



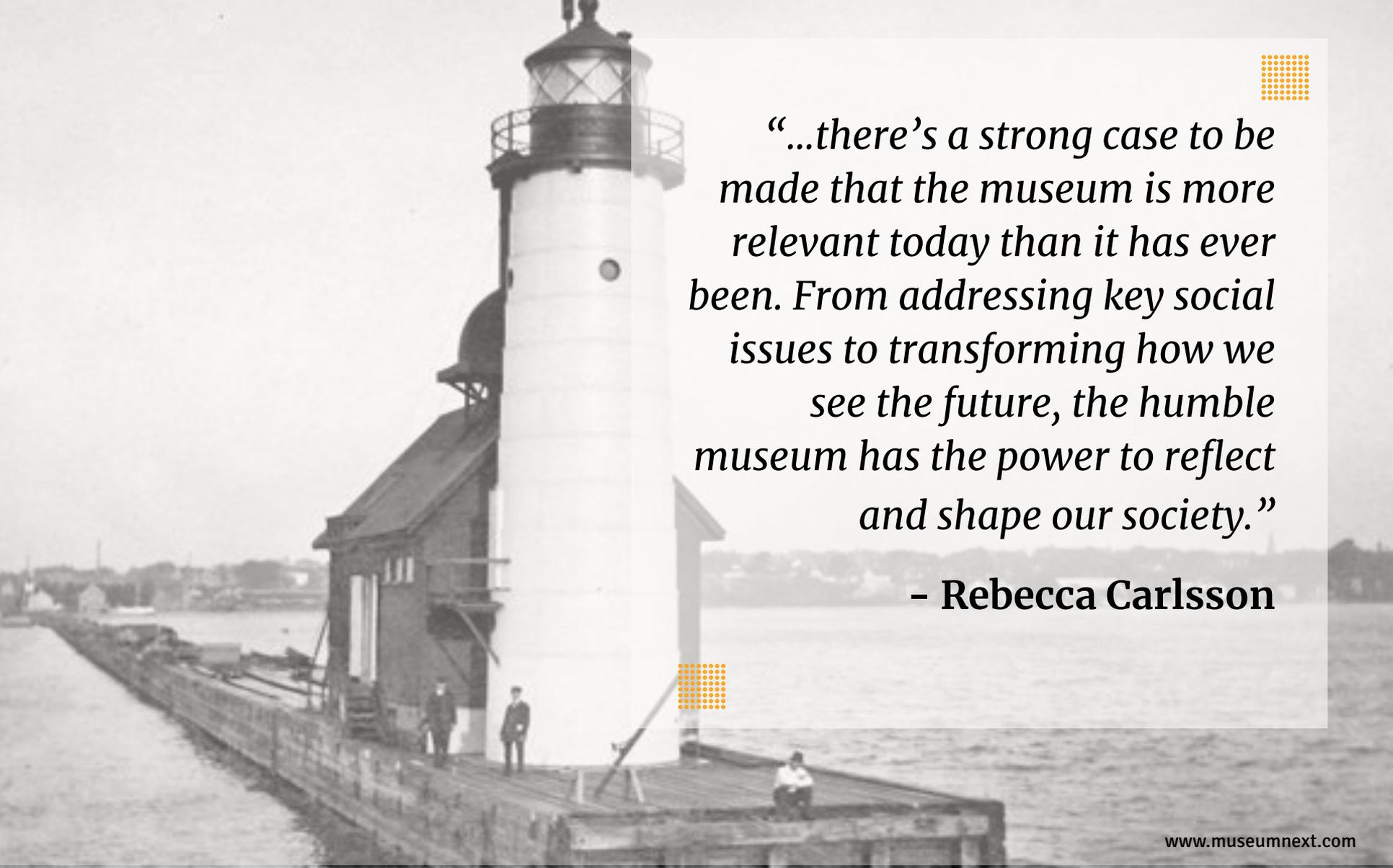
BRAND PLATFORM

First Draft



the idea works
relentless thinkers

January, 2022



“...there’s a strong case to be made that the museum is more relevant today than it has ever been. From addressing key social issues to transforming how we see the future, the humble museum has the power to reflect and shape our society.”

