THE EXPERIENCE GENERATION: BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MILLENNIALS AND MUSEUMS

By

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To my family, friends, and all who have provided support and mentorship over these past two-and-a-half years
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<td>AAM</td>
<td>The American Alliance of Museums is a non-profit professionalization organization that develops policies and strategic plans to unite museums and establish best practices within the museum field.</td>
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<td>ADA</td>
<td>Americans with Disabilities Act established in 1990. This act is a civil rights law that prevents discrimination against people with disabilities in public spaces.</td>
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<td>API</td>
<td>Application Programming Interface. An API is essentially a way for a digital technology to communicate with other digital technologies, allowing them to interact with each other. Many websites rely on API’s, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Amazon, to communicate products or services to users.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augmented Reality/ AR</td>
<td>Visualization technology that integrates digital environments into reality with the use of a smart phone or similar device. Augmented reality works in layers, adding to the user’s environment. In museums, this technology may be used to design digital interactive elements to physical exhibitions.</td>
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<td>Alf</td>
<td>The Raymond M. Alf Museum of Paleontology located in Claremont, California.</td>
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<td>Baby Boomer</td>
<td>A generational cohort typically used to describe any individual born between the years 1965 and 1984.</td>
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<td>Beacon Device</td>
<td>A communication tool that connects to a smart phone or similar device via Bluetooth. Beacons tracks movement to provide supplemental information. In museums, beacons may be utilized to track the movement of visitors in an exhibition space and provide additional information about objects.</td>
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<td>Generation X/ Gen X</td>
<td>A generational cohort typically used to describe any individual born between the years 1965 and 1984.</td>
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<td>IMPACTS</td>
<td>Intelligent Models to Predict Actionable Solutions. Trend research company that focuses on helping organizations uncover ways to connect with communities and remain relevant with their audiences.</td>
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<td>IRB</td>
<td>Institutional Review Board. A group of non-biased individuals hired by the University of Florida to approve research studies for all students.</td>
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<td>Kunsthalle</td>
<td>A non-collecting museum that rotates exhibitions from objects loaned from public or private collections around the world. These museums typically present exhibitions on contemporary art and are highly experimental spaces.</td>
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MCA Denver  
Museum of Contemporary Arts Denver located in Denver, Colorado.

Meme  
A 21st century communication device utilizing visuals coupled with text to express a thought process. These means of communication are typically shared by users on a social media platform.

Millennial  
A generational cohort typically describing any individual born between the years 1986 to 2000. In this thesis, the term “millennial” may also be used interchangeably with “young adult.”

MMA  
Mississippi Museum of Art located in Jackson, Mississippi.

Museum Affiliate  
For-profit companies that exist on the fringes of the museum field. These companies work with museums in various capacities including, but not limited to, consulting, audience development, evaluation, and demographic research.

SFMOMA  
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, California.

Universal Design  
The design of environments that are accessible for use by the greatest amount of people regardless of physical or psychological barriers. In museums, universal design allows for a majority of visitors to engage in an exhibition space regardless of age, race, socioeconomic class, or disability. True universal design includes seven factors: equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort, size and space for approach and use. Sometimes referred to as inclusive design.
Swift declines in visitation and funding are growing concerns among museums in the United States. Many institutions are asking themselves how to remain relevant in the 21st century, despite rapid changes in digital technologies and communication. One significant way may lie in the values of the millennial generation. Millennials are the largest, most diverse, and highly educated generational cohort in recorded history, yet they remain an underserved audience among museums. Current studies by museum researchers suggest millennials are uninterested in supporting cultural institutions. How can museums prepare now for millennials to become the next primary audience?

This thesis addresses the complex relationship between millennials and museums to understand how this generational cohort can be cultivated as an audience. The implementation of an original survey, titled *Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces*, makes visible the aspects of a museum experience that millennials value. From the results of this survey, major trends emerge and are applied to case studies. Each case study focuses on a museum that currently takes progressive action to engage this audience. The overall purpose of this thesis is to
demonstrate feasible opportunities for museums of all types and sizes to make their space welcoming to the millennial generation.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH: WHY MILLENNIALS?

Millennials have gotten a bad reputation over the years. Within the past decade, concurrent with the emergence of millennials into adulthood, this generational cohort is generally labeled with stereotypes such as “lazy,” “entitled,” and “self-absorbed.”

Journalists from older generations have published countless articles claiming millennials are poor workers seeking higher pay for less work. However, scholarship among trend researchers has proven these negative stereotypes are far from the truth.

One notable report published by the Pew Research Center in 2010 titled, “Millennials: Confident, Connected, Open to Change,” examined

1 In 2010, Deal, Altman, and Rogelberg acknowledged the often contradictory views about millennials in their article titled, “Millennials at Work: What We Know and What We Need to Do (If Anything).” This article examines the discrepancies between the perception and reality of millennial values, specifically in regard to the workplace. They found that all generations have similar issues when its members are the same age as millennials are now. For example, Baby Boomers were described as “entitled” and “self-focused” in 1969 by researchers Rukeyser and Seligman, respectively. Now these labels are used to criticize the millennial generation. This demonstrates a correlation between age and characterization that transcends just the millennial generation. To further this thought, Deal, Altman, and Rogelberg acknowledge that stereotypes among generations tend to exist due to a, “combination of a lack of data and an over-reliance on opinion rather than empirical results.” True to this thought, they found that millennials, while demonstrating obvious differences due to a shift in society, actually tend to be just as stable and reliable in the workplace as previous generations. Source: Jennifer J. Deal, David G. Altman, and Steven G. Rogelberg, “Millennials at Work: What We Know and What We Need to Do (If Anything),” Journal of Business and Psychology 25, no. 2 (2010): 191-99, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40605778.

2 The conversation surrounding millennials is slowly evolving toward a more positive conversation. Older generations tend to view millennials stereotypically as lazy, entitled, and poor workers. Joel Stein made waves throughout the United States in 2013 with his article “Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation.” With this article, Stein heavily criticizes the millennial generation for being narcissistic and dangerous, calling them, “the most threatening and exciting generation since the baby boomers.” Source: Joel Stein, “Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation,” Time Magazine, May 2013, accessed September 26, 2017, http://time.com/247/millennials-the-me-me-me-generation/.

Stein’s argument has since been refuted multiple times, most notably by Elspeth Reeve with The Atlantic. This article, titled, “goes point by point through Stein’s claims, providing more accurate data that uproots Stein’s claims. According to Reeve, all young people, regardless of generational cohort, tend to be self-absorbed, however they grow up to responsible and socially-conscious. Source: Elspeth Reeve, “Every Every Every Generation has been the Me Me Me Generation,” The Atlantic, May 2013, accessed September 26, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/05/me-generation-time/315151/.
the demography and social behaviors of millennials solidifying their potential to become the most powerful generational cohort in recorded history.³

The millennial generation is typically defined by all individuals born between the ages of 1986 to 2000, or anyone currently between the ages of 17 to 31.⁴ The Pew Research Center’s 2010 report identifies this generation as the largest and most diverse in history. In fact, many of the social and behavioral trends exhibited by millennials have the potential to be beneficial for museums in the future. As older generations age, millennials will step into the role of being a primary audience for cultural institutions in the United States for a majority of the 21st century.⁵

This thesis examines the role of the millennial within cultural institutions in the United States. It aims to answer two questions: First, what do millennials seek from a museum experience and how do their needs differ from those of previous generational cohorts? Second, how are museums working to facilitate an environment that millennials respond to? By answering these questions, museums, regardless of budget, size, and type, can gain an understanding of how to set the foundation to build a long-term relationship with millennial audiences.


⁴ This is the date range established by Neil Howe and William Strauss in the book Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation. Howe and Strauss are generally accepted as the researchers who originally coined the term “millennial.” For the purposes of this thesis, I am also choosing to focus on individuals within the United States, although the term can be applied globally. Source: Neil Howe and William Strauss, Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).

All generations differ from each other in significant ways. Baby Boomers and Generation X both largely consider their work ethic as their defining characteristic. Millennials, however, cite technology usage as the characteristic that best defines their cohort. Generations are defined with the purpose of allowing researchers to track changes in behavior over a certain period. The term “generation” as it applies to generational cohorts, is a nebulous word that can refer to a wide range of ages that differ among researchers. Generations are one way for researchers to track behaviors with the same group of people of a similar age over a given timeline, however time limitations can differ across studies. This is the reason why there are many defining age ranges for the millennial generation. To further this thought, all generation cohorts hold value sets that differ from one another, marking each group as distinct. According to the Pew Research Center’s report, 61% of millennials believe their generation is unique. Beyond intuitive use of digital technologies, millennials generally share a few additional characteristics that differentiate them from other generational cohorts. Millennials are less likely to belong to any religious organization, are highly educated, and delay marriage and children until later in life. Despite this finding, 52% of millennials say being a good parent is one of the most important goals they aim to achieve,

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8 For this thesis, I have chosen to align the term “millennial” with limitations established by Howe and Strauss. I define a millennial as any individual born between the years 1986 to 2000.

indicating that creating a thriving family is their top priority. Millennials also tend to be pro-government and democratic-leaning in their voting tendencies, however they are just as pro-business as previous generations. It is important to recognize that millennials are now all considered young adults and are transitioning into careers. This generation is transitioning into the labor force, acquiring leisure time and spending money. Soon, they will control a majority of purchasing power within the United States economy, thus, museums should shift their mindset to view this group as future potential donors.

This group is anticipated to be the most educated in history and control more of the United States economy than ever before, yet there is no way to know if millennials will choose to support museums as they age. Silvia Filippini- Fantoni acknowledged this discouraging fact saying,

We do not have any proof yet that the new generation of millennials is really going to fulfill the same role and be as engaged in our institution. We have a hard enough time getting them to come in the first place, so how do we know they will sustain us in the future. We have no evidence of that right now.

Even more recently, Chief Market Engagement Officer at IMPACTS and museum trend researcher Colleen Dilenschneider released data that reveals millennials will not necessarily “age

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11 In forty-seven of the United States, all individuals are considered adults by legal standards at the age of eighteen. The concept of legal adulthood is also referred to as the age of license, which pertains the threshold upon which an individual is legally able to enter into a contract within the United States. From a socio-behavioral perspective, adulthood can refer to a social construct in which individuals are held legally accountable for their actions. Source: Julie Beck, “When Are You Really An Adult?” The Atlantic, January 5, 2016, accessed September 28, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/01/when-are-you-really-an-adult/422487/.


into” arts and culture, unlike with previous generational cohorts, and currently do not visit cultural institutions at the same rate as previous generations. This low visitation rate may come about for multiple reasons: historically, nontraditional audiences feel unwelcome in museum spaces. Young adults in particular are rarely a priority audience for museums. This mindset needs to change, and museums must facilitate this relationship. Museums that readdress their approach to understand what millennials seek from cultural institutions may benefit from acquiring more visitors, members, and donors in the future.

Who in the museum field really knows, or is actively seeking to know, what millennials want from a museum experience? Current research on the behavioral trends of young adults in cultural institutions lacks significant research. Most existing information to answer this question exists in videos from previous museum conferences or on the blogs of museum professionals. Very little hard data exists about this group, which is remarkable considering how vital they are to the future of museums. Research organizations like the Pew Research Center have administered countless surveys and generated data about the general behavioral habits of young adults. This data tends to focus on societal likes and dislikes as well as general demographic information. While this knowledge is useful to grasping a general understanding millennials,

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14 Although the blog Know Your Own Bone is operated by a for-profit company named IMPACTS, the data examined by Dilenschneider holds great merit within the museum field. Colleen Dilenschneider, “Arts and Culture Remain Less Important to Younger Generations,” Know Your Own Bone, accessed July 12, 2017, https://www.colleendilen.com/2017/07/12/arts-culture-remain-less-important-younger-generations-data/.

15 Primary audiences vary greatly at different museums. Typical audiences of interest are children, families, and seniors, as is reflected in the programming offered at many museums. According the report Demographic Transformations and the Future of Museums, released by AAM, the typical core museum audience are adults within the age range 45-54.

16 During her time as Director of Interpretation, Media and Evaluation at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Silvia Filippini-Fantoni conducted numerous surveys and studies to understand millennial trends. Her research focused specifically on millennials within the Indianapolis community and was used make positive change at the IMA. Today Filippini-Fantoni serves as the Director of the North Carolina Museum of Art. Fortunately, her work is incredibly thorough and digitally archived on the IMA’s website. Her work proves that research efforts to understand millennials make an impact on increased visitation.
little to no data on the habits of millennials in museum spaces has been conducted.\textsuperscript{17} Knowing what millennials seek from an arts and cultural experience is the natural next step to solidifying the future of museums throughout the 21st century.

As the 21st century unfolds, museums have adapted their practices to be more community-oriented and accessible to a variety of audiences. Stephen Weil’s essay “From Being about Something to Being about Someone,” traces the mode of intent for field’s history, moving from being object-focused to visitor-centered.\textsuperscript{18} Museums must navigate the pathways of focusing on the communities they serve rather than the objects they house, realigning their purpose while staying true to their mission. As new visitor-centered practices arise, new, untraditional audiences will become more prominent and must be cultivated. If a museum is for somebody, it must be for everybody. Museums are finding themselves in an interesting period of transition, as traditional museum audiences age.

This thesis takes previous behavioral research on the millennial generation one-step further by acknowledging millennial relationships with cultural institutions. There is no way to ensure millennials will value museums as they age, so museums must instill a genuine interest with this group now to align their policy with millennial values. Many museum professionals face the challenge of implementing institutional change to attract new audiences while remaining true to their mission. This thesis will not only demonstrate the value of forming a relationship with millennials, but will also show creative ways museums across the country are making this change happen ethically and mindfully. Making museums accessible to the unique needs of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Assuming that data concerning behavioral habits specifically related to the millennial generation exists.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
millennials will begin to build the foundation upon which a long-term, stable relationship can thrive.

### Review of Literature

Chosen for their ability to provide an encompassing view of millennial social behavior, the following resources have the potential to provide museums with a deeper understanding of current practices to engage this audience. There is no shortage of information about this generation within the social sciences; however, behavioral research trends rarely are conducted specifically for the museum field. The current scope of research on the millennial generation typically concerns the demographic breakdown and behavioral trends. Nevertheless, applying the available information in a way that benefits museums remains a challenge within the field.

Currently, existing relevant scholarly resources related to this concept are limited. Much of the information in this area lives in museum conference transcripts, blogs run by prominent museum professionals, and original research conducted by social scientists. The readings explored in this section cast a wide net, ranging from studies rooted in demography and behavioral published by the National Endowment for the Arts, experiential theories on learning by museum theorists such as John Falk, and to the future of philanthropy from professional organizations such as the American Alliance of Museums. All of the articles, books, essays, and journals cited provide a formal understanding of millennials from a demographic perspective to determine how their relationship with museums can grow.

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19 Demographic research is constantly being updated by organizations such as the Pew Research Center, Millennial Impact Report, NEA, and AAM. Their findings are published in the form of reports that can be accessed online for free.

