspective of the visitors. If helpful, it is possible to create further subdivisions, i.e.:

| BIG FIVE | SUBDIVISION |
|------------|--|
| Brand | Personality ⁵ Communication ⁶ |
| Collection | Quality ⁷ Quantity |
| Facility | Style of architecture ⁸ Location in the city |
| Program | Exhibition Accompanying program ⁹ |
| Service | "Third Place" quality Participation ¹⁰ |

⁵ Communication is a managerial task. Therefore, the director of a museum is responsible for representing the museum authentically.

⁶ Brand-based communication should be a matter of course in the non-profit sector.

⁷ If the collection contains masterpieces, place them in focus. If there are no masterpieces, include interesting and unique features in the museum's story.

⁸ The museum's building is one of the main factors to be used for its development - the style, capacity and location in the urban space should be taken into account.

⁹ Developing programs is obviously one of the core tasks of a museum nowadays - think strategically, think collaboratively, think outside of the box.



Again: If you have other questions or objectives you may add to or change these items. In my point of view, the *Big Five* are a good starting point to begin to develop your vision.

Step 3 Benchmarking

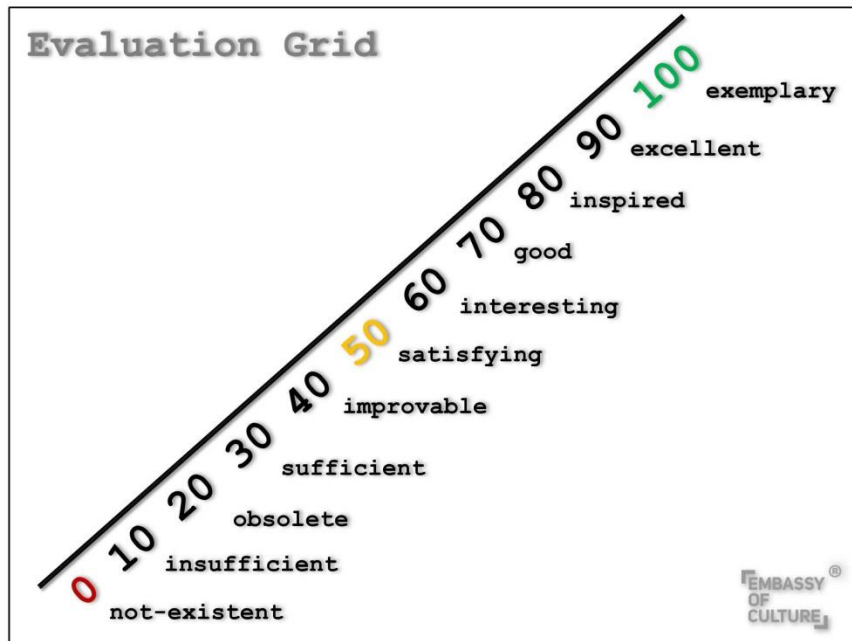
With regard to benchmarking, we have to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative analyses:

- a. Qualitative analysis can be used to take a closer look at each particular feature of your museum. To describe each feature in your own words will help you to get a deeper understanding of the whole phenomenon and how it functions. If you follow my recommendation, you should summarize each of the Big Five aspects: Brand, Collection, Facility, Program, Service.
- b. Quantitative analysis makes it possible for you to compare institutions with each other.

¹⁰ If you have a mediocre collection or if your museum's location is a disadvantage, you can still work on "Third Place" qualities (Ray Oldenburg).

c. Evaluation grid

In order to measure the performance of museums you need a clear evaluation grid. In my opinion, the following system is most suitable:

