

Museum Governance: Lessons From the Past as a First Step Towards Innovation

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Over the past thirty years, private sector governance has seen significant development in regulatory guidelines, best practices, and adaptation to emerging challenges. In contrast, the history of Canadian museum governance is relatively new. Not-for-profit Canadian museums began to establish governance frameworks only recently with influential publications like the UNESCO Recommendation on Museums and Collections (2015) and the SMQ Guide (2014), along with the implementation of Bill 114 in 2016. Bill 114 introduced constraints and responsibilities akin to those in the private sector, shifting governance from a more informal approach to a structured system. Notable examples of pre-Bill 114 governance include Rolland Arpin's initiatives at the Museum of Civilization and guidelines by the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization. This study aims to explore the lessons that museum governance can learn from private sector practices, comparing regulatory frameworks and drawing insights from corporate governance literature to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of not-for-profit museums and heritage preservation efforts.

Keywords: Canadian museum governance, regulatory guidelines, best practices, adaptation

INTRODUCTION

The governance landscape has seen significant evolution over the past three decades, particularly within the private sector. Regulatory frameworks, best practices, and adaptive measures have become integral to ensuring transparency, accountability, and sustainability. However, while private sector governance has flourished, the history of governance in Canadian museums remains relatively nascent.

Notably, governance frameworks tailored for not-for-profit Canadian museums have only recently emerged, marked by seminal publications such as the Recommendation concerning Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections by UNESCO in 2015 and the SMQ Guide titled “Museum Governance: A Guide to Directors and Boards of Directors” in 2014. The pivotal moment came with the enactment of Bill 114, known as “An Act to Modernize the governance of National Museum,” in 2016.

This legislation imposed numerous constraints and duties on museum Boards of trustees, mirroring aspects found in the private sector.

Before Bill 114, museum governance often relied on the goodwill of their Boards and/or directors. Noteworthy examples of pre-Bill 114 governance frameworks include Rolland Arpin's individual initiatives at the Museum of Civilization, as documented in "Diriger sans s'excuser" by Bergeron and Côté (2016), as well as the "Guidelines: Roles and Responsibilities of Museum Boards of Trustees" published by the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization in 2004.

This study's central research question is: "Are there lessons that museum governance can draw from the private sector experience over the past thirty years?" To address this question, a comparative analysis is undertaken between the new regulatory framework for museum governance and the established requirements applicable to the private sector. By delving into historical literature on corporate governance, insights and recommendations applicable to the museum sector are inferred, leveraging both observed similarities and strategic differences.

This study strives to enhance the governance framework of not-for-profit museums, aiming for increased resilience, innovation, and purpose. The objective is to bolster sustainability for these institutions and our rich cultural legacies amidst ongoing changes. This article offers a thorough analysis of governance practices, juxtaposing those endorsed by the AMF for the private sector against those designated for national museums. The ultimate aim is to cultivate effective governance strategies that transcend sectoral boundaries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past three decades, governance dynamics have evolved significantly, particularly within the private sector, where regulatory frameworks, best practices, and adaptive measures have become fundamental to ensuring transparency, accountability, and sustainability. However, Canadian museums have only recently begun to develop tailored governance frameworks for not-for-profit institutions.

The evolution of governance mechanisms within the private sector has been shaped significantly by scandals related to fraud in the early 2000s, including cases like Enron, Nortel, Worldcom, Norbourg, and Madoff (Smith, 2018). In Canada, the response came in 2005 with the publication of General Instruction 58-201 by the Autorité des marchés financiers (AMF), emphasizing good governance practices (AMF, 2005). Unlike its American counterpart, this document encourages flexibility while stressing the importance of compliance and justification under penalty of sanction.

General Instruction 58-201 outlines governance practices tailored to the Canadian context, aiming to balance investor protection, market fairness, and confidence (AMF, 2005). This document is a foundation for extending governance principles to various sectors, including state-owned companies, the hospital sector, and most recently, the museum sector through Bill 114 in 2016.

