

2009 CBIE CONFERENCE

THE EMERGENCE OF GLOBAL ACADEMIC BRANDING: FROM CONCEPT TO STRATEGY

DISCLAIMER

- **This presentation was delivered on 10 November 2009 at the CBIE Annual conference in Toronto, Canada**
- **It shall be considered incomplete without oral explanation and clarification**

Introduction

Conceptual Aspects of Branding

Academic Brand Matrix

Case Studies

Discussion

HOUSEKEEPING

- **The session will be split into about 45 minutes presentation and about 30 minutes discussion time**
- **This presentation will be posted on ICG's homepage (November ticker)**
- **There is no “five bullet points and you are done” slide: Academic branding is complex and difficult**
- **The focus of this presentation is not on a basic, “how to” aspect of branding – the focus is how a brand works vis-à-vis the external world**

THE SESSION'S FOCUS

- **To date, only a few higher education institutions have actively sought to brand themselves on a global level**
- **Yet the development of international education has resulted in pressure on institutions to differentiate themselves along a number of parameters such as service levels, teaching focus areas, international connections, alumni networks, etc**
- **All of these activities shape an institution's respective academic brand**
- **The session introduces core factors shaping such a brand and offers a perspective on assessing an institution's brand position relative to its peers and competitors**
- **The session concludes with four case studies**

SOME INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

- **What is the most valuable brand worldwide?**
 - » **Coca-Cola, at \$ 69 billion (Interbrand)**
- **What brand rank does Canada as a nation hold?**
 - » **Second worldwide in 2009 (Futurebrand)**
- **Which is the leading university brand?**
 - » **Harvard University (ICG)**
- **Which platform will fundamentally drive an institution's academic brand over the next decade?**
 - » **Facebook, and Twitter-like services (ICG)**
- **Who is a leader in the practice of global academic branding?**
 - » **LSE, MIT, UCLA, and... (ICG)**

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DEFINING A STRONG BRAND

- **A strong academic brand signals the ability of an institution to understand itself now as well as in the future, how well it relates to the outside world, and how the outside world perceives the institution on a comprehensive level**
- **Definitions**
 - **“A brand is a product (or service) plus added values” (Ambler 1995)**
 - **A brand converts a commodity into something which can command a higher price Meldrum and McDonald, 2000**
 - **“A brand is composed of a number of factors that identify a product or service as having sustainable and differential competitive advantage”**
 - **“A brand is simply a product or service which can be distinguished from its competitors” (Hankinson and Cowking 1996)**

A strong brand is a really good relationship

TECHNICAL COMPONENTS OF A BRAND

- **Budget / resourcing**
- **Design**
- **Culture**
- **Differentiation**
- **Guarantee (“QA”)**
- **Image**
- **Name**
- **Reputation**
- **Segment**
- **Value**
- **Visibility and awareness**
- **Other...**

