


Are **Millennials** out of reach for history museums?

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CONNER PRAIRIE
THE MAKING OF HISTORY PLACE

What is **Conner Prairie**?



A large organization in the outdoor history museum genre.



- 850 acres
- Operating budget over \$9 million
- \$95 million endowment
- 85 Full-time / 200 Part-time Staff
- 450 Volunteers

Opened 1974 as **“Pioneer Settlement”**

By mid-1990s, attendance had declined dramatically.



Daniel Logan,
Indianapolis
Age 15



Teenager's View of Museums, Conner Prairie (2001)

Why do we care about **millennials?**

- Conner Prairie seeks repeat visits from a local (non-tourist) family audience.
- Teens/pre-teens can hold the “veto” vote in deciding where to go.
- Locally, many parents of young children are millennials.



How did we attract **millennials?**

Product Development


- Greater on-site engagement
- Exciting new products

Communications

- Increased use of social media
- New, livelier website




The image shows a collage of digital content. At the top right is a Facebook page for Conner Prairie. Below it is a Twitter page with a tweet about a cloud demo. To the left is a YouTube logo. The background of the social media pages shows a natural setting with trees.



We made **more fun** for teenagers & younger children

- Research to find out how learning happens (2000)
- New focus on engaging, not presenting
- New approach to training front line staff
- New approach to programming

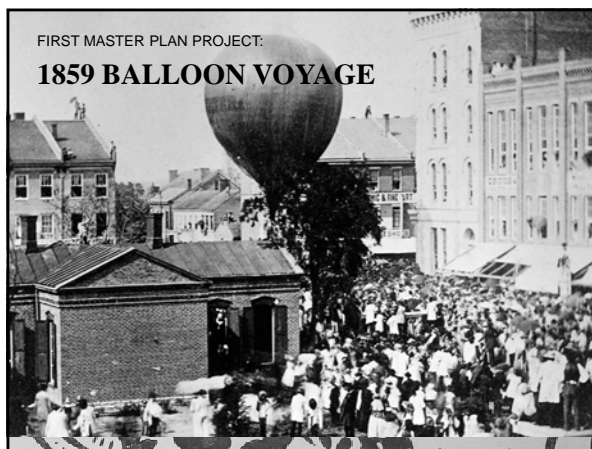
From watching & listening **to doing**



The image is split into two parts. The left part, labeled '1980', shows a woman sitting at a table in a room with a fireplace, looking at a book. The right part, labeled '2009', shows a man and a woman working together on a craft project, possibly pottery or woodwork.







2009 Attendance Results

- 2002 teen visits – 14% of kid visits*
- 2009 teen visits – 16% of kid visits*
- 2006–2009 Yearly increases in attendance, membership
- Membership repeat visitation up 18% over 2008
- Daily attendance 2009 up 7% over 2008

Attendance by Children 0 – 18
2009

Age Group	Percentage
0-5	19%
6-8	25%
9-12	40%
13-18	16%

*Represents children ages 0-18

Are Millennials out of reach for history museums?

NO

- Make the museum engaging for everyone
- Build a critical mass of “millennial-friendly” activities
- Communicate using social media
- Talk to millennials repeatedly. We created a Young Professionals Council

Thank you for listening!
