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An Exploratory Comparative Study

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Marketing Strategies of Museums in Quebec and Northeastern United States

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Museums have never had it so good. New ones are being built all over the place, and existing ones are expanding; fund-raising campaigns have never been so successful, and visitor numbers have never been higher. Last year, for the first time ever, American museums attracted more than a billion visitors. (The Economist, April 21, 2001 : 1.)

Museum attendance is also increasing in Canada. The most recent figures from Statistics Canada indicate that attendance at all types of museums reached over 58 million visitors in 2002-2003, up approximately 7% in as many years. Membership revenues have doubled and are now over \$16 million, while admission revenues have increased by 67%, to over \$ 126 million. Revenues from other sources, such as gift shops, sales counters, cafeterias, etc., have more than doubled, to over \$255 million. Museums are pushing to appeal to broader audiences, not just with blockbuster shows of impressionist paintings, but with a whole new category of populist fare.

Museums are recognizing that they are competing for consumers' share of leisure time and entertainment dollars and that new marketing strategies for museums need to focus on that (Peschiutta, 2001 : 9). Even successful museums and cultural organizations often cannot exist on earned income alone; and while museum attendance is up, public funding is drying up. Corporate and government funders, as well as foundations, are asking for greater accountability for money granted. One way that accountability can be documented is by sound marketing

approaches (Laczniak and Murphy, 1977 : 5). If its marketing is clumsy, even a well-financed national museum can find itself in trouble. The challenge for museums is to make a connection with potential visitors, through a shared historical experience, local event, school event, or community involvement, in order for its collection to translate into visitors' dollars (Colton, 2000 : 72). Sue Runyard and Ylva French (2000 : chap. 1) state that the profitable future of museums lies in their implementation of marketing and public relations efforts, which starts with finding out what visitors want, and providing collections, exhibits, and attractions that meet these interests.

Literature Review

This section will look at two streams of research. The first focuses on museum marketing research, and the second stream focuses on comparative studies (Canada-United States) in the tourism industry.

Museum Marketing Research

An extensive review of the literature on the role of marketing in museums and performing arts organizations was recently conducted by Ruth Rentschler (1998 : 85). Her content analysis of articles in seven key international journals was classified thematically to reflect the changing role of marketing.

Her thematic classification is based on Frederick Webster's (1992 : 2) three marketing thrusts as applicable to small and large organizations. The first thematic category is "Marketing as Culture." It relates to the values and beliefs about the importance of the customer that guide an organization (e.g., ability of an organization to assess market attractiveness by analyzing customer needs

and segmenting fund-raising). The second thematic category, "Marketing as Strategy," focuses on positioning and defining how an organization is to compete in its chosen businesses. And studies in the "Marketing as Tactics" category focus on attributes of the marketing mix, commonly referred to as the four Ps (Product, Price, Promotion, Place). Ruth Rentschler further adds to these four elements Persistence (the management of the organization/customer interface that results in income) and People (meeting the needs of people such as visitors).

According to her, chronologically, the process of change is conceptualized in two phases. The *Foundation Period* (1975-1984) is characterized by the recognition of the need for museums and performing arts organizations to change their approach to marketing. The second phase, the *Professionalization Period* (1985-1994), is characterized by recognition of the applicability of marketing to nonprofit museums through a "celebration of entrepreneurship," restructuring museums to add marketing departments, and demanding greater accountability. The implications for the future that emerge from this shift in attitude towards marketing over the past 20 years are that the strategic focus will continue to develop, along with the tactical focus, and that audience/visitor analysis studies will be integrated into mainstream decision-making for marketing and management purposes in museums and performing arts organizations.

