



**JACK MORTON**

the experience to inspire

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**“When people talked about innovation in the ‘90s, they really meant technology. When people talk about innovation in this decade, they really mean design.”**

—BRUCE NUSSBAUM,  
*BusinessWeek Online* (January 2005)

**“A store’s environment is acquiring an importance once reserved for... a commercial to be run during the Super Bowl.”**

—STUART ELLIOTT,  
*The New York Times* (December 2004)

BANK OF AMERICA, NBC & TISHMAN SPEYER  
DEMOCRACY PLAZA



# Designing the Customer Experience

## Five Fundamentals of Enhancing Marketing Effectiveness with Experiential Environments®

> BY LIZ BIGHAM

The marketing landscape is being transformed by the convergence of two phenomena:

- First, the rise of non-mass marketing techniques like events (led in part by the profusion and fragmentation of media that have robbed mass marketing of its former reach and impact). Witness the estimated \$150 billion marketers spent on events each year, slated by some industry sources for 15% growth this year.
- Second, the dramatic power of design as a driver of both innovation and customer engagement. Witness the cult-like status of brands that differentiate by design, e.g., Apple, Mini Cooper or Method home products.

Three-dimensional physical environments are at the nexus of both the new marketing realities and the current design renaissance. Never before has there been such an opportunity for brands to enhance marketing effectiveness by designing and integrating three-dimensional environments that invite participation and a sense of “membership” from their most important audiences.

Inviting participation and membership through designed environments is imperative. Customers are now equipped simultaneously with technologies that enable constant communication (wireless devices) and those that screen out unwanted communication (digital video recorders, spam blockers, etc.). Consequently, marketers must seek out their audiences by creating experiences that capture attention, invite exchange and inspire action. These experiences must occur in settings where customers are not only willing but eager to be engaged—where they shop, work, network and play.

By definition, live marketing experiences occur in real-world, physical settings. By design, these settings can become 360-degree brand expressions, rich in interactivity, entertainment and media.

By default, however, marketers often neglect the physical settings for their events, treating them as a simple stage or backdrop. Visit a tradeshow, walk through a corporate space, attend a promotion, visit a store, and most likely you’ll see a logo plastered on a scrim, hung on the wall, painted on the side of a truck. Environmental? No. Designed? Not very. Experiential? Definitely not.

The distinction is most evident in event marketing. An event against a backdrop is merely that: an event. An event within a designed physical environment, where the event and environment are integral to one another, is transformed into something more: an experience.

A similar distinction is evident when physical environments are created without thought toward their activation through events, interactive touchpoints and media; though literally three-dimensional, they fall flat in brand and marketing effectiveness.



**Bank of America,  
NBC & Tishman Speyer**  
Democracy Plaza

Rockefeller Center was reinvented as an experiential environment aligned with the Bank of America brand through its celebration of citizenship, democracy and the American electoral process. Democracy Plaza also served as NBC's primary broadcast headquarters leading up to the 2004 presidential election. Attended by hundreds of thousands of visitors and viewed by millions on TV, Democracy Plaza included historical exhibits, education centers and numerous broadcast environments. Attractions included an original broadside of the Declaration of Independence, artifacts from the Bank of America Heritage Collection and Rockefeller Center's famed ice rink transformed into a map of the U.S. with states coded red and blue. On election night, over 50 million tuned in to NBC and its affiliates as they broadcast from the site—over 11 million more than NBC's closest competitor. Measurement conducted by the bank concluded that the event drove a significant lift in goodwill toward the brand and greater recognition in the New York market.

The alternative is clear. There is enormous potential to create a continuum across marketing touchpoints, leveraging design to differentiate—and putting experiences and physical environments together to create something quite powerful: the Experiential Environment®. Integrate three-dimensional brand environments as a component of marketing across audiences and platforms—from internal corporate environments to tradeshows to consumer events to retail. Leverage the Experiential Environment® to enhance marketing effectiveness.

And most importantly, innovate: today, design has the power to build awareness and loyalty on an unimaginable scale. According to a recent Newsquest article, "In a Design Council survey, 62% of static companies, that is, [companies] that have not grown at all in the past year, see design as irrelevant. Markedly, however, not one rapidly growing company agrees with them."

