



# NOBODY'S READING THAT!

HOW TO CRAFT ENGAGING CONTENT FOR THE SCANNING EYE

with *Danielle Gray*  
"THE CONTENT WHISPERER"

# UNDERSTANDING THE BRAIN

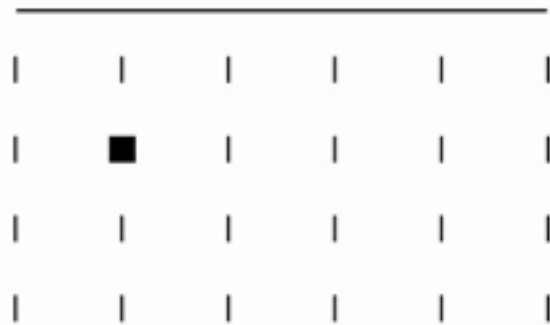


Your brain captures information through the pre-attentive processing of visual cues in your environment.

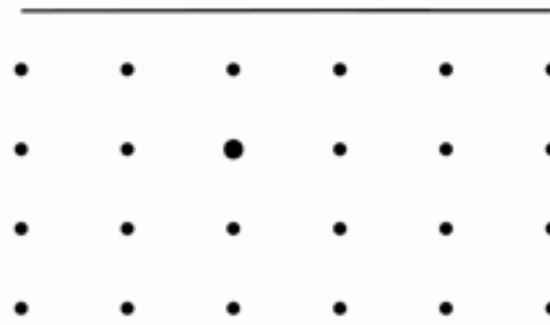
You unconsciously absorb and filter this information within **13 to 250 milliseconds**.\*

\* MIT, 2014

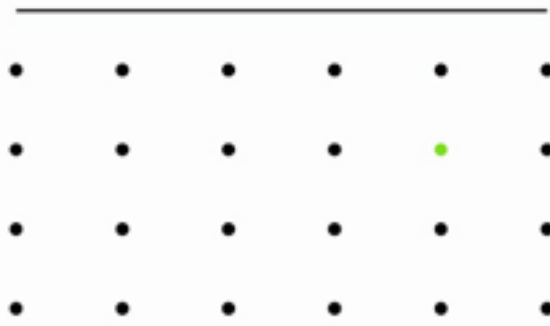
# UNDERSTANDING THE BRAIN



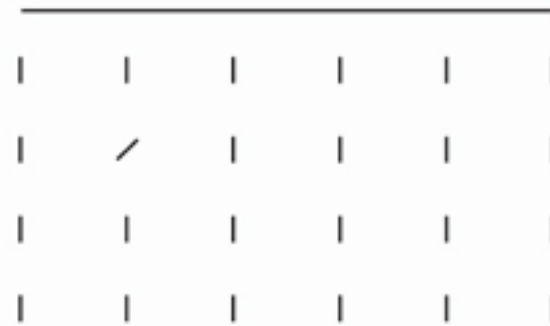
Shape



Size



Color



Position

# UNDERSTANDING THE BRAIN



We have always prioritized visual information.

Visual information is more attractive to our image craving mental processes.

Visuals can reach a wider audience, on a deeper level, and for longer than text alone.

**WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO  
DO WITH SCANNING?**



# HUMANS ARE VISUAL

People are relying heavily on visual cues to decide if content is worth reading or not.

We must take advantage visual elements to intrigue readers/viewers.

# UNDERSTANDING THE BRAIN

## Decision-Making Process

Define  
Problem

Gather  
Data

Evaluate  
Options

Make  
Decision

**WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO  
DO WITH SCANNING?**



# WHAT READERS LOOK FOR

Depending on the decision making stage, the reader may be looking for something different.

**Not all scans are created equal.**

# THE 2 SCANNING ELEMENTS

1

Align scannable content with the decision making process stage of the target reader.

2

Make sure what should be scanned has a visual component.

# **CRAFTING YOUR ENGAGING CONTENT**

# SNOOZEFEST CONTENT

Proposals

White Papers

Articles

Project Data Sheets

# 4 SCANNING STEPS

- 1 Define your audience
- 2 Identify their decision-making stage
- 3 Understand what key elements they need to hear to move forward
- 4 Craft those elements into scannable content

# STEP 1: WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

Role

Motivations

Concerns

Content

Time  
Available



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CEO

# STEP 1: WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

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CEO



FACILITIES  
MANAGER

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CEO



FACILITIES  
MANAGER



PROJECT  
MANAGER

# STEP 1: WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

Role

Motivations

Concerns

Content

Time  
Available



CEO



FACILITIES  
MANAGER



PROJECT  
MANAGER



PROCUREMENT/  
ACCOUNTING

# STEP 1: WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

What are their...

Role

Motivations

Concerns

Content

Time  
Available



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PROJECT  
MANAGER



PROCUREMENT/  
ACCOUNTING



# STEP 1: WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

What are their...

Role

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PROJECT  
MANAGER



PROCUREMENT/  
ACCOUNTING

# STEP 1: WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

What type is their focus?

Role

Motivations

Concerns

Content

Time  
Available



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PROJECT  
MANAGER



PROCUREMENT/  
ACCOUNTING

# STEP 1: WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

How much do they have?

Role

Motivations

Concerns

Content

Time  
Available



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PROJECT  
MANAGER



PROCUREMENT/  
ACCOUNTING

**STEP 2:**

**WHAT DECISION-MAKING STAGE  
IS THE AUDIENCE IN?**

# DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Define  
Problem

Gather  
Data

Evaluate  
Options

Make  
Decision

# WHAT THE READER NEEDS

## Decision-Making Process

Define  
Problem

Gather  
Data

Evaluate  
Options

Make  
Decision

- Do you understand my position?
- Do you understand my challenge?
- Is this really my problem?



