

Denver Museum of Nature and Science Case Study for

Master of Arts

Arts and Culture Marketing

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1. In the case study, Coughlin outlines four options as the primary objective for digital. For each objective, briefly discuss how it would change the “product” and “promotion” strategies for DMNS.
 - Objective 1: Digital could be a preamble to a physical visit (a pre-visit experience), used primarily as a marketing vehicle to drive people to the museum.
 - Objective 2: Digital could be the postscript to a physical visit (a post-visit experience) used to establish a longer term relationship with visitors and promote membership in the museum community.
 - Objective 3: Digital could enhance a visitor’s physical, in-person experience.
 - Objective 4: Digital could provide a museum experience entirely on its own, completely separate from a physical visit.

Objectives 1 and 2 are similar because in both scenarios, the core product of the physical museum visit stays the same. By adding the digital preamble or postscript, DMNS would be creating an augmented product. According to Bernstein, “the augmented product often consists of features and benefits that enhance the experience of current patrons” (Bernstein 2014, 172). Objectives 3 and 4, on the other hand, would have major changes to the core product itself. If DMNS brings digital components into the museum’s physical space, the visitor’s in-person experience will be different than before. Creating a completely digital experience would mean

that DMNS would essentially have two core products to sell: the in-person museum and the digital museum.

As far as promotion goes, digital would directly affect Objectives 1 and 2 the most.

Objective 1 is essentially a promotion tool on its own, aiming to bring more people to the physical museum. Objective 2 focuses on direct marketing rather than mass marketing, relating the museum experience to the individual. Objective 3 doesn't necessarily have to change the promotion strategies, but if they are claiming to have technologically advanced exhibits, they should probably move their advertisements away from print and direct mail and aim towards digital advertising as well. Objective 4 would require an entirely new promotion campaign separate from the physical museum because it is a completely new product.

2. Should digital act more as an expansion of the DMNS's product line or as a promotional strategy to drive people to the museum and/or retain them afterward?

Museums around the world are struggling to figure out how digital fits into their mission. In this case study, Hubner worries that parents "don't want their kids coming to a museum to look down at a screen. They want them to be experiencing the museum and the exhibits" (Avery and Rosenberg 2016, 8). I understand this concern, but recent research is showing that the opposite is actually true. According to a 2017 study, "Adults with children living at home are 52% more likely than those without to say that wearable technology would enhance a cultural experience" (Culture Track 2017). I think parents want their children to be engaged in whatever they are learning about, and they are happy to embrace digital strategies if

that is what will achieve this goal. Since a majority of the DMNS's audience is families with children, incorporating technology could be a major asset.

Even though digital strategies are well received by the public, they are not widely used in the museum industry. Knight Foundation conducted a study that showed "Only 25% [of museums] have a shared digital strategy or incorporate one into their overall strategic plan" (Knight Foundation 2020). Since so few museums are using digital strategies at all, I would recommend using digital as a promotional tool rather than an expansion of the DMNS product line. Digital promotion is well-researched, so there is much more information for DMNS to fashion their strategies after than digital museum products.

3. Staff from DMNS outlined many different strategies to segment their audience. In the context of your answer to question #2, compare and contrast at least two segmentation approaches from the case study. What are the benefits and drawbacks of using each segmentation approach with your chosen strategy?

I'm impressed with how much data DMNS has about their audience. It shows that they already have a basic understanding of digital tools and how they can be useful to the organization. I am particularly interested in how they segmented their audience motivations for coming to the museum. This segmentation is harder to do because it requires the patron to reflect and give the answer themselves, but it is very useful information to have. Knowing why certain people want to come to your organization helps you market yourself to them. They also segmented the audience into groups based on whether or not they have children, and what age

groups those children are in. It was very useful to know that the majority of museum visitors come with kids, because DMNS can take that information to promote more of their kid-friendly exhibits, but it doesn't delve into why parents bring their children.

4. Given your answers to #2 and #3, briefly describe a best-practice promotional campaign for DMNS. What would you promote? Through what channels? Who is the target of the campaign?

I would use digital promotion to start us off in digital strategies. I think this is a good way to get the organization and its audience comfortable with digital. Since families with kids are a large segment of our audience, I would promote our newest kid-friendly exhibit. The target audience would be local parents of young children. I would use social media posts and paid advertisements in addition to the other forms of promotion DMNS uses already. These posts would lead people to the DMNS website and guide them towards purchasing tickets.