

**Brand Communications and Employees:
Professional Perceptions of Building Support From Within**

Philip G Kelley

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BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

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About the Author

Philip Kelley is a strategic communications professional with more than 10 years of experience working in strategic marketing. His professional experience includes working as an account executive at Minneapolis based MarketingLab, Inc, direct marketing and nonprofit communications at the University of Minnesota Foundation, and marketing and brand management for the University of Minnesota. Philip earned his bachelor's degree in Strategic Communications from the University of Minnesota in 2005, and since then has spent 2/3rds of his career working at the University. Philip has a passion for identity management and brand strategy, and has been fortunate enough to indulge that passion through a variety of projects in his career.

Managing an identity for a complex institution like the University of Minnesota has highlighted the importance of internal marketing efforts, and the value of leveraging every constituency in those efforts. Because Philip has spent most of his adult life at the University, he wished to conclude his graduate studies with research that could provide some tangible benefit to the institution.

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Executive Summary

Employees and a strong brand are two elements that contribute to organizational success. This paper examines the relationship between the two using an internal branding framework and attempts to describe the ways in which brand supportive behaviors can be encouraged by internal audiences. A series of in-depth interviews was conducted with 19 marketing and communications professionals to determine the ways in which a variety of organizations communicated their brand to employees, and how effective those efforts were. Findings from this research support an integrated approach to internal branding efforts, and identify several ways that brand communications can influence employee attitudes and behaviors. Future research suggestions are also discussed and include additional research in the Higher Education industry, employee surveys, and brand communications content analysis.

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Introduction

Employees have always been seen as a key asset to organizational success. How they perform their core job functions and contribute to the productivity of the organization can directly impact its bottom line. However, their role in contributing to the success of their employers extends beyond just their job functions and responsibilities. Strategic communicators are increasingly seeing the value internal audiences can bring to organizational communications and marketing initiatives.

Today's shifting communications landscape has permitted nearly every individual, regardless of social status or financial means, a platform from which to communicate his/her own messages. Along with this change has come a renewed sense by marketing and communications professionals (and the organizations they work for) of the importance of word-of-mouth marketing. These shifts have led organizations to look to employees as a new and influential channel through which brand messaging and information can be relayed to consumers, stakeholders, or the general public.

Organizational brands have traditionally been managed by, the functional areas of marketing and public relations. They do so through the development of a unique organizational identity, the communication of values and a central brand promise, and by addressing concerns or crises as they arise. However, brand professionals have realized the benefit of aligning internal audiences with the organizational brand and have sought ways to leverage their internal employee bases to further build and support their organization's brand.

Employees can impact organizational success in several ways. First, and most obviously, they can perform necessary job functions contributing to the success of the organization. Second, they can deliver on an organization's brand promise through customer interactions. And third, they can act in ways that support the organization while not "on the job". In recognition of the influence employees can have, and the increasing challenges organizations

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face reaching their consumers through a cluttered communication environment, organizations are implementing internal branding efforts to foster supportive attitudes and behaviors from their employee base.

It is in this current environment that the central focus of this paper has materialized: exploring the connection between an organization's brand communications and employee attitudes and behaviors. To do so, insights from professionals who work in the marketing and communications field were sought. Their experience and perspectives have helped to identify ways organizations communicate their brand to internal audiences and better understand how to do so effectively.

Literature Review

Employee Value to Organizations. Brand equity, or value a brand brings to an organization, is a commonly used metric for evaluating an organization and describing the strength of its identity. King and Grace (2010) discuss several forms of brand equity of relevance to this research. One form is *financial brand equity*, or the value a brand can bring when sold or monetized in some way (King and Grace, 2010, p. 940). This type of equity can be seen when brands are sold or licensed for others to use. Take the University of Minnesota as an example. The University licenses its trademarks to clothing producers and sellers for use on merchandise. These vendors leverage the positive associations with the University's brand in order to sell merchandise bearing its logos, and the University receives royalties for merchandise sold with its trademarks.

Another form of brand equity is *consumer brand equity*, which is the differential effect a brand can have from competitors in the minds of consumers (King and Grace, 2010, p. 940). A good example of this type of equity can be seen in celebrity brands common in the cooking and entertaining world. A brand of brownie mix carrying the name of noted catering chef and celebrity personality Ina Garten may be perceived as better and of higher quality by consumers

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than a generic brand of brownie mix using the same ingredients. In this case, the inclusion of Ina Garten's name provides added equity to one brownie mix in the consumer's mind and the sales price can be increased to reflect that, providing more profit to the organization.