# WHAT THE READER NEEDS

## Decision-Making Process

Define  
Problem

Gather  
Data

Evaluate  
Options

Make  
Decision

- What do I need to know to move forward?
- Can I make a case with this information?

# WHAT THE READER NEEDS

## Decision-Making Process

Define  
Problem

Gather  
Data

Evaluate  
Options

Make  
Decision

- Is this the right solution?
- Who is the right fit?
- Will this make me look good?
- How can I avoid the most risk?

# WHAT THE READER NEEDS

## Decision-Making Process

Define  
Problem

Gather  
Data

Evaluate  
Options

Make  
Decision

- Would I tell colleagues about my decision?
- Would I do this again?

# STEP 3

**WHAT KEY ELEMENTS NEED  
TO BE SEEN QUICKLY?**

# 7 COMMON KEY ELEMENTS

for AEC firms

- 1 Empathy
- 2 Credibility/Expertise
- 3 Low Risk
- 4 Confirmation of Problem
- 5 Confirmation of Solution
- 6 Technical Support
- 7 Safety & Quality

# 7 COMMON KEY ELEMENTS

Which elements are of significance to each audience type?

- 1 Empathy
- 2 Credibility/Expertise
- 3 Low Risk
- 4 Confirmation of Problem
- 5 Confirmation of Solution
- 6 Technical Support
- 7 Safety & Quality



CEO



FACILITIES  
MANAGER



PROJECT  
MANAGER



PROCUREMENT/  
ACCOUNTING



# THE 3 QUESTIONS

What?

So What?

Now What?

# THE 3 QUESTIONS

What? The latest version of LEED

So What? It will impact all upcoming LEED projects

Now What? Visit newly certified XYZ project

# 6 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT MORE SCANNABLE INSTANTLY



# 6 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT INSTANTLY MORE SCANNABLE

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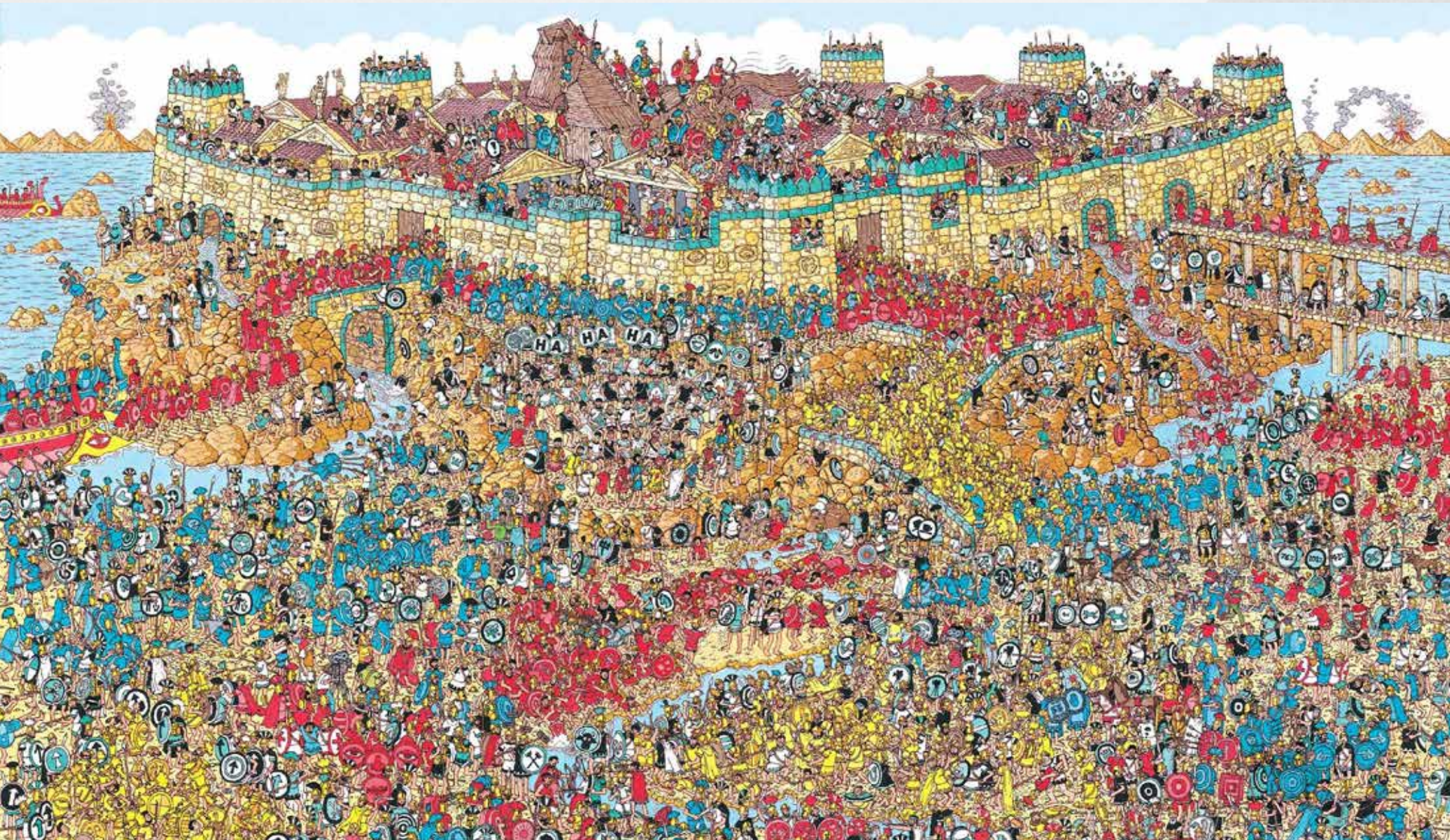
Type  
Hierarchy

Bullet  
Points

Photography

Call-outs

Infographics





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Space

Type  
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# 6 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT INSTANTLY MORE SCANNABLE

