What a Facility Won’t Do
Lessons Learned in a Tribal Relocation

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Since 2012, accountable for the People function for the company, with employees in 15 countries.

Prior to WD-40 Co., created four companies over 23 year period.

Prior to entrepreneurial adventures, held operations and HR roles for 15 years.

Damn, he’s old.
The Project

Company founded in 1953 in San Diego as “Rocket Chemical Company”
Went public in 1973
Built our headquarters in 1975 in Linda Vista, a neighborhood of San Diego
Stayed there for 42 years, and rented two-thirds of a second building nearby
Decided in 2015 to relocate to a purpose-built facility which would
  Allow for our Tribe’s expansion
  Improve Tribal cohesion and collaboration
  Provide an environment that fostered our culture, values and character
TRIBAL ATTRIBUTES

- Learning and Teaching
- Celebration
- Values
- Belonging
- Specialized Skills
- Future Focus
The Journey

• **Inclusive:** all affected Tribe members consulted, formed design teams

• **Driven by our values and culture first**
  - Example: “What design choices would ensure we create positive lasting memories in our relationships, each day we go to work?”

• **Location selected with a balance of pragmatic and aesthetic factors**
  - Available properties within reasonable commute with evenly distributed pain
  - Able to accommodate 20 years of growth, minimum
  - Neighborhood that improved quality of daily life

• **Tribe involved in all aspects of the move, including packing and cleaning**
Results

- Tears of joy
- Pride
- More collaboration, more effective and efficient communication
- More live interactions and less email
- More shared experiences
- Ease of conducting meetings and conferences
- Ability to offer our facility to worthy organizations who have a need to meet and can’t afford rented space
- A stable home for many years to come
Key Challenges

- Time is not your friend
- Everything costs more
- Surprise issues post-occupation: leaks, creaks and streaks
- Keeping the business of the business running, i.e., changing tires while the car is still traveling
- Burning people out in the process, which took over a year before move-in
What WE Learned

A facility will not enduringly enhance a culture, improve working relationships, improve efficiencies. After a period of time it becomes a hygiene factor (see Herzberg’s “two factor” motivational theory)

The project was a bonding experience for all who took the journey.

A facility reflects the expression of a culture that already exists. Or doesn’t.