Chapter Six: Endings and Beginnings
Going Out of Business Successfully and Building the Expo Legacy

As Nations Around the World Pursue the Expo Dream, US Should Get Back in the Game

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The last World Expo in the US was New Orleans 1984. Since that time, world expositions have been held in Japan ('85), Canada ('86), Australia ('88), Spain ('92), Korea ('93), Portugal ('98), Germany (2000) Japan ('05), and Spain again ('08). Following that, China hosts Shanghai Expo 2010, Korea hosts Yeosu Expo 2012 and Milan hosts Expo 2015. But in the US, the hosting of expositions has become an abrupt end, in spite of a long history that includes many outstanding events.

In the meantime, other nations around the globe continue to pursue the expo dream, along with the substantial municipal and regional benefits that, in the case of a well-planned event, accompany the privilege of hosting.

Consider: Zaragoza Expo 2008 ran June 14-Sept. 14. When it closed its doors, it began the process of converting its pavilions into a160,000-square-meter business park. Whereas in Shanghai, Expo 2010 (set to run May 1 – Oct 31 of that year) is the instrument of regenerating a run-down industrial waterfront site as a component of the Huangpu Riverside Regeneration Program. The expo will not only give the area a complete facelift, but also turn it into a pilot for new urban living, a firm testament to the very theme of Expo 2010: 'Better City, Better Life,' say organizers.

Following 1958, when Brussels, Belgium was the first to host a world expo after World War II, half a dozen expos took place in the United States within a 22-year period. These were: Seattle's Century 21 Exposition ('62), the New York World's Fair of 1964-65, HemisFair in San Antonio, Texas ('68), Expo 74 in Spokane, Washington, the International Energy Exposition in Knoxville, Tennessee ('82) and finally the Louisiana World Exposition of 1984 (the same year as the Los Angeles Summer Olympics).

Building International Goodwill and Boosting Trade

While New Orleans 84 was neither a model of organization nor of content, it nevertheless was a useful redevelopment vehicle, leaving a series of improvements to downtown New Orleans supporting the city's tourist and convention business. Other US cities have enjoyed post-expo benefits.

Lisbon, Portugal, in hosting Expo '98, replaced an aging refinery located on prime real estate on the city's waterfront, with a range of community facilities including a new aquarium, multimodal transit station, convention center, 9,000-seat performance hall, and new housing.

Hanover, Germany's Expo 2000 served as a vehicle to expand the city's trade fair, one of the largest in Europe.

How and how much a city benefits from hosting an expo is primarily a matter of good planning. But the above examples demonstrate that expos - unlike major one-time sports events which have specific building and facilities requirements - are more flexible and can leave behind a host of residual developments including parks, meeting and performance halls, theme structures, museums, waterways… practically anything that a community needs.

The US hasn't just passively left off hosting expos. The US is in fact no longer a member of the Bureau of International Expositions. The Paris-based BIE is a quasi-governmental treaty organization formed in the late 1920s to regulate the hosting of international expositions. The US was an active, supportive BIE member state for many years. But the US government now has legislation in place that prevents the country from spending a dime of federal funds on participation in expos abroad – and so the US participation record has deteriorated. The US was not among the community of international exhibitors at Hanover Expo 2000, which marked the creation of the European Union. (The US was present at Aichi Expo 2005, in an attractive, well-attended pavilion...funded by Toyota one of the best-selling auto brands in the US.)

Cost is a factor in all of this. Some criticize the “here today - gone tomorrow” character of many past international expositions wherein big, expensive structures were built only to be demolished later with little or nothing permanent to show for all the trouble.

Legacy is about what you leave behind

The cost question can be examined by looking at the Olympic Games. Los Angeles 1984 demonstrated that hosting the Games could be managed in a financially positive way. Organizers achieved a surplus by doing two things: raising revenues and lowering expenses. They were able to significantly increase the broadcast rights fees for television over those charged at prior Olympic events, making it evident that previous organizers and the IOC had undervalued the assets they controlled. On the cost side, Los Angeles built only one new sports venue – a swimming pool paid for by MacDonald's – and staged the Games in existing facilities, thereby saving millions of dollars in costs when compared to previous organizations. Of course, the region had many existing facilities to draw upon, but the organizers fully realized the potential of these assets, and leveraged them. For the IOC, the use of existing facilities has become something of a mantra for dealing with rising costs and addressing critics who are increasingly calling on event organizers to develop sustainable projects.

