



DESIGNING STRATEGIES®

Business Strategies for the Design Industry

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If you don't think that you can predict the future without a crystal ball, think again. Taking time to visualize, analyze and strategize will give you more control of the future and your success than you might imagine.

At 17 component plants, divisions of the 84 Lumber Company, employees have begun participating in mandated Spanish classes. They have been hearing about the Browning of America for a number of years. Statistics show a significant and steady growth in the number of Hispanics entering the American workforce. About 40% of their current employees across the nation are Hispanic. To help their English-speaking employees prepare for better communication with Spanish-speaking employees and vice versa, the company now offers both Spanish and English as a Second Language classes free to employees.

Their strategy is not only to help today's employees communicate better, but to give them skills to help them attain promotions in the future. They visualize today's employees as tomorrow's bi-lingual leaders. Classes are free for employees at both plant employee and management levels and meet two hours a week for 10 weeks. The curriculum is aimed at workers in the construction industry and the vocabulary they need to communicate in their specific business. 84 Lumber is controlling their future.

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

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 the thus far scheduled dates and locations for the presentation, "Branding - It's Not Just For Big Corporations & Cattle Anymore". Questions? Contact MCG at tmaurer@juno.com.

February 2005

Muncie, Indiana

March 2005

San Diego, California

ASID Conference: Interiors '05

Technology More To Blame Than Outsourcing

Thankfully we have lived through the turmoil of our national election process. This was arguably the most divisive battle for leadership of the free world that we have experienced in our lifetime. One of the many hot issues throughout the campaign was that of businesses outsourcing American jobs to other countries. Interestingly enough, statistics show that advancements in technology are responsible for far more lost positions than job outsourcing and off-shoring.



Baby Boomers Leaving Workforce

Note that back in the 1970s, our workforce grew by a whopping 30%. By the 1990s, that growth had slowed to only 12%. It is forecast that in the next two decades we will be lucky to see a 2-3% workforce growth. The reasons are pretty basic. We are on the leading edge of retirement for the enormous Baby Boomer population. There simply will not be enough members of Generations X, Y and Z to take up the slack. Not only will it be difficult to fill open positions, but we will also be seeing a massive 'brain drain' of corporate intelligence as our Boomer employees depart, taking with them decades of experiences and knowledge.

Analyzing The Situation

An important component of planning strategically for your firm is working through a situational analysis. Do you remember that rogue, Fagin, in the musical "Oliver", "reviewing the situation" as he considered options for turning from his life as a villain to a more respectable way of life? He weighed in all of his options including marriage, an honest job, even owning his own business. This was his own way of analyzing his strengths and weaknesses based on his past and his 'skills', as well as considering opportunities and threats coming at him from outside his present circumstances. Simply put, Fagin performed his own version of a situational analysis.

Have A Plan Of Attack

So, how do you plan to deal with the workforce shortage that is bearing down on us? How have you planned to capture your corporate intelligence before it is lost? How do you envision these factors impacting your operations over the next two decades? Have you given it any thought at all? The benefit of planning strategically is that you can take a look at what is happening in the world, consider how it might impact your business, and create a plan of attack to deal with it all. Don't just sit around and wait to see what happens. Plan for your future success now and avoid being waylaid by the obstacles.

Visualize

Analyze

Strategize

Know Where You're Going...

"If you don't know where you're going, you'll end up somewhere else."

Yogi Bera

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