



ULTIMATE GUIDE TO MANAGING VISITATION

A PLAYBOOK FOR
VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

USING THIS GUIDE

Visitation (attendance) is the primary performance metric of all attractions and public places as the top line of the visitor management business model.

This guide outlines best practices for managing visitation, with actionable insights from patterns and trends.

Moments for inspiration where visitation insights come into play:

- Front of house daily stand ups or weekly retrospectives
- Cross functional collaborations between departments
- Strategic planning and continuous improvement workshops
- Management reporting and presentations
- All hands town halls or staff communications



Things to ponder:

1. **How does visitation compare year on year and how does our venue compare against its peers? How much have recent events impacted visitation performance?**
2. **When are visitors coming - what are our most popular times and how do opening days or hours impact visitation?**
3. **How does seasonality, weather and what's happening in or around our venue influence a decision to visit? What can we control or respond to?**
4. **What products are encouraging attendance and what activities are visitors engaging with?**
5. **Who isn't visiting and why?**

BEST PRACTICE

Master these levels to adopt visitation best practices in your visitor management.

Traditional	Beginner	Learning	Great	Exceptional
<i>Little or no data</i>	<i>Developing data literacy</i>	<i>Descriptive analytics</i>	<i>Predictive analytics</i>	<i>Prescriptive analytics</i>
<p>Visitor attractions just starting out in visitor management often manually count or even estimate visitation, often periodically such as on a weekly or monthly basis.</p> <p>The attractions team may not often review or discuss visitation and likely have a low focus on performance.</p>	<p>Visitor attractions beginning to explore active visitor management start by actively monitoring daily visitation statistics, often implementing hardware onsite to automatically measure visitor flow (even if the venue itself is ticketed).</p> <p>Leadership purposefully review the business rules behind how visitation is recognized and these rules are made transparent to the team in making informed decisions.</p>	<p>As visitor management develops, the attraction team actively monitors nuanced visitor outcomes (such as conversions to membership or participation in activities such as exhibitions), with a view on metrics and trends, often complemented by qualitative studies.</p> <p>Visitation awareness is increasingly granular (down to the hour or minute), audited regularly. Onsite monitoring of visitor flow extends within the venue to various spaces and activities.</p> <p>Leadership set periodic goals for visitation metrics.</p>	<p>Successful visitor management involves forecasting visitation for strategy and operational planning.</p> <p>The venue is informed on the changing interdependent influences on a decision to visit (such as public holidays, school terms, weather and what's on) for those both within the venue's span of control and outside of this sphere.</p> <p>Leadership set granular goals in a consultative manner.</p>	<p>Top visitor management focuses around curating automated predictions, dynamically responding in order to consistently achieve growth goals. Dynamic responses span price, capacity, queue, staff and inventory for efficient growth.</p> <p>This hybrid approach blends human and artificial intelligence to optimize for both speed and accuracy in responding to opportunities and threats.</p>

TERMINOLOGY

Get to know these common terms used when managing visitation performance.

	What is it?	How do you measure it?
VISITATION	<i>How many visitors attend the physical venue.</i>	<i>Ticketing, footfall, membership or an alternate approach.</i>
RECOVERY INDEX, RATE	<i>How visitation compares to 'normal' (historic performance) and how quickly it regains.</i>	<i>Year on year visitation growth expressed as a percent of normal, change over time.</i>
LOCAL	<i>Visitors from within a 50 km or 30 mile range, accessible by commuter transport.</i>	<i>Zip code or self identified (ticket, membership, survey).</i>
DRIVE IN	<i>Visitors from within a 150 km or 100 mile range, accessible by car.</i>	<i>Zip code or self identified (ticket, membership, survey).</i>
TOURIST (DOMESTIC)	<i>Visitor from the venue's home country yet outside a 150 km or 100 mile range.</i>	<i>Zip code or self identified (ticket, membership, survey).</i>
TOURIST (INTERNATIONAL)	<i>Visitor from outside the venue's home country, sometimes split into continent regions.</i>	<i>Country code or self identified (ticket, membership, survey).</i>
CAMPAIGN	<i>Marketing or advertising activity, usually paid.</i>	<i>Scheduled plan including message, budget and channel.</i>
FORECAST	<i>Constantly changing predictions of future performance based on the current situation.</i>	<i>Machine learning predictions trained on historic data and influencing factors.</i>
PLAN	<i>Static expectations of future performance as set at the beginning of the period.</i>	<i>Manual analysis based on business strategy, financial plan and other inputs.</i>
SIMULATION	<i>Scenario plan of future performance based on variable assumptions.</i>	<i>A hybrid approach of machine learning predictions and scenario plan simulations.</i>

BUSINESS RULES

PREMIUM



Using Dexibit?

