

## **Library Director's Report August 2006**

The bids that we received in late July for the **Redwood Shores Library** were substantially over the estimates / budget for the project. Since then, several things have happened:

1. The engineering staff, project architect, and the construction management consultant have analyzed the bids to ascertain why.
2. We met with San Jose's library director and construction manager to learn:
  - a. What their reactions were to the bids we received
  - b. What their experience has been with costs for similar sized library buildings (they are midway through a 10-year program to construct 20 new branch libraries)
  - c. What their recommendations to us are. They were very helpful on all counts.

Our conclusions:

- Any re-design / reduction of the facility will entail a substantial time delay while the staff, community and state library office re-process the project. We think that community reaction will be negative, given the rigorous input/outreach process that led to the approved design – and the \$10M state grant award. Additionally, the escalation of costs during that period could result in a more costly, but lesser facility.
- The CM/GC bidding format seems to be ineffective in the current construction climate, so we will re-package the bid documents and try a different approach
- A re-bid using the conventional lump-sum / general contractor format (in lieu of the modified "CM/GC" method) should bring the total construction costs in at \$15.5M vs. the earlier \$13.4M estimate, leaving a potential -\$2.1M delta in project funding. Staff will begin to identify potential sources for Council's consideration.

Staff has determined an amended schedule as follows:

Sept. 25	Council to reject all bids and direct staff to re-package and re-bid the project
Mid-Nov.	Open bids
Nov. 27	Council to consider award of low bid and additional funding allocation to project
Jan. 2007	Notice to Proceed
May 2008	Construction completed
July 2008	Branch opens

The **Fair Oaks Library** staff received ergonomic equipment as a result of a Human Resources workplace evaluation. The equipment was put in place as a preventive measure. Human Resources also did an assessment at the Schaberg Library and will be ordering ergonomic equipment for the staff.

The **Fair Oaks Library** also received two new wooden compact disc browsers to prominently display cds face-out by category, making it easier for library patrons to browse the collection.

The **Schaberg Library** received a larger 500 capacity book drop which replaces the two smaller 100 capacity book drops. The larger capacity book drop was welcomed by library customers and staff.

Library staff will participate in the **North Fair Oaks Neighborhood Festival** on September 17. We will issue library cards, story-tell on the hour and have some fun give-a-aways.

The **Downtown Library Children's Room** remodel is underway. Here is a portion of the press release:

*Every afternoon, evening, and weekend, crowds of kids, students, and families descend on the Children's Room of Redwood City's Downtown Library. This most popular and well-utilized place is now undergoing a major renovation (work began on Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup>) in order to offer a fresh, expanded space for children and families.*

*To accomplish this transition, the Children's Room will be closed to the public during construction until it's re-opening, which is anticipated for October, 2006. All children's materials will still be available, temporarily relocated to areas throughout the library. Story times and other programs continue as announced. Programs and events can be confirmed by calling 780-7017. The Redwood City Public Library would like to thank its patrons for their continuing patience and understanding during this short construction period. This temporary inconvenience will be rewarded with a wonderful new Family Place and Kids' Place which will help the Library to better serve the entire community.*

*The Family Place is being created with the infant-to-five set in mind. Carved out of the existing Children's Room, this space will cater to the needs of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers, and their families. Plans feature colorful, comfortable seating, childlike décor, expanded picture books and beginning-to-read books displayed face out, and a new programming space, all in an environment that supports the age-appropriate behavior of young children. Families will find a place to browse for books, read, and bond together in a relaxed space. The Family Place will serve as a resource for parents, caregivers, and other community-based organizations that serve young children.*

*The Kids' Place will sit adjacent to The Family Place and will be tailored to the distinct needs of elementary and middle school children. Their primary use is of the library's collection and computers. The remodeled space will hold ample tables and chairs for study, a reconfigured place for independent computer use, and more computers. The size of the room will increase to meet the demand for more books and media for all age children, and to allow for future growth of the collection.*

**Elizabeth Gomez**, a children's book illustrator and Redwood City resident, presented a proposal for a mural above the doorway in the Program Room. Every element of it incorporates books (leaves on trees, wings on birds, rooftops are all books) and it also includes the library itself. She said she would normally get \$10,000 for the 21-foot mural but that she really wanted to do something with and for the library. Chuck presented her proposal to the Cultural Commission and they were knocked out by it. They are very interested in funding the project and will formally vote on it during their Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. This would be an exciting addition to the other art piece planned on the columns in the new Children's Room.

