

Robert J. Stein

About

A proven museum executive and global thought leader with a passion for transforming communities through experiences that celebrate the significance of diverse cultures, embrace the intrinsic joy found in learning, and tackle the fundamental challenges of our society and planet.

Skills

Deep experience leading and growing teams in complex organizations, executive leadership of education efforts, comprehensive design challenges, and content strategies across multiple settings. Globally recognized for creating innovative in-person and digital experiences with a long-reaching strategic vision. Strong relational leader with Boards and external stakeholders as well as demonstrated success in fundraising strategy and execution.

Experience

2019 – 2020

Senior Vice President, Guest Experiences & Communications

Shedd Aquarium

- Executive leadership team member setting strategic direction and ensuring the long-term financial health of the organization.
 - Led the Learning & Community, Design & Exhibits and External Affairs & Communications divisions to create guest experiences that advance Shedd's mission.
 - Direct oversight of 90+ staff and annual operating budgets in excess of \$9.2M (2019)
 - Close working connection to Board members including key staff liaison to multiple committees
- Primary leadership role in planning and execution of a \$195M strategic plan in advance of the Aquarium's centenary anniversary.
 - Led the experiential design process to renovate and expand Shedd's historic galleries to create an immersive, participatory and multisensory experience of the aquatic world.
 - Established the vision for a Learning Commons at the heart of the historic galleries to transform experiential learning opportunities for students and families at the Aquarium and becoming a platform that amplifies the voices and work of community partners.
 - Dramatically expanded the creation of compelling digital experiences to bring an expansive global audience eye-to-eye with aquatic animals while meeting learning outcomes and deepening empathy for the environment.
 - Championed and focused a strategic vision for community partnerships and programs to address the systemic racism and inequality that prevents many Chicagoans from fully experiencing the wonder and benefits of nature.

- Oversaw the care and maintenance of exhibits and visitor experience across three historic buildings with an important civic presence in Chicago. Led the horticultural program for 4 acres of landscaped gardens. Aligned a highly engaged visitor experience with the complexities of working with living animals and ensuring a high bar for accessibility and universal design.
- Recruited and mentored staff in Learning and Design areas to advance Shedd's leadership position in the field and to become a flexible, strategic, and high-performing team.
- Launched a signature high-school partnership model that grew from one to six partner schools providing 4 years of progressive science engagement to 2,600 students annually focused on disinvested Chicago communities.
- Created new virtual platforms for digital learning engagement while closed due to Coronavirus that engaged 25,000+ students and secured important earned and contributed revenue. Including 700 virtual summer camp students from 39 states and 5 countries.
- Increased year-over-year media reach and impressions by 320% through focused digital storytelling strategies that leveraged online audience trends and attention. Led teams in setting PR direction and strategy in the complex media landscape of Chicago and nationally. Secured numerous top-level media placements such as the New York Times, National Geographic, NBC Nightly News, and the Wall Street Journal.

2016 – 2019

Executive Vice President and Chief Program Officer

American Alliance of Museums – AAM

- Led the execution of the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan with focus areas in Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion; P-12 Education; and Financial Sustainability.
- Executive leadership responsibilities for the largest professional organization of museums of all types - from Art Museums to Zoos and Aquaria - with 37 staff and annual budgets of \$10m annually.
 - Significant board work and relationships including program development, strategic execution, and fundraising.
- Led the program development project planning and execution of AAM's flagship Annual Meeting and MuseumExpo - the largest global conference of museum professionals with more than 5,000 attendees and 280 exhibitors.
- Led creation and growth of professional convenings and leadership development initiatives across Latin America, China, Europe, and the Middle East.
 - Led AAM planning and growth for the *Conference of the Americas - El Museo Reimaginado*, the largest museum conference specifically focused on Latin American museum professionals. Held in Buenos Aires, Medellín, and Oaxaca.
- Created a comprehensive content strategy and marketing approaches for the organization including recruiting and building a team for content creation and aggregation.
 - Redesigned and launched AAM's digital content platform to engage 800k users and 6M+ page views each year - driving significant annual revenue to the organization.
- Directed the work of AAM's Center for the Future of Museums including the launch of professional consulting services (Alliance Advisors) to grow thought leadership and consulting revenues for the organization.
- Primary responsibility for earned revenue activities accounting for 80% of total revenue. Leadership of AAM's accreditation, membership programs, benefits, and revenues from 5,000 museums and 30,000 individuals.

