This study examines selected cultural elements of the negotiating environment in seventeen organizations having home or branch offices in the Northwest United States. Conference room and boardroom design, intentional placement of meaningful artifacts, arrangement of seating, and providing of refreshments are compared. Observations and interviews of organizational representatives in nine for-profit American businesses, four foreign for-profit corporations, and four non-profit organizations result in a broad spectrum of institutional recognitions of the socio-cultural importance of intentionally presenting organizational core values through these elements. While this study is too small to produce conclusive evidence, it clearly demonstrates that designing rooms to display core values of corporate culture, placing meaningful artifacts within them, choreographing discussions through intentional seating arrangements and recognizing the cultural value of offering refreshments is not universally recognized. The literature review suggests that such intentional implementation can be beneficial to effective negotiation. The study encourages further research into the value of anthropological awareness in the design and conducting of influential, successful negotiations.
Features of Boardrooms and Conference Rooms in Pacific Northwest Organizations

by

Andrew L. Foltz

A THESIS

Submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Arts

Presented May 26, 2006
Commencement June 2006
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to my family. Their support has made this task achievable.

I wish to express my warmest appreciation to Dr. John A. Young, my academic advisor in the department of Anthropology at Oregon State University, for his expert advice and consistent encouragement with this project. I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to the following organizations and their representatives for their cooperation and participation in this project:

Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon
Boeing
Equity Office
Hanjin Shipping
Hyundai Shipping
Louisiana Pacific
Mercy Corps
Nike
Northwest Medical Team
Northwest Natural
Providence Medical
Salvation Army
Smith Barney
Subaru
Toyota
Y.M.C.A.
Xerox
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiations as Part of Human Nature</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various Settings of Negotiations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Procedures</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories of Businesses</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording of Data</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacting the Businesses</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site Interviews</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing the Boardroom/Conference Room</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing A Second Person At The Same Company</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Limitations</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review:</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of cultural backgrounds in the negotiating environment</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Meanings of Symbols</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifacts and Symbols</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaying Core Values</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the elements in the negotiation environment</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Environments</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Visited Sites</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American For-Profit Businesses</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boeing</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity Office</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana Pacific</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nike</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Natural</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providence Medical Center</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regence Blue Cross of Blue Shield of Oregon</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith Barney</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xerox</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Profit Organizations</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercy Corps</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Medical Teams</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y.M.C.A.</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign For-Profit Businesses</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanjin Shipping</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyundai America Shipping Agency</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toyota Motor Sales</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subaru</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status Levels of Interviewees</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation Type and Size In Terms of Yearly Profit</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionality of Artifacts</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Presence of Artifacts and Size of Yearly Profits</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Artifacts</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison of Room and Table Size</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison of Table Arrangement</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison of Table Types</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionality of Colors in Boardrooms and Conference Areas</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Use of Glass Windows in Boardrooms and Conference Areas</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Use of Dimming Lights in Boardrooms and Conference Areas</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Flooring in Boardrooms and Conference Areas</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Placement of Plants in Boardrooms and Conference Areas</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Equipment in the Boardroom or Conference Area</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose for Boardrooms and Conference Rooms</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seating Position</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Food and Drink</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Food and Drink According to Overall Size of Corporate Profits</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Food and Drink In Terms of Office Size</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Use of a Catering Service</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion and Conclusion</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enculturation Through Symbol</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to Display Artifacts</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care in Selection of Wall Colors</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture as Reflecting Values</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional Chair and Table Placement</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows and Lighting</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalizing of Culture Through the Placement of Plants</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering of Refreshments</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Efforts/Recommendations</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Interviewee Ranking Within the Institution</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Corporation Type</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Corporation Size</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Comparison of Local Number of Employees</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Institutional Annual Profits</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Intentionality of Artifacts</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Artifacts and the Size of Annual Profits</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Types of Artifacts</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Lighting in Boardroom and Conference Areas</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Use of Plants</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Technical Equipment</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Types of Rooms</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Seating Assignment</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Seating and Yearly Profit</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Seating in Terms of Organization Type</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Presentation of Food and Drink</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Presentation of Food and Drink in Reference to Yearly Profit</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Presentation of Food and Drink in Reference to Office Size</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. The Use of a Catering Service</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statement of the Problem

Negotiations as Part of Human Nature

Negotiations are part of the experience of being human. Negotiations can take place between neighbors, nations, among siblings, within families, and in religious traditions. Due to the fact that constant adjustments are necessary in life individuals are perpetually negotiating. Negotiations may also be present internally within one’s psyche as a battle of life inside one’s own self. Sigmund Freud addressed this internal negotiation as the ongoing struggle between the superego of our conscience and the id of our primitive instinct. Careers, theological beliefs, as well as ethical issues involve negotiations. Many resonate with that ultimate internal negotiation of finding the value of life, such as we see in Hamlet’s soliloquy. To be or not to be, to relate or not relate, to partner or not to partner; all are levels of negotiation.

In many primal cultures, negotiation settings are prescribed by the culture. This author’s experience with traditional Navajo people at Klagetoh, Arizona, demonstrated formal seating arrangements within a hogan (men to the North, women to the south, guests to the west.). In this example of a single cultural setting, the colors and designs of blankets placed upon the wall indicate the values of the clan hosting the visit. The giving of food at the appropriate time is an indication not only of generosity, but of controlling the environment. The timing of speaking is also very formalized. Anthropological literature is filled with diverse examples from a large number of cultures indicating the formalities of appropriate conduct, generosity, and control. However, in the United
States we do not live in a single culture holding a stable, unified world view. The formal negotiations between groups do not represent family allegiances, clan values, or a particular set of understood signifiers. Many negotiations in modern, western societies are the designs of corporations; either for the sake of generating profit or for the solicitation of cooperation in giving social assistance. It is worthwhile to investigate as to whether or not the value of seating proximity, the demonstration of core values, and the offering of drink and food are recognized in formal organizations doing business in western society.

**Various Settings of Negotiations**

Negotiations take place in a variety of intended and unplanned settings. Spontaneous unplanned negotiations have little control over their venue. Planned agendas have the opportunity to design an appropriate setting. They can take place in restaurants, offices, work cubicles, and in boardrooms and conference areas. Significant elements of the planned setting are the physical furniture and descriptive artifacts which are intentionally placed in it.

In some cases, such as restaurants, the location of the table and the seating can be controlled. Seating arrangements can be pre-planned and the strategy of social distance can be used as a negotiating tool. However, if negotiations happen to take place on a park the bench or under a tree, the challenge of intentional seating becomes more complex.
In settings specifically designed for negotiations, many facets may be controlled, such as seating, lighting, the offering of food and drink as well as the placement of symbols which carry a message of a particular world view. This study examines the extent to which businesses pay attention to seating arrangements, offering of refreshments, and placement of value-laden artifacts to enhance success in areas intentionally designated for negotiations.

The Value of Creating Negotiation Sites

Whether an organization was created as a profit or non-profit enterprise, whether or not established within the United States negotiations are critical components of corporate livelihood. Most organizations give high value to constructing one or more areas designated for negotiations to take place with other parties or in the setting of a meeting. This study examines whether or not the planning of such spaces and preparation for the events within them includes placement of artifacts which convey core values of the corporation, the choice to assign or randomize seating, and recognizing the potential negotiating profit from funding the offering of refreshments.

Seating proximity in informal or formal locations is significant. Selecting seating whether in a restaurant, on a park bench, or in a boardroom exhibits that positional dynamics are an important component in the conversation. Locations and environmental elements found in the site design are critical components in the dynamics of the negotiation. It is important to recognize whether or not businesses are aware of the significant factors in the designing of their boardrooms or conference areas. Have they
considered the value of seating placement? Have they discounted its value? Do they employ placement strategies? If so, what strategies?

Potential for Affective Impact

The perspective toward settings for negotiations may vary as much as the world view and core value of the group that they represent. Participants’ feelings about an event may be swayed by the physical location and amount of space where informal or formal negotiations occur. Achieving emotional harmony and finding individual ease may greatly enhance negotiations. Are these aspects recognized? Are these aspects taught?

Boardrooms, conference rooms, or other locations in which negotiations are held may display a set of expected norms. Both the hosting as well as the visiting party might expect the designated location of negotiations to project a set of core values or convey messages such as sincerity or mutual respect. In many cases, businesses and individuals within corporations may not recognize the importance embodied in the physical site designated for negotiations. Some misunderstandings might be averted by careful design of the setting in which contractual agreements are constructed.

A prominent twentieth century example of the importance of a setting occurred in preparation for the Paris Peace talks of the Vietnam War. Between December 1972 and January 1973, individuals haggled over the design of the table while the war raged on. The representatives of both nations placed great political importance into the physical
location of the treaty conversation. In negotiating, differences in expectations can lead to misunderstandings. In many cases, the harmony between parties or individual comfort is embodied in the setting of negotiations. Certain expectations are necessary and expected for contractual agreements to be reached. Often individuals or companies do not understand the impact of the expectations which are embodied in the setting. The physical setting for negotiations can either enhance or inhibit a contractual agreement.

**Objective of the Study**

An objective of this study is to analyze, compare, and contrast the physical elements comprising the settings designed for formal, cross-cultural business interactions used by companies within the Northwest United States. In international business negotiations, the individuals engaged in dialogue frequently represent differing world views and cultural values. It is quite possible that persons and institutions oriented toward a specific set of cultural norms, social hierarchies, and gestures of politeness do not recognize that the individuals and organizations with which they are doing business do not hold identical value systems and social hierarchies. These partners in negotiation may not use the same symbol or gesture systems to convey their intentions.

The site of these negotiating interactions cannot help but demonstrate cultural values and motives embedded in their design. In some cases, the setting is an intentional choice by either the host or guest. In other situations the creation of the setting may be not consciously planned. However, as anthropologists such as Claude Levi-Strauss have noted, elements of design may be unconscious reflections of the designers' cultural
structure. While some settings for negotiation may be considered to have been unintentional in design, those involved in composing the setting may still have been influenced by structures of their own enculturation which are not part of their conscious awareness. This study addresses participant awareness of the intentional effort in composing an overall design for negotiation environments.

Companies and individuals within these particular businesses might understand the meaning of the setting with reference to the effectiveness of negotiations. Elements combined to create a location suitable for discussing business issues can inhibit or enhance relationships involved in negotiations.

Rationale

This study narrows a broad set of interpretations of culture and restricts its focus to an examination of cultural dynamics found within organizational structure. The boardrooms and conference areas examined in this study are multifunctional in use; and are not solely used for negotiations. The title given a particular room as being a “boardroom” or “conference room” is a decision made by each particular organization. The title “boardroom” may distinguish a culturally formal site for conversation as opposed to less formal “conference” areas, or it may simply designate the one and only permanent meeting room in the organization’s facility. The functions held in both “boardrooms” and “conference rooms” are varied and not restricted to a particular form of discussion. Intra-organizational meetings and staff functions are typically held in both.
In this study, the designation of a room to be a “boardroom” or “conference room” is that
given by the particular organization.

This ethnographic survey is designed as a study to gain a sense of the dynamics
embodied in designated settings of corporate negotiation. The case study analysis relies
heavily upon interviews as well as observations. The ethnographic approach is chosen as
it allows the researcher to observe a natural setting. The value of this approach is that it
allows interviews to be conducted in a friendly and non-confrontational conversation.

This project is not a true scientific experiment. It does not try to show a causal relationship
through the manipulation of an independent variable. It does not strive to present quantitative
correlations. Rather, it compares and analyzes observations and interviews. The investigator does
not manipulate elements but evaluates and observes sites and opinions.

Methods

Summary of Procedures

This ethnographic study simultaneously examines seventeen case studies as to
specific elements included or absent from their arenas of formal negotiation, boardrooms
and conference rooms. This study was conducted as an ethnographic survey; the
subjectivity of the single perspective is a significant limiting component to analysis.

The study divides participating organizations into three categories: national for-
profit corporations, foreign branch offices of for-profit companies, and local non-profit
organizations. In each of these categories, organizations volunteering to participate in this study were requested to show and comment on their boardrooms and conference areas. Observations were taken on the following elements within the negotiating environment:

- Status levels of interviewees
- Corporation type and size and yearly profits
- The placement meaning of artifacts which display the core values of the organization
- The use of planned seating arrangements
- Table types, arrangements, configurations, and sizes
- Structural considerations
- Considerations in use of the rooms
- The serving of food and drink

From the start of this study, the major observations focused upon the placement meaning of artifacts in the negotiating setting and the intentionality and meaning of seating individuals in the environment of corporate boardrooms and conference areas. Regarding the placement of artifacts, I was searching for items intentionally placed in these areas to project the core values of the particular business or organization. The researcher was prepared to find that there may not be any items adorning some locations for either the reason that the value of such artifacts was discounted or that the designers of the environment had never considered such placement.
Another major element observed was the intentionality and meaning of seating within areas designed for negotiations. Moran, in “How Chairs Give The Game Away,” (2004) indicates that seating arrangement is influential to the results of negotiations. The researcher was observing whether and in what way businesses were designating the seating of participants. Within the identified negotiating environments, the researcher looked for the difference between planned, intentional unplanned, and random seating patterns. Also noted were the features of particular types of chairs offered for seating by negotiating parties.

Prior to undertaking the study, the researcher had a set of informal assumptions about what conditions may exist in the seating of individuals in an area designed to host negotiations between fellow employees and between corporations. I expected to find different styles of chairs for hosting and visiting parties used for different intentions. The researcher believed that if there would be any variation in comfort level it would be in the favor of the hosting party.

Categories of Businesses

Seventeen firms participated in this ethnographic study. For the sake of analysis, businesses were divided into three categories. One distinction being made was that between organizations that were established to make a monetary profit and those which were created as non-profit service organizations. The overall attention and purpose of a corporation may influence
the intentionality of artifacts and seating. Foreign companies with branch offices located in the Northwest comprise another category. I hoped to find distinctions separating them from the American firms found in the Northwest.

Larger corporations operating in the Pacific Northwest that had more than one site and a designated boardroom or conference room were invited to participate. These businesses use their conference or boardrooms for meeting with their own people as well to meet with individuals who are not directly employed with their particular company.

The participation of large companies presented a set of challenges. Finding the appropriate telephone number to contact the appropriate representative was frequently more challenging than finding the proper contact person within a smaller firm. Larger organizations tend to have many conference rooms and the investigator was shown one or two selected by the company as being representative. Smaller businesses usually had one multipurpose conference room in which employees as well as individuals from outside the company are hosted. The one multipurpose conference room of smaller firms presented the opportunity of a more confident evaluation. When there were several rooms the researcher had to assume that the rooms that were shown were similar to the ones that were not presented. One advantage to observing larger firms was that the setting of negotiations might be representative of multiple branch sites.

Many reasons exist for a company not participating in this study. A lack of personnel to invest time to the interview or a concern about the use of collected data and results might prohibit participation. A company’s reasons for not participating may never be known.
Recording of Data

There was no formal quantitative instrument used in this study. Comparative tables are provided to allow for comparisons. Commentary regarding comparisons follows the presentation of data in table form.

This study does not provide a sufficient number of participating businesses to insure that statistically valid conclusions could be made. However, it does provide insights into several features which interact in a setting designed for negotiations.

Contacting the Businesses

The initial contact with each particular organization was made over the telephone. The initial conversation included a description of the project, requesting a visit to the boardroom or conference room, and requesting an interview with an employee knowledgeable about the components of the conference room and the negotiation process. It should be noted that this study involved interviewing individuals who hold different titles and positions within their company. The selection of the interviewee by the participating company was not based upon position but rather upon their familiarity with the conference room and elements of decoration and dynamics of negotiation.

To select participating firms, an extensive list was created of offices situated in the Portland, Oregon, metropolitan community. From that list telephone calls were made to solicit participation. Initially, I was attempting to gain four organizations of each kind.

Following the creation of the list, a few trial contacts were made with a small number of businesses and organizations. Once contacting skills were honed, other
organizations were contacted. In the soliciting of the seventeen participating organizations over thirty were contacted. Some of these businesses readily volunteered while others declined participation, stating that they did not have a boardroom or conference area. This may have been a polite method of declining to participate. Other organizations firmly stated that they would not participate in the study.

The participating institutions also provided the researcher with an interviewee as a result of the telephone conversation. In many cases the call was then transferred to the selected individual, the researcher described the project, answered questions, and scheduled an interview. In some situations, this person would suggest another individual to be interviewed instead. In quite a few occurrences, the particular individual was not available and multiple telephone calls had to be made. This process of transferring the interviewee role within the corporation resulted in a set of participants which held a variety of different positions within their respective corporations.

Of the more than thirty inquiries for participation, two firms, American Red Cross and Boyd's Coffee, were eliminated from consideration due to the complexity of procedures they would mandate for their participation in this study. Several institutions needed written proposals to be examined by their legal department prior to considering an interview. Companies that required special treatment due to their policies were not selected for participation. They could not guarantee a timeframe for their response.

I also requested the interview to be conducted at a time that the boardroom and/or conference areas could be observed while not occupied. In most cases this was possible. However, in a few situations when the area was in use, the rooms were observed through an open door or a window.
On-site kept handwritten notes regarding the meaning and intentionality of the placement of meaningful artifacts and seating arrangements were kept. Photographs, if allowed, were taken.

No formal script was relied upon in the process of requesting the visit and interview. The identification of the respondent was determined by the company and not by the researcher/interviewer. Some businesses gave an immediate response. Others require some time to select their interviewees.

**On-site Interviews**

For each of the companies that participated, an interview was arranged on site. The interviews were intended to last no longer than thirty minutes. The initial questions were designed to gain a sense of the dynamics of the business itself, including its expression of core values and mission statement. The questions that followed the initial set focused upon the nature of negotiations and the particular locations where the particular company held various meetings. These questions also addressed the use of artifacts, decorations, and the plan for seating within the corporate boardroom or conference room. The questions were designed as a starting place to see how well the interviewee could articulate aspects involved in negotiations as well as the design of the room.

Interviews at each of the participating organizations consisted of describing the firm as well as its core values. These were followed by questions involving the subject of negotiations. These questions included the structuring of the negotiating environment and
the variety of uses. Included were questions concerning seating and the placement of meaningful artifacts. Questions were also asked about the serving of food and drink as part of preparations for negotiations. Following the face-to-face interview, the researcher requested to observe the conference rooms and/or boardrooms. In some cases, one or more areas were shown to be representative of all the meeting rooms and boardrooms. In the process of being shown the conference rooms or boardrooms, additional questions were asked about the accommodations that were made in the particular setting.

Each interviewing process and visit to the boardroom/conference facility took approximately twenty-five to forty minutes. The length of time often depended on the interviewee’s knowledge of the dynamics of the setting. The interviewee’s interest in the study also influenced the length of the interview. Some of the participants appeared quite interested in the subject matter where others appeared as if they were content to be interviewed, but they did not seem as if they were interested in the research topic. Following the interview, I used the internet to verify statistics regarding the business. This was undertaken to check the accuracy of the data that were presented as part of the interview.

The businesses employed in this study were located in the Portland metropolitan area. The participating organizations were willing to assist with the scheduling of an interview and a tour of their boardroom or conference area. Future research should include a larger number of businesses and expansion to a larger geographic area.

All of the interviewees answered all of the questions that were asked. Some subjects needed clarification regarding the questions and/or a moment to formulate their answers. Additionally, none of the subjects requested that their names not be used in the
study. In most cases, employees seemed satisfied to be working in their particular organization and were willing to share about their experiences there. Interviewees were given the opportunity to volunteer information as well as to provide answers to questions.

**Viewing the Boardroom/Conference Room**

The information gathered in the interview was considered in the next stage of the process which involved viewing the corporate conference room or boardroom. The title of whether a room was called a “boardroom” or a “conference room” was denoted by the particular organization. This shows the emic perspective of observing a particular organization from their point of view. While examining the conference room the interviewer would continue to ask questions about the types of meetings held in the particular location, types of individuals who attended meetings in the particular location, the artifacts adorning the room, seating arrangements, and the presence of food or drink. The examination of the conference room and the ongoing dialogue contributed to the understanding regarding choreographed seating. The interviewer attempted to solicit uniform responses with open ended responses.

**Interviewing A Second Person At The Same Company**

It was the intent to interview a second person at each of the participating corporations. During the face-to-face interviewing process the interviewer requested the participation of another employee at the same corporation who would be willing to be
interviewed via e-mail. The purpose of this was to allow the interview to be conducted at
the leisure of the second employee without having to schedule an additional appointment.
For the researcher, the second interview was a method of verifying consistency among
the employees. Fifteen of the businesses said that they would be willing to participate in
this process. However, five followed through with their promises. The information gained
from the few corporations that took part in a second interview enhanced understanding
for the researcher. Due to the fact that not all businesses were willing or took part in the
e-mail interview the information gained was combined with the data from the face-to-
face interview. The small number that participated showed that the information gained
through this second interview in this study demonstrates that the information given by
different employees is quite consistent. Other businesses and organizations said that they
would not be willing to participate in providing a second interview. Approximately ten
other participating companies said they would be willing, but did not follow through. The
particular designated individuals never responded. In other situations, the particular
interviewee promised to e-mail the name and address of another employee upon receipt
of a prompting message. This would allow them time to think of another employee who
would be appropriate. However, in some cases, as was the case of about five the
prompting message did not always produce the name of another worker. Prompting
messages were sent to both the individual and the one whose name was given. There is
the possibility that the face-to-face interviewee did not follow through with mentioning
the request to another employee. There is also the possibility that the second individual
was declining participation and did not want their name given as a person who was
willing to take part. The second employee was interviewed using the same questions.
The participating firms stipulated that the second interview would be conducted via e-mail.

**Study Limitations**

As with all case studies, this investigation has its own limitations. This study presents two major questions which are being examined. The questions are the choice and placement of artifacts and the seating arrangement. Also observed are the presentation of food and drink as a formal gesture to participants. While interviewing subjects at any particular organization and allowing the particular business to select an appropriate person to be interviewed, the investigator was unable to control or maintain a consistent corporate status level of interviewees. A knowledgeable individual at one particular business may hold a different position within a organization than another interviewee at a different institution.

Since participation in this study was on a volunteer basis, sampling is skewed towards particular corporations that are willing to participate. Businesses that were contacted regarding an interview had the option to decline participation. The investigator cannot assume universal interest in the study.

Another limitation in this study arises in the case of firms having multiple conference rooms or boardrooms. The company or person selected to be interviewed had the prerogative to chose which room or rooms were shown as being representative of the others. I did not have the ability to observe all the conference rooms or select which ones
were shown. An investigator must hope that the particular site or locations that were presented were typical of all such environments within the company.
Literature Review:

The role of cultural backgrounds in the negotiating environment

Where two or more people gather, negotiations must exist. Often people are negotiating when they do not even realize that they are. Negotiations take place between individuals constantly. Negotiations are a method of individuals and groups adjusting world views. Most negotiations occur spontaneously however many times a day we see them being planned.

Many organizations are now developing and focusing on a set of organizational values as part of the culture of the organization. John Agnew, in American Space/American Place, (2002) relates the historical connection of a region’s human population and its environment cannot be ignored. Agnew emphasizes that environments have been important in the development of humankind. Individuals are acculturated by relating to their particular environment. Agnew’s assertions would indicate that attention paid to the development of an acculturating message in the construction of a negotiating environment would be a worthwhile investment for any organization facing the task of coming to agreement with individuals and groups who do not necessarily hold the organization’s core value system.

Kostof, Castillo, and Tobias note this necessity of encountering groups holding different value systems in A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals (1995). Understanding the difference and the qualities of both high context and low context
culture will enhance awareness of difference between individuals and enhance dialogue. The authors continue by saying that understanding the cultural background of another party which is involved in negotiation should help the hosting party extend hospitality, appropriate politeness, as well as carry meaning to the others involved in negotiations. For example, when negotiating with the Japanese, the authors state that it would be a benefit to the Americans to understand the expectations of the Japanese culture.

However, Kostof et al remark that American gestures of hospitality, such as handshaking and directness of topic discussion are frequently applied to negotiations. More commonly Asian formalities or gestures such as bowing, conducting small talk prior to discussing business dealings, and the recognizing who should speak first are often overlooked or not held as being as important as American formalities. This unintentional grasp of social dominance has the possibility of being insulting to Asians enculturated with a different set of gestures and meanings. Recognition not only of cultural signifying gestures, but of culturally appropriate contexts is important to the hosting organization.

As hosted groups are aware of the effort in preparing the environment in which negotiations will take place, they may acknowledge the sincerity of the act as one of welcome, even if the symbolism incorporated into the setting is somewhat inaccurate. Those corporate members who design locations for negotiation should recognize the potential value of assigned seating to match the style of expected conversation and plan an interior décor which employs such elements as paintings, photographs, floral arrangements, and other artifacts as conveyors of meaning and intention.

In examining culture-specific relationships between persons, we can see differences in negotiations. Leigh Anne Liu, Raymond Friedman, and Shu-cheng Chi, in
'Ren Qing' versus the 'Big Five': The Role of Culturally Sensitive Measures of Individual Difference in Distributive Negotiations (2002) note that understanding the particular culture or cultures represented by a particular group is important to negotiations. They continue by saying that culture-specific relationships and individual differences are present in discussions. This emphasizes the need to examine negotiations using culturally sensitive constructs and measures. Negotiations are a personal matter which relies on relationships. It is often when a business is successful that it also has quality relationships with many business partners. For example, as noted by the authors, the intended outcome of a particular negotiation may be as personal as the designated participants. Understanding of the importance and finality of a particular negotiation may be different among the parties who reach an assumed point of agreement.

Often, we see such negotiations falter, not because of lack of desire for agreement, but because these differing norms result in misunderstanding between the communicators. For example, Western companies may view a contract differently than Asian counterparts who are not accustomed to dealing with western organizations. Westerners often see a written contract as an agreement of services or goods to be carried out where as many Asians see the same document as reflecting an interpersonal relationship. Where Americans may focus upon the contract, Asians may focus upon the character of the individuals obligated by the document. The result is a growing need for inter-cultural awareness. Attention paid to social environment and the décor of the negotiating environment may facilitate understanding. Awareness of the meaning of manners in the preparation for cross-cultural negotiations is a component of preparing the environment. For example, if a company intends to be negotiating with a group of people
from Asia, they may want to use mannerisms and formalities of the specific Asian culture. They may need to teach employees the depth and intended meaning of bowing with Asian guests and engage in light conversation prior to talking about the workings of the business. The arrangement and placement of artifacts in the negotiating room may provide focus for introductory conversation, providing teaching tools about the hosting organization. Asian visitors may appreciate subtle physical considerations such as not entering a negotiating room in a straight line, moving to the right or left around an obstacle or stepping up to a raised platform. Some Asian religious traditions believe that malevolent spirits only travel in straight lines. Respectful décor, such as commonly seen in many Asian restaurants in America, places physical obstacles between entryways and places of seating; forcing the customer/participant to turn or climb before reaching an area of eating or conversation. This practice is mandatory in religious sites throughout Asia.