Based on the experience of several feasibility studies conducted by the authors, the use of existing buildings could significantly reduce an expo’s costs when compared with building new structures. Several options studied in the San Francisco Bay Area included: former military installations (warehouses, aircraft hangars, etc.), waterfront piers, and convention centers. Other sites could be large state and county fairs. All of these buildings could serve, with a little imagination and some temporary improvements, as exhibition halls for an expo.

A Solid Post-Expo Plan is Essential

In the case of Shanghai, which is building from scratch, the redeveloped site is close to Shanghai's downtown and its transportation lines. The shipyards and steel plants being displaced will be relocated. "This fits perfectly into the city's industrial restructuring strategy," say organizers.

In contrast to the decline of interest and support on the part of the US government in participating in expos abroad and promoting home-grown expos, there is no lack of participation and cooperation on the part of other countries and international entities, which have been signing up to participate in record numbers. They recognize the benefits of doing so in terms of building international goodwill and boosting trade.

Given current political circumstances and priorities, the near term opportunities for the US to promote a world expo look slim. But, as with the case of the '84 Olympics wherein Los Angeles was the only...
How NOT to Go Over Budget: Eleven Key Pressure Points to Watch in an Expo Pavilion

Note from the authors: The following segment from special contributor Bob Rogers, president of BRC Imagination Arts, Rogers gives essential tips on staying within budget while producing an expo pavilion.

By Bob Rogers and the professional staff of BRC Imagination Arts, Burbank, The Netherlands, United Kingdom

Hear any budget horror stories lately?

Want to make sure your expo pavilion doesn’t become one of them?

To the newcomer, the industry that creates and produces pavilions at world expositions may seem like a bewildering cacophony of artistic temperament and contradictory technical information. No wonder some people imagine that budget over-runs are inevitable.

But they’re not. The seasoned professionals see a different picture. They focus on the 11 key budget Pressure Points that generate 95% of the cost over-runs in themed entertainment projects. By closely watching these Pressure Points, they keep their pavilion budgets on target.

Here is what they watch for:

**Pressure Point #1: Avoid One-Of-A-Kind/State-of-the-Art**

Has anyone ever said this to you? “Give me something new, unique, never done before, never seen before and never imagined before anywhere in the world. And show me at least six examples where this concept has been open and profitable for at least five years.”

Wouldn’t we all love to have it both ways? Completely new yet tried and true?

But by definition, the world’s leading new Expo pavilions must go where no one has gone before, and that means risk.

“With state-of-the-art technology comes state-of-the-art problems, followed closely by state-of-the-art invoices.”

- Bob DeVille, former VP of Engineering at Walt Disney Imagineering

Themed entertainment is always an exercise in risk management but there is a strategy that can minimize your risk: Create your unique effects by combining proven parts.

**Solution:** Try to create a unique result by using components that are each individually tried and true. Don’t get sucked into the trap of making everything state of the art. Let the uniqueness come out of your creative combination. Be an integrator, not an inventor.

**Pressure Point #2: Avoid Designers Who Don’t Produce**

Using a Designer or Planner who doesn’t produce is like using a Doctor who has the right university degree but doesn’t actually practice medicine. Designers who only design and never have to build, produce or deliver what they design often lose touch with the reality of construction, production, installation and operation.

In the words of John Krug, project executive for General Motors, one of BRC’s expo pavilion clients: “I don’t care what the Designer says it will cost. The only estimate worth listening to is from the producer who promises to deliver for that price or risk losing his house.”

Designers who also produce are constantly taking their designs to the field and facing the results. They know how to design so it is easy and feasible to build. And they know from bitter experience exactly what things really cost.

