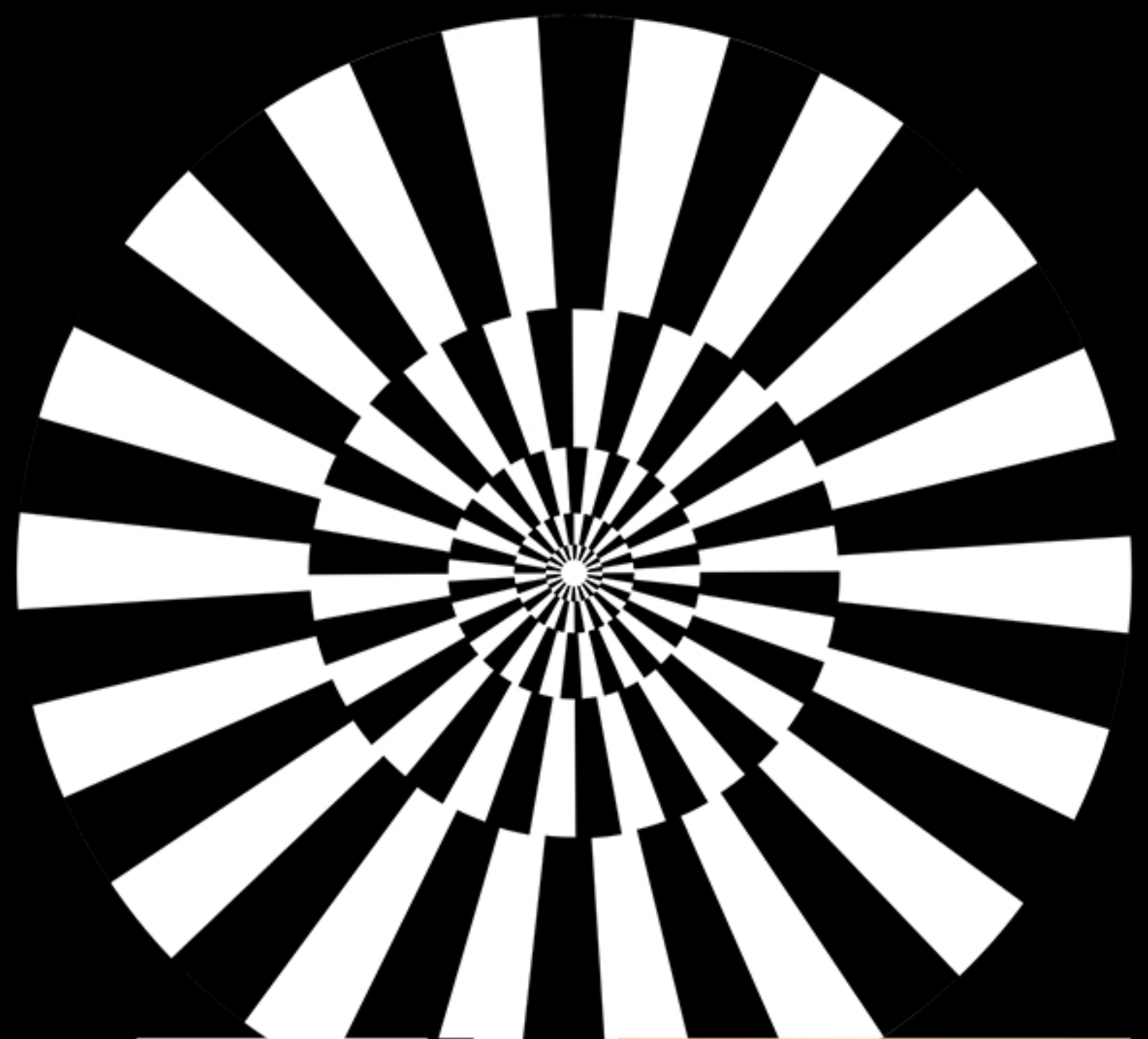




Museum After Dark: Capturing the Elusive Millennial

How does a 50 year old science museum in one of the most expensive cities in the world stay relevant and inspiring?

Presented by
Sewon Chung Barrera, Digital Marketing Manager
Sarah Owens, Membership Manager



01 About the Exploratorium

Founded in 1969 by physicist Frank Oppenheimer with revolutionary explore-for-yourself exhibits, the Exploratorium is an interactive museum on San Francisco's waterfront, a professional-development home for teachers, and an exhibit-design trailblazer that creates joyful, inquiry-based learning experiences for audiences worldwide.

50 years later, the Exploratorium is faced with the challenge of adapting to the changing demographics of the San Francisco Bay Area.

