

Making Exhibit Labels: 10 Deadly Sins

1. Labels that are not related to a big idea, that ramble without focus or objectives.
2. Labels that have too much emphasis on instruction (presenting information) instead of interpretation (offering provocation).
3. Labels that do not address visitors' prior knowledge, interests and/or misconceptions – that don't know who the audience is.
4. Labels with no apparent system of design and content to organise the messages, codes, or content.
5. Labels written with a vocabulary that is out of reach for the majority of visitors.
6. Labels that are too long and wordy.
7. Labels that ask questions that are not visitors' questions.
8. Labels for interactive exhibits that do not have instructions or interpretations located in integrated, logical ways.
9. Labels that do not begin with concrete, visual references.
10. Labels that are hard to read because of poor typography (bad choice of typeface, design, colours, lighting, materials, or bad placement).

(B. Serrell, Exhibit Labels. An Interpretive Approach)