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Communication in theory and practice

Museums and mass communication

In recent years many writers have emphasised the communicative nature of museums. Robert Lumley argues that 'the notion of the museum as a collection for scholarly use has been largely replaced by the idea of the museum as a means of communication' (Lumley, 1988: 15). Hodge and D'Souza see the two roles as complementary:

Museums are not only protectors but also communicators. . . . A museum display is an exercise in one branch of the mass media, requiring a special kind of understanding of the processes of communication, namely the nature of mass communication systems.

(Hodge and D'Souza, 1979: 146)

Mass communication systems are unnatural forms of communication, in that they operate at a distance and often in the absence of one of the two parties necessary before communication can take place. It is difficult therefore, to be sure that the process has worked. Has the message really been understood? In 'natural' communication, which we can visualise as a face-to-face conversation between two people from a common background, the main message of the communication is interpreted through this common background. Shared experience enables the message to be decoded. The words that might be used are supported by many other channels of communication, such as gesture, facial expression, emphasis. Any point of misunderstanding can be verified by asking a question and by repetition or restatement. In a face-to-face conversation, there is a possibility of the message being modified by either party and being reshaped as ideas are exchanged. In natural communication, and particularly in a domestic situation where two people know each other very well, ideas are often exchanged in fits and starts, with frequent repetitions and clarifications. Often two conversations are carried on at once, or ideas are conveyed through a series of grunts and gestures, with perhaps a drink acting as mediation. The shared domestic environment makes this erratic and unelaborated transfer of ideas comprehensible to the two people concerned. In natural communication, then, we find the following features: interpretation through shared experience, modification or development of the message in the light of response, and many supporting methods of communicating. Natural

Show' in Walsall in May 1992. In both these cases the social span of visitors was broader than we have come to expect of museum visitors. In both, a huge amount of work had been done prior to the opening to develop the audience, in contrast to many museum exhibitions which are developed with no contact with the intended audience. In Coventry, for example, the curator organising the exhibition 'Who are the Coventry Kids?' talked to over seventy city groups to explore the concept and meaning of this local expression, and used a thousand questionnaires to encourage people to take part in the exhibition process and to feel that the exhibition was of importance to them.

This chapter has examined a number of forces that are influencing museums as they move closer to their audiences. We have seen how the educational potential of the museum is expanding and how new methods of working with audiences are being developed, partly because of the results of market research, and partly because of the convictions of museum people that museums can and should have a broader social relevance. We have seen how standards of professionalism and methods of performance measurement are being developed in the field of museum communication.

The shift towards audiences does represent a very radical departure from museum thinking in the past. It is also fair to say that it is only one of the areas that museum managers must develop and support. However, because the change from an internal to an external emphasis is so great, and yet so vital to survival, the quality of thinking and planning to develop this side of museum work must be of the best. In the past the museum curator acted as the definer of the museum message, with content and mode of communication chosen because he or she felt that it was right. The effectiveness of the exhibition in relation to the reception of the message was not in question. Now we understand that this is no longer justifiable, and that people must find museums interesting and useful in order for them to survive.

Museums must communicate or die. For communication to occur, both the sender and the receiver of the message must share the same concepts, even the same passions. The task for museums and galleries is to find ways of arousing and instilling passions and ways of exploring ideas that people will find illuminating, using the collections of the museum, and the curiosity and experience of actual and potential visitors.

communication has the potential to be direct, responsive and equal.

With mass communication situations, things are very different. Let's take television as an example. Here, at the moment of communication, one party to the communicative act is present (perhaps sitting at home in the evening), while the other (the team who prepared the programme) is absent. The transmitter (the team) must rely on their skill to produce a message that the receiver (sitting at home) will be interested in hearing. The message is one-way, with no chance of immediate feedback. If the message is not clear, there can be no clarification. There are few supporting channels, although the comment in newspaper listings might be seen as one source of extra information. If the message is boring, unenjoyable or unpleasant, the remedy is simple; the television is turned off. Mass communication is one-way (indirect), impossible to modify (unresponsive) and takes place in the absence of one of the partners (unequal).

In order to succeed in communicating through television, considerable research is undertaken, both into ways of putting the message across and into audience response (Alvarado, Gutch and Wollen, 1987). This research includes preliminary (front-end) research into what is likely to succeed, and summative research into the effects of the programmes on the audience. Those programmes that are not successful are quickly identified through audience ratings, and are axed. Successful programmes are repeated or developed. Market research is seen as a vital tool, and as an integral part of the communication process.

In museums, there are many of the features common to most forms of mass communication, but in addition there are opportunities for face-to-face communication. The museum is fortunate in that it has a variety of methods of the communication at its disposal, and in museums this modifies the starkness of the mass communication situation. Traditional museum methods are now being modified to take account of visitor needs, and practices are changing, but in the past the experience of displays and exhibitions has shared the characteristic features of the experience of mass communications. One of the parties involved (the visitor/viewer) has been present, while the other (the exhibition team) has been absent. There have been few opportunities to modify the message of the display according to the response of the visitor. There has been no certainty that visitors would share the background of the museum communicator, although visitor surveys, in demonstrating the middle and upper-middle social class groupings of most visitors, probably illustrate that visitors are self-selected on this basis.

