

The 'Museum' Experience



History of Museums in Niagara Falls

Barnett Museum opened in 1827

1859 Barnett opens new museum on
“the Front”

Competition in this area for tourism \$
sparks feuds, fires and gun fights

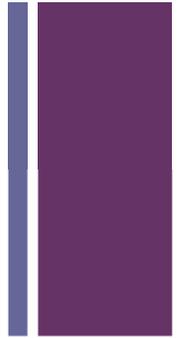
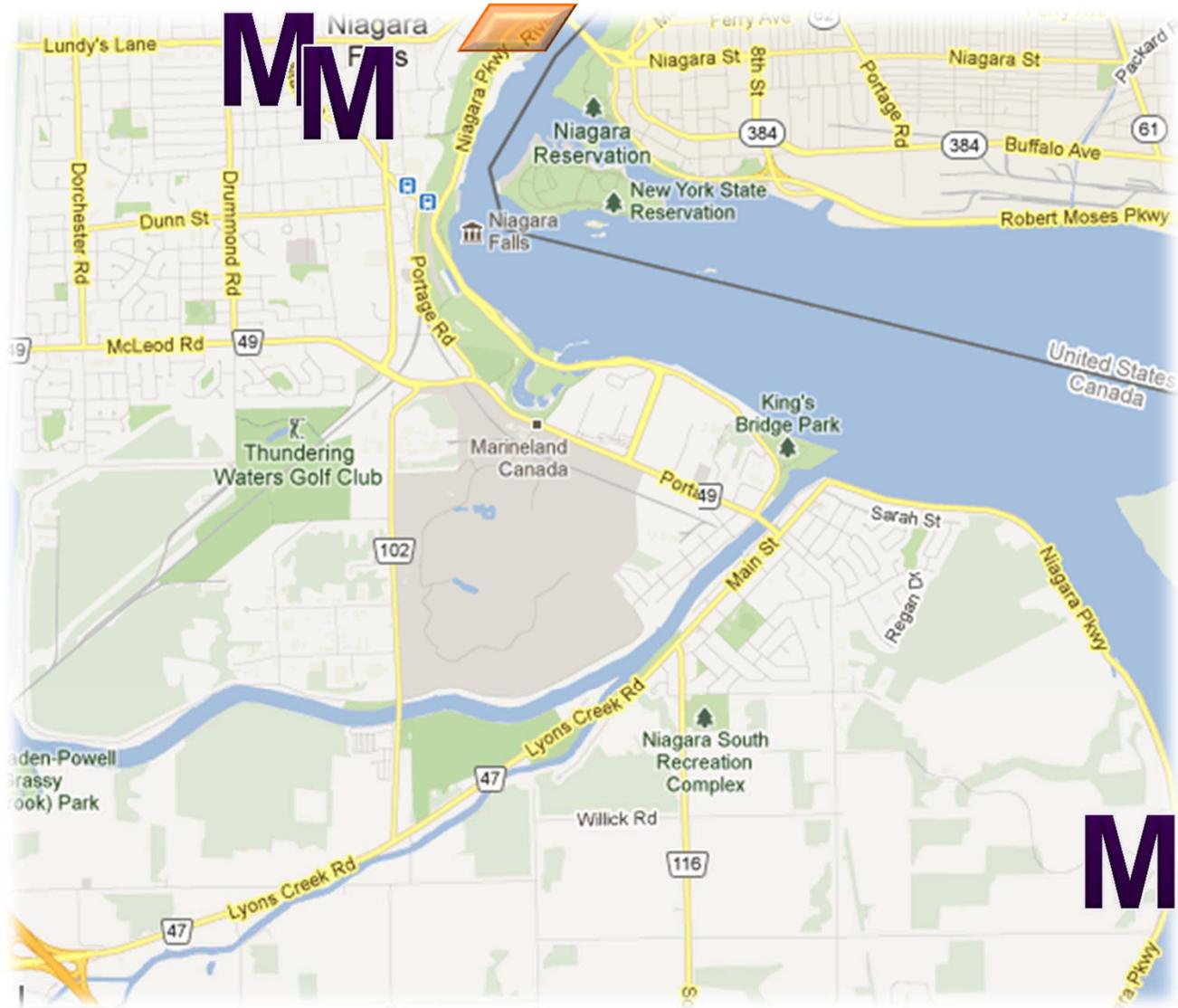
Foundation of the current Museums
collection begins in 1961



