

"How to" books are ten a penny. Fiona Humberstone's book on exhibiting at exhibitions, *exhibit!*, promised something different.

JOHN ASHCROFT read it and was so impressed he decided to put it to the test.

How to Show Off!

The exclamation mark is the most overused – and misused – pieces of grammatical notation. In emails it is abundant. The result is that everything screams for attention and nothing gets it. When they are used correctly they make their subject stand out from the rest. They give it an enduring life of its own.

When the Theatre Guild in New York launched a show called *Away We Go*, no one gave it a chance. It bombed on tour and it was only just before it was due to premier on Broadway that advice was sought. Impresario Lawrence Marshall's suggestion was not only to rename it after the US state his wife came from, but to add an explanation mark.

Oklahoma! is still running 60 years later. In fact, a west-end production is playing at the New Victoria Theatre this week (May 10th – 15th).

All this came to mind as I started to read Fiona Humberstone's book *exhibit!*. It's a book which gets your attention. More importantly, it's contents comprise truly easy ways to get customers' attention. It is the 'Lawrence-Marshall-advice' that will change the way your company exhibits forever..

Getting the right kind of attention

The book contains one of the most powerful, successful business practice sentences I've ever seen: everyone in business should read it. It's lines two and three on page 61. "If you can just switch your focus from what you want to sell to what's motivating your VISITORS, you'll be on the road to success."

For VISITORS, substitute 'clients' or 'prospects' or 'customers' or anyone else who can help make you successful. The sentiment of the rule is universal. It works for our magazine editorial too, when we tell contributors that we do not do advertorial. "If you can just switch your focus from what you want to sell to what's motivating your READERS, you'll be on the road to success."

exhibit! is the road map to success

We're trying it out

It's easy to write two dozen column inches of review about a book. With *exhibit!*, though, we are going to do something entirely different. Because the GROW exhibition is almost upon us, *eZie-publishing* is taking this book to task to see if it works. Our ad on page 23 and our stand display at GROW (stand XX) is right out of page 127 of Fiona's book.

It's a simple exercise in collecting data which the book goes into great depth about.

The other side of exhibiting is speaking. It's easy to say, as I have seen in other "how to" books, "Speak at seminars: it will boost your company's exposure." It's nowhere near as easy as that. Look at the seminar list for GROW YOUR BUSINESS on page 17. Many of those names keep popping up all over the place. Getting onto those lists takes perseverance. *exhibit!* comes up with a superb way of starting. Look at the scan of Fiona's "Creating a speaker sheet" page above.

This book has page after page of such working guides. Not words about what you should do, but checklists to ensure that you do it.

Creating a speaker sheet

Exhibition organisers are always inundated with requests from enthusiastic exhibitors and non-exhibitors hoping to boost their exposure by speaking. They can't say yes to everyone, so they tend to go with the best speakers who know their stuff and will probably attract the most visitors.

Usually event organisers will invite speakers they've seen before and they know are good. But if you haven't had exposure to these people, create a 'speaker sheet' that will put you ahead of the game. Here's how to do it.

- Create a seminar title that will attract attention
- Add a sub heading: how to... five simple steps... how you can...
- Write an introductory paragraph: why is your seminar so essential to the exhibition visitors?
- Outline what your seminar will cover
- Explain how the audience will benefit
- Add a testimonial from someone who has attended/ booked you for a seminar before (this will add reassurance that you know what you're doing)
- Put on a photograph
- Add some background information about you and what qualifies you to speak on the subject
- Remember to add your contact details!
- Make sure it's well designed and create a PDF that you can email across to anyone.

And these are not incomplete lists, where the way to complete a project is to employ the writer as a consultant. *exhibit!* has everything: it's Fiona's entire exhibiting knowledge. It's like having a professional exhibition consultant by your side, 24 hours a day.

You can see if it all works for yourself

Go to the seminars at GROW and see how others put their stands and their presentations together. Especially, go to Fiona's own stand (*she is speaking at 10.00am and her stand number is 35*) and you will see everything she writes of in practice.

Normally when a book is launched the author will sit at a desk for 60 minutes to sign copies, spending perhaps more than seven seconds with each customer. Fiona is going

to be there all day. There's no escape for her. She will be all yours at the Guildford Spectrum on 12th May. She'll tell you how this book will help you grow your business at GROW YOUR BUSINESS. And I guarantee that you'll get considerably more than seven seconds.

I think that deserves an exclamation mark!

exhibit! is available from book shops, Amazon and Flourish Publishing at: www.flourishpublishing.co.uk



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webster
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Organisers of local business-to-business exhibitions

Grow Your Business ● www.growyourbusiness.co.uk
Surrey Chambers Expo ● www.surreychambersbusinessexpo.co.uk
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Exhibition Organising ● Copywriting ● Display Graphics ● Design

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