20 Organizations dedicated to culture and the humanities, such as the NEA and AAM are conducting research about audience development. This research, however, is fairly limiting when specifically looking at young adults in museums. Typically, research presented in publically-available reports provide an encompassing, general view of audiences without singling out this age group, suspending millennials in a limbo of sorts between teenagers and older adults.
Millennials think and behave differently from any other generation, thus they have adopted values that differ from other generations. Due to this different value-set, millennials are a radical audience when it comes to programming and exhibition interpretation. Reports on millennial demographics from the Pew Research Center examine the behavioral trends and social perspectives that shape the needs and values of this group. The Pew Research Center conducts surveys across the United States, speaking directly with millennial participants. These reports provided framework to conduct the original survey for this thesis, titled, *Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces.*

The Pew Research Center’s 2010 report, *Millennials: Confident, Connected, Open to Change,* it was discovered that millennials are the largest and most diverse generation in history, and hold a set of characteristics that make them unique. This generation is also less likely to belong to an organized religion and tends to wait later in life to get married and have children. The demographic information described in this Pew Research Center report should bode well for museums, as these tend to be desirable traits displayed by many major donors.

Unfortunately, museum visitation across the country continues to decline and no current research implies that millennials will begin to care more about museums as they age. A recent finding by data analyst and museum trend research Colleen Dilenschneider suggests a negative effect. In her article titled, “Arts and Culture Remain Less Important to Younger Generations,”


Dilenschneider provides data suggesting that millennials will not “grow” into philanthropists similar to older generations.\textsuperscript{23} This supports the idea that people are not predisposed to support cultural institutions, but are carefully and strategically cultivated. This article and the accompanying data serves as a warning to institutions that do not actively seek to grow their relationship with millennials. Dilenschneider dedicates much of her efforts to increasing awareness of the importance of millennials to museums. A major reason why she often speaks about millennials is to demystify this audience so museums can understand that talking about millennials does not decrease the value of other audiences. “Millennial Talk,” is everyone talk according to Dilenschneider, and serving the needs to millennials often make museums more accessible to their entire community.\textsuperscript{24}

At the 2014 Museum Next conference in Dublin, Ireland, Susan McClure, Director of the Smithsonian Food History Programs, gave a talk titled, “The Mythical Millennial in Museums,” discussing the vital role millennials play as future donors and how many museums are missing the mark when it comes to building a strong relationship with this audience.\textsuperscript{25} This talk demystifies many stereotypes associated with the millennial generation, most notably the notion that all museums must do to attract millennials is to provide alcohol. By sharing examples of how she has combated these stereotypes at the Smithsonian, McClure demonstrates how museums can more mindfully consider their millennial audiences.

\textsuperscript{23}The website Dilenschneider operates, Know Your Own Bone, is “a data-informed website,” that presents findings conducted by the privately-operated research company known as IMPACTS. On a weekly basis, Dilenschneider presents new data-informed findings relevant to mission-driven, visitor-focused nonprofits.


Similarly, in Spring 2016, Bob Harlow wrote in the American Alliance of Museum’s *Museum Magazine* about the need for harmony between entertainment and education in relation to millennial programming in his essay “Building Cultural Audiences: More Than Just a Party.”

Using the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum as a case study, he highlights a successful example that balances the seemingly opposing forces of entertainment and education. Harlow demonstrates that in order for museums to build a sustainable relationship with millennials, programming must have ties to an educational mission.

According to John Falk, changes in the workforce in the 21st century mean more people have less physically taxing jobs, thus allowing leisure time to focus more on physical and mental wellness. His book, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience* explains his theory that people visit museums in order to fulfill identity-motivated needs. Leisure time in the 21st century is largely tied to identity. Individuals have so many choices in how they choose to spend their time, that it becomes the responsibility of museums to understand how they can meet the needs of their community. In his book, Falk identifies the five major personality types of museum visitors, including what they seek in an experience. These identities are Explorers, Facilitators, Experience-Seekers, Professionals/Hobbyists, and Rechargers. These categories are not to say that all people can be grouped into these five boxes; however, there are visible trends in what visitors are seeking in a museum experience that museums should attempt to capitalize on. When a museum visitor has their particular identity-related needs met, they are able to form a positive experience and are more likely to form a relationship with that museum.

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Graham Black’s book, *The Engaging Museum*, provides a helpful interpretation of 21st century audiences and provides a foundation for developing relationships with new audiences sustainably. Chapter 2, titled, Developing New Audiences, discusses methodologies to build sustainable relationships with new audiences. This book is dedicated to niche audiences, not necessarily to millennials, however the case studies and examples presented translate well to the general concept of sustainable audience development. Black emphasizes the importance of dedicating time and funding to the cultivation of new audiences. Ethical and sustainable audience development can only occur if a museum seeks to maintain and build upon its efforts to engage a potential audience long-term. Without establishing a firm plan with realistic and measureable goals, Black argues that cultivating a new audience would be a fruitless endeavor. *The Engaging Museum* is informative for its understanding that audience development is a practice that requires time and dedication, and seeks to make a museum a more inclusive space welcome to all.

Often, a museum is not attracting millennials because of potential barriers. The National Endowment for the Arts report, “When Going Gets Tough: Barriers and Motivations Affecting Arts Attendance,” explores the reasons people choose to not visit museums. This study found that the biggest barrier to not attending a museum or cultural institution is a perceived lack of

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Two additional reports from the NEA were useful background resources for this thesis. The NEA Guide to the United States Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account provided a thorough breakdown of the ways cultural institutions fuel the US economy and remain necessary for the creation of a successful and thriving society. The NEA report How a Nation Engages with Art: Highlights From the 2012 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts was also useful for understanding how aspects of our 21st century society are reflected in people’s motivations for attending cultural institutions. These two reports are not as vital to the specific topic of millennials in museums, however they did impact my understanding of the role of the arts in the United States.
time on the part of the visitor. The next largest barrier in participation was cost, followed by lack of transportation to get to the museum in question.

In spring of 2016, Colleen Dilenschneider wrote for the American Alliance of Museums publication *Museum Magazine* about the current relationship between millennials and museums. Her essay, titled “Building Cultural Audiences: Embracing Millennial Perspectives,” makes a compelling case for the ways museums must evolve to secure a relationship with this audience.\(^{30}\) Although millennials are a growing audience, Dilenschneider argues that their numbers in terms of visitation are not proportionate when compared to their overall population.\(^{31}\) While it may appear that more millennials are visiting museums, compared to the size of this generation, their rate of visitation is significantly less when compared to other generations.

Many of the practices for cultivating millennial audiences are promising in theory, but often apply to mid-size to large museums with funding available to support these efforts. Smaller museums with limited budgets have to approach sustainable millennial audience development strategically using little to no funding. For this reason, the American Association for State and Local History’s website became a significant source for seeking cost- and time- effective ways for small museums to increase young adult engagement. Lauren E. Hunley published an essay titled, “Hack Your Museum: Appealing to Millennials,” that shared ways smaller museums can incorporate millennials into their programming.\(^{32}\) Hunley explained one free and effective way to engage this audience is through the power of social media, serving as a marketing tool to


\(^{31}\) Colleen Dilenschneider, “Building Cultural Audiences: Embracing Millennial Perspectives.”

communicate directly to young adults. This post provided necessary information for understanding how a small museum strapped for resources can creatively engage millennials.

Millennials have been visiting museums for decades and should not be considered a new audience, however beginning to have more disposable income and leisure time as they age and will become the next primary audience. To get millennials in the door, some museums have developed specific programming that invites young potential donors into the museum. An article written by David Gelles in a 2014 issue of the *New York Times* explains how the nation’s wealth will become more concentrated as millennials begin controlling the economy. The article, titled, “Wooing a New Generation of Museum Patrons,” focuses on these creative new programs.\(^3\)

Held at the Guggenheim, an annual Young Collector’s Party celebrates the twenty- and thirty-year olds who support the museum through substantial charitable donations. This party, and other similar programs at other institutions, is considered crucial to the future of philanthropic giving in museums. New visitors, “do not go on the board overnight,” but are cultivated over time, being engaged in the, “life of the museum,” so that ultimately, they grow with the institution.\(^4\)

Interestingly, one of the most significant differences between millennials and other generations is seen in philanthropy. According to the Millennial Impact Report’s Retrospective: Five Years of Trends, in 2013 83% of millennials had smart phones.\(^5\) Of that percentage, 52% donated to a charitable non-profit through their phone, and 84% of millennials that year donated


by means of a website. In her article “The Recession Generation: How Millennials Are Changing Money Management Forever,” Samantha Sharf discusses how millennials are taking the lead on tech-driven financial companies, such as Lyft, Tinder, and online banking. In the New York Times Article “Connections to a Cause: The Millennial Way of Charity,” Nicholas Fandos writes about the factors that contribute to millennial philanthropic trends. Fandos explains how millennials expect transparency, and are more likely to give to organizations they feel like they can see their money is going towards some sort of positive service. The future of philanthropy is certain to be tech-driven and museums must adapt to this change in order to bring in new audience.

The United States economy has seen significant changes in the 21st century, shifting from a service-based economy to one that is experience-based. The book *The Experience Economy* by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore explains how the United States economy shifted and what that means for businesses seeking to remain relevant to younger consumers.

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Ksenia Kirillova, Xinran Y Lehto and Liping Cai published an article titled, “Existential Authenticity and Anxiety as Outcomes: The Tourist in the Experience Economy.” In this article, it is suggested that the global economy has moved beyond the experience economy originally posited by Pine and Gilmore. In this 2016 study, findings support that we have now entered the third wave of the experience economy. No longer are experiences the sole purpose of engaging consumers. Now, in order to be competitive, businesses must provide an experience the consumer perceives as potentially transformational. Source: Ksenia Kirillova, Xinran Y Lehto and Liping Cai, “Existential Authenticity and Anxiety as Outcomes: The Tourist in the Experience Economy,” *International Journal of Tourism Research* 19, vol. 1, (June 2016): 13-26, 10.1002/jtr.2080.

Amanda Smith relates this study directly to the museum field in an article titled, “How To Get Millennials Into Your Museum.” In this article, Smith discusses the value of identifying the third wave of the experience economy, acknowledging that museums tend to move at a slower pace than for-profit companies. She argues that while the
While the topic of the experience economy was originally developed for the for-profit sector, it directly affects non-profits who rely on funding from private individuals. The experience economy thrives on emotional response, or experiences that people perceive as unique tend to sell better than those perceived as inauthentic or commonplace. The Pine and Gilmore model relies on the idea that companies must stage events that appeal to consumers in unique, authentic, and meaningful ways. Creating meaningful experiences is something museums are designed to do well, but these experiences are becoming less relevant to millennials as this age group becomes the dominant generation. This book is a useful tool for identifying museums that successfully adopt practices outlined by Pine and Gilmore, in order to examine the psychology behind 21st century consumerism.

As is evident, these sources are expansive and far-reaching. Many of these sources reach beyond the museum field in order to understand millennial behaviors and social trends. The articles, books, and theories examined in this chapter that are within the museum field build a bridge that connects millennial and museums, demonstrating the best practices in audience development. Each of these sources provide a deeper understanding of millennial behaviors in order for museums to cultivate a relationship with this audience throughout the 21st century.

**Methodology**

Certain trendy words in the museum field, such as “participatory,” “relevance,” and “immersive,” often support the practices of engaging audiences in the 21st century museum, yet attracting this generation and keeping their attention over a period is a major challenge. What does a true participatory, relevant, and immersive museum experience look like through the eyes of the world is in this third wave experience economy, museums will take time to evolve to that same level. Source: Amanda Smith, “How To Get Millennials Into Your Museum,” *Museum Next!*, accessed September 27, 2017, https://www.museumnext.com/2017/07/get-millennials-museum/.
of a millennial? What are the values, both short and long-term, to cultivating a relationship with this growing audience? To answer these questions requires an analysis of millennial values and examples of museums currently working to apply these values within their walls. By looking at these issues from both the perspective of millennials and museums, this thesis will provide a holistic look at the best practices in engaging this generational cohort.

This research project brings together two frameworks: the qualities millennials seek from a museum experience and a sampling of museums that employ successful strategies for effectively engaging millennial audiences. Each museum recognized in these pages exist within the continental United States and range greatly in terms of budget size, collection scope, and mission. By focusing on a variety of museums across the country, it makes visible tactics and methodologies that any type of museum can employ to build a relationship with young adults.

This thesis consists of multiple chapters that explore two frameworks. Chapters 1 and 2 provide an analysis of millennial behavioral trends in order to understand what millennials seek from museums. Chapter 1 lays out the research for this project. Chapter 2 examines the survey implemented during the summer of 2017 titled, Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces. The response from this survey provides a first-hand perspective of what millennials seek from a positive museum experience. By analyzing the data from the nationally-representative response-pool, three major trends were unveiled. Each of these trends reveal what millennials seek from a successful museum experience. The major trends examined in this chapter serve as guiding points for the case studies in subsequent chapters.

Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 of this thesis explores current practices in museums. Consisting of three case studies featuring two museums of varying sizes and types, and one museum-affiliated organization. Each institution selected demonstrates excellent leadership and dedication to
millennial audience development in the United States. The MCA Denver, Museum Hack, and the Mississippi Museum of Art comprise of the case studies, selected for their ability to develop creative and strategic methodologies that facilitate a relationship with this audience. Additionally, each case study currently invests in all or a majority of the major trends found from the survey.

The conclusion discusses how a focus on millennials can benefit all audiences. This chapter examines how to create accessible spaces for people of all backgrounds. Effectively engaging an audience as diverse and economically significant as millennials depends on every department from development, to curatorial and even security, to adapt an inclusive and mindful plan of action.

Audience development is a cycle that is in continuous motion and requires constant dedication. To that point, this thesis cannot act as the definitive, end-all-be-all to millennial engagement, but a guide mapping out the current best practices in the field. This document aims to provide the building blocks a museum of any size can use to develop a plan to engage millennial audiences. As new technologies develop and millennials age, our understanding of this generation may change. By having a firm grip on current demographic trends among this audience, the museum field can better prepare to adapt with any potential changes they may face throughout the 21st century.
CHAPTER 2
SURVEY

Purpose
The current landscape of research available about millennials exists largely outside the museum field. With a notable lack of academic scholarship within the field, specialized knowledge concerning best practices in engaging this group is limited. A survey titled Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museums Spaces was created and implemented from June 13 - June 18, 2017 in order to incorporate the perspective of millennials into this thesis. The purpose of this survey was twofold. First, it allowed millennials to examine their personal relationships with museums. Second, the response data aids in the understanding of what millennials within the United States seek from a museum experience in order to expand upon the current demographic research on millennials, providing a relevant perspective to the museum field. By learning how millennials currently choose to interact with museum spaces, it becomes possible to examine the ways museums are relevant in the lives of millennials and compare their behavioral trends to current practices in museum spaces.¹

Implementation
The implementation of a survey of this magnitude required an active social media presence. Not only is social media the most useful communication device used by millennials, it is an effective means of distributing content in terms of both cost and visibility. As far back as 2008, Nina Simon spoke of the importance of developing a social media plan as a means of

¹It became necessary to implement this survey to eliminate any bias on my part as a millennial while this thesis developed. Being a millennial makes it easy to assume social values concerning 21st century life, however my values are not reflective of an entire generation. In order to prevent bias in the form of projecting my behaviors onto my generation, I needed to hear from as many millennials as possible, casting a wide net across the country. Gaining a nationally representative response pool is beneficial in allowing me to view specific trends drawn from the responses and examine how these trends relate to current practices in the field.
reaching audiences for a low cost. Data analyst and museum trend researcher Colleen Dilenschneider dedicates a large portion of her website Know Your Own Bone to similar social media strategies that are cost and time effective while boosting advertising power among young adults. By now, most people, regardless of age, use social media. Advertising through these platforms only serves to increase awareness for museums.

