

BEHIND THE SELFIE PHENOMENON

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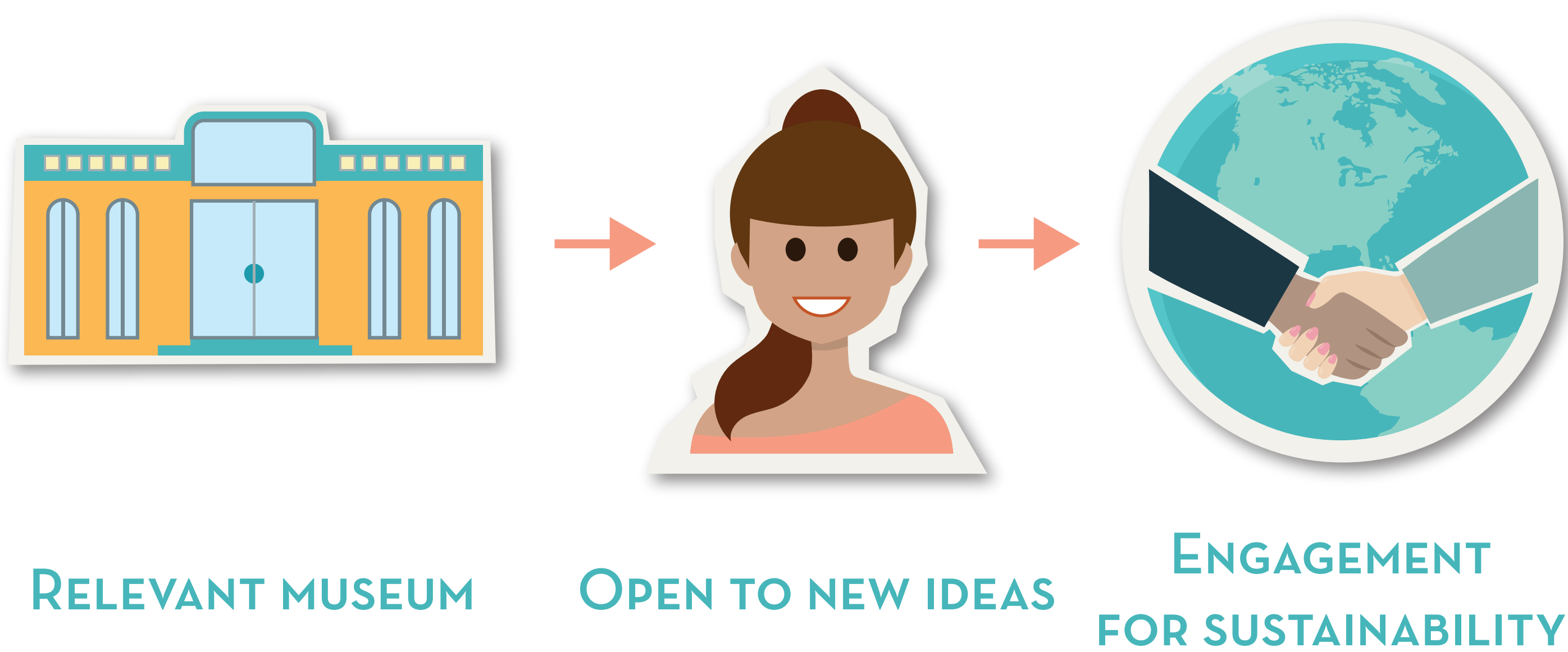
To reach sustainability, different sectors of society need to act together, first by creating awareness of its relevance, and then by encouraging self-commitment in order to build strong communities that accomplish the purpose.

Science centers and museums are a great place to promote sustainability, but this implies a challenge not only in communication and awareness, but also in engaging audiences in taking responsibility and actions.

SUSTAINABILITY FROM WITHIN SCIENCE CENTERS

The role of Museums and Science Centers has changed over the centuries. We now consider them spaces relevant to their contexts, from which people can leave more prepared to make decisions and actions.

They act as meeting spots in which audiences can encounter new ideas and perspectives. This experience can help to achieve awareness that serves as the first step towards personal engagement.



Science Centers have the opportunity to create a global community that offers solutions relevant to the environmental and social challenges we face, as well as commitment to the decisions and actions required to build a just and equitable world, for both current generations, and future ones.

HOW TO ENCOURAGE THE ENGAGEMENT OF OUR PUBLICS WITH SUSTAINABILITY?

Different strategies have been tested to achieve engagement in museum experiences, mainly by giving visitors something to take home like objects or messages.

