

#### @issue:

Volume 7, No. 2

The Journal of Business and Design

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Corporate Design Foundation Sponsored by Potlatch Corporation

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#### Interview: Sam Farber

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2

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14



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### Business and Design Classic

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demonstrates.

#### Acela

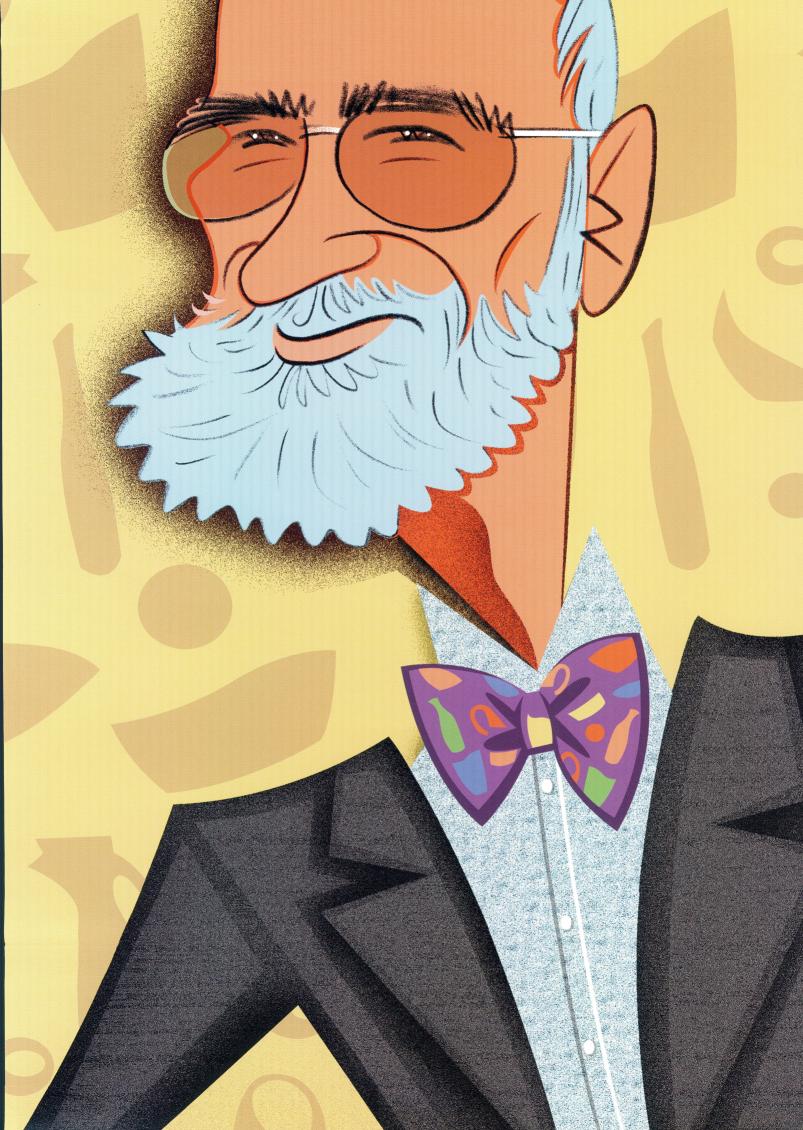
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24











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# **Entrepreneur Sam Farber on Design**

The founder of Copco® cookware, OXO® kitchen tools and a new serveware company called WOVO, Sam Farber has made human-centered design the hallmark of his highly successful kitchen-related products. Here, Peter Lawrence, chairman of Corporate Design Foundation, probes the secret of his success.

# noticed that you have an economics degree from Harvard. When did you become aware of the importance of design in business?

Actually, I became more aware of the lack of design in certain markets than in the importance of design. When I started Copco in 1960, kitchenware design was a desert. The feeling in the business was that there wasn't a need for design. So, introducing kitchen products with a strong design sense was an effort to appeal to a niche market.

#### Has design moved to the forefront since?

I think product design has come to the fore in the last 5 to 10 years. The affluence of consumers has helped, and the fact that people are better educated. Also, more companies recognize that to make their products a leader in their field, they have to add value and differentiate themselves, and they are doing it through design.

#### With your string of successes, you've been called a serial entrepreneur. When you get an idea, what gives you the impetus to plow ahead?

I believe typical entrepreneurs approach projects with a naive optimism. They say, 'I'm passionate about this idea, and I'm going to do it' without regard to the mar-



Sam Farber founded two of the most innovative brands in kitchenware-Copco and OXOand later sold both companies. This fall he and his son, John, are launching a new serveware line called WOVO. Farber also has mentored design programs at graduate business schools such as Harvard and Babson. He sits on the boards of the Institute of Design at ITT, Parsons and the Corporate Design Foundation, and is a trustee of the Museum of American Folk Art.

ket sometimes. That's what we did with OXO. But going forward with OXO wasn't an impulsive act. It was based on observing an unmet need—which happened to be how my wife Betsey's arthritis made it painful for her to use standard kitchen gadgets. In looking for better tools, I found there were none. They were all terrible to hold and use, which was particularly a problem for the 20 million Americans like Betsey who suffered from arthritis. So identifying the need happened by chance. We didn't begin by saying, "Let's go out and videotape people using tools in the kitchen and see if there's

a need there." And we didn't do a lot of preliminary research before deciding to go into design development. Our decision was largely driven by the recognition of a particular opening in the market.

#### Do you look over the market at all?

Yes, but I never spend a lot of effort on standard market research. We don't interview consumers. For OXO, we interviewed retailers and buyers to identify the best-selling and most important items for our starting line-up. Interestingly, when talking with them, we heard a lot about better packaging, better display, assortments that were too large, the need for large margins for the

retailer, but nothing about the failings of products on the market. When we asked about faults and comfort level, they either had no response or said they've always been like that.

#### What about research during the design phase?

That's another matter. I believe the design team should do their own research. Information transmitted from marketing managers to the designer can lose a lot in the translation. Smart Design—the design firm we worked with—looked into manual dexterity and limitations and observed people with arthritis using kitchen

tools to better understand hand movements. This kind of information is essential for designing appropriate features into a product.

#### What about the use of focus groups?

I don't have much respect for the focus group approach to research. In many cases, I think people in the marketing world, in corporations, use it to try to justify the decisions they've already made. Observing people doing a task is very important because it illustrates the need, whereas a focus group illustrates a want.

#### Is there a design credo you live by?

Yes. Never lose sight of the end user. It seems like a simple, elementary goal that should be inherent in the design process and not even worth mentioning. But many once-mighty companies have committed this car-

dinal sin. Believe me, consumers know when you're not meeting their needs, and they have a powerful weapon. They just don't buy the product from you.

You started OXO and WOVO on a vague concept that seemed like a market opportunity. Did you just say to a designer, "Here's the general idea" and turn them loose?

Basically I went to the designers and talked to them about my idea. Let's take the new company WOVO. Some years ago, Smart Design created a chopping bowl for Copco out of heavy, white polypropylene. Over the years I've loved that bowl and used it as a salad bowl rather than as a chopping bowl. Every couple of months I would say to my wife, "Someday I'm going to make a whole series of bowls like this." Recently, I decided

I would do it. I went to Smart Design and gave them the project parameters, as I did with OXO. I described what I found interesting. In the case of OXO, it was a need; in the case of WOVO, it was an aesthetic and type of material. Then I let them go on their own way.

