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"HOW THE NEW JERSEY STATE AQUARIUM WAS PROMOTED"

Beth Rose

A Thesis

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate Division of Rowan College
December 16, 1994**

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved 1/17/95

ABSTRACT

Beth J. Rose

**"How The New Jersey State Aquarium Was Promoted"
1994**

**Dr. Steve Shapiro
Corporate Public Relations**

This study determines how public relations was used to promote the New Jersey State Aquarium to persuade a skeptical public to overcome their hesitancy to come to Camden to visit the facility.

During its first year of operation, the New Jersey State Aquarium attracted more than one (1) million visitors, surpassing its projected goal.

The public relations plan was analyzed in nine different categories. The strategies included marketing, public relations, creativity, media, promotional membership, pricing, facility rental and group sales. The public relations campaign strategies included magazines, billboards, radio, television and a pre-opening press preview. The target market for each of these sub-strategies was identified. The Aquarium Public Relations Department was responsible for carrying out all nine of the above strategy elements.

Conclusions also reveal how the use of public relations contributed to the overall success of the Aquarium during its first year of operation.

MINI ABSTRACT

Beth J. Rose

**"How The New Jersey State Aquarium Was Promoted"
1994**

**Dr. Steve Shapiro
Corporate Public Relations**

This study examines how public relations was used to promote the New Jersey State Aquarium to persuade a skeptical public to overcome their hesitancy to come to Camden to visit the facility.

Conclusions of the study reveal how five major goals were reached, resulting in attendance of more than one (1) million visitors the first year.

BACKGROUND

CHAPTER I

Camden was not always a depressed city. Before the Depression and World War, Camden was a beautiful, prosperous city which contained many major factories, office complexes and attractive neighborhoods.

Charles Wolverton, the Camden County Prosecutor, spoke to a crowd during a celebration for the new Walt Whitman Hotel in 1924. He said, "Today Camden stands upon the threshold of a future so great in its possibilities, that no one will be so bold as to even attempt to outline the extent thereof, nor the limit thereto."¹

This was Camden County's most successful and prosperous decade to date and Wolverton's speech summed up the enthusiasm and hope of the county's citizens.

The county as a whole then boasted of a newly-fashioned bridge connecting it to Philadelphia, and the novelty of a newborn highway.

The construction of new office buildings, hotels and shopping centers were collectively ongoing, as well as a large ferry terminal to help enhance the harbor.

Camden City was at the very center of all of these advances, which were collectively being referred to as the

"Greater Camden Movement."² Even the political leaders of the 1920's, Presidents Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, supported the Greater Camden Movement.

The Benjamin Franklin Bridge, completed July 1, 1926, is considered to be the greatest symbol of the Greater Camden Movement. It was originally called the Camden Bridge when it opened in 1926, but was later renamed in 1956. Approximately four million cars drove over the bridge just one year after it opened. Some of the Philadelphia residents who came over the bridge had never seen Camden City before.

A newspaper reporter overheard a passerby say, "It looks almost like Philadelphia, only it's cleaner."³

More hospitals, schools, hotels and office complexes were being built, almost until there was an overcrowding problem. The new Stanley Theater opened in the city and many important celebrities went to see the first show.

All of this new growth eventually affected the real estate market in a positive way.

Construction materials and mortgage money which had been earlier repressed by the war were exploding out of control. The real estate bonanza reached its peak in 1925. Just about every available section of land was bought at ridiculously low prices. During this frenzied state, there seemed to be a lack of regard for details. Possible dangers of pollution due to the proximity of houses to factories, and the overcrowding of neighborhoods were overlooked. Increased traffic was not well

planned for, nor the correct sewage connections. This poor planning eventually led to problems for Camden City. For the time being, however, the city continued to thrive.

Interest in a Camden airport grew in 1927, and in 1929 Central Airport's opening ceremonies were held. By early 1929, Camden City was booming with even more roads, wharfs, bridges and real estate. House and automobile sales continued to rise at a constant pace each year. Camden City residents were looking forward to the future. The excitement of growth temporarily overshadowed the beginnings of an increase in air pollution, traffic congestion and crime.

"The inertia which has engulfed Camden City's government will contaminate the remainder of the county,"⁴ Pennsauken Republican Party Leader W. Leslie Rogers charged in May of 1958.

Roger's comments were an attack on then Mayor elect Brunner, and some local Camden Democrats on whom he blamed the area's urban problems.

"This political interloper has the effrontery to come in from his suburban retreat" retorted the mayor, "and tell the people of Camden that he alone can best determine the destiny of our city."⁵

This Brunner-Rogers dialogue reflected a few basic trends evolving in Camden during the mid 1950's. Suburban Camden was becoming increasingly prosperous, while the urban section was falling apart.

New suburban shopping centers, industrial parks and housing were attracting employees of many large companies and investment firms out of the city. Many downtown business centers closed and more and more houses became abandoned, gutted shells.

Although many religious and community groups fought to try to save Camden City, the situation worsened each year. Buildings stood empty and neighborhoods faced decay, while violence, crime, and poverty quickly accelerated. The people who could afford to moved as far away from the city as possible, while those who could not, stayed.

Even though Camden City had recovered quite nicely from the war, too many decades of insufficient urban planning had gone by and finally reached the crisis point by the mid fifties.

In January of 1954 the associate editor of the Camden Courier Post, Jane Stretch, commented, "We have not had any new real-sized industry come into Camden for the past twenty years. There have been some enlargements, but many are moving away."⁶ Unfortunately, even her company was one of the early firms to flee the city and move to the suburbs in 1955.

In 1952, the Camden-Philadelphia ferry vacated and fire destroyed any parts left behind. The Camden County Courthouse, a fifties landmark, was torn down and the Tower Theater was wrecked and turned into a parking lot.

While more large businesses and factories moved or succumbed to wreckers and fires, a few still remained. Amidst the commotion, the city's three main concerns, New York Shipbuilding, Campbell Soup Company and RCA stayed. Their presence left the city with a small dash of hope for better times to come.

In the 1960's, many Camden residents felt more optimistic. Much of this was due to the Kennedy administration. The administration promised to reduce poverty and unemployment. They planned for better housing and fought against the even then present racial discrimination.

