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Why Most Businesses Focus on the Wrong Problem And Pay for It

The overlooked lens that changes how you evaluate any opportunity



Richard Kielbon

An architect with fifty years of experience, Richard specializes in clarity architecture and "design thinking" for business. He solves core problems and builds profit models that perform under pressure. Richard's structured process has been proven across industries to redesign what is possible.

MIKE, THE ARCHITECT WITH A BRIEF

An architect, Mike, was advising a group of investors on an old auditorium. Historic. Full of potential. The question on the table seemed reasonable: Could the building support itself financially after purchase and refurbishment? Everything that followed... came from that assumption.

THE THEATER ASSESSMENT

The theater wasn't the problem.

The real question was whether the building could support the reason people would come at all.

I engaged with a group evaluating an old auditorium for purchase and refurbishment.

At first, the focus was predictable—seating, stage, restoration.

But those questions didn't answer the real concern:

Could the theater sustain itself in the future?

EXPLORATION → INSIGHT

We shifted to a different line of thinking—

What purposes, what "jobs to be done," would actually bring people there?

It seemed reasonable that community gatherings—informational, educational, even political—would define its future.

But that led to a deeper question:
What are the human purposes of those gatherings?

It became clear that beyond the formal event, people were coming to:

- connect
- network
- form relationships

And that raised an unexpected issue.

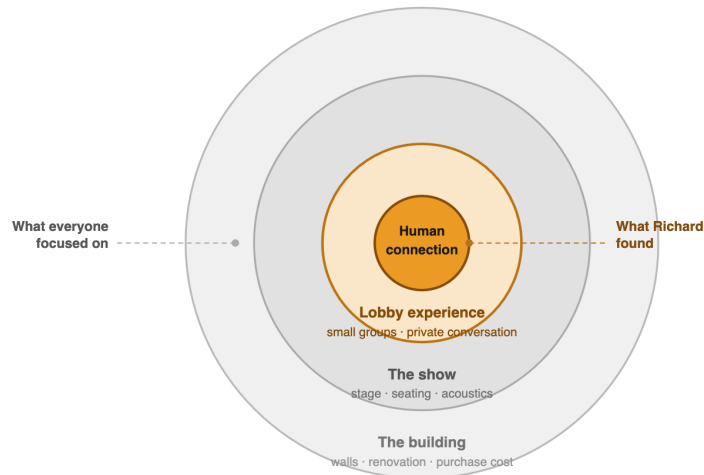


Fig 1: The Bullseye

The success of the theater wouldn't be determined inside the auditorium...
but in what happened before and after people took their seats.

An old theater is still an old theater.
Restoring it—new seats, improved acoustics—would not fulfill the deeper human purpose.

THE REFRAME

We reframed the design challenge:
What kind of space would support small, informal groups... and meaningful conversations?

The answer shifted everything.

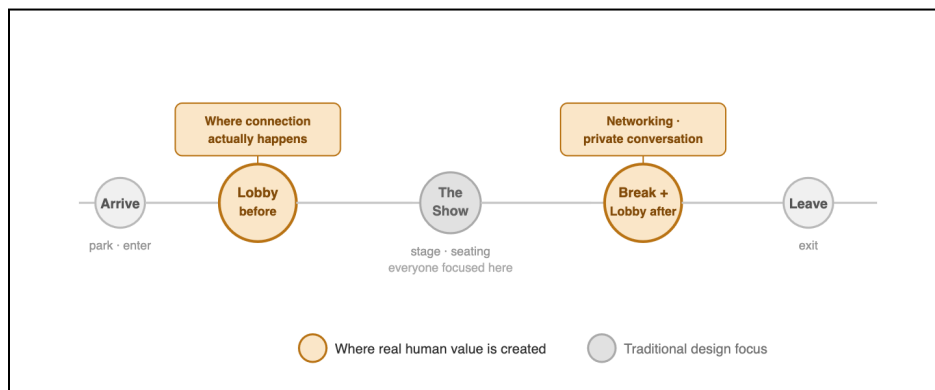


Fig 2: The Journey Timeline

THE OUTCOME

The highest design purpose became the lobby and surrounding spaces—places where interaction, not performance, was the main event.

The theater itself became secondary to the human connections around it.

The building was never purchased.
But the insight remained:

“Sometimes the success of a space has very little to do with the space itself. sometimes the success of your business has nothing to do with initial beliefs.”

The Four Forebears



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