The recognition of these age-old traditions by American hosts would be a gesture of consideration. Also, American hosts may utilize the value held by many Asian guests of a simple and uncluttered environment. A negotiating room may be prepared by taking into consideration simplicity in environmental composition. Making the other party feel comfortable and honored in a location other than their own may prove to beneficial in the process of forming a potential association. Understanding the background and position of the party participating in negotiations can lead to a potential business relationship.

Office environments should significantly reflect the culture of the company. Alan Davies, in “Office Design Is a Tool For Growth,” (2005) agrees that office environments very much reflect the culture of the company. Davies explains that not only the design
and arrangement of the office, but the placement of cubicle as well as the type and
placement of desks and table within them are a reflection of the culture that they
represent. Also significant are the items displayed on the wall. When considering setting
up a new office or even refurbishing an existing one, the office design must address the
current needs of the business while accommodating growth for the future. Many
questions present themselves. Is the room to be an office or a meeting room? Will the
room permanently house an employee or will no personnel be stationed in the room?
How many employees will use the room at once? What is the corporate status of those
using the room? Will the purpose of meeting in the room vary or will it be used for one
purpose or a single type of process? Will the transactions in the room be those of
managing the status quo of the organization or will the negotiations challenge the core
values of the institution? Will the particular room be used to operate or change the
company? Or both? Will persons other than employees use the room? Would the
relationships which interface in the room be congenial or sometimes adversarial? Will
foreseen changes in the organization indicate a future change in the use of the room
which should be acknowledged in its original construction? Addressing these elements
is prerequisite to satisfaction with a negotiation environment.

Managing the Meanings of Symbols

The concept of values has been central to organizational sciences and workplace
relations for decades. Jencks and Baird, in Meaning in Architecture (1969), describes
how meaning can be transmitted through communication. Carefully designed buildings and conference rooms are a method of communicating a particular goal or meaning. Boardrooms within these buildings are designed for particular transactions to take place. Communication and the understood meaning are important in negotiations. The perceived meaning of artifacts or symbols embodied in the location for negotiations often affects the business transaction.

Ferdinand de Saussure is widely considered to be the founder of modern linguistics. He described the structure of language rather than the history of particular dialect and forms. In *A Course in General Linguistics*, (1986) he proposed the complex nature of languages. Suassure's notions of "signifiers" and the "signifieds" to which they point can be applied to the messages carried by environments. The physical elements included in a negotiation area would be "signifiers" of a message interpreted by the participants who use the room. The colors of the walls, the size and type of table, the arrangements of chairs, the display of sculpture, paintings, posters, and photographs all may carry a message of value to both those who employ their use and to those who experience the environment in which they are used. The significant question surrounding the use of boardroom "signifiers" is not whether they point to a "signified" message or value; but rather whether or not the message is identified and recognized by the hosting party. Is the placement of a signifier intentional? Is the absence of signifiers intentional? Do corporations recognize the variety of messages which are given by the configuration and decoration of their boardrooms?

rest of the world should conduct business in ways similar to them. Begley, and Boyd comment that American firms would gain more effectiveness with foreign firms and other American institutions if they considered other methods of extending hospitality and receptivity. Consideration of processes of negotiations employed by other cultures might enhance a potential relationship.

Mircea Eliade, in *Rites and Symbols of Initiation: The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth* (1958) writes that within many cultures different rites of passages function. The acts of negotiating may be compared to rites of passage as they both end with an altered state of affairs. Work environments may be seen as settings for corporate rites of passage. Within these environments contracts are negotiated and signed. The formal signing of a contract parallels a rite of passage where the parties involved recognize a change in relationship. Arnold Van Gennep, in *Rites of Passage* (1960), discusses the significant impact of rites of passage upon the preservation of a culture. In the same fashion, corporate negotiations which change the mission or organization of a company need to have negotiations which are, in a sense rites of passage to sustain the organization. The signing of a formal agreement may be seen as a rite of passage as the identity of the negotiating parties is formally changed and often a new name, such as “partner,” is added to the myth structure of both companies. Using Van Gennep’s three stages of a rite of passage: separation, transition, and incorporation, the process of formalizing a business deal may be seen to use the boardroom as a site for the elements of the rite. The boardroom separates the negotiating parties from the former cultures of each organization and provides the setting in which transition of their world views (relationship to “the other”) may take place. The formal incorporation of the new
relationship through signatures and hand-shaking take place in this formalized setting. Therefore, it would seem worthwhile for the setting of such a rite of passage to convey signifiers of the core values and processes being identified, modified, and solidified in the business deal.

Claude Levi-Strauss significantly influenced the field of anthropology through proposing the concept of structuralism. In *The Effectiveness of Symbols*, (1963) Levi-Strauss suggested that the focus for an anthropologist should be how individuals categorize the world. He proposed that the focus should be on understanding underlying patterns of human thought. Claude Levi-Strauss was interested in the study of language and promoted theories that set to explain linguistic meaning. Levi-Strauss stressed the categorizing of the world to understand the reality of a culture. This study of structure of human thought can be applied to the structure of designing locations for human negotiations. These areas of thought can be presented in the context of boardrooms and conference areas. Communication can be enhanced in a proper setting in which is conducive to dialogue. Applying Levi-Strauss’ notion of myth structure to the structure and dynamics of an organization, the negotiating of business deals becomes a simultaneous examination of the elements of two organizational structures and the estimating the appropriateness of “fit” for a formal relationship of minor or significant importance to both.

Victor Turner is well-known for his study of symbolism. He examined the method individuals used to give meanings to their reality and the process by which this reality is expressed by their cultural symbols. Turner, in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, (1969) considered symbols as mechanisms for the maintenance of societies.
Turner demonstrates how the analysis of ritual behavior and symbolism may be used as a key to understanding social structure and processes. He extends Van Gennep's notion of the "liminal phase" of rites of passage to a more general level, and applies it to gain understanding of a wide range of social phenomena. Van Gennep's structure consisted of a pre-liminal phase (separation), a liminal phase (transition), and a post-liminal phase (reincorporation). Turner noted that in liminality, the transitional state between two phases, individuals were "betwixt and between." They did not belong to the society that they previously were a part of and they were not yet reincorporated into another society.

Artifacts and Symbols

Artifacts are universally significant even to children. Nelson, Chan, and Morghan in the research article: “When Children Ask, 'What Is It?' What Do They Want to Know About Artifacts?" (2004) relay that children asking, “What is it?” are seeking information about what a designated artifact is termed and/ or what kind of use it serves. Moreover, children tend to substitute questions about function for ambiguous questions over the course of the session. These results indicate that children are motivated to discover what kinds of things novel artifacts are, and that young children, like adults, conceive of artifact kinds in terms of their purpose. Scott Waltz, in “Giving Artifacts a Voice? Bringing into Account Technology in Educational Analysis,” (2004) suggests that cultures give artifacts a voice.

Artifacts often bring thoughts into a person's memory. Memory is to a person what history is to a group. Erving Goffman, in Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face
Behavior, (1967) states that one can have a better understanding of a particular culture through looking at the people’s rituals. Most notable is a culture’s approach to work. As noted by Goffman, observing the process by which individuals conceive the notion of necessary tasks and how they are carried out provides a clue about a particular set of cultural values. Room design must take into account cultural work habits and is itself a form of gesture which facilitates or inhibits styles of in-person conversation. For example, the size and arrangement of tables can denote the number of people who may be expected to participate in a particular meeting as well as give clues about the intention or purpose of the meeting. But elegance is relative. The cost of furnishings in a room relative to the cost of furnishings in other areas of the corporation’s facility may give a clue to the importance placed on the transactions held there. If the expense of the furniture is moderate, but the rest of the facility is furnished in cheap second-hand furniture, the room may hold high importance relative to the other areas in the facility. The relative cost and attention to wall coverings and placed paintings and photographs may indicate the relative importance given the location. The contents of photos and paintings may indicate a value of corporate history or significance of preserving natural spaces, or in the case of a constantly re-decorated room, an appreciation of the hosted culture. Seating arrangement may mandate or prevent a notion of preferential opinion. If all other seats face one particular seat, this may be a clue to the political sway held by the person sitting in the “head” spot. Seating guests and hosting parties on opposite sides of a table may intentionally introduce an adversarial atmosphere – “us” against “them”. Mixed assigned seating may attempt to embellish personal conversations and increase familiarity. Intentional open, random seating may indicate a trust of individual
participants’ interpersonal skills to give themselves conversational advantage. Desk size may indicate its use as either a note-taking space or one of simultaneously presenting a large number of documents. The presence of a single table or of multiple smaller tables not only prescribes a work environment, but also the structure of relationships between the participants.

Beth A Bechky, in “Object Lessons: Workplace Artifacts as Representations of Occupational” (2003) notes that there is value to examining businesses through the use of their organizational artifacts. Artifacts allow researchers to compare environments as noted by Baer, Kaufman, and Gentile, in. “Creativity” (2004). Existing artifacts should guide the placement of newer ones. Historical artifacts may provide an intended meaning from which newly placed ones should not deviate. If items are not carefully selected and the set of artifacts monitored, the room may send a confusing message. A display of historical artifacts – photos, prior products, and documents should not be combined with pieces of contemporary art or paintings/photographs signifying simply the value of nature. Having a variety of themes within a particular room dilutes the message of all. A room may convey a value of history, or of efficiency, or of personal care for the client, but it is in the common theme of the artifacts within a room that emphasizes the signified meaning. A hodgepodge of meanings may demonstrate no meaning at all. If newly placed artifacts must be carefully selected, or they will dilute or confuse the intended meaning conveyed in the room.

Artifacts and symbols need their environments to help them establish and maintain a meaning. Yi-Fu Tuan, in Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience, (1977) states that human feelings regarding place and space can be complex. Meanings
may be acquired in the setting. Feelings about space and place are affected by the sense of time. Tuan suggests that place is security and space is freedom. Tuan recognizes that human security may be evoked in the predictability of a definite, unchanging site having a predictable composition. He suggests that a physical location to which one can always return and to find intact is a mechanism of stability, similar to the notion of returning to one’s home or home town as a place of psychological origin. A predictable place is one which does not change in its meaning. On the other hand, an individual may safely reach out from that predictable place toward new dimensions of understanding through the provision of free space. A person can emotionally reach with a feeling of safety into new space if one is given a predictable, stable place from which to reach out. In the design of a conference room, the designer should first develop the notion of a stable “place” which gives the negotiating parties a sense of certainty and respect. From that “place”, “space” should be provided for the free exploration of ideas.

One valuable aspect is found in the distinction between sacred versus "biased" space. Sacred space can be thought of as being important in terms of expressing religious or historical significance where the meanings and values of signifiers are agreed upon and understood. On the other hand, “biased” space can be defined as a location for unique interpretation. In biased space, the negotiators may not recognize that they do not hold common values or common meanings for symbols. It is important that an organization particularly recognize when they are decorating a negotiation environment which might, in fact, be a biased space. Such an effort can construct additional misunderstanding. Tuan also comments on the concepts of mythical space and place. The meanings portrayed in a specific place and/or space may be viewed as products from the
imaginations of different negotiators. Mythical place and space may on occasion be a valued condition for generating ideas. However, the creation of mythical place and space as a product of negligence on the part of environmental designers can only be detrimental to reaching a satisfactory agreement.

Tuan comments that in the designing and furnishing of rooms, designers sometimes attempt to duplicate their mythical view of space and place. Corporations may design and decorate a room which holds such a unique and esoteric meaning that hosted individuals can not understand the values intended to be demonstrated by the decorations, seating arrangement, or type of refreshments provided. This expression of creativity holds strong possibility for constructing misunderstanding.

Time in experiential space, according to Tuan, is another method of understanding the notion of space. Mutually understood photos, paintings, and artifacts may be used to extend the negotiating environment across time, to display the history and development of the hosting organization and the evolution or stability of its core values. Tuan is also concerned with cultural attachments to space. Different cultures recognize the value of broad or close spaces in different ways. There is cultural variation in the meanings perceived in the positioning of people within an enclosed area. There are cultural variations in recognizing the efforts applied to properly decorate a place for negotiation.

An environment may have the ability to create moods and beliefs about a particular organization. Specific expectations and beliefs are brought with individuals as they enter boardroom and conference areas. The environment may be used to attempt to sustain or to modify people's perspectives toward a particular negotiating topic by
emphasizing a value of significant place, open space, or accommodating period of time. When an individual enters a particular boardroom or conference area he or she carries a set of personal values as well as a sense of assumptions regarding the particular firm, its staff and corporate beliefs. The décor and the protocol experienced within the room may substantiate the perspective of the hosted party or may convey notice of a differing set of values or intentions in negotiating. The value of place and time are embedded in the configuration of the setting. For example, the room may convey a message of historical partnership between parties or the renewal of former tenuous or non-existent relations. The room’s use of space may convey a freedom of creativity or it may persuade the use of specific channels of thought through displaying specific elements of past history, displaying value neutral decorations, providing a sense of spaciousness or a sense of close encounter. For example, an effort to renew contractual relations between estranged organizations may be facilitated through the absence of historical signifiers and the unavoidability of close, assigned seating. The participants might be forced to sit in positions which would be uncomfortably close if the room were not designed to avoid spaciousness. Avoiding the topic of awkward prior relationships could be facilitated through value neutral decorations and ones which have no sense of presenting the value of history.

Ornaments can be both practical and symbolic. In some cases, the items which adorn the walls of a conference area or boardroom symbolize an intended meaning. Katherine Benzel, in The Room in Context, (1998) notes that a room is part of the human experience. Rooms have a profound impact on how people view and act in the world. The
room relates in function, form, and meaning to the architecture of the building that houses it, the cityscape, and the landscape. Benzel comments that rooms are a reflection of a harmonious relationship to the world beyond their walls. This concept of creating rooms that are a reflection of a harmonious relationship to the world beyond their walls can be applied to boardrooms. They display the values and perception of the world view and the ethos of the business. They also can be useful as subjects of reference in the course of negotiations. For example, a carefully designed, constructed, and arranged boardroom or conference area respects the values of both the host and the guests in its use of space and meanings embedded in its décor. In a simpler way, the use of windows to tie the environment of the room to the environment which it overlooks can be an effective signifier of the values conveyed by the room. In contrast, organizations renting space may find the view outside an inconvenient window to convey values which are contrary to those which they wish to portray in the negotiation space. Some form of window covering then becomes a conveyer of values.

Artifacts and symbols help a business to gain a sense of personality. All office facilities present a personality. Jamie Beckett, in “Making Meetings Merry / Firms Try To Liven Things Up By Naming Conference Rooms,” (2003) notes that the construction of a setting involves the creating of an environmental personality. For example, states Beckett, if a business sees value in creating a congenial yet value-neutral environment, it may adorn the boardroom walls with pleasant- looking paintings that intentionally are not signifiers of the core values of the business. She also comments that naming conference rooms provides a personality. Whether conference rooms are named after individuals giving significant contributions to the core values of the company (such as the
value of winning embedded in Nike’s “Tiger Woods Center”) or whether the names
denote specific or generic natural environments (such as denoting uniquely Oregon place
and space in naming a conference area the “Willamette Room” or presenting the open
space of the open sea through naming a meeting area the “Seaside Room”

The values presented are of providing a specific value of place and space through the a designation
which denotes a particular environment or the importance of a significant contributor
through naming a specific site after him or her (such as the many Mark O. Hatfield
buildings, and rooms found in institutions throughout Oregon).

Displaying Core Values

Pedro Valle Javier, in “The Office Design” (2005) states that there are many
comfortable designs that will motivate employees to work harder and more efficiently.
Comfort may be relative to the task of the room. In some circumstances, overstuffed
chairs may be placed as a gesture of confidence in the authority and judgment of the one
seated. Conversely, a straight backed chair may be provided as a gesture to encourage
attention to the task at hand; to be comfortable only in the fact that the task will be
accomplished. In some cases, individual side tables for placing refreshments may be
seen as honoring guests who need not take notes. But in other circumstances, a large,
common table may be a signifier of providing working place and space for negotiators
who must utilize a large number of documents simultaneously. Lighting also may be used
as a facet of comfortablity. Individual reading lamps may be employed gestures of
paying particular attention to the value of the expressions of individual participants. In
other venues, bright overhead lighting may be recognized as more comfortable for seeing the overall “picture” of the negotiation. Certain amenities, like small places to relax, also will make the employee more productive. Little touches create a more effective working environment and often motivate employees in the process of their work. In this study the same notion of little touches will be applied to boardrooms. The environment should motivate negotiating parties to reach some form of agreement.

In personal interview. Chuck Ferguson related that his book *Indomitable Spirit*, (2004), co-authored with Steve Duin, conveys the overall success of a business to be dependant on its core values. Reaching business agreements is often a matter of the strength in carrying out core values. In the simplest form, effective managerial leadership is dependent upon understanding core values of the institution and their similarity to the core values of other institutions with which negotiations are desired and/or necessary. Ferguson stated, “In many cases, the failure of a business is due to the lack of implementing strong core values”.

It is possible to have different perception of the core values and the workings of a particular business from working inside then looking outside. The perspective held of a particular business may not be universal among outside interests. The message displayed by a conference area is more significant if its artifacts point to a single set of meanings. Each person encountering a particular artifact may have a slightly different interpretation of its meaning. The more similar the interpretations are the more effective the boardroom is in presenting a message. The attempt to convey a specific contextual message may not always meet with success. Sometimes the meaning may be ignored or misunderstood by the hosted party.
How a particular business allocates access to the boardroom relates to the values that a company places on relationships. Whether a boardroom is solely for the use of upper level managers for corporate negotiations or if it is open for lower tier employees is a demonstration of the expectations of a particular institution.

Managing the elements in the negotiation environment

Atmosphere

Restaurant design can instruct the configuration of negotiation sites as both host individuals with a particular attitude of satisfaction as a goal. In a restaurant as in a boardroom, physical atmosphere can help encourage further transactions. Reynaldo Alejandro in, Restaurant Design, (1987) notes that a restaurant's atmosphere is significant and can contribute to its overall success. In exclusive restaurants where a long-term relationship with the customer is an objective, the quality of the atmosphere is as important as the quality of the food. Alejandro comments that many other features are considered when deciding whether or not an atmosphere is acceptable. He notes that the physical design of the building, arrangement of table and chairs, and the theme and placement of decorations works in creating an atmosphere. The environment of a restaurant and the environment of a boardroom must convey a respect of the guest. The type of furnishings, amount and placement of lighting, the quality and singular theme of wall artifacts, amount of spaciousness or intimacy, all contribute to the appreciation by the guest of being honored while present in the prepared space. Does the room have a
theme conveyed in its ornamentation? Are the furnishings considered “fancy” or “practical”? Is the seating close or distant? Is there enough table room for that which will be placed on it (dinner and/or documents)? This study applies Alejandro’s concept regarding atmosphere to the setting and arrangement of a boardroom. Often the atmosphere of a boardroom or conference area can assist in developing or hindering a customer relationship. The hosting organization puts some reliance in the environment they present to sustain the congeniality of atmosphere for negotiation in the way many restaurants use ambiance to retain a clientele. However, like a greasy spoon eatery, some companies may ignore the value of the environment as the product or nature of the deal is so appealing in itself.

Unlike an office, a conference room or boardroom can offer a location which is considered more of a neutral setting. In the office of an individual, the seating arrangement is not equal. Christine Piotowski and Elizabeth Rogers, in Designing Commercial Interiors (1999) state that the interior design of a particular business setting can affect the overall operations. In their study of office arrangements it was confirmed that the design influences the quality of work. The design and the arrangement can effect whether or not visitors will be comfortable in the particular location. For example, in the setting of an office, usually the host has an advantage in controlling the environment. There is often the other side of the desk feeling which can create uneasiness among negotiating parties. In some offices, a location is provided which offers equal seating. In a conference room, negotiating individuals are often able to sit in a similar style of chair without the barrier of being on the other side of a person’s desk.
Seventeenth century English philosopher, John Locke, in An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1994) introduces the notion of “Tabula Rasa” or blank slate. Some corporations may intentionally provide a value-neutral site for the development of ideas. If intentional, the meaning of a blank slate context may be one of the co-generation of ideas rather than the modification of perspectives and intentions designed prior to the bargaining session.

Art is often selected to enhance the esthetics of interior space. Margain and Buchanan in The Idea of Design (1995) state that creative design involves the solution to a problem and the carrying out of a task. Therefore when decorating the boardroom the company needs to consider the range of use for the room. Using Margain and Buchanan’s suggestion a firm needs to determine whether the room going to be used for hosting individuals from outside the organization, for staff purposes, or for both. Often rooms that are used for hosting individuals from other organizations are more formally decorated and furnished. For example, they are often furnished with a fancier table and may display artifacts related to the work of the firm. Conference areas used more for intra-organizational idea generation or for employee instruction may convey more of the “tabula rasa” approach to decoration than the intention to surround the participants with core values, comment Margain and Buchanan.

Natalie Hanman, in “Office Hours: Pride of place: The Rules . . . Seating Plans,” (2005) relates that office must respond to quite a few conflicting demands. Considerations include ease of location and cost, number of staff members a location should hold, the size of cubicles, offices, and conference rooms, and sufficient parking
space. For example, the function and size of particular rooms, states Hanman, is often a compromise between conflicting demands.

Collaboration between parties is key for a project to be successful, but it would take only one weak link in that chain of suppliers to lead to a compromise in the integrity of the overall design. As noted by Robyn Clarke, in “Dress Up Your Office,” (1999) corporate spaces are an extension of specific professional images. They demonstrate a personal style. Office spaces can inform an observer about the personality of those who use the space. It can tell how they see themselves and view their relationship with the other parties involved in business negotiations. Are the walls blankly painted or decorated? Are they decorated with personal artifacts such as family photos and personal mementos or with corporate images and mission statements? Do the individuals working within an office area or those individuals most frequently using a conference room have the privilege of decorating the space? Are there overseeimg corporate parameters to what items and/or values may be displayed to others entering the space? Whose core values are on display in a particular location within an organization? Clarke notes that the type of furniture adorning a room also conveys a value message, balancing the personality of the occupants with the level of intentionality of the tasks undertaken. Clarke’s notion of spatial personality is easily transferred from office space to boardrooms and conference areas. The decorations on the walls, the type of table arrangement used, the color of the walls, the type and amount of lighting, and the physical layout of the room can be harmonized to construct a single style, or signifying message. Even those areas which have been painted neutral colors and intentionally contain no form of decoration convey a message according to Clarke. Corporate recognition of the inevitability of making a
statement through the appearance of their negotiating sites was an area of inquiry in this study.

Conscious can achieve more than visual unity and clarity. This is observed in the selection and the arrangement of furniture as well as the placement of artifacts. Amos Chang, in The Tao of Architecture, (1956) relates how humankind’s experience with space involves smelling, hearing, touching, and the interaction of the senses of temperature and humidity. Within the context of a room, according to Chang, all of these elements intermix. The individuals who set up these rooms have the ability to influence how these elements interact by the placing of furniture and individuals who occupy a given space.

Architecture addresses all these elements as stated by Andrew Ballantyne in What is Architecture? (2002). Within a boardroom all of these senses may be used through the recognition of the meaning of artifacts, comfortably with personal space, and the feeling of being welcomed. For Ballantyne, the senses of the guest are gateways to providing a sense of welcome and respect. The sounds provided or eliminated from the boardroom (background music, muffled conversation, or manufactured silence) can be recognized as honoring the integrity of the guests and the value of the negotiation to take place. Visually, the environment should present clear focus points which do not conflict with each other in either visual field or presented values. The smells of flowers or refreshments may signify welcome. This requires attention being paid to the room’s air flow system. The appropriate temperature of the room immediately indicates the attention being paid to the comfort of the hosted party.
Office Environments

A contemporary trend, as noted by Iva Yates, in “Office Solutions: Modern Touches with Traditional,” (2005) states that in high-tech industrial office design "highlights the use of glass, exposed ceilings, and raised, painted floors." Today's modern offices are inviting, open, worker-friendly spaces. Creating an environment conducive to business is significant to the workings of an organization. Yates' notion is that an overtly "high tech" environment is conducive to efficiency in the negotiating setting.

Business relies on visual presentations; as noted by Mitton in Interior Design Visual Presentation: A Guide to Graphics, Models & Presentation Techniques (2003). Ian Grayson, in “Watching Your Backside” (2005) states that boardrooms are being outfitted with sophisticated cameras, multi-speaker sound systems and large-format displays that enable group videoconferences to be conducted with ease. This modern hardware shows a contemporary methodology for doing business. Chris Oakes, in “The Reality of Videoconferencing,” (2005) and Carole Schweitzer, in “Virtual Boardrooms,” (2005) say that videoconferencing was something to replace a typical face-to-face meeting. Meetings are being moved out of boardrooms. Thus, the setting in one or more boardrooms can influence each other. Individuals in different conference rooms in different geographic places are communicating with each other simultaneously. For example, employees in a conference room in one place may be interacting other individuals in conference rooms in different parts of the United States or in other countries. This modifies the purpose of a boardroom or conference areas. Boardroom varieties were designed with this practice in mind.
The design and arrangement of a conference area or boardroom can play a significant role in negotiations, comments Rasmussen in *Experiencing Architecture* (1964). The overall design of a particular room and the elements displayed in it can either assist in negotiations or hinder them. For example, as noted by Rasmussen, the comfort of the chairs and the height and style of the table can assist in creating a comfortable negotiating environment. If, for instance, the height of chairs cannot be adjusted, the table may not be a suitable negotiating environment. Another example would be an untidy room which displays discarded papers or dirty dishware which would convey a message of neglect or minimal value of the occasion. A similar message of unimportance can be given by poor lighting. Lighting which is overall too dim or only bright in particular sections may give a message of participants being of unequal value. Non-uniform seating may demonstrate intentional or unintentional preference for particular participants.

Malnar and Vodvarka in *The Interior* (1992) state the definition of space is the notion of creating form. Architecture is the art of enclosed space. Creating the intended meaning of space is also a consideration of architecture. To create an effective area for negotiations the objectives of the social interactions and the respective social positions of the participants must be kept in mind as the space is constructed. The question of who will interface with whom for what purpose must underpin decisions for planning room configuration. Will the meeting generate new ideas or will it convey policy? Informal meeting spaces lend themselves to brainstorming. These spaces may not display as many core values or symbols of history as their intent is to generate novel ideas and systems.

A place is needed for spontaneous or near-spontaneous meetings. If there is no available venue, meetings may occur in hallways, parking lots, or over the restroom sink. It
should be noted that such natural spaces as golf courses may be used as both planned and spontaneous venues for official meetings. Such culturalized and monitored spaces as ball parks and golf courses may also be considered "enclosed spaces" and products of architectural design.

As stated by George Petersen, in "The Imperfect Space" (2005) in many situations workers deal with areas that are less than ideal. Both the timing of tasks and the limits of budget often cause negotiations to occur in areas which are less than ideal. Petersen states that employees must learn how to adapt to working in less than ideal situations. In the planning of work environments individuals are able to minimize the effect of working in imperfect space by considering what space related conflicts may arise. The notion of cautiously designing boardrooms and conference areas is to minimize the number of reluctant occurrences. There is a need to engage in significant discussions and in the construction of corporate relationships in locations which do not contribute to facilitating the organization's objective.

