

Adler Planetarium

In May of 1930, Chicago became home to America's first planetarium. It was named after the museum's chief financial contributor, an affluent businessman by the name of Max Adler. Dedicated as a "classroom under the heavens," the next two years boasted an impressive attendance of over 1.2 million guests. Today, like museumgoers of the past, patrons can experience engaging exhibits that illustrate the vast and important science of our universe and beyond. Situated on the very tip of Chicago's historical Museum Campus, this architectural gem remains one of Chicago's most visited attractions and is a crucial component to the colorful culture and history of this great city.

BRAND DEFINITIONS

Branding

Adler Planetarium is an equitable brand, and is a part of the 57-acre lakeside park known as Museum Campus. The Adler brand is comprised of several components, each reflecting the mission and values of the organization. In its history, the museum has undergone several rebranding efforts to help drive attendance and increase endowment. The most recent redesign of the museum began in 2011, with updates to the interior that modernized the ultra-futuristic design. The man responsible for these changes is the museum's Visual and Interactive Design Lead, David Miller.

Miller's first task was to define the experience of the museum so that the branding could be a visual representation of the institution itself. Borrowing themes from the art deco architecture and the building's zodiac plaques by Alfonso Lannelli, Miller was able to incorporate elements of the rich history of the museum into the typography and illustrations used today. By updating the color palate from dark "space like" tones to a more vibrant and saturated design aesthetic, the museum is able to emphasize its youthful curious nature and dynamically engaging voice.

In addition to planetarium itself, unique exhibits hosted in the building also require their own branding and marketing. Melissa Szwan is Adler Planetarium's former graphic designer, and is responsible for design elements of the current "Space is Freaking Awesome" campaign. This campaign, which is currently still being promoted, seamlessly integrates the modern design and interactivity of the museum with the core messaging of the larger Adler brand. The following sections will analyze key components of the Adler brand.

The Mission

The mission of the Adler Planetarium is to inspire exploration and understanding of our Universe.

Core Values

The museum defines their values as the following:

- An engaging, user friendly museum serving diverse audiences
- Excitement and curiosity about space science and space exploration
- Programs base on credible science and education research
- Well managed collections
- Adherence to results-oriented planning
- A professional work environment and highly motivated, diverse staff
- Long-term financial stability and the economic viability of our endeavors

Logo

The museum’s logo features Brandon Text, paying homage to the geometric sans serif type of the 1920s and 1930s. It is frequently placed on top of vibrantly saturated colors, but is pictured below in white/black. In addition to the museum’s logo, specific programs that are promoted by the planetarium borrow similar design principals, and can also be seen below.

ADLER PLANETARIUM



Slogan

- “Space is Freaking Awesome”
- “America’s First Planetarium”
- “Classroom Under the Heavens”

Trademarks

I attempted to conduct a search for registered trademarks for the planetarium using the United States Patent and Trademark office database, but had issues identifying/compiling a list. Adler Planetarium currently boasts a very impressive list of programs, events and exhibits, some of which with their own branding and identity. Below is a list of these unique programs, exhibitions and facilities that contribute to the brand identity of the museum.

Adler After Dark	Doane Observatory	Historic Atwood Sphere
Doane At Dusk	Reel Science Series	Space Visualization Lab
'Scopes in the City	Sun Salutations	Adler Store/Galileo Café
Exhibit: What is a Planet?	Exhibit: Mission Moon	Exhibit: Our Solar System
Exhibit: Community Design Lab	Exhibit: The Universe: A Walk Though Space and Time	Exhibit: Planet Explorers
Exhibit: Telescopes, Through the Looking Glass	Exhibit: Clark Family Welcome Gallery	Exhibit: Astronomy in Culture
The Aquarius Project	Ask Alder	Citizen Science
Far Horizons	Park Voyager’s Project	Astro-Science Workshop
Space is Freaking Awesome	Celestial Ball	Women in Space Science
Women’s Board	Shepard Society	Friends of the Webster Institute

Quality, Consistency and Satisfaction

Adler Planetarium's approach to quality, consistency and satisfaction are rooted in their core values and mission statement, which are provided above. The Adler brand is committed to education through the understanding and exploration of our universe, and continually evolves to respond to the needs of the consumer. This ensures high attendance, a goal that the planetarium was able to meet in 2016 when attendance rates were the highest in 23 years.

Assets and Liabilities

Assets	Liabilities
Historical significance to the city of Chicago, specifically as a National Historical Monument	Lack of access to CTA train lines
Location within Museum Campus, one of Chicago's most visited areas	Cuts to science and arts based grants that fund 5% of the operating budget
Large endowment and fundraising arm	Nearly half of funding comes from fundraising activities that are subject to change from year to year
High attendance numbers in 2016/2017	Pension and retirement spending is projected to increase
Credibility within the scientific community	Limitations for telescope visibility due to increasing light levels in the growing city of Chicago
Diverse programming that draws in multiple demographics	Innovations in other Chicago city attractions/museums that equalize Adler's competitive advantage
Affiliation with the Chicago CityPass/GoPass programs that help drive attendance	Farthest attraction on Museum Campus
Engaging interactive exhibits and programming for all ages	
Real estate holdings of significant value	
Thriving membership base	
Technologically advanced	
Strong outreach and education	
501(c)(3) charitable organization status	
Artifact collection	
Multi-level engagement strategy for educational programming at all ages	

Consumer Perceptions

Analyzing Yelp! reviews and social media posts about the Adler Planetarium, consumer perception of this attraction can be categorized as positive. I've chosen to highlight three reviews that epitomize the majority opinion of patrons:

"Ultimately, you will leave this place feeling profoundly changed and with a deeper understanding of yourself and the universe. If not, you did it wrong." – Jonathon S.

"It's a bit of a hike to get to the Adler Planetarium but its SOOO worth it. One of my favorite things to do in the summer is bike down to the planetarium and have a picnic with some friends!" – Madeline N.

"With all of the light pollution in Chicago, it's easy to forget your place in the universe. A visit to the Adler Planetarium will remind you that you're an insignificant piece of stardust desperately trying to comprehend the world around you." – Clayton G.

Brand Image

Adler Planetarium has always been a leader of engagement within the museum community in Chicago. The interactivity of its exhibits have transformed the imaginations of patrons since the beginning, as the founder, Max Adler, set out to create an educational environment that is both entertaining, imaginative and enriching. Consumers still believe in the mission of the museum, which is “to inspire exploration and understanding of our Universe.” In addition, and in contrast to some of the other museums in Chicago with defined target demographics, Adler sets out to be a welcoming destination for all, and has introduced programing, such as “*Adler After Dark,*” to help achieve this goal.

Brand Values

Adler’s brand values are a direct reflection of its core values, which are listed above. To summarize, the Adler brand is about education, access, and deeper understanding through interactivity and user-friendly engagement. The Adler brand is rooted in science and strategic planning, and will utilize advancements in technology to further enrich their patrons understanding of our Universe.

The Adler brand would never operate in any way that would challenge their core values and mission. Committed to diversity and access, the museum will always seek ways to improve the bond it has between its stakeholders and the greater Chicago community.

Brand Personality

The following adjectives can be used to describe Adler Planetarium:

Engaging	Historical	Imaginative
Interactive	Innovative	Exciting
Educational	Inclusive	Informational
Entertaining	Ground-breaking	Enriching

Positioning

To visitors and residents alike, The Adler Planetarium is Chicago’s only interactive and engaging museum to provide patrons with an interstellar glimpse into another world.

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