

32 WAYS TO ACTIVATE your SOFT POWER Tips for Museums and Cities



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What is Soft Power?

“Soft power” is the ability to influence through persuasion, attraction and ‘setting the agenda’ rather than military or economic force.

POWER DIFFUSION Governance and Human Resources 		1 Diverse, Networked Boards	2 Advisory Councils	3 Outward-looking Policies	4 Inspired Leadership	5 Meaningful Volunteer and Internship Programs
10 Inviting More People In	9 Responsive Operating Hours	8 Free Admission	THE SOCIAL COMMONS Operations 		7 The Best Employers in the Creative Economy	6 Opportunities for Hiring and Advancement Reflecting the Diversity of the City
ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES Collections and Documentation 		11 Collection Development for Social Equity	12 Tagging So Anyone Can Search and Find	13 Making Information Accessible	THE SHARING ECONOMY Research and Production 	
18 Bridging and Bonding	CULTURAL ACCELERATORS Education, Public Programs and Exhibitions 		17 Mobile Knowledge	16 Collaboration and Exchange	15 Developing Cultures of Creativity	14 Supporting Research and Production
19 Connected Learning	20 Learning for a Lifetime	21 Engaging With All Forms of Tourism	22 Encouraging Contextual Intelligence	23 Presenting Useful Ideas in Useful Places	24 Making Space for New Perspectives: Re-framing the Agenda	25 Participative Stakeholder Communication
SOFT POWER FUNDING 		27 Impact Investment	28 Crowd-Sourcing And Participatory Forms Of Income Generation	POWER CONVERSION Communication and Marketing 		26 Giving Context and Depth to the News
29 Public-Private Partnerships	30 Rewarding Urban Development	THE SOFT POWER EMBRACE the Role of Cities 		31 Planning Culturally	32 From Cultural Hubs and Heritage Districts to Cultural Commons	

HOW DO YOU ACTIVATE YOUR SOFT POWER?

SHARE YOUR SOFT POWER STORIES:

MuseumsSoftPower

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@Gail_Lord
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#softpowercities

CITIES, MUSEUMS AND SOFT POWER



The following excerpts are from the 14 essayists in our new book *Cities, Museums and Soft Power*. Consider them a storify, a hip hop track, some tapas, a collage of the ideas therein. They are also the beginning of a conversation...looking for your voice. Visit us on facebook (MuseumsSoftPower) to share your thoughts.

— Ngaire Blankenberg



Richard Florida, [Preface](#)

*Cities, which house more than 50% of the world's population and account for 80% of GDP, are starting to exercise influence on global issues like migration and sustainability, but **could cities more effectively exercise their soft power by embracing museums?***



Federica Olivares, [Museums in Public Diplomacy](#)

*The specific expertise of museums allows them to contribute to **place-branding, enhancing or transforming the reputation and perceived image of cities and regions.***



Batul Raaj Mehta, [Unearthing the Genius Loci of Museums in the Indian Subcontinent](#)

*The recording-keeping of the colonial rulers, and their distance from the local culture, led to the genesis of Indian museums... In the past decade however, a few museums have begun embracing identities that respond to their own histories... **probably from a need to express one's distinctiveness in a world that is increasingly homogenized.***



Baillie Card, [The Soft Power of Museums in the Knowledge Economy and Urban Development](#)

*By combining forces, members of London's Knowledge Quarter not only magnify their influence, but also change the terms of the national conversation around arts and culture to **explicitly embed it in discussions of the knowledge economy... "framing the agenda"**.*



An Laishun, [Cranking Up the Soft Power Engine of Chinese Museums](#)

The policy of free access to museums implemented in 2008 has enabled hundreds of millions of rural migrant workers and urban low-income people to experience museums. These new visitors account for a major proportion of the 500 million museum visitors annually.



Robert Punkenhofer, [Cultural Nomads: Creative People on the Road](#)

What if all the creative nomads—those who made the city the vibrant, diverse and entertaining area that attracted the rich and powerful in the first place—are driven out by the expensive cost of living?



