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GUIDE TO BRANDING IN THE PUBLIC AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTORS



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Welcome to the Centre's newest product Guide to Branding in the Public and Not-for-Profit Sectors. We hope you like it. If you have any comments or suggestions on how we can improve the guide or have any ideas on products you would like to see being produced by the Centre please let us know.

This Guide is being given out free to public sector and not-for-profit marketers because we believe it supports our mission: "To advance the marketing discipline in the public sector".

We would love to produce another edition of this branding guide which features case studies of public sector and not-for-profit marketing organizations who have done great branding. If you know of any great examples or cases please let us know.

Sincerely,

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INTRODUCTION

As markets become more competitive, and clients become more demanding, organizations must work harder to secure their fundamental relationships. Building distinctive relationships with their clients and stakeholders is what branding is about, whatever the market, whoever the client. The brand is the marketer's most advanced emotional tool. It combines and reinforces the functional and emotional benefits of the offering, adding value, encouraging consumption and loyalty. A good brand facilitates recognition, makes a promise, and, provided the full marketing back-up is in place, delivers satisfaction. Brands can provide very practical benefits. For example for young people, quick and clear brand identification can make both the buying and smoking of forbidden products such as cigarettes much less risky. Over time, brands become a fast, powerful way of confirming the synergy between marketer and customer^I.

Branding in the commercial sector is pervasive and fairly easy to understand and recognize. However, branding in social marketing is not as common but is becoming more popular because of its ability to create visibility effectively and ensure memorability. Many members of the public and not-for-profit sectors are hesitant to recognize that they face stiff competition and they fail to see the need to put an emphasis on branding and positioning. However, this view is slowly changing as more leaders in these sectors are recognizing that they are in a competitive market with limited funding. This realization highlights the fact that strategic identity and branding can significantly help organizations achieve increased program awareness, utilization and satisfaction, improved funding and donations, and ultimately improved social welfare^{II}.

This guide will assist those in the public and not-for-profit sectors to create, manage, and maintain a strong and effective brand thereby further promoting their organizations.

I Kotler, P., & Lee, N.R. (2007). Social Marketing: Influencing Behaviors for Good. 3rd Ed. Sage Publications.

II Andreasen, A.R., & Kotler, P. (2003). Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations. 6th Ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.



UNDERSTANDING BRANDING

Branding is an essential part of building up your organization. However, this vital function is often misunderstood and not used as effectively as it could or should be. Therefore, before implementing a branding strategy it is important to fully understand what branding is and what it involves.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Lingo in the marketing realm can often be confusing. Below are some key definitions to help you better understand the branding process and this guide.

Brand is the proprietary visual, emotional, rational, and cultural image that is associated with an organization or a product/service/program, setting them apart from the competition. Remembering the brand name and having positive associations with that brand makes selection easier and enhances the value and satisfaction with the organization or product/service/program.

Brand Awareness is the extent to which clients/customers recognize a brand^{III}.

Brand Contact can be defined as any information-bearing experience a customer or prospect has with the brand^{IV}.

Brand Elements are those trademarkable devices that serve to identify and differentiate the brand^V.

Brand Equity is the built up value an organization has gained through its formal/informal communications and activities. It is based on the extent to which it has high brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, strong brand associations, and other assets such as patents, trademarks, and channel relationships. It is an important, although intangible asset that has psychological and financial value to an organization.

Brand Essence is the core idea that you want the brand to evoke in the target audience^{VI}.

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

Brand Identity includes brand names, logos, positioning, brand associations, and brand personality. A good brand name gives a good first impression and evokes positive associations with the brand. A positioning statement tells, in one sentence, what business the organization is in, what benefits it provides and why it is better than the competition.

III Kotler, P., & Lee, N. (2007). Marketing in the Public Sector: A Roadmap for improved performance. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Wharton School Publishing.

IV Ibid.

V Ibid.

VI Ibid.

VII Ibid.



Brand Image is how consumers actually do, think, feel, and act with respect to the brand^{VIII}.

Brand Loyalty refers to the degree to which a consumer prefers and consistently chooses to purchase the same brand within a product or service class^{IX}.

Brand Mix or **Portfolio** is the set of all brands and brand lines a particular organization offers to consumers in a particular category^X.

Brand Performance relates to how well the product or service meets consumers' functional needs^{XI}.

Brand Personality involves forming relationships of trust between the organization and its employees and individuals/audiences to be engaged.

Brand Position distinguishes one organization from another and differentiates and provides key reference points for consumers.

Brand Promise is the marketer's vision of what the brand will do for consumers^{XII}.

Brand Values are beliefs that guide daily behaviours and interactions, setting terms and expectations of the organization-client relationship.

Co-Branding is the practice of using the established brand names of more than one company on the same product^{XIII}.

KEY QUESTIONS

This next section provides answers to common questions that public sector and not-for-profit leaders have with regards to branding.

HOW DOES BRANDING WORK?

According to Rob Frankel, a branding expert and author from Los Angeles, branding is the most misunderstood concept in all of marketing. He states that branding is not advertising, marketing, or PR; branding happens before all of those, first you create the brand THEN you raise awareness of it^{XIV}.

Brand is built on two levels: at a mass level, through things like advertising, public relations, community involvement etc.; and at a personal level, through individual client interactions created through the unique experiences clients have in dealing with the organization every day across multiple touch points. Developing effective graphics and visual representations of the brand are insufficient in themselves for creating,

VIII Ibid.

IX Ibid.

X Ibid.

XI Ibid.

XII Ibid.

XIII Ibid.

XIV Klein, K.E. (2008, June 9). A Practical Guide to Branding. BusinessWeek, Retrieved January 15, 2008, from http://www.businessweek.com/smallbiz/content/jun2008/sb2008069_694225.htm



representing, and managing a brand. The reality of the organization and the attitudes and behaviours of people who work in the organization have to be commensurate with the brand values that the organization is projecting with its publics. For example; service organizations should use internal marketing to communicate brand values within their organization. In this way they encourage their internal team to better understand the corporate brand and identity and improve commitment enthusiasm and consistent behaviour in delivering the organization's values^{XV}. Therefore, it is important to note that branding starts on the inside and moves outward. Making brand promises and creating brand images and expectations are ultimately of no value without the internal practices and attitudes to deliver the promise. Relationships must be the priority of branding and that approach must permeate an organization and its culture. The commitment of every member of the organization is critical for delivering consistently on the brand promise. This shared passion ultimately creates a powerful tool for building long term relationships, trust, and loyalty.