**Bookstock II** was a crowd pleaser on the afternoon of Saturday, August 17<sup>th</sup>. The afternoon kicked into high gear on the Downtown Library's lawn area with music by the Sippy Cups, a rock band made up of moms and dads, Marcus the juggler/magician who had people in hysterics with his mix of humor and prop magic, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Dads (as of this week, the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Dads). By the end of the Sippy Cups set there were 300 in attendance and by the end of the afternoon some 400 kids and adults stopped by the library's lawn area. All afternoon long kids and parents alike stopped by the canopies where they could take part in face painting, headband making, spin art, and hair braiding. The Friends of the Library sold over \$300 worth of books and Pete Bianchi from Jazzy Dogs sold over 300 hot dogs, his best day ever anywhere.

*Thank you to all the folks who helped make the afternoon happen. Jacky and Cristina sent many kids home with their spin art creations; Diane, Jan and Caroll helped kids bedeck themselves with artfully decorated foil headbands; Project READ's Karen and her volunteers created many a colorful cheek on kids' faces with their face painting; Angela and Jelainie helped Linda(?) who volunteered her hair braiding to the great delight of many of the girls and mothers; Laura and Lee from the Friends of the Library sold over \$300 worth of books; and Pete from Jazzy Dogs satisfied everyone's munchies with his food stuffs. Thanks also to the Parks and Recreation Department for the use of its stage and canopies and to Project READ and Celia for the use of their canopies.*

The final figures from this year's **Summer Reading, Listening, Parents and Teen Clubs** are still being compiled, but preliminary figures look very good so far. There were over 2000 signups, not including the Teen Reading Club, and 50% of those signing up completed the required ten hours reading. Most sign ups and completions were at the Downtown library (1300 sign ups, 625 completions, not including the Teen Reading Club), though Fair Oaks had very respectable numbers with the whole Garfield Summer School taking part in the Reading Club. Though the figures for the Teen Reading Club are not in yet, the number of teens signed up was well over 300.

The **Homework Center** at the Downtown library opened in its new site alongside the Teen Homework Center, rather than in the Program Room. Everyone seems pleased with the arrangement with its ample space and access to computers.

Scott Bauer has been selected to be part of the Management Talent Exchange Program. Scott will be working for the City of Belmont the next three months in the Parks and Recreation Department. This is a very elite program that will allow Scott to be exposed to other departments in another city.

Mary McGrath has announced her retirement (end of October).

The coffee cart operation for the **Downtown Library Plaza** is undergoing final City review. Here is the staff report for the Architectural Review Committee:

Progressive libraries typically offer their patrons coffee, as well as other beverages and light snacks on-site. The Redwood City Library has committed to providing such enhanced services at the Downtown Redwood City library. An agreement has been established with neighboring Alana's Café (formerly Redwood Spice Co.) to operate a coffee cart at the library. The intent is to enliven the existing public space and complement the tables, chairs and built-in benches already on site. Live music events are also currently held on a daily basis every lunch hour and music is played through outdoor speakers during the remainder hours of operation.

Why a coffee cart enclosure:

Alana's has already purchased a cart, hired, and trained an operator. This specific cart model is relatively elaborate in design and features (which means that it has to be enclosed and protected when not in use). This unit is also significant in weight and size (which means that moving the unit, even inside the library, is unfeasible).

