

I met with my financial advisor a few days ago, with hopes that he would enlighten me with a brilliant forecast of booming times over the horizon. But alas, his message was much more guarded. Apparently, many of us are still disappointed with the returns on our investments - it is not just me. He and other seasoned financial advisors agree that the challenging times will last quite a while longer. Many corporations are not really delivering glowing returns - but if they want to hold investors interests, they must prove capable of making a profit for that investor. If the business is not making increased profits from their day to day operations - then they try to create the illusion of a profit by cutting the cost of running their operation - from laying-off staff, cramming employees into smaller office spaces, to making facility changes without the benefit of professional oversight.



We get increasing numbers of calls from panicking facility managers, pleading for help: the staff are rebelling due to lack of air - and they don't know how to fix it. Or the Fire Marshall has come in and is threatening to close down the operation, for fire code violations. This quest to create the optics of a profitable operation by 'slashing and burning' are sadly harming hard earned 'brand messages', corporate images, and their own ability to recruit or retain top talent.

In this challenging economy - none of us can afford to waste what moneys we do have available. Designers should help ensure that clients get real value for each dollar invested. Good design consultants should not add to the cost of achieving an objective. They should actually reduce the cost of a project, while improving results.

Enlightened business people know that it is when businesses are the most challenged, that they need innovative,

seasoned, problem solvers partnering with them, the most! Trained problem solvers should be able to look at a situation, and establish the advantages and disadvantages of all optional ways of getting from A to B. Sometimes this means discovering that there is a far better, less expensive way to achieve an objective than was being considered. Or it identifies how to proceed to ensure compliance with all the necessary codes. Sometimes the advice might even be to not proceed with a contemplated project - not worth the cost involved. There might be a more creative way to achieve the objective?

Good designers know that their job is not to convince a client to beef-up their budget to allow tem some room to be creative. Their job is to be creative within the comfortable budget that their Client defines, and get that client more for their investment, than they would have received without the Designer involvement.

Their objective should be to 'amp up' the success of their clients' projects. And success is all about getting good value for the investment.

Good business people should not be shy about investigating what a good designer could do for them, to help distinguish them in their marketplace, and increase their market share.



by Lynn McGregor