2012 - 2016

Deputy Director

Dallas Museum of Art – DMA

- Executive leadership responsibility for one of the nation’s largest art museums.
 - Direct supervisory responsibility for 170 staff, annual revenue in excess of \$35M, and net assets of approximately \$210M.
 - Responsibilities including leadership of Education, Conservation, Digital Experience, Libraries, Finance, Marketing, Human Resources, IT, Security, and Visitor Services.
 - Deeply involved with Board governance including participation on every committee, nomination and strategy, as well as stewardship of key donor relationships
- Ensured the physical and information security for the museum facility, its visitors, and significant collection of art. Oversight of financial and human resource operations in addition to complex information technology systems fueling the daily working of the museum.
- Led audience development and growth strategies - including a transition to free admission that garnered significant philanthropic support and ancillary revenues.
 - Increased overall museum attendance by 50% from 485,000 to 730,000 in less than three years.
 - Increased minority audience participation by 23%, increased first-time visitors to the Museum by 35%, and increased participation among millennials by 30%.
- Created DMA Friends, the first visitor participation and loyalty platform in the cultural sector to grow repeat audience participation for the Museum.
 - Grew the program from zero to over 150,000 members in 2.5 years, increasing repeat visitation and enabling the organization to connect and steward this passionate contingent of supporters. Secured significant Federal support to launch mirror “Friends” programs in LA, Denver, Minneapolis, and Seoul, South Korea.
- Supervised diverse team of 30+ staff in the Education division, overseeing community outreach, audience engagement, public programming, and in-gallery interpretation
 - Created an online interpretation team to research every on-view object and to create deeply linked online context and content throughout the collection. Increased online visits to the collection by 30% in the first year.
 - Led the design and engagement programming of the Center for Creative Connections (C3) - a multi-generational learning studio for hands-on learning experiences.
- Personally secured over \$10.8M in grants and private donations. Cultivated a \$5M grant award for online collection interpretation. Managed and hired the team to comprehensively digitize every object in the collection in less than three years.

2006 - 2012

Deputy Director for Research, Technology and Engagement

Indianapolis Museum of Art – IMA

- Senior Executive leading a team of 50+ in Education, Digital Media, Conservation, Science, Research, Technology and Libraries.
 - Total organization budgets of \$35M and net assets in excess of \$500M.
 - Key liaison to Board individuals and committees on education, conservation, and technology.
- Established audience centered research focus for Education and Engagement division, dramatically retooling the experience for visitors to the museum and informing the museums practice for engaging audiences.
- Created the digital scholarship platform for the Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative together with the Art Institute of Chicago and the Getty Foundation (OSCIToolkit.org) to flexibly publish digital scholarship and technical art history.
- Founded the IMALab, a software consulting firm for the cultural sector, as a subsidiary of the Indianapolis Museum of Art.
 - Clients include the Art Institute of Chicago, the Smithsonian, The Getty Foundation, and the Corning Museum of Glass. Annual net revenues between \$250k-\$500k.
- Created and Launched ArtBabble.org, the first HD streaming video channel dedicated to art which featured more than 60 international partners—running from 2008-2017. Included deep resources for education and teaching art history and visual culture.
- Launched a consortium of cultural non-profits and commercial organizations to standardize content strategies for mobile gallery interpretation (TAP/TourML).
 - Framework adopted and deployed in commercial products and museum mobile apps including Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Palace of Versailles, and the Art Institute of Chicago.
- Project Director for a diverse partnership among 21 Museums to research how the general public talks about art and how to map this to the scholarly language of art history. (Steve.Museum)
- Awarded 4 consecutive National Leadership Grants from the Institute for Museum and Library Services. Total funding in excess of \$3M.

