

ADIGM A NEW VITALITY / A
NEW PARADIGM A NEW VITA
TY / A NEW PARADIGM A N
VITALITY / A NEW PARADIGM
A NEW VITALITY / A NEW PA
ADIGM **A NEW VITALITY /** A
NEW PARADIGM A NEW VITA
TY / **A NEW PARADIGM** A N
VITALITY / A NEW PARADIGM
A NEW VITALITY / A NEW PA
ADIGM A NEW VITALITY / A
NEW PARADIGM A NEW VITA
TY / A NEW PARADIGM A N

THE

GARDINER

MUSEUM

TODAY

A review of the Gardiner Museum's financial history, and several years of audience research, show that the Museum has overcome a period of financial instability and maintains a position as a valued but not particularly well-known component of the cultural community. While many exhibitions and programs have been critically successful since 2008, few have had as high attendance numbers as in the years prior to this, and annual attendance plateaued several years ago and has slightly declined. Revenue from hospitality has not exceeded peaks previously achieved, and the shop has been stalled at the same profit level for many years. In other words, the Museum is surviving but not growing, either in revenue or audience perception. Importantly, it's not growing a next generation of audience or establishing a unique position for itself in the community. **Since the Museum continues in a reasonable manner, a lack of urgency to assert itself could be its most insidious challenge.**

HOW DO WE DETERMINE OUR PRIORITIES?

Respond to our most critical challenges first.

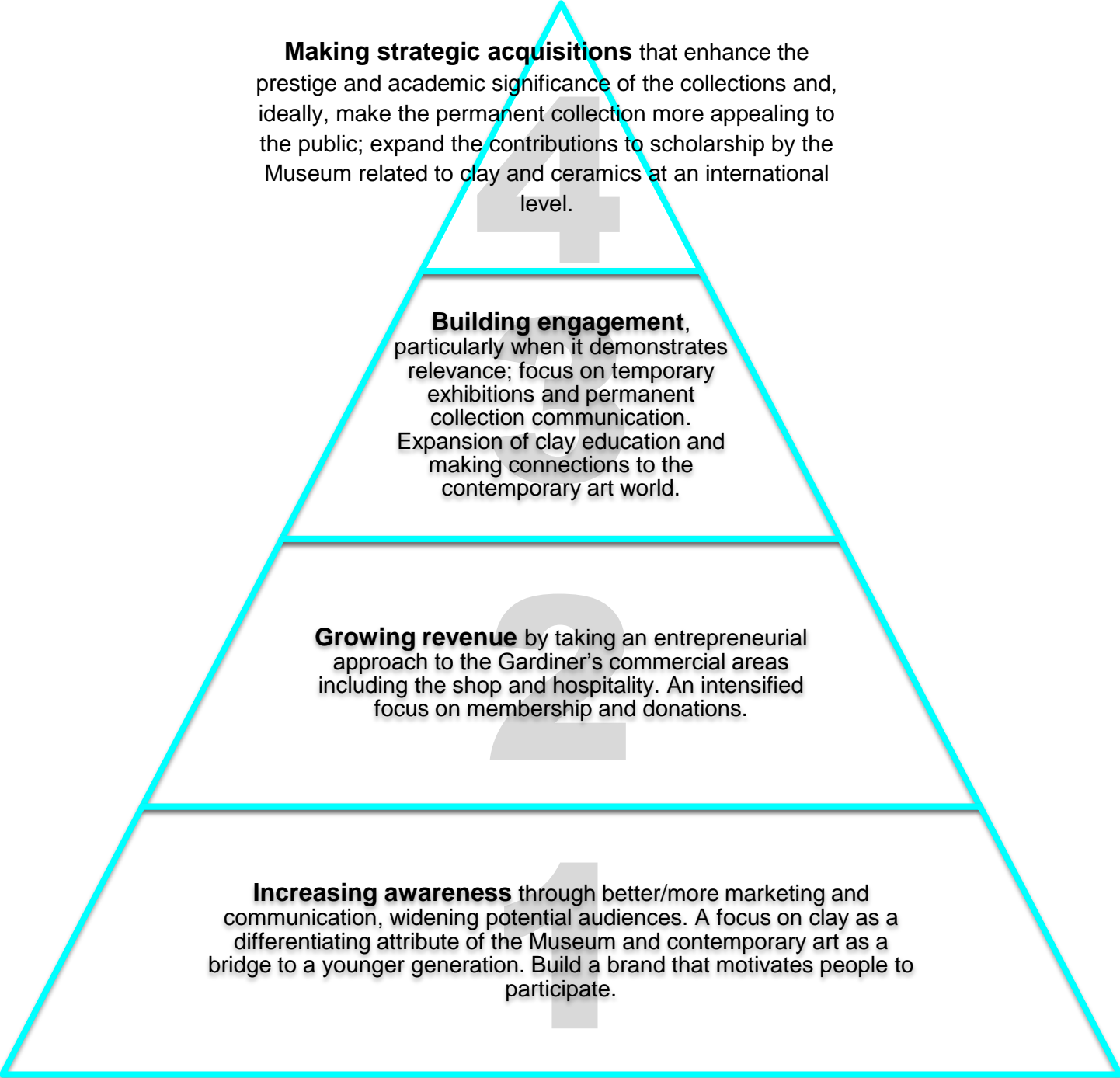
Because...

