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## Marketing museums and cultural assets in the modern era: an overview of the special topic

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### ABSTRACT

There has been a shift in museum and heritage marketing management toward creating environments that are more pleasant, engaging, and transforming for visitors. Since Mclean's (1995) and Goulding's (1999) work on public attitudes within a postmodern consumption society, a variety of research questions and approaches, including some published in the *Journal of Marketing Management*, have acknowledged the contemporary perspectives in consumption of museums and heritage spaces (e.g. Bennett, Kerrigan, & O'Reilly, 2010; Jafari, Taheri, & Vom Lehn, 2013; Taheri, Jafari, & O'Gorman, 2014). These developments have fueled an ongoing evolution in current museum and heritage marketing management theory, yielding new understandings of consumer behavior and the marketing process as a whole. They have been notably rich in exposing consumer engagement and substantial interaction between visitors and service providers, particularly those underpinning new features of decision-making, co-created experiences as well as experiential marketing. As a result, a wide range of themes and approaches are represented in this issue's six pieces. Following this, we provide short descriptions of each article included in this issue.

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### INTRODUCTION

Sean Lochrie has published the first piece for our special edition. In his study, he examines the World Heritage Site (WHS) setting, an area where stakeholder theory has not been well researched. By conducting various case studies on three World Heritage Sites in the United Kingdom (Edinburgh's Old and New Towns, the Antonine Wall, and the Derwent Valley Mills), he was able to isolate a number of key factors, such as community backing, active participation, the need of facilitators, and the need for enough time and funding. In-depth interviews, written records, and tangible objects were used to examine these issues. Moreover, Lochrie noted that the sheer size and diverse ownership patterns of these sites are the most problematic features of the site stakeholders, making for a complicated terrain to operate in. He also underlined the need of different case studies method in evaluating WHS sites workers' conduct by applying techniques such as boosting knowledge and trust, also adopting more stakeholder-led initiatives within their stakeholder networks. Managers are essential in these settings because they are tasked with creating plans to improve stakeholder capacities and sustain personal connections. Derek Bryce and Senija aurevi are the authors of the next article we'll be publishing. In this paper, they follow Said's (1978) and Bryce's (2013) advice and investigate the role of European identity

construction in light of current sociocultural and political concerns in Europe by examining the dichotomies between, for example, the imaginary cartographies of Modernity and History, East and West, Christendom and Islam. They analyzed data from eight exhibitions in Western Europe and Turkey using a Foucauldian discourse analysis supplemented with a semiotic method. There were two primary results. Since the legacy of Ottoman culture is perceived through a Eurocentric lens and transmitted as such in European exhibitions, it is shown in binary terms. These exhibits market themselves as welcoming, accessible places for casual viewing (Taheri & Jafari, 2012). The study recommends that marketing managers give greater consideration to providing their visitors with a fair and objective account of the past. In their third study, von Lehn and Heath discuss how to increase visitor participation, as well as social action and activity, via the use of a video-based method. They made an effort to develop the use of technology to record consumer behavior in public areas. They analyzed the social interactions of consumers at UK-based exhibits via the lenses of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. They identified numerous primary aspects include traversing displays, concerted looking, interactivity or social engagement.

Video footage that records visitors' reactions to and interpretations of displays or social interactions was taken into account. This adds to the literature on sensory and experience marketing already established by Hultén (2015) and Taheri et al. The audiovisual recording method may be augmented by data gathered from diaries, interviews, and subjective personal inspections. Finally, the audiovisual data collected from museum and gallery visitors might be useful for the institutions' management and design teams. For instance, students may learn how people explore and enjoy historic sites. In our fourth and fifth studies, we explore the role of authenticity in shaping the way tourists behave. The research study written by Derbaix and Gombault places an emphasis on genuine encounters and the creative processes of tourists. They establish a connection between the notions of staged authenticity and perceived authenticity in order to provide a genuine experience by means of the imagination in their conceptual framework. Hermeneutic analysis was used to data gathered from semi-structured interviews and visitor observations at Cézanne's studio in Aix-en-Provence, France. Material dimensions, immersion, and embodiment, as well as the infection of the intangible by the apparent, emerged as major themes from these interviews. On the basis of their research, they constructed a theoretical model. This model demonstrates how cognitive and creative processes like knowledge and perception have a role in the perceived authenticity of a situation. Wang (1999) and Hede and Thyne (2010) are two examples of their contributions to the authenticity literature. Their approach may be used as a diagnostic tool to spot and evaluate the imagining process in a wide range of contexts, from historical reenactments to musical performances. In their fifth study, Thyne and Hede investigate the management methods behind the idea of co-production as it relates to the genuine consuming experience offered by museums. In particular, they look at the Katherine Mansfield Birthplace in Wellington, New Zealand, and 56 Eden Street in Oamaru, New Zealand, to see how (in)authenticity is transformed via co-production in the museum-goer's experience. They had visitors to both venues fill out brief, open-ended questionnaires and conducted in-depth interviews with curators and administration. They concluded that there are no differences in genuine experience from visitors' point of view, but similar to some earlier research (Prentice, 2001) co-production is crucial to a good visitor experience in museums. Managers of visitor

services at museums should encourage visitors to work together via guided, experience-based tactics.

The final paper in the special issue written by Murdy, Alexander and Bryce focuses on consumers' desire to appreciate their own personal history within Ancestral tourism. In so doing, they employed semi-structured interviews from archivists, museum curators, man-agers and volunteers (who are responsible for delivery of ancestral information) in different heritage sites in Scotland. They found several themes including limited customer resource conflict, extensive customer resource conflict, limited customer and provider resource conflict and complex negotiation conflict. They contributed to previous studies including co-creation of value (Edvardsson, Tronvoll, & Gruber, 2011) and role conflict and ambiguity (Shamir, 1980). They noted that asymmetric resources can assist to increase a sense of service disconfirmation from consumer views, as well as the incapability of service providers to give visitors the personalised information they need. Service providers should find ways to decrease the asymmetrical nature of the relationship, for example, by creating a venue for consumers to register their research in advance of visiting these heritage sites. Understanding the role conflict will also reduce the level of stress faced by heritage professionals who deal (sometimes unsuccessfully) with personalised inquiries. Overall, the papers in this special issue offer important insights to contemporary issues in museums and heritage marketing management. The research findings offer guidance to practitioners to help them to better evaluate audience development in this context. For academics, these special section papers act as a starting point to encourage looking at the current development in marketing management and encourage experimentation with and implementation of these in museums and heritage locations. There are also several innovative methodological analytical techniques used to deliver insightful outcomes in this special issue, including: ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, thematic analysis, template analysis, multiple case analyses, documentations, observation, Foucauldian discourse analysis, semiotics and hermeneutical process. We believe each of these methods point towards significant contributions to contemporary issues in museums and heritage marketing management. Finally, the reviewers' valuable comments helped to select and revise the papers in this special edition. Both the guest editors and the authors appreciate the time and efforts from our peers for providing timely reviews of manuscripts for this special issue.

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