In fact, recent research is supporting Ruth Rentschler's (1998 : 92) projections, with a number of studies focusing on different marketing strategy variables, such



as product/service, promotion, price and place, as well as consumer segmentation and motivation. With respect to product/service strategy, museums are discovering the concept of services marketing (*i.e.*, tangible and intangible marketing services), which is becoming a recognized tool for enticing wider audiences (Quesenberry *et al.*, 2006 : 81; Rentschler and Gilmore, 2002 : 62). Online museum service marketing and delivery is increasingly used by museums worldwide to convey their product and promote it (Lagrosen, 2003 : 132; Schuler and Kurtz, 2002 : 13). However, Stefen Lagrosen (2003 : 140) finds that many museums do not have their own website, but have a presence either on a tourism bureau or chamber of commerce website (North Country Chamber of Commerce, 2000). Of those that operate their own website, there are four levels of use: (1) minimalists (information about the museum and exhibits); (2) aspirers (information and images, but no advanced virtual content yet); (3) virtual leaders (virtual content, ordering possibilities); and (4) informers (information about museum and exhibits, and extensive content about their subjects of expertise, but no virtual or ordering possibilities). Drue K. Schuler and Janell M. Kurtz propose three Internet museum service delivery strategies: avoidance strategy (minimize resources on Internet and focus on basic museum information); content strategy (large quantities of informative but no virtual content); and technological strategy (provide comprehensive value to customers through large quantities of information and virtual delivery and ordering features).

With respect to promotion, a survey of museum directors by Jin-Tsann Yeh and Chyong-Ling Lin (2005 : 279) finds that museum directors favour marketing strategies such as newspapers, magazines, and community activities to increase visitors' attendance to the museums. Most museums also update their homepage once a month. According to that study, most directors believe that museums should offer programs for diverse groups, have interactive activities to match visitors' learning styles, and have trained docents to explain exhibits. However, male museum directors in larger cities are more willing than other directors

to pay advertising agencies to enhance their museum's image. Furthermore, Theresa McNichol (2005 : 240) points out that smaller museums display several attributes that enable them to develop holistic creative marketing strategies: agility, responsiveness, and flexibility in the face of ambiguity and uncertainty. She provides several examples of small museums that respond quickly to an opportunity to have a special exhibit by involving community members in partnering to develop tie-ins with other community events, thus generating a great deal of publicity for the exhibit.

As regards price variables, Rentschler *et al.* (2007 : 163) find that museum marketers are failing to recognize and capitalize on pricing opportunities such as multiple pricing strategies for multiple market segments.

With respect to place, new architecture is playing a role in delivering museums from their past of elitism; the new designs are meant to be open and inviting to the public (*Creative Review*, 2003 : 1) and may serve to "brand" the city, as in the case of Newcastle (*Art Monthly*, 2002 : 2). At the forefront of forward-thinking museums is the Guggenheim: it is expanding with a global franchise to reach far more people and generate money from new sources (*Newsweek*, 2001 : 53), although the Las Vegas franchise has been less than successful (*Creative Review*, 2006 : 41). Others are experimenting with their hours of operation, such as charging higher prices to visit on a Monday, when the museum is typically closed to the public, or overnight (Stamler, 2003 : 4).

In spite of these efforts at developing marketing strategies, very little research is done on understanding museum visitors' and non-visitors' motivations, which should be at the core of an effective marketing strategy formulation. One study by Amber Auld Combs (1999 : 186) using focus groups concludes that learning and recreation are the primary motivations behind museum visitation, but that these represent different meanings than education and entertainment. Visitors value museums as places for active personal learning through the observation of objects and as outlets for

physical and mental relaxation and escapism (*Id.* : 191). This is confirmed in a study by Mix Slater (2007 : 149), who determines that there are three motivations of visitors to galleries: learning, social/family interaction, and escapism, the latter being the core motivation.

Another study looks at how visitors use exhibitions for "identity work," the processes through which we construct, maintain, and adapt our sense of personal identity, and persuade other people to believe in that identity (Rounds, 2006 : 134). "Browsing," the typical pattern of museum visitation, seeks to maximize the total interest value of the visit rather than maximizing mastery of a domain knowledge. Sarah Todd and Rob Lawson's (2001 : 272) study on lifestyle segmentation of museum/gallery visitors in New Zealand describes seven lifestyle segments with significant relationship to frequency of visit to museums and galleries: active "family-values" people, conservative quiet-lifers, educated liberals, accepting mid-lifers, success-driven extroverts, pragmatic strugglers, and social strivers. The authors state that educated liberals are the most frequent visitors, while conservative quiet-lifers and accepting mid-lifers are the least likely to visit because they are least likely to look outside their home for any form of entertainment. Success-driven extroverts are more likely to visit for the prestige and status often associated with such institutions, while active family-values people are more likely to visit for entertainment/education reasons. The authors further suggest different media and promotional messages to appeal to these different segments. Finally, one case study attempts to understand the motivations of a museum's multiple audiences in order to tailor marketing strategies to each audience (Lepkowska-White and Powell, 2007 : 184), but few studies make the connection between their audience's motivations and the appropriate marketing strategy to appeal to such motivation.