Finally, King and Grace (2010) propose a third form of brand equity, *employee based brand equity*, which is the value supportive employee attitudes and behaviors can have on a brand (p. 941). Employees who support their organizations can be found everywhere, but are frequently not considered when measuring brand equity. This form of equity precedes and influences both consumer and financial brand equities - and as a result directly impacts the success of an organization.

In his paper *Inside Out: How Employees Build Value*, Nicholas Ind builds on King and Grace's perspective of employee based brand equity. He argues that employees build brand value and contribute to a positive organizational image through their understanding of the organization's ideology (the mission, vision, and values) and adoption of attitudes and behaviors that embody that ideology - "living the brand". Their interactions with customers reinforce that ideology and help to determine the customer experience. They fulfill the organization's brand promise and thus provide customers with a unique and individualized experience congruent with the brand. Creating happy and loyal customers. This view recognizes the relationship between employees who live the brand, satisfied customers, and business performance; and suggests that employee attitudes and behavior are linked to overall business success (Ind, 2003, p.400).

Another example of how employee based brand equity can impact organizational success is highlighted by Tavassoli et. al. in their paper *Employee-Based Brand Equity: Why Firms with Strong Brands Pay Their Executives Less*. They propose that organizations with strong brands can limit executive salaries by leveraging the brand's equity. Using identity theory as a framework, they outline how individuals who identify with strong brands (by working for them) can experience positive self-enhancement to their own identity. Results from their study

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suggested that organizations with strong brands can not only positively impact recruitment efforts, but that they permit compensation committees to leverage brand equity as an effective bargaining tool when establishing executive pay (Tavassoli, Et. al, 2014, p687).

Digging deeper into ways employees can support and add value to organizations, it can be worthwhile to shift focus and explore how organizations think their employees contribute to their brand and add value. There are several perspectives on this, but frequently employees are seen as brand ambassadors. This perspective views employees as central figures from the customer or public's perspective who can deliver on a brand promise when engaging in job based customer interactions (Gelb and Rangarajan, 2014). Another perspective considers employees as elements of the brand. These employees are often referred to as "living the brand", because they internalize their organization's values and deliver on those during non-job related interactions with friends and family (Maxwell and Knox, 2009).

Literature on the topic of employee's creating brand value also highlights that they have significant influence on the brand perceptions of external audiences when they deliver authentic positive word-of-mouth away from the workplace (Morokane, et. al., 2016). It is important to note that employees generally influence consumer behavior by educating consumers through word-of-mouth, but they can also contribute to building positive brand associations when they champion their employer brand (Morokane, et. al., 2016).

Emphasizing the importance of word-of-mouth on brand value, Mikacova and Gavlakova (2014) refer to the "conversation economy" and the freedom consumers have to discuss product or service related issues. Consider then the impact that supportive employee's can have in the conversation economy, offering helpful information and guidance to consumers, or providing valuable feedback to the organization about current consumer feelings.

Collectively, the literature on employee contributions to brand value supports the employee focus of this paper's central research questions. It is in every organization's best

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interest to find ways to build and encourage supportive attitudes and behaviors by their employees to facilitate greater organizational success. With employee value established, we can shift to an exploration of how organizations communicate their identities to internal audiences.

Internal Branding. Saleem and Iglesias (2016) reviewed the current state of internal brand communications research and highlighted the fragmented approach to research in the field of employer/employee brand communications. They propose a clear delineation between internal branding (employees as brand champions inside and outside the organization) and employer branding (employees as brand ambassadors in customer interactions), and suggested that future research adopt a common definition of internal branding:

Internal branding is the process through which organizations make a company-wide effort within supportive culture to integrate brand ideologies, leadership, human resource management, internal brand communication and internal brand communities as a strategy to enable employees to consistently co-create brand value with multiple stakeholders. (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016, p. 50)

This paper adopts this definition of internal branding as a foundational framework. Saleem and Iglesias (2016) went on to outline the structure and components of internal branding initiatives (p. 48). This breakdown can be helpful to any organization undertaking internal branding initiatives, by providing a framework that branding and communications professionals can use to build internal communications strategies and tactics. See Table I for an overview of the components of internal branding.