...the most imperative challenges the Gardiner Museum faces present the greatest opportunities for positive growth.*

1. **Lack of awareness**, beginning with name/building recognition but even greater in terms of the content and programs, particularly so vis-à-vis significant audience segments, e.g., cultural consumer, younger demographic. THEREFORE, strategically important that initiatives creating awareness and reaching out to new audiences, especially younger ones, be a priority.
2. **Difficulty in generating additional revenue** through attendance, as well as sponsorships/donation which is exacerbated by the lack of awareness and engagement. THEREFORE, strategically important that investment be made in initiatives that create revenue, revenue that can then be used to build the collection and support other essential non-revenue generating functions, particularly as exhibitions/attendance can't be assumed to necessarily be the main source of revenue growth.
3. **Lack of engagement**, including a dated approach to the display of the permanent collection, a perceived lack of relevance and contemporary art content. THEREFORE, strategically important that initiatives that increase the ability of the Museum to engage have priority.

*note Appendix 1 for summary of challenges and opportunities

Priorities



Making strategic acquisitions that enhance the prestige and academic significance of the collections and, ideally, make the permanent collection more appealing to the public; expand the contributions to scholarship by the Museum related to clay and ceramics at an international level.

Building engagement, particularly when it demonstrates relevance; focus on temporary exhibitions and permanent collection communication. Expansion of clay education and making connections to the contemporary art world.

Growing revenue by taking an entrepreneurial approach to the Gardiner's commercial areas including the shop and hospitality. An intensified focus on membership and donations.

Increasing awareness through better/more marketing and communication, widening potential audiences. A focus on clay as a differentiating attribute of the Museum and contemporary art as a bridge to a younger generation. Build a brand that motivates people to participate.

Being a “gem” of a museum

The Gardiner Museum’s architecture is highly-regarded by design aficionados as well as the public. It’s one of the strengths of the Museum. However people seldom visit museums more than once for the novelty of the architecture, but rather decide to return for the overall experience they had there. Galleries are about having a compelling experience, one that a virtual tour of the collection cannot equal. While the value of a beautiful museum building cannot be diminished, the focus of the strategic plan must be on the total visitor experience.

The questions to be asked are: Is the lobby welcoming? Is orientation clear so visitors can navigate to the places that are their priorities? Are the galleries memorable in the way they present content, as well as for the content itself? Importantly, aspects formerly considered secondary museum experiences, for instance, the shop and the café, are now equally important for many as they consider where to spend their leisure time.

The strategy takes us from thinking about the Gardiner as

...A beautiful museum building with a precious collection in glass cases; a refined, elegant place to...

...a beautiful museum where visitors have a remarkable experience, where there are amazing objects with great stories and a sense of the enduring magic of clay.

The intimate museum

Size matters, and the intimate scale of the Gardiner is an advantage to be exploited. We offer a chance to engage with the institution and be recognized as an individual. From tours, to hands-on opportunities, to personalized special events, it's a human scale we offer.

The Gardiner Museum's new brand attributes

Vital

&

Audacious

vi-tal

1. Absolutely necessary or important; essential

“Secrecy is of vital importance”

Synonyms: essential, of the essence, critical, key, indispensable, integral, imperative, urgent, compelling, high-priority

Antonyms: unimportant, peripheral

2. Full of energy; lively

“A beautiful, vital baby”

Synonyms: lively, energetic, active, exuberant, vibrant, vigorous

Experiencing the Gardiner Museum must demonstrate it's...

Vital to the

Community

How does the Gardiner Museum position itself in a future landscape to be a key participant in the creative life of the community, and be understood as a unique institution, with a focused but essential role, supported by dedicated stakeholders? How does the Museum differentiate itself in a universe of cultural institutions actively asserting their brands? How does the Museum interpret its objects so their cultural relevance is reinforced, and connected to current cultural imperatives?

The evolution required of all cultural institutions to be relevant to their communities varies. Research, internal discussions, and consultation suggest the Gardiner Museum's central concern is communication rather than the need to initiate a profound change. The Gardiner Museum needs to refine or otherwise exploit its strengths.

That said, the communication required is one that expresses the evolution the Museum has undergone, and that better awareness of the result of this metamorphosis to date will spur further growth and attract a new generation of support. Building on strength is not status quo, but rather expressing the new kind of Museum the Gardiner has grown to be. In other words, what has the Gardiner become, and how can this new paradigm be communicated to build support?

au·da·cious

1. showing a willingness to take surprisingly bold risks.

"a series of audacious takeovers"

Synonyms: bold, daring, fearless, heroic

Antonym: timid

2. showing an impudent lack of respect.

"an audacious remark"

Synonyms: impudent, impertinent, presumptuous, irreverent, defiant

The perception of the Gardiner Museum should be one of...

An

Audacious

Institution

While we need the Gardiner Museum to be audacious in terms of showing a willingness to take surprising bold risks, we don't want to be known for showing an impudent lack of respect. The difference between the two perceptions can be subtle, but it is an essential one.

That said, it's only by being audacious that a smaller institution, like the Gardiner, gets noticed and in getting noticed and being recognized for innovation can collaborate with the leading cultural institutions and most dynamic people in whatever area of endeavor it focuses on. Audacious means having confidence, and for an entire institution from its board and staff, to supporters and members to share the belief that being bold is part of the mandate.

Audacious should mean that the Gardiner has exhibitions and other programs that are of international note, not only for an academic audience, but for a wide public. Like the Gardiner Museum was able to do prior to 2009, it should produce a blockbuster every couple of years. It's a mix of the provocative, scholarly and stimulating for the connoisseur, but an audacity that Toronto and beyond notices.

The Gardiner Museum must become more vital and audacious?
In other words move...

