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Harnessing the Power of Design

Outcomes from a Conference/Workshop
Convened 9-11 June 1993

To Assess Options Regarding the Formation of a
U.S. Design Council and
Office of Federal Design Quality

Sponsored by the
National Endowment for the Arts
Design Arts Program

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Background and Rationale for the Discussion

Should the U.S. establish a design promotion organization? If the answer to the question was based simply on evaluating the example of other nations, there is little doubt that the response would be yes. No claim is being made that every country has some kind of design council, but it is a fact that significant number of the nations with whom we compare ourselves economically and socially, and many countries that business and government leaders in U.S. perceive as industrial competitors have such institutions. Moreover, these countries understand that these organizations contribute to economic prosperity and, in some cases, feel they have a beneficial impact on environmental and quality of life concerns. Today, there are more than 100 design councils around the world. The litany of "believers" include Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Canada, France, Britain, Italy, Germany, Spain, Denmark, Finland and even newly formed Eastern European nations such as Poland, Slovakia and Bulgaria.

A Look at Some Precedents
Based on presentations given on the first day of the conference/workshop, the following illustrate several design promotion organization options. None is presented as a specific model for the U.S., but they demonstrate possibilities with respect to structure and size, budget and programming.

The British Design Council
• Established in 1944 as an independent government agency under the auspices of the Select Committee on Trade and Industry.
• No authority to mandate actions in either government or industry; it must influence policy through persuasion.
• A budget of about $20.5 million—$12 million in grants from the Department of Trade and Industry and $8.5 million from other sources such as publishing and consultancy fees.
• The Council’s headquarters is located in London with offices in six regions; regional offices offer services and sponsor activities tailored to the design needs of that particular area.
• In general, the program strategy over the past five years has shifted resources away from a high-profile consumer focus (exhibits and awards) to one that seeks to influence design in certain target industries—presently, clothing and textiles, furniture, and medical equipment.

• An effort has been made to identify intervention points where the Council can maximize the benefit of its efforts; the emphasis now is on design for export, CAD, materials selection and the development of international product standards.

• The Council has a staff of about 215 people; about half of them work in the region offices.

• Activities include a Design Advisory Service, a Design Consultancy Service, an Innovation Notice Board, a Materials Information Service, publishing, workshops, and the annual British Design Awards.

The Danish Design Center

• Founded in 1987, the Center is an independent foundation that serves as the activities arm of the Danish Design Council.

• It has a staff of 12 with a board of 40 persons qualified in design. The board of the center and the council are the same.

• The annual budget is about $2.5 million with $1.6 million coming from the Ministry of Industry and the remaining derived from fees for services and from publication sales.

• Most of the Center's energies are devoted to promoting design in Danish industry; other priorities are design education and training, and promotion of Danish design outside Denmark.

• Specific activities are diverse, entrepreneurial and responsive to opportunities as they arise. Ongoing projects include maintaining a database and library, offering a design management consultancy service, supporting a publications program, hosting and organizing exhibitions, running design competitions, giving three annual design awards, and working with the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Industry to develop design education policy guidelines.

International Design Center NAGOYA Inc.

• Builds on Japan's long standing commitment to design expressed in internationally recognized programs supported by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI).

• A quasi-governmental corporation organized in 1992 with a capital of $100 million as a joint venture of the Aichi Prefecture Government, the City of Nagoya, Nagoya Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chubu Economic Federation and corporate trustees from the business sector.

• Serves as a bridge of global communication between community, industry and the design profession to be an internationally oriented cultural and economic pivotal point for design-related information gathering and dispersion.
* Presently operating with a staff of 17.
* This design center will be the largest of its kind in Japan and will be housed in a new building, currently under construction, with more than 160,000 square feet of space devoted to design center activities.
* A lot of emphasis placed on the importance of design to the general public in addition to its importance to industry.
* Elements of the project are an R&D center focusing on high-tech design as it relates to product development, marketing and design management, design education and curriculum programs, corporate development services in the area of design, a design museum, a design resource center, and a shopping mart with retail outlets open to the profession, industry and the public.

