



Co-Creating With Your Community
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Imagine a world where everyone can connect with science and nature in ways that are meaningful to them. A world where human imagination and the enduring spirit of curiosity drives innovative solutions to our most complex problems. The Denver Museum of Nature & Science partners with people as they make sense of the world around them by co-creating experiences that ignite curiosity. As such, their Everyone, Everywhere strategic plan places significant emphasis on ensuring the community's voice is the center of its initiatives. Our MAP challenge was designed to develop a process that would include the community in a rebrand refresh, should the Museum choose to rebrand.

CHALLENGE

For more than 120 years, the Denver Museum of Nature & Science has been at the heart of the cultural experience in Denver, Colorado. In recent years, the Museum has partnered with various communities represented in the Denver area to explore what role they want the Museum to play in their lives. By authentically and intentionally listening to and engaging with its diverse community, the Museum is constantly evolving its products, processes, and institutional culture to become a museum with, of, and for, the community.

These conversations continue to shape their Everyone, Everywhere strategic plan, which features initiatives designed to accomplish extraordinary things—inside and outside the Museum's walls. The Museum then began to explore the idea of creating a new **brand strategy** that is informed by the strategic plan and community voice. Critical to this strategy would be the development of a **visual identity** and **brand architecture system** that results in an authentic reflection of who they are today and their ambitious goals.

APPROACH

We centered our project roadmap on the belief that great brands—similar to great strategies—are co-created with the community. Our process, therefore, encouraged high involvement from those who know the Museum best. We connected with staff, volunteers, board members, and community leaders who could help us navigate the first steps of a rebrand process in a way that both captures the community-centered intent of the Museum and also reflects the unique personality of the Museum.

We launched our journey by engaging in dialogue with key members of the Museum staff as well as local and national brand experts to share with us their definitions of branding and their impressions of the Museum's brand. Their insights laid the foundation for our stakeholders to think critically about our brand and engage in the conversation. We also drew insights from these interviews that informed our initial SWOT analysis.

We then reached out to community members to identify how they currently interpret the tone and personality of the Museum. Central to these interviews were questions that explored when people felt a sense of belonging within the Denver Museum of Nature & Science community.

In the background of our community outreach, we conducted an environmental scan of ten other cultural institutions in Denver, Colorado, allowing us to explore how others in our market are branded. We also completed a case study and dove deep into previous research conducted by the Museum.

OPPORTUNITY

Our project provided us critical insight into how members of our community currently perceive the Museum's brand as well. We were able to use those insights to identify opportunities that a rebrand would offer the Museum as well as best practices for an agency partner to lead the initiative.

Rebrand best practices that we heard included:

- **Use the momentum of your strategic plan** to lay the foundation of a rebrand process. It's best to communicate a rebrand as the next step toward achieving your visionary direction and programmatic and organizational goals.
- **Meet with people from all aspects of your community** to gain their perspective on what's working and what's not working with the current brand and to identify gaps in how others see you and who they say you are.
- **Know your weaknesses.** It's critical to identify feedback from the community that your organization wants to move away from through the rebrand.
- **Mobilize brand champions** who will help foster enthusiasm and buy-in throughout the process.
- **Determine the financial and human resources** at your disposal before you begin the process to set expectations.
- **Conduct a premortem** to identify potential roadblocks and create respective mitigations.
- **Prioritize doing the work right** and not a deadline to move things forward.

RESULTS AND FUTURE PLAN

Our research culminated in a brief that will be used to implement a brand refresh when the time is right for the Museum to commit to a fresh look, feel, and tone. The brief can be shared with an agency partner to design a modern and dynamic brand that reflects the Museum's strategic intent of connecting more people to nature and science in ways that are meaningful to them.

The Museum will provide the agency partner with our full research results, including our market research, strategy recommendations, interview quotes, and environmental scan. After thorough review and analysis of these reports and audits, the agency partner may conduct additional research and interviews as needed with key stakeholders to gain a more complete perspective of the Denver Museum of Nature & Science's brand history, industry trends, and challenges facing the Museum as well as target audiences.

Learn more about the Denver Museum of Nature and Science at dmns.org.