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Type  
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PROPRIETARY CONTENT





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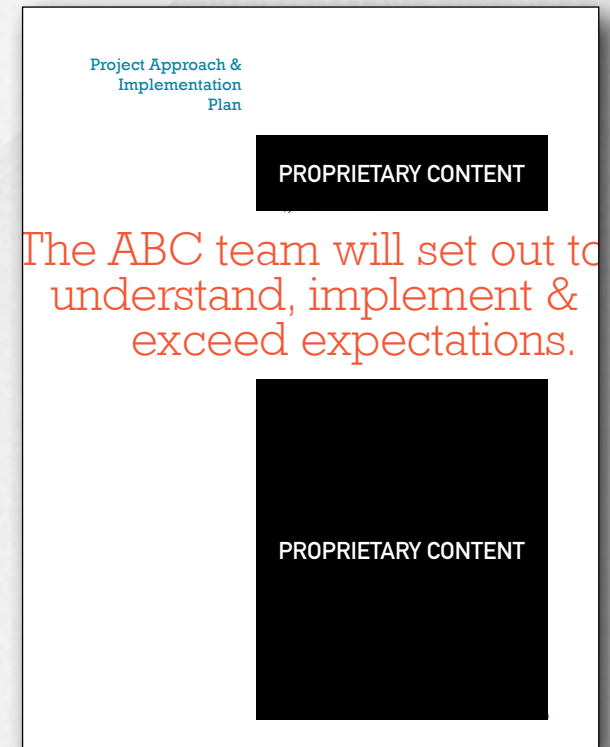
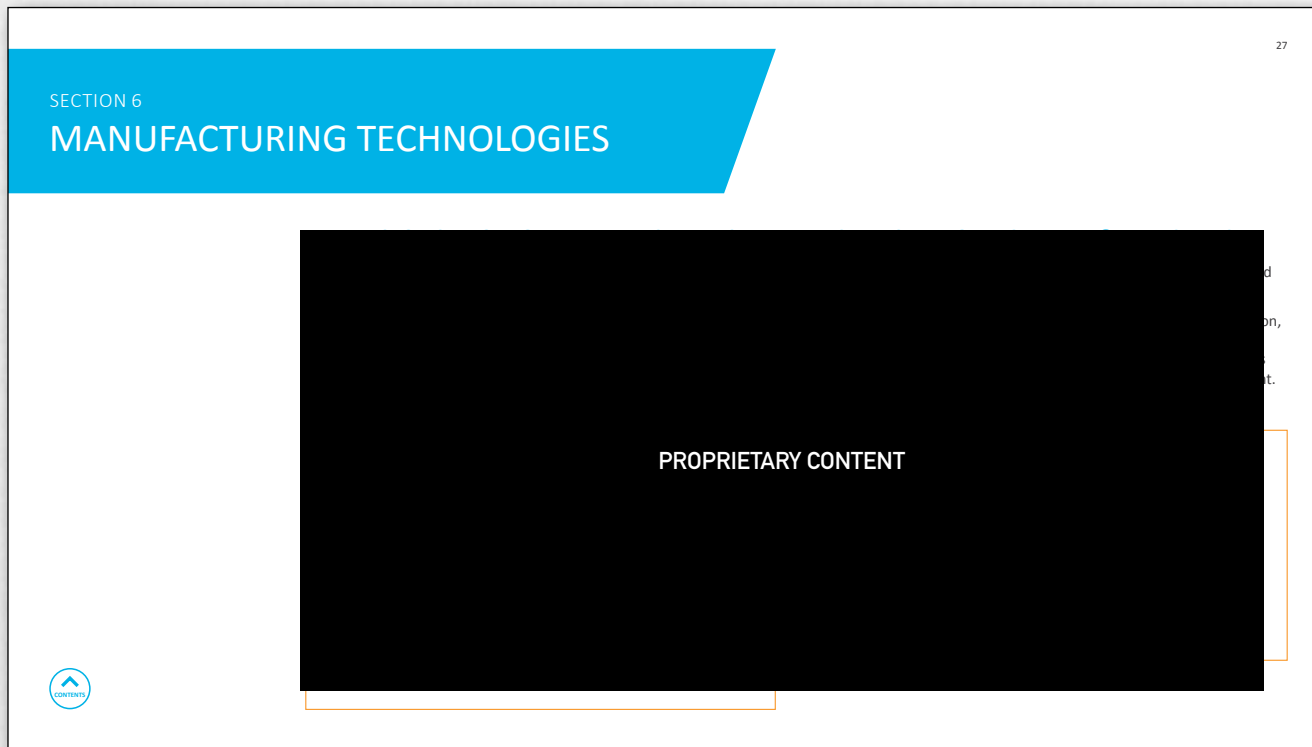
