A NEW WORLD FOR MUSEUM MARKETING? FACING THE OLD DILEMMAS WHILE CHALLENGING NEW MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

NOVI SVIJET ZA MARKETING MUZEJA? SUOČAVANJE SA STARIM NEDOUMICAMA PRI IZAZIVANJU NOVIH TRŽIŠNIH PRILIKA

TRŽIŠTE

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SAŽETAK

Muzeji pripadaju širem kulturnom i zabavnom okruženju u kojem vladaju izrazito zahtjevni posjetitelji koji traže izuzetna iskustva (edukacije i zabave istovremeno) s uštedom vremena. To je potaknulo, a po nekim mišljenjima i prisililo muzeje da se usmjere od kolekcija prema posjetiteljima. Oni se isto tako susreću s konkurencijom i novim tehnologijama u obliku virtualnih muzeja i virtualne stvarnosti. To je dovelo do naglašavanja potrebe prihvaćanja marketinga kao sredstva za preživljavanje muzeja i poveznice između muzeja i posjetitelja.

ABSTRACT

Museums are part of a wider cultural and entertainment environment, which is ruled by highly demanding visitors who seek immersive experiences (edutainment) and time-saving arrangement. This has encouraged and, in some opinions, forced museums to turn their focus from collections to visitors. In addition, museums have faced competition and new technologies in the form of virtual museums and virtual reality. This has emphasized the need to accept marketing as a survival tool and to make it into a link between museums and visitors.

U članku se pokušava dati uvid u aktualno područje marketinga muzeja kao dijela marketinga u kulturi i umjetnosti. Isto tako, cilj je identificirati i objasniti glavne izazove i prilike s kojima se muzeji susreću u svakodnevnom poslovanju kako bi se dobio uvid u složen svijet marketinga muzeja. Predstavljena su, sažeta i analizirana dosadašnja saznanja o razvoju marketinga muzeja, njegovim promjenama i izazovima.

This article attempts to give current insights into museum marketing as part of the arts marketing field. Its aim is also to identify and explain some of the major challenges and opportunities facing everyday museum business, in order to provide insight into the complex world of museum marketing. Former findings about the development of museum marketing and its biggest changes and challenges are presented, summarized and analyzed.

1. INTRODUCTION

The idea of museum can be found in early human civilization. Since then, museums have evolved with society, but not always at the same pace. Throughout their history, museums have constantly struggled to overcome modern challenges. Recently, the world of art has changed significantly. Museums have faced a market that is totally strange and unwelcoming to them. Balloffet, Courvoisier and Lagier (2014, p. 4) stress that "radical changes are currently taking place in heritage institutions" – not only in traditional museums, but also in other institutions, such as planetariums, historical monuments, nature parks etc.

Today, "museums are drivers of economic growth and community revitalization in a way that goes beyond traditional economic impact analysis" (AECOM, 2013). They operate in a highly competitive leisure market, trying to meet the expectations of increasingly discerning visitors (Conway & Leighton, 2012). Accordingly, "marketing is no longer an option for museums, it is a survival tool" (Rentschler, 2007, p. 12).

Marketing was gradually entering the museum sphere at the end of 1970s. Decades later, the bond between museums and marketing is becoming stronger, but not strong enough. There are still many (old) issues with which museums have struggled since the beginning of museum marketing, during its development in the 1980s and 1990s, and are still struggling today. Primarily, these emerge from the fact that museum marketing is a relatively new sub-field of (arts) marketing. Although there is quite a substantial body of literature, a considerable part of arts marketing research can be found outside marketing or even outside economics, in other disciplines (e.g. in law, sociology etc.). Secondly, museums face challenges (or opportunities) in their environment that they cannot fully understand without the help of a marketing professional. The biggest of these are changes that have occurred due to the shift in the museum's mission and orientation, changes in customer needs and wants, and the development of new technologies in museums (e.g. the emergence of virtual museums).

Also, changes in government policy towards arts and culture (consisting primarily of cuts in financing), increasingly fierce competition for visitors, as well as a genuine desire to serve the public better, have encouraged a number of museums to invest in the improvement of the visitor's experience (Kawashima, 1999). Some reports show that museums are still not projecting the right image (Mencarelli, Marteaux & Pulh, 2010), and that many people are not visiting them because of their image as boring, private and irrelevant institutions (Yeh & Lin, 2005). All of this has "led to an increased interest in marketing in museums" (Rentschler, 2007, p. 13) both in theory and in practice.

