

The Development of Marketing in the Canadian Museum Community: 1840 to 1989

Leighann C. Neilson, Queen's University, Canada

The topics of museums and marketing do not, at first glance, seem to go together. Some museum directors have regarded marketing as having no place in the museum world – the focus on 'management techniques' is anathema to museums, run by professionals who see marketing as an intrusion on their true work. Although there has been some attempt on the part of marketing academics to understand the nature of museums and conduct research within the museum environment, their focus has not been on Canadian museums. This paper marks a first attempt at examining the development of marketing within the Canadian museum system. Canadian museums differ from their counterparts in the United States and Britain, in part due to an emphasis on the production of a 'social good': the sovereign Canadian nation. The paper takes a chronological approach, detailing the development of marketing strategies from the beginning of the museum community in Canada in the early 1800s through to the opening of the new National Gallery and Canadian Museum of Civilization at the end of the 1980s.

The topics of museums and marketing do not, at first glance, seem to go together. An earlier assessment of the state of marketing within museums (Yorke and Jones 1984, p. 98) concluded, "neither marketing philosophy nor professional marketing research techniques appear to have been accepted by museologists." Although there has been some attempt on the part of marketing academics to understand the nature of museums and conduct research within the museum environment (Bhattacharya, Rao and Glynn 1995; Goulding 1999, 2000; Robbins and Robbins 1979, 1981) their focus has been primarily on American or European museums. This paper marks a first attempt at examining the development of marketing within the Canadian museum system.

The paper begins with a discussion of the unique position of Canadian museums and what marketers can hope to learn from studying them. Next, the methods used to uncover the history of marketing in museums are summarized. The remainder of the paper takes a chronological approach, detailing the beginnings of the museum community in Canada in the early 1800s and describing changes that occurred until the end of the 1980s.

Interwoven with the history of the museum is a discussion of the marketing practices that were employed, reflecting the museum's marketing management strategy.

WHY STUDY THE CANADIAN MUSEUM SYSTEM?

Although American and Canadian museums can trace their roots back to the older British and more generally European experience, this may blind us to the fact that the tradition of British and American museums is very different from that of Canadian museums, leading to differences in how they have viewed the visiting public over time. As social institutions, museums are themselves cultural artefacts, shaped by their national environments and influenced by social trends. And through the creation of social goods, museums can shape their national environments and influence social trends. The relationship is reciprocal.

Museums in Europe can trace their history back to the mid-fifteenth century, when the emerging bourgeoisie assumed the role of patrons of the arts and sciences, employing scholars to collect on their behalf (Key 1973). In general, these collections were founded largely for the sake of prestige, or from 'acquisitive compulsions'. They were intended to be viewed by the owner's circle of acquaintances, not by the general public (MacBeath and Gooding 1969). The growth in public museums can be linked to the Victorian enthusiasm for education, especially self-education of the working classes (Hudson 1975; Yorke and Jones 1984). By the mid-18th century in England, museums were to be open to the general public, although in practice not everyone was welcome; government policies ensured that only the 'desirable public' was admitted (Key 1973).

The mindset that sees the owning and viewing of *objets d'art* as something reserved for the upper classes finds its roots in the Kantian philosophy of aesthetics and has come down to us in the attitude which views public access as a

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MILESTONES IN MARKETING HISTORY

privilege rather than a right. As Kenneth Hudson points out (1975, p. 5), the wealthy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, "had no feeling at all that their collections might, as cultural assets, belong to the nation as a whole and that it was irresponsible to prevent other people from enjoying them." Such attitudes persisted well into the nineteenth century – the idea of consumer research "was altogether foreign to the way in which the heads of most nineteenth century museums thought about their task" (Hudson 1975, p. 6).

In the United States, museums developed in quite the opposite direction. While in many European countries, private collections came first and public museums developed from them, in the United States public museums existed many years before private collections began to be amassed. Hudson (1975, p. 31) credits the United States with the "idea of a museum established for the benefit of the whole community" and identifies the Charleston Museum in South Carolina, established circa 1773, as the oldest museum in the US. However, during the twentieth century, many private collections were bequeathed to or transformed into public institutions, in effect, reproducing the process that occurred earlier in Europe (Hudson 1975).

Canada has had little of the royal or aristocratic class, capable of building and later endowing collections on which the European museum tradition was founded. Certainly local elites donated items reflecting their accomplishments and heritage to Canadian museums (Canizzo 1989), but not on the same scale as was experienced in Europe. Canada has also shared little of the American experience of wealthy commercial magnates endowing public museums. Instead, the tradition in Canada has been one of government sponsorship. As a result, museum visiting in Canada has generally been viewed as a right of citizenship. Compared with its British and American counterparts, the Canadian museum is unusual for its focus, almost from the outset, on the marketing of an idea: the sovereign nation.

