

Brown Bookstore Renewal Initiative

Staff Focus Group # 4

February 1

Participants:

- Judy Kelley
- Mathew Young
- Ben Tilchin
- Norman (Bubba) Morse
- A. Estes Clarke
- Mania Dardeen

Focus Group was facilitated by Manny Cunard

Discussion area: **The Look of the Store; Color, Design and Theme**

The fourth *Store Renewal Focus Group* was held on Thursday, February 1, at 3 pm. For reasons that were left un-explained, the facilitator had a difficult time staying on task during the nearly 2 hour discussion. However, even with more than a few extended conversations outside the scope of the Focus Group, we did manage to identify a number of important attributes and conditions important to creating a store look supportive of the mission and vision established.

After providing an update on the progress of the Renewal Project, the initial conversation of the group focused on the broad issues related to the store look and feel. It was determined that the renovation/renewal should address the public address system in the store, making it possible to provide quality background music throughout the real areas. Upgrading of the Public Address system would also solve many existing problems related to notification aid announcements.

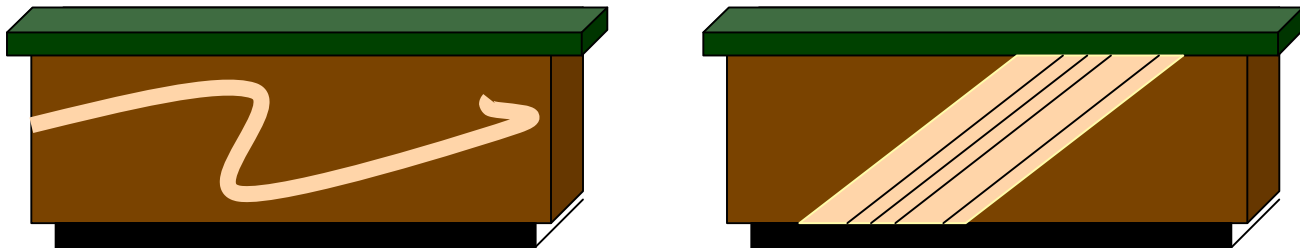
It is the opinion of the Group that the store needs to set a higher standard regarding cleanliness of the store upon the completion of the renovations. It was concluded that the store is much too large and requires more dedicated support than the present custodial staff can handle. As a high volume public space, there needs to be an assessment of the level of service and staffing appropriate for the size and the type of service the store provides. The present staff works diligently to maintain the building and should be commended for the excellent work they do, but with the completion of the renovation and the establishment of a higher standard during operating hours, the present staff fte is simply not enough to complete the tasks during regular operating hours.

The attributes identified as important priorities for the *look and feel* of the store are as follows:

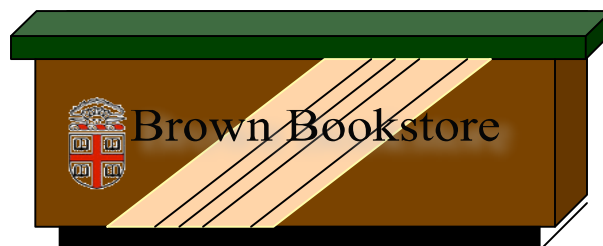
- The store should be very welcoming to the customer. A welcoming environment and entrance is essential as the store works to create a Positive Buying Experience.
- Lighting is a major issue in the current store. The present lighting scheme is inefficient both in terms of level of light and quality of light in a retail environment.
- Every effort should be made to take full advantage of any natural light in the building. The covered windows on the second level area that presently serving as the textbook department should be opened up.
- One of the most important attributes identified by the group that is critical to a positive Buying experience is the Customer Service priority. The group felt strongly that the Customer Service Desk should be up-front in the store, available to all customers as they enter the store.
- The store needs more places to sit and to read. As is evident by the heavy use of the limited number of seating areas presently in the store, people who frequent the store tend to enjoy staying for awhile. There should be a significant increase in the number of seating areas in the renovated space, located throughout the store.
- The possibility of introducing a new Café in the store was considered to be an important priority in creating a positive feel and look for the store. An assessment of the proposed location was re-confirmed as the correct location by the group.
- It was determined that the look of the store should include both a light and a dark palette of color as well as hard and soft surfaces.

A summary of recommended colors and surfaces is as follows:

- Use wood finishes throughout the store, mixing dark and light woods (maple and walnut finishes, or bamboo and hickory). Wood finishes are recommended for the following:
- All fixtures and all counter and display units. Finishes could be a combination of light and dark wood as shown below:



Example of possible use of inlayed color to break the dark finishes on counters, etc.



- It was recommended that the store primary walkways be finished in a hard surface material, possibly laminated wood flooring and that selected retail display areas (clothing, gifts) be carpeted.
- The seating areas in the store should be carpeted or should be finished in wood laminate with area rugs, creating a warm feel.

Color Scheme:

It was general agreed that the overall color scheme of the store should be earth tones./ soft colors, with perhaps some stronger colors used for signage and for selected areas (children's area, etc.)

The over-all color scheme should be the use of both light and dark woods, earth tones throughout, with the carpeting being the darkest color of the color scheme.