The aim of this paper is to give current insights into the museum marketing as part of the arts marketing field. In addition, its aim is to identify and explain some of the major challenges and opportunities museums are facing in their everyday business, in order to provide insight into the complex world of museum marketing. Former findings about the development of museum marketing and its biggest changes and challenges are presented, summarized and analyzed.

The first part of this paper offers a short introduction into the topic of museum marketing. The second part provides insight into the historical development of museum marketing, for better understanding of contemporary museum marketing and its specifics. The third part focuses on new challenges and opportunities in the museum's environment. The theoretical framework presented here is based on relevant academic and professional literature. It is followed by a discussion and important conclusions.

2. EVOLUTION OF MUSEUM MARKETING

2.1. Arts marketing and museum marketing

In 1969, Kotler and Levy published a paper entitled "The Broadening of Concept of Market-

ing" (in *Journal of Marketing*), in which they announced several new areas of marketing, one of which was cultural marketing (museums and performing arts) (Kotler, 2005).

Because "the arts, culture, arts management and arts marketing are interconnected" (Fillis, 2011, p. 12), there are no clear boundaries between them. According to Rentschler and Kirchner (2012, p. 7), "little analysis has been done to explore the development of the field". There is a substantial body of literature about arts marketing and museum marketing, but only recently have a few authors (e.g. Fillis, 2011; O'Reilly, 2011) started to define the field of arts marketing in order to map its territory (O'Reilly, 2011). They also want to provide insight into the richness of the arts marketing field and to encourage much needed further research in the marketing domain.

"Within the international academy, there are many scholars outside marketing who have a stake in the theorisation of art and its relationship with the market. […] It is important that arts marketing, arts management and indeed mainstream marketing scholars should listen to what they have to say" (O'Reilly, 2011, p. 26). There is also a substantial number of arts-related articles in mainstream marketing and management journals, but only a relatively small number of citations in those articles with reference to arts management journals (Rentschler & Kirchner, 2012). "There is, though, still much remaining to be discovered, understood, and embedded within arts marketing theory" (Fillis, 2011, p. 17).

O'Reilly (2011) emphasizes that there are two points of view on arts marketing:

1. the narrow view – focused on the marketing management of an artistic organization and its offerings and
2. the broad view – focused on the relationship between the arts and the market.

The broad view on arts marketing is in line with the so-called "fresh approach" (O'Reilly & Kerrigan (Eds.), 2010), where arts marketing is seen as a multidisciplinary field which "does not fit neatly within management, marketing, sociology, aesthetics, economics and law" (Rentschler & Shilbury, 2008, p. 60). The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines arts marketing as "promotional strategy linking a company to the visual or performing arts (sponsorship of a symphony concert series, museum exhibit etc.)" (AMA, 2014). Clearly, the AMA's out-dated definition of arts marketing needs to be updated and expanded in line with contemporary arts marketing practice and academic research. Also, there is no definition of museum marketing in the AMA Dictionary.

In the arts marketing literature, arts marketing usually encompasses some or all of the following types: marketing of popular music, marketing in the film industry, marketing of theatre, marketing of opera, marketing of jazz, marketing of the visual arts and museum marketing (Kerrigan, Fraser & Özbilgin (Eds.), 2004). Museums are "framed within the field of cultural organizations, a group that by no means forms a homogeneous sector, since it encompasses organizations that differ not only in terms of the cultural field in which they specialize, but also with regard to their goal" (Camarero & Garrido, 2012, p. 39).

2.2. Brief history of museum marketing

According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM, 2014), the definition of a museum has evolved in line with developments in society. "A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment." Furthermore, "museums are organizations endowed with their own particular characteristics. They may be perceived as non-profit organizations, wherein social objectives prevail (education, conservation, custody

etc.). They also "may be linked to other for-profit organizations, since they also pursue commercial goals" (Camarero, Garrido & Vicente, 2011, p. 248). The change in the definition of the word *museum* witnesses an important shift that occurred over the course of museum history, from a functional definition of museum, which was object-based (or collection-based) to a purposive definition, which was people based (see Table 1).

Table 1. Shift in the definition of museum

| Functional | Museums acquire, conserve, communicate and exhibit art for study and education | Object-based |
| Purposive | Museums are for the people to enjoy and to learn from collections which are held in trust for society | People-based |

Source: Rentschler, R., & Hede, A. M. (2007). *Museum Marketing: Competing in the Global Marketplace.* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

"The change in the definition has been gradual and has been influenced by prevailing social and philosophical attitudes" (Rentschler, 2007, p. 13).