Managers need to pay continual attention to a negotiation site and to remedy environmental problems that may arise. Managers, comments Petersen, need to understand the kinds of individuals that the location is going to accommodate and the type of meeting that would occur there. For example, he states, a manager in a site designed for the showing of Power Point may want to arrange tables into a "U" shape pattern and supply equipment for this purpose.

The way in which others see another business' environment of negotiations is critical for the potential of a partnership. Julie Rayfield in The Office Interior Design Guide (1994) notes that strategic facility planning is a proactive approach to interior
design, acquisition, and use of facilities as a means to demonstrate the dynamics of an organization. Design is evolutionary in nature. Careful attention to detail must be shown in the creating of a facility for negotiations.

Dimitra Kessenides, in “Office Space Anarchy” (2005), says that decorations are important to creating a certain mood or feeling in an office. Placing appropriate items on the wall may influence the employees of a particular firm. For example, according to Kessenides, the displaying of mission statements, photographs of corporate leaders, employees and/or satisfied clients, photos of production and/or shipping, as well as placing company products within the room act as messengers of corporate integrity, efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness. Kessenides further comments that they serve as tools for remembering values and origins and focusing effort. Each room may portray an intentional mood and personality. A room may convey a message of openness to new ideas or a message of stability in old ones. A room may convey a message of practicality and rapid-paced efficiency, or a message of patience and caution in taking action.

**Colors**

There is an uncertainty about what we mean by “places” and how we relate to them. Paul Marcotte, in “Was It Something I Said?” (2002), states that there is a psychology to decorating that makes clients feel more comfortable. Office environments have subtle effects on people. For example, soft colors and lighting put people at ease. Marcotte continues to say that soft colors have a soothing tone that assists in an environment suitable for discussion. Many offices of successful businesses rely on soft colors rather than brighter tones. Individuals do not always realize the hidden meaning
presented by colors within office buildings. The selection of color or colors is an art. Sometimes the selection of two or more colors also presents a meaning. Each color or groups of colors present positive or negative vibes that are preserved by employees and visitors to any office building.

John Gage in *Color and Meaning: Art, Science, and Symbolism* (2000) notes that colors influence moods and perceptions of the environment. For example, neutral or natural colors within a particular room provide a comfortable harmonious environment. At the other extreme “bright” colors that are not neutral express vigorous feelings. For example, as stated by Gage, in America yellow is associated with joy, happiness, and optimism. It denotes imagination, hope, and idealism, is related to sunshine, and is associated with the season of summer. In some cultures, comments Gage, yellow denotes dishonesty and cowardice, jealousy, betrayal, and deceit. What Gage does not recognize is that the meaning of colors which he portrays in his work may not extend beyond American or Western interpretations of meaning invested in color. For example, the Western notion the purity held by the color white is not recognized in Asia. In Asia it is often represented in the sincerity invested in the color red. The American division of colors into natural and artificial hues may not be held by members of negotiating organizations from other parts of the world. Therefore the intention of naturalizing a negotiating environment through the painting of walls in a “natural” color may backfire through ignorance of the color-value system of the foreign guests.


Beckett (2003) comments that wall color and room lighting make a statement of value through their hue and intensity. If a company sees the value in highlighting the energy and directness of their work, posters or models of their facilities, photos of employees on the job, or other signifiers of aggressive action may be displayed. Examples of stating value also might include photos of soaring eagles or roaring trains in contrast to photos or paintings of quiet pastoral scenes.

**Plants**

Addressing the intentional balancing of elements of nature and culture, the presence of plants is recognized as a method of creating a natural environment, as stated by Wallach in *Interior Decorating with Plants* (1976). This idea was also expressed by Graf in *Decorative Plants For Interiors; Recommended Plants for the Home, Public Buildings, Offices and Showrooms* (1973). Plants help by reducing noise in a corporate boardroom as noted by Hamilton in *Interior Designer's Handbook on Plants* (1987). They also represent harmony through natural elements. For example, in studies noted by Graf the presence of plant had a soothing effect on the individuals involved. In cases where plants were present there was more harmony between individuals than in locations were
plants were not present. It was further stated that in locations were plants are present fewer verbal arguments occur.

**Furniture**

Curhan, Neale, Ross, and Rosencranz-Engelmann, in "The O. Henry Effect: The Impact of Relational Norms on Negotiation Outcomes" (2004), notes that the organizational context can dictate what is expected in a particular negotiation. The uniformity or difference in the type and quality of chairs placed in a boardroom can convey a hierarchy of authority. Who sits where in what type of seat carries a significant preamble message to the negotiating environment. Do guests sit in chairs as comfortable as those of the hosts? Do guests sit in more comfortable chairs? Is the more elaborate or more comfortable seating reserved for officials holding higher positions in the corporate structure of the hosting company or the guest organization? Is there a table or tables? Are they more elaborate than functional in design? These factors can enhance or hinder a contract. The setting can also be influential in helping or hindering the longevity of a professional relationship.

The lack of attention to the boardroom environment may contribute to the onset of preventable disputes, mentions Roth in *Understanding Architecture: Its Elements, History, and Meaning* (1993). Conflicting colors, poor choice of furniture, disrespectful seating arrangements, and over-imposing artifacts may send conflicting or adversarial messages which may evoke a stance of resistance by the hosted party. The hosted party has the ability to recognize the selection of furnishings used in the negotiating site as to whether or not the furniture carries a message of care and respect. Mismatched, marred,
or broken furniture may carry a message of unimportance into a negotiating session. Common seating could carry a message of disrespect for corporate authority. The use of temporary furniture, such as folding tables and folding chairs may carry a message of impermanence to the relationship or a signal rare occasion to engaging in negotiating processes. The notion might occur to a hosted group that folding chairs and tables mean that the hosts do not hold this particular type of formal negotiation very often.

**Seating Pattern**

A functional seating pattern around a boardroom table may reflect the values of a company. Karen Allan, in “Lean's Design Leaves Pupils Sitting Pretty,” (2005) and Lydia Ramsey, in “Seating Arrangement,” (2004) note that seating needs to be functional and planned in the designing of space. Intentional comfort or the lack of comfort can influence negotiations. In some cases, comments Allan, sitting in wooden back chairs rather than padded chairs is done on purpose. Wooden, straight-back chairs impose a sense of immediate attention to the task at hand; an expectation of timely conclusion. These less-comfortable seats may send a corporate message that there is no time to relax or set a leisurely pace toward completion. Discomfort in reaching the collective goal is not to be acknowledged as impeding progress. The absence of padded chairs may send a message of task over comfort.

Accommodations and seating preference are important. A seating plan has to reflect how an organization functions. Quentin Reade, in “Public Sector Values HR as Strategic Business Partner” (2005) states that most public sector boardrooms (63%) offer a seat on the board to their most senior human resource manager, compared to only about
40% of private sector organizations. The choice of who is offered a seat is significant to negotiations. Seating in a boardroom conveys respect.

Liz Light, in "Space-Age Office Furniture," (2004) notes that office furniture may reflect people's workplace habits. Mobile tables and carts rather than larger, permanent desks and bookcases provide easy modification of the work area to match particular tasks. Small boardroom tables substituted for a single large table enable participants to easily cope with paperwork in small "break-out" groups simultaneously working on sub-tasks. The placement of PowerPoint material in the center of a room rather than stored in a side cabinet reflects the frequency of its use and might indicate the primary direction of information to be more one-way than multi-directional discussion. The presence of folding tables in addition to or as substitute for permanent tables reflects the need to rapidly modify a location to accommodate a variety of corporate tasks. The presence and location of a refreshment table indicates its level of participation in presenting a message of personal consideration.

Mobile tables, as noted by Danine Alati, in "Office Personality," (2003) are not just used for collaborative work groups such as creative departments, research and development teams, and marketing teams, but are also valuable when a given individual's work function requires flexibility. The presence of movable tables may convey a message about the intended purpose and function of a particular room or area.

The furniture and the decorations are a reflection of an individual’s work habits. The style of chair in an office or boardroom may reflect the amount of time spent in that
particular work environment. An individual who spends a great deal of time at a particular table or desk may use a chair that is more comfortable than their counterpart who does not use the facility as frequently.

McElroy, Morrow, and Ackerman, in “Personality and Interior Office Design: Exploring the Accuracy of Visitor Attributions.” (1983) note that intentional seating can influence conversations. For example, as stated by McElroy (et al), intentional seating has the ability to strongly control the conversational environment by the proximity of specific participants holding particular views. Juxtaposition of specific participants holding strong perspectives may heighten or diminish the intensity of dialogue. Intentionally amassing or diluting philosophical perspectives on a particular issue through assigned seating may contribute to swaying the conversation. Seating together individuals who hold the same perspective may give them space for side discussion or it may transform the room into a polarized playing field. Intentionally interspersing perspectives may have the opposite effect.

Ramsey and Casison, in “Sealing the Deal Over the Meal Incentive,” (2004) states that guests should have the prime seats. Ramsey and Casison state that offering the best seats and food and/or drink is a way of influencing the outcome of a meeting. They note that if a room has a view guests should be sat facing it. In the same manner prime seating may face significant artifacts. The authors suggest that the host take the least desirable spot. In this study, this would be the location where significant artifacts have the least influence.
Lighting

Karlen and Benya in Lighting Design Basics (2004) discuss dimming light and regular light. This was also noted by Essig in Lighting and the Design Idea (2004). The type of lights in a given room can tell the purpose of the intended space. For example, if a room is designed for the sharing of information through PowerPoint dimming lights will be available.

Food and Drink

The serving of food and/or drink often serves a method of showing hospitality as stated by Counihan in The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning and Power (1999). The presentation of food and the type of food served reflects a cultural and ideological system. Food preparation and sharing play an important part of constructing an identity of an individual and as a united group and sends a message regarding the society, culture, or group to which they belong. This was also noted by Counihan and Esterik in Food and Culture (1997). Food can be used as a negotiating instrument through making a hosted individual feel welcome and comfortable in a new situation. Counihan and Esterik note that the awareness of the negotiating power embodied in the presentation of food was recorded as far back in history as Cyprus during the third and second millennium B.C. when it was used for reinforcing group ties.
Description of Visited Sites

In this study seventeen different corporations were interviewed and their conference rooms/boardrooms were viewed. They include American for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations found in the Pacific Northwest as well as foreign branch offices of for-profit businesses. The American for-profit businesses participating were: Boeing, Equity Office, Louisiana-Pacific, Nike, Northwest Natural, Providence Medical, Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon, Smith Barney, and Xerox. Foreign companies with branch offices in the northwest which participated were: Hanjin Shipping, Hyundai Shipping, Toyota, and Subaru. Additionally, these non-profit organizations took part in the study: Mercy Corps, Northwest Medical Team, Salvation Army, and the Y.M.C.A.

American For-Profit Businesses

Boeing

Demographics

The Portland location which specializes in “Flight Control Systems and Commercial Airplanes” was the particular location viewed. Boeing has a total of 152,740 employees in 31 offices around the country. There are 4,409 persons employed in the Sandy Boulevard, Portland location. Boeing has an operating budget of $1,872 million and a yearly profit margin of $52,457 million dollars.
Since Boeing is the world’s leading aerospace company and manufactures commercial jetliners and military aircraft, they do not sell their product directly to the public. In addition, the company produces electronic and defense systems, missiles, rocket engines, satellites, launch vehicles and advanced information and communication systems. Today the company’s reach extends to customers in over one hundred countries.

**Logo**

The Boeing signature or trademark consists of a planet with a stylized image of a jet together with the word “Boeing” in blue logotype. The blue color of the text is to give the impression of the color of the sky. The meaning of the trademark identifies the presence of the core values of Boeing. It is seen on places such as documents used in the conducting of business. The logo is shown when the presence of Boeing’s values may be ambiguous. It is for this reason that that the company feels that it is not necessary for the logo to appear in the boardroom.

**Interviewee**

At Boeing, Executive Office Administrator Loretta Hamilton was interviewed. She seemed to understand the intention of usage of the particular rooms at the company. The interview was conducted in a small multi-use area. The interviewee was seated in a sofa while I was seated in a living room style chair.
Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations

I was shown two conference rooms at Boeing while employees were entering the rooms for the start of a meeting. The rooms are used to host individuals from other companies as well as employees of Boeing. Both of the conference rooms shown were painted the same color of white. The conference rooms had two different types of table arrangement. One room housed a standard Formica top rectangular conference table which was placed in front of a screen for the showing of Power Point presentations. Boeing recognizes the effectiveness of Power Point presentations in clarifying information which must be shared.

The other conference room was also designed for the showing of Power Points. Instead of one large table, this room contained three Formica top tables placed in a “U” shaped pattern. The Boeing interviewee stated that Formica table tops are easy to keep clean and were intended to give the impression of being modern. Formica tops are also a less expensive than their wooden counterparts. It appeared that the tables can be moved. However, as noted by the interviewee, the tables are never rearranged. Open seating around the tables at Boeing is offered. There are no pictures or decorations adorning the walls in these two rooms. Ironically the chairs do not match the style of the tables. Boeing places an expensive style of leather, padded office chair in both rooms along with the Formica tables. This presents a mixed message of economic efficiency (Formica table tops) and expensive luxury (fancy leather chairs). Both the style of chairs and tables connote a notion of durability which may remind individuals about these qualities in the
airplanes which they produce. Like the message of their rooms, their product, commercial airliners present a message of comfort, practicality, and durability.

The conference rooms rarely stand open and are occupied all day. There is a variety of agendas and a diversity of occupations represented in the meetings held in these conference rooms. The interviewee at Boeing describe the types of meetings held in these rooms to include "[strategic] planning, [managerial] leadership, finance, and marketing." The meetings involved individuals who are employees of Boeing as well as those who are guests. A noted, critical feature that was highlighted is that all the conference rooms at Boeing are very secure. They are designed to be sound proof and allow employees to activate secure software programs. The software that is used in these rooms require a security log in. Security at Boeing starts as a visitor enters through the guard gates. As noted by the interviewee, an individual visiting Boeing needs to allow fifteen to twenty minutes to clear security and the guest must be accompanied by an employee at all times. These polices extend into the conference rooms. No guests may enter or remain in a conference room unaccompanied. Another significant rule is that Boeing employees are not allowed to enter a meeting late as opening the boardroom door may allow conversation to leak into the hallway.

One employee commented that since the conference rooms are used for the showing of Power Point, the lack of symbols in the rooms is intentional to facilitate the focus of attention towards the task at hand. The rooms are not to be recognized as stark but as focused. The displaying of core values, as commented by the interviewee, could be deemed as being not necessary. However, Boeing’s buyers do have the option of the
European Airbus corporation. It might be valuable for Boeing to demonstrate their values of durability, safety, and economy in a very competitive market.

**Refreshments**

Food and drinks are typically served in the conference rooms at Boeing. Depending on the time of day, different items are served. Typically, before ten in the morning coffee and pastries are served. After that time until about one thirty in the afternoon lunch fare is presented. This includes water or soda to drink and sandwiches and salads. After that time snacks are offered. A typical snack served at Boeing is cookies which are often served at meetings in the conference rooms in the afternoons.

(Due to security, photographs are not allowed at Boeing)

**Equity Office**

**Demographics**

Equity Office is a commercial property management firm. The company has a total of 1,100 employees located in the company’s 24 offices around the country. Locally, in downtown Portland, there are 45 employees. The company has an operating budget of $5 billion each year. Approximately $17 billion are gained in profits each year as well.
Even the company logo is not very elaborate; consisting of a simple blue box with a white line drawn through it. It does not present any deeper symbolic meaning. Symbolic items are not a part of the negotiating environment of this particular corporation. Person to person negotiations are a small fraction of the company’s daily interactions. Equity Office does trade over one million shares a day on the New York Stock Exchange.

Senior Property Manager Sheryl Scali was interviewed. She did not demonstrate a great deal of awareness about the value of presenting artifacts or assigning seats in the conference setting.

Equity Office uses areas which they term “conference rooms.” They have no areas which are termed “boardrooms.” As stated by the interviewee, “conference rooms” are smaller than “boardrooms.” There are several conference rooms in the location. However, I was only shown one as a representation of all of them. The conference room itself did not have any photos or symbols representing corporate core values or history. It was sparsely decorated. The room had one four-foot wooden rectangular table with two seats on either side as well as one on each end. The rooms are equipped with a white
board and a window which offered a small view of the cityscape. There is no form of decoration or artifacts present in the environment of the conference rooms. The chairs surrounding the table were made of cloth fabric and did not have arm rests. Seating at Equity Office is random. There is no planned seating order that is consciously followed. I was shown one conference room at the company as being typical of the others. The room was basically a sparse environment. Seats are padded chairs of a single style. The table in the conference room was made of wood and was intentionally rather small to facilitate conversation. The conference room shown had two small windows which looked out across the street to the neighboring building. A whiteboard was placed on a wall and enclosed in a wooden cabinet. No screen for projections was placed on the walls or in the ceiling.

Even though Equity Office is the largest real estate investment trust company in the United States, it does not display photographs or models of properties that it manages within its conference areas. Instead, the conference rooms are small and have no type of meaningful decorations on the walls. This gives a researcher some insight into the intention of the conference rooms. The rooms' primary purpose is human interaction between employees and vendors rather than a space for presenting information. The small sized table and the limited number of chairs give the impression that the rooms were designed for small gatherings rather than larger boardroom size meetings. This is why they are entitled “conference rooms.” The conference rooms at Equity Office are used for interviewing, staff and department meetings, and for hosting clients whom they term “vendors.” The conference rooms are used to host guests and potential clients who
visit the company as well. The opportunity to use photographs, statuary, and other artifacts as representative of the trust and efficiency of Equity Office is not recognized.

**Refreshments**

Guests are offered coffee or water when they visit. Food is not served. According to the interviewee, meetings with clients do not last long enough to serve a meal. Although it was not stated perhaps the company holds lunch meeting in restaurants with clients.

(Photos are not allowed at Equity Office)

**Louisiana Pacific**

**Demographics**

There are a total of 2,300 Louisiana Pacific employees distributed in 38 branch offices. Locally, in Portland, there are 125 workers. The business has an annual operating budget of $106 million and profits equal $407 million dollars per year.

**Logo**

The logo for the Louisiana Pacific Company is of the letters “L.P.” in blue block letters. The company identifies itself with just the two letter initial. Under the letters is a red stripe and the words “building products” capitalized in block letters. The interviewee stated that the blue color gives the impression of cleanliness. The building products
corporation emphasizes the value of clean rivers and the sky. The company attempts to be earth friendly as part of its working values.

**Interviewee**

Janet Ashworth, Corporate Office Service Provider at Louisiana-Pacific, was interviewed regarding the boardrooms and conference rooms of the company. Louisiana-Pacific’s office is located on the eighteenth floor of the Fox Tower in downtown Portland. This office was the corporate office for the company until recently when they moved the home office to Nashville, Tennessee. The interview with Ms. Ashworth was conducted in a conference room. I was seated on a corner and the interviewee occupied a chair parallel to me at a round shaped table. The interviewee seemed to be knowledgeable of the dynamics involved in the setting of both conference rooms and boardrooms. In Louisiana-Pacific’s office there are no pictures or decorations adorning the walls.

**Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations**

There are several boardrooms in the Louisiana Pacific facility as well quite a few conference rooms. The boardrooms themselves have many windows that offer views of downtown Portland. I was shown two of them. Louisiana Pacific does not display artifacts in their boardrooms or conference areas. The windows are used to create a congenial environment. The interviewee commented that the windows onto the city from a high view can convey a message of power and control. Whether a person is sitting
facing towards or away from the view may be a significant factor in negotiation. Facing a window may denote respect; but the possibility of distraction may also exist. The use of glass is becoming a common trend in modern buildings. Curhan, Neale, Ross, and Rosencranz-Engelmann (2004) note that the organizational environment can dictate what is expected in a particular negotiation. Windows are a significant element in the room’s environment. They present a difference in light value, a commanding view, as well as the possibility for distraction. The company’s seating arrangement can be described as being random since the placement of individuals is not predetermined. However, conference rooms are selected by the unique placement of seats within them. Some of the rooms have chairs which are bolted to the floor. So instead of assigned seating, Louisiana Pacific has assigned conference rooms. Seating in the boardrooms consists of leather padded chairs having arm rests of a single style. The interviewee commented that the boardroom tables are made of wood and attempt to convey a certain level of respect.

Since Louisiana-Pacific manufactures building products, their boardrooms employ windows with views of the structures of the city to convey a value of the strength and durability of building materials, their primary products.

In each of the boardrooms there are large wooden rectangular tables surrounded by leather office chairs for employees and the hosts alike. Seating is never assigned. Some staff meetings and meetings with individuals who are not directly affiliated with Louisiana-Pacific are the primary use of boardrooms. Partnering lawyers and bankers commonly attend meetings in these facilities.
The interviewee at Louisiana Pacific stated that the table arrangement and shape is significant to the conducting and outcome of the meeting. For this reason the company employs many different table patterns depending upon the task and the participating parties. Louisiana-Pacific has a considerable number of conference rooms in addition to the boardrooms. I was shown quite a few of them. All are situated in the interior of the building. Windows overlook hallways. These rooms are designed for smaller meetings. There are four styles of furniture arrangements in these conference rooms. One style has a circle shaped wooden table in the corner of the room with a corner sofa that wraps around two sides. There is one chair that is at the opposite side of the table. The table placement does not act as a barrier. Written notes and fliers can be placed on the bulletin board behind the seats. It appears that items of importance could be placed on this board. However, it was not stated that these items are important to negotiations.

The second type of conference room has two chairs of a similar style with a smaller, wooden desk that acts as a barrier between them. All conference rooms of this type have seats that are of a single architectural style. This type of room is more conducive to one-on-one conversation rather than over-the-table negotiations and is used for interviewing situations. Here, the table forms a barrier between conversing persons. A third style of conference room that is used by Louisiana-Pacific has four or five large chairs that look as if they can recline. However, they cannot be moved into a reclining position. On the side of the chairs there are wooden fold up style desks similar to the ones in an old fashion school. Written notes and fliers can be placed on the bulletin board behind the seats. However, it was not stated that these items are important to
negotiations. There is no large common table present in this style of room. Ideas are more likely to be shared orally in this room as there is no facility for projection and the movement of documents would be awkward.

A fourth design of Louisiana Pacific’s conference rooms has recliner chairs with wooden fold up style desks. This room also has a coffee table in the middle between the individual seats. This gives the impression of a living room setting. Written notes and fliers can be placed on a bulletin board behind the seats.

Unlike the boardrooms, the conference rooms are not designed to view the city. All the styles of conference rooms are designed with the intention of focusing on a particular task at hand and to avoid the possible distraction that a city view could create. The boardrooms as well as the conference rooms were painted white and did not have anything hanging on the walls. The boardrooms are used for hosting of individuals from outside of the company and for the signing of contracts. The conference rooms are designed for the use of employees and staff meetings. As noted by Wendi Adair (2003) preferences and flexibility effects communication. Perhaps this is one reason for the many styles of conference rooms owned by Louisiana Pacific.

As in the boardrooms, there are no assigned seats in the conference areas. Instead of assigning seats to facilitate communication, Louisiana-Pacific assigns the most effective conference room to be used for a particular event. As noted by the interviewee, some L.P. managers have preferred styles of conference rooms they like to use. This selection often occurs for the conducting of in-house department meetings.
Refreshments

During meetings in the company's boardrooms food and drinks are commonly served. Coffee, water, and juice are frequently served. Breakfast pastries and lunches are served here and are brought in by a catering group.

(Refer to Appendix C for photographs)

Nike

Demographics

Nike, pronounced "ni-key," is the winged goddess of victory according to Greek mythology. The god sat at the side of Zeus, the ruler of the Olympic pantheon. The symbol of the winged goddess gives the corporation a mystical presence, symbolizing victorious encounters. The god Nike presided over battlefields which may be compared to the athletic playing fields on which the company's products are used. A Greek expression was, "When we go to battle and win, we say it is Nike." Expressed as honored conquest, Nike has become the twentieth century footwear that is worn by the world's greatest athletes.

There are 23,000 Nike employees worldwide including 3,000 in the Beaverton world headquarters. Nike has 20,000 employees working in locations other than its corporate office. There are about 50 employees who work in the Tiger Woods Center
where the particular employee interviewed was located. Nike has a yearly operating budget of $250 million and its annual income is roughly $12 billion a year.

**Logo**

When individuals think of Nike they commonly picture the Nike “swoosh.” The intention of the “swoosh” is to embody the spirit of the winged goddess who inspired the most courageous and mannerly warriors at the dawn of civilization.

This logo was created by Carolyn Davidson, a Portland State University advertising student, in 1971 and represents the wing of the Greek Goddess Nike. The logo was originally created to be placed on the side of a shoe. In exchange for the designed swoosh Davidson received $35.00. In the reconstructed and decorated for each hosted event this symbol will be present.

Nike has the philosophy that everyone is an athlete. The company believes that whoever has a body is also an athlete. The company’s mission is thus to bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world. The co-founder of Nike, Bill Bowerman, who was a track and field coach at the University of Oregon, created this mission statement. This also leads way for the common phrase from Nike: “just do it.”

**Interviewee**

Nike’s Event Service Manager, Jennifer Sedwick, was interviewed at the Tiger Wood’s Center. This interview was conducted at a round table outside in one of the
courtyards of the campus. Nike is very much aware of the dynamics involved in the negotiation setting.

**Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations**

At the Nike campus, I was shown two conference rooms as being representative of many more. Nike hosts over two thousand events each year on their campus. The company is quite aware of the design and decoration of the conference rooms. Nike recognizes the value of artifacts in displaying the core values of the company and intentionally designates seating of guests and company representatives. At Nike, the rooms are totally reconstructed and decorated for each hosted event. This includes discussing whether a table should be employed and which style and material is appropriate for the particular function. This would be an extreme example of the position of Price (2005), stating that a common one environment is not appropriate for all groups. I was shown two rooms that were in the process of being designed for an event. In these rooms a work crew was decorating the walls and decorating the area according as to carefully constructed plans. The rooms are designed to address the values symbols of the particular audience of the meeting. Meetings could address sales, legal situations, human resources, employee concerns, or, most commonly, clients.

Seating in Nike conference rooms is planned carefully for each event. So, too, are the artifacts. The artifacts are intentionally placed by Nike and are chosen for each particular event. They are selected to represent the specific value they want to emphasize at that particular meeting. Individuals designing a meeting at Nike discuss which aspects
of the company are important to the hosted individuals. Each meeting includes the presence of at least one product or its representation that Nike produces and the presence or image of at least one athlete which embraces the ideal of the company.

**Refreshments**

Meals are typically served during meetings at Nike. Evening meetings often include complete dinners with non-alcoholic drinks as well as beer and wine. Lunch and breakfast meetings are also common. Nike has its own chef and catering staff which is in charge of the food and drinks which are present during the particular meetings. (Due to fears concerning competitors photographs are not allowed in Nike’s boardrooms.)

**Northwest Natural**

**Demographics**

Northwest Natural has 1,300 employees who work in a total of eight branch offices located in the northwest. In the Portland corporate headquarters office there are 518 employees. Northwest Natural yearly working expenses total $401 million. The company has a yearly profit of $529.5 million per year.
**Logo**

The logo for Northwest Natural consists of a diamond shape with a stylized letter "N" inside. On the right side of the diamond the color of the logo is colored a light shade of green which fades into a darker green color. The color of the left side of the image is blue. To the right of the diamond “NW Natural” is written in black block font. The interviewee commented that the choice of the blue and green colors is symbolic of nature and of the type of work that the company does.