The opportunities to leverage Experiential Environments® to enhance marketing impact are significant. But how? Every brand is (or should be) unique, and therefore there is no single formula for success. There are, however, five fundamentals of enhancing marketing effectiveness with Experiential Environments®:

**1. Integrate Touchpoints**

Perhaps the most over-used word in marketing—"integration"—is its most critical gap. Marketers know that their brands must be consistent across every platform, from advertising to the Web to real-world experiences. Yet typically, they work with an assortment of partners who "specialize" but do not effectively assimilate. For example, event marketing agencies may excel in designing events, but not environments; exhibit companies may build great tradeshows, but lack design savvy or perspective on other kinds of spaces; "pure" design firms can create but not activate retail spaces; and so forth.

Far more preferable are partners capable of designing these marketing touchpoints as an integrated whole.

**2. Coordinate "Customers"**

Similarly, marketers and their partners too often create false distinctions among their audiences, rather than thinking through how audiences touch and influence one another. "Customers" are typically defined literally as people who buy products. Instead, customers should be approached holistically, as anyone who interacts with the brand and whose actions can impact its success. By this definition, customers can be conceived as employees, sales and distribution channels, business partners and clients, influencers and end-user consumers. Each of these audiences can be engaged via three-dimensional brand environments.

For example, employees are significantly influenced by the work environment. (Indeed, according to Newsquest, "If you are serious about putting design high on your priority list, there is no better place to start than with the surroundings that you work in." Studies by Watson Wyatt Worldwide have demonstrated the financial benefits of

**4-DIMENSIONAL MARKETING**

<b>TIME</b>	continuum ("total customer experience")
<b>MECHANISM</b>	coordinated experiences (e.g., event + environment + media)
<b>MANNER</b>	membership/invited
<b>AUDIENCE</b>	coordinated "customers" (employees, BtoB, partners, consumers, public)



TOYOTA PRESENTS SPORTS ILLUSTRATED'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR



RETAIL KIOSK CONCEPT

employee communications. Business clients and partners can be engaged at tradeshow and in briefing centers. And there are powerful platforms for situating consumers within physical environments that enhance understanding, purchase and loyalty, from mobile tours to retail to temporary public installations.

Clearly, much is to be gained by coordinating and ensuring consistency across all these environments and “customer” audiences, so that brand messages delivered to employees are in turn relayed to and reinforced with partners and consumers.

### 3. Inspire “Membership”

The Internet revolution almost universally reconfigured marketing by empowering customers with unprecedented access to information (which they use to “comparison shop” in a previously unimaginable way) and, in turn, by enabling marketers to invite information from their customers. Consequently, customers now expect exchange—and more. They expect the brand to connect on a new level of relevance (both emotional and intellectual) that can best be characterized as “membership.”

Membership is implied by Joseph Pine and James Gilmore’s contention in *The Experience Economy* that “businesses must orchestrate memorable events for their customers that engage each one of them in an inherently personal way.” Remember again the owners of cult-like design products. Their sense of community is clear. Like product design, physical environments have the capacity to dimensionalize brands—both literally and figuratively—and therefore provide a rich ground for engaging hearts, minds and senses. Audiences choose to become customers; customers eagerly volunteer to become members.

### 4. Integrate Environments in the “Total Customer Experience”

Increasingly, marketers—and CEOs—are taking a more diagrammatic view of the customer experience. Rather than isolating the individual touchpoints at which customers connect to the brand, they are mapping the big picture of how all touchpoints relate, adding up to what might be called the “total customer experience.” Managing a more effective total customer experience should unite the whole spectrum of brand communications: product design, packaging, employee training, customer service, retail representation and delivery. It should view the experience of learning about, buying, using and recommending the product as a connected whole.

Physical environments have a clear role to play in the total customer experience. Work and corporate environments influence employees and enable them to become more effective brand ambassadors. Briefing centers and tradeshow experiences enable business partners and clients to better understand products and more impactfully promote them within their organizations. Retail environments and events connect with consumers in a way that both promotes purchase and builds loyalty. And, needless to say, this spectrum of physical platforms can become a potent landscape of interconnected and mutually reinforcing experiences.