While the literature on museum governance in Canada may not be as abundant as in other regions, there is a significant body of research and scholarship on this topic. This includes contributions from academic research, professional associations like the Canadian Museums Association (CMA), government reports and policies, case studies, and collaborative research initiatives. These resources provide theoretical foundations, empirical evidence, and critical perspectives for advancing knowledge and practice in museum governance.

Academic studies on museum governance encompass a broad spectrum of research, ranging from theoretical explorations to empirical investigations and critical analyses. These studies delve into various aspects of how museums are governed, examining the underlying theories that inform governance practices, and conducting empirical research to understand the realities of governance in different museum contexts, and critically interrogating power dynamics and ethical considerations within museum decision-making structures.

Academic studies often draw upon theories from organizational theory, public administration, and nonprofit management to conceptualize museum governance. For example, agency theory, which examines the principal-agent relationship and issues of accountability and control, has been applied to understand the

dynamics between museum boards and executive leadership (Thompson & Wilsdon, 2007). Institutional theory offers insights into how museums are shaped by broader social, cultural, and political forces, influencing governance structures and practices (Scott, 2013). Also, Academic studies often adopt critical perspectives to interrogate power dynamics, inequalities, and ethical dilemmas within museum governance. Critical scholars may examine issues such as representation, inclusion, and social justice in governance processes, questioning whose interests are served and whose voices are marginalized within museum decision-making structures (Sandell & Nightingale, 2012). Critical perspectives also highlight the need for reflexivity and accountability among museum leaders and governing bodies, challenging assumptions and norms perpetuating inequities and exclusions (Macdonald, 2013).

Empirical studies provide as well valuable insights into the governance practices of museums across different contexts and organizational types. Researchers have examined various aspects of museum governance, including board composition, decision-making processes, stakeholder engagement, and governance effectiveness. For instance, studies have investigated museum board members' demographic characteristics and professional backgrounds, exploring how diversity and expertise contribute to board performance (Schadewald & Tymon, 2016). Surveys and case studies have also been conducted to assess the implementation of museum governance policies and practices (Krebs & Potts, 2019).

Comparative studies offer opportunities to compare governance models and practices across different types of museums, cultural sectors, and geographic regions. Researchers can identify factors that influence governance effectiveness and organizational outcomes by examining variations in governance structures, legal frameworks, and institutional cultures. Comparative research can also show the transferability of governance models and best practices between museums and cultural institutions operating in diverse contexts (Cameron & Robinson, 2014).

In conclusion, academic research is crucial in advancing knowledge and understanding of museum governance. These studies inform practice and policy in the museum by offering theoretical insights, empirical evidence, and critical perspectives. Museum practitioners, policymakers, and stakeholders can leverage this research to develop effective governance strategies that enhance the impact and sustainability of museums as cultural institutions.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this study represents a deliberate and comprehensive approach, designed to unravel the complexities of museum governance and forge a path toward a more resilient and purpose-driven framework for not-for-profit museums in Canada.

The first aspect of our methodology, the comparative analysis of regulatory frameworks, is a foundational exploration into the juxtaposition of two distinct governance paradigms. By scrutinizing the provisions of Bill 114, which delineates the regulatory landscape for museum governance, alongside the established governance requirements governing the private sector, we embark on a journey to uncover the underlying similarities, disparities, and potential areas for adaptation.

Through meticulous examination, we aim to decode the intricate web of governance mechanisms, from board composition to decision-making processes, with a keen eye on accountability structures and stakeholder engagement practices. By identifying where these frameworks converge and diverge, we lay the groundwork for strategic interventions to align governance practices with the unique mission and objectives of not-for-profit museums.

The second facet of our methodology delves into the annals of corporate governance history, drawing upon a rich tapestry of historical literature to illuminate pathways toward innovation and resilience within the museum sector. Through this historical lens, we seek to unearth timeless lessons and forgotten insights that may be key to overcoming contemporary challenges in museum governance.

