Arts and Entertainment Management Program

Bowater School of Management and Marketing

CREATIVITY AND INTERACTIVITY:
New Ways to Experience, Market and Manage Museums

The 2003 Kenneth Myer Lecture
by the George Fairfax Fellow

Dr Neil Kotler

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March 27, 2003

Deakin University
Toorak Campus

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Produced and distributed by the Bowater School of Management and Marketing
Faculty of Business and Law
Deakin University
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood, 3125

Printed by Deakin Print Services , Learning Services, Deakin University

ISBN 0 7300 2575 6

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Preface

The George Fairfax Fellowship in Arts & Entertainment management at Deakin University enables visiting practitioners and scholars in the cultural arena to enrich our understanding of national and international issues in cultural management. The Fellowship was made possible by the generous support of important donors, including the Myer Foundation, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch and the Faculty of Business & Law at Deakin University.

This volume presents the Kenneth Myer Lecture by Dr Neil Kotler from Washington, DC, USA. The issue of marketing is of keen interest to arts managers. The first arts management programs appeared in the 1980s in Australia. Traditionally, these programs were located in schools of arts and performing arts, emerging as a consequence of the need to re-define and reinvigorate their programs. Deakin University is truly unique in offering an integrated, creative arts management program in an innovative business faculty, nurturing artists and arts managers by having lecturers exposed to the latest issues and trends in management as well as experience in the cultural industry. In a sector concerned with performance, it has required a paradigm shift to see culture as fitting in a business environment.

In his keynote address, Dr Kotler offers solutions for museums, as an example of nonprofit organisations undergoing change, decreased funding, and in some cases declining audiences. He explains how marketing can help museums better understand and engage their audiences. Dr. Kotler's remarks at Deakin University focus on the transformation of museums into lively, popular, interactive places that draw on the creativity and participation of visitors as well as on the creativity and celebrity of the artists, scientists, historians, and naturalists whose collections are on view in the museum.

Arts marketing is important to the arts. Not only is there still a paucity of material on arts marketing in Australia, but the need for arts marketing knowledge is a world-wide one. Given the lack of data, the topic for this year's lecture became clear. Presenting the Kenneth Myer Lecture on arts marketing would assist students, practitioners and researchers alike, enabling them to keep abreast of developments in the field.

This publication places on record the important marketing issues chosen for debate by the George Fairfax Fellow, and raises questions about the translation of rhetoric into arts marketing policy and practice. This approach balances a process of scholarly and practical inputs for future inquiry. In addition, the volume places arts marketing at the forefront of discussion, in order to emphasise its importance in the cultural context.

Jenny Treloar and Anne Macaulay assisted in the preparation of the event surrounding the Kenneth Myer lecture. I appreciate their tireless efforts in working long hours to complete this project.

Ruth Rentschler
Melbourne, March 2003

Acknowledgement

It is a great pleasure to be in Melbourne, Australia and serve as the 2003 George Fairfax Fellow at Deakin University.

My daughter Jena, who is here with me, has dreamt of visiting Australia since she was a child. She is 26 years old.

I, too, have wanted to visit Australia. I've seen Aussie images in the movies and I've watched T.V. programs on native Australians and the Outback. I've heard about your splendid cities and cultural centres and now have an opportunity to see for myself. Associate Professor Ruth Rentschler's assistance to me has been superb and I want to thank her personally. Thank you all for inviting me.

Abstract

Museums are nonprofit organisations, which have undergone significant change in recent decades. Today, museums are visitor-centred rather than collection-centred. As a result of this shift to visitor concerns, museums focus on visitor experiences and services and whether these mesh with visitor needs and expectations. Marketing has played a role in this modernisation. At the same time, museums face growing competition in the recreational and educational marketplace. Huge multi-national companies, such as Time Warner and Disney, aim to capture the largest share of discretionary time and income that the public devotes to leisure activity. Museums, with few exceptions, cannot match these commercial resources. So how do museums link creativity and interactivity to explore new ways for visitors to experience museums? How do museums compete?

Cultural Institutions, Ideas, Experiences and Marketing

Museums, among the oldest educational and recreational institutions in the world, now have the singular challenge to design spaces, programs, services, and events that capture the imagination of their audiences.

Museums are as different and individualistic as people. The U.S., for example, has approximately 10,000 and they vary in size, staffing, funding, and collections. The museums I mention in my presentation are mostly U.S. museums and generalisations are difficult. Nevertheless, these museums will illustrate important principles and practices that can be applied to other museums in the world.

Prior to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on New York City and Washington, D.C., American museums were experiencing a dramatic increase in attendance, membership, and funding. Museums and cultural centres were reaching out to larger and broader audiences, using a wider variety of media, and raising significant money. The Smithsonian's Natural History Museum received a $60 million gift from a single person and several months later that same person, Kenneth Behring, gave the Smithsonian's American History Museum $80 million. The soon-to-open National Museum of the American Indian, also part of the Smithsonian, has had a fund-raising campaign that yielded approximately $200 million. The Kennedy Center has received $100 million in recent gifts.

