

## Five Key Elements of the Organization: Conner Prairie

1. What is your organization or company? Give background history including who, when, and why it was founded.

Conner Prairie is an interactive history park that is the only Smithsonian affiliate in the state of Indiana. The focus of Conner Prairie is to create an interactive learning space for visitors to experience the history of the early days of the state of Indiana. The interactive park was first purchased and restored by Eli Lilly in the 1930s. In the 1970s, Lilly named Earlham College as the trustee for the public charitable trust of Conner Prairie and the William Conner House. Now the museum and the college are independent of each other.

2. What do they do or make – describe the products and services and what makes them unique.

The original Conner Prairie consisted of the 1836 Prairietown with different buildings that had actors that guests could interact with and experience life in Indiana in 1836. Since then, Conner Prairie has expanded to include many facets of history and culture in Indiana during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The total number of attractions at Conner Prairie include the five interactive areas, the William Conner House, and the museum center.

3. Describe the culture of the organization or company. What is the work environment like – the atmosphere? What is the building like – exterior/ interior, architecture, fittings, and furniture? How do the employees work together? What are the jobs and roles of individual? How are they treated by management?

Conner Prairie is located in Fishers, Indiana, a suburban area of Indianapolis, Indiana. The environment of Conner Prairie is unique in the fact that there is no single building. The interactive park is comprised of administration buildings, an indoor exhibit space, and the many houses, cabins and grounds that come together to create the prairie town. The main employees of Conner Prairie that visitors interact with are the actors within the park, but there is also a board of directors, event programming and marketing teams. My experience at Conner Prairie has been limited to that of visitor (especially during the late 1990s and early 2000s), therefore giving me very little information of the environment surrounding the interactive park and the changes that have been made over the last decade.

The operations of the park fall under the command of two boards of directors. The first board oversees the operations of the museum while the second board oversees the operations of the foundation and the museum's land. As this is such an expansive area with many attractions, the two boards are necessary in keeping the interactive park running as smoothly as possible.

4. Who is the targeted audience? What are their demographics?

The targeted audience of Conner Prairie is students of varying ages with a concentration in upper elementary age as the Indiana state education standards covers Indiana history during the fourth grade. The interactive history park has developed multiple programs to accommodate family activities as well as school field trips. With new programs being created, Conner Prairie is also trying to expand their targeted audience to the community in Fishers, Indiana.

5. What is the organization or company mission statement?

The mission of Conner Prairie is "to inspire curiosity and foster learning about Indiana's past by providing engaging, individualized and unique experiences" (Guidestar.org)

\*All information retrieved from <http://www.connerprairie.org> and <http://www.guidestar.org>.