

CCAIE – PEI – June 2007

# Building a Brand That Matters

*The Four Essential Steps*

**Dr. Robert A. Sevier**

*Senior Vice President, Strategy*

**Stamats, Inc.**

[bob.sevier@stamats.com](mailto:bob.sevier@stamats.com)

800-553-8878 ext. 5100



STAMATS

*Promises kept.*

# About Stamats

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  - Campus visit audits
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  - Brand clarification and communication plans
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- 
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# The Big Questions

- What is a brand?
- More specifically, what is your institution's brand?
- Why/how do you think a strong brand will help you?
- How does brand marketing relate to integrated marketing?
- What obstacles to initiating a brand marketing strategy on your campus do you envision?

# Why Strong Brands Are Important to People

- They save time in decision-making
- They project a clear message
- They provide an identity
- They give permission
- They instill confidence

**When there is no time, space, or opportunity,  
a strong brand (expressed via your graphic identity)  
tells the world, in a nanosecond,  
who you are and what you stand for**

# Why Brands Are Important to C/U

- Strong brands attract:
  - The best students and faculty
  - More students who will persist
  - More donated dollars
  - More media attention
  - More research dollars
  - Strategic partners
- Strong brands generate:
  - More alumni support
  - Positive word-of-mouth
- Strong brands require fewer direct marketing expenditures
- Parents are less likely to encourage a s/d to attend a college with which they are not familiar

# Indicators That You Have a Brand Problem

- New programs languish
- Alumni involvement and giving is flat or declining
- First year to second year retention rate is below norms
- Job ads fail to attract best candidates
- Giving is localized to alumni and historic friends
- Pronounced negative word-of-mouth
- Campus morale is waning
- Others?

# How Do Traditional-Age Students Choose a School?

- Value?
- Specific academic program?
- Academic quality?
- Grad school acceptance rates
- Friendly?
- Close to home?



***“I didn’t even think of going to  
school there!”***



# What Is a Brand?

- Contrary to popular opinion, a brand is not just a look, letterhead, or logo
- Rather, a brand is a valued promise that an organization makes to its most important external and internal audiences
  - The complete expression of your core values
- **Perry Forster:** A brand is a promise expressed as a benefit that your target audiences value
- **Al Ries and Laura Ries:** The purpose of integrated marketing communication is to build a brand in the mind of a prospect
- **Rob Frankel:** Truly successful brands are perceived by the target audience as the best, even only, solution to a particular need



# What We Believe About Brands

- Strong brands are built on three sturdy legs: 1) Current and comprehensive market research; 2) Respect for your school's heritage; and 3) A clear and shared vision for its future
- A brand strategy will more likely involve the clarification of your institution's current core values rather than the creation of new values
- The goal of a brand strategy is to establish and hold a position of perceived and real value in the minds of your most important internal and external audiences
- The purpose of a brand is to return value to the institution
- The brand strategy should engage, equip, and energize the campus community
- Strong brands generate excitement in the marketplace



# What Problems Do the Following Brands Solve?

- Volvo
  - Craftsman
  - Mont Blanc
  - Coca-Cola
  - FedEx
  - Tim Horton's
- What problem do you solve?
  - Will students and donors pay their dollars for your solution?

**Drive Safely**



# Options for Building a Reputation/Prestige

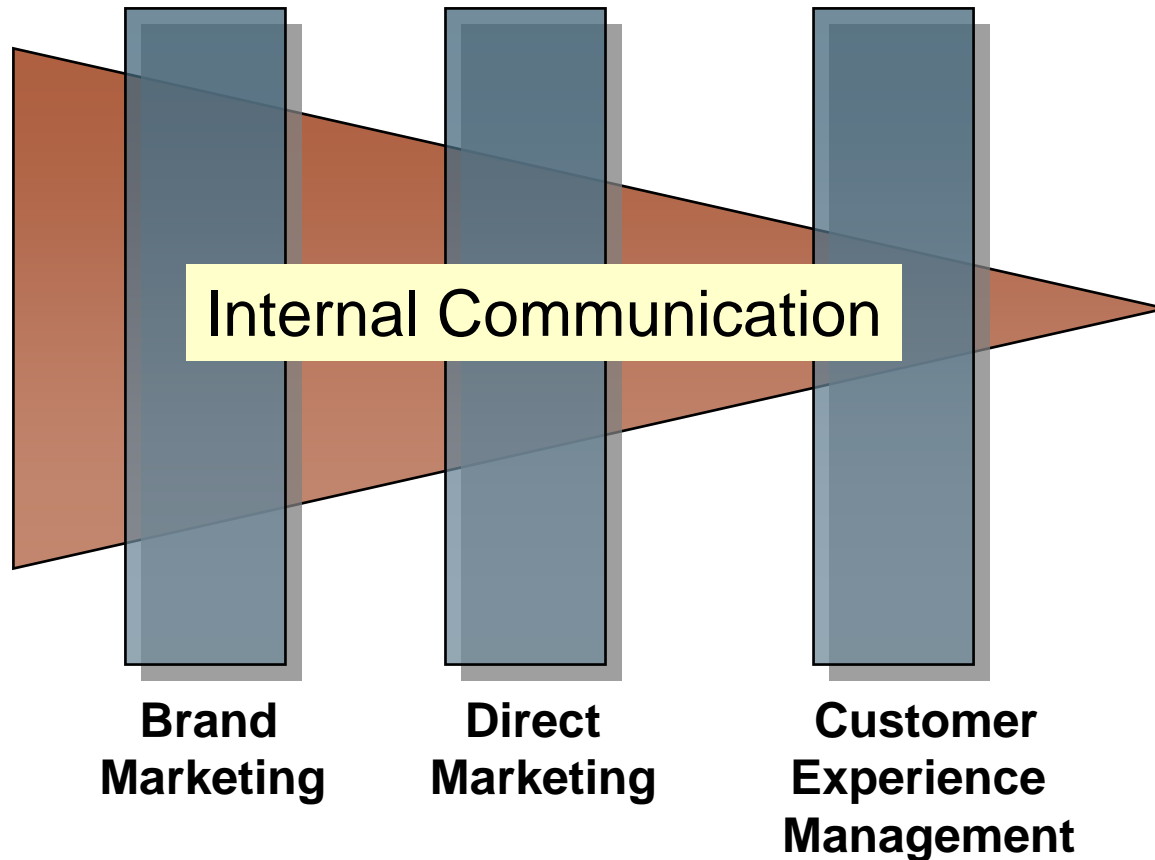
- **Academic quality – high selectivity.** Do you attract the best students in the country?
- **Academic quality – faculty research.** The quality, amount, and type of faculty research is a significant indicator of brand equity
- **Big-time sports.** Athletics are the front door. Win big or lose big, but don't do 6 and 6
- **Image-building.** Institutions that work hard to build a strong local, regional, and even national image will build brand equity
- **Co-branding (alliance marketing).** Marrying your brand with another, perhaps more prestigious brand, or a brand of particular interest to a target audience, is often used to jump-start a brand (Maclean's, Battelle, Boeing)
- **Endowment.** \$500 million in the bank might be a brand unto itself