+ Niagara Falls Museums



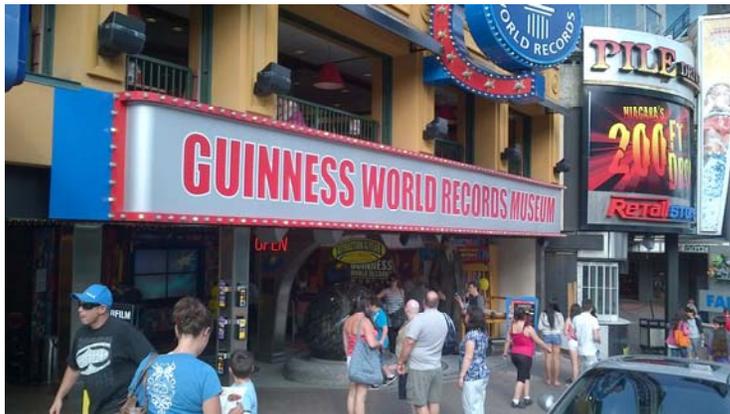
+ Where we are located





+ The "Competition"

+ The use of the term “Museum” in Niagara Falls



+ Other Museums in Niagara Falls

Bird Kingdom

Butterfly Conservatory



Dollar museum day a hit despite blistering temperatures



By Ray Spiteri, Niagara Falls Review
Sunday, January 16, 2011 2:37:59 EST PM



RAY SPITERI Review Staff Mitchell McManus looks over one of the displays outside Crystal Cave Mirror Maze. Several Niagara Falls tourist attractions opened their doors to people for \$1 Sunday during the 23rd annual museum day to benefit the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

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Niagara - It's become an annual family event for the Goldfinch's.

And best of all, it benefits a worthwhile charity.

Linda Goldfinch and her son Branden, both from Niagara Falls, are taking in several of the tourist attractions along Clifton Hill today as part of the annual Loonie Museum Day to benefit the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.



+ What does 'Museum' mean to residents

Museums to go loonie!



By [Alison Langley](#), Niagara Falls Review
Monday, January 7, 2008 12:00:00 EST AM

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Niagara museums will go loonie this weekend with more than a dozen attractions in the Clifton Hill area offering deep discounts on admission to local residents.

Niagara Falls residents on Sunday will be able to visit 16 participating attractions for \$1 admission.

Loonie Museum Day, which raises money for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of Canada, has been entertaining local residents for the past 19 years.

More than \$20,000 was raised last year.

"It was a heck of a year. Mother Nature really cooperated and it was just a wonderful family event," recalled Nancy Clayton, vice-president of the foundation's Niagara chapter.



+ What does 'Museum' mean to residents

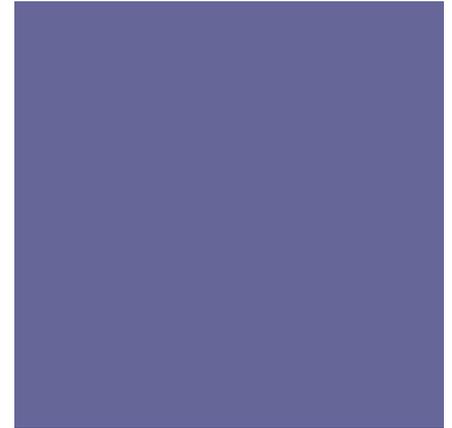


Impact on us

See us as a tourism product and not a community resource

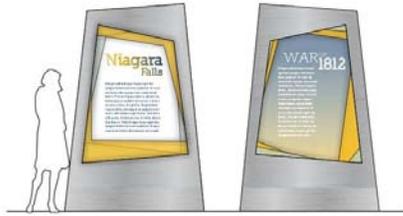
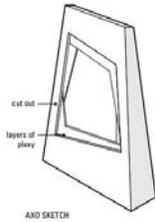
Tourism market in Niagara Falls is very, very expensive

Can't even pay to get into some marketing opportunities





View into C4 Tourism and Recreation



+ Early Niagara Falls
History Museum
Designs



Why did I want to do this?

Determine Market

Figure out what they are doing right – and we are doing wrong

These places wouldn't exist if they didn't make money

Understanding what a visitor is looking for in Niagara Falls

Do we have a chance with marketing to tourists or should we focus solely on residents?

Who can we attract and what are they looking for





Where do we think we fit in?

