



CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM CASE STUDY

How Self-Service Kiosks Allow Guests to Control Their Experience

CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM

LOCATION:

Bentonville, Arkansas

CHALLENGES:

- Alleviate visitor congestion in lobby
- Expedite museum entry

KEY RESULTS:

- Enhance visitor experience
- Streamline ticket sales and tracking
- Offer personalized touch for first-time visitors

BACKGROUND

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, located in downtown Bentonville, Arkansas, welcomes visitors to celebrate the American spirit in a setting that unites the power of art with the beauty of nature. Founded by philanthropist and arts patron Alice Walton, Crystal Bridges is a public, non-profit organization that takes its name from a nearby natural spring and the bridge construction incorporated into the building. Since opening on November 11, 2011, the museum welcomed over 5 million visitors and offers free general admission to all patrons.

With a series of pavilions, two house galleries, meeting and classroom spaces, and a large, glass-enclosed gathering hall, Crystal Bridges started researching kiosks when they began the main lobby renovation in 2021. The museum sought to offer an additional option to visitors, other than the guest services counter, to check in and get the tickets they need, thus, eliminating lines and enhancing the guest experience.

PROBLEM

Although admission to the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art is free, guests need tickets to enter special exhibitions in the museum. James Masner, Crystal Bridges Guest Services Manager, explained that the guest services staff spend time helping first-time visitors plan out their museum visit, which led to seasoned visitors waiting in line to check in and get tickets to the exhibitions.

During peak museum hours, managing visitor flow was also a concern. Lines at the guest services counter diminished the guest experience and created unwanted congestion. Often, these return visitors would prefer to skip the guest services counter and begin their museum experience.

Masner had also heard from younger employees that the museum check-in process was not ideal. Staff expressed they would prefer another option, like a kiosk, to expedite entry into the museum and exhibitions. Masner and his team hoped a kiosk would alleviate lines while meeting the needs of the museum's more tech-savvy demographic.

SOLUTION

After researching a few options, the museum's database management team spoke to staff at other museums who had successfully deployed KIS self-service solutions. In June 2021, the Crystal Bridges team decided to move forward by engaging KIS Technologies.

Masner's initial goal with the kiosk was to allow museum members to access their memberships and discounts for exhibition tickets without having to go to the guest services counter. With the kiosk in place, regular museum visitors who don't require assistance from a guest services associate can check in, get exhibition tickets, and spend more time enjoying the museum. With this change, lines at the guest services counter are now shorter resulting in a better overall museum guest experience.

Masner and his team are now able to track all ticket sales and attendance for special exhibitions and museum experiences through their Tessitura system via the kiosk. This means they no longer have to use clicker counts and other manual ticket sales tracking tools.

Partnering with KIS Technologies to deploy one kiosk in the main lobby frees up guest services staff to deliver a personalized experience to first-time guests while improving the flow of repeat visitors.

"Some of our museum regulars come in and immediately go to the kiosk, and even newer guests ask if they can check-in at the kiosk," said Masner. "There is a lot of interest in the kiosk, especially from people who didn't necessarily want to go through the traditional check-in process and discussion. They just want to come in and enjoy the museum, and the kiosk allows them to do that."

**James Masner, Crystal Bridges Museum
Guest Services Manager**

OUTCOMES

In less than one year, the kiosk has helped to improve visitor traffic flow, expedite member access to benefits, enhance the personalized services to museum visitors, and more.

ENHANCED VISITOR EXPERIENCE

For both the new museum visitor and the seasoned visitor, the kiosk has facilitated a smoother, more customized experience. First-time visitors can get the personalized attention they need from the guest services counter, while other guests can use the kiosk to quickly access their memberships and discounts for exhibition tickets and carry on with their museum visit. With two options for check-in, the line at the guest services counter is shorter, minimizing congestion in the main lobby.

“Some of our museum regulars come in and immediately go to the kiosk, and even newer guests ask if they can check-in at the kiosk,” said Masner. “There is a lot of interest in the kiosk, especially from people who didn’t necessarily want to go through the traditional check-in process and discussion. They just want to come in and enjoy the museum, and the kiosk allows them to do that.”

STREAMLINED TICKET SALES AND TRACKING

The kiosk enabled Masner and his team to access ticket sales data allowing them to understand what sales are made at different times throughout the day. After placing the kiosk in a few different locations in the lobby, the museum staff was able to use ticket sales data to determine the best location to attract users and increase sales.

Further, because the kiosk is so easy to use, museum volunteers without experience with the ticketing software can assist guests at the kiosk—no specialized knowledge is necessary. As a result, more guests are purchasing tickets to exhibitions.

IMPROVED GUEST SERVICES COUNTER

One of Masner’s goals is for the guest services counter to become more focused on the overall guest experience, offering a personalized touch to first-time visitors. The KIS Technologies solution helps him achieve this goal.

“We want to be able to spend more time with guests, talking about what we have to offer through the weekend, and other experiences they might enjoy such as local restaurant and hotel recommendations,” said Masner. “By allowing the kiosk to handle more of the check-in and ticketing process, our guest services team is available to encourage those conversations to create the best experience for each museum visitor.”

