the new mfa

Maximize Visitor Conversion On-site and Online
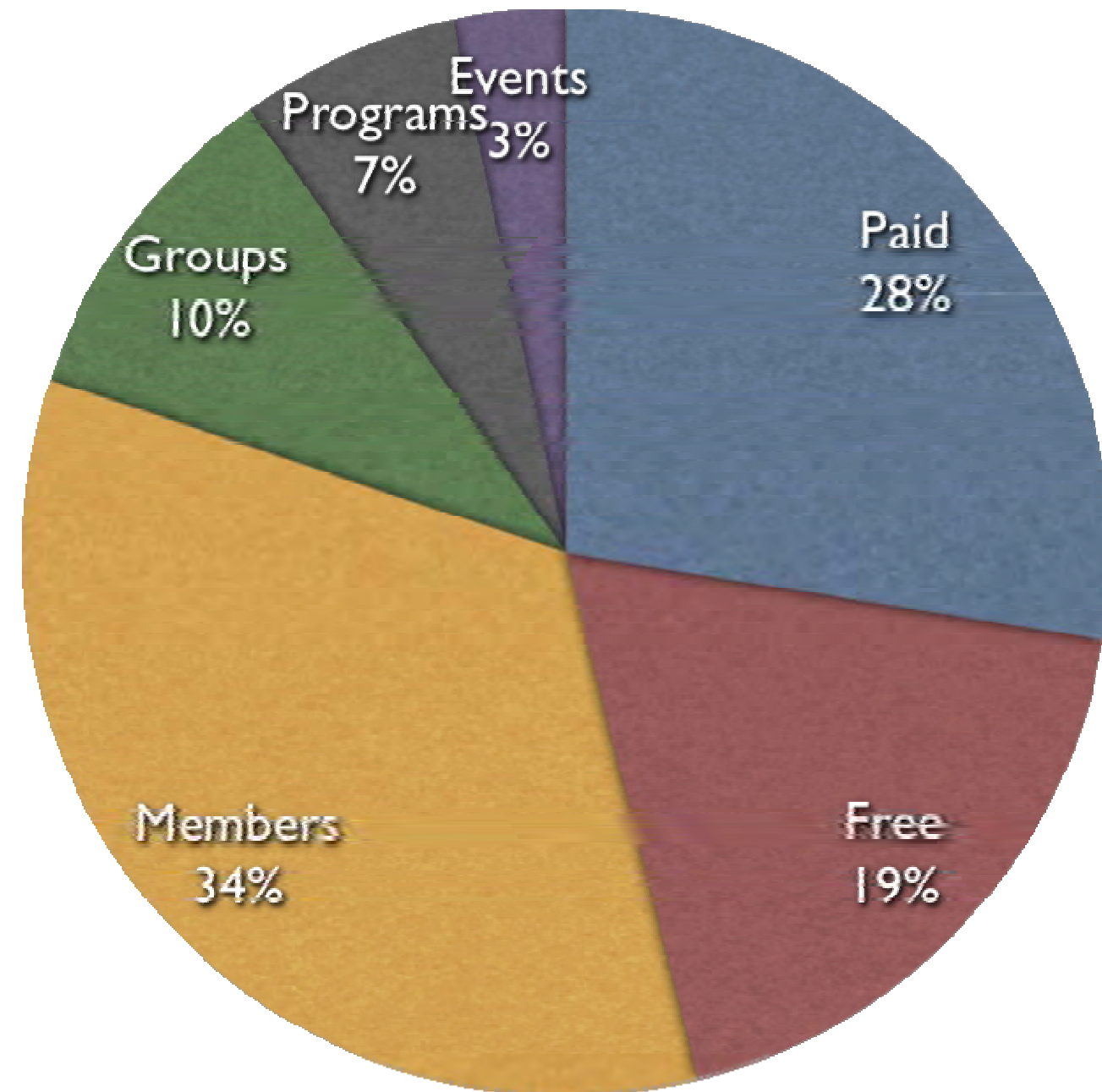
Edward Gargiulo
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
What is On-site Conversion?

Total Attendance

- Paid Admission

- Free Admission

- Members and Donors

- Groups
  (Adult, School, and Community)

- Programs
  (Film, Lectures, Concerts, etc.)