"I urge you to do everything within your ability to eliminate delay," President Kennedy told Mayor-Elect, Alfred E. Pierce. "I promise you the full cooperation of the Federal Government to this end."⁷

Many urban construction plans began and there seemed to be a growing hope of recovery. There were rumors of new companies and factories being planned, and even a \$100 million sports complex. After Kennedy's assassination in 1963, this short period of hope quickly diminished. The U.S. Civil Rights Movement questioned the possibilities of urban renewal and violence grew. Due to Mayor Pierce's strong efforts to involve minorities in political decision policies, Camden City was able to put off violent racial wars until the late 1960's. Racial tension grew during this period and the City's Afro-American community almost doubled. It was during this

time that New York Shipbuilding Corporation closed down. The shipyard had long stood for hope of a new beginning.

Mayor Pierce announced that he would not run again in 1969. The new Mayor-Elect, Joseph J. Nardi, made a strong effort to reduce taxes, attract more industries, and help uplift sagging community spirit. Nardi started a Community Relations Department and was supported by Campbell Soup, RCA and Arnold Cream. Arnold Cream, also known as Jersey Joe Walcott, was one of Camden City's most respected residents. The Department of Finance also supported Nardi's efforts. In August 1970, Nardi's Corporation started to undertake the project of rebuilding the city. The Camden Courier Post reported on the project. They said:

"It can be confidently predicted that history will show that August 6, 1970, put a definite period to the era in which Camden slid downhill and began another era brighter than many of us has had faith enough to envision."⁸

Just about five years later, the Camden Center City Corporation broke its contract to rebuild Camden. Then, finally, the growing trouble reached its climax in late August, 1971 when minority groups rioted for several nights. There was fire bombing, looting and burglarizing. Observers marked these events as the worst time ever in Camden City. This was noted as the all time low in Camden City history and nobody really knew if and when the city would ever recover.

The idea for an aquarium came about in 1983 when Campbell Soup, RCA, the City of Camden, Rutgers University and Cooper Hospital hired American City Corporation to develop a plan to improve the waterfront area of Camden City.

On New Year's Eve 1983, a bill allowing the New Jersey Sports Authority to construct a baseball stadium was changed at the last minute. It was amended to include the authority to build aquariums.

Cooper's Ferry Development Association, a public-private corporation, was formed to develop the plan to build the Aquarium on the Camden City waterfront. Thomas Corcoran was appointed the Director of Cooper's Ferry Development Association (CFDA), and John Grady was appointed Vice President.

CFDA put together a management services plan for the Aquarium and entered into a partnership with the State Economic Development Authority.

In 1985, CFDA conducted a feasibility study which revealed that the desire for such an attraction on the Camden City waterfront was widely supported. They also projected that the Aquarium could attract almost one million visitors per year. This study was conducted with the help of the Philadelphia Zoo. The late William Donaldson was President of the Zoo at the time. He had originally wanted to build the Aquarium at the zoo, but did not have enough land to do it.

According to Matt Schwendeman, Vice President of Finance at the Zoo, they had two goals in mind with their plan to build the Aquarium in Camden. The first one was to help revitalize the Camden waterfront area, and the second was to provide an additional cultural experience to stress wildlife conservation.

The Philadelphia Zoo helped establish the Aquarium, designed the policies and procedures of operation and provides management consulting services on an ongoing basis.

By January 1989, four years after the Cooper's Ferry's feasibility study, the monies for building the Aquarium were finally appropriated and construction plans began.

Excavating and plumbing contracts were awarded during the next few months.

In December 1989, ground was broken for the new Aquarium.

The underground construction was completed May 4, 1990, and electrical superstructure work begun.

Contracts were drawn up May 26, 1990 to help Camden anticipate increased traffic and parking. An 800 car parking garage was proposed with designs on how the buses should unload the visitors to the Aquarium.

William Donaldson wrote in a Philadelphia Inquirer article, "This Aquarium will be an outstanding environmental and cultural resource for the State, and indeed for the region."⁹ The admission rates were announced in the Inquirer as well. Adults would pay \$8.50, children ages 2-11 \$5.50,

seniors and students \$7.00. The New Jersey State Aquarium is owned by the State of New Jersey and operated by the Philadelphia Zoo. It is built on 4.5 acres and contains 35,000 feet of exhibition space. It features custom built tanks filled with 300 species of fish. The largest tank is a 760,000 gallon "open ocean" tank, almost twice the size of Baltimore's largest. It also features outdoor, as well as indoor, displays.

In 1992, Governor Florio announced a February 29th opening for the new New Jersey State Aquarium.

At this point the Aquarium was ready to open its doors to the public. All major details were finalized, including transportation, parking access and security. It was still unknown however, how many visitors would come or where they would come from.

Fortunately, the need to promote the Aquarium was foreseen even before ground was broken. The following public relations plan explains in detail how the Aquarium was promoted to a very hesitant public.

CHAPTER II

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

How public relations promoted the New Jersey State Aquarium to persuade a skeptical public to overcome their hesitancy to come to Camden and visit the facility.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF STUDY

The Philadelphia Zoo helped design the New Jersey State Aquarium. Their marketing team was responsible for writing Aquarium policies and procedures and even suggestions for hiring Aquarium employees.

The zoo was most importantly responsible for writing the pre-opening public relations plan for the Aquarium's Public Relations Department to closely follow.

The plan to promote the New Jersey State Aquarium was written for the time period of July 1, 1991 to September 30, 1992. The New Jersey State Aquarium opened February 29, 1992.

Data for this study was collected several ways.

Background information to show the evolution of Camden City was collected from Courier Post articles dated back to 1922, Camden Morning Post articles from 1926, the 1924 Wolverton Papers, and a book titled, *Camden County, New Jersey, 1616-1976 - A Narrative History* by Jeffrey M. Dorway and Philip English Mackey. Camden history information was also obtained from an interview with John Grady, the Vice President of Coopers Ferry Development Association.

Additional data was collected from the actual Aquarium Public Relations promotional plan provided by Dell L. Fioravanti, Philadelphia Zoo Vice President of Marketing.

