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Author(s): Antony Brewerton and Sharon Tuersley

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Marketing

More than just a logo – branding at Warwick



Branding isn't just about a fancy logo. It's about building relationships with your users, understanding what benefits they're expecting and what benefits you're promising, and solving their problems with your products and services. **Antony Brewerton** and **Sharon Tuersley** explain.



EVERYWHERE WE LOOK we see brands. Cities have brands ('City of Culture', 'City of Learning', 'The City That Never Sleeps'). Countries have brands (consider Britain's brand collateral in the US following the BP oil spill). Even individuals have brands ('Brand Beckham' anyone?).

But does your library have a brand? And does branding really matter?

Relationship marketing

It might be useful to consider what marketing is and why it is a library issue. In its broadest definition marketing has been described as 'the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably'.¹ Considering user needs and building the services to satisfy their needs sounds relevant to us. But why is this so significant in the Google Age? Eileen Elliot de Saez in her bible, *Marketing Concepts for Libraries and Information Services*, states: 'The real value of marketing is to ensure the survival and growth of the libraries and information services, which exist to enhance the communities they serve, adding value to the lives of the people and organizations who are their users, customers and clients.'² In the current economic climate, survival and growth seem like pretty good goals. To quote de Saez again: 'The marketing model in the digital age focuses on users, clients and customers and on keeping them.'³ It's all about relationships.

This is something we have focused on at the University of Warwick, developing library services that not only meet the needs of our various communities but also

facilitate the building of relationships with these groups. By doing this we can move prospective customers to becoming customers of our services. Regular use of a wider portfolio of services makes them clients. The trick is then to move them on to become supporters and even advocates of the service. Ultimately we hope our users can then become partners working with us to develop new services that satisfy other needs. A good example for us are academic staff. We want them not only as clients of our services but as advocates, promoting us to their students, and as partners working with us to develop new services that embed information provision and skills in the curriculum.

Branding can help in this relationship building. But how does it work?

A library brand?

For David Aaker 'brand' can be defined as 'a set of assets (or liabilities) linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service'.⁴ So it is about products and services as well as logos. Note that a brand can also hold negative connotations. This brings us to another definition, from the Buildingbrands website: 'A brand is a collection of perceptions in the mind of the consumer.'⁵ What comes to mind when you hear 'London', 'New York', 'Paris' ...'Scunthorpe'? What perceptions do potential users have of your library? Your library has a brand whether you like it or not. The question is: how can you manage that brand? Another way of looking at brands is shown in Figure 1. These are the elements we need to understand and manage.

Antony Brewerton is Head of Academic Services, and Sharon Tuersley is head of the marketing group, University of Warwick Library.



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- 3 *ibid*, p.xiii
- 4 David A. Aaker. *Building Strong Brands*. Free Press, 1996, pp. 7-8.
- 5 www.buildingbrands.com
- 6 www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/main/help/training/advice
- 7 Seth Godin. *Free Prize inside! The Next Big Marketing Idea*. Michael Joseph/Penguin, 2005, p. 8.
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- 9 Martin Lindstrom. *Brand Sense: how to build powerful brands through touch, taste, smell, sight and sound*. Kogan Page, 2005.

Promise

What is the concept you are offering, the promise you're making? What benefits are your (prospective) customers looking for? As Theodore Levitt wisely said, 'Purchasing agents don't buy ¼ inch drills; they buy ¼ inch holes.' We need to consider the 'total product'. Too often we focus on the 'basic product', the product sitting on the shelf. But we have to think about the 'core product' (the benefit users are looking for), the 'augmented product' (value-added elements) and the 'perceived product' (including the brand image – 'what using the product says about me'). In the university world the 'basic product' is teaching and examining. The 'augmented product' can include accommodation (living away from home for the first time), societies and entertainment. The 'perceived product' depends on where you go to university. The 'core benefit' will vary from student to student: some will want a rounded education; some will want to grow as people; some will just want a certificate so they can get a good job.

What your users value should, of course, affect your offering, so you need to understand the benefits your customers are seeking. At Warwick, library staff attend Staff-Student Liaison Committees and have regular meetings with the Students' Union's Education Officer. We have an electronic comments board ('You Say, We Say') and run 'Now You're Talking!' focus groups on a variety of topics. We have even asked existing students to make a video giving freshers advice about the library – partly as a peer-to-peer marketing tool but also to assess what students really value.⁶

Product

Going back to Figure 1, what about 'products and services'? As we have seen, these are core to the brand. As Seth Godin recently pointed out, 'If marketing is about communicating to consumers that you've solved their problem, then the first step is, in fact, to solve their problem'.⁷ Are we developing products and services that meet the diverse needs of today's users?