#### That's it? No other guidelines?

We try hard at the beginning not to give too much direction to the designer. With WOVO, I suggested we make four or five items in this particular thickness of material. With OXO, all we said was that these standard handles are uncomfortable, we'd like to have

comfortable handles—ones that will be soft and easy for all hands. We also added that we wanted the gadgets to be dishwasher safe, high quality, affordable and attractive. But the idea to use Santoprene® for the handles came from the designers.

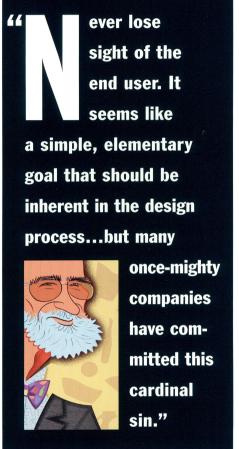
# You've been a strong advocate of universal or user-centered design. Why are you a believer?

I can't stress enough this universal accessibility concept. Population trends demand transgenerational products, products that will be useful to you throughout the course of your life. This approach acknowledges that people change over time, their needs vary with ordinary things like pregnancy, carpel tunnel syndrome, skiing injuries or the unavoidable changes

of aging. I believe we should use design to extend the useful life of both the object and the user. We should push the boundaries dividing the able from the encumbered. Transgenerational design considers all of these variations in strength and dexterity. It extends the life of the product and its materials by anticipating the whole life experience of the user.

#### Are more companies addressing user-centered design?

I think the term "humanizing technology" has become a buzzword of our time. But I would argue that it's more than technology that we want to humanize. We want to humanize every aspect of our daily lives. That's why the term user-centered design is too limiting. It refers to the physical and cognitive. I would



prefer to talk in terms of human-centered design, which takes into consideration the physical, cognitive, social, cultural and the emotional. Those are needs that designers should be striving to address.

## The beauty of your products has played a major role in their success. Is aesthetic appeal enough?

One has to be careful in design. Design has to work on more than one level. What I mean by that is, if you're making an item that is supposed to do something in the kitchen, albeit a tea kettle or a juicer, it should perform the function well and

be aesthetically beautiful too. The two are not mutually exclusive. I don't think, as Philip Johnson once said in a *New York Times* article, that 'form triumphs over function.' I find that's ridiculous, frankly. I think form and function should always work together.

#### How important is packaging today?

It is a selling aid certainly, but if I had my way, nothing would be packaged. That said, I'll admit that WOVO products are very elaborately packaged. The mission behind packaging is twofold: Make it beautiful to attract shoppers. And provide information about the merchandise inside. Still, I would like to see more merchandise designed to speak for itself. In some ways we did that with the OXO kitchen gadgets, which

incorporated fins to create a soft spot on the Santoprene handles. The first design covered up the fins. When I saw it, I said to the designers, "This won't do. We have all of 3-5 seconds to attract customers walking by in the store. We need them to stop and think, 'That's something different. Why are those fins there?' Or go further and think, 'Look, there's a place to grab that handle." The more the product itself can communicate visually, the less packaging is needed.

# Over the years, your companies have underwritten design programs at business schools. Why?

Basically I wanted to teach business school students about the world of design because they will be the people who will make decisions about design. I want to familiarize them with design at an early stage to change the corporate world a bit.

# As a trustee of the Museum of American Folk Art and chairman of its new building committee, could you share with us the design objectives for the new museum?

It is based on the belief that the design goal of a museum should be to create the best possible environment to bring about a connection between the viewer and the art. That's what it's all about. Yet so many museums fail in that. They become so locked up in the architecture, they forget about what's going to be shown. Todd

Williams and Billy Tsien, the architects for the new building, understand that the Folk Art Museum offers a very intimate kind of art. It's not large pieces, it's usually medium to small pieces. The museum has to reflect that intimacy. That was the goal and I think they achieved it.

Another goal has been to create a building that will be a great architectural addition to New York City. As far as I'm concerned, for the past 30 years or more, New York has been a desert in terms of architecture. You talk to people about the great buildings being built here and they mention the Seagram's building or the Guggenheim Museum. They are 40, 50 years old. We decided that if we are going to build a museum, it has to make an

architectural contribution to the city. I think Todd and Billy have done that very well.

#### What misconceptions exist about design?

The most common misconception is the word "design." You'll recall at one of your design conferences, Peter, we asked people to define the word and everyone had a different interpretation. People think primarily of pretty pictures or forms. They don't understand the depth to which design goes—not only in products, but in every aspect of our life. Whether it is the design of a program, a product or some form of communication, we are living in a world that's totally designed. Somebody made a decision about everything. And it was a design decision.

believe we should use design to extend the useful life of both the object and the user. We should push the boundaries dividing the able from the encumbered. Transgenerational design...extends the life of the product and its materials by anticipating the whole life experience of the user."

Sephora, the French perfumes and cosmetics company, is breaking every marketing rule in the industry by giving women the freedom to sample and choose from a broad array of brands and products. The response has been wildly enthusiastic, with new Sephora retail stores opening across the United States.

For products as individual and personal as the look of your face, it is remarkable that cosmetics merchandising in the U.S. has remained stuck in its longstanding "look but don't touch" tradition. On one hand, drug stores sell cosmetics in sealed-plastic packaging that require shoppers to buy things like lipstick without a chance to try it on. Alternatively, department stores allow more hands-on access, but only with the hovering attention of a sales person whose commission is driven by pushing a specific brand. Both approaches leave something to be desired.

Spotting a void in the marketplace, Sephora has staked out the middle ground. Three years ago Europe's leading retail beauty chain moved into the U.S. with a simple, if radical, concept. It created a retail environment that invited customers to roam the store and try on different lipsticks, eyeliners and blushes made by many different manufacturers. Instead of department store-type cosmetics counters that force shoppers to interact with a salesperson to sample a product, Sephora is organized around freestanding racks that feature such chic brands as Bulgari, Christian Dior, Gucci, Lancome and Calvin Klein.

Sephora's open, minimalist displays entice shoppers with sumptuous product colors, packaging and bottle design. Strategically placed mirrors, tissues, cotton





swabs, astringent and makeup remover encourage sampling. Prices-usually out of sight in department stores-are prominently marked. Without the pressure of a salesperson eager to close a sale and move on to the next customer, shoppers feel free to spend an hour or more trying out different colors and different brands until they arrive at the exact ones they like.

As for sales assistance, Sephora offers help only on request. "We think clients like to have someone help them, so we're an assisted self-service store," says Betsy Olum, Sephora's senior vice president of marketing. "Our customers can shop on their own and they don't have to fight off 'spritzers.' Sephora offers options. We think our customers are much more educated. They're reading a lot of fashion magazines. They don't always shop by brand. They like to shop across brands."

The company is aware that its approach is revolutionizing cosmetics merchandising. "We've opened this big wide door in the business; it's going to be hard to put everything back in the showcase," argues Barbara Emerson, who as Sephora's vice president of store planning and design heads up a staff of six in-house designers. "At Sephora everything can be touched and tried. There's a very democratic aspect to all of this. We think people should have fun experimenting. For years beauty retailers have kept product locked away as if it were some precious part of retail. I don't see how anyone can now go back to the old way of selling."