From: *A museum that is well-liked by those that visit but with low awareness in the community and perceived to have little impact and, for some, to be an anachronism*

To: *A high-profile cultural institution integrated into the fabric of the community and recognized for its cultural and education leadership focused on clay/ceramics*

STRATEGIC

IMPERATIVES

Awareness - Revenue – Engagement

1. Celebrating Ceramics

1a. Clarify the Gardiner Museum's mandate

Revise the expression of the mandate to make it clear what the purpose of the Museum is and why it's an essential part of the community's future: the Gardiner Museum offers a beautiful and enlightening experience of ceramics and responds to both the connoisseur and casual visitor, particularly by communicating the collections in context of clay process and their continuing cultural relevance; the Gardiner Museum plays a unique role in contemporary creative life often through the support of artists who work in clay and in this, and other ways, engages a younger audience and contemporary art supporters and is at the forefront of clay education which can be especially transformative in an increasingly virtual world, in addition to promoting and selling the work of artists who work in clay.

Each element of this definition is important, but it's the combination of stewardship – culture impresario – clay studio - retail gallery that is the way forward. It's a new paradigm where the support of artists through commissions and exhibitions, and education, is given equal status with attributes we usually associate with a museum.

Steward – Impresario – clay studio - retail gallery

The museum stewards the past and helps make it relevant; it's a cultural impresario that helps realize new art in clay; the studio is a focus of education in and about clay; and the shop promotes works in clay and is a source for the world's best ceramics.

The Gardiner by the nature of this approach becomes an innovator, a museum of the future.

1b. Add a tagline to “Gardiner Museum”. A tag makes it immediately clear what the mandate of the museum is. Use this tagline in a lockup in most situations. Do not change the Gardiner's current public identification; use it with the tag as “museum” is an advantage with many audience segments, public funders, educators, and others. Don't use “The Gardiner” alone as it means little to most people.

Gardiner Museum

The centre for ceramic art and clay education

Or

Gardiner Museum

The centre for the art of clay

1c. Revise the Gardiner's graphic identity. Render the name/tag in a similar graphic treatment as the current nomenclature, for continuity, but revise it to convey more vibrancy and a contemporary feel through colour and the way it's applied to materials.

1d. Create an “elevator pitch”. These few sentences become the standard expression, often informally used, of the Museum’s mandate:

The Gardiner Museum is about the creativity of clay, and the beauty ceramics bring into our lives in so many ways. Clay is real and remarkable, worth caring about in an increasingly virtual world.

and

The Museum has collections of international importance, including Ancient Americas, 18th Century European, and Contemporary, especially the work of great Canadian artists. There are clay classes for children and adults, and a wonderful shop and restaurant. The special exhibitions are exceptional, both historical and contemporary. It’s one of the great specialist museums in the world.

For promotional or campaign purposes, use

Gardiner Museum

Clay is (Real) Creativity

1e. International Strategy. Leverage the Gardiner Museum’s international renown. Investment in the academic prestige of the Museum is critical if useful relations with other institutions are to be maintained. As well, the academic prestige and profile of curators supports the Museum’s credibility, and is an essential platform for programs. An international strategy focuses the (academic) world on the Gardiner, but also demonstrates how to use this prestige to generate local support and initiatives as well as impact the transit segment. An international conference, for instance, could be part of this strategy. As well, an ongoing publication series of online lecture programs can support the status of the Museum.

These initiatives should be funded from operating, and the more ambitious one likely only possible through revenue growth.

2. Use audience segmentation to shape program development and marketing

The four pillars of the Gardiner – stewardship, impresario, clay studio, retail gallery – interact in varying degrees with the Museum’s audiences, and this intersection determines exhibitions and programs.

The Gardiner has an audience segment that, according to research, is its core constituency and it has surprisingly not been significantly penetrated– urban cultural consumers. This relative lack of penetration means there is a large number of people pre-disposed to visiting who have not yet been to the Gardiner.

Important secondary audience segments, that mostly overlap this larger one, are urban culturally aware young adults (typically interested in design, architecture and contemporary art that correspond to the Gardiner’s content, as well as performance, etc.), contemporary art patrons, specific cultural communities that value arts experiences and education, families interested in clay education, and ceramic connoisseurs. Connoisseurs are the most conspicuous component for the Gardiner of the larger, encompassing urban cultural consumers segment.

Going forward, it’s essential that programs be developed where the corresponding audience segment is clearly understood, and an investment in production and marketing is made commensurate with audience potential, e.g., don’t invest in a connoisseur exhibition expecting it to be a block buster, or under invest in production and marketing values if a show is one the general public audience could appreciate. This isn’t to say not to create programs for a connoisseur or contemporary art patron audience but rather better anticipate the outcomes as planning decisions are made.

With this in mind, the Gardiner should create an exhibition and program strategy that respects the capacity of staff, the need to focus marketing resources to achieve threshold levels of awareness and production to make an exhibition popular and, most importantly, understand the intrinsic appeal or lack of appeal to a general audience of content, as well as the most effective way to market contemporary exhibitions. The Museum should limit the number of exhibitions and programs. The increase of them in the last five years has resulted in a slight decline in attendance, and the shift of resources away from other areas of the Museum that need attention.

For example...

Urban cultural consumers – the largest, broadest target market. Typically this cohort is over 40, living downtown, well educated and affluent. To respond to this market, do one exhibition a year with a popular theme, celebrity objects/artists, or a compelling narrative that can be expressed through the exhibition. These exhibitions will often have historical themes. This kind of exhibition requires a relatively large investment in marketing, and should be anticipated to generate large attendance/revenue and popular awareness. The key is the selection of content that can be of wide interest and investing in production values that help engage the audience with the content in the exhibition hall. Ceramics presented in a broader design, decorative arts, or social context increase the opportunity for the content to reach a wider audience.