From the boardrooms of early industrial enterprises to the modern-day challenges facing multinational corporations, we traverse the arc of corporate governance evolution, extracting nuggets of wisdom and cautionary tales that resonate with the governance landscape of not-for-profit museums. By juxtaposing

historical precedents with present-day dilemmas, we aim to synthesize a nuanced understanding of effective governance practices tailored to the unique context of cultural heritage institutions.

The convergence of these two methodological pillars represents more than just a scholarly exercise; it embodies a commitment to actionable change and transformative impact within the museum sector. By bridging the worlds of regulatory compliance and historical inquiry, we endeavor to shape a governance framework that meets the immediate needs of Canadian not-for-profit museums and lays the groundwork for sustained resilience and relevance in an ever-evolving cultural landscape.

In essence, our methodology is not just a means to an end; it is a testament to the power of interdisciplinary collaboration and historical reflection in shaping the future of museum governance. Through this holistic approach, we aspire to catalyze a paradigm shift in how we conceive, implement, and evaluate governance practices, ultimately fostering a more vibrant and inclusive cultural ecosystem for future generations.

FINDINGS

Lessons from the private sector’s governance evolution offer valuable insights for enhancing governance within not-for-profit museums. The Autorité des marchés financiers (AMF) implemented several measures to structure governance within the private sector, fostering a culture of compliance and accountability. Unlike the more rigid structure of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX) in the US (2004), the AMF’s approach provides greater flexibility, encouraging Boards to voluntarily adhere to guidelines while emphasizing the importance of explaining deviations. These measures include guidelines, frameworks, and standards designed to promote transparency, accountability, and investor protection. This flexibility allows organizations to adapt governance practices to their specific contexts and needs, rather than adhering to a one-size-fits-all approach. As a result, boards of directors have the autonomy to tailor governance practices to best suit their organization’s objectives and challenges.

Table 1 compares the private sector’s governance requirements based on AMF guidelines and the museum sector based on Bill 114.

**TABLE 1
COMPARATIVE TABLE OF GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS BETWEEN THE PRIVATE
SECTOR AND THE MUSEUM SECTOR**

RULES	PRIVATE SECTOR	MUSEUM
Number of Board member	Non determine (but 9 to 12)	11 to 15
Equity Men/women	Non require but observes	Required
Independence	Majority of members	2/3
Accountability	Shareholders, Board committees	Government, Board Committees
Board member age/succession	Young board member not required	Required
Committees	Audit, governance, compensation, Human resources	Audit, governance and ethic, Human resources
Competencies	Criteria	Criteria (At least one Accountant)
Mandate duration	3 to 5 years usually, renewable, maximum 12 years	President and director – max 5 years Members max 4 years renewable 2 times

RULES	PRIVATE SECTOR	MUSEUM
Formation	Yes	Yes
Responsibilities	Strategic plan, criterias, CEO evaluation, criterias, members evaluation, budget, risk management, etc.	Strategic plan, criterias, CEO evaluation, criterias, members evaluation, budget, risk management, collections, etc.
Accountability	Yes (shareholders*)	Yes (government*)
Diversity	Not mandatory but...	Yes
Compensation	Required	Volunteer or paid
Chair of the Board/CEO	Separated	Separated

*Other stakeholders could be considerate; it is a growing trend.

Although many guidelines seem similar, the implementation of Bill 114 is delayed in state museums. As these governance principles currently only apply to state museums, other museum organizations follow these best practices at very different levels, even to the point of ignoring them. So, in light of this table, the following observations emerge regarding the structure of the boards as well as in their governance activities.

Acting in “Good Conscience”

As it has been mentioned, the AMF’s approach encourages voluntary adherence to governance guidelines while emphasizing the importance of accountability. Boards are incentivized to comply with governance standards to enhance transparency and investor confidence. However, in cases where deviations occur, organizations must provide explanations, ensuring accountability and fostering a culture of responsibility among board members.