IS IT A DIFFICULT PROCESS?

The branding process does not have to be difficult; however, it does take time and commitment from internal stakeholders. Note the key word: process. Building a strong brand takes time. Understanding the needs, expectations, and experiences of target audiences is the most important part of this process; this requires researching and getting to know your target audience, it also involves getting to know your organization. Now you may be thinking that initiating the branding process could mean major changes to your organization, this is not the case; remember, branding does not really change what your organization does on a daily basis, it changes how you do it. Branding is connecting projects and what you do to an overall brand vision and creating experiences for your clients that reflect the brand values.

IS IT EXPENSIVE?

There is a popular misconception that brand building is synonymous with large budgets and major marketing efforts. While a successful branding effort certainly does require "communicating" the brand to customers, prospects and stakeholders, it does not always require significant advertising or marketing investment. Branding budget requirements are primarily related to the development of strategy and implementation within the organization. Specifically, most brand strategies involve some level of customer, stakeholder and staff interviews, development of planning documents, and internal brand orientation, training and communications. Organizations can integrate brand strategies with on-going service delivery and customer communications by using existing marketing communication materials. However, these materials will need to be adjusted to reflect the brand proposition and to ensure consistency of messaging. Building a brand is not about how much is spent, but the consistency of effort over time.

XV Proctor, T., & (2007). Public Sector Marketing. Financial Times/Prentice Hall.



ARE BRANDS MORE APPROPRIATE FOR COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS THAN FOR PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS?

The idea that a public sector or non-profit organization should not view other agencies or organizations as competition and therefore should not treat them as such is a common mistake that leaders make. In the opinion of Kurt Aschermann, Senior VP for Marketing and Communications of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, branding is an exercise designed to help the sector serve its constituents better by establishing its uniqueness in a very cluttered public and non-profit world^{XVI}. One of the major challenges for any organization involved in communications is “clutter.” Branding is used to cut through the noise, establish a consistent presence and convey credibility. Many public sector organizations now use brand strategies as a discipline for coordinating messages to create a consistent presence for relationships. Regardless of what sector your agency or organization is a member of branding is a useful tool in helping further your organization’s objectives.

BENEFITS AND POSITIVE IMPACTS OF ADOPTING A BRANDING APPROACH

Branding is seen as a strategic investment in the organization. It can lead to an improved ability to communicate and internalize organizational vision and mission; a well-conceived and communicated brand provides clear and easy to understand sets of principles that help guide management decisions and operations. The internalization and integration of a brand leads to the brand promise being lived by employees and being upheld at all points of contact; “living of the brand” means more efficiency, good service, and more return on investment. If used strategically a brand can be a very profitable asset and have a major impact on how the organization is seen by key clients and stakeholders, this can also lead to your agency acquiring new clients.

XVI Andreasen, A.R., & Kotler, P. (2003). Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations. 6th Ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.





Source: 628773 Canada Inc./HBS Marketing

As shown in the figure above, brand can be central to your organization's strategic planning^{xvii}. As discussed further in this section, a brand creates internal benefits in various areas which are ultimately reflected in the delivery of your brand promise.

Not only is branding a great strategic investment for your organization, it also provides greater leverage of marketing resources. Since branding strategies are not restricted to advertising or promotion, a strong brand can ultimately spend less on marketing efforts and make budgets go further.

In the public and not-for-profit sectors it is not uncommon for the product offering to be an idea, a cause, or a service. Promoting these intangible offerings can often be difficult; by having to break through all the clutter to reach target audiences. Branding helps make your intangible product or service more tangible, which ultimately makes it easier to differentiate from competition and communicate with your target audiences. Branding can also help organizations move into new product lines. Using the existing brand as a platform for new products or services brings an already existing expectation and value to the new products because of the equity established and the positive association between the established brand and new initiatives.

XVII HBS Marketing. Service Canada Branding Presentation. February 17, 2009.



Any product or service can ultimately be copied, but a brand cannot. This inability to recreate a brand increases your organization's long-term sustainability. An effective brand builds brand equity. If you recall from the key definition section of this guide, brand equity is the built up value an organization gains from its communications and activities; therefore, effective brand building leads to high brand loyalty, name awareness, strong brand associations, etc. This value that is held by clients and stakeholders is what competitors will have a hard time trying to duplicate.

Brand is a promise to deliver value. For all key audiences it has to stand for something that is credible, compelling, engaging and differentiating in order to drive the desired perceptions, behaviours and attitudes. A brand strategy helps your organization bring focus on value delivery to your key audiences. For example, your brand could be creating value for your audience's tax dollars, their individual needs, or their corporate needs^{XVIII}.

Branding facilitates consensus building within your agency or organization. Focusing on "them, not us" will lead to great collaboration among organization members. Communication silos are often a challenge that members of public sector agencies face; branding will help break down the silos within and between departments, ministries, government, industry, etc.

By engaging all members of your organization there will be an increased level of involvement and buy-in to the entire branding process which ultimately leads to the increased ability of your organization to deliver on its brand promise^{XIX}.

XVIII Ibid.
XIX Ibid.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR BRAND