Canada-United States Comparative Tourism Research

Decades ago, marketers often assumed that Canadian and American consumers were similar enough that successful marketing strategies used in the United States



could be employed effectively in Canada. The current attitude in marketing, however, is that there are sufficient differences between the Canadian and American markets that specific marketing efforts should be developed for each target market. Although numerous studies have compared Canadian and American consumers (Ferley *et al.*, 1999 : 55-68), insufficient research has been conducted to allow tourism marketers to distinguish between the two markets in order to differentiate their marketing programs.

Few comparative tourism studies focus on museums. When comparing Canadian and American museum marketing strategies, each is found to have its own distinct way of attracting the customer (Daw, 1997). Canadian museums, on the one hand, focus their marketing strategy on all forms of advertising to get their name known in the community (*e.g.*, posters, bus shelters, bus boards, murals, brochures, newspaper ads, and placemats). American museums, on the other hand, are leaning towards new interactive and exciting ways to attract customers. They want to make museums a place for entertainment and education rather than just for looking at works of art. Some American museums promote their new strategies through sponsoring special events such as motorcycle shows, car shows, movies, and fashion shows (*The Economist*, 2001 : 1).

Other recent studies systematically compare the marketing strategies of Canadian and American establishments in the tourism and hospitality industry. In descriptive comparative studies of Bed-and-Breakfasts (Héroux and Burns, 2000 : 26) and motels (Héroux and Csipak, 2001 : 41) in Canada and the United States, more similarities than differences are found in the marketing strategies implemented by the establishments on both sides of the border. Higher ratings are consistent in both studies for product variables, service variables, establishment design, pricing variables, and the overall strategy ratings. Scores differ for target market variables, where American B&Bs score highest because of more specific target markets, whereas Ontario motels score highest because of a better mix of target markets.

Data also differ for location variables, where Quebec B&Bs rate highest for their location in pleasant rural areas, whereas American motels rate highest for their location on primary roads. Ontario B&Bs rate highest for greater use of technology for promotion and their professional attitudes for personal selling (or being a professional order-taker for the establishment), whereas Quebec motels rate highest probably for the type and quality of advertising appeals, and helpfulness in personal selling. Furthermore, the overall marketing strategy scores are very close for Quebec, Ontario, and the United States, indicating that the B&Bs and motels in the three regions have identified their target markets and have designed marketing strategies to successfully meet their needs. The American B&Bs and motels appear to do it just a little better in their region.

Nancy J. Church and Lise Héroux (1999 : 27) compare the importance ratings of hotel selection criteria for Canadian and American travelers and find significant similarity in their evaluation of hotels. Canadian and American travellers both consider cleanliness to be their most important choice criterion when selecting a motel. The study also finds that Canadian and American travellers have similar rankings for the importance (from most important to least important) of customer service, room prices, location, overall feel/look of the room, hotel appearance from the road, restaurant, free breakfast, bar, swimming pool, and exercise room. Since the choice criteria measured in that study were broad macro-level attributes of hotels, it may be that these variables are more universally understood and valued similarly across cultures. If such is the case, then similar marketing strategies might be successful in North America. Whereas Canadian and Americans might value macro-level hotel attributes (such as cleanliness or customer service), similarly, there might be more substantial differences between the two nationalities on how these variables are implemented on a micro-level. For example, Canadian and American travelers may agree completely on the importance of customer service, but they may have different preferences on how that service is rendered. This implies that although

a similar marketing strategy may be used in the two markets, the marketing tactics might need to be adapted in each market.

Purpose of the Study

The successful marketing strategy of museums requires the identification of a target market and development of a marketing mix (product/service, place, price, promotion) that will best satisfy the needs of the target market. It is not the scope of this study to conduct a consumer behaviour research to identify the needs and motivations that drive people to select one activity over another. Rather, the purpose of this study is to examine how well museums design their marketing strategy by identifying their target market and designing a marketing strategy to appeal to them, to draw them to their establishment. This research was conducted to investigate whether there were differences in the marketing strategies implemented by museums in reaching similar target markets in Quebec and the north-eastern United States.

