

Worksheet 1A: Take-Home Messages for _____
Name of our museum

Visitors will leave with the following take-home messages in mind:

- Message about
the Stories Told Here

- Message about
This Museum

- Message about
Myself (the visitor)

Worksheet 1B: Exhibit Elements Checklist

Exhibit elements	Minimal-Cost Exhibit (\$0-\$149/sq.ft.)	Low-Cost Exhibit (\$150-\$179/sq.ft.)	Moderate-Cost Exhibit (\$180-\$229/sq.ft.)	High-Cost Exhibit (\$230+ /sq.ft.)
Presentation media	Adequate text, but not too much Calligraphy labels or uniform font and size Visible title Theme and storyline	Vary typefaces and point sizes Use Changeable bulletin boards Provide opportunities for visitor feedback	Use layers of information for visitors to discover	Use electronic displays Consider having text projected onto a wall or other surface
Presentation media–sound	N/A	N/A	Produce in-house as MP3 files For playback use iPods, repeater chips	Have professionally produced Use durable playback device
Presentation media–video	N/A	N/A	Produce in-house using iMovie and camcorder For playback, use computer and monitor	Have professionally produced Use durable playback device
Presentation media–interactives	Touchable opportunities	Include hands-on and touchable opportunities	Use liftboards, sliding panels, matching games	Include computer-based interactives
Presentation media–smells	Use changeable samples (herbs, raw wool, scent bottles)	Use changeable samples (herbs, raw wool, scent bottles)	Use changeable samples (herbs, raw wool, scent bottles)	Employ automated release of synthetic odors
Furniture and décor	Used cases Cast-offs from retail stores	Panels Pedestals	Plexiglas cases Stage sets with inexpensive props Period rooms Art installations Changeable components	Dioramas Full-size replicas Environments Mannequins Media environments
Aesthetic and Environmental elements	Color unity Use of fabric Sense of unity No clutter or overcrowding	Color (paint) Textures: fabric Layout (spacious or crowded) Social or solitary experience Random or directed access	Color (graphics) Textures: floor and wall materials Visitor comfort (benches, accessible design)	Color (photos) Lighting

Worksheet 2A: Storyline Ideas for _____
Name of exhibit

Main take-home message about content:
(from Worksheet 1A)

If you were going to tell the story behind this take-home message in a sentence or two, how would you tell it? (Brainstorm ideas, pick the top two or three, and record them here.)

If someone asked “So what?” about this take-home message, how would you answer that question? (Brainstorm ideas, pick the top two or three, and record them here.)

Worksheet 2B: Who Knows the Stories?

Storyline Element

Which People Know the Most
about This Aspect of the Story?

Worksheet 2C: Main Facts

What are the juiciest, most compelling facts about our subject matter?

What are the two or three most important facts people need to know about our subject matter?

What are the most frequent questions people ask about our subject matter?

Do the facts listed above answer these frequently asked questions? If not, add relevant facts.

What stereotypes and misconceptions do people have about our subject matter?

Do the facts listed above correct these stereotypes and misconceptions? If not, add relevant facts.

Worksheet 2D: Organizing Concepts

Brainstorm possible organizing concepts and themes for your exhibit. (You don't need to fill in all the blanks; but try to come up with at least five or six different concepts and themes.)

Category _____

Chronology _____

Analogy _____

Observation/deduction _____

Comparison/contrast _____

Watchwords _____

Themes _____

Circle the concepts and themes that seem most revealing and engaging to the Exhibit Makeover Crew.

Do they belong in a certain order? If so, number them.

Worksheet 2E: Multiple Perspectives

First, review your storyline and identify topics that are rich, complex, and controversial.

For each topic, brainstorm key viewpoints that should be represented, so that visitors can get a full picture and make up their own minds.

For each viewpoint, research first-person sources such as quotes, eyewitness accounts, and oral histories.

Complex/controversial topic	Viewpoints	Sources
#1	•	•
	•	•
	•	•
#2	•	•
	•	•
	•	•
#3	•	•
	•	•
	•	•

Worksheet 2F: Objects

List all objects related to your storyline. Then select the most important objects that the Exhibit Makeover Crew agrees *must* be displayed, within the limits of your single case exhibit.

For objects in your collection, note information (such as an accession number or other identifier) that will help you locate the object. A photo of each object with measurements (height, width, and depth) will be essential to plan the exhibit layout. A digital camera makes it easy to record and store information. If you're working with a film camera, stick a label on each print, and record identification information and measurements on it.