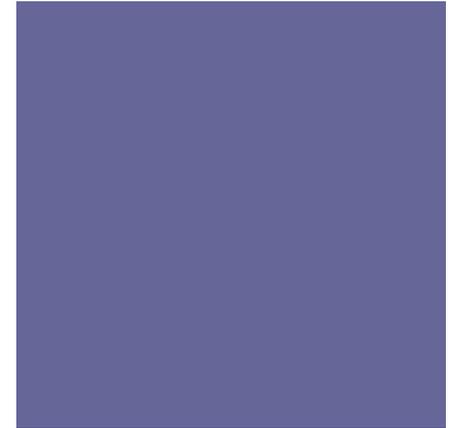
Price point – reasonable tourism market – marketing reflects this

Events are all resident driven

Still finding our place in the community

Starting with small membership base and small core audience

Trying to work with tourism marketplace to provide a unique alternative





Our Marketing vs Theirs



Are we attempting to attract the same or different audiences?



Related literature

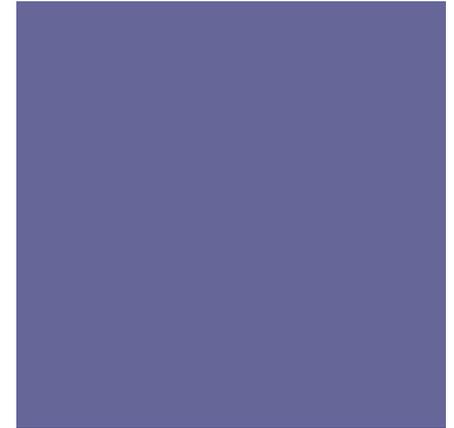
Museums are visited by only a small segment of the population (Bourdier, Darbel & Schnapper, 1990)

Museums are an important social institution in our communities which contribute to the formation of national identity (Kaplan, 1994).

Municipalities and other levels of government often support and promote their value.

Research has identified different motivations associated with museum visits (i.e. fulfilling educational interests, being with family, and escaping daily routines) (Slater, 2006) yet, there has been little comparative research that has studied the motivations of visitors in traditional and non-traditional museums.

Understanding why individuals visit these different forms of museums merits our attention.



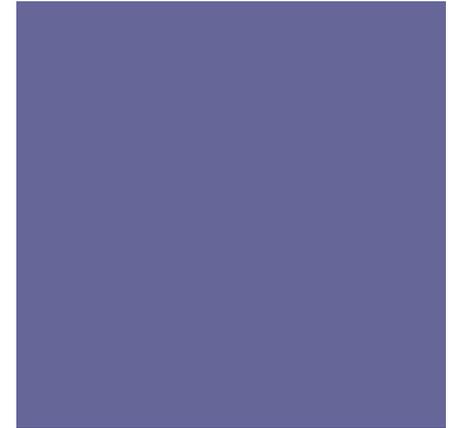


Research: Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this comparative research was to study the museum experience in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

Specifically, answering the following questions:

1. What are the motivations of patrons who visit museums?
2. Are these motivations different based on the type of museum visited?
3. How satisfied are individuals with their museum experiences?
4. What are the demographic characteristics of people who visit museums?





Data Collection

Research ethics approval: Brock University

Computer tablets were used to collect the data.

Staff members from the Niagara Falls Museums/research assistant approached visitors at each of the included sites and ask individuals to participate in the study. (NFM; NBC; GWBR)

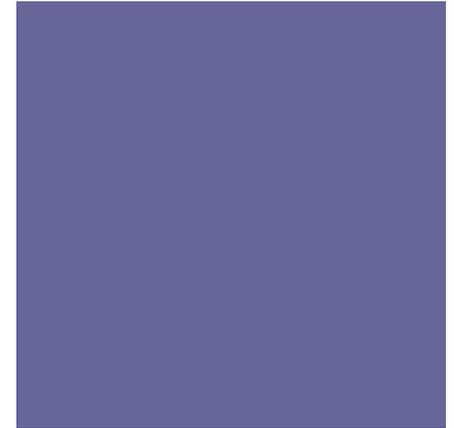
Respondents were given the Informed Consent Form.

The computer tablet will then be given to the individual for completion.

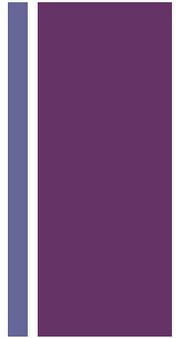
Completion of the study took less than 10 minutes.

Current Data Collected: N = 159; 65 at GBWR; 72 at NBC; 22 NFM

Upon completion, respondents will be given a “thank you” gift (i.e. a package of Historical Collector Cards from the Niagara Falls Museums).



+ Preliminary analysis: Who completed the survey?