Note that while the “new” exhibition hall requires considerably more investment to mount shows, show budgets have not increased since 2008, even to reflect inflation and, in many situations, are less than pre-2008 production costs.

Contemporary art patrons – likely the best way to reach a younger (25 – 40) and/or affluent demographic. Artists who work in clay, and ceramics in a design and architecture context, is an important element in the mix of the Gardiner offerings; it’s important programming but not necessarily connected to large audiences and revenue. These can also be smaller shows for “elite” audiences.

Connoisseurs – relate to all categories of content but primarily historical, often from the Gardiner’s collection. It’s important to sustain key stakeholders support and the academic reputation of the Museum to have a show with a strong historic and/or academic imperative. While these exhibitions and programs must be well produced, there should be reasonable expectations for attendance/revenue. Catalogues, online documentation, and lectures are a natural combination for these exhibitions. Artist interventions can bring both a contemporary element to the Gardiner Museum, as well as highlighting specific Museum collections.

Culturally diverse audiences – can respond to all categories of programs and exhibitions, and are best motivated to visit through direct connect through community groups and group sales promotions. Education is an imperative for diverse cultural audiences and like young adults, family programs/clay classes are the best way to reach them. The Gardiner’s diverse collections can be a component to bring varied communities to the Museum.

Family. The Gardiner is not a family-focused museum but education through tours and clay classes is the best alternative for introducing young adults raising families to the Museum.

2a. Develop an exhibition plan that promotes the Gardiner’s brand, is vital and audacious, and relates exhibitions to the Gardiner’s key audiences with the overall mandate being...

The exhibitions strategy has a double focus with the overarching goal of showing ceramics in a rich context and the development of original exhibitions with a foundation of exemplary scholarship.

The first focus is exhibiting ancient and historic ceramics to demonstrate their continued relevance, their connection to important narratives and current social themes, and to otherwise make them come alive for today's audience. Engagement is key, especially as not all of the Gardiner's galleries are able to do this with historic work in the permanent collection.

A second focus is on contemporary work, especially if it connects to the Gardiner's permanent collection, e.g., an intervention. The contemporary imperative also includes the promotion of emerging artists.

In the mix of exhibitions each year, the intention is to balance historical and contemporary content, feature Canadian as well as international artists, and to have at least one exhibition a year that is selected and designed to reach a wide public. This popular show helps build awareness of the Museum, supports other exhibitions that are narrower in scope, production and audience but may have significant academic interest or be valued by the connoisseur.

2b. Produce exhibitions intended to be popular. When the intention is to reach a wide audience and generate significant attendance, choose exhibition content accordingly, test it, produce and market the show within the cost range that previous shows demonstrate is necessary for success. Aim for an exhibition of 20,000 or more attendance in a two-year period; conversely, don't expect exhibitions within narrowly-focused content to achieve more than specialty audience penetration – but do these kinds of shows to reach these still important segments.

2c. Do more than one major, popular exhibition a year when increased revenue supports budgets and staffing levels to allow it. While doing more exhibitions has been demonstrated to not necessarily drive more attendance if the total annual production and marketing budgets don't change, more than one major “popular” exhibition a year is possible if funding supports this in the future.

2d. Design exhibitions from the audience's perspective. The display of ceramics and clay in context of cultural narratives and social issues, architecture, and design, as well as their physical combination with other decorative arts should be an objective, when appropriate, with all exhibitions, as well as the permanent collection. This makes content more widely enjoyable and accessible, and grows attendance as well.

2e. Activate the Raphael Yu Centre of Canadian Ceramics. More vigorously assert that the Gardiner Museum is the centre of Canadian Ceramics, as well as for artists who work in clay, by growing the Museum as a resource for Canadian artists and information about Canadian clay creativity for everyone. Promote the Museum as a national presence.

Shift from:

An object-centric, gallery display

To

A narrative-based approach that tells stories about objects, and links them in an overall narrative that gives relevance and creates a memorable experience

A note about the lobby: a basic introduction to clay/clay process that explains some of the key terms, such as *firing* and *glazing*, should be considered as a permanent installation in the lobby, encountered by the visitor after ticketing but before the gallery experience.

Please note 3d for comments about permanent exhibitions re: galleries

3. Investment Priorities

Investment approach

Invest in the aspects of the Museum that strengthen its ongoing financial independence and support bold initiatives that increase the relevance of the Museum in the community, and allow for major acquisitions to be made. Investment is necessary into the Gardiner's commercial operations.

3a. Increase the relative percentage of budget spent on Marketing. More of the Gardiner's budget needs to be spent on marketing to achieve better levels of awareness. As well, marketing budgets should be focused on the key activities each year, with paid advertising reserved for revenue generating events. The shop needs to advertise to increase its profitability, and the catering and rental operation needs more promotion. Education requires promotion so the Gardiner is perceived as a leader in the field with premium/unique program offerings.

3b. Invest in the website. Make an investment in the Gardiner's website to communicate the revised mandate, enrich a visitor's experience before and after coming to the Museum, be a better platform for online commerce, and market the Museum in a more compelling manner. The website must archive more of the Gardiner's program content, and show new video content, for instance, about collectors and collecting, as this will help it become a more visited site and build the Gardiner's brand. This is a labour intensive process and represents ongoing staff time rather than a one-time only expenditure.