Certainly, the role that national museums play in promoting national identity is well established internationally (Kaplan 1994). But sovereignty and national identity are not exactly the same concept. Sovereignty comes in many forms (economic, legal, cultural and military) and involves the idea that the nation state has control over its future (Held 1996). Kevin Dowler (1996) has argued that since Canada is both economically dependent on the United States (as our largest trading partner) and unable to mount a military defense of its borders against the more powerful US military force, it falls to culture to become the last bastion of sovereignty. As Dowler describes it, sovereignty is achieved by the inculcation of a unique Canadian culture through centrally administered programs delivered by federal agencies. As part of Canada's 'cultural industries', the national museums have a key role to play in marketing the idea of a sovereign Canadian nation.

The conservation and education roles and, more recently, the entertainment and tourism-related objectives of museums are generally well understood. What is less explicitly discussed in the literature is the role of museums in producing such 'social goods' as the idea of a sovereign nation. Social goods are those for which the consumer does not reap the entire benefit, there is an 'overflow' or surplus of positive affect which accrues to the larger society (Kresl 1996). For example, if many citizens agree to get 'flu shots', then not only are they personally protected from illness, but other members of society also benefit from the decreased likelihood of contracting the flu from inoculated persons.

Kresl (1996, p. 225-7) identifies the social good that cultural industries in Canada 'produce' as:

the continued understanding Canadians have of their unique historical, cultural, social and economic identity.... [T]he consumption by one individual generates a benefit that is enjoyed by another individual... [E]ach citizen [can] be assured of the continued existence of the nation as a separate entity if other citizens have access to national culture goods and are thereby able to make an informed judgment as to the value of their distinctive national political and social institutions and processes.

Kresl's discussion of the provision of social goods closely parallels the societal marketing concept, which suggests that organizations should go beyond customer satisfaction and provide their services "in a way that maintains or improves the consumer's and society's well-being" (Kotler, Armstrong and Cunningham 1999, p. 19).

But Canadian museums have not always embraced the production of this social good. In fact, at various times in their history, museum staff did not see this as an appropriate part of their role. Throughout their history, museums have produced a variety of other 'products' in addition to the social good outlined above. These include reports of a scientific nature intended for a learned audience; educational exhibitions, lectures and the like geared toward the 'visiting public'; and more recently, CD-ROMs and virtual exhibits via the Internet, aimed at making the museum's resources available to a broader audience. At various points in time, a different emphasis was placed on each of these products. Certainly, the federal government had a role to play in shaping the national museums (Collins 1928, Labun 1996), but the orientation of the museum's director and senior staff also influenced how they saw their role and to which products and services they gave priority.

In his 1973 study, Steven Thrasher (p. 2-3) postulated that museum administrators would evince one of three 'orientations': a 'client orientation' "in which administrators are primarily concerned with client satisfaction", an 'internal orientation' "concern[ed] primarily with efficiency, adherence to established rules and procedures,

organizational loyalty, [and] staff satisfaction", or thirdly, a 'professional orientation' "concern[ed] primarily with the values of professional peers in other institutions and with the professional reputation of one's own institution." Thrasher's point is not that museums progress through each of these orientations in a linear fashion, but that the orientation of key members of the museum staff influences the approach a museum takes toward meeting the needs of its various publics. And indeed we can see evidence of shifts in Canadian museums' orientations that can be associated with the predominant orientation of senior staff members in any given time period.

By examining the development of marketing within the museum system, this paper contributes to 1) a better understanding of how staff and socio-political influences effect societal marketing efforts of non-profit agencies, and 2) improves our understanding of the museum context, a rich and promising source of research data related to non-profit marketing.

This section of the paper has outlined some reasons why marketers should be interested in studying Canada's museums. The next section outlines the methods that were used to identify research materials. Subsequent sections detail the history of museums in Canada twinned with a discussion of the marketing philosophy espoused in each time period.

METHOD

To locate evidence of the use of marketing techniques by museums, a search of the literature was conducted using electronic indexes (ABI/INFORM, EconLit, Art Index, Humanities Index, Project MUSE and the Emerald e-journal collection) for the terms museum(s), museum(s) and marketing, non-profit marketing, services marketing, consumer behavior and museum(s). This search returned a number of results, including the production of 'special issues' on marketing by museum journals in Canada, the US and Britain. The search also returned review articles focused on marketing and museums (Kawashima 1998; Yorke and Jones 1984) and thematic bibliographies such as Rubenstein and Pavlik (1986).

