

## California Academy of Sciences

California Academy of Sciences is a natural history museum, aquarium, planetarium, four-story rainforest, and research laboratory all under one living roof. It offers a new way of exploring the key questions of life on earth.

The California Academy of Sciences is a multifaceted scientific institution committed to leading-edge research and educational outreach, and to engaging and inspiring the public. Located in San Francisco, the 154-year-old nonprofit institution houses the Steinhart Aquarium, the Kimball Natural History Museum, a four-story rainforest, and the Morrison Planetarium.



CALIFORNIA  
ACADEMY OF  
SCIENCES

### Goals

Revitalize the institution's visual identity and brand voice.

Design a comprehensive program.

Deliver a comprehensive visitor experience that complements the state-of-the-art facilities.

Increase recognition and attract new visitors and members.

Strengthen brand equity.

**We're an un-museum. In the past, natural science museums had thick walls and high columns, and they were about history. We're the inversion of that. Light streams in and the Academy is full of life.**

Gregory Farrington, PhD  
Executive Director  
California Academy of Sciences



**Process and strategy:** In fall 2008, the California Academy of Sciences unveiled its iconic new building that exists beneath a 2.5-acre living roof. The \$488 million all-green, LEED Platinum Certified museum was designed by Renzo Piano. Pentagram was engaged to design an identity and visual system that celebrates the Academy's dynamic, thriving, and interconnected experience, and complements its state-of-the-art facilities. The comprehensive identity system needed to include collateral, development, and membership materials; interior and exterior signs, banners, and donor walls; newsletters, membership cards, and visitor maps; and more. Pentagram's Kit Hinrichs and Laura Scott worked closely with the Academy's senior leadership team, building architects, and other design consultants, to create a cohesive brand experience to increase recognition, visitation, membership, and support.

**Creative solution:** Taking inspiration from the building's architecture, the Academy's new identity reinforces the cyclical nature of the natural sciences, and is often described as "The Fabric of Life." Everything was designed to have an unexpected element of discovery and engagement—like a photograph with a twist or scale larger than life, or the twenty-one-foot diameter logo at the entryway inset into the ground so children can trace its outline with their feet. For the development newsletters, the theme "Life Stories"

was created; oversized newsletters bring to life stories of people who have infused their passion into or been impassioned by the Academy, be they staff, donors, docents, enthusiasts, volunteers, researchers, scientists, aspiring scientists, or wide-eyed kids. Pentagram also created a series of donor walls. The major donor wall is a permanent installation of 388 six-inch-square glass blocks, a modern take on scientific "specimen boxes" that have been etched with names of major contributors. True to its sustainability mission, every element is designed with environmental responsibility in mind; membership cards are printed on recycled plastic and issued for the lifetime of the member, and visitor maps are printed on recycled paper and designed to be reused.

**Results:** The new California Academy of Sciences has been met with unprecedented local, national, and international enthusiasm. Membership has grown to over 75,000 in the first six months (up from 16,000 in 2004 when the Academy closed for reconstruction). Attendance has far exceeded its ambitious opening goals and, just five months after the opening, the Academy celebrated its one-millionth visitor.



Photos: Tim Griffith



California Academy of Sciences: Pentagram

Donor wall

## Minnesota Historical Society

The Minnesota Historical Society illuminates the past to light the future. Our history informs, inspires, and defines us.

The Minnesota Historical Society is a nonprofit educational and cultural institution established in 1849. The largest organization of its kind in the US, the Society collects, preserves, and tells the story of Minnesota's past through museum exhibits, libraries and collections, historic sites, educational programs, and book publishing.

### Goals

Speak with a unified voice.

Become consumer-centric.

Strengthen and streamline marketing.

