

ORSAY MUSEUM - SUCCESSFUL MODEL FOR RAISING COMPETITIVENESS IN THE ROMANIAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The contribution of cultural organizations to the expansion of the competitive position of cities has become increasingly significant in recent years thanks to the role they play in urban development. In this context, improving the management of cultural organizations is an important strategic option in order to achieve this fundamental objective, and their competitiveness is reflected directly proportional in the success of the cities. Practice shows that cultural organizations that have adopted a vision adjusted to the competitive economy and have applied specific management tools for the increase of organizational competitiveness, have achieved a good performance, becoming managerial success stories in the field. This paper presents the experience of the Orsay Museum from the perspective of the marketing mix, and also visitors, and gives some possible suggestions for action to Romanian cultural organizations in order to increase their competitiveness, augment the number of visitors, and thus the revenues generated by the urban economies.

KEYWORDS: *best practices, competitive advantage, cultural development, marketing mix, museums, tourism development, visitors.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *L32, M14, M31, R58*

1. INTRODUCTION

"Museums, theatres, art galleries, historical sites animate the urban landscape through the complexity of the cultural offer, which combines both entertainment, recreation and educational opportunities. The benefits of these cultural organizations aren't limited to improving the quality of life, but are also reflected in the degree of economic and cultural development of cities" (Cheney & Will, 2009, p.4). Taking into account these aspects, currently, "big cities invest more and more resources into cultural programs and major infrastructure projects, seeking a competitive advantage and sustainable development. The history and cultural wealth of a city contribute to attracting foreign investors and also tourists, by developing a cultural tourism" (Russo & Van der Borg, 2006, p.2). Therefore:

- "Cultural and leisure activities are key elements of urban competitiveness as these give the city specific characteristics that distinguish it from other similar urban centres. In addition, these activities contribute to transforming the city, from a production centre, into a consumption space with great symbolic value" (Russo & Van der Borg, 2006, p.4);
- "Apart from the implications that they have in stimulating the business environment, cultural institutions have also a great power of attraction on visitors or the public outside the city" (Moses, 2001, p.17). Thus, "museums are considered to be "magnets" for tourists" (Richards & Wilson, 2004, p.61). Considering what they offer tourists, cultural resources of an urban centre can be classified into static attractions (such as: museums, monuments, theme parks,

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architectural works, sculptures) and cultural events (which can be a mixture of music, dance, theatre, literature, festivals, art events)" (Richards, 2001, p. 55-56);

- Moses (2001, p. 21) believes that the amounts of money that tourists spend are an external source of revenue for the cities. Even if the visit is due to cultural offerings, such as concerts or art exhibitions, expenses will not be limited to this sector. Because they are in a new city, tourists are tempted to spend extra money on food, accommodation, parking, shopping, and visiting other cultural institutions than originally planned. All these revenues fuel the local economy, and represent another way in which the cultural sector helps develop urban centres.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE ORSAY MUSEUM

The history of the Orsay Museum is quite unusual. The museum is located in the centre of Paris, on the River Seine, in front of the Tuileries Gardens, and is built in the place of the old station, the building that hosted the Exposition Universelle of 1900 (Musée d'Orsay, 2011).

The specific of the museum. Orsay Museum is a public cultural institution of national importance, subordinated to the Ministry of Culture and Communication of France. It administrates the Hébert Museum and the Musée de l'Orangerie (Musée d'Orsay, 2011b).

Purpose and scope of activity. The Museum's mission is to present to the public artworks representative of the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century, to conserve, protect and restore cultural properties registered in its heritage, to enrich the national art collection through acquisitions by onerous title or free of charge, to ensure equal access without discrimination to culture for all social categories.

Revenue and expenses. The income of the museum comes mainly from the following sources: "subsidies from the state, from local authorities, or any other public or private institution; entrance fees; fees for enrolment in pedagogical workshops; activities in the auditorium; artistic or cultural activities; concessions and rental spaces; donations" (Conseil d'Etat, 2003, p.7). The *expenditure budget* can be divided into "personal expenses; operating and restoration costs; procurement of cultural goods; any other expenses necessary for the operation of the institution" (Conseil d'Etat, 2003, p.7).