Given the profit margins in the more than \$6.3 billion prestige beauty category, those products have, in fact, long been "a precious part" of department stores' bottom line-and Sephora's aggressive move into the United States has already caused competitors to begin opening up their beauty counters. Women gladly pay premiums for cosmetics' illusory promise of self-invention, and Sephora capitalizes upon this in its emphasis on personal discovery. Its success in America recognizes the increasingly independent will of shoppers. Sephora's U.S. network has grown to 70 stores since opening its first outpost in SoHo, New York City, in 1998.

Early growth was fueled not by advertising but by word-of-mouth buzz and inviting storefronts in areas with heavy foot traffic. "Our locations became our advertising," says Olum.



#### **See for Yourself**

Sephora's open-sell environment invites customers to touch products and try them out. Customers can place selections in black shopping baskets so their hands are free to continue sampling.

\$3.50

TEXTURE: Shiny, even,
ACTION: Varnishes a
RESULT: Long-lastin

#### **Visible Pricing**

As part of its selfservice concept, Sephora prominently displays the price of each product as well as its special qualities on each rack.



#### **Cleaning Station**

Mirrors, cotton swabs, makeup remover, astringent and applicators at each rack provide customers with essential cleaning items to sample different products.





#### **Creative Displays**

The use of ball bearings in this scissor display is indicative of Sephora's imaginative product staging. Hidden channel lights illuminate the sign and give the display a dramatic glow.



#### **Small Sizes**

Sephora's 150 shades of nail polish are packaged in miniature bottles so women can change their nail color frequently. They also prevent polish from getting gummy when kept around too long



#### **Icon Guide**

A face icon lets customers know the appropriate uses for the product—in this case, for eyebrows, eyeliner, cheeks and lips.



"Design is one of the most important elements in our U.S. rollout," Emerson emphasizes. "It's integral to the function and appeal of our stores."

It's easy to see why first-time customers wander into the company's shops. Most of them reflect the influence of Sephora's Champs Elysees flagship created by French architect Gerard Barrau. They are designed to give passersby a birds-eye view of the entire store and feature all products on one level. Open, glass facades greet visitors with a red-carpet welcome; that red, cut pile is used throughout as an integral element in the stores' bold black, white and red color scheme. Black-and-white floor tiles and architecturally striped columns punctuate the interiors, as do the giant blow-ups of the company's serpentine wisp of a logo.

Sephora was started in 1993 as a French perfume chain. French luxury conglomerate Louis Vuitton Moet Hennessy (LVMH) acquired Sephora in 1997. LVMH also owns Givenchy, Kenzo, Dom Perignon, Moet & Chandon, Guerlain, Hard Candy, Urban Decay, and Celine, among other exclusive brands. LVMH has expanded Sephora from less than 60 stores, based only in France, to include over 393 stores in

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Europe. In addition to its burgeoning U.S. business, Sephora operates in Asia with seven stores in Japan.

While all the company's stores are stamped in the same color palette, they allow for individual distinction suited to their surrounding architecture. In Las Vegas, for example, at the Venetian Hotel complex, the site offers thirteen 16-foot arched windows, giving Sephora a 160-foot wall of natural light along the front and side elevations of its store. The company's first Japanese shop, opened in Tokyo's shopping district of Ginza, is organized on three levels and stands out with a blackand-white striped facade. The Paris and Barcelona stores include large, flashing videoscreens, a digital ticker of world perfume prices and a museum display of antique perfume bottles. Sephora's Rockefeller Center store in Manhattan incorporates similar architectural details that are cast over 21,000 square feet on three levels with a glass elevator and people-mover conveyor beltway.





Bath Gel

#### 1 No jewelry

The dress code bans distracting necklaces and requires earrings to be no more than one-quarter inch in diameter.

#### 2 Lipstick

Red lipstick (to match the red carpet) and red or clear nail polish are the authorized colors for female personnel.

#### 3 Logo Pin

The only jewelry to be worn on the black outfit is the Sephora logo pin.

#### 4 Black Outfit

All sales personnel dress in black tunics and black slacks and wear one black glove.

#### **5** Presentation

The proper presentation stance is with the ungloved hand out of sight behind the salesperson's back. 6 The black glove is to be worn on the presentation hand, with the product presented jewel-like in the open palm.

Sephora keeps the spotlight on products by art directing every aspect of the selling "stage," including the attire of "cast members" who are trained to present each product with theatrical flair. Their all-black attire provides a bold yet neutral backdrop that draws the eyes to the product in the salesperson's gloved hand.





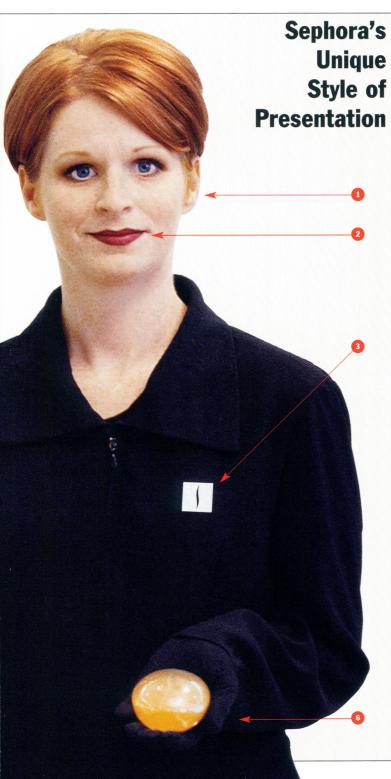
Bubble Bath

#### **Sephora Packaging**

Sculptural and eyecatching, Sephora packaging adds value to the product by communicating an aesthetic that implies premium quality. The Sephora logo is blind embossed into these clear and frosted bottles of bath products.



Sel de Lune (Bath Salts)





Regardless of those extra flourishes, all of Sephora's stores conform to the company's signature easy-to-shop concept. Belying product inventory of more than 11,000 items-covering over 250 brands-Sephora's retail layout is precise and orderly. Just past the store entry are women and men's fragrances, arranged in alphabetical order. Top 10 fragrance best-sellers are highlighted in their own areas. Products are grouped by brand and according to categories of need, like those for dry or oily skin. Sephora lipstick bars pop with more than 365 colors that include lavender, green, blue, gold, white, yellow and black. Do-it-yourself gift boxes allow customers to select their own colors, products and potpourri. Shoppers can choose among soaps, bath gels and crystals, body lotions and delicately arranged details like dried rosebuds, cinnamon logs

bottle. It sets us apart." When presenting products, cast members keep their ungloved hand discreetly behind them to eliminate any distractions from seeing the product cupped in the black gloved hand.

Another distinction setting Sephora apart is its growing reputation as a retail lab for small beauty companies like Shu Uemura, Vincent Longo, Peter Thomas Roth, Benefit and Stila, who have a tough time getting space at big stores. By extending the dimensions of its product offerings, Sephora has broadened its demographics beyond that of traditional department stores.

"We attract women as young as 15 and as old as 70," says Olum. "We offer cutting-edge product lines as well as more established cosmetics like Chanel and Clinique. Men as well as women shop the store. Men find our retailing approach a lot less intimidating."

