

Conner Prairie

Case Study Analysis

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Conner Prairie is an interactive history park that is the only Smithsonian affiliate in the state of Indiana. Conner Prairie's concentration is to create an interactive learning space for visitors to experience the history of the early days of the state of Indiana. Over the course of the years, Conner Prairie has expanded to include five interactive areas, the William Conner home, and a museum center.

Environmental Scan

Economic Scan

Contributed Income:

Conner Prairie receives support from various grants, gifts, and sponsorships that contributes to twenty-five percent of the total revenue for the previous fiscal year. This Conner Prairie has been named one of the recipients of the Lilly Endowment which will become a large contribution to the foundation support of the park. Major event sponsors for Conner Prairie include Marsh Supermarkets, Farmers Bank, and Reynolds Farm Equipment. An additional forty-one percent of the total revenue is attributed to endowment support.

Earned Income:

Conner Prairie generates earned income through admission fees, memberships, rentals, and retail sales. There is a range of admissions fees and memberships that visitors pay that change from season to season as part of the park close because of weather. Throughout the year, Conner Prairie hosts special events that also contribute to the admission fees, the majority of which are hosted during the colder months. With the multiple avenues of earned income, these avenues come together to contribute to thirty-four percent of the total revenue in the previous fiscal year.

Financial Health:

Conner Prairie operates as a financially healthy organization. Aside from national economic trends, such as the recession in 2008, there have not been many events that have influenced the financial health of the park. The uniqueness of Conner Prairie in the state of Indiana contributes to prosperity of the organization.

Demographic Scan

The Indiana population has a majority of white constituents that is relative to the population of Fishers, Indiana. Sixty percent of the population has a college

education with a median income of \$90, 437. The target age group of visitors is approximately ten years old (or 4th grade, when Indiana state history is an education requirement) but also includes other student ages. With thirty-three percent of the population of Fishers being under the age of eighteen, the majority of the visitors come from those families as well as other school groups and families within traveling distance.

Cultural Scan

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 are also two boards of directors, event programming and marketing teams.

Being an outdoor history park, Conner Prairie utilizes the resources around them by creating long lasting programs that are sometimes seasonal in nature. During the summer, Conner Prairie partners with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra to present a concert series called Symphony on the Prairie. During the fall, especially in the month of October, a series of fall family activities surrounding the Headless Horseman Hayride tradition including magic shows and Halloween themed karaoke. Many of the events that Conner Prairie hosts or cohosts are advertised and focused on family friendly programming. With the growing younger adult population in Fishers, that may or may not have children, the added adult programming is expanding the audience of Conner Prairie based on the change in demographics for the city and building relationships with those adults in the area that, in the future, will become future families and members of Conner Prairie.

Conner Prairie has been growing exponentially online. The official website has added many interactive areas to explore the many sections of the park while also emphasizing the mission of Conner Prairie and its relationship with the community surrounding it. Conner Prairie's social media presence aligns with the commonly used social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and Vine. In the last eight years, when Conner Prairie began its social media campaign, very few posts were made but all included a large amount of visual content to promote the park. While this has changed and grown over the last eight years, there is room for improvement and growth.

SWOC Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Product(s)	Five interactive parks provide multiple areas to explore and spend more time in park	Outdoor areas close because of weather limiting year-round use	Offer special events in different areas of park during the day	Some events may cater to the younger crowd only
Pricing	Admission: \$12 adults, \$12 seniors 65+, \$9 ages 2-12; Free Parking	Prices only advertised for the season, not the year, prevents prior planning	Pricing for groups and families can be advertised more	Can limit attendance according to time of year/week/day
Place	Conner Prairie Fishers, IN Large land area usage	Outdoor area closes depending on season limiting visitor experience	Create more summer/spring time activities to accompany many fall activities	Traveling to Fishers can be limited with/without interstate construction
Promotion	Multiple avenues used: social media, internet, print	Website is most used; needs more presence in social media	Create new social media position in public relations department	Can the organization afford the new position

References:

Annual Reports - Conner Prairie Interactive History Park. (n.d.). Retrieved November 19, 2015, from <http://www.connerprairie.org/About-Conner-Prairie/Annual-Reports>

United States Census Bureau. (n.d.). Population estimates, July 1, 2014, (V2014). Retrieved November 19, 2015, from <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045214/1823278,00>