Material basis. According to the data provided by the museum (Musée d'Orsay, 2011c), its useful surface area is 57,400 m². The 80 exhibition rooms have an area of about 16,000 m², in which are organized various galleries, with 4,000 permanent works. The rooms dedicated to temporary exhibitions have about 1,200 m², the auditorium has 347 seats and 570 m², the café restaurant has 1,200 m², the public reception room has 2,450 m² and the annexes or reserves have an area of approximately 3,000 m².

3. ORGANIZING THE MARKETING ACTIVITY OF THE ORSAY MUSEUM

The personnel within the Cultural and Auditorium Service is in charge with developing and organizing the cultural offer, by taking into account all categories of target groups. This service brings together the following offices: publications, audiovisual production, web and multimedia, conferences and colloquia, the Educational office. Based on the proposals of each office, specialists and consultants of the Cultural and Auditorium Service develop the marketing strategy of the institution, which requires the approval of the President of the museum. The Communication Service is responsible for implementing the strategy, it maintains a permanent relationship with the mass-media and ensures the promotion of the museum, its collections and all events and activities, both domestic and especially international (Musée d'Orsay, 2011d).

3.1. Product policy

The Orsay Museum hosts eight collections of art: painting, sculpture, decorative arts, photography, graphic arts, and architecture. The product policy of the Orsay Museum can be described as follows:

- *The basic offer* is represented by the permanent exhibition and its associated services, such as seminars, roundtables and conferences. The artworks exhibited in the permanent exhibitions come from three public sources: "(1) Louvre Museum - works belonging to artists born after 1820, (2) Jeu de Paume Museum, publicly known as the Impressionist Museum, (3) National Museum of Modern Art Georges Pompidou" (Musée d'Orsay, 2012);
- *The auxiliary offer* is represented by temporary exhibitions, film screenings, concerts, performances, colloquia held in the Auditorium. The temporary exhibitions organized at the museum or abroad, have placed the museum, in 2011, in the charts made by the publication *The Art Newspaper* (2012, pp. 35-41), as follows:
 - 18th place in "Top 20 Exhibitions of 2011", for the exhibition "Manet: Inventor of the Modern", held from April 5 to July 17;
 - 5th place in "Top 10 modern exhibitions";
 - 1st place in "Top 10 exhibitions of the 19th century" for the exhibition "The Spectacular Art of Jean-Leon Gerome";
 - 6th place in "Top 10 photo exhibitions" for the exhibition "A Ballad of Love and Death" held from March 8 to May 29.
- *The additional offer*: general and thematic guidance services, information services, contests;
- *Educational offer*: includes programs for high schools and kindergartens, workshops and special programs for children with disabilities. Also, in this category can be included the documentation activity that researchers can conduct in the library of the museum.

3.2. Price policy

For 2012, Orsay Museum has established the following tariff plan (Musée d'Orsay, 2012b):

- General access – 9 € / per person;
- Discount tickets – 6,5 € / per person [for young people aged between 18-25 years old; for all visitors, after 16:30 o'clock (Thursday after 18 o'clock)];
- Free entry (in the first Sunday of each month; for persons under 18 years; for people aged between 18-25 years old who are citizens or residents of EU; for teachers who hold a valid educational Card; for people with disabilities, etc.).

