

**THE MOCKINGBIRD  
BOOK OF**



**THE  
CONFERENCE**

*The “How Not To” Series is intended to help readers of all ages rapidly gain apparent mastery of hard-to-deliver business subjects. This is a work of fiction based on as many true events as we could get away with. Any resemblance to actual persons, places, businesses or events is purely fortuitous. No employees were harmed or in any way engaged in the making of this book.*

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**INVOLVE**

THE ‘HOW NOT TO’ SERIES

# THE CONFERENCE

A MOCKINGBIRD BOOK  
FOR PROFESSIONALS

Mockingbird  
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This is Simon.

Simon is a CEO.

He has a vision.

'It's simple', Simon says.



This is Anna.

Anna has concerns.

For Anna, Simon's vision will mean 4,304 PowerPoint slides, 152 spreadsheets, 8 keynote speakers, 4 guest presenters, 150 litres of coffee, 9 coordinated buffets and an arbitrary fancy dress selection.

Simple.





This is the agency.

They're running a thought shower on creative conference ideas.

By 4pm they've settled on Scratch'n'Sniff lanyards and a portable ball pond.

There is fierce debate over the tin whistle orchestra...

Anna can't help but feeling she is putting her entire career in the hands of strangers.

Mostly because she is.



After meticulous consideration 'The SLT' approves an Oak Tree as the Conference theme because it represents Organic Growth.

Jeremy points out that Oak Trees are slow growing.

"I thought we were going for rapid growth?" he asks...

...and that's how an Oak Tree became a Hybrid Poplar.



'Project Poplar' plans to shake things up invitations-wise...

This year each delegate will enjoy a personalised helium balloon bearing the joining instructions.

There is growing concern when 200 of these balloons fail to arrive by Friday.

The team decides to ignore the fact that 10% of the event budget is now floating somewhere over Milton Keynes...





Henry is completing his registration form.

He wonders how many allergies he will need to feign before he's deemed a high enough insurance-risk to miss the conference altogether.

Henry ticks wheat, lactose, sugar and sunlight intolerant.

In the short space provided for notes, he writes 'air fresheners, unfamiliar carpets and narcolepsy' for good measure.



Everyone has been asked to share 'A SURPRISING FACT' about themselves.

Andy is unsure if now is the best time to reveal that he'd faked his degree in engineering and has 'Regret Nohing' tattooed on his forearm.



Jennifer failed to see a direct correlation between abseiling and the key account management presentation but donned her hard hat all the same.

If luck was on her side she might well plummet to A&E before a full day of PowerPoint presentations began.



Melanie has a PHD in Modern European Literature; she juggles a senior position in the company with the demands of motherhood.

Melanie speaks three languages and last year ran the London Marathon in 3hrs 9mins...

Melanie has just been made to wear the 'STETSON OF SHAME' after failing to eat a Toblerone blindfolded with a knife and fork.





As Simon reaches slide 83 of the New Strategy, Michelle contemplates her role as a delegate.

Michelle is something of a philosopher.

She decides it is important for the delegate to pretend that nothing existed before the new strategy was put in place.

Especially if there was a new strategy before the new strategy.



Andy finds the 'Moving Forward' video with the accompanying 'Simply the Best' soundtrack particularly galling, given that time has clearly been moving backwards since lunch.



Tamsin takes the 'See Things in a New Way' presentation as an opportunity to see herself... living in Lake Como... with George Clooney.

Tamsin sees this, in explicit detail, for 45 minutes.

She absorbs less than 3% of the presentation but feels relatively confident that it has something to do with seeing - and newness.

In the post event survey Tamsin will give this presentation 10 out of 10.