Configure business rules for recognizing visitation to automate.

How does your venue recognize a visit to a place, space or activity?

FOOTFALL COUNTS

Manual clickers or automated sensors

You'll need to determine how you count for:

- Various footfall counter identifiers (remember to give these an easily recognizable alias so you can tell which counter is where)
- Opening hours (if you wish to restrict automated counters outside of hours to avoid maintenance staff)
- Scaling factor (used to audit and adjust for hardware integrity or staff movement)

Footfall counter hardware can be camera, beam break, turnstile, underfoot or road track technology.

TICKETED ADMISSION

Advance bookings or walk ups

You'll need to determine how you count for:

- Various ticket products (what visitors do)
- Various ticket types (who visitors are)
- Which ticket status (sold, scheduled or redeemed)

You might need to scale some tickets that represent multiple visits, such as a family or weekend pass.

MEMBER VISITS

Scanned membership or season pass

You'll need to determine how you count for:

- Various member products (what members do)
- Various member types (who members are)
- Which member redemption (if membership is presented on multiple occasions)

You might need to scale some member passes that represent multiple visits, such as a plus one benefit or a household pass.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives for standard approaches:

- Hybrid methods (involving a combination of footfall, ticketed and/or member approaches)
- Location analytics
Whilst RFID is suitable for visitation counts, WiFi or BLE methods should only be used to determine approximate visitor conversion into a space or activity (not to measure an absolute visitor count to a venue)
- Mobility data
Cellular networks or mainstream app providers can guesstimate visitation in hard to metric spaces such as outdoor parks without designated entrances

SOURCES

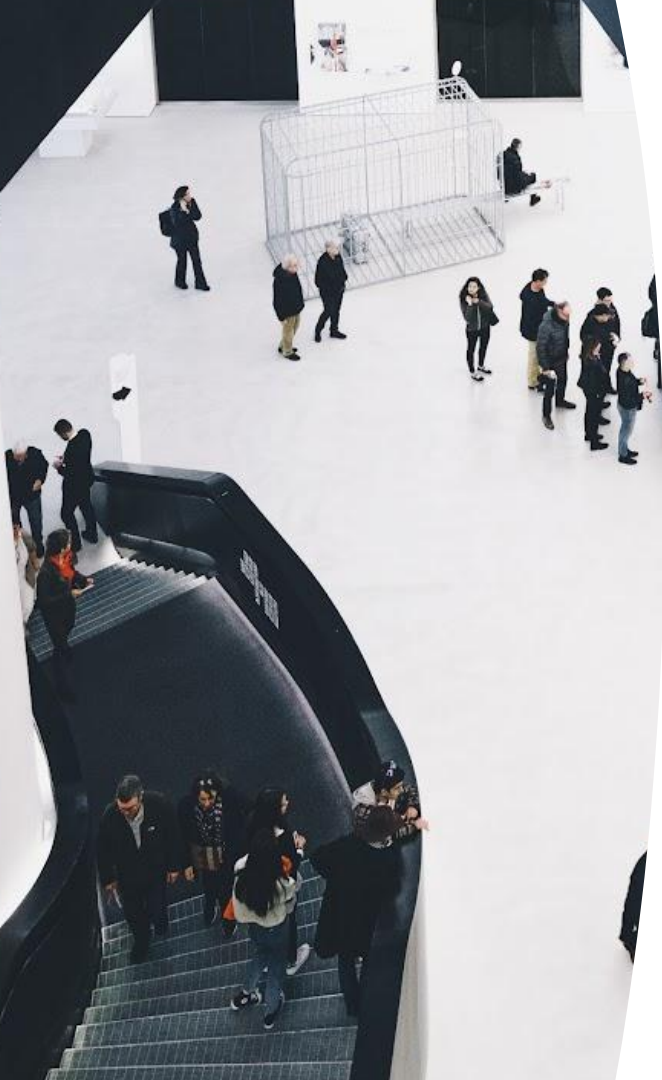
PREMIUM



Using Dexibit?
Automate and monitor
data sources and operations.

Ensure you have the right ingredients at hand for measuring what matters.

