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Strategy in practice: re-categorising tour guides as strategists

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STRATEGY IN PRACTICE: RE-CATEGORISING TOUR GUIDES AS

STRATEGISTS

Abstract

Tour guides are often believed to have an exceptionally simple role, leading an audience around a building and pointing artefacts out according to a script. However, this paper shows how their work pertains to organisational strategy in two significant ways; they can be seen to be acting in ways which *reflect* and *reiterate* the organisational strategy of audience engagement. Audience engagement is increasingly used as a criterion upon which museums are awarded funding and as such, guides deploy an organisation's strategic aims through their moment-by-moment actions as they try to engage such audiences. They must overcome significant obstacles and challenges which unfold over the course of the tour in order to engage the audience. In such light, in keeping with the 'workplace studies' turn in Strategy-as-Practice (Samra-Fredericks, 2010), we can see them as strategic actors. Because of the lack of understanding of the work of guides, as well as an ongoing tendency to see strategy as something that only happens at the most senior of organisational levels, this paper has contributions to make in showing the truly skilled nature of the work of the guide and demonstrating how these skilled workers present an example of those engaged in a form of strategising whether they know it or not.

Introduction

Tour guiding is a neglected occupation, despite being a role which is complex as well as important to the cultural sector. The idea proliferates that guiding is a simple activity which requires a guide to do little more than lead an audience around a space and talk about a few things as they go in a way which is relatively scripted. The small body of literature which exists on guiding sustains these assumptions, by either breaking down the role of the guide into a number of straightforward tasks or functions (Cohen, 1985; Fine and Speer, 1985; Schmidt, 1979) or focusing solely on the interpretive content of the talk (Levy, 2002; Mancini, 2001; Pond, 1993). There is no focus on the emergent nature of the work of the guide and how different deliveries of the same tour may call for different actions on the part of the guide. In essence, there is no consideration of the ways in which guides must strategise, emergently, in order to cope with the challenges which arise as the tour unfolds. This is problematic because even a brief practical reflection on the efforts that one would have to go to in order to keep an audience, comprised of individuals, together and engaged in a tour as they are led around a complex space rarely designed for guiding begins to hint at some of the emergent challenges that guides may face and how adept an experienced guide is likely to be at dealing with these challenges as they go.

And, the issue of engagement hints at the importance of the work of the guide; museum funding is often correlated with how well museums include and engage their audience(/s) (Ciolfi, Bannon and Fermström, 2008; McPherson, 2006; Skinner, Ekelund and Jackson, 2009). For example, a UK museum will need to carry out activities which allow audiences to become engaged to receive funding from The Arts Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund or HEFCE (Arts Council, 2008; HEFCE, 2010; Heritage Lottery Fund, 2009):

"Arts Council England's mission is to enable everyone to experience arts that enrich their lives. We believe that great art inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves, and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. We want as many people as possible to engage with the arts."(Arts Council, 2008: 1)

Guides play a key role in audience engagement because they interact directly with an audience who are rarely given the opportunity to engage directly with museum staff (Tran and King, 2007). In such ways, they may be seen as individuals who both deploy and, in so doing, recreate organisational strategy. Moreover, in a sector which routinely struggles for funding, tour guides, who are often volunteers, often represent a free or at least 'expenses only' resource for museums (ibid.) ensuring that museums are able to achieve their aim of survival even in straitened times.

It is likely to be both because tour guides are volunteers and thus rarely show up on occupational surveys (Cohen, 2010), and because their work is considered to be simple, that they are often overlooked. And it is for the very same reasons, coupled with the fact that guides are almost omnipresent in the cultural sector (Pond, 1993), that this research was carried out, in order to discover what lies beneath this much practised, important and yet neglected role and it was through this that the idea of the tour guide as an important emergent strategist evolved.

Uncovering the Work of the Guide

In order to study the work of the guide in a way which is sympathetic to the work that they do, a Workplace Studies approach (Luff et al., 2000) was taken. Workplace studies apply the

tenets of Conversation Analysis (for a full discussion, see Sacks, 1992a) and Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967) to the study of talk-in-interaction in the workplace by analysing video recordings of people doing work in order to discover the taken-for-granted rules and strategies that people use as they undertake their working lives (Luff et al., 2000). Treating the talk and actions of guides and audiences on video recordings of museum tours to detailed analyses, this paper allows for exploration of how guides routinely do their work, in particular in relation to the challenges that they face and the strategies that they use for dealing with them.

