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## Group 6 Project 1 Museum Member Application

### **Executive Summary**

Our team has been investigating the opportunity to develop a mobile app for museum members to help enhance their visitation experience and communications with their favorite museums. Ideally this app would also increase satisfaction with museum experience, and increase visitation rates and membership rates. This app could potentially incorporate personalized notifications, digital membership cards, and access to special benefits in order to help enhance these aspects of visitation. After exploring our root concept, we then developed a set of questions that would highlight our participants experiences with museums as well as mobile devices and apps and how these have impacted their day to day and decision making. We then were able to formulate 4 different personas based off of our interviews.

Summary of Key Research Findings [See *Appendix*]:

1. A museum app would be an added benefit of becoming a member, not a driving factor.
2. Cost of membership is high and not seen as a necessity for those who have heard of museum memberships. Some younger participants do not even know about membership options or benefits.
3. An app would be appealing if it provides meaningful content (ie. special events, discounts or location based information) and is not another resource to collect spam.
4. Participants are interested in an app or mobile device that would make their experiences more simple and provide more “bang for their buck” (ie. one app that provides access to multiple museums).

Summary of Design Implications [See *Design Implications section*]:

1. Artifact must support needs to increase member engagement as well as user requirements of simplicity
2. Notifications must be personalized and incorporate targeted, pertinent information only, based on location, membership type, and interests.
3. Consider partnering with supporting institutions to allow one app to be used at multiple different museums.
4. Layout must be usable for multiple age ranges and comfort with mobile apps.

### **Introduction and Root Concept**

Museums are mostly non-profit cultural institutions that rely heavily on donations and membership dues to function day to day and continue their mission. Chicago is fortunate to be a city full of museums that provide educational and entertainment experiences that are great for all types of people with a variety of interests. Currently, museums are falling behind in reaching younger audiences, whom are the key to the future of these museums. Concurrently, museum members are increasingly in competition for their attention, and how they like to spend their days. The cost of memberships can seem high and not as a necessity to people with multiple competing opportunities for entertainment (ie. libraries, amusement parks, concerts, festivals etc.) Some younger participants were not even aware of membership opportunities, which could be

seen of a lack of information sharing. Our root concept would be to develop a mobile app that enhances communications with museum members as well as provide additional personalized content such as discounts, event information and guided tours. Ideally this would help enhance customer satisfaction and increase visitation, which would support the needs of the app users and the museums.

## **Process Overview**

Each team member selected 2-3 participants to participate in a 20 question interview. Our participants were a selection of museum members and non-members, some of which were people that we knew personally. We each asked our participants and potential users 20 questions on their knowledge, habits and interests in both museums and applications [See *Appendix for interview questions*]. We received informed consent from all of our participants before capturing any data, by letting them know that their contributions would be utilized for this study, and we would remove any identifiable personal data. We went about our interview process in a few ways. Ferando, Alexis and Rebeka interviewed people in person or over the phone. Alexis included a person she knows, while Anna created a survey to gather a few extra responses [See *Appendix for link to survey*]. We then combined all of our answers and findings into one document and found 4 distinct personas that we identified as potential users of our application.

## **Personas**

We came across a variety of personas who would be potential users of our app. We were able to personify a student, a young professional, a working mother, and an older male professional. Each of these individuals have different needs and expectations out of a museum application. We believe that for this application to be successful it needs to be able to successfully appeal to as many of these users as possible. This would secure the participation and continued usage from not just the current museum members but also from the younger and more technologically savvy generation.

### ***Young professional***

Fictional Name: Mark Gallegos

Job title/major responsibilities: Graphic Designer

Demographics:

- 24 years old
- Single
- Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design

Goals and tasks: Highly creative individual. Very concerned around aesthetics and user satisfaction.

Spends his time:

- Designing graphics for websites and publications
- Communicating with clients and team members through email and other electronic means of communication
- During free time enjoys exploring the city with friends and participating in current cultural or artistic events.

Environment: While he is reliant on computers and technology in order to perform his work duties, he does not have the need to be connected 24/7. He utilizes a computer and design software daily at work. He also enjoys gaming and is part of various social networking sites. Accesses the web mainly through a PC but also utilizes his phone apps for convenience during the day. Most of his banking, shopping, and other menial interactions are handled online. He is in touch with current design and art trends and enjoys visiting museums from time to time.