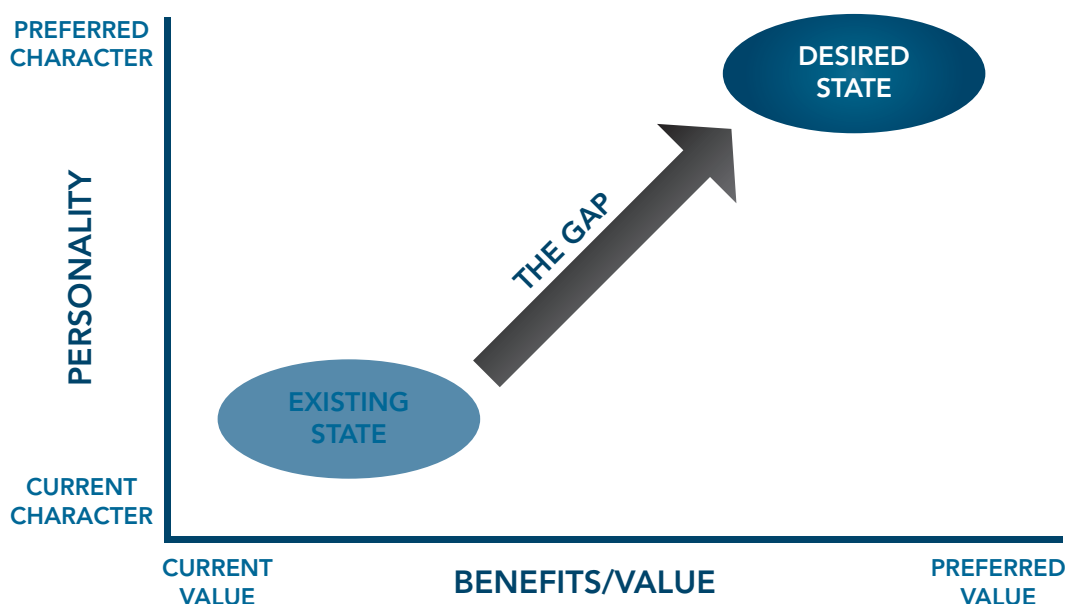
Most successful branding efforts start with the development of a sound strategy and plan that takes into account the organization's mandate, employee input, and customer perceptions. The branding process usually features an action plan that includes internal and external research, the development of potential branding models/platforms, validation of proposed direction with clients and employees, and finally a 1 to 2 year implementation plan for communicating and supporting the brand both externally and internally. In addition, like any business strategy, the impact of the brand strategy needs to be monitored and adjusted as required. The following sections discuss in detail the key stages in building a brand.

DETERMINE BRAND'S PRESENT POSITION AND THAT OF COMPETITORS

This stage can be challenging for organizations to go through because it involves identifying who your competitors actually are. Competitor identification includes both direct and indirect competitors and will assist in determining the unique points of difference of your brand. In order to determine these, your organization will have to dig deep; in depth research of the competitive landscape will need to be done. Key questions to ask may include: What makes your brand a good or better choice than the competition? What do you offer that the competition doesn't? What can you do better? In the public sector, this often relates more to alternatives that citizens have to programs and services that you offer; for example, Federal Express for the Postal Service and french fries for the 5 A Day campaign that promotes fruit and vegetable consumption.



DECIDE WHERE TO GO AND HOW TO GET THERE



Source: 628773 Canada Inc./HBS Marketing

Above is an illustration of the strategic gap that organizations at this stage in the branding process come to realize. In order to discover your existing state, your organization must conduct research; this research will help you determine where you stand in the mind of target audiences. Once your existing state is determined, your organization can make decisions based on research and analysis about where you desire to be and how to get there^{XX}.

This involves articulating your desired brand identity; how do you want your target audiences to think, feel, and react when they are exposed to your brand? This is your organization's chance to envision how you hope target audiences will respond. Once deciding where you want your organization to go in terms of building its brand, it is important to determine how to get to this new position. To find this path, your organization must determine if there is a reality problem, a perception problem, or a combination of both; once this is determined, a decision of how to overcome these issues must be made^{XXI}.

XX HBS Marketing. Service Canada Branding Presentation. February 17, 2009.

XXI Andreasen, A.R., & Kotler, P. (2003). Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations. 6th Ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.



GET BUY-IN FROM ALL INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

It is critical for the success of a brand that all internal stakeholders are a part of and believe in the building process. This means people at all levels, from senior management through to every employee and volunteer, must live the “brand promise,” this is done by integrating the brand promise into your organization’s culture.

Having representatives from all areas of your organization (both within the hierarchy of roles, and geographically) included in the creation process of your organization’s brand strategy is a way to further ensure buy-in from internal stakeholders. This stage also relies on an investment in hiring and training; this HR function has to play a key role in the implementation of the branding initiative. According to Susan D. Kirby, formerly at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the USA, this task should never be neglected because staff or various centers or divisions are the ones who carry out the positioning and therefore can easily undermine even the best branding initiative^{XXII}. Getting buy-in from all internal stakeholders is the difference between an average brand and a great brand; that is the key ingredient to world class performance.

CRAFT THE NECESSARY COMMUNICATIONS/CHOOSE NECESSARY BRAND ELEMENTS

What name, slogan, logo and colours will be associated with the brand? Will there be any consistent use of characters, music, signage or packaging as core elements of the brand? In choosing brand elements, a judicious approach will be most rewarding, one that will support decisions you have already made regarding brand purpose, target audience, brand identity, brand promise and brand positioning. Kotler and Lee have identified six major factors to guide these selections, ones that can be used to evaluate a pool of options, testing them with target audiences relative to these ideals^{XXIII}:

Memorable- How easily will this brand element be recalled and recognized? Short and catchy names and phrases such as Click It or Ticket and Amber Alert can help, as can symbols such as ones used for recycling.

Meaningful- Ideally, the brand element suggests something informative and relevant to the target audience, something that helps them decide whether to “participate.” Consider the inherent and rich meaning in names such as Neighborhood Watch.

Likeable- How aesthetically appealing are the proposed brand elements, both visually and verbally?

XXII Andreasen, A.R., & Kotler, P. (2003). Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations. 6th Ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

XXIII Andreasen, A.R., & Kotler, P. (2003). Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations. 6th Ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.



Are they things citizens might even want to put on their clothing, cars or perhaps in their homes; images such as ones of the Great Wall of China or the Eiffel Tower? Or how about your province/state's/city's litter prevention slogan?

Transferable- Are you able to use the brand elements under consideration to introduce new products in the same or different categories? A different version of the recycle symbol, for example has been used for glass and corrugated packaging.