Data was also obtained through telephone and face-to-face interviews conducted with the following key people. All of these people were directly involved in promotional planning for the Aquarium (and considered to be reliable sources of information):

- Linda Riley - Aquarium Public Relations Manager
- Todd Land - Aquarium Marketing Director
- Wendy Lennon - Aquarium Community Affairs Director
- James Wallace - South Jersey Chamber of Commerce President
- NJ State Senator Walter Rand (the sponsor of the Senate bill which allocated the money for construction of the Aquarium).
- John Grady - Cooper's Ferry Development Association President of Finance (CFDA oversees development of the Aquarium).
- Dell L. Fioravanti - Philadelphia Zoo Vice President of Marketing.
- Pat Jones - Aide to State Senator Walter Rand

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The collected data is arranged to show nine different categories of pre-opening planning strategies which promoted the Aquarium.

The plan also includes the Zoo's marketing staff's goals for the Aquarium and the description and location of the target market they hoped to reach.

Conclusions in Chapter VI evaluate the plan and specify goals that were reached and progress that was made.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The following is the public relations plan which outlines specific goals and strategies to promote the New Jersey State Aquarium. The plan was created by the public relations/marketing team at the Philadelphia Zoo, headed by Dell L. Fioravanti, Vice President of Marketing for the Zoo. The ideas and strategies written in the plan were intended as guidelines for the Public Relations Department at the Aquarium to follow closely.

The time line for this plan was July 1, 1991 through September 30, 1992.

According to Linda Riley, Aquarium Public Relations Manager, the plan was followed as closely as possible, so one can assume that each strategy was in fact carried out.¹⁰

GOALS OF PLAN

1. To build a strong image and identity for the Aquarium.
2. To generate attendance to the Aquarium -- at least one million visitors during the first year of operation.

3. To build a constituency of individuals who will not only attend the Aquarium, but support the institution financially through donations.
- *4. To create more jobs for Camden City residents.
- *5. To attract the private sector of investors to the city.
- * Pat Jones, Aide to NJ State Senator Walter Rand, explained that these goals could only be met by the success of the Aquarium. She stated that the Aquarium was designed as an "anchor", a means to reach more goals and ultimately improve the overall image of the City of Camden.¹¹

THE MISSION STATEMENT

(The Mission Statement is to understand and address the marketing challenges facing the Aquarium in 1992. It is important to have a thorough knowledge of the Aquarium mission, its potential market and its competitors.)

"The New Jersey Academy for Aquatic Sciences is a private non-profit institution whose foremost mission is to the promote the understanding and protection of aquatic life and habitats, especially in and around the State of New Jersey.

"In performing this mission, the Academy will operate the New Jersey State Aquarium at Camden and will demonstrate innovation and excellence in public education, aquatic animal husbandry and visitor services.

"The Academy will strive to foster personal and professional achievement in its employees and to provide them with a stimulating and supportive working environment. The Academy will also strive to be a responsible member of its communities, assisting in economic and social redevelopment by providing citizens with ongoing opportunities for employment and cultural self-enrichment."¹²

THE TARGET MARKET

The Target Market for the Aquarium includes the entire State of New Jersey and beyond. The market is divided according to the following standards:

The Philadelphia ADI (Area of Dominant Influence) - 0-50 miles:

This area contains eighteen counties in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. It represents a potential market of 7 million residents.

100-Mile Radius:

This area contains the geography from the 50 to 100 mile radius from Camden. It represents a potential market of 9.3 million residents.

Tourists to Philadelphia who are not from Pennsylvania or New Jersey:

This group makes up a potential market of about 1.3 million people annually.

IDENTIFICATION OF PROSPECTS

Philadelphia ADI:

Resident families headed by one or more adults age 30-44 with children ages 2-11. Secondly, senior citizens, resident groups including scouts, schools, daytrippers, camps, recreation centers, youth groups, church groups, corporate and meeting groups. Philadelphia Zoo members.

100-Mile Radius:

Daytripper families. Groups including youth groups, bus tours, schools, employee groups, senior citizens and scouts. National Aquarium in Baltimore members. New York Zoos and Aquarium visitors and members.

Travel Trade:

These prospects include receptive and per capita tour operators, hotels, car rentals agencies, casinos, convention and visitor bureaus, state tourism bureaus, visitor centers and other industry segments.

PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES OUTLINE

The elements of the following strategies include:

1. Marketing Strategies
2. Creative Strategies

- *3. Public Relations Campaign Strategies and
 - A. Pre-Opening Press Preview, B. Magazines, C. Billboards, radio and television
- 4. Media Strategies
- 5. Promotion Strategy
- 6. Membership Strategies
- 7. Price Strategies
- 8. Facility Rental Strategies
- 9. Group Sales Strategies
- * Although this section is actually called "Public Relations Campaign Strategies", it should be noted that the Aquarium Public Relations Department was responsible for carrying out all nine of the above strategy elements.

1. MARKETING STRATEGIES

It was recommended that the public opening of the Aquarium be held on February 29 and March 1, 1992. This allowed two months for the staff to work out any problems with the outdoor exhibits and four weeks of preview events for VIPs, trustees, corporate sponsors, aquarium members, media representatives, educators, travel/trade professionals and local residents. The public opening event was scheduled at the beginning of the upswing in the projected calendar year's

attendance cycle. At this time the greatest level of attendance, attention and excitement could be generated and was anticipated to support a successful opening.

The marketing strategy primarily included the use of public relations through the period of July 1, 1991 to April 30, 1992. Public relations efforts focused heavily on establishing a strong identity for the Aquarium by building high public awareness of its mission, logo and exhibit focus. In conjunction with public relations efforts, promotions played a key role in the plan to solidly position the Aquarium in the corporate business community and establish strong vendor partnerships.

Substantial effort was devoted to the use of direct mail for certain key target groups, including school populations, community groups, zoo members and travel and tourist trade representatives.