**Interviewee**

Here the Assistant Secretary, Richelle Luther, was interviewed. The interview was conducted in her office. I sat at one side of the desk opposite the interviewee. The Northwest Natural is a two level facility in a downtown Portland office building.

**Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations**

The intention of Northwest Natural is to put people at ease as they enter the discussions in the company’s boardroom. The soft natural color not only helps individuals feel comfortable but also is symbolic of the type of natural work done by the company. Northwest Natural’s slogan is "We Grew Up Here". Northwest Natural is attempting to protect the land that is their home.
All the meetings at Northwest Natural are held in a boardroom setting. This includes staff meetings with employees as well as gatherings with company guests. Guests frequently include lawyers, bankers, and accountants.

I was shown one room, the boardroom, at Northwest Natural. The boardroom is equipped with a long wooden rectangular conference-style table and overstuffed leather chairs. The table itself may be considered a work of art, displaying two colors of wood. As stated by the interviewee at Northwest Natural, their table is seen by outsiders as work or art. There is one interior window which looks back into their business environment. Alan Davies (2005) notes that work environments reflect the culture of the company. The culture of Northwest Natural includes the value of high speed communication and the meticulous keeping of records. As then expected, computer and internet connections are important components in the boardroom. Nothing is displayed on the boardroom walls. There is no form of decoration either portraying the values of the company or its history. The seating is random. In some situations, the person who is to lead a meeting may intentionally sit at the head of the table for a particular period of time. But this is not always a rule at Northwest Natural.

There is a statue of the cranes in the boardroom; however, the representation of these birds is not meant to intentionally reflect the core values of the company (Please see the photography in the appendix C). The significance of the statue was not mentioned by the interviewee. Possibly the cranes are showing the naturalization of a cultural atmosphere to depict the way that Northwest Natural protects the natural environments it must modify in its work.
The colors of the walls may be a signifier of the work of the company. Northwest Natural uses natural greens and browns rather than more synthetic hues. Soft colors such as these, as noted by Paul Marcotte (2002), puts people at ease.

**Refreshments**

At all meetings water and coffee are offered. In some meetings, particularly those hosting individuals who are not from the company, dessert snacks are served. There are also working lunches as well as lunches away from the location.

(Refer to Appendix C for photographs)

**Providence Medical Center**

**Demographics**

Providence Medical Hospital has a workforce of 33,700 employees with 1,900 locally. This business is somewhat unique in the sense that it does not have a large profit margin and the costs of operating a hospital are high. The budgets of the Providence Medical Hospitals are $3,834,944 per year and they only receive an income of $4,020,601 per year. Providence Medical Center’s Portland facility was another corporation visited in this study. Providence Medical Center has a number of locations but does not have branch offices or a head office. All the Providence Medical centers are affiliated but they operate independently. The Portland location is in a campus like setting.
The logo for Providence Medical is of a three-dimensional cross. The cross is white in color and the background is of dark blue. This image is symbolic of the values from the organization's Christian heritage which directs the mission and the work of this firm. It is intended as a constant reminder for employees as well as showing the perspective of their work to individuals who are not familiar with the organization.

Here Suzie Bickel, Scheduling Secretary in the Nutrition Services Department of the hospital, was interviewed. I was shown two conference rooms and the boardroom in the hospital location of the campus. The room arrangement might be different in the other office buildings that were also located on the campus. However, the other office buildings were not shown as part of the tour of conference areas and boardrooms.

The interview was conducted in an area that somewhat resembled a cafeteria. The location consisted of a few tables and chairs as well as a few booths. During the interview Ms Bickel took one side of a table and I took the opposite side. She did not seem to be too aware of the idea of the importance and meaning encompassed in negotiation settings. When questioned about the placement of artifacts in the boardroom and in conference areas, Ms Bickel made reference to items that were not to be found in the environments of the conference areas or the boardroom. Further, this was not due to recent remodeling. She merely was unaware.
Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations

At the Providence Medical Center, I was shown two conference rooms and their main boardroom. The conference rooms were created to be used by employees for staff meetings and are not designed to host individuals from outside the organization. The rooms are primarily used by the staff for department meetings. These conference rooms include either one long wooden rectangular table or smaller rectangular tables which are placed together to make a longer surface. The tables appear as if they can be rearranged. However, as the interviewee noted, they are usually not moved. The chairs are padded office style chairs. There is a white board affixed to one wall in each conference room. Open seating is permitted.

In each of the conference rooms that I was shown, there is only one item placed on the wall, a listing of the core values of Providence Medical Center. These are:
Compassion shown through caring for each person as part of our family, Justice demonstrated through working for a fair and equitable society, Respect defined as affirming the God-given dignity and worth of each person. Excellence demonstrated through continually improving all that we do, and Stewardship as explained by wisely caring for and sharing human, environmental and financial resources held in trust. In the corner of the document is Providence’s logo, a three dimensional view of a Christian cross.

The two conference rooms that I was shown displayed a similar environment to each other. The conference rooms were painted with brighter colors than the boardroom
and had one red wall. They showed more signs of wear and tear. It was noted that all conference rooms have a copy of the core values. Some conference rooms that were not shown to me were said to have round tables instead of rectangular ones. The boardroom was also observed at Providence Medical Center. It housed a long rectangular table similar in shape to those in the conference rooms. The table in the boardroom is considerably longer and more elaborate than the ones placed in the conference rooms. This boardroom is primarily used to host hospital administrators, the Board of Directors, and individuals who are not employed by Providence Medical. It attempts to present more of an air of respect and power than the décor of the conference rooms. The seating was a bit more luxurious, having wheels on the fabric style office chairs. The boardroom table may not be conducive to discussion as much as listening as it is considerably larger than those placed in rooms whose main function is conferencing.

The boardroom walls are painted in neutral colors. The boardroom also has the same core values document placed on one wall as is done in the conference rooms. The room is designed for the serving of food and drinks. On the day that I toured the room, it was being configured to host a meeting which included the serving of food and drinks. Both the boardroom and the conference rooms have a speaker telephone system on the table to enable other locations to participate in long distance meetings.

In addition to having a white board similar to the ones hung in the conference rooms, the boardroom also has a lowering screen for Power Point presentations. The interviewee commented that each of the hospitals in the Providence Medical Center system have their own boardrooms.
The act of placing a framed statement of core values in both the boardroom and conference rooms is worth noting. The size of this document so small that it may not be read unless approached. At the opposite end of the room, the core values are not able to be read. Therefore it must not be meant to be read but only to represent the presence of these values. Jencks and Baird (1969) note that conference rooms present a certain meaning. The presence of the list of core values may help refine the meaning of these rooms. All rooms display a clock which can be read from across the room. These clocks may reflect the preciousness of time and punctuality, but that message was not noted as being important by the interviewee.

Refreshments

In the environment of the staff conference rooms, food and drink are not served. However, in the setting of the boardroom, food and drink is served. There is a counter in the boardroom designed to be used for the serving of refreshments. Food and drink are only served when non-staff members are present.

(Refer to Appendix C for photographs)

Regence Blue Cross of Blue Shield of Oregon

Demographics

Regence Blue Cross of Blue Shield of Oregon has multiple locations in the state. The main office is a complex of buildings in downtown Portland. This company has a total of 2,475 employees in a total of five locations around the state. In the head office for Oregon which is located in downtown Portland there are approximately 1,700 employees.
The annual working budget of Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon is just over a billion dollars at $1.1 billion. The company receives an annual income of $6.5 billion through annual premiums.

**Logo**

It is the mission of Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield to provide customers with the best value in health, dental, vision and life insurance benefits, as well as administrative services. Blue Cross and Blue Shield health plans serve not-for-profit and for-profit companies and thus have two symbols. The organization has two logos, one represents Regence Blue Cross and the other represents Regence Blue Shield. One logo is of a blue cross with an image of a human in white in the middle. The shape of the cross is similar in shape to the red cross applied to medical vehicles and facilities with the primary difference being color. This is symbolic for the idea of strong medical assistance. The other logo depicts a blue shield with the staff of Asclepius in the center. This ancient symbol of the medical profession brings the stability of history to the values of the corporation. The blue color on the symbols is said to represent security.

**Interviewee**

At Regence Blue Cross of Blue Shield of Oregon, Robin Klein, a Senior Facility Design Specialist and Space Planning Designer, was interviewed. In the process of being interviewed she sat across a small table from myself in the entry of the building. As with the other businesses, an interview was conducted first and then a tour of the boardroom
and conference areas was given. Mrs. Klein understood the dynamics of a negotiating environment. She also provides a unique perspective in terms of design and architecture.

**Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations**

The conference rooms were situated on different floors throughout the complex. These were smaller than the company’s boardroom and varied in size. The conference rooms were decorated with photographs of employees. The status of the persons depicted was not described. The conference rooms are used by employees for staff meetings and at any time a group of Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon workers need hold department discussions. Seating of participants is random in all meetings.

I was shown the current boardroom as well as a future boardroom which is under construction. The boardroom at Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon is primarily used by the board of directors. At this organization wooden, rectangular tables are used in all meeting rooms. The current boardroom has a view of downtown Portland and is paneled in wood. On one wall of the boardroom hangs a painting of the president of Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon. At the boardroom’s entrance there are photos of outstanding employees for the visitor to see as they enter. As with every culture, rites of passage are embodied. Photos often denote a commendation, promotion or a retirement, rites of passage achieved by employees. Mircea Eliade (1958), Arnold Van Gennep (1960), Erving Goffman (1967), and Claude Levi-Strauss (1963) note the importance of rites of passage. The boardroom serves as a place where corporate rites of passages take place. The room is designed to hold meetings with individuals from
outside the business as well as upper level management who are involved in the negotiations and contracts for the organization.

Currently Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon is in the process of constructing another boardroom. I was shown the room that is in the process of being built. It will have outside views with glass on three sides of the room. As noted by the interviewee at Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon, the configuration of the tables and chairs may reflect a combination of the attitude toward those hosted as well as the orientation toward the type of discussion intended for the identified topic. The interviewee continued by saying there will be several tables that may be connected together for meetings or may be split apart for other functions. In the middle of the room there will be a folding room divider which will separate the room when needed. There will be wood paneling on the one wall that is not windowed. The closeness of the outside walkway to the windows may be a distraction. However, it conveys the notion of negotiations being transparent and honest. The body language of individuals who are negotiating will be visible by anyone walking by.

**Refreshments**

The boardroom, when completed, will include a side room where hosted parties can be served food and drink. This separate but attached room will have a mobile cart that will serve as the buffet table. The individuals will be able to intermingle, walk around, and interact with other guests as they eat. This facility will be available to be
rented out to other businesses. Regence Blue Cross /Blue Shield of Oregon believes that other businesses will want to use this new facility for hosting their meetings as well.

(Refer to Appendix C for photographs)

Smith Barney

Demographics

Smith Barney has a total of 35,000 employees working in 500 offices worldwide. There are 72 employees who work at the Portland location. Smith Barney/Citigroup has an operations budget of $4.99 billion per year as well as a annual income of $7.14 billion.

Logo

The logo of the company is a red umbrella, which is symbolic of providing protection and investing for a rainy day. Such a message would be easy to present through appropriate decorating of the boardroom. However, this was not the case.

Interviewee

At this location the Branch Administrator, Corina Franke, was interviewed. She seemed to understand the dynamics of the particular setting of the boardroom. The interview itself was conducted in the boardroom with myself and the interviewee sitting on opposite sides of the conference table.

Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations
Smith Barney has one boardroom which was visited. It was said by the interviewee that meetings of up to four people may be held in the offices of the employees. The location of meetings with Smith Barney representatives is selected by the clients. Clients may choose to meet in the office of an employee, in the boardroom, or even at their home.

The boardroom was equipped with a wooden rectangular conference table with dining room-style, wood backed chairs. Open seating is offered. Stylized old world maps were hung on the wall, but the interviewee stated that these pictures were placed for the purpose of creating a congenial environment rather than relating segments of the history, core values, or the workings of Smith Barney. These items were placed to create a professional image in the sense noted by Clarke (1999). The boardroom was painted white. Smith Barney does not make reference to the old world maps in the process of negotiating and did not represent the core values of the company on the wall. In the boardroom as well as in offices, a television and a VRC/DVD player were housed. The boardroom television equipment was encased in a wooden cabinet. It was explained that they were used in presentations in conjunction with a white board which was affixed to the wall.

The size of Smith Barney’s boardroom was significant. A unique feature of this boardroom is the raised platforms on which seats are placed (on the right of the photograph. See Appendix C). It appears that the chairs can be moved though, according to the interviewee, they rarely are. Smith Barney does not display artifacts representing their core values in their boardroom. Seating is open and not assigned around their table. Smith Barney was the only corporation in this study to have wooden
backed chairs around their boardroom table. The room was larger than most typical boardrooms due to the raised area with seats placed in rows. The seating on one side of the room offered views of the Portland skyline. However, most of the seats face away from the windows and have no vista distraction. In situations, when just the conference style table is being used, there are no assigned seats. However, when there are large meetings for all the employees, the higher ranked individuals have open seating around the conference table and those of lesser rank sit in seats on the tiered levels. This is the arrangement for staff and sales meetings. This configuration is an indication of the leadership style for the distribution of information. The room is also used for the hosting of clients for lunches and informational meetings. During informational meetings clients occupy seats in the raised area and the people hosting the meeting sit at the table. This design does not effectively facilitate dialogue. Here, during large assemblies, individuals lose the physical ease of mutuality. Lunch meetings are usually smaller in terms of the number of people that attend. On these occasions everyone is able to sit around the conference room table.

**Refreshments**

Food and drink are not always served. However, the company does hold some lunch meetings which are usually smaller in terms of the number of people that attend. Therefore everyone is able to sit around the conference room table.

(Refer to Appendix C for photographs)
Xerox

Demographics

Xerox has a total of 58,000 employees worldwide with 32,100 located in the United States. There are over 2,000 employees that work in the Wilsonville location. Xerox has a gross annual budget of $5 billion a year and profits of $15.7 billion.

Logo

The logo for Xerox is simply the word “Xerox” printed in red block style of printing. The red color is used to portray energy. The simple style is to show the precision that can be printed with one of the company’s printing products. The business’ slogan is that they are the “document company” which may be interpreted to include all the various tasks for which Xerox equipment can be used. As is the case with most of the corporations, the logo is not displayed in any of the corporate boardrooms or conference areas.

Interviewee

The Technology Development Engineer, Kirk McGlothlan, was interviewed. The interview was conducted in one of the boardrooms. We were seated adjacent to each other on the same side of the conference table. Mr. McGlothlan demonstrated a vast understanding of the dynamics involved in the setting of a boardroom.
Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations

I was shown two boardrooms and three conference rooms at Xerox. The most formal boardroom contained a long wooden rectangular conference table with fancy leather armed chairs around it. With the exception of the most formal boardroom, the tables have Formica table tops. The boardroom had a wall of glass on one side which overlooked a shaded strip of lawn. Plain wood paneling decorated the other side of the room. This particular boardroom is only available to the president and vice president of the company. The employees do not know when this room is being used as they are not able to schedule the use of the room themselves. The significance of this room, as stated by the interviewee, is for the hosting of important individuals. The formal boardroom offers an atmosphere of respect for the individuals involved in negotiations in this setting.

Outside the main door to the president’s boardroom is a display case which presents samples of Xerox’s products. This is symbolic of the quality of the specialized products that the company produces at their Wilsonville site and the skill level of their employees. This is situated to be noticed by guests as they enter this room.

At Xerox, there is another boardroom that is available for use by employees. This one also has a wall of glass. On the other side of this room are photographs of Oregon. Emile Durkheim (1972), Victor Turner (1969), Marvin Harris (1968), and Charles Sanders Peirce (1986) note the importance of symbols in defining a particular culture. In
this way, the Oregon photographs may be considered artifacts signifying the importance of the northwest location of this particular branch of the Xerox company.

This second boardroom is a bit smaller than the more formal boardroom for the president and vice president. In the case of both boardrooms, specific artifacts are sometimes brought into the particular locations to be displayed in certain meetings. There are several tables put together to create the employees boardroom work area which uses office style chairs around the assembled table and also lining one wall. The intention of this room is to host vendors and technicians not employed by Xerox. The seating pattern is technically open but often results in the negotiating party seated on one side of the table and the hosting party on the other. However, the interviewee noted that on rare occasions a host sits on the side of the table with the hosted party. Seats are padded chairs of a uniform style. Both boardrooms are painted white.

Xerox also has several conference rooms which are frequently used. One of these conference rooms has a set of smaller tables placed in a "U" shaped pattern. It was designed to hold employee training and presentations. By design the intention of this room is to be used primarily for instruction of employees. A projector has been installed for showing films. The presence of a projector suggests that this room is used for transmitting information rather than for sharing of ideas. There is no placement of participants, the seating being random. This particular conference room has dark green paint on the walls and does not display any artifacts. It appears as if the color choice is functional for the showing of films and Power Point presentations rather than portraying some intended meaning. Possibly rather than a stark white, the dark green presents the message of a calm soothing atmosphere. As with other companies who retain bare walls,
I had to assume that perhaps it is believed that decorations on the wall might cause a
distraction during meetings.

I was shown two other conference rooms at Xerox. They are used by employers and are
not designed to host individuals who are not employed by Xerox. Both of these are
painted white, unlike the room which is used for showing films. Perhaps wall color is
determined by the intended usage of the rooms. It appears that these rooms are used for
dialogue between employees where the other is designed for viewing presentations.

One of the conference rooms has art stylized paintings of the particular products
that Xerox makes. Pictures on the walls can assist individuals in categorizing their
environments. Hammer and Diesendruck (2005); Kemler, Egan, and Holt (2004); Nelson,
Chan, and Morghan (2004); and Waltz (2004) remind us that individuals categorize their
world through artifacts. The other conference room used by employees at Xerox has a
picture depicting modern art on the wall that does not relate to the core values of the
company but it does convey a congenial atmosphere.

These conference rooms for employees uses small round tables for three or four
employees to conduct a small meeting. The tables in these rooms have Formica tops. A
Xerox interviewee stated that the round shape of the tables is beneficial for staff
meetings. This interviewee felt that round tables do not create the “other -side -of -the –
table” feeling among colleagues working together on the same projects. A round table also
allows all participants to equally hear what is being discussed.
Refreshments

Food and drink are served in the process of negotiating. Mr. McGlothlan feels that this is a way of showing respect, maintaining harmony, and forming a potential business relationship with the other party. In some cases, when the meeting lasts all day, a catered lunch is provided. At other times meetings take a lunch break and then resume.

(Refer to Appendix C for photographs)

Non-Profit Organizations

Mercy Corps

Demographics

Mercy Corps has a total of five branch offices internationally with roughly 100 individuals employed at the local headquarters. The work of this organization relies heavily on volunteers. Mercy Corps is served by 7 million volunteers located in more than 35 countries. The organization operates on a working budget of $1 billion dollars a year which is distributed in terms of assistance to people in 81 nations.

Logo

The logo for Mercy Corps is stylized letters “M” and “C.” These letters form the shape of a person with arms outstretched in human compassion. Mercy Corps’ slogan is: “be the change.”
Interviewee

Executive Assistant, Annie Warner, was interviewed. The interview was conducted at a local coffee shop. The interviewee seemed to be aware of the elements that are included in their environment for negotiations. It was noted that Mercy Corps conducts a large number of its meetings at this particular coffee shop. This location provides another conference room for the organization.

Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations

Mercy Corps has several conference rooms as well as a boardroom. All the rooms are equipped with wooden rectangular tables. Presently, Mercy Corps is experiencing a lack of workspace and is planning to build another boardroom. Currently, the conference rooms and the boardroom are being used as office space for individuals working on the many problems caused by the recent hurricanes. It was noted that the rooms had just been cleared of extra employees working on the problems associated with the tsunami when the hurricanes hit the southern part of the United States.

I was shown the boardroom as well as several conference rooms at Mercy Corps. They are all painted in natural colors. The intention of the natural colors is to make individuals feel at ease. The conference rooms have moveable tables. However, they are rarely moved. The conference rooms are primarily used by employees. The boardroom, on the other hand, has a long, wooden table, which cannot be easily moved. This room is used for hosting guests. The décor of this room is designed to show respect for outsiders. The conference rooms are often used for management deliberation, training, and
strategizing. The seating pattern was described by the interviewee as a “round table format”. Open seating is the standard procedure. The chairs provided are padded and of a single style.

An unique feature of the Mercy Corps boardroom conference rooms, and hallways is the sizable number of photographs which serve as distinctive artifacts. These items are symbolic to the work of the organization. Mercy Corps has photographs of individuals whom have been aided in other parts of the world. These illustrated individuals are from places such as Pakistan, Albania, and Iran. Baer, Kaufman, and Gentile (2004); Bechky (2003), and Beckett (2003) note the importance of symbols as representing the culture. These photographs represent the organizational culture of Mercy Corps, depicting not only their core values but the emotions of urgency which drives the institution. The artifacts change regularly and relate to recent disaster victims whom they help. They also provide reminders for employees about the importance of their work through Mercy Corps. It was noted that some of the employees stated that they are expecting to see photos of victims of the U.S. hurricanes along the walls in the near future.

One other set of items that should be considered symbolic at Mercy Corps are many gifts that have been given to employees of the organization. These items are often displayed in the particular employee’s office or cubicle. These items hold personal significance for the Mercy Corps employee to whom they were given. There is not necessarily a universal meaning associated to these items, but instead signify to the individual an event centered in a particular time and place.
Refreshments

Food and drink are occasionally served at Mercy Corps. It was noted by the interviewee that sometimes restaurants provide a location for the organization's meetings and provide a meal or snack. This is often a method of showing support to the organization by these particular eating establishments. They often are eligible to deduct the cost of the food and service from their taxes.

(Due to the fact that the boardroom and conference areas were being used photographs could not be taken)

Northwest Medical Teams

Demographics

The Northwest Medical Teams International, Incorporated has headquarters in Tigard, Oregon. This organization has one head administrative office which houses approximately 125 employees. Here, again, this corporation is highly dependant on the support of volunteers. Often the work of employees and volunteers intermingle.

Northwest Medical Teams states that it is actively supported through the volunteer work of approximately 1,700 individuals. This organization has an operating budget of $13,894,528 which does not include the value of volunteer work which totals another $5,073,930.
Logo

The logo of Northwest Medical Teams is also significant to their work. It consists of a brown, elongated medical cross with two hands reaching vertically towards each other superimposed over the vertical axis. The organization's mission of medical rescue is clearly identified.

Interviewee

The Executive Administrative Assistant, Linda Woodbury, was interviewed. The interviewee understood the elements and dynamics of the corporate environment. The interview took place in the main conference room with myself on one side of a table and the interviewee on the other.

Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations

The main boardroom contains three wooden tables placed together in a "U"-shaped pattern. This room was designed with the primary intention of presenting information rather than facilitating common discussion. This is recognized by the arrangement of the tables and the placement of chairs as well as the location of a projection screen. In this location the seating is somewhat planned. The C.E.O. and other high status members of the organization self-select chairs at the bottom of the "U". The interviewee commented such seating allows everyone present to hear the speaker. Within the room there are six photographs of important individuals in the history of the organization. This room is designed to use Power Point presentations. Board meetings
and other major presentations take place in this room. The six pictures on the wall are of influential individuals in the history of the organization. These individuals are important to segments of the history of the organization. A small kitchenette can be used of the serving of food and drinks. A restroom has been built adjacent to the boardroom by reducing boardroom floor space. However, as commented by the interviewee, no one uses it due to its closeness to the meeting area. The natural functions facilitated by the restroom are taken away from the cultural milieu of the negotiating environment.

Northwest Medical Teams International also has a chapel which is used for some ceremonies. Of the many varieties of rooms in this organization this one finds the least use. The cross on the wall identifies the company’s faith-based nature and is shown to be symbolic of the work of the organization. The main entry way to the facility also displays a cross. The interviewee noted that within the chapel there are chairs that can be moved into a circle pattern as needed for some meetings. This room is also used for less formal meetings, as well. Chairs are often moved for this process.

Photographs on the wall depict the individuals around the world who have been helped by organization. These are significant reminders of the work that is undertaken by the organization. The photographs also exhibits the non-materialistic rewards associated with working with this particular organization. Northwest Medical Teams International does not designate seating. Chairs in the different areas vary in style between rooms. The type of chair is used with a particular room. All chairs in the facility are padded and have no armrests.

Northwest Medical Teams International, also has several conference rooms in which staff meetings are conducted. I was shown four different conference rooms, each
of a different style. The tables in these rooms were either wooden or had a Formica top. The meetings in these rooms are usually at a departmental level. Typically guests do not use these rooms and food and drink are not served.

Also in the building is an area with cafeteria style tables for quick meetings with outside people. This location is provided for short conversations with visitors. This meeting area does not offer any privacy as do the other meeting areas. This particular room displays a collage of small pictures on one wall exhibiting some of the individuals helped by this organization. They show individuals from such countries as Iraq, Uganda, and Ukraine.

Northwest Medical Teams International uses random seating arrangements in its meetings. Chairs in the conference rooms are of a single style, but are less formal than in their boardroom.

The Northwest Medical Team facility has a small formal conference room. This room appears that it was designed to hold conversations with important individuals. There is a map on a wall showing where some of their work is done. According to the interviewee, the selection of the two colors in which the room has been painted are not significant. However, perhaps the intentional choice of tan and dark blue colors work to create a congenial environment. Seating is in padded chairs of a single style and position of participants is random around the table. The table is made of dark mahogany rather that having the Formica top found in their other conference rooms.

A smaller conference room at Northwest Medical Teams International is used for less formal meetings. One picture on the wall conveys the purpose of the organization though depicting individuals whom the organization has helped. As in all other rooms,
seating around the table is random. Chairs are padded and of a single style, but are less formal than the chairs placed in the other conference room. The table top is made of Formica.

Another small conference room at Northwest Medical Teams International was also viewed. This room is also used for less formal meetings. As commented by the interviewee, “often the type of table and the comfort level of the seating is symbolic to the importance of the individuals hosted in the room.” The more expensive the table and chairs, the more important the conversation topics are. The same colors of blue and tan adorn the walls of this conference room as in more formal one. Two pictures on the wall in this room portray individuals who have been helped by organization. These photographs are symbolic of the type of work that is done by the particular organization. Chairs are padded and of a single style, but lack armrests. In the corner of this room stands an easel with a large white paper pad for presentations.

Artifacts in the form of photographs adorn all conference rooms. There are photographs of people in developing countries that have received aid from Northwest Medical Teams International. They symbolically serve as reminders to employees of the value and personal sacrifice embedded in their work with the organization.

Refreshments

The small kitchenette built into the main boardroom can be used for the serving of food and drink. Food and drink are frequently served. This may often be a drink and/or snack of some sort or, on occasion, it could be a full lunch. The type of food and/or drink
to be served is dependant on the type of meeting which is occurring. Often for higher
status meetings more elaborate meals are served.