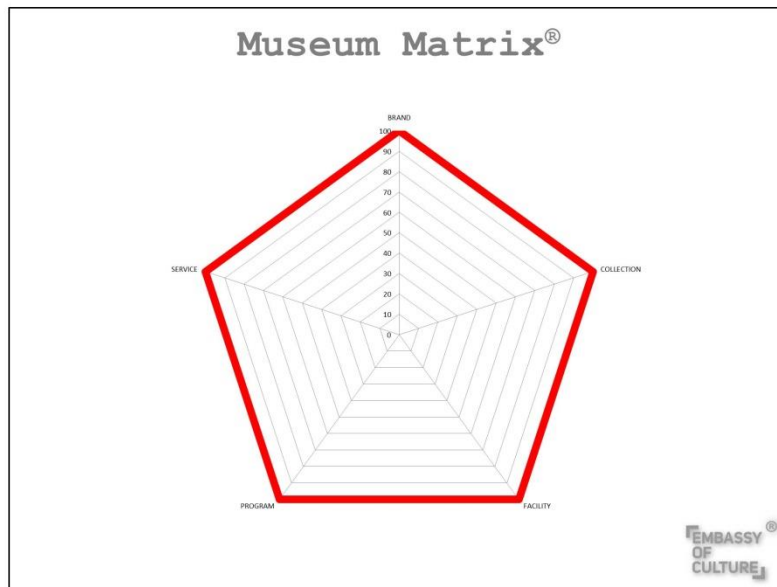


Step 4 - Museum Matrix®

Once you have finished your analysis, it is time to draw a chart to get a clearer view of the whole situation. The following are examples of three fictitious cases.

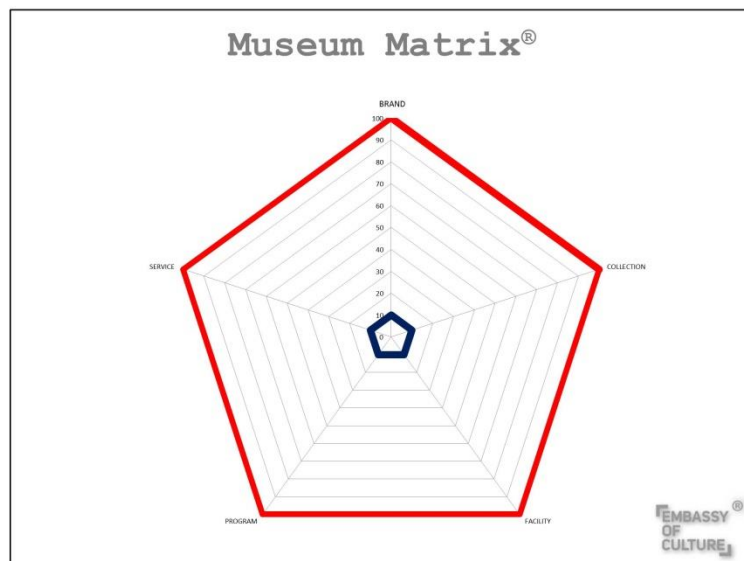
If your rather fanciful museum profile resembles this [Scenario 1], you may have forgotten to take the parameters of skills (resources, budget, staff, competence) into account.

Scenario 1



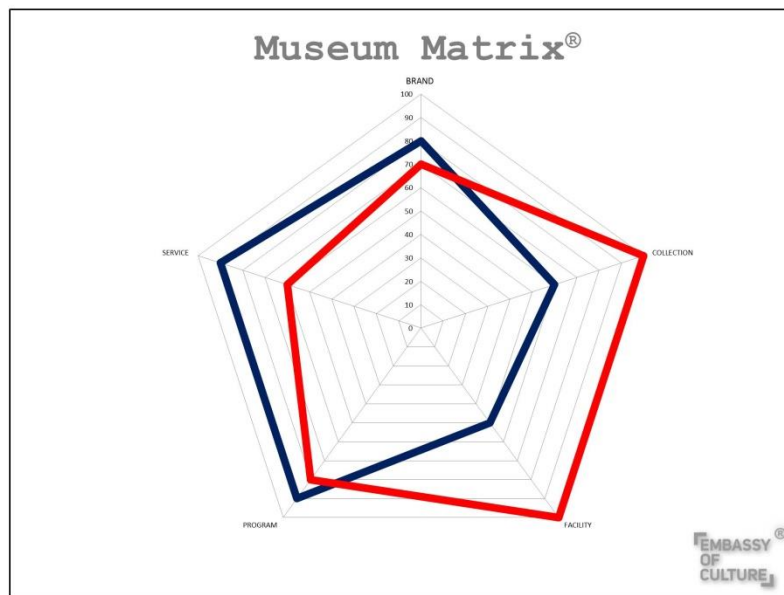
If your first result looks like this [Scenario 2], you may have chosen the wrong competitors. The red museums did everything right - the blue museum did everything wrong.