Strategy has, until recently, been largely treated by academics as a concept, rather than an activity (Samra-Fredericks, 2010). Gerund and adjective have been absent from the strategic terrain (Whittington, 1996). Those working in the 'Strategy as Practice' paradigm have, with considerable success, begun to break down this stereotype to a sufficient degree that the idea of 'strategy as practice' and the exercise of 'strategy in practice' have gained considerable currency academically, in the mainstream business press and in the curricula of Business Schools (Golsorkhi et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2007). There are links to be drawn, as Samra-Fredericks (2010) notably has, between the motivations of Conversation Analysts and those working in the Strategy as Practice field. In particular, the concern with workplace practice and studying the detail of work are shared. Moreover, they share an interest in how an organisation is affected by this work. In the case of Strategy as Practice, this centres on the relationship between strategising and organisation and one emerging interest is in how strategy may be seen to reflect and recreate organisations. This is strongly affiliated to the Workplace Studies approach for which a primary concern is also how workplace interaction reflects and recreates organisations.

However, as the field of Strategy as Practice is still relatively new and this is an important but emergent interest, there is still some distance to be covered to allow the interest in strategising to gain the kind of weight that those in the discipline believe that it deserves (Golsorkhi et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2007; Samra Fredericks, 2003; 2004; 2010; Whittington 1996). In light of this, this paper adds weight to the argument that studying strategising is important for developing understandings of organisation and how organisations are shaped. This is done here through the evidenced analysis of the work of tour guides, who are shown in this paper to be highly accomplished strategists, despite common conceptions to the contrary.

So, this paper progresses with exemplars and analyses of some of the common challenges faced by a guide and some strategies used for dealing with these. It identifies that the work of the guide is highly skilled and that they are accomplished users of emergent strategies. This leads to a consideration of the implications of the findings of this paper for those working in the cultural sector and those who are interested in *strategy in practice*.

A Guide's Common Challenges and the Strategies for Dealing with Them

In order to carry out this detailed study of guiding, video data was collected over a two-year period from 78 Derngate, a townhouse in Northampton with a Charles Rennie Mackintosh-designed interior and the Victoria & Albert Museum, an applied arts museum on 'museum mile' in South Kensington, London. Video cameras were used to record guided tours. In order to maximise the chances of gathering 'naturally occurring data' (ten Have, 1999), which is essential for the workplace studies approach as this forms the basis of the analysis, cameras were set up and left stationary, rather than being 'manned' during the tour. Part of the reason for this strategy is that people seem to be far more intrusive than cameras

because we are not as sensitive to being looked at by a camera's eye as we are to the eyes of a human (Goodwin, 1981). In 78 Derngate, this involved leaving a camera in one room and catching all tours which passed by. In the V&A, this involved some planning with the guide as to where they would stop next and required me to go to the next place on the tour just before the group arrived to set the camera up and then 'walk off' until the group moved off again. I learnt the technique of doing this as unobtrusively as possible over the first week or so of the research and was eventually able to blend into the background save for the time taken to reposition the camera.

As I gathered a large corpus of data (over 60 hours, which for the workplace studies method is far more than could ever be fully mined), I contextualised the video data with fieldwork, developing a sense of the problems that guides face and critically examining whether my ideas about the nature of the guiding role had currency. I chatted to guides between tours, attended training sessions and learnt to be a guide by giving a number of tours myself. This made it possible to 'check' research findings against my first-person understanding of 'local practices, lived experiences, and shared meanings' (Soin and Scheytt, 2006: 66) that I would not have had access to otherwise.

Having looked through the data set, I became interested in moments in which guides appeared to deal with complex challenges in routine ways. The fragments presented here are examples which allow me to reveal trends found within the data set more generally. Once fragments of interest were identified, detailed transcripts were produced which, in conjunction with the video, formed the focus of, and record of, analysis (Goodwin, 1993; Johnson et al., 2006). The method of transcription used within the paper is taken from Jefferson (1984) and is designed to produce a transcript which is readable and yet which

conveys with accuracy changes in speed, volume and emphasis, as well as pauses within and between passages of talk which prove to be important to the analysis, without rendering it totally obtuse to the reader. In order to ensure that the transcripts are relevant for this audience, a subset of symbols have been used, which are provided in a short Appendix.

