THE SAPPORO OLYMPIC MUSEUM

Olympic City: Sapporo  
Country: Japan  
Edition of the Games:  
1972 Winter Olympic Games

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Permanent since 2000  Locals & Visitors  sapporo-olympicmuseum.jp/  
WHEN  FOR WHO  WEB

The Sapporo Olympic Museum is an educational institution dedicated to the history of local winter sports and more specifically to the legacy of the 1972 Winter Olympic Games.

First opened in 2000, the Museum forms part of the Sapporo Winter Sports Complex, a centrally located network of winter sports facilities built for the 1972 Games. The Museum allows visitors to see, touch and feel the City’s winter sports heritage for themselves. To achieve this, three separate but interrelated zones are offered to Museum visitors.

The first of these areas is the Competition Information Zone. This educates visitors on the various technical elements of the competitions hosted by Sapporo throughout the years. Information on game rules and regulations, standard equipment and the various athletes who have participated in these competitions is available, with a specific emphasis on the sports included on the 1972 Winter Olympic programme.

The second dedicated area in the Museum is the Exhibit Zone. This gathers historical materials and valuable documentation in traditional exhibition style. The collection ranges from old artefacts from the time of the first recorded practice of winter sport in the region to valuable memorabilia from the 1972 Winter Games and other international winter sports events.

The third area is the Experience Zone. Here visitors can really live the experience of sporting competition through game simulators, each of which is designed to replicate the real life environment of various winter sports. A variety of sports including ski jumping, speed skating, bobsleigh and many more can be virtually practiced by visitors to the Museum.

The Museum has fast become a popular destination for both local and international visitors and it continues to grow each year.
OBJECTIVES

**Celebrate Olympism and its values**

The 1972 Games are a continued source of pride and joy for the citizens of Sapporo. The Museum acts as a physical space where the Olympic heritage of the City can be preserved and this civic pride can be curated for future generations. Education is at the centre of this, with the Museum telling many memorable stories around the 1972 Winter Olympic Games to visitors. Each of these stories has been carefully selected based on their inspirational quality, connecting them with the Olympic movement and framing them within the Olympic values.

**Promote the City by leveraging its affiliation with the Olympic Movement**

The Sapporo Olympic Museum has been strongly marketed as a tourist destination and has fast become popular with both local and international visitors. This has been aided by the location of the Museum right in the centre of the Sapporo Winter Sports Complex, itself a highly popular tourist hotspot. Plans are also in place to partner with schools from across the surrounding region to help get more and more young people involved in the Museum. These and all other marketing initiatives employed heavily leverage the Olympic connection of Sapporo, highlighting it as the destination for winter sports in the region and thereby attracting more and more people to the City.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

**Internal & External Stakeholders**

- City of Sapporo
- Sport Affairs Bureau
- Japanese National Olympic Committee
- The Olympic Museum (Lausanne)
- The Olympic Museums Network

**Finance and Cost**

The initial capital cost of the Museum was approximately US$ 25,000,000.

The annual running costs for the Complex, including both the Museum and the surrounding sports facilities is approximately US$1,500,000.
Use of the Olympic Brand

As the Museum represents a physical link with the Olympic Games, there is a large amount of Olympic branding connected with the institution. The Olympic logo is displayed on numerous occasions, not only in the Museum itself, but also at the competition facilities dotted around the Winter Sports Complex. As a member of the Olympic Museums Network, the Sapporo Olympic Museum refers directly to Olympism in its name.

Human Resources and Time

The Museum has a dedicated team of 12 persons. This covers one Director, two curators and ten other additional supporting staff members.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of the Museum project takes place on an annual basis. At the end of every year, a report is compiled by the appointed administrator and submitted to the Evaluation Board. The report covers a variety of areas including visitor numbers, revenues and expenses, events hosted and customer satisfaction.

KEY CHALLENGES

Maintaining continuous improvement

Part of the challenge for Museums of any kind is staying relevant and always offering improved experience and quality to new and returning visitors. Management needs to constantly focus on continuous improvement to ensure sustainable medium-to-long-term success. This is particularly the case where Olympic material is involved and new information and content becomes relevant every two to four years.

One recent development in particular will help to promote a culture of continuous improvement within the Museum. In 2016, the Museum joined the newly formed Olympic Museums network. Membership of this group will help bring external expertise and standards to improve service quality, increase the level of accountability to drive better performance and simultaneously provide access to a breadth of new and regularly updated Olympic material to develop the visitor experience on a systematic basis.

Connecting with youth

Having being staged in 1972, Sapporo is lucky in that many of its residents lived through the Games themselves. However, one of the key target groups for the Museum management is the local youth. These younger citizens share far less of a connection with the City's Olympic heritage. This is combined with an increasing ambivalence towards organised sport and a movement towards alternative lifestyle practices among the youth of today.
In recognition of this, the Museum has successfully combined the traditional exhibition-style museum experience with a more innovative and technology-driven experience. Virtual game simulators engage young visitors using the latest and most advance equipment and software. This helps to engage young people through a medium with which they are more comfortable, improving their overall visitor experience and increasing the impact of their visit.

KEY LEARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Market yourself as a destination

The Sapporo Olympic Museum has become an established feature on the tourist route of the City. This did not happen by accident. The marketing strategy for the Museum stresses its qualities as a tourist destination which has something for everyone. The promotion of the Museum highlights its proximity with the famous Okurayama, Miyanomori and Arayama Ski Jump facilities located there. Furthermore, elite sporting competitions hosted at the Complex facilities are incorporated into marketing efforts, taking advantage of the increased local attention and number of visitors that are brought about by such events.

Refresh your product constantly

One of the core beliefs of the Museum team is that the key to maintaining public interest and attracting new visitors is through constantly updating your offering to the customer. This is achieved through two main avenues. The first is by continually bringing in new exhibitions and materials which are linked to upcoming large winter sports events. This was used to great effect during the 2014 Winter Olympics, for example, where the Sochi Olympic Panel exhibition was very well attended. The second is through the use of technology that is constantly updated and replaced. This helps to ensure that people are always experiencing things for the first time.

CONTACT

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