Figure 2-1. Sample post of Twitter used to solicit participants for the survey Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces.

When thinking about the most effective course of action for administering the survey, social media presented itself as the best option. Millennials have grown up with social media, and intuitively know understand how to use this technology as a tool. Creating a social media

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plan is the most effective way to organize a research study such as the survey. Using compelling language, constructing an outline of all content, including copy text, hashtags, and images, organizes the tone of a social media campaign and attracts the attention of millennials.4 [Figure 2-1, Appendix A].

Creating a social media plan proved itself incredibly useful, establishing a constant voice to make each post consistent. To maximize social media’s recruiting potential, it is important to understand the most useful functions of each platform.5 Facebook and Twitter are best options for distributing a survey such as Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces. Facebook is the most widely used social media platform among young adults, and it is easy to locate groups of people based on common interests. Because of Facebook’s ability to create community-based interest groups, it is simple to attract a variety of people from beyond the museum field. Twitter is a powerful tool that connects people based on common interests using hashtags. This platform is also encourages real-time communication with users and is extremely popular within the museum field.6 Twitter also makes use of hashtags and tagging that gives posts the potential to reach a wide audience.

**Analysis of Results**

By the time the survey closed at midnight on June 18, 2017, it had received 468 responses from across the world. Nine of these responses came from international participants. Since the parameters of the survey and thesis required only national responses, a 1.92% margin

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4 Death to Stock Photo is a useful website that I utilized to find free, beautiful, and professional stock photos. Being a free member of the Death to Stock Photo community allows me to use the site for projects.

5 To learn more about the specific uses of the most Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, please refer to pages 70 – 71.

6 My Twitter account, Museum_Gal, is museum-focused, allowing me to communicate with professionals across the country. Tapping into my Twitter network made the survey visible to a wide variety of millennial professionals in the field. Source: Twitter, “Museum_Gal,” [https://twitter.com/museum_gal](https://twitter.com/museum_gal).
of error was calculated to account for an unanticipated international interest. The survey reached young adults from forty-eight of all fifty United States and the largest number of participants came from Florida, California, and New York.  

Qualtrics, the software used to create the survey, came with qualitative visualization tools that immediately turned the hard data into colorful and easy-to-read graphics that neatly displayed the results of the survey. With the exception of question three, every chart or visualization from data culled from the survey was created using Qualtrics. The responses from Question 3, which read, “What is your state of residence?” pulled reports that proved difficult to visualize in Qualtrics. Participants were prompted to enter their own response, rather than select their location from a drop-down menu and led to a variety of answers. For example, a participant from Florida could type in “FL, “Florida”, “FLA”, or any number of various answers. In order to clean up the responses for this question, and more accurately understand where participants were located, responses were pulled from a report into an Excel workbook. From here, the Excel file was uploaded into a software called Tableau to create a visual map denoting where participants were located within the United States [Figure 2-2].

7 The largest pockets of participation occurred in Florida, California, and New York. This could be a reflection of the scope of my online network. The distribution, however, had a cyclical effect, as my friends shared the survey with their network, then their friends shared with their network, and so on. By the time the survey closed, it had been distributed to individuals far beyond my social and professional network.

8 Qualtrics is an online analytics software that is free and available to University of Florida students. This software is incredibly user-friendly and made analyzing the results of the survey simple.
Trends from Results

The most significant takeaway from the response data was that millennials tend to feel museums are relevant to their lives. This major finding goes against a popular notion that millennials do not value cultural institutions and have no interest in museums.⁹ Largely seen in question eight, when asked, “What Factors Prevent You from Visiting a Museum?” only 3% of participants answered that museums were not relevant to their lives.¹⁰ This implies that 97% of those polled felt museums could offer them something that was meaningful and engaging. For

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⁹ Colleen Dilenschneider, “Arts and Culture Remain Less Important to Younger Generations.”

¹⁰ To read the responses for the entire survey, see Appendix B for a complete visual report. Question eight, “What Factors Prevent You from Visiting a Museum?” Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.
museums, this positive statistic considers millennials may desire to spend more of their time in museums as they age. If cultivated properly, millennials could easily transition into museum members, and increasing the probability that this age group could become donors of larger gifts [Figure 2-3].

Q8 - What are the factors that prevent you from visiting a museum? (Select all that apply.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Too expensive</td>
<td>41.33%</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Can’t get to museum/ lack of transportation</td>
<td>21.63%</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Museums are not relevant in your life</td>
<td>3.41%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Unaware of museums in your area</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rather spend time elsewhere</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2-3. What are the factors that prevent you from visiting a museum? (Select all that apply).

Overall, three major trends in the data presented themselves and are useful guides to determine what makes a successful museum experience from a millennial perspective. The following provides a breakdown of each major trend found from the results of the survey, including one example of a museum that currently embodies the respective trend. The examples demonstrate how these trends can be activated into useful resources for museums of varying sizes and types.

**Trend One: Hybrid Programming**

Traditionally, programming in museums fall into one of two camps: educational or entertainment. Museums at their core are, “essentially education in nature,” yet the means by
which they present educational content adapts to new ways of thinking. Programming purely in
the educational sense has largely revolved around object-centered opportunities, usually
involving a docent-led gallery tour or lecture. While this type of traditional museum program
holds great educational potential, it is not necessarily the most successful way to engage younger
audiences. Millennials are, “history’s first ‘always connected’ generation,” having grown up in
conjunction with digital technology as part of their everyday lives. As a result, millennials are
comfortable with smart phones and similar devices that provide a world of knowledge accessible
to them, rendering a purely educational program less enticing.

On the other side of the coin, special events that are more social in nature typically
entertain rather than educate. While entertainment-centric programs do not inherently fit the
mission of many museums, they are the most popular among young adults. These events
typically include food and alcohol, some sort of performance, and a lot of social interaction.
While this perspective is limited. … Where does the compromise between learning and being
entertained lie? Is it possible to create programs in a museum setting that are educational but also
fun and engaging? The emergence of hybrid programming, combining elements of both

us.org/resources/assessment-programs/accreditation/eligibility.

12 The argument of the museum experience shifting from object-centered to visitor-centered perspectives is not new,
however it does bear importance to this thesis as a point of departure from which to discuss future expectations of
visitors. Steven Conn provides a historical account detailing the shift from museological practices focusing on the
autonomy of objects to that of visitors in his book Do Museums Still Need Objects? In this book, Conn points to the
eyear 20th century as the moment museum theory shifted to a visitor-centered approach. Source: Steven
notion even further in the article, “From being about Something to being for Somebody: The Ongoing
Transformation of the American Museum,” advocating for museums to embrace their roles as agents of social
change to truly benefit the public they serve. Source: Stephen Weil, “From being about Something to being for
Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum,” Daedalus 128, no. 3 (1999): 229-58,

education and entertainment, is becoming more popular in museums across the United States and is changing the way museums think about free-choice learning.

Hybrid programming is becoming more important considering the falling rate of visitation to museums in the United States. A 2012 report published by the National Endowment for the Arts titled, “A Decade of Arts Engagement: Findings from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2002 - 2012”\textsuperscript{14} demonstrates somewhat dwindling numbers in terms of visitation to art spaces. During this time, the NEA conducted the study that corresponds with this report, attendance to United States art museums and galleries had fallen dramatically, moving from 26.5\% in 2002 to 21\% in 2012\textsuperscript{15}. In order to understand why attendance may continue to fall, the NEA released another report in 2012 titled, “When Going Gets Tough: Barrier and Motivations Affecting Arts Attendance.”\textsuperscript{16} This report emphasizes that while most adults polled were motivated to attend arts events based on a desire to socialize, a lack of time preventing many from attending.

In the survey \textit{Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces}, participants answered questions about the factors that impact their decision to either visit or not visit a museum, and the results differed slightly from the NEA’s reports. For millennials who participated in the survey, the main motivation to visit was tied between having a unique experience (28\%) and learning something new (28\%), while the main barrier, as discussed earlier, was high cost of admission.


prices (41%) [Figure 2-3] [Figure 2-4]. This suggests that millennials seek opportunities to go to the museum to have a unique and educational experience, but cost becomes a reason to decide against having that experience.

Q7 - What typically motivates your decision to visit a museum? (Select all that apply.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Spending time with friends or family</td>
<td>21.82%</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A peaceful place to “escape” to</td>
<td>17.74%</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>An opportunity to learn something new</td>
<td>28.35%</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>An opportunity to have a unique experience</td>
<td>28.14%</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A school project</td>
<td>3.94%</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2-4. What typically motivates your decision to visit a museum? (Select all that apply.)

Considering the barriers reported by the NEA’s reports and demonstrated in the survey’s findings, it makes sense why many millennials often choose not to engage in museum spaces. First, many millennials are now entering the workforce, acquiring their first professional jobs and earning a livable wage. Many do not have time to participate in museum programs that take place during traditional museum hours, Monday - Friday from 9 AM - 5 PM. Many adults have this time available, regardless of generational distinctions. Traditional gallery tours and museum hours normally do not take place at times when working adults can participate.

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17 Question eight, “What Factors Prevent You from Visiting a Museum?” Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.

18 Question seven, “What Typically Motivates Your Decision to Visit a Museum?” Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.
Second, traditional educational programs such as gallery lectures or tours do not appeal to many millennials because the information being presented is something they could easily find on the internet on their own time. Why should someone spend $8 and a few hours of their time on a gallery tour learning information they could just Google? Museums need to adapt to changing technologies and understand that millennials (and any new generation, for that matter) find different experiences more relevant than generations past. Reassessing both of these factors could unlock some of the mystery surrounding engaging millennial audiences.

This idea in particular reveals itself in the survey. The response when asked if participants preferred programming that was educational or entertaining in nature was divided nearly in half. Fifty-one percent of participants sought educational programs, while 49% sought entertainment-oriented programs [Figure 2-5].

**Q19 - Do you prefer museum events that are focused on education or entertainment?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Educational (e.g., lectures, tours)</td>
<td>51.33%</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Entertainment (e.g., drinking-related events, creative workshops)</td>
<td>48.67%</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2-5. Do you prefer museum events that are focused on education or entertainment?

What this suggests is that the growing trend in hybrid programming that fuses learning with creativity is on the rise. Millennials do want to learn from museums based on these results, and are interested in the value of objects presented in museums, however they also want to be

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19 Question nineteen, “Do You Prefer Museum Events That Are focused on Education or Entertainment?” Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.
handed concepts in an interesting, engaging, and fun way. Traditional docent-led tours and lectures will still strike a chord with some visitors, but most seek an engaging experience they can actively engage with. A museum that chooses to focus on one type of programming is missing half of its population of young people. For this reason, many museums are embracing the trend in hybrid programming. Many of these programs are highly unconventional, but they are creative and engaging, successfully bringing new young adults to museums.

True to popular stereotype, millennials also tend to seek events and programs where alcohol and food is present. When asked if they were more likely to attend a museum event if alcohol was present, 51% answered “Yes.” Similarly, when asked if food influenced their decision to attend a museum event, 68% answered “Yes.” Being “wined and dined” at museum events is a common practice and it appears millennials are eager to keep this tradition alive.

**Putting trend into practice.** The Augusta Museum of History in Augusta, Georgia found a creative way to tie the consumption of alcohol to their collection using history as a guide. Southern Suds is an annual historically themed party held at the museum that transforms its lobby into a pub for one night only. Unsurprisingly, Southern Suds quickly generated a lot of interest among young adults, however it is no regular beer that holds ticket holders’ attention.

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20 A long-running stereotype of millennials concerning museums is that they just want to be entertained and only come to events for food and alcohol. At the 2016 MuseumNext! Conference in Dublin, Director of the Smithsonian Food History Programs, Susan McClure shared an email she received from a co-worker planning an event to bring in millennials. This email read, “Give them drinks. Put it on the internet. Millennials like parties.” That was the extent to which this person felt a millennial-focused event should be planned. That might be a more common outlook that many museum professionals share. It also might not be an incorrect assumption. In order to get millennials in the doors of your institution, you have to plan something that revolves around a millennial’s interest. Source: Susan Evans McClure, “The Mythical Millennial in Museums.” Question twenty-one, “Are You More Likely to Attend a Museum-Related Event if Alcohol is Present?” Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.

21 Question twenty, “Are You More Likely to Attend a Museum-Related Event if Food is Present?” Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.

The museum collaborates with River Watch Brewery each year to create a special batch of historical beer. Based on a recipe from a cookbook in the museum’s collection, dated to the 1870’s, only attendees can taste the Per Simma Down. Local experts on beer and the brewing industry are available throughout the evening for guests to speak with, and all ticket sales directly benefit the conservation of the collection and supporting Southern Suds. Millennials were in the forefront of the museum’s mind when creating this program. “That was the purpose,” said museum executive director Nancy Glaser, “We wanted to draw a millennial crowd. It is a group that we have not had here.” Southern Subs is in its third year and continues to grow, bringing a unique and delicious experience to young adults in Augusta.

While this program does cater to the notion that millennials only want to drink in a museum, it brings together many elements that attract millennials. Creating an air of exclusivity, providing an experience that only ticket holders can achieve is attractive to many young adults. Millennials seek experiences they perceive as unique, and Southern Suds provides an environment that is one-of-a-kind while educating event-goers about a small history of beer brewing while connecting people to the collection.

**Trend Two: Social Media**

In the survey, participants were asked about the role social media played in their lives and whether they use social media to research exhibitions or events at museums. To no surprise, social media is a major influence in the lives of young adults. Facebook debuted in 2004, coincidentally at a time when many older millennials began college. This means that most

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23 This historical beer’s name is derived from its main ingredient, the persimmon. Recipe 888 from Ms. A.P. Hill’s late-1800’s cookbook was given the 21st century microbrewery treatment when the Augusta Museum of History sought to recreate it. According to local news station WSAW News, this beer was made as closely to the recipe as possible, with slight variations in order to make the beer more hygienic.

millennials were navigating through adolescence with the internet and social media. Not only are a majority of millennials comfortable with social media, many rely on it to be informed citizens in their communities. In the survey, when asked, “What source do you typically use to learn about community events and programs in your area?” an overwhelming 72% said social media [Figure 2-6].

Q16 - What source do you typically use to learn about community events and programs in your area?

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<td>Total</td>
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Figure 2-6. What source do you typically use to learn about community events and programs in your area?