**Barcelona Design Center**
* A private not-for-profit organization founded in 1973 by a group of designers and various public and private entities to promote industrial and graphic excellence for both cultural and economic purposes.
* Governed by a 45-member Board of Patrons whose honorary president is King Juan Carlos and whose chair is the Minister of Industry and Energy of the Catalonian Government.
* An annual budget of $1.7 million excluding grants and special programs; although it is not government sponsored, one third of the funds come from government agencies and the rest from private sources.
* Staff of 11.
* Activities include a Business Advisory Service analyzing the most effective roles for design in the corporation under study, a design information resource center, a national design awards program, the organization of exhibitions and competitions, and the development of design education and design management programs.

**Taiwan Design Promotion Center**
* An arm of the public/private China External Trade Development Council, the center was formed in 1979 to help raise the level of industrial design in Taiwan and improve the quality, image and competitiveness of Taiwanese products on world markets.
* Staff of about 80
* Exact budget unclear but does receive major portion of $170 million industrial design initiative sponsored by the Ministry of Economic Affairs to improve design and manufacturing quality, to enhance the perception of Taiwanese products, and to upgrade the industrial design resources and talent available within Taiwan itself.
• Nine program areas: design management, design research and development, industrial design, commercial design (i.e., graphics and identity programs), packaging design, Euro-design coordination, and three Taipei design centers—Duesseldorf, Milan and Tokyo.
• Broad range of activities including design consulting referral service, industrial design education, packaging design research and testing, product-focused design charrettes, "good design mark" awards, publications, exhibitions, and international design interaction between domestic and foreign designers.
• Center is recognized as a highly effective vehicle for liaison and coordination among designers, manufacturers, educational institutions and government agencies.

The Message Behind these Institutions
This comparative exercise could continue, indeed for many more pages. But the point is not to develop an exhaustive list. It is rather to underline the fact that an impressive number of nations are committed to nurturing design—some, given the examples of Nagoya and Taiwan, quite aggressively—as a national resource. Several articulate or imply improvements in the quality of life as a valued result of this effort. All believe critical economic benefits emerge from pursuing this strategy.

This last point is confirmed by Harvard Business School professor Robert Hayes when he discussed competitiveness in the Summer 1990 issue of the Design Management Journal in these terms:

First price, then quality, then speed and responsiveness, then the innovation cycle; what is next? Even as companies struggle with product development, it is possible to discern the next competitive challenge. It is design! And it will not be an easy one for many companies to master.

In an March 11, 1991 Fortune article, "Design that Sells and Sells and...," Brian Dumaine made the same point with these words: "After years of ferocious competition on price and quality, many companies believe that superior design will be the key to winning customers in the Nineties."

Clearly, certain countries were aware of this message long before the nineties and made design a matter of national policy. In the U.S., however, the focus on design is left to the discretion and wisdom of individual companies. The laissez faire ideals upon which we base our economy do not leave much room for intervention, however well-intentioned. More specifically, design is commonly perceived as "extra," the aesthetic veneer on an otherwise functional and already acceptable product, service or environment. In this sense, design adds value but is not regarded as
essential. Abraham Maslow's well known "hierarchy of needs" perpetuates this thinking when it assigns design to the last category in which human beings seek satisfaction.

Those committed to the principles behind the establishment of a design council or some other design promotion organization, of course, understand things differently. They believe that design is anything but an "extra," that in business decisions and as a matter of policy, it is pervasive, an element that should be considered in areas ranging from strategy and conceptual development to marketing and production, from identity and communications problems to product development and architecture.

The problem in the U.S. is to document these outcomes and create a voice that conveys the power of design. The documentation has to demonstrate that design is a management tool, an organizational asset—not a aesthetic "extra." It also has to include ways of accurately measuring the benefits that accrue from an investment in design. The voice has to actually be a chorus combining support from businesses, the design professions, academic and strategic experts as well as government leaders. And the message that emerges from this ensemble has to be delivered to Congress, to the President and to the heads of various government agencies. The challenge is anything but easy. It is one that has been attempted before (see the proposed 1985 Design Council bill HR 3514 and the 1991 Draft Executive Order in the Appendices section of this document). Fortunately, there are indications that renewing efforts in this area might have a better chance of success than in the past.