Methodology

This exploratory observational study, using 24 case studies, was undertaken in the contiguous regions of southwestern Quebec, northern Vermont, and northeastern New York. There is substantial economic integration and cross-border traffic between the two countries in these regions, and the hospitality industry targets business and leisure travellers of both nationalities (Church and Héroux, 1999 : 22).

A census of the museums in this cross-border region was selected for inclusion in the research. Of the 24 selected establishments, 12 were from Quebec and 12 from New York/Vermont. Each Quebec museum was paired with a U.S. museum similar in terms of size and theme (*e.g.*, transportation museum in each region), forming 12 pairs of comparable museums. A total of 36 international marketing students conducted the observational research of the marketing strategies implemented in each establishment. Since the purpose of the study is to examine marketing strategies in two countries, it is appropriate to have observers trained in international marketing to do the observations. They were divided



Table 1

Summary of the Marketing Strategy Variables Evaluation Grid

Target market variables: Age, education level, income level, occupation, language spoken, customer loyalty, geographic proximity of target market, overall evaluation (7 variables, maximum score of 35).

Marketing Mix (4 Ps)

Product

Product variety variables: breadth of product line, assortment of accompanying products, size variations, quality, private labels/brands, special features, overall evaluation (6 variables, maximum score of 30).

Service variables: customer services, customized/standardized, credit cards, empathy, reservations (computerization), hours of operation, guarantees, customer satisfaction (complaint handling), overall evaluation (8 variables, maximum score of 40).

Place

Location variables: primary/secondary road (visibility), site evaluation (nearness to target market), outside appearance, private/public parking availability, detached building versus strip, general ease of access, overall evaluation (6 variables, maximum score of 30).

Establishment atmospherics: interior layout (free form, grid, racetrack); atmospherics: scent, lighting, colour, music, noise, signage, fixtures, cleanliness, size of crowds, type of clientele, access to disabled, overall evaluation (11 variables, maximum score of 55).

Price

Pricing variables: relative high/low prices, competitive in region, group reductions, coupons/rebates, bundle or value pricing (packages offered), overall evaluation (5 variables, maximum score of 25).

Promotion

Advertising variables: newspapers, magazines, trade publications, television, radio, telemarketing, direct mail, Internet, special promotions (sales, coupons, contests), outdoor ad and/or signage, advertising theme—testimonial, comparison, informative, humorous, etc.—, overall evaluation (11 variables, maximum score of 55).

Selling variables: approaching the customers, helpfulness, presenting product/service, making the sale, knowledgeability, art of listening, verbal/non-verbal cues, general appearance of staff, overall evaluation (8 variables, maximum score of 40).

Summary rating

Overall marketing strategy evaluation: addition of the overall rating in the eight categories.

Source: authors.

into 12 teams of 3 students, each team being assigned one pair of Quebec/U.S. museums. Table 1 presents the variables in the detailed marketing strategy evaluation grid utilized in this study to collect the observational data (Héroux and Burns, 2000 : 25; Héroux and Csipak, 2001 : 39).

Each pair of museums was visited by a team of 3 observers who made detailed notes on how each marketing strategy variable was implemented in each of the 2 paired museums. Using a jury of expert opinion procedure, the 3 observers had to discuss each variable observation and come to a

consensus on a score for each variable (on an interval scale of 1 to 5, 5 representing superior implementation of the strategy), in an attempt to quantify the observational data. Means and standard deviations were then computed for each variable (product: 6 variables; service: 8 variables; place/location: 6 variables; place/atmospherics: 11 variables; price: 6 variables; promotion/advertising: 11 variables; and promotion/personal selling: 8 variables). The comparison framework therefore consists of three cultural/geographic regions by 8 marketing variable ratings plus one overall strategy score.

Research Results

In this section, the observational evaluation of each category of variables is discussed. Similarities and differences observed between the regions are presented.

