



Enhance Your Guest's Visual Experience And Enhance Your Revenue

By Mark Schmitz

The "art" of creating special human places has been around a few thousand years, but the practice has never been more important than now in the quest for the ultimate guest experience. Believe it or not, your facility is being judged by every ticket holder, vendor, maintenance worker and employee in the building. You see, the facility "experience" has become such an important part of our culture that any success you enjoy in the future depends on your creating that experience.

The next time you walk into your facility, pretend it's for the first time. What do you see? What don't you see? How do you know where to go? What does it smell

like? What sounds do you hear? How integrated is your brand identity to the space? Does the room "feel" right?

These are questions and thoughts everyone has and the answers are closer than you think.

Your facility can be an all-in-one VISUALLY INTEGRATED space with the infusion of a coordinated identity, signing and theme program.

Walking into a brand new and well-designed facility can be refreshing and uplifting, interesting, entertaining and educational. But you don't have to be "brand new" to create a brand new and integrated visual experience.

Visual brand integration is the key to success for any public facility, new or old. The integration between architecture and interior design is critical. We call it "Placemaking" and it works to bring your facility up to full utilization without spending a fortune on new construction.

How To Get Started

You want to present your guests with a visual experience that celebrates our way of living, playing, competing and of course ... buying stuff. It starts with a dynamic logo identity and builds from there.

Your logo is one of the most successful line item profit pools within your facility.



In a sports arena, it's a fingerprint to the world that thousands of people want to wear. Our culture celebrates and acknowledges sports unlike any other culture on earth. American sports fanatics live vicariously through the identity of their favorite stadium or arena. We claim it as our own. We connect to our heroes. We revel in that victorious feeling.

"Non-game day" has become the direct focus of developers, owners and facility managers. The need to create positive revenue streams on off days is critical to a sports franchise's survival. The glory of your venue's visual brand stands at the middle of that effort.

If you work within the destination resort, golf or indoor water park industries, your logo directly evokes emotions of an experience shared between guests. There is enormous power in that identity.

Developing Your Logo

1) Your logo needs to evoke an emotional response in your audience. You can carefully control that response with effective imagery and consistent frequency.

2) Keep it simple. The most effective marks are the ones that have the fewest graphic elements. Think of your logo as the period at the end of your sentence.

TAKE HOME POINTS

- *The integration between architecture and interior design works to bring your facility up to full utilization without spending a fortune on new construction.*

- *You must constantly be developing ways to "plus" your brand image. You're in the entertainment biz, right down to the soap in the soap dish.*

- *A strong interior graphic design program uses exhibits, public signage, banners, ad panels, themed concessions, landscape architecture and more to surround your guests in the revenue streams and culture you want.*



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Playing Off A 1930's Style Leather Football Helmet

For example, the newly renovated Lambeau Field is the first "retro" styled stadium designed in the NFL and the Green Bay Packers may be the only team in the NFL who could have pulled it off. The history, tradition and legend that make Packer football so special had to be graphically fulfilled throughout the \$295 million renovated stadium. Since 1919, local fan shareholders have fully owned the team. A graphic standards program was developed that sponsors had to follow in order to place their advertising in the facility. The plan called for special color pallets, typestyles and imagery that tied all sponsors to the central visual theme of the stadium. Hard nosed, leather helmet football. Looking back to the days when a torn ACL was considered a limp.

It's important to avoid "The Tradeshow Effect," where colors, messages and imagery clash like those on a tradeshow floor. Sponsors need to be convinced to follow an image plan. Having their brands associated with Green Bay Packers football in one of the most significant stadiums in professional sports is already paying off for them. The concourses, restrooms, executive offices, team spaces, restaurants and concessions all sing in visual harmony. This is the ultimate in effective visual brand symmetry.

- 3)** Your logo is only as effective as the collateral that surrounds it. Put significant thought into each application where your logo is used, including signage, stationery, your web site and apparel. A quality brand can be killed with bad detailing and inconsistent background colors and materials.
- 4)** Make sure a professional design firm develops your mark. This is critical. Yes, you do get what you pay for and a professional design firm will deliver a style and usage guide critical to any logo's ongoing success.
- 5)** Your logo is an investment, not an expense. It is often the first contact with your customer and first impressions count. With time and frequency your visual brand will pay enormous psychological and financial dividends. Be patient. The road to brand recognition is long.

Beyond The Mark

The visual sophistication of the American consumer is extremely high. You must constantly be developing ways to "plus" your brand image. You're in the entertainment biz, right down to the soap in the soap dish. Consumers are smart and their expectations are high. You must exceed their expectations at all times.

The Care And Feeding Of Your Visual Brand

Developing a graphic standards and usage program for your logo and visual collateral is critical to the success of your investment. It should go into great detail on proper usage of a logo in signage, printed materials, advertising and web animated applications, etc. There should be a section dedicated to "living the lifestyle" of the brand. Here we go beyond usage and color to educate people on what emotional stimuli should surround the mark. This is critical for the development of unique image vehicles you can use to feed your brand.

Space: Delivering The Promise

A strong interior graphic design program uses exhibits, public signage, banners, ad panels, themed concessions,



The image plan is a journey that provides a moving, dynamic, rich history ending up with an ice cold product sample in your hand.

A visual branding team can make your facility come alive with fresh approaches to living and experiencing your brand. Trust in the power of your story even if you are a start-up or don't have a 100-year history. Your story is your power and it must be put on display every chance you get from your parking lots to your executive offices. Your facility is the single greatest tool you have for success. 

Mark Schmitz is the creative director and president of ZD Studios in Madison, Wisconsin, with an aversion for signing gone wrong and unimaginative use of space. His firm has developed visual brand programs for stadiums, arenas, master planned communities, destination resorts, golf courses, professional office buildings and specialty retail. He may be contacted at mark@zebradog.com.

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