**Solution:** Find a Planner/Designer who produces what they draw.

**Pressure Point #3: Two Master Chefs are NOT Better than One**

“He wanted it to be the greatest meal ever served at any party so he hired the twelve greatest chefs of Europe, many of them arch rivals, put them all in the same small kitchen and told them to “have fun”.

This could be the opening sentence in a murder mystery. It is certainly a sure fire recipe for disaster.

Some creative people get along great. Others don’t. Be very careful how you combine them.

**Best idea:** Hire an established team (a Show Designer/Producer and an Architect who have teamed successfully before or hire a proven Show Designer/Producer as the corner stone and with their participation build a team around them).

**Pressure Point #4: Design Before You Build**

As obvious as this sounds, even some of the leading theme park owners start construction with incomplete or inadequate designs. Often they actually thought they were going to save money by “field art directing” (an industry term for last minute invention during installation). What happens next is that the construction and installation process becomes a series of bad surprises, all of them fixed at the owner’s expense, at change order rates.

**Solution:** The more detail and accuracy in

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Interactive flooring at Expo 2008’s Valencia Pavilion
your design, the smoother and easier your installation will be. This will save you a fortune in change orders.

**Pressure Point #5: Choose the Right Project Manager**

Would you hire a conventional construction project manager with no show business experience to manage the creation of a Broadway show? Would you ask that conventional building construction manager to take responsibility for a film production? Some expo pavilions do the equivalent of this when they put a traditional construction project manager in charge of the overall project management of their pavilion. A great construction project manager is indispensable for managing your building construction. But when you put them in charge of the show/exhibit producer, they tend to give higher priority to solving the problems they understand, so the needs of the building tend to come first while the needs of the show/exhibit are often misunderstood or undervalued.

**Solution:** Do one of the following:

- Find a show/exhibit producer who can also provide the owner's representative or project manager function for the overall project. (Notice this is the same producer already doing your shows and exhibits. To bring in another producer risks the "two master chiefs" problem.)
- Create a project management committee which you chair. On it with you are two other advisors: The construction manager in charge of the facility construction, and the show/exhibit producer in charge of the exhibits and presentations. You make the difficult decisions with balance.

**Pressure Point #6: Mind the Gaps**

Before awarding contracts, carefully read the scope of work for each contractor who is working directly for you, and eliminate gaps and overlaps. It is even fair play to ask your suppliers to talk to each other about this and adjust their scope and price before you sign. But never forget that, as the owner, you (not they!) will pay for any gaps or overlaps that they overlook or which develop later.

The extra cost of an overlap is obvious – you pay for the same thing twice. But it is the gaps that generate the worst surprises. Example: Suppose the Building Contractor's price includes bringing power to the building but does not include routing the power to where it is needed. Meanwhile, imagine the Show Producer is providing all of the technical equipment for the theater but presumes that "others" will bring the power to the places it is needed. This is a gap. As the owner, you will pay dearly for it.

It is always cheaper to find and fill gaps before the contracts are awarded. Gaps discovered later in the process will have to be fixed under costlier change order conditions.

Remember that you are responsible for the gaps between contractors who contract directly to you. Usually you are not responsible for coordinating between a prime contractor's subcontractors. Therefore, one strategy is to divide the work among a lower prime contractors who report to you. This is an area where an experienced Show Producer can save you money and time by consolidating all of the show-related elements1 under a single contract responsibility (the Show Producer's) and guaranteeing to cover any internal gaps between his or her direct-report vendors. This means you can concentrate on the gaps between fewer major participants.

**DANGER:** It is a mistake to assume your major vendors (the ones who report directly to you) will address this problem without your involved direction. The owner is the one at risk. The owner (you) must be the leader in eliminating gaps and overlaps.

**Pressure Point #7: Share All the Drawings**

"Why should I spend the money to bring the show/exhibit people to all these building design reviews? I don't need to send them all the building drawings, either."

Communication is everything, especially on a one-of-a-kind project. A large number of cost overruns come from failure to completely share information. Communication failures cause you and your people to make decisions without understanding the consequences.

