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Trends

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Trends

TRENDS

QUESTION 1: What impact has the amusement parks and attractions movement had upon society?

ANSWER: The primary impact has been upon servicing a need for family fun. It may be interesting to take a look on a 100 percent basis, where most of the individuals spend their time when they are in an amusement park. Fifty percent of those who attend at any one time are watchers, 50% are actively involved in park activities. Of the 50% who are actively involved, 30% are interested in participating in rides or preparing to participate in rides. Twenty percent are involved in the game and food operations with about 10% being game and 10% being food and merchandising. Of the 50% who are watching, about 10% are involved in entertainment types of events and the other 40% are involved as watchers of people.

QUESTION 2: What are the differences between theme parks and the traditional parks?

ANSWER: A theme park is one in which there is a consistency of pattern in a particular area of rides, gifts, and food. A traditional park is one that is function-oriented, that is, more rides.

QUESTION 3: Since the demographics are changing to an older population, how will the parks and attractions look in the future?

ANSWER: I think the parks will change to meet the needs of the population. It will be more sedentary, something like the British park. There will be more of an emphasis on food, walking type of events, collection types of exhibits, sit and see areas, soft music, and more entertainment. One area that has an overabundance of those types of attractions is Opryland in Memphis, Tennessee.

QUESTION 4: There seems to be two trends, one toward diversity of development and the other toward single purpose types of parks and attractions. Do you see this type trend continuing in the future?

ANSWER: What I see in the future is the collection type exhibits that are of the educational variety. Epcot Center epitomizes this type of

facility. There will be a greater emphasis on food, gift items, and entertainment. They will add to existing facilities to further diversify their base of attractions. I see the single purpose park only of a limited appeal because one of the strongest elements in the past and in the future will be diversity, that is, being able to fulfill the family needs at one site.

QUESTION 5: What will be the impact of more scientific management upon the industry, especially with individuals coming into the field being better trained and experience based?

ANSWER: The industry in itself will have to change its position to accept such talent because, at present, most of the owners and operators have been used to acceptance through a limited resource base. Someone will have to work with the individuals to show them the benefit of this scientific management. At present, the industry is based upon limited partnerships and family holdings. It is not based upon a corporate structure that has available the talent and resources to be scientifically managed. Educational training is essential for those currently in the industry.

QUESTION 6: Is it better to have a business or a people-related degree?

ANSWER: There are some individuals who suggest that a business related area is very important, and it is. A primary dimension that is important is that someone have an understanding of business skills that relate to leisure and know which business principles apply to this particular industry based upon its uniquenesses, and an ability to be able to apply this type of business process to people. There is a new science related to the business/leisure interface. Individuals are being trained, or will be trained in the future, to be competent in using a business approach in relation to people that has been specifically designed for industry. This type of individual will be able to more scientifically develop the field and maintain more of a competitive edge to increase the level of professionalism associated with the particular trade.

QUESTION 7: What will be the impact upon the population?

ANSWER: The operation would not stagnate and there would be greater growth. The pace is becoming faster and the amount of change necessary to keep up to show positive growth is going to increase. In fact, the amount of change that the industry will have to deal with is probably twice as fast as the change that will occur in the population. The industry must change faster to maintain its leadership role.

QUESTION 8: What will be the primary element within the industry or trade association that has helped deal with change?

ANSWER: The research and development component of an organization is that particular element that has, in the past, stimulated change within the profession. It is the suppliers that have their research and development specialists who have made an important contribution to the industry. There has been an open door policy that has allowed more of an informal structure to develop between the suppliers and the buyers.

They have given rise to an important input in the profession. Without this two way interaction, the research and development people would not have an idea about what direction to follow to develop new products and services. Therefore, it is a symbiotic relationship that is extremely essential for the future and must be fostered even more than it is now, especially in terms of the intellectual input of the suppliers.

QUESTION 9: One of the misunderstood elements of a theme park is the psychological outcomes and how they translate into dollars. Could you give us an example of some of the psychological outcomes and how they translate into greater satisfaction and return visits for profits.

