In addition to this online publication, The Expo Book is available in print in issues of Inside Parks & Museums (IPM) Magazine. To request a hard copy, send an email to editor@InParkMagazine.com.
This much-needed business guide is intended to assist those who are involved in, or considering becoming involved in, a modern world expo – whether as host, organizer, promoter, participant, sponsor, concessionaire, designer or contractor. THE EXPO BOOK provides useful information, guidelines, illustrations, facts and figures and relevant examples, gained through the authors’ decades of experience advising the organizers of world expositions, Olympic Games and other mega-events. It is appearing in six consecutive installments between November 2007 and November 2008, in IPM magazine and online at www.TheExpoBook.com.

**Note from the Authors**

Up to this point, in the first three chapters of The Expo Book, we’ve been speaking primarily to expo organizers, addressing the issues of getting an expo conceIVED, pitched, planned and underway. Now, we widen the focus. The following segment by Bob Rogers (president, BRC Imagination Arts), a celebrated designer and leader in the expo field, is an insightful contribution about the business of realizing a great expo pavilion that tells your story, conveys your message and makes the most of your investment. It will be of use to all participants creating pavilions - including the organizers’ theme pavilions as well as those of the individual exhibitors: corporations, countries, NGOs, etc. Here is Part I: Getting Started. Part II: Choosing a Producer will be published in Chapter Five and Part III: How Not to Go Over Budget will be published in Chapter Six.

**A Design Primer for Expo Pavilion sponsors**

by Bob Rogers and the professional staff of BRC Imagination Arts, Burbank, California; the Netherlands; and the United Kingdom

**Part I: Getting Started**

Over the last quarter century, too many Expo pavilions have left their audience dazzled, but ultimately empty. At an Expo, the world community spends a billions dollars, more or less, and uses the most advanced and powerful communications technology in the history of our planet – and what message is conveyed? Far too many pavilions amount to elegant shells: multi-story, abstract sculptures. The exhibitors go for architectural art or flashy presentation technology at the expense of content, and thereby forfeit the opportunity to say anything.

**Question:** Why do some pavilions have a message and others do not? Answer: It’s very hard to say something worthwhile and to say it in an entertaining, moving way. It is hard to get all your pavilion committees and designers to agree on a single, meaningful, focused, understandable, achievable objective. During the development period of a pavilion, it is always much easier to discuss presentation technologies and formats, or architecture, or the furniture for the VIP lounge. In the rush to design and build a world expo pavilion, it is always easier to discuss things rather than ideas.

**So how can the problem be approached?** By what test can the pavilion design committee know if their pavilion is on the right track?

**Behind Every Great Guest Experience, There Are Facilities**

There is a framework of facilities and support services essential to supporting efficient operations and delivering a positive guest experience at an expo. Defining and locating these facilities is a key part of master-planning the site. This step integrates the vital elements of public safety and comfort into the site, and how well it is accomplished will greatly affect how the public perceives the expo. In addition to their practical functions, the components –buildings, roads, utilities, kiosks and so forth – must follow a coherent design and wayfinding scheme that establish the character and culture of the guest environment, and visually and physically knit the site together. This is essential to a world expo because the individual pavilions and other structures are quite different from the built environment that people experience in cities. In order to fully appreciate all of the experiences the expo offers, visitors require a navigable, accessible site, devoid of conflicts with service and operations activities.

**Food, Beverage & Retail**

Food and beverage services are an important component of the visitor experience and represent a major source of income for expo organizers via rental fees, service charges, and commissions collected from concessionaires who will equip, furnish, and operate them; many pavilions will also offer food and beverage services. These facilities need to be located adjacent to main pedestrian walkways, with the possible exception of full service restaurants on unique sites (e.g. an observation tower or inside a pavilion). A modular building system can be utilized to accommodate different sizes. Some concessionaires may wish to develop their own structures.

Mobile food carts provide flexible responsiveness to crowd size and distribution, and peak demand times. Visitor services,Lost & Found, Etc.

Mobile food carts provide flexible responsiveness to crowd size and distribution, and peak demand times. Visitor services, such as Lost & Found, etc., are important additions. Visitor services should be located nearby. Mobile food carts provide flexible responsiveness to crowd size and distribution, and peak demand times. Visitor services, such as Lost & Found, etc., are important additions. Visitor services should be located nearby.
A common error (to be avoided) is to underestimate the women’s facilities. Adequate water and sanitary sewer capacity must be provided; drinking fountains should be located nearby.

The Lost & Found will collect, identify, tag, and return lost items: cameras, handbags, mobile phones, keys, eyeglasses, etc. Outfit it with storage bins and cabinets, and locate it near the main gate. (In many cases, people pass through the turnstiles, exiting before they realize they left an item behind.)

The Lost Children facility will temporarily accommodate small children who have become separated from their parents. It operates in conjunction with the auxiliary security facility and should be centrally located. Provide a friendly environment with toys, games and restrooms.