For example, an owner meets with only his building contractor to value-engineer the building and they decide to delete "excess" electrical panels, wiring, conduit, etc. They thought they had saved money. Months later, during installation, the Show Producer discovers the deletion and reports that the show equipment won't work without the electricity called for in the original specifications. Oops! Usually, if the project, some or all of the deleted items must be put back at costly change order rates. Even if they only put back about half of what was taken out, the unhappy result is often that it costs more than they originally thought they were saving.

As improbable as this sounds, it happens all the time.

In another classic example, one of our clients "saved money" by eliminating all of the acoustical panels from their theater. Their reason: "It was all dark up there so no one would ever see them." (No one would see the acoustical panels!) Without the acoustical panels to absorb and control sound, the sound track echoed off the walls, making the words of the ride impossible to understand. We were not told about it and didn't discover the deletion until installation. For the theater to function, the panels had to be put back at the owner's expense, at change-order rates.

Every project goes through periods of value engineering. Although painful, it is often necessary. Any show designer (especially one who also produces what they design) understands the importance of budgets and the need for value engineering. Before you eliminate things, make sure you really understand the impact. Make sure everyone is involved. Otherwise, your budget cuts may cost more than they save.

**Solution:** Keep everyone informed. Copy everyone on all drawings. Communication is cheap.

**Pressure Point #8: Respect the Ride System**

We once saw a small paper model that said it all. The ride track was fabricated from a metal strip that looked just a little bit like spiral razor wire. The building around it was done in ordinary white printer paper. The symbolism was perfect. It said, "Change and manipulate the building all you want but if you touch the ride system you will bleed."

A client new to this industry may assume that the ride should flex to suit the needs of the building, but the truth is the reverse. Here are four things you can do to help make ride system costs predictable.

- Be as innovative as you like with the sets and environments that your ride passes through but don’t do anything innovative with the ride system unless you have a big budget contingency... and lots of liability insurance.
- Start with a manufacturer-recommended standard track layout copied from a previously successful installation and don’t change it for anything.
- Build from the inside out. Start with the track and ride system. Then fit the sets, environments and effects in around the ride track. Finally, shape the building to suit.
- Rigorously eliminate dangerous sheer points (places where the vehicle passes close by a wall, set, column or whatever – any narrow clearance that could catch, crush, snag, hit or otherwise endanger a passenger or employee).
- Get the ride system running first, as early as possible in the construction schedule. After the ride is working perfectly, then shut it down while you install show sets and effects around it.

Of course the world’s best attractions (by Disney, Universal, etc.) don’t follow all those rules. On the other hand, Disney’s ride attraction budgets range from $30 million to well over $100 million.

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1Examples of Show-Related Elements that can be combined as part of the Show Producer’s scope: Concept, Design, sets, environments, projectors, screens, ride systems, special effects, show control computers, custom software, media elements such as film or videos, interactive elements, displays, cabinetry, robots, etc.

2Examples: There were relatively few ride system problems with Disneyland Paris first opened because Disney got all... well, most... of their ride systems up and working a full year prior to opening.
Pressure Point #9: Enforce “Dust Free”

“Dust Free” is the single most crucial date on your schedule. It is also the least understood. Violations of the “Dust Free” date cause about 50% of the problems during installation and perhaps 25% of all change orders and most premature equipment failures.

“Dust Free” is the date that the building and the site are supposed to be completely finished, clean and done—ready for the show technical people to take over and begin installing the delicate show sets and sensitive electronics. All of the construction work is supposed to be over. Really over.

Dust Free usually means:

- Construction and its clean-up are completely finished.
- All of the painting is finished.
- All carpet is down, all flooring, walls and ceilings are finished. No more construction activity.
- All of the control systems are working and stable. The power will not be fluctuating or being turned on/off.
- All fire sprinkler pressure tests and audible fire alarm tests are complete.
- Absolutely no additional dust generating construction work or painting will be done anywhere in the building.
- All of the major electrical systems are in, finished and stable. The power will not be fluctuating or being turned on/off.
- All construction punch list items are completed and done.
- And a lot more. Check with your producer. And all of the above will stay that way. This isn’t one clean day and then everybody goes back to work. At Dust Free, the above things are done.