Other particularities of the price policy:

- Degas ticket (12 € / per person) allows the access to both exhibitions held for the first time, as well as permanent collections and other ongoing exhibitions;
- Musée d'Orsay / Musée de l'Orangerie Passport (14 € / per person): allows access to the permanent collections and temporary exhibitions, as well as access to the partner museum for the next four days from the purchase.
- Other benefits: People who purchase a ticket to the Orsay Museum benefit, within 8 days of its issuance, reduced-rate access to the following monuments: (1) National Museum Gustave Moreau, (2) Garnier Palace (which houses Paris National Opera);
- Tickets purchased for concerts and performances held in the Auditorium allow free access to visiting the permanent collections in the day of the event (Musée d'Orsay, 2012c). Subscriptions can also be purchased for concerts.
- Audio-guide rates. Permanent collections have audio-guides in French, English, Spanish and Italian. Temporary exhibitions benefit from audio-guides in English, French and Italian. The price of an audio-guide is 5 €, or 4 € for "Carte Blanche" or "MuseO" card holders (Musée d'Orsay, 2012d).

3.3. Distribution policy

Orsay Museum's permanent collections can be seen at the headquarters of the institution, Lille Street, number 62, which represents the main distribution network. The museum is open to the public from Tuesday to Sunday, from 9:30 to 18:00, except on the January 1, May 1 and December 25. Every Thursday, the visiting program is extended until 21:45 (Musée d'Orsay, 2012).

In 2010, at the museum's headquarters were exhibited 2,421 works of art, 1,821 of which were presented in temporary exhibitions.

Every year, works of art from the museum's collections can be admired in other locations in the country, in temporary exhibitions organized by the Musée de l'Orangerie, Museum of Art and Industry Roubaix, Grand Palais National Galleries, Giverny Museum.

Numerous works of art from the museum's heritage are exhibited annually in international exhibitions, which attract millions of visitors. In 2010, over 500 works of art went abroad: Canberra, Tokyo, San Francisco, Madrid, Vancouver, are just some of the cities in which these were exhibited.

The products and services offered to visitors are presented in publications, available in the museum library. Many of these publications have English and German versions. Since 1995, the museum has its own magazine, having a biannual occurrence, which consists of 3 sections: News, Studies and Documentation (Musée d'Orsay, 2012f).

3.4. Promotion policy

On September 20, 2011, one month before the opening of the Amont Pavilion and the exhibition halls closed in 2009, was launched a campaign to promote the Orsay Museum, created by the advertising company Publicis Consultants. The slogan of the campaign "*Nous avons revu Orsay, tout est à revoir*" ("We've reviewed the Orsay Museum, everything has to be reviewed") expresses the rebirth idea of the museum: the exhibit rooms have been redecorated, the lighting system has been changed, the walls have been painted in shades of gray, in order for the works of art exhibited to stand out better. The campaign brought immediate results, so that two months after its launch, the number of visitors increased by 25%. For the first time in years, the number of French visitors exceeded the number of foreign tourists, reaching 56% (Publicis Groupe, 2011).

Promoting the Orsay Museum was achieved through more channels, such as:

a) Mass-media. The 49 second advertising spot was aired on the channels: France 3, Arte and TV5. The slogan of the campaign was also promoted on radio: Radio France and Europe 1. The daily and cultural press, as well as the museum's own magazine has written on this subject.

b) Online and direct marketing:

- *The museum's official website* (<http://www.musee-orsay.fr/>) was improved significantly in 2007, in order to highlight the cultural diversity of the offer and the many services offered to visitors. The new format includes a much larger volume of information available in 5 different languages (English, French, Spanish, German, Italian), and offers a virtual tour of all the exhibits, according to the types of collections, and also an online catalogue, in order to facilitate the visit to the museum. Also, the website can be accessed from a mobile phone or a tablet. Another innovation is the integration of a video gallery, which shows in minutes, a brief summary of the exhibitions, and other cultural events. In order to maintain a permanent relationship with the visitors, the website has a newsletter section, by filling out an online form; people who are interested will be kept updated permanently about the events, activities and exhibitions organized by the museum. Other features of the site are: virtual cards (reproductions of famous paintings), the possibility to make a visitation plan online, the possibility to create a personal album with favourite works or to reserve and pay tickets online.
- In December, 2010 was created the Facebook page of the Orsay Museum, which has over 26,795 assessments. All events, exhibitions, and their schedules are updated daily.

