The Understanding Business

December 1987 - January 1989
Freelance Visual Information Design

I proposed content, conceptualized, and designed page layouts for a variety of feature types for Richard Saul Wurman's *The Understanding Business*, in San Francisco, for The Pac Bell SMART Yellow Pages.

The Community Access Pages were approximately 10-30 pages of local information at the front of every Pac Bell Yellow Pages directory in California. We researched, wrote, designed, and produced the content for every community in the state on an annual basis.

I collaborated with other designers, researchers, writers, editors, cartographers, and illustrators.

While I worked there we transitioned the entire production process from traditional paste-up to DTP using Macintosh SE computers and dial-up modems.

Communication Arts article about TUB's SMART Yellow Pages project

January/February 1988

"UNDERSTANDING THE scope and size of the project makes one wonder that it was ever started, much less implemented in little more than a year.
…
Enter Richard Saul Wurman, out spoken "Architect of Information" and co-owner, with Frank Stanton, of Access Press, the creator of critically acclaimed guidebooks on cities and subjects.
…
in a few days I discovered so many things that were so exciting, I called him back and said 'let's see what I can produce by the end of the year.'"
…
What they came up with were two sections that would collectively become known as the Smart Yellow Pages. The first called Community Access Pages, a collection not unlike the Access guides, which contain information about community services, events, recreational activities and attractions specific to the geographical area served by each book. "
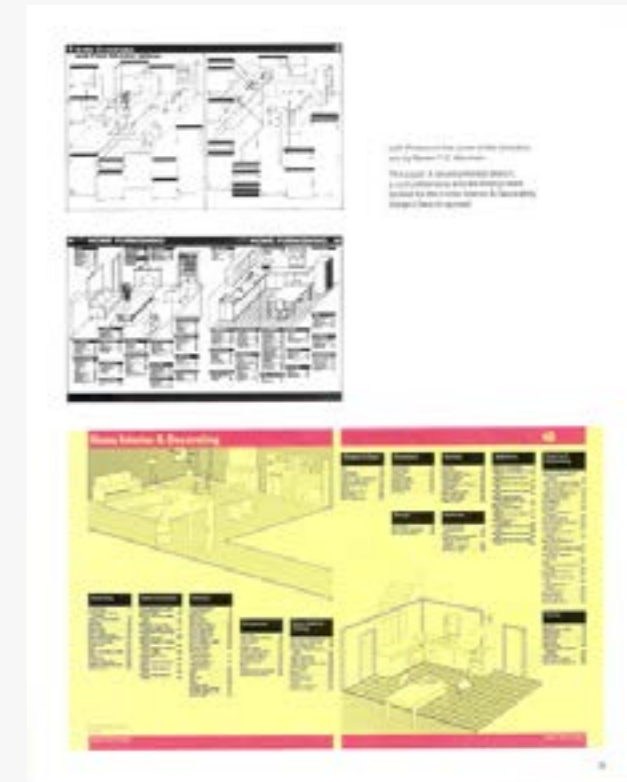
Communication Arts article about TUB's SMART Yellow Pages project

Richard Saul Wurman explains The Understanding Business:
"TUB is formulated on the basis that there are only three businesses involved in communication today. The first company is the transmission business,
…
The second is the storage business.
…
The third business is the understanding business and nobody's in it. Your readers might not want to hear this but the best writers serve two gods. They serve the god of style and the god of accuracy but not the god of understanding. Graphic designers, graphic design magazines, AIGA, contests, peer groups and all the universities serve one god and that's the god of looking good. They don't serve the god of understanding. They don't have courses in meaning. In fact, in the few schools where I've seen courses in graphs and charts and maps, the judgement of those problems is in how good they look and not how they function."