Various elements combined to boost museums. More and more parents have been concerned about their children's education and concerned about the vacuity of television and other pop cultural media. The mass media in the main – certainly in the United States – are filled with sensory stimulation of the torpid and demeaning kind. Much of the media views human nature as degraded by lust, power urges, and self-destructiveness. Museums, on the other hand, offer an elevated view of human nature, celebrating human virtue and creative gifts rather than human vice. (They also celebrate the human instinct to collect or hoard.)

Adults, too, are seeking after more spiritual, emotional, and intellectual content in their lives. There is evidence that people do not wish to be cooped up in their homes for long periods. People, indeed, are social animals and they want interpersonal activities. Museums, in particular, have been safe, secure places for children and adults, where one can find substance and delight and at the same time withdraw from the difficult surrounding world.

The September 11 shock led to a decrease in public participation in cultural institutions. Stay-at-home behaviors became more prominent. The Smithsonian Institution, in the year following the terrorist attack, experienced a 20 percent drop in attendance. Attendance also has been down at museums such as the Art Institute of Chicago, in cities not subject to attack. In the art world, there is an additional terrorist insurance cost in borrowing objects from overseas museums. It appears that the biggest and best-known American museums, which have had historic relations with European museums, for example, are in the best position to borrow objects from these museums. A new level of psychological and physical uncertainty has arisen and it is difficult to predict the future. In the last year, attendance at American museums has begun to rise again.

Museums have been modernising at different rates although some still defy modernisation. The norm of traditional museums was well articulated by Sir David Wilson, former director of the British Museum. Wilson stated: "Museums are about the material they contain. The first duty of the museum curator is to look after that material…His second duty is to make that material available to whoever wants to see it." (Wilson 1991, p. 11)

Today, museums are visitor-centred rather than collection-centred. Indeed, some museums such as the Smithsonian are trying hard to get rid of portions of their costly collections; the Smithsonian has an aggressive program to loan objects for long periods to other museums. As a result of this shift to visitor concerns,

museums focus on visitor experiences and services and whether these mesh with visitor needs and expectations.

Marketing has played a role in this modernisation – especially in the areas of "positioning," creating experiences, generating revenue, making museums more accessible to a broad range of the public, and assisting museums to raise big donations from individuals and corporations. Marketing has helped museums run themselves as businesses. There are staff training procedures and promotion guidelines; rigorous financial accounting; and growing research on audience needs and interests. Like other organisations, some museums, such as the Guggenheim, have accumulated debt, which recently led the museum, unfortunately, to abandon plans to hire the architect Frank Gehry to create a Guggenheim museum on the lower East side of Manhattan.

Perhaps, marketing's greatest contribution has been in the area of accountability. Marketing compelled museums to take seriously the outcomes of their strategies, goals, and plans (i.e., effects on visitors), not simply their inputs (i.e., staff, space, and collections). The great management guru, Peter Drucker, has said this about marketing: "Marketing is so basic that it cannot be considered a separate function. It is the whole business seen from the point of view of its final result, that is, from the consumer's point of view" (Kotler and Kotler 1998, p. 348). Because of the new emphasis on visitors, museums have to rely on visitors' impressions and perceptions. Visitors, after all, are the judges of their experiences, not staff. Visitors are in the driver's seat, so to speak, criticising museums or praising them, visiting them or staying away. Museums have to report to their boards and public authorities issues related to visitors, visitor accessibility and satisfaction. This is a big step for institutions that used to view themselves as insular, self-contained institutions.

What I will call, the traditional model of marketing as an exchange process, is being challenged by new marketing leaders who regard marketing, in the context of social and cultural institutions, as dealing more with experiences specifically than with exchanges generally. Traditional marketing, whether applied to for-profit or non-profit organisations, is broad-based and deals with consumer behaviors, transactional costs and benefits over a range of products and services, product features, relationships, and the exchange model of giving something for something in return.
Three books in 1999 expounded the experiential view of marketing: Michael Wolf, *The Entertainment Economy* (1999), Joseph Pine and James Gilmore, *The Experience Economy* (1999); and Bernd Schmitt, *Experiential Marketing* (1999). A fourth book, Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), discusses creativity as a driving force of contemporary economies. Notably, experience for these authors is the dominant concept of cultural and recreational marketing and experience for them is viewed quite narrowly—as intense, visceral, emotional, and exciting. Varieties of experience such as contemplation, meditation, playfulness, sociability, and enchantment are assigned second or third place.

Indeed, experience marketing has an extreme edge. People can pay to joust in medieval armour in Wisconsin. A friend of mine paid thousands of dollars to fly to Arizona, book a room at the Chicago Cubs' training camp, get up every morning, and play baseball with retired legendary Cubs players. He told me that putting on a Cubs' uniform and playing the game made him feel that he really was a Chicago Cubs player, not just a fan or spectator. Extreme experiences also include jumping from airoplanes and jumping into water from the highest rocks. Schmitt, one of the authors cited above, sees an end to traditional marketing, at least in the recreational and cultural sphere, and the replacement of experiential marketing (Schmitt 1999).

