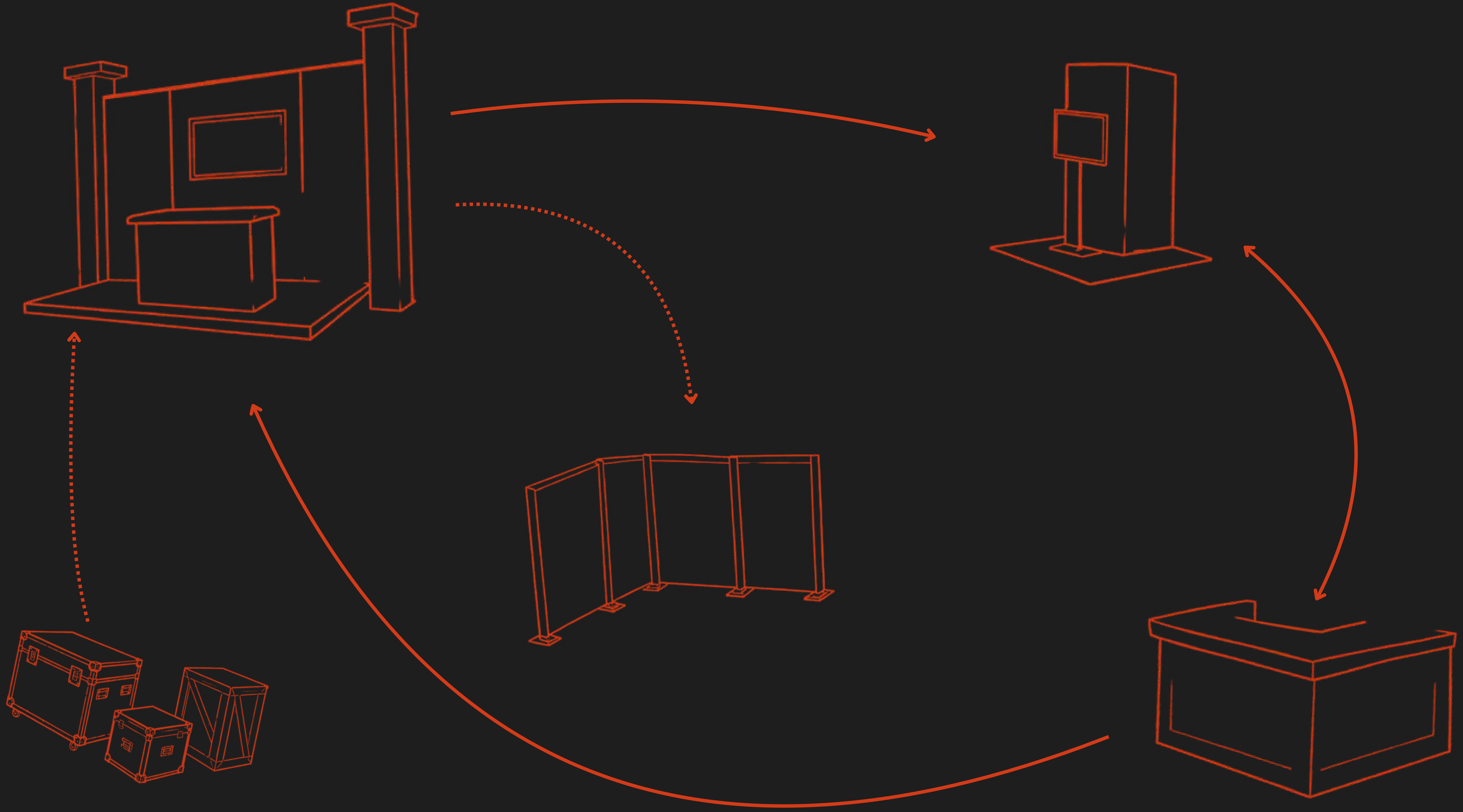
EXHIBIT *Program* PLAYBOOK



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INTRODUCTION

IN A WAREHOUSE NOT SO FAR AWAY… **A BRAND DIRECTOR IS STARING AT 15 RACCOON SCULPTURES, WONDERING WHAT TO DO NEXT.**

The raccoons made sense at the time. They were the centerpiece of last year's flagship booth. "Curiosity Is in Our Nature," big campaign, the raccoons killed. But the campaign's over, the raccoons cost $2,200 a month to store, and the next thing on her calendar is a fintech conference in Vegas, where it is genuinely unclear what a raccoon would be doing. She has, for one dark moment, wondered if they could hold tablets.

