UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCES: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

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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.
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
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?