An important element of the marketing strategy was the use of all available opportunities to cross market the Philadelphia Zoo and New Jersey State Aquarium at Camden. Care was taken to maintain and strengthen the individual identities of the two institutions. The relationship was presented as a professional affiliation. Market studies showed that the Zoo's 47,000 family members and 1.3 million visitors annually were two of the most likely groups to visit the Aquarium.

OBJECTIVES:Short Term:

To achieve a 5 to 6% share of the Philadelphia ADI market and a 0.5% share of the 100-mile radius market within the first six months of the calendar year 1992. This was projected to generate an attendance of 400,000 people.

Long Term:

During fiscal year 1993, to obtain a 9% share of the Philadelphia ADI market and to achieve target goals of 3% of the 100-mile radius market and 10% of the tourist market. These objectives were projected to generate an attendance of one million visitors.

2. CREATIVE STRATEGIES

The most important prerequisite of great creative work is sound strategic thinking. The first media communication became the target's first and most lasting impression. That impression must effectively establish the positioning statement and address objectives. Creative must present the Aquarium as the newest and most innovative facility and must sufficiently intrigue prospects to compel them to visit. The following strategies were designed to address specific target audience needs and provide additional creative direction.

Creative Positioning

All advertisements positioned the Aquarium as a family oriented, safe, clean, accessible, year-round attraction. The facility is more "alive" than a museum, more "hands-on" than the Zoo and more educational and less raucous than an amusement park.

Copy Themes

All advertisements, public relations efforts, collateral and promotional materials for the Aquarium included words and/or images which communicate the concepts of new, dynamic, engaging, informative and fun. Advertising copy was written to focus on all aspects of "new." It is a new attraction, it is a new concept for this marketplace and its design is unique and new in comparison to other aquaria. The copy had to convey the sense of discovery each visitor will experience.

Variations of a "Waves of Excitement" theme line and key features stated in the positioning statement were to be used in developing advertisements, collateral and promotional materials.

The Aquarium's convenient proximity to major northeastern metropolitan cities, especially Philadelphia with its wealth of cultural and historical sites, was also addressed.

Objectives for Target Markets

General Audience:

The Aquarium provides an exploratory adventure that can be experienced simultaneously by all family members. It is such an extraordinary experience that it is not attainable anywhere else.

Casual Visitor/Family:

Public relations efforts and advertisements in mass media aimed to build advance sales and attendance. Advertisements included and emphasized the Aquarium's appeal to all age groups. The advertisements were also intended to provide a sense of adventure and discovery of the "new world" that awaits visitors.

Seniors:

Generally, this group was positioned as people who may visit the Aquarium in the company of family and friends. Copy points, as they appeared in collateral material, stressed safety, guest amenities and available discounts. No advertisements were planned to exclusively target this group. However, efforts were made to reach a significant number of seniors through travel trade promotions.

Travel and Tourism:

Advertisements directed at this market were specifically designed to spur advance group or individual admission reservations. Copy points in direct mail pieces and print advertisements emphasized newness, proximity, guest and group amenities and available discounts.

Schools and Other Groups:

Emphasis was placed on the importance of the aquarium as an integral part of their organization's education and community outreach efforts. Copy points included the types of group accommodations available, advance reservations/sales, education programs, lunchroom availability and discounts.

Corporate and Individual Facility Rentals

Advertisements and brochures were created to emphasize the allure of a new party rental facility which boasts an unequalled setting, convenient proximity and spectacular views. Copy was written to suggest the suitability and flexibility of the facilities for various business and personal functions. Advertisements pointed out that there is no other facility comparable to the Aquarium for holding their event.

3. THE PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES

The campaign was designed to educate the public about the new facility, to communicate that it is a family entertainment experience where everyone has fun while they learn and to inform the public of its accessibility. It was intended to accomplish this through a comprehensive strategy which included:

1. Publicity
2. Community Relations
3. Special Events and Promotions

1. Publicity

The plan included the standard "nuts and bolts" releases, but also brought an approach that stretched the usual boundaries of public relations to include exciting and interesting elements carefully targeted and expertly executed.

The plan secured the editorial calendars from all local media and national trade and consumer travel media to develop stories pertinent to the issues and increase the likelihood of publication.

It also concentrated efforts to reach the suburban papers that served a significant number of potential customers living in the outlying areas.

2. Community Relations

It was essential that the Aquarium receive the support of the surrounding community.

The plan engaged in a dialogue with community leaders and groups to develop their support and enthusiasm. This took the form of community events or projects involving the local neighborhood. It included a special preview of the Aquarium for local residents and a periodic newsletter informing the community of events and activities at the Aquarium.

3. Special Events and Promotions

Public relations promotions (these were promotions intended to generate publicity) also played a key role in the strategy. Public events were planned and implemented in order to draw media attention to the project.

The above is an outline of Public Relations Strategies. The next three sections: "A" The Press Preview, "B" Magazines and "C" Billboards, Television and Radio explain in more detail some of the successful pre-opening plans that were carried out.

A. THE PRE-OPENING PRESS PREVIEW

The Press-Preview was run by Linda Riley at the Aquarium.

First, a press list was prepared including local politicians and hundreds of reporters on the guest list.

According to Riley, reporters were invited from New Jersey to California, Canada, Japan and everywhere in between. Governors Thomas Kean and James Florio were invited, as well as all of the county freeholders and local politicians.¹³

A press kit was prepared for reporters which included:

Two news releases:

1. A calendar of events for the year, broken down by months. This was created to give the press an overview of which special events were planned for the year so more stories could be written.

2. "Dangers of the Deep", a news release which explained an attraction which featured the world's most dangerous creatures, a four-foot electric eel, spiky lionfish, toothy eels, young alligators and more. This release also provided location and parking information, admission prices, hours and the Aquarium's telephone number.

The kit also included two color brochures:

1. A color brochure with pictures to highlight different attractions at the Aquarium, special features, refreshment/cafe information, the gift shop and membership programs.
2. A color brochure about the Delaware River Ferry Schedule. The Riverbus provides a quick, pleasant passage between Penn's Landing in Philadelphia and the NJ State Aquarium in Camden. The brochure points out how to use The Riverbus to avoid traffic, bridge crossing, parking fees, hassles and wasted time. The brochure shows pictures of the Riverbus and provides an 800 number for more information.