In addition to on-line sources, a review of Canadian government documents was conducted. This search unearthed the reports prepared for the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1949-1951), several museum policy related documents, and a useful summary of the history of the Canadian museum system (Muisse 1989). In addition, the web pages of Heritage Canada, the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Canadian Museum Association were searched for related publications (i.e. Rubenstein and Loten's (1997) review of audience studies in Canada). The index and 'suggested further reading' sections of more recent texts on museum management were also searched to find references to earlier sources.

While the search was guided by a concept of marketing that included the '7 P's' of services marketing (price, product, place, promotion, people, physical surroundings, and process) and a focus on determining and meeting the needs of the customer implicit in the marketing concept, it was recognized that museums often do not employ these terms. It is far more common to find marketing tactics and techniques described as 'communications', 'public relations' or 'liaison', or simply clustered together under the banner of '(good) management'. Therefore, once the broader search of the literature revealed a number of Canadian sources, a close reading of several of these texts was conducted. The next section reports the results of this research by relating the history of the Canadian museum system.

THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS: 1831 TO WORLD WAR II

The history of museums in Canada commences in 1831, with the establishment of a Mechanics Institute in Halifax, Nova Scotia, which shortly thereafter opened a public museum and reading room (Royal Commission 1949). The roots of the National Museum in Canada can be traced to the 1840s, the early days of the Geological Survey of Canada. Geologists tasked with providing accurate information on the country's natural resources began to collect not only specimens of rocks, soils and minerals, but eventually biological and anthropological items as well (Royal Commission 1949). In 1877, an Act was passed which gave the Geological Survey continuity of existence and outlined its museum functions:

It shall be the duty of the persons in charge of the said Survey: -- (2) To continue to collect the necessary materials for a Canadian Museum of natural history, mineralogy and geology; ... (8) The Museum shall be opened to the public from ten a.m. until four p.m. Sundays excepted, and shall be furnished with such books, instruments and apparatus as may be necessary for scientific reference..." (cited in Collins 1928, p. 39).

Referred to variously as 'the museum' or 'the museum division' in early documents, the official title 'National Museum of Canada' was not conferred upon the research and exhibit holdings of the Geological Survey until 1927 (Collins 1928). And as outlined in the citation above, the museum in its early days focused primarily on natural, not human history. The anthropological artifacts collected consisted mainly of items of aboriginal culture, which tended to be displayed, as Canizzo (1989) reports, as part of the flora and fauna of the nation. The nation's art treasures were maintained by the National Gallery which, although it eventually occupied space within the Victoria Memorial Museum Building, had a separate reporting structure.

MILESTONES IN MARKETING HISTORY

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, museums in Canada emerged as symbols of national maturity, consistent with the popular idea that Canada would be the nation of the twentieth century. The wish to imitate the patriotic fervor of Americans who were celebrating their centennial in 1876, led to an "outburst of nationalism...and [the museum's] first new mission – the reflection of the integrity of the nation" (Muisse 1989, p. 14). Although well before the adoption of any form of marketing philosophy by museums, this is an important point to notice. From its earliest days, the national museum's 'product' was not just exhibitions or public lectures, but contained a symbolic element as well – the representation of the nation to the Canadian people.

On February 3, 1916 the Parliament buildings in Ottawa were burned and the Victoria Memorial Museum building, the purpose-built home of the museum division of the Geological Survey since 1911, was determined to be the most suitable building for temporarily housing members of Parliament and Senators. All exhibits except those of the anthropology section were removed to temporary quarters, spread throughout the city. Still, efforts to provide services to the public were maintained. A lecture series on natural history topics had begun in 1912 and museum staff was proactive in advertising the availability of the lecture series to the public. Mention is made (National Museum of Canada 1932, p. 5) of a direct mail campaign that was carried out in 1917.

Copies of the program were mailed out to about 1,500 persons selected from the memberships registers of the Ottawa Field Naturalist Club, the Woman's Canadian Club, and other organizations, with the result that the average attendance at the lectures was nearly doubled.

It is important to bear in mind that during this time, "[other] museum work was reduced almost to a standstill because it was not essential for the conduct of the war" (Collins 1928, p. 47).

Between the two world wars, there were subtle changes in the public functions of museums – curatorship and education began to challenge scholarship; display techniques moved beyond glass cases to dioramas. The lecture series was revitalized with the return of the National Museum to the Victoria Memorial Museum building in 1920. A new lecture hall, equipped with a 'projection lantern' and 'moving picture projector' could accommodate 500 persons – a good thing since Saturday morning lectures were regularly attended by over 1,000 school children; forcing museum staff to split the group in two and offer lectures at 10 and 11 o'clock (National Museums of Canada 1928).

