



FUTURE PROOF MUSEUMS



Image courtesy of the Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton and Hove

Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton and Hove Business Model

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“Sustainability needs to be about purpose rather than propping up something in which no one wants to participate.”

Janita Bagshawe

Director, Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton and Hove



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A break-through moment:

Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton and Hove

Brighton Royal Pavilion and Museums have been reviewing their vision and business model to enable them to remain relevant to the people they want to connect with and to become more resilient in an ever-changing world.

The Director, Janita Bagshawe, has overall responsibility for five museums across Brighton and Hove. She recently took part in the AMA's Future Proof Museums (RPM) programme. During sessions which involved other Royal Pavilion and Museums team members she identified that the optimal future for their business model involved each of the five sites clearly "finding its own voice".

The Royal Pavilion is a true icon for the city — reflecting a culture that is cutting edge, eccentric, creative, tolerant, diverse and playful. Its iconic architecture has helped make it the number one attraction in Brighton and Sussex and enabled it to generate income through admission, retail, weddings, functions and filming.

However, adopting the business model of a national attraction was not the best way forward for the other museums.



Image courtesy of the Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton and Hove

The business model canvas

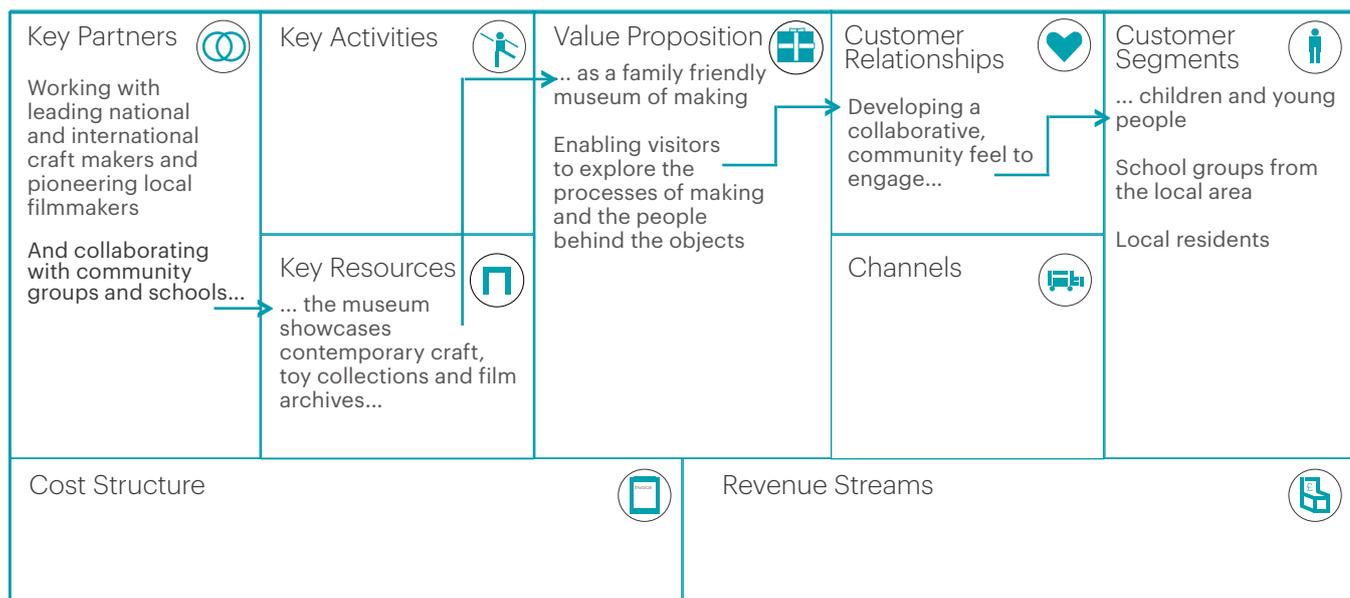
Using Strategyzer.com's business model canvas during the Future Proof programme helped the RPM team to:

- analyse and frame where each museum is now and where it wants to be
- inform forward strategy
- assess financial and visitor drivers
- consider how to balance the key purpose of each museum with commercial imperatives of income generation

The canvas also alerted them to what activities do not fit the model and could be dropped out.

As a result, each museum can now differentiate its unique characteristics to provide clarity about the value of that museum to the people it seeks to engage. For example, one museum with craft and filmmaking collections is now repositioning itself as a museum of making focused on engaging families, schools and local residents.

The following canvas has been simplified for the purpose of this case study:



Another museum is repositioning itself as an interactive science centre, combining the gothic charm of a 19th Century 'bird' museum with a 21st Century story of evolution.