Also included in the press kit were:

1. A location, parking, and direction sheet.
2. A public transportation information sheet, which covered ferry, train, and jitney times and prices.
3. A Facility Fact Sheet all about groundbreaking, indoor and outdoor exhibits, building site information, daily demonstrations, visitor services, and design and construction information.
4. An Exhibit Highlight Sheet which went into detail about the trout stream, open ocean tank, shark display and many more unusual exhibits.
5. An Entertainment Fact Sheet. This sheet explained many other forms of entertainment and amusement in the waterfront area besides the Aquarium. It included information about Wiggin's Park Marina, Walt Whitman Cultural Arts Center, Walt Whitman House, The Riverbus Ferry, Penn's Landing, The Campbell Museum and the Stedman Art Gallery.

Lastly, the kits included the first issue of a quarterly newsletter called "Wavelength." The Wavelength is a large,

color, six page fold out newsletter featuring activities and events at the Aquarium and at the Camden Waterfront. It contains pictures of Aquarium exhibits and another calendar of events. It also featured a story about a seal and his trainer (at the Aquarium) with a poster size picture of the seal. The press kits also included Riley's business card.

Riley measured the success of the press preview by the number of publications which printed positive articles prior to the opening of the Aquarium. Some of the most well known publications included:

The Washington Post, USA Today, Boston Globe, Wall Street Journal, Philadelphia Magazine, Sport Fishing, Recommend Magazine, Underwater USA, Dallas Morning News, Marin Independent Journal, Salt Lake Tribune, Ottawa Citizen, Orlando Sentinel, Central Record, Cape May County Herald, New Brunswick Home News, New Jersey Business, Afro Times, Chattanooga News, Architecture Adweek's Marketing Week, Business Philadelphia, Philadelphia Inquirer, Courier Post of South Jersey, Carpenter Magazine, Newark Star Ledger, Asbury Park Press, Atlantic City Press, Gloucester County Times, Burlington County Times, Doylestown Intelligencer, Compressed Air Magazine, American Printer, Mid-Atlantic Group Tour Magazine, Philadelphia Daily News, Bergen County Record, New Hope Gazette, Jewish Exponent, Landsdale Reporter, Allentown Morning Call, - even the National Enquirer!

Also, according to Riley, as a result of the Press Preview, the New Jersey Network created a documentary highlighting the Aquarium's collection and opening.¹⁴

B. MAGAZINES

"News Network" consists of four magazines. They are *Newsweek*, *Time*, *U.S. News and World Report* and *Sports Illustrated*.

News Network covers readers across the range of editorial preferences. These national weekly magazines provide quality and immediacy and elicit credibility and respect from their readers.

The total subscription only circulation of *News Network* is 107,900.

The *Network* covers the Delaware Valley, Burlington, Camden and Gloucester counties.

The following chart shows the impressive demographic statistics of the *News Network* readership. The source for this chart is the 1989/1990 SMRB Double Database Market Statistics, 1980 Census. All population, impression and reach figures stated in thousands.

	TOTAL ADULTS 18+	PROFESS/ MANAGERIAL	ATTENDED/ GRADUATED COLLEGE	\$30,000+	HOUSE HOLD \$40,000	INCOME \$50,000+
BASE-THREE TIMES						
GROSS IMPRESSIONS	2870	897	1316	2328	1782	1114
REACH	1021	241	311	669	439	270
% COVERAGE	44.7	62.4	61.4	54.5	60.6	63.2
AVERAGE FREQUENCY	2.9	3.7	4.2	3.5	4.1	4.1

The ads in the *Network* focused on "support the Aquarium and support New Jersey". Geographically, the *News Network* included Cherry Hill, Mercer, Monmouth/Ocean, Middlesex/Somerset, Morris/Warren, Bergen/Passaic and Essex counties for a total subscription circulation of 369,510. The *Home Network* included the Southern Jersey and Northern Jersey editions for a total subscription circulation of 121,910.

C. BILLBOARDS, TELEVISION AND RADIO

After the Press Preview, there were two overall grand opening campaigns run simultaneously starting in August of 1991.

The first involved the outdoor painted bulletins (billboards)) and the second involved a special fund allocated by the State specifically to purchase media and offset any negative perceptions regarding location.

Billboards: Nine outdoor locations were purchased. The number and locations were determined according to: 1. traffic patterns, 2. metro population concentrations and 3. three twenty five mile concentric geographical circles from the Aquarium. Four locations were concentrated in the Philadelphia metro areas, one bridge location, one I-95 location, one Roosevelt Boulevard location and one Schuylkill location. The other locations included the Northeast near Allentown, Wilmington, Northern Jersey and Central New Jersey.

Special Fund: This budget was used to purchase eight weeks of television and eight weeks of radio in the Philadelphia ADI.

The intention was to generate a high level of awareness in the largest tourist market in the state. A company called Krain Outdoor donated an entire fleet of jitneys and all displays at no charge for 16 weeks. The Aquarium purchased 50 curb and street sign displays for six months.

According to Riley, a detailed analysis of the effectiveness of these campaigns is not yet complete, however, she stated the total visitor level achieved is a testament to the Aquarium's overall initial success.¹⁵

4. MEDIA STRATEGIES

Media Objective:

1. To reach adults 25-49 with children 2-11.
Senior Citizens and Tourists
2. Media were used which achieve a high degree of reach against this audience because reach is of strategic importance in generating meaningful levels of exposure.
3. Media provided minimal levels of exposure during the Introductory Phase in order to sufficiently support the opening and other marketing efforts.
4. Media were used which effectively compliment and communicate the Aquarium's image.

5. The Aquarium's paid advertising appeared primarily in the Philadelphia ADI since this represents the greatest potential. Exceptions to this are those special or smaller markets which were targeted through direct mail or travel trade advertising.
6. Flexibility was maintained in order to react quickly to various market conditions.

Media Strategy

The strategy included a mix of outdoor, radio and television that takes into consideration target audience reach and frequency in conjunction with geographic coverage and media environment.

