Attractions.io

ZooTampa go green with Attractions.io

ZooTampa wants to lead by example when it comes to green behaviours. Adopting a mobile app has dramatically cut waste on-site, reduced marketing costs, and uncovered new ways to inspire guests to become more sustainable.

11,000 users one month after launch

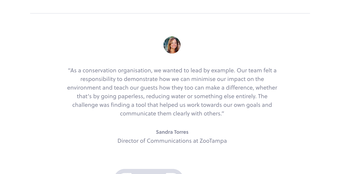
4.4-star rating on App Store

95% reduction in paper waste

Increased awareness of local conservation efforts

About Zoo Tampa

ZooTampa at Lowry Park is one of the most popular zoos in the southeastern US, with over 1 million guests annually. The zoo encompasses 56 acres of naturalistic animal exhibits in a tropical garden setting. It offers educational programming, up-close animal encounters and engaging seasonal events for which it has won accolades as one of the United States most family-friendly zoos. The ZooTampa team takes an active role in the community, working to raise the profile of environmental and sustainability issues that affect the natural world.



The Challenge

Like many Zoos, ZooTampa worries about its own impact on the environment. The site has a footfall of over 1 million guests a year, and by default, that creates a whole host of waste- from printed brochures and maps to plastic drinking straws and food waste from catering outlets.

In the last year alone, ZooTampa printed:

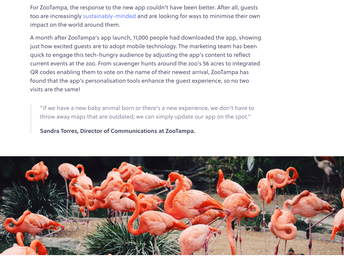
- 400,000 tickets
- 300,000 maps
- 30,000 membership cards

Something needed to change! In keeping with their overarching goal to protect wildlife in Florida and worldwide, ZooTampa introduced simple switches, like ditching single-use plastic and using aluminium cups to reduce their on-site waste. But they wanted to go even further to really make an impact.

Not being experts in app development or having a team inhouse, ZooTampa needed a technology partner who understood the complexities of delivering branded, feature rich apps for attractions.

"As a conservation organisation, we wanted to lead by example. Our team felt a responsibility to demonstrate how we can minimise our impact on the environment and teach our guests how they too can make a difference, whether that's by going paperless, reducing water or something else entirely. The challenge was finding a tool that helped us work towards our own goals and communicate them clearly with others."

Sandra Torres
Director of Communications at ZooTampa



The Solution

"In Attractions.io, we found a vendor who could handle the heavy lifting for us" explains Steve Maniscano, Marketing and Content Manager at ZooTampa. "Their digital platform was ready to go, and the team made sure the setup was smooth, effective and above all, furthering our goals at the Zoo."

Leading by example

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Connecting, inspiring and educating guests

Whatsmore, the integrated communications platform helped ZooTampa bring guests on the digital journey with them. By utilising Bluetooth beacons and push notifications, the team were able to blend digital and real-life touchpoints to reach guests before, during and after their visit.

"When people visit the zoo, they want close encounters with our animals" explains Sandra. "And when they are here, we want them to make the connection between the animal standing in front of them and an action that they can take to help that same species out in the wild.

For example, when they visit our Orangutan habitat, they see these beautiful animals up close, often for the first time. At that moment, if a message pops up saying, 'you can help these animals in the wild by buying sustainable palm oil,' that really resonates. We make that connection through the app so that when they leave the zoo, they go back into it and check what they can do to help."

And they're already seeing the positive effects of this enhanced communication strategy. In ZooTampa's home state Florida, boat strikes are a huge problem affecting native manatees. By sharing boating tips with guests at the zoo's manatee exhibit and sending push notifications once they've left, ZooTampa is helping local communities coexist with nature more effectively.

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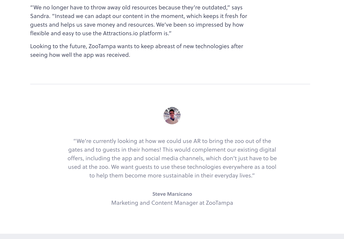
Guests have welcomed the sustainable initiatives

For ZooTampa, the response to the new app couldn't have been better. After all, guests too are increasingly sustainably-minded and are looking for ways to minimise their own impact on the world around them.

A month after ZooTampa's app launch, 11,000 people had downloaded the app, showing just how excited guests are to adopt mobile technology. The marketing team has been quick to engage this tech-hungry audience by adjusting the app's content to reflect current events at the zoo. From scavenger hunts around the zoo's 56 acres to integrated QR codes enabling them to vote on the name of their newest arrival, ZooTampa has found that the app's personalisation tools enhance the guest experience, so no two visits are the same!

"If we have a new baby animal born or there's a new experience, we don't have to throw away maps that are outdated; we can simply update our app on the spot."

Sandra Torres, Director of Communications at ZooTampa.



The Results

Thanks to the Attractions.io platform, ZooTampa are genuinely able to lead by example. Their app helps them connect with guests and inspire change daily whilst also dramatically affecting their environmental footprint as an organisation. These days, ZooTampa is practically paperless and expects to reduce printing by an incredible 95% in the next two years. And by doing so, they're saving $50,000 every year in printing costs!

11,000
11,000 users one month after launch

95%
Predicted paper reduction in next 2 years

$50,000
Increased awareness of local conservation efforts

"We no longer have to throw away old resources because they're outdated," says Sandra. "Instead we can adapt our content in the moment, which keeps it fresh for guests and helps us save money and resources. We've been so impressed by how flexible and easy to use the Attractions.io platform is."

Looking to the future, ZooTampa wants to keep abreast of new technologies after seeing how well the app was received.

"We're currently looking at how we could use AR to bring the zoo out of the gates and to guests in their homes! This would complement our existing digital offers, including the app and social media channels, which don't just have to be used at the zoo. We want guests to use these technologies everywhere as a tool to help them become more sustainable in their everyday lives."

Steve Maniscano
Marketing and Content Manager at ZooTampa

About Attractions.io

The Attractions.io platform enables real-world businesses to lead in the digital age. Our guest experience apps and powerful platform for operators provide world-renowned attractions like LEGOLAND, San Diego Zoo and Butlin's with the tools and data they need to deliver better outcomes and experiences. From virtual queuing and interactive maps to enhanced communication with guests, we've got the know-how to future proof your attraction for the digital age.

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