

By [Fresh Produce Marketing](#) founder Lisa Cork



I was recently in San Francisco for a Board meeting. Since I got in a day early, I was checking out things to do and discovered the Museum of Ice Cream (MOIC) had recently come to San Francisco. I had read about the Museum of Ice Cream before - how it was created as an 'experiential pop-up' and had sold out in New York, Miami and Los Angeles.

With #museumoficecream having over 190,000 Instagram posts and #MOIC having nearly 75,000 posts, I knew I had to go and see what all the hype was about. I booked my spot online, paid my US\$38 (that's not a typo!) and went and experienced a world of rainbow sprinkles, unicorns and pink...lots of pink. What was it like? Read on.

Let me first say, the Museum of Ice Cream is not about ice cream. Say wha? That's right. While ice cream features as part of the experience - there are different sampling occasions related to different themes - this is not a museum in the traditional sense of the word. Yes, one room after you first enter has nine placards that talk about the history of ice cream, where the first ice cream was made, etc - but that's it regarding the traditional museum experience. The rest of the exhibition is designed for you to 'experience and feel things' - ice cream is just the hook.

What do I mean by, "to experience and feels things"? Let me give you some examples.

One pink room had magnetic rainbow-colored letters by the thousands stuck on the walls. In this room, you were encouraged to create your ice cream name using the letters provided.

Also located in this room were what I would call 'feelings' books. These were large, pink journals on pedestals that encouraged you to think about questions and write a response. For example, one book asked, "Write a message to your future self." Another booked encouraged, "Write a message to someone unsure of their path."



Being curious, I took some time to read the responses written and I must admit, most were well thought out and kind. In the book asking you to write to someone who was unsure of their path, someone wrote, “Things fall into place, somehow, always. Don’t be afraid, do your best, improve, ask questions and don’t hesitate to love yourself.”

One of the next rooms was what I called the ‘high-five’ room. Prior to entering this room, there was more introspection required. Scattered along the pink walls were questions like, “What is something you have created?” And, “What is your best quality?” And, “What does no one else know about you?” After pausing in this room to contemplate the questions, you were led into a room with high-five hands moving along the wall. The Instagram moment was to video yourself high-fiving all these moving wooden hands as you passed through the room.

Other rooms were less introspective but themed with rainbows and unicorns or the chance to sit on a pink, animal cracker carousel animal. Are you starting to get a mental picture?

The final room is the most famous room. Two stories tall and painted pink, it features what is called the sprinkles pool. Picture a ball pit from a children’s indoor playground and you’ll get the idea. The sprinkles pool is knee-deep and filled with plastic, rainbow-colored pieces that remind you of sprinkles that go on top of a cake.

Some of the most famous shots from Instagram are the shots with people tossing the sprinkles into the air and capturing the moment using Instagram’s boomerang feature.

Here, at the sprinkles pool, is where your 45-minute Museum of Ice Cream experience ends.

I admit the Museum of Ice Cream made me both introspective...and curious. First, it was sold out when I went. I got one of the last tickets available for the day. Entry sessions are staggered into 15-minute blocks, each session has about 20 people and there are 26 sessions per day. You do the math. With ticket prices \$38 each (unless under 2!), this works out to gross income per day of approximately USD\$19,760. Not a bad income earner.



More than the money...what was interesting was what it was like to be fully immersed in well done 'experience' that so clearly understands their target audience. When you look at the Instagram photos, you clearly see who the MOIC is targeting. Young, social media savvy, there to be seen and capture the experience as sharable moments on their Instagram feeds. When I was there in person, I could see it in the people in my group. I was by far the oldest one in the building at the time.

The other interesting insight is what can something like The Museum of Ice Cream teach us about fresh produce marketing? In fresh produce, we tend to be pragmatic marketers. We talk about nutrition and taste and versatility and the facts of fresh produce...but we struggle to share the experience of fresh produce.

We don't talk about the experience of growing something good from soil and seed and water and sunshine. We don't talk about the joys of harvest...or the heartaches when a hailstorm comes through and decimates nine months of work. We talk about the benefits of eating

'five a day' and the goodness of fresh, but struggle to turn this into moments people want to share.

Consumers continually evolve. Millennials seek different things from marketing than Boomers sought. The art of marketing teaches us the only way to connect with consumers is to truly know your target market and appeal to their needs. This is a lesson the Museum of Ice Cream will be known for writing the book on.