Those displays that demonstrated the features of mass communication were prone to a range of problems. These included a failure to transmit the intended messages, a distortion of communication and an inability to involve the visitor. These problems of communication, understood and explored at an empirical level in a range of forward-looking museums, have led to the shifts we can now observe, where methods of mounting displays are changing to take account of the needs of visitors and to provide opportunities for sharing and involvement through handling, activity sessions and through collaborative exhibitions.

In addition to display methods which are close to the methods of mass

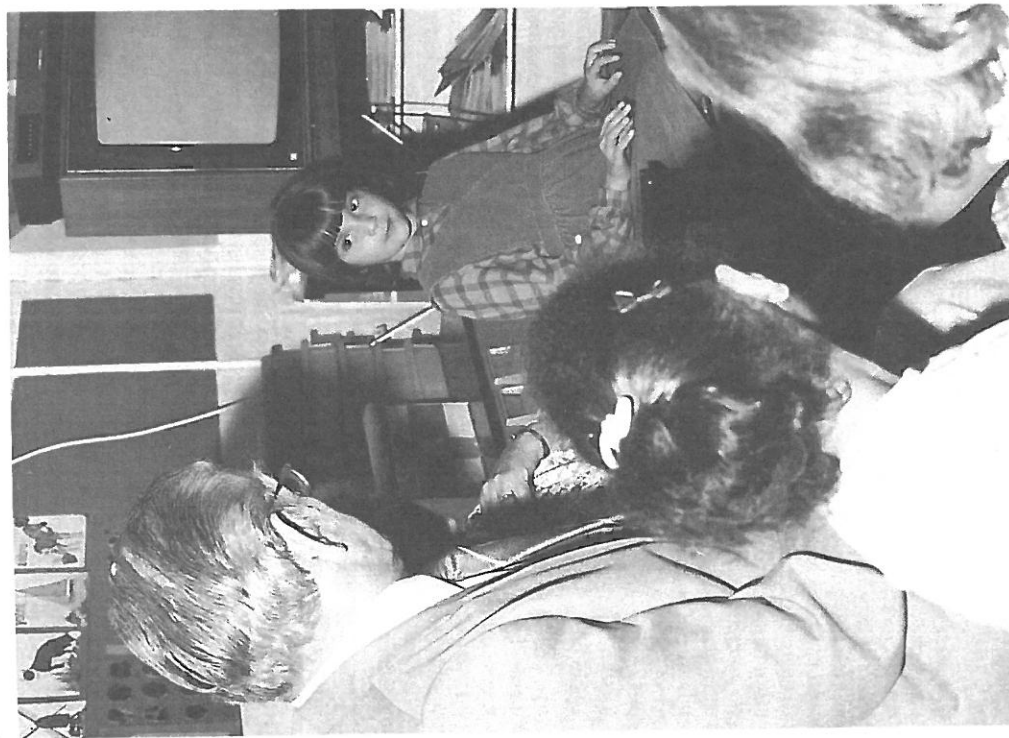
communication, museums also have the opportunity to exploit natural communication, through talks, guided tours, meet-the-curator sessions, demonstrations, handling sessions, enquiries, discussion groups and social events. It is also true that the mass media themselves provide other opportunities for museums to make connections with people: using television itself, either in advertising or as part of an exhibition or event; through the use of videos, as an aspect of the interpretation of displays, as souvenirs to take home, or as outreach into the community; through newspaper and magazine advertising or articles; through posters, leaflets and flyers; and through publishing at all levels. The communicative methods of museums are extremely varied and this is surely one of the great advantages that museums have over many of the other institutions of the mass media. The 'communication mix' will become a vital concept in the next decade as museums and galleries develop policies and strategies for museum communication.

Mass communication, as we have seen, is likely to be prone to miscommunication, and this is as common in museums as elsewhere (Hodge and D'Souza, 1979). The two most common problems with museum displays concern saying things which were not intended,* and not saying what was intended. For museum workers, it is important to try to understand as well as possible the communication process itself, both in general and in museums. There is room for considerable theoretical development in museum communication methods. Most branches of the mass media now have extensive texts on methods, but in museums this is only just beginning. There is a need for new methods of communication to be tried out, evaluated and published.

In addition to developing knowledge and expertise in the techniques of museum communication, it is at least as important to try to understand people and how they react to museums. Again, work has begun in this area, and we will consider some of it later, but more is needed. Visitor surveys have been fairly common since the 1960s in Britain, but have tended to remain at the level of counting who comes, and how. Information has remained at the demographic level, and it is only very recently that more qualitative research has begun. Research into visitors is as important as research into communication methods. Indeed, the one cannot exist without the other. As we need to know more about how people respond to particular displays or events in order to evaluate and develop new techniques, so we will need to research attitudes to museums, opinions on a range of methods, feelings about a variety of different experiences and so on. In the same way as the mass media researches its audiences to evaluate reaction to its products, so we will need to research the audiences of the museum to discover whether an exhibition, a poster, a café or an event has been successful.