Acting in “good conscience” rather than being compelled by strict regulations can have positive implications for governance effectiveness. This proactive approach to governance fosters a culture of continuous improvement and ethical leadership, ultimately enhancing organizational performance and sustainability. These observations hold valuable lessons for not-for-profit museums seeking to enhance their governance frameworks. By studying the evolution of governance practices in the private sector and drawing parallels with their own contexts, museums can identify strategies for improving transparency, accountability, and sustainability. Embracing a flexible yet principled approach to governance, museums can adapt best practices from diverse sectors to meet their unique missions and challenges.

The notion of acting in “good conscience” rather than being compelled can yield positive outcomes. This proactive approach to governance fosters a culture of continuous improvement and accountability, potentially leading to more performant Boards that are responsive to evolving governance standards. Through collaboration and adaptation, museums can leverage lessons learned from diverse governance contexts to develop innovative and purpose-driven governance frameworks tailored to their unique needs and missions.

In summary, lessons learned from the private sector’s governance evolution underscore the importance of structured yet flexible governance frameworks, voluntary adherence coupled with accountability, and proactive leadership driven by ethical considerations. By embracing these principles, not-for-profit museums can strengthen their governance practices, promote sustainability, and fulfill their vital role in preserving cultural heritage for future generations.

Beyond Structure

While having a structured governance framework is essential, it is insufficient to ensure good governance, as evidenced by past scandals in the private market. C. Francoeur (2013), aptly notes that

simply adhering to rules and best practices may not elevate the social consciousness of board members. To foster effective governance, organizations must go beyond regulatory compliance and target personal engagement among board members. This emphasis on personal commitment and ethical leadership is particularly relevant in museums, where the mission-driven nature of their work demands a higher level of dedication and accountability from board members.

Transparency and accessibility of information is a cornerstone of effective governance, rooted in principles outlined in the Agency Theory by Jensen & Meckling (1976). However, ensuring that information is accessible and clear to all stakeholders remains challenging. Museums must prioritize transparency by making information readily available and easily understandable to stakeholders, including donors, patrons, and the broader community. By enhancing transparency, museums can build trust and credibility, fostering stronger stakeholder relationships and promoting accountability.

In summary, lessons learned from the private sector underscore the importance of going beyond mere regulatory compliance to foster personal engagement and ethical leadership among board members. Transparency remains a critical aspect of effective governance. Museums can leverage these insights to strengthen their governance practices, build trust with stakeholders, and fulfill their missions with integrity and excellence.

Mandate Duration and Board Composition

The duration of board mandates is critical in ensuring independence and integrity within governance structures. Over time, board members may develop close personal relationships or affiliations that compromise their ability to maintain a critical perspective. Cormier and M. Magnan (2017) noted that prolonged tenure can diminish critical sense, potentially leading to lapses in judgment or conflicts of interest. In the context of family enterprises and museums for instance, where personal relationships and familial ties may influence decision-making, the issue of board composition becomes particularly pertinent.

Furthermore, in the case of museums, government involvement in nominating directors and influencing organizational orientations raises questions of accountability and independence. Government-appointed directors may face pressures to align with political agendas or prioritize government interests over the museum's mission. This dynamic raises concerns about the autonomy of museum directors and the integrity of decision-making processes despite the current compliance rules and best practices on paper. Furthermore, the nomination of board members by the government introduces the risk of conflicts of interest and undermines the board's independence. Clear and transparent processes for board nomination and approval are essential to safeguard against undue influence and ensure the integrity of governance structures.

Donors and arts collectors also play significant role in the museum governance, often wielding influence through financial contributions or art acquisitions. While their support is invaluable, it can also raise questions about conflicts of interest and undue influence on decision-making processes. Museums must navigate these relationships carefully, ensuring transparency and accountability in their interactions with donors and collectors. Frequently, scenarios arise where museum boards cannot make decisions against a project due to concerns that specific donors might withdraw their support. Clear policies and guidelines for donor engagement, including ethical considerations and disclosure requirements, can help mitigate risks and uphold the integrity of governance practices.

In summary, maintaining independence and integrity within governance structures is essential for the effective operation of museums. Addressing issues such as board composition, government involvement, and donor influence requires clear policies, transparent processes, and a commitment to ethical principles. Still, those are not part in the policies currently. By promoting accountability and safeguarding against conflicts of interest, museums can uphold their missions with integrity and serve the interests of their stakeholders and the public trust.

