

Evaluating the Children's Museum of the Canadian Museum of Civilization

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Background

The Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC) is the largest of Canada's national museums, comprising museums of history, ethnology, archaeology, folk culture, a national postal museum, and a children's museum. The Canadian War Museum is a major affiliate, operating under the same corporate management. Together, the museums comprise a corporation with a staff of approximately 650 full and part-time staff in high season. The corporation operates two large public buildings and two larger curatorial buildings, and also leases two other off-site facilities to store the remainder of the more than five million artifacts in its collection, which range from the tiny (caribou sinews) to the enormous (main battle tanks).

The Canadian Museum of Civilization features a year-round, full-time professional theater company (which has recently been evaluated!), the world's first combined OMNIMAX/IMAX theater, five boutiques, two restaurants and a healthy catering business, and a changing exhibitions program that has, in the four years since it opened, mounted an average of one new exhibition every two weeks. In addition, there are 57,000 square feet of empty exhibition space, a result of the corporation's only recent ability to assemble the resources to complete construction of its permanent galleries. The museum attracts more than a million visitors a year—a rate that is still growing after four years of operation.

The Children's Museum is different from other children's museums in that it operates within another museum (or, really, a series of other museums). As such it provides a bridge between children and the other parts of the museum. Its mandate is:

- To enrich children's lives;
- To broaden their cultural experiences; and
- To provide them with a creative space in which to learn about the world.

The Children's Museum has approximately 600 square meters of internal exhibition space, with an additional 800 square meters being opened in December, 1994. It also features patios and outside space totalling another 1000 square meters, a permanent collection of some 10,000 artifacts, plus access to the 3.5 million artifacts of the CMC collection (the collection of the Canadian War Museum is not used, as it does not relate to the mandate of the Children's Museum), and curatorial and program staff of 27, supported by the other divisions of CMC.

The Children's Museum caters primarily to pre-teens, and attracts approximately 600,000 visitors each year. Visitors come in both family and primary-school groups. The Children's Museum is the most popular part of CMC and its largest artifact—a garishly-decorated bus from Pakistan—is the most popular artifact in the corporation (with the possible exception of one of Hermann Goering's Mercedes Benz limousines, which forms a centerpiece of one of the Canadian War Museum's galleries).

Why Do an Evaluation?

In late 1992, when a corporate decision was made to fast-track completion of the Children's Museum, its manager requested the Audit and Evaluation Division of the Corporation to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the Children's Museum. Primarily, this would help to obtain information for planning completion of the available 600 square meters, by determining the design concepts that had been most successfully employed in Phase I construction and programming, and to obtain ideas from both staff and visitors on content and design features for the new space.

It was also important for the Children's Museum to confirm:

- the viability of its mandate;
- the degree to which its objectives were being achieved; and
- the impacts and effects of its exhibits and programming.

In short, the evaluation was very much a classical program evaluation.

Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

The objective of the evaluation of the Children's Museum was to provide CMC officials with feedback on five evaluation issues:

- To what extent are the objectives and activities pursued by the Children's Museum relevant and important to Canadians?
- What are the major impacts and effects (intended and unintended) of the Children's Museum?
- To what extent have the exhibits, programs and curatorial activities contributed to the enrichment of children's lives, broadening of cultural experiences, and providing a creative space to learn about the world?

- To what extent are visitors to the CM satisfied with the Museum?
- Are there alternate exhibits, programs, and curatorial activities to those presently being offered, that could be implemented, and which would more effectively address the objectives of the CM?

Each issue was addressed through a number of more specific evaluation questions. Before conducting the evaluation, we conducted an evaluation assessment to: plan for the evaluation, identify more detailed questions to be addressed under each issue, review information which was available on the museum, and develop the data collection methodologies and approaches to be used in the study. To assist the evaluator in determining where to place emphasis, each evaluation question was given a priority ranking of high, medium or low.

How Did We Evaluate the Museum?

The methodology used to evaluate the museum was based upon an approach that utilizes multiple lines of evidence, and allows the researcher to build a chain of evidence with the data collected. By using multiple lines of evidence, various data collection techniques are used to gather information from a number of information sources in order to obtain the required information to answer the evaluation questions.