The communication process

An act of communication is one that aims to produce an effect on another person or persons. If this intention is absent, the act tends to be expressive rather than communicative (Morgan and Welton, 1986). Any study of communication, therefore, can logically assume a desire to influence, and can assess the strength and nature of this.



Plates 6 & 7 Communication is a two-way process. Interaction is much easier to achieve in a face-to-face 'natural' situation than in an exhibition. Here for example, the little girl from Northam First School, Southampton, is listening intently to a former pupil of the school, Harry Triggs, as he recounts his memories of his schooling. The challenge is to find ways of stimulating this level of attention to displays and exhibits.

Photo: Southampton City Heritage.



In museum exhibitions there is frequently a subjective element – the exhibition can be, and has been, seen as an act of expression on the part of the curator. Expressive acts, such as works of art, or exhibitions that are very largely the subjective work of a curator, can and sometimes do, communicate effectively. They will communicate with those people who share the same subjectivity, the same interests, the same modes of expression. If, however, a broader audience for communication is looked for, an awareness of the mechanics and psychology of communication can help.

The understanding of the process of communication has evolved from the development of a simple model to something more complex (McQuail, 1975). The initial simple description of the process of communication was based on the idea of one person sending a message to another, perhaps over the telephone, or through the post. The process involved a communicator, a receiver and a relationship between them. Several elements were required: an intention on the part of the communicator; the subject of the message; a common language; some shared experience; and, to demonstrate that something had in fact been communicated, some activity or change as a result of the process. Described like this, it seems very unproblematic. A simple diagram expresses this process well (see Fig. 1).

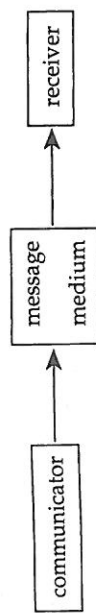


Figure 1 A simple communications model

This simple model was elaborated slightly by Shannon and Weaver (see Fig. 2) (McQuail and Windahl, 1993: 17). Distinctions were made at the beginning of the process between the source and the transmitter, and at the end of the process between the receiver and the destination. Also introduced was the idea of 'noise', which is anything external (or sometimes internal) to the process that might interrupt the transfer of information.

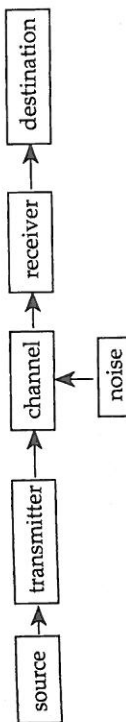


Figure 2 The Shannon and Weaver communications model

The Shannon and Weaver model has been applied to various forms of communication (McQuail, 1975) (see Fig. 3).

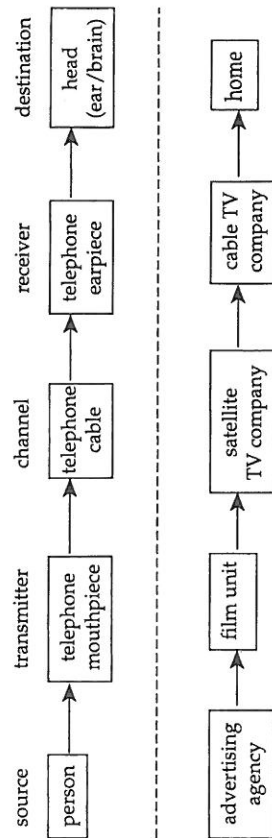


Figure 3 The application of the Shannon and Weaver model to a mechanical process and a process involving agencies working together

The application of the Shannon and Weaver model works both with a mechanical process (that of a telephonic message), and in the case of agencies working together. In the first instance the source is the person making the call, the transmitter is the telephone mouthpiece, the channel is the telephone cable, the receiver is the telephone earpiece, and the final destination is the head or the brain of the person receiving the call. In the case of agencies working together, the source is the advertising agency, who hires the transmitter (the film unit) to make an advertisement broadcast through the channel (the satellite TV company) to the receiver (the cable TV company) into the destination (the home).

The model can be applied to a museum exhibition. It is possible to describe the exhibition team as the source, the exhibition as the transmitter, with objects, texts and events as the channel of communication, the visitors' heads as the receivers, with the visitors' understanding as the final destination (see Fig. 4). In this instance the 'noise' which interferes with the message might include anything from crowds to visitor fatigue, or workmen in the gallery next door. Internal sources of noise might include confusing signals such as poor graphics, or inappropriate use of colour (Duffy, 1989).

The value of models such as the Shannon and Weaver model is the preliminary separation of a complex process into a series of elements. Each of these elements can be analysed as a unit, which is sometimes a useful way of beginning to penetrate a difficult and multi-layered event, such as the development of an exhibition or an event.

However, there are problems with simple models of communication, such as the Shannon and Weaver model. One very basic problem is that this model suggests that communication is the simple transfer of a message from one part to another. Communication is, of course, far more than this.