Role of the Board in Innovation

Research by Hillman et al. (2000), Huse (2007), Pfeffer (1972), and Burt (1992) underscores the pivotal role of the board in driving innovation within organizations. A diverse range of competencies among board members can lead to richer discussions, more robust decision-making processes, and ultimately, greater

innovation. Studies by Kang and al. (2007), Mahadeo and al. (2012), Bear and al. (2010), and Héroux and Fortin (2016) have consistently highlighted the positive correlation between diversity of competencies and innovation outcomes.

Research by Héroux and Fortin (2016) suggests that organizations with diverse competencies on their boards are more likely to foster innovation in their processes and operations. By bringing together individuals with varied backgrounds, expertise, and perspectives, boards can challenge conventional thinking, identify new opportunities, and drive creativity and innovation throughout the organization.

Ensuring recruiting the best individuals to serve on the board is essential for fostering innovation and driving organizational success. Studies emphasize the crucial role of board members in providing the company with resources, strategic advice, knowledge, and networks (Hillman et al., 2000; Huse, 2007; Pfeffer, 1972; Burt, 1992). One strategy is to prioritize diversity of competencies in board recruitment processes, actively seeking individuals with a broad range of skills, experiences, and perspectives. This may involve considering candidates from diverse professional backgrounds, industries, and demographics to ensure a well-rounded and dynamic board composition.

Offering competitive compensation and incentives can also attract high-caliber individuals to serve on the board. Although financial compensation plays a significant role, non-monetary incentives like professional development opportunities, networking, and leadership positions also serve as attractive motivators for prospective board members. However, these incentives also carry the risk that a board member may join for the wrong reasons, similar to the concerns associated with financial compensation. By aligning incentives with the organization's mission, goals and values, boards can attract individuals passionate about contributing to the organization's success.

In summary, the board plays a crucial role in fostering decision-making and innovation through diversity of competencies. By recruiting individuals with varied skills, experiences, and perspectives, boards can stimulate creativity, challenge conventional thinking, and drive organizational innovation and success. Strategies such as prioritizing diversity in recruitment processes and offering competitive compensation and incentives can help attract the best individuals to serve on the board, ensuring a dynamic and innovative governance structure.

Moreover, the Quebec government issued a decree¹ in April 2023 so that board members of state-owned enterprises, including museums, would be paid to attract talent and, most importantly, ensure their attendance at board meetings. This also aims to minimize “no shows” from individuals for whom a board position is merely a line on their resume.

Impact of Gender and Cultural Diversity

Research by Galia et Zénou (2016) suggests that diversity, particularly in terms of gender and culture, significantly impacts innovation outcomes. While diversity may not directly influence process-related innovation, it strongly impacts other types of innovation, particularly in marketing decisions. Studies indicate that diversity in terms of age, nationality, gender, and cultural background can lead to a broader range of perspectives, ideas, and approaches, ultimately driving innovation across various aspects of the organization.

Age diversity within the board also plays a role in fostering innovation. While age may positively impact organization success, its influence on organizational innovation may be less pronounced. However, a diverse range of ages within the board can contribute to a richer pool of ideas and insights, particularly in product development and market strategies. The law on museums requires leaders under the age of 35 and gender parity, which is not automatic in the private sector but encouraged. Several studies have been conducted on the diversity of skills in innovation (Kang et al. 2007; Mahadeo et al. 2012; Bear et al., 2010), but few have examined the effects of age and gender diversity on innovation (Galia and Zénou, 2016) - impacting all types of innovation except process innovation. There is a strong positive impact on marketing. Age positively impacts the product/services but less on organizational innovation.

The heterogeneity of the leadership team in terms of demographic characteristics such as age, nationality, gender, and racial diversity promotes innovation and influences the types of ideas and innovations generated by the company (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Torchia et al., 2011; Olson et al., 2006;

Ostergaard et al., 2011; Talke et al., 2010; Carter et al., 2010). Board diversity has also been associated with positive impacts such as creativity and the generation of new ideas (Goodstein and al., 1994; Ruigrok et al., 2007; Kang and al., 2007; Miller and Triana, 2009; Deutsch, 2005).