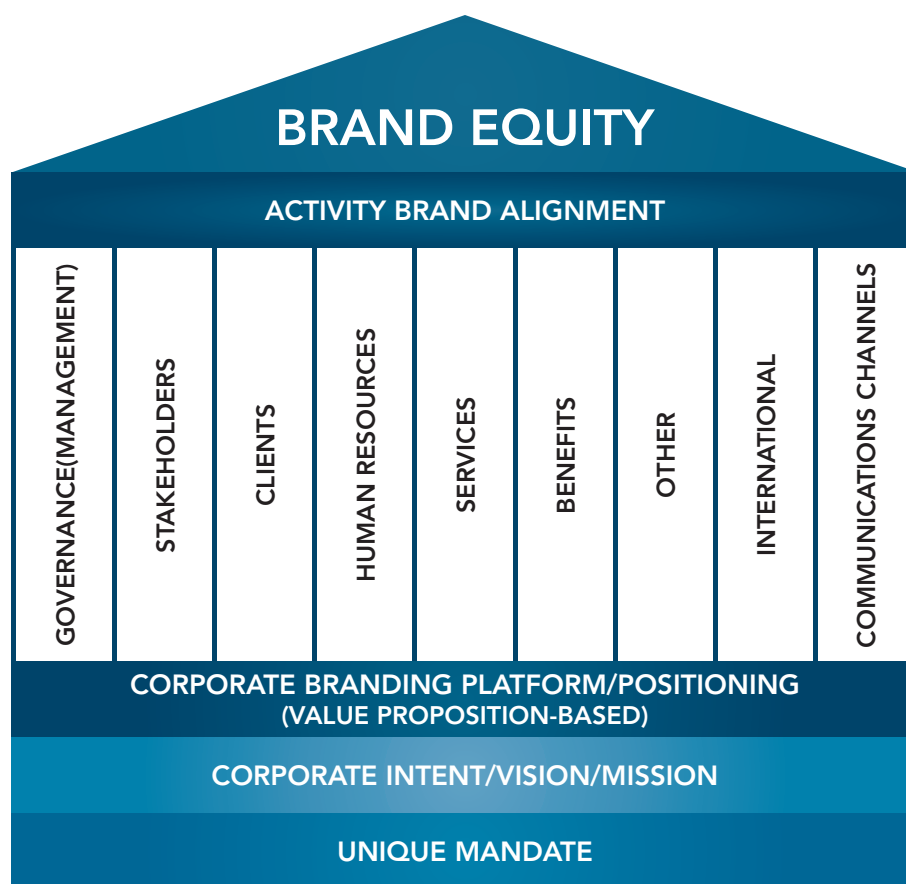
Adaptable- Consider how adaptable and updatable the brand elements will be in the future. This would be especially true when using characters as a core element of the brand, ones like Smokey the Bear.

Protectable- Will you be able to legally protect the brand elements or are they so generic that "anyone" could use them. Can it be too easily copied or used inappropriately? Although it might at first seem flattering, it is important that names retain their trademark rights and not become generic, as Kleenex, Xerox, and Jell-O did in the private sector.



INTEGRATE STRATEGY ACROSS SEGMENTS AND MEDIA

Now that your organization has determined not only in what direction you need to go, but how to get there, and what brand elements you'll use in your strategy, the next stage is to integrate the strategy across all your communication channels and points of contact. A holistic approach is necessary in the integration process of your strategy. Brand conveys meaning and emotion about your organization and its offerings, therefore everyone who works on anything related to the brand and every physical or electronic element involved must support and integrate with the branding effort^{XXIV}. For example, if your organization wants to convey to clients that you are an up-to-date, tech savvy group then everything from your letterhead, website, and staff should support and emulate this image. Below is a diagram showing all the elements of your organization that need to be aligned and integrated into your brand strategy in order to create true brand equity^{XXV}.



Source: 628773 Canada Inc./HBS Marketing

XXIV Andreasen, A.R., & Kotler, P. (2003). Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations. 6th Ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

XXV HBS Marketing. Service Canada Branding Presentation. February 17, 2009.



GET BUY-IN FROM ALL EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

External stakeholders and clients ultimately decide if your brand will succeed or fail. A problem often faced by long standing organizations when implementing a brand strategy with the aim to change from old to new is that the disassociation from the old brand is difficult to make happen. Ensuring that your external stakeholders understand the new brand promise and that the new brand promise means an improved relationship with your organization is very important to getting them to buy-in to the process.

Also, following through on this promise is vital. Their acceptance or rejection is an indicator as to whether you are doing enough in the minds of your external stakeholders to justify this new brand.

PRETEST

Pretest as much as possible; this will help your organization understand where it sits in the minds of target audiences. This not only allows you to gauge if your efforts are taking your organization where you want to go, but also highlights any changes or adjustments that may need to be made. Engaging key stakeholders and members of your key audiences is useful and necessary in this stage because they are the ones who can tell you if your organization is likely to succeed^{XXVI}.

MONITORING AND BRAND MAINTENANCE

After selecting and designing brand elements, your branding tasks now enter a second phase, that of launching and managing this identity to ensure its intended outcome - a desired brand image. You will need passion for your brand in order to encourage its use and perseverance to take good care of it. This may involve a variety of research techniques; ideally to measure your brand image prior to your efforts (collected from the pretest stage) and then compare this baseline result to later measures after your launch or repositioning. It will count on you having clearly identified your desired image, giving you a basis for measuring success.

STICK WITH IT OVERTIME

If you follow the history of great brands, in both the public and private sectors, you will most likely find that the common thread is not always one of brilliance or creativity, but simply that the parent organization had the patience to stick with something that worked.

Brand trophies more often go to those who nurture and protect brand elements during difficult times and renew them as they begin to age. The smartest organizations understand that just because they are “bored” with the brand does not mean it should be changed and is not an “old friend” to the marketplace^{XXVII}.

XXVI Andreasen, A.R., & Kotler, P. (2003). Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations. 6th Ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

XXVII Kotler, P., & Lee, N. (2007). Marketing in the Public Sector: A Roadmap for improved performance. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Wharton School Publishing.



DEVELOP GUIDELINES FOR USAGE OF BRAND ELEMENTS

When you have developed a strong brand for your entire agency or only one of its programs, the good news for you is that your co-workers and marketing partners will want to use it. The bad news is that they will, and unless told otherwise may take a little creative license (just imagine members of a province/state drowning coalition dressing Smokey Bear in a swimsuit and life vest with the slogan “Only This Can Help Prevent Drowning!”) This is why internal branding is a job that you must do. One effective technique to help ensure a consistent use of all brand elements is to develop a simply style manual which is often referred to as graphics standards manual or brand identity guidelines. This manual should inform and help others to reproduce and display the brand; it should inspire them as well^{XXVIII}.

AUDIT AND MANAGE BRAND CONTACT POINTS

According to Kotler and Lee, there will be additional internal branding tasks for you, as brands are not built, or brought down, by promotions alone. Clients come to know a brand through a variety of contact and touch points including interactions with agency personnel and your partners, experiences when online, on the telephone, performing transactions at your facility, and personal observation and associations when utilizing programs and services^{XXIX}.