What this implies is that most millennials are using social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to learn about places they can visit in their free time. If a museum does not have an active online social presence, they could miss a major opportunity to engage with this audience.

This begs the question: What social media platform is best? The past few years have seen an influx of social media options, some more trendy than others. Some museums, such as the Los

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25 Question sixteen, “What Source Do You Typically Use to Learn about Community Events and Programs in Your Area?” Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.
Angeles County Museum of Art found success using Snapchat, others gained a following with Instagram or Twitter.\textsuperscript{26} For LACMA, social media coordinator Lucy Redoglia said, “Obviously, bringing people in the door is one [goal], but it is also about spreading awareness of the museum and its collection to people who might not be able to attend — to get people interested in art history.”\textsuperscript{27}

Whether the platform is tried and true such as Facebook, or trendy like Snapchat, the purpose of using social media is to help people connect to a museum’s collections and deconstruct the metaphorical walls someone might build that prevents them from entering a museum space. Maintaining an active, friendly, and engaging social media account shows the public that they are invited and encouraged to come into the physical space of the museum.

Still, different platforms yield different responses. In the survey, when asked, “What social media platform do you prefer to use in your life?” 61\% responded with Facebook, followed by 27\% who preferred Instagram [Figure 2-7].\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26} In 2016, LACMA won a Webby Award in the Social: Culture and Lifestyle category for their innovative use of Snapchat. https://www.webbyawards.com/winners/2016/social/social-content-and-marketing/culture-lifestyle/los-angeles-county-museum-of-art-lacma-snapchat/.


\textsuperscript{28} Question eleven, “What Social Media Platform Do You Prefer to Use in Your Life?” Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.
Q11 - What social media platform do you prefer to use in your life?

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<td>3</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Figure 2-7. What social media platform do you prefer to use in your life?

Interestingly, 95% of participants consider following museums on social media as a means of staying informed about events, and 81% of all surveyed cited Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter as their preferred platforms to follow museums.  

It appears that Pinterest, Tumblr, Snapchat are not as popular among this age group and museums may want to consider focusing their communication efforts on more useful platforms. These numbers are significant, showing that young adults are present on social media and will use these platforms to learn about cultural institutions. A majority of millennial audiences are already online, and are more likely to form a relationship with a museum they follow on social media. Considering this is a free resource, it makes sense to capitalize on this opportunity to reach more people.

Putting trend into practice. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art gained a lot of national attention in 2017 for its social strategies. At this moment, anyone in the world can send a text message to the number 572-51 and receive art from the collection of the SFMOMA.

29 Question thirteen, “Would You Ever consider Following A Museum on Social Media to Learn More About Their Programs and Events?”, Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.

30 Question fourteen, “What Social Media Platforms Do You Use to Follow Museums?” Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.
Figure 2-8. Example of SFMOMA’s Send Me SFMOMA campaign.

While not directly linked to a social media platform, the SFMOMA’s text message initiative highlights the importance of becoming social with the communities outside of a
museum’s physical space through means of digital technologies. With the rise of social media and digital technologies as a primary means of communication, museums can now reach two target audiences, both physical and digital. Traditionally, the SFMOMA, like any other museum, has a responsibility to visitors that are involved in the physical bounds of the institution. In the 21st century, digital platforms like the Send Me SFMOMA campaign allows the museum to provide an interpretive experience for virtual visitors, expanding the museum’s ability to communicate on a global scale.

The Send Me SFMOMA campaign is a creative example of how a museum can reach people on a global scale by means of digital communication. While this campaign relies on adequate funding and a long-term investment in the creation of an API, it makes sense that it would go viral when considering the lifestyles of young adults. 77% of all Americans owned a smart phone in the year 2017, and 12% of American adults use their smart phones as a primary means of using the internet. As millennials age and technology continues to integrate into our lives, smart phones will increase in importance in the United States. Maintaining a digital presence using social media is a crucial way to connect with communities on a global scale.

Millennials are becoming the dominant generational cohort in the country, and they consume and process information in a digital way that is different from previous generations. Museums that wish to communicate with potential visitors need to use social media to cast as wide a net as possible. In the survey, participants were asked, “How would you prefer to learn

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about events and programs at a museum?" 76% of participants responded social media was their most preferred method to stay informed about museums in their area. [Figure 2-9]

**Q17 - How would you prefer to learn about events and programs at a museum?**

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<td>3</td>
<td>Text message/ Push notifications</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Mailed invite</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.14%</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>468</td>
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Figure 2-9. How would you prefer to learn about events and programs at a museum?

More traditional marketing techniques, such as paper brochures and email are not considered relevant methods of communication to younger generations, who are directly connected to the world through social media.

Social media is a resource museums should love. It is a free tool to use that could replace a bulk of more traditional marketing tactics. Regardless of age, almost everyone uses social media too connect to their online network. Millennials in particular use social media as their main way of receiving information about community events in their area. Not only do people use it to learn about news and events in their area, but also share their experiences with their network. Museums can take advantage of this free resource by dedicating time and money to maintaining an active social media presence.

32 Question seventeen, “How Would You Prefer to Learn about Events and Programs at a Museum?” *Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.*
Trend Three: Membership

What motivates someone to belong to a museum? Being a member for some people means free admission and discounts, while to others membership means supporting the institution. Some people are driven by value while others by philanthropy. Regardless of motivation and intent, membership matters to museums, providing financial support while also cultivating a group of people who truly desire to grow alongside an institution.

This being said, millennials are different consumers than previous generations. The economy today is experience driven, rather than based on the purchasing of products or services. Young adults tend to invest in products that elicit emotional response and support companies or organizations that they feel connected to. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore originated this concept of emotionally-oriented consumerism in their book *The Experience Economy*. Young consumers entering the market today want products that spark passion and provide a unique experience they would not get otherwise.

Consider the recent rise of transportation network companies such as Uber and Lyft. These companies offer the same product as taxis, meaning they move people from one place to another in exchange for money, however they provide a unique experience passengers cannot get from a taxi. In a Lyft, you get to choose when, where, and how you want to get to a place from the comfort of your phone. You even have the option to see who is driving you and what car they own before you begin your ride. Once you inside the car, you can have a different experience every time. Some drivers keep comfort amenities in their car, so you can have the best possible ride. Others provide snacks or bottled water, all so you can enjoy your brief respite in their car. All of this is usually less money and much less hassle than a taxi ride. The Lyft system works because the company considered what young consumers like about traditional taxi experiences and enhanced those qualities while eliminating the qualities young consumers did not like.
In a few years, millennials will control a majority of the wealth in United States. With this amount of control, millennials will hold the power to support museums. Traditionally, museums implement membership programs to support operational costs as well as ensure their relevancy among their communities. The traditional membership model might not be the most effective way to get millennials involved in an institution. Until the results of the survey, it was not clear if young adults could afford, or were willing to budget around the cost of a membership at a museum.

In the survey, participants were asked if they currently held a membership at a museum and if not, would they consider becoming a member of a museum. Surprisingly, 58% of participants currently held a membership at a museum, and 87% were interested in museum membership.33 34 This means museums should find new ways to market their membership programs using social media, and develop member benefits that suit the needs of this audience.

When asked about membership benefits, specifically which traditional benefit seemed the most appealing, the most-selected choice was free admission (59%). Participants were also nearly tied between additional traditional benefits such as members-only events (13%) and access to reciprocal museum programs (12%) [Figure 2-10].35

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33 Question twenty-two, “Have You Ever Been a Member of a Museum?” Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.

34 Question twenty-three, “Would You Ever Consider Being a Member of a Museum?” Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.

35 Question twenty-four, “What Types of Benefits Would You Look For in a Museum Membership?” Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, Appendix B.
Figure 2-10. What type of benefits would you look for in a museum membership?

This implies that millennials tend to seek membership from an economical point of view, but are also drawn to the idea of exclusivity and being connected to like-minded people. Millennials may seek memberships for value now, but with careful cultivation and planning, more young adults can continue their relationship with museums to form a relationship that is based in affinity and driven by a deeper desire to grow with institutions.

**Putting trend into practice.** Museums that rework their membership system to suit a 21st century audience are more likely to attract millennials because they provide this group with the ability to move into more affinity-based roles. The Perez Art Museum Miami established a new membership tier to reflect the needs of Miami’s young professionals. Called PAMM Contemporaries, this program functions as a networking group, allowing young adults to meet
like-minded people and stay closely connected to the Miami art scene. Being a PAMM Contemporary means you get all the basic membership benefits, such as free admission to the PAMM, store discounts, and access to reciprocal museum programs, but this membership also comes with some unique additional perks. Being a member of this program also means access to private, PAMM Contemporary only events and programs, such as a graffiti art bike tour, and social mixers. Finally, members have the opportunity to serve on the museum’s Young Collectors Council, which supports the growth of the museum’s collection.

Becoming a PAMM Contemporary comes with a price, at $200 per annual membership. While this is not an accessible program for all young adults, the PAMM is cultivating support from young people who may become the museum’s major donors in the near future. On this program, Christopher Pastor, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations at PAMM, says,

At PAMM, we mark success by watching our young professionals mature with the museum, deepen their love of art, and become vested in the museum’s future and success. Patrons who hear about the museum through the PAMM Contemporaries and join at that level have gone on to become involved with our corporate programming, serving as chairs for museum fundraisers, joining upper level membership groups, and even contributing to the museum’s capital campaign.

The PAMM Contemporaries program serves as an example of a museum that is successfully cultivating major donors and affinity members for protect their financial future. Other museums have followed a similar method, choosing to create top-tier millennial-oriented membership programs that attract people who have the ability to make substantial gifts in the future. The Guggenheim, Museum of Modern Art, and the Miami City Ballet are other cultural

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institutions that are following this trend in donor cultivation by readdressing their membership program to include young adults.

Each of these trends found from the response data, hybrid programming, social media, and membership, are by no means the only factors millennials think about when entering into a museum space. Identifying major trends in the response data provides a close look at the elements that influence their experience. These trends are adaptable to museums of varying budgets and sizes and none are exclusive to any specific type of institution. Many museums already take initiatives in each of these areas to communicate with their varying communities and the examples in this chapter demonstrate some of the most interesting expressions of each trend within the field.

Based on the findings in the response data, it is evident that millennials are interested in museums, and would seek deeper level of engagement with institutions that are able to adapt to their needs. Many adaptations this audience seeks are simple, such as a more direct line of communication using social media, while others are more complex, such as reevaluating membership programs. Museums that are able to successfully pinpoint the areas of interest for millennials in their community are seizing opportunities to thrive in the future. In the next section, cases studies of specific museums are identified for their ability to successfully cultivate a relationship with their millennial audiences. Each of these case studies are notable for adapting their practices in groundbreaking ways. From the case studies, a new perspective will emerge, shifting from the lens of millennials to that of the museum field.
CHAPTER 3
INTRODUCTION TO CASE STUDIES

The following chapters consist of case studies focusing on museums and museum-affiliated groups who place an emphasis on millennial engagement. Selected for their unique approach to audience development, they demonstrate a variety of ways museums of all sizes can adapt their practices to become more millennial-friendly. Consisting of two museums and one-third party museum affiliate group, the MCA Denver, Mississippi Museum of Art, and Museum Hack, respectively, each institution is significant for their unwavering desire to enhance their accessibility to their communities. Each case study correlates strongly to trends found in the survey Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, including social media presence, creative hybrid programming, and membership.

The museums featured in the case studies go beyond the traditional tactic of a monthly social event by writing and implementing institutional policy that embraces this audience and enhances their mission. These case studies demonstrate museums that actively seek opportunities to bring millennials into the museum, providing them with unique experiences that connect them to each institution. Graham Black refers to audience development as a, “long term challenge,” that requires strategic planning reflecting the mission of the institution.¹ Sustainable audience development can only happen when a museum has what Colleen Dilenschneider calls, “mindset shifts,” in which all departments work together to reevaluate current practices, rather than add to them.²

The research for each case study took place during a series of interviews with various members of staff at each institution. There is a specific purpose behind interviewing

² Colleen Dilenschneider, “Arts and Culture Remain Less Important to Younger Generations.”
professionals at each of these museums rather than simply researching their websites, social media presence, and strategic plans. Speaking directly with a staff member at an institution provides a deeper understanding of programming, policies, and goals that a website or social media platform rarely provides. Institutional change always comes from within, and providing staff with the necessary training to engage new audiences can be rewarding to the entire institution. The institutions vary in terms of size and type to demonstrate how any museum might adapt their practices to be more millennial friendly.

Each institution shares a commonality: they are each active in their approach to attract millennials and seek a long-term relationship, rather than an in-the-moment satisfaction, with this audience. What this means is that these institutions dedicate time and money to hire staff that carry out millennial-related tasks that will have positive long-term effects. Not only do these museums and museum-affiliated groups seek to get millennials to walk through the museum’s doors, they want them to stay, hang out, and spark a connection that could lead to a growth of affinity members in the future.3

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3 Affinity members are individuals who view their membership with the museum as a relationship, rather than a way to save money on admission. Most people become affinity members over time, as their connection to a museum grows. People who are affinity members typically view their membership as an investment supporting the longevity of the museum they belong to. For an excellent description of affinity memberships, please refer to Chapter 2 of The Participatory Museum by Nina Simon. Source: Nina Simon, The Participatory Museum, 2010, accessed September 25, 2017, http://www.participatorymuseum.org/. 
CHAPTER 4
CASE STUDY ONE: MCA DENVER

The MCA Denver is a museum established in 1996 as Denver, Colorado’s first and primary space for the scholarship and exhibition of contemporary art.\(^1\) As only one of less than a dozen fully operational non-collecting institutions, also known as kunsthalles, in the United States, the MCA Denver is a breeding ground for experimentation and collaboration.\(^2\) While the museum does not have a permanent collection, it does maintain a regular exhibition schedule with three to four exhibition rotations every calendar year, allowing exhibitions to rotate every two to three months. The museum also plans its exhibitions two to three years in advance, headed by their curatorial department.\(^3\)

Theoretically, one benefit of the kunsthalle is the ability to experiment. The MCA Denver embraces this facet wholeheartedly. Molly Nuanes, the MCA Denver’s Manager of Teen

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\(^1\) The mission statement of the MCA Denver is as follows: “MCA Denver is an innovative forum for contemporary art that inspires and challenges all audiences, creating understanding and dialog about the art of our time.” Source: MCA Denver, “About: History and Mission,” accessed October 26, 2017, https://mcadenver.org/about.

\(^2\) Kunsthalle is German for “art hall or “art shed,” but is a term that has no equivalent in the English language. This type of museum is unique in that is non-collecting and produces exhibitions from objects on loan from other public or private collections across the world. The kunsthalle is a rare institution in the United States. According to the Association of Art Museum Directors, only eleven of their 222 members are non-collecting and identify as a kunsthalle. Elsa Longhauser, director of the Santa Monica Museum of Art, said “A kunsthalle is a place where ideas can germinate and grow, flourish or fail,” allowing for these institutions to act as an “engine for cultural exploration and discovery.”