Throughout the 1930s, educational lectures continued to be offered by museum staff and invited lecturers. Two, sometimes three, sections of children attended the Saturday morning lectures, which were repeated on Wednesday

evenings for adults. In 1938-39, 19,960 'visits' were paid to the museum (11,675 children and 8,285 adults) for the purpose of attending the lectures (National Museums of Canada 1939, p.5). The importance that museum staff placed on this activity is mirrored in the words of the Director, W.H. Collins (National Museums of Canada 1931, p. 3):

Popular education is not the least important of a national museum's activities. A museum that aims only at accumulating a great mass of material for study, that provides the most adequate equipment and facilities for investigation, and that concentrates its energies on scientific research to the neglect of popular education, grows one-sided, and fails to attain to a maximum of usefulness to the community it serves. It separates itself from the common current of humanity and forfeits the interest, the enthusiasm, and the support of the public.

This 'education work' was the sole activity of the museum not to suffer from the financial restrictions imposed by the government during the 1930s. From 1931 to 1933 no field work activities were conducted at all, with a return to collection activities resuming slowly toward the end of the decade. However, with the advent of World War II, significant reductions in the services offered by the Museum were experienced once again, as museum staff were seconded to other government departments or served military duty (National Museums of Canada 1949).

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARTS, LETTERS AND SCIENCES (1949-1951)

After World War II, "all aspects of Canadian society came under re-evaluation and planning for an expansive and prosperous future" (Muisse 1989, p. 17), including the nation's museums. The operation and role of museums in Canada formed part of the mandate of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1949-1951), also referred to as the Massey-Levesque Commission. The Commission's report advocated a major restructuring. Previously, the National Museum's functions had included collection, research and publication, exhibition and education activities, with the emphasis being placed on collection and research. The Commission considered that the National Museum "should not be regarded primarily as a research institution", but should "attend chiefly to the work of exhibition and general education for which it is so well fitted" (Royal Commission 1949, p. 321). Of concern to the Commissioners was the 'general demand' voiced within so many of the briefs presented to it that the "National Museum go out to the people" (ibid).

A member of the Commission, Professor Hilda Neatby of the University of Saskatchewan, "was more preoccupied than other members with Canadians' illiteracy about their own history and ... champion[ed] a central recommendation of the commission - [the] creation of a museum of Canadian history" (Muise 1989, p. 17). The Commission (Royal Commission 1949, p. 323) made reference to Canada's lack of "two institutions which are generally considered essential to a civilized people, a National Library and a National Historical Museum". In the opinion of the Commissioners, a national museum focused on human history was urgently needed.

In spite of a sense of urgency in its tone, government was slow to act on the Commission's recommendations. In 1957, under the direction of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, the museum was divided into the Museum of Natural History and the Museum of Human History (Alcock 1958), forming two separate museums. For their part, museum curators demonstrated a 'professional orientation', emphasizing preservation and scientific work throughout the 1950s, and ignoring educational and communication functions, to the extent that "Museums were in danger of becoming an anachronism, playing no decisive role in any identifiable community beyond their own four walls..." (Muise 1989, p.18). For museum curators, the 'true' work of the museum was research and its product was knowledge. Conveying that knowledge to the public was seen very much as a secondary activity, and it is perhaps not stating the case too strongly to say that the visiting public was 'tolerated' rather than 'welcomed'. In 1958, *The Encyclopedia Canadiana* (Alcock, p. 211) noted that the National Museum was "primarily a research institution, making available in its reports and bulletins the results of field and laboratory studies of its scientists."

The Diefenbaker years (1956-1964) saw the advent of "salvage-inspired" heritage projects such as Ontario's Upper Canada Village and the restoration of Fortress Louisbourg in Nova Scotia. These restoration projects proved to have important implications for the heritage movement in terms of their links with tourism and education (Muise 1989). In spite of the new emphasis on tourism, the museum's marketing strategy (if one could be said to exist at all) was akin to the product concept, "the philosophy that consumers will favour products that offer the most quality, performance, and innovative features" (Kotler, Armstrong and Cunningham 1999, p. 17). Their attitude was similar to that still espoused by many in the Arts - they see their project as so worthwhile they assume that once the public is aware of it, they will patronize it (Raymond and Greyser 1978).

THE 1960S: THE FIRST VISITOR SURVEYS, EXPO 67, AND THE GROWTH OF THE MUSEUM COMMUNITY

Although the practice of counting visitors to the National Museum had begun as early as 1874 (Collins 1928), the surveys conducted by Cameron and Abbey (1960a, 1960b) in the late 1950s and early 1960s, at the Royal Ontario Museum, are generally acknowledged to be the first visitor surveys undertaken in Canadian museums (Rubenstein and Loten 1997). 'Audience research' and 'visitor studies' are generic labels used to describe systematic efforts to gather information about museum audiences - both current visitors and potential audience members. While Borhegyi and Hanson (1964) reference an 1897 book by G.T. Fechner as the earliest example of the published results of museum visitor studies, much of the audience research literature identifies Edward S. Robinson's 1928 study in the United States as the beginning of the field (perhaps because it was the first work published in English).