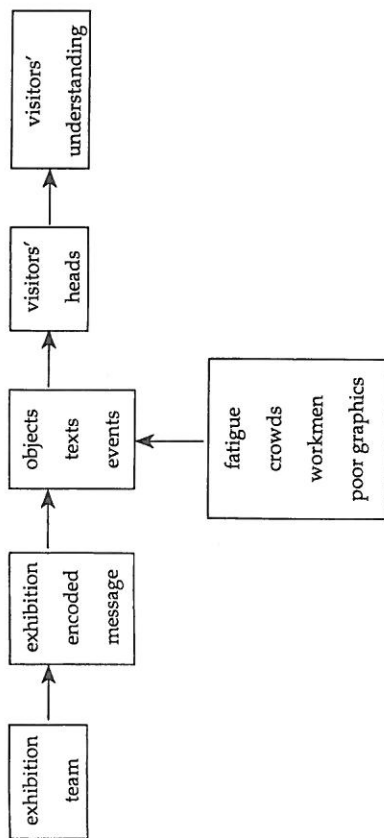


Figure 4 The Shannon and Weaver model applied to exhibitions

Two other ways of thinking about communication are as 'networks of contacts', or as 'hierarchised chains' (see Figs 5 and 6).

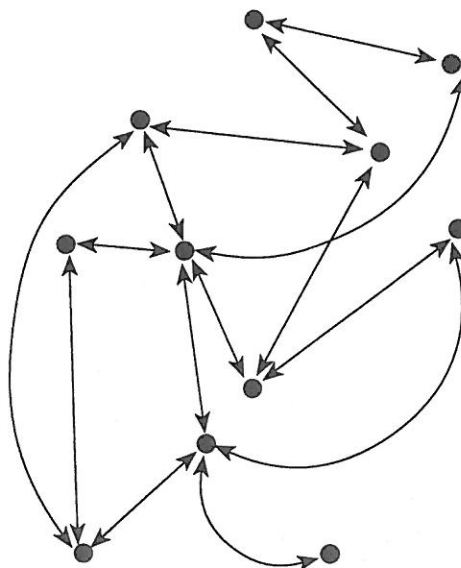


Figure 5 Alternative models of communication: a network of contacts

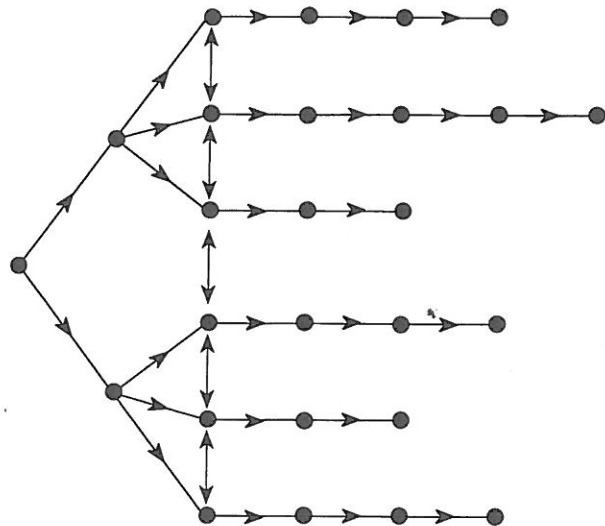


Figure 6 Alternative models of communication: hierarchised chains

The idea of communication as a network of contacts works well in relation to the forms of communication that are sometimes to be found in families, or in informal groups. Messages are passed by word of mouth, letter, phone-call – non-hierarchically, in a free-flowing and mobile way. Any part of the network might contact any other part as required, and communication is relatively open and equal between parties. Power relations emerge from this network according to a multitude of factors, but are not enshrined within the structure itself.

Hierarchised chains describes a form of communication that is often to be found in formal institutions, including traditional large museums. It is premised on power and authority, with communication flowing from the top down, but not from the bottom up. The communication links are very closely delineated, and in fact *prevent* a great deal of communication taking place. In museums with a staff structure based on a director, two deputies and a number of departments, probably mostly based on divisions of the collections, such as archaeology, natural history, fine art, social history, with possibly an education and/or design department tacked on the end, this form of communication structure is all too familiar. In such museums, there is little communication between departments at the lower levels, and that communication which takes place between department heads generally operates as a form of defence of territory.

This rigid and authoritarian power structure is seen by modern management theorists as wasteful and lacking in cost-effectiveness. Industry is now moving towards flatter structures that are more flexible and democratic, that assign more power to branches, that are organised as units each with its own autonomy and network, and where a range of relationships to the work task are possible (Handy, 1990).

The simple communications model, therefore, can be seen as only one way in which communication can be conceived. There are many other ways in which the process can be understood.

The simple communications model has been criticised because it makes a number of assumptions that are not always appropriate. The model proposes a wholly linear view of communication, one that begins with a source which also defines the meaning of the communicative act. The receiver is conceived as cognitively passive, and contributing nothing to the process. The role of the receiver is simply to receive. If this reception does not occur, the communicative process must be deemed to have failed.