For a long time, museum marketing was considered a "dirty word", and what many in museums feared was that, by introducing marketing, "art [would] suffer in the hands of the market" (Rentschler, 2007, p. 12). "As marketing language and concepts began to enter into new domains, serious opposition emerged from the old guard. Museum directors and staff felt uncomfortable about introducing marketing talk in their discourse. It smelled of commercialism and might pollute the sacredness of their objects and missions" (Kotler, 2005). However, "over the past decade the term 'marketing' has acquired an important place in the agendas of those who are engaged in the management of art and cultural institutions" (Lagier & De Barnier, 2013, p. 2).

Even though museum marketing has evolved, and the old prejudice and misconceptions are considered to be in the past, there are still some strong confronted opinions in museum practice. According to Kaitavuori (2011, p. 29), there are "three characters, three powers that battle over the rule of the (art) museums:" politics, business and academia, making them protagonists in a drama where each of them makes a claim over museums and their activities. "We say 'audience' but mean 'market', say 'learning' and mean 'entertainment', say 'participate' and mean 'consume'. The (relative) autonomy of a field is endangered when a foreign logic and language colonises it; in the art museum world this seems more and more to be the reality" (Kaitavuori, 2011, p. 34). The fear that, by introducing marketing, museums would fail the ideals of their profession has existed for a long time (Šola, 2001). Several studies have been conducted in order to investigate the real picture of museum marketing. Their aim was to find out the opinions of museum professionals (directors, curators, marketing professionals) regarding marketing in museums. All of these studies have shown some improvements in the perception of marketing (in comparison to the past) (Ballofet, et al., 2014; Lagier & De Barnier, 2013; Komarac, 2013; Yeh & Lin, 2005).

According to Rentschler's (2002), research and analysis of marketing articles published over 25 years, there have been three distinctive periods in museum marketing:

1. the Foundation Period (1975–1984)
2. the Professionalization Period (1985–1994) and
3. the Discovery Period (1995–present).

In addition, Rentschler breaks the studies down thematically into three classifications: marketing as tactics, marketing as strategy and marketing as culture. In the Discovery Period, there have been more articles in the marketing-as-strategy classification than in previous periods: "The shift to marketing articles has been dramatic and evidences an attitudinal change about marketing the arts" (Rentschler, 2002, p. 13).

Also, for a long time, "the marketing discipline was poorly understood in the museum community" (Addison, 1993, as cited in McLean, 1995, p. 601). For example, professionals in cultural institutions were trying to "set up traditional marketing, based on classical practices and paradigms which [have] led to the use of management tools which could a priori be applied to any sort of environment" (Guerzoni & Troilo, 2000, as cited in Lagier & De Barnier, 2013, p. 3).

"In the 1980s, it became fashionable to talk about artistic 'product'" (Hill, O'Sullivan & O'Sullivan, 2000, p. 101). There are four levels of products in art experience:

1. core benefits – which encompass aesthetics and emotion;
2. central experience – which encompasses artistic elements, venue ambience, staff attitudes, physical environment, conventions, processes, atmosphere, branding and ease of use;
3. extended experience – which encompasses catering, merchandise, recordings, sponsorship, workshops and ancillary products;
4. potential experience – donor, volunteer, practitioner, legator, touring promotion and affiliation.

The term *museum product* is used continuously in the literature and in museum practice (Toblem, 1997; Kawashima, 1999; Hill et al., 2000; Meler, 2003; Conway & Leighton, 2012), even though museums provide services and experiences, not physical products (McLean, 1994; Hill et al., 2000; Conway & Leighton, 2012). Some authors also use the term *museum service product* (e.g. Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002) probably because museums have "traditionally operated with a strong emphasis on collection care" (Kawashima, 1999, p. 22), and collections (objects) were and still are in the center of their offerings. Similarly, Conway & Leighton (Leighton, 2007, as cited in Conway & Leighton, 2012, p. 37) point out that "marketing in the arts and cultural sector has tended to be product or supply focused, and has tended to emphasize the importance of product fea-

tures and benefits – such as the collection, the site or the architecture as the basis for the visitor offering". According to Kotler *et al.* (2008) in the context of museums, the product is viewed at three levels: core product, actual product and augmented product. The core product represents needs and benefits; for example, some visitors seek education, some recreation and others sociability. The actual products are the features and characteristics of the museum itself and its offerings (e.g. the building's architecture; the appearance of the entrance; restaurants and shops; the exhibitions and educational programs.) Finally, augmented products are additional benefits that museum offers, such as membership programs or visits with the museum director.