The approach taken has allowed an in-depth treatment of each question within the five evaluation issues. The key methods used were as follows:

Analysis of Completed Evaluation Forms

Visitors to the Children's Museum are invited to complete a very brief evaluation form, though only a tiny fraction of its visitors do so. These forms are quite brief and ask the visitor for comments about various aspects of the Children's Museum. We reviewed a total of 156 completed visitor evaluation forms. These represented all forms on file which were submitted to the CM from December, 1991 to May, 1992. This analysis provided the evaluation team with information regarding the more popular exhibits in the Museum, areas of the Museum that need improvement, the importance of the Museum to visitors, and overall visitor satisfaction with the Museum.

Visitor Surveys

The Visitor Survey captured the opinions and attitudes of 388 adults and 129 children, just after they had completed a visit. Adults and parents completed a brief written questionnaire which took approximately 10 minutes to complete. While adults were completing that task, we conducted a second survey with the children accompanying them. This survey was the about the same length as the adult questionnaire, but was administered in the form of an oral interview. The target group was children between the ages of five and fourteen. These interviews were conducted close to an activity

area, so that younger children could amuse themselves while their parents and siblings completed the surveys.

Focus Groups

Focus group sessions were held with three different types of respondents: children who had visited the Museum, adults who had visited the Museum, and staff and volunteers of the Museum. Participants in the children's and adults' focus group were recruited during their visit to the Museum. Participants (or their parents, in the case of the children's focus group) were provided with a confirming letter about the focus group, and a map to the focus group facility. An honorarium of \$30 was paid to participants in both focus groups. Participants in the staff and volunteers focus group, which was conducted in French, were recruited from a list provided to us by the Children's Museum.

Development of Signage Methodologies

A pilot test methodology was developed in consultation with Children's Museum officials. The objective of designing the methodology was to provide Museum staff with a mechanism to capture feedback from visitors about signage in the Museum. The development of signage methodologies partly drew upon data collected during the first phase of the Visitor Survey.

Mail-Out Survey of Teachers

The teachers' mail-out survey was conducted during September and October. The sample frame for the mail-out was developed from Children's Museum records of teachers who had accompanied classes on a museum visit. The questionnaires (in English or French) were mailed to approximately 80 teachers, along with a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. A reminder letter was sent approximately two weeks after the questionnaires were mailed.

What Did We Find Out?

Relevance of Museum Activities

The evaluation examined the extent to which the objectives and activities pursued by the Children's Museum are relevant and important to Canadians. To examine this issue the following questions were explored:

- To what extent are the activities of the CM consistent with this mandate?
- Are the objectives of the CM consistent with the CMC's mandate?
- Are the mission and objectives of the CM relevant to what Canadians want in their cultural institutions?

The corporate objectives of the Canadian Museum of Civilization are to:

“Increase, throughout Canada and internationally, interest in, knowledge and critical understanding of an appreciation and respect for human cultural achievements and human behavior by establishing, maintaining and developing for research and posterity a collection of objects of historical or cultural interest, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, and by demonstrating those achievements and behaviors, the knowledge derived from them and the understanding they represent.”

The mission and objectives of the Children's Museum are consistent with the CMC's mandate in a number of ways:

- The Children's Museum increases knowledge, critical understanding, and appreciation and respect for human cultural achievements, through the intercultural approach taken by the Children's Museum to its activities, programs, and exhibitions;
- The Children's Museum establishes and maintains a collection of children's material and items of interest to children that are of historical or cultural interest; and
- The Children's Museum is a forum in which children, and to a certain degree, adults can derive knowledge and understanding from the programs, activities, exhibits, and products (including publications) of the Children's Museum.

From the data collected, the mission of the Children's Museum appears to be relevant, and to reflect what Canadians want in a cultural institution. There is an overall high level of satisfaction with the Museum, including its layout, staff and activities. A total of 47% of those surveyed (adults, children, and teachers) are return visitors (i.e., have been to the Children's Museum one or more times before), and 48% of return visitors have been to the Children's Museum 3 or more times. As well, the comment cards often stated the intention to return to the Museum, with many comments starting with “Next time I come to the Museum, I will ...”

While it was a relatively straightforward matter to determine that the mission and objectives were relevant to what visitors wanted in this institution, it was much more difficult to determine what visitors were getting out of their visits. Interaction between adults and children at exhibits can take many hours. Questions may be asked, adults and children may talk about the exhibit, or the exhibit may simply provide an opportunity for adults and children to be together.