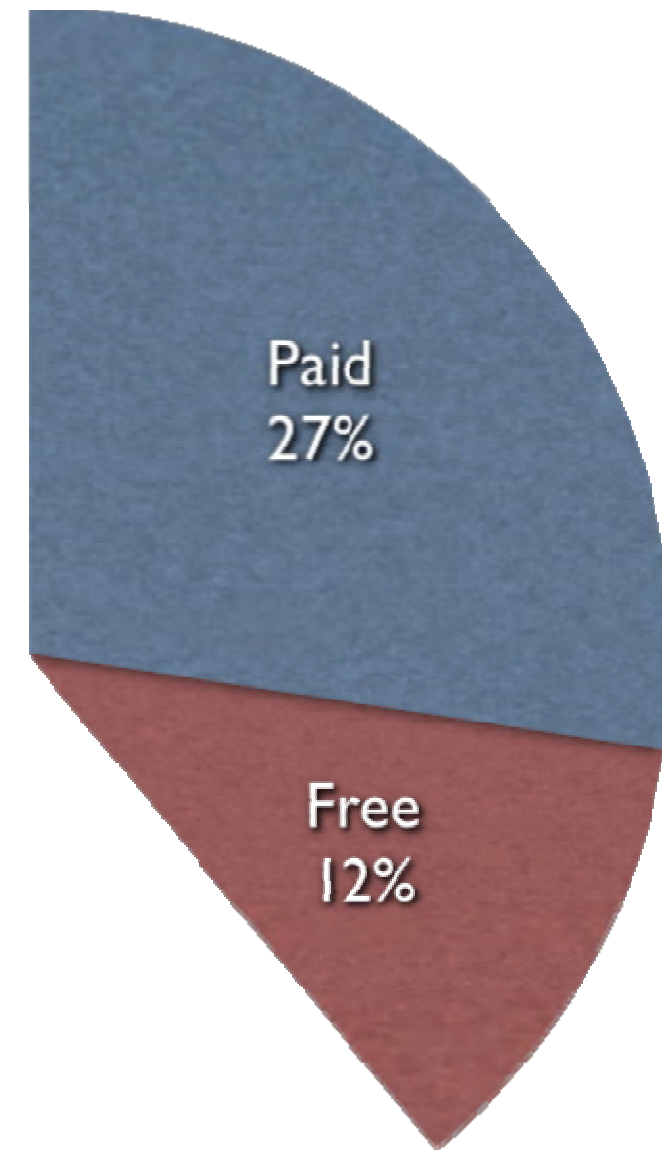- Events

What is On-site Conversion?

Convertible Attendance

- Paid Admission
  (Children removed)

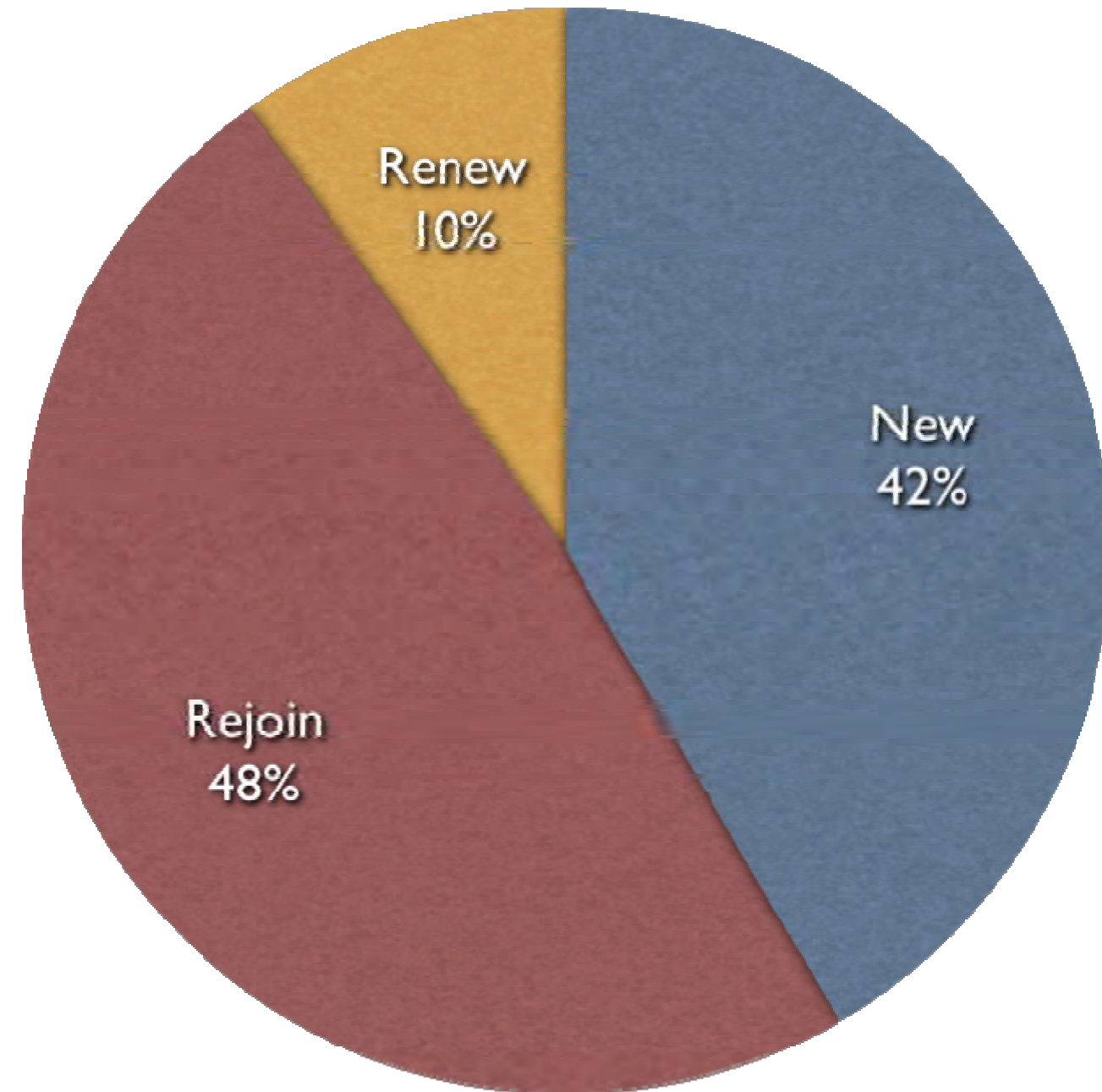- Free Admission
  (Children and repeat visitors
  removed)

Paid
27%

Free
12%

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
What is On-site Conversion?