Mouillett (Fragrance Stick)



#### Sephora's L' Orgue des Parfums

True to its French roots, Sephora is teaching American consumers about the subtleties of perfumes. A master perfumer, with a supersensitive nose, helps customers to identify the fragrance they seek by providing samples on a stick from the scent organ, a semi-circular display of hundreds of bottles of essences. Fragrances range from floral and woodsy to oddly familiar smells such as motor oil and coffee. By learning what scents evoke pleasant emotions, the perfumer can direct customers to the brand that would most likely appeal to them.

and pastel starfish. Even as Sephora's relaxed, retail environment invites browsers to linger and sample products, its stores' clearly defined organization offers a quick read for busy customers making a short visit.

Stores contain "staging" areas for free makeovers, by appointment. In fact, Sephora calls its sales staff "cast members" and refers to the selling floor as "on stage." The cast members' presence further reinforces the role of cosmetics in fashion theatricality. Dressed in black designer tunics and slacks, they wear no jewelry or makeup other than red lipstick and red or clear nail polish (matching the black and red signature colors of the store interiors). Mime-like, they move quietly around the store wearing a single black glove. Without the benefit of display counters, the glove serves to show off the product much in the same way a jeweler uses black velvet to offset jewels.

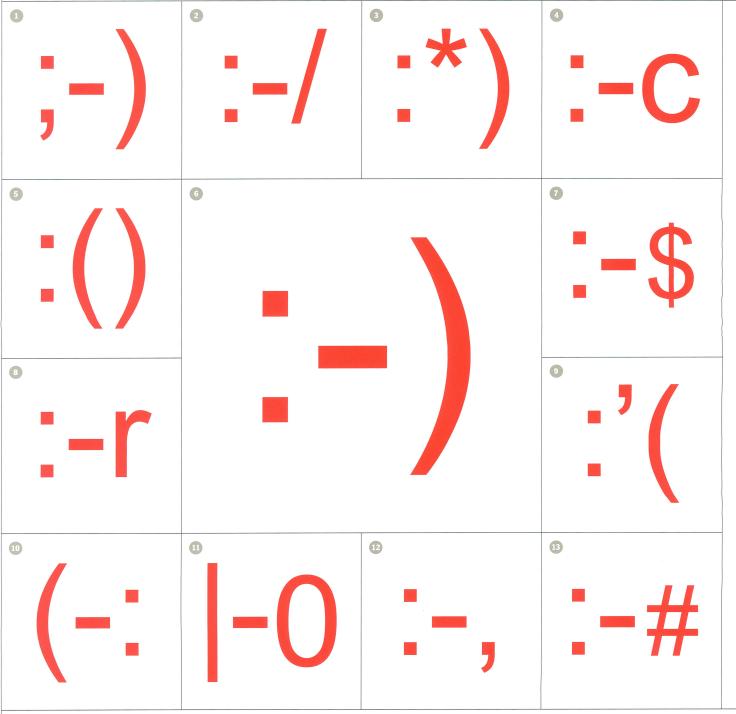
"Black is a strong background for design and beauty products," acknowledges Emerson. "A black glove is a good background for showing off things like a fragrance Sephora is, however, becoming a more intimidating force to department stores. LVMH, after all, has the marketing muscle and money to turn Sephora into a global player. More critically, Sephora's underlying operating philosophy is an affront to an industry traditionally driven more by retailer sales ploys than buyers' choice. For example, Sephora does not go in for popular department-store gimmicks like free gifts with purchase. It's that belief, communicated through open, accessible retail design, that has made Sephora one of the most potent forces in beauty products today.

"Every aspect of the stores—from their architectural layout and interior design to the background music chosen to the customer experience—is designed to reinforce a shopping experience emphasizing freedom, exploration, discovery and a personal definition of beauty," underscored Daniel Richard, president and CEO of Sephora Holdings, when he accepted the "Innovator of the Year" award from the National Retail Federation in 2000.



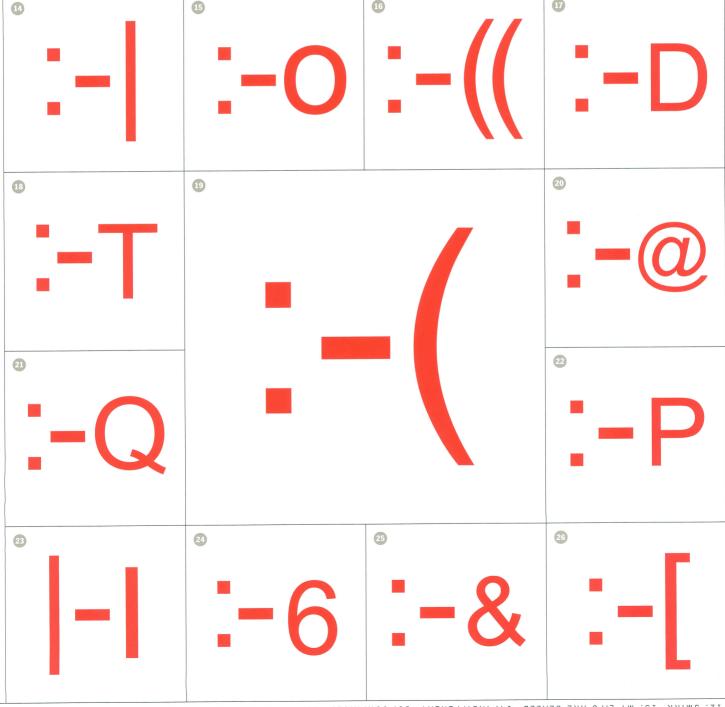
# **Emoticons Quiz ?-)**

In 1982, Carnegie Mellon researcher Scott Fahlman was a participant in some of the earliest online newsgroups. The exchange revealed its limitations since online participants lacked the benefit of vocal cues and facial expressions to tell them whether a poster was being ironic, humorous or serious. Frustrated by the lack of feedback, Fahlman proposed that posters express their feelings



PUTTING YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS 8. STICKING TONGUE OUT 9. CRYING & REALLY SAD 10. LEFT-HANDED EMAILER 11. YAWNING UNHAPPY 20. SHOUTING 21. "WHAT?" 22. TONGUE HANGING OUT IN ANTICIPATION 23. ASLEEP 24. EXHAUSTED 25. TONGUE-TIED 26. POUTING

through the use of self-invented ASCII hieroglyphs, using keyboard characters to draw digital "smiley" faces. The rest is history. Now known as "emoticons," these faces (presented sideways) have become the emotional language of online chat rooms, email and instant messaging, with new icons being invented every day. See if you can guess what these emoticons mean.



EMOTICONS ANSWERS: 1. WINKIE FACE 2. SKEPTICAL 3. CLOWNING AROUND 4. REALLY GAD 17. LAUGHING 18. KEEPING A STRAIGHT FACE

# Art on the Fly at SFO

Often called the best museum in San Francisco, the exhibits at San Francisco International Airport showcase art and artifacts from around the world. They're so good, in fact, that for many museum-lovers, San Francisco International has become a destination in itself.



John Martin
Director, San Francisco International Airport (SF0)
Director of SFO since 1995, John L. Martin previously
served as SFO's deputy director for business and finance
and has been on its Airport Commission since 1981.

nyone who has spent much time in an airport knows the tedium of waiting around for a flight. Yet the airport is often the first introduction to a city for visitors and the last place they see before returning home. Making the experience enjoyable for them is not only a show of civic hospitality, it speaks to the cultural vitality of the city.

