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Design helps Business Succeed:

By Lynn McGregor

Business Leaders already know that the secret to success today, especially in the Global market, is Alnnovation®, and Innovation is the result of thoughtful, targeted creative problem solving, or ADesign®. Research studies done have identified the GTA as the third largest design hub in North America, (after New York and Boston).

Design should not be seen as a luxury, saved for good times, when people can afford to be indulgent. It is often when times are the worst that we need >design= the most. Canadian businesses would be well advised to leverage the creative talent they have available to them, to: Reduce overhead, distinguish themselves from the

competition. Strengthen their message to potential clients and investors, help increase market share and support recruitment efforts.

Just a few examples of how you could use “creative problem solving” to help achieve your business objectives, while likely reducing the cost of overhead:

Struggling New Communications Firm Finds Success:

Two young partners, one the very articulate ‘business manager’ and the other the very talented ‘creative director’ start a communications firm together. They quickly set up their offices then wasted no time contacting potential clients. Frustration sets in as they fail to lock-in the important contracts they were seeking. Potential clients tell them they needed better history and track record to be serious contenders. Eventually, they contact a professional Interior Design firm to discuss a better meeting room, in which to present their work. When the interior designers see the office - they are not surprised that clients are not registering to this young team. It did nothing to reinforce the creative energies of the pair.

The Interior Designers set up creative meetings with the team, asking how they work, the messages they want to send, how they want to distinguish themselves from their competition, etc. And a new space was designed, on less than Aa shoe string budget®. The new space not only better supported the team functionally, making them much more efficient and competitive; but it also provided a needed new, carefully calculated corporate image. These creative meetings also inspired a new integrated approach to all the firm-s letterhead, business cards, web site etc. - giving them a fresh Abrand® that they didn-t have before.

The result was an incredible improvement for the young firm. Potential clients that came to the offices expressed embarrassment that they did not know of this group - as they would have met with them earlier if they had known of them.



Their success rate in presentations more than doubled. Eventually this group opened branch offices - always calling the same interior design firm, to ensure their successful brand was respected, reinforced but given a regional twist for each new unique global location.

These young partners were always incredibly talented and able to do world class work - but their office facility sent a message that stole opportunities. By respecting the professional talents of other trained designers - and collaborating, they corrected the problem and increased their market share dramatically. This also gave the new partnership the confidence to push even further into new areas of business that also became very lucrative for them.

International Corporation Seeks Facility Improvements that are Investor friendly:

A large, successful and growing Canadian manufacturer had been working away in their international headquarters location for more than 25 years, without making major changes. The new President realized that the office facility was rather dated, but wanted to ensure that any changes made would be financially responsible ones, that their investors would support. This organization needed to add staff, but they also really wanted to change the way they used their office space, and rather than give all the perimeter windows to executives who were out of the office a great deal - they wanted to share more of the available daylight with staff who worked in internal workstations all day long.

This corporation did their due diligence and spoke to several consulting firms seeking a recommendation. What should they do? The responses were incredibly varied. Some suggested they expand the office space with the same space standards to ensure uniformity throughout. Some suggested they add small, non-uniform workstations in every closet and cranny, to

accommodate the looming headcount growth. The manufacturer decided to work with the firm that suggested looking at the current space standards to see if they could improve life for all the staff while minimizing the square footage increase required to receive the new staff.



The results were new space standards that used the existing workstation investment, but modified them with new components that increased the use of vertical space, and the amount of organized storage that each person was provided. These new standards allowed for a brighter work environment with daylight shared by all.

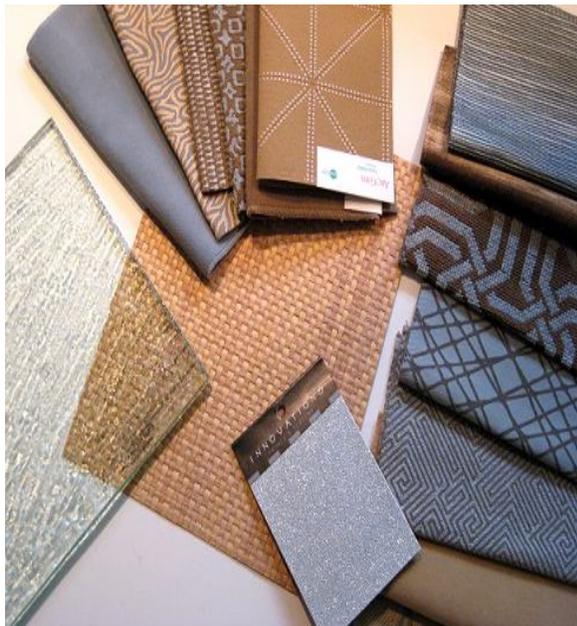
The new design also integrated new lighting technologies that were closer to daylight - so when light enhancement was needed - it was more pleasant than the fluorescent sources that had been experienced before. The new space standards also allowed the original organization's square footage to receive 30% more staff that it accommodated before the changes. And with all this, came a new look and ambiance for the corporation, that instilled great pride and energy.

There was an initial cost to the manufacturer for this project - but it resulted in reduced overhead



expenses for the organization on a long term basis, while improving the quality of the space for staff. Staff morale improved dramatically.

The approach that was taken for this project involved a more intensive process than the client initially anticipated. But the result helped launch the manufacturer into a happy future of lower overhead, higher quality of staff and a more energized, productive complement. And as operating costs were reduced - Investors were very pleased. The client group saw the changes as an incredible success.



When looking at a 5 year lease period, this organization had a hard time rationalizing the cost of typical tenant improvements, when they knew they would need to either walk away from the investment or pay *further* to demolish them at the end of their stay. (Lose, lose.)

The professional Designer-s solution? To design all elements as moveable Afurnishings® to allow the tenant to retain their investment and move it with them to any of their new locations. This gave the tenant the confidence to proceed with an executive approach for their offices. They ensured they had the right image, and that their team was organized and efficient. And they could retain their value of the improvements for many years to come, even if they relocated.

Not only did this approach provide the client better long term value - it also meant less waste that would end up in landfill. This group thought they could not afford the premiums normally associated with doing business in a Asustainable manner®. Problem solved.

We could go on and on with other examples. But we believe these three make the point: Design should not be seen as a luxury, saved for good times, when people can afford to be indulgent. It is often when times are the worst that we need >design= the most, to achieve business objectives within constraints.

Renovations that have Lasting Value:

An office space user signed a fairly short term lease on a raw space - and needed to sub-divide it into offices, storage, etc., before they could occupy - to ensure their suite supported their needs. As is typical in all commercial leases, the new tenant understood that they would be responsible for removing all improvements in the suite at the end of their lease, to clear the way for a new occupant - if the new tenant did not want to >inherit= the improvements.