Make a note of any must-display objects that aren't in your collection and should be acquired.

Type of Object	Description	Must-display	Collection i.d. #	To Be Acquired
Artifacts	•			
	•			
	•			
	•			
	•			
	•			
Specimens	•			
	•			
	•			
	•			
	•			
	•			
Replicas	•			
	•			
	•			
Models, props	•			
	•			
	•			

Worksheet 2G: Images

List key images related to your storyline. Then select the most important images that must be displayed.

For images in your collection, note catalog numbers and other identifiers that will help you locate the image. (Be sure to copy information from the back of the photo, too.) If possible, scan or photocopy the images.

Make a note of must-display images that aren't in your collection and should be acquired.

Type of Image	Description	Must-Display	Collection i.d. #	To Be Acquired
Photographs	•			
	•			
	•			
	•			
	•			
	•			
Drawings	•			
	•			
	•			
	•			
	•			
	•			
Maps	•			
	•			
	•			
Documents	•			
	•			
	•			

Worksheet 3A: Look-and-Feel Ideas

List preliminary ideas about look and feel that appeal to everyone on the Exhibit Makeover Crew.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Worksheet 3B: Content Summary

Using worksheets you've already completed, summarize your choices so far. Line up objects/images with their corresponding facts and concepts.

Take-Home Messages: from Worksheet 1A	Organizing Concepts: from Worksheet 2D	Main Facts: from Worksheet 2C	Must-Display Objects and Images: from Worksheets 2F and 2G
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
	•	•	•
	•	•	•
	•	•	•
	•	•	•

Worksheet 3C: Interactive Opportunities

List interactive opportunities appropriate to your content, look and feel ideas, and price range.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Worksheet 3D: Preliminary Exhibit Outline

Draw on previously completed worksheets to rough out a preliminary exhibit outline.

Big Idea (most important take-home message from Worksheet 1A):

Working exhibit title (based on big idea):

Concept:		
Facts:		
Images:	Objects:	Interactives:
Concept:		
Facts:		
Images:	Objects:	Interactives:
Concept:		
Facts:		
Images:	Objects:	Interactives:

Worksheet 4A: Telling Meaningful Stories

Exhibit title	
Take-home messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • •
Storyline summary	
Organizing concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • •
Complex/controversial topic	
Hands-on interactive experience	
Media-based component	
Look and feel of the exhibit	

Worksheet 5A: Preliminary Exhibit Gallery Outline

Draw on previously completed worksheets to rough out a preliminary exhibit gallery outline.

Big idea: _____
 (Most important take-home message from Worksheet 1A)

Working exhibit title: _____
 (Based on big idea)

Concept:		
Facts:		
Images:	Objects:	Interactives:
Concept:		
Facts:		
Images:	Objects:	Interactives:
Concept:		
Facts:		
Images:	Objects:	Interactives:

Worksheet 5B: Object Specifications

Object name or ID number	Dimensions: Height, Width, Depth	Conservation Needs	Security	Mounting
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Worksheet 5C: Planning Matrix

Area _____

Object/Item #	Date/week of completion
Restoration/mounting:	
Interpretive support materials:	
Installation:	
Additional Notes:	
Estimated hours for completion:	Assigned to:

Object/Item #	Date/week of completion
Restoration/mounting:	
Interpretive support materials:	
Installation:	
Additional Notes:	
Estimated hours for completion:	Assigned to:

Object/Item #	Date/week of completion
Restoration/mounting:	
Interpretive support materials:	
Installation:	
Additional Notes:	
Estimated hours for completion:	Assigned to:

Worksheet 5D: Identified Needs

Area/Object	Skills Needed	Materials Needed	Budget	Source
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Worksheet 5E: Talking Points for Your Design Plan

From the early process; for those who haven't been involved before or may need a reminder (e.g. a new donor prospect):

- How does this plan address the museum's mission?
- Who are your target audiences?
- What are the goals of the exhibit?
- What are the key messages?

(for those who already know the big picture, e.g., a board member)

- What will this exhibit feel like for the visitor? Be prepared to describe galleries of thought/key messages and show how visitors will move through the story being told.
- What have you discovered about your museum/collection while working on this display? How will you share these insights with your community?
- What special skills, materials and/or components will your museum staff need help with?
- How much will this cost and how long will it take?
- Is there a promotional component?