This paper explores the evolution of museums from the traditional collection focus to the modern consumer focus. It probes the competitive pressures on museums and the key issues they have to deal with: among them, financing and accessibility. The paper includes an analysis of museum-going experiences and argues that a mix of experiences, along with social events, high-quality services, and strong design and programs are crucial to museum vitality. The paper incorporates the concept of creativity strategically into the museum and

cultural sphere: ordinary visitors are calling for creative projects as much as they admire the creativity of the artists and scientists whom they learn about in museums.

Museums in Transition: Traditional Museums

My idea of a traditional museum is a delightful museum in Oxford, England—The Ashmolean Museum. It is filled with thousands of different things, many accumulated from the age of Imperial British conquest, and its fascinating objects illuminate the nations and cultures of the world.

The memorable thing about the Ashmolean is that objects are put together in a hodge-podge way, which I find pleasing (this is how museums in the past were organised). There are few labels and wall texts that explain what the artifacts are—at least, this was the case several years ago when I visited the museum. The Ashmolean, clearly, has a special appeal for connoisseurs, collectors, and scholars, furnishing them a unique vantage point for viewing times and things past.

Museums in Transition: Popularly-Oriented Museums

The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), which is now undergoing a vast expansion, is my idea of a popularly-oriented museum. Not only does MOMA have extraordinary art, but it has several first-rate and specialised gift stores, several fine restaurants and coffee bars, and ample seating from which to view the crowd

Another popularly-oriented museum is the Pompidou Centre in Paris. The architecture is extraordinary, both viewed from inside and out. There is a fine restaurant with superb design on the top floor that overlooks much of Paris. The lower-level and ground floors glow with excitement: the dramatic designs of new automobiles on one level; numerous shops, demonstrations, and a lot of seating to watch the happenings, on another. The wonderful escalators pull one upwards, providing grand views of the city.

The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis is yet another example of a popular-centred American museum. One Saturday a month is devoted to family day. Young children dress up in costumes and learn to draw and paint. High school students serve as docents and give guided tours. Musical concerts are performed in one theatre and young children are performing a play in another theater. All of this occurred during a visit when the Walker had a Willem de Kooning exhibition in the upper galleries—rooms filled with wonderful pastel canvasses that soothe the nerves.

The Exchange Model Between Museums and Museum Visitors

Many individuals in the audience will have a good idea of marketing, its process and purpose. But for those who do not, let me sketch briefly marketing's main phases. Marketing is the systematic study of consumer behavior in the marketplace: what motivates consumers to purchase and not purchase, how they make their choices among products, and what captures consumers' attention. Marketing is highly comprehensive, systematic, and based on extensive research.

Each phase of marketing is as follows:

- It begins with research about the external environment in which an organisation operates, especially the competition; but, also, the numerous constituencies, which a museum is responsive toward;

- It examines the strengths and weakness of an organisation and the opportunities and threats organisations are likely to encounter;

- It analyzes the consumer base that is appropriate, discerning needs and interests; segments people into groups that share characteristics; and then targets consumers who are most likely to purchase the products and services;

- Once a target consumer or visitor group is determined, the organisation "positions" itself as being: a) unique and distinctive in relation to other organisations; b) offering things that will satisfy and add value to the consumer's life; and c) a high-profile institution;

- "Positioning" has a more specific meaning. As Ries and Trout point out in their book, *Positioning,* the only sure way an organisation can reach loyal customers is to implant in their minds positive images and messages that they will associate with the organisation's products and services; (Ries and Trout 1986);

- This is the essence of "branding" products such as BMW, Dove Soap, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. These are trusted products and institutions that consumers return to over and over again;

- In a museum context, when a young family on a weekend wants to visit a museum, if a particular museum is "branded" effectively, the family will choose to visit that museum – almost as a automatic reflex;

- "Positioning" has a very credible assumption behind it: the world is saturated with stimuli that are hard to block out, stimuli consisting of endless images and messages that tell consumers to purchase things or get involved in activities;

- "Positioning" is marketing's response to drown out the unwelcome cacophony of stimuli, narrow the range of images and messages, and simplify consumer choices. Consumers can select from a few trusted brand items;

- A good example of positioning in a museum took place in the late 1990s at Boston's Museum of Science. Its new logo, "Museum of Science: It's Alive," along with placing a consistent image in every publication, letterhead, and shopping bag, and communicating the image consistently, all combined to boost attendance and membership;

- Marketing's next stage involves measurable goal-setting, time frames for achieving goals, and devising strategies to reach the goals;

- Marketing then proceeds to a phase known as "Tactical Marketing (the so-called 4Ps):" **products**, the things an organisation puts forward as its prime products, services, and experiences; the **prices** it will charge; the **places** an organisation will distribute information about itself and its products (e.g., a museum website, a mini-exhibition in an airport, taking exhibitions to schools, etc.); and the ways a museum will communicate and **promote** itself to target consumers; and

- Finally, marketing involves monitoring and feedback; if strategies are not working and goals are not being met, marketing will readjust its plans and make course corrections (Philip Kotler, 2000).