ANSWER: An example is when a child has a fear of a particular thrill ride. When the child overcomes the fear and eventually rides, there is a gain in self accomplishment and a general feeling of success. This feeling of self accomplishment is an important dimension to a return visit from this particular child because it is a place where he/she has been successful and this success will directly translate to dollars in return visits.

QUESTION 10: What are some of the important psychological outcomes associated with parks and attractions?

ANSWER: Some of the more important psychological outcomes are escape into a fantasy/make believe world, self-concept, family solidarity, getting away from stress, and a happy/uplifting environment. Many of those people who work in amusement parks or attractions usually comment that one of the very pleasant aspects of the job is the ability to help people become a little more satisfied or happy. An amusement park and attraction is a place that helps develop an attitude or frame of mind. In fact, tips seem to be larger in establishments that are associated with amusement parks and attractions. This is one of the external indicators that people are in a different frame of mind and it is this frame of mind that translates indirectly to dollars.

QUESTION 11: What type of business principles, unique to the park industry, will have an important impact upon it in the future?

ANSWER: One factor that may be influencing the industry most now and in the future is real estate value. Many of the parks that were in urban areas have a greater profit potential for some other use other than an amusement park or attraction. As a result, many of these parks are disappearing based upon development for other uses. Even some of the movie sets in California that had a great nostalgic potential gave way to condominiums and high-rises because of the profit making potential. As land use values and patterns shift, this factor of real estate values and how it applies to amusement park and attractions may be a very important factor in shaping future development of the parks.

QUESTION 12: What will be the impact of park disappearance upon the industry?

ANSWER: There will be a net total growth in the industry and it has a very positive outlook. The outdoor amusement industry will continue to grow but what the new units will look like that replace the ones that are lost I do not have an idea. These new units will reflect the

changing moods and needs of the society.

QUESTION 13: There has been a trend for public facilities to add specialized attractions like waterslides to increase their revenues. Please comment.

ANSWER: These facilities may add attractions but they will never be able to provide the diversity that is offered by the private sector. In many cases, what is happening is that we are getting conflict between public and private interests and the lines of demarcation between public and private services are becoming confused. As these public facilities move into private sector interests, there are going to be some conflicts that do arise in certain areas. These individuals may also find that the revenues generated may not be worth the investment because after the novelty of the attraction wears off, the primary question is that of change and viability.

QUESTION 14: How big can some of the parks become before size influences the quality of the experience like at Epcot and Disney?

ANSWER: Size at the present time at Epcot and Disney does not seem to be a problem because individuals take one or two days, leave and come back. The participant realizes the size and nature of the area and adjusts his/her use patterns to fit the type of area. Those who try to see the attraction all at one time become exhausted and it influences the quality of the experience. Some type of educational program is needed to help the individual understand the use patterns of the park.

QUESTION 15: Could you define the word "success."

ANSWER: Success in the amusement parks and attractions industry is primarily focused upon gate attendance and customer satisfaction with return visits.

QUESTION 16: What are the differences between amusement parks and attractions in Europe and the United States.

ANSWER: The primary differences between the amusement parks and attractions is one of a cultural difference. In Europe, the parks are softer and subtler than those in the United States. There are five primary differences: 1) The food services in Europe tend to be more formal and those in the United States more informal. 2) In Europe, the amusement parks and attractions are more widely accepted at all socio-economic strata than in the United States. This means culturally it is more accepted in Europe than in the United States. 3) There is greater diversity in the type of attractions in the United States. Those in Europe tend to be narrow and more focused on a more sophisticated level of entertainment. 4) The nature of the attraction or event in Europe is more passive than in the United States. There tends to be less emphasis upon thrill rides of the United States to more of a subtle entertainment type of activity in Europe. There is greater diversity. 5) Those parks of Europe tend to be more conservative and less innovative in relation to new technologies. The above observations are not meant to dicotomize, just to point out that the amusement parks and attractions occupy different positins culturally and have many different expressions as would be expected.