Consider contact points that Hong Kong International Airport, the world’s fifth busiest international passenger airport, must manage in order to reinforce their official branding as a “dynamic physical and cultural hub with world-class infrastructure.” Experiences that will need to be managed in order to achieve this desired image will be expansive and include: ease of checking flight arrival and departure information on their Web site; access to transportation by land and sea to and from the airport; requiring coordination and assurance of user friendly connectivity for arriving passengers as well as the 45 million residents of the Pearl River Delta region; time required for checking in for flights; services available while waiting for flights with implications for retail shops, food service, as well as Internet lounges and children’s play areas; even options for how to pass the time for longer waits. It does not seem surprising, given this brand promise, that future development adjacent to the airport includes construction of an Asia-World Expo exhibition center, a second hotel project, and even a 9-hole golf course^{XXX}!

ENSURE ADEQUATE VISIBILITY

When introducing a new brand, even a revitalized one, giving adequate exposure to brand elements will be critical to its eventual orbit and landing in a desired position in the minds of key audiences^{XXXI}.

XXVIII Ibid.

XXIX Ibid.

XXX Hong Kong International Airport. Retrieved January 15, 2009, Web site: <http://www.hongkongairport.com/eng/index.jsp>

XXXI Kotler, P., & Lee, N. (2007). *Marketing in the Public Sector: A Roadmap for improved performance*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Wharton School Publishing.



IMPLEMENTING YOUR BRAND

When implementing your brand, there are some key items that your organization needs to remember and be prepared for to minimize problems while ensuring the smoothest possible implementation of the brand strategy.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

When creating and implementing a branding strategy, there are several factors that are absolutely necessary for any type of success. Some of these factors have been mentioned throughout this guide, and will now be discussed in more detail.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT STEWARDSHIP

Visible leadership will drive consistent behaviour. Top managers must demonstrate that internal brand alignment is high priority through their own commitment to brand goals, values and behaviours. Through words, matching actions and the initiatives they support, senior managers can demonstrate that the whole organization is serious about keeping its brand promise.

ALIGNING BUSINESS AND BRAND STRATEGY

Customer relationships fuel success. Brand strategy must foster loyalty-based relationships by defining relevant, differentiated and credible value propositions. Success is achieved by ensuring product and service quality is consistent with your brand promise. Select candidates for your organization that share similar values and attitudes to customers. Make new employees aware of the brand promise and values as soon as they join. Support client and stakeholder expectations through every interaction. Failure to live up to the brand promise quickly depreciates brand equity.

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Middle managers are vital to delivering brand promise. Their role is to infuse their teams and their operations with practical commitment to living the brand. This protocol applies as much to 'back office' functions as customer service. In this way, the brand becomes the platform for focusing staff attention outwards, towards the customer priorities. It often involves changes to processes, incentives, training and management style as much as communication.

ONGOING PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND FEEDBACK

What gets measured gets done. A coherent brand evaluation program with milestones, progress measures and celebrations of success is vital for sustaining momentum of internal brand alignment.

Regular customer feedback helps to monitor the effectiveness of your brand delivery and serves two distinct and equally important purposes: it determines how successfully internal managers are translating business strategies into compelling value propositions,



and it creates an employee feedback loop to assess customer acceptance of and satisfaction with the brand promise.

CHALLENGES OF BRANDING IN THE PUBLIC AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTORS

Every organization, agency, and group in every sector will face challenges when implementing a branding strategy. The public and not-for-profit sectors are certainly no exception to this, some of these hurdles that need to be overcome in the implementation process are shared across sectors, while some are specific to these two sectors.

Branding has to be seen as an initiative of the senior management team, and all senior executives have to see it as a key initiative of the organization. The key champion of the brand has to be the leader of your organization (CEO, President, etc.). In some organizations the champions are in the marketing and communications functions, however, if they leave the organization, the branding initiative tends to lose momentum because the senior management team had not bought into the “branding initiative.” Momentum needs to be started from the very top of your organization so that when people leave, enthusiasm is not lost and impetus and support of the branding strategy continues. Not only does senior management play a key role in championing the branding strategy, they also need to be made aware and understand that branding is a long term process that requires approximately five years for full implementation in a large organization. It is important not to build expectations that cannot be met. The visual design element could be implemented in a few years but the other elements such as “living the brand culture” will take much longer.

It is easier to implement a branding program when your staff is very committed to the goals of the organization. For example, in a study of public sector organizations conducted by our Centre, it was easier to motivate Parks Canada staff and the Canadian Blood Services team than it was to motivate Canada Post Corporation employees. A strategy to motivate staff is required; aligning rewards systems, level of involvement in the brand building process, and hiring and training practices with the brand promise are possible motivational strategies.

The nature of your organization and staff can make motivation a major challenge in creating, and maintaining your brand. Clerical and heavily unionized staff can be hard to motivate to live the brand promise. Therefore involving them in the early stages is critical to the success of the initiative. Organizational orientation/focus can present a challenge as well; for example, a very operations/finance driven organization (rather than marketing driven) can impede the implementation of a brand. Therefore, seeking the involvement and buy in of senior management in finance and operational functions is very important. Early involvement of various internal players will provide the opportunity for your organization to gain a wide range of ideas and perspectives, as well as give your staff a sense of ownership to the brand and the process.



Long standing organizations that need to update, redefine, or change their image in some way may run into difficulty in the repositioning of their brand. It is difficult to establish a new brand when the organization is strongly linked to a previous brand. The Red Cross, Canadian Blood Services, and Revenue Canada are all examples of organizations that have a strong link to a brand that could be hard to disassociate with. Strategies may have to be more aggressive and invest more resources (monetary and non-monetary) in order to reposition an organization in the mind of key audiences.

Government legislation and the shortcomings of organizations in the past have created new challenges for public sector organizations. Bureaucracy is here to stay and will come up with new processes which will make initiatives like branding more challenging to implement.

BEST PRACTICES

There are commonalities in the strategies used by those organizations that have been successful in creating a brand that delivers. The following contains a list of best practices that will help your organization achieve its branding goals.