If this feels less like a hypothetical and more like an old diary entry, this playbook is for you.

Drawing on nearly 80 years in the exhibit business, we'll break down the warning signs of event-by-event thinking, the misconceptions that keep brand marketers and CMOs stuck there, and how to build smarter, more strategic exhibit programs.

BLINK T
YOU’RE T

WICE IF RAPPED

BACK TO THE RACCOONS. THEY AREN'T THE PROBLEM. THEY'RE A SYMPTOM.

Also in that brand director's warehouse: a 20-foot curved LED wall purchased for a flagship show that's been used twice, an eight-foot reception counter with a logo from two rebrands ago, and four crates labeled "MISC, ASK JEFF" that no one has opened since Jeff left. Meanwhile, her next ninety days look like this:

- A 10x10 in Chicago
- A 20x20 in Vegas
- Two regional shows on the same week, in different time zones

That means at least one booth is getting panic-rented from whoever picks up the phone, and it will look nothing like the other three. None of these were bad decisions.

Every single one made sense in the meeting where it was made. That's the trap. Each show got solved, one at a time, by smart people doing their jobs, and nobody's job was to ask whether all of it added up to anything.

THE BOOTH-BY-BOOTH TRAP

Most exhibit calendars run this way. This show needs a 20x20. That show needs a 10x10. Another show needs something fast because the timeline collapsed and the good options left the building three weeks ago. Each show gets its own budget. Its own timeline. Its own slightly frantic kickoff call.

The shows get solved but the program never gets designed because "the program" isn't anyone's job. And corporate accounting doesn't do anyone any favors here. Budgets get approved per event. Vendors quote per event. So everyone ends up thinking per event.

The costs of that thinking hide in places no single show's budget ever has to look: storage invoices, duplicate design fees, rush charges, freight, refurb, and the slow brand erosion that happens when your booths look like four different companies in one quarter.

THE DIAGNOSTIC

Wondering if you fall into the trap? See if you can answer these questions:

1. Can you say, right now, what you spend per show?

2. Do your booths read as the same brand at 10x10 and 20x20?

3. Does anyone know what's in the warehouse & what it costs to sit there?

4. When two shows collide, is there a plan?

or is there a phone call that starts with "okay, don't panic"?

If the answers are “no, no, no,” and “please don’t make me answer that,” you may not have an exhibit program, and that’s ok. You can escape the trap, stop managing shows, and start managing a program... and we can help.

PART TWO

LESS BOOTH MORE PROGRAM

-BY-BOOTH,
M-BY-PROGRAM

PART TWO

How do you decide what's worth owning and what's worth renting? Honestly, it's simpler than the industry makes it sound.

EVERY ASSET ASSESSED

THE GOLDEN EQUATION

Owning makes sense when something gets used enough to pay off the build plus the storage, freight, and refurb. That's the whole formula. That LED wall in the warehouse has been used twice, and the storage fees have quietly passed what renting a wall for both shows would have cost. The wall is not an asset. It's a tenant who doesn't pay rent.

Ownership also can't solve certain problems no matter how much you spend. It can't be a 10x10 in March and a 30x30 in June. It can't be in Chicago and Denver the same week. It can't out-ship the cost of renting near the venue. And it definitely can't keep up with AV technology, which ages like fruit.

EVERY PIECE EARNS ITS PLACE

Most healthy programs land on a hybrid: a few owned hero pieces that carry the brand everywhere, with rented structure flexing around them, sized to whatever each show actually demands. Not "rent everything." Not "own everything." Every asset earns its slot, or it goes. Decide that asset by asset, across your whole calendar, and a structure starts to emerge.

RUN IT LIKE A PORTFOLIO

A hybrid model only works if someone keeps it honest. Booth-by-booth thinking never looks back; the show happens, the crates return to the warehouse, and nobody asks whether that asset still deserves its spot. Program thinking adds the step that's missing: an annual rebalance.