Guinness Book of World Records (n= 65)

- 61% were female
- 66% were employed full-time
- 40% had a university degree or higher
- 53% had incomes of 60,000+

Niagara Falls Butterfly (n = 72)

- 51% were female
- 61% were employed full-time
- 54% had a university degree or higher
- 61% had incomes of 60,000 or higher

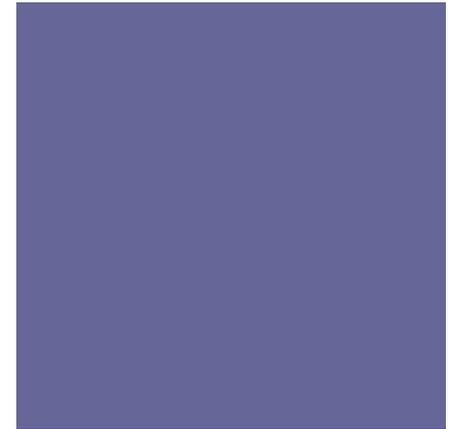
+ Niagara Falls Museums (n = 22)

59% female

45% employed full-time

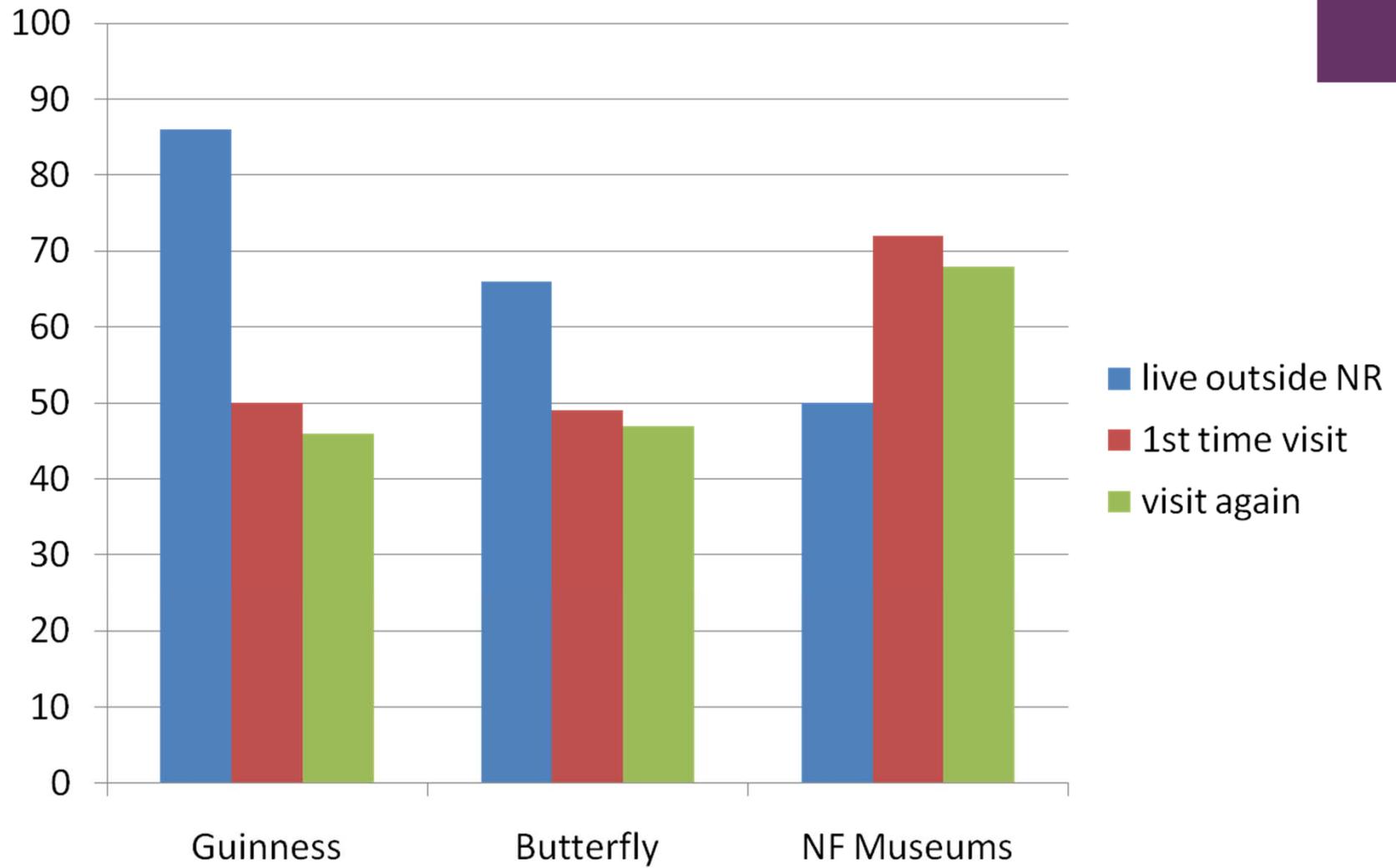
22% had university degree or higher

63% had incomes of 60,000+

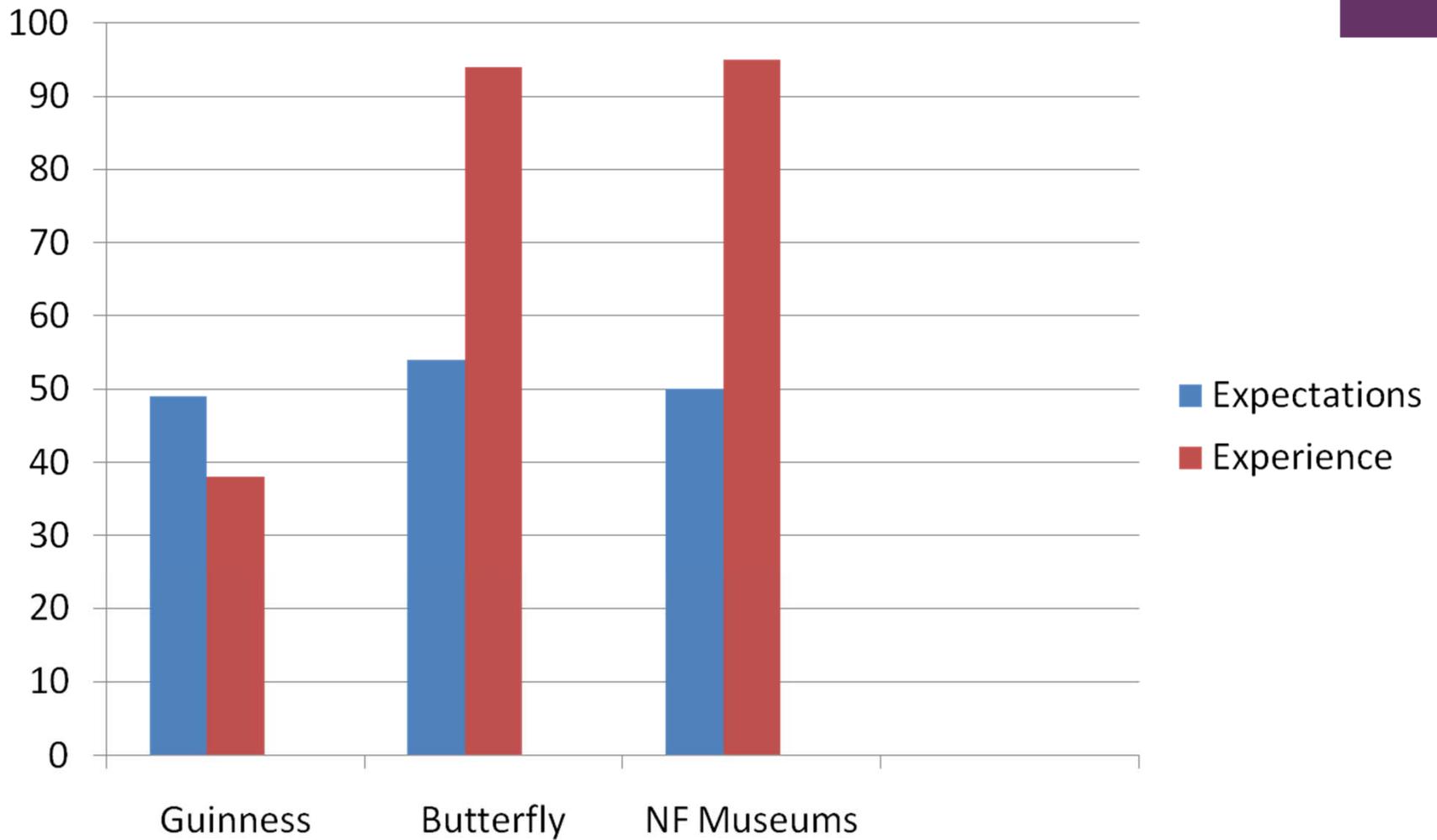
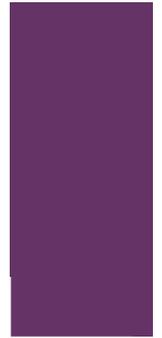


Preliminary analysis:
who completed the
survey?