	Insight	Approach
VISITATION	<i>Correlate and quantify visitor behaviors and outcomes with visitation patterns</i>	<i>Upload from manual collection or integrate footfall hardware or ticketing systems</i>
FOOTFALL	<i>Understand visitation and conversion into spaces, including for capacity</i>	<i>Upload spreadsheet or integrate footfall hardware</i>
TICKETING	<i>Understand visitation and conversion into activities, including for capacity</i>	<i>Upload spreadsheet or integrate ticketing system</i>
MEMBERSHIP	<i>Understand member conversion, visit frequency and other outcomes</i>	<i>Upload or integrate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system</i>
CAMPAIGNS	<i>Understand the influence of marketing on a visitor's decision to visit</i>	<i>Manual schedule entry</i>
REVENUE	<i>Commercially quantify the impact on improvements on visitor outcomes</i>	<i>Upload or integrate from point of sale (ticketing, membership, shop, cafe, parking)</i>
ACTIVITIES AND ALMANAC	<i>Correlate what's happening in and around your venue with visitor outcomes</i>	<i>Calendar entries of what's on in and around the venue</i>
WEATHER	<i>Rule out the influence of environmental factors on how visitors feel</i>	<i>Integration to a global feed from a third party source</i>



PREMIUM



Using Dexibit?

*Refer to 'Insights'
for your data stories.*

THE INSIGHTS GUIDE TO VISITATION

DATA STORY EXAMPLES



Talk to Dexibit about democratizing data with rapid insight - forecasts, insights, dashboards and reports with a unique data concierge, designed for visitor attractions.

All visualizations use demo data for illustrative purposes only.

Visitation performance

Are we on track for success?

Visitation performance

Year on Year (YoY) growth

Financial Year (FY) to date
and projected

Goal burn

Benchmark comparison

In visitor management, a look at visitation means more than just a headline number - there's lots of insight to be gained in the patterns and trends behind this metric for use in communicating with the attraction team and governance stakeholders.

An eye on topline visitation fuels a performance oriented culture within the team. Given most attractions experience highly seasonal demand, Year on Year (YoY) growth is the best measure of success for visitation.

Before COVID-19, over 5% YoY growth was considered great and over 10% YoY growth exceptional. Post pandemic, given growth will likely be negative, a *Recovery Index* is a more appropriate measure (percent of normal compared to the equivalent day from last year on a rolling 7 day basis), plus the *Recovery Rate* (weekly or monthly improvement). Benchmarking these metrics for comparison is also valuable for comparing your attraction against others in the industry.

Determining what success looks like in terms of growth or recovery provides a basis for setting goals and in conjunction with forecast performance or scenario simulation can be used to establish financial plans.

1. Monitoring

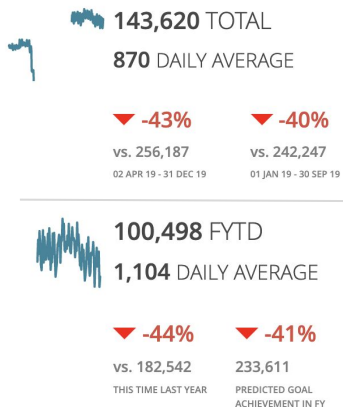
Visitation

In this view...

For a complete perspective on topline trends, analyze:

- Total visitation
- Daily average visitors and/or daily median visitors (adjust seasonally to determine what constitutes a busy versus quiet day across high and off seasons)
- Period on period performance
- Year on Year (YoY) performance
- Financial Year (FY) to date
- FY YoY performance
- FY predicted achievement
- Visitation over time (daily, weekly, monthly or more)
- Goal burn (by target)

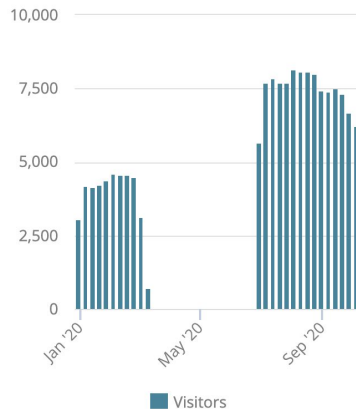
TOTAL VISITATION



In this example, the venue has been dramatically impacted by shutdowns, slightly more so on the financial year due to its position at the time of the COVID crisis.

Sparklines and trends are a simple and easy way to visualize trends at a glance.

VISITORS OVER TIME



Following COVID related slowdown and closure, this venue experienced a relatively buoyant comeback with some pent up demand, albeit slightly muted compared to its historic growth trajectory and now declining. Its best week timed with the midyear school holidays.

Adjust data frequency based on the reporting duration (<90 days, daily; <180 days, weekly; more, monthly +).

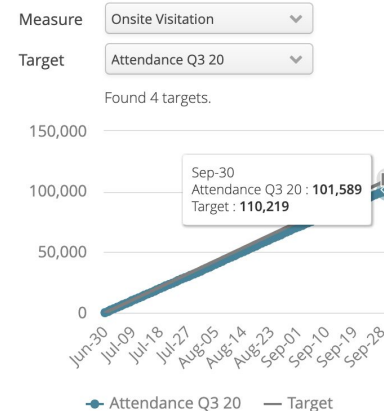


Watch a video on the key visitation metrics you should be sharing with your team

CALENDAR Q3, CALENDAR YEAR TO DATE
Jan 1 2020 to Sep 30 2020 with April 1 FY



GOAL BURN



Despite the crisis, visitation is on track for the adjusted last quarter, though with FY impact.