Thus, the methodology allowed detailed analysis of the work of guides. And, it was because of this method – which admitted the possibility of treating the tour as a situated, embodied, multi-party interaction as long as such a treatment was oriented to by the participants – that it emerged just how incorrectly the work of tour guides had been treated to this point. This discovery will now be revealed and expounded upon in the following analyses, which proceeds with analysis and discussion of three data fragments in which guides face and deal with challenges in emergent ways, before widening to consider what this data teaches us about guides as strategists.

Disengaging from a focus One task which guides must carry out is the movement of their audience from one place to the next. Cohen's dichotomy of the functions of tour guides has pathfinder as one of their two major roles (1985). However, moving audiences away from one object and towards the next presents challenges. The audience must be physically reoriented from one object to the next with as efficiently and with as little fuss as possible as guides will not want the transition to overcrowd the interpretation of the objects, which is what audiences will be there to experience.

Here, the guide is standing in the dining room of 78 Derngate – a Northampton town house that was refitted by Charles Rennie Mackintosh for the Bassett-Lowke family during the First World War. He is standing by the coffee table, showing his audience – a group of

about six – a photograph of the wall-panelling in Hill House, another Mackintosh designed property. The guide holds out the photograph to the audience members who are gathered around the coffee table. As can be seen in Figure 1, the guide is progressively moving it around the audience members so that all those who are gathered have a chance to look. He first holds it out to Tom, then John and Lottie and, then, to just Lottie. Each time, he waits to move the photograph away until the audience member indicates that they have finished looking. They do this by leaning away or by nodding their head. The focus of this analysis, however, is on the challenge that emerges as the guide holds the photograph out to Pam, who takes longer to look than the guide appears to have accounted for.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Just before the guide shows the photograph to Pam, he holds it out to Lottie. As Lottie nods, the guide moves the photograph around to Pam. Pam looks down at the photograph. She continues to look for some time. During this lengthy look, the guide's talk seems to reach some kind of conclusion, as though attention is soon to be shifted elsewhere:

`and he did use it in other places (0.5)'.

By beginning with 'and', the guide would appear to be about to conclude with the last point about the panelling. The comment moves the talk from the specific to the general, widening the talk out from the detail of the photographs to Mackintosh's use of wall panelling more generally. The break in talk following 'places' also suggests that perhaps some conclusive point has been reached. Moreover, this has all happened as he has shown the image to the last person in the group.

Despite the guide projecting a completion point, which is obvious enough to be oriented to by John, who leans back and nods, Pam continues to look at the photograph. Rather than appearing oriented to the guide's seemingly closing statement, Pam is instead continuingly oriented to the image of the wall panelling in front of her.

As Pam continues to look, the guide continues to hold the photograph out to her, showing no orientation to pulling away. His orientation remains unchanged. What does change, however, is that rather than maintaining the pause in talk which began after 'places', the guide begins to talk again, half a second into the break in talk, saying 'as well'. He delivers it slowly. The apparently terminative nature of the previous talk, the pause, John's orientation to the guide's conduct as terminative, and the fact that 'as well' does not add to or alter significantly the sentence's meaning all corroborate that 'as well' is crafted around allowing Pam the opportunity to continue looking without the guide beginning to say anything new or significant about the photograph.

It is as the guide begins to say 'as well' that Pam nods and begins to move back, showing that she has finished looking. Almost instantly, the guide pulls the photograph away, shuts the book that it is contained in, and shifts around towards the cabinet, which he then makes the next focus of his tour.

It would thus appear that the guide's talk is intricately crafted around Pam's extended viewing of the photograph. It is not initially organised in a way which would seem to account for Pam looking at the photograph for such a length of time. It appears not to have been accounted for in the guide's initial production of his summative talk, which seemingly ends

with 'and he did use it in other places'. John, in particular, appears oriented to this as implicative of an imminent change in focus.