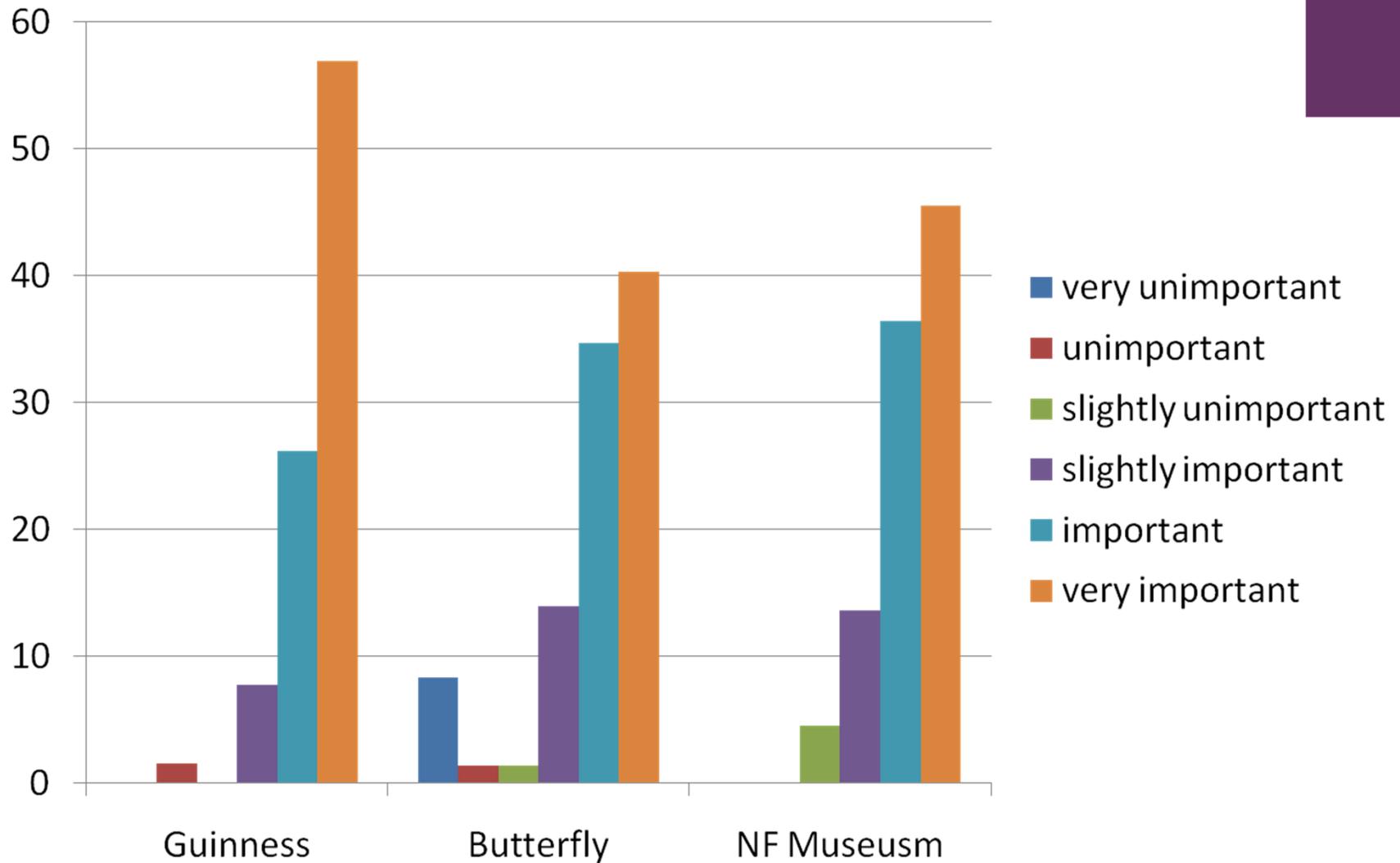
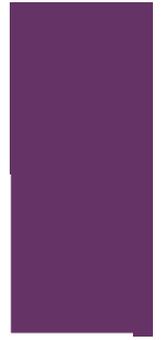
+ Additional insights