Pro-Active Orchestration of Museums

In the past, museums left visitors pretty much to themselves. Years ago, visitors to the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum of Art (a modern and contemporary art museum) would enter the main lobby, encounter non-welcoming guards, and find no cues whatsoever on how and where to proceed. There was no information desk and the gift shop was located on the lower level. The galleries are on the lower level and on two floors

above the entrance. Fortunately, the Hirshhorn has become friendlier to visitors; now has an information desk, friendlier guards, and maps for navigating the galleries.

Today, museums recognise that they have to furnish visitors with services and provide something of value. Museums have as their goal the design and arrangement of artifacts, props, and architecture that will offer visitors an unusual set of experiences. Stories and narratives play a big part in the design of museum programs. Museums are moving to story telling, which movies and other media have long practiced. All of this results in a pro-active management of peoples' visits. Little is left to chance, although management cannot afford to have visitors feel they are being manipulated (Neil Kotler 1999 vol.78, no.3, pp. 30-36; 38-39; 58-61).

Blockbusters and Superb Museum Architecture

Museum Blockbuster shows and great architecture continue to draw large crowds of visitors. Smaller museums cannot afford Blockbuster shows; insurance, transportation, and conservation are too expensive. Big museums like the Metropolitan, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, MOMA, the National Gallery of Art can afford these costs.

- The Cezanne show at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1996 drew 700,000 visitors in the space of a few months;
- MOMA this spring expects to attract a similar audience size for its show, Matisse Picasso; and
- Several years ago, the Art Institute of Chicago, with one of the world's great Impressionist Art collections, planned to organise an Impressionist blockbuster each year as a means to keep up attendance.

Museum architecture has become a major draw for museum audiences, irrespective of the shows and services provided. Frank Gehry's Bilbao in Spain is a glorious building that draws visitors who might never enter the building. Richard Meier's Getty Museum in the Brentwood section of Los Angeles draws people who often don't visit the exhibitions. The hilltop view is spectacular; visitors can look below at the homes of actors; the gardens are beautiful; people can spend all day in the sun on the Getty hilltop and never enter the museums, though they might dine in the restaurants. The lesson for more mortal museums is to create the best design possible, inside and out, show what may be hidden treasures in their collections, and draw visitors to compelling exhibitions and programs. I have visited many museums that could dramatically improve their ambience and attract more visitors but this does not happen because museum people underestimate the aesthetic and sociable values and needs of visitors.

Issues Affecting Museums: Financial Issues

Many museums, in the last decade, expanded their facilities, programs, and staff as visitorship increased and are now saddled with debt as economies have declined. The growth was fueled by favorable economic circumstances. Yet, under the best of circumstances, most museums operate with a subsidy - an endowment, a government subsidy, a patron's private wealth. Given the current economic downturn, museums have lost investment assets in stock markets; wealthy patrons are more reluctant to part with their wealth; and government agencies have more pressing social service needs than support of museums.

This has led museums to focus on earned income, which in some circles is viewed as commercialism. Commercialism in museums for decades has been viewed as anathema to museum missions. Traditionally, audiences were secondary considerations, until the affected museums ran out of money. Museums now are paying more attention to the prices they charge and charging for hitherto free activities. The ingredients of earned income are admission tickets, tickets for special shows, merchandise prices in the shops, food prices, parking prices, and the price for leasing the facility for social and outside use. Yet without some form of subsidy, the typical museum cannot cover all its expenses with earned revenue alone. It always helps to have active, competent fund-raising staff and boards of directors who have access to funds.

Museums have opportunities to extend earned income potential. Some museums have successfully converted visitors to members; moved members to higher membership categories, thus earning more revenue; moved high-end members into the donor class and have received yet even more support. Museum events and sense of community boost the chances of membership and donorship conversions.

A story I heard illustrated this. Several years ago on a visit to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, I met an older woman who expressed her love of the museum. She visited the museum actively as a young and older adult, then was asked to become a member, and then was asked to be a docent and conduct tours. This woman said to me: "This is my home away from home…when I die, I will leave my estate to the museum." This is a wonderful story because the museum helped make this individual active and happy and, in return, the individual will give the museum her estate (Kotler and Kotler, 1998 pp. 45-53).

Building Large, Diverse Audiences and Community Support

Years ago, art museums particularly, operated as elite institutions; really like clubs of the wealthiest, most respected, most powerful members of the community. This has changed. United States museums are more self-consciously public institutions that obtain privileges from the public, such as tax exemptions, exemptions for income received by members, sometimes free municipal utilities such as water and sewage (Weil, 1994).

Agencies of government have made it clear to museums in the U.S. that in exchange for their privileges, museums have to be held accountable and serve all groups in the community. The good result is that museums are creating programs for diverse segments of their community, selecting minority citizens for Boards of Directors, and hiring more minority staff.

In their quest for large audiences, museums are trying to convert single-time visitors into regular visitors; convert regulars into members and then into donors. This is a movement away from transactional marketing, single-time visits to museums, and toward relationship marketing, in which individuals have an ongoing interaction with an organisation.