# Key Concepts



# Integrated Marketing Communication

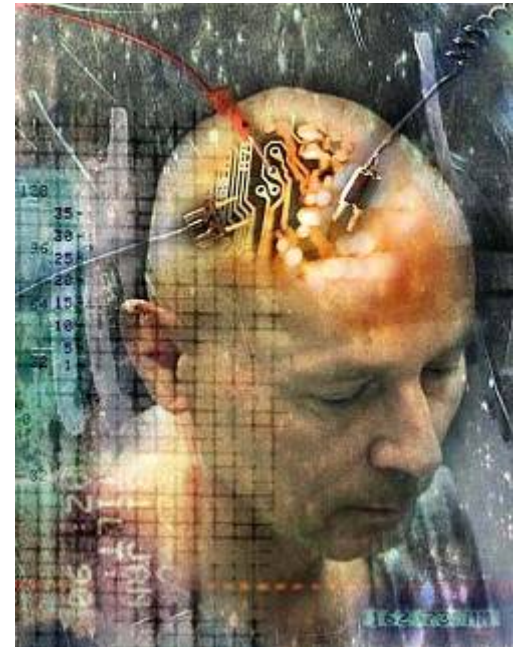


# Brand as Position

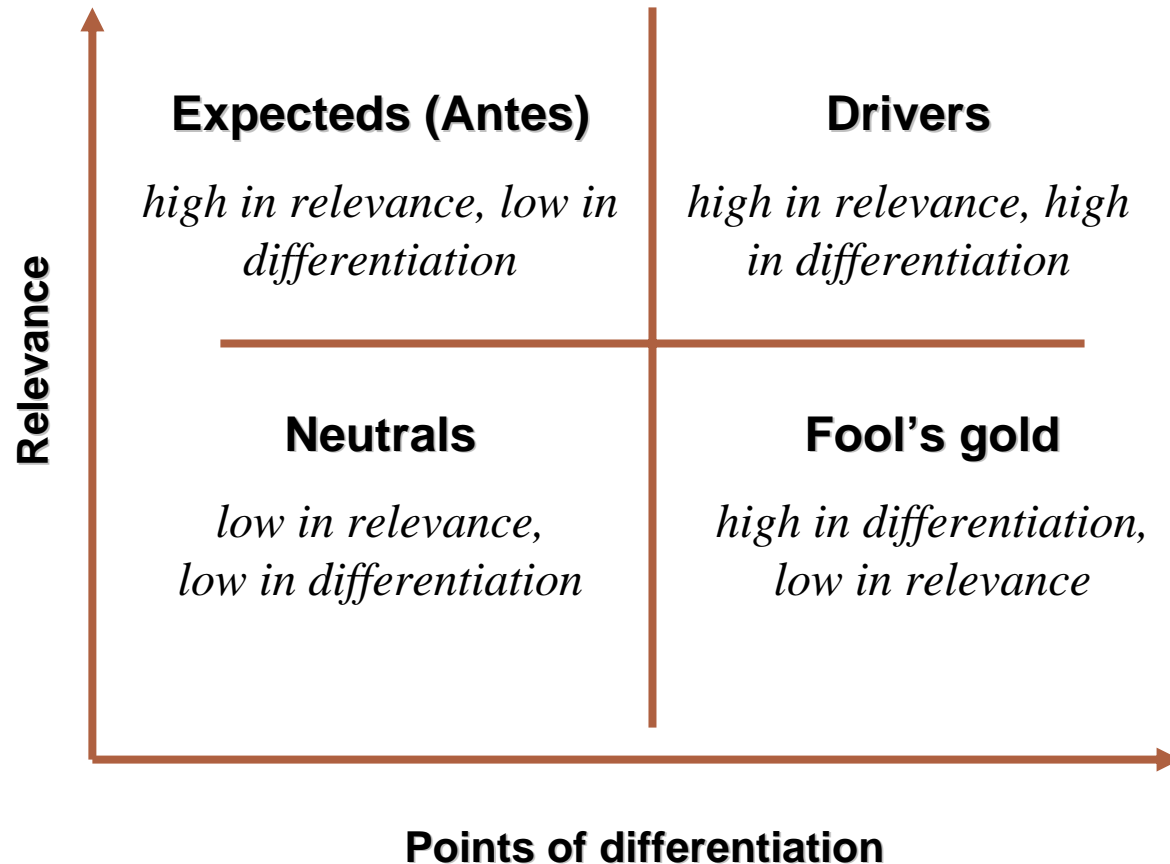
- The essence of both brand marketing and positioning can be understood by answering this question:

***What do people think when they hear your name?***

- Is what they think important, believable, and distinctive?
- Or when they think of a valued position do they think of you?