In other situations, the guide may be able to use his own reorientation away from the object as a way of engendering the audience's disengagement and thus facilitating his own disengagement. Because he is holding the photograph and seems oriented to not moving the image away until he receives some acknowledgment, he does not pull the image away before Pam shows that she has finished looking. When guides show objects to audience members, it is often challenging to disengage; however, this is exacerbated with objects that the guide provides direct access to, such as a handling collection, a photograph, or a room which is not open to the public but only as part of a guided tour. Such features present specific challenges because the guide cannot move towards the next focus until the audience finishes looking at the feature.

Here, then, the content and flow of the talk is prompted by Pam's continued looking. By producing extra talk, the guide reduces the amount of 'dead air', which is the ultimate 'gaffe' in public speaking (Goffman, 1971) and is thus able to delay his own moving of the photograph until Pam shows that she has finished. The guide's conduct in this fragment is thus built around the challenges that this particular audience presents.

Thus, a guide's talk is crafted around the challenges of this specific audience. The guide shapes his tour around the precise difficulties that he is currently encountering with delivering a tour to his audience. If the guide moves his talk on before the audience have finished looking at the object, they will be able to attend to neither the old topic, nor the new

topic, in full. Because the audience is small, he is able to provide time for all those interested to look at the photo, and in doing so he factors the space for this into his talk on the tour.

Examination of talk alone would suggest that this is a monologue. However, observation of talk-in-context reveals a moment of subtle yet significant interaction: the guide builds the tour around the audience. The guide is able to avoid 'dead air' by using an adjunctive clause to extend the summative assessment and allow his audience time to finish looking at the object. By keeping talk on track, he is able to sustain audience interest and maintain focus.

The form of this guide's talk in this fragment, and those fragments of other guides throughout the data, emerge routinely in light of the specific challenges presented by the disengagement of a specific audience. This is an interesting issue because public speaking occasions, including guiding, are usually scripted or pre-rehearsed or repeated so many times as to have a certain patterning (Levy, 2002; Sacks, 1992b). There is thus a sense that guiding talk is predetermined to a large degree. However, once the visual aspects of the tour are taken into account, it is revealed to be interactive and shaped around an audience in situ, as opposed to an absolutely pre-determined monologue.

Recipient design, as it has been discussed in the past, has assumed that speakers use things that are already known about other participants before a conversation starts: where they live, whether they have already heard a story or not, if they like a particular sport, their demographic status, or their political leaning (Duranti, 1986; Goodwin, 1986; Sacks, 1992b). What this paper shows is that recipient design is undertaken *in situ*, with small pieces of information gleaned from things that are visible in the course of talk or a tour being used to

make talk contextual. In her book on guiding, Pond recognises that good guides should be able to make use of visible aspects of the audience to build contextualised talk:

> *'No discussion of speaker skills should exclude the importance of listening to one's audience…Guides who actively and attentively listen to travellers and learn to alter their approaches in response to them are not only more successful interpreters, but tend to enjoy themselves and learn more in the process.'* (Pond, 1993: 136-7)

However, advice on precisely how this contextualised talk should be achieved is not coupled with guidance on precisely what a guide should do with this information. What use are *eye movements* or *posture* and how can they be taken into account? Here, it can be seen that such visible information could emerge as relevant and be built into the talk in contextual ways that allow the guide to build an attentive, interested audience, and that good guides may be open to a wide range of things, examining their audience for information that they can use to build an attentive audience, or to build their talk around. Recipient design is central to audience engagement and thus to a successful tour.

In this case, the guide deals with the challenges that they face with a particular audience in ways which reflect the specifics of that particular occasion. Thus, a strategy emerges to overcome the challenges which present themselves in ways which are oriented to the unique challenges of a group. However, elsewhere in the data set, it can be seen how similar challenges are dealt with through similar, although not identical means. There are a number of other examples of tour guides extending their talk to avoid dead air. However, none will be identical because this strategy emerges as a response to particular circumstances.

Attaining and Sustaining Audience Attention A further challenge faced by guides is that of securing and sustaining audience attention. Museums are expected to demonstrate their ability to engage their audiences, and guides, in trying to engage individual audience members in the course of the tour are enacting this important strategic activity at the micro level.