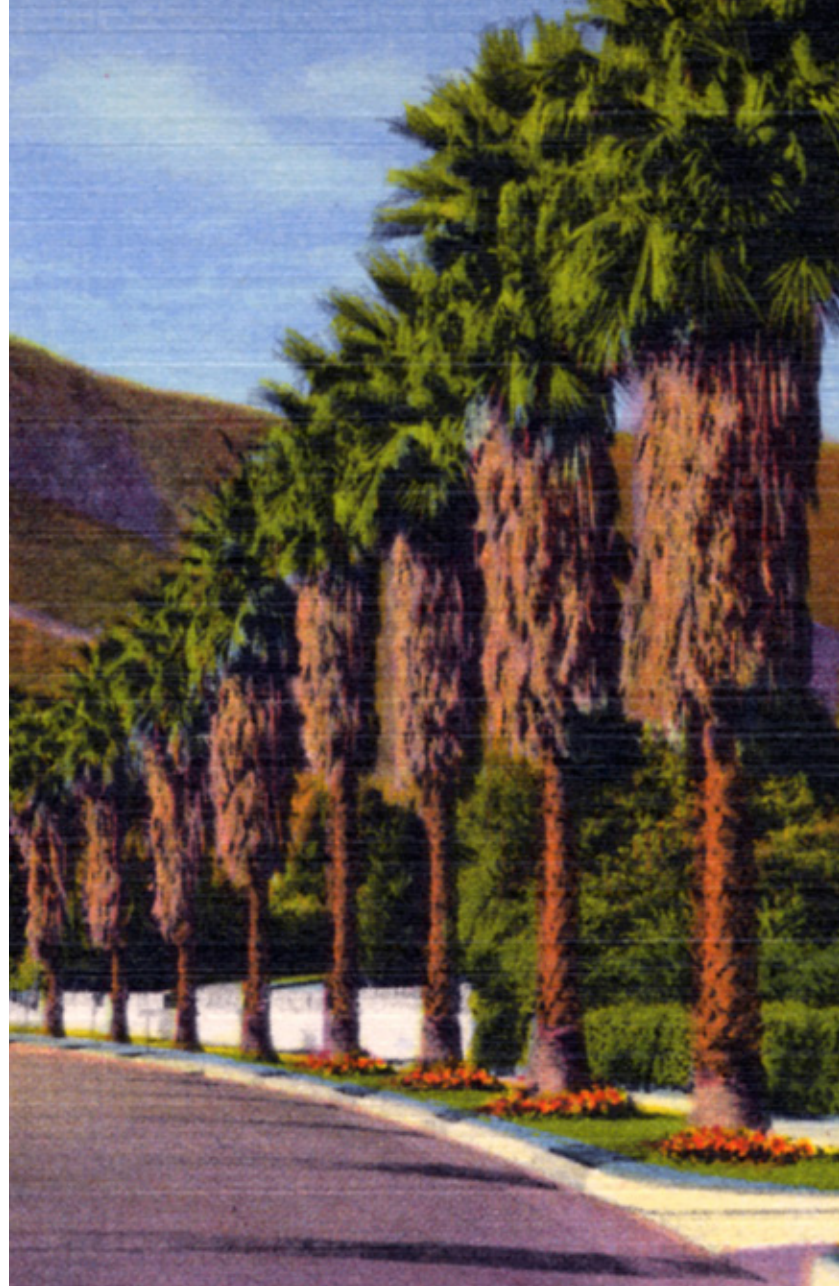




After a 2 hour presentation Henry now understands that “Hybrid Poplars are the fastest growing trees in the world”.

But now the Sales Director is talking about ‘steady sustainable growth’.

Anna is concerned things may be going Oak-shaped.





Sophie appreciates the efforts of the leadership team to 'connect' with their audience, but is finding it increasingly difficult to concentrate on next year's targets with the Financial Director dressed as Thor...



Following the 3rd guest presentation about unlocking ones potential, Rebecca hesitated before completing the 'Personal Goals' section of the questionnaire.

'Learn to pole dance' and 'Move to Vegas' looked unachievable when written down.



David works in Manufacturing. He's hoping to find new ideas to increase productivity by doing more with less.

He's now just completed a questionnaire that tells him he's more of an I.N.T.J.

David more or less doesn't give a S.H.I.T.



The Gala Awards Dinner is somewhat subdued and 3.5 hours long.

In a bid to raise morale, Simon has insisted on an award for each of the 220 delegates...

Mary's at the bar for 219 of them, but is touched and honoured to win 'Best Lunchtime Anecdote In The Over 50s Category'.





Ashley's certain he only had two drinks last night.

He is also certain he didn't order £1,120 worth of room service.

Ashley is altogether less certain why he's wearing Keith's lanyard, a pearl necklace and has woken up in an empty bath next to Thor.



Anna collates this year's feedback forms and records the various scores.

68% found the lanyards 'well measured'.

73% found the ratio of egg to cress unsatisfactory.

Anna knows better than to trust these figures, as less than 12% of the delegates bothered to fill in the feedback form.



The conference has ended.

Neil is confused.

He's unsure how to proceed, what the vision is or what the road ahead looks like.

Neil, like most of the delegates, can't see the wood for the Hybrid Poplars.





Andy is generally underwhelmed by the contents of this year's goodie bag...

He's not sure which of this year's giveaways will be less useful: The token for 15% off at Leicester Motorway Services or the framed photograph of Thursday's group Macarena.





After the conference, Simon announces that he's moving to another company and is handing over to Joe.

This is Joe.

Joe has a Vision.

"It can't be average," says Joe.



INVOLVE would like to thank our in-house team  
of authors, illustrators and contributors.

Hopefully through the merciless ribbing of the  
traditional conference format, you have been  
inspired to consider a more effective, immersive and  
involving approach at your next conference.

If so, get in touch.

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Mockingbird titles covers a wide range of business subjects and reading ages, but mainly focus on tackling passive conferences.

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