KNOWING YOUR VISITORS WELL IS AT THE HEART OF SUCCESS

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ACM Interactivity 2017 – Fun is Serious Business
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CASE STUDY: EUREKA!

Knowing Your Visitors Well Is at the Heart of Success
CASE STUDY: NEW DISCOVERY PLACE NATURE MUSEUM

Presented by:
- Barrett Long, Senior Site Director, Discovery Place
- Elena Kazlas, Principal, ConsultEcon, Inc.
CASE STUDY: NEW DISCOVERY PLACE NATURE MUSEUM

- Existing Discovery Place Nature Location, Offerings, and Relationship with rest of Discovery Place attractions
- New Museum Master Planning Process – building and brand
  - Brought in ConsultEcon, Inc. to
    - Review Site and Master Plan by Haizlip Studio from Market & Economic Perspective
    - Conduct Market Analysis / Define Markets / Review Demographics
    - Estimate Attendance and Earned Revenue Potential for New Museum
    - Provide recommendations to planning based on market and economic potential of New Museum
Case Study: New Discovery Place Nature, previously Charlotte Nature Museum

Source: Haizlip Studios
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Existing Discovery Place Nature Location

- Originally built on Freedom Park in Charlotte in 1951 – only modest capital improvements since then
- Freedom Park serves as local “central park” despite being 3 miles away from downtown
- Connected to downtown by Little Sugar Creek Greenway

Source: Google Maps; ConsultEcon, Inc.
Existing Discovery Place Nature Offerings

♦ Indoor and outdoor exhibit areas
  – Live animal exhibits
  – Planetarium
  – Outdoor trails
  – Butterfly pavilion

♦ Target audience: children in grades Pre-K through 2 and their families

♦ Attendance of 60,000 to 70,000 annually

Source: ConsultEcon, Inc.
Charlotte Nature Museum to Discovery Place Nature

♦ Part of the Discovery Place network
  – Discovery Place – a science museum opened in 1981
  – Discover Place Kids Huntersville – opened in 2010
  – Discovery Place Kids Rockingham – opened in 2013
  – Discovery Place Education Studio - 2014
♦ Evaluating brand connection with Discovery Place – shift in 2016 to new name: Discovery Place Nature – focused on kids market
New Discovery Place Nature Master Plan

♦ Facility Master Plan by Haizlip Studios
♦ Attendance and Earned Revenue Potential by ConsultEcon
New Discovery Place Nature Site Evaluation

♦ Adjacency to Freedom Park
  – Recommend: Leverage location and improve entrance sequence from park side to better capture park’s million annual visitors

♦ Access from N. Tryon Street
  – Recommend: Improve signage for better visibility on approach

♦ Parking needs
  – Facility, site, and exhibit improvements would increase traffic & need for parking
  – Recommend: Increase capacity of proposed 105-space parking lot to accommodate more visitors

Source: Haizlip Studios
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New Discovery Place Nature Competitive Context

- There are a number of nature-oriented educational attractions in the area.
- Many nature centers offer interpretation of a larger nature preserve with trails, typically with free admission.
- Discovery Place Nature is also competitive with other Discovery Place attractions – both the science center and children’s museums.
- New museum planned to differentiate itself with new unique exhibits and live animal exhibits.

Source: Google Maps; ConsultEcon, Inc.
Note: Yellow Star on map shows location of Charlotte Nature Museum.
Discovery Place Attractions’ 60-Minute Drive Time Map

Discovery Place Science  Discovery Place Nature
Discovery Place Kids-Huntersville  Discovery Place Kids-Rockingham
Existing Discover Place Nature Visitor Origins

- Visitor origin analysis based on most recent fiscal year
- Highest market capture rate in local counties – typical of nature-based and children’s museums
- A new Museum that emphasizes its relationship with the larger Discovery Place brand will likely increase attendance from both locally and further away

- Map shows capture rates for museum in North and South Carolina Counties
- Market capture rate is the attendance from a given area divided by the area population

Source: Charlotte Nature Museum; U.S. Census; QGIS; ConsultEcon, Inc.
Define Target Audience

- Shift target audience from children in grades Pre-K to 2nd
- Primary Target Audience: Children ages 5 to 10
- Secondary Audience: Children ages 1 to 4, and 11 to 14 (siblings of primary audience)

Source: Haizlip Studios
Define Resident Market Area - based on drive times
- Primary: 0-15 Minute Drive
- Secondary: 15-30 Minute Drive
- Tertiary: 30-60 Minute Drive

Total resident market area population estimated at 2.33 million in 2015; projected to grow to 2.53 million by 2020

At periphery, Resident Market changes into Tourist Market
- Most tourist visitors to museum would be visiting friends and relatives

Source: ESRI; ConsultEcon, Inc.
Close-In Market Age Analysis
New Discovery Place Nature

♦ Population of children ages 5 to 9 (the primary target audience) as a percent to total population by census tract code, 2015
♦ Yellow & green lines show 15- and 30-minute drive time rings from museum
♦ Higher concentration of target audience children in neighborhoods further away from downtown.
♦ Significant number of children in the neighborhoods directly to the east of the museum

Source: ESRI; ConsultEcon, Inc.
Population ages 25 and older with educational attainment higher than High School Diploma as a percent to total population by ZIP code, 2015

Yellow & green lines show 15- and 30-minute drive time rings from museum

Higher levels of educational attainment concentrated in neighborhoods to southeast of museum

Lower levels of educational attainment just beyond 15 minutes driving to west, north, and east of museum

Source: ESRI; ConsultEcon, Inc.
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Close-In Market Income Analysis
New Discovery Place Nature

- Households with annual income of more than $50,000 as a percent to total households by ZIP code, 2015
- Yellow & green lines show 15- and 30-minute drive time rings from museum
- Higher income is found in neighborhood immediately surrounding museum, especially to the east
- Most affluent zip codes are in the 30-minute drive range.
- Downtown areas (just north of museum) have lower levels of affluence.

Source: ESRI; ConsultEcon, Inc.
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New Discovery Place Nature
Key Findings and Recommendations

♦ Clearly defined target audience demographics helped to contextualize visitors within local market
♦ Understanding social geography helped to define markets of opportunity in resident market area
♦ Leveraged relationships with other assets – including local resources (like Freedom Park) and partner organizations (Discovery Place) – helped to elevate brand
♦ Acknowledgement and addressing limitations of space, either within facility or on site for parking
Target Audience
- Visitor Experiences
- Educational Outcomes
- Community Benefit

Organization
Personnel / Volunteers
Operating Budget

Location
Building
Exhibits

Attendance & Earned Revenue Potential

Gift and Grant Funding
- Initial Museum Development
- Ongoing Operations
- Museum Reinvestment

Source: ConsultEcon, Inc.
Know Your Visitors!

♦ Understanding who makes up your audience from within through evaluations and surveys will help your organization better serve the existing audience.

♦ Intentionally defining the target audience and understanding available markets will help your organization grow its audience.

♦ Offering a range of exhibits and programs for different audience segments will help your organization meet the needs of its audience and elevate the visitor experience.
Q&A
THANK YOU!

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