The fragment begins as guide and audience have entered the dining room of 78 Derngate. The guide appears to be having difficulties with orienting the audience to her, as they are engaged in various conversations and when the guide begins with an amplified '`THIS IS THE dining room`', and looks about the audience, nobody turns to look at her.

However, seemingly in response to this challenge, the guide focuses her attentions on a subset of the audience. She says '`and the morning room`' and points to the area used by the Bassett-Lowkes as a place to take morning coffee. A number of members of the inattentive audience are standing in this area, as can be seen in Figure 2, and immediately following the guide's gesture, they turn to her. As the guide points out the extension and the audience look around at the area she is pointing to, it is clear that the guide has successfully achieved the orientation of this subset of the audience. The guide then continues to talk just to this subset, treating their engagement as sufficient without needing to win the attentions of other audience members, too.

Insert Figure 2 about here

The audience orient to her gestures by looking at the extension to the room that the guide is pointing out. By making use of the fact that they are standing in the area that the guide is

talking about, and by gesturing into this area, the guide wins herself an oriented audience with whom she can then engage as she delivers her talk.

The guide makes use of her audience's occupation of the window bay as a resource with which to secure their attention. In this way, she engages a subset of the audience and can then reveal further information about the window bay/extension with an audience oriented to that information. The guide seems to make use of the fact that some audience members are standing in a particular area of the room to build herself an oriented audience.

What is notable here is how the guide uses talk and gesture to win and sustain the orientation of the audience. On a larger scale, fundamental to a museum's strategy will be the ability to reach out and engage with audiences. In the case of the tour, we can see how the strategy is enacted on a micro level, with the guide using sub strategies to deal with the emergent challenges of achieving this goal. One clear strategy used here is to utilise gesture and voice to win around an inattentive audience.

Another point to make which has an impact on our understanding of this occupation is this: the audience is divided into subsets by the guide and this is fundamental to the way in which the guide does her work. Usually, audiences are treated as a homogenous mass in tour guiding literature (e.g., Ham and Weiler, 2002; Pond, 1993; Schmidt, 1979), and literature in performance studies more generally (Heritage and Greatbatch, 1986; Schechner, 2002; Turner, 1986), and this is clearly not the case. Indeed, the 'participation framework' (Goffman, 1983; see also Goodwin, 1993) of the guided tour is more complicated than just 'speaker' and 'audience', because at any given moment, audience members are participating in highly individualised ways; the subset of the audience in the window bay are now

'attentive listeners' and those audience members not in the bay appear to still be 'inattentive listeners'. Recognising that audience members will have individual responses to a guided tour and will, even at this micro-level, have differing responses to the same moment of the tour is significant because it transforms our understanding of the work of the guide from being delivering talk at one listening group into being about engaging individuals who have differing responses to the tour. How work is done and the strategies used to undertake it rely on methods of uncovering such things and the use of Workplace Studies has a clear role to play in the development of strategy as practice.

Dealing with Comments One final challenge to be considered here that guides routinely face is dealing with audience member comments. Whilst the tour guiding literature rarely discusses audience contributions and when it does focuses only on audience questions (e.g., Levy, 2002; Pond, 1993), peppered throughout the data are examples of audience members contributing to the tour through comments such as 'oooh, lovely' or 'wow'. These are comments from an audience member in response to something that the guide has just said or done. They present the challenges faced by guides, but also reveal some of the challenges and strategies deployed by audience members over the course of a tour.

In this last fragment, guide and audience are standing around a corset made from baleen (whalebone)[1] in the Victoria and Albert Museum's British Galleries, as can be seen in Figures 3 & 4. The guide makes a comment about the corset, `I wouldn't like to wear it` and then turns away whilst continuing to talk.

Insert Figure 3 about here

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[1] The bones in the corset are made from strips of whalebone, which are thermoplastic, and which are warmed up and then moulded around the shape of the body to give a good fit.