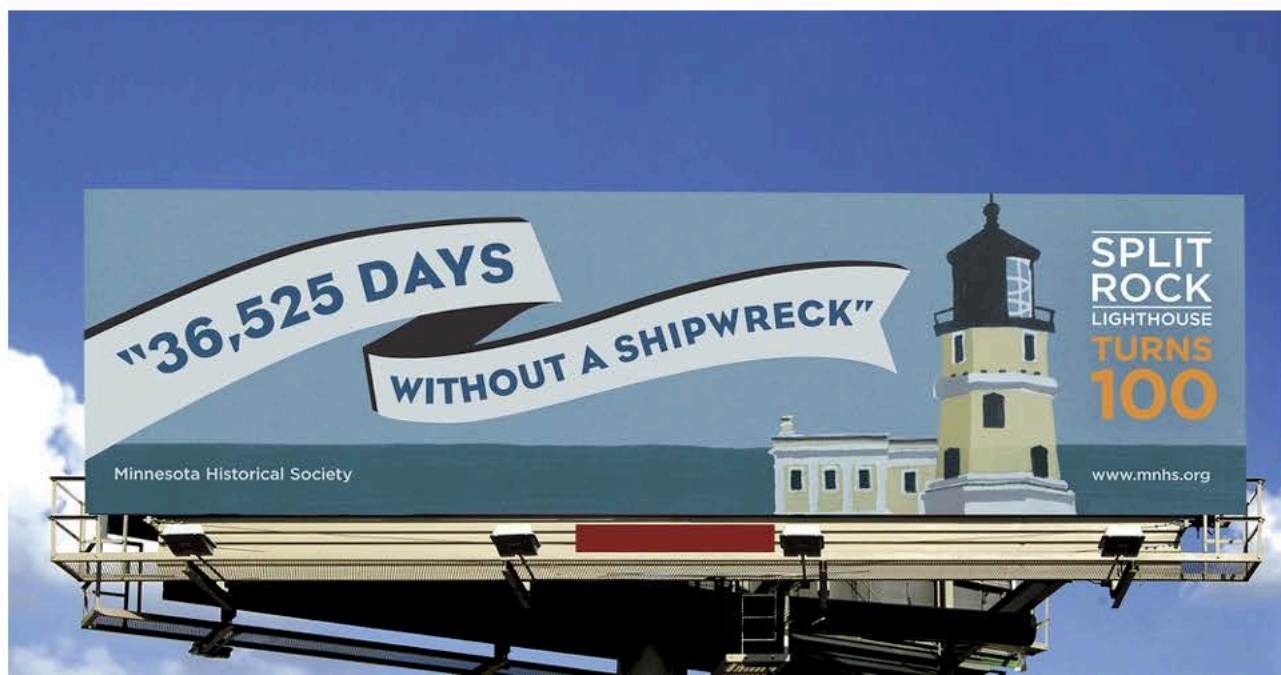
Increase affinity for the Society.

Increase attendance and site traffic.

**Today, our one, collective brand is seen and heard with exceptional clarity and consistency—giving greater meaning to our marketing and creative initiatives.**

Lory Sutton

Chief Marketing Officer  
Minnesota Historical Society



**Process and strategy:** Through its twenty-six historic sites and museums, the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) has offered a wide range of thought-provoking education and entertainment experiences across urban and rural territories. Lory Sutton, Chief Marketing Officer, wanted to achieve marketing synergy for the twenty-six sub-brands and identify a more intentional connection to the MHS master brand. Little & Company was engaged to examine brand architecture and its impact on marketing, new campaigns, and exhibits. From the beginning, the process was collaborative and engaged all of the sites, exhibits, and marketing teams. Little used three methods to gather insights: interviews with site managers and exhibit developers; on-site visits, visitor observation, and casual intercepts (that is, no formal questionnaire); and a review of annual visitor and member surveys. After the discovery phase, the strategy phase focused on clarifying positioning and personality. Regardless of the site, the twenty-six sub-brands needed an umbrella strategy to increase traffic and a way to leverage a deeper affinity for the master brand.

**Creative solution:** Over the course of seven years, Little worked with the Society to become a consumer-centric marketer, raising its influence as the one brand keeper for all of its site affiliations. Traditionally, the Society had employed a marketing strategy that distributed funds equitably across all twenty-six historic sites and museums, severely limiting the resources dedicated to the top attractions. However, in 2003, the Society's brand architecture was reenvisioned and all marketing initiatives became part of a tiered system that prioritized funds toward the top attractions. This shift laid the groundwork for Little to create an authentic, site-specific brand identity for top attractions Split Rock Lighthouse, Mill City Museum, and Historic Fort Snelling. Campaigns would now incorporate fresh and bold visual language, an audience-friendly marketing tone, and a consistent voice. The campaign art conveyed new excitement and personality, and was used across marketing channels, from the website through environmental graphics.

**Results:** The new, more focused brand strategy has allowed the Society to funnel its marketing budget toward the top-tier sites that feature the most exceptional visitor experiences. Based on the philosophy that "a rising tide lifts all boats," these then became hubs for promoting the other sites around the state. The effectiveness of that strategy, and the efficiencies it created, was a cornerstone of the tiered-site approach, which has achieved dramatic double-digit increases at targeted sites, and an overall increase statewide.

DISCOVER THE CITY  
MADE FROM WATER

**VISIT  
THE MOST  
EXPLOSIVE  
MUSEUM  
IN THE  
WORLD**

A unique concoction of raw power, stunning views and hands-on fun propels you through Mill City Museum, from its fiery past to its dynamic present. Rediscover the spirited riverfront—the very birthplace of Minneapolis—as it comes to life before your eyes.

704 South Second Street • Minneapolis • [www.millicitymuseum.org](http://www.millicitymuseum.org)

MILL CITY MUSEUM  
Minnesota Historical Society  
StarTribune.com

**As caretakers of the Minnesota Historical Society brand, we helped thread together existing equities that allowed the organization to speak as a stronger, singular entity.**