- Rebecca Carlsson



▶ **A new landscape for old artifacts and stories**

In a world where you can access some of the biggest artifact collections virtually and where all the information you need is only a click away, with new generations connecting and socializing in digital realms, are local, physical museums still relevant?

While many small museums struggle to reach younger audiences and to not be seen as obsolete, specialists and scholars claim that such spaces are gaining importance and may be even more relevant now than in the past.

Since May 2021 the Sheboygan County Historical Museum has been working to become a more visible and active presence in the County and surrounding areas. The present document provides a framework designed to renew the brand and develop new and fresh mechanisms to engage and interact with the community.



► Why rebrand?

“Branding is the process of giving a meaning to an organization, its products, or services by creating and shaping a brand in consumers’ minds.”¹

Brands define the first impression people have of organizations and predisposes them to have certain expectations. In many cases, institutions need to revise and renew or completely change their identities and brands, because they:

- Think their existing brand image is dated and doesn’t fully reflect the organization's reality.
- Need to redefine their philosophy and value framework and require a brand images that fully represents the new vision.
- Need to expand their reach and engage new audiences.



► **Strategic Goal**

Museums like the Sheboygan County Historical Museum document daily life in our communities, display diverse and often dissonant perspectives on history, create experiential education opportunities and offer democratising spaces for critical dialogue. In that sense, as part of a holistic approach to reframing the Museum's role in the community, our main challenge is:

- to create a fresh, updated brand and communicate it in a way that can increase and renew people's interest in our local Historical Museum, particularly when it comes to reaching younger audiences and engaging a growingly diverse community.