Sociability is a large factor in drawing people to museums and to museum events. Museum members expect high-quality events and this means staff costs and time. If the events yield more members, higher-paying members, and more donors, than events are worth the cost to museums. Events can be holiday events (Christmas), seasonal events (spring flower shows), commemorative events (U.S. Independence Day), opening exhibition events, events with scholars and celebrities, events with the museum director. (Kotler and Kotler, 1998 pp. 32-34; Kotler and Kotler, 2000).

Museums also are spending more research dollars figuring out why more citizens don't visit and what prevents non-visitors from participating. Focus groups are the best means to elicit this type of information.

Competitive Pressures.

Museums exist in the recreational and educational marketplace. There used to be a debate whether museums are solely educational or solely recreational. This proved to be a false dichotomy, since museums are both, and the differences lie in the proportion given to each.

There are more museums than ever and each is competing with the others. The better strategy would be for contiguous museums to join forces and cooperate, form a marketing group for publicity and perhaps for purchasing, and create a cultural area of critical mass and variety that will draw large audiences.

Museums compete with stay-at-home behaviours (working on computers, gardening, cleaning houses, watching videos, etc.) Museums also compete for the attention of non-visitors who comprise a majority of people in most communities.

However, the most serious competitive pressures come from the huge entertainment and recreational corporations that span the globe and that are investing in every phase of leisure activity. Examples are Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation and Fox, AOL Time-Warner, Sony, Disney, Viacom, and Vivendi-Universal. These corporations are going after the largest share of leisure income and activity they can obtain from people, at a point when leisure time in urban areas is diminishing.

Consider Disney's wide-ranging recreational offerings: theme parks, cruise ships, hotels and restaurants, retail stores, films, television, videos. Its latest product is the Disney Institute in Orlando, Florida. It is educational. It furnishes adults with opportunities to explore their creative side (learn to cook, train to be a T.V. anchor person, learn to do watercolours; study philosophy), while their children are residing separately with trained staff. Disney also is investing in museums: it helped build Port Discovery, a high-profile Baltimore children's museum.

The biggest museums like the Louvre, the Powerhouse, the British Museum, the Hermitage, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, can compete with these enormous corporations because they have worldwide reputations and offer things the big entertainment corporations cannot offer. The competitive lesson is this: museums can hold their own as long as they provide unique value, meet the needs of their visitors, and make themselves highly accessible to the public.

Smaller museums can take further competitive actions. They can fill part of their Board of Directors with people who have sought-after skills in marketing, public relations, fund-raising, and communications. In many cases, these services will be provided on a voluntary basis. Museums have to provide high-quality services such as close by parking, dining, and way-finding guides, especially since leisure time is scarcer. Competition can be a positive thing: it has empowered some museums to excel. Unfortunately, competition also has overwhelmed and disabled weak museums.

Museum Identity: The Image a Museum Conveys to the Public

The issue of museum identity may be the most serious of the challenges facing museums today. A museum has many roles and models to choose among (Carr, 2001, vol. 80, No. 5; Gates, 2001; Kotler and Kotler, 1998, pp.28-32):
:

- It can be a place of learning;
- A place for social and community gatherings;
- A civic institution, especially history museums that tackle
- neighbourhood and citywide issues;
- A place for connoisseurs and scholars to study objects;
- A place that mixes learning and entertainment and has a broad spectrum of programs and activities; and
- A place of popular culture and entertainment

The best museums combine roles and recognise that their publics are diverse and expect a range of programs and activities. An example of a successful museum in this regard is The U.S. Army First Infantry Division Museum at the Cantigny Estate in Wheaton, Illinois, 60 miles west of Chicago. It was built by Colonel Robert McCormack, publisher of the Chicago Tribune newspaper and a soldier in the First Infantry Division during W.W. I. The museum balances exhibitions and activities. In the gardens surrounding the museum are tanks, artillery guns, and other weapons that stand-alone and resemble for some visitors sculptures,

monuments, and aesthetic phenomena. The galleries present the story of the Infantry division's achievements, with labels, wall texts, and artifacts. The newest addition allows visitors to experience the sights and sounds of war. One gallery consists of trenches in Cantigny, a French town and battleground in W.W. I. In the trenches, visitors can smell war and hear its sounds. A second immersive gallery is a reconstruction of part of the village of Cantigny just after a bombing raid. Cries of anguish are heard; burning smells are pervasive. The variety has made the museum a popular place to visit.

Ultimately, museum identity has to be grounded in a museum's strongest attributes (staff, collections, treasures, location). Identity also has to be grounded in roles that are most useful in the community. Does a community want to attract tourists? Does it want to have a community cultural centre? Does it urgently need youth activities? Identity has to be communicated in a compelling way. Marketing assists museums to determine the image and message that captures the attention and imagination of major target groups as well as other constituencies.

The Significance of Museum Accessibility

Accessibility sounds complicated. It means the ease of access that different groups have in museums, for example, young people, low-income people, and disabled people.

Even before marketing researched American shores, one pioneering museum leader, Charles Willson Peale, opened a late 18th century Philadelphia museum of art and natural history that was designed to be accessible to all classes. Peale made a special effort to reach labourers; he kept the museum open late hours a few days a week. Peale stated that his museum offered "rational entertainment," an experience combining the mind and emotions, learning and enjoyment (Brigham, 1995, pp. 1-5; 19-20).