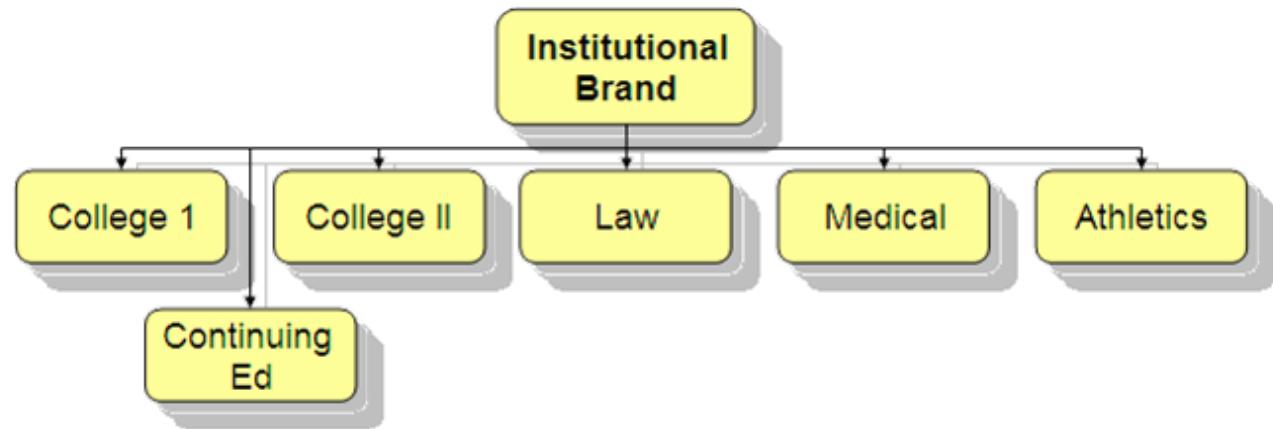
# Seeking Points of Differentiation



Source: *McKinseyQuarterly.com*

# Brand Architecture

- A systematic way of viewing and organizing your institutional (super) and sub-brands, attributes, and graphic identity so as to achieve greater clarity, synergy, and leverage
  - Branded house or house of brands
- A clear brand architecture is especially critical as brand contexts become more complex with multiple sub-brands and product offerings



Source: Aaker, modified

# Determining Sub-brands

- Sub-brands must act in concert with the super-brands
- Sub-brands cannot act unilaterally
- You might consider a sub-brand if:
  - Distinctive market presence
  - Not obviously tied to the larger super-brand
  - Serve separate target audiences or target geographies
  - Sub-brand has a different and valued USP
  - Others?

## Architecture – *continued*

- “House of brands”



- “Branded house”



# Experiential Marketing

- Colleges and universities “sell” the sum of all experiences a student will have and the opportunities they will have after they leave
- Those experiences grow from touchpoints. What are your major touchpoints for...
  - Traditional students
  - ...Nontraditional students
  - ...Donors
- ...and how do you know?
  - Gap analysis: 1) What do they expect? 2) How well do you deliver?

A brand is a living entity – and it is enriched or undermined cumulatively over time, the product of a thousand small gestures. – Michael Eisner

# Tesco – The Point of Brand

- 16 touchpoints that customers interact with on a weekly basis

- Out of store:

- Fleet media
- Posters
- Car parks
- Gas-pumps

- At home:

- Club card statements
- Tesco magazine
- Baby and toddler club
- Wine club
- Tesco.com

- In store:

- Sampling
- Displays
- People: Aisle help, baggers, cashiers, stockers
- Signage
- Organization
- Baskets
- Tesco TV




SO, HONESTLY,  
*how much trouble*  
ARE YOU IN?



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# Colleges and Universities

- Where is your point of brand?



# More Than Dollars ... Will

- Many college and university administrators believe that the biggest requirement for a successful brand marketing strategy is cash
- While you will spend dollars, there is another currency that is even more important than dollars: institutional will
- For a brand marketing strategy to be successful, you must have the institutional will to conduct the research and respond strategically
- A critical element of brand marketing, therefore, is the decision to focus outward rather than inward, the decision to first understand and then respond to customers
- One final word about dollars. You will spend dollars to create and maintain a brand
  - More than new dollars, you will spend coordinated dollars, dollars already being spent; now coordinated—and maximized—under one overarching brand marketing strategy



# Marketing Dollars

More Dollars

More Target Audiences  
Larger Target Geography  
Contested Position  
Less Valued Position  
Complex Position

Fewer Dollars

Fewer Target Audiences  
Smaller Target Geography  
Open Position  
More Valued Position  
Simple Position

# Building a Brand That Matters



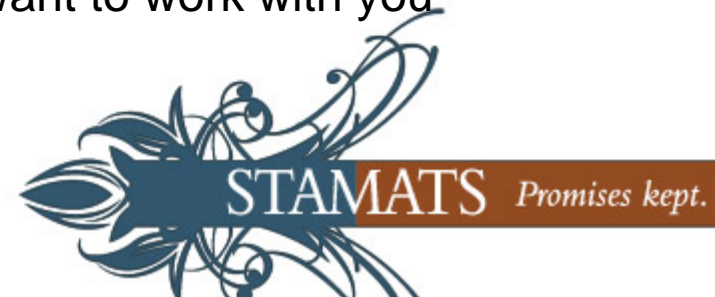
# A Nod to the Nomenclature

- Brand promise, brand position, and USP are synonyms
- Brand attribute, benefit segment, and vivid descriptors are synonyms as well
- An image is the initial, leading dimension of a brand
- A graphic identity is the graphic (visual) presentation of the brand:
  - Look
  - Letterhead
  - Logo



# Campus Engagement

- If you have a recently completed a strategic plan, and affirmed your core values, and your brand strategy is an extension of those core values, then it is possible to curtail the level of campus involvement in developing your brand
  - Similar to strategies used in strategic planning process
- Increasing campus buy-in
  - Clearly show how stronger brand will increase flow of resources
  - Begin with a research base
  - Not creation, but clarification
  - Emphasis reputation-building
  - Strong, demonstrated leadership from the top including board and senior team
  - Work with leadership and faculty who want to work with you
  - Strong internal launch
  - Share rewards