Here, the concept of feedback enters the process. In order to test the system, we must see whether the message has been understood. If it has not been understood, then the message must be modified to make understanding more likely (see Fig. 7).

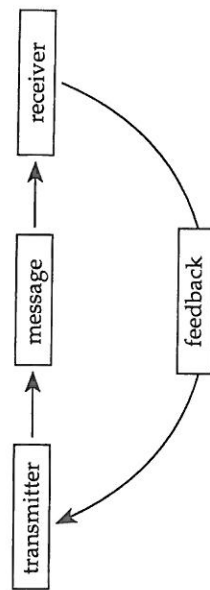


Figure 7 The simple communications model with feedback loop

If (as it will) feedback indicates difficulties with the reception of the message, so it is successively modified until it may well become fragmented out of all recognition (see Fig. 8).

Once a feedback loop is introduced into the process, the message is likely to change. It is likely to change because any linear process of communication cannot be certain of speaking the language of the receiver, or even of having anything to say that is of interest to the receiver. In the absence of coercive power, the message may simply be ignored. Once the receiver is brought into the process to play a more active role, the whole process changes and begins to break up. The linearity of the process is altered. The meaning of the message is no longer defined only by the sender, but also by the receiver. The work of

making meaning begins to be shared between the two parties. The greater this sharing process, the more likely effective communication is to take place. The logical outcome of this process is to consult the receiver before any messages are sent, to try out a variety of messages to see which are appropriate and interesting.

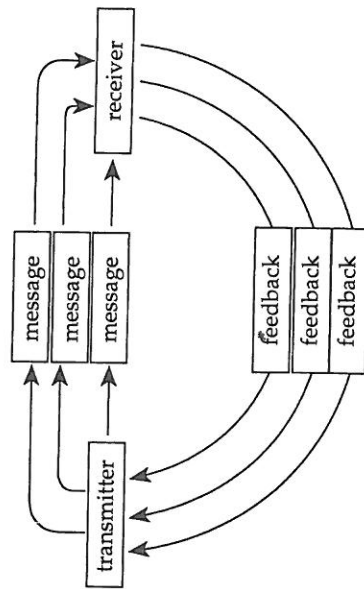


Figure 8 Successive feedback loops progressively alter the original message, and eventually change the process from linear to circular

This preliminary research can be carried out in relation to the content of the message, but might also usefully be carried out in relation to the medium through which the message is to be carried. Which is the most appropriate channel for which audience? What channels are the audiences used to? Which do they find difficult? Which do they enjoy? When a match can be made between the audience (the receiver), and both the content of the message, and the nature of the medium, then a communicative process may be begun.

What is interesting in the above discussion is the amount of work that is required *before* the communicative process can start. It is now recognised that it is not enough to make a decision to communicate a message and to put the receivers on stand-by to receive it. If the receivers are not predisposed to appreciate the message, to find it relevant and to make it their own, then it is likely that no initial contact will be made at all. This explains the preliminary or piloting work that is carried out by television and advertising companies in the very early stages of a product, and it is clear that there are lessons here for museums and galleries.

Communications models in museums

The simple communications model was introduced to the museum world in North America by Cameron in the late 1960s, and this stimulated a debate (Cameron, 1968; Knez and Wright, 1970; Miles, 1989). The focus of the debate was whether objects were the most important aspect of a museum's communication system, or whether objects were merely one form of communication. The debate seems a little sterile today, but it is instructive to note the uses and adaptations of the simple model of communication and to notice the concentration on the medium, and on how messages are transmitted.

Cameron used the model virtually intact, but suggested that, in a museum, there are many transmitters, many media and many receivers. The prime medium used is that of objects ('real things') (see Fig. 9).

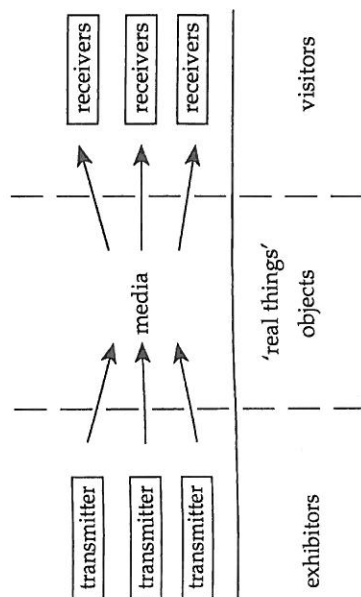


Figure 9 The use of a simple communications model by Cameron (1968)

Knez and Wright agreed with Cameron that the museum was, among other things, a communication system, and also agreed that a professional museum officer (whether curator, exhibit designer or educationalist) was the 'transmitter', and that the 'receivers' were the visitors. However, Cameron's emphasis on objects as the medium of museum communication was challenged by Knez and Wright (1970), who proposed that a distinction could be drawn between those museums, such as science museums, that relied on verbal symbols (written or spoken words) as of primary importance in exhibitions, and those such as art museums, where objects were more important.