In February of 1930, *Museum News* (the journal of the American Association of Museums) carried an article entitled 'Pennsylvania Museum Classifies Its Visitors.' Later that year, Paul Marshall Rea published 'How Many Visitors Should Museums Have?' in the same journal. Mildred Porter's (1938) study of the behaviour of visitors to the Peabody Museum of Natural History reported that guide leaflets encouraged visitors to stay longer in the Museum, to view more exhibits and read more labels (in Hudson 1975). Arthur Niehoff's (1953) survey of museum visitors to the Milwaukee Public Museum, conducted in 1952-53, uncovered basic facts about visitors such as age, gender, educational background, income group and place of residence (in Hudson 1975).

These were undoubtedly some of the studies Cameron and Abbey (1961, p. 34) were referring to when they stated, "For over thirty years now, museum workers in North America have been using scientific methods in the study of museum audiences... Yet in spite of these many and varied endeavors (sic), the useful knowledge accumulated is slight, and the value of such investigations remains a matter of diverse opinion in the museum profession." Duncan Cameron's (1960) earlier work, *Visits versus Visitors*, had caused reverberations throughout the international museum world. His insight that visits (attendance) do not equal visitors (patrons), although seeming quite simple once enunciated, caused museum administrators to re-evaluate their attendance figures, especially when he suggested that because of repeat visitation, attendance figures at the ROM should be cut in half (Hood 1993).

The work of Cameron and Abbey is one of the standards against which later researchers compared their work. The author of the first published audience research work in Great Britain (Doughty 1968) compares his results to those of Cameron and Abbey and to Niehoff's work at the Milwaukee Museum. Cameron & Abbey (1960a) urged researchers to investigate the motivation behind museum visiting, thereby influencing not only Doughty but also the work of many future researchers (cf. Hood 1983, 1989).

MILESTONES IN MARKETING HISTORY

Muise (1989) sees the most critical step for Canadian museums taking place in 1964, with the transfer of the responsibility for the National Museum to the new office of Secretary of State. With it came a series of policy reviews of museums that were finally rationalized in 1968 with the passage of the National Museums Act. The National Museums Act (1968) created the National Museums Corporation, headquartered in Ottawa; a crown corporation empowered to administer the affairs of four new museums: Man, Natural Sciences, Science and Technology and Fine Arts (the National Gallery).

Centennial celebrations in 1967 also mark a critical point in the history of Canada's museums (Canadian Heritage). Prior to 1967,

most Canadians thought of museums (if they thought of them at all) as dim and dusty places... The astounding success of Expo 67 changed all that. In the glittering pavilions and displays of many nations, Canadians were amazed to see that the achievements of our own society and the unique character of our country were second to none. They saw that the techniques of museology could be used to demonstrate our many-sided character... Nothing could have been less like a musty attic than Expo. It was beautiful in its total effect and in all its details... (National Museums of Canada, n.d., p. 4).

The excitement and passion for the nation that was generated by Expo '67 was infectious. The physical expansion within museums that accompanied centennial celebrations necessitated dramatic increases in staff. The influx of centennial money created hundreds of museum jobs - almost too many.

"Suddenly there was a shortage of talent," Crowdis [a founding member of the CMA] recalled. People with commercial backgrounds and experience designing store windows got involved in designing Expo '67 exhibits and they continued on in museums afterwards (in Young, n.d.).

As the number of professional staff increased, there was a corresponding rise in the importance of the role played by their professional organization, the Canadian Museums Association.

The Canadian Museums Association (CMA), founded in 1947, established a permanent office in Ottawa in 1965. In 1969, the CMA published the book *Basic Museum Management*, as part of its effort toward professionalization. The book was co-authored by George MacBeath and S. James Gooding. MacBeath was the former Director of the New Brunswick Museum (1962-64) and of the Centennial Centre of Science and Technology, in Toronto (1964-66). He would go on to become the President of the CMA, from 1978-1980. Described as a

'basic museum worker's primer', it formed part of the required reading for the CMA's Training Program. The unique nature of museums was reflected throughout *Basic Museum Management*.