2002 - 2006

Assistant Director

Pervasive Technology Labs, Indiana University

1996 - 2002

Senior Visualization Programmer

National Center for Supercomputing Applications, University of Illinois

1995 - 1996

Web and Technology Specialist

Silicon Graphics Computer Systems

Volunteer Service

2016 - Present

Corporate Director

Dexibit, NZ

2016 - Present

Senior Advisor

National Center for Arts Research, Southern Methodist University

2008 - 2011

Secretary, Board Member

Museum Computer Network

Selected Funding

Stay Home with Shedd Aquarium. Private Donors. Spring 2020. **\$150,000**

Project Partner. *Facing Change: Advancing Museum Board Diversity & Inclusion.* The Andrew W. Mellon, Alice L. Walton, and Ford Foundations. January 2019. **\$4,000,000**

Project Director. *Garnering Support for the Economic and Social Value of Museums to American Communities.* The Mellon Foundation. May 2017. **\$150,000.**

Project Director. *Supporting Free Access and Free Admission.* The O'Donnell Foundation. November 2013. **\$9,000,000.**

Supporting a transition to free admission. Meadows Foundation. 2013-2015. **\$400,000.**

Supporting New Technology Initiatives. Private Donor. 2013-2016. **\$400,000.**

Principle Investigator. *Building for Engagement: Participation at Scale in Art Museums.* Institute for Museum and Library Services - National Leadership Grant. November 2013. **\$458,000.**

Project Director. *Laboratory for Museum Innovation.* Texas Instruments, AT&T, and Private Donor. 2012. **\$300,000.**

Supporting Research into Visitor Engagement at the DMA. Private Donor. September 2012. **\$250,000.**

Principle Investigator. *TourML and TAP: A Toolkit Supporting Museum Mobile Experiences.* Institute for Museum and Library Services - National Leadership Grant. November 2011. **\$420,000.**

Principle Investigator. *The Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative: Building a Toolkit for Online Scholarly Publishing.* The Getty Foundation. October 2011. **\$237,000.**

Project Director, *Steve in Action: Social Tagging Tools and Methods Applied,* Institute for Museum and Library Services - National Leadership Grant. 2008-2011. **\$995,275.**

Project Director, *T3: Text, Tags, Trust to Improve Image Access for Museums and Libraries,* Institute for Museum and Library Services - National Leadership Grant. 2008-2011. **\$996,750.**

Principle Investigator, *Steve.Museum: Researching Social Tagging and Folksonomy in Art Museums,* Institute for Museum and Library Services - National Leadership Grant. 2006-2009. **\$384,784.**

Selected Talks / Publications

- Stein, Robert. *Making Plans for the Unknown*. Keynote Address. Illinois Library Association. Chicago, IL. October 2019.
- Stein, Robert, Sina Bahram, and Pattie Reeves. *Developing For The Broadest Access: Practical Strategies For Creating Accessible Digital Products*. Professional Forum. Museums and the Web 2018. Vancouver, CA. April 2018.
- Stein, Robert. 2018. *Seeing Through a Global Lens*. Keynote Address. 2018 Working Internationally Conference. ICOM-UK and UK Museum Directors. Edinburgh, Scotland. March 2018. <http://uk.icom.museum/events/annual-conferences/2018-working-internationally-conference/>
- Oxford Economics, Stein, Robert. *Museums as Economic Engines: A National Study of Economic Impact*. Research and Report. American Alliance of Museums. December 2017.
- Stein, Robert. 2017. *When the Library Meets the Network*. Keynote Address, Sharing is Caring 2017. Aarhus, Denmark. November, 2017.
- Marcelo Araujo, David Anderson, Robert Stein, and Américo Castilla. 2017. *The Museum as a Socio-Political Actor*. Panel Discussion. El Museo Reimaginado 2017. Medellín, Colombia. November, 2017. <https://youtu.be/-vVqp14A8Y>
- Stein, Robert, Kaywin Feldman, Seb Chan, Colleen Dilenschneider, Kari Alldredge. 2016. *The Line between Creepy and Cool: Getting Data Driven Decisions Right*. American Alliance of Museums Annual Meeting, St. Louis, MO. May 2016.
- Stein, Robert. 2016. *A Body in Balance: Imagining an Ecology of Museums*. Keynote Presentation, Visitor Experience Conference. Philadelphia, PA. April 2016.
- Stein, Robert. 2016. *Making Sense of the Storm: Knowledge and the Future of Museum Publishing*. Keynote Presentation, National Museum Publishing Seminar, Chicago, IL, May 12. <https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/noncredit/professional-development/national-museum-publishing/index>.
- Stein, Robert. 2015a. *Connecting to Visitors at Scale: How a Data-Driven Approach to Visitor Engagement Can Help Museums Reach Large Audiences Effectively*. Invited Lecture, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea, April.
- Stein, Robert. 2015b. *Charting the Course: Using Data in the Museum to Explore, Innovate, and Reach New Audiences*. Keynote presented at the We Are Museums 2015, Berlin, Germany, June 3.
- Stein, Robert. 2015c. *Museums... So What?* In CODE|WORDS: Technology and Theory in the Museum, 268. MuseumsETC. <http://museumsetc.com/products/code-words>.
- Stein, Robert, Ed Rodley, and Susan Cairns. 2014. *CODE | WORDS: Technology and Theory in the Museum An Experiment in Online Publishing and Discourse*. CODE | WORDS Technology and Theory in the Museum. May 9.
- Stein, Robert. 2014a. *Connecting the Dots: How Digital Methods Become the Glue That Binds Cultural Heritage to Contemporary Society*. Keynote presented at the Museums and the Web Florence 2014, Florence, Italy, February 19. <http://www.slideshare.net/rstein/connecting-the-dots-43304062>.
- Stein, Robert. 2014c. *Museums... So What?* CODE | WORDS Technology and Theory in the Museum. June 4. <https://medium.com/code-words-technology-and-theory-in-the-museum/museums-so-what-7b4594e72283>.
- Stein, Robert. 2014d. *Experience Mining: Understanding Cultural Participation in Museums*. Keynote presented at the Museums and the Web Asia 2014, Daejeon, South Korea, October 8. <http://www.slideshare.net/rstein/experience-mining-understanding-cultural-participation-in-museums>.
- Stein, Robert. 2014e. *Reading the Tea Leaves: Global Opportunities for Tomorrow's Museums*. Keynote presented at the Communicating the Museum, Sydney, AUS, October 12. <http://www.slideshare.net/rstein/reading-the-tea-leaves-global-trends->