Joseph Cecere  
President and Chief Creative Officer  
Little & Company



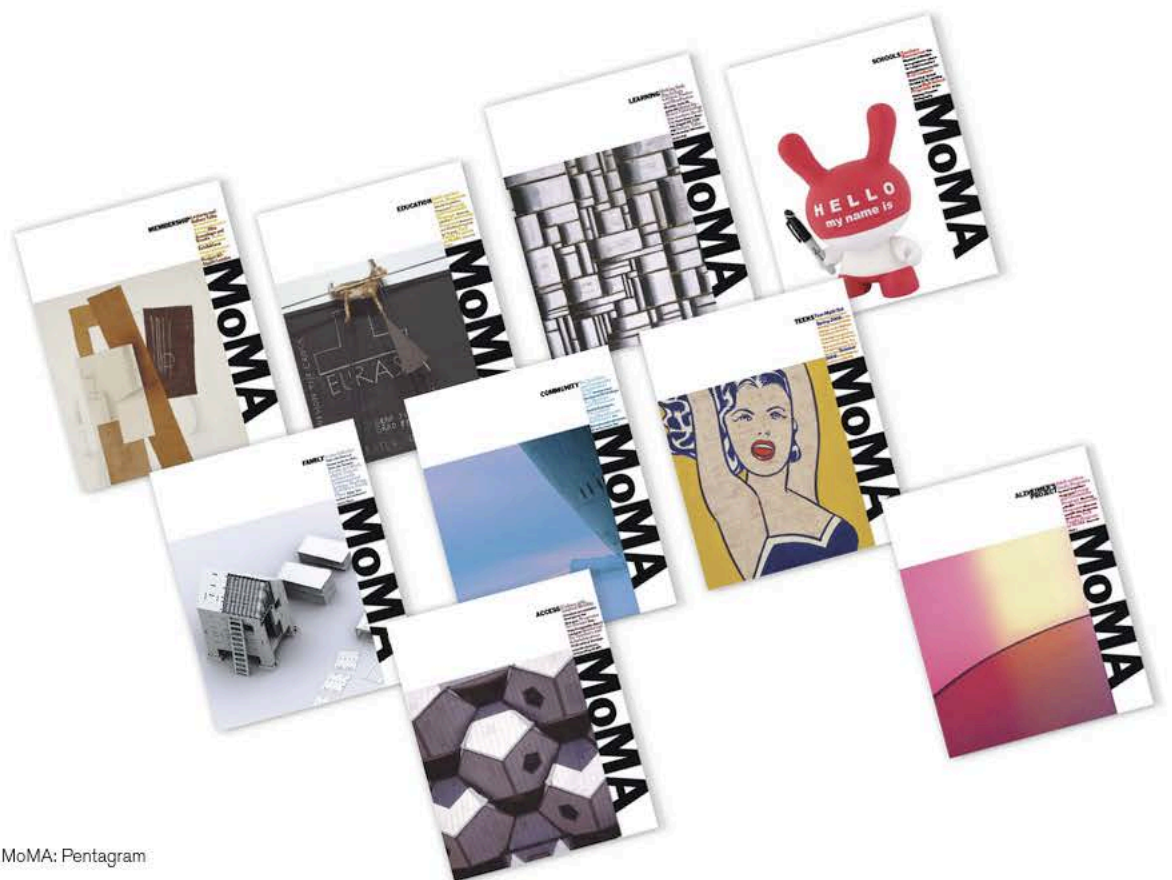
**Process and strategy:** MoMA has one of the most recognizable logotypes in the museum world. Originally designed by Ivan Chermayeff in 1964, the Franklin Gothic No. 2 logotype was redrawn in a new custom typeface named MoMA Gothic by Matthew Carter in 2004. Although the core identity itself is bold and iconic, the overall application across web, print, and the physical environment has not been cohesive or visionary like the museum itself. The marketing advisory committee of the museum identified revitalizing the communications system as a priority. The museum engaged Pentagram to design a more powerful and integrated comprehensive system. "While the MoMA logo is iconic, it alone is not enough to continually carry the spirit of the institution," said Paula Scher, partner and lead designer for the project.

**Creative solution:** To create an attitude that modernizes the institution's image, Scher designed a complete methodology for the new system that works at any scale, from an exterior banner to a print advertisement in the newspaper. A strong grid was designed for the uniform placement of images and type. Each quadrant of a page or a banner has a specific function. And for the first time in the museum's history, artwork is being

cropped to maximize visual impact and marketing. A bold, singular image is selected as the signature focus of an exhibit, and is visually accompanied by a text block that features upcoming events. The logotype, always black on white, is used vertically when possible, and always bleeds off an edge. MoMA Gothic is the primary font for all typography in all applications. The system is very flexible. On applications like banners and billboards, type and images are used in multiples, creating a dynamic pattern against the urban landscape.

**Results:** The new system is being used for MoMA's institutional and public communications, including brochures, banners, the website, and other materials. Individual exhibitions will continue to have their own identities, used in catalogues, websites, and exhibition graphics. Julia Hoffmann, creative director of advertising and graphic design at MoMA, and her internal team have brought the system to life in applications from large banners and subway posters to the website. MoMA at long last has an identity system that carries the spirit of its iconic institution.

This project is one of a series of innovative initiatives conceived by a new marketing advisory committee established by MoMA in January 2008. The committee, composed of local advertising and design professionals, advises the museum on new avenues of communication and ways to diversify and engage with its audience. The committee is chaired by Ted Sann, MoMA honorary trustee.



MoMA: Pentagram