

UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCES: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

- Bob Pickering, Ph.D.
- Director, Museum Science & Management program
- Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Tulsa.

WHAT AUDIENCES DO YOU WANT?

- Same
- Bigger
- More diverse
- Wealthier
- More engaged
- ??
- How well does your museum serve its current audiences?
- How do you know?



THE COMPETITION

- Sporting events
- Shopping
- Digital devices and gaming
- Outdoor activities
- Being a couch potato

PARADIGM SHIFT

FROM INWARD-LOOKING TO OUTWARD-LOOKING

- What's wrong with the old model?
 - Awesome art & objects
 - A contemplative environment
 - An authoritative voice & perspective

- Competition from other kinds of leisure activities,
- A place to experience & to learn vs. a place to see,
Putting the visitor in the picture.

THE CHANGING MUSEUM

- Multiple audiences & stake-holders; each with different interests, knowledge levels and desires for multiple entry points
- Attention to patterned behavior
- Donors want accountability & impact.



CHANGING AUDIENCES

- The greatest generation
- Boomers
- Gen Xers
- Millennials
- Born digitals

- Each broad category has its own interests & expectations

WHEN DOES THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE BEGIN?

- The front door is not the beginning of the experience.
- Access & signage
- The parking lot
- First interaction by phone, internet or personal contact
- A welcoming entry?
- Ease of navigating thru the entrance to ticket purchase to first encounter



BIRDS IN ART

November 22, 2015 – February 7, 2016

Exhibition organized by the Leigh Yawkey Art Museum, Wausau, Wisconsin.



GILCREASE
MUSEUM

*Thomas Gilcrease Institute
of American History and Art*

Exhibition season Title Sponsor is the Sherman E. Smith Family Foundation. Support also provided by Mervin Bovaird Foundation. TU is an EEO/AA Institution.

GILCREASE.ORG

PERCEPTION & REALITY; THEY ARE NOT THE SAME

- Can you name the top five audiences that visit your institution?
- How were these audiences identified?
- What experiences do you provide?
 - Walk and look
 - Watch & listen(audio-video presentations)
 - Docent/presenters
 - Touchable objects
 - Computer/phone interaction



PERCEPTION & REALITY

- **Case #1** – from where do our visitors come?
 - The board's perception
 - No systematic data collected
- Parking lot survey
- Zip code tally
- 1st Language tally

PERCEPTION & REALITY

- **Case #2** – BBCW – five museums in one
 - Western art
 - Plains Indian museum
 - Firearms
 - Buffalo Bill
 - Natural history
- What museum did visitors want to see, first?



PERCEPTION & REALITY

- **Case #3** – a non-visitor survey
 - Potential visitors that are in your town but choose not to come – why?
 - Time?
 - Cost?
 - Intimidated by museums?
 - Not interested?



WHAT AUDIENCES DO YOU HAVE?

- Can you identify different audiences?
Their wants & expectations?
- Ranked by size
- Ranked by importance
- The visitor survey - Individual-centered questions
 - Demographic descriptors
 - Family information
 - Geographic
 - Life-style
 - Leisure activities
 - Bigger issues
 - What does the person know about your museum?
 - Other museums?
 - How does your museum rank compared to other museums or leisure activities that are available?

WHAT AUDIENCES DO YOU WANT?

- Museums in the digital age
- Emphasis on the experience
- Providing choices for visitors
- Develop an audience strategy.
- Create a marketing program that fits your strategy.
- Assign staff to do the work.
- Evaluate the results.
- Be willing to change, if the plan isn't working as expected.

DEMOGRAPHICS & PSYCHOGRAPHICS

➤ Demographics

- Age, sex, ethnicity
- Zip code
- Income

➤ Quantifiable traits

➤ Descriptive of visitors

➤ Psychographics

- Based on a person's interests
- Worldwide in scope, potentially
- Predictive

WHAT AUDIENCE RULES YOUR DECISIONS?

- The board?
- The staff?
- The donors?
- The public?

WHAT IS YOUR ADVERTISING MESSAGE?

- Do your messages encourage visitors?
 - Are you using media, effectively?
- Traditional audiences & traditional media
 - Reaching multiple generations

THREE WORDS THAT AUDIENCES TAKE AWAY FROM YOUR MUSEUM – WHAT ARE THEY?