Table I - Summary of internal branding components

<i>Brand Ideologies</i>	A brand's vision, mission, goals, norms and values.
<i>Brand Leadership</i>	Transformational leaders working alongside staff who disseminate a clear brand ideology and facilitate a positive shared understanding of the brand.

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<i>Brand-Centered Human Resource Management (HRM)</i>	Recruiting and selecting individuals who possess values congruent with the brand, in addition to training them in line with brand values and having a compensation structure that promotes the brand's values.
<i>Internal Brand Communication</i>	Brand related communication in all directions internally and externally.
<i>Internal Brand Communities</i>	Virtual and physical communities that foster employee identification with the brand.

(Saleem and Iglesias, 2016, p. 48)

The value of internal branding was further highlighted by a study from Punjaisri and Wilson (2010). Their research showed that internal branding efforts can have a positive effect on an employee's sense of belonging to an organization, as well as their performance (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2010, p. 1531). This summary of internal branding components provides a framework from which an exploration of organizational communications to employees can be examined to determine best practices. In addition to internal branding and employee based brand equity, the literature review provided several other takeaways on this internal branding framework.

First, organizations should survey and identify what employees value and find attractive about their organization, so those attributes can be leveraged in any internal brand communications (Maxwell and Knox, 2009). It is also important to identify authentic organizational values, attempting to convey values or attributes that aren't natural to the organization can result in decreased levels of employee engagement (Holtzhausen and Fourie, 2011). Values and attributes directly relate to brand ideologies, important to internal branding.

Next, consider the important role organizational leadership can have on the internal brand. Leaders voices carry weight with employees and can help communicate messages with authority unlike others within an organization. The literature highlighted just how impactful leaders can be in the communication of the internal brand by conveying coherent and consistent brand messages (Vallaster and Chernatony, 2006), explaining the value of the brand to

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employees (Xiong, et al, 2013), modeling brand consistent behaviors (King and Grace, 2008), and communicating brand ideologies (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). Encouraging leadership to play an active role in the internal brand communication process can also increase broader organizational buy-in and support.

Third, it is also important to consider the nature of the internal branding process, and how it can overlap the marketing, branding, public relations, and human resource management functions within an organization. Alignment and collaboration between the marketing and human resource functions can help to ensure successful internal brand communications by incorporating brand consistent messages to human resource communications and functions (Saleem and Iglesias, 2015). Organizational and human resource policies or processes may have an effect on employees, and it is important to ensure policies are supportive of the brand in their intent and function (Gelb and Rangarajan, 2014). For example, human resources can ensure connection to the vision, mission, and values of the organization by incorporating measures of individual employee performance on those points in the review process and tying them to rewards and recognition.

Further proof of the integrated nature of internal branding efforts comes from Mikacova and Gavlakova's paper *The Role of Public Relations in Branding* which makes the case that public relations can play a role in brand management and organizational success. The public relations function can support a brand or organization by influencing the public conversation and narrative about the organization. This support manifests itself through credible story-telling, and providing the proof points that support advertising and marketing messages from the organization (Mikacova and Gavlakova, 2014, p. 839). Though these efforts are traditionally focused at news media, the same strategies can be used when communicating to internal audiences, and thus provide those same audiences with valuable knowledge so they are

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equipped to participate in, and possibly steer, the public conversation when it relates to their employer.

Finally, brand knowledge has been shown to positively affect brand supportive behaviors in employees (Xiong, et al, 2013), and lead to positive word-of-mouth between employees and their networks, either internal or external (Morokane, 2015). To that end it is important to communicate brand information to employees regularly and in ways that will resonate with them.

Research has shown that employee commitment can be increased through two methods: highlighting examples of committed employees through internal and external communications, and by recognizing and leveraging the impact coworkers can have on each other (Gelb and Rangarajan, 2014). Telling employee stories through communications can provide a model or connection point for other employees to see. Communicating brand messages can be most effectively done through the organization's internal communities, leveraging employee influence on each other and building on existing associations between them (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).