For an executive overview, gauges present a simplified view.



19%

GOAL ACHIEVED

of 739,063
JAN 01 - SEP 30



2. Benchmarking

Visitation



Watch a video on how to benchmark your results against the visitor attractions industry

CALENDAR Q3, FINANCIAL YEAR H1

Jul 1 2020 to Sep 30 2020

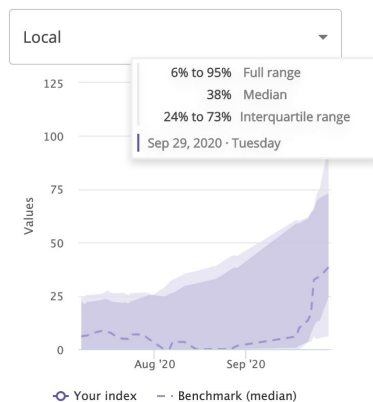


In this view...

To provide context for performance compared to the rest of the industry, include global, local or group benchmarks such as:

- Visitation Index
YoY growth over time, calculated by comparing to the equivalent day last year, used to understand changing market size or share.
- Recovery Index
YoY growth by days since reopening, calculated by comparing to the equivalent day last year on a rolling 7 day basis, used to understand the behavior of returning audiences and responsible market tactics.
- Index Rate
Periodic changes, used to understand growth or recovery trajectory (the second derivative).

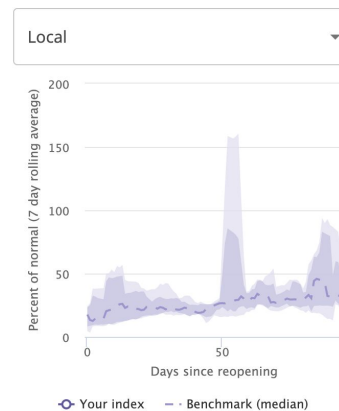
VISITATION INDEX



In this local benchmark, we venues started out with a tight range earlier in the quarter, no more than around 25% of normal, however this gradually widened and the interquartile range begins at this level, with some finishing the quarter near normal.

The Visitation Index is useful for tracking industry responses to calendar events such as public holidays, school terms, seasonal change and more, useful both in crisis and in usual times.

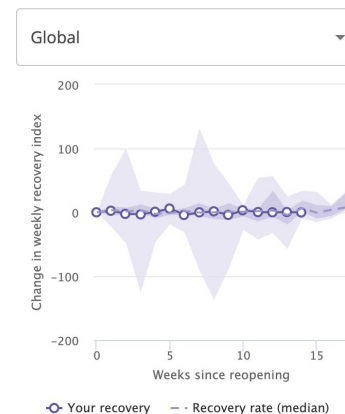
RECOVERY INDEX



Here we can see local venues have had a fairly similar experience since reopening, with a gradual improvement - and several top performers having great boosts at around the 50 day mark and just prior to the 100 day mark, which coincide with holidays.

The Recovery Index is particularly useful for the first 180 days post reopening, including after rolling shutdowns or capacity constraint changes.

INDEX RATE



This index rate is fairly flat for this venue, indicating no or slow growth. This is set against a dramatic global context of exceptionally high peaks and low troughs in performance, though less turbulent after 10 weeks since reopening.

If still positive, a declining rate simply means growth is slowing (not poor performance).

3. Planning

Visitation



Watch a video on forecasting visitation for strategic and operational planning

CALENDAR Q4 (forward looking)
Oct 01 2020 to Dec 31 2020

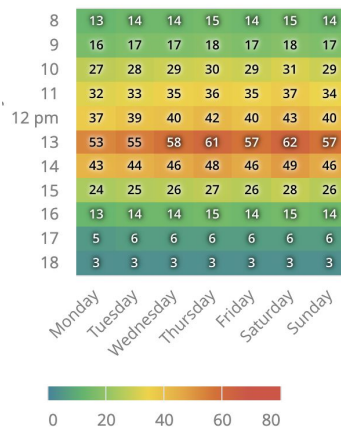
In this view...

Data helps inform strategic and operational planning and scheduling:

- Predictions for operational plans
Recommended outlook of hourly predictions for the next 7 - 14 days to aid resource scheduling
- Forecasts for strategic plans
Recommended outlook of daily predictions for the next 30 days, weekly for the next 90 days and monthly for the next 365+ days for financial planning, goal setting and activity scheduling
- Simulation for scenario plans
Recommended quarterly review of best case, worst case and most probable case for risk mitigation

Machine learning provides rapid, granular and accurate forecasts - automatically, using models designed specifically for attractions, including both time series and factors such as public holidays and school terms.

