



SESSION PROPOSAL GUIDE

#VEX23

The cultural sector is in a period of significant change. It is imperative that we let go of restrictive and outdated practices and focus on developing a more inclusive and equitable field. With an eye turned to flexibility, we welcome you to bring your ideas for new content, new staffing models, new programs, and new exhibits to the 2023 Visitor Experience Conference. In this spirit, we encourage you to try something new in your institutions this year, then come to VEX23 and tell us all about it. We'll be waiting in the Brandywine Valley for you.

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

This year we are looking at ways we can improve our field and focus on the future. We're looking for folks who think on their feet, who've had to make pivots large and small, for folks who embody the meaning of flexible. What new ideas are you implementing in your institution? How are you reimagining museum work? What are you doing to improve staff experience? What risks have you taken? What mistakes have you made, and what did you learn from them? Which ideas have brought you success? Where do you see museums going in the future? What would you like to see more of in our field?





SHARE YOUR STORY

Get together with your team and submit your session proposal for the 2023 Visitor Experience Conference. Proposals must be submitted by Friday March 31, 2023. Only complete submissions will be reviewed.

What are we looking for in a good presentation?

- Clear takeaways with applications in our everyday work.
- Fresh ideas and projects that have been tested in your institution that resulted in a visible difference in operations.
- **Sessions that bring diverse perspectives** - consider who is presenting. Is your panel representative of different genders, races, economic backgrounds, work level, etc.
- Clarity and consistency in titles and descriptions. Your session has value, give attendees a snapshot of that value.

DEVELOP A FUTURE-FOCUSED SESSION IN 3 STEPS

1

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

VEX welcomes visitor experience professionals from around the world each year. Our conference brings together everyone from the front line ticketing team to the President/CEO of an organization. Our audience is excited to be at a conference that focuses on experience and engagement and they are eager to hear from their colleagues in the field. We all have stories to tell and experiences to share, and our audience has shown time and again that they love to hear from people like you.



PAST PRESENTER JOB TITLES

Senior Guest Experience Manager
Director of Communications
Project Manager
Director of Community Partnerships
Visitor Services & Museum Shop Manager
Field Services Manager
Vice President, Marketing & Brand
Manager of Fan Engagement
Visitor Services Team Lead
Director of Operations
Gallery Specialist

Manager of Visitor Services & Analytics
Program Manager
Director of Development
Visitor Engagement Specialist
Volunteer Program Specialist
Chief Executive Officer
Director of Visitor & Member Services
Manager of Guest Services & Retail
Visitor Services/Membership Coordinator
Director of Interpretation
Director of Operations

2

KNOW YOUR STYLE

Make your content shine. Choose a format that highlights your content and allows you to interact with your audience. We offer a variety of formats to cover individual learning and engagement styles. Don't see your format here? Send us an email at programming@visitorexperience.group



- Lecture
- Panel Discussion
- Roundtable
- Technology Demo
- 2-3 Hour Workshop

3

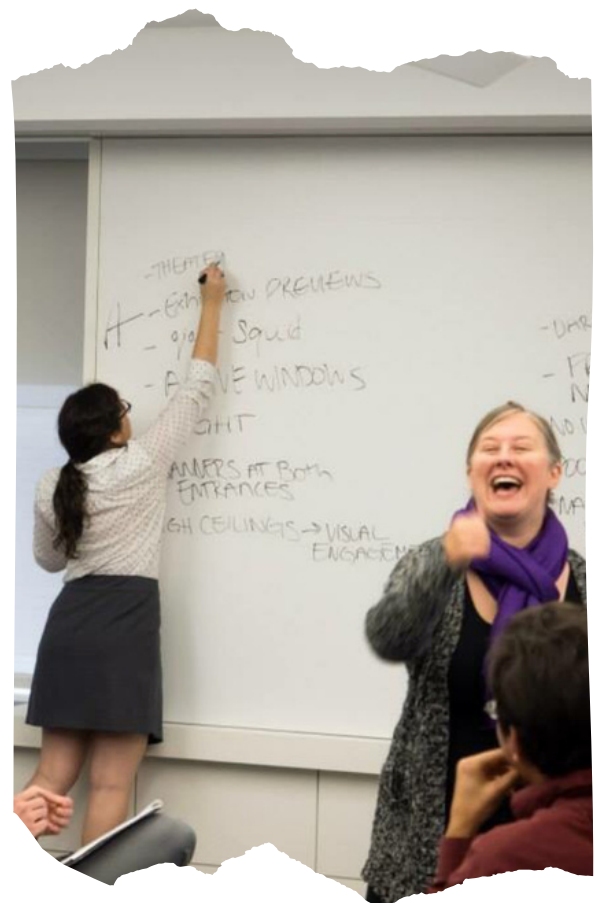
KNOW YOUR TOPIC

This is it, the meat and potatoes and your proposal. Here are the components you need to include:

- Your primary objectives and goals for this session.
- Three or four audience takeaways

Other Considerations:

- Descriptions don't cover everything. Let the committee know if there is anything outside that description that is important.
- An interactive or action element can inspire your colleagues
- Case studies are valuable but balance them with concrete actions that attendees can bring to their institutions.