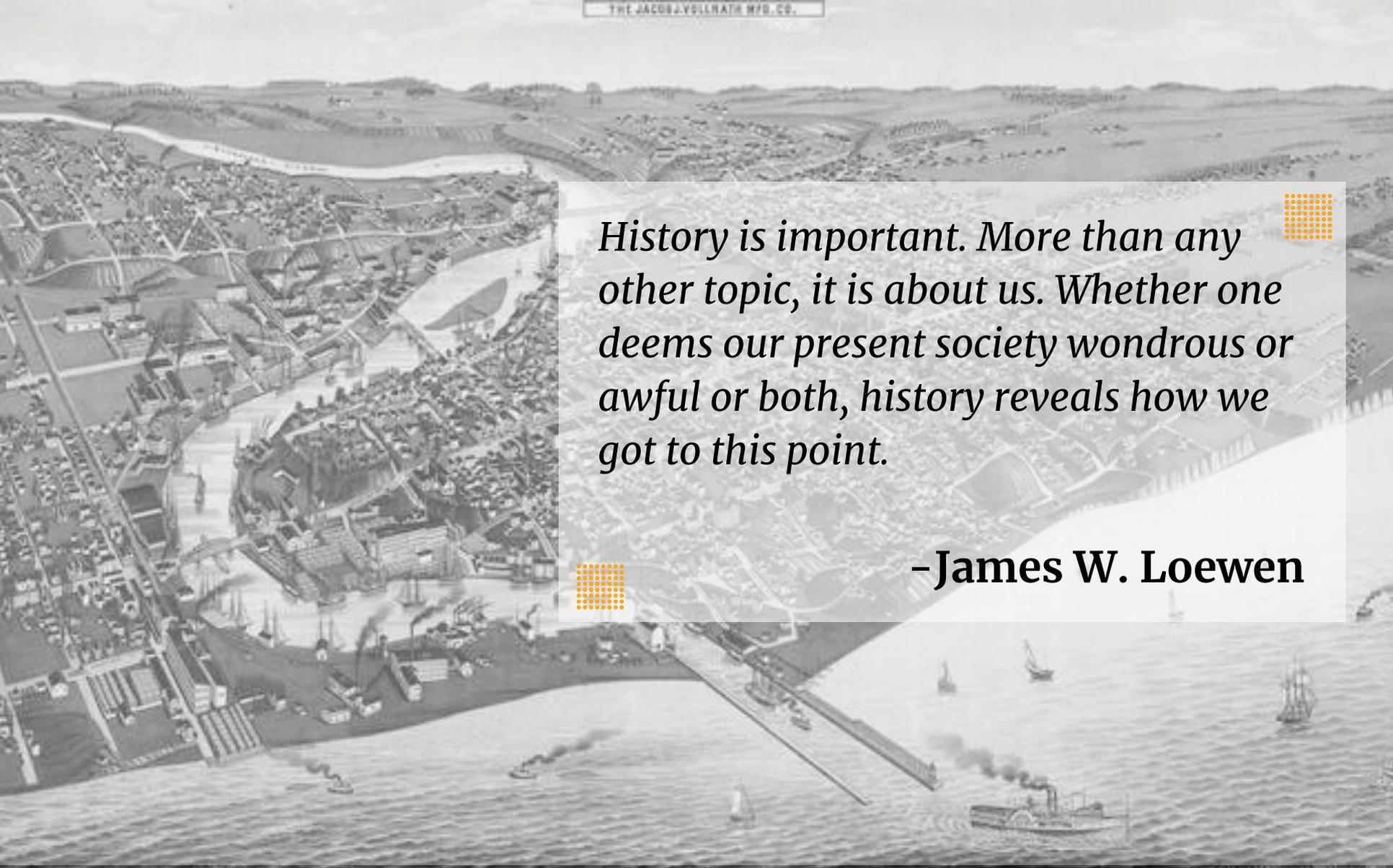
► Methodological approach

Refreshing a tired and outdated brand requires lifting the positive aspects that exist in people's perception and years of valuable institutional knowledge, as well as identifying the elements that the community would like to see reshaped and renewed.

In order to rebrand the Sheboygan County Historical Museum the idea works is facilitating a collaborative process that includes:

- **Research & Discovery:** Desk research, 3 guided conversations (board, staff and members), 10 in depth interviews (leaders).
- **Brand Strategy - Defining:** target audiences, positioning statement, brand personality, brand essence.
- **Design - Meaningful brand and visual identity,** concepting, initial pencils, tight layouts, final logo art.
- **Brand Launch Strategy - Roll out campaign guidelines** (production not included).



An aerial, sepia-toned illustration of a 19th-century industrial city. A wide river flows through the center, with numerous bridges and docks. The city is densely packed with buildings, including large industrial structures and smaller residential houses. In the foreground, a large steamship is docked at a pier, with several smaller boats nearby. The background shows rolling hills and a distant horizon.

History is important. More than any other topic, it is about us. Whether one deems our present society wondrous or awful or both, history reveals how we got to this point.

-James W. Loewen

► Perceived Value Drivers



► General Perceptions

Are museums relevant? Why?

“It's the power of knowing who we are as a society, you know, that contributes to that self knowledge. Knowing your place in the world, knowing your place in the scope of human history. It's powerful.”

“I think now more than ever, there should be relevance and where we came from, to understand where we need to go especially in such a divisive sort of space for many people in our communities.”

“...especially when you're looking at misrepresentation and under representation and misinformation and what lies within...”

“I think there's an opportunity to bring the community together. (...) We are able to kind of come together and see differences and see similarities and connect us all.”

“We have to tell the full picture. (...) I think that that's the responsibility of our historic Museum, to fully tell the history -not just the super privileged people who have cleaned out their grandparents garage and gave all the stuff.”

“I wish people would be more in tune with what happened in history. They would, I think be a little bit more open minded to the way to tackle problems now.”



► General Perceptions

How is the Museum perceived? What aspects would you highlight?

“...it has this perception (a) psychological perception of, you know, is it more of an archive or is it more of a public museum, it never seems open or active on the outside which might have that physical barrier to draw people in so to say”

“I will say when the students were there, they were super engaged, and they really loved it. And I think they also really appreciated the members of the community that they were connecting with (...) I know (people) like to go back to that Christmas display piece. I know that's highly popular.”

