

How Should We Label Our Magnets?

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THIS IS NOT A DEFINITIVE FINAL REPORT

FORMATIVE evaluation studies like this one often:

- **are conducted quickly**, which may mean
 - small sample sizes
 - expedited analyses
 - brief reports

- **look at an earlier version** of the exhibit/program, which may mean
 - a focus on problems and solutions, rather than successes
 - a change in form or title of the final exhibit/program

How should we label our magnets?

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Goal: Determine the best way to label our magnets so that visitors understand what they are.

Interview 1 — Straight Cow Magnets

Methods:

- Age > 5
- 3 Cow magnets — straight, cylindrical magnets. One with red & white colors, one with colors plus N & S, one with colors plus North & South
- Grab the first person who crosses a line. If in a group, take person on side nearest interviewer.
- Ask the person to hold the magnet and then ask questions.

Synopsis of Results:

- The most successful label was Red and White colors at the tips with the letters “N” and “S” written on the tips.

Questions & Results:

1. Suppose this object were part of an exhibit. What do you think the object is?

Type of Labeling	Number of Vs	Magnet/compass/magnetic	Other
Colors only	19	47%	53%
Color + N/S	29	83%	17%
Color + North/South	28	71%	29%
Total	76	70%	30%

Interview 2 — Cow Magnets inside a spinner

Methods:

- Age > 5
- 2 Cow magnets, each in a spinner. One with colors plus N & S, one with colors plus North & South.
- Grab the first person who crosses a line. If in a group, take person on side nearest interviewer.
- Ask the person to hold the magnet and then ask questions.

Synopsis of Results:

- No difference between the two types of labels.

Questions & Results:

1. Suppose this object were part of an exhibit. What do you think the object is?

Type of Labeling	Number of Vs	Magnet/compass/magnetic	Other
Color + N/S	15	80%	20%
Color + North/South	15	87%	13%
Total	30	83%	17%