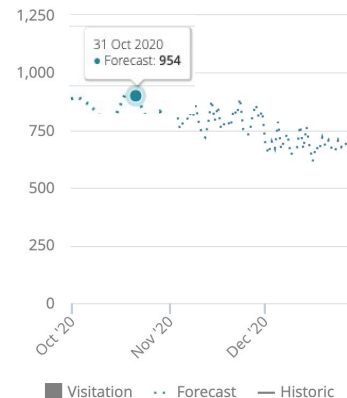
OPERATIONAL PLANNING



This prediction of visitation indicates that the afternoons will be busiest. The venue could consider tactics such as encouraging groups to visit in the mornings to distribute demand, or reducing staff shifts to the afternoons to reduce costs.

For cost reductions, match resources including staff and inventory to granular forecasts.

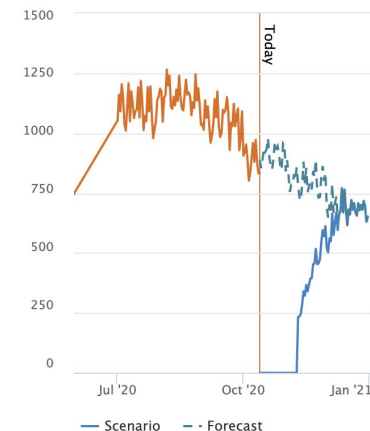
STRATEGIC PLANNING



This venue's daily visitation is predicting with a 95% expected accuracy, from a combination of time series and other factors, such as school terms, public holidays and onsite activities. This venue is not seeing any uplift around the holidays and could consider activities to achieve spikes.

To increase forecast accuracy, feed models a strong almanac calendar of what's on in and around the venue.

SCENARIO PLANNING



In this example, the venue is preparing an alternate scenario for the quarter ahead, in case it faces an imminent rolling closure and resulting demand impacts.

For easy simulation, use a standard forecast as a starting point and manually play constraints over the top to adjust.

4. Patterns

Visitation



Watch a video on analyzing patterns in visitation data

CALENDAR Q3
Jul 1 2020 to Sep 30 2020



In this view...

Visitation in most public places is primarily driven by time series factors, such as:

- Seasonal impact
- Days of the week
- Hours of the day

Often, gut feel guides a team's working knowledge of these patterns. Precisely measuring pattern impacts and tracking these closely over time, including analyzing their seasonal variation, helps better inform decisions around resource scheduling, activity planning and demand distribution.

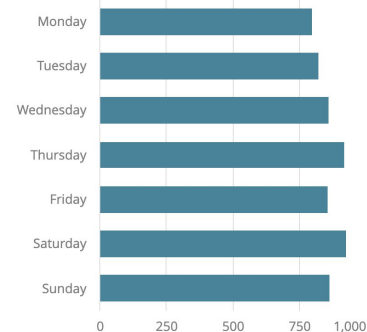
SEASONALITY

	TOTAL DAYS	DAILY AVERAGE	SEASONAL IMPACT
SPRING	12	366	▼ -56.8%
SUMMER	62	1,128	▲ 33.1%
FALL	92	919	▲ 8.3%
WINTER	91	649	▼ -23.5%

This venue had a shortened spring/summer season which also bore the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, but naturally saw pick up in the fall and a high season in summer.

Make a conscious strategic decision on whether to embrace seasonality to constrain costs or attempt to distribute off season demand through programming, marketing, offers etc.

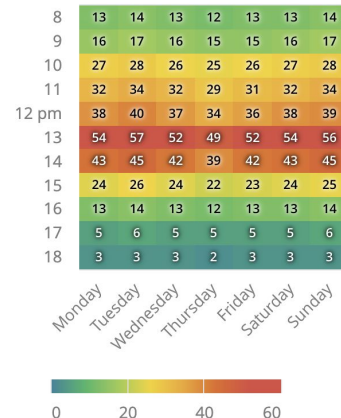
DAYS OF THE WEEK



Other than a typical Saturday boost, this venue has seen recently increased popularity on Thursdays following new variable pricing for night entries, previously the quietest day of the week in Q3.

Revisit seasonally or following major changes in and around the venue to reflect on decisions such as opening days, activity scheduling and pricing.

HOURS OF THE DAY



This venue is particularly popular from midday to mid afternoon. Improving its lunch and afternoon tea food and beverage appeal might help to increase average spend before and after these visits.

Revisit periodically or following change to reflect on decisions such as opening hours, resource scheduling and group bookings.