# Key Steps in Engaging the Campus

- Help the campus community understand the process
- Clarify their role in the process
- Build their confidence in the process (solid defensible research)
- Give the campus community access to the process
- Clarify the role of campus members in executing the plan
- Aggressively communicate outcomes

# Key People

- **The champion:** The spark or true believer (the visionary)
- **The sponsor:** Runs interference for the spark (the champion)
- **The large steering committee or taskforce:** The appointed planning committee; largely ineffectual as a true planning body
  - Best to transition it to an advisory group status
- **The planning team:** The champion and the team who actually do the heavy lifting
  - Involved with both developing and implementing the brand promise and strategy



# President/CEO as Sponsor

- President/CEO must:
  1. Have a vision for how marketing can help the institution
  2. Commit his or her power and prestige to the marketing efforts
  3. Dedicate sufficient institutional time, talent, and treasure
  4. Make tough decisions in a timely fashion
  5. Provide authority to the marketing champion
  6. Convey that marketing is an institution-wide commitment and responsibility
  7. Clear away organizational and policy roadblocks
  8. Insist on shared goals and resources among senior administrators/staffs
  9. Go toe-to-toe with recalcitrant administrators, administrators who adopt a wait and see attitude, and administrators who are hostile to the idea of marketing
  10. Demand departmental and even individual accountability
  11. Be the champion's sponsor



# Campus Involvement/Engagement

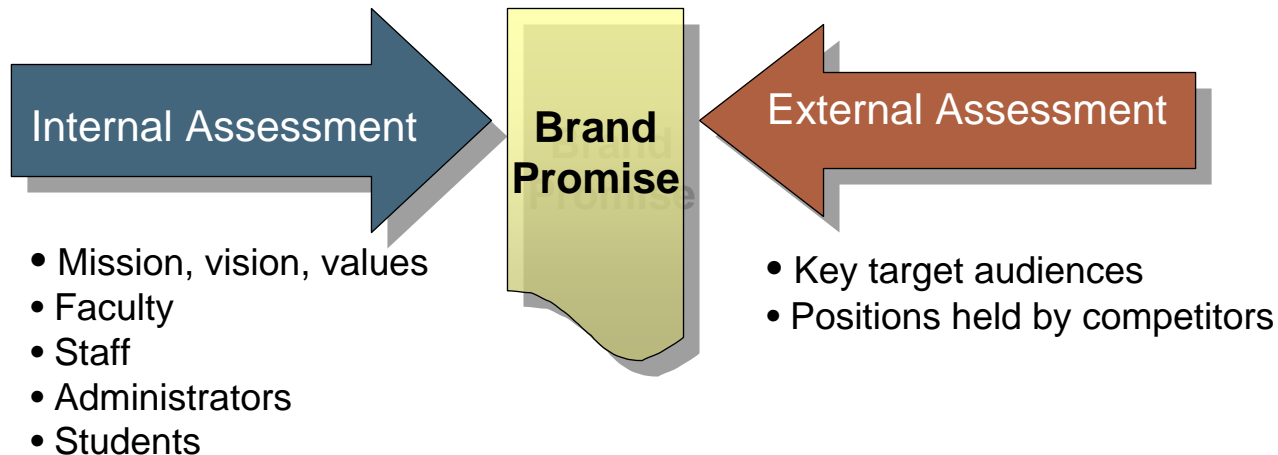
- Key issues:
  - If your plan involves the public declaration of previously settled core values then there is less need for campus engagement
  - If your plan involves the clarification of core values then there will be a greater need for campus engagement

# Building a Brand That Matters



# Step One: Make a Promise That Matters

- Begin with two broad assessments: (again, can be curtailed if SP was recent)
  - Internal
    - Stakeholders
  - External
    - Target audiences
    - Positions held by competitors