Whilst the guide has directed her gaze away from audience members and thus does not appear to be seeking audience participation (which sometimes guides do), Abi comes in with 'no, thank you'. This comment is delivered with a smile, which can both be seen in the images and heard in the tone of Abi's voice. Abi thus humorously agrees with the guide's assessment. The guide cuts off her own talk as Abi speaks, letting Abi finish, and then continues straight on again with her own talk. However, rather than ignoring Abi's comment, she turns to Abi a moment later whilst delivering the word 'spectacular', smiles and nods very deliberately in her direction. These actions may be seen at least as an acknowledgement and perhaps even as a response to Abi's assessment. However, they are delivered in a more appropriate place in the tour which deals with the simultaneous challenges of potentially interrupting the flow of the tour versus ignoring the audience member's comment and thus appearing rude. Moreover, nodding over the word 'spectacular' seems appropriate as it not only provides a response to Abi but also reinforces the word 'spectacular' itself. In many ways, the guide's activities can be seen to reinforce the 'moral order' of the tour. By this is not meant some complex notion of morality but, rather, the routine rules and normal conduct which would one would expect from, in this case, a tour guide. She keeps the tour on course whilst ensuring that Abi is included.

However, notable is that the guide is seemingly not alone in orienting *to* this moral order; Abi's comment becomes interruptive when the guide cuts off her own talk to let Abi finish but it does not appear to be delivered in a way which would render it obtrusive. As Abi makes her comment, she shakes her head and looks down to the ground, shifting her gaze to her left, away from the guide. Her assessment may be designed to be publicly hearable, but it also appears designed to be publicly ignorable.

For Abi to make this comment, timing is crucial. Any later, and it will be nonsensical; any earlier, and it will obviously interrupt the guide mid-flow (Sacks, 1992b). However, Abi is oriented to the potential disruption that her comment may cause and, rather than just saying it, she produces it in a way which renders it hearable and yet does not warrant further response. By looking away from the guide and down to the floor, she outwardly conveys a sense that this comment is not produced to divert the course of the tour, but rather to be heard and not acknowledged, listened to and yet outwardly 'ignored'. Whilst this talk is designed to be heard, it also appears designed to negate the need for a direct response which an accompanying look at another participant might be seen to prompt (Goodwin, 1986). This is talk which reiterates the moral order of the tour as we, and this audience member, understands it. The tour's strategy is not left solely to the guide but is assisted by the audience member, who shows her enthusiasm for and engagement in the tour, but tries to do so in a way which retains the primacy of the guide as main speaker.

Insert Figure 4 about here

Discussion

In the past, guiding has been seen as relatively straightforward work, in which guides lead a homogenous, quiet audience around a museum space pointing a few things out (Cohen, 1985; Pond, 1993). However, it can be seen here how it is a role which is both important and complex. Firstly, guides can help to bring into being the audience engagement, which is a key strategic aim of many museums, including the V&A, whose *raison d'etre* is stated thus on their website:

"The purpose of the Victoria and Albert Museum is to enable everyone to enjoy

its collections, explore the cultures that created them and to inspire those who

shape contemporary design.

"All our efforts are focused upon a central purpose - the increased use of our

displays, collections and expertise as resources for learning, creativity and

enjoyment by audiences within and beyond the United Kingdom." (accessed 7

December 2010 at http://www.vam.ac.uk/about_va/)

Audience engagement is an important component of many museums' aims. For example, the

Natural History Museum (London) have a 'Director of Public Engagement' sitting on their

board of directors (UK) (http://www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/museum-

governance/directors-group/sharon-ament.html) and the Smithsonian Museums (USA) have

'Broadening Access' listed within their priority activities on their website

(http://www.si.edu/About/Mission). This is at least in part because it is often used as a criteria

for public funding (e.g., Natural History Museum; Ciolfi, Bannon and Fermström, 2008;

McPherson, 2006; Skinner, Ekelund and Jackson, 2009). Secondly, this is work which is

considerably more challenging than has been previously conceived. Challenges of moving,

informing and entertaining audience members can be seen here to be quite pronounced, with

guides and their audiences both oriented to the difficulties which such tasks present. Thus,

guiding work requires considerable skill, as guides must overcome significant obstacles and

challenges which unfold over the course of a tour in order to engage the audience. In

revealing the skill of the guide's work, this paper also reveals the routine strategising

involved in such work. This is not strategy with a capital 's', but rather strategy with a small

one: guides orient to the moral order of the tour and carry out processes which assist with

overall organisational aims.

