

## **Museum of Science and Industry, Tampa, FL**

### **Anderson Hadley**

I was in the Cartoon Network Exhibit that we had which was animation. I just came upon a kid who was doing a stop-motion animation and I started asking him some questions. He wasn't really responding, so I just kind of sat there and watched him come up with his animation. And I said, "That's really neat. That's really cool." It was about ten minutes and then I kind of faded into the background and walked away and the educator that was watching me, Samantha, came up and said, "That was an awesome interaction." And I'm like, "What are you TALKING about? The kid didn't even TALK to me." And she goes, "No. But he kept looking UP at you to make sure you were still interested. He could have ENDED that stop-motion animation, but then he started a NEW one because you were still sitting with him and watching him." That's all he wanted was somebody to pay attention to him and because I had simply took time to sit there and kind of encourage him and watch what he was doing and say, "You know, that's really kind of cool." THAT was an epiphany moment because I realized that I was being overly critical in that my expectations of an interaction were completely different than the results that I was, you know, getting. That – it changed my view completely of how to approach an interaction. What a successful interaction with a guest was. Simply by just participating, maybe not saying much and just like watching them, you become the kid's best friend and that kid will drag you around the museum with you everywhere. They will grab your hand and be like "You are my best friend and let's go." (LAUGHS) It's – it's amazing to have worthwhile interaction with a family and then have the children HUG you afterward. OR when they come back again the next weekend or even a couple months later, "OH, Miss Hadley. Miss Hadley. It's good to see you." I'm like, "Hey, you!" (LAUGHS) Um, and it's just wonderful that they remember it because we want them to have a lasting experience. That's what EVERY museum wants. They want you to remember something and have some sort of experience that you take with you for the rest of your life. Whereas before, in the museum industry, it was entirely about exhibits. It was about whether they were effective in – in perpetuating somebody's understanding of what this exhibit was, you know, supposed to CONVEY and museums are completely designed their exhibits and completely designed on like trying to facilitate this learning through this static exhibit that doesn't change. So I think it's going to revitalize the industry in the way that they view their STAFF. That we can take the guests' expectations and wants and what they want to learn about AND translate that into either finding an exhibit that applies to that or transforming an exhibit to MAKE it apply to that. So it's opening up those doorways instead of having a formal learning curriculum IN an informal environment which is just kind of absurd – to moving it into something that is open for not only the docents but the guests to learn and to teach. We have so much Internet and so much – there's so much communication that's almost distancing ourselves from...

(AUDIENCE): Right.

...actual human beings that coming to a museum and having an interaction – some people really do need to be TRAINED in how to communicate and how to, you know, stand next to somebody...

(AUDIENCE): Face-to-face...

... face-to-face. It's almost going the way of the dinosaur. (LAUGHS)

(AUDIENCE): (LAUGHS)

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