It is important to bear in mind that museums and other nonprofit organizations differ from for-profit businesses. Museums have a multiplicity of missions (Feldstein 1991), are responsible for achieving nonfinancial (i.e. societal) as well as financial objectives (Gallagher and Weinberg 1991), serve many publics (d'Harnoncourt et al. 1991), and are in the difficult situation of competing with, while at the same time seeking collaboration and support from, private sector for-profit entities (Business Week 1978; Gallagher and Weinberg 1991). An analysis of the text of *Basic Museum Management* gives us some insight into how marketing was practiced within museums at this point in time.

Although not explicitly using the marketing terminology we are familiar with today, there was a recognition on the part of the book's authors that museums were in a competitive market situation. "In spite of the healthy competition of television, football and the backyard swimming pool, museums are enjoying phenomenal attendance" (MacBeath and Gooding 1969, p. 10). The upbeat tone of the times is reflected in the following statement:

Today's museum is reaching a larger percentage of people than ever before, and the likelihood is that the trend toward public service will increase, as will the emphasis on exhibition and education programs. The ability of the museum to render service to this growing public presents both challenge and opportunity. To ignore the problems and needs of the community is to risk not only the loss of a broad base of support, but also to court stagnation and loss of any real meaning (MacBeath and Gooding 1969, p. 10).

In spite of the reference to the 'needs of the community', the marketing philosophy espoused can best be described as evidencing a product orientation - museum workers were encouraged to improve the quality of the product, now conceived as the 'museum visit experience'.

Concern was shown for customer comfort during visits, for example, locating washroom facilities near the arrival point of a bus full of children was considered a 'must' (MacBeath and Gooding 1969, p. 20). The physical location of the museum was also considered important - it should be accessible to the general public, close to public transportation, and with sufficient parking spaces for school buses and private vehicles (MacBeath and Gooding 1969, p. 22). Concern for the quality of visitors' experience was also to be demonstrated in exhibit design and layout, lighting, and labeling. Museum workers were exhorted to "[b]ear in mind that even the sympathetic viewer is limited by his physical and mental endurance and is less likely to remember your 'message' if he has had to wade through

countless items, overcrowded showcases, and labels which loom above or sometimes in front of objects" (MacBeath and Gooding 1969, p. 68).

Museums in the late 1960s had a fairly well developed sense of who their target customer was – "a family unit, consisting of husband and wife and two and one half children" (MacBeath and Gooding 1969, p. 63). Museums were expected to promote their products not only to their primary target audiences, but to secondary markets as well, and were encouraged to price their product 'modestly' in order to attract a maximum number of visitors. "The price of admission should be commensurate with the facilities that are provided, but at the same time, it is desirable to consider that the museum is there to provide a service, and this service is to the entire community – the travelling community and the local community" (MacBeath and Gooding 1969, p. 41).¹

Although the inclusion of a 'Sales Desk' is described as an 'important adjunct' and a useful source of additional income, it is considered secondary to the main purpose of the museum.

The size of the sales desk is important. If it is intended that it be self-supporting, then it must be large enough to carry and display a stock consistent with this goal. But in the smaller museum, this might be too large a percentage of space to be given over for a non-display area. (MacBeath and Gooding 1969, p. 20).

The awkward position of non-profit organizations regarding their relationship with competitors who are also patrons or sponsors is underscored. "[I]t is imperative that great care be used in selecting sales material. The museum must not be obviously in open competition with the merchants of the community, nor must it sell material that is not in keeping with the aims and objects of the museum" (MacBeath and Gooding 1969, p. 41).

Throughout the history of museums in Canada, there seems to be a marked reluctance to actually insert the word 'marketing' into anyone's job title. Instead the terms 'Public Relations', 'Education' and 'Publication' are used. In 1969, these functions were determined to be the job of the Director, the Curatorial Assistant or the Education Officer/Guide, depending on the size of museum (MacBeath and Gooding 1969, p. 31). Although no specific reference was made to collecting information about the visiting public, it was recommended that the number of 'registered visitors' be included in the annual report to the board of museum trustees (MacBeath and Gooding 1969, p. 31).

THE 1970S AND THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS POLICY

A parallel development of equal importance to the role played by the Canadian Museums Association was the

emergence of a 'new and more vital cultural bureaucracy' at both the provincial and federal levels. The National Museums Policy was announced by Secretary of State, Gerard Pelletier, in 1972. Muise comments (1989, p. 21) that

More than anything else, it [the National Museums Policy] extended those patriotic centennial aspirations of 1967, now restructured to meet the objectives of the new cultural policy mandarins who determined to keep the flame of the celebration alive. When these cultural bureaucrats turned their attention to culture's role in resolving the basic issues facing the nation – that is, threats of breakdown of the fabric of Confederation, or implementation of policy objectives like enhanced multi-cultural activities – it was easy to find a place for museums alongside a number of other national institutions.... For museums it was a heady time being close to the levers of political decision-making.

