

Branding for Water and Wastewater Utilities

Orange County, Inland Empire Branding Workshop



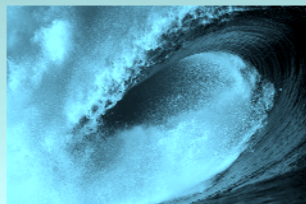
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John Ruetten
Resource Trends, Inc.

The Utility Branding Network

The Power of Branding!



What is Branding?



- Not Spin, Not Advertising
- Good Branding - Not What You Say, Who You Are
- Brand Not “Defined” by a Logo or Look
- Concerned with Reputation, Trust, Value, Price
- For Utilities – Addresses Trust, Support, and Investment
- More Precise Objective than “Public Education”

Why Branding for Utilities?

- **Being Branded with No Branding Strategy!**
 - Vulnerable to Misleading or Negative Perceptions
- Need More Local Investment!
 - More Water Resources, Higher Water Quality
 - Aging Infrastructure - Rising Construction Costs
 - More Stringent Regulations
 - Emerging Contaminants
 - Climate Change and Carbon Footprint
 - Sewer Overflows.....etc.



Utilities Are Competing for Dollars!

Must Be Clear on Value – Must Be Trusted!

Benefits of Branding

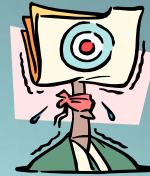


- Highly Integrated Organization (Integrity)
 - Planning, Decision Making, Service, Communications
- Better Relationships with Policy Makers and Public
- Insulation Against Negative Events
- Increased Trust, Support, and Investment
- Products that are Accepted and Bring a Fair Price

Serve Customers!

Build Your Brand!

Branded!



- Constantly Happening
 - People, Products, and Organizations
- Judgments, Perceptions, Expectations
- Negatively Branded
 - Management Shake-Ups, Corporate Failure
- How Are Wastewater Utilities and Employees Branded?

The Brand

- The Set of Perceptions
 - Defined By You and/or Others
- An Asset or Liability
 - Coca Cola Brand Worth Over \$60 Billion
- Logo is an Identifier
 - Not the Essence of the Brand!

The logo for The Coca-Cola Company, featuring the brand name in its signature script font on a red rectangular background.

Branding

- Creating and Communicating Value
- Can Be Simple Ideas of Value
 - Volvo = Safe Cars
 - Southwest Airlines = Low Cost / On-Time Airline
- **Not a Slogan or Single Idea – An Experience!**

The Hertz logo, consisting of the word "Hertz" in a bold, italicized, yellow font on a black background.

Oakley Sunglasses

- Good Optics
- UV Protection is Real
- Lenses and Frames are Shatter Resistant
- Well Designed – Functional
- Nose Piece – Glasses Don't Fall Off
- Oakley Will Replace Anytime
- Worth the Higher Price



Brand = Price!

Personal Branding Exercise



Branding Sampler



Branding and the Use of Words

Bailout
Stimulus
Deficit
Earmarks
Spending
Investment

Meaningful Communications!

The Utility Brand



Organization's Commitments

- Long-Term Planning, Appropriate Investment
 - Sustainability
- Specific Value Standards
 - Water Reliability
 - Water Quality, Public Health
 - Environmental Stewardship
 - Producer of Valuable Resources
- Increasing Efficiency, Financially Competent

Staff Character Traits

- Honesty, Openness
- Having Integrity
- Being Clear
- Problem Solvers
- Collaborative
- Innovative Leaders
- Professional

What People Can Count On!



Defining the Brand

- A Series of Commitment Statements
- What the Statements Mean
 - Volvo = Safe Cars is Simple and Clear
- Demonstrating Credibility
 - Don't Have to Be Perfect
 - Must Demonstrate Your Commitment
- Mission and Vision Statements
 - Usually Include High-Level Branding Ideas
 - Don't Get to the Real Meaning of the Statements
 - Aren't Very Empowering



Utilities Can Afford to Build Their Brand

Brand Building Tactics

- Relationship with Policy Makers
- Planning and Decision Making
- Building Key Relationships – The “Authorizing Public”
- Reaching “The Public” When They are Paying Attention
- Traditional Communications



Highly Integrated Organization - Integrity

When They Are Paying Attention

Efficient Communications

- Customer Service
 - Billing, Problem Solving
 - Make it Easy, Don't Make Them Wait
- Construction Projects
 - Communicate, Listen, Collaborate
- Recycling Centers, Drug Dumps
- Special Projects – “The Bufferlands”



Utilities Have Significant Access

Make an Impression During Each Interaction!