3c. Review staff compensation. A salary review should be done with a consultant to understand if Gardiner Museum salary levels – in the cultural sector context and for a Museum of the Gardiner's size - are appropriate to attract and retain exemplary staff who can deliver the strategic plan.

3d. Create an organizational growth plan aligned to strategy. A staffing plan to achieve growth assuming incremental growth in revenue should be created as a roadmap to hiring. New positions initially contemplated should be linked to revenue generation, such as building new audiences. A clear rationale for the hiring of additional permanent staff vs. contract assistance, even longer-term, should be made.

3e. Review human resource practices with an HR consultant. The Gardiner does not have a designated HR staff member and its HR policies have not been updated recently. Consider combining a staff compensation and staffing plan review with a general re-consideration of HR policies and procedures.

3f. Create a comprehensive Museum Infrastructure Renewal Plan. A plan for renewal of all galleries should be created. The renovation of the second floor galleries (The Porcelain Galleries) should be reviewed in terms of how it fits with plans for the entire Museum to position itself for the future. Importantly, the approach taken to gallery display should correspond to the new paradigm of the Museum where the components of historical narrative, support of creativity, and focus on the unique attributes of the medium, clay, are reflected. Process should be a more evident narrative thread through all galleries as people respond to it, and it speaks to the essential nature of the Museum.

Better display of the current permanent collection takes precedence over enhanced operating funding of acquisitions or establishing an acquisitions fund. There is no purpose in an acquisition fund when the public doesn't appreciate the collections.

Are we adding enough *wow* moments, not gimmicks, but memorable museum experiences that can enthrall a diverse audience and help them enjoy the collections? A transformative renovation of the permanent galleries, one that changes audience's perceptions of the Gardiner Museum, is a more expensive undertaking than the current, cosmetic treatment of the second floor gallery.

This research, which should encompass the entire experience of the Museum for a visitor, should be reviewed. Is the building welcoming? Is orientation the basis for comfortable visitor navigation? Do all the secondary components, such as the shop and bistro contribute to a memorable visit and extremely positive word of mouth?

The lobby, for instance, should initiate a visit with an introduction to clay process and ceramics that animates the balance of the visit. The Corning Glass Museum is a good example of how to do this. This addition of essential interpretation should be considered if any renovation of the lobby is contemplated.

3g. Curatorial Plan. Investigate alternative curatorial management structure that can best support the strategic plan. Prioritize curatorial initiatives so that they can be implemented, as operating funding through increased revenue becomes available. The curatorial plan must address how to grow the national influence of the Museum, especially in regards to the Raphael Yu Centre of Canadian Ceramics.

4. Better appreciate the importance of core stakeholders – board, patrons, members

4a. Build a board to reflect the strategic objectives in the context of the community. Board building is a priority for any organization, and the Governance Committee should continue to renew the Gardiner Board with members who have experience that can support the strategic plan including how better to connect with new philanthropic and sponsorship supporters, and reach a younger demographic, the next generation of Gardiner supporters.

4b. Consistently grow the endowment. A relatively large endowment is the Gardiner's most important asset, and gives a secure platform for change. Therefore, building the Endowment remains a priority. However, it's difficult for people to contribute to a general endowment fund (versus one to support something specific), and endowment campaigns can cannibalize other annual fundraising events. The recommendation is to determine an event or activity each year, .e.g. gala, run, online fundraiser, that contributes exclusively to the endowment and focuses attention on it.

4c. Better utilize board Committees. Restructure board committees to support management and give oversight, e.g., separate the governance/oversight aspects of committees from the management support only situations.

Suggested committee approach:

- Audit
- Governance
- Budget and Finance
- Investment
- Collections & Exhibitions*

*to be discussed as an option in a broader review of curatorial process and management.

Development will not be a committee but rather several smaller groups relating to specific activities, and the endowment, that will work closely with management. For instance, advisory committees related to special events, exhibitions, and education

that meet regularly, in addition to an over-arching endowment advisory group that meets annually.

Marketing is best supported by a marketing advisory group led by a board member(s) and including others as required. It should meet on an as needed basis, and it's assumed that in the strategic initiatives suggested to build awareness it would recommend changes to the Board. An annual "brainstorming" of the year ahead in marketing would be a good way to bring new ideas to the Museum, as well as ensure consistency of brand approach.

4d. Refine the Gardiner Museum's partnerships and collaborations.

Recognizing the important role of partnerships and collaborations, form longer-term relationships with a few key institutions, while remaining open to projects with a diverse range of institutions (ones that likely vary with the Gardiner's special exhibitions) .

As well, strengthen links with the creative community through participation in Contact, Luminato, TIFF and other events and festivals. Use artist interventions and the RBC Emerging Artist's Award to strengthen ties with other cultural institutions and cultural funders.

4e. Work with Gardiner volunteers to meet the needs of Museum visitors

Volunteers play a key role at the Gardiner Museum, one of the most important is to ensure that there is another generation of volunteers prepared to help sustain it. As well, docents are critical to the education the Museum provides, but they too must be orientated to current realities of what Museum visitors expect today. Museum staff must work closely to evolve how volunteers work to ensure a younger generation of volunteer feels comfortable at the Museum, and that tours reflect the needs of contemporary visitors.

As well, as the intimate scale of the Museum is an advantage, personalized tours can be a hallmark of the Gardiner. Rather than assuming that augmenting the visitor experience relies on technology, the personalized tour can be further developed to become a unique feature the Gardiner offers.

4f. Consider hiring a Volunteer Coordinator

As volunteers are less willing to self-administer, and become more focused on specific volunteer activities, e.g. shop, docent, staff will need to more broadly support and integrate volunteers.

