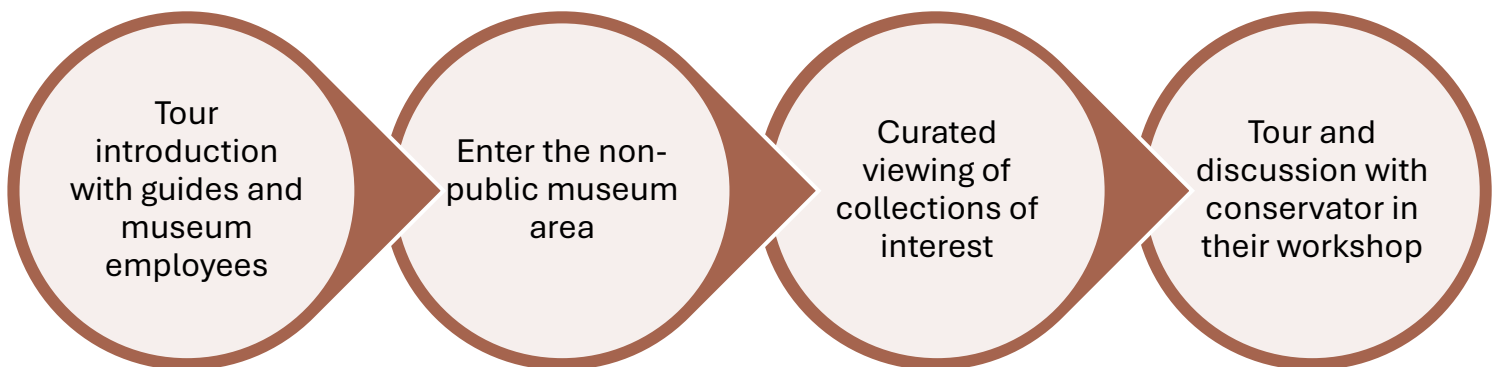


Behind the Scenes – Guided Tour

Objectives: Showcase unique museum items and expertise; to bring visitors into interesting and little-seen parts of the museum; to give elderly men the feeling of a special or unique visit tailored to their interests; leverage the collections already maintained by the museums

Target group: Elderly men interested in the specific collections and behind-the-scenes locations chosen for them

Tour Flow Step-by-step



Tour Structure

- Take a peek at the offices on your way to collections—where do the museum employees work?
- Visit one or two collections—keep the information brief and let the elderly men ask their own questions based on the objects in the collection
- Visit a workshop or other production facility—show the elderly men how exhibits are made and objects are prepared

Behind the Scenes Guided Tour at the Estonian National Museum

Collections: Wooden objects archive, Traditional Estonian Beer mugs archive

Workshop: Metal conservator's workshop

Considering the elderly men in designing the tour:

- The men themselves were highly interested in aspects of the museum that were not public facing—architecture, history, operations, curation and construction of exhibits
- They were also interested in seeing something both new and special, having visited the museum multiple times throughout the process
- Collections and locations were chosen based on topics of interest to the elderly men—wooden objects, beer mugs, metal conservation (the workshop contained engines and mechanical parts)
- The men like to talk and ask their own questions—therefore the tour guides did not overly-prepare any sort of set script. Rather, they relied on their expertise to answer questions about the objects as they came up. This allowed them men to curate their own tour within the bounds of what was offered.



Resources

Personnel	One or two tour guides (one is required, but especially with a larger group 2 is preferable to field more questions) One conservator, archivist, or other behind the scenes employee
Time*	Event duration 1.5 h Planning and preparation ~ 2-4 h Implementation (incl. preparing and clearing the space) ~2-3 h Feedback and documentation ~1-2 h
Space and equipment	Existing collections and spaces are used, but may need to be arranged, cleaned, or otherwise prepared to accommodate guests from the general public.
Budget*	Rough estimate for personnel cost is 100-200 €

* Depending on the amount of preparation required to make behind-the-scenes spaces ready for public viewing, the time required (and thus, budget) can vary a bit. The simplest case would be a space that needs no preparation, while a more complex situation might require some hours worth of cleaning and/or organizing.

Highlights from the feedback

Both the men and museum enjoyed the experience, with one man remarking, “it’s so interesting, I could come and live here!”

Both groups proposed making this event a regular occurrence: “We should visit these kind of places [archives] more often”

The behind the scenes personnel enjoyed sharing their work and interacting with the public—something that is very rare for them

From one man: “a day full of surprises”

Visiting certain archives made them wonder about what else the museum has in its archives—and what other museums have in theirs

The men had a lot of questions for the metal conservator and could have kept talking for hours

Without a break in the middle or places to sit, a 1.5 hour tour was a bit tiring for some men

Recommendations and tips:

- The beauty of this service-product is its simplicity: it is endlessly adaptable to any target group and does not require much if any extra resources or planning.
- Consider the physical ability of the participants when planning a tour. Unlike regular exhibits, behind-the-scenes spaces may not be as accommodating for people with disabilities or the elderly. Build in rest time and bathroom breaks.
- For similar reasons, the museum must consider where they take a tour if it includes children. Not every behind-the-scenes location is safe, and children cannot be trusted to keep their hands away from fragile or potentially dangerous objects.
- These tours cannot be offered to anyone who walks in the door of the museum. To include others—especially those who are not part of a group visit—consider offering the tour on some sort of regular basis and allow the general public to sign up.

Partners and reaching the target group:

- Pensioners' associations
- Men's groups
- Local Facebook groups
- Hobby groups (especially those that may coincide with collections)
- Elderly care facilities

Appendices and materials:

- [Example of work phases and time spent](#)
- [Business Model Canvas](#)

Appendix 1

Example of work phases and time spent

Estimated working hours for the event (total approximately 25–35 hours)

Planning and preparation (~2-4 h):

- Designing the tour
- Preparing the facilities (cleaning and tidying, removing sensitive or dangerous items)

Marketing and reaching participants (5–10 h):

- Designing and producing marketing materials (e.g. print ads, social media posts) ~3–5 h
- Distribution: cooperation with elderly facilities, elderly groups, hobby groups, other local networks, bulletin boards, Facebook, etc. ~2–5 h

Implementation (~2-3 h):

- Event duration up to 2 hours
- Collecting feedback and documenting during the event

Processing feedback (1–2 h):

- Reviewing and summarizing the feedback
- Recording possible development notes

Appendix 2

Business Model Canvas