TOPIC IDEAS

- Welcoming New Communities
- Accessibility
- Visitor-Centered Strategic Planning
- Master Planning/ Building Re-design
- Forming a Union
- Construction
- Innovative Wayfinding
- Visitation Models
- Negotiation
- Adapting in a pandemic
- Inclusion Initiatives
- Evaluation Strategies
- Partnerships/Corporate Partnerships
- Innovative Programming
- Community Engagement
- Membership
- Internal and External Communication
- Sustainability
- Dealing with Difficult Situations
- Staffing, Training, and Hiring
- Leaving the field
- Performance Reviews/Appraisals
- Staff Retention Programs
- Volunteer Services
- Retail Services
- Budget Basics
- Security/Public Safety



SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL TODAY!

Please follow these guidelines for submitting:

- Proposals must be submitted by midnight EST on March 31, 2023. Only complete submissions will be reviewed.
- Sessions are 60 minutes in length (this includes time for question and answers).
- If there is more than one presenter working on a proposal together, please establish a point of contact.

[Fill out this form to submit your proposal](#)

SAMPLE SESSIONS

Starting From Scratch: A Museum Metamorphosis - VEX22

- Patrick Wittwer, Sr. Guest Experience Manager, Delaware Museum of Nature and Science



In December of 2020, the Delaware Museum of Natural History closed for the last time and in May of 2022, the Delaware Museum of Nature and Science opened in its place. In this session, we will share the story of our Museum Metamorphosis, from a complete redesign of the entire museum to a full rebranding to a brand new guest experience philosophy.

Beyond the Field: Putting Transferable Skills to Work - VEX20

- Joseph Gonzales, Business Development Associate, Physician Life Care Planning
- Mikaela Maria, Manager of Community Programs and Services, Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities
- Tarra Raspanti, Office and Events Manager, Manor College

Join us for a lively discussion with former museum professionals who have left the field and learn about moving into a new field, adapting skills from museum work for a new profession, and life after museums.



FAQ

Where/when is the conference?

VEX23 takes place over October 22-25 in Wilmington, DE. Your presentation will take place on Monday, October 23 at the Hotel duPont.

Is there any compensation for presenting?

All profits from our merchandise sales from October 15, 2022 through October 22, 2023 will be combined with donations from attendees during the conference and whatever that amounts to will be divided evenly among session presenters.

When will I know if my session was accepted?

Decisions regarding the selection of sessions and panelists will be e-mailed to all candidates by mid-May of 2023. Please email the Programming Committee at programming@visitorexperience.group or visit our website at vexgroup.org with any questions during the process.

Should I register myself for the conference?

Presenters will receive instructions on how to register themselves for the conference over the summer. You are responsible for registering yourself for any add-ons such as the welcome event, post-conference networking party, tours, and workshops.

Which format should I use?

We ask all presenters to submit their presentations as a Google Slides file. This allows us to test all presentations prior to your arrival and share them with our attendees.

Can I submit more than one proposal?

Yes!

Why do you want a headshot/museum selfie?

We decided to include these in our digital programming and marketing as a way to help attendees find familiar faces at the conference based on attendee feedback from prior conferences. Make sure to submit a photo for each presenter along with your proposal!

What's Next?

Before March 31, 2023

After you submit a proposal, you will hear from Mandi Magnuson-Hung, the VEX Programming Chair, to confirm receipt of your submission. From there, Mandi will share it with the rest of the board and we will begin the selection process.

April 2023

The board will review session proposals to prepare for selection. We will meet in mid-to-late April to discuss and review. Sometimes, at this meeting, we decide to ask presenters to combine proposals

Early May 2023

Decisions regarding the selection of sessions and panelists will be e-mailed to all presenters by mid May of 2023.

Late May 2023

If your proposal has been selected, the Programming Committee will reach out with the Presenter Questionnaire. This form allows us to learn a little more about you and your proposal and helps us ensure that what our attendees see in September matches what is described in the program.

June 2023

The Communication Committee will reach out to you about promoting your individual session. This can involve short videos if you're comfortable on camera, or photos relating to your presentation along with a quote. They will also give you a kit for promoting the conference with all of the tools you need to reach out to your network.

July/August 2023

The Programming Committee will follow up with you to discuss needs for your presentation. They will confer with the Hospitality team and then get back to you with your session's room/layout.

October 2023

You will share your Google Slides presentation with veconference@gmail.com by October 9, 2023. Your slides will be preloaded on a computer in the room in which your presentation takes place.