5. Impacts

Visitation



Watch a video on identifying influences on visitor behavior or correlations in visitation data

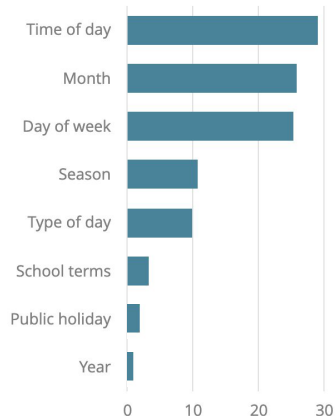
CALENDAR Q3
Jul 1 2020 to Sep 30 2020

In this view...

Analyzing impacts on visitation:

- Factor analysis
An outcome of using machine learning for predictions is the ability to analyze the contributing factors influencing visitor behavior, showing the comparative influence of both time and other features.
- Almanac impact
A simple way to view correlations is to classify the average impact by type with an instant visual and comparative percentage.
- Weather impact correlation
Correlating visitation with factors such as weather, particularly by sub factors such as conditions (in this case, temperature, windspeed, humidity, etc), also helps to understand the nuances of decisions to visit.

FACTOR ANALYSIS



With this example, the strongest factor in visitation patterns is the time of day, month, week or season. Comparatively, school terms and public holidays have a lesser impact.

Try conducting a factor analysis on visitation versus other behaviors such as attrition or outcomes such as revenue to build your attraction's model of visitor influences.

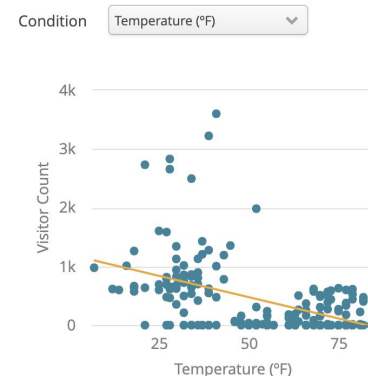
ALMANAC IMPACT

	TOTAL DAYS	DAILY AVERAGE	ALMANAC IMPACT
REGIONAL EVENT	10	647	▲ 55.9%
PUBLIC HOLIDAY	6	245	▼ -41.1%
SCHOOL TERM	199	415	NONE
CRUISE SHIP	N/A	N/A	N/A

In this venue, whenever there's an event such as a conference or sports game on in the city, visitation increases. However, the venue doesn't do as well during public holidays.

Analyze the seasons separately given holidays and regional events tend to be more frequent in summer months.

WEATHER IMPACT



In this venue, lower temperatures correlate with higher visitation.

Analyze the seasons separately given visitation is seasonal to begin with and weather usually so too. The steeper the line, the stronger the correlation (though not necessarily causation).

6. Visitor audiences

Visitation

CALENDAR Q3
Jul 1 2020 to Sep 30 2020 

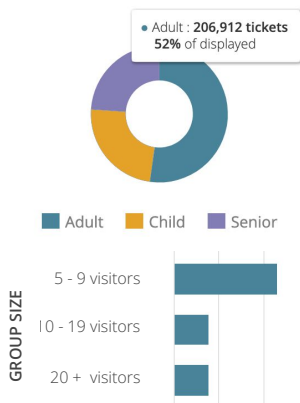
In this view...

- Demographics of tickets by type
- Group size distribution
- Visitor origin by neighborhood
- Catchments
- Channels

Ticketed admission provides detailed data to understand audiences - including type (often demographic), zip or postal code (visitor origin), purchase channel and more.

Without this, or to complement this data, other methods such as follow up surveys or exit intercept evaluation are required to learn more. Alternatively, micro intercepts such as WiFi captive portal polls can be used to capture small amounts of data (though will only represent a subset population of all visitors).

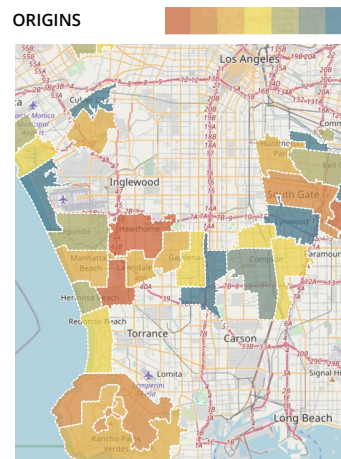
DEMOGRAPHIC



In this example, adults make up the majority of visitors, with most groups falling in the 5 - 9 visitor size.

If gaining demographic data by survey or interview, proceed inclusively and delicately if asking audience of age, gender or income.

