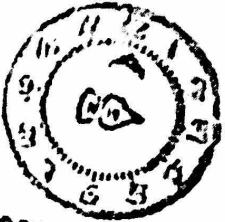


1591 Metropolitan Avenue
New York 62, New York

Mr. T. H. Mechy
Vice President, Public Relations
Ford Motor Company
The American Road
Dearborn, Michigan

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EDITORIAL SERVICES
DEPARTMENT

Dear Mr. Mechy:

In the interim between graduation from Columbia College and the commencement of study at law school, I served as a Host at the Ford Pavilion at the New York World's Fair. Perhaps inevitably, I made many observations regarding this operation within your purview. I should like to take this opportunity to relate to you some thoughts based on these observations which you may find of interest and, hopefully, of some value.

My employment by Ford Motor Company dated from July 8 of this year and ended on October 18, the Fair's closing date for the season. I was first assigned to the embarkation, or "loading," area in the circular, glass enclosed part of the exhibit, wherein the public was put into Magic Skyway ride cars. On September 16 I was reassigned to the West Exit Door, where, until the season's end, I received and serviced special guests of the pavilion. My exposure to these situations, I believe, lends a special pertinence to my suggestions in reference to them, as set out below.

Some general observations are in order first. Luncheon forays across the fairgrounds have left me with the impression that for that which it was planned to achieve, the Ford Pavilion was eminently successful. Taken with the group of some half-dozen major domestic industrial exhibitors, Ford has best presented an interesting, sometimes fascinating, albeit product-oriented, show in the context of a family audience showplace. The pavilion's displays and exhibits are of uniformly high quality. The "flow" concept of crowd management, (with a serious fault to be considered below), is intrinsically a fine one and has been best mastered at Ford. Personal contact between guests and staff is, without exception,

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the most successful established by any major domestic industrial exhibitor. In sum, the average fairgoer is left with the favorable impression of the Wonder Rotunda, and by inference with the company's "way of doing things," which the exhibit was set up to convey.

Almost certainly, though, a large and complex apparatus is not to be without weak spots, problem areas which arise from conditions which could not be, or were not, anticipated during the planning stages. A few will be pointed out here.

ITEM: Some seven million guests rode the Magic Skyway in the first season of the fair. (The official figure of 6,632,555 is undoubtedly low as it was determined by turnstiles which did not register special guests who were expedited to the ride or guests at previews.) For the most part, guests were of necessity required to wait in line, and during the bulk of the season, the exhibit's ride was operating at, or close to, the maximum capacity possible, which grew from the low-mid thirty-thousands to about forty-five thousands at the peak of the season, during the month of August.

It appeared to me that the greater part of the public passing through the pavilion did so in family units. While I have no verified data to endorse this, the results of several impromptu samplings of guests entering the front doors by my zone leader bears out this observation. Heads of family units, of course, are perhaps most frequently motivated to wait on lines by a desire to please their children, to whom the Ford show was largely directed. Lines outside of an exhibit are sometimes inevitable, as they were at Ford where capacity was outstripped daily by crowd size. External lines served positive functions in that they attested to and advertised the popularity of the exhibit, and they were to that extent beneficial to the company. Nonetheless, the net impact of lines is negative, and it would be expedient to minimize them; the lines demanding the greatest attention are those within the building itself.

Few reasonable fairgoers could complain of the lines they were compelled to wait in outside the Ford exhibit. Lines were the rule at the other major exhibits. Moreover, lines in motion are more palatable than stop-and-go arrangements. Further, a visitor

does not generally fix blame on the exhibitor for the external lines, since he is not, while waiting outside, involved in the exhibit. Once inside the door, however, the guest demands satisfaction of a sort. He will not countenance stoppages subsequent to the expected exterior wait. It behooves Ford, then, to eliminate all interior waiting lines. Two problem areas come to mind here; both can be done away with with a minimum of effort and at relatively slight expense.

A. Unnecessary waiting in the International Gardens, at the immediate front of the pavilion, first floor. A ride-control supervisor is on duty in the area of the consoles controlling the ride mechanism on the second floor of the building. Conscientious effort by him in coordination with the zone leader in the Gardens would ensure a smooth, continuous flow of guests from the front entrance to the ride staging area. In the marked absence of such coordination, the two lines entering the two speedramps from the first to the second floors were constantly being stopped and started, stopped and started, frustrating guests who had waited outside the building for periods ranging from twenty minutes to one and one-half hours. At this point the flow concept was ignored, and as a consequence, a similar start-and-stop pattern was passed all the way along the waiting lines outside the building. A flow pattern was, however, virtually impossible to achieve, as a result of the operation of the staging area immediately adjacent to the loading ramps on the second floor.