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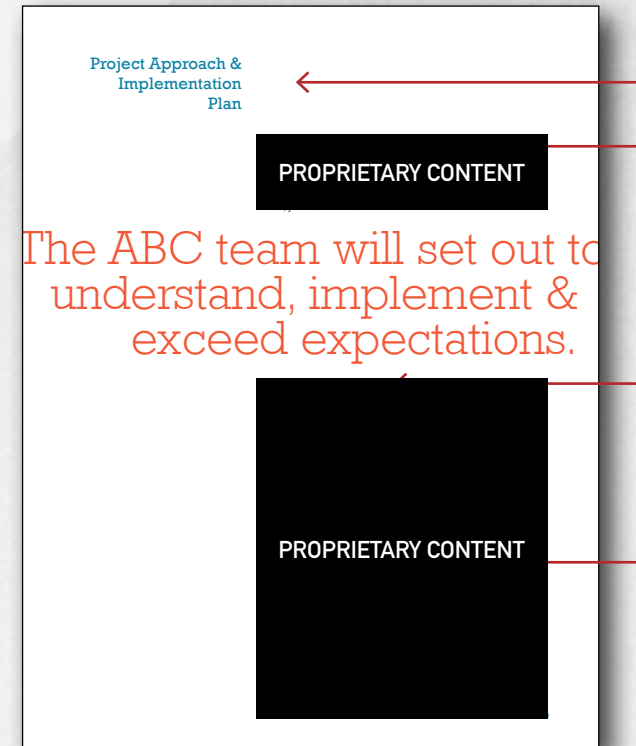
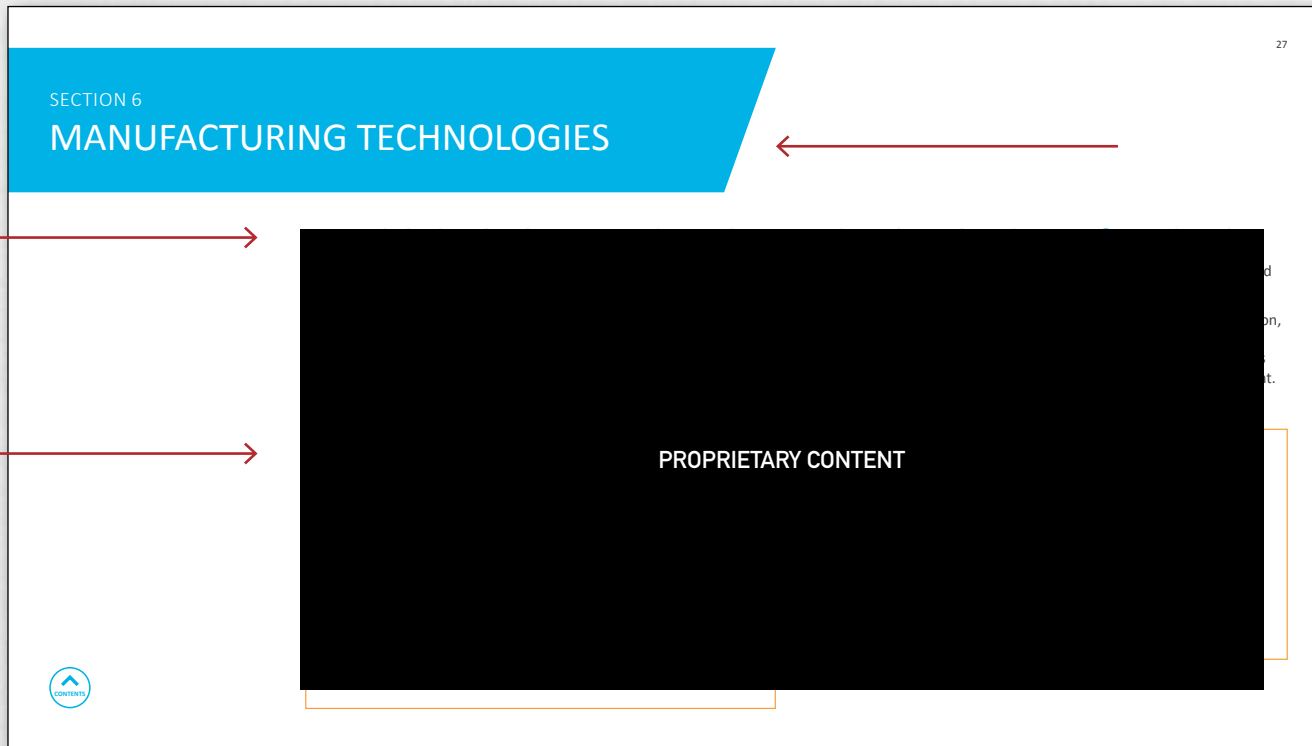
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## WHY FIRM + CLIENT WOULD MAKE AN AWESOME TEAM