The goal of branding: Competitive advantage

Introduction

Conceptual Aspects of Branding

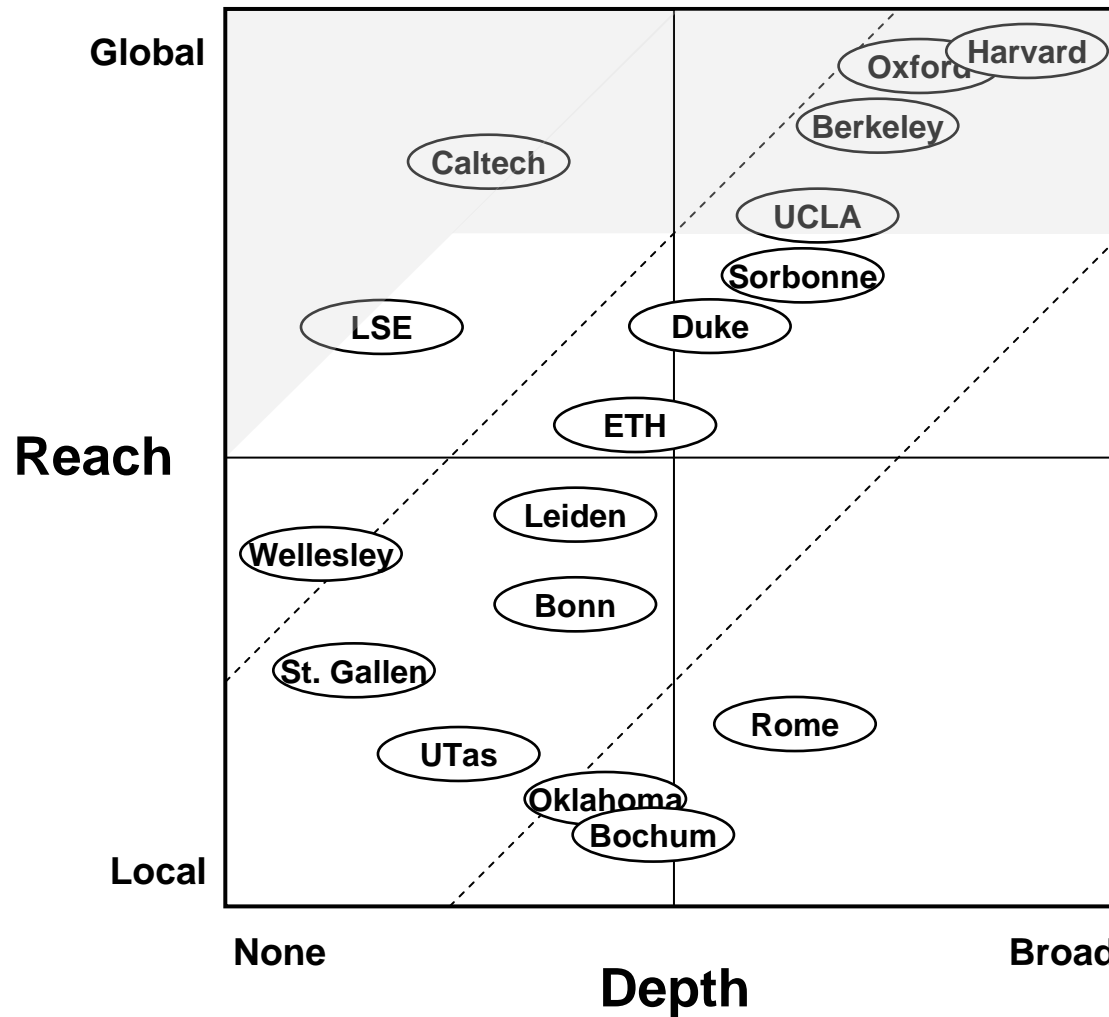
Academic Brand Matrix

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- **Professional, active academic branding is a relatively recent phenomenon. Yet competition for talent, funding, and attention has led to a strong acceleration of branding activities**
- **Higher education institutions are both complex as well as granular – this makes a unified brand positioning approach difficult**
- **Many faculty members – and entire academic cultures – still resist branding in the academic world. This is nothing short of naive. Academic branding is real, it is important, and it will not go away**
- **Branding in academia is often mis- or only partially understood. It is not just a logo (“crest”), slogan (“world class”), or a ranking (THES vs. Shanghai). It certainly is not simply based on academic reputation alone, though reputation underpins much of the an academic brand**

ACADEMIC BRAND MATRIX – MEASURING AN INSTITUTIONS EXTERNAL PERCEPTION-BASED POSITION



Notes: The definition for the reach and depth axes is included in subsequent slides

Source: ICG.

ABOUT THE ACADEMIC BRAND MATRIX I

- **Axes**
 - Reach is broadly defined by geographic reach as measured by the level of general public awareness of a given academic brand
 - Depth is defined by a combination of seven criteria: academic performance, innovation, financial strength, leadership, social/cultural contributions, athletics, and marketing/ positioning efforts
- **Factors**
 - Quantitative (most)
 - Qualitative transformed into quantitative (some)
 - Qualitative (a few)
- **Placement**
 - An institution's position is driven by both axes. Regarding the depth axis, the Academic Brand Matrix allows for customization (weighting)
- **Competitive Aspect**
 - The Academic Brand Matrix's main use is to establish an institution's relative, competitive position – and to highlight brand development pathways

The Academic Brand Matrix is a conceptual and competition tool

- **Internal world**
 - **Everyone**
- **External world**
 - **Alumni and friends**
 - **Applicants**
 - **Communities and networks (online and offline)**
 - **Employers**
 - **Experts (rankings, assessments, etc.)**
 - **Faculty members**
 - **Government**
 - **Influencers**
 - **Media**
 - **Peer and competitor institutions**
 - **Prospects**
 - **Staff members**
 - **Students**