B. Weaknesses in the staging operation and an alternative approach.

When the building operated at full capacity, as was the case during the larger part of the time it was open to the public, every guest admitted by the main entrances from the waiting lines (except a few with physical impediments unnoticed until they reached the second floor) had to follow an "S" shaped maze composed of three "J" shaped straightaways and two turns. It took between eight and twelve minutes for each individual to navigate the "S" maze. Each individual had to walk some sixty-five feet, then turn about, return to the point from which he started, and then retrace his steps yet another sixty-five feet to

Switchback

finally arrive at the end of the maze, wherefrom he was put upon the speedramp for loading into a ride car. Total distance walked within the confines of the maze was about two hundred feet. Total time consumed was about ten minutes. Were it possible to reduce these to a minimum, no guest would walk further than sixty-five feet, or spend more than three minutes in the maze under normal working conditions. Had these minimums been achieved last season, the savings in time waited within the building would have amounted to some fifty million minutes, or roughly one million hours. Without doubt this would have been translated into a definite advantage to the company in the form of diminished frustration on the part of millions of guests who expected no wait whatever once inside the pavilion. Further, each foot-weary fairgoing guest would have walked less distance to reach the same point (about one hundred-thirty feet less) and not have been subjected to the demeaning experience of being compelled to walk in circles, backtracking without purpose. There is an alternative approach to staging of guests for the ride which would more efficiently bring them to their objective.

The staging area exists to facilitate the loading of ride cars, and to give passengers a glimpse of their conveyances before they board. If guests could be pre-sorted as they reached what is now the beginning of the "S" maze, and dispatched by a host or hostess into one of the three existing straight-aways according to the size of their party, they would be spared the retracing of their steps and the expenditure of waiting time described above. The staging process would serve the same functions as it has in the past, but would do so far more efficiently.

A host or hostess, assigned last season to the supervision of the line of guests in the maze, would be able to ascertain the number of guests in each party. The three channels leading to the loading ramps would be used depending on crowd size. If an unusually disproportionate number of guests were to be present in parties of one, two, or three, then the center channel, normally left vacant, would be given over to groups of one, two, or three, while the larger groups, those of four, five, and above would

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be kept to the channel they would normally be assigned to. Similarly, during the earlier part of the day, when family groups are present in greater number, the extra center row would be set up for their use as well as the usual passage for groups of four or more. The host assigned to "breaking" the line last season would find his job simpler, and would be better able to fill cars according to their capacity with a foreknowledge of the approximate sizes of groups next in line. If the number of individuals in groups of three or less or four or more differed greatly, the host breaking at the loading ramp would be instructed to take one group from the head of the smaller column, and two (one from the regular, and one from the extra, or overload, channel) from the heavier crowd.

If this arrangement were implemented, time necessary to reach the ride once inside the building would be lessened by a matter of minutes for the millions of guests visiting the pavilion at peak traffic times. Beyond this, a smooth flow from the gardens to the second floor staging area would be achieved, presuming a coordination of effort by the ride control supervisor and the zone leader in the gardens as discussed above. As a consequence of the smooth flow and the diminution, if not elimination of stoppages, the external lines would move slowly but continuously, making them more pleasant to navigate. I believe that all this can be derived with, at most, increasing staffing by two, one host or hostess on each side of the building to do the grouping. Even this expense need not be incurred because the normal function of line supervision would not be necessary if the "S" line were eliminated.

It became apparent to me during the summer that the maze constituted the least desirable aspect of the pavilion, and most warranted correction. I submit that this arrangement, as described above, would provide a superior result for most of the pavilion's guests and consequently for the company in its role as host.

ITEM: On one occasion, an evacuation of the west side of the second floor was necessary. I was assigned to the group of eight safety doors on the second floor facing the glass wall of the rotunda. An orderly group of some three hundred children and adults were requested

to leave the west staging area, and were to be conducted by hosts to the east staging area via the stairways and the first floor to the part of the ride remaining in operation. In a relaxed mood the guests, not apprehensive because they saw others across the tracks boarding, were not mindful of those in back of them as they went through the set of doors where I was stationed. There were no stops on the doors which I could have set to keep the doors open, and because of the spring or hydraulic closing mechanisms on the doors they tended to swing shut when not held open by hand. I could not, because of the arrangement of the doors in pairs separated by fifteen inches of wall, hold open more than one of the eight doors at any one time. One shudders at the thought of the same number of guests fleeing the building in the event of a real emergency; the urge for self-preservation would inevitably result in inattention to the doors by individuals once through, and it is all too simple to see a child or elderly person severely injured by the backswing of a door and/or by the crowd pushing forward at that point. It would appear, then, that an investment in manual stops of a positive nature for the eight exit doors on each side of the first and second floors would be a sensible one.