(Refer to Appendix C for photographs)

Salvation Army

Demographics

The Salvation Army’s West Women’s and Children’s Shelter was also visited. Salvation Army employs thousands of employees worldwide. In the West Women’s and Children’s Shelter there are 27 employees. There are eight branch offices of the Salvation Army in the Portland area alone. Each branch has a different number of employees. West Women’s and Children’s Shelter has an operations budget of $948,000 per year.

Logo

The logo of the Salvation Army is a red badge that is similar in style to many types of badges worn by individuals of social authority. The organization was started by a British minister, William Booth, 1865. The color red may symbolize the Christian ethos surrounding Christ’s sacrifice which is modeled by members of the organization. The words “Salvation Army” are written upward across the red badge in white italic block print. The motto of the Salvation Army is: “doing the most good.”
Interviewee

Program Manager Gloria Willis was interviewed. The interview was conducted in a small conference room. The interview demonstrated that Ms Willis seemed to understand the environmental significance carried by artifacts, furniture, and seating arrangement. We sat on opposite sides of the table.

Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations

The conference room at the Salvation Army is used for advisory board meetings as well as many other gatherings. This room has Formica top tables. It would appear that these tables can be rearranged. As stated by the interviewee this is not practiced. It would also appear as if the room is too small for tables to be rearranged. From time to time this room is used for clients of the West Women’s and Children’s Shelter to meet with lawyers and welfare personnel. It was noted that some clients do not like this particular room as it has interior windows which allows observation from the entrance of the building. Clients comment on the lack of privacy. The small conference room is equipped with office style chairs. The chairs are padded and of a single style with armrests. Open seating is provided except during advisory board meetings when the head of the department sits at one end of the table. Other than these occasions, there are no assigned seats. The room does not have any form of decorations except for one framed collage of photographs which is on the floor leaning against the wall. The collage shows photos depicting the history of the Salvation Army’s West Women’s and Children’s Shelter. This collage is hardly noticeable as when the door opens it blocks the view of this item.
The placement of this collage might be intentional as their position on the floor does not convey a message or notes a responsibility. It is unknown how long this artifact has been sitting on the floor.

The glass door to this room also does not contribute to privacy. Clients often complain that they would prefer a room which includes more privacy rather than one in which individuals entering the building can view. This room is painted in neutral natural colors.

In addition to the one conference room that I was shown, another meeting area was presented. The Salvation Army's West Women's and Children's Shelter also has another room which is used for meetings involving clients. This room is furnished with couches and easy chairs. This room is used frequently for meetings with staff members and clients. Most of the time this room is used exclusively by women and children, as this location does not provide services for men. Outside visitors are not invited in... Snacks are served in this less formal area during meetings. This room is decorated with a three-foot cross on the wall to remind individuals of the significance of the faith-based nature of the Salvation Army's mission.

On Sundays, the chairs are moved to form a row configuration for a church service. The interviewee stated that is room offers more comfort than the conference room to the women and children using the facility. In this room there are no assigned seats. However, individuals tend to sit in the same spots by habit rather than assignment. This room is not intend for board meetings. This room also attempts to provide an environment to make individuals feel at ease. The style of seating is informal in this meeting room at the Salvation Army's West Women's and Children's shelter. It denotes
the importance of comfort. Seating is primarily on sofas rather than on office style chairs. The seats are equally padded and offer the same level of comfort. This room is designed for the atmosphere of safety and comfort. There is a bear stuffed animal which may be a sign of comfort to children who are present in this room. The rooms are painted in a comforting white color. Both the stuffed bear and the natural color is to be used to portray a comfortable environment.

Refreshments

The serving of refreshments at the Salvation Army is not a traditional practice. As stated by the interviewee, "drink is only served occasionally." In most cases if a drink is served it would be coffee or water. Occasionally, juice may be served. It is more common for drink to be served at board meetings in the conference room rather in meetings involving the women and children who live in this shelter.

(Refer to Appendix C for photographs)

Y.M.C.A.

Demographics

Young Men's Christian Association also participated in this study. The "Y" was founded in London in 1844 by Sir George Williams as a place for young business men to improve in mind and body. Locally in the administration office for the region of the Columbia-Willamette there are approximately 30 employees. Worldwide the Y.M.C.A. has a total number of 19 million employees in 10,000 communities. The annual budget is
broken down into the different regions in which the Y.M.C.A. serves. The region that serves the Portland metropolitan area has an operating budget of $20 million.

**Logo**

The logo of the Y.M.C.A. is shaped like a large “Y”. The left portion and the bottom of the letter is in black block bold print. This is to be symbolic of something that is traditional, lasting, and solid. This is how the Y.M.C.A. would like to be considered. On the right side of the upper part of the letter “Y” is of a red color forming a triangle shape. The red triangle symbolizes the mission of the Y.M.C.A. which is to "build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all."

**Interviewee**

Ms. Chris Stubblefield, Executive Assistant, was interviewed. She seemed to be informed regarding the dynamics involved in the settings of negotiations. The interview took place at the regional office for the Y.M.C.A. of Columbia-Willamette. It was held in a conference room on site. The interviewee sat at the head of the small rectangular conference table while I sat to one side.

**Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations**

At the administration office I was shown a boardroom and a conference room. The smaller conference area is where interviews are held. This room is primarily used for
meeting with parents of children who take part in the Y.M.C.A. programs as well as small group staff meetings. It is also used for interviews for employment within the Y.M.C.A. organization. In this conference room there are no artifacts and open seating is practiced. The room is furnished sparsely and consists of smaller sized wooden rectangular conference table with office chairs for seating. The lack of decorations in this conference room, as noted by the interviewee, is used to focus attention on the conversation at hand. Important information is shared during gatherings in this room. Gatherings commonly involve personal conversations with two or three people. As stated by the interviewee the floor plan of the room consists of a small buffet area where paper ware can be gathered and used for the serving of food and drink on a moment’s notice. This is an expression of the quality of hospitality of offering food and drink to individuals who are involved in meetings here.

This regional office in Portland also has another conference room which can accommodate a larger number of people. This room has several Formica top tables which are often put in a “U” or a square-shaped pattern. The room allows the tables to be moved. Seating is random. However, the arrangement of the tables may be planned for a particular meeting. However, according to the interviewee, they are rarely moved. The employee interviewed at the Y.M.C.A. stated that she found a square shaped assembly of smaller tables to be helpful in meetings involving larger groups. She further stated that it allowed everyone to hear and see each other without looking around another participant. She further stated that viewing the speaker is awkward at long boardroom tables. She feels that long board tables resign some participants to the role of listener rather than contributor.
The Y.M.C.A. recognizes the worth of artifacts in displaying the core values of the company. Ferguson and Duin (2004) note the importance of displaying reminders of the core values of the workings of a particular organization. (It is ironic to note that author Ferguson serves on the board of directors of this branch of the Y.M.C.A.) This branch of the Y.M.C.A. displays its core values prominently. The larger room has five artifacts on the wall. Each framed calligraphed statement relates to one of the five core values of Y.M.C.A. These relate to the core values which are love, respect, honorability, responsibility, and service. This organization relies on open seating and does not designate seating around their tables. Chairs are in a single padded style. These chairs are less fancy than the ones used by other corporations. The room is painted in a soft white color.

The boardroom also has several whiteboards attached to the walls. The interviewee commented that the boards were donated to the Y.M.C.A. The room also is equipped with a lowering screen for visual presentations. Some of the chairs in the room have their backs to the screen. This would suggest that these items are not used at every meeting. The plant in the corner by the window can be a method of naturalizing, and somewhat softening, the business atmosphere. It was noted by the interviewee that the room is used for a variety of purposes. Common users include staff members, volunteers, as well as participants in the Y.M.C.A. programs.
Refreshments

The conference room includes a buffet table and the boardroom a small kitchenette. Often coffee, water, and snacks are served to the individuals who attend meetings in this room. This is especially true when the room is being used to host individuals other than employees. As noted by Ms Stubblefield, attendance by outsiders is greater when food and drinks are served. In a way, it shows a small gesture of respect for their time.

(Refer to Appendix C for photographs)

Foreign For-Profit Businesses

Hanjin Shipping

Demographics

Hanjin Shipping has more than 400 employees in eight branch offices. The company has its world headquarters in Korea which includes head offices of its subsidiaries: Keoyang Shipping, Senator Lines, and Cyber Logitec. The Portland location is among the smallest of the branch offices with only 12 employees. The local branch of Hanjin Shipping has a yearly operating budget of $6 million and total profits reach $11.3 million yearly.
Logo

The logo of the company is a blue circle and the “H” of Hanjin inside of it. The interviewee stated that the blue color is to represent the color of the open sea. The business would like to think that the “H” symbol reflects the commitment to customer satisfaction that is said to be expressed by each of its 3,600 employees. The motto of the company is: “your choice, your success.”

Interviewee

At Hanjin, Regional Manager, Jeffery McElwen was interviewed. The interview was conducted in the business’ conference room. He seemed knowledgeable about the business but did not seem to be concerned with the dynamics involved in the settings of negotiations. Instead, he seemed anxious for the interview to be over.

Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations

All the meetings at this business are held in this one conference room. Seating is random other than assigning the director of a particular meeting to sit at a the head of the table. No distinction is made in the type of chair around the table.

The conference room housed one wooden rectangular table. The room was painted an off-white color. The boardroom, including its furniture, as noted by Light (2004) and Alati (2003), is a reflection of an organizations workplace habits. Although
the conference room is small, it has a large number of artifacts. A map of the world
denotes the number of locations where Hanjin Shipping delivers packages. It is symbolic
in the sense that it shows the scope of their work. On the conference table there is a
model of a ship. All the company’s ships, including the model, have the blue circle and
the “H” of Hanjin inside of it. The interviewee stated that the blue color is to represent
the color of the open sea. The “H” is to symbolize the name, Hyundai, and its
commitment to customer satisfaction.

Also, adorning the walls are several clocks which identify the time of day at
different branch offices in other locations. This shows the importance of knowing the
time at other branch offices. These clocks also convey the message of a world-wide
awareness of company business. Also inside the conference room there is a photograph of
one of the ships that are used for carrying goods. The ship symbolizes their expertise in
carrying cargo. A kitchenette built into the side of the conference room demonstrates the
importance to Hanjin Shipping of offering of drink to guests. However, food is not
offered. There is a sink used for offering drink to hosted individuals. A microwave is
also in the room but used by employees only. A television sitting on a small desk is used
for presentations to exhibit the overall quality of the company. The core values of the
company are written in English and in Korean and appear on the wall. Hanjin Shipping
recognizes the value of displaying these artifacts Seating is at random as the company
does not designate seating around their table. Seats are padded chairs of a single style.
**Refreshments**

Drinks are served during the meeting. Food is not served. This may be due to the fact that this is a small branch office of a larger company. This policy might also be that the result of the facility consisting of only one conference room that does not allow for extra space.

(Refer to Appendix C for photographs)

**Hyundai America Shipping Agency**

**Demographics**

Hyundai America Shipping was another foreign company which participated in this study. This Korean company has a total of 350 employees located in the United States. There are six employees working at the Portland location. The company did not disclose its yearly working budget, however, it yearly profits total $45,404,000 per year.

**Logo**

Unlike the automobile manufacturing component of the overall company, the logo for Hyundai America Shipping consists of a green colored triangle to the left of the word “Hyundai.” Under the black block print of the word “Hyundai” it reads “America Shipping Agency.” The same color and type of font is used for this saying. It appears smaller than the company’s name. It is interesting that this Korean firm refers to itself as “America Shipping Agency.” As a large portion of this Korean company’s business is
trans-pacific to the United States. The firm is attempting to make a partnership and a profit from shipping between the two countries.

**Interviewee**

The Branch Manager, Tony Galati, was interviewed. He was very much aware of the dynamics involved in the setting of negotiations. The interview took place in the conference room at the Portland branch site. I sat on the opposite side of a table from the interviewee.

**Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations**

I was shown the company's one conference room which housed a wooden rectangular conference table. The Hyundai Shipping America representative stated that rectangular-shaped tables are conducive to discussions with a few individuals. This room, as stated by the interviewee, is used for all forms of meetings. As commented by Mr. Galati, anytime someone visits the company he or she is hosted in the conference room. The room is also used for staff meetings.

Seating is planned, not random, in this conference room. In addition to the table and chairs there is also a small kitchenette. The room has a medium sized window which offers a view of the city as well. The Branch Manager stated that he intermixes negotiating parties. He further stated that the conference area is a nice location to host visiting people as it offers equal seating for all individuals involved. Although the seating is planned, this attention does not extend to the style of their chairs. They are not any
more comfortable than other companies who rely on random seating. Hyundai’s policy directs mixing the seating positions of employees and guests.

Meetings in offices, according to the interviewee, divide individuals and could hamper discussion. He further commented that he believed that offices were to be used solely for personal projects. Although the conference room is not large it is holds a variety of artifacts. The interviewee could point out the meaning of each artifact whose meaning could be understood by all employees in the particular business. Mr. Galati stated that the photos of the ships related to the amount of cargo that the company carried. The award on the wall shows the high overall quality of the company. The model of the ship also notes the importance of this high quality of service. The Asian figurine on display signifies the fact the company is of Korean origin. The figurine is of a Korean girl which is proudly displayed to express their value of Korean culture. Hyundai places a plain wall clock at the end of the room. Time is significant and the company finds it appropriate to display a clock within their conference room. Hyundai does not need to be discreet about the monitoring of time.

**Refreshments**

Everyone is offered something to drink. During meetings this might include coffee or tea; but always chilled water is offered. Food is rarely served. Although it was not stated I suspect that this might also be due to the fact that the facility consists of only one conference room which does not allow for extra space.

(Refer to Appendix C for photographs)
Toyota Motor Sales

**Demographics**

Toyota employs a total of 264,000 employees worldwide but only 63 employees locally. The company has a operating budget of $10.7 billion and produces a yearly profit of $15.4 billion.

**Logo**

The word “Toyota” in Japanese means “forward thinking”. This conference room symbolizes forward thinking through the use of technology for negotiating. Since the vision of Toyota is to be active in the process of forward thinking the company uses technology in this process. The logo itself is red in color and, overall, is oval in shape. Within the larger oval is a smaller elongated one crossed by a half of another to form a stylish “T” shape to represent the “Toyota” name.

**Interviewee**

Toyota Motor Sales’ Field Technology Service Provider, Michael Oka, was interviewed. The interview was held in a conference room in which I sat at the head of the table and the interviewee to one side.

**Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations**

Toyota’s conference room includes three large Formica top tables placed in a “U” shaped pattern. This room is used to accommodate staff discussions as well as meetings.
with visitors, which often includes vendors. Seating is in office style chairs and can be described as random. The tables are arranged in order to view presentations on the screen. The Toyota representative commented that “U” shaped tables were effective for the sharing of information. It allows the focus of attention to be on one person while others take notes on what is being presented. This interviewee went on to say that this arrangement is effective for teaching or presenting information rather than mutually sharing in a discussion. This is why Toyota provides tables for note taking rather than a set of chairs. The interviewee stated that it is used for this purpose frequently. The tables have power ports as well. The chairs are of a single style.

There is a whiteboard, television, and a screen in the boardroom of Toyota. The configuration of the tables would appear that this room is frequently used for presentations. The room is painted a natural tan color. Although not stated, I believe, as in the case of other organizations that a possible intention of tan bare walls would be to focus concentration on the topic at hand.

In addition to the conference room I was shown a room exclusively used for video conferencing. There was one wooden rectangular shaped table in this room. This is a unique feature at Toyota. Grayson (2005), Schweitzer (2005), and Oakes (2005) note the increasing trend in the use of video conference rooms by companies. Frequently, Toyota conducts multi-venued meetings with individuals in different parts of the United States as well as in Japan. This room is symbolic in that it conveys the vastness of Toyota as an international company. Each of the different conference rooms in each of the different geographic areas have a sign to identify what city they are in. In this way one boardroom in one location can identify the location of fellow participants. Thus, multiple
boardrooms can affect each other. Seating at meetings is at random. Toyota does not or has not considered designating seating around their tables. There are pictures on the wall of the video conference room but they neither relate to the core values of the company nor identify the specific geographic location of the room. They merely have the intention of breaking up the monotony of the wall. Electrical equipment makes the atmosphere of the room less relaxing. The pictures might ease the tension brought into the room by the television equipment. Chairs are of a single style. Meetings occurring in the video conference room are scheduled with the consideration that individuals in other time zones will be taking part.

Refreshments

Food and drinks are served. Snacks such as pastries and cookies as well as juice and coffee are offered. The interviewee noted that refreshments at Toyota were a method of establishing and maintaining harmony between negotiating parties. The serving of food and drink during meetings is a common practice.

(Refer to Appendix C for photographs)

Subaru

Demographics

There are approximately 14,189 employees of Subaru worldwide. Locally there are 27 individuals working in the sales office, 30 working in the field, and another 17
who are employed in the warehouse location. The company has an annual budget of $153 million and a yearly profit margin of $644 million.

**Logo**

The word "Subaru" is a Japanese word meaning "unite," as well as a term identifying a cluster of six stars, which the Greeks called the Pleiades. According to Greek mythology, Atlas' daughters turned into this group of stars. Therefore, Subaru's symbol contains six stars appearing in an oval shape. The yellow or golden colored stars on the dark blue background are intended to give the impression of the night's sky.

**Interviewee**

The Regional Administrative Manager, Rebecca Welch, was interviewed. The interview was conducted in the office of the interviewee. She did not seem to understand the workings of negotiations or their related environments too well. The interviewee sat on her side of the desk and I sat opposite her.

**Artifacts, Seating and Table Configurations**

I was shown one location at Subaru, that being their boardroom. The company uses a wooden rectangular table. The room itself is used for team and staff training meetings as well as meeting with outside people such as vendors. The room contains a conference table with ten office chairs around it. Subaru applies an open seating tactic,
not designating particular spots to participants. Seating is in office style chairs that are of a single style.

The room includes a descending screen for displaying power point presentations. The room exhibited one artifact which was a Subaru car advertisement banner. While Alejandro (1987) notes the importance of atmosphere of an environment, the interviewee did not recognize the significance of the presence of the banner. Therefore, I became aware that the company did not recognize it as being an artifact. In addition to the banner, other posters and written sayings adorn the walls. These relate to the quality of their automobiles and may be considered artifacts. However, they are not recognized as being such by their employees. It was stated by the interviewee that Subaru does not have any artifacts or items related to the company in their boardroom. Yet visiting the boardroom showed differently.

**Refreshments**

The company serves food and drink occasionally. When they do, perhaps the table below the banner is used for this purpose (Please see photograph). As noted by the interviewee, food and drink are served when outside visitors come, which is about ten percent of the time.

(Refer to Appendix C for photographs)
Findings

The businesses in this study can be divided into one of three categories: domestic for-profit, foreign for-profit, and international non-profit. American businesses in the Pacific Northwest included Boeing, Equity Office, Louisiana-Pacific, Nike, Northwest Natural, Providence Medical, Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon, Smith Barney, and Xerox. Foreign companies with branch offices in the northwest were Hanjin Shipping, Hyundai, Toyota, and Subaru. Non-profit organizations which took part in the study were the Mercy Corps, Northwest Medical Team, Salvation Army, and the YMCA.

Different corporate sizes and categories seem to display different tendencies in constructing the settings for negotiations. In most cases, the larger companies seem to apply less decoration to their boardrooms and conference areas than the smaller institutions. However, this does not seem to be a conscious decision. With a few exceptions, most larger companies had not considered the advantage of intentional decoration of these spaces.

With regard to profit motive, almost all non-profit organizations have displayed some indication of their core values in their negotiating sites where less than half of the for-profit companies use intentional displays.

There is not a clear distinction between foreign and domestic for-profit companies in the presentation of artifacts. Three of the four foreign companies displayed artifacts, although one company did not recognize the intentional value of their action.
This study involves the single interviewer in each company. The meaning and intentionality of artifacts and the meaning and intentionality of seating were two of the major focuses of this study. The topics listed below were investigated. The larger categories are followed by more detailed analysis.

**Background factors**
1. Status levels of interviewees
2. Corporation type size and yearly profit

**Artifacts**
3. Comparison of Intentionality and meaning of artifacts with yearly profit
4. Types of artifacts displayed

**Table placement**
5. Room size and table size
6. Table arrangement
7. Types of tables

**Structural Considerations**
8. Intentionality and meaning of wall coloration
9. Use of glass and windows
10. Use of lighting
11. Types of flooring

**Other interior elements**
12. Inclusion of indoor plants
13. Inclusion of technical equipment

**Considerations in use of the rooms**
14. Persons using identified rooms
15. Intentionality and meaning of seating arrangement
16. Presentation of food and drink in comparison with annual profit and office size

### Status Levels of Interviewees

This study included four kinds of interviewees: managers over varying types of departments, executive administrative assistants or employees who performed similar on-
the-job supervisory tasks but were given different titles for the same duties, mid-level 
employees, and lower-level employees. One of the limitations of this study, as discussed 
earlier, is that fact there is no constant level of status among the interviewees. This chart 
(chart #1) displays the breakdown of the status levels of the employees who were 
interviewed.

**CHART 1: INTERVIEWEE RANKING WITHIN THE INSTITUTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Type</th>
<th>Profit / Domestic</th>
<th>Profit foreign</th>
<th>Non-profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>Louisiana Pacific, Smith Barney, Nike, Equity Office</td>
<td>Hyundai Shipping, Hanjin Shipping, Subaru</td>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Assistants/ Similar background with different title</td>
<td>Northwest Natural</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mercy Corps, YMCA, Northwest Medical Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-Level employees</td>
<td>Xerox, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon</td>
<td>Toyota</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Level employees</td>
<td>Providence Medical, Boeing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As part of this study, eight managers were interviewed. Their titles and job 
descriptions vary, but they are all designated as having a manager’s role. The interviews 
of managers included: a program manager at the Salvation Army, a branch manger at 
Hyundai Shipping, a senior properties manager at Equity Office, a regional manager at 
Hanjin Shipping, an administrative manager at Subaru, an event service manager at Nike, 
and other managers with different titles at Louisiana Pacific with the title of Corporate 
Office Services Supervisor, and at Smith Barney with the title of Branch Administrator.

Two executive assistants were interviewed. They represented Mercy Corps and 
the YMCA. Another two subject with the same job but with a different title was 
interviewed at Northwest Medical Teams International and at Northwest Natural.
Middle-level employees included a technology development engineer at Xerox and a field technology service provider from Toyota. Also, an interior designer was interviewed at Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon. The interpretation of corporate dynamics from the perspective of middle level employees is different in that decisions about negotiations are delegated to them.

Two lower-level employees were interviewed at Providence Medical and at Being as part of this study. The interviewee at Boeing held the title of Executive Office Administrator of the Flight Control Systems Commercial Airplanes. The other interviewee at Providence Medical held the title Scheduling Secretary in the Nutrition Services department. Their perspective is not one of decision-making ability and they are not directly involved in the negotiating processes in a conference room or boardroom. These lower-level employees do not offer the same working knowledge as higher level employees.

I was expecting to see a common level of understanding between informants holding the same job title. The eight managerial interviewees differed in awareness regarding meaning in their boardroom or conference area. The managers from the Salvation Army, Nike, and Hyundai Shipping demonstrated a clear understanding and proved that they had thought about design and configuration of their conference areas and/or boardrooms. Managers at Subaru and Hanjin Shipping had artifacts in their boardrooms and/or conference and were unable to state the meaning of them. Boardrooms at Louisiana Pacific, Smith Barney, and Equity Office did not display artifacts and the interviewees at each were not able to answer why that was so.
Interviewing individuals who did not appear to understand or could not elaborate on the meaning of elements proved to be difficult.

The two interviewees given the title of executive assistant and the two supervisors with similar job descriptions but holding different titles demonstrated a clear understanding of the intended meaning portrayed in their boardrooms and conference areas. These individuals were able to tell of the meaning of purpose of items which adorned the walls. The understanding of these two individuals was better than that of some of the managers in other organizations. The three middle-level employees demonstrated a thorough and equal level of understanding. Even though they were not the ones who decided the arrangement of boardrooms and conference rooms they could explain the meaning of artifacts and colors used.

I had expected that the lower-level employees could not demonstrate the same understanding of boardroom design as persons higher in the organization. This proved to be a correct assumption. While interviewing at Boeing, a lower-level employee had to confess that she did not know the answer to several questions regarding boardroom composition, but was able to ask a fellow employee who held a higher status in the organization. At Providence Medical, I noticed a framed statement on the wall containing the core values of the organization and asked for detailed explanation. The interviewee needed to examine the framed statement to remember the core values of the organization and respond to my question. I would have expected all employees at Providence Medical to have a greater familiarity with the institution’s core values; particularly an employee assigned to be interviewed on behalf of Providence Medical. In
the very small sample of only two lower-level employees from two organizations, neither could articulate the meanings held in the interior composition of their corporation's board rooms. While mid-level employees, in most cases, were able to clearly articulate the elements and themes found in the institutions' board rooms, the selection and modification of the design was supervised by upper-level management. Only the Y.M.C.A. made decisions with the assistance of a professional consultant regarding the use of color and placement of artifacts. Nike, Xerox, Boeing, and Northwest Medical Teams have had their facilities custom built. These firms consulted both their architects and interior designers in forming a meaningful, coherent composition. In these cases, the professional designers were given the mission statement and operational dynamics of the organizations to guide the production of facility designs which were approved by upper management. The other dozen organizations in this study inhabit previously constructed facilities. Each consulted interior designers to provide a meaningfully cohesive décor which signifies the values and processes of the institution. Here, also, upper level management assisted in modifying and approving the final design.

A unique feature of Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon is that this company employs its own interior designer who was interviewed for this study. Nike, in its energetic endeavor to modify its conference rooms to hold the particular intent of every conference, has a team of design employees hired to redecorate every time a conference is held, making this process of placing signifying artifacts and modifying wall and floor materials an on-going function of the corporation.
This study included more for-profit domestic branch offices than any other category of participating organization. There were an equal number of for-profit domestic businesses and for-profit foreign branch offices. The other types of businesses comprised non-profit domestic branch offices and foreign non-profit branch offices. Many individuals do not realize that the corporate head office of the Salvation Army is located in London, England, and thus it appears on the chart above as a non-profit foreign branch office.

Noting the number of employees in the particular organization provides one interesting means of comparison. The following chart (Chart #3, below) represents the total number of employees hired by a particular firm.

Surprisingly, of the four Asian companies examined, only Hyundai Shipping America recognized the influence of physical surroundings. I had anticipated organizations with home offices in Asia to be more sensitive to contextual dynamics than western corporations. From living for a summer as a student in Chengdu, People’s Republic of China, and living and working for a year in Hsinchu and Taipei, Taiwan, as
well as teaching for ten months in Ota, Japan, I have had a considerable number first hand observations of the workings of business in these parts of Asia. I have noticed how heavily Chinese, Taiwanese, and Japanese businessmen rely on contextual dynamics. This was particularly evident in Japan. As an English instructor teaching evening conversation classes to professional Japanese businessmen and women, I heard many workplace anecdotes about the conducting of business and the critical importance of contextual dynamics. However many, if not most, of the management personnel employed by the four Asian companies in this study are not Asian and do not expect any particular cultural sensitivity on the part of their American clients. All seventeen sites were characterized by American gestures of hospitality, such as handshaking and directness of topic discussion. None of the companies examined used Asian formalities or gestures.