The outside world matters (more)

ACADEMIC BRAND MATRIX: REACH

- **Definition**

- Reach is broadly defined by geographic reach as measured by the level of general public awareness of a given academic brand

- **Measurements / Factors**

- Direct surveys, interviews, contextual evaluation
- Media coverage

- **Competitive Aspect**

- Global reach bestows significant competitive benefits – instead of reaching out, a global brand institution is being sought after

- **Branding Implications**

- Each institution needs to precisely define its reach and optimize for a realistic positioning

Less than 20 universities have a truly global reach

- **Definition**

- **Academic performance is defined as the actual or perceived (halo) academic quality/reputation with a (strong) bias to research performance**

- **Measurements / Factors**

- **Rankings (Shanghai, less so THES; national rankings such as US News, CHE)**
- **Media coverage**
- **Surveys, interviews (perception-based)**

- **Competitive Aspect**

- **Institutions with a strong academic performance tend to out-brand strong teaching institutions; both out-compete weak institutions**

- **Branding Implications**

- **Academic performance (quality, reputation) serves as the very cornerstone of an academic brand**

Academic performance based branding is well established

ACADEMIC BRAND MATRIX: INNOVATION

- **Definition**

- Innovation is defined by quantifiable, standardized accomplishments as well as clearly traceable commercial success

- **Measurements / Factors**

- Patents (University of California), spin-offs, research transfer, tied-in start-ups (Stanford - Google), and inventions (MIT)
- Rankings, expert opinion
- Media coverage

- **Competitive Aspect**

- Innovation success adds to an institution's academic brand position. It only applies to a limited number of institutions as a competitive lever

- **Branding Implications**

- Institutions with known innovation cultures are superior talent and commercial opportunity attractors, and receive a brand “boost”

Some universities are globally renown for their innovation

- **Definition**

- Financial strength is broadly defined by geographic reach as measured by the level of general public awareness of a given academic brand

- **Measurements / Factors**

- Budget structure and volume, endowment, donations, sponsorship
- Other holdings (real estate, IP, etc.)

- **Competitive Aspect**

- Global reach bestows significant competitive benefits – instead of reaching out, a global brand institution is being sought after

- **Branding Implications**

- Each institution needs to precisely define its reach and optimize for a realistic positioning

Less than 20 universities have a truly global reach

- **Definition**

- Leadership qualities are defined by the quality of an institution's senior executive based on their resume and accomplishments, as well as their proven ability to successfully administer an institution

- **Measurements / Factors**

- Biographies
- Expert opinion

- **Competitive Aspect**

- High quality and respected leadership attracts public recognition

- **Branding Implications**

- In some instances, strong university leadership compliments an institution's brand; more often, a lack of leadership damages an institution's brand

Leadership is not an amorphous but rather a categorical category

ACADEMIC BRAND MATRIX: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- **Definition**
 - **Social and cultural contributions are denoting contributions which have made an impact on society at large**
- **Measurements / Factors**
 - **“Public perception”**
 - **Expert judgment**
 - **Media coverage**
- **Competitive Aspect**
 - **Contributions of this kind can drive perceptions for decades (Cal & free speech, Frankfurter Schule, LSE policy advisory,**
- **Branding Implications**
 - **The impact of contributions is driven by societies’ perspectives – and can be unplanned and unmanageable from an institutional vantage point**

**In a knowledge economy, social and cultural contributions
will become a key driver for academic brands**

- **Definition**
 - An external awareness of athletics achievements in recognized competition formats (college level, major championships, professional sports)
- **Measurements / Factors**
 - Athletics success: Championships, records, medals, other
 - Media coverage
- **Competitive Aspect**
 - Athletics success can drive (Oklahoma State), add to (USC), or compliment an academic brand (OxCam boat race, Cal-Stanford Big game)
- **Branding Implications**
 - Athletics add to an institutional brand in quite different ways; in a few cases, athletics can be the key brand driver