Scenario 2



The third scenario [Scenario 3] is much more interesting and realistic. The red museum has a wonderful collection and a perfect building but pays less attention to the quality of service and communication.

Scenario 3



In comparison, the blue museum compensates for its weaknesses in the area of the collection with good service, an attractive program and better strategic communication. Most surprising is that both museums can benefit from this comparison with each other.

Step 5 - Learn from Each Other

To keep it short: Copy and paste is the wrong way - always. Learning from the leaders - or learning from each other as we have seen above - means that you have to analyse the whole situation: from basic concepts to the budget, the resources, staff and competences.

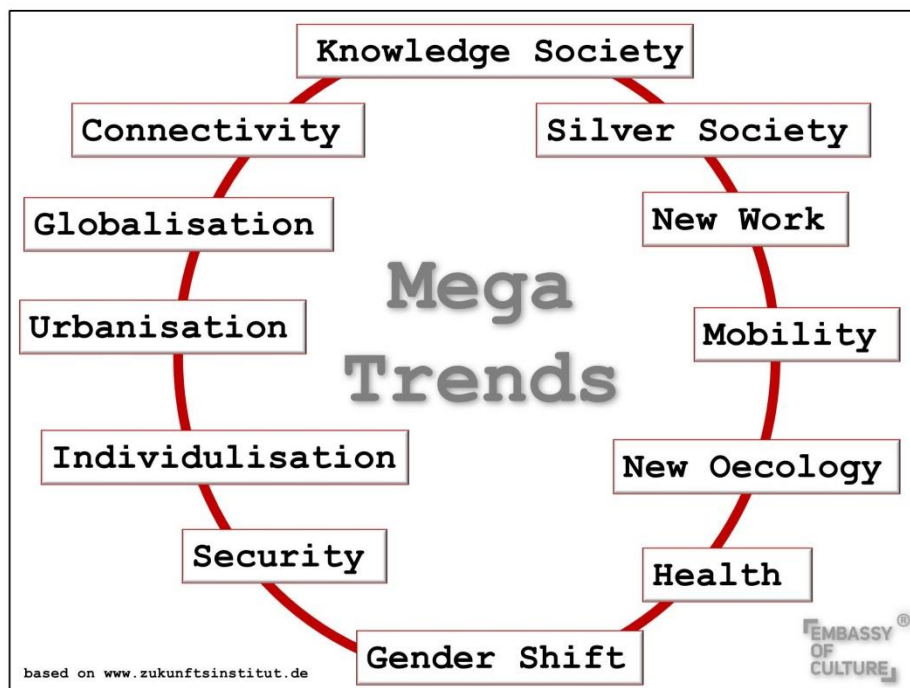
Step 6 - Go Your Own Way

Last but not least: A concept that has been successful for one institution will not necessarily be successful for another. Therefore, develop our own individual and authentic concept based on your own experience. Use your experiences as a source of inspiration. Become conscious of your qualities and your skills - both hard and soft.

5. Megatrends

There are certain megatrends that we cannot neglect¹¹. That means if you want to implement new objectives you have to pay attention to your social and economic environment:

- Knowledge Society (new structure of learning)
- Silver Society (we are growing older)
- New Work (work/life balance)
- Mobility (city tourism is a big pull for museums)
- New ecology
- Health (plays a big role in everyone's life)
- Gender shift (women are coming to power)
- Security (in the age of the suicide bomber)
- Individualisation
- Urbanisation
- Globalisation
- Connectivity
- Globalisation
- Connectivity (not just in terms of technology - but of identity as well)



¹¹ <https://www.zukunftsinstitut.de/dossier/megatrends/>

6. Conclusion

What is the intention of the Museum Matrix® concept?

- The analytic view makes it possible to measure the cultural performance of museums.
- Museum Matrix® can be used as a tool to compare different museums.
- The qualitative analysis provides a basis to form concepts and plans.
- The quantitative analysis offers the possibility to compare different institutions in a visual way.
- The main idea is to think about the profile of your own museum in a conceptual way.
- In the end, Museum Matrix® represents a way to define the brand of your museum.
- Last but not least: go your own way. Act and communicate authentically. Work hard on your individual brand identity.

Dr. Matthias Henkel
Berlin/Germany
ceo@embassy-of-culture.com
www.embassy-of-culture.com