### **We have direct experience with ABC Client.**

Working on your initial headquarters design, we are familiar with your team, preferences, and process.

### **We know the city's permitting process.**

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We have extensive previous experience with similar financial institutions, including Bank of America, Berkshire Investments, BNY Mellon, CitiGroup, Fidelity Investments, HSBC, Invesco, J.P. Morgan, Manulife Insurance, MFS Investments, Santander, and Suntrust.

## RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

- Bank of America
- Berkshire Investments
- BNY Mellon
- CitiGroup
- Fidelity Investments
- HSBC
- Invesco
- J.P. Morgan
- Manulife Insurance
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## RELEVANT EXPERIENCE





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White  
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PROPRIETARY CONTENT



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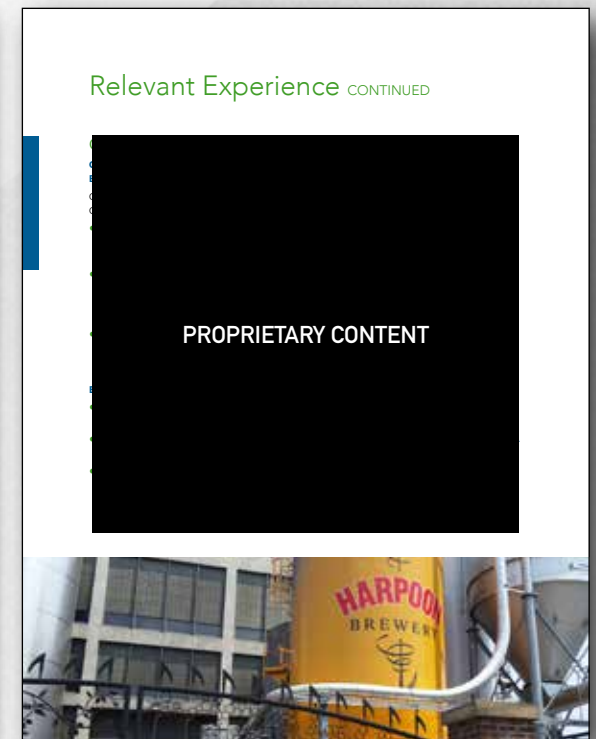
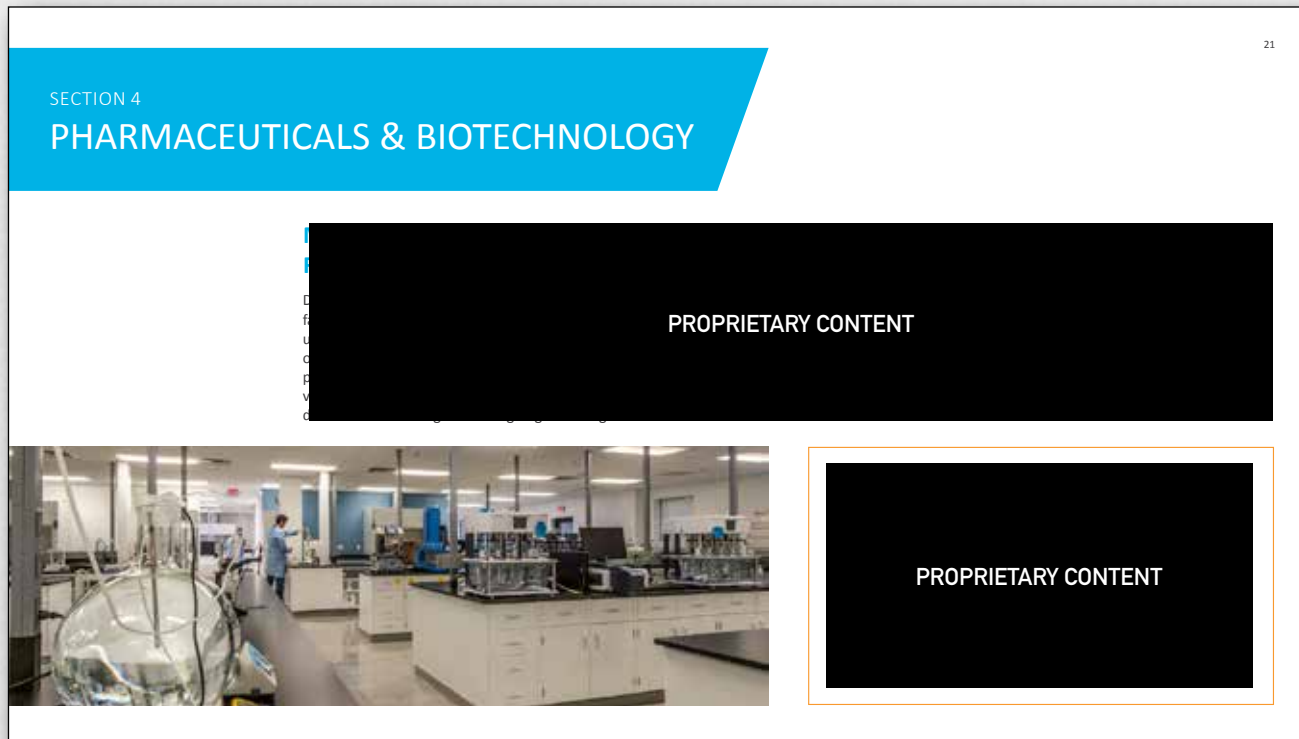
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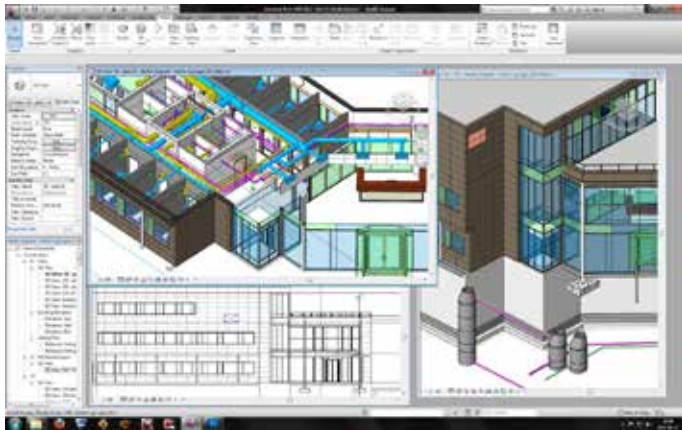
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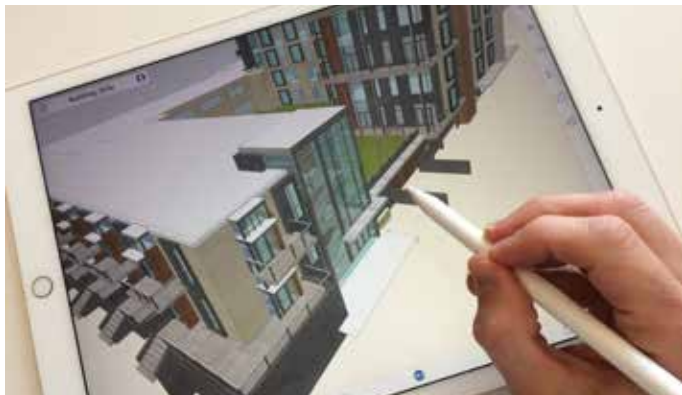
Call-outs