2.3. Museums as service and experience providers

Even today, "many museums are organized around collections. Museums are places where visitors encounter authentic, aesthetic, inspirational, and learning experiences. They offer memorable experiences, ideas and activities not found in other places" (Kotler et al., 2008, p. 3). That is why "museums must make every effort to imbue their personnel with the notion that they are to serve the public and that they must continuously improve the quality of the services offered" (Toblem, 1997, p. 339). Balloffet *et al.* (2014, p. 9) stress that, "where a museum's richness was once measured by the objects it possessed, its true value is now represented by the dissemination of information related to those objects". So, museums are increasingly focusing more on visitors as they use marketing strategies to attract more and more visitors. Museums are shifting toward a visitor orientation, as opposed to traditionally being subject to curator's dictation (Dirsehan & Yalçın, 2011).

Research in museum marketing is, therefore, becoming mainly focused on the exploration of the museum's visitors, especially their museum experience. Goulding (2000) used observa-

tion techniques to study on-site behavior. She discovered and outlined three approaches: the social, the cognitive and the environmental perspective, which could be applied to studies of museum visitor behavior. In addition, Goulding offers an integrated framework of customer behavior with important implications for the management of service encounters in museums. Harrison and Shaw (2004) aimed at identifying visitors' experience, satisfaction and loyalty regarding their museum visit. They discovered that, even if visitors were pleased with the initial experience, most of them who visited a museum might regard the experience favorably without repeating it immediately. "Products of this type may be characterized as "infrequently purchased products" (Harrison & Shaw, 2004, p. 30). Futhermore, Siu, Zhang, Dong and Kwan (2013) studied the effects of new service bonds on customer commitment through the creation of knowledge and rational values in the museum industry. They found useful techniques for enhancing visitor experience and the intention to make a repeat visit.

Dirsehan and Yalçın (2011) clustered museum visitors according to their experiential appeals and differences for their post-experience dimensions (learning in the museum, visitor satisfaction, visit intensification, revisit intention and WOM communication). They found that "utilitarian museum visitors have low-experiential appeals, in the contrary of holistic visitors who are interested in all experience types" (p. 85). Brida, Disegna and Scuderi (2012) studied visitors of two types of museums in order to find similarities and differences in their behavior patterns and characteristics. According to their findings, visitors could be divided into three clusters: "knowledge seekers", "non-motivated" and "interested". "Knowledge seekers" had heterogeneous socio-demographic and economic characteristics (between museum types). The "non-motivated" cluster was made up of a large group of visitors without any particular push-motive. "Interested" was a group which seemed to spend more time in the museum shops than other groups. Kent (2010) used an exploratory approach to examine visitors'

knowledge and experience of museums and their shops, demonstrating the importance and significance of museum shops for visitor experience.

Mokhtar & Kasim (2011) studied the motivations of young visitors for visiting and not visiting museums. They discovered that the majority of young adults had an overall positive image of museums, but due to a lack of time, lack of interest and lack of information about museum offerings, some young adults were not motivated enough to visit museums.

Mencarelli et al. (2010) conducted an exploratory research and identified seven major orientations of cultural consumption: social ties, awakening sense, active role of audience, edutainment, time management, mixed genres and new technologies. Each trend was evaluated by 56 French museum professionals. The authors stress the following: "the existing gap between actual management practices and practitioner's judgements. It seems that museum managers still find it difficult to position themselves relative to their audience when it comes to defining their offer" (Mencarelli et al., 2010, p. 342). While visitor experience is being studied, some other areas of museum marketing, such as museum shops, are being neglected in research (Brown, 2013).

In the contemporary museum marketing literature, museums are considered as services (McLean, 1994; Goulding, 2000; Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002; Lagrosen, 2003; Conway & Leighton, 2012). The examination of marketing theories from the point of view of services in museums begins in the 1990s. McLean (1994, p. 190), among the earliest authors, states that "museums are distinct from other services", although they do have the characteristics of services (intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, perishability, lack of ownership). Further, Gilmore and Rentschler (2002) were the first authors to offer a conceptual framework for services marketing in museums, and also showed how it impacts upon the delivery of the museum service product (experience).

According to research by Goulding (2000), service marketing theories can be applied in the museum environment. Lagrosen (2003, p. 134) examines three basic characteristics of services (from Grönroos) with regard to museums. He concludes that museums can be characterized as services, rather than goods-producing organizations. Museums are services for the following reasons:

1. although the collections of museums usually consist of physical objects, it is not the objects that are the products, since they are not transferred to the visitor;
2. a museum visit cannot be "produced" until the visitor is present in the museum (or visits the web site);
3. museum visits require substantial activity on the part of the visitors.