ITEM: Special arrangements for immediate entry to the pavillion for stockholders, company guests, and the guests of other exhibitors undoubtedly had a favorable effect on those so expedited. It was, however, my experience that this privelege was abused incessantly by press people and others who claimed to be such. While favorable press treatment undoubtedly serves to maximize the company's costly public relations effort at the fair, it can by no stretch of the imagination bring many fairgoers into the pavillion who would not otherwise be there, and conversely, would deter very few who had the Ford exhibit on their itineraries, if press comment were negative. But more specifically, I doubt the effectiveness of admitting (with immediate family) any person with a press pass, of whatever sort, who can show any corroborating identification and then merely putting the party on the upramp. If the need for a season-long press courtesy is acknowledged, then the pertinent members of the press, the ones who would write or report in any medium on the Fair, should be met by the pavillion's press coordinator or his delegate

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and greeted, acknowledged, perhaps given some descriptive material, and then escorted by a staffer to the ride. As the special admittance arrangement operated last season, any stray with the office press-pass or woman reporter for a New England garden club newsletter could secure preferred entry and during September and October, many did. This interfered with handling of special admitees.

ITEM: A throwaway with some historical background, a description of what awaits them inside, and a floor-plan would be effective if distributed to guests by hostesses as they entered the building. The handout used at the General Motors exhibit is a good example: interesting, diverting after a long wait on line, well put together, and inexpensive.

Four problem-areas have been pointed up here. With the exception of the first, regarding the unnecessary wait in the staging areas, they are of no great moment. They do not, and are not intended to, detract from my major premise, that the Ford exhibit was eminently successful during the first season of the fair. The suggestions set out here are offered in the hope that they may lead to an improvement of a presentation that is, as it stands, excellent.

I would be remiss if I did not mention three people who contributed materially to the success of the pavilion and to my enjoyment working at it. Clayton Sheldon, Bill Taylor and Rudi Fischer impressed me as conscientious, thoughtful, marvellous men; they were an asset to the exhibit.

My undergraduate work was done at a school which drew its student body from a national geographic base, but I found working with and servicing people from throughout the U.S. and the greater part of the free world instructive and enlightening. Working at Ford constituted my first real contact with the "public" and I drew much from the experience. Two weeks after I began work at Ford, I turned down an offer at higher pay from a competitor (Cadillac Division of General Motors). I think this is testimony enough to the satisfaction I derived from my summer's work for Ford.

Very truly yours,



Richard J. Keiner

24 December 1964

Ford Motor Company

THEODORE H. NECKE, JR.
VICE PRESIDENT - PUBLIC RELATIONS

DEARBORN, MICHIGAN
January 8, 1965

Again, I should like to thank you for your thoughtful letter and your constructive criticism in bringing us your experiences at the Ford Motor Company exhibit at the New York World's Fair this past year. I appreciate your careful critique of our Pavilion.

Dear Mr. Keiner:

The young men and women who represented us were, I'm convinced, among our major assets at the Fair. We hope that most of them -- including yourself if your studies permit -- will be back with us for the coming season.

The problems that bother you have bothered us, too, and Mr. J. G. Mallaly, our World's Fair Program Manager, and his staff have been working on resolving these matters in preparation for the 1965 Fair season.

Reducing the length of lines, within and without the Pavilion, and moving them smoothly, has been a major concern. In fact, before you joined us last year, we had experimented with straight lines at the "staging area" instead of the mass system. The experiment was not notably successful.

For this coming season we believe we have a very practical answer in the addition of new displays at that point. They won't, of course, expedite movement, but they will make the wait more pleasant and agreeable, as well as spreading the crowd out.

We think the opening of a new reception lobby for all special guests may ease the problem of handling the press. Two other innovations for 1965 might interest you -- a special entrance for those who choose to visit only the product salon area, skipping the automobile ride, and the installation of some new and arresting displays in that area.

Mr. T. H. Mechy

VI Again, I should like to thank you for your service this past year and for your conscientiousness in bringing us such a carefully drawn commentary on improving Ford at the Fair. I know that Rudi Fischer, Clayton Sheldon and Bill Taylor would want me to express their own appreciation and their hopes to have you with us again.

In the interim between graduation from Columbia College and school. **Finally, you have our best wishes for success in law school.** I served as host at the Ford Pavilion at the New York World's Fair. Perhaps inevitably, I made many observations regarding this operation within your purview. I should like to take this opportunity to relate to you some thoughts based on these observations which you may find of interest and, hopefully, of some value.

Very sincerely,

My employment by Ford Motor Company dated from July 8 of this year and ended on October 18, 1964, closing date for the season. I was first assigned to the embarkation, or "loading," area in the circular, glass enclosed part of the exhibit, wherein the public was put into Magic Skyway ride cars. On September 16 I was reassigned to the West Exit Door, where, until the season's end, I acted as host for special guests of the pavilion. My experience and observations, I believe, lends a special pertinence to my suggestions in reference to them, as set out below.

THMjr/aw

cc: Mr. J. G. Mullaly

cc: Mr. John E. Sattler

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