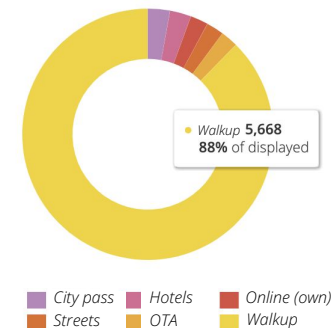
ORIGINS



In this example, locals comprise 62% of visitors and are spread over a corridor, with other areas unrepresented.

Typical catchments comprise locals (accessible by commuters), drive in (within a 2 hour drive), domestic tourist and international tourist. Combine with census data to extrapolate other demographic findings.

CHANNELS



In this example, 12% of visitors stem from a channel, with 4 of 5 of these being partners.

Additional analysis around channel partner settlement is a quick win area to increase revenues through assurance (making sure all revenues are accounted for in cash receipts).

7. Visitor outcome conversions

Visitation

CALENDAR Q3
Jul 1 2020 to Sep 30 2020



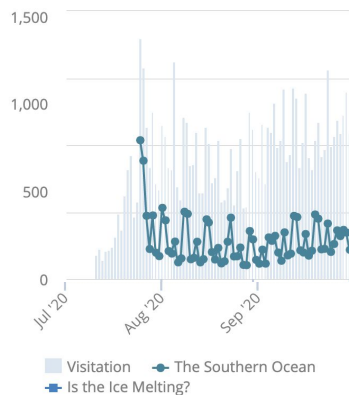
In this view...

- Activity conversion (exhibitions, experiences or events versus visits)
- Member conversion (member sign up or season pass purchase against visits)
- Commercial conversion (upsell or cross sell purchase against visits)

Additional visit efficacy measures:

- Visitor satisfaction (measured from NPS, sentiment or satisfaction scores)
- Dwell time distribution (measured from location analytics such as WiFi or RFID)
- Average revenue per visit (measured from various point of sale data sources)

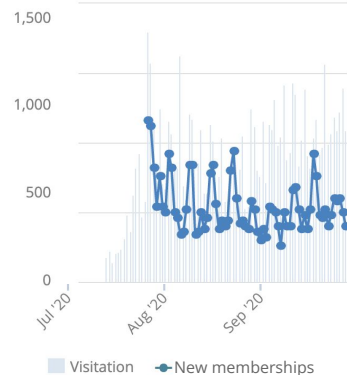
ACTIVITY CONVERSION



In this example, the exhibition sees the highest conversion rate at opening, with a more variable first half and a slow rise to closure.

Compare conversion rates between various exhibitions, experiences or events (based on ticket sold status date) to discover demand curves.

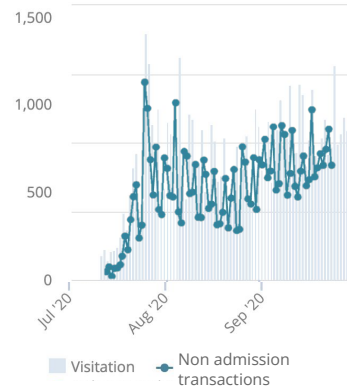
MEMBER CONVERSION



In this data, member conversion has been particularly high, correlating with a recent exhibition. When member conversion is higher than normal and correlated with an activity, this risk should be balanced with higher expected attrition in the year following the activity's conclusion, unless a similar new program is planned.

Split membership conversion by member product or type to see trends in how these perform.

COMMERCIAL CONVERSION



This data shows almost all visits coincide with a commercial transaction, which has been relatively stable. Increasing this rate is a significant revenue growth generator.

Have visitors scan their ticket (or members scan their card) for further data on spend distribution and correlation by audience.

Strategies and tactics

Where to from here?

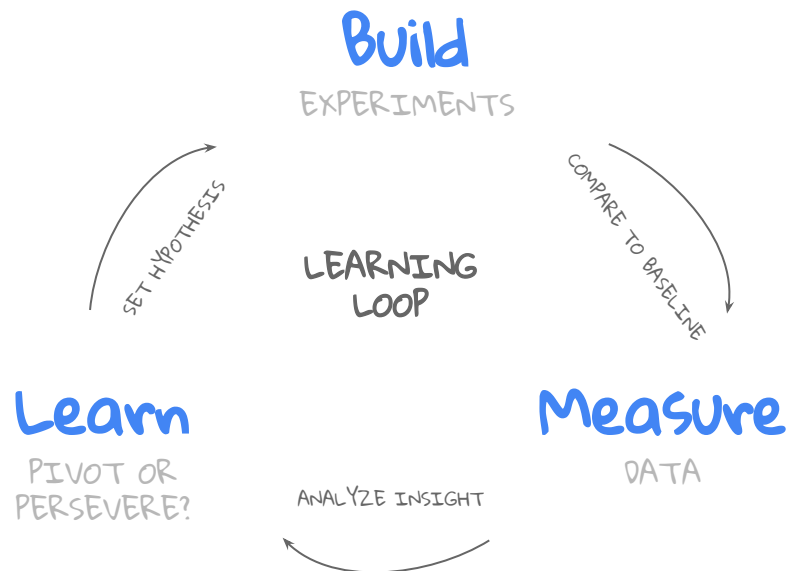
The goal of insight is to inform our thinking - to be actionable by seeding ideas, shaping discussions and making decisions. Through being insight inspired, high performance visitor attractions empower their teams to become lean and agile.