Target Markets

All Quebec and American museums are frequented by a diverse clientele. Their visitors tend to be of all age groups, but U.S. museums appear to target children more frequently than Quebec museums. Although all education, income, and occupation groups visit the museums, Quebec museums attract more highly educated guests, while U.S. museums attract more elementary school children. In terms of the language of the clientele served, the distribution varies by region, as one would expect: 75% of U.S. museums cater to English-speaking visitors, while 25% attract a mix of French and English language visitors; Quebec museums cater to a mix of French- and English-speaking visitors, with the exception of 2 museums that attract French only or English only visitors. All museums, however, have a large proportion of repeat visitors, a third of whom hold a museum membership, and come from a close radius, consistent with other research (Church and Héroux, 1999 : 28; Héroux and Burns, 2000 : 26).

Product Variety

The majority of Quebec and American museums hold a wide breadth of exhibits, although more Quebec than U.S. museums specialize in one narrow field of interest. Approximately two thirds of Quebec museums present high quality exhibits, while half of U.S. museums have high quality exhibits and the other half good quality exhibits. None of the museums visited in either region is perceived as offering low quality exhibits. Half of the Quebec museums display works by well-known artists, either nationally or internationally, while the rest offer exhibits of local artists, or antiques from a particular period. In contrast, only 25% of U.S. museums present works by well-known artists (e.g., Remington), another 25% of the museums hold works by locally known artists, and the rest focus on antiques from a particular period. Quebec museums tend to be larger than U.S. museums in the region



under study. Two thirds of the museums in both regions offer an assortment of supporting products/services to the exhibits. Most have a gift/book shop, and a few have a coffee shop.

Museums in both regions have unique special features to offer their visitors. One third of museums in each region highlight temporary exhibits every year. Another third offer customized guided tours, workshops, and school field trips when requested in advance. In each country, one museum performs period re-enactments. Some Quebec museums also present concerts and multimedia shows, while some American museums hold private parties and award scholarships.

Services

Most Quebec museums have similar hours of operation; the majority are open Tuesday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (usually closed on Mondays). Hours of operation vary more widely in the U.S. Most are open Monday through Saturday, and closed on Sunday. Their hours vary from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 12 a.m. to 4 p.m., 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., or 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. That means that visitors must plan ahead and, to avoid frustration, call to find out days/time. Two museums in both regions have seasonal hours. Reservations are not necessary, but are recommended for large groups. Computerized reservations are found more frequently in Quebec. All but one Quebec museum accept major credit cards, compared to half of the American museums. In both regions, satisfaction guarantees are not stated; complaints are handled on an individual basis by the manager or tour guide. Guided tours are more often standardized than customized in Quebec, whereas the opposite is true in the U.S. Overall, a similar level of empathy from the museum employees towards the visitors is found in both regions.

Place

Nearly all the museums in both regions are located on primary roads and are easy to find. The majority are also easy to access from the road and have ample parking for the clientele, private or public. Museums are also located near their target market. The majority are located in a stand-alone or a

Table 2

Atmospheric Variables across Regions

	Northeastern U.S.	Quebec
Scent	Musty, old	Clean/neutral
Lighting	Dim, inadequate	Half good, half dim
Furniture	No seating	Seating in each room
Use of colour	White walls	Changes with exhibit
Signage	Good to few; English	Great; bilingual

Source: authors.

detached building. Most museums in each region are described by the observers as having a good/nice or clean outside appearance, whereas the rest look rundown or have a poor outside appearance. Different cultures offer different interior atmospheres (see table 2).

The majority of the institutions follow a free-form layout, are very clean, have no music playing, are very quiet, and have no noise from crowds or from the street, although one third of Quebec museums have a lot of noise from echo. The Quebec museums tend to have larger crowds, contributing to noise, compared to very small crowds at the U.S. museums. Only half of Quebec and American museums have good access for disabled visitors, the rest limit access to the ground floor.

Price

Quebec museums generally have moderate prices, which are higher than the low U.S. museums prices, 25% of which have free admission. Museums in both regions have special admission prices for members, groups, families, seniors, students, and kids. One third of Quebec museums have free admission for children. Other than these special rates, museums rarely accept coupons or do value packages.