Infographics



## TECHNOLOGY & VISUALIZATION

PROPRIETARY CONTENT



## DOCUMENT CONTROL

PROPRIETARY CONTENT

# 6 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT INSTANTLY MORE SCANNABLE

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Space

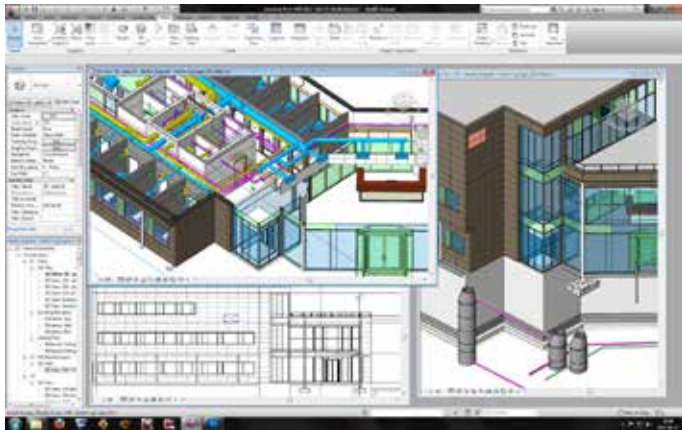
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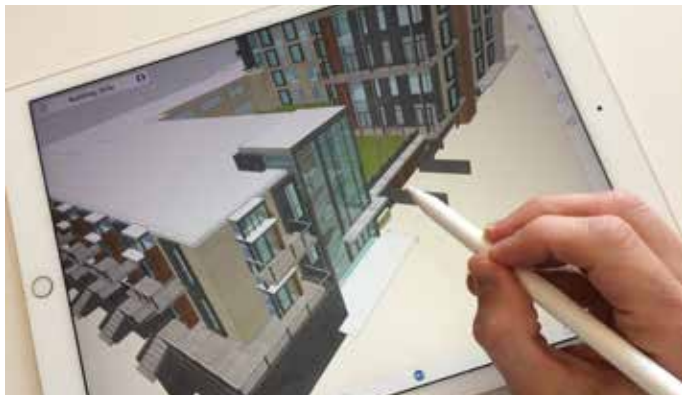
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## TECHNOLOGY & VISUALIZATION

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## DOCUMENT CONTROL

PROPRIETARY CONTENT



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Call-outs

Infographics

Project Approach & Implementation Plan

PROPRIETARY CONTENT

The ABC team will set out to understand, implement & exceed expectations.

PROPRIETARY CONTENT

Project Approach & Implementation Plan  
(CONTINUED)

PROPRIETARY CONTENT

“This is the most professional construction firm I've ever hired. On time, under budget, kept us informed every step of the way.” ~Sam Jones, ABC Client

PROPRIETARY CONTENT

WISE CONSTRUCTION 21

PROJECT APPROACH FOR ABC CLIENT

YOUR EXPERIENCE THROUGHOUT THIS PROJECT IS OUR PRIORITY.

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# 6 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT INSTANTLY MORE SCANNABLE

White  
Space

Type  
Hierarchy

Bullet  
Points

Photography

Call-outs

Infographics

30%

the time an average person spends  
at work during their lifetime

71%



*millennials who  
choose jobs with firms  
committed to the  
community<sup>2</sup>*



# 6 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT INSTANTLY MORE SCANNABLE

White  
Space

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Bullet  
Points

Photography

Call-outs

Infographics

By recycling used office furniture, we are able to save 4,312 pounds/88 office chairs and 5,400 pounds/36 lateral files from entering the waste stream. Others in the community benefit from these upcycled materials and don't have to waste their budget on furniture.

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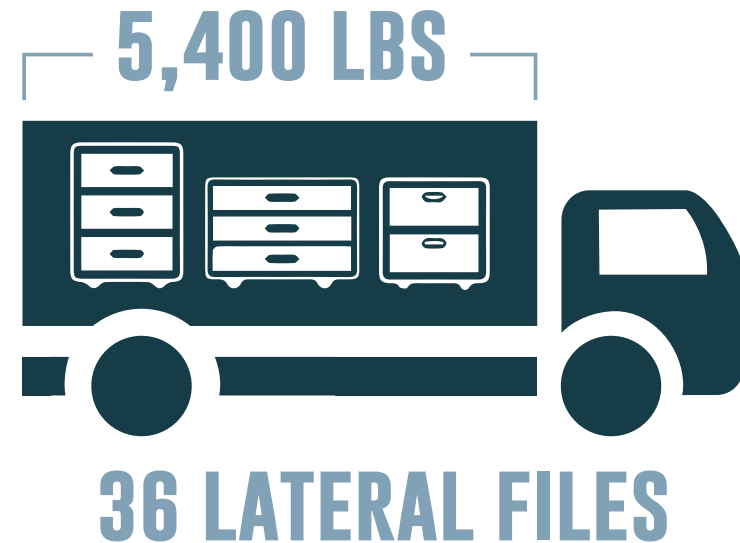
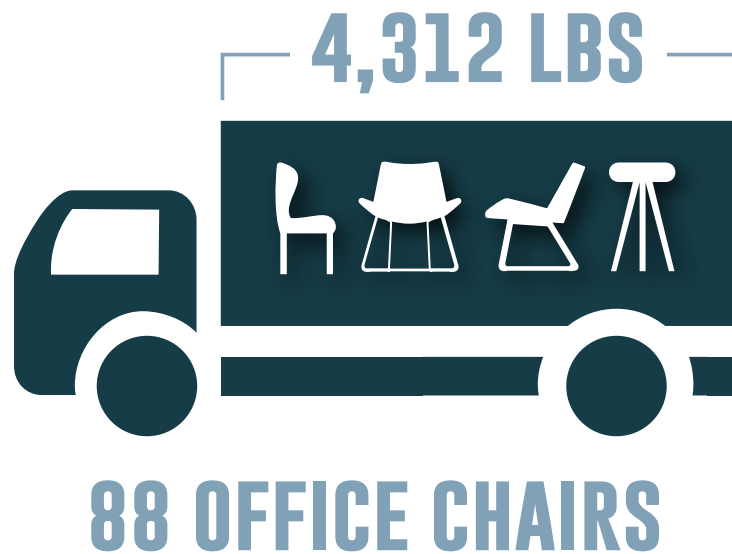
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Call-outs

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SAVED FROM THE WASTE STREAM & GIVEN BACK TO THE COMMUNITY



# 6 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT INSTANTLY MORE SCANNABLE

White  
Space

Type  
Hierarchy

Bullet  
Points

Photography

Call-outs

Infographics

Corporations have multiple types of meeting rooms. For every 100 people who work within the firm, the average company has six small meeting rooms seating two to six people, two medium conference rooms seating eight to ten people, and one large conference room seating 12 or more people.

