



Science on a Sphere Lobby Interview Report

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Overview

A study was carried out to understand how many visitors see Science on a Sphere (SOS) during their visit to the museum, prior knowledge they have about SOS, and why they choose not to visit SOS. For this study, visitors ages 8 and above were interviewed as they exited the museum. Individuals in school groups were not included in the sample. A continuous random sampling method was used for data collection. Using this method, the interviewer positioned him/herself in the lobby and drew an imaginary line. The first eligible visitor to cross this line was approached for an interview. Data was collected January 8 to February 17, 2007. A total of 189 visitors were interviewed. Visitor demographics can be found on page 4.

Results & Discussion

Visits to SOS

Visitors were initially shown an image of SOS and asked if they saw the exhibit during their visit to the museum. A quarter of visitors (26%) reported visiting SOS. A chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing visits to SOS to the composition of the visitor group (adults and children or adults only). A significant interaction was found ($\chi^2(1) = 6.98, p < 0.01$). Groups of adults and children were more likely to visit SOS (34%) than groups composed of adults only (17%).

Prior Knowledge of SOS

The 50 visitors who saw SOS were asked if they sought out the exhibit or if they just happened to come across it. Most visitors (92%) said they just happened to come across SOS. These 46 visitors were asked if they had seen or heard anything about SOS before seeing it at the museum. Most of these visitors (91%) said they did not have any prior knowledge of the exhibit. The four visitors who had prior knowledge of the Sphere said they had seen it during a previous visit to the museum.

The four visitors who purposefully sought out the Sphere were asked what made them seek the exhibit out. Two of the visitors had seen the exhibit on a prior visit and wanted to show the Sphere to other people in their group. The other two visitors had heard about SOS from someone else, citing SMM's information desk and someone from the organization Fresh Energy.

The 139 visitors who did not stop at SOS during their visit were asked if they had heard or seen anything about the Sphere prior to the interview. Only 17% were familiar with the Sphere. These 24 visitors were asked what they had seen or heard about SOS. Visitors most frequently reported seeing the Sphere during a prior visit (42%) or simply glancing at it during their current visit (42%). There were also a small percentage of visitors (16%) who had heard general information about SOS from other people or in the media.

Reasons for Not Visiting SOS

The 24 visitors who were aware of the Sphere but did not visit it, were asked why they decided not to stop and see SOS. Visitor responses were coded into themes and representative responses are included for each. Some visitors provided more than one reason for not visiting the Sphere. Lack of time was most frequently mentioned (38%). Visitors also cited kids in the group, their own lack of interest, and crowding in the SOS exhibit area.

Reason for Not Stopping at SOS (n=24)

38% (9) Time

- Lack of time.
- Forgot about it. Time constraints, we only had a little bit of time today.

21% (5) Kids

- They (the kids) didn't want to see it.
- So many kids (with him in the group).

13% (3) Not Interested

- Not really interested.
- Didn't look interesting.

13% (3) Crowded

- Wasn't showing what we wanted to see. Sphere was having problems and there was a class there.
- It was crowded.

13% (3) Other

- Going to the Race show and got distracted by other things.
- Dinosaurs.
- Didn't remember it.

Likelihood of Visiting SOS In the Future

All visitors were asked about their likelihood of visiting SOS during a future trip to the museum. The 139 visitors who did not visit SOS during their museum visit were asked to read a description of the exhibit before stating their likelihood. As illustrated in the table below, the likelihood of visiting SOS in the future was similar for both groups of visitors. More than two-thirds of both groups (72% visited, 68% did not visit) said they were likely to visit SOS in the future.

Likelihood of Visiting SOS in the Future

	Percent of Visitors	
	Visited SOS (n=50)	Did not Visit SOS (n=139)
Likely to visit SOS	72%	68%
Somewhat likely	26%	23%
Somewhat unlikely	2%	5%
Unlikely to visit SOS	0%	4%

Visitor Demographics

Sex (n=189)

Female: 60%
Male: 40%

Primary Language (n=188)

English: 95%
Other: 5%

Ethnicity (n=188)

White: 84%
African American: 6%
Asian: 4%
Other/Mixed: 4%
Hispanic: 1%
South Asian: <1%
Native American: <1%

Age (n=189)

Median age: 36
Minimum age: 9
Maximum age: 80

Age Range (n=189)

8-16: 12%
17-24: 13%
25-34: 24%
35-44: 18%
45-54: 15%
55-64: 9%
65+: 9%

Temporary or Permanent Disability (n=189)

No: 99%
Yes: <1% (Cognitive Disability)

Interest Level in Science (n=189)

Interest level 1-5: 11%
Interest level 6-10: 89%

Knowledge of Science (n=189)

Knowledge level: 1 – 5: 43%
Knowledge level 6 - 10: 57%

Household Income (n=162)

Under \$30,000: 11%
\$30,000 to \$39,999: 9%
\$40,000 to \$49,999: 4%
\$50,000 to \$59,999: 10%
\$60,000 to \$69,999: 7%
\$70,000 to \$79,000: 10%
\$80,000 to \$89,999: 7%
\$90,000 to \$99,999: 4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999: 10%
\$150,000 and higher: 15%
Didn't provide info (refused and no data): 14%

Group Composition (n=189)

Adults and kids: 53%
Alone: 4%
Adults only: 47%

Number of Other Visitors in Group (n=187)

Median: 2
Minimum: 0
Maximum: 8

Ages of Other Visitors in Group (n=408)

Median age: 22
Minimum age: Less than 1
Maximum age: 82

SMM Members (n=189)

No: 62%
Yes: 36%

Number of Visits to SMM in Last 2 Years (n=189)

None: 24%
1-2 times: 27%
3-5 times: 35%
More than 5 times: 14%

Education (n=189)

Less than High School: 14%
High School: 6%
Some College/Tech Ed: 18%
College Degree: 40%
Post-Grad: 22%