Prospects for the Future
One advantage to the present initiative is that it builds on a legacy of design promotion achievements. With no claim to being complete, it is worth citing a few elements that are part of this history. The National Endowment for the Arts Design Arts Program (NEA/DAP) has, since 1972, sponsored an array of activities under the auspices of its Federal Design Improvement Program (a concise overview of this endeavor is one of this report's Appendices), including the Federal Architecture Project, the Federal Graphics Improvement Program, the Federal Design Assemblies, various design awards programs, charrettes, and a relatively new architecture peer review process. On a regional level, Design Michigan, funded in part by the NEA/DAP, has assisted companies in that state with making the link between good design and good business. Over the past few years, Boston's Design Management Institute, with support from NEA/DAP, has started to put together a series of case studies that demonstrate the value of design as an organizational strategy. In the field of architecture, the National Trust's Main Street program has helped many communities exploit design as a tool in economic development. Recently,
BusinessWeek has published an annual issue highlighting the best designed products, and this year, Fortune co-sponsored a design competition that honored corporations that made the most effective use of design in all dimensions of their businesses from offices, factories and retail outlets to letterhead, products and packaging.

Perhaps the most heartening sign of progress, however, is that voices from quarters previously silent about design are acknowledging its importance. Speaking at the conference/workshop, Deborah Wince-Smith, Senior Fellow at the Council on Competitiveness and former Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Technology Policy, noted the essential role of design in translating high-tech research into high-tech products. She suggested that design needed to be integrated into a seamless development process that made a team of all the talents necessary to move a product from the technological innovation and concept stages through manufacturing and marketing.

In another presentation, the Honorable Kent H. Hughes, Assistant Deputy Secretary of Commerce, mentioned several areas where design had the potential to make contributions. It might be incorporated as a component of the Manufacturers Extension Partnership Program. It could have a roll in successfully refocusing companies from military to civilian production. It was essential in the technology transfer process, and he felt it could be a useful dimension in a national information infrastructure where the government acted as a data and research resource center for business and industry.

Beyond the boundaries of the conference/workshop, a December 1992 meeting of design leaders with Christopher Hyland, deputy political director of the Clinton-Gore Transition Team, resulted in a proposal for a three-part national design agenda. The Strategic Design Initiative would establish a business-government partnership that, according to a March 1993 article in I.D. magazine, "would facilitate the matching and collaboration between designers, technologists, manufacturers and investors in key areas of innovation, such as communications, transportation, medical care, energy and environmental management." The Urban Design Initiative would develop programs to create communities of "unparalleled productivity and pleasure" based on a vision blending "beauty, sustainability, safety and plurality, advanced communications, construction, transportation and environmental technologies." The Inclusive Design Initiative would help "remove the barriers to full participation in society...create institutions, monuments and products that include everyone."

One conclusion that can be drawn from the Little Rock meeting and report is that design is attracting the attention and interest of a broader constituency. In this context, it appears that there is a more receptive environment for creating a permanent, visible and dynamic advocate for design in
the United States. The NEA/DAP sponsored conference/workshop and this report, then, are both timely and necessary. The goal is not to copy any of the international models mentioned earlier. It is, rather, to take the first steps toward discovering in those examples and in the thinking of design and business leaders, an avenue that uniquely fits the needs and aspirations of an América that understands (or at least senses) the value of design.
Options—Four Scenarios

Based on international precedent, a rationale that affirms the economic and quality of life contributions of design, and what appears to be a growing momentum to take more dramatic steps in the arena of design promotion, we confront a special opportunity, a junction where the example of others, a crescendo of thinking and the particulars of history create the chance to act decisively. It is to take advantage of this situation that this conference/workshop was convened by NEA/DAP. But with our uniquely American set of economic, political and geographic circumstances, how exactly should we proceed? A laissez faire attitude—one that disdains outside interference—prevails among many of this country's corporate leaders. Design as it relates to business strategy and quality lacks a coherent constituency and depth of expertise. And the size and diversity of our nation makes a single design management focus difficult to achieve and support.

To respond to these circumstances, after a day and a half of presentations, participants were divided into four working groups. Each group was asked to develop a U.S. design council/office of federal design quality and outline the organization's mission, structure, activities and funding. Each team also had to discuss a strategy/implementation plan. These four scenarios are outlined in the following pages.
Profile One—American Design Development Office (ADD)

Mission
To create an environment for influencing design quality in a public/private partnership organized to improve American competitiveness and social inclusiveness.