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White  
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Photography

Call-outs

Infographics

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## FOR EVERY 100 EMPLOYEES, FIRMS HAVE

**SMALL**



**6**

(2-6 person)  
conference rooms

**MEDIUM**



**2**

(8-10 person)  
conference rooms

**LARGE**



**1**

(12+ person)  
conference rooms

# 6 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT INSTANTLY MORE SCANNABLE

White  
Space

Type  
Hierarchy

Bullet  
Points

Photography

Call-outs

Infographics

We posed the question: does the collaboration between others in the open office environment distract you from your work? 31.6% of respondents said not at all. The majority, at 47.4%, claim occasional distraction when there are many collaborators while 21.1% say they are frequently distracted.

# 6 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT INSTANTLY MORE SCANNABLE

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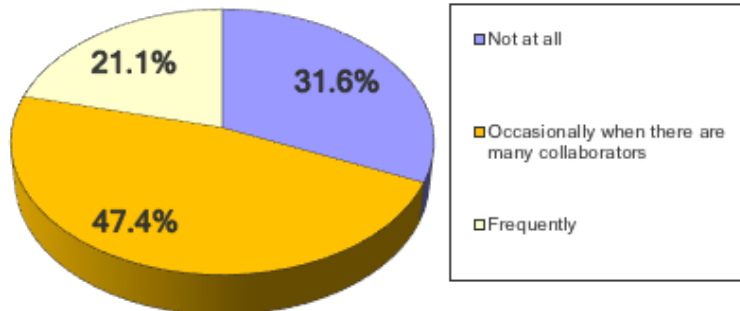
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Does the collaboration between others in the open office environment distract you from your work?





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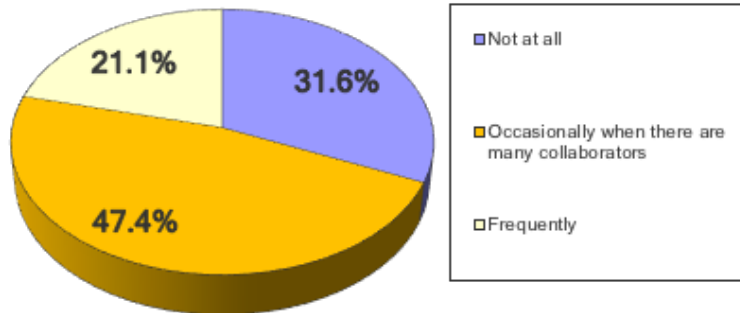
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Does the collaboration between others in the open office environment distract you from your work?



## IS OPEN OFFICE COLLABORATION DISTRACTING?



NEVER

32%

SOME-TIMES

47%

USUALLY

21%

# **STEP 4**

**CONVERT KEY ELEMENTS  
INTO SCANNABLE CONTENT**

# HOW TO APPLY

- 1 Empathy
- 2 Credibility/Expertise
- 3 Low Risk
- 4 Confirmation of Problem
- 5 Confirmation of Solution
- 6 Technical Support
- 7 Safety & Quality

# HOW TO APPLY

1 Empathy

2 Credibility/Expertise

3 Low Risk

4 Confirmation of Problem

5 Confirmation of Solution

6 Technical Support

7 Safety & Quality

- Stat call-out on current situation
- Testimonial from past client that speaks to issue
- Use of familiar environment photos
- Bold sentence in content

# HOW TO APPLY

- 1 Empathy
- 2 Credibility/Expertise
- 3 Low Risk
- 4 Confirmation of Problem
- 5 Confirmation of Solution
- 6 Technical Support
- 7 Safety & Quality

- Logos of former notable & recognizable clients
- Icons of certifications
- Photos with people on site with logow
- Call-out major stats in savings, square footage
- Project map







PROPRIETARY CONTENT

CAMBRIDGE

ALLSTON

CAMBRIDGE-AREA PROJECTS

CHARLES RIVER

BOSTON'S  
BACK BAY

# HOW TO APPLY

- 1 Empathy
- 2 Credibility/Expertise
- 3 Low Risk
- 4 Confirmation of Problem
- 5 Confirmation of Solution
- 6 Technical Support
- 7 Safety & Quality

- Case Study call-out box with project highlights
- Rankings call-out box
- Safety record call-out box or chart
- Logos of former notable & recognizable clients
- Icons of certifications
- Photos with people on site with logo



# HOW TO APPLY

- 1 Empathy
- 2 Credibility/Expertise
- 3 Low Risk
- 4 Confirmation of Problem**
- 5 Confirmation of Solution
- 6 Technical Support
- 7 Safety & Quality

- Call-out with statement/bullets of common issue(s)
- Graphs/Imagery of Issue
- Testimonial from past client that speaks to issue
- Use of familiar environment photos



# HOW TO APPLY

- 1 Empathy
- 2 Credibility/Expertise
- 3 Low Risk
- 4 Confirmation of Problem
- 5 Confirmation of Solution**
- 6 Technical Support
- 7 Safety & Quality

- Call-out with project highlights
- Graphs/Imagery of Solution
- Testimonial from client that speaks to solution
- Call-out of design/delivery process in infographic
- Logos of former notable & recognizable clients
- Icons of certifications

