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"Building" your brand: Alternative way to accomplish branding through landscape elements

April 03, 2011 - Owners Developers & Managers

Many large corporations have been using their buildings as a part of their branding strategy for decades. From the unmistakable if not unbearable orange roof of a Howard Johnsons Restaurant to the more subtle architectural consistencies of some familiar hotel chains, owners have leveraged the familiarity that people experience when patronizing or simply passing by their facilities. Some of the more upscale buildings are turning their attention to the building interiors by using interior plants with distinctive containers or even branded aroma. Still, much of the attention remains focused on the building exterior; possibly because owners and managers are able to touch many more people when they do not have to actually enter the building to experience the particular brand. More and more building owners and developers are taking advantage of the recognition or the subtle familiarity when designing their buildings or their master developments. Often times this type of planning comes at significant up front costs.

When you consider the creativity of the architecture necessary to capture that unique look and then you add to that the enhanced engineering that is often required to support the distinctive design and finally the level of skill required by the contractors to create the total cost can be much higher than the "normal" cost of construction. There are however alternative ways that a building owner or developer can accomplish the desired familiarity, or branding while retaining control over much of the cost that can be associated with unique design. One such way is through landscape elements.

Although these strategies tend to be on the more costly end of the spectrum relative to alternative landscape elements, they can easily be incorporated into either new construction or the retrofit of an existing or acquired property. What about the more budget sensitive owner who would prefer not make this kind of capital improvement? There are even simpler ways to build both uniqueness and familiarity across your portfolio.

Many building owners or developers have used the flexibility and relative low cost of flowers, shrubbery and various types of planters to accomplish this effect. A skilled horticulturalist can create flower designs that can be rotated throughout the seasons so that your tenants and clients experience a variety while maintaining the intended look that was part of the master branding. These ideas can be further expanded to include lighting schemes and seasonal or holiday displays; all of which can contribute to the overall consistency within one property or across several properties. A well planned and executed exterior branding strategy can bridge miles between properties as effectively as it can connect opposite quadrants of a master development or even a sprawling real estate complex. The measurement of success is to have patron, tenants or the general public "know" when they have arrived at one of your properties.

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