Hill *et al.* (2003, p. 119) emphasize that the usual four levels of product (core benefits, central experience, extended experience, and potential experience) can easily be transposed to service provision. "Adopting a service paradigm to examine services in relation to the core service offering and the facilitating or supplementary service offering together make up the total experience" (Hume & Mills, 2011, p. 283).

Alcaraz, Hume and Sullivan Mort (2009, p. 220) agree that, "given the role of museums to educate, inspire and portray stories of the past, knowledge generation and stimulation, a service centric paradigm for analysis and management is argued to be more appropriate". This is in the line with Lusch and Vargo's (2011) view that service-dominant logic is a necessary step in marketing theory and practice.

Later, the trend of experiential marketing appeared as a "potential strategy for cultural attractions operating in a highly competitive leisure market" (Conway & Leighton, 2012, p. 35). As museums represent "a very special part of non-profit organizations in the service sector, services marketing approach might be insufficient" (Kirezli, 2011, p. 173). Pine and Gilmore (1999) advocate experiential marketing because companies need to move away from providing only goods and services and aim to provide excellent experiences. "When a person buys a service, he purchases a set of intangible activities carried out on his behalf. But when he buys an experience, he pays to spend time enjoying a series of memorable events that a company stages – as in a theatrical play – to engage him in a personal way" (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 2). Dirsehan and Yalçın (2011) point out that museums are experience-centered places that offer both emotional and cognitive stimuli, and because of this, understanding the visitors and the visitors' experience is vital. "Great museum exhibition offer visitors transformative experiences that take them outside of the routines of everyday life" (Kotler, 2005, p. 5). Hence, Mencarelli *et al.* (2010) encourage the need to go beyond the redefinition of the museum experience from a simple visitation to an immersive experience, where an individual becomes an actor.

3. (NEW) CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND TRENDS IN MUSEUM MARKETING

The world of art has changed (Carr & Paul, 2011). The changes that have occurred are not superficial, because they alter the environment in which arts managers operate. "Some strategies that were once commonly accepted best practices in the performing arts industry are rapidly losing effectiveness because of behavioral and attitudinal changes in the broader environment" (Bernstein, 2007, p. 10). Museums are no exception, and as a part of the arts marketing field, they are also influenced by changes and trends beyond their domain. Some of the trends are unique to museums, but some have a much wider influence. "The turbulence of external environment equally affects museums", and museums have much in common with other consumer-based businesses. The increasing intensity of competition and

changing visitor behavior have forced museums to seek new sources of competitive advantages (Evans, Bridson & Rentschler, 2012, p. 1472).

The American Alliance of Museums and the Center for the Future of Museums (CFM) tried to predict the future of museums by identifying future trends in 2034, focusing on demographic trends, changes in the geopolitical and economic landscape, shifts in technology and communications, and the rise of new cultural expectations. They urged museums to react – whether early or late – if they want to benefit from the emerging structural shifts (or simply avoid the harms of inaction) (AAM, 2013).

While the museum external environment is changing, museums face a number of difficulties in their internal environments. "The difficult task for those responsible for marketing lies in combining two elements: on the one hand, the object to be attained, and on the other consumer satisfaction, and this through acting on the level, pace and nature of the demand of the target population in a way which allows the institution to fulfil its mission" (Toblem, 1997, p. 340).

Most of the reasons underlying a dilemma faced by museums throughout history still exist today. How are museums finding a balance in their mission, by focusing on their collections or on their visitors – or on both? How are they dealing with the rise of new technologies in the museum environment? Answering these two questions becomes a modern museum challenge in the 21st century.

Years ago, McLean (1995, p. 604) noted that the dilemma faced by "the modern museum was foreshadowed in the complicated roots of museum both as a word and as a phenomenon". He cited a number of factors contributing to that dilemma: between the museum as a temple and as a public forum; between the museum as a pedagogic pursuit and as a place of enjoyment; between the museum as a process of collecting and research and as the outreach of education and exhibition; and between the scholar and the layman, among

others. Most of these still exist, even though "both directors and marketing styles have evolved to meet the changing needs within the museum sector" (Rentschler, 2007, p. 14).

3.1. Choosing between collections and visitors

The purpose of museums has changed through history. "Museums were historically places where objects were accumulated, and their exhibitions became increasingly accompanied by text, which were then transformed into broadcast to keep pace with the virtual world" (Mencarelli *et al.*, 2010, p. 341). "Because of advances in technology and changes in consumer behavior, the art experience – and art marketing as well – is evolving into an interactive relationship that reaches far beyond a physical venue" (Carr & Paul, 2011, p. 1).