5. Grow commercial revenue to support the strategic plan

Many of the initiatives suggested by the strategic plan are not possible without additional revenue, and this revenue cannot be assumed to come primarily from increased attendance. It should also not be assumed it's possible to increase revenue from government. In some ways, increasing revenue through commercial enterprises is less risky, and has the potential for higher returns, than increasing expectations for exhibitions and programs. As well, with increased revenue from non-exhibition sources, there is more opportunity to produce exhibitions in a manner that can increase traffic, heighten awareness, and so on.

5a. Increase revenue expectations for the Gardiner Shop. The Shop needs to become, or become again, a Bloor Street-like retail destination. It should be ceramics focused, and exploit the public's increasing demand for the unique, i.e., "one of a kind" and the handmade. That said, it should align itself with artists who work in clay, and artisans who create unique objects – not craft. Craft, especially for a younger audience, is associated with amateurism, while art is not.

Shop business should be expanded online and special selling opportunities to groups maximized. The Shop should be aggressively marketed especially relating to the Christmas/holiday season. Gardiner-image based products and reproductions of the Gardiner collection should be investigated with a potential for third party retailers selling the products. The shop could be configured to be a gallery-like space that visitors walk through when they enter and leave the Museum. The shop isn't just a retail space, but a key vehicle for the promotion of clay artists, and bringing international ceramics to the attention of the visitor.

5b. Increase revenue expectations for hospitality. Hospitality through venue rental and catering must be increased to achieve levels of several years ago through a hospitality strategy that includes making the Bistro a destination restaurant (introducing people to the Museum that might not otherwise visit), filling unused rental capacity with Gardiner revenue generating events, activating the Plaza patio, and having secondary caterers bringing business to the Gardiner. The Bistro should have more of a "ceramics" flavor, as this would enhance its sense of a unique dining experience.

5c. Increase revenue (and profile) from Education. See Strategic Imperative 6.

5d. Increase revenue from Membership and philanthropic gifts. Establish membership as a club to which our key segments want to belong. Patrons and members are the best conduit for fundraising, communicating the Gardiner brand, and generally increasing support for the Museum. Specialty museums, such as the Gardiner, rely on their core supporters more than museums with larger attendance, particularly tourist visits. Enhancing the perceived value of membership, particularly at the Patron level, is essential for growth, and increasing philanthropic gifts.

The Manager of Commercial services needs to promote group tours, and group visits are the key for encouraging Museum visits from diverse cultural communities.

A young patron segment should be established and maintained within the context of current patron programs, e.g., not separate young patron events.

6. More clay education

Clay education is one of the key differentiating attributes of the Gardiner brand, and should be given more prominence. Since clay classes run at capacity and are highly profitable, ways to expand them should be considered including corporate and other value-added premiumed courses.

6a. Promote clay education and differentiate the Gardiner's approach to it.

Clay education should be featured more prominently in all communication materials, and be a more prominent aspect of the brand. Develop a Gardiner proprietary approach to clay education which can help better communicate the Gardiner's leadership in this area.

6b. Make clay education and the process of making with clay more apparent to a visitor; add clay studio capacity.

One approach to implement this is a renovation that transforms the existing Shop into studio space that could invigorate the entry experience, as well as generate additional revenue and likely have a short pay-back period. (The shop could be moved to the location of the current entry counter and there would be no loss of rental lobby space if a moveable entry desk is used adjacent to the east wall in the lobby.) This new studio space can also be used periodically as the location for an artist in residence and might be named to reflect this. The promotional focus of the new studio space for artists is preferred branding. Renovations to this area could add amenities to broaden the use of the plaza and make the patio more efficient as a hospitality location.

Any reconsideration of the lobby area should address issues with visitor orientation and navigation, all previously noted.

6c. Establish new clay education products. Specialty clay classes for corporate training and with therapeutic focus ("in a virtual world, people, particularly children, more than ever need the *real* of clay") can be developed. There is an opportunity for premium pricings and differentiating the Gardiner on an international basis with innovative courses. Special master classes also have potential for increased profitability and brand enhancement as do opportunities for painting classes on clay. The Gardiner Museum must take an international leadership role in education.

6d. Library & Archives. Review the use of the library and determine if this resource can be more fully utilized.

7. Collections policy

Align the acquisition and collection policy with the strategic plan; focus on our most important collections, on Canadian ceramics, and with community connectivity with need imperatives for greater awareness, engagement and revenue.

7a. Focus on building the Gardiner's most important collections*. Seek extraordinary objects that can be prompted as unique in the world and capture the public's attention. Assume no increase in an acquisitions budget from operating until Museum revenue increases but rather a disciplined donations strategy, e.g. seek objects as donations, or individual fundraiser for specific items.

7b. Be the pre-eminent centre for Canadian ceramics. As there are donors actively collecting on behalf of the Gardiner, with the Gardiner's consultation, focus on building awareness of the Gardiner Museum as the most important centre for Canadian ceramics, as well as promote Canadian ceramics internationally. A first initiative would be to have a national competition for a commission for the Gardiner plaza to celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary.

7c. Build community through ceramics. Secure objects relating to the diversity of Canadian society, with a focus on identifying appropriate donations and loans, that can link the main collections of the Gardiner with varied traditions. This isn't an objective of becoming a comprehensive ceramics museum, but rather finding ways to engage a wide public and have a more universal narrative about ceramics.

*Note 1e. International Strategy. A focus on being the pre-eminent centre for Canadian Ceramics does not preclude international curatorial involvement to build the Gardiner's brand, especially among academics and consumers.