Less than a third of children reported that their parents asked them questions (22%), or that they asked their parents questions (28%), during their visit to the Museum. Almost half of the children reported that they do not read the signs and labels of exhibits in the Children's Museum. Very

few participants in either the adult or children's focus groups mentioned having asked questions of their parents/children during their visit to the Museum. Adult participants felt children knew what to do at exhibits without needing their explanations.

However, asking questions is only one part of interaction. Being together, doing things together, and discussing are also components of interaction. With regard to these activities, most adults (81%) indicated that they had come to the Museum with their own children. A majority of children (62%) also indicated that they were with their parents/mother/father when looking at exhibits or when doing things. While the level of questioning between children and parents might be low, the Children's Museum is clearly providing an opportunity for families to be together. Since the Museum aims to facilitate interaction between parent and child, these findings indicate that more research is needed on how parents and children interact at exhibits.

Impacts and Effects

The impacts and effects of the Children's Museum were another key issue for this evaluation. This issue focused on the overall impacts and effects of the CM but also specifically asked:

- What do visitors learn as a result of visiting the CM?
- To what extent are these impacts long lasting?

In the survey of children, 47% said they had learned something at the Museum. This percentage should be interpreted with caution, as some children's definition of "learning" may be very narrowly defined as the memorization of facts and dates, and may not include experiential learning. For example, we suspect that few children would leave the sand or water tables and say that they had "learned" something, yet educators and child development experts have demonstrated that children do gain an understanding of gravity, physics, and how the world works, from such "play".

The adult survey also addressed the issue of learning. Of adults surveyed, 75% rated the Children's Museum highly as an opportunity for their children to learn something, and 54% professed high satisfaction with the Museum as an opportunity for adults to learn something.

From the children's focus group, it is quite clear the Children's Museum has both long-lasting and immediate effects on child visitors. When asked for their spontaneous reaction, child participants could name many specific things that they had learned at the Museum. When pictures of exhibits and artifacts were shown to children, they could recall the related activities in which they had participated. The special exhibits and highly participatory activities had particularly strong impacts on the children. Some who had previously been to the Museum were able to recall special exhibits which had appeared more than two years before. Parents in the adult focus group also reported that their children learned and retained diverse

information from the Museum. One parent gave us an example of his child recognizing the architecture of the Chinese exhibit in a documentary on China which he later saw.

Of the teachers surveyed, 96% said their students learn something from a visit to the Children's Museum, and 92% said the effects of a visit are long-lasting, as well as immediate. Teachers identified hands-on exhibits and activities as having the longest-lasting effect on children. These results corroborate the findings of the children's focus group.

Contribution of Museum Activities to Its Mission

We examined the extent to which exhibits, programmes and curatorial activities of the Children's Museum contributed to the achievement of its mission. The following questions were addressed:

- Would an increased use of other means of communication lead to more effective exhibits and programs?
- Is the Children's Museum communicating effectively to visitors and potential visitors?
- Could the signage in the Museum be improved? If so, how?
- Are there unmet needs of staff and volunteers?

According to adults surveyed, the most effective labels on exhibits and artifacts were labels that were aimed at children. 60% of adults indicated that this approach was effective. Slightly smaller numbers of adults (53% and 52% respectively) felt that labels that were informational (describing the visual content of the exhibit), or instructional (telling the visitor what to look for in the exhibit) were also effective.

The same group of respondents saw other kinds of labels as less effective. Only 30% of adults saw interpretive labels (interpreting objects or processes) as effective, while 29% felt descriptive labels were effective. Twenty-seven percent of adults felt that the non-traditional labels used, such as computer screens, were effective, and only 24% felt that labels aimed at parents were effective.

Teachers felt even more strongly (77%) that the labels aimed at children were the most effective. Factual labels (e.g., telling where the artifact originated) were seen as effective by 73% and questioning labels (asking questions about the exhibits) were considered effective by 63%.

On the other hand, floor staff and volunteers participating in the focus group said signs and labels appear to be more of a requirement for adult visitors than for children. They mentioned that few children are inclined to read signs and labels, and that pictures were more effective in conveying messages to children. This belief tends to be confirmed by survey results.

Indeed, an overwhelming majority of adults (94%) and teachers (97%) indicated that they usually read the labels attached to exhibits and artifacts. However, fewer children (30%) indicated that they read the signs and labels, with 23% sometimes reading them, and 47% not reading at all. Of those

children who said they read the signs, 97% indicated that they found the signs and labels helpful.