The kunsthalle model works harmoniously with contemporary art because of the themes of contemporary art reflect ever-changing societal issues. Originally developed in the late 19th century, the kunsthalle as we think of it today morphed over the course of the past fifty years according to Dr. Friedrich Meschede, “into a very interesting engagement in the contemporary” due to a desire to preserve culture in a post-World War II environment.

While rooted in experimental thought, the kunsthalle raises interesting challenges. For example, fundraising for a non-collecting institution can be difficult without having a tangible outcome readily visible. It then becomes the role of development officers to demonstrate where gifts are going, providing donors with measurable outcomes as a result of their charitable donation. This is a challenge that is felt intensely in the United States because a majority of public institutions rely on gifts from private individuals for operational costs.

Programs, has watched the museum experiment and evolve since 2013. Her role at the museum allows her a great deal of space to experiment at the museum. Although Nuanes typically works with teens, she pointed out the MCA Denver has a small staff of only twenty-two full time employees that work closely together, so she is well-informed about the procedures and major goals of other departments.

When Nuanes began working at the MCA Denver in 2013, she focused on programming for the entire museum. Originally, she split her time working with both adult and youth audiences, but felt that teen programs were becoming more of a priority within the Denver community. After over a year of working with the board and researching ways to revamp museum programming, she became fascinated with finding innovative ways to communicate with younger audiences in order to engage them in the museum. There is an institutional mindset at the MCA Denver that contemporary art is synchronous with contemporary life. One cannot exist without the other. Bearing this in mind, Nuanes and the rest of the museum’s staff dedicate their time to engaging visitors on a holistic level so that they may become life-long art lovers and museum goers.

The MCA Denver is unique in its ability to establish and maintain strong partnerships within the Denver community. In fact, the museum as it stands today is built on collaboration. Upon the hire of director Adam Lerner in 2009, the board of trustees voted to merge the MCA

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4 The research for this case study was conducted through a phone interview with Molly Nuanes, Manager of Teen Programs, on July 18, 2017.

5 Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.

6 The MCA Denver was established as a permanent museum space, however galleries predicated upon the concept of bringing contemporary art to the community were already flourishing. Prior to the creation of the MCA Denver, the Laboratory of Art and Ideas at Belmar was a major institution that acted as a community hub and public forum for discussion of social issues. The MCA Denver absorbed all the programming from the Lab at Belmar after being built. Adam Lerner, the founder of the Lab at Belmar, was hired as the director of the MCA Denver. Source: The Lab at Belmar, “The Lab: Archives,” accessed September 27, 2017, http://www.belmarlab.org/.
Denver with The Lab at Belmar, adopting an innovative and interactive programming style.\(^7\) This is evident on their online event calendar, in which nearly every event and program the museum hosts is in partnership with local artists, musicians, institutions, and groups.\(^8\)

The museum’s dedication to experimentation has led to measurable success. The museum’s 2016 Annual Report, demonstrates a 30% rise in new donors of major gifts, a significant increase in overall visitation to exhibitions and programs.\(^9\) These two highlights from the Annual Report run counter to the general outlook within the museum field. The American Alliance of Museums released a report titled, “Demographic Transformations and the Future of Museums,” in 2010, making visible the demographic makeup of museum visitation.\(^10\) This report found that in general, visitation to museums in the United States decreased by 4% from 1992 to 2008, and since that number has continued to decline.\(^11\) While trends in museum visitation and funding continue to decline across the country, the MCA Denver thrives in these areas.\(^12\)

Among their most notable partnerships is Feminism + Co., a group that leads an annual, four week intersectional feminist lecture series that, “explores the fabric of contemporary culture through issues relating to women and gender,” specifically targeting its intersection with


contemporary art practices.\textsuperscript{13} These lectures have a playful element to them, a feature most museum lectures lack. “Men drink free,” in a cheeky turn-around of fortunes, and performances, food, and a Wikipedia-Edit-A-Ton are interwoven into the series.\textsuperscript{14} This partnership with Feminism + Co. continues to be a staple to the Denver community and in 2017 celebrated its ten-year anniversary in dedication to the intersection of feminism and contemporary art.\textsuperscript{15}

Surprisingly, the MCA Denver does not focus specifically on young adults as a primary audience, although a majority of its visitors are under the age of 45.\textsuperscript{16} Operating in a way that is untraditional and rooted in experimentation tends to resonates with a younger crowd, according to Nuanes.\textsuperscript{17} This museum does not fear change and embraces new ideas on a regular basis. “(They) program a lot differently than most institutions,” in that they actively seek new ways to invigorate traditional programming.\textsuperscript{18} The lack of a permanent collection also shifts the museum’s stance on programming, allowing events to focus on themes beyond the art on view. Due to this flexibility, there is more freedom to connect visitors to things that truly interest the community. “We can ask questions like, how can we make a lecture series more fun and interesting how can we make them different. That makes the nature of our programming experimental.”\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{13} MCA Denver, “Feminism + Co.,” accessed July 14, 2017, \url{https://mcadenver.org/coming-soon}.
\textsuperscript{14} MCA Denver, “Feminism + Co.,” accessed July 14, 2017, \url{https://mcadenver.org/coming-soon}.
\textsuperscript{16} Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.
\textsuperscript{17} Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.
\textsuperscript{18} Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.
\textsuperscript{19} Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.
The MCA Denver is arguably one of the most accessible cultural institutions within the city.\(^{20}\) In 2013, the MCA Denver received a major gift from a donor that supported free admission for every visitor under the age of eighteen. This has made a significant impact in the museum’s increased visitation. In the four years since implementing free admission at the museum, they have seen visitation for those under eighteen increase from 1,500 people to nearly 10,000 people.\(^{21}\)

When it comes to hours of operation, the museum considers its community. Departing from the traditional Monday through Friday, 9 AM – 5 PM weekly hours of operation for most museums’ gallery hours, the MCA Denver met with their community to find a time that worked better for most.\(^{22}\) Most museums in the United States hold open gallery hours on a Monday through Friday, nine-to-five schedule with additional gallery hours on the weekend. This system, while traditional in the field, is not necessarily a realistic time for most working individuals to actually visit any museum. In June 2017, the United States Department of Labor reported the unemployment rate as 4.4%.\(^{23}\) This implies that a vast majority of Americans, 93.6%, spend a majority of their days working.\(^{24}\) Traditional gallery hours do not allow for working people to visit, meaning many potential visitors are missing the chance to get to a museum. The MCA

\(^{20}\) This assumption is based on findings throughout this case study. The MCA Denver has a lower admission cost than average, altered hours of operation to support the community’s needs, and partners with local organizations regularly to provide the most beneficial content to its visitors.

\(^{21}\) Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.

\(^{22}\) Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.


\(^{24}\) This study does not specify the times during which Americans are working. For this case study and based on my readings, I am assuming a majority of Americans work during the daytime at some point between 9-5 on weekdays.
Denver has combated this issue by shifting their gallery hours to times when most members of their community are available.

We have offset our hours so during the weekday we open at noon and we close at 7 pm. On Fridays, we close at 9 pm and in the summer we even close at 10 pm. It is a time when most people can actually come to the museum.  

The museum is also more affordable compared to other institutions in the city. After calculating the average admission price for non-member adults in the Denver area at $9.86, making the MCA Denver an affordable institution as a whole within the city. Daily adult admission to the museum is $8, dropping to $5 after 5 PM. This shift in hours and flexible admission costs correlate positively with the museum has increased visitation rates and funding.

In addition to its unique approach to collaboration another point of departure from other museums lies in MCA Denver’s membership program. The museum revamped their membership program in 2014 to allow more people from various socio-economic situations to belong to the institution. This program takes form digitally, allowing any individual to purchase a membership for only $1.95 a month. Once purchased, the member can access their membership card through the museum’s app. All digital members receive free admission to all exhibitions, advanced and discounted ticketing for programs, and discounts to the store and cafe. This membership provides a tremendous amount of access for people who typically would not invest in a membership.

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25 Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.

26 I calculated the average cost of admission for non-member adults visiting museums in the Denver, Colorado area at $9.86. This number was achieved after researching the cost of non-member adult admission prices at twenty-two museums in Denver, using the website Denver.org to locate these institutions. This average amount is subject to change, provided that museums may alter their admission prices, new museums may open, and current museums may close. This average admission price is current as of August 2, 2017.

27 After Googling the MCA Denver’s app, it seems as though it is only available to Apple users. This is a major limitation to the museum’s digital accessibility. With time, the museum should strive to have an app that is available to both Android and Apply users. Source: Apple, “MCA Denver: ITunes App Store,” accessed October 4, 2017, https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/mca-denver/id1199629380?mt=8.

traditional membership, and attracts young adults due to its low cost.\(^{29}\) At less than $24 a year this membership is a bargain compared nearly any other institution across the United States.\(^{30}\) Additionally, all children under the age of eighteen are admitted for free and the museum provides free membership to any artists in the city who apply to the museum’s “I’m An Artist” program.\(^{31}\)

Concerning programming, the museum takes an open approach about who possesses the ability to create engaging programs and how those programs can provide meaningful experiences to the community. “We have a reputation in our city as being an institution that is ever-changing because we rotate our exhibitions, we do not have a permanent collection, and we have so much live programming,” said Nuanes, adding that the way the museum views programming aids in the overall health of the space.\(^{32}\) To cite an example, one of their most popular summer programs, a summer rooftop music series called B-Side Music Fridays, was originally created and implemented by the manager of the museum’s rooftop café. Programming at the museum is an open process that the museum seeks input from all departments.

Most of the museum’s visitors are under the age of forty-five, so it is sensible that they maintain an active social media presence to effectively communicate with both their physical and

\(^{29}\) Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.

\(^{30}\) The $24 per year figure was calculated by myself and compared to membership costs at similar museums across the country. The museums I compared this cost to were the Dallas Contemporary (DC), Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM), and Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (MCA). At these institutions, basic individual membership is visibly higher, at $60 (DC), $55 (CAM), and $70 (MCA), respectively.

\(^{31}\) The “I’m An Artist” program is underwritten by the generosity of John Caulkins. This program currently accepts roughly 1,500 artists a year for free membership and often has a waiting list. In order to qualify, applicants must prove they are currently working as an artist in the Denver community. This membership can be renewed for up to three years. Source: MCA Denver, “I’m An Artist Membership,” accessed October 4, 2017, https://mcadenver.org/im-artist-membership. The museum is also free to all visitors under the age of eighteen. This benefit is available to the public due to the generosity of a private donor. Source: Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.

\(^{32}\) Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.
digital audiences.\textsuperscript{33} The museum, “recently shifted marketing priorities from the programming department to a fully-fledged marketing department,” with two full-time staff members, allowing the museum to sharpen their focus on social media.\textsuperscript{34}

Nuanes engages the teens she works within the museum’s social media marketing by providing them access to the museum’s Snapchat account. While Snapchat is not the museum’s main method of digital communication, “they get to share (visual) content… of current exhibitions, which they love.”\textsuperscript{35} Facebook, unsurprisingly, is the primary social media platform used to market and promote events hosted at the museum, while Instagram is used to promote content visually in a creative way that grabs the attention of online followers.

Working so closely with teens on a regular basis, Nuanes is more inclined to understand their trends, which tends to correlate with social media patterns in the future. Snapchat is incredibly popular among teens, more so than Instagram and especially more popular than Facebook. “It is really not cool,” said Nuanes on Facebook. “Teens use it as a way to track events, but not to share personal content with,” and identify closer with cleaner, image-based platforms.\textsuperscript{36}

Compared to the results of the survey \textit{Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces}, this statement is quite surprising.\textsuperscript{37} Sixty-one percent of participants cited Facebook as their most preferred social media platform, followed by Instagram and Twitter at 27% and 7% respectively. Snapchat remained one of the least used social media platforms among those\textsuperscript{37}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33} Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.
\item \textsuperscript{37} For the full results of the survey \textit{Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces}, please refer to Appendix B on page 90 of this document.
\end{itemize}
surveyed, with only 2% of participants preferring the platform. This suggests a narrow age difference dictating what social media platform is most effective for communication. Millennials may find Facebook to be the most effective social media platform for their age group, but over time, as younger generations age, there could be a shift in social media trends. In the coming years, the potential exists for Facebook to fall to the wayside in favor of image-based platforms.

With the steady guidance of the MCA Denver’s board, the museum’s staff are encouraged to constantly test new ideas and methodologies that resonate with the Denver area. Comprised of many young adults and artists, the board splits into sub committees that assist in every department in the museum, meeting with their departments once each quarter of the fiscal year. “We have seen a lot of growth in the past couple of years. The board lets us take risks because they see that in general they seem to pay off,” said Nuanes, noting that most of the board members have been with the museum for many years, so they have witnessed its many changes.38 Having artists and young adults as board members also allows the museum to embrace new ideas without fear of failure. This level of support from the board provides the staff with the confidence to think outside the box. More often than not, this level of support facilitates ideas that lead to measurable successes.39

Denver is a rapidly growing city, “experiencing a lot of growing pains.”40 From 2010 to 2016, the city underwent a massive population boom. During this time, the city increased by 15.5% and filled the city with new potential museum visitors.41 The Denver community seems to

38 Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.
39 Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.
40 Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.
respond well to the work the museum is doing. Their tactics to boost attendance tend to have a cyclical effect, particularly with the teen audience. Nuanes said on average teen visitation hovers between 11-14% of the museum’s overall visitation, which is beginning to impact adult attendance:

With the large bump in teen attendance, we have seen a correlating bump in college attendance. These students grow up, go to college, and come back to our institution. It is starting to create a ripple effect we are now getting to observe now.

The MCA Denver is truly committed to ensuring they serve their community effectively. Just outside the building is a large, site-specific sculptural work titled “Toxic Schizophrenia (Hyper Vision)” by British artists Tim Noble & Sue Webster. It is a giant heart illuminated with neon and flashing lights, acting as an icon in the Denver area. Director Adam Lerner sees this sculpture as a metaphor, representing the museum as the creative heart of the city. Lerner views the MCA Denver like a creative heart of the city, producing creative exhibitions and programs that circulate new blood and new life throughout the community. Nuanes believes this thought process attracts people who energize the museum, creating, “a completely reciprocal relationship,” in a sense acting as, “a bleeding heart of the city.”

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43 Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.

44 Phone conversation with Molly Nuanes on July 18, 2017.
CHAPTER 5
CASE STUDY TWO: MUSEUM HACK

Museum Hack came to fruition just as its mission implies: unconventionally.\(^1\) The idea for the company sparked in the mind of one man who “hated museums.”\(^2\) A few years into living in New York City, Nick Gray thought he knew everything about the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He thought of museums as big, boring buildings full of old stuff and dust. His mindset concerning museums became challenged after one unique visit changed his perspective. That day, he walked into the Metropolitan Museum of Art with the intention of experiencing a romantic date with a woman, but left in a long-term relationship with cultural institutions. This newfound love for museums quickly evolved into a deep passion for Gray. He found himself going back repeatedly to his favorite objects, learning as much as he could about their histories. Despite his infatuation with cultural institutions, his friends and family did not share his interest. He realized if he wanted to share his experience with others, he would need to get creative.