This involves achieving a learning loop - the feedback cycle of:

1. Using experiments to explore ideas and improvements
2. Gathering performance data from these tests
3. Determining whether to pivot or persevere as a result

The tighter this loop, the more shots at goal the team has, the steeper the growth curve. As a result, teams that master this style of thinking and collaboration are more likely to succeed.

For visitation, these loops could span operational elements such as opening days and hours, marketing components such as campaigns and offers and public programming such as events.



My action plan

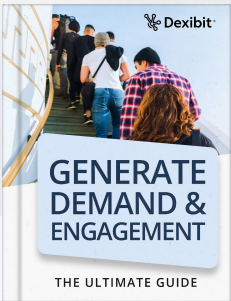
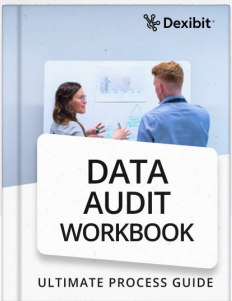
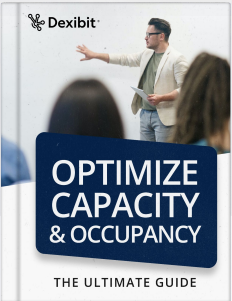
Here's what, so what.... now what?

Use this worksheet to form an innovation and improvement plan from your own data stories.

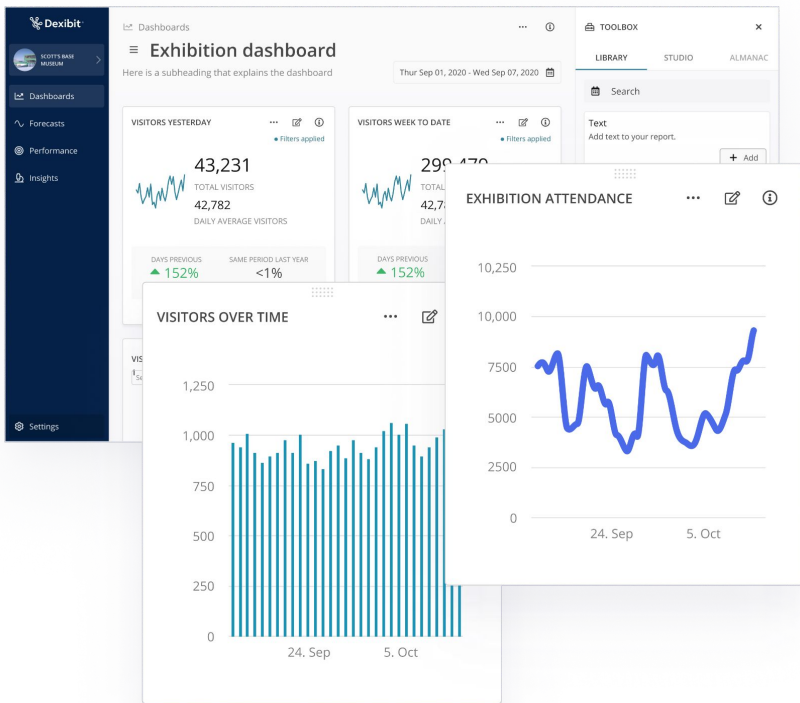
Insight	Hypothesis (strategy / tactic)	Experiment	Baseline prior change	Actual following test	Pivot or persevere?
Visitation low at noon	Visitors delaying their visit or leaving to have lunch elsewhere	Food truck with picnic blankets in the garden (trial for 1 month)	Average noon occupancy: 132	Average noon occupancy: 154	Persevere - likely to add nearly 8,000 visitors annually, analyze impact of onsite cafe

LEARN MORE

As the Visitor Attraction Industry's no.1 data and analytics platform, we've worked hard to uncover the most important themes which ensure that you and your team are providing world class visitor management.



ABOUT DEXIBIT



Big data and analytics, designed for your visitor attraction.

Track all of your exhibition and event attendance and revenue metrics in a single dashboard, and discover insights to inform your event strategies.

Get in touch to learn how we can work together to help you achieve your goals.

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