Adult visitors and teachers preferred exhibits that provided a variety of communication tools, such as a label with a video screen (54% and 90% respectively), as well as exhibits that provided adults and teachers with a series of questions to ask children (44% and 43%), or a label giving brief details about the exhibit (39% and 40%). Less than a third of adults preferred soundtracks (32%), a video screen with information (28%), or a computer as part of an exhibit (24%). Of the teachers surveyed, 50% said they preferred a video screen with information, and 27% mentioned a preference for a computer as part of the exhibit. None of the teachers indicated that they would prefer no computers at all. A majority of adult respondents (66%) and teachers (87%) preferred signs that provided written text and symbols together.

Adult visitors felt that there was a need for more information about how to interact with children at an exhibit (42%), as well as for ways in which the exhibit can be used (39%), and about the artifacts on display (26%). Slightly less than a quarter of respondents felt that they needed more information about the purpose behind exhibits.

Teachers' preferences differed markedly from adults. Teachers said they needed more information on ways in which the exhibits can be used (61%), on the artifacts on display (43%), on how to interact with children (39%), and on the purpose behind exhibits (36%).

The need for more information about the exhibits was strongly felt by floor staff and volunteers. In the focus group, employees mentioned that they often felt like they lacked the time to properly learn about the exhibits, and volunteers indicated that it was difficult for them to know a lot about many of the exhibits. Volunteers were very positive concerning their experience in the Children's Museum, and felt that they were treated with respect and appreciation by other staff members.

Adult visitors were very satisfied with current labels on exhibits and artifacts, with 52% rating the labels and signs highly. Approximately the same proportion of teachers (57%) were highly satisfied with current signs and labels. General directional signage (i.e., washroom signs) were rated slightly higher, with 56% of adult respondents rating the signs in the top two scores on a 1 to 5 scale, and 72% of the teachers rating them in the top four scores on a 1 to 10 scale. In the employees and volunteers focus group, it was suggested that the educational value of exhibits could be increased by posting a small map beside the exhibit to highlight the country referred to in the label.

Survey results appear to be contradictory regarding the effectiveness of signs and labels. Adults felt labels aimed at children were the most effective, but almost half the children indicated that they do not read them. Slightly more than half of the respondents expressed high satisfaction with current signs and labels. Teachers and adult respondents indicated different

needs regarding their information needs, indicating a need for museum signage to be directed at different groups of visitors at the same time. Teachers, volunteers, and employees agreed that they wanted more information on exhibits, as well as on upcoming activities. Employees also felt that group leaders should be provided with more information about the requirements of a visit to the Children's Museum, and CMC employees should be given more information about the Children's Museum.

The Children's Museum is currently making a strong contribution to its mission through its exhibits, artifacts, and activities. Coupled with the finding that the Children's Museum is an effective component of the CMC and reflects what Canadians want in a Museum, the Children's Museum is viewed as a valuable cultural institution.

Visitor Satisfaction

Visitor satisfaction is a key concern of the Children's Museum. We addressed a number of specific questions to explore visitor satisfaction. These questions included:

- How satisfied are visitors with exhibits and activities, service from staff, the layout of the Museum, and the admission arrangements?
- Are there variations in the expressed level of satisfaction among the different visitor groups?

Several dimensions of client satisfaction were examined, including the layout of the museum, admission procedures, Museum staff, exhibits and artifacts, and overall satisfaction.

A majority of adult visitors (51%) indicated that they wanted more places to sit down in the Museum, and preferred benches (66%) over chairs (30%), cushions (23%) and stools (14%).

Questionnaire responses revealed that most visitors come into contact with Children's Museum staff at some time during their visit (as indicated by 69% of adult respondents, and 87% of teachers), and that the most likely type of interaction occurs when staff members lead a program or workshop (38% of adults and 92% of teachers), when staff answer a general question about the facility and/or give directions (43% of adults and 15% of teachers), when staff answer a question about an exhibit (30% of adults and 12% of teachers), and when staff animate or interpret an exhibit (22% of adults and 31% of teachers). Adult focus group participants felt that the role of staff members should mostly be to facilitate, rather than lead, activities.