Structure
The American Design Development Office would be an independent public/private agency with a broad community-based constituency within industry, various levels of government, academic institutions, and regional and local communities. It would have a small headquarters staff lead by an entrepreneurial director. Oversight would be provided by an interdisciplinary advisory board.

As an institution, the ADD would, like the National Trust for Historic Preservation, be a hybrid public/private organization. Ideally, it would piggyback activities on existing federal design programs such as those in Commerce, DOT, the Post Office and Veterans Affairs. It would build partnerships with other levels of government and the private sector including links to state and local organizations, corporations, business associations and educational institutions. It would also network with similar design promotion entities abroad.

Activities
- Write and distribute design case studies.
- Provide professional schools with information and curricula on managing design.
- Prepare programs on design that reach all levels of education.
- Establish a network to share design education resources and ideas.
- Make the economic and social benefits of design explicit and visible.
- Operate through existing organizations to:
  - Improve the design competition process
  - Create internships
  - Initiate/Refine awards programs
- Foster design excellence at the federal level as a model for the private sector.
- Create a system for design quality review within the Federal government.
• Profile examples of poor design as a method for raising design consciousness.
• Stimulate design activities at the grassroots level—Where the People Are
• Inaugurate and publicize an annual "State of Design" report reviewing the status of design in both the public and private realms.
• Share design information via an Internet DESIGNET
• Nurture regional design activities building on ADD's resources and expertise.
• Address design responses to environmental and resource problems.

Funding

Initial financial support for the American Design Development Office might be made available by reallocating money designated for existing federal programs. Later, it should be a line item in the federal budget similar to Congressional appropriations for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Perhaps a portion of export tax credits could be allocated to the ADD. Other revenues could come from grant support and royalties.

Implementation

In the short-term, the ADD might be created by an executive order. Over the long-term, ADD would be established legislatively by passing the appropriate authorization and appropriations bills.

To realize both strategies, a lobbying effort—combining voices from the various design professions and business—would be initiated to garner the attention and commitment of the Executive Branch and to build support for ADD on the local and regional levels as well as among members of Congress. A bottoms-up, broad community-based implementation strategy would include sharing a better understanding of the value of design with business executives in small- and medium-sized firms as well as state and city political leaders.

To get the ball rolling, design activities might be started within various federal agencies—e.g., exploring the importance of design as part of Commerce's Manufacturers Extension Partnership Program, starting a design development program as a facet of the Small Business Administration, having the EPA initiate K-12 education packages on environmental issues.
Perhaps some interest in ADD could also be created by linking it with Vice President Gore's initiative to "reinvent government."

More directly, an executive order creating ADD could be drafted and circulated among the President's advisors. An multi-disciplinary Design Advisory Board might be organized with representatives from the design professions, industry, the arts, education and government to highlight the breadth, significance and legitimacy of establishing a national design agency.

Any implementation program needs to take into account what is legislatively possible; what kind of testimony has to be prepared to make ADD happen; what can be done and what cannot be done through NEA's Design Arts Program; what is necessary to get the attention of the President and have him issue an Executive Order; and what aspects of design can be productively linked to other important issues such as protecting intellectual property and safety concerns.

**Working Group Members**

- Arnold Wasserman (Chair)
- Sheila de Bretteville
- Bruce Nussbaum
- Michael Rock
- Sally Schauman
- Roger Schluntz
- Noel Zeller
Profile Two—The U.S. Design Council

Mission
To increase U.S. competitiveness through the promotion of design excellence. (This mission is based on the assumption that design is a vital tool for improving the competitiveness and quality of American products and companies. It is important to note that job growth is a likely benefit of a more competitive America. This group also believed that there would be a natural and positive impact on quality of life and social conditions as a result of the emphasis on competitiveness.)

Structure
A U.S. Design Council would be established within the Department of Commerce and be guided in its programs by a Board of Advisors from the public and private sector. An executive director with a small staff would carry out and coordinate program activities at the national level with additional staff at the Department of Commerce's regional offices.

In the near-term, the audiences for Council activities would be business executives, especially in the areas of marketing and product development, business schools, new companies and firms undergoing a major transformation including those in the defense industry. Over the long-term, the public—notably school children and consumers—would become a target of Council initiatives.

Activities
The Council would not focus on federal design quality. It would stress programs that created partnerships and strategic alliances between the Council and its audiences. Activities would fall into three categories:

1. Building a Base of Knowledge and Expertise
   - Developing design case studies
   - Defining standards—What Is Excellence?