Program requirements (Alana's and Library):

- Position the coffee cart in a visible location so that it becomes an attractive focus to the existing tables and chairs already installed in the library forecourt.
- Position the coffee cart enclosure near the library entrance and adjacent to the library parking lot (located south of the library entrance) to service the most public.
- Install a roll up door to provide full public exposure and direct access to the coffee cart whose sides will also open outward.
- Design the enclosure so that the coffee cart can be operated from inside the enclosure.
- Paint highly decorative "trompe l'oeil" graphics i.e. super-realist or old fashioned type advertising) on the roll up door. The sides would also be painted using the same artistic advertising method.

Location:

Because the Library (Fire station #1 Circa 1921 building) is an historic landmark, the ordinance standards preclude blocking a head-on view to the resource. The coffee cart will be located in front of the 1989 south wing addition, away from the original building. The existing modern book drops will be relocated closer to the parking lot to make way for the

enclosure which will have an ornamental tree as a backdrop. Electrical connections have already been installed.

#### Construction

In order to accommodate the roll up door yet reduce the bulk of the coffee cart enclosure to a museum, steel was determined to be the lightest and strongest material for this use. Wood was not considered as appropriate. The enclosure was designed to be structurally attached to the existing concrete slab yet portable in the event of a relocation. The metal roll up door and metal roof would be paint grade. The sides and back of the building would be MDX paint grade.

#### Conclusion

The intent is to introduce a modern and colorful enclosure that will provide enhanced services to a very busy library. The design of the structure is unrelated in design to the historic resource, it will not be a fake replication of style. This simple yet "fun" element will be relatively modest in size so as not to impact the adjoining landmark yet will greatly enhance the street furniture and library and urban activities already in place. Once open, the focus will be the highly ornamental coffee cart and the enclosure will take second stage. The intent is to take full advantage of this unique central site and activate a relatively empty urban place.

The Library has a new **Monthly Events** newsletter, both in hardcopy and electronic. The public has given us many positive comments. We are actively expanding our email list to send out library information to the community.

A finished draft of **Technology Plan** is being presented for input to all staff. Michele Mizejewski, our new Electronic Services Specialist, has begun the process to redesign our virtual services, including our website; and creating an easy process for customers to get materials quickly and seamlessly. Magda Galindo has completed training with County Library and is ready to implement many enhancements and processes they use.

Great article on Marketing from a local company:

## **Time for Some Buzz-Kill**

**Brand and marketing gurus need to lose the jargon and get back to first principles in order to really connect with the public**

**O.K., I'm going to say some mean things here about branding and marketing. But first, a disclaimer: In the past, I have sat in front of a client -- many clients, actually -- and, in all seriousness, used words such as "marketecture," "contenterprise," and**

**"brandology."**

**I know, I know. Looking back at it all, having a clever "TM" methodology seems to me like wearing spandex or liking "nouvelle cuisine," but I get the feeling that some people are still a bit stuck in the whole '90s dot-com make-yourself-sound-clever-by-using-long-words thing. People like the whole branding and marketing industry, for example.**

**Some statistics for starters. Googling "brand" brings up 830 million hits -- with almost as many definitions, lots of them trademarked, and hardly any of which make any sense whatsoever. Brand Fingerprint. Brand Voltage. Brand Harmonization. Brand Magnetism (which, in case you're wondering, is defined as "the search for an integrating, energizing, and sustaining force that creates a common purpose within the business, and a strong affinity with customers, employees, and shareholders. Brand Magnetism is about creating a brand with the properties of an organizational magnet, where the whole business' operations and behaviors are driven by this values-based magnetism.")**

**NO NEED FOR TRICKS. Then there are the names for methods of quantifying a brand's value by giving it some kind of "score" that ranks it against the competition. These range from the sublime BDI (Brand Development Index) to the faintly ridiculous BAV (Brand Asset Valuator) which claims to "quantify your brand's meaning." Um, O.K.**