Staff and volunteers indicated that the most satisfying aspects of their work at the Museum were coming into contact with the public, and seeing children learn. Adult visitors reported that they were very satisfied with the staff. The scores reported below indicate the percentages of adult visitors and teachers who rated staff highly on a number of dimensions. The satisfaction rating from visitors included:

- 87% of adults and 100% of teachers stated high satisfaction with respect to the friendliness of staff;
- 67% of adults and 96% of teachers stated high satisfaction with the staff's knowledge about exhibits and the museum;
- 72% of adults and 92% of teachers stated high satisfaction with the availability of staff to answer questions; and
- 54% of adults and 96% of teachers stated high satisfaction with regard to staff members as facilitators or animators.

Teachers' higher ratings (compared to adults) of staff knowledgeable of exhibits and the Museum, and with satisfaction with staff as facilitators or animators, could be explained by the fact that almost all teachers indicated that staff led a program or workshop with their group. As such their opportunities for asking questions about the Museum and exhibits might have been greater and the staff's ability as facilitator/ animator would have been experienced more directly than for visitors.

A vast majority of adult respondents (97%) and teachers (100%) think that the Museum is succeeding in communicating its overall message to visitors. Participants thought the overall message of the Children's Museum was to make learning, and the museum experience, fun (37% of adults and 17% of teachers), to teach through hands-on experience (18% of adults and 20% of teachers), and to increase awareness of the history of our cultures (20% of adults and 17% of teachers). When asked how likely it is that respondents will return to the Museum:

- 67% of adults indicated a rating of 4 or a 5, where 5 means very likely; and 87% of teachers answered a 7 or above on a 10-point scale; and
- 60% of adults and 92% of teachers indicated, on the same scales, that they would return within 1 year.

Respondents were asked to provide satisfaction ratings on a number of dimensions regarding their overall satisfaction with the Children's Museum. The following percentages of respondents stated high agreement with the following statements:

- 74% of adults and 89% of teachers were satisfied with the Children's Museum as good value for the money;
- 71% of adults and 82% of teachers were satisfied with the Museum when compared to other museums they were familiar with;
- 81% of adults were satisfied that the Museum provides an opportunity to do something with their families;
- 75% of adults and 80% of teachers were satisfied that the Museum provides an opportunity for children/students to learn something;

- 54% of adults and 92% of teachers were satisfied that the Museum provides an opportunity for adults to learn something; and
- 85% of adults and 92% of teachers were satisfied that the Museum is a place to have fun.

Of the children who were surveyed, 99% also indicated that they had fun at the Museum. The finding is supported unequivocally by the comments cards and the focus group with children.

A total of 99% of adult respondents and 100% of teachers said they would recommend the Children's Museum to someone else. When asked to consider the staff, facility, exhibits, and artifacts within the Children's Museum, 78% of adult respondents and 89% of teachers rated the Museum highly. The vast majority of the children (94%) said that they would tell their friends about the Museum.

Participants in the adult focus group gave an overall satisfaction rating of between 8 and 9 to the Children's Museum (10 being "very satisfied"). All children in the children's focus group were enthusiastic about the idea of going back to the Museum. They expressed their belief that separate children's museums were needed because they are less boring than adult museums, and they allow children to get used to museums.

Overall satisfaction with the Museum in general, and with more specific aspects or dimensions of the Museum, tended to be high from all the groups surveyed. A greater proportion of teachers than adults were consistently highly satisfied with the Museum, especially with respect to their involvement with staff. Adults and children indicated that they would like to see more artifacts and exhibits, especially of the hands-on variety. A majority of adults said they were planning to return to the Museum and a great majority of adults and children said they would recommend the Children's Museum to someone they know.

Alternate Delivery Mechanisms

This issue assesses whether there are alternate exhibits, programs, and curatorial activities to those presently being used, that would more effectively address the objectives of the Children's Museum. To address this issue, the evaluation team examined whether the existing types of exhibits, programs, and curatorial activities could be improved to have a more significant impact on visitors to the Museum.

Adult visitors were asked what would facilitate their visit to the Museum, and half of adult respondents and 59% of teachers stated that they would like to have a guide for parents/teachers, 44% of adults and 48% of teachers indicated that they would like to have a self-help guide to the Museum, and 23% of adult respondents suggested that they would like videos or computers that provide information about the Museum. A

majority of teachers (69%) asked for guided tours, in the form of a structured progression through the Museum accompanied by a facilitator.