2. Outreach—Building Networks and Relationships
   - Creating an electronic database and resource center
   - Mounting exhibitions
   - Developing career awareness materials
   - Making presentations at business conferences
   - Giving design support to businesses through extension programs, publications, seminars and referrals
3. Incentive Programs
   - Giving awards for design excellence and excellent design processes
   - Being an advocate for strong intellectual property protection
   - Promoting tax breaks for design investments
   - Providing grants to support design excellence activities

Funding
For a five-year seed period, the U.S. Design Council would be 100 percent funded by the Federal government. Later this would be reduced as other resources were developed including the procurement of matching monies for specific programs, charging fees for services, and seeking private foundation and corporate support. Perhaps states could be tapped to finance some of the costs associated with the regional offices.

Implementation
Implementation would have several elements:
- Analyzing previous efforts to create a Design Council (e.g. HR 3514).
- Preparing of a detailed plan of action.
- Broad-based lobbying effort:
  — Raising private funds and building a coalition of corporate and professional support (e.g., get five corporations to contribute $250,000 each)
  — Writing the necessary authorization and appropriation legislation
  — Finding advocates in Congress and the Executive Branch including the Vice President and the Secretary of Commerce
  — Preparing supporting documentation and lobbying materials
- Creating a voluntary design council advocacy board headed by a persuasive director.
- Developing a precise council structure, organization plan, and schedule of activities.
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<th>Working Group Members</th>
<th>Don Rorke (Chair)</th>
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Profile Three—National Design Partnership

Mission
Promotes the recognition of design innovation as central to the continuous reinvigoration of the nation's global competitiveness, prosperity, and quality of life and work. The Partnership also promotes the development of a collaborative infrastructure to insert design at the core of an integrated product development process in public and private organizations from local to national levels.

Structure
The National Design Partnership would be an independent public/private partnership. It would be co-chaired by the Vice President of the United States and a corporation or university president. Its advisory body would be called the Forum and would be composed of the following presidentially-appointed members:

- An Undersecretary of Commerce
- The Director of the NEA Design Arts Program
- The Head of the American Chamber of Commerce
- The Head of the American Design Council
- One Congressperson
- Four Design Leaders
- Three University Presidents
- One K-12 Representative
- Three Corporate Presidents
- One Labor Representative

In terms of day-to-day operations, the Partnership would be under the leadership of the Design Advocate General, a persuasive, energetic and visionary individual. The staff itself would be small and responsive. The central office would be located in Washington, DC.

Activities
The Partnership would undertake several different kinds of programs. To support competitiveness, it would:

- Network, support and fund existing design advocacy programs from the local to the national level, affiliating with these organizations to enhance impact and credibility.
• Provide a technical assistance program, in conjunction with professional
design organizations, to start-up firms, small- and medium-sized
manufacturers, and government.
• Participate in the Commerce Department's Manufacturers Extension
Partnership Program.
• Establish a library and electronic database on design as a management
resource.
• Fund design management research.

To stimulate and acknowledge design excellence, the Partnership would:
• Establish a Design Process Award with entry procedures similar to those
used for the Malcolm Baldrige Award, to honor and promote as a model
the successful integration of the design process into product and project
development. Applicants could be from the private sector or government.
• Advocate adding design process as a criteria in the Baldrige Awards
program.

To increase understanding about the importance of design, the Partnership
would:
• Develop design curricula for grades K-12 and for business schools.
• Write an annual report on the "State of Design" addressed to Congress,
the Executive Branch and professional organizations.
• Advocate adding a design representative to the Council on Sustainable
Development.

Funding

The National Design Partnership would be supported by funds from three
sources. Government agencies, such as Commerce and the NEA, would
designate funds to the Partnership. Corporate giving and foundation grants
would be used to generate an endowment. Finally, fees would be collected
as a revenue stream. Start-up funding would be dependent on corporate
grants.

Implementation

The Partnership would be implemented through an Executive Order.
Initially it should focus on concrete, quantifiable economic goals. Assess
what is out there and invent as few new entities as possible. Stress
people/communication/network—not a place/location in Washington.
Working Group

Members

Katherine McCoy (Chair)
Jack Beduhn
Paul Hawken
David Kelly
David Lee
Boone Powell
Rita Sue Siegel
Frederick Skaer
Scenario Four—U.S. Commission on Design and Technology Innovation (DTI)

Mission
Integrate design processes in government and industry to stimulate economic growth and environmental quality.