On his 30th birthday, he coerced his friends and family into celebrating at the MET. During this trip, Gray took his friends to the objects he most identified with and shared why he thought these objects were amazing. His genuine passion was hard to deny. Afterwards, his friends began asking Gray to recreate the night, taking them through the museum. Soon, word of these rogue tours spread and people across New York City sought to experience an unconventional, and unofficial, tour the museum with Gray. “My friends told their friends. Their

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friends told their friends, and it became like the go-to thing to do on a Friday or Saturday night in New York City,” said Gray during his 2015 TedX talk.³

Museum Hack has come a long way since its early days when Gray would host private tours for free. Within its first year, Museum Hack turned a $1 million profit.⁴ Today, the company employs a team of thirty-eight staff members who create, host, and evaluate tours that cater to a 21st century audience.⁵ It flourishes because of one simple concept that is echoed throughout every aspect of the company: “Museums Are F****** Awesome!”⁶

![Museum Hack's Slogan](image_url)

Figure 4-1. Museum Hack’s Slogan: Museums Are F***ing Awesome.

³ Nick Gray, “How I Learned to Stop Hating and Love Museums.”


⁶ The controversial nature of Museum Hack’s slogan is intentional, although it may ruffle feathers among museum professionals. From personal experience, I have classmates who feel Museum Hack’s use of profanity is unprofessional and does not represent their affiliated museums. While this opinion may not be popular among some, Museum Hack feels that use of eye-catching language using profanity gains more positive feedback than negative. This is evident in a blog post from 2013 on Museum Hack’s website. In this post, a person who went on a tour with the company claimed to have had a wonderful time during the tour, but was against the use of curse words. Museum Hack responded by saying although they do receive some negative feedback, overall for, “each one person who is turned off by our usage of that word, nine more are lit up and get excited.” Source: Museum Hack, “Use of the “F” Word RE: Museums Are F***ing Awesome,” December 18, 2013, accessed October 5, 2017, [https://museumhack.com/use-of-the-f-word/](https://museumhack.com/use-of-the-f-word/).
Museum Hack has further expanded, leading non-traditional tours through the most popular museums across the United States. Due to their highly experimental and non-traditional nature, they tend to attract people who are unlikely museum visitors. By deconstructing the long-accepted conventions of a traditional museum experience, Museum Hack expands the profile of the typical museum visitor, demonstrating to these visitors why museums matter. “I have spent every day (since starting Museum Hack) to reimagine the adult museum experience,” says Gray, and his dedication to audience development has made waves in the museum field.

Museum Hack believes a museum experience should start with passion first. Demonstrating a deep and genuine interest allows people to establish an emotional connection to a collection or a particular object. This emotional attachment in turn strengthens the likelihood that participants will come back to the museum and become more frequent visitors. Building meaningful experiences that lead to increased visitation is a major goal for Museum Hack.

Paradoxically, this company is leading the way in terms of audience development in museums, despite being a private, for-profit business just beyond the bounds of the museum field. Additionally, Museum Hack places a priority on engaging millennials, prioritizing this age group as a target audience. Julia Kennedy, Museum Hack’s Marketing and Audience Development Associate, believes that millennials are an underserved audience across the board, yet they are vital to the thriving longevity of museums.

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7 Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.
8 Nick Gray, “How I Learned to Stop Hating and Love Museums.”
9 Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.
10 The research for this case study was conducted through a phone interview with Julia Kennedy, Marketing and Audience Development Associate for Museum Hack, on June 21, 2017.
Kennedy defines millennial as someone born roughly between the years 1985 to 1996. This group was raised in a time when almost every aspect of our American society was undergoing rapid change, making this group unique in her opinion. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, a time when most millennials were in their formative years, use of digital technology in everyday life became normalized, shifting from being a cultural fad to something vital to our quality of life. Millennials also entered into adulthood during a time when the standard of living was shifting in a dramatic way. Changes in technology, the Great Recession and subprime mortgage crisis, and United States involvement in multiple major wars contributed to a societal shift in the way Americans chose to spend their time. This shift in leisure activity affected museums dramatically, and aided in the purpose for museums to become visitor-centered rather than object-centered.  

When it comes to museum programming, young adults seek what Kennedy calls “cool” content that provides a unique experience. Kennedy knows that millennials, “are not cheap, but are willing to pay a premium for a unique experience.” This makes sense, considering the rise in popularity of events such as Five K Color Runs, large outdoor music festivals like Coachella, and home-delivered, do-it-yourself meals from companies like Blue Apron in the 21st century. Millennials prioritize spending their money on experiences they perceive as unique. Shifting the focus back on museums, the current experience offered by the average docent-led tour. According to Kennedy’s observations,

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11 Kennedy’s opinion, taken from phone conversation on June 21, 2017.
12 Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.
13 Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.
A typical museum tour may only be $8, but people can also easily Google many of the things discussed. We (millennials) are not lazy. We know what we want and we are willing to pay for that experience.\textsuperscript{14}

Her theory behind why museum tours might not be successful among young adults is striking. Since the shift of museums being about something to being for someone, programming as a whole has slowly evolved. Docent-led tours are not popular among young adults. The millennial age group is generally more receptive to participatory and immersive experiences that transform learning into something that is also entertaining. They are the first generation to have grown up with digital technologies, providing them access to a world of knowledge via their smart phones. Despite this, the average museum tour continues to espouse information that will not immediately resonate with connected young-adults. Museum Hack diverges from the typical docent-led tour by providing engaging content that resonates with young adult audiences. Most, if not all, of Museum Hack’s staff are millennials with backgrounds in the arts and humanities. Working as a team allows them to embrace millennial perspectives and understand what this audience seeks from a trip to the museum.

Kennedy single-handedly operates Museum Hack’s social media presence, making her one of the most informed voices within the museum field for strategically creating engaging content over a multitude of digital platforms. Museum Hack boasts over 71,000 followers across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Different platforms serve different functions, and Kennedy successfully navigates Museum Hack’s online presence to provide content that is simultaneously thrilling and engaging.

Kennedy refers to Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter as the “Big Three,” social media platforms for any museum to utilize.\textsuperscript{15} For Museum Hack, Facebook remains the all-around most

\textsuperscript{14} Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.

\textsuperscript{15}
useful platform for reaching people who want to go on tours and learn about events. Instagram works best for generating visual content often with a humorous tone. This is an online space for sharing images and memes relevant to the museum field or specific events hosted by Museum Hack. According to Kennedy, this digital space is not necessarily productive for provoking an in-depth conversation but it works well for staying visually relevant in the minds of their many followers. Kennedy refers to Twitter as her, “personal favorite beast.”\(^\text{16}\) Twitter is less understood than other social media platforms, but remains a valuable resource, communicating with online audiences in real time and connecting people globally through trackable hashtags and trends.\(^\text{17}\)

Managing content across each of these platforms, could potentially take a great deal of time out of Kennedy’s day-to-day responsibilities, however she has found a way to use digital technology to her advantage. Utilizing digital social media management tool allows Kennedy to organize content and plan weeks in advance. By using these tools, she, “Rarely has to worry. Taking the time to plan social media content really pays off, because in the long run, the software can take care of itself.”\(^\text{18}\) A long-running criticism of social media management in the museum field is that it consumes too much time. By employing social management tools, Kennedy can plan content weeks in advance and post supplement material as needed. For

\(^{15}\) Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.

\(^{16}\) Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.

\(^{17}\) There are notable differences in regard to relevant social media platforms in different museums. For example, Museum Hack finds that Facebook is their most effective platform for reaching young adults. This is also supported by the results in my survey Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces, with 61% of participants citing Facebook as their preferred social media platform, while only 2% preferred Snapchat. Interestingly, at the MCA Denver, Snapchat dominates their digital marketing strategy. Teen Programs Manager, Molly Nuanes, explained that high school aged teens feel Facebook is outdated and not relevant to their lives. Nuanes believes that there is a very small age gap between Facebook and Snapchat users, but as teens age, this could contribute to a shift in social media preferences. For more about social media at the MCA Denver, please refer to Chapter 4, Case Study Two.

\(^{18}\) Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.
Facebook, Kennedy uses a tool called Buffer, which allows her to work two weeks ahead, and Edgar for Twitter. These tools allow her to plan and set a schedule that does not have to take additional valuable work time away from her day. “Sometimes he really hates GIFS,” said Kennedy, speaking of management tool Edgar, but overall having tools to help her remain focused on creating relevant content that speaks to their audiences.¹⁹

Kennedy cites three audiences as Museum Hack’s focus. Unsurprisingly, millennials are a primary audience. Museum Hack identifies, “people who participate in the Museum Hack tour experience,” as their first and foremost focus.²⁰ The second audience is a network of museums that Museum Hack consults with both physically and digitally. Kennedy says that one major challenge for her job is balancing Museum Hack’s social media presence so it speaks to both of these groups equally. To add an additional challenge, tour audiences constantly evolve as different people of varying backgrounds are always interested in participating in the tours. Kennedy navigates this challenge by understanding the best use of each major social media platform and posting content relevant to each platform that grabs both audiences equally.

The third growing audience Museum Hack has begun working with is businesses that seek corporate consulting. This mostly takes the form of bringing corporate groups into museums to participate in creative team building exercises that allow businesses to give their employees unique professional development opportunities. This is just one of the many ways Museum Hack works to create experiences that show people who would not normally come to a museum to see all the amazing ways museums are amazing spaces. “We constantly want to be

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¹⁹ Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.
²⁰ Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.
engaging new spaces and new audiences,” says Kennedy, “we are always combating the idea that museums are just warehouses full of stuff.”

Intriguingly, Museum Hack is a for-profit company that immerses themselves in non-profit spaces. When asked about how the company is generally received by the museum field as a whole Kennedy replied:

This is a huge stigma we face. We are constantly told that we just do not understand, but most of the people who work here have backgrounds in audience development and have tons of museum experience.

Kennedy says the fear of something different should not prevent museums from looking deeper into Museum Hack’s purpose to serve visitors. “Adult engagement geared towards millennials should be a higher priority in museums because news flash! We are adults,” says Kennedy, adding that she believes millennials are currently one of the most underserved audiences in museums today. Current major audiences are phasing out and museums are finding themselves at a turning point where they can choose to adapt to new audiences or fall to the wayside. Kennedy believes that adaptation is the key to staying relevant in the coming years. As audiences change, best practices also must follow suit. Museum Hack seeks to be leaders in audience development, supporting museums and helping the nonprofit world understand their communities better.

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21 Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.

22 In our conversation, Kennedy quoted Museum Hack’s founder Nick Gray that the company “turns a profit to make non-profits better.” Source: Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.

23 Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.

24 Phone conversation with Julia Kennedy on June 21, 2017.
CHAPTER 6
CASE STUDY THREE: MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF ART

The Mississippi Museum of Art was established in 1911 in Jackson, Mississippi.¹ It originally hosted temporary art exhibitions at the Mississippi state fair, and today has grown into the state’s largest art museum. The MMA has a rich history of educating their communities and making art accessible. In many ways, the MMA is extremely progressive, being a visitor-centered institution serving the public long before such an undertaking was popular in the museum field. Within its first few years, the MMA partnered with an organization called the Art Study Club to lobby to the state of Mississippi to create art courses for all public schools.² In 2007, the museum moved into its current building, located at the site of the former Mississippi Arts Pavilion. Today, the museum’s current campus includes a 1.2-acre park named the Art Garden, which stands in conjunction as an art space for the entire community to enjoy.³

This museum takes action to break down barriers between neighborhoods in the community to act as a museum for everyone, embracing the diversity of their audiences. As a self-proclaimed “community-supported museum,” the MMA maintains a strong presence in Mississippi through a myriad of ways that stem directly from the institution’s administration.⁴


⁴ The MMA collaborates with its community constantly. The ongoing series C3: Creativity. Conversation. Community. art series is a great embodiment of this collaborative intention. Taking place throughout the winter and spring, C3 is a program inviting artists into the museum for a participatory art installation that takes place over a series of workshops with community members. This program has existed since 2012 with the goal to, “bring together the diverse members and citizens of the community for the purpose of fueling an artwork that is representative of this place and of Mississippi as a whole.” Source: Mississippi Museum of Art, “C3 Community Art
Designed with the diversity of Mississippi in mind, the Art Garden is a symbol, “breaking down barriers between the neighboring arts organizations and serves as a nexus that empowers creativity, expression, and synergy in the arts community.”

As a testament to their unwavering community service, the museum won the National Medal for Museum Service in 2010 from the Institute of Museum of Library Services for their excellent programs and activities bringing their audiences together.

The visitors’ experience lies at the core of the MMA’s mission and is a major focus for the museum in their Strategic Plan. Produced by the museum in 2014, the strategic plan acknowledges the discrepancy between, “the changing behaviors of American consumers and the outdated business models operated by museums.” With this plan, the MMA has mapped out goals to serve their public by creating a welcoming and engaging environment for all visitors.

The MMA is an intriguing example of a museum that maintains a balanced array of both educational and entertainment-focused programming. Staff at this museum have found a way to engage young adults beyond the traditional monthly nighttime art party. While such a program does exist, it is not the basis for the museum’s involvement with their millennial community.

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Daniel Johnson, the MMA’s former Director of Engagement and Learning, established a multitude of these programs.9 Beyond the expected monthly nighttime party series, called Museum After Hours, the MMA hosts a variety of engaging programming focused on conversation and education. One such program, called Art and Coffee, was created by Johnson to provide community members, “an opportunity to slow down,” and enjoy a casual museum experience.10 A typical Art and Coffee experience brings about ten to twelve visitors on average, “about half [of which] are millennials.”11 Millennials participating in a program of this nature run counter to many stereotypes surround this generation. “It is not after hours, social, and there is not alcohol.”12 It does not hit any of the three most typical attractors, yet it still brings in civically minded millennials each month.

With a growing population of 169,148 and an average household income of $32,250, Jackson is an affordable city for young adults to thrive in.13 The young adults living in the city, “are politically engaged and looking to have deeper conversations” about ways to improve the quality of life in Jackson.14 Numerous opportunities for higher education exist in Jackson, including Jackson State University and certain colleges within the University of Mississippi, which further attracts young adults to the city. Between opportunities for higher education and

9 The research for this case study was conducted through a phone interview with Daniel Johnson, former Director of Engagement and Learning, on September 6, 2017. Daniel Johnson prefers his name to be represented in lowercase script. With respect to his preferences, his name will appear that way throughout this document.


11 Phone conversation with Daniel Johnson on September 6, 2017.

12 Phone conversation with Daniel Johnson on September 6, 2017.


14 Phone conversation with Daniel Johnson on September 6, 2017.
low cost of living, “there is a lot of room and access to co-create the future of the city.” For young people in particular, this is an attractive quality.

The MMA works to create an environment that pulls the qualities millennials in their community are most interested in exploring. Staff positions like johnson’s were created by the museum’s executive director to, “challenge the staff,” towards, “more inclusive, relevant, and timely programming,” for community members and partners. In addition, “most of the staff are millennials,” aiding the museum in its ability to build community partnerships and understand its young adult visitors. Numerous opportunities in the museum exist for young adults interested in working in the museum field. Teaching Fellows facilitate the museum’s K-12 school visits, serving as “paid student guides,” working closely with public educators in the community to provide tours.