[and-opportunities-for-tomorrows-museums.](#)

- Stein, Robert. 2013a. *Museums and Civic Responsibility*. Invited Lecture presented at the Association of Art Museum Curators Annual Meeting, New York, NY, May 5. <http://www.slideshare.net/rstein/museums-and-civic-responsibility>.
- Stein, Robert. 2013b. *Participation at Scale: Leveraging Incentive and Gamification to Promote Museum Engagement*. Invited Lecture presented at the MuseumNext 2013, Amsterdam, NL, May 13. <http://www.slideshare.net/rstein/participation-at-scale-rstein-museum-next-2013>.
- Stein, Robert. 2012d. *Chiming in on Museums and Participatory Culture*. Curator: The Museum Journal55 (2).
- Stein, Robert. 2012e. *Designing for Engagement: Changing the Museum to Build Participation*. Invited Lecture presented at the NODEM 2012 Hong Kong Future Culture: [In]tangible Heritage | Design | Cross Media. MWA2013, Hong Kong, December 5. <http://www.slideshare.net/rstein/nurturing-engagement>.
- Stein, Robert. 2011a. *Crowd-Sourcing Art History: Research and Applications of Social Tagging for Museums*. In Research Infrastructures in the Digital Humanities, 18–19. Strasbourg, FR: European Science Foundation. <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/humanities/strategic-activities/research-infrastructures-in-the-humanities.html>.
- Stein, Robert. 2011b. *Towards a Reputation Economy: How Openness and Transparency Become a Central Business Strategy*. Invited Lecture presented at the DISH2011: Digital Strategies for Cultural Heritage, Rotterdam, NL, December. <http://www.slideshare.net/rstein/towards-a-reputation-economy-how-openness-and-transparency-become-a-central-business-strategy-for-cultural-heritage>.
- Stein, Robert. 2010b. *ArtBabble: Exploring Collaborative Content and Niche Portals*. Invited Lecture presented at the MuseumNext 2010, London, UK, April.
- Stein, Robert. 2008. *Institutional Dashboards: The How's and Why's of Transparency at the Indianapolis Museum of Art*. presented at the Museum Computer Network 2008, Washington, D.C., November.
- Chun, Susan, Robert Stein, and Michael Jenkins. 2007. *Open Source, Open Access: New Models for Museums*. In *The Digital Museum: A Think Guide*, edited by Herminia Din and Phyllis Hect. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums.

Education

1992 – 1996
BS Electrical and
Computer Engineering
University of Illinois

Skills

- Strong Team Leadership
- Strategic Vision
- Program Creation
- Digital Engagement
- Content Strategy

Interests

Rob is enthusiastically enamored by craft coffee, planning travel around a great meal, and collecting jazz vinyl since his time to practice the trumpet has vanished long ago.

Contact

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