Once a year, you pull utilization on every owned asset and let the data, not emotion, decide one of two things: It stays owned, because it earned its keep: high use, stable footprint, long brand shelf life. Or it leaves the warehouse, for one of two reasons: a rental does the same job for less, or its show is over and it's never needed again.

The discipline is simply asking the question every year, asset by asset: are you still worth more than it costs to keep you?

4 THINGS FOUND IN EVERY WELL-RUN PROGRAM

1. Per-show costs are known in advance, not reconstructed afterward.
2. Utilization is tracked per asset, so every item in the warehouse can justify its rent.
3. The mix gets rebalanced once a year.
4. One partner can see, and quote, the entire calendar.

This isn't a fringe practice. The largest brands and exhibitors in the world live by these principles. We know because many are our clients.

So if the logic is this sound, why isn't it applied across every brand? The answer: a few deeply ingrained beliefs and assumptions are keeping most brands from seeing things clearly.

SMART PEOPLE.

BAD ASSUMPTIONS.

FIVE COSTLY BELIEFS

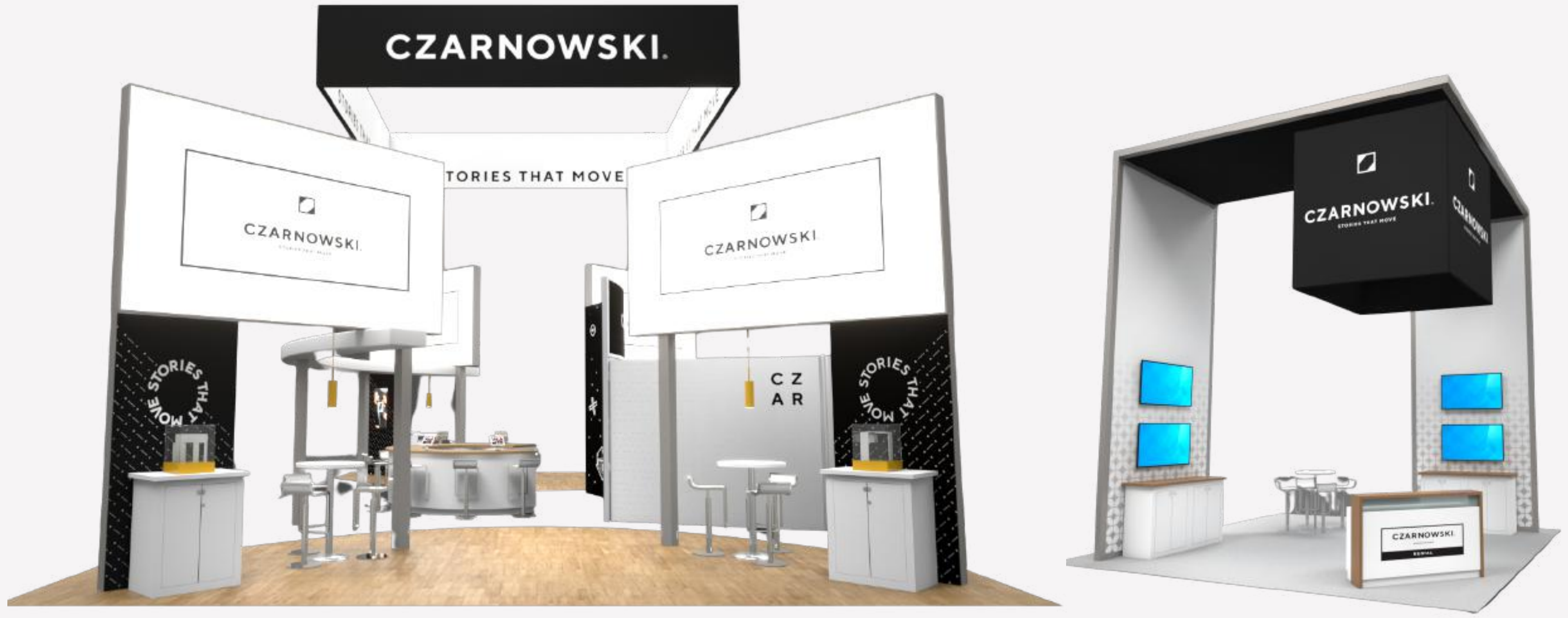
Each of the five assumptions we're about to walk you through sound like prudence, which is what makes them so dangerous. Time pressure and per-event budgets get brands into the booth-by-booth trap. These five beliefs are what keep them there.

