



Exploratory Questions

When we launched our very first cohort program, we welcomed former Director and President of Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia), Kaywin Feldman, as a participant. At the time, she was intent on improving the museum's gift shop, which was built on an outdated model and cumbersome space. Over time, she and the subsequent Mia team members who took part in Exploratory Leadership programs learned that by leveraging the principle of asking exploratory questions they could change the entire museum experience.

One of the most impactful questions posed was: If this museum existed 100 years ago for a certain person to visit and enjoy, who is the museum for today? This question led to a successful rebrand of the institution. The museum now goes by Mia, meaning "mine" – an intentional effort to reflect back to the community more authentically that the museum belongs to everyone.

Leaning into curiosity and asking exploratory questions is now embraced by the entire organization, in order to honor the Mia brand.

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART

- **HEADQUARTERS:** Minneapolis, MN
- **DESCRIPTION:** Community centered arts museum; home to more than 90,000 works of art
- **WEBSITE:** artsmia.org

For example, to create unique experiences, curators are empowered to ask how exhibitions can uniquely reflect the Mia brand and audience. This has led to collaboration with theater set designers, movie directors, musicians and more. Team members have traveled to Comicon to study fandom, and explore what builds audience loyalty. And of course, they ask questions of their members, involving them in exploration to determine what resonates most as they experience the museum in their own unique ways.

Because of Mia's focus on the principle of asking exploratory questions, they have found new national relevance, and doubled museum attendance to over 800,000 annual visitors in the last 10 years.