I offer four suggestions:

► Define your Objective

"If you’re not sure where you’re going, you’re liable to end up someplace else," said educator Robert F. Mager. To that I’d add: "If you don’t know why you’re going, perhaps the trip is unnecessary."

So, define your objective -- whether it is to educate, to inspire, to sell a product, to advance a political or social concept, or to promote regional tourism or a local economy. And define it in terms that will later allow you to test your achievement. Avoid generalities.

In the early days of working on one of our Expo pavilions, I asked members of the sponsor’s steering committee to tell me how they would know if their pavilion was a success. After an embarrassed pause, someone said three things would mark its success: Everyone who came to Expo would want to visit this pavilion, it would have the longest line, and all the newspapers would write about it. And one more bonus: It will cost less than will be spent by most other pavilions.

"Oh, no," they said. "That will never do.”

"Why not?"

As they answered that question, out came insights into their real objective. The meeting then became productive.

You should formulate a clear and simple objective statement before designing anything, before discussing the presentation technology and before discussing the architecture.

► Design from the Inside Out

Anyone who has ever helped create a pavilion has heard this: "We don’t have time to discuss the content. The press announcement is in three weeks, and we need a name, a logo and an architectural model for the newspapers to photograph. We have to get the architect going. We’ll discuss the content later.”

Or how about this: "We don’t know what the pavilion is about yet, but we just saw a demonstration of the XYZ technology and we loved it, so it’s all settled. The architect has the XYZ manufacturer’s specifications so he’s designing the building around it. Any ideas what to do with it?" (Would you select a tool from your toolbox before you knew what the task was?)

And, of course, the ever popular: “I know how to get things started! Let’s contact a bunch of architectural firms and have a contest. Let them all submit ideas and we’ll build the winner.”

The above approaches will all start you moving toward an empty-headed pavilion.

There is a better way: Design from the inside out. Start inside - way inside - with the heart. How do you want to change the way people feel about your subject? (This is the theme.) Next, write a clear objective statement. Then give the presentation designer a three-to-five month head start over the architect. In other words, develop the content first. After that, select the best presentation technique, then the equipment. Next design the interior schematics. Create the exterior design last; wrapping it around the content. The plan evolves from the inside out. Make sure form follows function.

Locate public phones/Internet near main public walkways, within view. For servicing and to minimize development costs, place them near main utilities corridors. Increasingly, visitors desire access to wireless service and electrical outlets for their laptops and other devices.

Info Kiosks, ATM & Post Office

Information kiosks should be located inside each gate area, adjacent to main public pathways. There should also be one kiosk located in or near the main public plaza at the physical center of the site. They should be of modular design and easy to see and identify. Each kiosk should be equipped with a device for internal expo communications.

ATMs should be near the entrance gates and near areas where cash is utilized, such as merchandise and food areas. These facilities will be owned and operated by a sponsoring bank.

Dedicated electrical power and data communications lines are required.

The main postal facility should be near the main gate, and should include a display and sales area for special Expo stamps and coins. Locate mailboxes around the site, especially near shops.

Security, Emergency & Fire Facilities

A centrally located facility for auxiliary security and emergency services provides the necessary first-response capability for security and fire and life safety at the expo. It is supported by a main facility on the perimeter. There must be good access between the two, and both must communicate directly with corresponding facilities in the host city.

The auxiliary facility should incorporate a small security office, a basic first aid setup and cots. A screened parking area should accommodate mini-
amusements as well as small, electrically powered (i.e. quiet, exhaust-free) vehicles to convey operations personnel around the site. The design of this facility should be such that the general public cannot have direct access, entering via a reception area. The Lost Children facility can be adjoining.

The main security and emergency medical facility holds administrative offices and activities for the corresponding departments. It is not accessible to the general public. It provides support to the auxiliary facility that is the first point of public contact. Its perimeter location gives emergency vehicles direct access to public streets through designated fire lanes. A small, secured area should be provided for the temporary confinement of persons detained by security. The medical treatment center should be similar to that in a full-service hospital, with sufficient parking. Emergency services should be utilitarian design. They include: warehouse and distribution, main security and emergency medical facilities, Fire Department, solid waste removal, parking (on-site, restricted access), staff gates and rest areas, Fire, Police, and Ambulance emergency entrances, service roads, and emergency exit gates (disaster control/site evacuation).

The warehouse and distribution facility provides a central point for the receipt of goods and services for the expo and its participants including the international, corporate, and government exhibitors and the concessionaires. The facility permits secure storage of goods for the duration of the event and facilitates timely dispatch of supplies.

For reasons of control and security, the warehouse and storage area should be located somewhat independently of other functions. It should adjoin a major street for ease of access by delivery trucks, and there should be good access between the warehouse and storage area and the various functions on the expo grounds, via service roads. Because the international participants will import some goods and materials, there will be a need for a national government customs office function as well as a bonded warehouse.