Worksheet 8A: Creating Memorable Experiences

In a Museum Makeover Crew meeting, spend a few minutes reflecting silently about this question:

Can you remember an experience in childhood or adolescence when you became aware of the existence of the past? Or saw the natural world through new eyes? Or felt a work of art capture and hold your attention?

Ask each person to share memories and reflections about these pivotal moments.

These are the types of experiences that we are trying to create in a museum setting. As a group, try to understand what your experiences had in common. Write down some guiding principles to make sure your exhibit will give visitors the opportunity to have their own “aha!” experiences.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Worksheet 8B: Looking with fresh eyes

EXPLORATION

(Please follow these directions one step at a time, without reading ahead.)

1. Stand by yourself near the front entrance to the exhibit gallery.
2. Relax. Spend one or two minutes clearing your mind and using all your senses to become as attentive as possible to your environment.
3. Let yourself be drawn in any direction toward any one of the exhibit spaces.
4. Explore the exhibits until you find an object that you really like.
Move around and look at this object from different points of view.
5. Make a drawing of the object. (Use blank side of this page.)
6. List any words that will help you describe the object to another person.
7. What are some questions you have about this object? List them.
8. How does this object make you feel?
9. How is it like you?
10. How is it different?

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Worksheet 8C: Multiple Intelligences

What can your museum's exhibits offer to people with strengths in the various multiple intelligences?

Type of intelligence	Description	Examples of exhibit elements that match each intelligence	Ideas for your exhibits
Verbal-linguistic	A person's way with words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bold first-person quotes • Opportunity to write • Opportunity to audio-record 	
Logical-mathematical	Thinking and reasoning, use of numbers, ability to recognize concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solve math problems, e.g. to understand class differences or trade relationships • Be a detective; solve a mystery 	
Visual-spatial	Ability to work with objects and dimensions, and to see images in your mind's eye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to draw • Opportunity to design • Experiment with a hands-on model or replica (e.g. a model train or a towboat's control panel) 	
Body-kinesthetic	Ability to express yourself physically and control your body (as in dance, athletics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare your body with an animal's body • Make your body look like someone in a painting 	
Musical-rhythmic	Tuned in to tone patterns and sounds; responds to rhythm and beat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background music • Musical elements, e.g. a song or instrumental performance • Play an instrument (e.g. drum) 	
Interpersonal	Ability to communicate person to person and have relationships with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board game • Game of skill or chance • Have a conversation about a thought-provoking question 	
Intrapersonal	Capacity for spiritual exploration, self-reflection and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to leave testimony • Self-assessment opportunity 	

Worksheet 8D: Visitor Participation

(This bonus worksheet does not appear in the 2008 edition of Exhibit Makeovers.)

Brainstorm ideas for building visitor participation into your existing exhibits. If you wish, try out some of your ideas on the exhibit floor and watch what happens. A simple method is to invite visitors to write responses on index cards and put them in a box. Post a selection of visitor contributions on a bulletin board for all to see.

- Open-ended questions

?

?

- Mystery objects

- Unidentified photos

- Questions we don't know the answers to

?

?

Worksheet 8E: Accessibility Checklist

Review your current exhibits. Write down all the elements you've identified that will make your exhibit accessible. Then brainstorm ways to fill in any blank spaces on the worksheet.

Types of visitors

Exhibit elements accessible to them

Visitors who can't read

Visitors who aren't English speakers

Families with small children

Teenagers

Elders

Physically impaired

Visually impaired

Hearing impaired

Add more categories...

Worksheet 8F: Possible Project Outcomes

Check all outcomes that might apply to you. Add outcomes specific to your museum.

- How will exhibit renewal benefit **visitors** to the museum?

_____ Visitors feel welcome, comfortable, confident, and relaxed during the museum experience.

_____ Visitors understand key messages conveyed by exhibits.

_____ Other benefits to visitors (list)

- How will exhibit renewal benefit our **community**?

_____ Visitors gain a deeper understanding of one or more aspects of community life.

_____ The museum becomes a more significant cultural resource for the community.

_____ The museum attracts and engages people of varied ages and backgrounds. It is a place where everybody goes.

_____ Other community benefits (list)

- How will exhibit renewal benefit the **museum**?

_____ Increased attendance, with greater revenue potential

_____ Favorable word-of-mouth and media publicity

_____ Increased volunteer involvement

_____ Increased/diversified support from individuals, businesses, corporations, foundations

_____ Increased attention and support from government agencies

_____ Increased ability to recruit and retain professional staff

_____ Increased attention and recognition from professional associations and peers

_____ Other benefits to the museum (list)

After you've brainstormed all the benefits that might apply to you, identify your priorities. What are your top two outcomes in each category?