- Both assessments help you establish the initial baseline

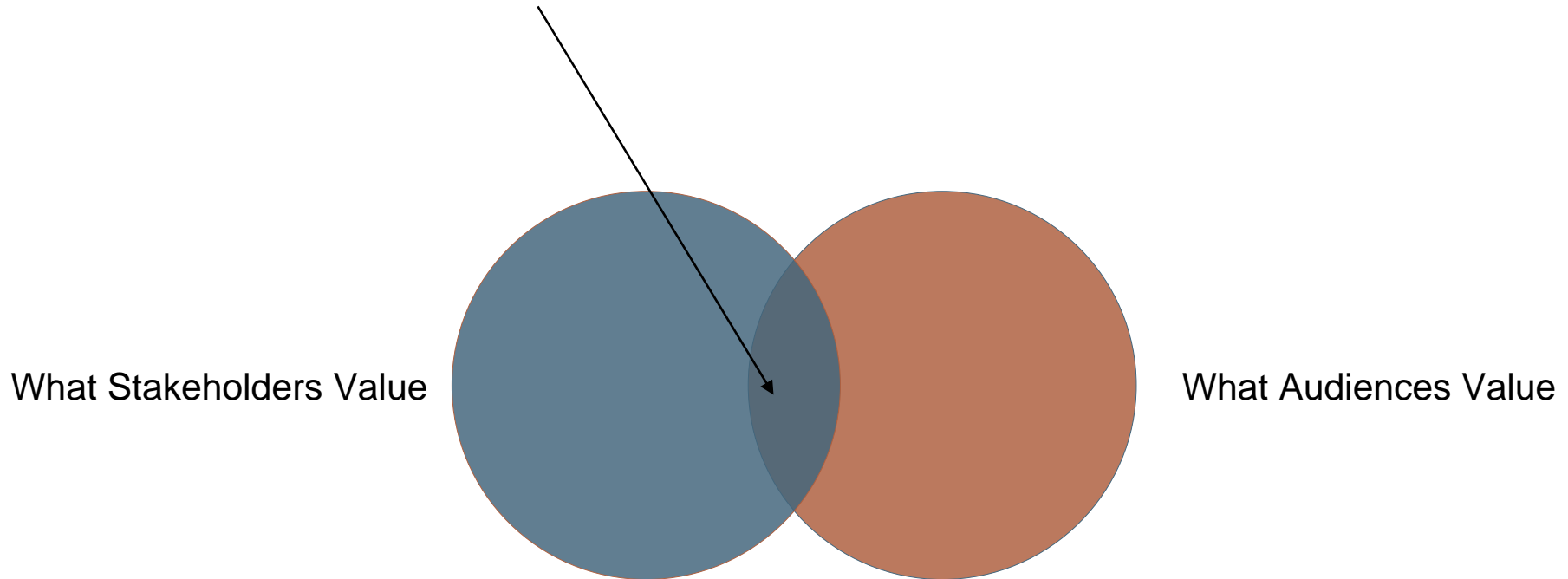
# Initial Research

- To establish a baseline
  - This is what we are currently known for
- Establish a reference point for later determining whether or not your brand strategy is/was effective
- It is very difficult to determine whether or not your brand strategy has been successful if you do not do the initial baseline research



# Focus on the Overlap

Make a Promise



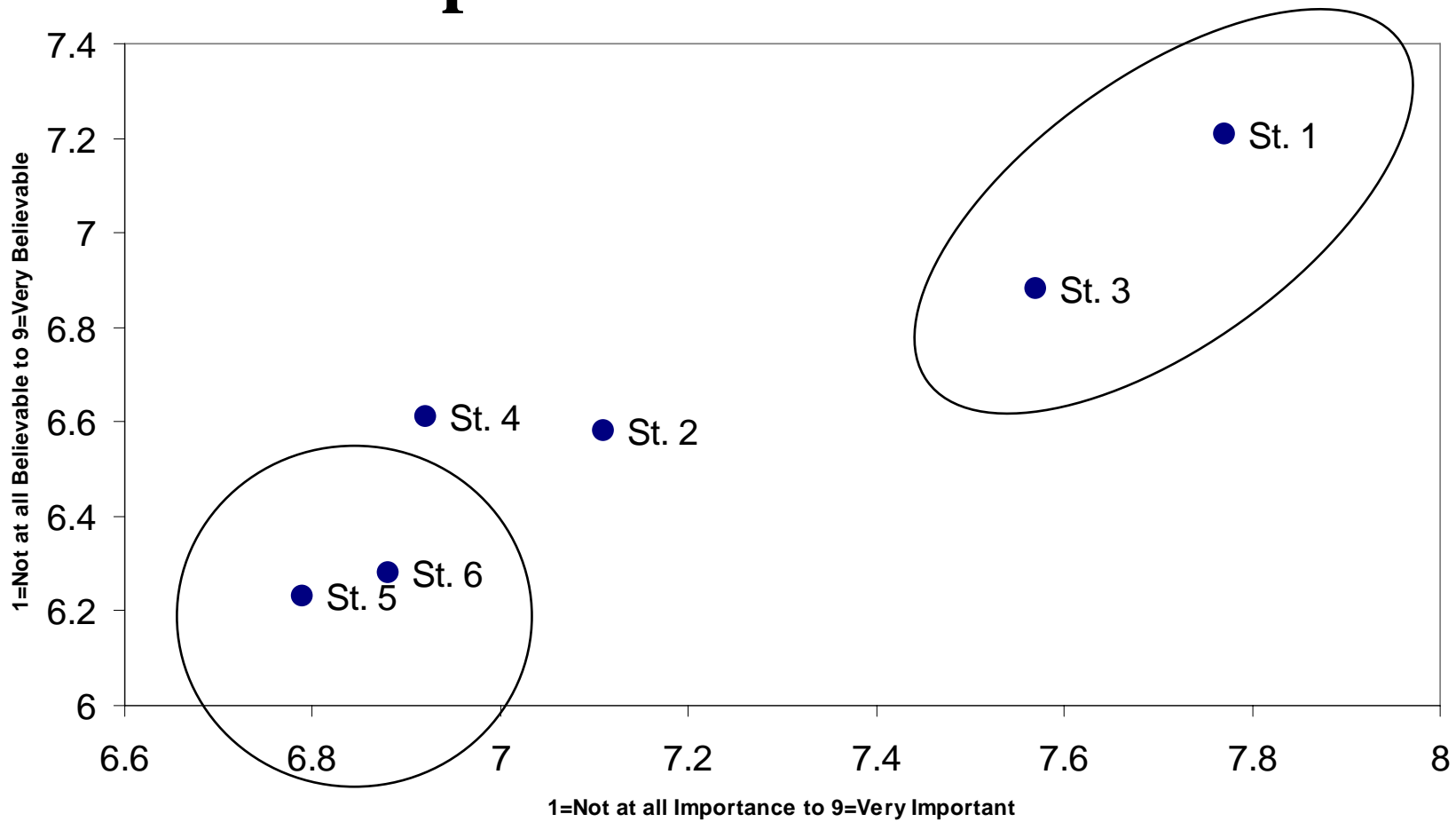
# The Promise Test

Make a Promise

- A promise test is not about popularity, but believability
- Go back and ask key audiences, via research, which of the four or five potential brand promises is:
  - Most understandable
  - Most important
  - Most believable
  - Most distinctive (especially external audiences)
- Research options:
  - Telephone
  - Web
- Typically survey a subset of original samples



# Importance vs. Believable



**Make a Promise**



# Brand Promises

Make a Promise

- **University of Western Ontario:** Western provides the best student experience among Canada's leading research-intensive universities
- **Memorial University** offers the freedom to explore and experience your ingenuity
- At **McMaster University**, students explore and expand their potential in an innovative research community of teachers and learners
- **York University** redefines the impossible