On-site Membership Sales

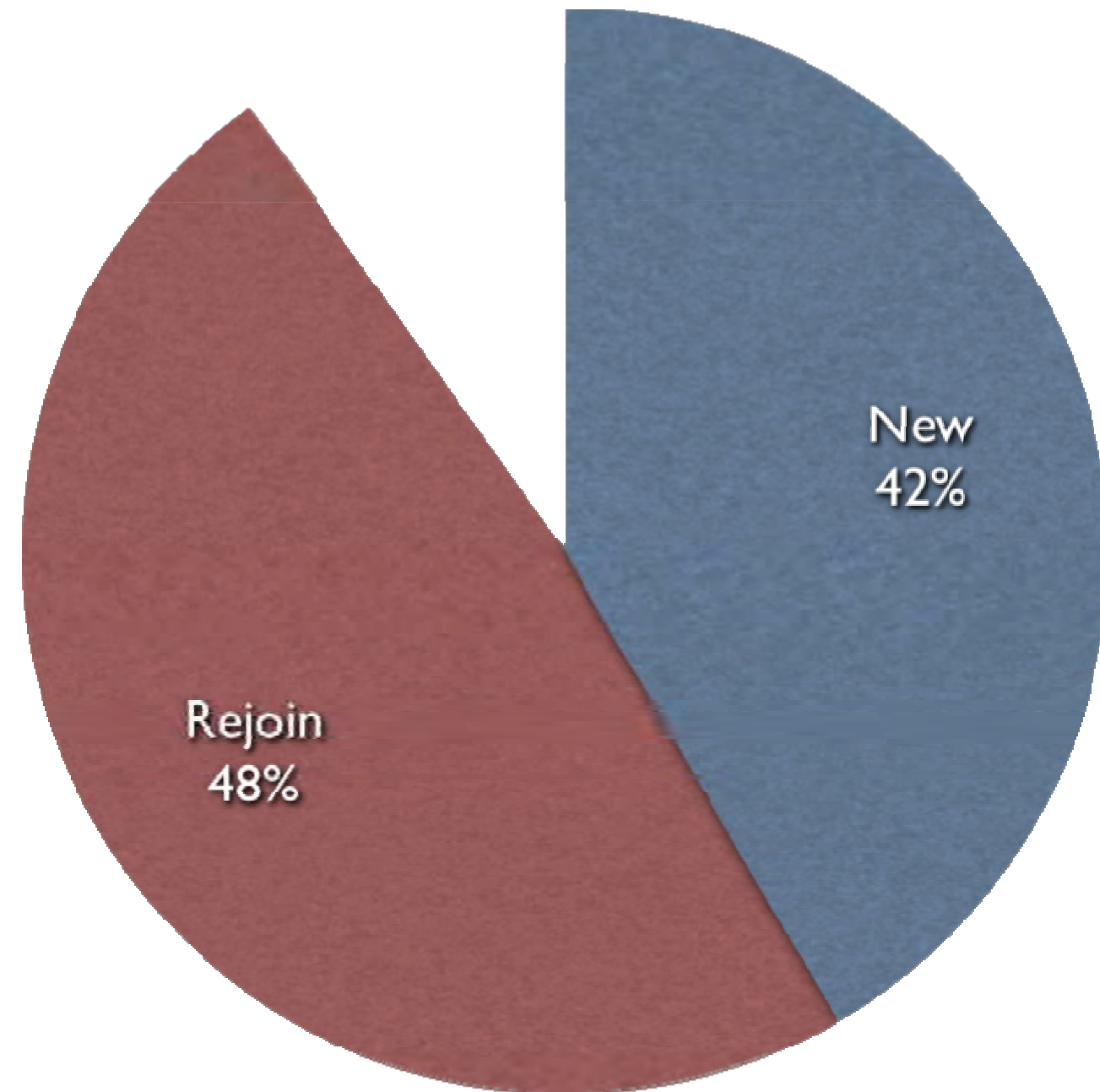- New members

- Rejoining members

- Renewing members

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
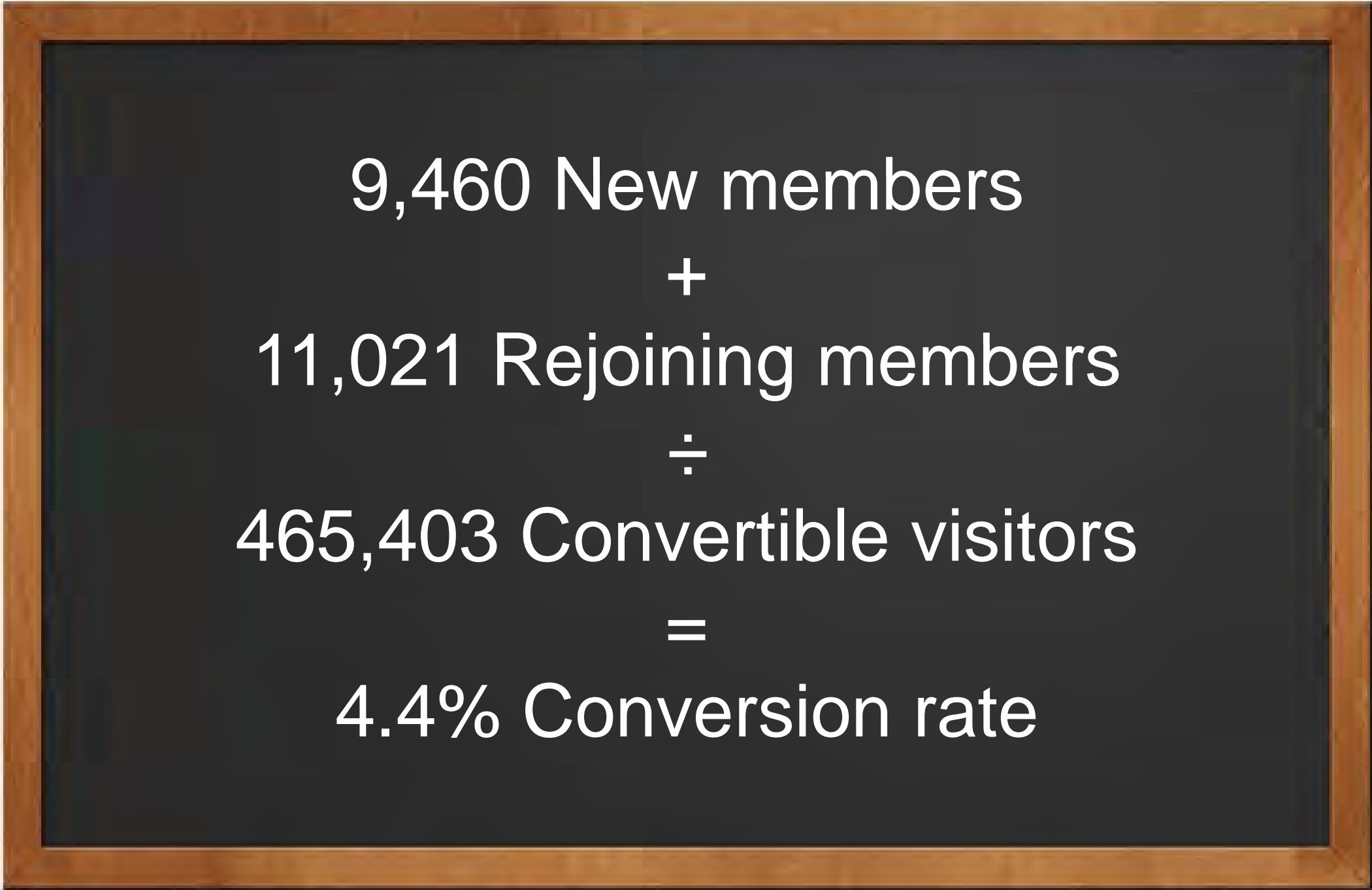# What is On-site Conversion?