The Media Plan required a more in-depth use of paid media in order to assure the Aquarium's share of the market during the prime visitor season. It included the continued use of outdoor and television and radio. This strategy assured greater return on the media investment because the dollars were allocated against the greatest potential selling period.

Television and radio schedules took a traditional flighting pattern of two weeks on and two weeks off for a total of six weeks from mid-July through September, 1992.

Outdoor was used extensively for mass market awareness against all targets and strong directional support to Aquarium-bound visitors. The exact type and extent of outdoor used was dependent on location and availability. Outdoor types included:

- painted bulletins
- posters
- rotaries
- backlits
- bus shelters
- train cards

Television:

Television was recommended because it provided the dynamic elements of sight and sound. Research and experience have confirmed that television performs the best of all selling environments because it comes the closest to personal selling.

Television and radio consisted of PSAs and promotional support. This created no actual out-of-pocket expenses to the Aquarium.

Radio:

Radio was recommended because it is an excellent supporting medium to other more "mass" media. But it also played an important role for these reasons:

- Promotional support and opportunities
- High frequency medium
- Excellent for mobile populations
- Excellent summertime medium
- Flexibility
- Local coverage

5. PROMOTION STRATEGY

The Aquarium aggressively sought and utilized promotional partners to achieve its goals of building awareness and attendance. This allowed the Aquarium to offset costs and to create exciting events which not only drew visitors but provided them with value-added and enriched visitor experiences. In addition, promotions helped provide the Aquarium with valuable media exposure. In exchange for donations of product or advertising time, the Aquarium offered promotional partners a limited number of discount admission coupons and/or advertisement exposure.

The Aquarium has a variety of educational programs and private events to provide sponsors with the opportunity to be publicly associated with New Jersey's newest, most dynamic attraction. These were included as promotional opportunities.

6. MEMBERSHIP STRATEGIES

Objectives

Short Term:

Build a general awareness of the institution and total membership of 10,000 members by the end of 1992.

Long Term:

Reach a level of 20,000 members by the end of 1993.

Individuals join an institution for one or both of two reasons:

1. For the benefits offered by the institution.
2. For a sense of belonging.

Membership income offers an institution a stable financial base shielded to some degree from seasonal trends, weather or short-term economic fluctuations.

Benefits to be offered to members of the Aquarium included:

- free admission for 12 months,
- members-only entrance privileges,
- exclusive members events,
- member publications,
- aquarium gift shop discounts,
- discounts on educational programs, and
- discounts on Philadelphia Zoo memberships.

It was expected that because the Aquarium was new and a great source of pride for state residents, many individuals would be eager to join the Aquarium at philanthropic levels.

It was proposed, therefore, to offer two overall levels of individual membership:

1. General membership which stressed economic benefits.
2. Upper level categories which stressed belonging and exclusivity.

Lower Level Membership Categories:

As with general admission, membership at the lower levels is price sensitive. The pricing strategy proposed was to price the family membership at the cost a family of four would pay for two

visits per year. This resulted in the following price structure for the lower membership levels:

Dual.....	\$45.00.....	Admits individual and one guest.
Family.....	\$55.00.....	Admits two adults and all children in household under age 18.
Family Plus...	\$85.00.....	Admits two adults and all children in household under age 18 PLUS two guests at every visit.

Upper Level Membership Categories:

Traditionally, organizations bring new members in at the general membership categories and then attempt to convert them to the upper philanthropic levels. However, the New Jersey State Aquarium at Camden was new and had at this point the option of offering exclusive incentives to pre-opening upper level charter members. There was, therefore, a window of opportunity to attract these upper level members from the start.

Four upper level membership categories were established at \$125, \$250, \$500 and \$1,000. These members received:

1. The basic benefits of a Family Plus member.
2. Invitations to an Aquarium preview during the month before opening.
3. Permanent recognition in the building as charter members if they joined before January 1, 1993.

Membership Sales Strategies:

1. The first membership acquisition for the Aquarium was to be directed to zoo members. Prior to this acquisition mailing, zoo members were informed of the Aquarium's

plans and membership categories through their exclusive magazine, ZOO ONE. Immediately following, in October, they received their first membership acquisition which included all category options and a \$25 discount on the \$125 level.

2. In November, a 400,000 piece mailing was sent to selected households in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. This mailing offered all categories but focused on the opportunity to preview the Aquarium for those who joined at the upper levels.
3. After opening, memberships were solicited by mail to targeted individuals at the following times: April (250,000 pieces), June (100,000 pieces), October (400,000 pieces) and April 1993 (250,000 pieces).

7. PRICE STRATEGIES

Since the largest single source of revenue for the Aquarium comes from casual visitors, the price strategy focused most heavily on this group. Aquariums are market driven institutions and as such, attendance at these institutions is price sensitive. Thus, it was important to position the price within the competitive framework.

Several factors positively impact on a pricing strategy:

1. The facility is new and novel.

2. There is limited physical capacity with anticipated high demand.
3. Fiscal reserves are needed to support future expenses and growth.
4. Rates must be positioned appropriately in view of comparable local and national attractions.

Factors which justify lower prices:

1. The need to build a strong perception of being a public service organization accessible to most socio-economic groups.
2. The need to gain broad exposure by maximizing volume of visitors.
3. Positioning the facility as an acceptable alternative to competitive options.
4. Building an image of an excellent value/price relationship.

Recommended Price Structure

Taking the above price strategies and revenue sources into consideration, it was recommended to position the Aquarium in the middle of the competitive field. Based on the prices below, Aquarium admission for a family of four was set at \$28.00. While this is more than admission for a family of four at the Academy of Natural Sciences (\$20.00) or the Philadelphia Zoo (\$21.00), it compares quite favorably to the Franklin Institute (\$31.00), the National Aquarium in Baltimore (\$36.50) and Sesame Place (\$67.00).

The Admission Price Recommendations were as follows:

Adults.....	\$8.50
Children (2-11).....	\$5.50
Students (with ID).....	\$7.00
Seniors (65+).....	\$7.00
Groups (15 or more individuals):	
Adults.....	\$7.00
Children.....	\$4.50
Schools.....	\$4.00 (flat rate)
Tour Operators.....	\$6.00 (flat rate)

8. AQUARIUM FACILITY RENTAL STRATEGIES

It was the goal to reach a total revenue of \$350,000 in fiscal '93.