Or so the San Francisco Airport Commission reasoned in 1980 when it agreed to establish a changing art exhibition program at San Francisco International Airport (SFO). It is still the most extensive program of its kind in the United States.

"We in San Francisco are very proud of ourselves for being unique and different," says Jane Sullivan, SFO manager of marketing and communications. "This is just another amenity that the City and County and Airport can provide. People probably spend more time in airports than in museums. Why not have the museum at the airport?"

A welcome diversion for the traveling public, the initial exhibitions in the North Terminal occupied by United Airlines were an instant hit—so much so that the San Francisco Airport Museums program has since



Blake Summers
Director/Chief Curator, SF Airport Museums
Blake Summers oversees the exhibitions, the new
Aviation Library and Museum, and the children's
art programs throughout the airport terminals.

expanded into all four terminals at SFO. In 2000 alone, the Museums organized some 55 exhibitions. The shows focus on an eclectic mix of topics, ranging from nostalgic looks at lunch boxes and cocktail shakers to international displays of Balinese masks and Australian boomerangs.

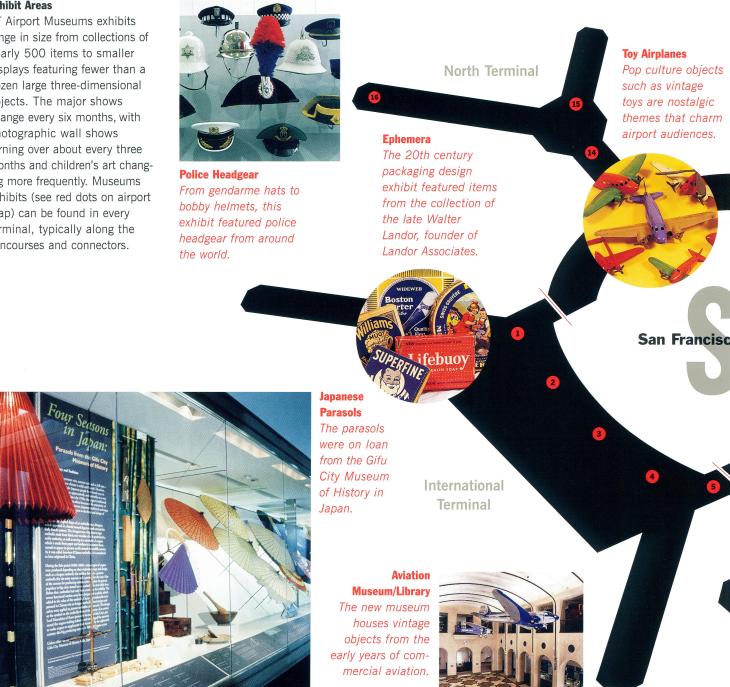
The diversity and scope of the exhibits now demand a full-scale staff. Over the past two decades, SF Airport Museums has grown from a team of five people, tucked into a tiny office next to a United Airlines gate, to 30 professionals including curators, designers, registrars, preparators and conservators housed in a building offsite. Their detailed attention to strict museum conservation standards earned the SF Airport Museums accreditation from the American Association of Museums (AAM) in 1999.

A desire to humanize the airport environment is not the only reason that the Airport Commission has devoted significant funds to these major exhibitions. Although not an income-generating entity itself, SF Airport Museums is helping to draw more business to airport concessions, an important source of revenue for SFO. "We're considered an enterprise department



#### **Exhibit Areas**

SF Airport Museums exhibits range in size from collections of nearly 500 items to smaller displays featuring fewer than a dozen large three-dimensional objects. The major shows change every six months, with photographic wall shows turning over about every three months and children's art changing more frequently. Museums exhibits (see red dots on airport map) can be found in every terminal, typically along the concourses and connectors.



of the city, which means that we are completely selffunded,"explains Sullivan.

That means that SFO gives 15% of its concession revenue to the city. The remaining 85% is used to meet the airport's operating expenses, with the difference between concession revenues and operating budget determining the terminal rental and landing fees for airlines. "It is in everyone's best interest to make the airport a place where people want to come and spend money," Sullivan adds.

At the same time, SFO has tried to make a pleasing environment for everyone. "We made a decision quite a while ago not to have advertising in our terminals (although limited advertising is now being allowed in

the garages and connectors)-in large part because we did not want to subject the traveling public to that sort of assault. It is a huge potential revenue source that we haven't tapped."

While it is impossible to calculate whether the art exhibits generate dollars, SFO's annual consumer survey shows that they consistently ranked as one of the airport's most popular attractions. Anecdotal reports indicate that, especially with the opening of the new International Terminal this year, people are making a special effort to get to the airport earlier to take in the exhibits, eat at the restaurants that include some of the best-known local establishments in the Bay Area, and shop the many top-brand retail stores.



#### Eames Design

The exhibits that line the long concourses leading to airline gates serve to decorate the space as well as entertain people as they walk along. This show in the North Terminal presented furniture designs by Charles and Rae Eames.



On any given day, SFO has a population that would make it one of the largest cities in California. Not only does the airport have a staff of 35,000 employees, it serves 40 million travelers and another 10 million "meeters and greeters" a year. This is a potential audi-

On the other hand, the airport environment presents the SF Airport Museums staff with challenges that traditional museums rarely encounter—like being open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Blake Summers, SF Airport Museums director and chief curator, says that this requires a great deal of preplanning since they don't have the luxury of closing down sections of a terminal during installation or blocking heavily trafficked walk-

ence that any museum in the world would envy.

ways. "We set up everything offsite, arrange it in the display cases so that we know exactly what we are going to do and the exact position of each object. Then we take a picture of the display and duplicate the arrangement at the airport," Summers says. While the offsite preplanning may take months, the actual installation happens incredibly fast.

For the most part, SF Airport Museums shows focus on popular culture themes. The reason is not because of security since the airport's around-the-clock activity is a deterrent against art theft, but because SFO also features a fairly sizable permanent fine art collection through the San Francisco Arts Commission. Fine arts paintings by the likes of Wayne Thiebaud, mammoth





sculptures and murals in the concourses are part of the Arts Commission's public program. "By default, SF Airport Museums is not allowed to do fine art," explains Summers. "That is why you don't see contemporary artists in our cases. We will wrap in things that pertain to the shows, but you aren't going to see a one-man show or a group show."

What you do see is an imaginative presentation of collectible-type objects that appeal to viewers of every age and cultural background. "Probably our best shows are the ones where we have the popular culture aspect like lunch boxes where somebody recognizes something and can relate to it. Then we expand the idea and bring things in that people wouldn't have experienced before," Summers says. The boomerang exhibit, for instance, showed how the shape has been echoed in an array of other objects including coffee tables.

A current "The Chicken or the Egg" exhibit demonstrates the popularity of chicken, rooster and egg images in cultures worldwide. Another features bicycle lanterns from the early 19th century up to World War II. A major exhibit that lines the concourse of the North Terminal is called "Car Culture," a celebration of America's fascination with cars over the past century. "We show something playful or silly and then throw in very serious artwork," says J. Abram Garfield, the Museums assistant director of exhibitions. "It's fun and accessible and not intimidating."