On-site Membership Conversions

- New members

- Rejoining members

New
42%

Rejoin
48%

What is On-site Conversion?

9,460 New members

+

11,021 Rejoining members

÷

465,403 Convertible visitors

=

4.4% Conversion rate

Why is On-site Conversion Important?

Visitors are Highly Qualified Prospects

- They are already visiting

- They are interested in your museum

- They are even willing to pay (if you charge admission)

Low Cost and High Return

- No printing costs, no postage costs, no telemarketing fees

- You can utilize existing infrastructure and staff

- If you're ticketing visitors, membership should be part of the sequence of service

What is a Sequence of Service?

The MFA's Sequence of Service for Ticket Desk Staff

1. Smile and Greet the Visitor

3. Ask for Zip Code or Country

2. Inquire about Membership Status

4. Ask for E-mail Address

Raising the Bar

Staff Incentives

- $X for every membership sold

- Prizes for the most memberships sold
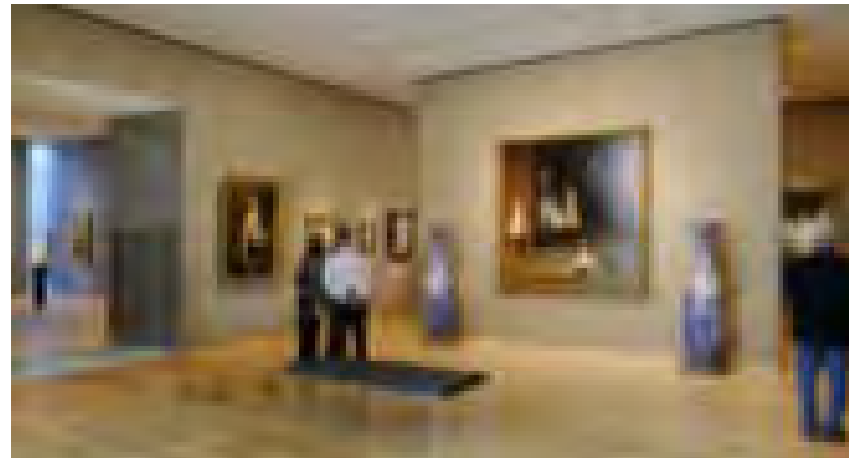
- Group incentives for reaching a conversion-rate goal

Visitor Incentives

- 20% off in the Museum Shop

- Free Audio Guides

- Special Gifts

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Raising the Bar

The Opportunity: Art of the Americas Wing

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Raising the Bar

Hiring Professionals

- Companies provide dedicated on-site sales teams as a service

- Some guarantee that they can increase on-site conversion

- Is it worth it?

The MFA's Test

- Hire an on-site sales team for a three-day period

- Evaluate their ability to increase on-site conversion

- Use the opportunity to identify any operational issues

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Raising the Bar

The Pros

- On-site conversion rates increased over the prior year

- We yielded a positive ROI

- Workload impact was minimal

The Cons

- End-of-day reconciliation taxed already busy frontline managers

- Once the "sale" was closed, ticket desk staff still had to process it

- The cost limited the number of days/occasions we could use the team for the opening

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Raising the Bar

Our Decision: Invest in Ourselves

- Hire a team of Membership Sales Associates

- Increase on-site signage to support our efforts

- Develop a mobile method for selling memberships

The Details

- A team of 10 were hired as temporary employees for a two-month period; they received a base pay and commission

- New signs and banners were placed throughout the Museum to support the sales team's efforts

- We worked with our kiosk vendor to develop a custom iPad App that was fully integrated with our frontline systems