#1: "CUSTOM BUILDS ARE THE SERIOUS CHOICE."

There is a moment that happens in event planning meetings all over the country. Someone looks at the calendar, looks at the budget, and says, "we'll get a rental for this one." And they say it the way you'd say, "we'll probably just have leftovers tonight." Like the booth's inadequacy is a foregone conclusion. But rental is not what brands do when they cannot afford custom. In fact, roughly 70% of our clients build rental components into their programs on purpose. Not because they have to, but because flexibility is part of the strategy.

#2: "OWNING ALWAYS MEANS SAVING."

"Owning is cheaper in the long run" sounds like wisdom, which is what makes it dangerous. Sometimes, it is true. A custom build that deploys constantly for years can come out cheap per show. Money well spent. But ownership comes with an entourage of costs: storage, freight, refurbishment, insurance, maintenance, and depreciation. Run the real total against actual utilization, and "always cheaper" collapses into "sometimes cheaper." The number your CFO will care about is cost per show. Purchase price, plus upkeep, divided by the number of shows where the asset actually works. Renting quotes you that number up front. Owning reveals it at the end.



#3: "RENTALS JUST AREN'T UP TO OUR AESTHETIC STANDARDS."

Okay, this was a fair comment back in 2010. Everything was the same aluminum extrusion and stretch fabric, your logo slapped on the same architecture as the booth next door. Today, rentals look indistinguishable from custom. Proprietary rental systems, designed and fabricated in-house rather than pulled from a universal catalog, now span everything from a 10x10 inline to a 50x60 island, with custom brand elements integrated so thoroughly that the owned/rented seam disappears.

#4: "OUR BRAND EVOLVES CONSTANTLY. THAT MAKES RENTING SMARTER."

Can you name a Fortune 500 brand that hasn't tweaked its logo in the past five years? Not easy, is it? Renting isn't a way of dodging commitment to your brand; it's a way of staying current every cycle and scaling presence to what each show is actually worth. You can revise a custom build; it's not inconceivable. But ownership is a bet that your calendar, your footprint, and your brand identity will all stay stable enough to justify the ongoing cost. If your brand evolves constantly, that's useful information for the bet, but it's also not a mandate to rent everything.

Czarnowski Collective

(Present)

Czarnowski

We love what we do.

(~2000)

CZARNOWSKI DISPLAY SERVICE, INC.

(~1950)

#5: "EVERY RENTAL VENDOR SAYS THE SAME THING."

Okay, this one's mostly true. Browse the category and you'll find the same conversation on a loop. Rentals "don't have to be boring." A rental "doesn't have to look like one." Renting "isn't just the budget option anymore."

Every one of those sentences is an apology in hiding. The industry has spent a decade quietly agreeing with its own stigma.

So when a rental partner opens the conversation with a discount or an apology, believe them. They've just told you exactly how they think about your booth. The better question is what they ask about before the quote: your calendar, your warehouse, your goals for the year. A partner who starts with strategy is selling you a program. A partner who starts with a price is selling you a tent.

Despite the steady drumbeat of apologies from the industry, the question should never be "can we afford custom?"

It puts the booth at the center of the decision and your strategy somewhere in the parking lot. The right question is the one the smartest brands already ask: what does this circumstance actually demand, and what's the sharpest way to deliver it?

Sometimes the answer is custom. Sometimes it's rental. Usually it's both — planned as one system instead of solved one panicked show at a time. Which brings us back to where we started...

IN CLOSING...

YOU COULD TRY AND DO THIS ALL ALONE.
OR YOU COULD BRING US YOUR RACCOONS.

Remember that brand director from the start, the one staring down fifteen raccoon sculptures and a warehouse full of one-off decisions? Her story ends fine.