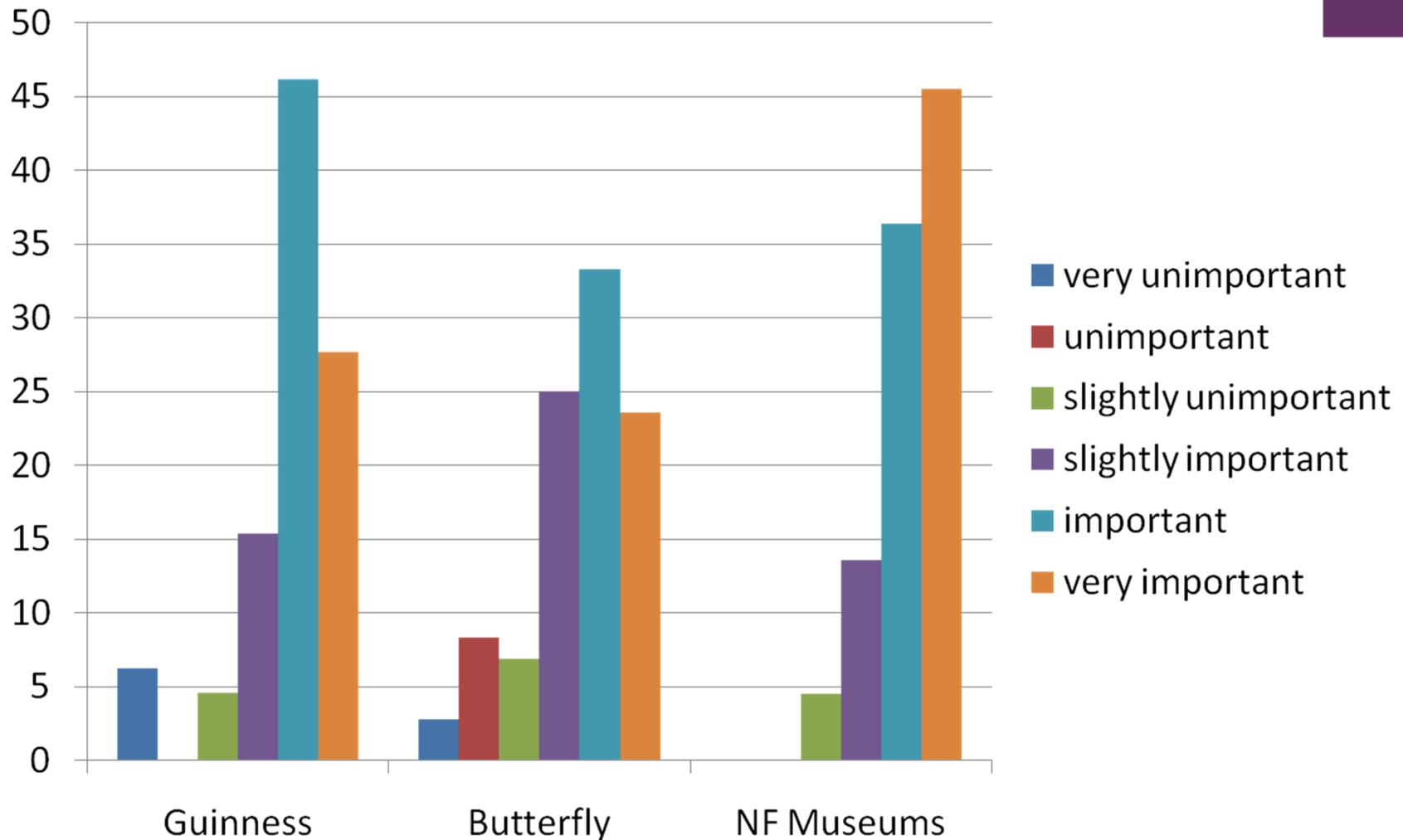
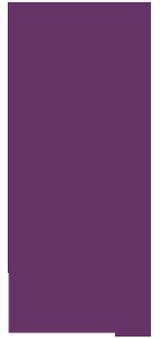
+ Customer service results



