



DESIGNING STRATEGIES®

Business Strategies for the Design Industry

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Our last issue of 'Designing Strategies' touched on the efforts of 84 Lumber to utilize the growing population of Hispanics in their workforce by mandating Spanish and English courses as a means to improving communications between employees. We have been hearing about the growing Hispanic population for nearly a decade. It was a constant, repetitive chant: "It is coming.

Watch for it. Get ready for it." Well, it's time to stop watching and waiting. It, that truly significant Hispanic population has arrived, in significant numbers that are affecting all levels of American business, it is now the largest minority in the United States.

Some areas of the country, notably California and Texas with their shared border with Mexico, and Florida with their significant population of Cubans, are well aware of the impact created by this influx of immigrants. These border states are not the only parts of the country with increasing Hispanic populations. Ever think of Milwaukee, Wisconsin as a Hispanic center? That upper, mid-west city has nearly 100,000 Hispanic residents now, and their number and influence are growing. It is felt that over the next three decades this growing segment of their population may be the saving grace to a city that has been facing a decreasing population trend.

It is commonly thought that this immigrant population is one of low skills and low wages, a drain on the economy of the areas they populate. Not entirely true. Many communities are finding this to not be the case. Once we begin to understand their culture and the influence they will have both politically and economically in America, we will appreciate what they bring to the table in terms of keeping America a leader in the global economy. Many cities have successful Hispanic leaders. The country now has its first Hispanic member of the Supreme Court. Forward thinking corporations are adding Hispanics to their boards.

By 2010, Hispanics are expected to have \$670,000,000 in economic clout. How is your firm planned strategically to take advantage of this population shift?

**Visualize - Analyze - Strategize.
Plan for success!**

Strategic Planning or Tactical Mediocrity?

"Strategic planning or tactical mediocrity?" Each firm has the choice." This was the eye-catching headline of an article by Scott Clark, a sales consultant from Iowa. Now, think fast. Which is your company: (a) one with management that is strategically focused, constantly thinking in a strategic mode, watching for changes and opportunities in the world around you? Or, (b) does your management team spend their time putting out fires and dealing with the tactical, day-to-day, operational issues of the business?



If your response was 'b', dealing with the operational tactics that just keep the business going, odds are that no one is strategically focused on the future of the business. Anyone devoting all of his time focused internally, dealing with inventory levels, equipment malfunctions, supplier and distribution issues, and human resources issues will be unable to focus strategically, missing the big picture so necessary for a successful and profitable future. Who is watching for opportunities on which to capitalize?

Visualize

Many firms think that they are strategically focused. After all, they schedule a planning session every year. Doesn't that make them strategically managed? Not by a long shot. Spending a day or two at a retreat and coming away with something passing for a strategic plan does not guarantee success or change the way a firm operates. If no one routinely analyzes the strengths that led you to the level of success you hold today, or the weaknesses that held you back from becoming more than an 'OK' company, why would anything change? Why should you be more successful than you already are...assuming you are successful in the first place? Do your core competencies poise you to merely maintain your position against competition, or to jump ahead when an opportunity arises? Will they help or hinder you in finding new markets, developing and introducing new products or services?

Analyze

A management team focused day in and day out on the status quo, giving attention only to immediate, short-term issues, will doom a company to stagnating at that level indefinitely. Or worse yet, they will doom the company to failure due to their inability to see or understand what is happening around them in terms of competition, or customer needs and preferences. This does not even include awareness of constant changes in the environmental, political, economic, technological and sociological spheres that make up that big world in which we strive for success.

It is imperative for the firm that dreams of success to move their management team toward strategic thinking as the first step to becoming truly strategically planned and managed. Of course, your company must deal with the day-to-day issues that keep it operating smoothly; that is essential for any company. Just be sure that internal, tactical focus does not exclude that external, big picture focus critical for a strategic approach to success.

Strategize

Maurer On The Move

In every issue we'll update the **Maurer On The Move** calendar so you can keep track of Terri and know when she'll be in your area. Below are listed Terri's scheduled speaking engagements for 2005 thus far. If you have questions regarding a particular event or topic to be presented, please don't hesitate to email Terri at tmaurer@juno.com.

February 25th ASID Design Interaction Day Muncie, IN	March 18th ASID Conference Interiors '05 San Diego, CA	November 1st Boston, MA
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Know Where You're Going...

"If a window of opportunity appears, don't pull down the shade."

Tom Peters

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