“What I find interesting about Sheboygan that I think is truly unique is all the family owned companies in the generations that they've gone through... (...) it's that type of company, the family run the mink farmers that have been here for generations and until recently, I mean, they were world class.”

“...you're paying your staff over there peanuts”.

“They're an old museum with old stuff. My belief is that they would be relevant if they were treated, not as a warehouse of old stuff, but as a connector to how our community got to the place (it is). Through programming, through access, through good community engagement. I think they are super relevant in creating hometown pride, understanding.”



► General Perceptions

How is the Museum perceived? What aspects would you highlight?

“I think among the Hmong community is not represented at all, the history of how they arrived here? I would say to some degree, our Hispanic community is not represented, probably to a great degree.”

“I mean, when you try to rebrand without addressing content as part of brand, yeah, it's tough. It's like Facebook becoming Meta. I mean, who cares?”

...museums by choice can be relevant or not relevant. And if I can speak to our local museum, I've been there a couple times, but I don't go a lot because there's not much in the content that drives me there. Okay? I don't feel it's relevant to me or my experience, or my life.



► General Perceptions

What should change? What would you like to experience?

“ I know just given the size of our community, given the size of the staff that they have, that their ability to curate big exhibits is probably limited, but bringing in more outside exhibits like that, I think would be really powerful...”

“...telling those stories about the community, you know, tying them into national things.”

“if there were new things that were interesting and it was kind of more fun. Okay? And I don't know what the fun part would be. I don't know. That perception of it's a bunch of stuff that's sitting in a basement. Feels uninteresting.”

“...what are you reading? What movies are you watching? What conversations you're having, what's keeping you up at night? What community issues do you find yourself discussing a lot? You know, to answer the question, what's relevant to our people right now?”



► General Perceptions

What should change? What would you like to experience?

“I think there's a part of the fabric of who we are, that will be lost and especially -and what's dear to our heart- is the whole diversity, equity, inclusion. How do we make sure the stories are not just tied to the founding families, which are (...) very definitely European, We also have to have a mixture of showing that diversity is growing in the market, and how that's being embraced by the community. I mean, I think the museum is a critical aspect of that. To show it as part of the fabric of who we are today.”

“I mean, I think I would probably be able to say in three words ‘reflect the diversity’. Because though, I mean it's that two sides of the same coin. Indeed, this area has not only been white settlers and white immigrants over many decades. Very white, very, you know, European. (...) There have always been non European, you know, white men, still making this a community. And I think that the Historical Museum, perhaps better than many others really, has a vantage point and a mission to double down on telling that (hole) story.

“Wouldn't it be great to have like, Sheboygan County queer oral history, or video collection, right? Or a project of some kind? ...it would be primarily for the LGBTQ community to see ourselves and our history reflected.”

“I think that the different blocks of people that ended up moving into the area at different times. I think that would be something key to have there.”



► General Perceptions

What should change? What would you like to experience?

“Well, communication is missing. Okay? Not enough communication. That's the key”

“I think in today's day and age, with what young people have become so accustomed to technology, museums are probably going to have to be marketed differently or use different means to get young people in there and interested...”

“...if you sit back and expect people to find you, that ain't going to happen. Somehow you have to reach out. (...) I think that increasing engagement will help the museum.”

“... they don't have to just focus on what's in their collection, okay? Any good museum knows that you can borrow stuff from everywhere. (...) And it's the same with history museums.”



► Perceived Image

POSITIVE ⊕

- Many of the collections/objects are meaningful and very relevant.
- The community values the programs directed to schools and children.
- The Holiday Memories event has become a local tradition and attracts a very diverse population.
- The space is nice, interesting and could be used in a variety of ways, including the surrounding green areas.
- People who have attended programs or exhibits recently had a great experience. The staff is great.
- Traveling exhibits provide new ways to engage the community.