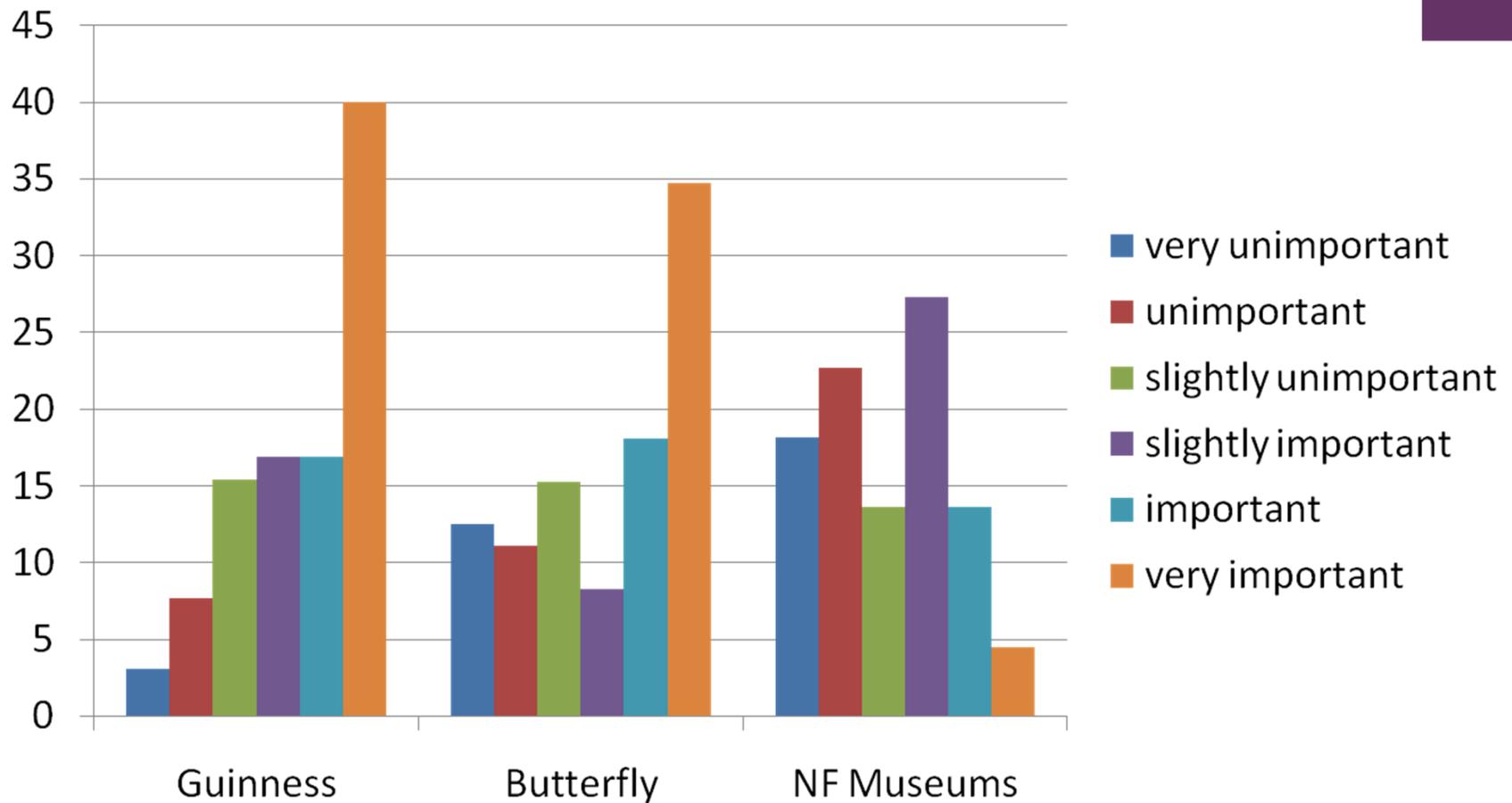
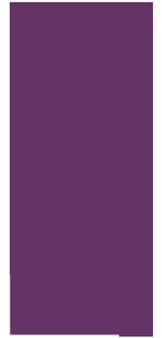
+ Motivations – time with family



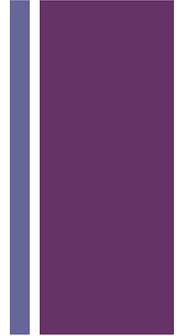
+ Motivations: To learn about exhibits



+ Motivations – To get away from responsibilities of my everyday life



+ Data Collection Reflections



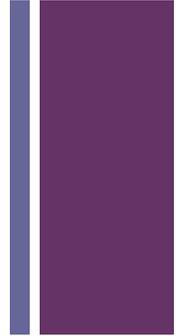
Successes

- People seemed willing
- Recognizing that people are on their leisure time, however they were pleased to receive historical cards as a thank you for completion

Challenges

- Tablet vs. paper questionnaire –
 - Only one tablet – which meant that the NFM was not able to collect data when it was at other sites.
- Wireless signals
- Technology issues (data input, etc)

+ Study implications



Practical

- determines how to market to individuals specifically in Niagara Falls
- Understand ideas related to customer service
- Can provide decision makers with data to support museums and their contribution to community life

Theoretical

- Rich area of research; supports some existing literature
- Contributes to our understanding of different museum type experiences
- Begins to address differences amongst sectors



Thanks

Clifton Hill BIA

Guinness Book of World Records Museum

Niagara Parks Commission