- Effectively use internal communications to raise employee morale and commitment through the shared beliefs and vision.
- Give managers and staff a deeper understanding of the brand promise and the behaviors and values the promise demands – and train them to adapt their behaviour.
- Enable all employees to understand how their own work processes and responsibilities contribute to delivering the brand promise to customers.
- Change company policies, e.g., recruitment, training, rewards, so that the organization is also behaving in line with its brand promise.
- When employees understand and accept that the values are genuine, they align their attitudes and behaviour to the brand values. The result is greater satisfaction for both clients and employees, leading to employee and client preference and loyalty.
- Involve staff and key stakeholders (e.g. NGOs, private sector, other levels of government, partners, etc.) early in the branding process.
- Branding is totally integrated in the Marketing and Communications functions and it is those functions that play the major roles in implementing and managing the branding initiative.
- The person ultimately responsible for branding has to sit on the Executive Committee/ Senior Management of the organization and report to the CEO/Executive Director/ Deputy Minister etc.
- Although it is the marketing function that manages the implementation of the brand initiative it is the CEO who owns the brand and is the brand chair.



- A Brand Council should be set up and have the key functions (Director General/Vive President level) in the organization represented. The senior executive responsible for branding should chair the council. It is useful to have some key members of the management board on the council.
- Each of the major functions of the organization should have one senior person, preferably at the Director General/Director level to act as a “brand steward/ambassador.”
- Branding a decentralized organization has a number of key challenges; therefore Regional operations have to be involved very early in the process.
- Engaging mostly part-time staff in an organization to “live the brand promise” requires an investment in hiring and training. The Human Resource (HR) function has to play a key role in the implementation of the branding initiative. It is important to have a “Brand Police” function; senior management has to be firm on enforcement of branding guidelines and policies. Exceptions for certain parts of the organization especially in brand identity can be a “slippery slope.”
- The branding team has to be well equipped with both human and financial resources. For a large organization this may involve 3 to 4 staff at fairly senior levels. In addition, implementing a branding initiative will also require significant up front operational dollars to initiate the process.
- Web has to be a key component to the brand and must be consumer-friendly and interactive.
- Ad agencies and communication suppliers and consultants need to be integrated into the branding team and have to play a key role in implementing the brand.
- Important to have branding guidelines and products that can be used by both internal and external organizations to ensure consistency in brand identity and management.
- Branding must be integrated into overall business plans and strategies.
- Important to place a great deal of value on the customer experience, therefore “living the brand” by all “points of contact” in the organization is critical to success of branding strategy.
- In order to motivate and get “buy-in” from management and staff a reward/incentive system tied to brand contribution can be a very effective tool.
- In order to ensure on-going buy-in and support for the branding strategy the use of research to demonstrate the value proposition of branding to senior management on how it improves efficiency and productivity of overall operations as well as dollar return efficiency and ROI is very important.



- Use international comparisons to evaluate effectiveness (e.g. S compares themselves to Great Britain and other countries). This can be an effective tool for organizations that have no real competitors.
- Use of a top-box score* is important on evaluating effectiveness of branding initiative.
- Initial benchmark strategies and ongoing tracking and evaluation of branding initiative very important.

* The “Top Box” scores represent the responses that fall only into “Excellent” (Top Box Score), while the Top 4 & 5 Box Scores show responses for those that indicated “Very Good” or “Excellent.” Calculating these scores allows an organization to identify the driving variables associated with the top performing units. Most survey research responses result in scores clustered primarily in both “Very Good” and “Excellent.” As the goal of any branding initiative is to identify pathways to excellence, it is recommended that organizations separate “Very Good” results from “Excellent” results. For example, if most of the responses are clustered in the Top 4 & 5 scores, it is far more useful to separate the two groups so that you can address measures needed to move the 4’s to 5’s.