NEGATIVE ⊖

- Many people are not aware of the Museum's presence in the community and the programs offered.
- The Museum serves mostly middle aged white people from european descent.
- The organization's collection and displays don't fully reflect the experiences of BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and other audiences. Some objects are not relevant anymore.
- The exhibits don't change. There is a sense of general stagnation.
- The Museum does not communicate, engage with the community.
- The space is underutilized, not visible, not easily accessible.
- The Museum is understaffed.





► Primary Audience

WHO

WHAT

WHY

TEACHERS

Schools and individuals needing to extend the learning experience to spaces beyond the classroom.

To create new opportunities for students and add to the existing curriculum. To inspire students to explore and research. To teach history in an engaging, experiential way.

FAMILIES, PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS and GUARDIANS of SMALL CHILDREN

People providing new experiences to their young children.

To give children the opportunity to play while learning.

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

People interested in learning, researching and engaging with other community members their age.

To ignite and nurture young minds curiosity, providing them access to historically significant information and resources and showing how the past has shaped our community



► Primary Audience

WHO

HISTORY BUFFS

Individuals with a strong interest in history, many times with strong Sheboygan roots. Also researchers, academics.

WHAT

VOLUNTEERS

People wanting to use their time and skills in a meaningful way.

WHY

To learn about the past. To better understand the present. To plan for the community's future.

To give back to the community.



► Aspirational Audience

WHO	WHAT	WHY
<p>BIPOC, LGBTQ & PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (DIVERSITY)</p>	<p>People demanding to see themselves and their communities represented and included in Sheboygan’s (and the nation’s) history.</p>	<p>To learn. To participate. To belong.</p>
<p>YOUNG ADULTS</p>	<p>People interested in meeting peers with similar interests, while being exposed to new, creative, and informative experiences.</p>	<p>To expand their social interactions, to increase their knowledge.</p>
<p>DONORS</p>	<p>Individual and institutional donors willing to make a difference.</p>	<p>To support transformational community investment in education and cultural programming.</p>
<p>TOURISTS</p>	<p>People visiting Sheboygan and interested in museums, cultural and entertainment experiences.</p>	<p>To explore, learn and have fun.</p>



► Segment characteristics

<p>TEACHERS</p>	<p>Many times, overwhelmed and exhausted.</p> <p>Schools have been impacted by budget cuts that have limited their ability to keep an ideal teacher/student ratio (bigger classes), offer supplementary and extracurricular programs in non traditional learning environments. Collaborative partnerships provide teachers with the ability to enhance their curriculums and expose their students to valuable resources and experiences.</p>
<p>FAMILIES, PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS and GUARDIANS of SMALL CHILDREN</p>	<p>Traditionally from a white and middle to upper socioeconomic background. Looking for fun (entertaining) and educational activities for the younger generations. Willing to pay for classes, workshops and exhibitions.</p>
<p>MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS</p>	<p>Not fully engaged. Interested in social interaction more than in adding to their knowledge base. With limited opportunities to engage locally and most of the times motivated by “mandatory” school assignments.</p>



► Segment characteristics

HISTORY BUFFS

Mostly age 40 and older, mainly white and local or from local ancestry. Interested in learning about the past and researching.

In a few cases, academics in search for local resources and access to historically accurate information.

VOLUNTEERS

Mostly older adults (65+), predominantly white and from a middle to upper socioeconomic background. In Sheboygan County.

Willing to participate and help, often motivated by a nostalgic approach to local history. Many of them see themselves and their families represented in the museum's collection and displays.



► Segment characteristics

BIPOC, LGBTQ, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, DIVERSE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND	<p>Underrepresented. Mostly, not reflected in the museum's collections, displays and programs. Many times with limited access, due to transportation, economic, language, and other cultural barriers.</p> <p>Eager to be included, acknowledged, seen.</p> <p>Not necessarily actively involved with the museum and its programs yet.</p>
YOUNG ADULTS	<p>Increasingly diverse and digitally adept, in search of meaningful interaction and experiences. Most of them finding options in neighboring cities and counties, but interested in local high quality experiences (demanding).</p>
DONORS	<p>Family Foundations and corporate donors oriented to investing in education.</p>
TOURISTS	<p>Traveling families, individuals, used to paying higher fees, interested in experiencing the local culture, looking for something fun to do.</p>



▶ **BRAND PLATFORM**

► Changing Perceptions

The following descriptors are not absolutes or considered generalized perceptions, but help identify some of the elements that negatively affect the Museum's image and that can be effectively addressed.