Two non-profit organization took part in this study, Mercy Corps and Northwest Medical Team. Both rely heavily on a wide diversity of partnerships with diverse organizations. They rely upon the support of firms in the United States as well as those aboard.

**Chart 3: Corporation Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of employees in a particular organization</th>
<th>300,000-100,000</th>
<th>100,000-50,000</th>
<th>50,000-25,000</th>
<th>25,000-10,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Toyota, Boeing</td>
<td>Xerox</td>
<td>Providence Medical, Smith Barney</td>
<td>Louisiana-Pacific, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon, Equity Office, Nike, Northwest Natural, Subaru</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHART 3: CORPORATION SIZE (CONTINUED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of employees in a particular organization</th>
<th>10,000-5,000</th>
<th>5,000-1,000</th>
<th>1,000-500</th>
<th>500-1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The work of employees and volunteers overlap in the setting of a non-profit organization. Employees of these organizations do not know the total number of employees working in the particular organization.

Chart #3 displays the for-profit businesses with more than 1,000 but than less than 25,000 employees. Five organization had 50 or fewer employees as noted on chart #4, below.

CHART 4: COMPARISON OF LOCAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of employees in a particular organization</th>
<th>4,000-2,000</th>
<th>2,000-1,000</th>
<th>1,000-700</th>
<th>700-400</th>
<th>400-100</th>
<th>100-70</th>
<th>50-0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Xerox, Nike</td>
<td>Providence Medical, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon,</td>
<td>Boeing, Northwest Natural</td>
<td>Louisiana-Pacific, Northwest Medical Team, Mercy Corps</td>
<td>Smith Barney, Subaru, Toyota</td>
<td>Equity Office, YMCA, Salvation Army, Hyundai Shipping, Hanjin Shipping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corporation Type and Size In Terms of Yearly Profit

Businesses may be described in terms of the size of their profit margin. The chart (chart #5, below) represents the yearly profit margin of each particular intuition.
Among the participating for-profit businesses there was a of three having an annual profit margin of over $10 billion and also three having over $1 billion but less than $10 billion. There were four non-profits who took part in this study.

Through the observing the annual profits of these organizations, the researcher investigated patterns in awareness of the influence of boardroom décor, seating arrangement, and the value of serving food and drink. This also provides a scope of organizations who are considered non-profits to those that gain a yearly profit of over $10 billion a year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Over $10 Billion</th>
<th>Over $1 Billion</th>
<th>$1 billion-$500 million</th>
<th>$500 million - $100 million</th>
<th>$100 million- $50 million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nike, Xerox, Toyota</td>
<td>Smith Barney, Equity Office, Blue Cross/ Blue Shield of Oregon</td>
<td>Northwest Natural</td>
<td>Louisiana-Pacific, Subaru</td>
<td>Boeing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$50 million- $25 million</th>
<th>$25 million- $10 million</th>
<th>$10 million- $5 million</th>
<th>$5 million- $1 million</th>
<th>Non-profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hyundai Shipping</td>
<td>Hanjin Shipping</td>
<td>Providence Medical</td>
<td>N.W. Medical Team, Mercy Corps, YMCA, Salvation Army</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intentionality of Artifacts

One of the primary elements that this study evaluates is the intentionality of placing artifacts in boardrooms and conference areas. Five of the seventeen sites explored had no artifacts containing core values. However, none of the interviewees from the five organizations which had no artifacts volunteered that the absence of artifacts was intentional. I had suspected that the absence of artifacts was an intentional effort to neutralize the ambient meaning of the setting.

In some cases, the boardroom or conference area is designed to provide a value-neutral meeting place. This idea was held by the interviewee of Hyundai Shipping who stated that the intended purpose of Hyundai’s conference area or, from his perspective, any boardroom was to provide a neutral meeting location. He further commented that in the site at which he worked offices were value-laden with the values and tasks of its occupants and were only to be used for individual work. Anytime a project was to be shared with fellow staff members or outsiders, the corporation’s conference room was to be used. He further stated that a conference room or boardroom was to provide equality in terms of its furnishings to match in intent the equality of ideas.

The following (chart #6, below) distinguishes between firms which place artifacts in their boardrooms or conference areas and which represent the core values of the organization from organizations which do not employ artifacts in their boardrooms which convey core values.
Six of nine domestic profit companies (noted by DP) did not have any items intentionally representing core values. Three of the four foreign companies (noted by FP) intentionally place artifacts in their boardroom or conference area. Three of the four non-profits (noted by NP) placed items in their boardrooms which reflect the core values of the company. Of the seventeen institutions examined, there is not a strong majority which
intentionally places artifacts in their conference areas to convey the core values and/or history of their organization. Eight place value-laden objects. Nine do not. Of the slight majority which do not employ artifacts as symbolizing corporate values, the question of this absence being an intentional act of providing value neutrality is not answered.

The Presence of Artifacts and Size of Yearly Profits

Businesses can be grouped in terms of yearly whole corporate profits and as to whether or not they place artifacts in their boardroom. This following (chart #7) notes these variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yearly Profit</th>
<th>Decorations in the room do not represent core values</th>
<th>A few artifacts are placed, but there is limited understanding of their meaning. The meaning of the artifacts is not universal</th>
<th>Items are intentionally placed and the meanings are recognized by the people within the company or organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over $1 Billion</td>
<td>Equity Office BlueCross/Blue Shield Smith Barney Toyota</td>
<td>Xerox</td>
<td>Nike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1 billion-$500 million</td>
<td>Northwest Natural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500 million - $100 million</td>
<td>Louisiana-Pacific</td>
<td>Subaru</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100 million- $50 million</td>
<td>Boeing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50 million- $25 million</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hyundai Shipping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25 million - $10 million</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hanjin Shipping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10 million- $5 million</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5 million- $1 million</td>
<td></td>
<td>Providence Medical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>Mercy Corps, YMCA, Northwest Medical Team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five of the seven for-profit companies (either domestic or foreign companies) with yearly profits of $500 million and above do not place artifacts in their boardroom of conference areas. At Xerox, the corporation places photographs depicting the company's Oregon location. Examples of these photographs include photographs of downtown Portland, the Oregon coast, and waterfalls in the Columbia River Gorge. It was stated by the Xerox interviewee that not all employees understand the significance of the photographs. Some of the employees merely see the photographs as being eye-pleasing pictures on the wall.

Nike is quite unique in that they place artifacts within their boardrooms and conference areas for each hosted event. Nike hosts roughly two thousand events each year. Prior to hosting an event, considerations concerning the placement of artifacts and other elements of room decoration are discussed. In general, according to the Nike interviewee, artifacts depicting Nike products are placed within a decorated boardroom. Nike shoes are the most common product displayed. The Nike interviewee continued by saying that athletes and their accomplishments are also commonly portrayed through artifacts placed in boardroom and conference areas. A wall sized poster is the most common display. Athletes commonly portrayed by Nike include basketball great Michael Jordan, golfer Tiger Woods, and football star Jerry Rice. The Nike interviewee commented that when the company began as a small venture it was successful in marketing through the displaying of their products through the use of artifacts. The current international giant corporation continues the same practice.
Two of the three for-profit companies in this study, Louisiana Pacific (having yearly profits of $100 to $500 million) and Boeing (with a yearly profits of $50 to $100) do not place artifacts on their walls. At Subaru, I observed artifacts in the boardroom. When I asked about the meaning of the artifacts and even pointed to them, the interviewee could not state any intended meaning.

There were two smaller foreign for-profit firms, Hyundai Shipping (having yearly profits of $25 to $50 million) and Hanjin Shipping (having yearly profits of $10 to $25 per year) that placed artifacts in their conference rooms and the meaning of the artifacts were understood by their employees. An interesting point regarding both companies was not only did they have smaller yearly profits and smaller numbers of employees, but both only had a single conference room within their Portland, Oregon facilities. The question remains as to whether having a smaller number of employees makes the task of detailing core values to all personnel appear easier to accomplish and, thus, undertaken.

Three of the four non-profit organizations place artifacts which represent core values inside their boardrooms and conference areas. Salvation Army also displays artifacts. However, not all employees understand the meaning of the single artifact left on the floor in the room.

Types of Artifacts

Of the seventeen sites visited, six recognized the value of conveying values of the company through the display of artifacts. There are different intentions in decorating a boardroom or conference area. Some organizations try to convey a cognitive message
through highlighting segments of their history or presenting their core values. Other firms wish only to provide an affective atmosphere for the congeniality of negotiations through the selection of natural colors and perhaps handsome decorations. This particular intention is not to present core values or segments of their history. Chart #8, below, exhibits the categories of artifacts that may be found in a boardroom or conference area differentiated by type of organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifacts</th>
<th>Profit / Domestic</th>
<th>Profit foreign</th>
<th>Non-profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical value of corporation</td>
<td>Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Northwest Medical Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary core values</td>
<td>Nike, Providence Medical, Subaru</td>
<td>Hanjin Shipping, Hyundai Shipping</td>
<td>Mercy Corps, Northwest Medical Team, YMCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Décor for congeniality</td>
<td>Xerox, Smith Barney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No artifacts and did not decorate for congeniality</td>
<td>Boeing, Equity Office, Northwest Natural</td>
<td>Toyota</td>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three classifications of artifacts include those representing a historical value, those that display contemporary corporate core values, and those that affect congeniality. Five firms attempted neither to place artifacts in their boardrooms or conference areas nor to decorate for a congenial environment.

All the historical artifacts encountered in this study were photographs. Most of the photographs were of significant individuals who played a role in the development of the particular organization. Some photographs displayed depicted prior facilities. I had expected to see some form of statue within a few boardrooms or conference areas. However, none of the organizations visited displayed statues.
Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon’s current boardroom will soon be replaced. The current facility displays a painting of the corporation’s first president. Another example is seen at Northwest Medical Team where a photograph of the founder of the organization is proudly displayed beside the room entrance. The interviewee at Northwest Medical Team stated that the photograph of the founder on the wall of the boardroom enables founder Ronald Post to personify the courage and determination essential to the work of the charitable agency.

Contemporary core values can be displayed by artifacts depicting a product of the particular business or displays which depict the manufacturing or shipping processes, or assisting activities of the company. These types of artifacts were found more commonly as items which adorn walls rather than those that sit on tables or on the floor. Nike readily uses these types of artifacts in their boardrooms and conference areas, changing them each time they are decorated for an event. At Providence Medical contemporary values are seen through the display of a chart which lists the working values of the organization. The displaying of the working values is also presented by the Y.M.C.A. As stated by interviewees from both Providence Medical and the Y.M.C.A., the displaying of these items helps employees remember the importance and the focus of the organization. Although not recognized by the interviewee, Subaru, displays its values within their boardroom though banners and posters highlighting their products. Mercy Corps and Northwest Medical Teams display photographs of recipients of aid from other parts of the world who have benefited from the efforts of the organization. As stated by interviewees at both organizations, that the photographs are recognized as valuable by being constant reminders of the importance of their work.
In examining the cultural environments of boardrooms, objects placed in the rooms act as more than decorations. The ship models displayed by Hanjin Shipping and Hyundai Shipping are used to convey the message of modern, technological service. Hanjin also displays a set of clocks informing the viewer of local times in various portside offices around the world. Plaques displaying the core values of the organization are prominently displayed by Providence Medical and the Y.M.C.A. Subaru decorates its venues with banners. Xerox intentionally proclaims an allegiance to the Northwest United States through the display of local photographs. The thankfulness of assisted individuals is displayed through photographs adorning the walls of Mercy Corps and Northwest Medical Teams. Nike, recognizing the power of messages carried by artifacts, invests considerable funds in re-decorating their meeting rooms for every conference. Astroturf was being applied to one during the interview.

Decorating for the affect of congeniality involves furnishing the room in a pleasing and comfortable manor in which negotiating parties can feel at ease. With regard to the organizations in this study, this form of decoration was noted to exclude specific artifacts and rely upon wall surfaces and furniture. As stated by interviewees from Xerox and Smith Barney both corporations attempt to decorate their boardrooms to denote a congenial location. Both Xerox and Smith Barney try to create a congenial environment through displaying generic paintings and photographs which could be found in an American living room but do not relate to corporate core values of the firm. In the case of Smith Barney, this is done through displaying handsome pictures, but ones that do not relate the workings of the particular business. These pictures may be the kind of item one would find at an upscale poster shop in any given location. This style of decoration often
looks nice but makes no reference to the history, product, service, or core values of the business. Examples of this may include a still-life painting or an unknown place that does not have to do with the workings of the particular firm.

Both Xerox and Smith Barney also use wall-size windows overlooking soothing environments to create a congenial atmosphere, in a sense naturalizing the culture of the room. An interviewee at Xerox noted that the glass walls and scenic photographs within the boardroom attempt to create a comfortable and pleasant atmosphere which reduces the tension of negotiations. It was also noted by the Xerox interviewee that the company built its own facility instead of locating into a preexisting facility. He continued by stating that when the company built its own facility they were able to accommodate for the placement of large windows. The interviewee at Smith Barney stated that the large wall size window in the boardroom was one of the important features for selection of their present location.

In some situations, businesses could display an artifact of historical nature in their boardrooms and/or conference areas. However, its value, significance, or importance may not be recognized and its meaning would not be universal among employees. Such might be the case of Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon. This company has a painting of a person on the wall; but it is not necessarily understood in terms of meaning. I had to ask about the significance of the individual displayed in the painting to find that he was a former president. No plaque indicated that. In the case of Northwest Medical Teams, paintings are displayed in the boardroom of important individuals in the history of the organization. Here, labels denoting the individual and his or her importance to the
organization are placed on each work. In their conference rooms, Northwest Medical Team and Mercy Corps display photographs of people they have helped in their rescue efforts, relating their safety and health to the organization’s objectives.

Comparison of Room and Table Size

In this study, eight of the nine participating domestic for-profit businesses had a large boardroom. Five of these firms also had a conference room or rooms with a smaller table. As stated by an interviewee at Smith Barney, room design is a form of gesture which facilitates or inhibits styles of in-person conversation. On the decision regarding the size of a table in a particular conference room is significant. There were no domestic or foreign for-profit organizations that had a large boardroom housing a small table...

Among foreign for-profit businesses, two of the four participants had only conference areas and had no official boardroom on their facility. Among the non-profit organizations, there were two of the participating four that had a boardroom with a large table configuration and in addition had a conference room or rooms with smaller tables.

It was interesting to note that in some Asian religious traditions it is believed that the entrance of a room should not continue in a straight line, but rather encounter a barrier which compels individuals to walk around or a doorway lip which one must step over. Beginning in religious practice this behavior has become a formal symbol of respect and is commonly experienced in Asian restaurants and in homes. However among the Asian
companies participating in this study, it was not observed in building entrances or in entrances to boardrooms or conference areas.

Comparison of Table Arrangement

As was communicated by twelve of the seventeen interviewees, the physical organization of the table or tables can either enhance or inhibit the negotiating situation. This study exhibited several physical table arrangements that are commonly used in the setting of a boardroom.

As stated by an interviewee at Northwest Natural, the arrangement of a particular room can express a set of values. She continued by stating that it is a significant gesture to have padded chairs instead of straight back wooden chairs; wooden, sculpted tables instead of large Formica tables; and circular instead of linear seating to convey the value system and direction of respect given by a particular firm.

The same twelve interviewees noted that table arrangement is significant to successful negotiation. They further commented that different table patterns are more conducive to different styles of meetings. In firms that employ more than one table arrangement, the choice of location should consider the purposed outcome and the conversational style of the meeting.

Of the domestic for-profit institutions, four of the nine participating businesses only use rectangular table in their boardrooms and conference areas. Among the foreign for-profit businesses, three of the four participating companies only use rectangular tables
in their facilities. In the case with non-profit organizations two of the four observed in this study had meeting areas that did not house a center table. These particular firms also have meeting areas with other table configurations.

Comparison of Table Types

As stated by an interviewee at Hyundai Shipping a conference or boardroom table has the ability not only to provide an equal level of comfort but it also denotes a certain level of respect. Observing the type of material that a table is made of can tell about a particular firm. It provides a method for comparing corporations. With the exception of the YMCA, all participating organizations used stylish and comfortable office-style chairs in their boardrooms and conference areas.

Of the domestic for-profit businesses, four of nine participating businesses only had wooden tables in their boardrooms. Among the foreign for-profit firms, three of the four participating organizations only have a wooden table in their boardroom or conference area. In the case with non-profit organizations, there appeared not to be a tendency.

As stated by the Mercy Corps interviewee, the type of table that is used in a boardroom or conference area relates beliefs about a particular corporation: for example, whether a firm has a Formica or a wood grain table comments on whether the organization is demonstrating utility or displaying wealth. It also may denote the amount of finances that the company is able to spend on furnishing their boardroom or conference area.
Inside the boardrooms of the seventeen organizations, all but Boeing and the Salvation Army had a wooden table in their formal boardroom. Boeing had a Formica top table. None of the seventeen firms had a metal, a clear glass top, or plastic patio style of table. In the thirteen businesses which have both conference areas and boardrooms, three companies had tables in their conference areas of quality equal to that in their boardrooms.

Interviewees at Hyundai Shipping America and at the YMCA stated that the particular type of material from which a table is made demonstrates to both their particular organization and to guests, their overall budget as well as how they view other parties involved in meetings which use the table. An interviewee from Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon stated that wooden tables bring the natural environment inside the boardroom through earthy colors and wood grains. She further commented that a wooden, polished table also denotes respect and importance to what individuals are saying. In most cases, wooden tables are used for discussions and idea generation between individuals rather than instances of instruction.

Eight interviewees noted that it is quite common for businesses to have a boardroom and an additional conference area with a less formal table. The formal boardroom, as stated by the interviewee at Northwest Natural, would be a device for putting any company’s “best foot forward”.
Structural Considerations

Intentionality of Colors in Boardrooms and Conference Areas

Interviewees at Nike, Hyundai Shipping America, Xerox, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon each noted that the color of a room provides clues as to how a particular business views the world around them as well as influence the attitudes, assumptions, and perceptions involved in a negotiating setting. As stated by the Hyundai Shipping interviewee, "the color that a conference area is painted helps to create a mood." Natural colors assist in creating a congenial environment for discussions. Colors, according to the Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon interviewee, help create the mood which contributes to the working out of negotiations. None of the seventeen organizations observed voluntarily expressed the intention of their boardroom and conference area décor to be a valuable tool in minimizing the potential for misunderstanding. The decoration, coloring, seating, and offering of food and drink were seen as expressions of hospitality, but not seen as useful in averting or minimizing the effects of misunderstanding of intent in negotiating.

Of the nine domestic for-profit firms, there did not appear to be a consistent pattern regarding the use of wood and color in conference areas and boardrooms. Among the four participating foreign for-profit corporations, there were two that have only conference rooms and use a natural color of paint. Among the four participating foreign
for-profit firms there were two that had boardrooms and a conference room painted in matching color.

The Northwest Medical Team interviewee stated that the selected colors of the walls are used in intentionally naturalizing the cultural atmosphere. The informant further commented that having wood paneling and a wooden table in a boardroom or conference area may be over done. The use of natural colors, wood paneling and the placement of wood furniture may suggest an environment of which provides stability over time demonstrate a synchronic value of corporate stability.

Of the forty-two conference areas and boardrooms examined from seventeen different organizations, only two conference rooms at Providence Medical were brightly painted in beige and rose colors. And these, like the entire sample, were coordinated colors.

The Use of Glass Windows in Boardrooms and Conference Areas

I have come to believe that the intentional use of clear glass windows is modified by the company’s ability to dictate the construction of the building. Most companies, with the exception of Nike, Boeing, Xerox and Northwest Medical Teams, use pre-existing facilities for conducting business. The reality of a dilemma caused by unwanted windows was affirmed by interviewees at Toyota and at the Y.M.C.A. They stated that companies sometimes use window coverings and shades
to cover windows and outside views that they wished were not there. In these cases, window placement was inherited with the space and must be accepted, incorporated or modified through the use of window coverings. Interviewees at Nike and Xerox noted that their facility was built to their order which allowed window placement as the selected. Ironically, Boeing designed and constructed their facility to display views which are now covered as they are found less than valuable as elements of the negotiating environment.

The Toyota interviewee stated that window placement may be dictated by architectural building codes and the vertical blinds are a response to the necessity of placing a window in a particular wall. In the case of the four participating non-profit corporations, two had boardrooms with windows facing outside as well as two or more conference rooms with windows facing into interior hallways.

Two of the four foreign for-profit organizations, Hanjin Shipping and Hyundai Shipping had conference rooms that offered views outside. These two firms do not have boardrooms located in Portland and do not hold corporation-wide board meetings in Portland, Oregon. The Hanjin Shipping interviewee added that the company’s board of directors would never meet in this satellite facility.

As stated by Louisiana Pacific’s interviewee, the view that a company’s windows overlook is significant. This interviewee continued by saying that the windows within the boardrooms are used to denote respect for negotiating parties as well as to denote the power and influence that is held by the individuals that are invited to the room. The L.P. boardrooms both view is the Portland skyline from the
eighteenth floor, giving a high panoramic view of the realm served by the corporation. She continued by noting that the boardroom intentionally overlooks building which may be constructed from L.P. products. A carefully chosen view which a particular boardroom overlooks, such as the views from the Louisiana Pacific boardrooms, also can denote a message of power and authority. The high view offered by Louisiana Pacific which looks down upon the streets and nearby buildings of Portland, Oregon, places negotiators high above the bustle of the city and provides a sense of superior control.

The Use of Dimming Lights in Boardrooms and Conference Areas

Attention to room lighting may be considered by some to be significant in providing an effective context for negotiation. Many organizations take advantage of natural, external light. However, most rooms examined in this study had windows only in one wall, providing unidirectional lighting from outside which would not be conducive to negotiations if not augmented. Lighting which is evenly distributed may be considered crucial. All forty-three rooms examined in this study had ceiling lighting. None of the participating businesses had lamps inside their boardrooms or conference areas. The use of lighting which may be dimmed for presentations was considered important to the workings of most of the organizations, but not all of their boardrooms and conference areas were so equipped. The following (chart #9) shows the distribution of variable lighting:
In regard to the use of lighting that can be dimmed, of the seventeen participating organizations ten of them have dimming lights in their boardrooms and not in their conference rooms. The style of lighting may tell of the designed intention of the room. (Mitton, 2003) notes that dimming lights were designed for the purpose of visual. It may be that some rooms designated as “conference” rooms are appropriately named as their function is in the sharing of information rather than its delivery to an audience. The dimming lights would be appropriate when focus is one directional.

Among the domestic for-profit companies, five of the nine participants had dimming lights in their boardrooms. Of the foreign for-profit companies, two of the four participating companies had dimming lighting available in their boardrooms only. These either did not have a separate conference room or they did not use dimming lights in these particular areas. Two foreign for-profit businesses did not use lighting which dimmed in their facilities. In this category, there were no businesses that had dim-able

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lighting</th>
<th>Profit / Domestic</th>
<th>Profit foreign</th>
<th>Non-profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimming lights only in boardroom:</td>
<td>Boeing, Louisiana-Pacific, Northwest Natural, Regence Blue Cross of Blue Shield of Oregon, Smith Barney</td>
<td>Subaru, Toyota</td>
<td>Mercy Corps, Northwest Medical Team, YMCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimming lights only in conference rooms:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimming lights in boardroom and conference areas:</td>
<td>Nike, Providence Medical, Xerox</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dimming lights:</td>
<td>Equity Office</td>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>Hyundai Shipping, Hanjin Shipping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
lighting in both their boardroom and conference area. Also, none of the participating firms had dimming lights in their conference rooms without it also present in their boardrooms.

Among the non-profit organizations, three of the four who had both a boardroom and conference areas installed dimming lighting only in their boardrooms. Only one of the participating non-profit firms did not use lighting which dimmed at all. Among all participating categories, there were none that had lighting which dimmed in both their boardrooms and conference areas. Also, there were none that just had dimming lights in their conference rooms.

From observing and questing interviewees about the intended purposes for boardrooms and conference areas, it appears that in most cases dimming lights in a room are used with the intended function of facilitating the transfer of information. The transferring of information requires a different style of room than one that is used for the sharing ideas. The lighting structure for a specific event will indicate the intent to be a teaching session or the mutual sharing of ideas. It should be noted that those firms which had conference areas equipped with dimming lights also had boardrooms with similar ability. No companies which had both boardrooms and conference areas had dimming lights exclusively in their conference areas.
Types of Flooring in Boardrooms and Conference Areas

There was some variation in the materials used in the flooring/carpeting of rooms used in negotiation (Wilhide and Bourne, 1997) comment that flooring depicts values, practicality and comfort. It is equally interesting to note the potential types of flooring which were not used. The relationship between ownership of the facility and installation of flooring is a significant factor. Those organizations having less profit margin and renting their facility did not have as much interest in investing a proportion of available funds in modifying the pre-existing floor. Those corporations with a large profit and designing their own facility have a different type of response to the intentional choice of flooring material.

All seventeen institutions participating in this study used wall-to-wall carpeting in their boardrooms. No wooden or hard linoleum floors were observed. Xerox and Northwest Medical Teams had staff meeting areas floored with cushioned linoleum tile. The interviewee at Northwest Natural stated that echoing sounds from a solid floor would interfere with the discussions. She cautioned against a "gym floor" atmosphere. Representatives of Hyundai Shipping and Northwest Medical Teams commented upon the value of investing in carpeting to set the scene for significant conversation. As stated by the Northwest Medical Teams interviewee, the type of flooring within conference areas and boardrooms may denote the intent of practicality or comfort. The type of flooring (Cole, 2001) may help to convey the value of the information presented within the particular room and well as the importance of the participants as well as a priority of financial investment.
Nike is unique in that a designer team decides on appropriate unique flooring for every boardroom event. One event which was immediately following the interview session would utilize Astroturf as the boardroom floor covering. This is a demonstrates both intention and investment potential in using the floor as a signifier of a particular core value.

Interior Considerations

The Placement of Plants in Boardrooms and Conference Areas

The presentation of artificial or living plants may be intended to create a more congenial environment (Wallach, 1976). An interviewee at the YMCA stated that plants assist in diminishing interfering noise in environments where multiple conversations are common. Chart #10, below, compares organizations in terms of their use of plants in boardrooms and conference areas.
Regarding the placement of plants, seven of the nine domestic for-profit firms do not place plants, either artificial or living, in their facilities. In the case of foreign for-profit institutions, three of the four have no plants in their boardrooms or conference areas. However, one interviewee at Hyundai Shipping noted that plants made the room feel more comfortable. Three of the four participating non-profit firms do not place plants in their negotiating environments. The interviewee at the YMCA noted that she felt that plants made the environment feel more “homey.”