In the interest of public health and the clean appearance of the expo grounds, it is essential to collect and transport the high volumes of refuse that will be generated daily; there are numerous opportunities for recycling of materials and these can be realized through provision of appropriate collection points throughout the site for paper, plastic, etc. Related administrative functions and the equipment yard can be adjacent to or in the warehouse. Small refuse storage facilities should be provided at all pavilions, but not necessary, generated, such as restaurants. Compaction reinforces the theme. (A machine should have no unnecessary parts.)

This idea is a hard taskmaster, but it will keep you on the straight and narrow. It won’t let you hide behind the abstract or purely artistic value of your designs. It forces you to take a stand with every detail. It won’t let your pavilion dance all over a subject without ever making a point, the way a theme park will. A World Expo is like a magazine; it is today and now. The stories and ideas in a theme park operate for a decade or more. Here’s just one example: To reduce operating costs over a 10-year run, a theme park might invest in automating more elements while avoiding offerings that are labor-intensive; whereas in the six-month run of an Expo, it might make more sense to use more labor and less automation. Issues like this can have a big, positive impact on the personality of your pavilion.

A World Expo is a Unique Art Form

At the start of conceptual planning for an Expo pavilion, it is useful to borrow ideas and people from closely related industries. These usually include theme parks, trade shows, advertising and events. But as you begin working with people and ideas from these industries, do not make the mistake of assuming those industries or professionals understand the important differences between their industry and yours. There is a World Expo pavilion is its own unique art form. Here are some tips for adapting ideas and experience to world expositions.

I. Unlike a Theme Park

A theme park is like a textbook: It must stand the test of time. The stories and ideas in a theme park must remain current for at least 10 years, maybe 20 years with no changes. This makes a big difference in the kinds of subjects and stories that can be portrayed in a theme park. It is very hard to present “the future” in a theme park because our ideas of the future will change a lot in 10 or 20 years, but in a theme park, there will usually not be a budget to change the presentation. This also applies to contemporary design styles, music, issues, etc. As a result, the best theme park people try to limit themselves to ideas that will endure. By comparison, a World Expo is like a magazine; it is today and now. A world’s fair must stand for a very short period of time – six months to be exact. This means you can use subjects and ideas at an Expo which date quickly. You can be extremely current and “of the moment.” At an Expo you can embrace today’s styles, today’s issues and today’s notions of the future because you only have to be current for six months.

A theme park is year-round and forever, whereas an Expo is generally held only in the summer months and only for six months. This means you can commit to technologies and operating costs for a six-month run that you would never consider in a project that will operate for a decade or more. Here’s just one example: To reduce operating costs over a 10-year run, a theme park might invest in automating more elements while avoiding offerings that are labor-intensive, whereas in the six-month run of an Expo, it might make more sense to use more labor and less automation. Issues like this can have a big, positive impact on the personality of your pavilion.

At a theme park, your pavilion’s attendance will rise for the first two hours of the day, stay strong until 3pm or thereabouts and then gradually go down. But at an Expo, if you are one of the bigger pavilions, your attendance demand curve could be a square wave. You’ll be jammed, running at full capacity every hour of the day. It is exhausting.

Relationship Management - Individual attractions within a theme park have almost no relationship management requirements. By comparison, each major pavilion in an Expo will need a substantial relationship management and business hospitality department to receive, care for and escort VIP’s and high level guests. By relationship management, we mean the team of professionals who build and maintain relationships with other pavilions at the Expo and take care of your VIP guests. For example, this might include dealers, suppliers, employees, unions, government regulators, distributors, “fleets” customers/large users, the media, stock market analysts, and more. If you are a country, the list may include travel and tour operators, VIPs from the travel and convention industry, industrial developers, etc.

1Sometimes this effort is called Protocol. This comes not from protocol as used in computer systems, but rather protocol as used in international diplomacy.
ever. These professionals greet and guide your most important VIP visitors in many ways:

► In some cases, you will be conducting serious business and need high-level relationship management in your Expo VIP lounge. That kind of activity might never take place in a theme park attraction. To take advantage of this opportunity, you need a substantial service, hospitality and Relationship Management staff, all of whom are highly trained representatives, broadly knowledgeable of your business.

► A successful Expo is a three- to six-month party, and you will want to share it every day. Your relationship management/hospitality team will be arranging big and small events at the Expo for the business partners and customers important to you.

► Another major Relationship Management activity in an Expo pavilion is arranging “Easy Access” itineraries for VIP visitors. This is a personalized tour schedule of back-door appointments at other pavilions, so that your visitors can access those pavilions without waiting in line. Trading such favors between pavilions is a big activity in your relationship management staff. Your staff will be constantly calling other pavilions and those other pavilions will be calling you to arrange Easy Access for their guests. Each VIP will have different preferences and, therefore, different schedules, so no two Easy Access itineraries will be alike. In most cases, you will give your VIP’s an Easy Access itinerary to follow on their own, but in a few cases you will send one of your relationship management people to accompany them. Easy Access is a huge amount of work. If you are lucky enough to have a popular pavilion, the other pavilions will be eager to trade favors with you so your Easy Access program will be bigger in both directions.