# Select a Singular Brand Promise

Make a Promise

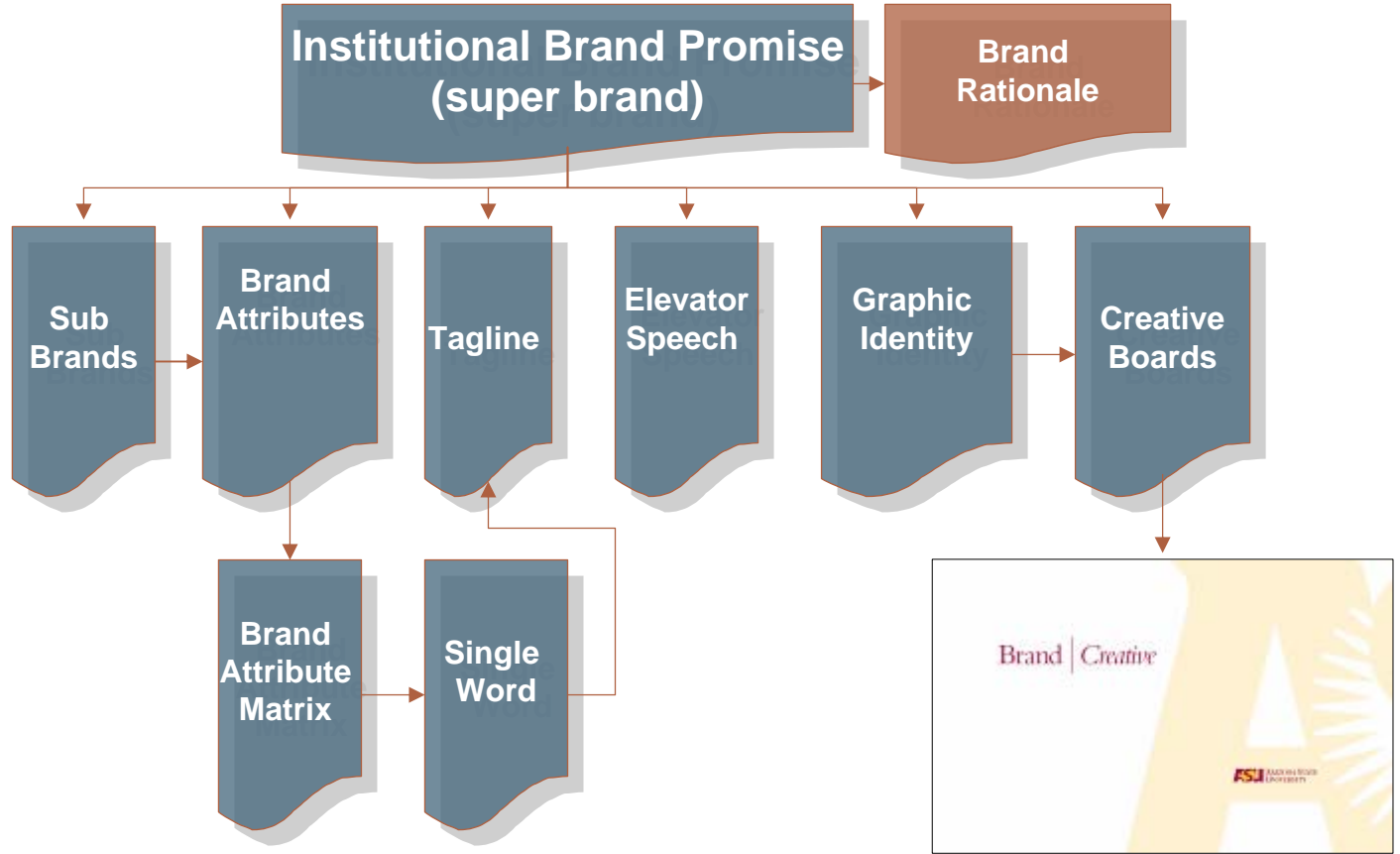
## Remember:

Your promise must play (and work) well in recruiting/admissions, advancement/fundraising and academic affairs



# The Brand Portfolio

Make a Promise



- Verbal and visual vocabulary



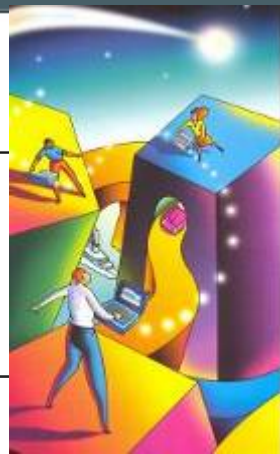
# Sample Brand Portfolio: Susquehanna

- Brand promise: Susquehanna University is a friendly, collaborative community of teachers and learners passionate about preparing students to achieve, lead, and serve
- Brand attributes:
  1. Balance of liberal arts and professional programs
  2. Passionate faculty mentors
  3. Student-centered
  4. Results oriented
  5. Experiential learning
  6. Exceptional facilities and welcoming community

# Step Two: Communicate Your Promise

- Your goal at this point is to position your brand promise in the minds of your most important internal and external target audiences
  - Your goal is awareness
- Ultimately, you want messages that are:
  - Relevant (understandable, important, believable, distinctive)
  - Repeated
  - Remembered
- For these messages to succeed, they must first be noticed!





<p><b>Constituent relations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public</li> <li>• High school</li> <li>• Alumni</li> <li>• Donor</li> <li>• Community</li> <li>• Business</li> </ul>	<p><b>Media work:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hometowners</li> <li>• Features</li> <li>• Wild art</li> </ul>
<p><b>Interactive media:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web (social media, blogs et al.)</li> <li>• E-mail</li> <li>• CD-ROM</li> </ul>	<p><b>Direct response:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telephone</li> <li>• Postal mail</li> <li>• E-mail</li> </ul>
<p><b>Publications including variable digital printing/print on demand</b></p>	<p><b>Sponsorships, publicity, event marketing</b></p>
<p><b>Internal communication</b></p>	<p><b>Collaborations, alliance marketing (co-branding)</b></p>
<p><b>Word-of-mouth (buzz marketing)</b></p>	<p><b>Facilities and environmentals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings and grounds</li> <li>• Signage and perimeter marking</li> </ul>
<p><b>Traditional media (advertising):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magazine and newspaper</li> <li>• TV/cable</li> <li>• Radio</li> <li>• Outdoor/out of home</li> </ul>	<p><b>Engaged employees as media</b></p>



