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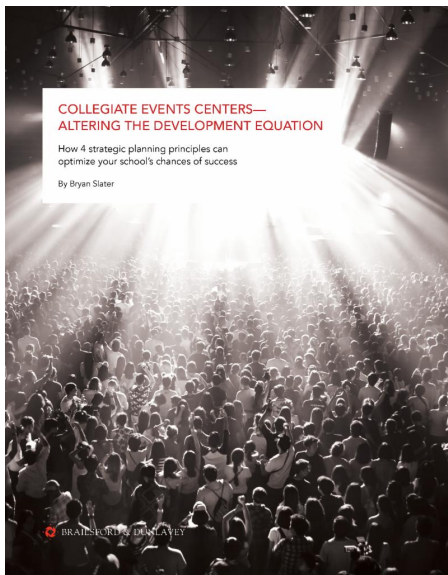
Volume 4, Issue 3

Get the latest industry news and trends:



Collegiate Events Centers—Altering the Development Equation

How 4 strategic planning principles can optimize your school's chances of success



Bryan Slater

Athletics play a key role in helping compete for higher education's most valuable commodity: high-quality student athlete applicants. Nonetheless, many schools are saddled with aging arenas that offer an underwhelming first impression and that hamper both athletic recruiting and institutional stature. They're left asking: How do we fund an arena project whose benefits are difficult to quantify or fully articulate, and that is costly and perceived as non-essential to the academic mission? To that end, **I estimate that just 10 to 15% of collegiate arenas generate an operational profit, much less potential debt service payments for capital projects, resulting in the creation of very difficult funding equations.** But the equation can be fundamentally changed by

employing four planning principles that optimize an institution's chances for a successful arena and events center development initiative.

PLANNING PRINCIPLE #1: IDENTIFY PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND STICK TO THEM—EVERY SQ FT COUNTS!

At the outset of any arena planning process, project objectives must be clearly articulated in a visioning session and continuously referenced thereafter to develop the most responsive, efficient project concept (every square foot counts!). **There are four typical objectives associated with strategic projects**, which are listed below from most to least common.

1. Provide an improved environment for the athletics program that fosters strong

- student-athlete recruitment;
- 2. Reposition the university's institutional stature and potentially facilitate a conference re-alignment;
- 3. Provide a new venue for commencement; and
- 4. Capitalize on a financial opportunity associated with the local/regional entertainment marketplace.

The first objective—developing a venue that provides an engaging atmosphere for the athletics program—is the primary reason collegiate arena projects begin to percolate. The environment sets the stage for a chain of events that has occurred at many institutions: the environment assists with recruiting, which results in improved team performance, and triggers a series of outcomes that benefits the institutional brand.

The most notable examples of this chain of events occurred at Gonzaga University . . .

To continue reading, click [here](#).

Transforming A Neighborhood And An MLS Franchise Through Innovative Partnerships: The D.C. United Story



Sanath Kalidas

Audi Field, Major League Soccer's ("MLS") newest stadium, just opened in Washington, DC's Buzzard Point neighborhood. It is the new home for D.C. United, U.S. Soccer's most decorated franchise, and a venue for concerts, cultural events, and community activities. Through an innovative public-private partnership ("P3") project, this state-of-the-art, 20,000-seat stadium has already begun transforming Buzzard Point from an isolated industrial area into a vibrant

mixed-use neighborhood serving as a new destination within the city, and repositioning the MLS franchise in the process.

An urban design framework for the neighborhood. In conjunction with the stadium initiative, DC sought a new vision for Buzzard Point—an area suffering decades of under-investment and neglect. The vision: a medium- to high-density mixed-use waterfront neighborhood with strong connections to nearby areas and attractions.

Collaboration between the District and D.C. United. To bring this vision to fruition, DC entered into a P3 with D.C. United. The District retained ownership of the property and served as the developer for the horizontal infrastructure, with D.C. United as the developer for the vertical construction of the \$200M stadium. Tom Hunt, President of Business Operations at D.C. United, spoke to the value of the new venue: "Audi Field is another major step for D.C. United as we enter a transformative and promising era for the club. We are excited to mark a new chapter in D.C. United history by giving the fans and community a new state-of-the-art, soccer-specific stadium."

Repositioning D.C. United within its league. The match-day experience for the team's loyal fan base will be taken to new heights with Audi Field's premium areas, including 31 luxury suites, a rooftop patio overlooking DC's captivating landmarks, a 10,000 sq.ft. indoor lounge, and more. According to Bloomberg, Audi Field will likely help raise the team's valuation to \$500M—up significantly from Forbes' 2017 figure of \$230M. With the projected valuation, naming rights, and a multi-million dollar sponsorship, the team is well-positioned to move to the top of the league.

Catalyst for future development. Audi Field was envisioned as a powerful catalyst not just for the team, but the neighborhood's growth—and indeed it is proving to be that catalyst. Buzzard Point has seven development projects in play delivering five million

square feet of residential, retail, office, and hotel space. It is also becoming a pedestrian-friendly and environmentally sustainable community, improving quality of life for current residents while attracting new ones to the area. All of this work will of course spur economic activity—the projection: \$1.6B.

This is an excerpt of an article that appeared in Facility Manager magazine. [Read the full article.](#)

What Has B&D Been Up To Recently?

B&D was excited to learn that [ENR's list of 2018 Top 50 Program Management Firms](#) shows us up several places (now at 28th place, up from 34th). We have been honored to advise more and more venue projects across the country, and this advancement reflects our growing work.



On the conference front, we enjoyed presenting and attending. Bryan Slater presented at the ALSD sports venue conference, discussing how to maximize premium seating revenue through the use of analytics. The presentation offered an in-depth look at the planning process and analysis that went into the renovation of Philips Arena and the building of Sun Trust Park in Atlanta.

[More information here.](#)

Meanwhile Andrew Lieber attended the Sports Management Institute, where he engaged with industry professionals on topics like the management of financial, physical, and human resources; management strategy; legal and ethical behavior; and more.

B&D has three quarterly newsletters (Higher Education, K-12, and Venues). [Learn more.](#)

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