**The Home Depot**  
59th Street “Urban Theater”  
Retail Experience, New York

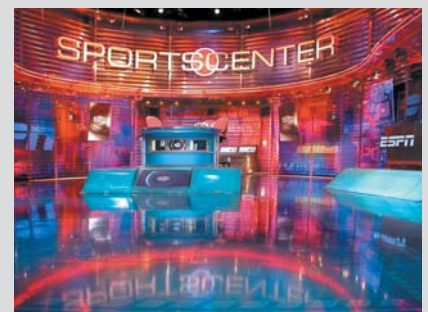
Taking cues from urban theater, Jack Morton designed and installed a permanent yet flexible 1,400-square-foot lobby environment, a brand platform that merges retail environment design and entertainment for the New York customer. Designed to showcase products and provide a venue for live demonstrations, the environment—a prototypical prewar co-op apartment suspended within the entrance of the store—enhances brand messaging and is readily adaptable to seasonal, promotional and project-based marketing stories. The environment launched with a five-day, 12-hour-a-day event in which passersby could watch two actors, performing as do-it-yourself apartment owners, renovate their apartment with Home Depot products and services. An LED “zipper” and plasma screens broadcast brand messaging and aspects of the renovation project. Programs are in place to feature a range of interactive retail experiences throughout the year.



REUTERS BRIGHTSPOT  
TRAVELING PRODUCT EXHIBIT



SERVICEMASTER  
CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT



ESPN SPORTSCENTER  
HDTV BROADCAST ENVIRONMENT

## 5. Design Must Be Marketing

A significant obstacle faced in leveraging physical environments to enhance marketing effectiveness is that the people who create them are not often marketers. But in order for design to be leveraged as a driver of marketing, environments need to emerge from a rigorous process that is both art and science.

A truly rigorous environmental design process engages and is informed by architecture, graphic and industrial design, media, psychology, anthropology, entertainment—and yes, marketing. If one defines as marketing (as does Barron's *Dictionary of Marketing Terms*) the "process associated with promoting for sale goods or services," there must of course be a process for environmental design. Prerequisites for any partner must include a means of generating not just great design, but design that is informed by research on the audience, its current and intended behaviors. Any partner must be prepared to define clear and measurable goals, hold firm to the conceptual core of the brand and—most importantly—integrate measurement tools from inception to track the progress of brand growth.

## Four-Dimensional Marketing

There is enormous potential to leverage Experiential Environments®—and what I would call "four-dimensional marketing"—to create a continuum across marketing touchpoints. *BusinessWeek* noted in a 2004 article on the "power of design": "As the economy shifts from the economics of scale to the economics of choice and as mass markets fragment and brand loyalty disappears, it's more important than ever for corporations to improve the '[customer] experience.'"

Though much is written about the challenges brands face today, this truly is an exciting time to be in marketing. There's never been such receptiveness to new strategies or such a wealth of new ideas and technologies. Never before has there been such an opportunity for brands to enhance marketing effectiveness by designing and integrating three-dimensional environments to drive purchase, build loyalty and inspire membership. Combined with the growing focus on design as a driver of innovation and differentiation, the potential for forward-thinking marketers is tremendous.

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## ABOUT JACK MORTON

Jack Morton Worldwide is an experiential marketing agency that helps the world's leading companies improve performance, increase sales and build brands. In addition to live events, branded environments and interactive experiences that engage, educate and entertain employee, business and consumer audiences, Jack Morton also creates large-scale, globally televised ceremonies such as the recent opening and closing ceremonies of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. The agency offers environmental design-build offerings as an integral aspect of experiential marketing strategy and services. Jack Morton has a staff of 600 employees throughout the United States, Europe and Asia-Pacific, and is part of the Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc. (NYSE: IPG). More information is available online at [www.jackmorton.com](http://www.jackmorton.com).

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## Hewlett-Packard Company

Consumer Experience Center, San Diego

Jack Morton conceived, designed and fabricated a 4,000-square-foot briefing center that showcases the latest HP consumer solutions, initiatives, key partnerships and retail best practices within a single space that is customizable for any group. The center's highly visual and tactile home, home office and retail zones demonstrate HP's complete digital imaging and digital media solutions in typical real-world environments. Main functional areas include a lobby, a breezeway for special attractions/gatherings, a foyer for introductory messaging, a consumer solutions gallery, experiential immersion zones simulating user environments, two retail ecosystems, a briefing center, ample conference space and a café.



## Rainbow DBS

VOOOM Tradeshow Environment

Jack Morton Worldwide designed and fabricated a state-of-the-art environment that resulted in wall-to-wall booth traffic at the International Consumer Electronics Show in 2004 and 2005.



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