FROM

- Unknown
- Middle aged white people
- Exclusive
- Old, dated, stagnant

TO

- **Recognizable** by a very targeted group of people. We can't please and serve everyone, but we can be very present in target audience's minds.
- **Diverse.** It is our duty to show the whole picture and provide historical context that reflects all angles of the county's past.
- **Inclusive.** Implementing universal design when developing programming, exhibitions and accepting collections.
- **Modern, vital, relevant.** Offering programs and exhibitions that connect the past with the present and the future. Always changing. Always creative.



► Changing Perceptions...

FROM

- Disconnected
- Underutilized, invisible, inaccessible.

TO

- **Connected.** By:
 - Implementing a strategic communications plan and intentionally developing communications tactics.
 - Rethinking, remodelling the programs.
 - Both mean resources -people and budget.
- **Accessible, collaborative, visible.** By:
 - Rethinking signage and space utilization.
 - Collaborating and interacting with other organizations and sharing expertise and spaces.
 - Meeting the people where they are, creating satellite point of contact, extending the programming to other spaces in the community.





► Key Concepts

WHAT we do

HOW we do

WHY we do

INFORMATIONAL RATIONAL APPEALS

We **collect**, we **preserve**, we **educate** about the history of Sheboygan County.

- By collecting items for their cultural and/or artistic value and influence.
- By preserving historically relevant items that tell local stories from diverse perspectives.
- By offering programs and curating exhibits that reflect the area's history and the way it connects to relevant national and international events.

- To provide historical context, by telling stories about how our communities came to be.
- To provide a space for intellectual exchange, that encourages people to engage in conversation regarding historically relevant issues.

TRANSFORMATIONAL EMOTIONAL APPEALS

We **inspire** and **entertain**. We create a sense of **community** and **belonging**.

- By including the stories of every segment of the community.
- By offering programs that are interesting, engaging, fun, and creative.
- By modernizing our approach, extending our programs and eliminating access barriers.

- To honor the past by reflecting historical events from a variety of angles.
- To provide equitable access to educational opportunities.
- To build community.
- To stay relevant and present.

► Brand Benefits Ladder

Brand Features

“Museums collect, conserve, and communicate heritage through exhibitions and display. They are public institutions that make cultural heritage present and accessible to all. Museums are agents of education and recreation through research and display, with the power to lead social, cultural, and intellectual change for the benefit of human development.”*



* International Council of Museums. Creating the new museum definition.
<https://icom.museum/en/news/the-museum-definition-the-backbone-of-icom/>

► Brand Benefits Ladder

Rational Benefits

The Museum offers access to exhibits, displays, programs and experiences that allow people to interpret the past as a way to better understand the present and to envision and create the future.

Emotional Benefits

The Museum is the space where the community comes together to celebrate its collective memory, its heritage.