As mentioned by Galia and Zénou (2016), Torchia et al. (2011) note that very little research has examined the effect of these different diversity criteria on the museums' board of directors, such as gender or age, on innovation, which seems logical at first glance. Tiana and Miller (2009), in their study on the relationship between board diversity and company performance, suggest that innovation plays a mediating role and find a positive relationship between gender diversity on the board and innovation. Torchia et al. (2011) on their part, demonstrate a positive link between gender diversity on the board and organizational innovation, while Sapra et al. (2014) developed a theory demonstrating how internal and external governance mechanisms affect innovation and the counterpart is that poor governance reduces innovation activity (O'Connor and Rafferty, 2012).

Research by Hambrick et Mason (1984), Torchia et al. (2011), Olson et al. (2006), Ostergaard et al. (2011), Talke et al. (2010), and Carter et al. (2010) highlights the positive influence of board diversity on innovation. Boards characterized by diversity in terms of age, nationality, gender, and cultural background are better positioned to generate innovative ideas and strategies. By bringing together individuals with different perspectives and experiences, diverse boards can foster creativity, challenge assumptions, and drive innovation throughout the organization.

Gender and cultural diversity within the board significantly impact innovation outcomes, particularly in marketing decisions. Age diversity also plays a role in fostering innovation, particularly in product development. While it is mandatory in Bill 114, these aspects are still difficult to meet in practice, even more for small museum where recruiting members with different profiles is a challenge. By embracing diversity in board composition, organizations can tap into a broader range of perspectives and insights, driving creativity, and innovation across various aspects of the organization. Strategies to promote diversity on the board, including proactive recruitment practices and inclusive decision-making processes, can help organizations harness the full potential of diversity to drive innovation and achieve sustainable growth.

Importance of Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement, especially in ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) considerations, has become increasingly important for organizations. Ayuso, Rodriguez, and Ricart (2006) highlight two key aspects of stakeholder engagement: dialogue and knowledge integration. Dialogue involves two-way communication, transparency, and feedback mechanisms, fostering a collaborative relationship between organizations and stakeholders. Knowledge integration, on the other hand, entails leveraging stakeholder insights and expertise to address their needs and preferences effectively. By engaging stakeholders in innovation processes, organizations can tap into diverse perspectives and ideas, leading to more effective solutions and products.

Effective communication is essential for successful stakeholder engagement in innovation (Ansell, C., & Gash, A., 2008). Organizations must adopt transparent and open communication channels to facilitate dialogue with stakeholders. This includes regular updates on innovation initiatives, opportunities for feedback, and mechanisms for addressing stakeholder concerns. By fostering a culture of open communication, organizations can build trust, credibility, and collaboration with their stakeholders, ultimately enhancing the innovation process.

Integrating stakeholder knowledge into the innovation process is crucial for effectively addressing their needs and preferences. Non-hierarchical structures, flexibility, and openness to change are essential for integrating stakeholder insights seamlessly into organizational decision-making processes. By incorporating diverse perspectives and expertise, organizations can develop innovative solutions that are more aligned with stakeholder expectations and societal needs. (Chesbrough, H. W., 2003)

While stakeholder engagement and knowledge integration offer numerous benefits for innovation, associated costs and challenges exist. Francoeur and Garcia-Castro (2014) note the importance of instrumental stakeholder theory, which emphasizes the positive effects of investing in stakeholder relationships. However, organizations must carefully consider the costs and benefits of stakeholder

engagement initiatives, balancing the need for innovation with resource constraints and operational realities. By adopting transparent communication strategies, integrating stakeholder knowledge, and carefully managing costs, museum can leverage stakeholder insights to develop innovative solutions that meet societal needs, enhance stakeholder satisfaction, and drive sustainable growth.