Promotion

In both regions, the majority of museums advertise in the local newspapers. One half of U.S. and one third of Quebec museums advertise in magazines. One half of U.S. museums place ads in trade publications/tourism guidebooks, compared to one sixth of Quebec museums. In both regions, 25% advertise on television and 50% advertise on the radio. The most popular type of

advertising appeal in both regions appears to be historical/informative. Although telemarketing efforts are non-existent in both regions, two thirds of Quebec and one half of U.S. museums promote themselves on the Internet. Direct mail is used by few, whereas outdoor media are used by the majority of museums. Sales promotions such as coupons and contests are not popular in general, with the exception of "open houses." Due to the large amount of repeat business, many museums rely on past client experience for future business, school field trips, as well as walk-ins. As a result, not all museums promote their establishment actively.

Prospective clients' decision to visit a particular museum, their level of satisfaction with the museum, or their probability of repeat visits may be greatly influenced by the competence of museum representatives. In both regions, the museum representative is generally welcoming and friendly, as well as helpful. In all regions, the observers find that the museum representatives, docents, or tour guides present themselves (e.g., dress, professional behaviour) and the museum exhibits professionally. Most are very knowledgeable and listen carefully to the questions and needs of the visitors.

Evaluation of the Ratings

A successful marketing strategy of museums requires the administrator to identify a target market and develop a marketing mix (product/service, place, price, promotion) that will best satisfy the needs of that target market. Although tests of significance could not be computed due to the small number of museums in the study, some patterns emerge in the different regions, which will be discussed in this section. These patterns



Table 3

Comparison of Quebec and Northeastern-American Museums on Marketing Strategy Variables Ratings

VARIABLE	Quebec		Northeast U.S.		VARIABLE	Quebec		Northeast U.S.	
	Mean (n=12)	St. Dev.	Mean (n=12)	St. Dev.		Mean (n=12)	St. Dev.	Mean (n=12)	St. Dev.
Product					Price				
Product line	4.33	0.887	4.00	0.852	Price level	3.42	1.676	4.17	1.403
Assortment	3.58	1.729	3.00	1.809	Competitive	3.83	1.114	3.83	1.114
Sizes	4.17	0.717	3.33	1.614	Group discount	3.58	1.564	3.33	2.059
Quality	4.42	0.793	4.17	1.029	Coupons	1.58	1.729	2.25	2.137
Brands	2.92	1.676	2.25	1.864	Value bundling	1.75	2.022	1.50	1.977
Special features	3.83	0.717	3.83	1.029	Promotion-Ad				
Service					Print ads	3.67	1.073	3.67	1.154
Guest Services	3.92	1.311	4.17	0.937	Broadcast ads	2.08	2.065	2.17	1.850
Customization	3.50	1.882	3.58	1.379	Other ads	3.75	1.864	3.25	1.658
Credit	4.50	0.674	3.17	2.335	Special promos	3.17	1.899	2.75	1.912
Empathy	3.17	1.527	3.58	1.114	Outdoor sign	3.33	1.669	2.67	1.775
Reservations	4.25	0.965	2.92	1.621	Ad theme	3.25	1.864	2.75	1.864
Hours	3.75	1.356	3.67	1.230	Promotion-Sell				
Guarantees	1.67	2.059	1.50	1.732	Approach	3.42	1.621	3.42	1.831
Satisfaction	3.00	1.858	2.92	1.505	Helpfulness	3.83	1.642	3.97	1.729
Place-Location					Presentation	3.75	1.422	3.67	1.723
Visibility	4.17	1.029	3.42	1.564	Making a sale	2.17	1.749	1.67	1.922
Site evaluation	4.25	1.138	3.83	1.466	Knowledge	3.67	1.669	3.67	1.497
Appearance	4.33	0.887	3.97	1.240	Listening	2.50	2.153	3.17	1.696
Parking	2.97	0.793	3.75	1.055	Nonverbal cues	2.25	2.179	1.92	2.020
Building type	3.97	0.900	3.58	1.505	Appearance	4.10	1.443	3.62	1.667
Accessibility	3.50	1.507	2.97	1.621	Marketing strategy				
Atmosphere						Max		Max	
Scent	3.58	1.505	3.00	1.651	Target Market (7 variables)	28.75	35	27.58	35
Lighting	4.10	0.668	3.25	1.544	Product (6 variables)	23.42	30	20.75	30
Colour	4.17	0.717	2.67	1.874	Service (8 variables)	27.08	40	24.42	40
Music	2.17	2.037	1.25	1.815	Place-location (6 variables)	24.25	30	22.25	30
Noise	3.42	1.443	3.17	2.208	Place-atmosphere (11 variables)	42.42	55	36.67	55
Signage	3.58	1.832	2.75	2.094	Price (5 variables)	16.17	25	17.17	25
Fixtures	3.10	1.880	2.58	2.108	Promotion-Ad (11 variables)	19.25	55	17.08	55
Cleanliness	4.10	0.996	4.10	0.996	Promotion-Sell (8 variables)	28.00	40	27.27	40
Crowdedness	3.33	1.435	3.27	1.864	Overall Marketing Strategy				
Clientele type	3.75	1.422	2.75	1.912		26.17		24.15	
Disable access	2.42	1.832	3.42	1.880					