Quote: "Let's try this out and see how it looks"

### **College Student**

Fictional Name: Hannah Gutierrez

Demographics:

- 18 years old
- Single
- Working on bachelor's degree

Goal and Tasks: Main goal is to make friends and pass her college classes. Enjoys spending time with friends and participating in various clubs such as dancing, hiking, etc. Seeks new experiences and is in touch with what is going on in the city through social media.

Spends her time:

- Working part time as a tutor to obtain some extra spending money
- Does not have much of a work experience before college
- Enjoys artistic events and opportunities to share a selfie online

Environment: She is surrounded by technically savvy friends and fellow students. Utilizes her phone 24/7 and has an active presence online in social media apps such as Instagram. Follows the lives and activities of various idols and enjoys sharing her life online. Does not own a laptop or PC, does all her schoolwork in her iPad or smartphone. While has utilized a smartphone for most of her life, she has no interest in the technical functionality of the machines. Instead, she enjoys the benefits and convenience that they provide. Very interested in current fashion, idols, artists and follows current trends. As such, enjoys going to museums and taking pictures of and with interesting artwork.

Quote: "Why do I have so much homework?"

### **Mother**

Fictional Name: Caryn Albo

Demographics:

- 45 years old
- Married with children
- Teaches kids

Goals and tasks

- Main goals are to spend enough time with her kids as well as giving enough energy to her classroom children. She enjoys taking the kids out the movies, zoos, museums, anything that gets them away from the television.

Spends her time

- o Teaching, doing yoga and Pilates, finding fun new recipes for the kids, and taking the kids on adventures.
- o Does not have a lot of free time, also on a bit if a budget as a teacher with 3 kids.

Environment: Caryn is usually surrounded by children and utilizes her phone a lot. She uses Pinterest to find new creative ideas, google to find kid friendly events, food delivery apps to order food, and other services like dry cleaning apps that allow her to have as much free time as possible. She even uses it to let them play games during long car rides, etc, and considers it a lifeline. She is interested in finding new things to do with the kids.

Quote: "What would you kids like to do this weekend?"

### **Middle-aged Professional**

Fictional Name: Jeff Riebart

Job title/major responsibilities: University Biology Professor

Demographics:

- 46 years old
- Single
- Graduate degree

Goals and tasks: Highly creative as well as technical individual. Works in a university setting, but has a number of creative hobbies.

Spends his time:

- Teaching Biology at a university
- Participates in biology research studies at the university
- Going dancing 1 night a week
- Loves history
- On weekends or other free time enjoys hiking and photography.

Environment: Jeff is reliant on technology for work purposes, and has social media accounts, but prefers to disconnect from technology as much as he can during his free time. He uses mobile apps for convenience, such as banking, scheduling, and keeping up with friends that have different schedules. He keeps a very busy schedule, both at work and on his days off. He loves learning new things, and enjoys going to museums for this purpose. He enjoys both the technical and creative and so would love a membership that would allow him to go to a few different museums a month.

Quote: “The more you're willing to ask, the more you're going to get out of it”

## **Design Implications**

Based on the interviews and personas developed, the design of the app would need to be accessible and usable for a variety of experience with mobile apps and devices, as well as age ranges. Museums are places that attract people of a variety of needs, but many express an interest in simplicity. The app itself must be designed in an accessible way, but also provide components that make their experience at the museum more simple. This could include a digital wallet for membership cards, tickets or maps, stored within the app, that can be pulled up easily. This would eliminate the need to search their wallets or bags for their necessary identification or paper resources. Participants also expressed a desire to avoid useless information. This means that any notifications that come through the app must be personalized to their location or membership level. They wish to not be bothered by information that is not applicable to them. This will help lower the need for an inundation with paper and email communications that will end up being discarded. Many participants described their unfamiliarity with museum membership and benefits and strong desire for simplicity. A participant mentioned an idea to potentially have one app that store information for multiple museums and provides access to each one. This would help with the cost/benefit decision when deciding whether or not to join museum membership, as well as provide an easy way to stay connected to their favorite museums. This consideration would require partnering with multiple museums.

## **Appendix**

### *Interview Questions*

1. How old are you? Other basic demographics?
2. What are your hobbies?
3. Do you go to any museums? Which ones and how often?
4. How do you currently pay for your tickets and find information on which exhibits are available?
5. Can you demonstrate the process of going through the entrance of the museum?
6. Can you describe one of your best customer experiences while at a museum?
7. If you could enhance your communication experience with your museum, how would you?
8. Are you a member of the museum? If not, have you ever considered it? What led to your decision?
9. Did you know about the existence of museum membership programs before this interview?
10. If yes, why did you decide to sign up? What would you say are the main benefits of being a member?