Impact of Social Media

Despite the growing impact of social media on organizational governance, there remains a lack of studies exploring this intersection. However, the influence of social media on governance practices is becoming increasingly apparent, with notable implications for organizational reputation, stakeholder engagement, and decision-making processes. Claude Francoeur's (2013) provides a compelling example of how social media can significantly impact corporate reputation and financial performance. For instance, criticism and boycott calls from advocacy groups on social media platforms can tarnish a company's image, leading to reputational damage and decreased sales. Moreover, if supported by responsible investors, such criticism can elevate the company's financing costs, highlighting the financial implications of social media governance issues.

The influence of stakeholders, especially through social media channels, presents opportunities and challenges for organizations, particularly for museums for whom this medium is very useful, even more so since the pandemic. While stakeholder engagement is crucial for innovation and accountability, organizations must carefully consider the costs and risks associated with responding to stakeholder demands on social media platforms. The viral nature of social media can amplify stakeholder voices and rapidly escalate issues, potentially leading to reputational crises and financial repercussions. Consequently, organizations must weigh the potential benefits of stakeholder engagement against the risks of reputational damage, financial impact, and resource allocation.

When navigating the intersection of social media and governance, organizations must carefully consider how to integrate stakeholder feedback and concerns into decision-making processes effectively. While ignoring stakeholder voices can lead to reputational harm and loss of trust, organizations must also assess the feasibility and implications of addressing every stakeholder demand. Balancing stakeholder interests with organizational goals and resource constraints requires thoughtful governance practices prioritizing transparency, accountability, and ethical decision-making. By proactively engaging with stakeholders on social media and incorporating their feedback into governance processes, organizations can enhance trust, mitigate risks, and drive sustainable value creation.

In summary, the impact of social media on governance practices is undeniable, with implications for organizational reputation, stakeholder engagement, and financial performance. While social media presents opportunities for innovation and stakeholder dialogue, museums must navigate this landscape cautiously, considering the costs, risks, and ethical considerations associated with social media governance issues. By adopting transparent and responsible governance practices, organizations can harness the potential of social media to drive positive change, enhance stakeholder relationships, and achieve long-term success.

CONCLUSION

In summary, Bill 114 marks a pivotal moment for the governance of national museums by introducing a stricter regulatory framework akin to that of the private sector. This legislation is designed to foster transparency, accountability, and sustainability, laying down a solid groundwork for adopting best governance practices. Despite this, the practical application of these regulations faces hurdles, highlighting a discrepancy between the theoretical framework and its real-world execution.

The challenge lies not in the absence of a regulatory structure but in its effective implementation. While resources and tools to aid in this process are available, their underutilization suggests a broader issue of integrating these guidelines into practical, everyday governance. The crux of advancing museum governance lies in embracing innovation and actively applying available resources to bridge the gap between prescribed standards and their operationalization.

Concerns particularly emerge for smaller museums, which may struggle with the rigorous demands of Bill 114 due to limited resources and capacities while its application is not mandatory for them. However, they have to implement good practices. This disparity calls for adaptive governance strategies that cater to the varied needs of museums across the spectrum. Collaborative models and resource-sharing initiatives could serve as key strategies, empowering smaller institutions through partnerships with larger entities, facilitating a more inclusive approach to excellence in governance.

Effective governance under Bill 114 and beyond requires more than just adherence to regulations; it demands innovative thinking and collaborative efforts to translate principles into action. By harnessing innovation and fostering a culture of shared learning and support, museums can better navigate governance complexities, ensuring they comply with regulatory mandates and thrive as vibrant custodians of cultural heritage.

Looking forward, research into museum governance should delve into the evolving challenges and opportunities within the sector, including the impacts of globalization, digital transformation, and environmental sustainability. An interdisciplinary perspective, incorporating insights from sociology, anthropology, political science, and beyond, will be crucial in comprehensively understanding and addressing the multifaceted nature of museum governance in the contemporary era.

ENDNOTE

- ¹ <https://www.quebec.ca/gouvernement/votre-gouvernement/remuneration-membres-conseils-administration-societes-etat>

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