► In order to do all of the above, a tremendous amount of time will need to be spent building and maintaining relationships between your relationship management staff, the relationship management staff of other pavilions and the staff of the Expo.

► In a theme park, all of the attractions are under common ownership, so cooperation and shared resources are normal in a theme park, but not at an Expo. Instead, there is often conflict. At an Expo, every pavilion is on its own. Each pavilion must maintain its own complete staff and payroll system. Each battles against its neighbors and the Expo for publicity, attendance, visibility, employees and more. Finally because the Expo is only for three to six months, every pavilion tries to break the rules regarding boundaries, infrastructure, building heights, permission to sell merchandise, where to build, etc. It is a passive-aggressive war zone.

► The stakes are higher at an Expo than at a theme park. The sponsor of an attraction in a theme park typically pays a sponsorship fee of anywhere from 10% to 35% of the actual costs of building, producing and operating the attraction over the duration of the sponsorship. In contrast, the sponsor of an Expo pavilion pays 100%.

► The value must be recovered quickly. The sponsor of an attraction at a theme park expects to justify their investment over the period of the sponsorship agreement usually - three, five or 10 years. In contrast, the sponsor of an Expo pavilion must justify the entire expense of construction, production, operation and eventual demolition, based on the value generated in only a three- to six-month run. This puts tremendous pressure on the Expo pavilion to rapidly generate value for its sponsor. A key to your later claims of success will be your ability to document and measure the value generated for the sponsoring organization (your country, province, city or corporation). The best advice is to start now. At the beginning of pavilion design, start thinking through and planning the end-of-project documentation, presentation and information campaign that will prove to upper management, your future employers, your grandchildren, etc., the value of your pavilion. The usual formats are reports, surveys, etc. A published glossy photo book is a great idea. Reports, books, and other career-building documentation require planning and 아직, and never your reputation and the survival of your career and reputation depend on it. (Here’s one example: At no extra cost, our company, BRC Imaginary Arts, usually creates an exciting high-energy video minutes of each of the pavilions we create. Then BRC gives portfolio copies of the video to the sponsor and pavilion staff.) One way or another, you need to start documenting your success starting at the beginning of design.

► Your identity is at stake - At a theme park, sponsors are often only sponsors presenting the following mixed metaphor is at once inappropriate and instructive. If the rents from an apartment building were 1/10th of the value of the building you would have an invest-ment payout of 10 to 1. Not bad for an apartment building. A venture capitalist looking at a higher risk investment might want the possibility of recovering their investment in four or five years – a 5 to 1 or 4 to 1 ratio. An Expo pavilion isn’t looking for a cash return, but whatever return they are hoping for has to come out in only six months – a ratio of 1 to 1½. In other words, faster than just about anything else.
the organizers can operate the amusements themselves. The area should be a fairly compact, somewhat independent zone since it generates noise and has high levels of illumination which can clash with the international and corporate pavilion areas. Nevertheless, it should be readily accessible and highly visible. This area requires a substantial and reliable power supply, as well as a good water supply for daily cleanup.

As the expo visitors will include many family groups, it is important to provide a safe and well-supervised play area for small children, with qualified child-care staff. This service is a potential revenue-generator. Locate it in a transitional zone between the amusement area and the exhibition areas, with restrooms and drinking fountains nearby.

A diverse cultural and entertainment program is an important dimension of an expo that helps generate repeat visitation and some revenue. Indoor and outdoor facilities, appropriately designed and equipped, are needed to accommodate shows, plays, concerts, and other circulations made by various groups from the participating entities (countries, companies, and governmental entities) as well as other entertainers. Typically, open-air performances are free to visitors, while the events in the enclosed facilities are presented on a paid ticket basis. Since the larger facilities accommodate significant crowds, they should be located in conjunction with public restrooms and food and beverage outlets. Open-air venues should be near main public walkways, where they are easily seen.

**Pedestrian Paths & Internal Transportation**

The largest land area at the expo is typically the open space and pedestrian circulation network linking all the major public activity and service areas. In addition to pathways, open areas are needed for rest and relaxation, outdoor consumption of food and beverages, passive enjoyment of scenery, street entertainment and emergency evacuation corridors. The open space and circulation areas should provide convenient, safe access for large groups of pedestrians. Landscaping such as small gardens, fountains, pools, etc. should be interspersed, enhancing the experience of traversing the site.

Pedestrian circulation should serve all age and population groups and therefore, it will be desirable to achieve a smooth progression throughout the site, if possible without stairs or elevators. The network should permit continuous circulation, without dead-end corridors or abrupt transitions. Landscaped areas should be easily accessible via service roads for maintenance.

