



5 Steps to an Integrated Brand Identity

A WHITE PAPER BY



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A company's corporate or brand identity is one of its most valuable assets. Consequently, periodic evaluation is recommended to ensure this asset remains relevant, progressive, and reinforcing of desired positioning. By defining identity to include not only logos, but messages, graphic themes and images communicated by a company using numerous mediums and vehicles, it's clear that without integration, brand equity is compromised. Reasons for considering or revisiting an identity include acquisition or merger, new product introduction, or a need to react to competitive marketing activities. Often corporate or product repositioning is required to revitalize a brand or address a neglect situation. In any case, brand equity must be carefully evaluated, and completely understood.

At least five steps should be considered when undertaking an integrated identity program—audit, benchmarking, planning, creative development and implementation.

STEP 1 - IDENTITY AUDIT

First, evaluate your current identity for consistency, continuity and positioning. Identify corporate identity issues and problems. Evaluate Corporate, Masterbrand and Sub-brand architecture: logos, typefaces, graphics, messages, tag lines, theme lines, and the standards system. Visit the implementation process and identity usage. Evaluate all company materials, e.g., advertising, websites, sales materials, stationery, signage, trade show booth, packaging, vehicles, press materials and multimedia tools. Survey customers to identify perceptions of your identity and to determine your positioning.

STEP 2 - BENCHMARKING

Identify benchmark candidates both within and outside your category. Consider key competitors. What do you admire about their identity, messaging, and

positioning? Why is it successful? How does it compare to yours? What facets of their program would you consider adopting?

STEP 3 - PLANNING

Using the information gained from your audit and benchmarking, brainstorm specific identity issues and develop an identity plan with objectives, strategies, actions, schedules and estimated costs. The proposed strategy should cover each of the identity issues and problems from Step 1. Integrate each of the proposed identity applications into a total marketing plan. Create a timetable for implementation.

STEP 4 - CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Recommend refinements of the existing logo/logotype system, typography, graphics and color treatments; create new identity options.
- Test above concepts with internal and select external publics; refine concepts and test.

STEP 5 - IMPLEMENTATION

- Start production of all identity applications.
- Develop an identity standards manual covering all applications of identity (printed or web-based).
- Create a brief standards handbook for suppliers and other tertiary users.
- Disseminate new guidelines via internal communications (kick-off presentations, Email, direct mail, intranets); provide all digital artwork files on disk or via web.
- Define a migration plan for applications including stationery, brochures, advertising, websites, etc. Depending on the evolution of the identity, some implementation can occur over a longer time period.

CONCLUSION

Carefully managing your corporate or brand identity is critical to maximizing brand equity, minimizing misuse, eliminating possible confusion, and reinforcing desired positioning. By identifying all relevant identities as part of a comprehensive audit and benchmarking exercise, followed by identity planning, creative development and implementation, achieving successful identity integration will be as easy as 1-2-3-4-5!

FUSION b2b is a full-service, strategic marketing and creative communications agency focused on business-to-business markets. Clients include USG Sheetrock, Panasonic, AMCOR packaging, OMRON electronics, Woodworking Machinery Industry Association (WMIA), ITW, Tyco Electronics, and others. For more information or press kit, contact Heather Hawes.

CONTACT

1548 Bond Street, Suite 114
Naperville, IL 60563
t:630.579.8300
f:630.579.8989
www.fusionb2b.com