Knez and Wright proposed that putting across ideas (intellectual cognition) was the primary function of museum communication, at least in science museums, and their suggestions led to the following modifications in the basic communications model (see Fig. 10).

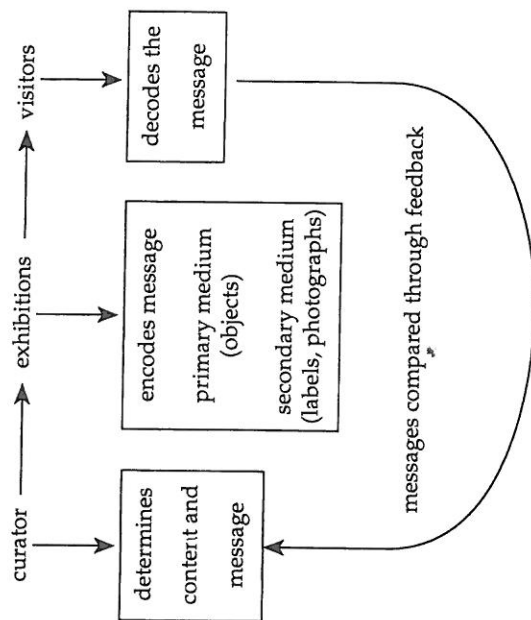


Figure 10 The communications model (particularly applicable to science museums) as suggested by Knez and Wright (1970)

However the media for exhibitions is understood, and however this might vary with different types of museum, the basic linear 'hypodermic' model, able to 'inject' the receivers with ideas remains (Morley, 1980: 1). The model (and the writers) assumed that the audience was passive and merely reactive, and there was no acknowledgement of the fact that audiences actively interpret their experiences of museums in the light of many individual and social factors, including their backgrounds, cultural assumptions, levels of knowledge and personal agenda for the museum visit.

The influence of this model of communication on approaches to exhibition production is discussed by Miles (1985) who points out how this linear understanding of the communication process is mirrored in the linear process of making exhibitions (see Fig. 11).

Miles has described museums as 'disabling institutions' when they produce exhibitions using this model. The model is based on people working independently in separate departments (curatorial, design, education), with no team-work and little co-ordination. The work of one department is finished before the work of another begins. Change is difficult and painful and leads to inter-departmental or interpersonal friction.

In this model the curators, as exhibition-generators, play the role of power-broker. They define the content and the message according to their own point

of view, without taking into account the views of the other departments or of the audience. Designers are expected to attend to packaging the ideas of the curator and are treated as functionaries and technicians rather than as communications professionals. The educator is brought into the process at far too late a stage to contribute to planning, and is forced into a remedial role, making the best of a bad job once the exhibition has opened, (re)interpreting it for those people who take part in events or activities. The absence of feedback from the audience means that any improvement is based on intuition or trial and error, and evaluation is impossible. The absence of preliminary audience-related research makes a communicative act unlikely.

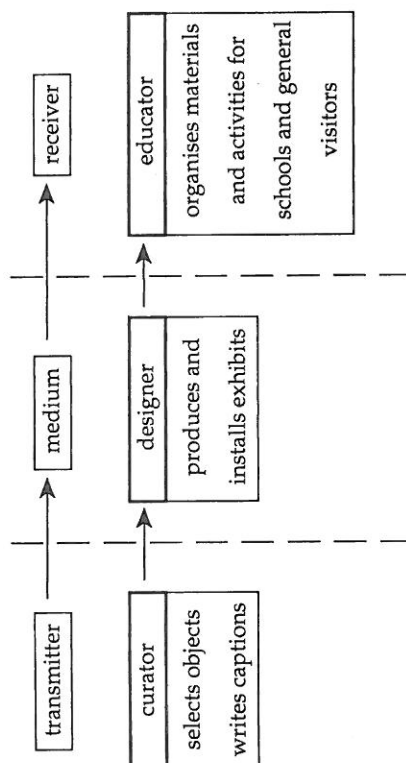


Figure 11 The simple communications model adapted as a way of understanding the exhibition process. The move from curator to designer to educator takes place in time

Miles proposes a very different approach to exhibition production which is much more flexible and makes use of extensive research at all stages of the process, including market research before the process begins, trialling of exhibits during production and summative evaluation after the exhibition opens (Miles 1985). Miles also includes reference to the concurrent development of the literature that is written to accompany the exhibition (which might include catalogues, handlists and teachers' packs), and the design of educational activities related to the exhibition (see Fig. 12).

The simple communications model is here superseded by a vastly more complex and reflexive system, one which begins to reflect the various activities and their interrelationships in the production of exhibitions. The incorporation of research and evaluation into the processes of development and production enables the design of exhibitions, and their related literature and educational activities, that has some relationship to the proposed audiences.