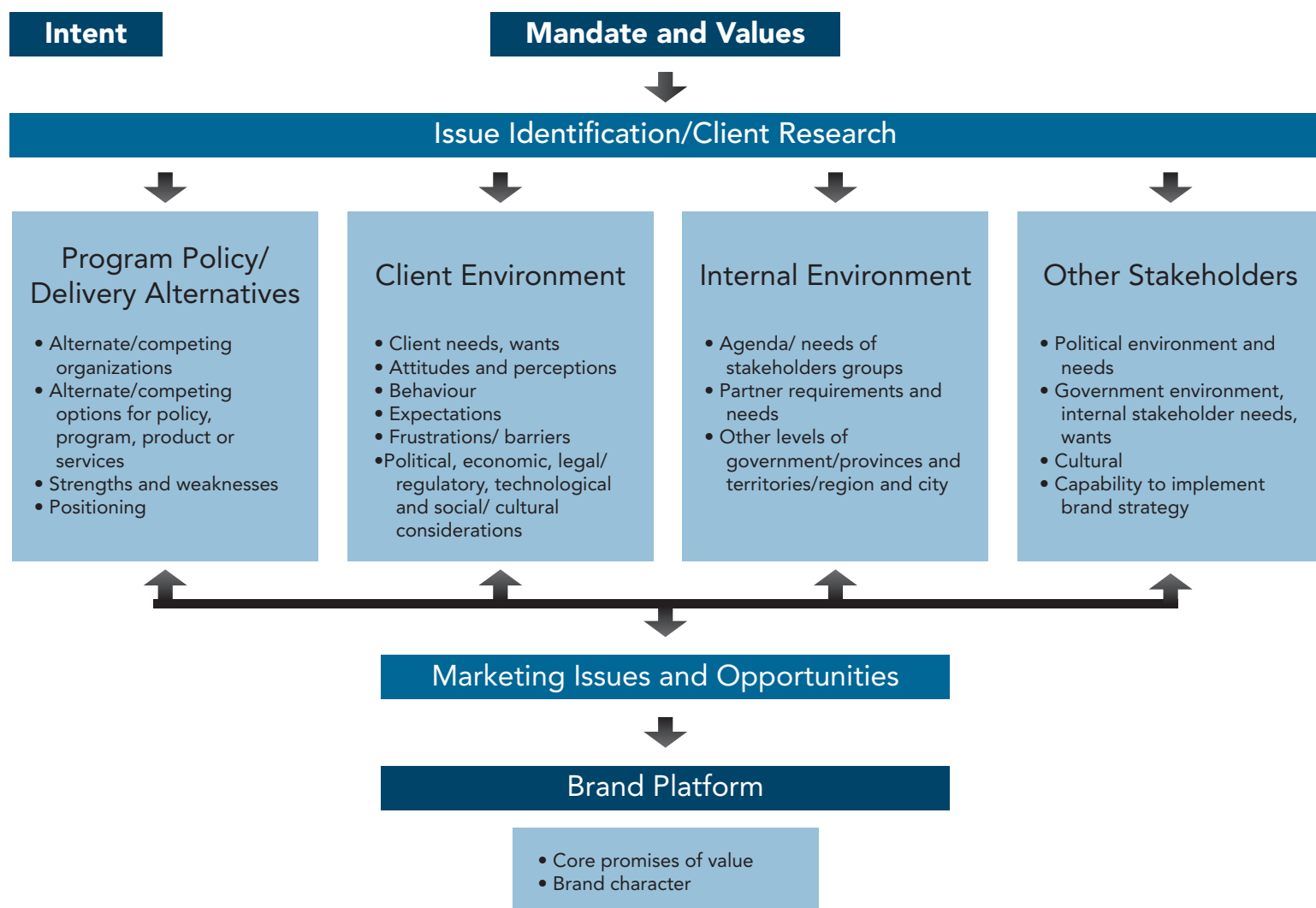
CONCLUSION

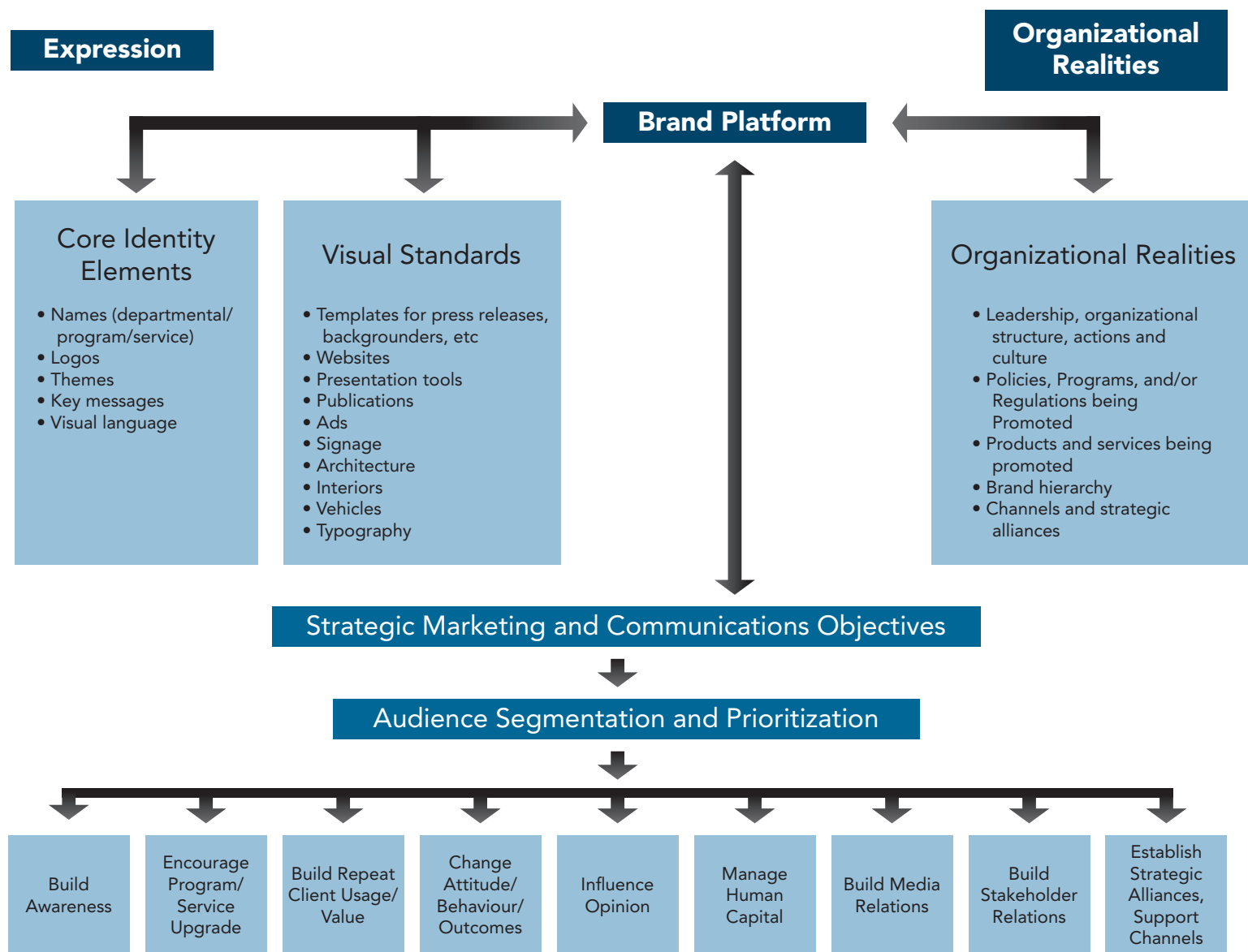
This guide is a reference aide to organizations when implementing a branding strategy. It clarifies definitions, explains the major stages in building a brand, and provides insight into what makes a successful brand. Remember, branding is a very useful and powerful tool that provides an organization with many benefits. Some of these benefits include differentiation from competitors, equity, recognition, and consistency. Just as it is important in the private sector, building a brand is important in the public and not-for-profit sectors. By involving key stakeholders in the process right from the beginning and integrating your brand promise with your organization’s culture your target publics will be able to experience your brand promise at all points of contact.