The role of museum curators as moral guardians has for a long time influenced curators' perceptions (Hooper-Greenhill, 1988, as cited in McLean, 1995). Because museums are essentially object-based, their existence depends on this (McLean, 1994). Evidently, the custodial approach to museums, which focuses on the objects rather than on the customer and the intangible benefits derived from the visit (Alcaraz *et al.*, 2009), has its historically grounded reasons. In the line with this, research done by Lagier and De Barnier (2013) shows that the historical function of museums – conservation – is their mission. Additionally, they found that museums also have two other missions: the task of acquiring and extending collections, and the that of presenting and showing.

Pursuant to the museum's mission and ICOM's guidelines, an educational approach in museums is very common (Balloffet *et al.* 2014). To achieve educational aims, museum exhibitions today feature interactive electronic media, demonstrations, storytelling, theatrical, dance and musical performances, and hands-on activities (Kotler *et al.* 2008). That is why museums are "gradually

shifting toward the search for intelligent entertainment" (Mencarelli & Pulh, 2012, p. 149), so they can meet the expectations of their highly demanding and discerning visitors. Marketing becomes the connection between museums and visitors, because the marketing professional, unlike the curator, has to understand changes in collective consciousness, trends and transitional fashion (Šola, 2001).

Camarero and Garrido (2012, p. 39) state that "many museums are committed to market orientation, as the underlying philosophy for their strategy." According to them, market orientation needs to be coordinated with service orientation which is focused on quality and custody in order to fulfill the museum's mission.

Deciding whether to focus on collections or visitors does not have to be a question of only one choice. The most successful museums around the world, such as the Louvre, the Smithsonian and the British Museum to name but a few, have demonstrated that combining both orientations can lead to success, without compromising the museum's core values and mission.

3.2. Rise of edutainment, virtual museums and virtual reality

A new trend known as *edutainment*, involving a convergence of education and entertainment, has emerged (Addis, 2005). Edutainment is entertainment that is designed to be educational (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2014). The edutainment experience is a form of edutainment, in which individuals themselves while learning at the same time (Addis, 2005). Its influence is spreading quickly through the world of art and culture, due at least in part to the application of new technologies (Addis, 2005).

The emergence of edutainment has triggered some serious opposition on the museum side because "many museum professionals believed that incorporating entertainment experiences compromised museum missions" (Kotler *et al.*, 2008, p. xxiii). Recently, some research studies have investigated opinions among museum professionals regarding edutainment (see Balloffet *et al.*, 2014; Komarac, 2013). Besides, Balloffet *et al.* (2014) examined the opportunities and risks of edutainment, and found out that "while the museum professionals were in favour of edutainment, they questioned the advantages of excessive spectacularization" (Balloffet *et al.*, 2014, p. 11). According to these authors, one of the underlying reasons for the shift towards edutainment is budgetary. Similarly, Kotler *et al.* (2008, p. xxiv) points to the fact that "museum professionals have understood that the balance between traditional views of what a museum should be and the responsiveness to competitive pressures can be achieved". A study by Lagier and De Barnier (2013, p. 4) discovered that a majority of museum professionals mention the dichotomy of "learning in a way that is fun and in a way that is educational. A fun aspect must be introduced into museums to increase the number of visitors, but at the same time must respect the educational mission of museums". Museums are also becoming more hybrid because of increasing cross-fertilization of museums and amusement parks (Mencarelli & Pulh, 2012). "In their eagerness to boost attendance, museums […] risk falling into the trap of 'Disneyfication'." (Brunel, 2006, as cited in Balloffet *et al.*, 2014, p. 4). But there is "a misconception that a 'Disneyfied' experience of the museum offer will replace spiritual enrichment objectives" (Evans *et al.*, 2012, p. 1461). Interestingly, a recent Themed Entertainment Association report shows statistics of worldwide visits to museums and theme parks (such as Walt Disney World). A comparison of the world's most visited museum, the Louvre (in Paris, France, with 9 million visitors in 2013), to Magic Kingdom (at Walt Disney World Florida, with 18.6 million visitors) suggests "that people prefer Mickey to Michelangelo" (The Economist, 2014).