**So here's where I'm going with all of this. After all the miserable, expensive, and well-documented failures of recent years, (O.K., soda anyone? Maybe to wash down your McDonald's Arch Deluxe?) everyone knows that getting a brand right and marketing it cleverly is really hard. So maybe we don't all need to make it sound more complicated simply to justify what we do.**

**Like a lot of you, all my clients (in whatever category they're in) want to be like Mini, which burst into the automotive market -- the most crowded, cliched, and macho category out there -- and redefined it in one word: "motoring." I know it looks really smart to put up a chart with 45 words and benefits and benefits-of-the-benefits and apply some quantum physics, to "ladder" the words with a cleverly named process and make them all add up to 20. A tip: Take Blaise Pascal's quote "The present letter is a very long one, simply because I had no leisure to make it shorter," and stick it up on your wall.**

**VODAFONE'S RIGHT CALL. The hardest thing that marketers and brand managers have to do right now is simplify. Marketing and branding need to get back to first principles -- people, feelings, stories, and things. Tangible things. Not weird words. And for all of us agencies out there, we need to feel more confident that actually the best thing we can do is to tell it simply, both to the organization we're working for and ultimately to the consumer.**

I don't know about you, but I've never heard a consumer say they've been "magnetized" by anything, least of all their brand of fabric softener. On the other side of the coin, I can't help but be impressed with the simplicity, authenticity (and continuing relevance) of Dove's new campaign, which tackles head-on the fake mystique and claims of the beauty industry -- 73.7% less wrinkles! Nanocollagen! Nouveau Innovation Complexe! (That's French-beauty-speak for "New Innovation Complex," by the way.)

So, how do we get there? It's all about creating more confidence. Confidence in the fact that the insights we gather at the start of the process are robust, inspiring, and above all, true -- the days of finding clever "spin" and myth behind things are over. Case in point: Vodafone ([VOD](#)) recently launched a phone in Britain for the 50+ crowd. When target customers were interviewed, it turned out that extra-clever features and ding-dongs were a no-no -- all they wanted to was to retrieve messages easily, get to their friends' numbers quickly, and make calls. So the company launched a simple, intuitive phone, called Vodafone Simply, to great success.

**MAKING SENSE.** We need confidence in the fact that we (consultants and our clients) will find those insights together, out in the real world, not behind some one-way mirror. Next comes confidence in the fact that the solutions we develop are relevant, desirable, and tangible. And above all, confidence in our ability to articulate those unmet needs and communicate them to both the organization and the consumer in plain-speak, with no fancy terminology and silly buzzwords.

I know a lot of you out there have your "process" -- your pyramids and your positionings -- but at the end of the day, and I'm sorry to say this, they often don't make a lot of sense. A matrix of clever hybrid nouns doesn't communicate anything, it often confuses it.

And I do this stuff for a living, so heaven help the consumer. Bob Sutton in his book *Hard Facts, Dangerous Half Truths & Total Nonsense* quotes Wells Fargo ([WFC](#)) CEO Richard Kovacevich, "I could leave our strategic plan on a plane, and it wouldn't make any difference. No one could execute it. Our success has nothing to do with planning. It has to do with execution." While I agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Kovacevich, my bigger fear would be that the competition would mistake the strategy for its own because it had all the same 40 words and ambiguous terminology.

**LESSONS FROM HOME.** So try this. Buy a train ticket home for the weekend. Not your current house, but home-home, to your parents. Now sit them down at the kitchen table and, in 50 words or less, tell them what you do for a living, what product you make or sell (or if you're a consultant, what process or deliverable you sell), and what's good about it. Don't use weird words or anything with lots of syllables. Don't quit until they understand you. I told my mother once that I worked in Conceptual Marketing and I swear she thought I had joined a cult.

**Remember what you said. Now go back to work, and apply this principle to your job. Simple stories, truths well told, no made-up nomenclature and gilded lilies. It's more clever to be simple, don't forget that.**

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