- *Google* is another unique way of promotion in the online environment. Orsay Museum is part of the *Google Art Project*, where it has a three-dimensional presentation of all rooms and works of art as they are presented in the museum.
- *Youtube Channel* also contributes to the promotion of the museum among Internet users, and includes over 1,000 videos, which have tens of thousands of hits.
- c) **Museum's cards.** Orsay Museum offers its visitors two types of cards, called "Carte MuséO" (aimed at young people aged between 18-30 years, and costs 15 €) and "Carte Blanche" (which costs 44 €). These cards offer owners multiple discounts on the museum's services, free access to the museum's exhibitions, and are valid one year from the date of issue.
- d) **Events.** The Museum takes part in the annual event "Long Night of Museums", which reached its 8th edition, extremely popular in France, and which was initiated by the Ministry of Culture and Communication.

3.5. Additional offer

The museum attaches an increased importance to additional services, which complement the basic offer. The audio-guid services provide visitors with a better perception on the works of art exhibited, and are available in French, English, Spanish and Italian. Also, people with hearing impairments can benefit from this service.

In order to attract more visitors, the museum has functional spaces designed to transform this institution into the perfect location for leisure:

- *The bookstore and the gift shop* gather reference works for the time frame 1848-1914: over 5,000 books, catalogues, CDs, DVDs about painting, sculpture, architecture, decorative arts, photographs, and collections of the museums in France or international museums. Among the items that can be purchased in the gift shop are included: postcards, posters, stationery specially printed for the Orsay Museum, jewellery and gifts inspired by the works of great artists, replicas of works of art displayed in the museum. Orders can also be placed online.
- With a capacity of up to 600 seats, the *restaurant* has a varied menu and can be rented for organizing private events.
- In the museum there are *two cafés, locker rooms, a room designated for babies, an information desk and an office for lost objects*, and in the front courtyard is a small *boutique with drinks and snacks*.

4. VIZITORS

Orsay Museum is one of the most visited museums in the world, ranking 10 in the top created by the "The Art Newspaper" in 2010 and 2011 (tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Top 10 of the most visited museums in the world in 2010

Rank	Museum	City	Number of visitors
1.	Louvre	Paris	8.500.000
2.	British Museum	London	5.842.138
3.	Metropolitan Art Museum	New York	5.216.988
4.	Tate Modern	London	5.061.172
5.	National Gallery	London	4.954.914
6.	National Art Gallery	Washington	4.775.114
7.	Modern Art Museum	New York	3.131.238
8.	Pompidou Centre	Paris	3.130.000
9.	National Museum of Korea	Seoul	3.067.909
10.	Orsay Museum	Paris	2.985.510

Source: Art Newspaper, 2011, p. 24

Table 2. Top 10 of the most visited museums in the world in 2011

Rank	Museum	City	Number of visitors
1.	Louvre	Paris	8.880.000
2.	Metropolitan Art Museum	New York	6.004.254
3.	British Museum	London	5.848.534
4.	National Gallery	London	5.253.216
5.	Tate Modern	London	4.802.287
6.	National Art Gallery	Washington	4.392.252
7.	National Palace Museum	Taipei	3.849.577
8.	Pompidou Centre	Paris	3.613.076
9.	National Museum of Korea	Seoul	3.239.549
10.	Orsay Museum	Paris	3.144.449

Source: Art Newspaper, 2012, p. 35

According to the latest edition of the Cultural Statistics Yearbook, published by the Ministry of Culture and Communication of France, in 2011 the museum ranked 4th in the top of the most visited museums in the country (table 3).

Table 3. Top 5 of the most visited museums in France in 2011

	Number of visitors
Louvre	8,346,000
Versailles	6,088,000
National Museum of Modern Art	3,255,000
Orsay Museum	2,986,000
Army Museum	1,427,000

In order to analyse the evolutions in the annual number of visitors, it was chosen as a reference period the time frame 2007-2011. According to Figure 1, in the analysed period, according to data provided by the Orsay Museum (2007, p.190), the highest number of visitors was recorded in 2007: about 3,170,000 visitors. This was due mainly to temporary exhibitions that had attracted as many as 752,768 people. To this were added numerous programs dedicated to young audiences, families, as well as the fact that in March 2007 was launched a new version of the website, more attractive and available in German, English, Spanish and Italian.