Culture and Authenticity. Internal branding is recent framework for a much older construct that communicators and organizations have sought to influence for decades - culture. Much research has been conducted on organizational culture. Generally, culture is considered to be a reflection of the activities and meanings in an organization, and as a description of the activities by which these meanings come to be produced and shared in organization (Deetz, 1982). In essence, culture is reflective of the people, customs, beliefs, and processes in an organization. These factors combine to create a culture, which can influence employees. Culture can be reflective of current organizational norms and values, but also aspirational in that an organization may seek to develop its culture towards a specific set of values and ideals that may not currently exist. Though culture is not a primary focus of this research, it is important to

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note that internal branding seeks to communicate cultural values and customs in a coordinated and thoughtful way to influence employees.

Internal branding also relies heavily on the identification and understanding of authentic organizational norms and values, but how do organizations know what's authentic? Brand authenticity has been a heavily researched topic, and many scholars point to many factors that influence the perception of authenticity. Napoli, et al. (2014) defines brand authenticity as "*the subjective evaluation of genuineness ascribed to a brand by consumers*", and identifies seven cues that contribute to perceptions of authenticity: heritage, nostalgia, cultural symbolism, sincerity, craftsmanship, quality commitment, design consistency. Communicators and brand managers can review their ideologies through these constructs and assess their authenticity. In some cases, it may be valuable to conduct internal research to determine if internal audiences perceive the identified ideologies as authentic. An exploration of how to authentically define a brand or organizational values is not conducted in this paper, but the concept of authenticity is important for internal branding.

Research Questions. The connection between internal branding and employee attitudes and behaviors has been explored by a multitude of research in the field. However, there is still more to explain and uncover in this area. Therefore the following research questions are posed:

R1: How can firms communicate their brand to internal audiences in effective ways?

This research question seeks to uncover not just how firms communicate their brand internally, but to go a step further and qualify those efforts based on how they measure and determine their effectiveness. When considering the applicability of this research, it is important to consider organizations with limited resources or capabilities. Communications and branding initiatives require investment, and part of the goal of this research is to identify the most

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effective ways to communicate brand supportive messages to internal audiences, thus achieving high levels of organizational return on investment.

R2: How have organizations encouraged supportive attitudes and behaviors among their employees?

Similar to R1, this question seeks to identify specific and concrete ways organizations have engendered supportive attitudes and behaviors among their internal employee base. By finding specific examples of how organizations have fostered employee support, a framework for employee attitude and behavior moderation can begin to be developed using real world successes.

Method

Research Design. The central questions this paper attempts to answer are how organizations can communicate their brand to internal audiences, and how communications can foster supportive attitudes and behaviors among those same audiences. Because these questions seek to discover organizational specific information and examples, an in-depth, qualitative data gathering approach was selected. This approach provides for thorough discussion and follow-up, allowing insights and information to be gleaned from first-hand experiences by experts and professionals. Theories and concepts in the literature on this topic have provided a basis for this research, but deeper understandings on the topic can be gained directly from those conducting internal branding and employee communication efforts. Because this research involved human subjects, the study was submitted to the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board and granted a waiver from full board review and approval.

Data Collection. The use of in-depth interviews for this study was determined to be most effective due to the type of information needed - first hand accounts. It was also selected because it allowed for large amounts of information to be gathered from each participant, and allowed for follow-up, clarification, and additional probing when desired by the researcher.

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Additionally, researchers in this field of study have frequently used in-depth interviews as a method for data gathering (Grace, 2008).

Using the central research questions of this paper as a starting point, a series of questions were developed in the form of an interview discussion guide. The questionnaire was formulated using survey question examples from related research literature. This informed the development of specific and supportive questions which tied to the central research focus of this study. Questions asked of participants related to their organization's brand, internal communication, and employee perspectives. Participants were invited to share examples from other employers they worked for if relevant to the discussion. Table 2 outlines the interview questionnaire as it relates to this study's research questions.

Table 2 - Research questions and corresponding interview questions.