The new National Museums policy constituted a major shift in emphasis for Canada's museums. Previously, urban centres and the dominant social classes were seen as being the sole audience and indeed, major beneficiaries of the museum. Now, the National Museums would need to make greater efforts to 'go out to' the people. Although in many ways the national museums were being encouraged to consider the wants and needs of the public and to be innovative in terms of the distribution channels used, museums were really still in a 'selling' mode. Peter Lewis, in his article entitled 'The role of marketing', perhaps puts it best. "It can seem elitist to give people what we perceive they *need* rather than what they *want*, but I do believe that to be an essential part of the ethos of museums" (1991, p. 26, italics original).

Annual reports (Tyler 1973, 1974, 1975) from the National Museum of Man (later renamed the Canadian Museum of Civilization) indicate that a Communications division was established in April 1972. Its role, in support of the new National Museums Policy, was to establish and maintain a nationwide extension, education and information programme; its mandate included media communications. The division grew from two staff members to over twenty by the end of 1973; by 1974 it was the largest division in the museum. In 1972, the budget for paid advertising was \$17,000, but the division recorded that it also received free press, radio and television coverage estimated at an additional \$20,000. Paid announcements were placed in the three Ottawa papers and tourist advertisements were placed in local, regional and provincial publications. A monthly museum program on the local public access cablevision channel was initiated, in cooperation with the National Gallery, the National Arts Centre and the National Archives. The division's 'most important single effort' was the press reception and potlatch that accompanied the

MILESTONES IN MARKETING HISTORY

opening of the 'Ksan exhibition at the National Arts Centre, with Governor General Roland Michener and over 350 invited guests in attendance. It must be kept in mind that all these promotional efforts took place while the actual museum was closed. In 1972, the only museum division open to the public was the Canadian War Museum.

The Communications Division's activities increased dramatically over the next two years, both in preparation for the reopening of the Victoria Memorial Museum Building in 1974 and with respect to the development and promotion of innovative products and channels of distribution. The division cooperated in the production of the *Visual History of Canada*, which documented the nation's history on eleven slidesets and accompanying booklets. In addition, the division pioneered the use of 'edukits', making artefacts and teaching tools available to the nation's schools. It was perhaps a sign of the times that their efforts were greeted with staff cuts in the 1975/76 budget year.

It was also during this period that an extensive survey (Dixon et al. 1974) involving personal interviews with 7,230 persons was conducted, on behalf of the Arts and Culture Branch of the Secretary of State. This was the first survey to undertake an evaluation of Canadians' leisure time activities and attitudes toward museum visiting. Described as "comprehensive, accessible, and professional", it was seen by researchers in other countries as "a model for future research" (Hooper-Greenhill 1988, p.216-7). The survey determined that although more than half the Canadian population visited museums at least once per year, geographic location led to real differences in participation rates. Both rural dwellers and, to a lesser extent, those Canadians living in large metropolitan areas felt that museums were inaccessible to them (Dixon et al. 1974). For rural dwellers the distance they needed to travel to attend a museum posed access problems; urban dwellers had to contend with the traffic congestion of museums' urban core locations.

Channel innovations, like the 'museumobile', did improve access to collections somewhat. Touring for 45 weeks a year and serving up to 85 visitors per hour, the three museumobiles (representing Canada North, Canada West and Atlantic Canada) reached an audience of one million Canadians by 1977 (National Museums of Canada n.d., p. 12). Many Canadians who had never seen museums in the past were exposed to some sense of their national heritage. But, in general, most museums in the country continued to focus their efforts on the audience who came in the front door.

THE 1980S: MUSEUMS AS A CULTURAL INDUSTRY

In 1980, responsibility for the National Museums Corporation was transferred to the Ministry of Communications, a "cultural industries format that seemed to demand results rather than encouraging innovation.... As museum services came to cost more, politicians and cultural

mandarins came to question the effectiveness of the dollars spent on the system" (Muise 1989, p. 23-4). Minister of Communications, Flora MacDonald, determined that the provisions of the 1968 National Museums Act were inadequate to guide the federal museums into the 21st century; both a new museum policy and a new museums act would result. The new policy was to be based on three 'broad principles': greater accessibility, a stronger sense of mission, and more individual flexibility in planning, to "encourage greater collaboration with the private sector and with provincial and local institutions, and allow museums to devise individual revenue-generating plans" (MacDonald 1989, p. 4).

A discussion paper circulated in advance of the new legislation proposed four roles for museums – acting as custodians, research bodies, educational institutions and entertainment centres (Communications Canada 1988). Although the inclusion of entertainment as a role of museums was not unprecedented, it does seem as though a particular emphasis was placed on this function. In the words of Minister MacDonald (1989, p. 8) "...they [museums] present highly desirable tourist destinations," well placed to compete with theme parks, festivals, water slides, arenas, etc. How aggressively museums should embrace this function was seen as a matter of 'some controversy'.