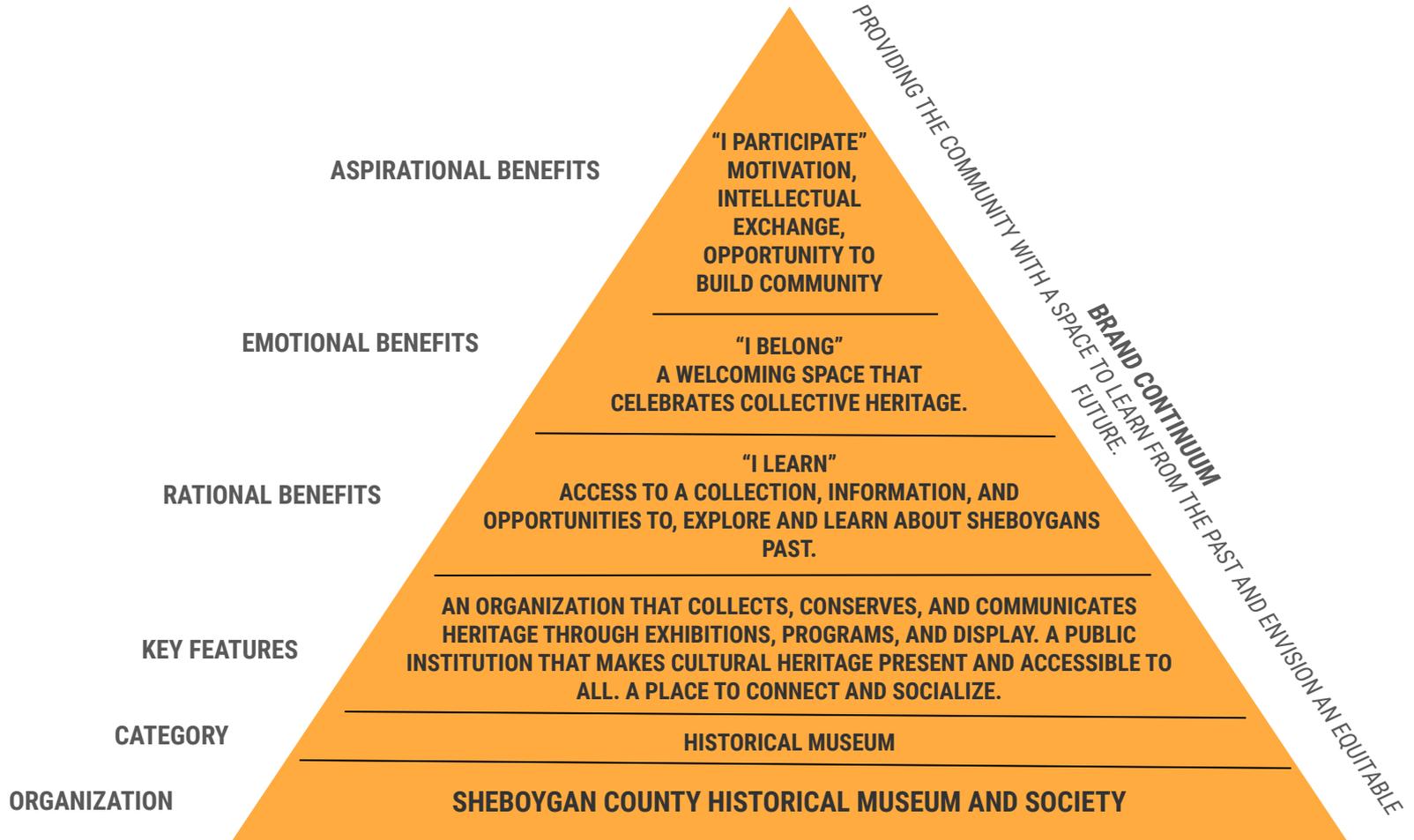
Aspirational Benefits

The Museum is the space where the community as a whole finds itself reflected and represented. The space where people have transcendental conversations about the past, to build a better future for all.





► Brand Benefits Ladder



▶ **Positioning**

The distinct position the brand occupies in the mind or perception of the consumer.

▶ **Personality**

The way we want people to perceive the brand, a description of its character, public behavior, habits and traits.

▶ **Essence**

The simple, short sentence that describes the brand.





▶ **Positioning**

We connect visitors and members of the community to Sheboygan's cultural heritage, facilitating conversations to enrich the possibilities of identity construction.

▶ **Personality**

We provide a **fresh** view of our past by conserving material evidence and displaying it in an often **nostalgic**, but also **critical**, and **analytical** way. We use a **creative**, **engaging**, and **accessible** approach.

▶ **Essence**

We are the stewards of Sheboygans cultural heritage and work to make history and historical debate and reflection accessible to all.