This definition of “Dust Free” is counter-intuitive to normal builders who haven’t been involved in the telecommunications industry. In the absence of any other information, the Building Contractor usually assumes that he has until a couple months after Opening Day to finish details of the building construction. That assumption is deeply ingrained in construction culture, and hard to displace. As a result, the Dust Free date is frequently not taken seriously by construction people. But if the construction continues after Dust Free, you may suffer cost hits from problems like these:

Contamination - Even a small amount of concrete dust or leftover construction dirt can permanently damage sensitive electronics. At minimum a dusty installation takes longer because the show programmer/installer spends a large amount of their time fixing dirt damage instead of installing. At worst it can destroy equipment or void your warranty.

Accidental Damage - The average construction worker is unfamiliar with the kinds of materials and equipment attraction people bring on a site, so they often cause unintended damage. If you are particularly unlucky the item damaged could be a six-month or more long-lead item.

Costly Schedule Extensions - Some examples:

- Installing and programming the show lighting requires darkness so you can see the effects of the lights you are directing. Other workers opening doors from lighted areas or turning on work lights make it impossible.
- Installing and programming sound systems requires quiet so that engineers and creative directors can hear what they are doing. Imagine trying to program sound while nearby someone is testing fire alarms, grinding concrete or using a table saw.
- Before show control computers are installed, make sure that all major electrical work is complete. Power surges or outages caused by work in other parts of the building can damage the electronics or erase programming memory.

Pressure Point #10: Optimize Your Schedule.

An owner whose job was seriously behind schedule once quipped, "There's nothing to worry about. I've got 300 guys on the job, all destroying each other's work!"

For any given project there is an optimal schedule which minimizes cost and conflicts. It is well known to anyone who builds things, that both compressed and prolonged schedules cause more money and cause more grief to all concerned. Ignore this danger at your own peril.

A world exposition will not delay its opening date to wait for you! If you get behind and then try to catch up by throwing more people at the work, this just leads to overcrowding and more confusion, downtime and coordination problems. Some functions can't be doubled up. (Nine women can't make a baby in one month!) When you try to superimpose two kinds of work that are incompatible you get cost overruns from damage and the loss of efficiency for all concerned. For example, it is impossible to install sets and exhibits in a room while simultaneously installing carpet. If one trade's work is continually interrupted by the work of others, the installation gradually slips further and further behind schedule, eventually causing overtime costs and opening delays. Each individual interruption may be minor but taken together it’s like getting pecked to death by ducks.

Any decent construction contractor already knows how to sequence and schedule the flow of normal building trades to minimize conflicts and damage to the work, but most don't have a clue how to integrate the highly specialized work of the attraction "trades." Your experienced Show Producer will know how.

Solution: From the beginning, get ahead and stay ahead. Start earlier than you think you should. Commit to your team and give them a chance to help you set a reasonable schedule and do their best work for you. And...

Pressure Point #11: Be Decisive

Don't try to keep your options open for too long. Many clients falsely believe that exhibits and attractions are like trade shows. They think they can delay decisions and continue making changes right up until opening.

The best expo pavilions require long lead times and early commitments.

When the client wants to continue creative brand advertising and constant re-designing all the way up until opening day, they must expect massive change orders for changes in facility infrastructure, re-design, re-stocking charges on equipment that must be returned, media re-shoots and exploding costs.

Solution:

- Make timely decisions and stick with the plan you've approved.
- Give your Producer a consistent target to hit.
- Attend reviews and give feedback.
- Process change orders and keep your promises.
In Summary:
1. Avoid State of the Art: be an integrator, not an inventor.
2. Be wary of Designers who don’t Produce.
3. One Master Chef: Build your team around one strong design lead, preferably your attraction producer.
4. Design before you Build. The time and money you spend on design will be saved many times over when you build.
5. Choose the Right Project Manager – Don’t put a building construction expert in charge of the show.
6. Mind the Gaps – Close all scope Gaps & Overlaps
7. Share All Drawings with all participants, all the time. Understand the consequences before you value engineer.
8. Respect the Ride System – Make it the boss of everything.
9. Enforce a firm “Dust Free” date, so your building contractor will finish early enough to allow your attraction producer to do his job.
11. Be Decisive. Once the design phase is done, stick to the plan so the work can get done.

