

Marty Hale-Evans

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Prospective Company Profile

The Industry: Museums

Museums seek to acquire, hold, conserve, and display articles of historical and cultural interest. As part of this function, they are also educational institutions and sometimes assist in, or perform, research and scholarship. Museums' educational mission may manifest in different forms; educating the public about a museum's area of focus and the objects in its collection (as well as their cultural and historical significance) is primary, but it may also incorporate community outreach efforts, partnership with schools and other educational institutions, or the establishment of its own adjunct educational organization or research and reference resources, such as a specialized library.

The museum field is, of course, highly varied and geographically diverse. There are many museums of all sizes and types in nearly every city and town. These include art museums, historical museums, science museums, special-interest museums and collections, and more, often growing to match local cultures and highly individualized goals. Because of this, each museum institution is somewhat independent and generally tied closely to its community, and its economic situation varies according to many factors. While all museums have struggled in the past decade due to fluctuations in the economy as well as political factors (such as budget cuts to public funding of museums), some museums have been able to weather the downturn and recover more quickly because they are larger, in urban areas that tend to have a more solid economic base, or more well-known. For example, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in

New York and the Art Institute of Chicago have recovered well from recent economic problems. [Pes and Stoilas 2012] Nonetheless, all museums have felt the pinch of economic problems that follow the recession in the larger economy that has necessitated less public funding as well as less private giving as individuals have less discretionary income to donate.

By the same token, however, many museums have seen growth in attendance recently; when money is tight and communities are under stress, they need their museums more than ever as places of inspiration, entertainment, and education, usually at a comparatively low cost. According to a study released by the American Association of Museums in 2011, more than 70 percent of the U.S. museums surveyed were under financial distress, yet half of these museums reported increased attendance and educational programs. [Associated Press 2012] This may bode well for future museum funding, as the public remembers the benefits gained from museums in times of need and contributes again when income becomes available as the economy improves. Museums that act to follow future trends in how people want to use museum resources are also more likely to flourish. Some of these trends include smart strategizing according to the changing demographic landscape of philanthropy, partnering with educational institutions to offer credits and “microcredentials” or other forms of non-traditional learning that may be valuable to donors, and attending to patrons’ new relationships with the virtual information world by offering opportunities to connect more deeply with the collections and exhibits (or, conversely, offering opportunities for specifically “unconnected” experiences). [American Alliance of Museums 2013]

The company: EMP

The company I have chosen to focus on is the EMP Museum in Seattle, WA. EMP was founded in 2000 by Paul G. Allen and Jody Allen as the Experience Music Project, a museum designed to explore

creativity and innovation as expressed through American popular music. The Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame was added in 2004. These themes reflected the substantial personal collection of musical and popular culture artifacts owned by Paul Allen and Jody Allen, which was a foundation for the museum's collection. In 2011, the two institutions were merged under the current expanded mission and name EMP Museum. EMP is located at the edge of Seattle Center in downtown Seattle, in the iconic EMP building designed by Frank Gehry; partnering with local utility companies and vendors, EMP is currently pursuing LEED EBOM green-building certification for its landmark facility.

The stated mission and goals of EMP are as follows:

EMP is a leading-edge, nonprofit museum, dedicated to the ideas and risk-taking that fuel contemporary popular culture. With its roots in rock 'n' roll, EMP serves as a gateway museum, reaching multigenerational audiences through collections, exhibitions, and educational programs, using interactive technologies to engage and empower visitors. At EMP, artists, audiences, and ideas converge, bringing understanding, interpretation, and scholarship to the popular culture of our time.

EMP's exhibitions and public programs engage the senses; deepen our understanding of art and culture; and examine their relevance to our lives. The mission is achieved by:

- *Creating immersive environments that invite emotional and intellectual responses.*
- *Delivering distinctive programs using technology and media, the voices of artists and the engagement of our guests.*
- *Developing, protecting, and interpreting a diverse collection of 21st century artifacts.*
- *Providing welcoming, responsive visitor services.*
- *Building community support, ownership, and value in the institution.*

Central to the culture of EMP is a strong conviction that creativity can be learned and that the creative impulse should be actively nurtured. This permeates the museum's exhibit design and programming, much of which is interactive, hands-on, and activity-based. EMP produces several major special and traveling exhibits per year as well as maintaining numerous permanent exhibits. EMP also hosts an ongoing series of concerts and special events – 319 programs and events in 2011. Some current exhibits include Worn to Be Wild: the Black Leather Jacket, The Art of Video Games, and Hear My Train a-Comin': Hendrix Hits London. Total attendance in 2011 to the EMP Museum and at EMP's traveling exhibits was 1,308,997, while the EMP website had more than 700,000 visitors. EMP's Education and Programs department produces full roster of programs for youth education and partnership with schools, including the S.T.A.R. Program, which helps coach student musical ensembles and provides them with opportunities and venues for performance, and the first ever Music Therapy Camp for children with Asperger Syndrome, ASD, or related developmental disabilities. EMP also provides curriculum support and resources for educators that pertain to arts and creativity, and several participatory creativity programs, such as a short film festival, a battle of the bands, and a short story contest. Academic programs of the EMP reached an estimated 385,000 students worldwide in 2011.

EMP is headed by a CEO and Director; this role is currently in transition, as they are currently in the process of hiring a replacement for a retiring executive. The CEO and Director reports to a 12-member board of directors; the executive staff reporting to the CEO and Director includes an Executive Assistant, a Director of Marketing and Audience Development, a Director of Human Resources, a Deputy Director of External Relations and Advancement, a Chief Financial Officer, a Director of Curatorial Affairs for EMP, and a Chief Technology Officer. In all, there are approximately 100 full-time employees, 78 part-time employees, and a complement of volunteers and interns. EMP had a 2011 budget of \$16.3 million, of which \$7.5 million was earned revenue and \$8.7 million was contributed operating support. It is still

significantly financially supported by Paul G. Allen; a goal of the Board is to continue growing EMP's earned income and diversifying its philanthropic funding base.

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