The rental program required an aggressive advertising stance to compete with the other major cultural rental facilities. The advertisements promoted the size and appropriateness of the Aquarium for specific events, highlighted the view of Philadelphia and included the tag line "Put Some Splash into your Next Bash." The recommended media publication list included:

- Applause Magazine
- Philadelphia Magazine
- Inside Magazine
- Main Line Magazine

This group of magazines represented the caliber and quality of audience that was currently booking reservations. They are all well noted for their entertainment editorial and coverage. According to their own research, readers use these publications for party and entertainment ideas. The caliber of the audience also reflects a high corporate executive readership that doubly influences this market as well. Executives are consumers too.

Listing advertisements were also placed in The Jewish Exponent "classified party guide" section. A mix of display advertisements and listings was also placed in Philadelphia MSA yellow page directories.

The Aquarium's sales representatives also participated in hospitality and travel/trade-related shows throughout the region.

A full-color brochure was developed to enhance sales presentations and provide material for direct mail solicitation. Each convention sales representative for the Philadelphia and Cherry Hill Convention and Visitor Bureaus received a copy of the Aquarium's brochure for sales presentations to out-of-state clients. In addition, local members of Meeting Planners International, party planners, Aquarium contracted caterers and hotel sales representatives were provided a copy of the Aquarium rental brochure for off-site sales purposes.

9. GROUP SALES STRATEGIES

Group sales strategies included a special pre-school day, the offering of specific educational workshops and off-site field trips. The marketing included a mix of direct mail, media advertising and trade shows.

A small advertising campaign promoting the Aquarium as a tourist destination greatly enhanced visibility and reservation requests. Publications used for this campaign included:

- New Jersey Travel Guide
- Pennsylvania Visitors Guide
- Tour and Travel News
- Travel Weekly's New Jersey Travel Planner
- VFCB Group Tour Planner
- PCVB Destination Planning Guide

The mix of these publications provided wide-spread impressions of the Aquarium throughout the United States and some internationally.

THE SCHOOL MARKET

The Zoo developed a '92/93 school group planning guide for the Aquarium which emphasized pre-paid group admissions for the Aquarium and registration for formal educational programs. This guide also included a section on the RIVERKEEPERS outreach program and highlighted the educational value of the Aquarium and its focus on aquatic wildlife habitats native to the north Atlantic and New Jersey. It was recommended that this educational guide be designed to compliment the design of the zoo's educational program guide for the purpose of coordinating joint marketing efforts to elementary educators throughout New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware. Joint marketing with the Zoo provided added penetration into the marketplace and made available information on two of the most visible and environmentally focused institutions in the area.

The Zoo also placed Aquarium educationally-focused advertisements in FIELD TRIP IDEAS mailed directly to teachers and camp directors by name from southern New York to northern Virginia.

It was recommended that a focus group of educators would be helpful to measure teacher's expectations of the Aquarium and to determine its effectiveness as an educational facility. Information gathered from educators also helped focus future marketing efforts to address the needs and expectations of these important customers.

CONFIDENTIAL

The following is Budget Information. The categories listed were the only categories for when budget information was available. It should be noted that the projected income was four times greater than the projected expenses. The actual outcome showed that the income for the first year of operation was, in fact, four times greater than the expenses. This shows that the budget was planned and successful.

The following budget figures are taken from the Zoological Society of Philadelphia's Marketing Plan:

Consumer Marketing and Marketing Department:

Advertising - \$1,068,064.00

Ad Production and Collateral - \$135,950.00

Consultants - \$74,828.00

Public Relations - \$94,200.00

Events - \$107,000.00

Promotions - \$10,000.00

TOTAL - \$1,490,042.00

Membership Marketing:

Advertising - \$33,045.00

Ad Production and Collateral - \$478,890.00

Consultants - \$24,945.00

TOTAL - \$536,880.00

Facility Rentals Marketing:

Advertising - \$21,517.00

Ad Production and Collateral - \$20,500.00

Consultants - \$824.00

TOTAL - \$ 42,841.00

Development Marketing:

Advertising - \$63,101.00

Ad Production & Collateral - \$500.00

Consultants - \$3,712.00

TOTAL - \$ 67,313.00

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

ATTENDANCE

The long-term goal of the overall marketing strategy for the Aquarium was to obtain a 9% share of the Philadelphia ADI market, a 3% share of the 100-mile radius market and 10% of the tourist market. This was achieved and resulted in the attendance of more than one million visitors to the Aquarium during the first year of operation. (There were also more than one million visitors the second year).

According to the Zoo's marketing team, the only drawback of exceeding the projected number of visitors was, when on certain occasions, the Aquarium was overcrowded and subsequently resulted in some negative publicity and word of mouth.

GROUP SALES RESULTS

The plan for promoting group sales was also so successful that it led to some overcrowding problems. Group sales income the first year was approximately \$600,000. This figure was way beyond what was anticipated.

MEMBERSHIP RESULTS

The Aquarium's current membership base consists of approximately 13,000 members. This compares favorably with the pre-opening projection of 10,000 members. The total membership income earned was \$1.1 million, which doubled the pre-opening projection of \$550,000.

The direct mail plan to increase membership, which consisted of mailings to 400,000 regional households, was also successful. The results of the mailings were calculated by the Gillespie Organization, a consulting firm hired by the Zoo to measure the results. Membership sales were vital to the success of the Aquarium according to Dell L. Fioravanti, because members provide a base of regular visitors who remained consistent through the slower seasons.¹⁶

According to the Gillespie Organization, the direct mailings produced 2,400 new members. A second mailing produced 2,500 new members.

The remaining 8,300 memberships were cultivated mostly through gate sales, a special state employee promotion and requests for information through the mail. (The requests for information through the mail were very minimal).

A third new member acquisition was recently mailed in June 1994 to another 400,000 regional households. The experience from the first two mailings helped to set the direction for this

mailing. The June offer emphasized joining at the Sea Adventurer Society level in order to obtain permanent Aquarium recognition in the building.

