

let's talk EXHIBITING

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THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

In two recent instalments of this column I have emphasized the importance of your Story and the importance of your Plan. Now, we need to consider another component critically important in the evaluation of exhibits – how you demonstrate your “Knowledge, Study and Research” within the topic you are exhibiting so that the viewer and the judges can understand how well you know what you are talking about.

Knowledge, Study and Research weighs in at a full 35% in the evaluation of competitive exhibits in Canada, the United States, and in international exhibiting. FIGURE 1 shows the most current version of our RPSC Exhibit Feedback Form. (Note that “Treatment”, “Knowledge, Study and Research” and “Rarity and Condition” are all to be weighted about equally in the evaluation process, whereas “Presentation” is supposed to weigh in at only 5% in the process.)

Consequently an exhibit with great material and a strong development could still be weak unless one can also demonstrate philatelic and subject knowledge. As exhibitors, this means we are expected to have learned our material espe-

cially well through the sort of personal study and research we normally would engage in while learning the intricacies of our material. Certainly we need to go well beyond the catalogue description of our material, going deeper into the more intricate knowledge found in our specialized catalogues and the other information found in our philatelic journals or specialized publications, and extracting the salient points necessary to demonstrate our knowledge of what we are exhibiting.

And, though many of us are neither trained nor have the inclination (or time) to conduct original or secondary research in archives and special collections, any sort of “new” information we can convey as a result of our research and study also will count favorably in the evaluation of our exhibits.

“Knowledge, Study and Research” is demonstrated variously in the references you include (either on your Title Page or within your Synopsis), in the accurate and specialized information you include in the write-up accompanying your items, and in any analysis you have made about your material. In fact, analysis is an intangible that counts quite heavily here, as there is more complexity involved in the analysis of an item than in its simple description. Phil Stager, a very accomplished American exhibitor and APS judge, has more than once commented “don’t just describe your material, analyse it”, and the APS Manual of Philatelic Judging expects that “items shown must be analyzed to demonstrate knowledge of their significance and their representative roles in fulfilling exhibit development” (p. 16).

How you decide to do this is up to you, though the more you can demonstrate specialized knowledge in your write-up, and the more you can highlight any personal study and research (e.g., by selectively indicating such throughout the exhibit), the greater the appreciation that will be formed that you really do know what you are talking about.

Remember, in most cases the accomplished exhibitor with a strong exhibit knows more about the philately of his or her exhibit than any judge or jury assigned to evaluate it. Let then the research, the fruit of the attention you have brought to your material, become apparent to the viewer of your exhibit so that it is presented, and appreciated, in as complete a fashion as possible. ☒

Exhibitor Feedback Form

Name: _____

Exhibit Title: _____ Trade No: _____

Division/Class: _____

Treatment	Weighting
Title Page: Appropriateness, title, date, location, list of products	(10%)
Description: Coverage, development, clarity, relevance, logical organization	(15%)
Significance: Subject and philatelic importance, philatelic comparison	(10%)

Knowledge, Study and Research (35% total)

Philatelic and Subject Knowledge: Scientific and application, commonness, rarity	(15%)
Personal Study and Research: Analysis and evaluation, original research	(20%)

Rarity and Condition (20% total)

Rarity: Challenge factor of material topic, difficulty of acquisition, provenance of item material	(10%)
Condition: Physical condition and appearance in light of quality standards	(10%)

Presentation (5%)

Presentation: General layout, balance, important material identified	(5%)
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Comments and Recommendations (see reverse of envelope)

Total % Awarded: _____

Model: _____ Evaluation Judge: _____ Chief Judge: _____ (optional)

Judge's name: _____

Special thanks: _____

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