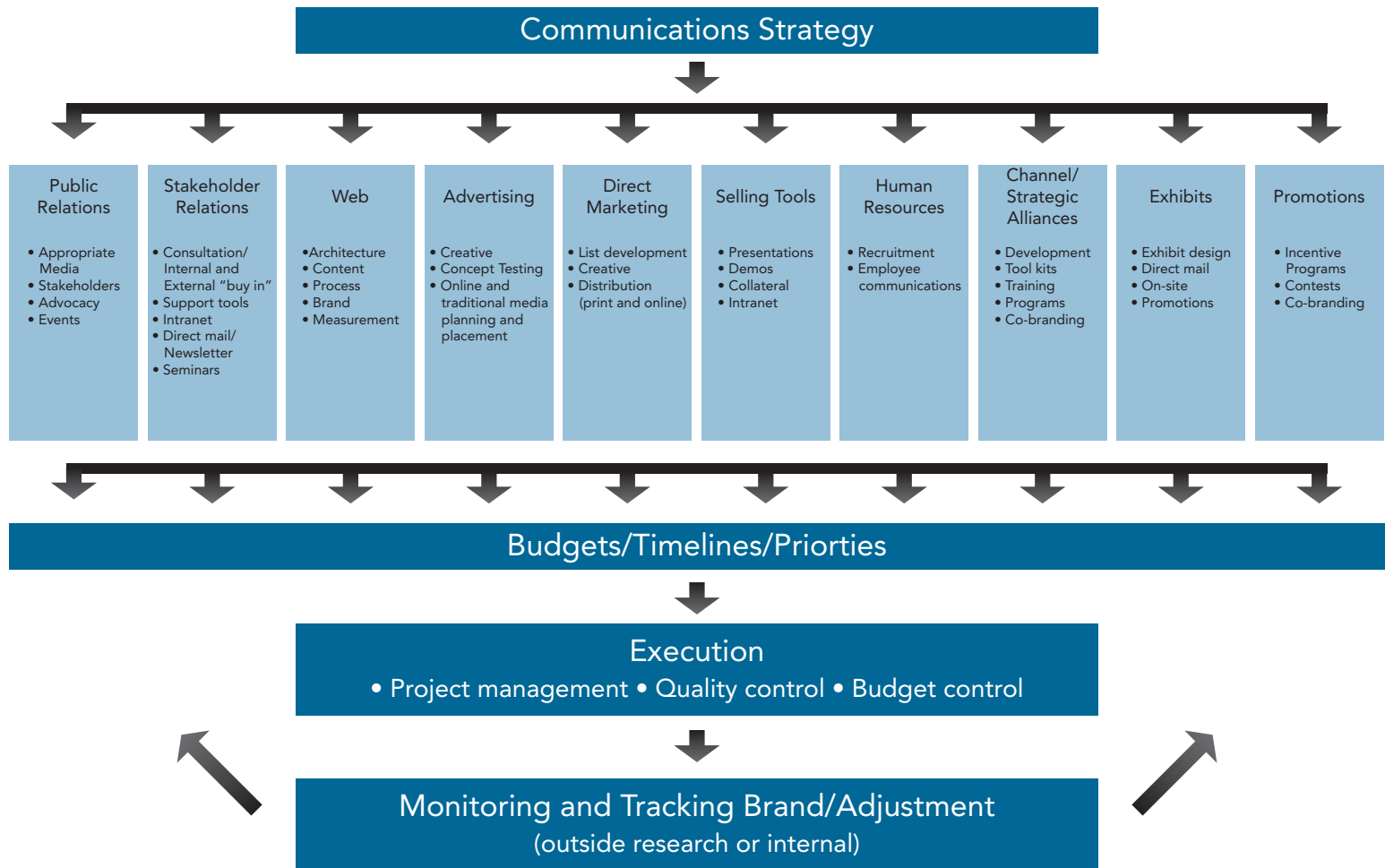


APPENDIX A

Public Sector Brand Strategy and Communications Planning







Source: 628773 Canada Inc./HBS Marketing



APPENDIX B

ABOUT THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR MARKETING (CEPSM)

CEPSM was launched in 2005 to help public sector organizations overcome the unique challenges they face in their marketing and communications initiatives. The mission of CEPSM is straight and simple: “To advance the marketing discipline in the public sector”. We provide our clients with top-notch expertise through our core functions of consulting, speaking and professional development.

OUR MANDATE IS TO:

- Build a community of marketing professionals to share ideas, resources and best practices;
- Provide specific research and tools that are relevant, including opportunities for learning and networking through peer-to-peer forums, events and on line resources;
- Offer strategic advice and professional expertise through its roster of seasoned professionals.

We deliver bilingual strategic marketing solutions, designed to meet the unique needs & challenges of governments and government agencies, associations and non-profit organizations. We provide our clients with top-notch marketing services through our core functions of consulting, speaking and professional development.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Our key areas of expertise are:

- Product & Service Marketing
- Policy & Program Marketing
- Social Marketing
- Website Strategy Planning
- Social Media Marketing
- Sponsorship & Partnerships
- Service Standards



CORE FUNCTIONS

PROFESSIONAL ADVICE AND COACHING

- High-level strategic solutions;
- Strategic planning and marketing research;
- Analysis and advice on marketing initiatives, including marketing assessments;
- Assisting organizations in establishing a marketing operation in their organization.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

- Workshops, courses, e-learning and special events;
- University professional certificate programs
- In-house training tailored to the public and non-profit sector;
- Provision of subject experts for keynotes and individual sessions at conferences.

TURNKEY SOLUTIONS

STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Managers in public sector and non-profit organizations are often required to develop strategic marketing plans to sell their products, programs, policies or services, but don't have the resources to prepare top level plans. Using a collaborative 6-step approach we will work with your team to prepare a strategic marketing plan and help find solutions to your specific marketing challenges.

MARKETING GROUP CREATION

Our three-step service is designed to assist you in establishing a marketing operation in your public sector organization. Specifically, we will help you integrate marketing into a communications and/or program division.

STRATEGIC MARKETING ALLIANCE AND/OR PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

We will work with your organization to establish a strategic alliance and partnership framework as well as develop a "value proposition". In addition, we will help you in establishing guidelines for collaborative arrangements with the private sector and other partners, including assessing challenges and risks, determining value, creating effective agreements and developing performance indicators to track and measure impact.



MARKETING BEST PRACTICES ASSESSMENT

The goal of the marketing assessment service is to review the effectiveness of your marketing function and process, and provide you with recommendations for improvement. We will conduct a systematic examination of your marketing objectives, strategies, organization, human and financial resources and performance.

INTERNET/DIGITAL/SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

As part of this service, we will help you align online marketing with your offline efforts and show you how to get engaged with your target audience using the latest social media tools and website best practices. Specifically we will develop an interactive and engaging online strategy and then show you how to optimize your marketing initiative for optimum on-line visibility. In addition, we will provide your organization with an intensive training program for all your key staff.

ON-THE-JOB COACHING AND TRAINING

We believe that building internal expertise through on-the-job coaching and training is the key to future success of an organization. The problem facing most public sector and non-profit organizations is that they may have excellent staff but they lack real world experience of managing marketing activities. Our on-the-job coaching and training service is designed to assist organizations involved in strategic marketing of products and services, policies and programs, social marketing, advertising, internet marketing and sponsorship & partnerships.



APPENDIX C-CONTACT

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