The exhibits also often focus on intriguing cultural objects that are nostalgic, good-humored and non-controversial. Avoiding controversy is by design since the exhibits are located in a public institution. "We are not a museum with doors," says Summer. "For the most part, the audience is not coming to see us by choice. They are given an opportunity to see our exhibits because they are here to catch a plane."

This has not only made SF Airport Museums sensitive to different tastes, but aware of the fact that many people see the exhibits as they hurry to and from departure gates. Objects that they can see and understand in passing without stopping to read lengthy descriptions seem to work best.

The SF Airport Museums divides its program into three broad categories: Changing shows that include both case exhibits and wall art, including photography. Children's program including an aquarium, interactive educational display and art from local schools. And the new San Francisco Airport Commission Aviation Library and Louis A. Turpen Aviation Museum—the only entity of its kind in a major American airport. The museum/library is dedicated to preserving the history of the airport and Pacific Rim commercial aviation. It contains some 9,000 aviation artifacts and is located in the International Terminal, in an 11,500-square-foot space that replicates the interior of the original 1937 San Francisco Airport passenger waiting room. The

research library houses some 6,000 books and oral histories that record the pioneering days of flight. The museum is working on putting the contents of the catalog on the Internet so people around the world can access the archives online.

The exceptional quality and the AAM accreditation of SF Airport Museums exhibits have drawn the attention of other museums worldwide, as well as private collectors and retailers, who have been more forthcoming in lending art and artifacts for display. "Over the past five to 10 years, the whole nature of our program has changed because we have higher standards," says Summers. "This has given us the ability to borrow from institutional collections."

In recent years, SF Airport Museums has borrowed art objects from Bay Area institutions such as the Asian Arts Museum, the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, the California Art Academy, and the Phoebe Hearst Museum, as well as museums from around the world. Even the Kid's Spot, an interactive play area, was designed with exhibits from the hands-on science museum, the Exploratorium. Such programs offer reciprocal benefits to both the airport and the lending institution. "Most museums own more than they can show," says Garfield. "This allows them to show off things that might be in storage, and it also encourages people to go see their museums."

For the M.H. de Young Museum, which is being completely rebuilt due to damage from the 1989 earthquake, airport exhibitions will be a way to keep its name and collection before the public while it is closed. Over the next five years, the de Young is collaborating with SF Airport Museums to present a series of exhibitions.

The selection of appropriate objects is always a challenge to SF Airport Museums since, unlike traditional museums, it has little control over the ambient

> environment. "When we are thinking about a show, we have to consider light, temperature and humidity," says Garfield. "There are certain things we can't put in, say, the North Terminal but can in one of the connectors where we can control the light. We work closely with a conservator."

Four new Museums sites that include two 60-foot cases and two areas with 20 freestanding cases each were integrated into the design of the new International Terminal. Serviced by state-of-the-art climate, lighting and security systems, the display cases have expanded the Museums' options for subject matter.

The Airport Commission took the Museums' needs into consideration when planning the space

for the new terminal. "The Commission has always been supportive of our program," says Summers. A sign of this respect is the fact that the Museums' director has always been part of the senior staff. "To be involved at that level is remarkable. The airport is behind us."

Sullivan agrees, "As John Martin, our airport director, and Mayor Willie Brown like to say, "This [SFO] is our front door—not just for San Francisco but for the entire Bay Area. We want it to reflect the diversity, beauty and culture that are here." We San Franciscans place value on aesthetics and on our shared culture. The Museums program is a way to bring a sense of specialness to the airport experience."



**Aviation Museum and Library** 

Built in the precise footprint and architectural style of SFO's original 1937 passenger waiting room, the new Aviation Museum in the International Terminal displays artifacts, photographs and memorabilia, including early crew uniforms, vintage aircraft seating and dinnerware, model aircraft and a huge 1939 Pan Am globe. The Library houses archival material on early commercial aviation in the Pacific Rim. The 11,500-square-foot space may also be rented for special events.



Barbara J. Richardson
Executive Vice President
National Railroad Passenger Corp. (Amtrak)
Amtrak's second in command, Richardson oversees
day-to-day management and leads marketing and
communications programs.



hile people in Europe and Japan have long viewed passenger trains as the preferred way to take trips of less than 500 miles, Americans have opted to go by car or plane. To be fair, Americans have had little choice, since passenger trains in the U.S. have not kept pace with other modes of transportation over the past several decades. In fact, the government-subsidized National Railroad Passenger Corporation, better known as Amtrak, was formed in 1971 because rail companies wanted out of the moneylosing passenger-train business. Last December Amtrak set out to give cars and planes a run for their

money with the debut of Acela Express, America's first high-speed train service.

Marketed as a business travelers' alternative in the perpetually gridlocked Northeast Corridor (Boston-New York-Washington), Acela signals Amtrak's goal of making train travel relevant to the 21st century. Acela's sleek teal fin logo, inspired by the serenity of a sea turtle gliding through pristine water, has become a symbol of that change. The quiet, smooth-running Acela trains are capable of traveling at 150 miles per hour—although old infrastructure, inherited from Amtrak's hodgepodge of predecessor railroad companies, is still forcing them to go much slower. But the most dramatic difference to most passengers is the deluxe quality of the experience.

That emphasis on customer comfort emerged from extensive research undertaken by Amtrak and its team



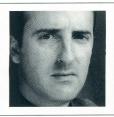
of designers gleaned from IDEO (San Francisco and Boston) and OH&CO (New York). Interviews with over 24,000 Northeast travelers showed that people love trains, but were tired of being treated like commodities. "People love the notion of traveling a long distance, relaxing, looking out the window," says Barbara Richardson, Amtrak's executive vice president. "What was discouraging to us was that none of that translated to Amtrak. We were viewed like a utility. We also found that Americans love their freedom and their cars but they had reached a frustration point. They don't like sitting in traffic and things like road rage. We knew we had a dated image. We weren't viewed as modern."

To encourage people in the Northeast Corridor to give train travel—and Amtrak—a fresh try, Amtrak knew it had to address the business travelers' desire

#### **Brent Oppenheimer**

#### Managing Partner/Creative Director, OH&CO

Prior to working on Acela's branding and design program, Oppenheimer and his partner, Robin Haueter, were involved in the design of Spain's AVE high-speed rail service.



for a better quality of life, a span of time where they could feel free to unwind. "This is not about speed. What we're giving people is time," says OH&CO principal Brent Oppenheimer.

Richardson concurs, comparing it to recent American Express ads. "It used to be you were nobody unless you had a gold card. Now it's about how you use your gold card. That's what Acela is about: inner values. It's not the time it takes you to get somewhere, it's all about how you use your time." That Zen-like philosophy is apparent in new "Life on Acela" ads that urge "Depart from your inhibitions" and "Inner children travel free."





Acela's cars are well designed for work or leisure. They offer more comfortable seating and legroom than air shuttles. Every seat has electrical outlets for laptops, music channels and CNN audio feeds. Each train has six roomy pay-phone areas with Internet connections; cell phone signals can be picked up anywhere. There are numerous conference areas, but those seeking tranquility can relax in the designated "quiet" car, devoid of conversation and cell phones. The bistro car, with its panoramic windows, serves items like fresh salads, gourmet coffee blends and beer on draft. Passengers in first class are given unlimited beverages, and menu options are served on china and linen.