There are several forms of internal transport which, depending upon a variety of factors – such as site size, configuration and cost – may be utilized to transport visitors around the site as an alternative to walking. These include skywalks, monorails, trams, and small vans and buses. Some of these forms of transportation provide views of the site and environs not possible on foot. The routes should provide access to and from the various entry gates with convenient stops at various points of interest. They should not interfere with normal pedestrian circulation. Adequate electrical power and backup systems for vehicles which are not self-powered are required. Also, emergency access and egress should be thoroughly studied to ensure that, in the event of a breakdown, passengers can be safely removed from the vehicles. Control of other activities at the expo are not affected.

**II. Not Like a Trade Show**

**A. Trade Show**

A trade show receives a highly "qualified" guest. For example, at a car show, you know that every guest or someone in their immediate party is either a car nut or they intend to buy a car within six months. Or they are part of the automotive trade media. Nobody else goes to a car show. Most of the guests are shopping. By comparison, most Expo visitors may care nothing about your product or your region and may not intend to buy or visit for years. That is a very different guest with a very different mindset.

**B. At a trade show, guests expect to see exhibits that are highly commercial and very product-focused.** If an Expo pavilion did the same, guests would find it offensive. Guests expect an Expo pavilion to give a relatively low-commercial presentation as their main show.

**C. The shorter duration of a trade show allows you to use exhibits and technologies that would fall apart in an Expo. A trade show operates 8 hours a day for a maximum of three to seven days. An Expo operates 12 or 15 hours a day for three to six months.** A trade show booth might serve 1,000 to 10,000 guests in its entire run, whereas an Expo pavilion may do 2,000,000 or more.
Accommodations, Preview Center & Flag Plaza
The management and staff of the various exhibitors, participants, and sponsors involved in the expo will require a variety of accommodations in the host city both prior to and during the event. It is anticipated that the required accommodations will be found in the various housing resources available including hotels, apartments, private homes, etc. The primary responsibility of the organizers in this regard is to facilitate the matching of requirements with available resources through existing hotel associations, rental agencies, etc. A hotel on or near the site of the exposition can be a convenient asset, although the expo-generated demand shouldn’t be the basis for building a new one unless long term demand is forecast.

Apart from the offices required for expo personnel to perform their functions, two facilities are needed: A Preview Center and a Flag Plaza. Both can be incorporated into the final site layout, but should permit easy access during the period prior to the event. The Preview Center is used by the expo to entertain VIPs, sponsors, prospective exhibitors and the public to explain the vision of the expo. It can include a model of the site, an audiovisual presentation, and displays concerning various aspects of the expo. There can also be a small merchandise sales area for advance sale of T-shirts, posters, keychains and the like. The Flag Plaza accommodates ceremonies connected to the participation of individual countries. Traditionally, as a country announces its participation, a formal ceremony is held and that country’s flag is added to the flag plaza.

Off-site Facilities
These are several off-site facilities needed in the host city, especially prior to opening. A VIP lounge may be developed in key locations, such as at the city airport or as part of the expo organization’s offices prior to moving to the site and will accommodate visiting dignitaries and representatives of exhibiting countries and corporations. Existing visitor information centers, ticket offices and other appropriate locations should be adapted to provide the expo both prior to and during the event through the use of graphics and banners to residents and tourists alike.

The visitor experience will be enhanced through the careful, selective adaptation of transitional areas outside the expo perimeter. This adaptation, through the use of banners, graphics, information kiosks and the like, can establish and extend the sense of celebration and festivity to visitors on their way to and from the event. Care should be taken to manage these transitional areas in order to ensure that they are safe and that undesirable activities are minimized. Undesirable activities may include the sale of unauthorized (i.e. unlicensed) merchandise, the offering of food and beverages from carts, trucks and other temporary structures, the establishment of campgrounds, the use of vacant lots and parcels for temporary parking, etc.

Expo Architecture and the Guest Experience
Most books about world expos are picture books packed with images of spectacular, colorful and unique structures - some of which are elegant, and others downright eccentric and quirky. That expo buildings are different from “typical” buildings is obvious, but underlying the spectacle are several important functions which the architecture at expo fulfills in terms of the visitor experience.

The first thing that architecture at an expo seeks to do is to make a building stand out from the others in the environment, to make it unique, memorable and recognizable. An Expo pavilion must almost always be mainstream and represent the public separately likes, such as a superstar, a sport, etc. But in an Expo, the sponsor must create the thing the public likes. As a general rule, ad agencies do not know how to do Expos. They don’t know how to design them, produce them, operate them or bill for them. The creative people at ad agencies know all about conceptualizing and producing conventional one-screen two-dimensional media, but not about how to design or deliver systems designed to keep that media running for a three- to six-month period.