At Warwick the library's mission for its users is simple: 'Connecting you with information, support and your community'. Some of our offering is traditional: a stock

of a million books, more than 13km of archives. But we are also developing our services to meet new needs. Over the last few years we have invested in e-resources, and the Academic Support Librarians have worked with academic colleagues to develop e-learning packages and other digital collaborations. We have remodelled the physical library to provide both group work and more traditional study options. Segmentation, targeting and positioning have been used to develop and promote services to meet the specific needs of different user communities. The Learning Grid provides peer-assisted support for the student population in a multimedia-rich environment. The Teaching Grid offers a space for academic colleagues to discuss their information and pedagogical needs, get support with new technologies and develop innovative teaching practice. The Wolfson Research Exchange provides a collaborative work environment and a centre for developing, promoting and celebrating best practice among our research community.⁸ Again, a lot of this is to do with relationship building.

Promotion

But brand is also undeniably about the representational elements we normally think of first when we consider branding – the logos, the language, the look.

There are many models you can use to develop your brand messages. One we have found particularly useful is Lindstrom's 12 elements of brand manifestation.⁹ Some elements will apply to all libraries, other elements will be relevant to some, all are worth considering. The first element, of course, is name, which can be full of connotations. Think of the smoothie firm Innocent – all the 'pure' and 'good' associations. What about 'library'? Is that positive or is it what Aaker would call a liability? Is 'ideas store' better or would users call it 'the library' anyway? What about services? Our Research Exchange does what it says on the tin, providing a forum for 'research exchange' across and beyond the Warwick community.

Next up on Lindstrom's list is icon/logo. Such visual representations are very important, especially in the



Disney uses a variety of key words (such as 'magic') to get key messages across. We use our mission to focus our messages on 'information', 'support' and 'community'. Once this becomes second nature, marketing communication becomes far easier.

international marketplace. Some logos have been inexpensive to design and are priceless (e.g. Nike), others have been pricier and less well received (2012 Olympics, perhaps). Logos are powerful and should not be weakened, so most brands have guidelines about use. At Warwick we have developed a 'black box' logo for the library and different coloured boxes for our sub-brands (Teaching Grid, Learning Grid, etc) to show they are part of the wider library 'family'. We have also produced guidelines on positioning, font and pantone, with examples of layout for colleagues employing the brand. Linked with this are picture and shape. Do you have a visual house style? Can you see immediately that all your publications originate from the same organisation? We use large images of dynamic environments showing active use by students which immediately give a consistent look.

Colour is a key element of our branding. With the remodelling we used bold colours for different floors, different noise zones and different segmented services. Our entrance floor is now very orange... and so are most of our marketing tools. Posters and postcards are orange. Induction guides are orange. Memory sticks are orange. Our library rock sweets are orange. Even the heart on our 'Love the Library' coasters and bags are orange.

In this multimedia world, language remains one of the most important ways to get your brand's personality

across. Think again about Innocent and its warm and funny tone. Disney uses a variety of key words (such as 'magic') to get key messages across. Again, we use our mission to focus our messages on 'information', 'support' and 'community'. Once this becomes second nature, marketing communication becomes far easier, and even difficult concepts (such as environmental management) can be treated positively (as a 'community' issue).

Sound, navigation and service are all part of the brand messages we give out. Some brands have recourse to rituals and myths: a pint of Guinness is poured in a certain way; some readers enjoy consulting specially retrieved archives in a controlled environment in white gloves. Other brands can exploit tradition: the Bodleian Library has postcards of its famous oath and sells egg cups emblazoned with 'Silence Please'. But even less well established brands have their own character. Behaviour is about personality. Warwick prides itself on being innovative. Is this reflected in our communication channels? Is the library on Twitter? Check! YouTube? You bet! Facebook? Two thousand fans and counting.

All these elements can help in brand recognition and changing perceptions, getting services known and building relationships, satisfying our users' needs and ensuring we survive.

Branding is certainly more than just a logo. **U**

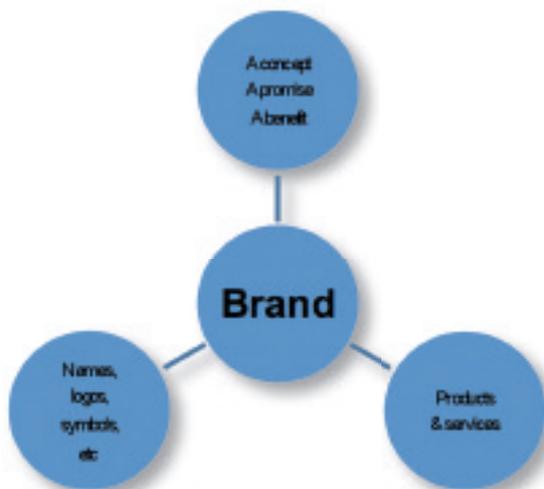


Fig 1. The elements of a brand.

These themes and other elements of branding are explored more fully in Antony's workshop 'Branding the library and information service', which will take place on 27 January 2011. Email training@cilip.org.uk for further information.