One goal of the U.S. Commission on Design and Technology Innovation is to reshape the economy from a post-cold war configuration to one equipped to meet the challenge of the global marketplace. A second goal is to foster communication among industries and between industry and the government.

Structure
DTI is seen as an independent federal agency with links and on-going working relationships with the private sector and state governments. The Commission itself would be composed of these constituencies:

- Federal Agency Representatives—e.g. Commerce, HUD, DOT, NEA, State Department
- State and Regional Representatives
- Industry and Business Representatives
- Professional Design Society Leaders
- Academic Leaders

Organizationally, at the federal level, DTI would operate out of the Office of the Vice President. With support from cabinet officers, however, there would be mechanisms for promoting DTI objectives and activities within a broad range of relevant agencies and programs.

DTI would also develop an outreach strategy to create partnerships at the state, regional and local levels. These would include cooperative ventures with departments of economic development, urban planning agencies and arts councils.

Activities
- Identify opportunities to take advantage of design resources.
- Support design research.
- Promote innovation.
- Provide strategic direction on using design effectively.
- Demonstrate the value of design in addressing environmental issues.
• Develop and disseminate design education material.
• Foster global communication on design issues.
• Advocate regulatory reform from a design perspective.
• Create design recognition programs.
• Act as a design promotion organization.

Funding

The U.S. Commission on Design and Technology Innovation would be funded with a federal appropriation with matching monies coming from state and private sources.

Implementation

To make DTI a reality, these steps are suggested:
• Work with the House Subcommittee on Technology, Environment & Aviation to combine the recommendations of this workshop with a new version of HR 3514.
• Solicit the support and commitment of federal agencies with design ownership (i.e., responsibility) such as Commerce with responsibility for competitiveness and technology, HUD and DOT with responsibility for urban design and infrastructure, and NEA, Interior and Education with responsibility for culture and education, to the recommendations of this conference/workshop.
• Initiate a Vice Presidential Task Force to:
  Research and define the problem
  Analyze and identify options
  Build and ensure support
  Submit a report to the President and Cabinet
• Prepare an Executive Order to establish DTI.

Overall, the goal is to foster marriage of technology and design. This is the heart of the U.S. competitive edge.
Working Group Members

Tom Hardy (Chair)
Robert Blaich
Alan Brangman
Edward Feiner
Deborah Mitchell
Deane Richardson
Lella Vignelli
Patrick Whitney
Consensus and Issues Requiring Further Consideration

While there was uniform support for creating some kind of national design promotion organization, there were several views regarding the character and details of such an entity. The paragraphs that follow distill areas of agreement and those still open to debate. The organization of this material mirrors the organization of the proposals prepared by the four teams.

**Mission**

The consensus was that the design agency should have a dual focus. On the one hand, its mandate should address the value of design as economic tool—a means of enhancing corporate competitiveness, improving productivity, stimulating prosperity and job growth. On the other hand, and equally important, it should promote design as a strategy for improving the quality of life—a way of creating better working and living environments, reducing environmental damage and promoting sustainability, and making the benefits of design excellence available to all groups in our society.

It is worth noting that while everyone believed the quality of life goals were needed, there were some reservations about including them within the scope of the mission because they made implementing and financing the agency and designing its programs significantly more complex. The extended focus would bring with it a broad constituency of individuals, government agencies and professional groups, all of whom would inevitably be involved in the debate looking for some common ground regarding structure, organization and funding.

Some felt a narrower economic mission might not achieve as much, but it might be easier to realize in terms of building consensus and allocating scarce resources. Others commented that perhaps the economic objectives
could serve as a vehicle for establishing the agency, and that later the organization could extend its perspective to include the quality of life concerns. A few believed the two-part agenda should be explicit from the beginning.

On a related theme, three groups included improving design quality within the government as a component of their mission. One explicitly stated that this significant objective should be handled by some other organization. Again, the breadth of the constituency was the issue. All acknowledged that exploiting the value of design was as important to the government as it was to the private sector. Indeed, in one proposal, the government was to serve as a model of design excellence. Those that spoke for limiting activities to the business audience, however, suggested that nurturing design excellence in government was quite a different task—in terms of motive and approach—from trying to do the same thing within private industry. To these people, the risk was that instead of doing one thing well, energy would be spread across a spectrum of activities none of which would receive the attention and support it deserved.