General Questions	<p><i>Interview Questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you tell me a little bit about your organization, and how many employees you have? 2. What is your position in the org - your title/responsibilities?
<p><i>Research Question 1:</i> How can organizations communicate their brand to internal audiences in effective ways?</p>	<p><i>Interview Questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Can you tell me a little about the org's brand? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How and when was it developed? b. How were internal audiences included or considered? 4. What unique challenges does your organization have related to communicating your brand to employees? 5. What does your organization do to engage employees in the brand? What have you found to be the best/worst ways to engage with employees? 6. How does organization leadership play a role in the brand and it's communication? 7. How do you measure engagement and impact of the internal brand? What are the key performance indicators?
<i>Research Question 2:</i>	<i>Interview Questions:</i>

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How have organizations encouraged supportive attitudes and behaviors among their employees?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How does your organization see employees contributing to the brand?2. Do you think your internal brand is working to engage and motivate employees? Why or why not? What would you change to make your internal brand more effective at this?3. Are there specific communication materials or pieces that you feel have helped strengthen or improve brand perceptions with employees? What made them successful?
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Interviews were formally structured and administered in person and over the phone, depending on participant. The author of this paper conducted all interviews, which lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. When appropriate and time permitted, probing follow-up questions were asked to gather additional detail on responses of interest or high relevance. Interviews were transcribed and were then analyzed for common themes and key insights.

Participants. A total of 19 interviews were conducted between April 19 and June 24, 2016. Five interviews were conducted in person, at locations convenient to the participants, and 14 interviews were conducted over the phone. Participants were selected on the basis of having positions that involved responsibilities in strategic brand management or internal communications from various organizational levels (strategic leadership of entire enterprise marketing and communications, to mid-level marketing and communication managers). Participants were split between three distinct industries: two were from advertising and branding agencies¹, seven from for-profit corporations, and ten from higher education institutions (both public and private). Geographically, participants were clustered in Midwest states, but also came from locations as far as California and Texas. The diverse makeup of the participant pool was intentional and sought to provide the widest variety of insights and perspectives on the

¹ Interview participants who worked for advertising and branding agencies were asked to provide insights from their own agencies or from clients they worked with. Their position as outside consultants for businesses conducting brand and marketing work was desired to provide a unique perspective on the practice and provide an added dimension to results.

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central research questions. It was also hoped that examining a variety of industries would provide insights and learnings that would be universally applicable. This approach builds on previous research in the field, which primarily focused on organizations within the service industry. Participants were included because of their expertise in the area of brand management and communications, and willingness to participate in the research. The sample was identified through references from the author's professional network.

Confidentiality. This research sought specific and concrete examples of internal brand communications from practitioners in the field, with their assessments of effectiveness. Because the nature of this information is sensitive, i.e. thoughts and opinions from employees about their employer organization's efforts in the areas of internal branding and employee communications, participant names and organizations are not identified in this study. The identification of particular organizations does not impact the results of this research or its applicability.

Results

Results from in-depth research interviews are broken into three categories relating to the industry in which the respondents came from: agency, corporation, and higher education. Clustering results in this method allowed for the easiest analysis and comparisons to be made between industries. It also provided the opportunity to find commonalities in effective internal marketing and brand communications practices across all fields, while permitting a deeper understanding of what is effective within specific industries.

Agency Responses. Both respondents felt it was critical that organizations have an understanding of their primary mission, vision, and values, in order to be successful at internal branding and communications. They felt that organizations must understand and identify those core elements in order to ground internal branding and marketing efforts. Building on the mission, vision, and values, the "elevator pitch" was mentioned as a component of the organization's identity that every employee should be able to articulate. These elements should

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be communicated to internal audiences in a way that they can understand and act on. As one respondent said, “when it comes to internal audiences, you need to communicate concisely and clearly.”

When asked about the challenges organizations face when undertaking internal branding efforts, both respondents identified issues related to employees. First, overestimating employee engagement and investment in the brand can be a challenge to organizations. It’s important to know where employees are at in terms of engagement and support of their employer so that organizations can build communication strategies to address any shortcomings or gaps. Second, the simple act of communicating with employees was mentioned as a challenge. The variety and abundance of available channels to communicate through can be overwhelming when trying to determine what is most effective. Distinct employee communities within organizations were a third challenge referenced. For instance, organizations with groups of hourly, store based employees, and corporate office employees, have a unique challenge in that these groups approach work and communicating in completely different ways.

Agency respondents were also asked about their views on how employees could contribute to the organization's internal branding efforts, their responses centered on ways that leadership and employees could contribute to successful outcomes. From the leadership perspective, one respondent highlighted the value organizational leaders can bring in communicating internal branding messages and acting as the face of the effort. Through leadership involvement, a sense of importance and buy-in from organizational leadership is conveyed to employees. From the employee perspective, one respondent spoke of the value that engaged and supportive employees can have on internal branding. Organizations can leveraging their excitement and passion through brand supportive content, for instance blog posts or marketing materials which shines a spotlight on employees who live the brand. This

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type of content provides examples of brand supportive behavior that can be adopted by others in the organization.