Athletics branding is essentially an Anglo-Saxon experience

ACADEMIC BRAND MATRIX: MARKETING & POSITIONING EFFORTS

- **Definition**
 - The value and quality of marketing and positioning efforts are determined by their active, concerted, visible, and impact-full deployment
- **Measurements / Factors**
 - Survey, direct assessment
 - Media coverage
- **Competitive Aspect**
 - Positioning efforts provide a lever effect over other factors
- **Branding Implications**
 - Without marketing and branding efforts, an institutional brand will be defined for an institution rather than defined/guided by the institution

Most universities still position themselves in a narrow manner

ACADEMIC BRAND MATRIX: DEPLOYMENT

- **Necessitates the acceptance that clearly defined factors, variables, scoring models, etc. drive an academic brand in conjunction with external perspectives (quantified)**
- **External perspectives are mostly easily accessible, or can be surveyed**
- **Is based on a set of defined research tasks leading to a scoring matrix**
- **Requires a comprehensive approach across all campus units – this is not a silo exercise**
- **Academics will have to accept that an academic brand does not equate their personal research relationships**

Introducing realism / brand clarification / education / call to action

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- **UCLA – Leveraging a strong multi-faceted brand internationally**
- **London School of Economics – Comprehensive re-branding exercise**
- **University of Maryland – Dynamic image development**
- **Guess – the world's leading employer brand**

BEST PRACTICE INTERNATIONAL BRAND LEVERAGE MODEL



IKOUKEE DESIGN

- **Point of Departure**
 - The LSE relied on its established “name” and did not pursue any marketing or branding activities, while the basics (services, experiences) suffered
 - The brand was based on historical beliefs, not current perceptions
 - The LSE is highly depended on tuition receipts from non-EU students. The East Asian crisis in 1997-98 had a strong negative impact on enrollments
- **Challenge: Re-branding an established brand**
 - Examining and re-inventing the brand was critical to drive income
- **Focus**
 - Self awareness, relating and communicating to the outside world, understanding evidence/data, brand protection
- **Research**
 - Interviews and questionnaire addressing a different audience
 - Alignment of international and external perceptions
 - Dialogue led to the distillation of the essence of the LSE’s brand

BEST PRACTICE ACADEMIC RE-BRANDING PROJECT II

From...



...To



Clear, concise, modern but not over-stylized use of images

Sources: Flickr (creative commons license), LSE.

- **Three Perspectives on the LSE**
 - **More than two-thirds of students are international students. This makes the LSE the most internationalized university at a student level**
 - **The LSE has become one of the most well run higher education institutions**
 - **The LSE has one of the strongest, most well integrated brand presences of any universities**

- **Goal**

- **Maryland's core brand values are: Quality, discovery, impact, and momentum**
- **Those core concepts became the touchstones of the story Maryland wanted to tell: A great research university whose commitment to discovery and learning is a catalyst for fast-acting economic development and social and cultural vitality**
- **The goal was to transform Maryland's image from that of a middling "safety school" to one of a top-tier research university**

- **Approach**

- **An architectural and environmental design firm was hired**
- **A series of focus groups generated seven "descriptors" that the university wanted the logo to represent: Ambitious, spirited, friendly, creative, traditional, diverse, and excellent**
- **The winning design was a calculated political choice, a nod to state legislators who control higher-education funds**

- **Image Campaign**

- In 2001, the Zoom campaign was introduced. The vision was for the sphere to zoom onto the scene and show the audience through movement and motion what was inside
- When production was completed, the kinetic television ads included an original music score and a voice-over touting the University's success
- The promotion continues



- **Results – Hard Numbers**

- In the two years after the Zoom campaign began, applications to the freshman class increased 24.7 percent (2001-03)
- The average high-school GPA of incoming freshmen rose to 3.75 from 3.01, and the average combined SAT scores climbed to 1,246, up 73 points
- Over a five-year period, membership in the alumni association has grown 35 percent, and the number of donors who contribute to the university annually nearly doubled to 41,000

- **Results – Internal Behavior**

- Maryland's marketing efforts have generated buzz. State politicians have cited factoids gleaned from the university's ads. Maryland attire has become fashionable in Baltimore. And Maryland's first major branding effort, the Zoom campaign, has altered the local lexicon
- "The word 'zoom' has become part of our vocabulary," according to Brodie Remington, Vice President for university relations. The term and its various conjugations are being used from teenage students to elder statesmen alike

BEST PRACTICE TALENT ACQUISITION BRAND MODEL



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