Creating that environment began by studying how travelers use their time. Building on Amtrak's market research, the design team used human factors experts to shadow a broad range of travelers-disabled, young, old. Those experts also toured stations and interviewed Amtrak constituents ranging from senior managers to station operators. Their findings helped define a vision that outlined the 10 steps in a typical passenger trip: 1. learning (about routes, timetables, etc.), 2. planning, 3. starting, 4. entering, 5. ticketing, 6. waiting, 7. boarding, 8. riding, 9. arriving and 10. continuing (their journey). Those points of customer contact identified design opportunities.

"We wanted to create a seamless journey. Riding on the train was actually the eighth step," says Richard Eisermann, who was IDEO's project leader on Acela. "Everything prior to the ride was something that Amtrak never connected with the experience. The ten points became the core of what we tried to do. We wanted to look at the design implications across the board."

IDEO enlisted Brent Oppenheimer and Robin Haueter to ensure a multidisciplinary approach. Now partners in OH&CO, Oppenheimer and Haueter brought expertise in brand strategy and design to IDEO's specialists in human factors, environments and industrial design. The design group worked with Amtrak executives from areas like marketing, mechanicals, customer service and operations. Aside from the government entity's cost constraints and stringent safety require-

ments, the designers also had to incorporate the preexisting car design from the consortium awarded the train contract: Canada's Bombardier and France's Alstom Ltd. Acela's cars blend mechanical and structural elements from European trains but are rejiggered for American tracks. Acela's "train sets" consist of locomotives at each end, a first class car, four business cars and a bistro car for a total of 304 seats.

OH&CO had previously worked on the design of AVE, the Spanish high-speed railway launched in 1992. Richardson, who saw the AVE cars in Spain before OH&CO joined IDEO's Acela team, explains one of AVE's most appealing features. "Trains differed

from culture to culture but the Spanish train had a warmth and comfortable feeling to it that would appeal to Americans," she recalls. "The interiors weren't plush. It wasn't about efficiency. It was all about the comfort of the passengers."

Drawn to the strategy behind the AVE system, Amtrak sought similar qualities. Tailoring that to the Amtrak system, however, wasn't easy. "The question we faced was: how to fit Acela into the context of what Amtrak already has in place, what its competition is, and what the marketplace is in the Northeast," explains Oppenheimer. "It was extremely important to change Amtrak's focus from pure equipment development to

the creation of an integrated set of services."

These services place passenger comfort needs first and foremost, beginning with the seating. Oversized, and with extra legroom, the seats rotate with the touch of a foot pedal to let neighbors face each other. They also have pull-down footrests and tray tables for working and eating. Neck pillows slide along a moveable band to accommodate travelers of any height. IDEO's Eisermann wanted to break up the boxy sameness of train cars. He used three separate shades of plum, green and teal, each made from the same rich weave flecked with red and yellow, and mixed them throughout the car. The business class configuration features two seats on each side of the aisle, while in first class, there are two seats on one side of the aisle, a single on the other. The arrangements alternate so there are

#### Acela Express Route

An alternative to the hassle of air and road travel, the Acela Express offers city-center to city-center service from Boston to Washington D.C. The 452-mile journey will eventually be traversed at speeds of up to 150 mph, as aging infrastructure is replaced.



doubles and singles on both sides of the train. The seats do not all face the same way. "We wanted to give the cabins a rhythm and feeling of individual space," explains Eisermann. "It gives the train a sensibility that is less like a cattle car."

Some seats face one another with "conference" tables between them. Each train has 32 of the tables, which are big enough to accommodate everything from architects' blueprints to family board games. Those tables solve a prickly problem that has long annoyed Amtrak travelers and staff alike. Passengers have always camped out in the dining car because of its tables, blocking passengers who want to sit down and eat.

The design of the bistro car also reflects that need for control of passenger flow. Gone are tables that entice passengers to linger; Acela's modern-looking cafe features a bar with attractive stools and a leather-padded rail for those who like to lean and watch the changing landscape through the car's large windows. Video monitors display the day's news from CNN. "With Acela, dining is centered less around the idea of 'table'—it's more about using a bar," explains Eisermann. "We wanted to create an area that was casual; people could sit, lean and rest. But we didn't want them to get so comfortable that they'd want to hang out there."



#### **Uniform Studies**

These sketches provided a point of discussion at focus groups. People expressed a preference for a "layered" outfit that would be comfortable in any climate and for the colors gray and teal.

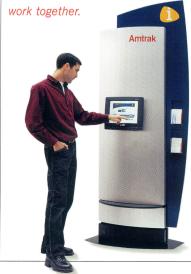


#### **First Class**

Conference tables spread throughout the train make it easy to hold on-board meetings or just plug a laptop into the electrical outlet at each seat. Cell phone and pager use is also allowed.

#### **Interactive Kiosks**

This information kiosk prototype was developed as part of the Acela brand launch to show how the graphic system and structural elements would work together.





The bistro car's modern look reinforces Acela's new, freshly prepared menu offering specials like a Maine Lobster wrap. There are new specials every two weeks.

Maneuvering through Acela's cars is easy. "Flow was a key word in terms of the train's image," notes Eisermann. "We wanted it to be softer, not as hard as traditional trains. We wanted it to look more architectonic, more home style. The interior should have a sense of rhythm and movement." Aisles are wider, lighting is brighter and warmer, and passengers don't have to strain to open heavy doors. Glass panels, which slide open automatically, separate seating areas and vestibules that house exit doors, phones and bathrooms.

Acela's designers went through as many as 200 different versions to settle on the right restroom for the trains. In contrast to the stainless steel tombs on most trains and tiny plane restrooms, Acela's restrooms are roomy and enjoy natural light filtered through sandblasted glass. The sink and mirror lighting look more like what passengers have in their homes. There's also a diaper-changing table and a full-size mirror. The ample-sized restrooms meet wheelchair requirements, a consideration throughout Acela's cars. "We shadowed a regular Amtrak traveler in a wheelchair," recalls Eisermann. "It was eye-opening to see what he went through to get on the train and use it."



Rail Caps

#### **Bistro Car**

Bar stool seating in the cafe creates a casual bistro atmosphere and encourages turnover. The red color also imparts an upbeat mood and is noticeable-a safety feature on a moving train.





The Acela brand represents an integrated set of Amtrak services in the Northeast Corridor that includes regional and commuter lines as well as the high-speed Express. Regional trains are being refurbished with amenities now found on the new Acela Express cars.



In addition to passengers, Amtrak surveyed railroad employees about customer complaints, suggestions and usage patterns; the Acela team wanted to know what the train's crew needed to do their job better. As a result, conductors have their own workspace for the first time. Previously, they had to claim a couple of seats to handle paperwork. Their new space contains computer screens where conductors can monitor things like speed levels. Conductors are also sporting new, updated uniforms created by designer Stan Herman, who also outfitted the ranks of FedEx, JetBlue and McDonald's staffers.

Amtrak has always been associated with deep blue, but it wanted a warmer shade, more akin to teal. (Purples, greens, red accents and blonde wood compliment the teal.) "We wanted a color palette that is more sophisticated than you'd normally find on a train," says Eisermann. "It's fairly muted. It's a tone-on-tone approach with some spots of color thrown in. They're not pure colors—they're complex—but they still have some saturation in them."

