



Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience

By John H Falk

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Understanding the visitor experience provides essential insights into how museums can affect people's lives. Personal drives, group identity, decision-making and meaning-making strategies, memory, and leisure preferences, all enter into the visitor experience, which extends far beyond the walls of the institution both in time and space. Drawing upon a career in studying museum visitors, renowned researcher John Falk attempts to create a predictive model of visitor experience, one that can help museum professionals better meet those visitors' needs. He identifies five key types of visitors who attend museums and then defines the internal processes that drive them there over and over again. Through an understanding of how museums shape and reflect their personal and group identity, Falk is able to show not only how museums can increase their attendance and revenue, but also their meaningfulness to their constituents.

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Editorial Review

Review

John Falk's determined focus on the visitor's experience continues to transform our understanding of the relationship between museums and their audiences. *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience* demonstrates that Falk remains the leading voice in the field of museum learning. For the first time he moves beyond theory and proposes a model that museums can use to explore how to serve their visitors in more meaningful ways. -Nannette V. Maciejunes, Columbus Museum of Art

John Falk's most exciting work reframes frustrating old questions in new ways that bring immediate clarity. In this important book, Falk shifts the old issue of visitor segmentation away from stable traits to ephemeral dispositions. His new formulation shows us visitors who actually seem to belong to the same species as ourselves, and whose differences relate to understandable differences in the ways that they perceive and use exhibitions. -Jay Rounds, E. Desmond Lee Professor of Museum Studies, University of Missouri St. Louis, and former editor of the *Exhibitionist Journal*

This book should be read by anyone serious about visitor experiences in museums. Falk reconceptualises the field from a wholistic perspective using the 'lens' of visitor identity and motivation. The model he proposes will shape and inform the nature, design and understanding of visitor experiences in free-choice learning environments. -Roy Ballantyne, University of Queensland, and editor of *Visitor Studies Journal*

From the Inside Flap

Drawing upon a career in studying museum visitors, renowned researcher John Falk attempts to create a predictive model of visitor experience, one that can help museum professionals better meet those visitors' needs.

About the Author

John H. Falk is a leading figure in free-choice learning, museum research, and science education in the United States. Currently, he holds the position Sea Grant Professor of Free-Choice Learning at Oregon State University. He is founder and Director Emeritus of the well-known museum research firm, Institute for Learning Innovation, in Annapolis, Maryland and has worked at a variety of other key positions in the museum world, including 14 years at the Smithsonian Institution. Falk earned a joint doctorate in Biology and Education from the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of over one hundred scholarly articles and chapters in the areas of biology, psychology and education, co-author with Lynn Dierking of *The Museum Experience*, *Learning from Museums: Visitor experiences and the making of meaning*, and *Lessons without Limit: How free-choice learning is transforming education*, with Beverly Sheppard of *Thriving in the Knowledge Age: New business models for museums and other cultural institutions* and editor of numerous books including *Free-Choice Science Education: How we learn science outside of school*.

Users Review

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