Unlike most advertising venues, the delivery technology is a critical element that your Expo producer must design and deliver. Your pavilion staff must keep it working. If a key piece of equipment in your Expo pavilion breaks or shuts down for some reason, your entire pavilion is closed. Only companies with tremendous Expo experience will be sensitive to this issue. Most ad agencies have never provided or maintained the hardware that plays their media.

IV. Different From an Event
(Olympics, Concert Tour, etc.)

When you sponsor an event, the event itself is the main interest. As the sponsor of an event, you are trying to associate your brand with the thing the public separately likes, such as a superstar, a sport, etc. But in an Expo, the sponsor must create the thing the public likes.

Most advertisements are interruption-based. The viewer was trying to see something else (a show, game or website that they were personally interested in, but which had nothing to do with your product or brand). Or they are driving the highway and your sign interrupts the scenery. Ads are interruptions of the guest’s main interest. As the sponsor of an event, you must keep it working. If a key piece of equipment in your Expo pavilion breaks or shuts down for some reason, your entire pavilion is closed. Only companies with tremendous Expo experience will be sensitive to this issue. Most ad agencies have never provided or maintained the hardware that plays their media.

More time causes a completely different psychological communications structure. A television commercial is a 30-second interruption. A visit to an Expo pavilion is a 30-minute immersion in the values of the brand. Or longer! A television commercial is something to be skipped via TiVO or by running to the kitchen to get something to eat. But an Expo pavilion is the thing you waited in line to see. This makes a huge difference in the mindset of the guest. Your television advertising is an invasion into the consumer’s home, but at an Expo, you are welcoming the consumer into your home. The potential consumer is a guest in your house. They have come to see you. And once inside, you have the guest’s complete attention for 30 minutes or longer. By comparison, their minds and hearts are open at an Expo. But if you are too commercial, their minds and hearts will close.

In an ad, you can be unabashedly self-promotional, but at an Expo, you’re expected to rise above that in an inspiring way.

An ad merely has to be clever. An Expo pavilion must be both clever and thoughtful.

An ad can sometimes bequirky and weird, strongly appealing to a narrow demographic. An Expo pavilion must almost always be mainstream and aimed at a broad general audience.

Most advertising is two-dimensional: Magazine ads and billboards are two-dimensional. Television commercials are two-dimensional and single-screen. These are all things you look at. By comparison, an Expo pavilion is something you enter. It happens to you. It is a three-dimensionalization of the brand. You are in the brand. The experience is immersive.
order to capture visitors, so that as they enter an area, even those well-prepared with a guidebook and map will be immediately attracted to particular structures or facades in their line of sight. (At expos in which many of the participants develop their own pavilions, the range of architectural expression can be virtually unlimited.) At expos in which most pavilions occupy modular shells provided by the organizers, the range is narrower.)

The decorative and practical functions overlap. In most cases, a pavilion facade bears the name of the participating nation or entity; thus, the building becomes a kind of billboard which in a very unsubtle way beckons the visitor. In responding to the overall master plan of the expo, which establishes the pedestrian corridors and open spaces that contrast with the built-up areas, the buildings play an important role in framing circulation paths and giving clues that influence the directions visitors may take in exploring the grounds.

An important dimension of the visitor experience is the after-dark environment, in which each building has its nighttime personality, casting off its daytime persona for an altogether different world wherein light, color and structure interact to create unique settings, moods and messages. This helps fulfill the mission of architecture at expos to venture into the realm of the experiential – to brave the untried and untested, challenge the conventions of typical city buildings, and suggest other modes of living to explore and enjoy.

Sustainability: Not Just a Buzzword
A frequent criticism of mega-events, including world expos, is that the “here today, gone tomorrow” approach to hosting such an event is wasteful and unsustainable. Within the context of a growing international consensus that the broader practices of urban development is failing to deliver sustainable solutions to societal needs, expo architecture cannot simply remain available - or not available - of the site and should play an important role in the dialogue by demonstrating new, innovative, environmentally sound ways to achieve shelter and enclosure.

Many of the facility buildings required at an expo, such as warehousing, administration, fire and life safety, etc. can easily be accommodated in modular, pre-engineered structures; these can be quickly erected and, if there is no legacy requirement for them, can be dismantled and either relocated elsewhere or the materials repurposed. Other building requirements, such as seating, towers, and entertainment spaces, can be achieved by leasing components which are readily available and utilized for temporary purposes only. For example, the Los Angeles Olympics demonstrated that many required theme components could be assembled from a “kit of parts” and decorated with colorful fabrics, thereby achieving a significant but temporary upgrade/change to the existing, standard-built environment. After the Games, most of the temporary and portable facilities were simply returned to the companies that leased them. It is appropriate for expos to explore other aspects of sustainability, including reduced water and energy consumption, and the use of recycled materials to estimate the sustainability of products and systems that are environmentally sensitive, the expo architecture of the future can be as sustainable as typical urban development, if not more so. By making the sustainable message explicit to visitors, expo architecture can be used to communicate to young and old that creative design has no limits and that, like all things, change is part of the expo medium.