Cost & Revenue Implications of Strategic Plan initiatives

1. Celebrating Ceramics

- 1a. Revised mandate – in house with marketing advisory
- 1b. Create an “elevator pitch” – in house with marketing advisory
- 1c. Add a tagline to “Gardiner Museum” – in house with marketing advisory
- 1d. Revised graphic identity – in house with marketing advisory
- 1e. International strategy – in house with operating funds as available in curatorial budget and special sponsorships

2. Use an audience segmentation to shape program development and marketing

- 2a. Develop an exhibition plan that connects to the Gardiner’s audience segments and the three main vectors of its mandate – in house with exhibitions committee
- 2b. Understand what it takes to make a show popular in terms of production and marketing – increased exhibition costs correspond to increased attendance revenue
- 2c. Do more than one major popular exhibition a year – success with major exhibitions increases frequency of them
- 2d. The display of ceramics and clay in context of cultural narratives and social issues, architecture, and design, as well as their physical combination with other decorative arts should be an objective, when appropriate, with all exhibitions – cost implications as per 2b

3. Investment Priorities

3a. Marketing – 20% increase in 2015 through re-prioritization; and 10-15% in 2016 and 2017 depending on revenue increases, including increased shop and hospitality advertising

3b. Invest in the website - \$40 - \$60,000 for upgrade with consultant, including additional online transaction capability*. Consulting upgrade will proceed with government funding or operating assuming revenue increase.

3c. Staff compensation - \$60 - \$90,000 per year additional payroll not including any new positions possible in 2016; implementation dependent on increased revenue

3d. Staffing plan – no cost if internal

3e. HR Consultant - \$10 - \$15,000 when available in operating; consider \$500 - \$1000 monthly retainer ongoing if operating permits.

3f. Galleries – Major capital investment beyond the current Porcelain Gallery renovation. \$1.5 - \$5 million but assume 2015/2016 planning (initial research in house and then 2016 consultant), and 2017 fundraising, and staged construction 2018 and beyond.

3g. Curatorial Plan – part of the Acting Chief Curator's mandate, and funded through operating

*assume FTE available for additional web and volunteer support if PR taken in house in 2015

4. Better appreciate the importance of core stakeholders – board, patron, members

4a. Board Building – no cost, in house with Governance Committee

4b. Endowment – no cost

4c. Board Committees – no cost; reorganized first quarter 2015

4d. Partnerships and Collaborations – no cost

4e. Work with Gardiner volunteers to meet the needs of Museum visitors – no cost*

4f. Volunteer Coordinator – from existing operations*

*assume FTE available for volunteer support if PR taken in house in 2015

5. Grow commercial revenue to support the strategic plan

5a. The Gardiner shop – increases in marketing in general marketing addition noted, cost related to enhanced online sales in web upgrade expenses; other costs recovered through additional profit. Assume a 10% increase net revenue per year target for each of three years.

5b. Hospitality on site – increases in marketing in general marketing addition noted. Assume no growth in 2015 transition year (new caterers) and 15% and 20% growth in 2016 and 2017.

5c. Education revenue can be increased marginally. See Strategic Imperative #6. Assume no new net revenue contribution until new studio is paid.

5d. Increase revenue from Membership and philanthropic gifts. Assume 5% a year in revenue growth, each of three years.

6. More clay education

6a. Clay education should be featured more prominently in all communication materials, and be a more prominent aspect of the brand – increased advertising note in general marketing additional

6b. A renovation that transforms - \$400,000**; \$70,000 increased revenue potential per year offset **to be confirmed by KPMB Architects

6c. Specialty clay classes – no additional costs but potential additional revenue tbd

7. Collections policy

7a. Focus on important collections – fundraising for acquisitions, or increased overall revenue to support acquisitions

7b. Canadian Ceramics – national competition supported by fundraising but will need some seed money in operating/development budget

7c. Build connections to the Gardiner Museum from diverse traditions – through donations of objects, fundraising and loans

Cost Summary of Strategic Proposal

	2015	2016	2017
CONSULTING			
Web	\$50,000*	\$10,000*	
HR	\$15,000		
Gallery		\$50,000****	\$50,000****
OPERATING			
Marketing	\$60,000**	\$30,000-\$45,000**	\$30,000-\$45,000**
HR		\$6,000**	\$6,000**
Payroll		\$60,000**	\$80,000**
CAPITAL			
New Studio	\$150,000**	\$250,000***	

*Only proceeds in 2015 if government grant received; if delayed until 2016, from operating

**Included in operating

***loan from the endowment repaid through new clay studio revenue

****dependent on fundraising

Metrics

What are the possible measures of success of the strategic plan?

Revenue
Attendance (paid or all inclusive)
Membership (numbers and/or revenue)
Awareness compared to a research benchmark
Clay class participation
Program participation (not including exhibition attendance)
Academic references/publications
PR/media volume
Website hits
Endowment growth through donation
Collection growth (through donation or purchase)

Recommendation: Strategic Metrics

The recommendation is that there be one metric to correlate with each of the three areas of strategic focus. With this in mind, the three essential measurements become...

