Branding Primer

What are we talking about?

Brands are often thought of as the name, logo, and design surrounding a product or service, created by a firm or organization. These are manifestations of brands but the core of a brand is that it is the complete set of images that reside **in the consumer's mind** about the firm or organization, its products or services, where it 'fits' versus competitors, who they think it is aimed at.

Brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design (or a combination of these) that identifies the maker or seller of a product or provider of a service, which can be a tangible good, service, organization, place, or idea or experience.

Brand Identity is how the maker or owner of the brand wants consumers and or citizens to think, feel, and act with respect to the brand.

Branding is the process of developing an extended brand identity.

Brand Image is how and what consumers and citizens actually think, feel, and act with respect to the brand.

Brand Essence is the core idea that you want the brand to evoke in the target audience mind.

Brand Awareness is the extent to which consumers or citizens recognize a brand.

Brand Promise the consistent promise made to consumers or citizens about the benefits and value that the product, service or experience will deliver.

Brand Delivery how service people responsible for delivering goods and services live and deliver the Brand Promise day on day.

Brand Loyalty refers to the degree to which a consumer and citizens prefers and consistently chooses to purchase the same brand or adopt the social behaviors that are being promoted through the brand.

Brand Equity is the value of a brand, based on the extent to which it has high brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, strong brand associations, and other positive assets such as patents, trademarks, and channel relationships. It is an important although intangible asset that has psychological and financial value to a firm or organization.

Brand elements are those devices, signifiers such as colors, and other associations that serve to identify and differentiate the brand.

Brand Mix or Portfolio is the set of all brands and brand lines a particular firm or organization offers for sale to buyers in a selected category.

Brand Contact any experience a customer or prospect has with interacting with the brand.

Brand Performance relates to how well the product or service meets customers' functional needs.

Brand Extension is using a successful brand name to launch a new or modified product or service in a new category.

Co-branding is the practice of using the established brand names of more than one company on the same product or are marketed together in the same fashion.

7 things you need to do to create a powerful brand

1. Conduct qualitative research to focus on feelings rather than facts. If you have time, dig even deeper using anthropological or ethnographic techniques.

2. Define your 'competitive set': how will consumers position GFA against the other advice out there?

3. Move beyond messages and into narrative. How does GFA fit into the story of people's lives?

4. Brand the behaviour as well as the service – being financially responsible is a good thing – but be careful not to alienate the vulnerable.

5. Brands can be fragile. Keep the government at arms length – but you must promote the impartiality, so public service is powerful

6. Brands become associated with sub groups. If you are serious about a universal service, be careful your brand isn't hi-jacked in the public mind. Burberry…

7. The evidence is that social marketing brands mostly fail due to a lack of long term commitment. You can use this evidence to warn of short term government thinking.

Adapted from McDivitt 2003

What is branding for in the public sector?

In government and not for profit sectors influencing behaviour is often a key part of any social programme. Governments and NGOs have realized the need to focus communications and marketing efforts in terms of consistency of message to increase both effectiveness and efficiency. Developing a branding strategy is a key element in this process. This is especially true because the context is that more groups and issues are competing for anyone's attention. Today people are faced with as thousands of marketing messages per day. There if fierce competition for attention and retention of any kind of message and strong competition to influence behaviour from other competitors that can include social norms, economic circumstance, community beliefs as well as direct competitors. The more targeted the audience of a brand, the more chance it has of working. Departments and ministries should stick to simple, basic brands that act as umbrellas for more much stronger sub-brands. Public sector branding is about strong sub-brands. You focus your branding where you have defined audiences.

Commercial sector branding is about getting people to act or buy into things. Not for profit social marketing aims to get them to buy into positive social behaviour. Apart from that distinct difference most other elements of branding are the same."

One difference is the degree of control the not for profit and public sector has over branding strategy. In government and the not for profit sector branding can be made harder because of complex reporting structures, bureaucracy and decision-making and lack of consistent long term strategy. Great bradding does not stand in isolation form strategy it is an integral part of it. There needs to be policy strategy operational delivery and branding strategy alignment if social products, services and behaviors are to be optimally promoted.

There is therefore a need for senior management and political commitment to developing implementing and sustaining a social branding effort. There is also a need for strong policing and monitoring effort to ensure that the branding strategy is consistently applied and evaluated. This means that it is necessary to allocate responsibility for the delivery of the brand strategy and set up an infrastructure to administer it.

Some final thoughts about branding

"Citizens live in a branded World"
                                        Edwin Colyer, (Colyer 2006)

"Branding is a shortcut to people's understanding"
                                        Andrew Prince (director of COI), 2006

"A brand is a seed in someone's mind" (Judith McDivitt, 2003)