Today's visitors do not have the same profiles as they had in previous decades. The social dimension of museum consumption was underestimated for a long time. As visitors "want it all and

want it now" (Mencarelli *et al*., 2010, p. 334), it is important to understand the social and cognitive factors and the environmental perspective influencing the museum experience. According to Goulding (2000, p. 269), the social factors influencing the experience are the following:

o cultural identification,
o continuity of theme and story,
o conversation and story building from evaluation of stimulus,
o social interaction.

In addition, the experience is influenced by a number of cognitive factors:

o the creation of mindful activity,
o involvement and engagement,
o inner reflection and imagination,
o variation of stimulus to create a meaningful "whole",
o perceived authenticity.

Moreover, the tendency to "live it all" explains why consumers are turning to time-saving arrangements (Mencarelli *et al*., 2010). This tendency has followed technological development, which has led to the development of virtual museums. "A virtual museum does not house actual objects and therefore lacks the permanence and unique qualities of a museum in the institutional definition of the term" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2014). Museums are interested in the digitalization of their collections because they want to make the content of museums accessible to the wider public in a more attractive way (Styliani, Fotis, Kostas & Petros, 2009). A visitor to a virtual museum is "a special visitor, a virtual visitor. It is a different visit" (Battro, 2010, p. 145 in Parry (ed.)).

Hume and Mills (2011, p. 287) pose the following question: "Is the virtual museum leaving the physical museums virtually empty or is it enabling the increase of onsite visitation?". Kotler *et al*. point to the argument "that museum visits are not necessary in an age when countless virtual museums are available through the Internet" (2008, p. 467). According to Schweibenz (2004, p.

3), the virtual museum is "no competitor or danger for the brick and mortar museum because, by its digital nature, it cannot offer real objects to its visitors, as the traditional museum does". On the contrary, additional visitor interest can be aroused by offering basic information about objects (Bošković & Balog, 2007). Virtual museums can be characterized as digital reflections of physical museums, as well as an extension of physical museums' exhibition halls, and the ubiquitous vehicle of the ideas, concepts and messages of the "real" museum (Styliani *et al*., 2009).

Carrozzino and Bergamasco (2010) advocate the use of immersive virtual reality (VR) in museums. "VR is a simulation of a real or imaginary environment generated in 3D by digital technologies that is experienced visually and provides the illusion of reality" (Styliani *et al*., 2009, p. 522). "VR is nowadays more and more used as education, divulgation or storytelling tool" (Carrozzino & Bergamasco, 2010, p. 453). Obviously, any implementation of new technologies in a museum is an attempt to get closer to today's visitor, who is constantly in search of intelligent, fun, interactive education and of overall immersive experiences.

4. DISCUSSION

Following the literature review presented above, it is clear that in the arts marketing and museum literature there are a number of open issues, still waiting to be resolved. Until satisfactory solutions are found, museum marketing cannot reach the next step in its development.

The first issue is related to the fact that museum marketing is a relatively young field of arts marketing that lacks a widely excepted definition and defined territory. Although quite a number of scholars (in economics and other fields mentioned above) are doing research in museum marketing, it is important that marketing scholars take a stand and become the ones to lead the way for others with an interest in the museum marketing field. In order to achieve this, a prop-

er definition of museum marketing is needed. In the museum marketing literature, the term *museum marketing* is explained from the perspective of the role of marketing in museums and what marketing in a museum environment does, without defining it as one term. Also, while the AMA, as the leading organization for marketers, is not offering a definition of the term (yet), we are still left with the questions: Why? and Until when?. Probably, some of the reasons are related to the fact that "there is no one marketing theory that can be applied universally across the museum field" (McNichol, 2005, p. 246). Also, many things still need to be discovered and understood in the art marketing field (Fillis, 2011). Nevertheless, a proper definition would encompass a complex nature of museum marketing, as a discipline that uses marketing not only as tactics, but as strategy and philosophy, taking into account a museum's (art, heritage) perspective and a marketing (business) perspective. Furthermore, introducing it into the AMA Dictionary would probably stimulate some needed acknowledgement of museum marketing from mainstream marketers, who still consider art marketing, and thus museum marketing as well, to be a minority interest area (O'Reilly, 2011). There are countless museums around the world and millions of visitors who are using their services on a daily basis. Their importance and influence on society and the global economy are significant. Therefore, museums must not be even slightly neglected in marketing anymore. There is substantial interest in museums in many other disciplines, such as in heritage tourism management, that have received a great deal of attention from researchers (Siu, *et al.*, 2013). The real question is what is stopping marketing scholars from joining in? Hopefully, they are no longer misguided by old prejudices and misconceptions about arts and museum marketing.

