

Why Organizations that Rely on Experience Need to Rethink Their Space Now

Your space is supposed to be your brand's greatest ambassador. It should tell your story, embody your values, and create experiences that people remember long after they leave. Instead, most experiential organizations—including hospitals, museums, schools, cultural centers—operate in spaces that actively work against their mission.

Lobbies that confuse visitors. Sterile environments that drain inspiration. Facilities that look impressive in marketing materials but feel disconnected from the transformative experiences they're meant to support. These organizations are paying premium prices for spaces that undermine everything they're trying to accomplish.

What's an experiential organization to do about it? Start thinking in terms of [Return on Architecture \(ROA\)](#). ROA isn't about creating pretty spaces—it's about creating purposeful ones that amplify your brand promise and deliver on your mission through every interaction.

"When your space contradicts your brand, visitors feel it immediately," says Stephen Giorgio, CEO of Lammey + Giorgio. "Whether you're shaping minds, hosting exhibits, or caring for patients, your environment either supports your mission or sabotages it."

The Unique Challenges Experiential Organizations Face

Organizations that depend on creating meaningful experiences operate under a different set of pressures. Every spatial decision affects perception, engagement, and outcomes. Here are a few challenges that are common amongst this category.

1. Misalignment Between Physical Space and Brand Promise

When space doesn't reflect your mission or identity, the disconnect affects perception, loyalty, and impact. Visitors sense the contradiction before they even realize what's wrong.

2. Outdated Visitor or Patient Experience

Environments that feel clinical, confusing, or uninspired make it harder to deliver care, education, or inspiration effectively. The space becomes a barrier to the very outcomes you're trying to create.

3. Sustainability and Operational Inefficiencies

Rising utility costs and poor building performance strain both budgets and environmental credibility. Inefficient systems undermine your mission while draining resources that should support programs.

4. Underutilized or Disconnected Spaces

Spaces that don't flow well or adapt to changing needs waste valuable square footage and leave users frustrated. Poor circulation and inflexible layouts constrain program possibilities. These challenges compound each other. When your space doesn't support your mission, every other aspect of your organization has to work harder to overcome that fundamental disconnect.

Why Traditional Design Processes Fail Experiential Organizations

Traditional design processes trade impact for aesthetics, and experiential organizations pay the highest price. Architecture firms create spaces that photograph beautifully but fail to support the complex, nuanced experiences that define these organizations' missions.

This approach treats experiential organizations like any other client, ignoring the fundamental reality that your space is your brand. Every corridor, every entrance, every interaction point either reinforces your mission or undermines it.

"We don't design spaces that look like they support your mission," Giorgio explains. "We design spaces that actually do support your mission. That's the difference between impressive architecture and impactful architecture."

When you take a more strategic, return-driven approach to architectural design, experiential organizations can support:

1. Brand Values: Design that reinforces what your brand stands for

Spaces are curated with purpose to extend your brand beyond your website or brochure. Every hallway, entrance, and interaction point tells your story. Thoughtful, experiential design builds emotional connections with your audience.

2. User Needs: Programming that prioritizes what people need

From visitors to staff, experience-driven planning considers how people move, feel, and engage within your space. It's about creating intuitive, immersive experiences that reflect your mission.

3. Comfort + Performance: Environments optimized for impact

By connecting design elements with metrics that improve occupant well-being and operational throughput, your space can lead to happier users, better outcomes, and more efficient operations.

4. Future Growth: Planning that allows for your next evolution

An ROA-driven process ensures flexibility is built into the design, so when your program or audience grows, your space can evolve with it. Smart phasing strategies let you plan for now, next, and what's after that.

What's Your ROA?

If your space isn't actively supporting your mission, it's undermining everything you're trying to accomplish. Experiential organizations can't afford the luxury of beautiful but ineffective environments.

ROA gives experiential organizations a framework for creating spaces that amplify mission impact rather than just housing programs. It's about designing environments that make every interaction more meaningful, more memorable, and more aligned with your brand promise.

Ask yourself:

- Does our space reinforce our brand or contradict it?
- Are visitors having the experience we intend them to have?
- Is our environment helping or hindering our mission outcomes?
- Can our space adapt as our programs and audience evolve?

Because that's what ROA is about for experiential organizations. Creating spaces where brand, purpose, and experience finally align. Where every square foot supports your mission and every visitor interaction reinforces your values.

Your workspace is an investment. Are you getting the returns you deserve?

Your space is an asset. With the right design and strategy, your space can reduce expenses and maintenance costs and increase wealth and resilience.

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