02 Background & Context

2017 Exploratorium visitor exit survey showed 49% of Exploratorium visitors came without children; 54% do not have children living in their households.

With more dogs than children and a continued influx of young professionals, it has become mission critical to attract and foster new audiences—including the elusive "millennials."

"There are more millennials living in California than people residing in Switzerland, Denmark, or Finland."
– Quartz, February 8, 2018

03 Expanding After Dark

Addressing the fact that traditional museum hours create barriers to access for working professionals, the Exploratorium created an adults-only evening event called After Dark. After a successful pilot decades ago, After Dark has become a mainstay in San Francisco nightlife, and has continued to grow in its potential to serve adult audiences.

With this potential in mind, the Exploratorium shifted its focus to build out a comprehensive marketing campaign and a brand new, adults-only membership product with young professionals at the forefront. The After Dark membership is the first of its kind in the Bay Area, taking a step towards revolutionizing the traditional museum membership model.

04 Goals

- Increase After Dark attendance
- Promote rich existing programming
- Meet market need for thoughtful entertainment
- Address philanthropic values of millennials
- Pave the way for long-term sustainability
- Change market perception of the Exploratorium as a "children's museum."
- Address negative substitution

"The need to cultivate new audiences as regular attendees is critical for our long-term survival."
– Colleen Dillenschneider, Know Your Own Bone



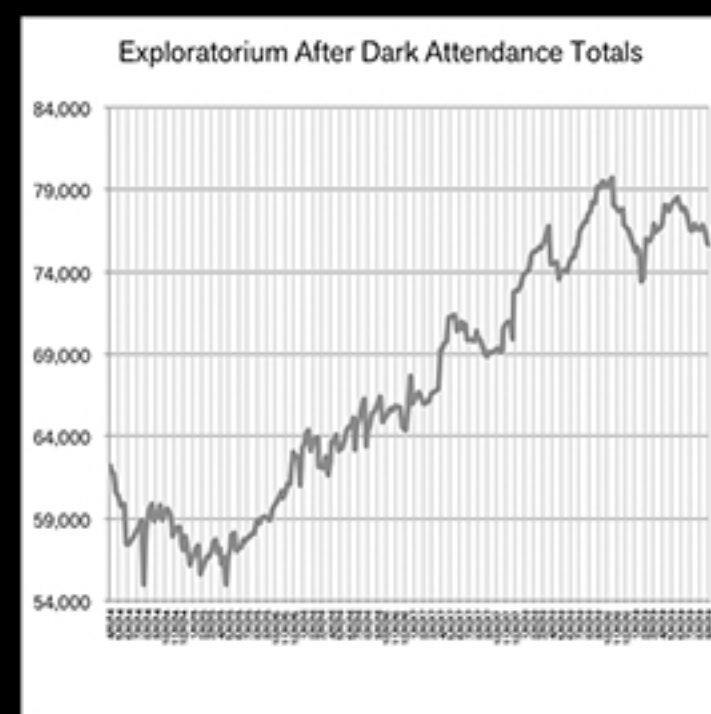
05 Approach

- Create an internal stakeholder team across marketing, programming, finance, design, editorial and more.
- Review pricing; break free from \$15 price collusion
- Create a new, affordable After Dark membership
- Promote rich programming calendar
- Partner with Collins to develop a dynamic campaign
- Launch a multi-channel digital and mail campaign
- Reposition Visitor Services during After Dark
- Produce on-site membership sales incentives



06 Challenges

- First of its kind: No other evening program adults-only membership exists in our market
- Pressure on programming team to deliver quality content on a weekly basis
- Quick turnaround: the After Dark membership product was created in two months, from concept to launch
- Increasing digital distraction and noise



07 Evaluation

- After Dark attendance continues to grow
- Local partnerships can be successful ways to amplify messaging to a new, targeted audience
- Social media is becoming an increasingly common source of online ticket sales for After Dark
- Campaign fatigue settled in after ~2 years, leading to additional campaign refreshes
- Experimenting with new tools and platforms will be key in reaching new potential visitors



08 Future of After Dark

- Refresh After Dark campaign artwork to reinvigorate social media interaction and visibility in-market
- Implement marketing automation for timely touches and personalized communications
- Continue enriching After Dark programming
- Continue building brand-aligned local partnerships
- Offer benefits such as themed giveaways and more

EXPLORATORIUM
PIER 15, SAN FRANCISCO

EXPLORATORIUM.EDU
@EXPLORATORIUM

SBARRERA@EXPLORATORIUM.EDU
SOWENS@EXPLORATORIUM.EDU