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Raising the Bar

Signs in the Garage are Located by Elevators, Stairs, and Pay Stations
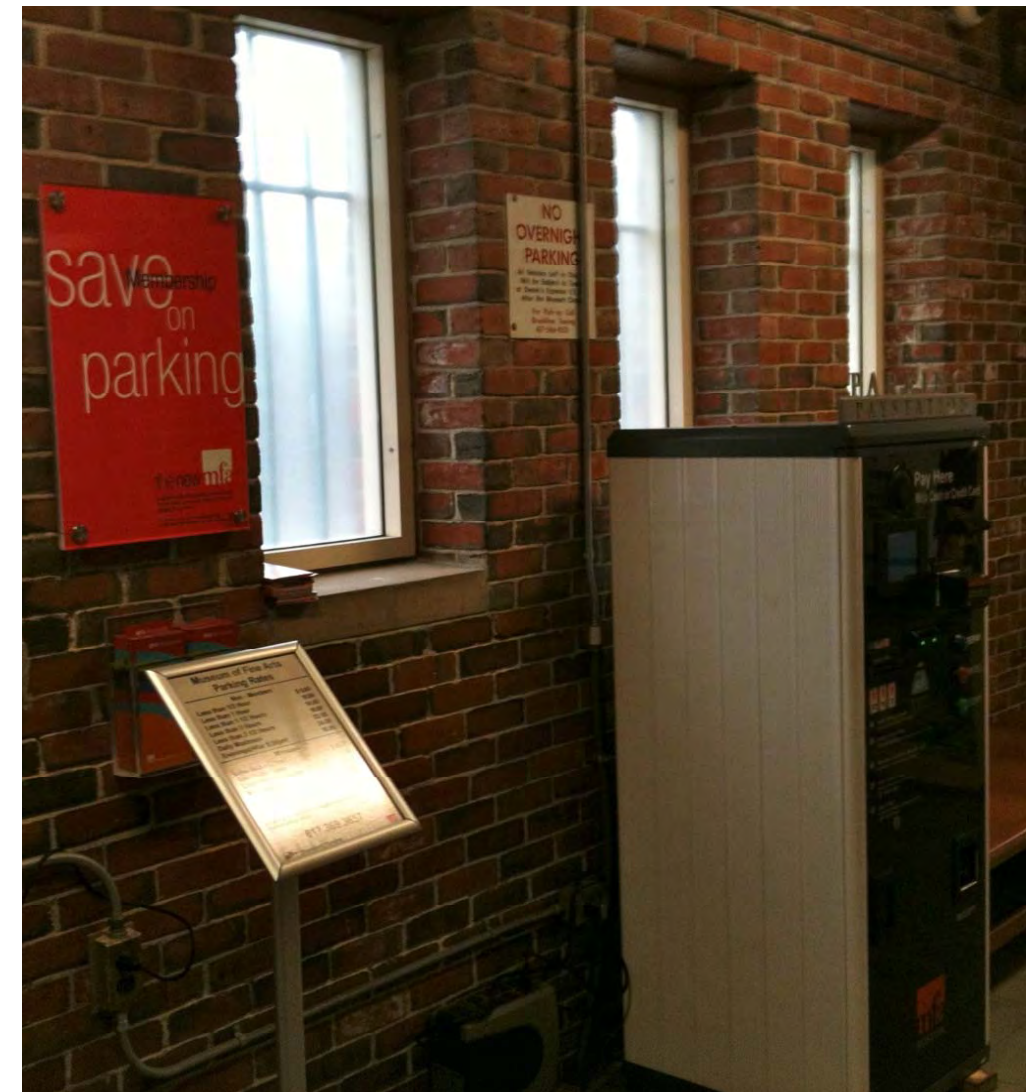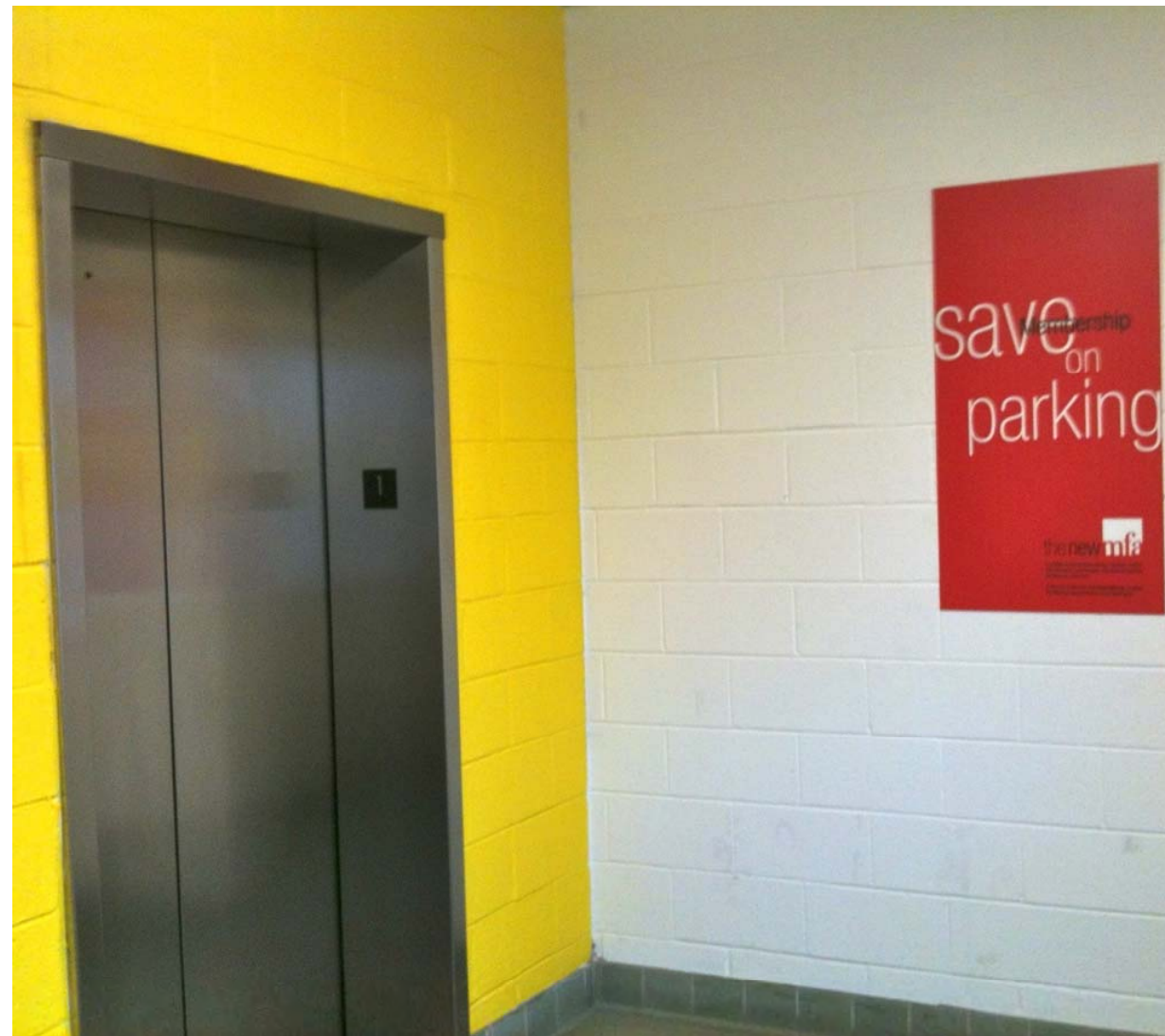
Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Raising the Bar