In the early 20th, century, John Cotton Dana at the Newark Museum in Newark, New Jersey conceived of his museum as a hand servant to the community, instructing young people and adults in trade skills and offering instruction that had direct value for households and the routines of daily life. At the Smithsonian around this time, George Brown Goode was a notable museum reformer, renovating galleries, creating labels and wall texts to explain collections, all of which made the Smithsonian, the national museum, far more accessible to the public.

Great urban American museums, founded in the early years of the 20th century, were remarkably accessible. In Chicago, the department store magnate Marshall Field created the Field Museum of Natural History and specifically invited people without formal education to participate. This also was the case at the Museum of Science and Industry, founded by the Sears Roebuck chief executive, Julius Rosenwald. Both museums occupied municipal land and, in return for their subsidies, these museums were expected to reach out to all classes in the community. The Metropolitan Museum in New York also occupies municipal parkland and has a similar public obligation of accessibility.

Museum accessibility concerns are in part a result of the aging of museum audiences. Museum audiences are older as the population ages. They are older also because museums, on the whole, fail to attract young people.

The accessibility problem still affects lower-income groups, newly settled immigrants who don't speak English, and young people who perceive museums as boring places. Museums have a challenge to attract young people and some museums are succeeding. An example of a museum that reaches out to young people is the Newark Museum, a museum of art and science.

- It has apprenticeship programs for high school students
- Science clubs for middle school and high school students

- Summer camps for children and youngsters
- And research work for college students.

Another museum that attracts young people is the Science Museum in St. Paul, Minnesota. The museum has apprenticeship programs. It also has a large Imax theater and young people like to bring their dates to see the shows. It's a great sight to see these young people strolling through the museum galleries before going into the Imax theater.

American art museums, in particular, have organised social groups called "Young Professionals," groups that can be between 25 and 40 years of age. These young adults meet at the museum once a month, generally on a Friday evening, and pay a modest fee for entrance. The museum provides drinks, foods, jazz musicians, sometimes films, curator-lecturers in the galleries and, most of all, companionship. The most successful groups, such as the one at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., have organised committees to raise funds for the museum, specifically funds for new acquisitions (Kotler and Kotler, 1998 p. 291).

Museums can take steps on their own to promote accessibility. They can train their guards and staff to be welcoming rather than intimidating. The Canadian Museum of Civilisation has had a very comprehensive training program to encourage staff responsiveness to visitors. Museums can make their entrances and parking lots safe and well lighted; create way-finding maps to make movement easier; provide large-type brochures for older people; and offer appealing websites that encourage people to visit the museum.

Museums can promote accessibility by hiring staff that not only handle
membership but also deal with discrete museum segments such as young families. Hiring specialists to focus on target groups and the services and programs affecting them is one of the newer approaches to accessibility. Museums should consider hiring a services coordinator who would be responsible for ensuring the high quality of all museum services. Museums are well advised to hire outside inspectors whose job it is to visit museums without staff knowledge, scrutinise the quality of services, and file reports for the managers. Museums are highly complex organisations that have to be responsive to numerous external and internal constituencies. Arguably, accessibility pertains as much to these wide-ranging constituencies as it does to visitors and members.

The Significance of Museum-Going Experiences

Today, the concept of experience is prominent. Why is the concept so prominent in connection with cultural and educational institutions? Experience, presumably, gives recreational activities legitimate value.

In the 1950s, the New American Library in New York published a series of philosophical books with titles such as*The Age of Enlightenment, The Age of Analysis, The Age of Reason* . No volume at that time was devoted to *The Age of Experience.* Why the emphasis today on experience?

One can argue the media elevate experience to the foreground because they are so full of sensate experiences that change, disappear, and need renewal. A related reason may be the reaction to the surfeit of sensory stimuli: a new, fresh experience may be the only thing that breaks through this overexposure. People want to lead more active lives, seek after variety, and they want to participate in their own way, individualistically. All of this comprises elements of experience.

What is meant by experience? It has many meanings and one narrow one that the new marketers single out. Experience is the totality of understanding and meaning a person has accumulated in a lifetime. It is something that is known through sensory stimuli. It is a happening that is intense, visceral, exciting, and out-of-the-ordinary. It is a perceptual state that combines intense emotion and reflection. Experience is something that affects an individual in personal terms. It is participating in an event directly rather than as a spectator.

The contemporary marketing concept of experience gives emphasis to the intensity of sensory perception rather than to its reflective insight over time. My sense is that these new authors touting experience as the solution for museums and cultural centres present too narrow a view of experience. Finding meaning can be an experience. Pondering and discerning patterns in art can be an experiencing. Engaging in reverie can be an experience. Feeling awe and enchantment can be an experience. Thus, experiences can be reflective (cognitive) as well as emotional (affective). The authors, cited above, do not recognise the breadth and variety of experiences available to people and that satisfy their needs.

In our book, *Museum Strategy and Marketing* (1998), Philip Kotler and I refer to six varieties of experience found in museums. These experiences are not mutually exclusive; they are usually combined. The mixtures may be different but the best museums pay attention to all six and offer them in some combination and measure. I will draw on personal museum experiences to illustrate the six varieties.