A guide's moment by moment strategising can be seen to reflect and reinforce the organisation's character, which is by the same token thus both stable and yet continuously evolving. This paper makes use of the Workplace Studies approach (Luff et al., 2000), which supports this reading of the work of the guide. Conversation Analysis (Sacks, 1992a), upon which Workplace Studies are based, has forever been interested in how order is reflected and recreated through the actions of participants in that order. The value of Workplace Studies for the still growing field of Strategy as Practice is significant as it can help to make the link between micro-activities and interaction and the organisation's 'macro-order' (Samra-Fredericks, 2010; Whittington, 1996).

Indeed, findings emerge from using this approach, which admits even non-verbal participants into the analytic frame, that audience members have a significant participatory role to play, whether they speak or not. As well as the guides, audience members are also routinely oriented to the moral order of the tour and act in ways which make it more straightforward for the guide to undertake their work.

The finding that guides' work is more skilled than was previously considered has significant implications for those working as, with, or managing guides. Previous studies of guiding at most infrequently highlight the contextual challenges of the guide's work (Almagor, 1985; Cohen, 1985; Edensor, 1998; Ham and Weiler, 2002). However, here it is shown how extraordinary interactional sensitivity pervades the work of the guide as talk and actions are crafted to ensure audience engagement. Guides show an orientation to securing audience attention, perhaps because it is by securing this that they are able to inform and entertain them. Moreover, their talk and actions are often highly efficient: they structure the tour in

ways which simultaneously foster audience interest *and* encourage the audience to orient to the feature under consideration, with such skilled activity being seen throughout the data.

Some museum guides are paid educators and these findings will be appropriate for developing suitable performance measures which can be used with this group of remunerated workers, and will help to professionalise and raise the standing of this often-overlooked occupation (Tran and King, 2007). But even in the case of the many guides who are not paid, a better understanding of how to run a good tour and support from museums for guides to help them to achieve this will improve the standing of guiding. And, because of this, it should help museums to retain and motivate guides, as well as to improve their performance. Volunteers often say that they feel unconsidered and undervalued in their role (Holmes, 2006). Museums may be further aggravating the challenges that they face with retaining and motivating guides with their over-simplified perception of what a guide does. Current approaches do a disservice to the guide as they ignore the level of complexity that the role requires. Recognition of the routine challenges which guides encounter and the intrinsic skill with which they habitually tackle these challenges within the training and management of both volunteer and paid guides may help guides to feel more valued and utilised.

Audience engagement is increasingly used as a criterion upon which museums are funded and as such, guides enact strategic aims through their emergent actions. Their actions reflect and reinforce the strategies of audience engagement which contemporary museums have. In other ways, museums are very good at recognising the need to serve diverse audiences. Outreach programmes, academic lectures and activities aimed at children, all of which museums regularly provide, show how they differentiate between different stakeholders which they serve (e.g., the visitor programme at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the

Smithsonian Institute, or even in smaller museums such as 78 Derngate or Freud's House, London).

It would be advantageous for museums to extend their recognition that audiences are differentiated to their delivery of tours (Mason and McCarthy, 2006). Moreover, if they were to recognise and reflect how good practice requires guides to structure their tours around these individuals, it is likely that they would reap the rewards. Whilst this can be seen to be happening anyway in the course of tours, as per the fragments above, *because* guides are not trained to recognise this level of complexity or to harness it, they are unlikely to be engaging individual audience members, who can be seen to 'listen actively' to the best of their abilities in the course of their work. Encouraging reflexivity within the guide would enable them to change their practice in line with this knowledge. Making guides aware, through training and reflexive practice, that interaction is inherent to their role could improve their sensitivity to audiences as well as their identification with their own role.

Museums could reflect this in their guiding programmes by exploring how tours might be ongoingly personalised to engage and include diverse audiences. As museum funding is often correlated with how well museums include and engage their audience(/s) (Ciolfi, Bannon and Fermström, 2008; McPherson, 2006; Skinner, Ekelund and Jackson, 2009) they need to carry out activities which allow audiences to *feel* engaged. Moreover, effectiveness and efficacy are key performance indicators in many museums and currently, guides are not being used to their full potential (Griffin, 2008). Personalisation of tours could help to achieve this. Guided tours are often criticised for being boring and didactic by younger audiences, just as museums themselves are often perceived to be by the same group (Mason and McCarthy, 2006). This is in part likely to be because younger audiences have

emerged from an education system which is more interactive and less didactic than the typical guided tour (Buehl, 2001). Museums have become much better at seeing themselves as dialogic institutions which need to interact with their audiences (Coffee, 2007), but sadly their tours are lagging behind and need to be given the chance to catch up.