11. How do you, as a member, stay up to date on exhibits and how/where do you store your tickets?
12. How accessible is your membership information?
13. How does the museum generally communicate with you? What do you wish was different about that?
14. If paper – how long did it take to get information in the mail?
15. Do you utilize many mobile apps? Which kind do you like to use?
16. Would the availability of a mobile app to manage museum communication and membership be valuable to you?
17. What would you like to see and be able to do in that app? Could you describe the interaction?
18. Are there any key features that you would require the app to have?
19. Could you talk about a time where an app enhanced your customer experience?
20. Could you talk about a time where an app negatively impacted your customer experience?

#### *Survey Link*

<https://s.surveymonkey.com/rl-iwU89>

#### *Key Research Findings*

##### *Fernando:*

Neither of them had heard about museum membership before (I also asked other friends and family and no one has ever joined a museum's membership program). I think this signals that there is an overall lack of information related to this program amongst common young people.

They are both relatively young (19 and 23). They both thought that an electronic means of communication would be a very convenient way to get information related to their favorite museums. They both would like to become museum members if the perks of doing so justify the hassle involved (namely they want discounts and special events). They would also consider any physical mail communication a nuisance and would not join the program if this is a requirement. The idea of an app was perceived very positively as long as it comes with meaningful interactions and functionality. The app should not be just a resizing of the current website. Instead, this app should help them plan for their visit by offering exhibition previews and scheduling across multiple museums. In-app communication such as special events or offers are also welcome as long as they are meaningful and not just spam. The possibility of purchasing tickets in advance in

order to skip queues and even validating student discount status would improve their overall experience.

*Alexis:*

She was aware about museum memberships but did not believe there would be any benefits of joining so never looked into it. As someone from an older generation, I was surprised but how often she uses apps and how helpful she thought a museum app would be. This shows that this app would not only be beneficial for younger audiences, but for families and older generations as well. Currently her biggest concerns are the pricing of various tickets and not knowing what exhibits are included in the ticket she is purchasing, and how much extra it would cost to visit others. She also seems to have trouble directing herself in the museum with paper maps and 3 kids, so an app that allows you to schedule based off of exhibit location within the museum and possibly even give directions could be very beneficial. I don't think a compact version of the website would be helpful - it would need more meaningful interactions and communication. Notifications of special events and discounts, etc.

*Anna:*

Most people I interviewed did not have current memberships at any museum, though most had a membership at one point in time. People thought an app for members would be useful, even if it wouldn't impact their decision to be a member, and mentioned features such as detailed information on various exhibits, notifications on museums or exhibits a user might be interested in based on location, what's new or coming to a user's favorite museum, a location-based map of the museum, and ticket sales.

Another common complaint was that people wanted the ability to have a membership that would allow them to visit multiple museums. They couldn't justify the price of a membership for one museum that they wouldn't visit very often since they would see a lot of the same things. If a user could visit 3 different museums per month, for example, that was much more appealing.

*Rebeka:*

I approached 3 people who were all members of a Chicagoland Museums and conducted in-person and phone interviews. I received verbal consent from the participants of the interview. I used the list of interview questions that were developed collectively by our team and took notes. The people I selected were a variety of age ranges and experiences with apps and mobile devices. The participants were interested in the possibility of an app or mobile component to manage their museum membership information. The participants all mentioned how they primarily communicate via email and text, and many conduct transactions and read articles through various types of apps. Many mentioned the hassle of being flooded with emails that are lost in promotions folders and never enter their main inbox, which is a miss for important information. The app is an appealing idea to the participants as it would give them control in their experience, and would potentially assist them with finding more personalized and pertinent information. This possibility is seen as an added bonus for their cost of membership, and not a driving factor in making a decision to purchase a membership- as mobile apps are becoming more common and somewhat expected.

*Individual Contributions*

We each came up with 10 questions to ask in potential interviews. We combined these into a list of 20 questions total and each conducted our interviews. After we combined all of our data,

Alexis made one persona for a working mom, Fernando made a persona for a young adult and for a student, and Anna made a persona for an older professional. Rebeka wrote the executive statement and design implications and developed the root concept. We all contributed to the process overview. Alexis managed communications between group members and helped develop email chains and preferred methods of communications.