Museums are, foremost, places of **visual, sensory, and aesthetic perception.** The National Gallery in Washington, D.C. organised in the mid-1980s a Blockbuster Gauguin exhibition, which was a visual delight. Gauguin's luminous and intensely coloured canvasses filled many galleries at the museum. The colours enveloped me for days. It had snowed in Washington at the time and the next morning when I picked up my newspaper at the front door, instead of seeing the snow I saw the colours of Tahiti. The effect diminished over time yet I certainly had a powerful experience with Gauguin.

Another visual, sensory experience exerted a powerful pull on my imagination. Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry has a famous Coal Mine exhibition. Visitors descend into the coalmine riding in coal cars that miners used. The clanking of the cars, the coolness and clamminess I felt as we descended into the mine is still memorable today, 45 years later. The walls of the mines were covered with insect and plant fossils. At the bottom it was completely dark. Why has this experience been so vivid? I suspect it is vivid because it dealt with an exotic experience removed from everyday life and at the time I had some fear that I would never reach the top.

Family Day at the Walker Art Center is a blending of **social and learning experiences**. Sociability in museums is an important phenomenon since most visitors come with family and friendship groups. Visitors also want to associate with other people. The Walker had a great variety of sociable and interpersonal activities for children (musical, drama, art, and theater performances) as well as activities for adults. Each of these activities is rooted in a shared sense of being part of a community.

Museums offer **recreational activities**, which are designed to relax, divert, and provide enjoyment. In the U.S., recreation is mainly thought of as shopping, dining, and watching other people. It should not be forgotten that visitor surveys have found that museum visitors spend as much time outside the exhibition galleries as inside. One of the best recreational experiences I've had was at the Baltimore Museum of Art. The shops were filled with first-class merchandise, some of which I purchased. The restaurant was exceptional. Upon request, the museum provides visitors with aluminum folding chairs, which can be placed in the centre of the huge galleries of the contemporary art wing and the chairs offer superb perspectives. There is ample museum seating with which to view other people.

There are many places to **learn** about nature and science but the two finest in the U.S. are the Exploratorium in San Francisco and the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

The Exploratorium, one of the earliest hands-on science museums, is always buzzing with excitement. Docents and student apprentices are helping visitors learn how to do science experiments. Different sections of the enormous warehouse-like space are devoted to physics, biology, astronomy, ecology, and chemistry. Visitors can have a one-on-one interaction with docents and have their questions answered. Interactivity is

emphasised in the experiments and instruction. Visitors with special acumen are given more difficult experiments to work with.

The American Museum of Natural History, next to the Smithsonian's Natural History Museum, is one of the great institutions combining natural history, anthropology, archeology, and astronomy. The Rose Center of Astronomy, a beautiful glass cube within the museum, presents one of the most remarkable treatments of the history of the earth and the universe found anywhere. The space is designed with architectural flair. The learning modules are fascinating, and along a grand stairwell is illuminated the history and development of the universe. There is also an illumination of the big bang and its effects, as visitors look down upon a large convex mirror.

Museums are preeminently **celebrative institutions**: art museums celebrate artistic creativity; science museums, scientific creativity; natural history museums, anthropological, archeological, and geological expertise and creativity; history museums, historical imagination and creativity; and ethnic museums, the achievements of an entire people and culture. Celebration is to honour human kind, its gifts and talents; not only the great figures of history, but also the potential greatness of ordinary people.

My favorite celebrative museum in the U.S. is the Minnesota History Center in Minneapolis. The celebrative experience I had did not involve authentic artifacts. One small theater celebrates the natural and human history of the State; a second theater celebrates universal human sentiments and meanings. This second theatre had a bench for about 15 visitors. A small stage rotates in front of the viewers and contains several sets. One set has an old chair, table, and pipe lying at the edge of the table. Another set shows a young woman and a young man who is going off to war and the anxiety of his girlfriend. A third set shows a family with children and stories are told about them. A narrator describes the significance of the sets with pleasant music in the background. The theater told remarkable stories and the one that captured my attention was the set with the pipe, stuffed chair, and table. I associated that with my father, who smoked a pipe and had a similar stuffed chair, and I began to reflect on his life and his passing, I cried, as did the other visitors who had other strong associations, and none of us were embarrassed. It was a cathartic experience of sharing ideals of human life and meaning.

The Center's theater had ordinary props, not authentic artifacts. We witnessed a type of theatrical performance. One can ask if this is appropriate for museums. It is appropriate because it told stories of human value and meaning. The stage provided a memorable celebrative experience.

The last type of experience is **enchantment and awesomeness**. I will give two illustrations, both from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. One was a show on Vermeer paintings about 4-5 years ago. Twenty paintings were on display (Vermeer had only painted approximately 30 painting in his lifetime). Vermeer paintings are sublime; the extraordinary technique is accompanied by an aura of spiritual transcendence. The experience was utterly enchanting.

