



DESIGN IS GOOD BUSINESS

It doesn't just add value; it multiplies it.



Design is Good Business Firm Toolkit | Blank DIGB PDF Template

Your building can do much more than keep the rain off your business; it can advance your business plan. To capture the full value of your capital program, you will do well to engage your architect in a discussion of your business goals, with your business leaders.

Being a Successful Client: Bringing Vision and Knowledge to the Table

In an earlier installment of Design Is Good Business, we discussed the importance of educating your architect not only about your known needs for new or improved space, but also about your business goals and methods. As we noted there, "How you develop talent, how your staff collaborate with one another, how you introduce yourself to clients and customers—these and innumerable other business activities are profoundly affected by the shape and character of your building. The better the architect understands where you're headed, the more your building will help you get there."

The architect needs to understand your vision. In turn, the

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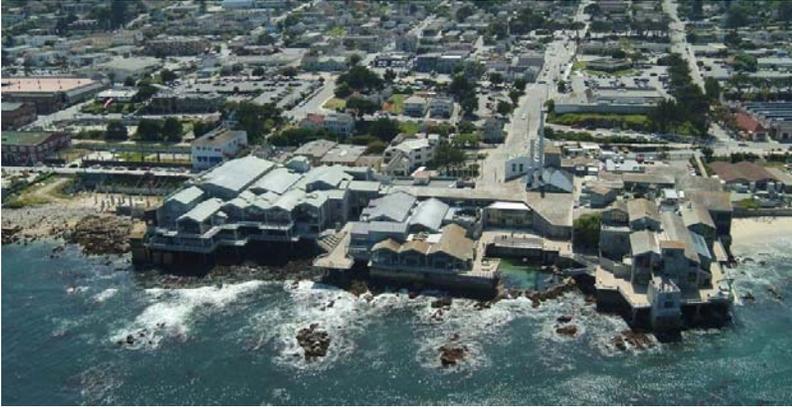
keepers of your vision—the leaders of your business or organization—need to be at the table throughout the design and construction process. Handing off responsibility for approving design decisions to a project manager who is responsible only for budget and schedule may appear to streamline the process, but it in fact impedes the communication of goals and the means for their realization. The best buildings are invariably the ones founded on a close partnership between the visionary leadership and the architect.

A good example is the Monterey Bay Aquarium. The client—the Aquarium's founder and funder—was David Packard of Hewlett Packard; the architect was Chuck Davis, FAIA, of Esherick Homsey Dodge & Davis (EHDD). Davis set up an office at the site, and he and Packard met there weekly throughout design and construction. Packard, his wife Lucille, and their two daughters—both marine biologists, one of whom became and remains the Aquarium's director—were tough, inquiring clients who challenged Davis to do his best work, while Davis, in turn, challenged the Packards to imagine new possibilities for this building type. The result was not merely a container for an existing program, but also innovations in visitor experience and technical processes that make the Aquarium a world leader and a beloved destination for two million visitors a year.

Just as the architect needs to understand your vision, she also needs to incorporate your knowledge of what makes your organization "go"—and that knowledge is shared across your staff. For example, a complex facility like a hospital runs on the combined expertise not only of physicians but also of nurses, social workers, and administrative and maintenance staff. Bringing representatives of each knowledge-bearing group into the design conversation will help to streamline your operations and create a more productive and cost-effective building.

Don't shortchange yourself. Bring the people with the vision and the knowledge to the table.

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2011 AIACC 25-Year Award Winner, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Monterey, CA, EHDD. A light-filled ensemble of diverse spaces, unique among aquaria in its interweaving of indoors and out. Photo by Steve Proehl.

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