Watching these 11 Pressure Points won’t prevent all budget overruns, but they are a good start toward preventing the majority. The recurring themes here are teamwork, communication, owner leadership… and hiring a professional expo pavilion attractions producer!

Bob Rogers is the Chairman of BRC Imagination Arts. For more information, see “About the Contributors.”

The Expo Conundrum: How to Go Out of Business Successfully

We’ve repeated the phrase “go out of business successfully” often throughout this book – and we’re about to repeat it several more times - because it is an essential part of the process, and it calls for ways of thinking and doing that are not part of running a conventional operation.

Acclimated as we all are to the notion that a successful business is one that, with hard work and a strong management hand, endures a long time, the idea of going out of business successfully sounds almost like a non-sequitur. But the conventional ways of thinking about business can create real problems for a one-time event. Many things that are second nature to running a traditional business are at odds with the interests of an Expo. An Expo organizer must be alert to these problems so that when the dust settles after closing day, the eventual outcome is successful rather than painful.

In order to understand the principle of going out of business successfully and appreciate how strategic decisions in all phases of organizing and operating an Expo can affect the final outcome, we provide herewith some guidance on successful Expo organization practices that illustrate some key differences between a one-time event and a typical business.

Outsource functions

Rather than build up a large organization to cover all of the functional requirements needed to put on an Expo, organizers should consider opportunities for outsourcing. Certain functions, such as management and operations, are inevitably in-house territory and can’t realistically be handled by an outside firm or individual. But rather than building a large, in-house organization which will require a whole range of facilities, services and the care and feeding which go along with permanent businesses, where the expertise exists in the community there’s an opportunity to access skills and avoid the difficult and costly process of recruiting, hiring and retaining staff who, at the end of the day, will need to find another job when the Expo is over.

On the other hand, in some communities an Expo can be a vehicle to create jobs, and therefore the personnel on hiring an outgoing management team or another way. But even in such cases, outsourcing remains a viable means of obtaining needed assistance. It won’t be realistic to get some needed skills to sign on to an organization which will only last a few years.

Curtail the tendency to build empires

When a person is appointed the head or supervisor of a department or group in a business, their initial instinct is to look at their role and their responsibilities and take actions to “make things better.” Sometimes the emergence of these tendencies can be tempered by providing the newly appointed employee with a thorough description of his or her job along with a budget and staffing plan, etc. But it’s not unusual for a motivated employee, in the spirit of showing their competence and desire to optimize their contribution to the company, to ignore or attempt to modify the pre-existing plans in order to meet their own standards and experience. In the context of an Expo, wherein a newly-appointed department head or supervisor arrives without the benefit of experience with a prior one-time event, there will be a need on the part of the Expo management to productively direct these instincts which experienced people have gained in conventional businesses and ensure that every organizational unit is operating in a resource-constrained environment. In addition, the management team will need to instill the vision of going out of business successfully from the top down, to ensure that everyone gets the message that when the Expo is over, it’s over.

Rent or lease rather than buy

When faced with a decision as to buying equipment or furniture - or even buildings and facilities - most managers will be inclined to assume that the capital cost will be amortized over a certain number of years. They will also find, when deciding whether to purchase or to rent, that in many cases the costs of renting and leasing appear higher. In the case of an Expo, however, the economics of purchasing versus renting need to be reevaluated, repair and replacement considerations factored in. As the owner of a piece of equipment, or multiple pieces of the same equipment, there are numerous hidden costs which are easy to leave off the sheet when doing the math - such as the cost of the human resources needed to maintain the equipment, the value of replacement parts, insurance, etc., etc.