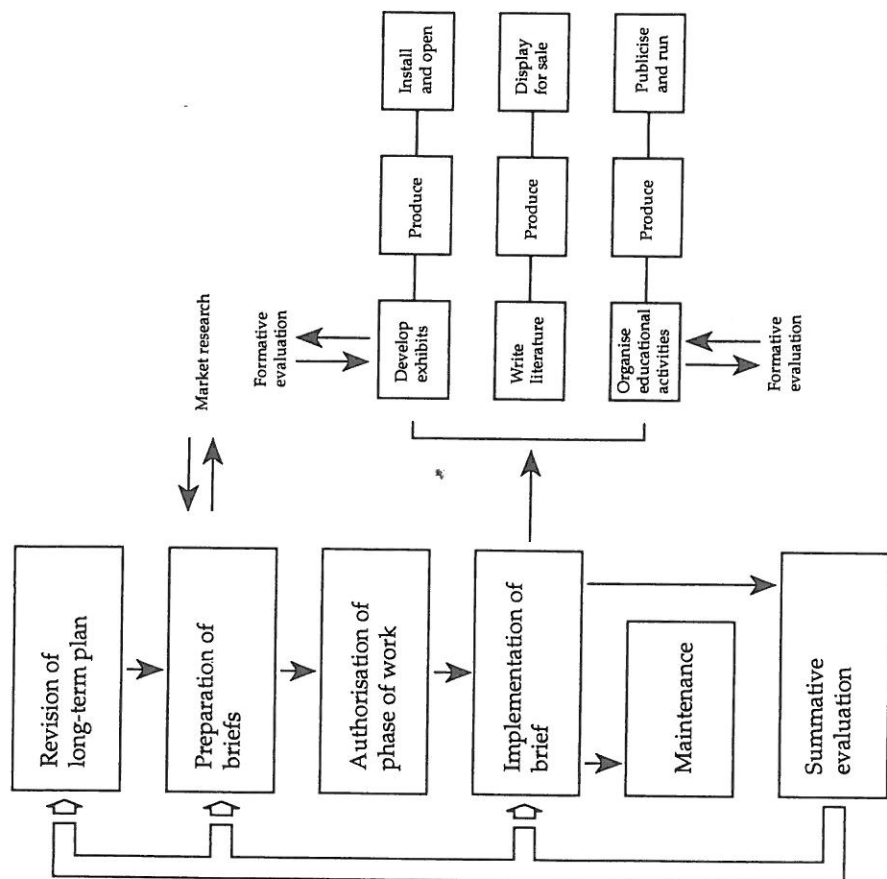


Figure 12 Activities involved in planning, designing and producing exhibitions, from Miles (1985)

The simple communications model has been discussed in relation to the production of exhibitions, and on the whole, this is how it has been deployed in the literature. And although rarely overtly articulated in internal museum debates, the linearity of the information flow, the definition of the message, the attitude to visitors and the position of power for the curator/transmitter, can still be recognised in the exhibition process in many museums. Indeed it can be recognised in much more than this. Many of the attitudes to museum audiences

that can still be found in museums can be traced back to the idea that visitors are passive receivers of those worthwhile experiences that are prepared for them by the museum transmitters.

In many museums there is still no understanding of the nature of the communication process, of the fact that it is a shared process, and that if two parties are not involved, the process may not occur at all. Very many exhibitions are still mounted and demounted at great cost, with visitors having little or nothing to do with them, to the extent in some museums of not even bothering to visit. All too few museums are involved in dialogue with their audiences, at whatever level, and all too few directors understand more than the rhetoric of the importance of effective museum communication for survival, let alone development, in the next decade.

A holistic approach to museum communication

The simple communications model has already been given much to answer for, but there is still one more aspect that we must address. One of the effects of the use of the simple communications model as it has been used in the literature is to reduce discussion of museum communication to discussion of exhibitions. It is all too easy for the notion of museum communication to become subsumed into the production of exhibitions. This is of course an important method of making connections with people, but museums are fortunate enough to have a whole battery of other methods. In addition to formal methods of communication, many other aspects of the museum need to be considered (see Fig. 13).

In considering a holistic approach to museum communication we should be aware of museum-wide elements, those aspects of the operation of the institution that impinge either on the museum's image, or on the general experience of the visit. These include the museum's buildings, both internal and external features; the attitudes and activities of the museum staff, including the director and the whole range of staff; the general atmosphere in the institution, which will owe much to management styles and staff morale; and the attention given to comfort, orientation and the general guiding of visitors through the experience of the museum.

Museums communicate on-site through a range of methods which includes exhibitions of many different types, functions, sizes and approaches to interpretation. The balance between, for example, a costly, short-term, popular blockbuster appealing to tourists and expected to raise money, and a small-scale exhibition of perhaps the work of a local adult education group, needs to be carefully considered. Different audiences need different provisions, and thought should be given as to how different types of exhibition or display can be used to attract different sections of the public.