Several recent expos (i.e. Lisbon ’98, Hanover ‘00 and Aichi ‘05) have had good success with bringing out plans for the post-expo use of buildings and structures. There are many ways in which expo exhibit buildings can be repurposed. For example, Lisbon’s exhibit halls were retained after the expo for use as a much-needed upgrade to the City’s trade fair; some of the buildings not needed at the expo site were relocated for use as sports halls in various locations around the city. Lisbon also built an aquarium which was a key theme pavilion at the expo and now is a permanent visitor attraction. Likewise, Hanover employed its trade fair campus (one of the largest trade fairs in Europe) as the expo site and gained new exhibit halls in the form of several pavilions which remained after the event. Aichi, on the other hand, removed expo pavilions and structures to make way for a city park; some of the corporate pavilions were specifically designed to permit quickly dismantling and removal of building elements which were subsequently recycled.

Economics & Design
The economics of participation at an expo involve balancing various hard and soft costs and among the most significant expenditures are those associated with architecture. In cases where the organizers provide the space, participants’ expenses associated with architecture are considerably reduced in comparison with the cost of designing and building a complete pavilion. In the former case, the participating need only decorate and enhance the exterior of the building (although it is worth noting that often a participant goes to elaborate and expensive lengths to disguise the “box”). In the latter case, the building itself can cost several million dollars and require many months of work to construct and then fit out with exhibits. The participant’s costs - whether delivering a building or decorating a shell - can mount up (and for this reason the member nations of the BIE seek to discourage the proliferation of events which, without regulation, might be promised almost on an annual basis rather than at intervals of about five years).

Expo organizers can assist participants by providing well-thought-out design guidelines concerning the architecture for a given event. Such guidelines can help ensure that the participants’ investments in structures will contribute to the overall attractiveness/appeal of

At an event, the sponsor’s responsibilities are usually limited to putting up logos and then providing a hospitality tent or suite. That’s not enough at an Expo.

An event is usually a few days or at most two weeks and only a few hours a day. An Expo pavilion may operate 14 or more hours a day, seven days a week for as long as six months.

V. The Importance of Theme in an Expo Pavilion

Other media allow for a very aggressive direct-sell commercial approach, but this is not effective at an Expo. But this truth must not become an excuse for creating some empty work of pure entertainment that fails to serve the sponsor’s objectives. The sponsor must get real value for their expense and effort. Here’s a proven approach that we use at BRC:

The best way to reach guests at an Expo is to find a theme that is already deeply important to the audience, but which also deeply reflects the true values of your brand. (By “brand,” we mean your country, province, city or your organization - the people and things your pavilion represents.) You can’t fake this or create these shared values. You can only find them. This theme must be a pre-existing dream, idea, or emotion that is already living in the hearts of the audience. It must also resonate with values the audience already associates with your brand. When it works, the idea speaks to the heart of the audience, while gently leading them toward a preference for your brand.

A frequent criticism of mega-events, including world expos, is that the “here today, gone tomorrow” approach to hosting such an event is wasteful and unsustainable. Within the context of a growing international consensus that the broader practices of urban development is failing to deliver sustainable solutions to societal needs, expo architecture cannot simply remain available - or not available - of the site and should play an important role in the dialogue by demonstrating new, innovative, environmentally sound ways to achieve shelter and enclosure. Several recent expos (i.e. Lisbon ’98, Hanover ‘00 and Aichi ‘05) have had good success with bringing out plans for the post-expo use of buildings and structures. There are many ways in which expo exhibit buildings can be repurposed. For example, Lisbon’s exhibit halls were retained after the expo for use as a much-needed upgrade to the City’s trade fair; some of the buildings not needed at the expo site were relocated for use as sports halls in various locations around the city. Lisbon also built an aquarium which was a key theme pavilion at the expo and now is a permanent visitor attraction. Likewise, Hanover employed its trade fair campus (one of the largest trade fairs in Europe) as the expo site and gained new exhibit halls in the form of several pavilions which remained after the event. Aichi, on the other hand, removed expo pavilions and structures to make way for a city park; some of the corporate pavilions were specifically designed to permit quickly dismantling and removal of building elements which were subsequently recycled.

Economics & Design
The economics of participation at an expo involve balancing various hard and soft costs and among the most significant expenditures are those associated with architecture. In cases where the organizers provide the space, participants’ expenses associated with architecture are considerably reduced in comparison with the cost of designing and building a complete pavilion. In the former case, the participant need only decorate and enhance the exterior of the building (although it is worth noting that often a participant goes to elaborate and expensive lengths to disguise the “box”). In the latter case, the building itself can cost several million dollars and require many months of work to construct and then fit out with exhibits. The participant’s costs - whether delivering a building or decorating a shell - can mount up (and for this reason the member nations of the BIE seek to discourage the proliferation of events which, without regulation, might be promised almost on an annual basis rather than at intervals of about five years).