Given the relatively short period of time that the Expo will operate, it is almost always cheaper to rent or lease than to buy, although if the item being considered is part of the legacy plan wherein the long-term use can be identified and ensured, the value of going out of business successfully is somewhat reversed to the more standard outcome. On the matter of legacy planning, wishful thinking is not enough, and sometimes vague or preliminary plans are kept in place in the haste of putting together an Expo and capital expenditures are unwisely placed in the “legacy column” of the balance sheet, when a rented item would have been the prudent choice.

Substitute people for equipment where possible

Unlike a regular business, wherein it would be reasonable to justify the costs of labor-saving equipment or technology compared with the costs of staffing, at an Expo it is often the counterintuitive conclusion which makes the most sense: to use people to perform certain functions rather than making a capital purchase. For example, for some years now Expos have utilized very sophisticated turnstile systems. These turnstiles, which have scanning capabilities, offer the ability to verify the validity of the ticket, identify the type of ticket being used (i.e. one day, season pass, etc.), and count the number of uses of the ticket by the holder. Although the systems are now commonplace in many performance venues and many people around the world have utilized them, their utilization at Expo appears to be both costly and not entirely satisfactory from an operational point of view.

In most recent Expos, staff has been assigned to each and every turnstile to ensure that visitors and any needed staff are able to use the machines correctly. By staffing each turnstile with a uniformed employee, any economies which might accrue to an automated versus manual system have immediately evaporated. In observing visitors entering Expo gates on different continents, it is apparent that many people are unfamiliar with the technology to begin with and then in a situation which is somewhat stressful (i.e. trying to quickly
move through the turnstiles) errors are made and the flow of visitors interrupted by the occasional intervention of a staff member to aid the visitor who is having a problem. Problems entering the turnstiles can include: inserting the tickets incorrectly, tickets which have been folded or otherwise bent aren’t easily introduced to the scanner, tickets which have become wet in the rain and may not easily be accepted in the turnstile, etc. Thus, it is evident that a relatively simple, yet absolutely essential function for an Expo would be better served by forgoing the expensive, automatic turnstile in favor of a ticket taker with a hand-held scanner.

Allocate land, permanent facility and equipment costs to legacy investments

Some Expo organizers have failed to understand the very basic idea that one cannot build a theme park-style project that accommodates several hundred thousand visitors on a daily basis, operate it for three to six months and expect to have a successful thousand visitors on a daily basis, operate it for a relatively simple, yet absolutely essential function for an Expo would be better served by forgoing the expensive, automatic turnstile in favor of a ticket taker with a hand-held scanner.

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Plan for personnel transition

Organizing, training, and motivating a team to host a three- to six-month event is a real challenge. If that weren’t enough, just as soon as things are operating smoothly, then it’s all over and people will no longer have a job. The reality of a one-time event is inescapable and although a few employees may be required for several months after the event concludes to manage the closeout of the paperwork and transition of the site and facilities, the vast majority of the staff will be out of a job. Expo organizers need to acknowledge this reality and put in place measures to retain staff who will see, as the event draws to a close, that their jobs will soon be eliminated. These measures can include providing a centralized outplacement operation where employees can obtain assistance in preparing resumes, obtaining information on future job potentials, organizing seminars on job searches, etc. To ignore the reality may fuel, among employees, premature defections and other human resource problems.

Intrinsic to a one-time event: it simply can’t, on a short-term scale, duplicate the business model of a permanent development.

The only way that it will work - assuming that the intention is not to totally redevelop the site after the Expo, but rather utilize the Expo investments for years beyond the actual exhibition period - is for many of the major costs for things such as land, buildings and equipment, to be allocated to the legacy package for the site and amortized beyond the exhibition period.

If the long-term plan for the site is to radically depart from the template of the Expo in terms of infrastructure, buildings and equipment, then an all-out effort should be made to minimize any costs that cannot be fully amortized over the exhibition period. In cases where the Expo and all of the infrastructure, buildings and services have a good match with the long-term plan, then even if the Expo loses money on an operating basis, the long-term project will have benefited substantially from the Expo investment.