This shifting paradigm from publicly supported cultural repository to marketing oriented private sector entertainment/tourism industry occurred not only in Canada. In Britain, the 1980s and 1990s saw a decline in public funding of the arts and museums (Kawashima 1998) along with a push by government for museums to think of themselves as "an 'industry' with an economic role to play in social life, and with customers to satisfy" (Hooper-Greenhill 1995, p. 2). In the United States during the 1970s and 1980s, "the market assumed new importance, both as a source of admission and retail revenues and because attendance figures could bolster applications for government and corporate grants" (DiMaggio in d'Harnoncourt et al. 1991, p. 48).

Many arts administrators who formerly resented the notion of marketing were forced to realize the need for the application of marketing principles (Rosen 1983, Rosenthal 1982). Once again, the Canadian Museums Association responded – the CMA's journal *MUSE* published a 'Special Theme Issue', *Marketing and Museums*, in the summer of 1986.

The Guest Editor for *MUSE*'s special issue expressed the view that

At present, museums may be experiencing a transition similar to that which occurred in the business community during the 1950s and 1960s when the orientation shifted from 'manufacturing and sales' to 'serving the needs of customers'.

What about museums? ... The marketing concept requires us to be more sensitive to user needs and characteristics and to design, promote, fund and provide access to a wide range of satisfying learning opportunities (Lewis 1986, p. 2).

Along with articles detailing the 'how to' of marketing, the special issue included a case study of the innovative approach to exhibition sponsorship being taken at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta. Early involvement of their Marketing and Public Relations department in the exhibition planning process had allowed the Glenbow to focus on building relationships with their various publics. In particular, they developed an approach to sponsorship solicitation that focussed on helping donors to meet not only their corporate image needs but also to benefit their clients and employees. As the Marketing Manager stated, "these proposals extended into the marketing function of the donor corporation itself... Not only was the museum able to tap marketing expertise and sophisticated distribution systems, but it also benefited from additional cooperative marketing dollars" (Mallman Law 1986, p. 36).

The Glenbow Museum is only one example of how Canadian museums have evolved their marketing strategies to embrace not only the marketing concept but also relationship marketing. As the 1980s drew to a close, museums were increasingly adopting for-profit management practices in an effort to thrive in their new operating environments. The Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC), for example, pioneered the use of the Internet to provide access to its collections and conducted one of the first on-line museum visitor surveys. More recently, the CMC took a very public step toward embracing a larger societal role by hosting a rally on its premises just before the last Quebec referendum. Currently, the CMC is exploring the use of e-commerce, in an effort to bring its information resources to market.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The use of electronic indexes during the literature search phase of this research certainly facilitated document retrieval. However, whether these systems provide comprehensive coverage for periods before the early 1980s is somewhat doubtful. Therefore this study is limited by the capacity to track earlier documents through the reference sections of papers identified through the electronic search.

Still, a copious amount of material related to the visitor research traditions in the United States, the U.K. and Canada was available. A comparative study, perhaps including an analysis of the enabling museum legislation in these three countries, would no doubt facilitate a more in-depth analysis of the influence that socio-political environments have on the societal marketing efforts of non-profit cultural organizations

There were some 'hints' in the literature that museums and retail stores had, from time to time, learned display lessons from each other. There were also suggestions that commercial museums in the United States and cultural institutions, more generally, in Canada had contributed in a positive way to the effectiveness of foreign trade (Palmateer Pennee 1999, 2000). A thought-provoking exploration of the relationship between the 'uncommercial' realm of Art and Culture and the nation's retail and international trade relations remains to be done.

CONCLUSION

While museums may not immediately come to mind as good exemplars of marketing practice, Canadian museums, in particular, have evolved their marketing strategies over time to the point where they are now making use of some innovative marketing ideas. This paper has used a very broad brush to paint the picture of museum marketing over a 150-year time span. Museum archives contain many interesting examples of marketing practice, and marketers could learn much from them. It is hoped that this paper's contribution will be to open the door to the study of marketing in museums more widely. As nonprofit organizations increasingly make use of marketing theories and practices, it is important that we, as marketers, understand their unique environments and their histories.

NOTES

¹Internationally, the issue of charging for admission has been a sensitive one, especially in societies where museums are funded primarily by tax dollars and access to cultural assets is seen as a right of citizenship. Some studies have been carried out regarding the price elasticity of demand, notably those by Cameron and Abbey (1962) and O'Hare (1975). However, with the reduction in funding that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, objections to admission fees were soon silenced.

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CHARM 2001

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