Outdoor Banners Greet Visitors at the Entrances

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Raising the Bar

Indoor Banners Reinforce Messages and Provide Information

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Raising the Bar

Plasma Screens at the Ticket Desks Show Level and Price

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Raising the Bar

iPad App

- Log in

- Search

- Name, Address, Phone, and E-mail

- Membership Level

- Order Summary, Guest Passes, Admission Ticket Redemption

- Payment

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Raising the Bar

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Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Raising the Bar

The Results

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Raising the Bar

The Results

- Year-over-year, weekly conversion rates in November and December were consistently higher with the additional sales people
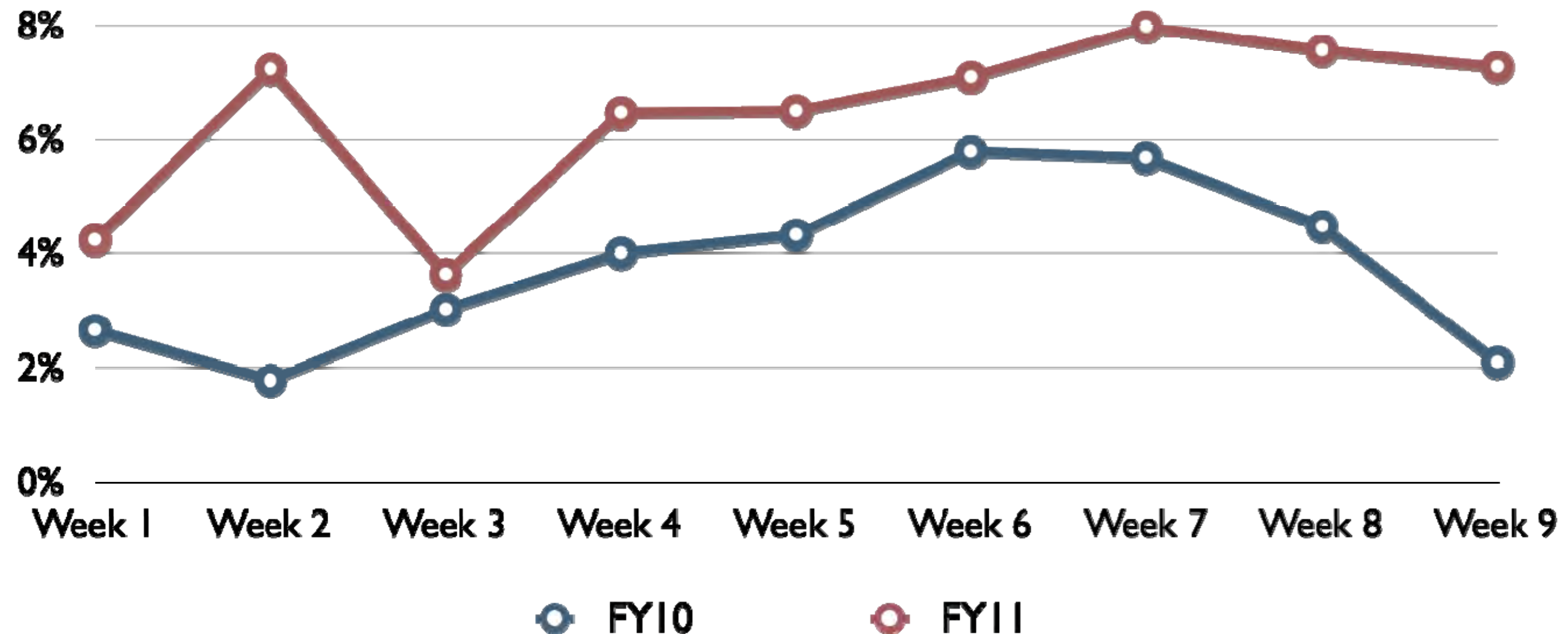
Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Raising the Bar