Competitive internship opportunities are available to students who seek, “insight into the operations of a museum.” These internships provide unprecedented access to the MMA by allowing interns to understand the inner-workings of the museum, specifically concerning collections access. johnson built this program from the ground up based on an IMLS grant which had been written prior to his arrival, and faced interesting challenges to which the program must now adapt. He found retention for the program was difficult, as the program targeted students who were juniors in college. The next year, “some could not come back because they were

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16 Phone conversation with daniel johnson on September 6, 2017.


seniors and did not have the time.” To adjust to this challenge, he created space for these seniors to come back simply as “mentors” for new, incoming interns. In the end, three of the seven were able to come back for a second year. Involving college students in a behind-the-scenes capacity at the museum is one way the MMA engages with their millennial demographic.

Long-running scholarship within the museum field supports the notion that establishing a connection with collections is one of the most mindful to facilitate a relationship with an institution. According to the Smithsonian Institute, when a museum facilitates a hands-on experience with collections, “school visits increase... and children who have enjoyable experiences at a museum later return as adults with their own families.”

Social media allows the MMA to connect with all the museum’s audiences on a deeper level than traditional marketing communications. The museum casts a wide net through its social media initiatives, allowing the museum to capture a “virtual audience” that goes beyond physical visitors to the museum. Social media is the main promotional tool for communicating events and programs at the museum as well as objects in the collection. The use of social media allows

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19 Phone conversation with daniel johnson on September 6, 2017.
20 Phone conversation with daniel johnson on September 6, 2017.
21 There was one student in particular johnson described as a “huge success” for him personally. This intern was pursuing a career in the hard sciences when she came to the MMA. Through the hands-on nature of the program, she developed a passion for museums and fell into a more creative path. johnson encouraged her to continue cultivating her desire to work in museums and went on to an internship in New York City at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem with full intentions of applying for graduate school. Source: Phone conversation with daniel johnson on September 6, 2017.
22 Phone conversation with daniel johnson on September 6, 2017.
visitors to the digital portion of the museum to form a connection to objects. One goal of the museum’s strategic plan is to see a measurable increase in social media activity as an indicator of success in the MMA’s institutional progress. This increase takes must demonstrate not only more followers and “likes”, but also a heightened amount of diversity among new followers.25

Membership is an aspect of the MMA acknowledges is outdated and needs to evolve. As is evident from the museum’s strategic plan, the museum’s average visitor spends money in different ways than is reflected in the museum’s current membership infrastructure.26 The museum also recognizes pockets in their immediate community do not connect with the museum. To increase visitation among individuals in these pockets, the MMA is creating a Community Advisory Council, or CAC.27 With the CAC, the museum invites individuals across the entire Jackson area, focusing on communities that are less active with the institution. A major incentive for participating in the CAC is free membership.28 The goal of the CAC is to redesign membership to a framework that align with the benefits visitors truly want.

To increase engagement with millennials, the MMA has established a membership tier that specifically caters to people between the ages of 21-40. Named the Young Rembrandt Membership, this program includes opportunities to become deeply involved with the museum.29

This membership comes at a steep price for most young adults at $600 per year, however the


purpose is clearly to cultivate future major donors for the institution. Benefits of this membership include free membership to the museum’s New Collectors Club, exclusive previews of exhibitions, and opportunities to travel with museum officials.

johnson left the MMA on May 1 to continue his pursuits as a socially active artist in Jackson by focusing full-time on his company Significant Developments, LLC. Following his departure as Director of Engagement and Learning, the MMA underwent many changes in staffing and programming. Despite changes in staff, most of the museum’s department directors are young adults who generally fall within the millennial generation. Seeing as a significant portion of the staff are millennials, it makes sense that partnerships with the museum and both colleges and community groups in the Jackson area continue to flourish, as millennials tend to value collaborative thinking and social engagement.

Before leaving the MMA, johnson worked with fellow staff members to develop new ways to connect the museum, art, and public engagement. A major goal for the museum is to explicitly state the importance of maintaining a, “dynamic interactive relationship with a hint of social justice,” as the most effective way for the museum to serve its public. One way johnson

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33 After johnson’s departure, many of the projects and initiatives he created either no longer exist or are adapting under new staff members. Source: Phone conversation with daniel johnson on September 18, 2017.

34 Millennials tend to be community-oriented and emphasize the importance of equality among all individuals, regardless of gender, sex, racial or ethnic background, or class. Millennials tend to be more vocal about social issues than previous generations. Source: Pew Research Center, “Millennials: Confident, Connected, Open to Change,” 2010: 63- 84, accessed October 6, 2017, http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/02/24/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change/.

35 Phone conversation with daniel johnson on September 18, 2017.
helped the museum achieve this goal was to implement programs that foster discussion around civil rights and the history of Mississippi with visitors. Bringing in socially engaged artists for residencies and creating programming around exhibitions with the help of active community organizers and university students are two significant ways the MMA fosters these conversations.\textsuperscript{36}

Digital technologies, including social media platforms “activate the museum physically and virtually.”\textsuperscript{37} The MMA understands that digital technologies are a primary means to communicating with millennials and uses these technologies as a means of “digital storytelling.”\textsuperscript{38} Jackson, Mississippi is a conservative community, with many older residents who are wary about the overproduction of digital technology in exhibition spaces. For this reason, the MMA is experimenting with ways to integrate technology that “makes the experience fluid for all visitors, allowing people to dive deeper into additional layers if they want to.”\textsuperscript{39} This could take the form of an app that could produce different levels of activity depending on the user or a self-paced audio tour. By developing digital content that visitors can access allows individuals to, “curate their own experience… to adapt it to themselves.”\textsuperscript{40} Johnson found that by talking with older visitors about the use of digital technologies, it becomes easier to learn about how comfortable these visitors are with adapting to technology in exhibition spaces.

The MMA underwent many changes, ranging from programming to staffing following johnson’s departure. While the museum may be moving through a state of transition, this case

\textsuperscript{36} Phone conversation with Daniel Johnson on September 18, 2017.


\textsuperscript{38} Phone conversation with Daniel Johnson on September 18, 2017.

\textsuperscript{39} Phone conversation with Daniel Johnson on September 18, 2017.

\textsuperscript{40} Phone conversation with Daniel Johnson on September 18, 2017.
study serves as a shining example of a museum that is embracing the needs of their community and seeks to involve the voices of their visitors at every juncture. New technologies and modes of communication will soon make way for younger audiences, and the MMA is preparing now, by involving their visitors, both young and old alike, into their space to discuss how the museum may be more responsive to their needs.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

The Benefits of Including Millennial Voices

Museums are for everyone, regardless of age, racial or ethnic background, or socio-economic class. They are spaces to learn about the history of biological creation and help us to learn more about ourselves and the world that surrounds us. While this is a wide-accepted thought, the interpretation of objects and exhibitions is sometimes unintentionally exclusionary. Museum audiences have traditionally fallen under the demographic categories of upper middle class and white, yet this hardly reflects the multifaceted population of the United States. Millennials are the most diverse generation to date, and museums will need to adapt to become more accessible for this growing primary audience’s accessibility needs.

Making museums more accessible for millennials is not a way of making museums less accessible to other audiences. Rather, creating a welcoming environment for millennials also serves to enhance the experience for all visitors. All of the technological advances this age group embraces can have positive impacts for both younger and older generations alike. With any audience, museums should ask themselves: Are we doing all we can do connect to this audience? Asking this question is not a means of replacing the discussion about audience development, rather it serves to add to the ongoing dialogue.

Things that tend to be thought of as exclusively “millennial values” are often things that would make an experience better for any visitor. Krystal Young shares this sentiment in her blog The Iris: Behind the Scenes at the Getty writing, “a welcoming environment, engaging storytelling, good food and coffee, innovation, free Wi-Fi,” are not exclusively millennial needs,
yet they help millennials, and others, feel more comfortable in museum spaces.\(^1\) Knowing that adjusting current practices to suit millennials is a major step in 21st century audience development as a whole.

**Frankle’s Hierarchy of Museum Visitor Needs**

Elissa Frankle is the former Museum Experience and Education Specialist of Digital Learning and New Media at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. and current Senior User Experience Researcher for Ad Hoc LLC. Her time at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum allowed her to explore, “the intersection of the in-museum experience and digital interactives,” in order to better understand the visitor experience.\(^2\) Frankle has dedicated her career to unpacking what makes an experience meaningful and how to make the things we use in our daily life function in a user-friendly manner. In the past year, Frankle made a seemingly breakthrough discovery in the field of audience development: The Hierarchy of Museum Visitor Needs.

Adapted from Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs, Frankle’s pyramid proposes a sustainable way for creating positive visitor experiences. “One thing I wanted the hierarchy to do is get museums to think a little more broadly about what they want their audience to be.” said Frankle, during a phone interview.\(^3\) Working as a museum professional for the past twelve years allowed her to see the flawed ways many museums facilitate learning. Frankle has seen curators and exhibitions designers often create spaces not for the average visitor, but for recognition from their peers. “If you really believe in the mission statement of the museum,” said Frankle, “you

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\(^3\) Phone conversation with Elissa Frankle on September 1, 2017.
see that it is really about humans, and thinking about what those humans need.”

By placing more emphasis on the creation of a safe and comfortable environment, the focus for learning shifts to the needs of the human body.

Millennials obviously have the same needs as any other visitor when experience comes down to the fundamental, “brains and the body.” Frankle recognizes millennials have a different set of expectations for public spaces because of how quickly they process information. “We want to have it when we want it,” and in a way that can be shared in order to have a memorable experience. While millennials have new values for public spaces, for her there is no distinction between generations for creating welcoming environments. “I look at it like universal design,” said Frankle, “designing everything better for people with [specialized needs], it actually makes everyone better able to have access.”

This concept is simple, yet remains groundbreaking, allowing for spaces that are more accessible physically and psychologically.

In order to reach one’s full physical and psychological potential, a person must satisfy a system of needs in a particular order. Basic needs, psychological needs, and needs of self-fulfillment culminate in the ultimate goal of self-actualization in which a person can express himself or herself creatively. In the museum field, visitation continues to decline every year. A 2012 National Endowment for the Arts report “When Going Gets Tough” examines the barriers and motivations for participating in cultural institutions. The report breaks down the myriad of potential reasons a person might choose against visiting a museum, the most common reasons

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4 Phone conversation with Elissa Frankle on September 1, 2017.
5 Phone conversation with Elissa Frankle on September 1, 2017.
6 Phone conversation with Elissa Frankle on September 1, 2017.
7 Phone conversation with Elissa Frankle on September 1, 2017.
being a lack of time, high cost, and difficulty getting to the museum, all of which lie within the realm of accessibility.

Similar to Maslow’s 1943 model for establishing human behaviors and motivations, the Hierarchy of Museum Visitor Needs builds upon itself in levels [Figure 7-1]. The visitor is only able to move up the pyramid once the previous needs have been met. Frankle’s model is as follows:

![Frankle’s Hierarchy of Museum Visitor Needs](image)

Figure 7-1. Frankle’s Hierarchy of Museum Visitor Needs.

Accessibility, feeling safe and welcome, is the most-basic and primary need that must be fulfilled for the visitor to begin exploring any space. Incorporating universal design tactics make spaces user-friendly for all visitors. Frankle is unyielding in this aspect for good reason, as “accessibility” truly boils down to “just good practice.”\(^8\) By creating a comfortable environment with adequate exit and restroom signage, proper lighting, low pedestals, and large typeface, the

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\(^8\)Phone conversation with Elissa Frankle on September 1, 2017.
spaces becomes a place for everyone. Any body needs, “a little bit of comfort before they can get to the point,” of learning, including, “those scholars who want to come in and be wowed by the scholarship.”

Following accessibility are physiological needs, such as finding a space to sit and using the restroom. Only after these two needs are met can the visitor begin to mentally unpack the purpose of the museum and their role in that space. Higher physiological and psychological needs follow, allowing the visitor freedom to think about more in depth about any objects exhibited and the way the concepts might affect the visitor’s life. At the peak of the model is, like Maslow, Self-Actualization. When a visitor reaches this point, they begin to think about how the objects and concepts being presented and the possibility of having a life-changing experience.

A major part of her model involves thinking about the brain and body of a visitor being in the same space at the same time. Often, Frankle posits, museums focus on getting the brain of the visitor in an exhibition space to think about concepts, yet visitors’ bodies are sometimes left behind. “It is really hard to read about a collection, even one as awesome as a space shuttle,” says Frankle, “if you have to pee.” Bodies need care, regardless of background, and this model provides a simple breakdown of those needs applied through the lens of the museum field.

The Raymond M. Alf Museum of Paleontology

The physiological and psychological needs of visitors to reach self-actualization are greatly aided by the use of digital technologies in museums. At the Raymond M. Alf Museum of Paleontology in Claremont, California, Collections Manager Gabriel Santos incorporates digital

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9 Phone conversation with Elissa Frankle on September 1, 2017.

technologies into exhibitions. His work has proven that with dedication and time, making
exhibition spaces accessible for visitors does not need to be expensive or over-indulgent.

The Raymond M. Alf Museum of Paleontology is the only AAM accredited museum to
share a campus with a secondary institution of learning in the United States. The museum is
named for Raymond Alf, a paleontologist who developed the paleontology program at the Webb
Schools, which culminated in the Alf Museum in 1968. Today, the Alf is home to nearly 14,000
specimens, with 90% of the collection discovered by students studying at the Webb Schools.

Being located on a high school campus provides the Alf staff with a unique opportunity
to work with a young audience. The Alf is a small museum with a limited budget, meaning the
staff faces resource limitations that make any kind of change difficult to achieve. Santos,
Collections Manager at the Alf is meeting these challenges head-on by utilizing cutting-edge
digital technologies to make the museum more accessible for all its audiences.

Santos combats the major misconception in the museum field that focusing on millennials
will isolate other groups, particularly older generations who are not intuitive with digital
technology. According to his evaluations of his programs, digital technology has the opposite
effect at the Alf, and even enhancing the experience for all museum visitors. As a small museum,
the Alf has limited resources in terms of money and labor, especially for major projects.
Utilizing the concept of universal design and an understanding the power of digital technology to
engage audiences, Santos has successfully made his museum more accessible for his community.

According to Santos, a large percentage of visitors to the Alf are people with a disability
influencing their visit, whether visual, hearing, tactile, or simply people who do not speak
English as their primary language. When Santos started working at the museum in 2014, he
noticed visitors with disabilities possessed the ability to physically enter the space, but their
experience could be negatively influenced a myriad of problematic practices common in many museums. “They cannot interact in the same way with exhibits,” said Santos, “and when you talk to them, many people will share that in some way they feel excluded.”

Museums are spaces for everyone, and in order to prevent visitors from feeling excluded, Santos began utilizing universal design techniques that are inclusive for all types of visitors.