Guides were mentioned most often as tools that would facilitate a visit to the Children's Museum, and the great majority of the adults who were surveyed said they wanted more information about special events that are happening at the Museum. Children mentioned a variety of exhibits that they would like to have added to the Museum to improve it, and they agreed with employees and volunteers that more activities and games were needed for older children.

Summary

Overall, the evaluation indicated that the Children's Museum is achieving its objectives, and has a positive impact on both children and adults who visit the Museum.

Survey respondents and focus group participants could name many exhibits that they thought were particularly effective in the facilitating learning, and demonstrated through their comments that they had learned many things. As well, this evaluation team saw evidence of this occurring throughout the Museum. Comments indicate that hands-on exhibits contribute most effectively to long-lasting effects, and many parents mentioned that they would like to see more hands-on activities and artifacts. It should be noted that respondents were satisfied that the Museum provided a learning opportunity not only for children, but for adults as well.

While both adult respondents and teachers reported that labels and signs aimed at children were the most effective, few children actually read the labels and signs—a finding supported by employees and volunteers at the Museum. Almost all adults read the signs and labels. There appears to be interaction between adults and children at the Children's Museum at a basic level (e.g., adults playing with children), but high-level interaction (e.g., asking questions) was not nearly as common. This could indicate a need for emphasizing ways for adults and children to interact, rather than emphasizing the content of signs and labels, especially since adults and teachers mentioned that they wanted more information on the former.

Findings from this evaluation indicate the need to provide further information on the Children's Museum. Employees and volunteers suggested that they would like more advanced notice of the upcoming activities of the Museum, as would adult visitors and teachers. Also desired were more information on exhibits, clearer communication between employees and superiors, and increased communication between Children's Museum and CMC employees. Informing CMC employees about what is going on at the Children's Museum, and making the upcoming schedule of activities available well ahead of time, were suggested as ways to improve the distribution of quality information to the public.

Overall satisfaction from all people surveyed during the evaluation was high, although teachers consistently rated the Museum more highly than the general public on a number of dimensions. A greater proportion of teachers also indicated that they were planning to go back to the Museum within the next 6 to 12 months. Given that only a quarter of the teachers surveyed were on the Museum's mailing list, the number of return visitors could potentially be increased by adding names to that list.

The most common suggestion for improving the Children's Museum was to add hands-on artifacts in the Museum. Games were consistently preferred by both adults and children. Participants in the employees' and volunteers' focus group mentioned that appropriate games which involve older children more actively were needed—a perception which was also expressed by child participants.

The Children's Museum is a very good place for both children and adults to learn. As it is, the Museum is accomplishing this goal to the satisfaction of visitors. The evaluation showed that the Children's Museum is accomplishing its mission, as well as making a strong contribution to the mandate and objectives of the CMC. This is especially impressive when one considers that only the first of two phases of the Museum is completed. The availability of more hands-on activities, and of activities targeting older children, could probably further contribute to the effectiveness of the CM in accomplishing its objectives. However, it is most important to ensure that employees and volunteers are well enough informed to pass on their knowledge, and that the public is made aware of the activities taking place at the Museum, and of all it has to offer.

Impacts of the Evaluation

What did the Children's Museum get out of this evaluation, how has it used what it got, and what has happened since this evaluation was completed? First, it discovered a great deal about what its visitors—teachers, parents children—liked and didn't like about what it was already doing. It received good suggestions for improving and expanding current services and exhibits, and it has since conducted two smaller evaluations to follow up—one of the children's advisory committee, and another of signage.

Most importantly, it discovered that it was achieving its objectives beyond its wildest expectations—that the children who visit the museum are at least as interested in learning as in playing, and that the Children's Museum's mandate is not only appropriate, but is also tangibly directing its exhibitions and programs.

There have been two significant spin-off effects of this evaluation. First certain key staff members in other areas of the Canadian Museum of Civilization have become much less critical of the Children's Museum, and, in some cases, even seem to have become boosters. As well, since this was

one of the first major evaluations to be carried out since the museum's establishment, it proved that evaluation can provide essential results, and that it does not have to be seen as an unusually nasty form of audit.

What Made This Evaluation Effective?

The management and staff of the Children's Museum really wanted the information, and saw it as useful. A competitive process was used to select the firm to conduct the project, a factor which added to staff confidence. The team selected was extremely competent, and gave the Children's Museum products cut at precisely the levels it wanted. There was a good fit of personalities between the evaluation team and staff and the museum got a quality product on time, and on budget.