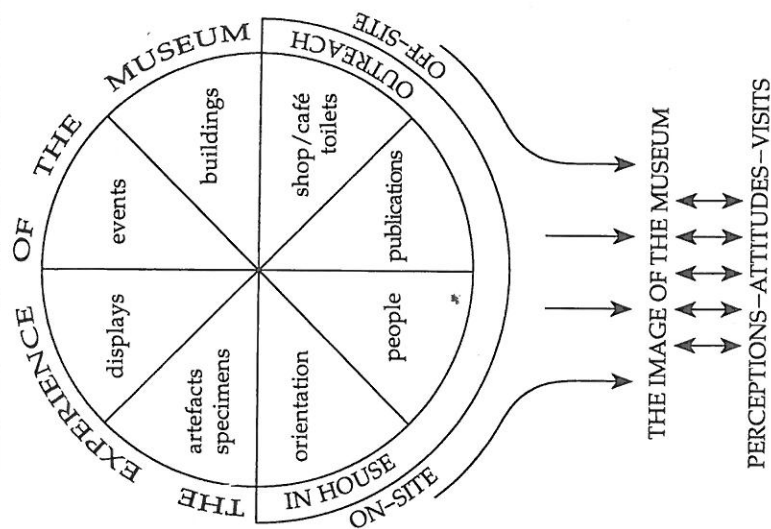


Figure 13 The entire experience of the museum contributes to the image of the museum. The image of the museum affects the perceptions and attitudes of people, and will affect whether or not they decide to visit the museum

Activities, events and educational programmes are generally designed to match the needs of particular audiences, and a vast range of approaches can be found in museums and galleries, including the use of actors or demonstrators; talks, lectures and tours; films or concerts; opportunities for handling or involvement with the collections; chances to try out practical skills such as dancing, drawing or weaving; invitations to view the stores or the conservation laboratories and so on.

Many museums have extremely well-organised shops where a range of goods are sold, the main criteria being one of relationship to collections. Many museums have taken the opportunity to develop specialist shops in tune with their missions; the Science Museum, London, for example has an excellent specialist science bookshop. The shop is an opportunity to make the museum's scholarly work available through catalogues of the permanent collections,

temporary exhibition catalogues, books and monographs. Postcards, information packs, calendars, notebooks, pencils and other small items can often be found alongside replicas of some of the collections. Some museums, and Ironbridge Gorge Museum is an example, have developed sophisticated and very successful mail-order systems.

In addition to communicating with visitors to the museum on-site, museums use a variety of means to communicate to people outside the building. These include the establishment of connections with the local and national media; the building up of secure supporting networks among the local, and sometimes national, business, educational and cultural communities; and the use of a variety of marketing techniques, such as research, mailing and advertising. In addition, some museums have very lively and comprehensive outreach programmes, where activities and events are organised by the museum but take place in a community venue such as a shopping centre, a school, a day centre for the elderly or a hospital (Beavers *et al.*, 1988; O'Neill, 1990, 1991; Hemmings, 1992; Plant, 1992). Some museums have established mobile museums that carry collections and events to housing estates, school playgrounds, fairs or pop concerts. Some museums have collections of loan objects that are available to schools and other institutions.

The role of the museum as a communicator is enormously varied. It can include communicating information in a clear and effective way, perhaps through a leaflet or telephone answer service; enabling a learning experience related to the demands of school curricula, with a role-playing session for a small group of school children; promoting enjoyment and fun, possibly through manipulating interactive technology; and facilitating reminiscence and mental activity in the old and frail through the provision of suitable objects as stimulus.

Communication is one of the primary functions of museums and galleries. As such, it relates closely to the other main functions of the museum, the collection, conservation and management of artefacts and specimens, and the management of the whole institution. The priorities and policies for communication should be considered when decisions are taken in the other two main areas of museum work, just as communicators must consider management directives and conservation constraints when developing communicative approaches. For example, the use of objects should be considered before a decision to acquire is finalised. What is the object's value for teaching, for exhibiting, for handling or for promotional purposes? If it has no use in any of these areas, how will it contribute to the knowledge-base of the museum, and can research work carried out on it realistically be disseminated to a broad audience? If the object can satisfy none of these requirements, is it really justifiable to collect it?

When museum managers are making decisions over budgets, funds should be set aside to carry out research into visitors, their needs and their responses. There is little point in approving exhibition budgets without including ways of measuring the relevance and success of the exhibition. A little market research, some preliminary front-end analysis and attention to the lessons of earlier summative evaluation is likely to prevent expensive mistakes.

Communication can be considered from a number of different points of view. It impinges on all the activities of the museum, and for a good proportion of them, its success is of vital importance. Up until now, in many museums, communication has been left to chance. Communicative activities have certainly happened, but often in isolation from each other, even when in the same museum. Education for schools and adults, exhibitions for whoever cares to come and advertising through leaflets and posters have all been organised in a communication policy vacuum. A framework of institutional commitment has not often supported and inspired these activities. Many happen because of the enthusiasm of one individual, and without the help and co-operation required across the institution. This is clearly wasteful and frustrating.

Very few museums have coherent and well-managed communication policies. Some have exhibition policies and some are now producing education policies. A few marketing strategies are emerging. A few audience development plans are being introduced. But how do these relate to each other? Are they informed by the objectives of the museum? And once the plans or policies are written, what are their chances of being implemented? If strong links to a variety of publics including the governing body, visitors, new audiences, schools, the media and industry are required to sustain the museum in its work, then the communicative functions of the museum will need to be better understood, and better managed.