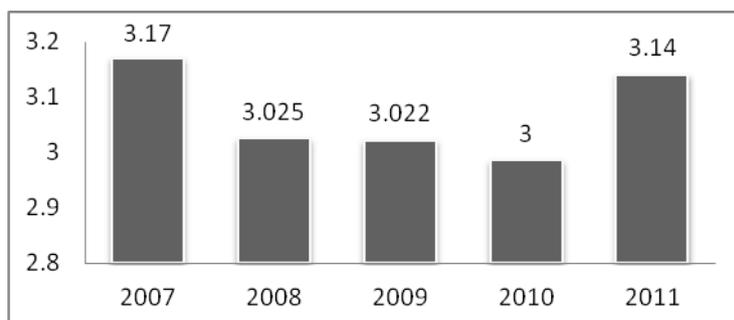


Figure 2. The evolution of the number of visitors during the period 2007-2011 (in million)

Source: processed information from Activity reports of Orsay Museum

The economic crisis is the main factor behind the decrease in the number of visitors in the time frame 2008-2010. According to data provided by the Orsay Museum (2010, p.140), in this period, the number of foreign visitors, who represented 60% of visitors, has declined by 7%.

The renovation of the museum, which took place between September 2009 - October 2011, has decreased the exhibition space by 20%. This was reflected in the downward trend in the number of visitors in the period 2009-2010. Temporary exhibitions have had a significant contribution in attracting new visitors: over 1 million people in 2009 and about 940,000 people in 2010.

The number of visitors has increased significantly in 2011 due to the opening of a new exhibition pavilion, occupying 5 floors, and reopening of the café, and also due to the launching of an extensive advertising campaign. The Museum enjoys great popularity in the online environment, as it is shown by the number of hits to the official website (Table 4).

Table 4. Evolution of the online visits on the official website of Orsay Museum

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010
Number of visits	3.023.069	5.091.983	6.321.755	6.600.000

Source: processed information from Activity reports of Orsay Museum

5. THE KNOW-HOW TRANSFER FROM THE ORSAY MUSEUM TO ROMANIAN MUSEUMS

The statistics and information presented about Orsay Museum justify the claim that the museum can be a model for art museums in Romania. Thus, in order to increase their reputation and visibility at national and international level, Romanian art museums could borrow from the Orsay Museum elements related to:

- *Promotion policy.* The representatives of the Orsay Museum put a great emphasis on marketing, knowing that without an aggressive promotion strategy, the institution could not face the competition, represented by the well-known Louvre Museum (which for a few years in a row occupies the first place in the top of the most visited museums in the world). Thus, our museums could adopt the example of France museums, and could launch an advertising campaign in order to encourage the public interest in their cultural offer.
- *Official website,* extremely attractive and well documented. In addition, the Orsay Museum website can be accessed from a mobile phone or tablet, a special version being available for each of these devices.
- *Attractive educational and recreational offer.* Our museums could take the French example, and organize in the Auditorium numerous performances, classical music concerts, documentary films, some of them on the artists of the exhibitions.
- *The Museum's magazine.* By editing its own publication, Romanian museums can constantly inform the public about their entire cultural activity, as well as the schedule of temporary exhibitions, special events, educational programs and satellite museums, not very known to the visitors.
- *Very diversified additional offer.* Inside the Orsay Museum there are: a restaurant, two cafés, a bookstore and a gift shop, spaces designed to increase the comfort of the visit and to attract new customer segments. We trust that, establishing such spaces inside the Romanian museums would considerably increase the number of visitors, being at the same time, a good source of income, money that could be invested in the promotion policy.

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