Traditional Communications

- Websites, Newsletters, Press Releases
- Two Communication Objectives
 - Help Customers Do Something – Pay Bill.....
 - Build Your Brand, Build Trust
- No Information without Motivation
 - More Meaningful Communications
- Emphasize Water Resources or Water Reliability?
- Avoid Long Sentences and Overly Technical Information



Educate?

Motivations Meaningful Value Standards



“Completion of the water quality laboratory will allow Metro Water to meet its goal to improve water quality and increase its knowledge of water quality issues.”

“The North Fork Reservoir project plan has been approved by the City Council, which is a critical milestone in improving water reliability and drought resiliency in the region. This project will allow our region to weather multi-year droughts with little or no cutback in service.”

Small Utility Issues, Advantages

- Relationships More Intimate
 - Staff Character Traits More Important
- Sewer Spill Makes the Front Page
 - Branding May Be More Critical
- Entire Staff Can Build the Brand
 - Don't Have to Train a Thousand People
- Narrow Focus Utilities Also Have Branding Advantage
 - The Best Brands are Focused Brands



Utility Product Branding

Tap Water

Conservation, Water Use Efficiency

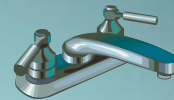
Reclaimed Water

Biosolids, Organics



Tap Water and Conservation

- Tap Water
 - Reliable
 - Safe But Not Healthy
 - Utility Needs to Become the “Source of Quality”
 - Create Water Quality Confidence
- Conservation, Water Use Efficiency
 - Conserving So We Can Build More Houses?
 - Need for Clarity
 - Drought Measures Versus Efficiency Measures
 - Why?



Branding of "Recycled Water"

The Name!

Source = Quality



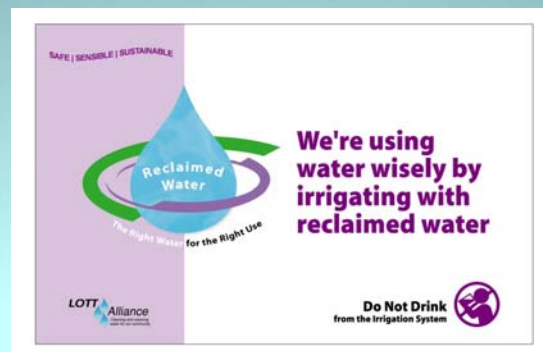
It's Not Water!

A Manufactured Product! Irrigation Water - Do Not Drink

Multiple Products - Multiple Uses



A Positive and Strategic Message



Organics Markets

- Biosolids
 - Not a Product – Substance or Ingredient
 - Provisions for Brand Management in Contracts?
- Soil Amendment Markets
 - Separation Between Utility Brand and Fertilizer Brand
 - Utilities – Investors in Market Assets
 - Formulations, Brands, Sales and Distribution Channels



Are We Renting or Building Equity?

Lunch



Sample Branding Audit of Utility Website

The Relationship with Policy Makers

- Branding of Staff Members
 - Financial Competency?
 - Efficient? Committed to Increasing Efficiency?
 - Clear, Proactive, Collaborativeor Bureaucratic?
- Branding of Policy Makers
 - Not Knowledgeable
 - Motivations - Politics, Career or.....?
 - Willingness to Vote for Rate Increases, Investment?



The Staff Must Lead!

The Utility Brand



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What People Can Count On!

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Discussion



Branding of Water Conservation

- Drought Response?
- Ongoing Water Use Efficiency?
- Financial and Efficiency Benefits?
- Green Initiative?
- Saving Water, Higher Rates, Fueling Growth?
- National Programs Versus Individual Utility Programs?

Discussion



Regional Branding and Communications

Problems and Opportunities

- What People Know?
- Mixed Messages?
- Funding and Resources to Reach People?
- What's the Message?
- Reliability or Scarcity?
- Appropriate Investment or Under-Investment?

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Build Your Brand!

Wrap-Up

Branding Insights, What is Branding?

Tour of the Branding Manual

John Ruetten
John@ResourceTrends.com

Tammy Russo
Tammy@UtilityBranding.net

Ongoing Branding Support
The Utility Branding Network
www.utilitybranding.net



The Lens of Branding