“What we are doing in our museum is using Augmented Reality (AR) and hoping to incorporate beacon technology,” to provide experiences that are unique to each visitor. With AR technologies, visitors can download an app on their smart phone, developed by Santos, and use their devices to engage with exhibitions in unanticipated ways. Labels and additional interactives throughout the entire museum are equipped with AR technology that is customizable to each visitor to enhance the typical museum experience. For example, if a visitor speaks Spanish as their primary language, they can program the app to their language. The visitor can then hold their device up to any label in the exhibition space and the AR technology will translate the label so the visitor can understand. Santos is aware that most visitors who are not primary English speakers typically speak Spanish, Chinese, or American Sign Language, so he developed this app to reflect these languages. Using beacon technology, Santos created a program to aid visitors with visual disabilities so an auditory guide can provide a descriptive experience that walks them throughout the entire exhibition space.

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12 Conversation with Gabriel Phillips Santos on August 6, 2017.

13 Santos has applied for grant funding to purchase tablets for the Alf, so that visitors do not need to take the time to download an app on their personal devices. If the Alf receives this funding, it has the potential to make a major difference in the quality of visitors’ experiences to the museum.
Creating the digital programs that provide these experiences are, according to Santos, “basically free to develop,” as long as there is adequate time to create meaningful content.\textsuperscript{14} For Santos, the investment in time is completely worth it when he sees the difference it makes in allowing people who are not primary English speakers or the typical museum audience to feel included in the museum. Using digital technologies such as AR is a major point of departure from the more traditional museum practice of creating supplementary pamphlets or booklets in different languages. While having paper materials such as pamphlets in different languages is ADA compliant, it is not the most effective way to engage visitors. Sharing how this makes a difference at the Alf, Santos said:

\begin{quote}
While these are great resources, people often share that they feel separated, disconnected, or less engaged because they have to constantly be looking up and down from their pamphlet to experience the exhibit. By having the AR with the Spanish language, visitors tell us they can look at the exhibition without feeling that separation. They feel like the museum is there for them too, and that is an important feeling that is required for a museum to thrive.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

When Santos began creating these digital programs for the museum, there was a general fear among the staff that people from older generations would hesitate to use this technology, or that it would not be user-friendly enough for people who did not grow up with technology to understand. Once the programs were developed, implemented, and tested, Santos learned that people of all generations and backgrounds enjoyed the experience the app provided. In beta-testing trials, people from older generations understood how to use the app after a brief demonstration and had little to no issues using the programs. Even younger people who accompanied older visitors enjoyed the app because it meant they did not have to take the time to translate every label, or describe every object, which meant they had more time to engage with

\textsuperscript{14} Conversation with Gabriel Phillips Santos on August 6, 2017.

\textsuperscript{15} Conversation with Gabriel Phillips Santos on August 6, 2017.
the exhibitions on a deeper level. Santos found that this app helped visitors of all ages and backgrounds have a deeper experience because it allows each user to engage on a personalized, individual level with the objects. Initially, many older visitors are hesitant to use the technology, according to Santos, but with a quick tutorial, most people agree, “the technology is simple to use,” and generally visitors, “seem to enjoy it.”

At the Alf, most of the staff are millennials under the age of thirty. Santos believes that because most of the staff grew up with technology in their lives, there is less hesitation to experiment with integrating these technologies into the museum. The Alf realizes that AR, and beacon technologies are not for everyone, but by demonstrating its usefulness to visitors, it helps create meaningful experiences. “When you see the smile on someone’s face when they are able to take the time to have their own unique experience and feel they belong at the museum,” it proves the investment of time and energy was successful.

The Alf museum is unique for bringing together audiences from multiple generations to learn about paleontology with the support of digital technology. Being located on a secondary-learning campus, it makes sense that its primary audience is high-school children, however its programming and interpretation engages children, young adults, and older generations alike.

After looking closely at museums across the United States, it becomes evident that nearly all are asking themselves how to build a relationship with the millennials in their communities. The general concept of cultivating new audiences requires a great deal of time, energy, and funding. In and of itself, this remains a challenge in the museum field. Millennials specifically are an audience with a unique set of needs, making them a difficult group for museums to

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16 Conversation with Gabriel Phillips Santos on August 6, 2017.
17 Conversation with Gabriel Phillips Santos on August 6, 2017.
18 Conversation with Gabriel Phillips Santos on August 6, 2017.
cultivate. Growing up in a time marked by an increased dependence on digital technologies, this audience communicates in different ways than generations past.

From the results of the survey *Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces*, it was determined that participants felt museums were relevant to their lives and were interested in engaging with museums through social media platforms. Further, participants cited high admission costs as the biggest barrier, however a majority expressed interest in becoming a member at a museum to gain access to exhibitions and special events. Learning what millennials interests and needs are concerning museum spaces allows museums to understand how they can adapt their current practices to be more engaging for this age group.

Many museums currently adopt excellent methodologies to retain the attention of the millennial generation. This thesis examines a multitude of these institutions and highlights three as case studies. The museums examined in this thesis range in terms of size, budget, and type to best present an encompassing view of how any museum might work to engage millennials. Millennials are the future of cultural institutions and soon they will become the primary audience. Creating and maintaining a long-term relationship with this generation is possible now, and museums that work to cultivate this connection are on the path to thrive throughout the 21st century.
APPENDIX A
SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING SURVEY

Short-Term Goal
To use Facebook, Twitter, and email in order to recruit participants for online survey. Each post has the same purpose, to spark an interest in millennials to participate.

Long-Term Goal
To acquire 50 complete responses in order to evaluate millennial perceptions of museum spaces in order to analyze the results to back my thesis.

Tweet Drafts
1. Are you a millennial with a passion for museums? An anonymous survey by a UF Museum Studies grad asks why museums matter to you. Click here to participate!
2. Millennials matter to museums! Click here to participate in an anonymous survey about what millennials seek from a museum experience.
3. A UF Museum Studies graduate student wants to know what millennials seek from a museum experience. Click here to participate in an anonymous survey!
4. Are you a millennial with a passion for museums? Take this survey to share what you love about museums!

Potential hashtags #millennialsinmuseums #millennials #ufmuseumstudies #mastersthesis #empchat

Facebook Draft
1. A vital component to my graduate thesis involves your input! I’ve created an anonymous survey that asks millennials how they feel about museums. It takes less than 5 minutes of your time and your response has the potential to be extremely valuable not only to my research, but to the museum field. Please consider taking a few minutes of your day to participate!
2. Calling all millennials! I’ve created this anonymous online survey to help me understand what millennials seek from a museum experience. Your response will aid in my research and has the potential to help museums create a more relevant environment for you! Click the link to participate!
3. Are you a millennial? Do you feel museums are relevant spaces for you to engage with? Click this link to participate in an anonymous survey to help museums better understand how to create a relevant experience for you!
4. Millennials will soon become the major audience for museums. I’m currently writing my thesis about the most effective ways for museums to reach the millennial generation. Click this link to participate in an anonymous survey that will my research in understanding what millennials seek from a museum experience!

Potential Facebook groups to reach out to:
- UF Graduate Research
- UF Center for Undergraduate Research
- UCF Undergraduate Research
• Harn Interns
• We Love Museums
• UF SA+AH Students
• FLMNH Research and Collections
• Florida Arts Connect
• UCF Art History Club and Events
• Snap! Community
• Gainesville Free and For Sale
• Emerging Museum Professionals Community Board.

**Potential Stock Photos to Use in Conjunction with Posts to Boost Visibility:**

![Image](https://unsplash.com/photos/Priscilla-Du-Preez)

Figure A-1. ©Priscilla Du Preez courtesy of UnSplash.com.
Figure A-2. ©Zachary Nelson courtesy of UnSplash.com.

Figure A-3. ©Bao-Quan Nguyen courtesy of UnSplash.com.
APPENDIX B
FULL RESULTS OF SURVEY RESPONSES

Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces: Report Pulled September 7th 2017, 2:42 pm MDT

Q1 - Before you begin, please read the following:
Maximum time to complete survey: 5 minutes
THANK YOU for joining this survey! The purpose of this study is to understand the motivations that inspire young adults to visit museums in the United States. At no point will this survey collect demographic information other than age and state of residence. Museums are so much more than old, dusty buildings filled with ancient objects of mystery. They are incredible spaces that have the power to connect diverse communities and encourage progressive thought through the collection and exhibition of our world. Your participation is vital to my research, so I can better understand what millennials seek from a museum experience. There is no compensation for participating in this research. Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your name will not be used in any report unless you specifically ask to be quoted. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. Your participation is completely anonymous and there is no risk for participating. You have the right to withdraw your responses from the survey at any time without consequence.
Who to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study IRB02 Office Box 112250 University of Florida Gainesville, FL 32611-2250 phone 352.392-0433. I have read the survey description above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the survey and I have received a copy of this description.

Figure B-1. Voluntary consent to participate in survey.
Q2 - What is your age?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.07%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.14%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.63%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.70%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5.34%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.12%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
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<td>9.19%</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>10.90%</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8.12%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
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<td>30</td>
<td>6.41%</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>3.63%</td>
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<td>4.70%</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.21%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.06%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-1. What is your age?

Q4 - Have you visited a museum sometime in the past year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>97.65%</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1.71%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>0.64%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-2. Have you visited a museum sometime in the past year?
Q5 - What type of museum have you visited in the past year? (Select all that apply.)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Natural History Museum</td>
<td>16.45%</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Art Museum</td>
<td>20.42%</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Historic Site/ Historic Home</td>
<td>17.56%</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>History Museum</td>
<td>14.82%</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Zoo/ Aquarium</td>
<td>13.13%</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Botanical Garden</td>
<td>12.29%</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>All of the Above</td>
<td>5.33%</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1538</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-3. What type of museum have you visited in the past year?

Q6 - Approximately how much money are you willing to spend on admission to a museum?

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<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$5 - $10</td>
<td>36.25%</td>
<td>170</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$15 - $20</td>
<td>44.78%</td>
<td>210</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$20 or more</td>
<td>17.27%</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-4. Approximately how much money are you willing to spend on admission to a museum?

Q7 - What typically motivates your decision to visit a museum? (Select all that apply.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Spending time with friends or family</td>
<td>21.82%</td>
<td>321</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A peaceful place to &quot;escape&quot; to</td>
<td>17.74%</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>An opportunity to learn something new</td>
<td>28.35%</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>An opportunity to have a unique experience</td>
<td>28.14%</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A school project</td>
<td>3.94%</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-5. What typically motivates your decision to visit a museum?
Q8 - What are the factors that prevent you from visiting a museum? (Select all that apply.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Too expensive</td>
<td>41.33%</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Can’t get to museum/ lack of transportation</td>
<td>21.63%</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Museums are not relevant in your life</td>
<td>3.41%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Unaware of museums in your area</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rather spend time elsewhere</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-6. What are the factors that prevent you from visiting a museum?

Q9 - Approximately how much time do you spend in a museum?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Less than 1 hour</td>
<td>1.28%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 - 2 hours</td>
<td>45.30%</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 - 4 hours</td>
<td>40.81%</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 or more hours</td>
<td>12.61%</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-7. Approximately how much time do you spend in a museum?

Q10 - Do you research museums before visiting them? If so, which of the following do you use to aid you research? (Select all that apply.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Google search</td>
<td>28.52%</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Museum's website</td>
<td>28.59%</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>18.52%</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Museum brochure</td>
<td>5.77%</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>17.54%</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.06%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-8. Do you research museums before visiting them? If so, which of the following do you use to aid you research?
Q11 - What social media platform do you prefer to use in your life?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>60.77%</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>27.08%</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>7.25%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>1.49%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tumblr</td>
<td>1.07%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-9. What social media platform do you prefer to use in your life?

Q12 - Do you follow any museums on social media? (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80.38%</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>18.34%</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>1.28%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-10. Do you follow any museums on social media? (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, etc.)

Q13 - Would you ever consider following a museum on social media to learn more about their programs and events?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>94.46%</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-11. Would you ever consider following a museum on social media to learn more about their programs and events?
Q14 - What social media platforms do you use to follow museums? (Select all that apply.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>37.70%</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>27.03%</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>16.16%</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>5.49%</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tumblr</td>
<td>4.27%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>3.25%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>984</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-12. What social media platforms do you use to follow museums?

Q15 - How often do you attend community events or programs in your area?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>20.04%</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>70.79%</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>9.17%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-13. How often do you attend community events or programs in your area?
Q16 - What source do you typically use to learn about community events and programs in your area?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>5.97%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>1.07%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>72.28%</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Website</td>
<td>5.12%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>11.51%</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>3.62%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-14. What source do you typically use to learn about community events and programs in your area?

Q17 - How would you prefer to learn about events and programs at a museum?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>75.64%</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Text message/ Push notifications</td>
<td>2.14%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mailed invite</td>
<td>3.42%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.14%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-15. How would you prefer to learn about events and programs at a museum?

Q18 - Do you ever attend events or programs at museums?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>82.52%</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15.14%</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-16. Do you ever attend events or programs at museums?
Q19 - Do you prefer museum events that are focused on education or entertainment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Educational (eg lectures, tours)</td>
<td>51.33%</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Entertainment (eg drinking-related events, creative workshops)</td>
<td>48.67%</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-17. Do you prefer museum events that are focused on education or entertainment?

Q20 - Are you more likely to attend a museum-related event if food is present?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>67.80%</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>17.27%</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>14.93%</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-18. Are you more likely to attend a museum-related event if food is present?

Q21 - Are you more likely to attend a museum-related event if alcohol is present?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>51.60%</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>33.05%</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>15.35%</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-19. Are you more likely to attend a museum-related event if alcohol is present?
Q22 - Have you ever been a member of a museum?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>58.42%</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>39.45%</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>2.13%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-20. Have you ever been a member of a museum?

Q23 - Would you ever consider becoming a member of a museum?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>87.21%</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3.62%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>9.17%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-21. Would you ever consider becoming a member of a museum?

Q24 - What type of benefits would you look for in a museum membership?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Free admission</td>
<td>59.74%</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Museum store discount</td>
<td>2.57%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Exclusive members-only events</td>
<td>13.28%</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Museum restaurant discount</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Special members-only gallery hours</td>
<td>7.92%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Priority registration for classes</td>
<td>1.28%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Access to reciprocal museum programs (ex NARM, ROAM, CUAM)</td>
<td>12.21%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Discounted gallery rental</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.14%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B-22. What type of benefits would you look for in a museum membership?
LIST OF REFERENCES


Reeve, Elspeth, “Every Every Every Generation has been the Me Me Me Generation.” The Atlantic, May 9, 2013. https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/05/me-generation-time/315151/.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Halee Sommer was born and raised in Niceville, Florida. In 2014, she carried a Bachelor of Arts in Art History from the University of Central Florida while working as Gallery Assistant at the UCF Art Gallery. Sommer enrolled in the Museum Studies program in 2015. During her graduate studies, Sommer held internships in the development offices of the Cade Museum for Creativity and Invention, the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, and the Peabody Essex Museum. Sommer is the founding president of the University of Florida’s student organization We Love Museums. Sommer will graduate with her Master of Arts in December 2017.