► Brand Identity Model

POSITIONING

WE CONNECT VISITORS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO SHEBOYGAN'S CULTURAL HERITAGE, FACILITATING CONVERSATIONS TO ENRICH THE POSSIBILITIES OF IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION.

PERSONALITY

WE PROVIDE A FRESH VIEW OF OUR PAST BY CONSERVING MATERIAL EVIDENCE AND DISPLAYING IT IN AN OFTEN NOSTALGIC, BUT ALSO CRITICAL, AND ANALYTICAL WAY. WE USE A CREATIVE, ENGAGING, AND ACCESSIBLE APPROACH.

ESSENCE

WE ARE THE STEWARDS OF SHEBOYGAN'S CULTURAL HERITAGE AND WORK TO MAKE HISTORICAL DEBATE AND REFLECTION ACCESSIBLE TO ALL.



ANNEXES

► Things we should keep doing

Programs, collections, and exhibits:

- Educational programs, particularly those geared towards schools. First Peoples and Journey to Sheboygan County need to be revisited and improved.
- Traveling exhibits. Particularly those that attract diverse and younger audiences.
- Outdoor entertainment and programming, including “Movie Nights” and “Music Fest”.
- Collaboration with Mead Public Library and The John Michael Kohler Arts Center.
- Continue expanding the “Holiday Memories”.



► Things we should stop doing

Programs, collections, and exhibits:

- Expanding programming without considering how limited our resources are (staffing and budget). *“It is exhausting”*
- Planning for growing exhibits and programming without adding people and support.
- Doing things because *“this is the way we always did it”*. It is time to *“stop limiting our possibilities”*, *“we need to change the mindset”*.
- Collecting non historical items, pioneer and farming focused items, objects that represent only a segment of the community.
- Maintaining exhibits without updating or changing them.

Audiences and communications:

- Focussing on *“old, white people”*.
- Try to please and serve everyone.
- Printing the newsletter.



► Things we should do

Diversity, equity, and inclusion:

- Add programs and exhibits highlighting diverse populations, particularly the Hmong, Latinx, Black, and LGBTQ+ communities. (E.g. “*oral histories of underrepresented populations*”).
- Increase collaboration and connection with local grassroots organizations.
- Improve accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Eliminate language barriers.
- Improve and expand communication with diverse populations.
- Hire staff of color.
- Make sure the Board is representative of the community the museum serves.



► Things we should do...

New audiences, new programs:

- Add programs for youth and young adults (e.g. junior historian camp)
- Create special offers for teachers.
- Increase preschool outreach.
- Take advantage of digital options, create virtual programming, increase interactivity.

Plan for growth:

- Re-evaluate the staffing needs, increase staff.
- Budget for growth.



► Things we should do...

Space and infrastructure:

- Reevaluate the spaces, invest in restoring, maintaining and improving the Taylor House and the main building.
- Improve signage, make the area more accessible and visible to the public.
- Meet people where they are, create satellite options.
- Use the space surrounding the building in a more consistent way.



Research instruments

The following are links to the guides used during the qualitative research process and to the analysis of the findings:

- [Interview and community conversation Guide](#)
- [Identity conversation - workshop guide](#)



Interviews, local leaders | Nov, Dec. 202

Name	Title/Organization
Adam Payne	Sheboygan County Administrator
Ryan Sorenson	Mayor, City of Sheboygan
Melissa Prentice	Public Services Manager, Mead Library
Brian Doudna	Executive Director, SCEDC
Brenda Bintzler	Marketing and Communications Manager, SCEDC
Laura Roenitz	Executive Director, Kohler Foundation
Kate Baer	Executive Director, United United Way of Sheboygan County
Sam Gappmayer	Executive Director, John Michael Kohler Arts Center
Jim Renzelmann	Coordinator of Instructional Services at Sheboygan Area School District
Carolynn Lee	Sheboygan County LGBTQ Alliance
Vernon Koch	President, County Board of Supervisors





THANK YOU!