Gegê Leme Joseph, [Museums in the Age of Brazilian Soft Power](#)

*Given the ineffectiveness of wealthier institutions in reaching disadvantaged communities, and the success of social museums to achieve that same purpose...perhaps **Brazilian museum professionals should start thinking outside the box about cross-institutional collaboration...***



Lourdes Fernández, [Global and Local: Fairs and Biennials, Temporary Urbanism and Pop-Up Museums](#)

There is a need now for new working models and relationships between institutions... Networking proposes the creation of a universal dossier, where all documents are shared...it enables museums to combine their expertise and exert long-lasting influence...



Mohammed Gamal Rashed, [Cairo and The Grand Egyptian Museum](#)

*During the January 25th Revolution...young Egyptians formed a human shield in front of the museum to protect it from looting. This demonstrated to us the commitment of a new generation of Egyptians to our long heritage and proud history. **It is now our turn, as museum professionals, to strengthen this relation.***



Javier Jimenez, [The Economics of Museums and Cities](#)

Museums are among the most valuable, prestigious and frequented assets of cities... they directly contribute \$21 billion to the U.S. economy each year and support 400,000 jobs. This represents more jobs than computer programming or civil engineering generate.



Guido Guerzoni, [The Museum Building Boom](#)

*...A museum is not a hospital, a university or a court of law. It is a construction type that has taken upon and sometimes overloaded itself with **meaning and expectations.***



Ngaire Blankenberg, [When Soft Powers Collide](#)

*"Open" museums, as with open cities, take this expectation seriously and are more successful at exercising soft power. **Top-down museums with little local participation or relevance may be successful initially at attracting attention but ultimately will fail.***



Hayfa Matar, [Museums as Signifiers in the Gulf](#)

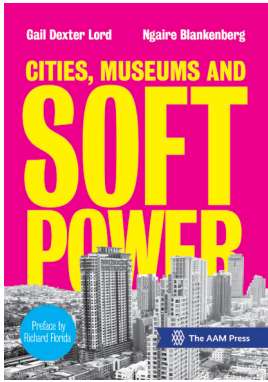
*It takes courage to examine the vulnerabilities in our region, present them honestly and foster a dialogue with people, using the museum or art gallery as a platform... **Museums and cultural institutions, if planned properly, can become the next Majlis: "a multigenerational area for dialogue and learning"**.*



Gail Dexter Lord and Joy Bailey Bryant, [A Tale of Two Civil and Human Rights Cities](#)

*If need be, as in Atlanta and Winnipeg, cities will invent new museums and new cultural institutions to shape and convey the stories they need to tell. Sometimes subversive, sometimes supportive of national policies, **the soft power of cities and their museums has the potential to change our world in the 21st century.***

What People Are Saying...



“With the help of 14 experts from 10 countries, Lord and Blankenberg demonstrate how much museums have to offer our rapidly urbanizing planet. **Cities will never be the same...**”

— Richard Florida, Director of the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management, Global Research Professor at NYU, co-founder and editor-at-large of The Atlantic’s CityLab, urbanist, and author of international best-seller *The Rise of the Creative Class*

“In this important and timely book, Gail Dexter Lord and Ngaire Blankenberg have brought together an interesting and innovative array of essays that not only answer the perennial question, why museums matter, but also suggests a blueprint for how museums can exercise more influence and be of greater value to their urban communities. **This is a must read for those who care about culture, museums and the evolution of our communities in the 21st century.**”

— Lonnie G. Bunch, Founding Director of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, author of *Call The Lost Dream Back: Essays On History, Race and Museums.*

“*Cities, Museums, and Soft Power* is a must-read for museum leaders who grapple with their institution’s role in building cultural infrastructure locally or globally. **Readable, instructive, and compelling,** Ngaire Blankenberg and Gail Lord build the case for museums as strong society-minded networks that can deftly employ soft power to accelerate cultural change and empower citizens at home or around the world.”

— Melody Kansch, Executive Director, Getty Leadership Institute

“The authors build a compelling argument as they explore what’s next for cities, museums and soft power, framing the international conversation about the future in fresh and provocative ways.

A fascinating book.”

— Jim Richardson, founder, MuseumNext, London

“*Cities, Museums and Soft Power* provides a **fascinating and multifaceted analysis** of a theme that is intrinsically linked to UNESCO’s convictions on the influential role of culture and creativity in promoting social inclusion, understanding and economic growth.”

— Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

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