# Brand Communication Plan

Communicate Your Promise

- Singular brand promise and portfolio
- Prioritized target audiences (who we are talking to)
- Target geography (where they live)
- Message strategy (segmented brand attributes)
- Internal launch strategy
- Media mix strategies (how are we reaching our target audiences?)
  - Internal communication
  - Public relations including media relations
  - Traditional media (advertising) [print, broadcast, outdoor/transit, mall et al.]
  - Interactive/direct marketing/social media
  - Experiential marketing (event, atmospherics, signage/vehicle ID)
  - Merchandising
  - Alliance marketing
- Budget year one, two, and three
- Calendar (by audience)
- Evaluation mechanisms and timeline



# Audience Attribute Matrix

Audience Attribute Matrix			
Target Audiences	Target Geographies	Brand Attributes Defined	Media Preferences
1	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.
2.	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.
3.	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.

# Apportioning Marketing Dollars

- Brand vs. direct (30% vs. 70%)
- By audience → Primary and secondary
- By media channel
  - Internal communication
  - Public relations including media relations
  - Traditional media (advertising) [print, broadcast, outdoor/transit, mall et al.]
  - Interactive/direct marketing/social media
  - Experiential marketing (event, atmospherics, signage/vehicle ID)
  - Merchandising
  - Alliance marketing
- By media effectiveness
  - 70%        Traditional media
  - 20%        New media
  - 10%        Experimental media
- By geography → Primary vs. secondary



# Internal Launch

Communicate Your Promise

- Before you roll out your brand to external audiences, you must undertake an internal launch
  - Launch, not leak
- The purpose of the internal launch is to:
  - Celebrate the new brand (pump up the volume)
  - Give internal audiences talking points
  - Build support among internal audiences
  - Educate people on the brand portfolio, especially the rationale
  - Offer guidelines on how to communicate the brand
  - Offer guidelines on how to live the brand

**Vision + Communication = Shared Purpose**

# Build Momentum

Communicate Your Promise

- Pick some low hanging fruit
- Celebrate early wins
- Communicate at three stages:
  - At the campaign launch
  - Periodically (quarterly) throughout the campaign
  - When the plan achieves short-term wins, intermediate goals, or evidences other indicators of success
    - Especially successes related to resource gains
- Show outcomes, not merely output
- Share the rewards
- Don't blink



# Step Three: Live Your Promise

- Align your experience and your brand
  - Consistently tie your brand to your strategic plan
  - Help people understand their role in brand fulfillment
  - Conduct ongoing staff training
    - What does your brand promise mean to recruiting, fundraising, parking, and the business office?
  - Campaign maintenance
    - Secret shopper
    - Post-mortems

# Internal Branding

Communicate Your Promise

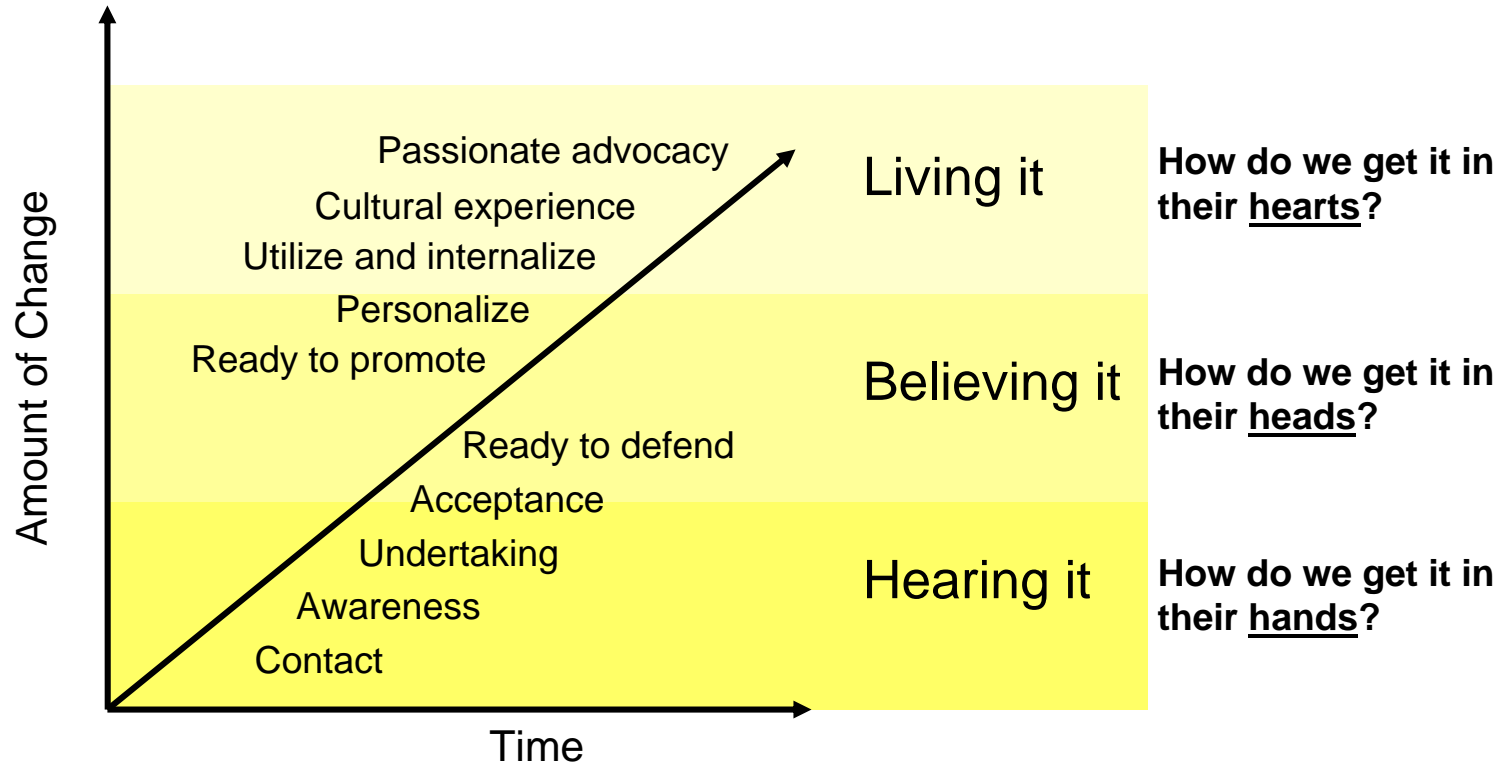
- Changes in brand culture come through the thoughtful development of tools, training, and using evangelists to spread and keep the word
- Brand evangelists
  - Identify influential people within the organization who understand and embrace the brand strategy
  - Develop these people as “change agents” who can generate excitement and reduce anxiety

