

Theater

Branding may be defined as “the identification of a product with a particular manufacturer,” or “the use of advertising, distinctive design, and other means, to make consumers associate an identifiable product with a specific manufacturer.” This strategy for branding can also be applied to the movie-going experience. As theater designers, we create environments that will be consistent with the experience operators desire for their guests. The overall movie-going experience is the operator’s product and, by means of appropriate design, the physical surroundings of the theater will contribute toward defining that product.

AUDIENCE

The first consideration in branding a theater is to identify the target audience relative to the venue. The theater location, movie genres played, food service options and comfort levels, tend to dictate the target audience. Once identified, the theater should be designed to reflect the appropriate atmosphere to support the desired movie-going experience, and will help establish the theater’s branding. Consistency in details and elements, finish-materials, colors, lighting and signage, all serve to create

BRANDING

Presently all the rage, the “branding” concept applies equally to theaters as a prime differentiator. **JKR Partners** helps to identify some of the principal considerations – like target audience and specific branding – that make for a unique and more memorable movie-going experience.

and reinforce the brand. The branding should also be holistic: starting outside the building and main entrance, and continuing on into the lobby, through the promenade and culminating in the auditorium. A similar branding approach should also be carried into the ancillary public spaces. Restrooms, lounges and event areas should be developed with similar design considerations in mind. In some cases, the desired branding of the theater will be so literal that a particular theme is created; often referenc-






RAISING THE BAR – Entry to Regal's "RPX" auditorium at its New York, E-Walk 13 location brands the premium movie experience to be presented inside; while the distinctive lobby environment (left), using upscale materials and finishes, supports the branding of a sophisticated theater-and-dining venue

ing cultures, history or fantasy. With this approach, the desire is for audiences to feel transported to another place or time.

MULTIPLE-BRANDING

Some theaters may require multiple-branding. This becomes necessary when a variety of movie-going experiences is offered within the same venue – such as VIP seating, alternative food service and dining, and premium movie presentations. For example, if a movie theater offers isolated VIP seating, then the area designated may need a distinctive, upscale environment, different from the rest of the theater. More spacious auditorium seating with higher-end finishes and lighting may also be in order. This distinctive environment serves to “brand” the VIP experience for the guests. Or, if a premium movie experience is offered, the associated auditor-

ium should be identified and branded in a unique manner from the others. This branding typically begins at the auditorium entry with a distinctive design advertising the premium experience to be offered inside.

The movie-going experience should also be memorable, and the theater environment making a lasting impression. Exhibitors have opportunity to create the desired environment and experience for their guests which will serve to brand their theaters in a unique manner while differentiating from the competition. 

“Theater-branding should be holistic as well as carried over into ancillary public spaces. Sometimes, the branding may be so literal that a particular theme is created, the desire being for audiences to feel transported to another place or time.”