

CREATING A MUSEUM DISPLAY

An exhibition tells a story to a visitor. It appeals to people through their senses using:



- Visual stimulus, which is the strongest and most memorable
- Includes posters, pictures, 3D model, diagrams



- Sensation, such as hearing, which is immediate and associative
- Includes people talking, objects to touch, perhaps even smells or food to taste



- Words and reading, which require the most effort and mental processing
- Includes labels and documents

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The design comes after decisions are made about what to display and why.

Stage 1: Planning

- What story will you be telling?
- What is the main idea of your presentation?
- What information will you need?
- What items will you need for the display?
- What roles or duties will each person in your group have?

Stage 2: Design development

- How will you lay out your display?

Exhibitions tell stories but they are not exactly like books or films. People don't sit passively and view them from start to finish. Most people will look first at some of the pictures and three-dimensional objects, then read labels about something that has captured their attention.

That's why it's important to present your exhibition as 'packets of information', which can be put together individually or as a whole.

Stage 3: Production

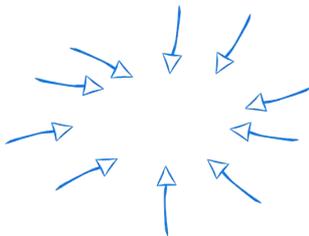
This is where you will be actually be producing the items needed for your display. This might include:

- Posters
- Labels
- Physical items

Stage 4: Installation and completion

SOME OTHER USEFUL POINTS

Focal points



When a visitor first walks into the exhibition, what are they going to see? Will it attract and draw them in? The point to which the eye is drawn is known as the focal point. The first focal point is a long view. It should be supported by other focal points throughout the exhibition to keep attracting visitors from one point to another. It is always important to create a hierarchy of the objects you intend to display so you can establish which objects to use as focal points. The colour, texture and form of the objects need to be considered when making these choices.

Grouping and alignment

Grouping is a very powerful way of concentrating the attention of visitors, either through precision grouping or studied carelessness.

'Precision grouping' uses alignments that are accurately measured (use a tape measure for exactness).

See how in this display everything is lined up and straight.



'Studied carelessness' creates a dynamic in a display. For example, a sewing box can be displayed with its contents arranged so as to appear spilled.

See how the jewellery box has items placed on angles to make it seem random.

Flat objects such as paintings, photographs, prints or drawings need to be hung at a comfortable viewing height. For adults, this is generally 1500mm from floor level, measured to the centre of the objects. After setting this line, you can vary some of the smaller objects just above and below the line, with larger objects on the line.

Another way is to align all of the objects at the top. Remember that differing horizon lines within these objects need to be taken into consideration, and directionality in the arrangement should aim to direct the visitor's gaze.



References:

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