At an event, the sponsor’s responsibilities are usually limited to putting up logos and then providing a hospitality tent or suite. That’s not enough at an Expo.

An event is usually a few days or at most two weeks and only a few hours a day. An Expo pavilion may operate 14 or more hours a day, seven days a week for as long as six months.

V. The Importance of Theme in an Expo Pavilion

Other media allow for a very aggressive direct-sell commercial approach, but this is not effective at an Expo. But this truth must not become an excuse for creating some empty work of pure entertainment that fails to serve the sponsor’s objectives. The sponsor must get real value for their expense and effort. Here’s a proven approach that we use at BRC:

The best way to reach guests at an Expo is to find a theme that is already deeply important to the audience, but which also deeply reflects the true values of your brand. (By “brand,” we mean your country, province, city or your organization - the people and things your pavilion represents.) You can’t fake this or create these shared values. You can only find them. This theme must be a pre-existing dream, idea, or emotion that is already living in the hearts of the audience. It must also resonate with values the audience already associates with your brand. When it works, the idea speaks to the heart of the audience, while gently leading them toward a preference for your brand. Your show might or might not feature any product or service the sponsor currently offers. But if the audience walk away with a strong appreciation for your brand - a preference for your brand. When it works, the idea speaks to the heart of the audience, while gently leading them toward a preference for your brand. Your show might or might not feature any product or service the sponsor currently offers. But if the audience walk away with a strong appreciation for your brand - a preference for your brand. When it works, the idea speaks to the heart of the audience, while gently leading them toward a preference for your brand.
the expo. Without unduly constraining creativity, in the case of events in which the building shell is provided, organizers can supply guidance on the location and sizing of signage as well as the structural limitations of attaching materials, signs, lighting, etc. Organizers can also provide information and guidelines about requirements for fire and life safety, to ensure that local authorities’ standards are incorporated and not subject to change when it is too late for change. For example, the Japanese pavilion at Expo 2000 in Germany included a large canopy of paper and paper tubes; local authorities were concerned about the fire danger inherent in having several hundred people inside a paper structure, and negotiations about giving an occupancy permit to the pavilion went down to the wire. Thus, innovative architectural design at expos should be encouraged to enhance the visitor experience, but getting the entire team on the same page is essential to success.

**Theme Pavilions**

The expo organizing entity usually develops one or more theme pavilions. These structures typically represent a significant investment and fulfill multiple purposes for the expo:

► First, as the design of a theme pavilion is usually announced long before many participants have decided to participate, it sets an example for other participants in terms of the level of commitment, both in financial terms and in design terms. Organizers, above all, have an interest in creating an iconic image to represent their event.

► Second, a theme pavilion is a manifestation of the particular theme of the event (although the extent to which a given theme can be communicated via a building or structure is perhaps debatable - in some cases, the connection between a theme and a structure appears fairly tenuous and a “wow” design can trump a theme any day).

► Third, a theme pavilion is like a major ride or attraction at a theme park in that it is intended to draw and accommodate large numbers of visitors. At some events, such as Aichi Expo 2005, the corporate blockbuster attractions may compete for attention with the organizer’s theme pavilions, but in most cases, the level of investment in a theme pavilion is sufficient to guarantee that it will be noticed, even in competition with corporate facilities.

---

**About the Contributors**

**Gordon Linden AIA, AICP** is Manager of Planning and Urban Design with Parsons International, based in Dubai, UAE where he has responsibility for directing the planning of a variety of mega-projects in the Middle East. During his career, he has worked on numerous one-time events, including Olympic Games and International Expositions; recently he was part of a team assisting Toronto, Canada in assessing the potentials for hosting an Expo in 2015. Visit www.GordonLinden.com.

**Paul Creighton** is President of Creighton Management, Inc. in Olympia, Washington, a private firm specializing in recreational park development and world’s fair development and management. Mr. Creighton has held management positions at numerous North American Expos and acted as an advisor to several Expo organizations in Europe, Asia and North America.

**Bob Rogers** is the Chairman of BRC Imagination Arts-planners, creators and producers of presentations for world expositions, museums, corporate image centers and theme parks around the globe. BRC’s trademarked Scholarship and Showmanship approach has been responsible for ten highly successful world expo pavilions and consulting on a half dozen others.

Since it was founded in 1981, BRC has been honored with over 250 international awards for creative excellence, including two Academy Award Nominations and twelve THEA Awards for Outstanding Achievement in themed entertainment, including the 2007 Thea Award for Lifetime Achievement. Visit BRC Imagination Arts at www.BRCweb.com.


**Urso Chappell** is a San Francisco-based graphic designer and branding specialist. As a lifelong student of world’s fair history, he founded ExpoMuseum.com in 1998. He was the winner of Expo 2005’s international contest to design the Linimo maglev train exterior and has visited seven world’s fairs. Visit www.UrsoChappell.com.