**Source:** Aaker, *Prophet*, modified



# Assimilation Takes Time

Communicate Your Promise



Source: Aaker, *Prophet*, modified

# When You Break Your Promises ...

Live Your Promise

- With prospective students
  - Rise in nonmatriculants
  - Negative word-of-mouth
- With current students
  - Increased number of withdrawing students
  - Loss of potential alumni support
  - Negative word of mouth
- With alumni
  - Decline in participation in alumni events
  - Decline in participation in annual fund
  - Loss of future gifts
- With faculty and staff
  - Quit contributing
  - Become obstructionists and saboteurs
- With donors
  - Increased number of non-repeat donors
  - Decline in gift opportunities
- With community residents
  - Loss of community support



# Step Four: Strengthen Your Promise

- Ongoing evaluation to determine how we can:
  - Make a better promise
  - Communicate our promise better
  - Live our promise more completely
- To strengthen your promise, revisit key audiences and ask them: “How’d we do?”
  - Conduct internal assessments
  - Evaluate retention, student satisfaction, and outcome data

# Evaluate Progress

Strengthen Your Promise

- Periodically, you need to repeat baseline research to determine whether or not your campaign is effective
  - Invest in a research cycle
- Solid data that indicates progress is one means to legitimize the effort and gain political and monetary support



# Keep the Timeline in Mind

Strengthen Your Promise

- Institutions wishing to develop a successful brand marketing strategy recognize this as a long-term commitment that is better measured in decades rather than months
  - It is the same long-term commitment you make to building academic quality or the campus master plan
- The goal is to build brand equity among internal stakeholders and external audiences



**Over time, a successful brand strategy will become the central organizing purpose for the institution and will be indistinguishable from a successful strategic plan**

# Final Question

Based on this presentation, and your experiences at your institution, what three things need to be done before you can initiate a brand marketing strategy?

1.

2.

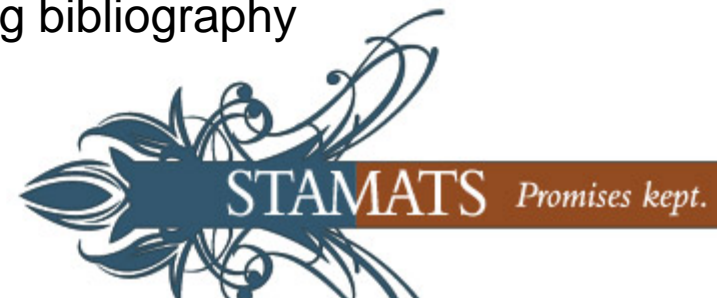
3.

Resources on Stamats Web site:

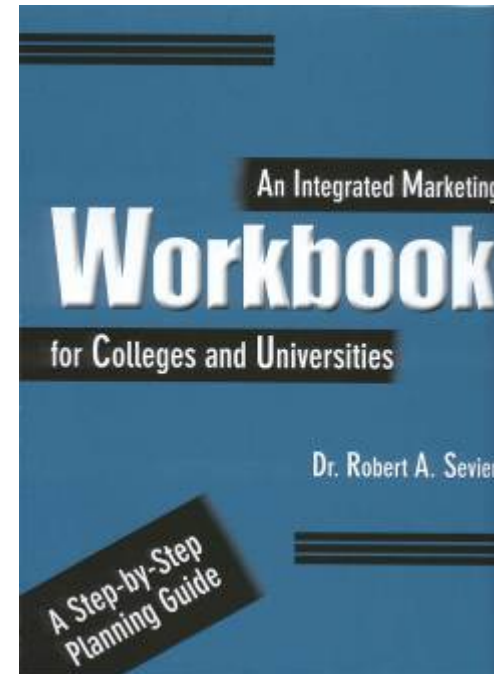
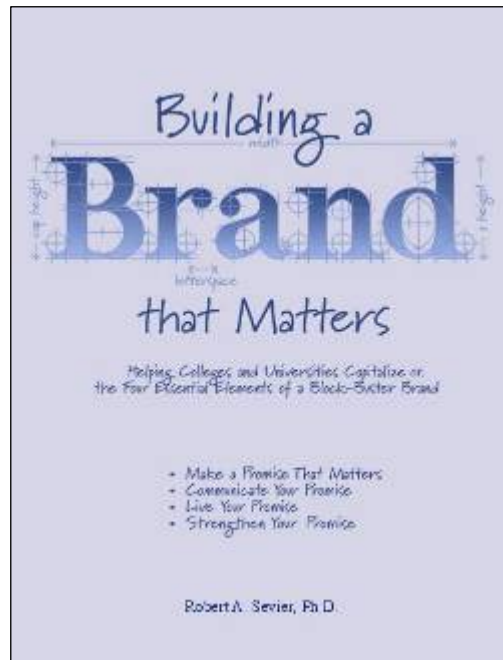
Glossary of key terms

Brand marketing White Papers

Marketing bibliography



## Books by Bob Sevier



Available from [case.org](http://case.org) or [strategypublishing.com](http://strategypublishing.com)