COSI’s Center of Science Model

The Framework: Real, Relevant, and Relationship-Driven

The Center of Science is a relationship-driven model in which the traditional science museum offers a suite of activities supported by the intersections among its partners. The goal of the Center of Science is to provide a flexible, responsive, and proactive framework for creating relevance and inspiration for the many audiences around science, technology, and engineering content and topics. Through the Center of Science model, COSI is committed to being a lifelong learning institution and is an integral part of the learning ecosystem, a contributor to the economic impact model of the arts and cultural institutions, and an important player in workforce development in Central Ohio.

The Center of Science is a science center, and the relationships of all team members to guests, to each other, and with partners are essential for this “core” of the Center of Science. The science center is a place for all learners, no matter where they are in their lifespan. The team provides the human capital to help guests and audiences gain a better understanding of science, industry, health, and history through involvement in relevant exhibits, demonstrations, and a wide variety of activities and experiences. The science center serves a demographically diverse (and continually increasingly diverse) audience that finds the center to be interesting, enticing, and inspirational.

The Center of Science is about embedded partnerships, and the relationships of these partners to the generation and sharing of scientific knowledge. Embedded partners are considered in terms of how they contribute to knowledge generation and sharing, and the interface of that
work with the core work of the science center. The embedded partners continually deepen their relationship with the science center and connecting their work with COSI’s guests. The partners also continually explore ways their work can support each other. By having embedded partnerships, COSI provides real things, real synergies and expertise and content beyond its own staff to the experience of the science center. In addition, the synergies created among the embedded partners benefit the guests, and the partners themselves.

The Center of Science is about out-of-building partnerships, and the relationships of these partners to the generation and sharing of scientific knowledge. Creating ways for those in the community doing science, technology, engineering, and innovation to engage with the science center and to share their work with broader publics is central to this vision. Building sustainable relationships with the businesses, organizations, and institutions doing this type of work supports and showcases these partnerships. These partnerships create synergy around workforce development and provide an affinity to and connection with COSI ambassadors, and work together in the community to benefit the community.

The Center of Science is about creating convenings and opportunities for bringing people together, to build scientific knowledge and create relationships in and across the community. Whether on-site or off-site, the Center plays an important role in creating forums for sharing and discussing relevant topics involving science, technology, and engineering. Through these convenings, COSI fills a gap in the community learning ecosystem and has earned legitimacy in its role of lifelong learning around science, technology and engineering.

The Center of Science is about creating a future society, and ensuring the citizenry is scientifically literate, critically aware, and engaged. Through early childhood learning for school readiness; middle and high school activities; structures designed to facilitate career awareness and interest; focus on family (inter-generational) learning; young adult science programming; adult programming; and more, the Center of Science inspires interest in science and encourages people to want to learn more about their world.