**Structure**

As a result of the group discussion following the four presentations, most of the participants felt that any design advocacy organization should be an independent, quasi-government entity. The rationale was twofold. First, independence enhanced the visibility and importance of design and opened the way for greater networking and partnership with the private sector. Second, it recognized that no one existing federal agency fully integrated in its mission the many ways design might be used to improve business and the quality of life. If the organization were housed in one federal department, the other federal agencies would probably ignore it, and it would fall victim to the NIH (Not Invented Here) government syndrome.

Another area of agreement was the creation of an interdisciplinary, broad-based operating board composed of federal agency heads, business and labor leaders, design experts, educators and communicators, with a small staff and dynamic director to refine and carry out the programs.
Another popular concept was the creation of a formal regional network to implement and disseminate programs. This was not seen as a substitute for work at the national level but as a way to tailor activities to local needs. Alternatively, two models indicated they would build partnerships at different levels of government and with various private organizations and associations but were not specific about how this would be achieved. The implication was that the approach would be more opportunistic rather than bureaucratic or formally organized.

On another topic related to structure, some participants were convinced that a critical way for the design organization to influence the government agenda was to piggyback design onto existing agencies and programs. Again, some voiced skepticism about interagency cooperation and the willingness of one agency to let another comment on, let alone shape its activities. Others responded that with the appropriate Executive Branch mandate and support from agency heads that design could be lifted to a higher priority across a range of existing government initiatives.

Another discussion related to structure revolved around the difference, in government parlance, between a "council" and a "commission." The council was understood as an advisory body, therefore having less influence on policy making. The commission (like the SEC and other such entities), on the other hand, was seen as having the power to actually mandate certain rules and activities. The consensus was that it was more desirable for the design advocacy organization to have a commission-like structure and authority. No one, however, knew exactly how to go about building support for and creating this kind of body.

It is interesting to note that among the foreign design council presentations, the councils with the most economic influence and resources were those that focused on business concerns and were very closely associated with a department of trade or industry (Nagoya and Taiwan). Independent councils generally had more diverse objectives, a broader constituency and smaller budgets (Britain, Denmark and Barcelona).

**Activities**

Together, the four working groups enumerated a variety of program
possibilities. Indeed, the breadth of activities was so extensive that the problem, given limited budgets and staffing, would be selecting wisely rather than being concerned about not having enough to do. Supporting design research, developing design materials and curricula for schools, and creating an interactive design resource center were ideas on everyone's list. Awards programs and networking with existing design promotion activities and organizations were also common proposals.

Additional options included offering design assistance and professional referral services. Other popular actions were demonstrating how design can be a valuable tool in addressing environmental concerns, preparing an annual "state of design" report as a vehicle for assessing progress and publicizing the importance of design, and acting as an advocate for strong intellectual property rights.

Some activities discussed less extensively but still valid for consideration were: mounting exhibitions, developing career awareness materials, promoting tax breaks for design investments, coordinating internships, and establishing a federal design quality review program.

In a sense, this list was an exercise in brainstorming rather than a plan detailing precise pathways for action. A more elaborate analysis linking goals and techniques would be necessary before any final activity recommendations could be made. Another point is to note that, while most groups endorsed improving the quality of design within government as part of their mission statements, few suggested specific ways to actually move towards that objective.

**Funding**

The financial support of the design agency was another area where suggestions were more in the nature of brainstorming. One group thought initial funds could come from corporations; most looked to the federal government for start-up monies. All came to the conclusion that, over the long-term, both public and private sources should be tapped to underwrite this endeavor. Seeking grants, building an endowment, charging fees for services, soliciting state support, and enlisting corporate assistance were all strategies considered in this category.
No one attempted to estimate the magnitude of the funds needed to successfully support the design entity. In the various council presentations that hallmarked the first day of the workshop, budgets varied from a low of $2.5 million to over $100 million depending on the type of programming and capital costs associated with the venture. There was also no way those at the meeting could assess the private sector’s willingness to support a design organization. The Sloan Foundation and the Pew Memorial Trust were mentioned as potential sources for grant support.