Technical Equipment in the Boardroom or Conference Area

The use of technology within the boardroom may give some insight into the role it plays in the company. Speaker telephones were found in all rooms. Other equipment was
not always used. The following chart, chart #11 compares firms in the use of media equipment other than speaker telephones:

**CHART 11: TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Profit / Domestic</th>
<th>Profit foreign</th>
<th>Non-profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whiteboard (or blucher paper easel) only in boardroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television and screen in boardroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteboard, screen, and television in boardroom</td>
<td>Smith Barney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screen only in boardroom</td>
<td>Boeing, Northwest Natural</td>
<td>Subaru</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boardroom with one item and conference without a screen, whiteboard, or a television</td>
<td></td>
<td>Northwest Medical Team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boardroom with two or more items and conference without a screen, whiteboard, or a television</td>
<td>Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon,</td>
<td>Mercy Corps, YMCA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boardroom with two or more items and conference area with whiteboard</td>
<td>Xerox, Providence Medical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boardroom with two or more items and conference area with whiteboard and television</td>
<td>Toyota</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As this project revealed, boardrooms and conference rooms differed by the size and the intended function of the room. All nine domestic for-profit firms installed media equipment of one form or another. This configuration would demonstrate a possible distinction in information pathways available to persons using these types of rooms. Nike has multiple boardrooms and conference rooms all with technical equipment.

Two foreign for-profit businesses had a boardroom with two or more pieces of electronic equipment and a conference room without these tools. The other two foreign for-profit organizations had but a single conference room. In Hyundai Shipping’s conference room there was no television, projection screen or whiteboard. The interviewee commented that the company relies on verbal communication in its meetings. Hanjin Shipping’s conference room housed a small screen television.

| Conference area without a screen, whiteboard, or a television | Hyundai Shipping |
| Conference area only with television | Hanjin Shipping |
| Conference area only with whiteboard | Equity Office |
| Conference area only with whiteboard and television | |
| Conference area only with screen | |
| Conference area only with screen and television | |
| Conference area only with screen, whiteboard, and television | |
| Multiple boardrooms with two or more items and multiple and multiple conference areas without a screen, whiteboard, and television | Louisiana Pacific |
| Multiple boardrooms with two or more items and multiple conference areas with one or more items (including a screen, whiteboard, and television) | Nike |
| Conference area only without screen, whiteboard, and television and another meeting room with one or more of these items. | Salvation Army |
The presence of technology may provide clues regarding the use of a particular room. An interviewee at Xerox the use of technology is used for the conveying information rather than for sharing ideas. This interviewee continued by saying that rooms used for the sharing of information do not have much technical equipment and thus are designed for mutual input and discussion. There are some rooms that are used for both purposes. I noticed that screens were covered in an attempt to invite individuals to mutual input into discussion. Only one company, Toyota, had a video-conference room.

**Purpose for Boardrooms and Conference Rooms**

Some organizations had conference rooms and boardrooms for hosting staff and guests. Other organizations had both a boardroom for guests and a conference room for staff, or permitted boardroom and conference room use by employees as well as guests. Three had a conference room only, with no boardroom. As affirmed in conversation with an informant at Hyundai Shipping, the uses of a conference room or boardroom are unique to each organization.
Three of the nine domestic for-profit organizations use their boardrooms for both hosting guests and for employee functions. Three separate their uses, utilizing their boardrooms for hosting guests and their conference rooms for staff meetings.

Two of the four foreign for-profit institutions use their boardrooms for employee functions as well as for hosting guests. The other two do not have a boardroom, but use their conference rooms in the same fashion. None had conference rooms and boardrooms used by both guests and staff members. None of the foreign for-profits has specifically designated their boardroom for hosting guests and conference rooms to be used by staff. Two of the four participating non-profit corporations had a boardroom and conference areas that were used by the staff as well as the guests.

Only Toyota calls a room designed for non-face-to-face interaction a "conference" room. However, the case of their "conference" room, the facility is
designed more for the unidirectional presenting of information than for the sharing of ideas. As noted by the Toyota interviewee, whenever a meeting is being held in their “conference” room someone is presenting a Power Point or another form of visual presentation and the other staff members are listening and not necessarily providing mutual input.

Seating Position

This study also examined seating arrangements. The positioning of participants in negotiation sessions might be considered significant by hosting organizations. Interviewees at Nike and Hyundai Shipping note that seating arrangement of employees and hosted individuals can enhance or hinder the effectiveness of a business relationship. A corporation might assign seating to intentionally position negotiating parties. Or, a corporation might intentionally provide “open seating,” allowing the individuals to decide for themselves the most opportune position for performing their transactional role. The recognition of intention in seating was observed. The following (chart #13) denotes seating arrangements within participating firms.

CHART 13: SEATING ARRANGEMENT

Key DP= Domestic Profit Company, FP= Foreign Profit Company, NP= Non-Profit Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Seating arrangement is without design; random</th>
<th>Seating arrangement is intentionally not assigned.</th>
<th>Seating arrangement is designed for the comfortabably of the host and/or visitor, and is recognized as being intentional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boeing</td>
<td>DP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity Office</td>
<td>DP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanjin Shipping</td>
<td>FP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The chart reveals that in most cases an organization either plans for intentional seating or does not consider seating placement valuable. There were no cases of a company stating the value of intentionally not assigning seating. Domestic profit companies (noted by DP) tend not to designate seating around tables in their facility. Almost all foreign companies that have a location in the northwest (noted by FP) do not assign seats around their boardroom and conference room tables. Of the non-profit organizations (noted by NP) who participated in this study, all of them use random seating placement.
seating. Chart #14, below, shows the consideration of seating arrangement contrasted in terms of yearly profits.

**CHART 14: SEATING AND YEARLY PROFITS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yearly Profit</th>
<th>Seating arrangement is without design; random</th>
<th>Seating arrangement is intentionally not assigned.</th>
<th>Seating arrangement is designed for the comfortably of the host and/or visitor, and is recognized as being intentional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over $1 Billion</td>
<td>Equity Office, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Smith Barney, Toyota</td>
<td>Xerox</td>
<td>Nike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1 billion-$500 million</td>
<td>Northwest Natural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500 million-$100 million</td>
<td>Subaru</td>
<td></td>
<td>Louisiana-Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100 million-$50 million</td>
<td>Boeing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50 million-$25 million</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hyundai Shipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25 million-$10 million</td>
<td>Hanjin Shipping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10 million-$5 million</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5 million-$1 million</td>
<td>Providence Medical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>*Northwest Medical Teams, Salvation Army, Mercy Corps, YMCA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It would appear that with the exception of Nike companies with profits over $1 billion do not plan for the seating of individuals. In the small sample of businesses interviewed, only three of the seventeen firms considered the concept of intentional seating. None of the non-profit organizations planned for intentional seating. The following (chart #15) relates this information.
Interviewees at Louisiana Pacific and at Nike stated that seating position can affect the outcome of a meeting. These companies plan the seating as part of designing the particular setting of a meeting. However, there is a difference between these two companies. Nike is the most aware of the structure and motives of negotiating organizations. At Nike, they discuss the type and placement of chairs in which individuals will be seated as well as the shape of tables. In other situations, they select not to have a table and chairs but use couches instead.

At Louisiana-Pacific, the negotiating staff members select a conference room based on the previously configured seating of a particular room. Some of the conference rooms are designed with the intent of collaboration on a project or task other are more conducive to conversation rather than a project that would require the use of a table which all participants could use. The employee typically hosting the meeting will select the style of room to be used. For example, Louisiana-Pacific has a meeting room designed specifically for interviewing. The other conference rooms at the firm have different furniture arrangements. The conference rooms are configured in one of three different seating patterns. The room pattern to be used is selected by the intention and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intentional seating</th>
<th>Profit / Domestic</th>
<th>Profit foreign</th>
<th>Non-profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intentional assigned seating</td>
<td>Louisiana-Pacific, Nike</td>
<td>Hyundai Shipping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional unassigned seating</td>
<td>Xerox</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disregard for seating position</td>
<td>Boeing, Equity Office, Providence Medical, Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon, Smith Barney</td>
<td>Hanjin Shipping, Subaru, Toyota</td>
<td>Mercy Corps, Northwest Medical Team, Salvation Army, YMCA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
potential dynamics of the meeting. In a different fashion, Hyundai Shipping, which has but one conference room, intentionally assigns seats for meetings. At Hyundai, visiting and hosting parties are intermixed around the table.

Thirteen of the seventeen organizations admitted that they have never considered seating arrangements in the configuration of negotiation environments. The positioning of negotiators is frequently left unassigned. Often individuals seat themselves in a happenstance manner. As stated by the manager at Hyundai Shipping (who intentionally seats participants), possibly some organizations have not recognized the value of planned seating or the effort has been discarded as irrelevant. According to the interviewee at Xerox, the company does not assign seats; but rather encourages the members of the hosted party to sit where they feel the most comfortable. Then employees of Xerox fill the unoccupied seats. As noted by the interviewee, often one party voluntarily moves to occupy one side of a conference table while the second party will take the other. However, the particular interviewee at Xerox often makes an effort to sit on the side with the negotiating party opposite the side of his own staff.

Presentation of Food and Drink

The following (chart #16) denotes whether a particular organization serves drinks occasionally or frequently; or serves food with drinks occasionally or frequently.
Presentation of Food and Drink According to Overall Size of Corporate Profits

Most of the participating organizations offer food and drink as part of their negotiations. The second most popular trend among the participating businesses is to serve food and drink occasionally, followed by the offering of drinks frequently. The least common policy is to offer drink only occasionally. This is often done with the intent of creating a welcome feeling for the hosted party. Eight corporations openly stated that drink and/or food is recognized as a method of expressing hospitality and enabling the visitor feel more comfortable in their location. Interviewees at Northwest Medical Teams, Toyota, Boeing, and Hyundai Shipping stated that they often felt more welcome in another location than their own facility when food and/or drink were served. Other organizations did not give a reason for either serving or not serving food and/or drink.

Chart #17, below, shows whether drink or food and drink is served in the following firms according to yearly profit margin.
I had expected a tendency among the for-profit businesses with revenues over $1 billion dollars to provide food and drink as signifiers of hospitality as the expense is relatively negligible.

Three of the six firms with yearly profits of over $1 Billion present food and drink. The other three routinely offer only drink. I correctly expected to see a pattern among the non-profit organizations that rely heavily upon the donation of time, money and volunteers to frequently serve food and drink as a gesture of appreciation.

Three of the four non-profit organizations serve both food and drink. It is noted that Mercy Corps receives donations of conference hospitality by restaurants which volunteer to host meetings of the organization, providing food and drink as their contribution.
The two largest foreign for-profit firms (Subaru and Toyota) serve both food and drink at their negotiation meetings. The two foreign for-profit firms which are smallest in size and budget (Hanjin Shipping and Hyundai Shipping) serve only drink; in some instances only cold water.

Among Asian companies, I had expected to see a great deal of emphasis placed on relationships and the offering of food and drink on a regular basis. It is surprising that the serving of food and drink is regularly practiced in only the two larger firms. One additional factor was stated by the Hanjin interviewee, acknowledging that the size of their conference room does not allow for serving food and simultaneously holding a meeting.

In no cases experienced in this study was the sense of smell either intentionally produced or negligently overlooked. The smell of provided food may be a component of the negotiating atmosphere, but no other odors were produced. No rooms were inflicted with displeasing odors from sources within the buildings.

Presentation of Food and Drink In Terms of Office Size

The size of the local office that was visited may influence whether food and/or drink are served and to what frequency. The following (chart #18) denote the size of the office and the frequency trend of offering food and/or drink.
CHART 18: PRESENTATION OF FOOD AND DRINK IN REFERENCE TO OFFICE SIZE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees in Location Visited</th>
<th>Drink Only</th>
<th>Food and Drink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 thousand or more</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nike, Xerox, Boeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 1 thousand but less than 2 thousand</td>
<td>Blue Cross/Blue Shield</td>
<td>Providence Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 500 and less than a thousand</td>
<td></td>
<td>Northwest Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 300 and less than 500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 100 and less than 300</td>
<td></td>
<td>Louisiana-Pacific, Northwest Medical Teams, Mercy Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50 and less than 100</td>
<td>Smith Barney</td>
<td>Toyota, Subaru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 25 and less than 50</td>
<td>Equity Office, Salvation Army</td>
<td>YMCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10 and less than 25</td>
<td>Hanjin Shipping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10</td>
<td>Hyundal Shipping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chart denotes the serving of food and drink by the number of employees in the particular location visited as part of this study. Of the three corporations visited that have over two-thousand employees on location, all serve food and drink. As stated by several interviewees food and drink serves as an expression of respect and puts the hosted party as ease. Another pattern is visible in category of corporations having over 100 employees but less than 300. All these firms serve food and drink.

The Use of a Catering Service

In the preparing of food and drink, some corporations use a catering service.

Chart #19 exhibits the relationship between corporations and catering services.
Regarding the use of a catering service within the nine domestic for-profit firms, seven of them sometimes use a professional service. Two of the four foreign for-profit corporations do not use a catering service. Two of the four non-profit firms use a catering service on occasion. Two do not use the service of a caterer at all. As stated by the YMCA interviewee, whether a firm uses a catering service depends on many factors including the affordability of doing so according to their budget and the size of the office.
Discussion and Conclusion

Enculturation Through Symbol

Anthropological studies affirm the importance of using a variety of symbols in conveying the core values of a particular institution. Literature addressing the anthropological concept of “enculturation” emphasizes that symbols act as the mechanisms for teaching and maintaining the cohesion of societies and institutions. Artifacts are symbols which carry as a reminder to individuals about the significance and purpose of the particular groups or events. Artifacts provide clues to understanding how individuals categorize the world. This process of enculturation begins soon after birth and is expanded and reinforced as a necessary function of maintaining identity throughout life.

Authors have noted that specific rooms carry a personality reflecting that of the designers and occupants. All of the seventeen participating organizations value the construction of a negotiating atmosphere, but seven of them did not employ artifacts in creating this environment. Ten of the seventeen organizations participating in this study did make use of artifacts within their boardrooms or conference areas. Of those companies which placed meaningful artifacts within their boardrooms, in most cases the action was carefully planned. In the case of one business, placed artifacts were carrying meaning, but inadvertently. Some of the artifacts were used to portray a segment of the history of a particular corporation while others were used to represent the working core values. In some corporations where the purposeful effort was invested in putting artifacts
in the negotiating areas, not all employees were able to recognize the meanings embedded in the plaques, paintings and wall decorations. This was demonstrated by interviewees who could not articulate the meaning of the placed objects.

**Willingness to Display Artifacts**

Not all organizations recognize the significance of displaying history and core values in their negotiation sites. Among the seven participating organizations who have not employed artifacts, none were adverse to the notion. From the response of the interviewees, it would appear that the idea of using artifacts was a novel consideration for these firms. There is the possibility that upper level managers not interviewed in this study had considered the use of artifacts and had decided against it. But from the design of this particular study, such evidence could not be obtained. The fact that interviewees in these companies did not appear to discard the idea of utilizing artifacts in the organizations’ negotiating rooms suggests that artifact placement may now be considered by the organization as a useful tool.

**Care in Selection of Wall Colors**

In addition to the literature identifying the value of artifact placement, the literature confirming the importance of environmental atmosphere embraces those authors noting that atmosphere includes appropriate uses of color, type of furniture,
arrangement of seating, use of windows, use of lighting, as well as the placement of plants

None of the participating firms were less than very cautious in selecting the coloring of boardroom and conference room walls. The meaning of the color selection varies with the variety of intended purposed for the room, and the selection is never arbitrary. But the intended value carried by the color selection varied with each company. There was no definitive relationship between a particular chosen color and a message to be carried by it. Literature comments how particular colors can generate particular feelings and moods. All organizations were clear on the understanding of colors and their power in making meaning. But the particular meaning to be generated by a particular color was a matter of individual corporate opinion. Many of the companies in the study displayed at least one wall painted a soft, neutral color or a plain white as an indicator to present the notion of a “blank slate” basis for beginning negotiations.

Furniture as Reflecting Values

Authors from the literature comment that furniture is a reflection of the values, priorities, function, and culture of an institution. Several authors suggest that it is not to be guaranteed that more profitable firms purchase more expensive furniture. All of the participating firms stated their understanding of the importance of utilizing furniture which denotes respect. None of the study’s organizations displayed furniture that appeared to project carelessness or lack of care for hosted parties. Some of the firms had
staff rooms that had less expensive furniture than their boardroom. This might transmit a message how those particular businesses view the status of their employees.

**Intentional Chair and Table Placement**

The literature search confirms that a planned seating pattern can significantly maintain or improve the overall quality of negotiations. Of the seventeen participating corporations, only two of them paid attention to seating arrangements. Both of these also were concerned about the placement of artifacts within areas designated for negotiations. Most institutions simply had not thought about the potential elevation of the dynamics of negotiation through the careful assignment of seats to participants.

Many of the businesses designed what they consider to be an optimal placement of tables and chairs to assist in facilitating the handling of the topics to be negotiated in each particular area. The arrangement of their tables and the style and comfort of their chairs showed care in constructing the negotiating environment. The tables within these firms were consistently large enough for the display and sharing of documents, and were sufficiently wide to maintain comfortable personal space between negotiating parties. However, few of these boardroom and conference room designs which recognized the value of wall color and seating arrangements equally recognized the intentional placement of artifacts to convey a particular message. The two exceptions in this study were Nike and Hyundai Shipping. Both of these companies intentionally assign seating as well as place artifacts within settings designed for negotiations. Other corporations
appear to be now recognizing the potential value of seat assignment and artifact placement.

Windows and Lighting

There is commentary in the literature making note of the use of windows and their view to enrich an environment. Three of the seventeen firms stated a recognition of the value or detriment of the view through boardroom windows. In some cases, particularly in institutions which were able to design the floor plans of their facility, the vista through a boardroom window is used as a signifier of corporate values and products. Other organizations which inherited an existing floor plan recognize the disadvantage to the boardroom environment which a disagreeable view can cause and take measures to cover it. In both cases, the value of an appropriate view as a meaning-laden signifier is recognized. In the case of a considerable number of conference rooms visited, the interior window provided the ability to hold observable meetings while privatizing the sound through a shut door.

All seventeen organizations saw value of bright, uniform lighting of the negotiating environment. The value and the effective use of lighting is encouraged in the literature. All but two companies utilize dimming lights for visual presentations. Two companies did not use projection equipment in their negotiating environments, stating that the rooms were used primarily for the mutual sharing of ideas.
Naturalizing of Culture Through the Placement of Plants

The anthropological notion of environmental balance through the naturalizing of culture by the placement of living plants or flower arrangements in a social space is not applied by the majority of visited organizations. Only two of the participating firms placed plants in their boardrooms and/or conference rooms. The absence of plants may have been due to an unstated factor of maintenance as much as a matter of not recognizing the variety of messages that they may bring.

Offering of Refreshments

All the institutions participate in the basic cross-cultural gesture of offering guests food and/or drink. The variety of ways in which they are offered extends from full dinners to a glass of water. The motives behind the variety of investments in food and/or drink may not be clear even in the minds of the organization’s executives. There is no clear pattern or reason stated by the interviewees for the extent or limitation on the offerings.

Future Efforts/Recommendations

This set of seventeen case studies provides an introduction to a direction of inquiry in which further, detailed investigation would enable applied anthropology to make a significant contribution to the awareness level of organizations as they design their venues for the critical processes of negotiation.
As this study opens up many questions for further examination, it should be the first of several studies to investigate the intentional designing of boardrooms and conference rooms. No generalized statements may come from this small number of observations, but the study does confirm the value of investing further study into the use of artifacts, colors, furniture, seating, and refreshments in constructing negotiating environments.

Organizational size would appear to correlate with whether or not a firm places artifacts and considers assigned seating within the corporate boardroom or conference area. However, organizational size is not a predictor of awareness of the value of placing artifacts or assigning seating. In this beginning study it appears that smaller organizations are the ones that have considered intentional artifact display and assigned seating more often than their larger counterparts. Larger firms appear to have not considered this and may not know the potential benefits of doing such.

This small sample tends to suggest that non-profit organizations whose relationship to their partners is unique set of cooperations and dependencies has a heightened awareness and desire to use artifacts to surround negotiations with a message of institutional core values. The uniqueness of the relationships that these organizations have with sponsors and clients may be the driving force behind their desire for value clarity. Larger American for-profit business were the least likely to include artifact placement and seating arrangement in their boardrooms and conference areas.
The variety of levels of awareness demonstrated by the interviewees assigned by each organization gives more evidence to the need of instruction of personnel in the meanings (or absence of meaning) found displayed within their own workplace. The positive attitude of many interviewees toward their new awareness of the importance of elements in their environment as a result of participating in this study would give indication that the production of an applied anthropological resource guide for the design and modification of negotiating environments would be received with the same positive spirit as was the research study. Such a handbook might be accompanied with a set of workshops for personnel instructing in several of the fundamental anthropological concepts which are at the core of this study and its literature review.

This project was received with enthusiasm and openness by the participating organizations. The elements of investigation were often seen as being novel by the particular interviewees. The organizations seemed eager to learn more about this study and many of them asked me to return with findings. It was noted that many interviewees, as a result of this study, are starting to take another look at their boardrooms and conference areas with a fresh set of eyes and are now taking into consideration the factors examined in this study.

A possible product of this and resultant studies would be a handbook for boardroom and conference room designers as well as for organizational managers and employees to assist in their awareness of significant anthropological elements in their cautious planning and their intentional design of conferencing and negotiation sites.
References


Allan, Karen “Lean's Design Leaves Pupils Sitting Pretty”, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*. News; Education; Secondary; Pg. 6, April, 2005.


Tuan, Yi-Fu. Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.


Appendix A:

Data Forms for

Participating Corporations
American For-Profit Businesses

Data Forms

Boeing

- Name of Company: Boeing
- Home office: Chicago, IL
- Branch office visited (if applicable):
  - 19000 NE Sandy Boulevard
  - Portland, OR 97294
  - 503-669-4311
- Number of branch offices: 31
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: 152,740
  2. Locally: 4,409
- Gross Annual Budget: 1,872 million
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): $52,457.0 million
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Loretta Hamilton, Executive Office Administrator
- Length of Interview: 35 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee seemed interested in the research
  2. reluctance was not shown
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee was clear on some areas and not others.
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): Three or four main conference rooms without artifacts. It was stated that the rooms were designed to be used with PowerPoint and very secure. It was noted that the boardrooms are almost always in use between 6 am and 5 pm.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:

Artifacts in the room do not intentionally represent core values

Seating arrangements:

Seating arrangement is without design; happenstance
Equity Office

- Name of Company: Equity Office
- Home office: Chicago
- Branch office visited (if applicable):
  - Equity Office
    - One SW Columbia, Suite 300
    - Portland, OR 97258
- Number of branch offices: 24
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: 1,100
  2. Locally: 45
- Gross Annual Budget: $5 billion
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): $17 billion
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Sheryl Scali, Sr. Property Manager
- Length of Interview: 29 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee did not seem to be knowable or interested in the topic.
  2. Interviewee seemed resistant to answering questions.
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee showed a clear understanding.
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): The conference room held no artifacts. However, it did have a raised seating area.

Notes:
Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:
Artifacts in the room do not intentionally represent core values

Seating arrangements:
Seating arrangement is without design; happenstance
Louisiana Pacific Corporation

- Name of Company: Louisiana Pacific Corporation
- Home office: Nashville
- Branch office visited (if applicable): 38
  Louisiana Pacific Corporation
  805 SW Broadway Suite 1200
  Portland, OR 97205
- Number of branch offices: 18
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: 2,300
  2. Locally: 125
- Gross Annual Budget: $106 million
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): $407 million
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Janet Ashworth, Corporate Office Services Supervisor
- Length of Interview: 30 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee did seem to be knowable on the topic.
  2. Interviewee did not seem resistant to answering questions.
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee:
  1. The interviewee seemed to have a clear understanding.
  2. The interviewee did not seem resistant to answer questions
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): The conference rooms and boardroom did not have any artifacts. LP does have different styles of rooms for different purposes.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:
Artifacts in the room do not intentionally represent core values

Seating arrangements:

Seating arrangement is designed to address the comfortably of the host and/or visitor, and is recognized as being intentional
Nike

- Name of Company: Nike
- Home office:
  Nike World Headquarters
  One Bowerman Drive
  Beaverton, OR 97005
- Branch office visited (if applicable):
  Nike
  Tiger Woods Center
  Beaverton, OR 97005
  503-532-6300
- Number of branch offices: 5 regions
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: 23,000
  2. Locally: Beaverton: 3000, 50 at the Tiger Woods Center
- Gross Annual Budget: $250 million
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): $12 billion
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Jennifer Sedwick, Event Services Manager
- Length of Interview: 35 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee seemed willing to talk about the project
  2. Interviewee seem willing to answer the questions to the best of her ability
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee was clear in terms of what was happening in the Tiger Woods center.
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): There are main conference rooms at Nike and many meeting as well. Nike hosts over 2,000 events each year. Artifacts were present and are supplied for each of the meetings. Seating arrangements are discussed prior to each meeting.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:

Items are intentionally placed and are recognized by the people within the company or organization

Seating arrangements:
Seating arrangement is designed to address the comfortably of the host and/or visitor, and is recognized as being intentional

Northwest Natural

- Name of Company: Northwest Natural
- Home office: Portland
  220 NW 2nd Avenue
  Portland OR 97209
- Branch office visited (if applicable)
- Number of branch offices: 8
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: 1,300
  2. Locally: 518
- Gross Annual Budget: $401.0 million
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): $529.5 million
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Richelle Luther, Assistant Secretary
- Length of Interview: 35 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee seemed open and willing to talk about the project
  2. Reluctance was not shown
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee showed a clear understanding.
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): NW Natural had one boardroom. No photographs or artifacts were on display.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:
Artifacts in the room do not intentionally represent core values

Seating arrangements:

Seating arrangement is without design; happenstance
Providence Medical Hospital

- Name of Company: Providence Medical Hospital
- Home office: -
- Branch office visited (if applicable):
  Portland Medical Center
  4805 NE Glisan
  Portland, OR 97213
- Number of branch offices: 18
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: 33,700
  2. Locally: 1,900
- Gross Annual Budget: $3,834,966
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): $4,020,601
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Suzie Bickel, Scheduling Secretary Nutrition Service
- Length of Interview: 35 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee did not seem to be knowable on the topic.
  2. Interviewee seemed resistant to answering questions.
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee seemed to be unclear.
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): The conference rooms and boardroom contained one artifact.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:

Items are intentionally placed and are recognized by the people within the company or organization

Seating arrangements:
Seating arrangement is without design; happenstance
Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon

- Name of Company: Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon
- Home office: Portland
- Branch office visited (if applicable):
  100 SW Market Street
  Portland, OR 97201
  503-225-5454
- Number of branch offices: 5
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: 2,475
  2. Locally: 1,700
- Gross Annual Budget: more than $1.1 billion
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): more than $6.5 billion in annual premiums
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview.
- Person interviewed: Robbin Klein, Sr. Facility Design Specialist Space Planning and Design
- Length of Interview: 35 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee seemed interested in the research project
  2. Reluctance was not shown
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee did show clarity regarding the layout and use of space
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): Main conference room being built, Boardroom had one painting, small conference areas may have had one photo sometimes of an employee.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:

Artifacts in the room do not intentionally represent core values

Seating arrangements:
Seating arrangement is without design; happenstance
Smith Barney/Citigroup

- Name of Company: Smith Barney/Citigroup
- Home office: New York City
- Branch office visited (if applicable):
  Smith Barney/Citigroup
  805 SW Broadway, Suite 2300
  Portland, OR 97205
- Number of branch offices: 500 offices around the world
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: 35,000
  2. Locally: 72
- Gross Annual Budget: $4.99 Billion
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): $7.14 Billion
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Corina Franke, Branch Administrator
- Length of Interview: 35 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee seemed interested and aware of the topic.
  2. Interviewee seemed not to be resistant.
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee showed a clear understanding.
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): The conference room held no artifacts. However, it did have a raised seating area.