FACILITY RENTAL SALES RESULTS

It was the goal of the Aquarium's Public Relations Department to reach a total revenue of \$350,000 in facility rental sales by 1993 and it was surpassed.

According to Fioravanti, 10% of Aquarium events were booked by individuals and 90% by corporations.¹⁷ Public awareness of the rental program was driven by the Aquarium's participation in trade show activities, grand opening publicity and the strategic planning of magazine advertisements. (A detailed plan of ad placements is outlined in Chapter IV under Facility Rental Strategies).

Fioravanti points out that this program was especially successful because the Aquarium's rental rates are at the high end of the marketplace.

To date, the Aquarium has been required to obtain a liquor license in order to dispense alcoholic beverages at rental events. They also have contracts now with twenty-five outside caterers.

PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN, MARKETING STRATEGY, CREATIVE STRATEGY AND MEDIA STRATEGY RESULTS

The success of the above strategies were all measured by attendance the first year. There were not any further studies conducted by the Zoo or the Aquarium's Public Relations Department to measure separate components of the above strategies. As already mentioned, because attendance projections were surpassed, the entire public relations campaign and marketing strategies were judged to be successful.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND PRIVATE INVESTORS

Pat Jones, Aide to New Jersey State Senator Walter Rand, shows specific examples of how the success of the Aquarium has brought new developments and investors to the Camden waterfront area. It should be noted that many of the following companies said "no" to investing in the waterfront area prior to the success of the Aquarium. New investors to date include:

- "Pace Entertainment" was contracted to build the "Sony Music Amphitheater."
- "Blockbuster Video" will also be investing in the Sony Amphitheater.
- "The Martin Marietta Company" was originally planning to close down and lay off many employees, but has now decided to stay on the waterfront.
- Campbell's Soup Company, already located in Camden, will be expanding their corporate offices to the waterfront.

- The GE Aerospace Campus, the DRPA Headquarters Building and the River's Edge Corporate Center will be investing in the waterfront area. These new projects are estimated to bring more than 2,700 new employees to Camden.
- The lot next door to the Aquarium was sold in 1994, and, although it is not certain who is going to be there, it is recognized as another sign of improvement.
- The Riverbus Ferry in Camden has started backup again for the first time in twenty years.
- Starting the summer of 1995, Wiggin's Park (next to the Aquarium) will hold daily bazaars. It will give local vendors a place to sell their goods, and, at the same time, provide even more entertainment for the city.
- Jones stated that so far the State has been pleased with the results of their investment.¹⁸

NEW EMPLOYMENT RESULTS

According to John Grady, President of CFDA, creating new jobs was one of the main goals of the Aquarium.¹⁹

To date, Grady reports that 100 full-time jobs have been created by the Aquarium alone. "Fifty percent of these are for city residents" he said, "and 500 new construction jobs were also created."²⁰

Grady explained that the "Martin Marietta", a new office complex to the waterfront area, is projected by CFDA to create 1200 new jobs. All together, so far, according to Grady, companies have totalled approximately \$200 million of investments in the Camden waterfront which will keep employment on the rise.

Wendy Lennon, Director of Community Relations for the Aquarium, has a different perspective regarding the employment issue. She revealed that while Aquarium job statistics may look good on paper, the picture was different from an insider's point of view. Lennon said that the "100 new full-time Aquarium jobs" reported were really only part-time and did not even provide benefits for the employees who worked at them. She stated that the only full-time jobs available with decent salaries and benefit packages were a sprinkling of upper management positions.²¹ This issue is something that Lennon would like to change in the future.

CORPORATE SPONSORED PROGRAMS

One of the new programs that Lennon runs, and is very proud of, is called the "Outreach Program". The Outreach Program is funded through corporate grants to the Aquarium. It is a summer science camp that allows city children to go to camp for four weeks in August. The program costs \$90.00 a week, but the children who cannot pay go as well. Lennon reported that 47 children attended last year. Lennon gathered feedback about the program through surveys, which turned out to be almost 100% positive. Due to this feedback, the corporate grants will continue and Lennon hopes to attract three times as many campers for the summer of 1995.²²

Through another special program called "Aquarium Access Program", corporate sponsors have already made possible more than 16,000 free admissions for economically underprivileged groups.

In conclusion, the Aquarium has had tremendous public success in its first year of operation. All of the major revenue centers have exceeded goals, including casual visitors, memberships, group sales and facility rentals.

The new investment activity at the waterfront is proof of a successful beginning.

THE FUTURE OF THE NEW JERSEY STATE AQUARIUM

New Jersey State Senator Walter Rand:

"It's (Aquarium) a beginning, not an end. The Aquarium is not the answer to the City's problems, but it begins the process by attracting people to our waterfront. It dispels the lack of safety myths and begins to attract new private investments, i.e., the Sony Place Amphitheater project."

John Grady:

"Although there has been a significant amount of measurable success, the positive changes set forth by the Aquarium will have to be continually monitored for the next 20 years. The new image of Baltimore's Inner Harbor took 30 years to re-create, but Camden City has already begun to change theirs for the better in only two years." "The greatest success of the Aquarium is that it set a precedent that successful business can exist in Camden."

Wendy Lennon:

"I see a bright future ahead, in the next 20 years or so, for the entire Camden Waterfront area. I hope people will give it a chance, and not expect miracles overnight. I would like to see raised self esteem in Camden City residents, and have people be proud to live and work there."

James Wallace:

"The careful planning and timing of special events and press releases highlighting the safety of the Aquarium atmosphere was a major factor in helping to change the press's attitude toward the idea of a successful attraction in Camden. This is the first step. We met many primary objectives, the long term results will need to be continually measured over the next two decades."

CHAPTER VI

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Continued research of Camden waterfront investment activity over the next 5-10 years.
- A study of the 1994-95 Cooper's Ferry Development Association's Annual Review to measure future success for the Aquarium.
- Monitoring the number of casual visitors and new memberships to the Aquarium each year over the next 5-10 years to see if attendance increases, drops off, or remains approximately the same.
- A study conducted to determine how the Zoo's plan to promote the Camden Aquarium would work in another depressed city, in another state.

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