Amtrak also wanted a fresh name for its new high-speed service. At first it considered calling it "American Flyer," which sounded very patriotic, but the design team argued against it because America was not known for its trains. OH&CO came up with the name Acela, based on the ideas of acceleration and excellence. "It's a name that can be adapted and implemented anywhere. It's not a geographically-centered name the way trains usually are," Oppenheimer points out.

Those qualities are critical to the future of American rail travel and to the future of Amtrak, which has been plagued by deficits since it was founded 30 years ago. Amtrak has never received the public support that trains get in Europe and Japan, which have state-of-theart high-speed trains soaring along dedicated tracks. (Acela must share its tracks with commuter and freight trains, which slows it down.) Legislation passed in 1997 set a January 2003 deadline for Amtrak to break even or face restructuring or liquidation. In planning the launch of Acela, the design team knew they were dealing with a challenge far larger than aesthetics and functionality. "America is becoming more like Europe, which relies on high-speed intercity trains. That's where you make money," concludes Oppenheimer. "A large part of Amtrak's future relies on Acela."

#### **Brand Launch**

A year before launching Acela, Amtrak began familiarizing customers with the Acela name and services through backlit posters prominently displayed in Amtrak train stations.





#### **Ad Campaign**

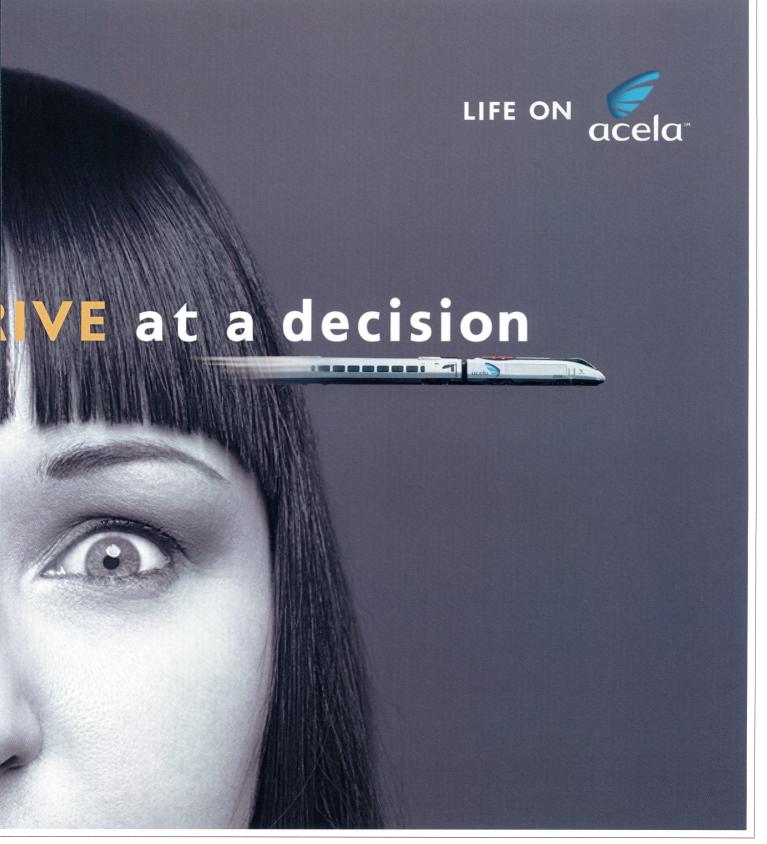
Aimed at highly educated and often affluent business travelers who make frequent Boston-NY-Washington trips, Acela ads, created by DDB Worldwide, picture life on Acela as an oasis, a place to "recharge, unwind," a smarter choice over freeway or airport gridlock.



#### Amtrak Guest Rewards<sup>™</sup>

Acela is just part of Amtrak's effort to upgrade services. The frequent travelers program, developed by OH&CO, extends across Amtrak's national network and incorporates Amtrak's new corporate identity.





nyone trying to lose weight or on a restricted diet has probably spent a fair amount of time scrutinizing the Nutrition Facts on packaged foods. It may seem dry and matter-of-fact, but when you think about it, the label is a tribute to clarity and design. Each label presents more than 30 bits of essential nutrition information in a legible, easy-to-understand manner—often in a space barely two inches high. Typeset in sans-serif Helvetica with thin and thick rules, Nutrition Facts simplifies complex information and gives it a hierarchy of importance so you don't have to search the fine print for pertinent details like serving size.

Food producers weren't always so forthcoming with nutrition facts. Less than a century ago, food labels barely identified what was inside a box. Consumers had to trust the manufacturer to use only healthy ingredients—not always a safe bet.

In 1924, the Federal Food and Drug Act gave the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authority to clamp down on bogus health claims and misleading labels. The FDA also tried to make manufacturers more accountable by requiring them to list their names and addresses on the packaging.

By 1973, packaged food makers were also required to supply nutritional values listing the amount of vitamins and minerals inside, but the manner in which this information was presented was often inconsistent and incomplete.

The Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 finally called for a major overhaul of food labels. The FDA and U.S. Department of Agriculture set out uniform guidelines for the new labels. Launched in 1994, Nutrition Facts offers a plethora of health-relevant information. What it couldn't cover, unfortunately, was how

to motivate people to eat right.

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CLASSIC QUIZ NO.1

# SOUD SOR DESIGN

The first poster in a series of @Issue classics, printed on the new Potlatch McCoy™ Uncoated.

#### PRODUCTION NOTES

#### SOURCE

Reprinted from @Issue, Volume 3. Number 2

#### INKS

Front: 4-color process + second black + satin spot varnish Back: Match red + match gray

Eight-unit 28" x 4 Komori IIV press

#### PAPER

Potlatch McCoy™ Uncoated 80 lb. Text







# @issue:

CLASSIC QUIT NO. 1

# Alphabet Soup

You don't always need to see the whole word to recognize the name of the brand. One letter will do. Used effectively, a distinctive logotype becomes the corporate signature. That is why many companies commission the design of a unique typeface, or wordmark, that incorporates clues to their line of business or operating philosophy. Other companies have adopted an off-the-shelf typeface that they have made their own through the use of designated corporate colors, upper or lower case styling, condensed or expanded leading and other techniques. As with any branding tool, a logotype must be used consistently and frequently to work. Test your familiarity with some of the best-known logotypes by naming the brand that goes with each letter in this alphabet.

ANSWERS: AUDI, BALL

JARS, CHICAGO CUBS,

FIRESTONE, GOODYEAR,

JOHNSON & JOHNSON,

CIRCLE K, LEGO, MAYTAG,

NASA, OREO, PERRIER,

QUAKER OATS, REUTERS,

GUAKER OATS, REUTERS,

YIRGIN, WESTINGHOUSE,

VIRGIN, WESTINGHOUSE,

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The sponsor of @Issue, Potlatch Corporation has long been a proponent of the use of quality design to enhance corporate identity, promote products, and establish credibility and distinction among key consumer and business audiences. Its broad line of highperformance printing papers—including Potlatch McCoy™ new McCoy™ Uncoated, Vintage® Northwest® Mountie® and Potlatch Scout<sup>™</sup>-are available in a choice of versatile finishes and shades, with both recycled and virgin fiber content. Potlatch's manufacturing systems in Minnesota are also recognized for quality by the International Standards Organization (ISO) 9002. For Potlatch, paper is just the beginning of the partnership.

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