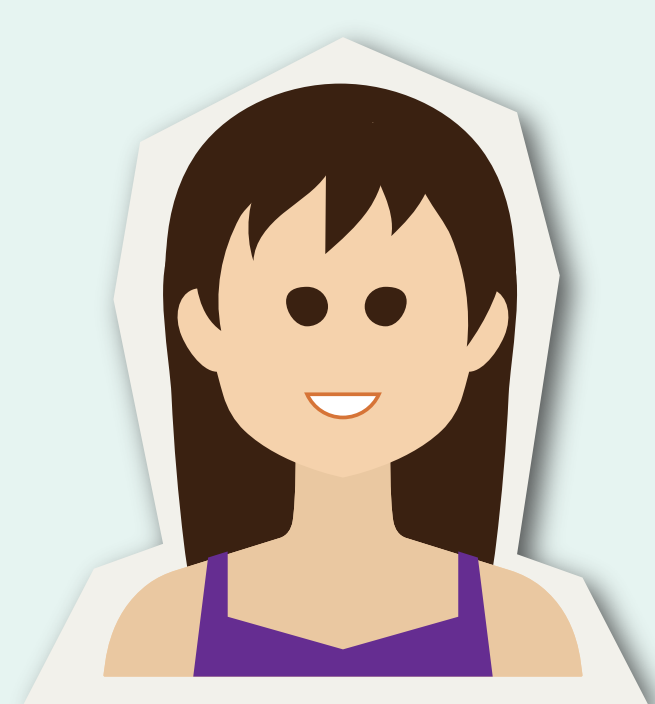
In the pursuit for sustainability objectives, science and daily life play a vital role. They are clearly involved in topics such as food security, having clean water or ensuring the welfare of the oceans. This implies a positive aspect to relate them to the exhibitions, as well as to our visitors' experiences.

Selfies are and have been a strong phenomena. It has been calculated that in average 1 million selfies are taken globally each year, mainly by young people around 23 years.

By using selfies self-disclosure appears and allow for more credibility and empathy that the ones you will get with a regular marketing campaign. This empathy shortens the distance between the one who encourages the message and the one who receives it, giving place to conversations that are able to trigger phenomena such as trending topics, and actions for global causes.

WHAT ARE THE MOTIVATIONS BEHIND TAKING A SELFIE AND HOW CAN WE USE THEM IN OUR SCIENCE CENTERS?

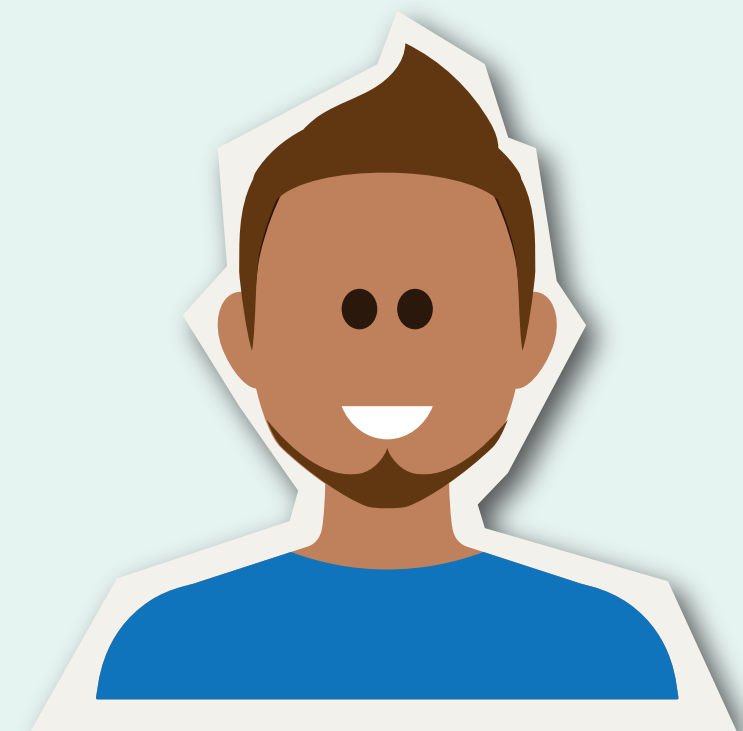
There are different causes that motivate people to take selfies, and this can be resumed in three archetypes: "The Self-Publicists", "The Autobiographers" and "The Communicators".



SELF-PUBLICISTS

Have a strong motivation to use the medium as a form of one-way messaging. They very strongly want to share a mediated and approved version of their lives with other people and tell their story.

If you are referring to an approved version of yourself, what would this version be? If people share selfies with the motivation to share an approved version of themselves, why not do so through messages that encourage engagement with sustainability?



AUTOBIOGRAPHERS

Are most motivated to preserve memories, but ultimately they also very strongly want to tell their story to the world.

What part of you would you like to show to the world? This motivation also serves as a pretext for personal engagement with sustainability, as people seek to tell positive things about their lives, such as when they decided to commit themselves to take action in favor of sustainability.



COMMUNICATORS

Primarily use selfies to engage in conversation through photographs. They want to be part of a community rather than let their personal self-photographs remain a personally intimate venture.

This motivation based on the self-disclosure and commitment will serve to initiate and expand the conversation on sustainability in social media. On the other hand, the willingness to form and be part of a community helps to make engagement not only personal, but collective, which increases the impact of such initiatives.

Sustainability depends on the co-responsibility of people and institutions. With the selfie strategy, an alliance between museums and people would be established, one that can be carried out all over the world enabling a worldwide conversation and organization.

Science centers are out there, as well as the urge for actions toward sustainability and the million selfies taken every day.

WHY DON'T YOU GIVE IT A TRY?