Awareness – total attendance, all inclusive not only paid

Engagement – Membership numbers and donations

Revenue – total earned revenue but not including grants, sponsorships, and membership-related income

While the goal for each of the three years of the strategic plan should be confirmed each budget year, the goals at the outset are:

	2015	2016	2017
Awareness	5%	10%	15%
Revenue	0%	15%	15%
Engagement	5%	10%	10%

Implementation Calendar

		2015	2016	2017
1A	Clarify the Gardiner Museum's mandate			
1B	Add a tagline to "Gardiner Museum"			
1C	Revise the Gardiner's graphic identity			
1D	Create an "elevator pitch"			
1E	International Strategy			
2A	Develop an exhibition plan that promotes the Gardiner's brand			
2B	Produce exhibitions intended to be popular			
2C	Do more than one major, popular exhibition a year			
2D	Design exhibitions from the audience's perspective			
2E	Activate the Raphael Yu Centre of Canadian Ceramics			
3A	Increase the relative percentage of budget spent on Marketing			
3B	Invest in the website			
3C	Review staff compensation			
3D	Create an organizational growth plan aligned to strategy			
3E	Review human resource practices with an HR consultant			
3F	Create a comprehensive Museum Infrastructure Renewal Plan			
3G	Curatorial Plan (ends Sept 2015)			
4A	Build a board to reflect the strategic objectives in the context of the community			
4B	Consistently grow the endowment			
4C	Better utilize board Committees			
4D	Refine the Gardiner Museum's partnerships and collaborations			
4E	Work with Gardiner volunteers to meet the needs of Museum visitors			
4F	Consider hiring a volunteer coordinator			
5A	Increase revenue expectations for the Gardiner Shop			
5B	Increase revenue expectations for hospitality			
5C	Increase revenue (and profile) from Education			
5D	Increase revenue from Membership and philanthropic gifts			
6A	Promote clay education and differentiate the Gardiner's approach to it			
6B	Make clay education and the process of making with clay more apparent to a visitor; add clay studio capacity			
6C	Establish new clay education products			
6D	Library and Archives			
7A-C	Focus on building the Gardiner's most important collections, Be the pre-eminent centre for Canadian ceramics, Build community through ceramics			

APPENDIX 1 -

Gardiner Museum Strengths	Gardiner Museum Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Superb collections, unique in Toronto- Gem of a museum; a beautiful building- An intimate museum, a “manageable” visit- Flexible and can quickly adapt to new directions; not a government agency, not large and bureaucratic- Position perception among those who know the Museum- Credible in an academic context, known internationally- On the tourist radar- Clay education is popular, and does well at the Gardiner- Plaza an asset- Shop and Bistro/ Café revenue generating- Good rentable spaces- Financially stable and not dependent on public sector funding- Some ongoing collaborations- A loyal (but dwindling) donor base and membership- Good publications and reasonable web presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Limited staff resources; difficult in past to expand revenue base- Lack of space - for collections storage, clay education, contemporary display – and few alternatives, e.g., an addition- Awareness low (by comparison with, for instance, the Bata Museum)- Narrow focus, particularly with collection- Narrow demographic of potential visitors and supporters re: collection- Traditional galleries, some perceived as out of date- Lack of compelling brand expression (although mandate good)- Difficulty fundraising as support base narrow and cannibalization of one fundraising stream for another, e.g., donor gives to Porcelain Gallery and then not via membership- Lack of youth and content for younger demographic- Difficulties with perceptions of craft vs. art- Relevancy always must be stressed; often lack of topical subject matter- Few large, ongoing donors- Shop, Bistro/Café, rentable spaces not yet optimized

APPENDIX 2 -

Gardiner Museum

Vision & Mandate - 2014

The Gardiner Museum is an inviting destination that inspires and connects people, art, and ideas through clay.

The Gardiner Museum...

Is dedicated to the collection, preservation, presentation, discussion, and interpretation/exhibition of historical and contemporary ceramics, and to be a catalyst for creativity in clay, both with established and emerging artists;

To serving its local stakeholders at the Museum and to reaching out to diverse audiences in the GTA, and engaging national and international audiences through the Internet, publications, and symposiums

To be a center of curatorial excellence focused on clay, and to maintain its collections as an international resource for scholars and connoisseurs;

To be renowned for clay education, for children and adults, and to be an activist for the benefits of creating with clay;

To be bold in promoting innovation that engages a broad range of people in the institution, including through exhibitions that present clay in a broad range of contexts that reinforce its relevance

Everyone Can Love Clay

Priorities

Curatorial excellence and Collection stewardship. The reputation of the Museum is rooted in curatorial excellence and management of its collections. Maintaining a high level of curatorial visibility is essential in all mediums, as well as the conservation of the collections and implementing a strategic plan for their enhancement. Part of curatorial excellence is a focus on communicating the collections to a broad public, in addition to connoisseurs, and directly the development of galleries so that they engage visitors.

Education. The Gardiner Museum educates through clay classes and lectures and other events related to the collections. The Museum is an exponent of the value of clay, historical and for the future.

Catalyst for Creativity. The Museum is an active participant in the cultural life of Toronto, and Canada, and helps prompt creativity in clay and innovative ways for people to care about ceramics.

Specifically...

Permanent Collections: The Gardiner Museum strives to interpret the collection in ways that communicate the remarkable narratives associated with clay and ensures that the collection rotates so that all key elements have an opportunity to be seen by the public

Exhibitions: The Museum typically presents two major exhibitions a year, and smaller ones that connect to historical as well as contemporary themes, including an artist intervention on an annual basis

Research: The Gardiner Museum has a strong ongoing plan for research, publications and lectures

Programs: The Gardiner Museum's programs engage a diverse community, e.g. age, background, and interests, and position the Museum as a community resource valued by all

Education: Clay education for children and adults, and its connection to the collections, demonstrates it's at the core of the Museum's vision and mandate, and can be used as a way to outreach to communities new to the Museum

Gardiner on site: The Museum is a gem that is the basis for a pleasurable visit; the Gardiner Shop and Restaurant, and other aspects of the facility, support this