Notes:
Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:
Artifacts in the room do not intentionally represent core values

Seating arrangements:
Seating arrangement is without design; happenstance
Xerox

- Name of Company: Xerox
- Home office: Stamford, Conn largest facilities in Rochester NY
- Branch office visited (if applicable):
  Xerox Corporation
  26600 SW Parkway Avenue
  PO Box 1000
  Wilsonville, OR 97070
  1-800-835-6100
- Number of branch offices: world's largest document-management company.
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: 58,000 in Xerox worldwide, 32,100 in the USA
  2. Locally: over 2,000
- Gross Annual Budget: $5 billion
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): $15.7 billion
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Kirk McGlothlan, Technology Development Engineer
- Length of Interview: 45 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee seemed interested and aware of the topic.
  2. Interviewee seemed not to be resistant.
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee showed a very clear understanding.
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): There were several conference rooms at Xerox. The smaller ones that the employees met in had photos displaying their product. A larger conference room was designed to host guest and exited photos of Oregon.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:

A few items are intentionally placed, but not recognized by many people

Seating arrangements:
Seating arrangement is designed for the comfortably of the host and/or visitor, but not recognized as being intentional
Foreign For-Profit Businesses
Data Forms

Hanjin Shipping

- Name of Company: Hanjin Shipping
- Home office for North America: Ontario, Canada
- Branch office visited (if applicable):
  Hanjin Shipping
  1500 NE Irving Street, Suite 300
  Portland, OR 97232
  503-736-3680
- Number of branch offices: 8
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: 3,400+
  2. Locally: 12
- Gross Annual Budget: $6 million
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): $11.3 million
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Jeffery McCewen, Regional Manager
- Length of Interview: 25 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee seemed preoccupied
  2. Reluctance was shown through the willingness to give time
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee did not always show clarity
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): Small conference room with a small kitchen area, board table, and many artifacts, including maps, clocks, and models of ships.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:

Items are intentionally placed and are recognized by the people within the company or organization

Seating arrangements:
Seating arrangement is without design; happenstance
Hyundai Shipping Agency

- Name of Company: Hyundai Shipping Agency
- Home office: Dallas TX
- Branch office visited (if applicable):
  121 SW Salmon Street, Suite 1050
  Portland, OR 97204
  503-224-1112
- Number of branch offices: 21
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: 350
  2. Locally: 6
- Gross Annual Budget: Not disclosed
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): $45,404,000
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Tony Galati, Branch Manager
- Length of Interview: 45 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee seemed very open and willing to talk about the project
  2. Reluctance was not shown
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee showed a clear understanding of both the importance of seating and artifacts.
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): The conference room overlooked downtown Portland. Many artifacts were present.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:

Items are intentionally placed and are recognized by the people within the company or organization.

Seating arrangements:

Seating arrangement is designed for the comfortably of the host and/or visitor, but not recognized as being intentional.
Toyota

- Name of Company: Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc.
- Home office: Torrance, California
- Branch office visited (if applicable):
  Portland Regional Office
  8338 NE Alderwood Road Suite 210
  Portland, OR 97220
- Number of branch offices: Besides its own 12 plants and 11 manufacturing subsidiaries and affiliates in Japan, Toyota has 51 manufacturing companies
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: 264,000
  2. Locally: 63
- Gross Annual Budget: $10.7 billion
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): $15.4 billion
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Michael Oka, Field Technology Service Provider
- Length of Interview: 40 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee seemed interested and aware of the topic.
  2. Interviewee seemed not to be resistant.
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee showed a clear understanding.
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): The conference room held no artifacts. Toyota had a video conference room for conducting interviews with branches in other parts of the country and the world.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:

Artifacts in the room do not intentionally represent core values

Seating arrangements:
Seating arrangement is without design; happenstance
Subaru

- Name of Company: Subaru
- Home office: Cherry Hill, NJ
- Branch office visited (if applicable):
  Subaru of America, Inc. Western Region
  5216 NE 158th Avenue
  Portland, OR 97230
- Number of branch offices: Five regional sales and warehouse offices, two port offices
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: Approximately 14,189
  2. Locally: 27 in the Sales office, 30 in the field (managed out of this sales office but no located here) and 17 in the warehouse
- Gross Annual Budget: $153 million
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): $644 million
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Rebecca Welch, Regional Administrative Manager
- Length of Interview: 25 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee seemed uncomfortable with the topic
  2. Interviewee did not seem to understand the subject matter
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee was not at all aware of negotiation dynamics.
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): The conference room held artifacts however employees did not know them as artifacts.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:

A few items are intentionally placed, but not recognized by many people

Seating arrangements:
Seating arrangement is without design; happenstance
Non-Profit Organizations
Data Forms

Mercy Corps

- Name of Company: Mercy Corps
- Home office:
  3015 SW 1st Avenue
  Portland OR 97201
  503-796-6844
- Branch office visited (if applicable)
- Number of branch offices: 5
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: Volunteers reach 7 million people in more than 35 countries.
  2. Locally: 100+
- Gross Annual Budget $1 billion in assistance to people in 81 nations.
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): Non profit
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Annie Warner, Executive Assistant
- Length of Interview: 45 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee seemed open and willing to talk about the project
  2. No form of reluctance was present
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee showed a clear understanding of the nature of questions being asked.
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): Mercy Corps is in the process of building a new conference room. They have three that are being used as offices now. They have photos of people they have helped in other parts of the world. They change artifacts often.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:

Items are intentionally placed and are recognized by the people within the company or organization

Seating arrangements:
Seating arrangement is without design; happenstance
Northwest Medical Teams International, Incorporated

- Name of Company: Northwest Medical Teams International, Incorporated
- Home office:
  14150 SW Milton Ct.
  Tigard, OR 97207
  503-624-1000
- Branch office visited (if applicable)
- Number of branch offices: 1
- Number of Employees:
  1. Total: Total number of volunteers: 1,783/ Total value of volunteer services: $5,073,930
  2. Locally: 125
- Gross Annual Budget: $13,894,528
- Net Annual Income (if Profit Company): Non Profit
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Linda Woodbury, Executive Administrative Assistant
- Length of Interview: 40 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee seemed open to the project
  2. Reluctance was not shown
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee showed a clear understanding.
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): Smaller conference rooms had photos of people who NW Medical team helped. The larger boardroom did not have any artifacts.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:
In conference rooms:

Items are intentionally placed, but there universal meaning is not understood.
In boardroom:

Seating arrangements:
Seating arrangement is without design; happenstance
The Salvation Army

Name of Company: The Salvation Army
Home office:
The Salvation Army
International Headquarters
101 Queen Victoria St
London EC4P 4EP
England
Branch office visited (if applicable):
West Women’s and Children’s Shelter
PO Box 2398
Portland, OR 97208
503-224-7718
Number of branch offices: 8 in the Portland area
Number of Employees
1. Total: not stated
2. Locally: 27
Gross Annual Budget: $948,000 (for the children’s and women’s shelter)
Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): Non Profit
Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
Person interviewed: Gloria Willis, Program Manager
Length of Interview: 40 minutes
Sense of formality in the interview
1. Interviewee seemed interested in the research
2. Reluctance was not shown
Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee was clear
Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): Main boardroom had one photo on the floor leaning against the wall. Many meetings are held in a room with sofas.

Notes:
Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:
Artifacts in the room do not intentionally represent core values

Seating arrangements:
Seating arrangement is without design; happenstance
Y.M.C.A.

- Name of Company: YMCA
- Home office: Chicago, Ill.
- Branch office visited (if applicable):
  YMCA of Columbia-Willamette Association Services
  9500 SW Barbur Blvd, Suite 200
  Portland, OR 97219-5426
- Number of branch offices: 2,400 YMCAs in the United States
- Number of Employees
  1. Total: 19 million members in more than 10,000 communities
  2. Locally: 30+
- Gross Annual Budget: US$20 million
- Net Annual Income (If Profit Company): Non Profit
- Process for securing the interview and boardroom visit: Telephone call and interview
- Person interviewed: Chris Stubblefield, Executive Assistant
- Length of Interview: 40 minutes
- Sense of formality in the interview
  1. Interviewee seemed open to the project
  2. Reluctance was not shown
- Sense of clarity regarding negotiations and the boardroom on the part of the interviewee: The interviewee showed a clear understanding.
- Prominent features of the conference room (or prominence of none): One smaller conference room showed not prominent features on wall but did have a buffet table. The major conference room exhibited movable tables, coffee/food service table a small kitchen, and artifacts on walls.

Notes:

Meaning of the objects that represent the core values of the company or organization:

Items are intentionally placed and are recognized by the people within the company or organization

Seating arrangements:

Seating arrangement is without design; happenstance
Appendix B:

Sets of Questions
Face-to-Face Interview Questions

1. What aspects are embedded in your mission statement?

2. Which of your company’s values have to do with the product and the process of doing business?

3. Which of your company’s values have to do with the treatment of employees?

4. What different types of locations are used for conducting contractual agreements?

5. Does the company appreciate negotiating in formal settings?

6. Do you do negotiations in public places like restaurants or golf courses?

7. Do you have a place for negotiating in your boardroom or office? Is there a difference?

8. When negotiating with products, processes, employees, or customers/clients do you have a preferred location?

9. Do you have a preferred seating order when negotiating regarding products, processes, employees, customers/clients? Can you give your preference?

10. When negotiating in another business setting what values do you hold that you hope the setting will display?

11. Within your office or boardroom/conference room are there some artifacts that signifies specific values that you want to present as part of the negotiation?

12. In your estimation do the artifacts hold universal meaning among all the employees?

13. Is there any faith based artifacts that specific values that you want to present as part of the negotiation?

14. Is any kind of ambient sound preferred or helpful?

15. In times when you find the environment disappointing what elements made it such?
Face-to-Face Interview Questions (Continued)

16. Can you tell me about a recent meeting that took place here?

17. Tell me about your experience of negotiating in other business settings other than your own?
Boardroom/Conference Room On Site Questions

1. What types of meetings occur here?
2. What types of people attend?
3. Please describe the seating arrangement?
4. Are food and drinks served?
5. Describe a recent or typical meeting that took place here.
6. Can I take a photo of the room?
Appendix C:

Photographs of Selected Boardrooms

And

Conference Rooms
These diagrams are of several of Boeing's conference rooms. The company does not place meaningful artifacts in their conference rooms. The color of the paint in these rooms is white. These rooms are designed to be secure. Conference rooms at Boeing are rarely unoccupied. Boeing does not designate seating around their tables. Seats are padded chairs of a single style.
This is diagram of one of the conference rooms at Equity Office. The company has several conference rooms with a similar environment of this one. The company does not place meaningful artifacts in their conference rooms. Equity Office does not designate seating around the table. Seats are padded chairs of a single style. The conference room viewed had two small windows which looked outside. The room had a whiteboard, but no screen for presentations using a computer. The room was basically a sparse environment.
This is one of Louisiana Pacific’s boardrooms. The organization has more than one, but all have a similar environment. Louisiana Pacific does not display artifacts in their boardroom or conference areas. The use of windows is used to create a congenial environment. The windows onto the city from a high view can convey a message of power and control. The company does not designate seating in terms of placement around their tables. However, when using conference rooms the location is chosen due to placement of seats. Seating in the boardrooms are padded chairs of a single style.
This is another one of Louisiana Pacific's boardrooms. The environment is similar to the others. The use of windows is used to create a congenial environment. The view of the city may represent the power of individuals who are hosted in this room. Chairs are not assigned. Whether a person is sitting facing towards or away from the view may be significant. There would be a difference in light and the possibility of distraction.
Note the use of windows in Louisiana Pacific’s boardrooms. Whiteboards and speakers telephone adorn these rooms. The table itself is made of a lighter color wood. This room like the others capitalizes on the view of other buildings downtown.
This is one of Louisiana Pacific's conference rooms. The organization has more than one. All have a different built-in seating arrangement. Louisiana Pacific does not display artifacts in their boardroom or conference areas. The conference rooms do not use windows in the same method as the boardroom. The company does not assign the seats individuals sit in. Like with the case of all other conference rooms and boardrooms at Louisiana Pacific, seats in the conference rooms are of a single style. This room is more conducive to one-on-one rather than over the table negotiations. This room is used for interviewing situations. Here the table forms a barrier rather than sitting on the same side or in upholstered chairs.
Here is another style of Louisiana Pacific’s conference rooms. All have a different built-in seating arrangements. Louisiana Pacific does not display artifacts in their boardroom or conference areas. There are no windows facing outside in conference rooms. Written notes and fliers can be placed on the bulletin board behind the seats. The chairs in which an individual will sit is not assigned. These seats are all of a single style.
Here is a third style of conference room at Louisiana Pacific. The organization has more than one like this. All of the company’s conference rooms have a built-in seating arrangement. This company does not display artifacts in their boardroom or conference areas. Like the other conference rooms, written notes and fliers can be placed on the bulletin board behind the seats. It appears that items of importance could be placed on this board. However, it was not stated that these items are important to negotiations. Seats in the conference rooms offer the same level of comfort. This room has chairs around and across the table. Here the table does not act as a barrier.
Here is a forth style of conference room a Louisiana Pacific. Louisiana Pacific does not display artifacts exhibiting their core values in their boardroom or conference areas. The windows in the conference rooms face into the hall rather than looking outside. One can notice the written notes and fliers can be placed on the bulletin board behind the seats. It appears that messages of importance could be placed on this board. However, it was not stated that these items are important to negotiations. Where a particular person sits is not assigned. Seats in the conference rooms are the same. Each person in this room has a personal side table and does not shared a common table like the other conference rooms. Ideas are to be shared orally in this room. Possibly this style of
conference room was constructed to keep a distance of ideas and papers from different people. This room looks as if ideas are not intermixed.
Nike recognizes the value of artifacts in displaying the core values of the company and intentionally designates seating of guests and company representatives. Seats and the placement of artifacts are discussed prior to hosting every party at Nike. Rooms remain sparse prior to meetings until they are decorated to suit the particular gathering. The modern environment of the exterior of the building extends inside as well.
This is the main boardroom of Northwest Natural. Note the lack of items on the walls. Northwest Natural does not designate seating. The chairs are all of the same style. The statue of the cranes does not reflect the core values of the company. They were not mention by the interviewee. Possibly the cranes are showing the culturalization of the natural in the same way that Northwest Natural protects nature in its culturalizing enterprise. Perhaps it may be placed here to create a congenial environment. Perhaps the company should consider removing this statue and replacing it with artifacts that represent the core values of the company.
The opposite wall of the same boardroom also has a lack of items adorning it. When food and drinks are served, perhaps the serving table on the right is used for this purpose. The table itself may be considered a work of art, showing two colors of wood. This may be for creating an effective work environment as well as demonstrating a certain level of respect for the individuals who use the facility. The colors may be a signifier of the work of the company. Note the use of natural greens and browns rather than more synthetic hues. The natural colors match the company’s name.
This is Providence Medical’s boardroom. The room has all of the standard items which are found in boardrooms. Providence does display one artifact in their boardroom which shows the core values of the organization. The company does not designate seating around their boardroom table. Like every other boardroom, seats are of a single style. The length of the table may not be conducive to discussion as much as listening.
Note the framed statement of the core values on the far wall. The clock may denote the importance of time, but that was not noted as being important by the interviewee. To the right of the boardroom table (not in the picture) there is a counter for placing food and drink for individuals involved in a particular meeting.
This is one of Providence Medical’s conference rooms. The organization has more than one, but all have a similar environment. Providence does display the same artifact in their conference room as in their boardroom. This shows the core values of the organization. The company does not designate seating around their tables. Non designated seating might become a scramble for position in negotiation because of the length of the table. Seats are padded chairs of a single style, but are not as fancy as in their boardroom. It was stated that on this particular day they were going to be participate in a conference telephone call. However, it is not typical to have a phone here.
This is another angle of the same conference room. Note the framed statement of the core values on the far wall. The size of the statement of the core values may convey a message about the organization. It is a distance away from where people are seated. At the opposite end of the room the core values are not able to be read. Therefore it must not be meant to be read but only to be present. The clock is used for keeping track of the time during staff meetings, but that was not noted as being important by the interviewee.
This conference room is in the process of being built. Windows will be on three sides and will have wood paneling on the other side. Currently, in the company’s boardroom artifacts are not displayed. It may have the purpose of conveying a congenial atmosphere. The room is being built with dividers.
This conference room may have the purpose of conveying a congenial atmosphere. The room will be available to be rented by other corporations for their purposes. The closeness of the walkway to the windows may be a distraction. However, it conveys the notion of negotiations being transparent and honest. The body language of individuals who are negotiating is visible by anyone walking by.
In Smith Barney's boardroom, the picture on the wall does not relate to the values of the company. A unique feature of the Smith Barney boardroom is the raised seating (on the right of the photograph). It appears that the chairs can be moved. Though, according to the interviewee they rarely are. Smith Barney does not display meaningful artifacts in their boardroom. Seats are not assigned around their table. Smith Barney was the only corporation in this study to have wooden backed chairs around their boardroom table.
A unique feature of the Smith Barney boardroom is the raised seating. It appears that the chairs can be moved. Though, according to the interviewee they rarely are. These seats are used for meetings with all the staff members as well as informational meetings with groups of clients. Here during large assemblies individuals loose the physical ease of mutuality.
This conference room is designed to be used by employees. Note the items on the walls which show views of the state of Oregon. This signifies the importance of this branch of Xerox. The company does not designate seating around their tables. It appears that the tables can be moved. The interviewee noted that tables are usually left in the same location. They remain in the same location in most situations. Seats are padded chairs of a single style.
XEROX
ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM FOR THE USE OF EMPLOYEES

This second conference room at Xerox is designed to be used by employees. The dark green paint is more functional than symbolic. Perhaps it is believed that decorations on the wall might form a distraction during meetings. This is the only employee conference room that does not have anything on the walls. The company does not designate seating around their tables. It appears that the tables can be moved. The interviewee noted that tables are usually left in the same location. This room is used for presenting power point and films. Seats are of a single style.
This conference room is designed to be used by employees. Note the pictures of the products on the walls of this meeting room. The company does not assign seats around their tables. In each room, Xerox uses chairs of the same style. This conference rooms displays artifacts where the other does not. Perhaps this is due to the intended usage of the room. It appears that this room is used for dialogue between employees where the other is designed for viewing presentations.
This conference room is designed to be used by employees for small staff meetings. The picture on the wall does not relate to the core values of the company. It has the purpose of conveying a congenial atmosphere. The company does not designate seating. Again, seats are padded chairs of a single style.
Hanjin Shipping has but one conference room. Note the world map on the wall which signify the locations where their goods are sent. The clocks denote the time in many of their branch offices. The core values of the company are written in English and Korean and appear on the wall. Hanjin Shippin recognizes the value of artifacts in displaying the core values of the company. The company does not designate seating around their table. Seats are padded chairs of a single style.
Note the sink which is used for offering drink to hosted individuals. The microwave is used by employees and is not typically used for guests. The conference room owned by Hanjin Shipping is not large but it is loaded with artifacts and does serve the company's purpose.
Hyundai Shipping has but one conference room. Note photographs on the wall which signify the history and efficiency of Hyundai Shipping. On the bookcase rests a Korean figure in a glass case. Hyundai recognizes the value of artifacts in displaying the core values of the company. Hyundai Shipping intentionally designates seating of guests and company representatives. Seats are padded chairs of a single style. Although they plan for an arranged seating pattern their chairs are not more comfortable than other companies who do not. Hyundai policy directs mixing the seating positions of employees and guests.
Hyundai places a common wall clock at the end of the room (see the clock in the upper right corner). Time is significant and the company finds it appropriate not to be discreet about the monitoring of time. The award on the wall denotes the high quality of service that Hyundai stands for. The picture on the right also shows another one of Hyundai's ships.
This is the main boardroom of Toyota. Note the lack of items on the walls. Toyota does not designate seating around their tables. It appears that the tables can be moved. However, as commented by the interviewee they are not. They remain in the same location in most situations. The chairs are of a single style. Only possible intention of tan bare walls would be to focus concentration on the topic at hand.
Note the whiteboard, television, and the screen in the boardroom of Toyota. These are used for presentations. The configuration of the tables would appear that this room is frequently used for presentations. The interviewee stated that it is used for this purpose frequently. The tables have power ports as well. This conference room recognizes the power of technology for negotiating with Toyota.
This is the video conference room at Toyota. In this way multiple boardrooms can effect each other. Toyota does not designate seating around their tables. The picture partially seen does not relate to the core values of the company. But rather breaks up the monotony of the wall. Electrical equipment make the atmosphere of the room less relaxing. The picture might counteract the television’s presence as being sterile. Seats are in chairs of a single style.
This is another angle of the video conference room at Toyota. The overhead projector in the corner of the room is not used as stated by the interviewee. It is just placed there to be out of the way. The Portland sign is necessary as multiple boardrooms in different sites are interfacing. As stated by the interviewee, many of Toyota's video conference rooms in other geographic areas have a larger sign on the wall denoting their location.
Subaru has one boardroom. Note the banner on the wall. This may be considered an artifact, but is not recognized as being one by the employees. The company serves food and drink occasionally. When they do perhaps the table below the banner is used for this purpose. Subaru does not designate seating. Seating is in office style chairs that are of a single style.
This is another angle of Subaru's boardroom. In addition to the banner other posters and written sayings are adorning the walls. These are considered artifacts. However, they are not recognized as being such by their employees. It was stated by the interviewee that Subaru does not have any artifacts or items related to the company in their boardroom. However, visiting the boardroom proved different results.
This is a diagram of the boardroom at Mercy Corps. The company does place meaningful artifacts in their conference room. These are often photographs of individuals who the organization has helped. A unique feature is that Mercy Corps changes these items regularly. Sometimes they relate to the latest disaster. The organization does not designate seating around their tables. Seating is in padded chairs of a single style.
This is the main boardroom of Northwest Medical Teams International. Note the six pictures of influential individuals in the history of the organization. These individuals are important in segments of the history of the organization. The small kitchenette to the left can be used for serving food and drinks. Northwest Medical Teams International does not designate seating around the table. Seats are of the same style.
This is another angle of the main boardroom of Northwest Medical Teams International. The purpose of the glass on the back wall was not commented on by the interviewee. The windows offer a nice view of trees near the site. To the right there is a restroom built into the boardroom. However, as commented by the interviewee, no one uses it. They instead leave the room and make a trip down the hall. The natural functions facilitated by the restroom are taken away from the cultural milieu of the negotiating environment.
This is smaller conference room at Northwest Medical Teams International. Note the map on the wall showing where some of their work is done. The two colors of paint were not stated as being important. Perhaps the intentional choice of tan and dark blue colors work to create a congenial environment. Northwest Medical Teams International does not designate seating around the table. Seating is in padded chairs of a single style. The table is of a fine quality of wood rather that having a Formica top.
This is another smaller conference room at Northwest Medical Teams International. This room is used for less formal meetings. Note the picture on the wall relating to the purpose of the organization. Northwest Medical Teams International does not designate seating around their tables. Seating is in padded chairs of a single style, but in less formal ones than the other conference room. Note that the table is made of Formica opposed to the dark mahogany table of the main conference room.
This open area at Northwest Medical Teams International provides a location for short conversations with visitors. Note the pictures on the wall exhibiting some of the individuals helped by the organization. Northwest Medical Teams International does not designate seating around their tables. Seats are of a single style. This meeting area does not offer any privacy as do the other meeting areas.
This is another smaller conference room at Northwest Medical Teams International. This room is used for less formal meetings. The same colors of blue and tan adorn the walls of this conference room like the more formal one. Note the two pictures on the walls showing individuals who have been helped by organization. Northwest Medical Teams' seating is happenstance. Seats are padded chairs of a single style, but lack armrests. In the corner there is an easel with white paper for presentations. An informal correlation can be observed between the cost of the table and the level of negotiations at Northwest Medical Teams International.
This chapel at Northwest Medical Teams International is used for worship services as well as other functions. This room is also used for less formal meetings, as well. Chairs are often moved in this process. Note the pictures on the wall to the right relating showing individuals around the world who have been helped by organization. Northwest Medical Teams International does not designate seating here. Seating is in padded chairs of the same style without armrests.
The Salvation Army has but one conference room. Note the absence of photos on the walls. The Salvation Army does not designate seating. The seats are padded chairs of a single style with armrests. Note the glass door which does not allow for privacy. Windows overlooking the entry of the building are to the right. Clients often complain that this room lacks privacy as individuals can view into this room as they enter the building.
Note that these artifacts are just temporarily placed on the floor in the conference room. They are not positioned on the walls and there is the possibility that they are not permanent items in the conference room. These items are hardly noticeable as when one opens the door it blocks the view of these items. That might be intentional as their position on the floor does not convey a message or responsibility. It is unknown how long these artifacts have been adorning the floor.
Note the absence of anything adorning the walls in the Salvation Army’s West Women’s and Children’s shelter. It would appear that these tables can be rearranged. However, is not practiced as stated by the interviewee. It would also appear as if the room is too small for this to be done as well.
The Salvation Army's West Women's and Children's shelter uses this room for meetings with the women and children housed in this facility. Men usually do not see this room as it is for clients only and this facility does not serve males. Seating is not assigned. However, individuals tend to sit in the same spots by habit rather than by assignment. Note the cross which serves as a reminder of the core value of the work of this shelter. Chairs are moved for Sunday church services. This room is not intend for board meetings.
Note the style of seating in the informal meeting room at the Salvation Army’s West Women’s and Children’s shelter. This denotes the importance of comfort. Seats are equally padded and offer the same level of comfort. This room is designed for the atmosphere of safety and comfort. The bear may be a sign of comfort to children who are present in this room.
This is Y.M.C.A.'s boardroom. Note the five framed pictures on the wall. One relates to each of the core values of the organization. It appears that the tables can be moved. Though, according to the interviewee they are rarely moved. The YMCA recognizes the worth of artifacts in displaying the core values of the company. The company does not designate seating around their tables. Seating is in padded chairs of a single style, but are less fancy than other corporations.
The Y.M.C.A. sometimes uses the screen of the television during their meetings. The whiteboard is not used often as stated by the interviewee. It was a donation. Notice how the chairs have their backs to the screen. This would suggest that these items are not used at every meeting. The plant in the corner by the window can be a method of naturalizing the cultural atmosphere.
This is YMCA’s conference room. Note the lack of adornment on the walls. The company does not assign seating. Seats are padded chairs of a single style, and are fancier than the ones in the main boardroom. The interviewee stated that this room is often used for meetings with parents of children who participate in YMCA’s programs.