Source: authors.



may or may not be applied generally to other regions of these countries; further investigation is needed to ascertain that these patterns represent museum marketing strategies in both countries.

The overall ratings of the 24 museums are close, however Quebec museums seem a little better than northeastern American museums (see table 3). The observational data suggest some explanations for the variations in ratings. With respect to target markets, Quebec museums appeal to a wider, more educated audience, whereas American museums appear to have more specific target markets, such as school-age children. For product variety, Quebec museums score higher than American museums because they present higher quality exhibits of national or international renown. The factors that distinguish Quebec museums from American museums for service variables are the more standardized hours of operation, and greater acceptance of credit cards. It is unclear from the findings whether offering customized versus standardized tours to visitors provides greater satisfaction.

The observational descriptions of the location variables offer little insight for the difference in ratings. Although the majority of museums are located on primary roads, a few of the U.S. museums are not very visible on that primary road, which may contribute to lowering their rating. In addition, although most are rated as having a good outside appearance, some buildings and architecture may be more impressive than others, influencing the ratings accordingly. The largest difference in evaluation of the museums is for establishment design atmospherics. Quebec museums rate highest for establishment design because of their clean appearance and scent, compared to musty/old scent in U.S. museums. Quebec museums also have more adequate lighting, more available seating in the exhibit rooms, colour schemes that change with the various exhibits (as opposed to white walls everywhere), and better signage for the exhibits.

The only variable where American museum scores are slightly higher is price. American

museum prices are lower, and sometimes admission is free.

The observational data does not suggest specific reason(s) for the higher promotion score for Quebec museums. It may be due to the quality of the advertising or type of appeals used, as opposed to the type and quantity of promotion, since the two regions are similar in that respect. However, Quebec museums do make a greater use of the Internet for promotion. As regards personal selling, very little difference is found in the two regions. The majority of museum representatives are very professional, attentive, and knowledgeable, contributing to a pleasant experience.

It is interesting to note that, using the same marketing strategy evaluation grid in the same regions, most of the museum ratings are not consistent with those obtained in a comparative motel study (Héroux and Csipak, 2001 : 43) and a comparative Bed-and-Breakfast study (Héroux and Burns, 2000 : 27). Quebec museums have a higher overall marketing strategy score, whereas U.S. motels and B&Bs have higher overall strategy scores. Quebec museums have consistently higher scores on all variables except price. The greatest differences are found for product, service, promotion, location, and establishment design. Quebec museums appear to have higher quality, nationally or internationally recognized artists/exhibits. Services include more standardized and predictable museum hours of operation as well as greater acceptance of credit cards. Consistent with Lesley Daw's (1997) study, Quebec museums promotion is different from U.S. museum promotion, and appears more successful. The approach of promoting outstanding exhibits using a wide variety of media such as posters, bus shelters, murals, newspaper ads, etc., may be more appealing than focusing on educational, entertainment, or special events, as U.S. museums do. More visible location of Quebec museums on primary roads, and more impressive architecture leading to higher ratings is consistent with the literature (*Newsweek*, 2001). But by far the greatest difference is related to museum design and atmospheric variables. Quebec museums have a more appealing scent,

lighting, furniture, use of colour, and signage to enhance the museum experience.

This study only examined one province of Canada and two states in the U.S. More research is needed in other parts of these two countries to see if these findings apply. In addition, a more quantitative approach to determine different market segments' preferences for amenities and determination of their reaction to different elements of the marketing strategy would be recommended for future research.

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