APPENDIX A

Transcription notations

A::re – colons represent an extension of the preceding sound.

Hell^o – An upwards pointing triangle represents a raise in pitch

(0.6) – numbers in brackets represents the number of seconds, or tenths of seconds of a pause

WALL – capit

als represent talk delivered at a higher volume than surrounding talk

NNnn – nodding; a capital 'N' represents an upwards nod; a lowercase 'n' represents a downward nod.

He[llo

　　[Hello – opening square brackets reflects the point at which talk begins to overlap.

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FIGURE 1

Guide:	But, he ob[viously u:sed this
John:	[oh right yep.
Guide:	technique befo:re and he did use
Lottie:	NNnnNNnn
Guide:	it in other places. -----
Guide:	as well. --------.tch

FIGURE 2

This is the: (0.8) the dining room (0.6)

and (0.2) the morning room, really. (0.8)

That bit is the extension (3.4) thh-,

you're standing in the
extension now of the house.
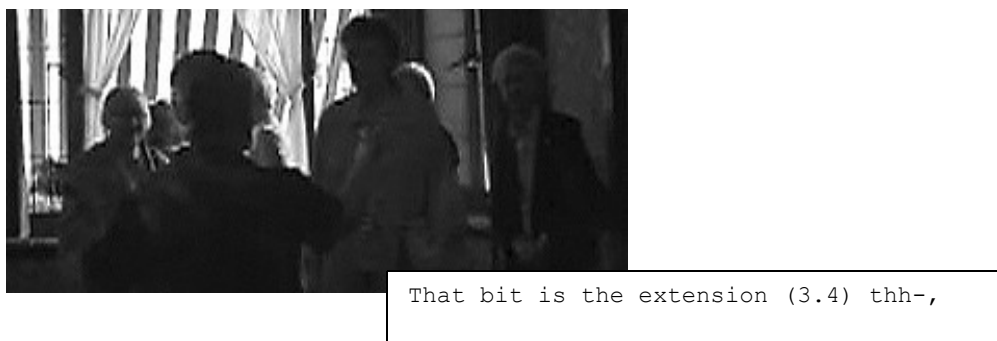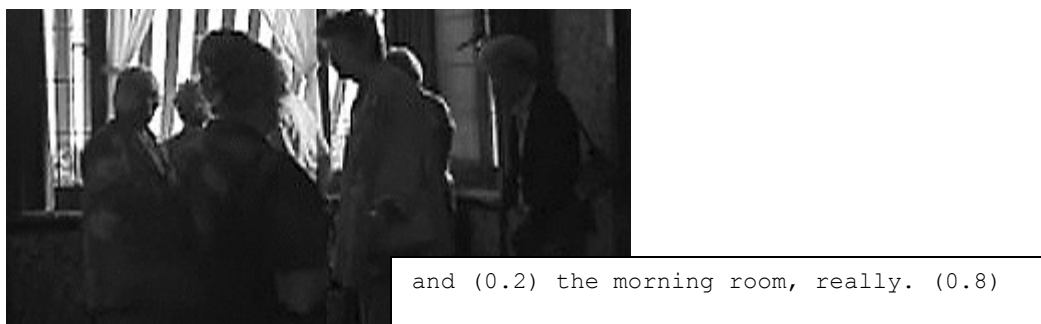
FIGURE 3

The corset that the

guide talks about

FIGURE 4

Guide: a wonderful *piece*. (0.3)

Abi Looks towards corset

Abi

Guide

Shakes head

I wouldn't like to wear it,

Looking at the left side of the audience

Guide: b[ut   it   *i*[s   [umm
Abi: [°nuh° t'eh [THANKyou [heheh

Nodding

Abi and guide look at each other

Guide: spec*tacular* (0.2)
       nonetheless.