The IPOP Exhibition Development Toolkit and Process

1. **An IPOP team** - Form an IPOP team (or get IPOP profiles of a pre-existing team)
2. **Understanding IPOP** - Explain to the team what IPOP is and why it is relevant to their work.
3. **Interviewing visitors** - Train interviewers in this particular method (interviewers can be from inside the team or from elsewhere in the museum)
4. **Concept development** – Creative meetings, using visitor input to enrich and inspire the team's ideas. Two-hour meetings biweekly or monthly. First hour: team divides into interviewer & note-taker pairs and discusses concept statement with visitors. Second hour: team discusses new/unexpected/different things they heard and whether they want to alter the statement/plan in response. During interviews there can be an informal attempt to estimate the IPOP preference of the interviewees. The team is looking for perspectives and reactions that differ from their own, including words understood in different ways, unanticipated negative or positive responses, unexpected connections or implications, etc. These are perspectives that the team can consider and decide whether or not they wish to address them. This is also the moment to try out alternative versions/extensions/variations of what the exhibition could be. Are there responses that suggest new possibilities or overlooked potential? The result of this process is a well-formed, accurate and compelling statement that can become the wording for an entrance panel, PR materials, website previews, etc. It becomes the key guiding document that helps the team stay on track as the development process continues.
5. **Title creation and testing** – A step-by-step process helps the team to create strong title candidates. Surveys of visitors determine which title possibility has the strongest draw and whether that draw is influenced by IPOP preference. It can be done at this point when a project needs a definite title early on because the core concept has been established. However, in some cases it might be preferable to wait until the exhibition experience is clearer and images are more definite – at the 30% stage. See the title creation and testing process document for details.
6. **Content card sorts** – This step combines clarification of content possibilities with surveys of visitors to refine and enrich content choices and language. The team makes a deck of 48 cards: 12 Idea cards with the key concepts of the exhibition; 12 People cards that depict people who are important to the exhibition and can have emotional resonance with visitors; 12 Object cards featuring the top objects in the exhibition; and 12 Physical cards describing possible interactive/immersive/audio experiences. Visitors use these cards in a kind of game: picking the ones they like best, arranging them in clusters, and naming the clusters. They then take an IPOP survey. The data is analyzed statistically to determine which cards had especially strong or weak responses and how IPOP preferences relate to those choices. The team can then choose to replace the lowest ranking cards with alternatives; re-phrase and re-present them; or leave them as

they are (depending on how important they are to the overall concept/story). The process is repeated until the team feels that they have established a strong core of Ideas, People, Objects, and Physical experiences.

7. **The IPOP matrix** – This activity does not involve visitors. The team constructs a matrix with IPOP columns and content rows. For each content item/display/experience row, cells indicate where the team believes that this element is making a strong contribution in one or more of the IPOP dimensions. Is this a strong Idea? Strongly emotional? Will it reward close-looking in an engaging way? Does it provide a physical connection? The cells can even contain specific details of the element that describe/illustrate how it is effective in that dimension. After the initial creation of the matrix, the team can consider whether it is possible to add "new" dimensions to key elements. Is there an overlooked Idea/Story/Detail/Physical possibility that would make that element more of a "4E" (i.e., 4 experience = IPOP) element?

8. **Experience design** - How are experiences distributed across the entire exhibition? Where are flips most likely to be achieved? This stage is usually expressed as a diagram that can be thought of as the experience landscape of the exhibition.

9. **Testing 4E displays** – This step involves visitors to check on the effectiveness of the most important combinations developed in the previous step. Only a few exhibition elements are likely to be 4E in themselves – i.e., strong in all four IPOP dimensions. Others can be brought together in combinations, however, to form holistic displays that are 4E. This activity offers a chance to check on the beliefs of the team that they have elements or combinations of elements that are effective across all four dimensions. As in concept development, the team uses creative meetings preceded by interviews with visitors. Visitors are shown papers that represent these elements/combinations. Each one includes text, people photos and stories, object images, and (where possible) a description of a somatic experience. Does everyone who sees this sheet find a starting point that draws them in? Do they grasp the synergy of the whole? Does it "flip" them to an unexpected dimension? Typically one or more visitors in a single interview can be shown 3-7 of these sheets. These 4E displays can be thought of as the central vertebrae of the exhibition spine. They will be the locations where "flips" will be most likely. They are IPOP highlights.

10. **Testing section themes** – This is a late-stage activity that involves visitors to refine and enrich statements (with or without images) that distinguish sections of the exhibition. In some instances it is preferable to have done this during the concept development stage (step 4 above). In others it can wait until this later point. If section divisions are not critical, it can be skipped.

11. **Prototyping** – investigating visitor responses to texts, interactives, graphics, design, displays, etc., to refine details as a last check before final design. In the case of texts, this can resemble crowd-sourced editing. It is most important, however, for interactives, which are easily misunderstood or misused unless their design and instructions are tested for unanticipated problems across IPOP types.

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