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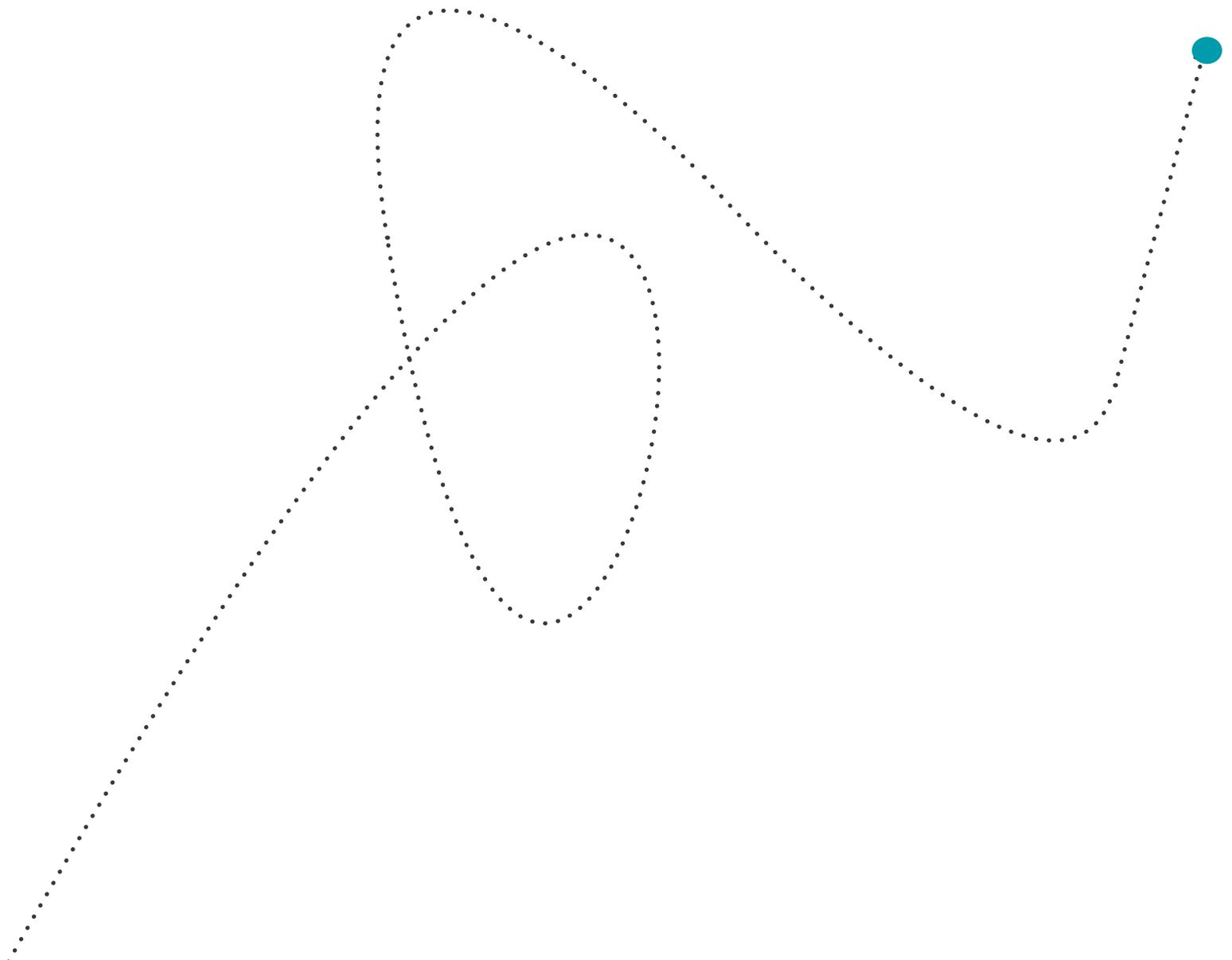
Another has revised its programme to provide fun and innovative events which make good use of its site. This raised visitor numbers and compensated for a decline in school party visits.

The decision to take a different focus for each museum was based on the recognition that a business model is more than just a model of how an organisation generates income; it is a model of how an organisation generates value. Each of the Brighton museums has a clear value proposition which enables it to appeal to different visitors. As Janita puts it, "sustainability needs to be about purpose rather than propping up something in which no one wants to participate."

Reviewing your business model

Reviewing your business model involves considering:

- How desirable that model is to the people you want to engage. Do visitors, funders, participants, members etc. truly love what you do? Are you attracting new visitors? Do people come back again and again? Identifying the perfect fit between your vision, collections, skills and other assets, and what visitors (and other groups) want to get involved with is key to future resilience.
- How feasible is it to deliver? Do you have the right structure, resources, skills, activities etc. to deliver on your promises and fulfil your value proposition?
- How financially viable is the model? How predictable is your income? Is any income likely to reduce or increase in the future?



Clarifying purpose

Given the very different nature of the venues and collections at Brighton, rather than trying to compare and hunt for commonalities across all five venues and become a jack of all trades and a master of none, the team clarified the purpose of each museum, its place in its community and in the bigger picture of the city's vision and visitor economy.

Collectively they deliver on the manifesto:

"Many of today's issues and challenges in Brighton and beyond have echoes or roots in the past. We need to learn from our shared histories and cultures, science and heritage to shape our future.

Our museums and collections... link the past with the present to contribute to society now and drive a better future... have a social purpose: they are an anchor for the community... are for present and future generations... the aspirations of our future city."

The break-through moment

Future Proof Museums was a breakthrough moment for the team at RPM. It provided the solution to an issue that they had grappled with. The new business models have supported the planning for RPM's NPO application and RPM's process of moving its governance from local authority control toward independent trust status.

This new way of working is embedding into the leadership team's work. Collectively, the five museums operate as a 'fellowship' or community — "where all members of the workforce have significant roles to play in the success of museum services."

Business model generation is a creative and exploratory process. What's right for one museum, its community, its collections, and its vision, is not necessarily right for another. As a contrast to this approach you might want to read the case study from the [National Justice Museum](#), which has united its various venues and collections under one clear national brand.



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