The Mark Rothko show at the National Gallery was also remarkable. This show had about 75 canvasses from Rothko's entire life's work. Rothko is a favourite of mine but it took this show to help me discern the scope of his artistic genius. Large exhibitions have an advantage in their size, sheer reinforcement of impressions, and comparative value. I was able to view the shimmering spaces that separated one colour from another, which I had not seen before. I could appreciate the vividness of Rothko's colours and the dynamism of their juxtaposition. The show left me breathless.

These experiences I have had in museums led me to the conclusion that museums would do well to offer each of these experiences in some measure. Together, these experiences enrich the museum-going visit.

Museum Websites

Museum websites have at least three useful purposes. They offer information about the museum, its hours, facilities, exhibitions, and programs. A museum website, available in the museum and online at home, can display virtual exhibitions and images from the collections. Websites allow users to purchase items from the gift shops. Research shows that online websites encourage people to visit museums, and their design can be decisive in this regard (Anderson, 1994).

The Significance of Creativity in Museums

Museums celebrate the creativity of artists, scientists, naturalists, and historians. Visitors come to museum to bask in the glory of artistic creativity or scientific discovery.

But what prevents museums from tapping the creativity that exists in their visitors and members? People want to express their creative impulses. They want to be involved in projects that have value to others and to society. More and more art museums are organising studio arts programs for their members—programs that can unleash their creativity and also provide for welcome sociability. Science museums can help their audiences learn and practice science, as the Exploratorium does. Natural history museums can have members apprentice themselves to museum scholars who are doing field work. Members can help with cataloging the collections. Each of these activities is instructive and can be creative. History museums can transform their members into urban archeologists who are assigned to find famous markers of a city's origin and development. In all cases, museum members are called upon to actively participate in the research of a museum and to apply their creative talents and skills to the on-going work of the museums.

Museums also can tap the creativity of young people. Young people should be encouraged to create their own collections. Creating collections includes many skills and thought patterns: organising things by some type of methodology; learning about the properties of objects; analyzing what is appropriate and inappropriate for collections; discriminating between what is authentic and inauthentic, superior, inferior, or mediocre. Collections invite collectors to search out the origins and provenance of the objects collected.

At the Smithsonian's 150th anniversary in 1996, 40 students exhibited their remarkable collections under a tent on the National Mall called, "Young Collectors." These young collectors displayed collections of old-fashioned home appliances, objects that measure things, Persian jewelry, Western cowboy boots, coins, ceramic holders of Chinese chop sticks, and many other things. Museums are the place to encourage young collectors and museums need young people.

One other suggestion for museums is in order. Usually, the public visits museum galleries, partakes in various services, but has nothing to do with museum professionals such as curators or, for that matter, with other museum visitors. Museum visitors lack opportunities to gather together to discuss what they have seen and to share perspectives. A museum can arrange at special hours (with announcements) for interested visitors to meet with other visitors and a curator to talk about their museum experiences. These sessions can be held in the afternoons. This would allow curators to learn what the public thinks of the museums and it would enable visitors to share their experiences, reflect, and synthesise their observations. This, too, is a creative activity that museums can foster.

Conclusion: Marketing's Contributions to Museum Vitality

I conclude my paper with a few observations on museums and marketing. Recall Charles Willson Peale who when asked what he wished to accomplish in his Philadelphia Museum stated, "a place to rationally entertain" visitors of all classes. Both entertainment and marketing aim to capture the attention of an audience (the root meaning of entertainment is capturing attention). Rational entertainment is not the Disney theme park-type of

entertainment that is visceral and excites the emotions. Nor is it scholarly work at museums. Rational entertainment is something in-between. Museums have to "position" themselves in distinctive ways, combining the best of both worlds.

Museums have to be true to the integrity and authenticity of their collections, research, and mission, which ultimately is to raise the aesthetic and intellectual level of visitors that contributes to a better quality of life. Museums should actively seek after visitors, volunteers, members, and donors, and work hard to convert one category into another for the purpose of strengthening the bonds among constituencies and the museum, on the one hand, and also acquire more revenue and income, on the other. Museums are sociable places that can build loyalty through events as well as programs. Museums can foster a sense of community, relationships, and a sense of investment by their participants, which will smooth out the rough times, when the economy is down and Blockbuster shows are not available.

Marketing focuses on the needs of consumers for culture, education, and recreation. Research will enable museums to offer consumers the value they seek after that is not offered by other organisations. Marketing will help build relationships, where only single-time transactions existed before. Marketing utilises the skills of communication and promotion to raise the visibility and profile of institutions that in the past were overlooked or unknown.

Museums have to exercise judgment when hiring a marketing firm. There are good marketers and bad. Museums hire marketers for their skills in specified areas. But one thing has to be clear: museum marketers follow the lead of museum management, the Board of Directors, and staff. Marketers are not to impose their judgments on museums and engage in any activities on their own.

Museums and cultural institutions enrich are lives. They help cultivate our appreciation for creativity and talent. They also can help us express our own creativity. Museums are important subjects to think about and highly enjoyable institutions to participate in. We should all work to increase their vitality, their scope, and their public reach.

Thank you for your attention. I have enjoyed sharing these thoughts with you, which I hope will assist you in your own work. Thank you, again, for inviting me to Australia.

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