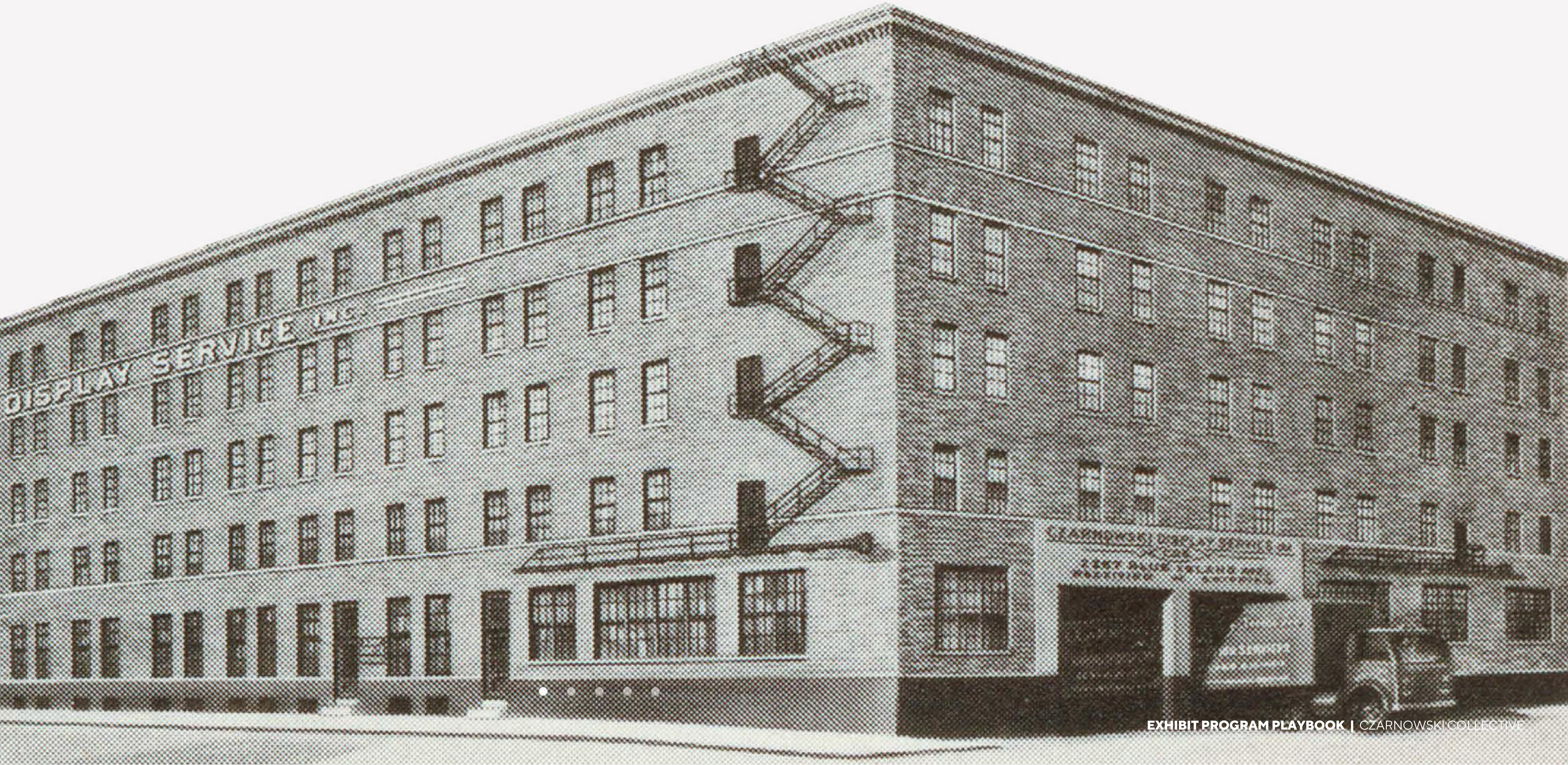
She ends up working with us, of course. The LED wall goes to consignment. The colliding regionals get covered by rentals near each venue. And that reception counter with the ancient logo? Rewrapped in the current brand, it turns out to be a workhorse, anchoring every booth she runs now.

The raccoons, on the other hand... Fourteen went to a summer camp in north Georgia. The fifteenth was purchased by a man named Gary, who paid in cash and refused to answer any of our questions. She thinks about him sometimes.

Gary aside, that's what program thinking really is: every booth, wall, counter, and raccoon gets a verdict instead of a storage invoice. Some things stay, most things flex, and nothing sits in a warehouse just because nobody asked.

That's why we start with your calendar, not your floor plan. Bring us your raccoons. We'll bring you a program plan built to last.

CONNECT WITH A DESIGNER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