The Results

- Year-over-year, monthly conversion rates continued to be higher than the previous year
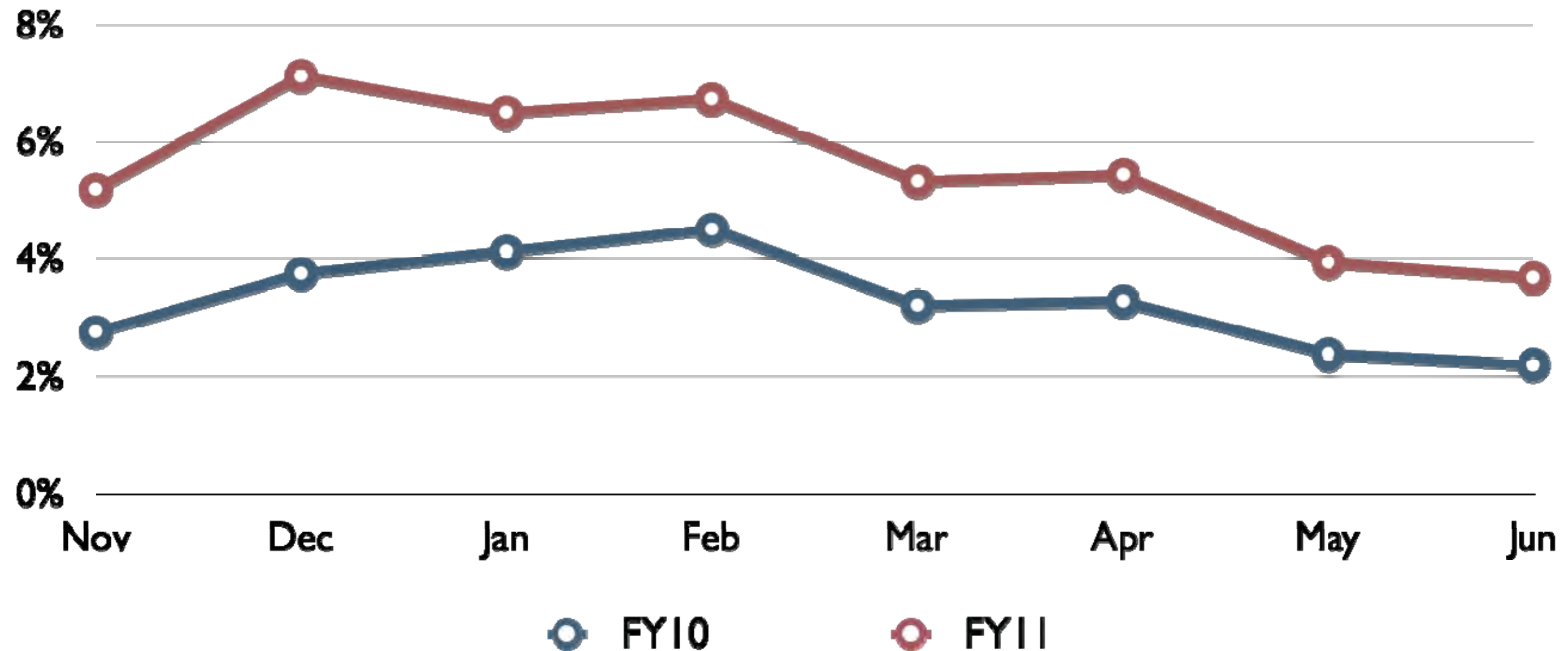
Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Continuing the Dialogue

Not Every Visitor Will Convert On-site

- Capture their information

- Continue to communicate with them

- Don't stop talking about membership

1. Smile and Greet the Visitor

2. Inquire about Membership Status

3. Ask for Zip Code or Country

4. Ask for E-mail Address

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Continuing the Dialogue

Visitor Onboarding Series

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Continuing the Dialogue

Visitor Onboarding Results

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Continuing the Dialogue

Integrate Membership—in big ways...

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
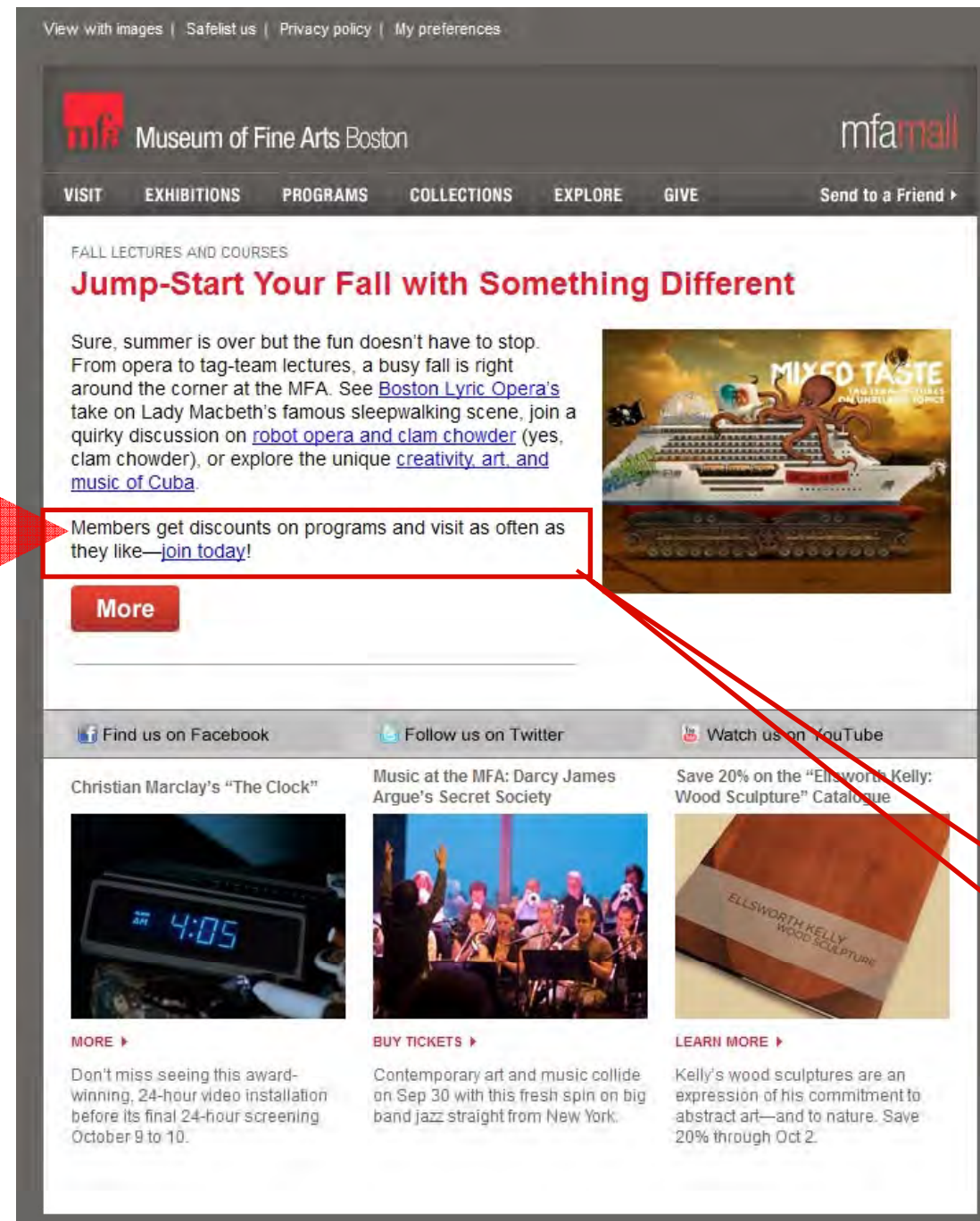# Continuing the Dialogue