As the world of art and museums is changing constantly, many museums have a hard time tracking the changes in their environment and adapting to them accordingly. For a long time, museums were under the impression that they did not need to change. The whole heritage sector was slow to recognize the paradigm shift (Conway & Leighton, 2011). Museums resisted the change of focus from rich collections to visitors. But, as they face substantial competition in the leisure-time marketplace and are receiving less funding from governments than before, marketing has become their means of survival. Interest in the exploration of the museum marketing field is slowly growing, and the perception of marketing in museums is partially changing from that of an intrusive to a useful tool for museum promotion, as it is predominantly perceived historically (Šola, 2001). Marketing has finally been accepted in museums, although some museum professionals continue to express concerns about the way in which marketing or new technologies are ruining the sacred mission of museums. This leads to the conclusion that marketing is still not fully understood in the museum community. Conducting any kind of research in the museum marketing field even today adds pressure, because it is considered to be a sensitive issue for museums (Balloffet *et al.,* 2014). How is this possible when today, "virtually every museum has a marketing person who is responsible for attracting visitors, selling memberships, building an image in the community, helping the development department, assisting the gift shop, and improving the restaurant, public facilities and signage" (Kotler *et al.*, 2005)? Improvements in the perception of marketing in museums are clearly very slow, and some museums are still struggling to accept the holistic marketing approach, limiting it only to the promotion of a museum's collections or services. Others, however, have embraced it and enjoy the results of that decision.

As the product-versus-services debate in museums continues, the service approach to the museum management becomes more logical. Museums are providing services, in other words, experience, even though they are providing them in a physical (object-based) environment. In addition, many museums can sell products (souvenirs) in their gift shops, which does not make museums goods-producing organizations (Lagrosen, 2003).

In choosing the mission of museums, while deciding between collection and visitor, the wisest

path is to find a balance which will satisfy museums' aims and visitor needs. It is not recommended to fully abandon the collection focus, or to force the change. The real question is what can be done around the core (exhibition), without altering it (Mencarelli *et al.*, 2010). Thus, some potential negative sentiments about marketing in museums could be avoided. It would also be more prudent to let marketing professionals take care of visitor, and allow them to follow trends in a wider cultural and entertainment environment. In this way, they could react on time when changes occur. In the coming years, this will be their key for survival, especially when new technologies and cultural consumption reshape the museum world all over again.

New technologies entering the museum environment have been received in very different manners. In the beginning, the fear of anything new – and which might bring radical changes to the museum – was obvious in museum practice, and therefore stigmatized. Today, many agree that edutainment is an inevitable trend that museums need to take advantage of to get closer to their visitors. But there are also divided opinions about its benefits and risks. After being considered as a potential threat to museums, virtual museums now get much more recognition. They have become an opportunity for spreading a museum's message to a more diverse audience, and an additional reason for visiting a physical museum. While the world of museums is becoming more complex than ever, recognizing changes in society, understanding visitors and their expectations, adopting new technologies, fighting competition in the leisure market, and doing all of this while preserving the traditional values of the museum will be a challenging endeavor for every marketing professional.

5. CONCLUSION

Many museums have become places open to a diverse audience, as they have adjusted their activities to visitors' needs, wants and expectations. They have gradually abandoned a full object focus and become more people-focused. Following the visitors' needs and trends, museums have begun to offer different kinds of services, apart from exhibitions (as their core service). But this process is far from being over yet, since there are countless museums which still resist becoming more open. They also resist accepting the fact that the world of museums and art (in general) has changed, and no one can stop such changes because they are outside of the sphere of influence of museums themselves. Successful museums around the world – which have accepted marketing and used its potential – bring hope to other museums that are still wary of the influence of marketing in the museum community and beyond.

As new technologies are becoming a reality for museums, resistance among some museums is also growing as they consider these technologies to be harmful and undesirable. Museums are generally slow to accept any kind of change. First, they reject almost any change in their path, but eventually they see its potential and then they accept it (e. g. virtual museums or edutainment).

Today, many museum professionals agree that marketing is essential to museums. Marketing professionals in museums are under great pressure to achieve the non-profit goals of museums, but also the profit goals that the future activities of museums depend on. Museums also need to realize that "no single marketing and planning formula is applicable to all museums, but every museum can benefit from one or another facet of marketing and strategy" (Kotler, 2008, p. xxiv). This is just one more reason why further research is necessary in any part of the museum marketing field. Many unsolved dilemmas will continue to burden museums' decision-making processes, as new ones appear along the way. The future of museums can be a bright one, if they decide to collaborate more with marketing professionals, with their visitors in the creation of new services, and with academia in research.

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