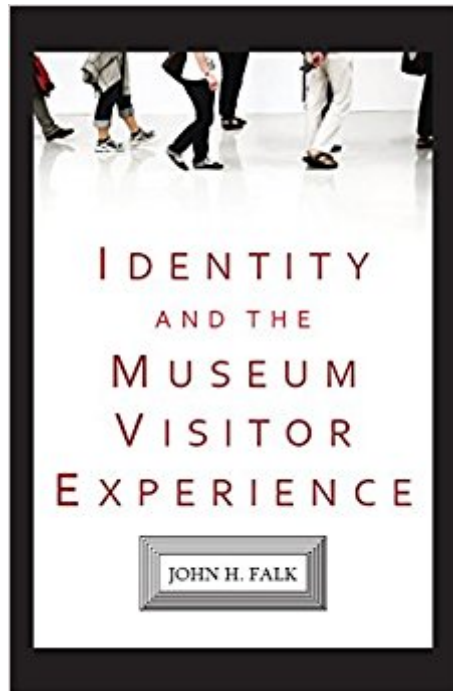




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Identity And The Museum Visitor Experience



Synopsis

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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Customer Reviews

I was extremely impressed with Falk's book. In this book he talks about five museum visitor identities: Explorer, Facilitator, Experience Seeker, Professional/Hobbyist, and Recharger. Instead of thinking of general demographics of museum visitors, such as age, race, gender, etc., Falk recommends thinking of visitors in one of these five visitor identities. Doing so will help the museum better meet the needs of the community. I currently work at a museum complex in Lehi, Utah called Thanksgiving Point, and I look forward to incorporating the ideas in Falk's book into our practices here. In doing so I hope to see not only an increase in revenue, but also an increase in the public's perceived value of our museum complex. I plan on conducting research to test many of the ideas presented in this book. This book has caused me to rethink how I look at visitors that attend museums. It has shown me how I can more fully focus on their needs, instead of just thinking of the objectives of the museum. It is an excellent read for anyone in the museum field or anyone interested in free-choice learning in general.

For someone looking to work in museums, this book is important in understanding the various groups who attend museums. There are some parts of Falk's "Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience" that are so difficult to read due to the redundancy. However, like any study Falk is merely trying to prove his theory is accurate with multiple examples.

This book really helped me in my final paper for one of my classes. It was interesting to read how different people approach their experiences in a museum, as well as why they decide to go or not go.

Interesting insight into the museum visitor experience, though a bit too broad and theoretical. "Practical" part of the book (several last chapters) are particularly inspiring. Good examples of visitor interviews.

Great book. Not only by the great scientific content (his model of the several types of visitors is great), is written in a way that makes reading it a pleasure. In fact, 5 stars

Good information to ponder.

Another fabulous book by Falk.

I came into museum education from the field of secondary education, and was looking for books to provide an orientation to how museum educators and visitor experience professionals think about making their institutions meaningful and engaging for their audiences. I got this book for Christmas, and I devoured half of it that day. Falk cites a body of research conducted by himself, his research partner Lynn Dierking, and others, at LA's California Science Center over decades. While the book isn't overly technical (it pulls mostly qualitative data), Falk & Dierking's mixed methods provide a compelling case for the framework they've developed for both visitor identity and learning in informal spaces. As someone with a strong background in pedagogy and learning theory, this book was an excellent bridge between theories and museum practice. I introduced it to my staff, and while there was some initial push-back, they had to admit that the visitor identities provided ring true to our visitorship and provide a helpful lens for thinking about programming and supplementary materials.

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