Integrate Membership—in big ways...

- Transaction rate: 0.02%

- Revenue per e-mail: $0.025

- Return on investment: 625%

- Membership sold: 32

- Membership revenue: $4,075

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Continuing the Dialogue

...and small ways...

- Transaction rate: 0.03%

- Revenue per e-mail: $0.014

- Return on investment: 350%

- Membership sold: 2

- Membership revenue: $185

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Continuing the Dialogue

...even when advertising free admission

- Transaction rate: 0.01%

- Revenue per e-mail: $0.0097

- Return on investment: 142%

- Membership sold: 5

- Membership revenue: $515
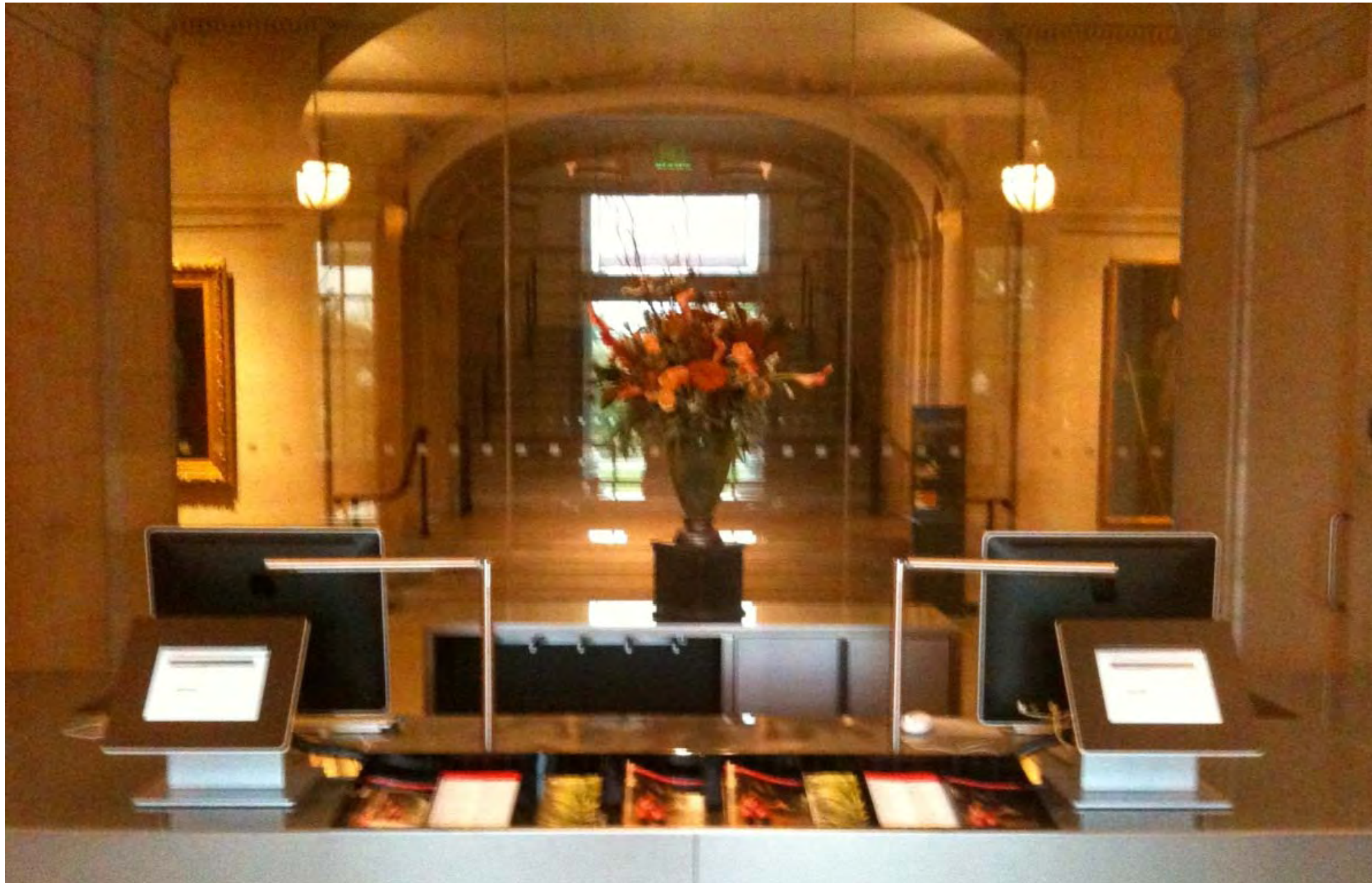
Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Continuing the Dialogue

Visitor Onboarding Results

- Visitors providing e-mail address: 4.48%

- Bounce rate for e-mails collected on-site: 19%

- Membership conversions after one month: 0.34%

- Membership conversions after two months: 0.51%

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Continuing the Dialogue

Next Steps: Improve Results

Maximize Visitor Conversion—On-site and Online
Continuing the Dialogue

Next Steps: Better Targeting of E-mails

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