# HOW TO APPLY

1 Empathy

2 Credibility/Expertise

3 Low Risk

4 Confirmation of Problem

5 Confirmation of Solution

6 Technical Support

7 Safety & Quality

- Industry graphs and common stats in market
- Call-out with photo of expert from your team
- Environment photo
- Logos of notable certifications
- Proprietary tools to help get the job done



# HOW TO APPLY

- 1 Empathy
- 2 Credibility/Expertise
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- 4 Confirmation of Problem
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- 6 Technical Support
- 7 Safety & Quality

- Safety certifications logos
- Safety record in chart
- Quality process in infographic
- Internal safety stats
- Photos of Safety and Quality team



# GROUP CONTENT EXERCISE

**DOES YOUR CONTENT  
LEAVE A S.C.A.R.?**

# SCANNABLE

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VS

## WHY FIRM + CLIENT WOULD MAKE AN AWESOME TEAM

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# CONSUMABLE

- Write at a 7-9th grade level
- Expand on technical concepts
- Create a storyline
- Utilize metaphors
- Use numbers to give reader expectation





# APPLICABLE

- Outline which concepts to apply and how to apply
- The 'now what' of the content
- Identify how content will help them

# RELATABLE

- Provide examples  
(ex: case studies, etc.)
- Identify challenges and  
outcome for examples
- Reader will see  
themselves in their  
shoes

**WHY SHOULD THEY HIRE  
YOUR FIRM?**

# WHAT MAKES [REDACTED] *UNIQUE?*



## LOCAL & NATIONAL EXPERIENCE

[REDACTED] staff have assisted more than 500 utilities across the country on financial, rate, and management consulting engagements. These utilities include some of the largest and most complex utilities in the country. In addition, we have worked with numerous utilities throughout the State of California on hundreds of studies, including financial plans, cost of service, and pricing.

### BENEFIT TO THE DISTRICT

Our extensive national and local experience will allow us to provide innovative and insightful recommendations to the District, and will provide validation for the proposed methodology ensuring that industry best practices are incorporated.



## INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

Our senior staff is involved in shaping industry standards by chairing various committees within American Water Works Association (AWWA) and Water Environment Federation (WEF). Raftelis' staff members have authored and co-authored many industry standard books regarding utility rate setting. [REDACTED] also publishes the national *Water and Wastewater Rate Survey*, which is co-published with AWWA, and the *CA-NV Water and Wastewater Rate Survey*, which is co-published with the CA-NV AWWA.

### BENEFIT TO THE DISTRICT

Being so actively involved in the industry will allow us to keep the District informed of emerging trends and issues, and to be confident that our recommendations are insightful and founded on sound industry principles.



## EXPERTS ON CALIFORNIA REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The regulatory environment in California has become more stringent due to Proposition 218 and Government Code Section 54999. [REDACTED] staff are very knowledgeable about these regulations and have made presentations on this subject for the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), California Society of Municipal Finance Officers (CSMFO), and CA-NV AWWA. In addition, we are frequently called on to be expert witnesses regarding these regulatory matters.

### BENEFIT TO THE DISTRICT

This expertise will allow the District to be confident that our recommendations take into account all of these regulatory requirements.

Hard-to-miss title

Graphic to keep things interesting

Reason is called out

Text available IF the reader wants more info. Will likely be ignored.

Specific benefit to the client/ why they should care

# WHY [REDACTED] SHOULD HIRE [REDACTED]

## [REDACTED] UNDERSTANDS THIS PROJECT IS NOT JUST ABOUT A CASINO.

Sure, providing an additional place of entertainment is great, but we also understand there are greater things at stake and the impact this project will have on the state of Connecticut:

**5,000+  
JOBS**

This project will generate LOCAL construction jobs, positions to staff the casino, and indirect vendors.

**\$75M  
ANNUALLY**

This yearly tax revenue goes to the state of Connecticut.

**SEE YA NEVER  
MGM**

This casino has the potential to keep the gambling in Connecticut, reducing those crossing the line into Massachusetts.

## THIS IS MORE THAN JUST A PROJECT. THIS IS AN EXPERIENCE.

We love what we do; we love going to work. If selected, we will be working with you for some time and we want to make this an exceptional experience for all involved.

We are committed to elevating expectations for that experience, and have completely redefined the level of trust, communication, professionalism, leadership, teamwork, and mutual respect you can expect in your relationship with a consultant.

With [REDACTED], you're choosing more than a team of experts in the construction industry. You're choosing partners who will always put your best interests first, always be honest and responsible, and always drive themselves to achieve extraordinary results for you.

We bring skill, insight and creative analysis to both the boardroom and the construction site by combining industry expertise with an ability to adapt to specific client needs. As a result, we are able to offer our clients customized solutions tailored to their unique project requirements.

## OUR ROCKSTAR PROJECT MANAGERS FOCUS ON VALUE.

Our philosophy is that costs are more difficult to manage if a team waits for a design deliverable to engage in value management. For this reason, we set expectations early on that cost savings ideas should be discussed throughout the project, especially before an architect or engineer puts pen to paper. This helps provide better predictability and reduces the impact on the schedule.

Along these lines of value management, [REDACTED] provides value added services whenever possible: we aim to bring more to the table than our cost. This net zero cost to the client for our services as a minimum target through collaboration with the overall team.

We will work to ensure that cost savings from design management, value management, schedule management, creative technical solutions and change management, yield [REDACTED] savings equal to or greater than the cost of our services.

Hard-to-miss title

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Additional call-outs in red boxes convey more of the point.



**LISTEN AND SOLVE**  
**NOT TELL & SELL.**

CONTENT STRATEGY HELP?  
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GRAPHIC DESIGN/MARKETING HELP?  
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