Implementation

None of the workshop participants were experts in political strategy. In this context, they shared their thoughts regarding implementation but advised seeking additional counsel to develop a realistic plan.

The most commonly proposed tactic was to use an executive order as the immediate way to create the design organization. Legislation was recognized as a more permanent approach to establishing an organization, but it was acknowledged that this would take a significant amount of money, lobbying and time. Ultimately, however, most believed the legislative avenue was the way to go over the long-term.

Supporting both the executive order and the legislative strategies, lobbying was considered an essential element in creating any design promotion organization. One group stressed working with the House Subcommittee on Technology, Environment & Aviation which is reviewing HR 3514, the 1985 Design Council bill. This team also advocated involving various agency heads (Commerce, Labor, Transportation, and HUD) and the Vice President. Others added soliciting endorsements from corporations and professional organizations, preparing lobbying materials and information, and encouraging grassroots design promotion activities as an expression of support and an indication of the need for an national entity. No doubt all these activities would become part of a comprehensive lobbying program.

One of the major concerns in terms of implementation was establishing a recognizable voice and expertise in the area of design promotion. Presently, support for the idea is spread among diverse groups all of whom
understandably have other unrelated items on their political agendas. This can result in distracting messages and dilute the impact of lobbying for the design organization. To overcome this problem, one suggestion was to create an interdisciplinary volunteer design advisory board to act as the advocate for some sort of U.S. design council (or commission). This would help focus attention on the issue and single out a range of experts who could later testify to the importance establishing a national design organization.

Having the right facts was also a concern in the implementation process. There was a need to be clear about goals and to persuasively articulate the benefits of exploiting design as a business and quality of life resource. Designers and enlightened executives were convinced that design is fundamental, but it was not yet a priority among the public. The conclusion was that, as a facet of any lobbying program, materials were needed to convincingly present the case for design.

**Selected Participant Comments**

(Some of these may be woven into the Executive Summary or made into side bars in the final layout.)

**David Lee**—"The process is important here. It is not about making things. We must create a culture of good design. This is why the quality of life issues—and not just the business concerns—are vital to this discussion. We may need a Trojan horse to get things started, but we must never be our broad agenda."

**Arnold Wasserman**—"If jobs are the Trojan horse, go for jobs. If it is final competitiveness, use that. Hidden agendas are O.K. Let's select a focus to get us in the door."

**Edward Feiner**—"The hidden agenda, Trojan Horse approach may not work. We have to deal with these issues holistically and legislate ways to make them permanently part of the way we think and do business."

**Gary Cadenhead**—"The design process paradigm has value in the public and private sector. We believe this. We want to propagate this perspective. But how do we propagate it, insert it into the thinking of other leaders? As a model, Jack Kennedy's "whiz kinds" brought a micro-economic approach to decision making in the Defense Department. If we want to bring design
thinking into the decision making of government and corporations, then I think we must go via the Commerce Department. It is the only agency that can have a significant impact, the one that can best integrate the value of design into the decision making process."

*Rita Sue Siegel*—"We must involve the best PR talents possible. We have to make our message entertainment and keep it visible."

*Lella Vignelli*—"Play up the environment. Touch all the hot spots. Hit them from many points of view."

*Tom Hardy*—"The Council on Competitiveness may be able to help in this effort. It can be a persuasive voice."

*Boone Powell*—"We have focused on design in government. But we have only paid a little attention to the private sector where all the products are produced."

*Kristina Goodrich*—"Passing a law costs money. Also know that in pursuing the legislative approach that there will always be someone against you and they may have more money than you do."

**Who Said This?**

"Whatever message we deliver, it has to be short, focused and repeatable. When we have that meeting with the Secretary of Commerce, we want him to remember and be able to repeat our mission to everyone. I don't know what the right words are—competitiveness, environmental quality, prosperity, social inclusiveness—but whatever they are, they have to be simple and easy to understand."

**Who Said This?**

"In addition to talking about formal organizations, we may want to consider certain gorilla tactics. Design awards and working with existing design and business networks may be yield valuable exposure and support."
Appendices

1. Workshop Format and Agenda
2. Participant List
3. Key Activities Initiated as Part of the Federal Design Improvement Program
4. HR 3514—A Bill Introduced October 7, 1985, to Establish a U.S. Design Council