Worksheet 8G: High-Priority Outcomes

Project outcomes and measures of success for _____
Your museum's name

	Outcomes	Measure of success
Visitors	1. 2.	
Community	1. 2.	
Museum	1. 2.	

Appendix B/Worksheet A: Honoring Our Museum's Past: *who are we?*

As a first step in planning, learn as much as you can about your museum's history. Use this worksheet as a guide. Don't be satisfied with hearsay; members of the makeover crew will know some of the answers to these questions, but there's always more to learn.

Do the research that will help you understand the motivations, personalities, controversies, struggles, and triumphs that have made your museum what it is today.

To find the information you seek, draw upon documents and sources such as

- Articles of incorporation
- Early correspondence, fundraising letters, publications, files
- Stories in back issues of your local newspaper
- Personal knowledge of volunteers, staff, and community members

(If your makeover crew is starting a new institution, use this exercise as a way to recognize the people, ideas, values, and controversies that have shaped your plans so far.)

History of _____ (your museum)

1. What was the original purpose of your museum?

2. Who started the museum?

3. What values, needs, and hopes motivated the museum's original founders?

4. Who are the key people who have helped to shape and guide the museum since it was founded?

5. What notable successes has the museum achieved?

6. What obstacles has the museum overcome?

7. Has the museum's purpose changed over time? (See Question 1.)
___No
___Yes.

If yes, describe the current purpose.

Appendix B/Worksheet B: The Museum's Community Role: *we make a difference*

Community Role of _____ (your museum)

Review each description as it might apply to your museum today. Check the descriptions that you think best match how your community *now* views your museum. Rank order each description on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=perfect match; 5=not at all like us)

_____ Visitor attraction

The museum is the “front porch” of the community, welcoming visitors and giving them an overview of what’s special and unique about this place.

_____ Catalyst for change

The museum exists to deliver a message that will encourage people to think differently about their relationship to others or to the world.

_____ Center of creativity

The museum engages visitors in activities where they make and do things. Visitors, rather than the museum, determine the outcomes.

_____ Memory bank

The museum displays aspects of the history of a place, person, cultural tradition, etc.

_____ Storyteller

The museum interprets the history of a place, person, cultural tradition, etc. in ways that relate the past to the present—and even to the future.

_____ Attic

The museum preserves objects and images that would otherwise have been discarded.

_____ Treasure trove

The museum preserves valuable, meaningful, and/or rare and unusual objects and images.

_____ Shrine/hall of fame

The museum honors a particular group or individual and assumes visitors have a built-in interest in this topic.

_____ Exclusive club

Although open to the public, the museum is primarily aimed at people with special interests in and knowledge of the topic.

Appendix B/Worksheet C: The Museum's Intended Role in the Community

_____What roles could your museum play in the community? What roles would you like the museum to play?

If you're not satisfied with the status quo, now is the time to rethink, rewrite, and create a modified or brand-new community role for your institution.

Intended community role of _____ (your museum)

Drawing on the category descriptions in Appendix B/Worksheet B, what role(s) do you think your museum could and should play in your community?

Describe this role in a short paragraph.

Appendix B/Worksheet D: The Museum's Mission: *why do we exist?*

Now it's time to revisit the museum's mission. In light of your institutional history, your current purpose, and your desired community role, do you need to modify the museum's mission statement? This exercise will help you evaluate your museum's mission in light of the institution's history and community role.

1. What is our museum's most recently approved mission statement?

2. Does our mission statement reflect changes in the museum's purpose? (See Worksheet 1A.)

_____ Yes

_____ No

3. Does our mission statement reflect the museum's role in the community? (See Worksheets 1B and 1C.)

_____ Yes

_____ No

4. If you answered YES to questions 2 and 3, you're ready to move ahead with exhibit planning.

5. If you answered NO to either question 2 or 3, or if the museum doesn't have a mission statement, ask the museum's board of directors to draft a working statement of purpose.

For best results, respected community leaders should be involved, as well as museum insiders. Once this draft is in place, the makeover crew can proceed with exhibit planning. The board can continue their work on the mission statement as a parallel activity.

For help with your museum's mission statement, see Gail Anderson, *Museum Mission Statements: Building a Distinct Identity* (American Association of Museums, 1998), available through the AAM Bookstore, www.aam-us.org.