Finally, both agency respondents felt it was important to measure the *effect* of internal branding efforts in addition to general metrics related to *awareness* and *engagement*. In essence, organizations should measure employee pride and support of an organization to gauge the success of internal branding efforts, rather than only measuring awareness of internal brand campaign messages or tactics. Agency respondents highlighted the need to consistently invest in measurement and analysis, to provide long term insights and trending data on the effects of any efforts.

Corporation Responses. Corporate respondents to this study came from organizations ranging from large, multinational companies, to smaller niche organizations. Employee counts ranged from 250 to 200,000, and all respondents felt their organization's employee base had subgroups. A common example of employee subgroups is employees from corporate offices, and those from store locations.

Two respondents held management positions overseeing marketing and branding teams and initiatives within their organizations, the remaining five respondents held supportive roles managing specific marketing and branding efforts under the leadership of others.

When asked about their organization's brand, all but one organization had a developed and actively managed brand. The outlier organization without a well-developed brand lacked any active brand management or marketing employee until recent years when a marketing function was created. Before that time, the organization's brand was directly tied to the owner. The remaining six organizations had brands that were actively managed and had identified central mission, vision, and values statements. Only three organizations had developed internal marketing efforts targeting employees and sharing brand information, while the remaining four organizations spoke of internal communications but no formal program targeted to employees.

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When asked how the organization's brand connected to internal audiences, a variety of responses were received. Four organizations cited the important role employee needs and feedback played in the development and management of their respective organizational brand. The most common form for collecting feedback was through employee surveys, but anecdotal and informal feedback was also cited by respondents as having an impact on brand development. Regardless of how the feedback was received or collected, these organizations felt it was important and used it to shape their brand. The remaining three respondents stated that they believed employees were an important part of the organization's brand, but that they weren't actively engaged or included in the development and management of their respective brands.

All but one respondent articulated one or more challenges to communicating their brand to employees. Connecting with large employee bases with diverse backgrounds, job functions, and needs was highlighted by six of the respondents as a challenge for internal brand communications. Respondents from multinational corporations also referenced cross cultural communications as a challenge, citing examples of simply translating communications and other factors like the differing approaches to work between cultures. The respondent who didn't cite any specific challenges stated that the organization takes a proactive approach to communications with employees.

All respondents felt that employees served as ambassadors or advocates for the organization. In their view, they provided positive word-of-mouth to friends, family, and prospective customers. One respondent referenced the important role employees can play in providing feedback from outside audiences and customer bases, giving the organization insights into what's working or not working from the public or customer perspective. One organization had a formalized brand ambassador-training program, which focused on educating employees about the brand and helping them to promote it when interacting with customers or anyone

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outside the organization. Another organization highlighted an interesting variant on brand ambassador training. They felt the best way to make employees advocates was to provide them the same experience as a normal customer to the organization. Through that experience, they could better understand the benefits the organization provides to customers and communicate those to others.

Leadership from all corporate organizations surveyed played a role in internal brand communications. Respondents referenced the value of infusing brand messages into leadership communications to the organization, which provided employees information and knowledge on the brand via a recognizable source. One interview participant articulated an interesting drawback to this leader-to-employee brand communication, explaining that communications from leadership directly to front line employees can create a bypass of middle management in the organization. One possible solution to this issue was shared from another respondent. Their organization had an employee rewards system in which managers could recognize employees who were acting in brand supportive ways. This reward system allowed the organization to leverage both leadership and direct employee managers in emphasizing brand supportive actions and engaging employees through direct rewards.

Though all organizations reported leadership involvement in brand communications to employees, one respondent did indicate it was a weak point for the organization and that they could do it better. The respondent did not offer any thoughts or opinions about how the organization could improve, however.

When corporate respondents were asked to describe effective employee-brand engagement tactics and strategies their organizations utilize, a wide array of responses were cited. Email newsletters, intranet and other websites, and interactive brand focused events were all listed as effective tactics used by organizations to engage their employees in the brand. Note that these tactics contain a mix of pull and push style communications, which require different

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forms and levels of engagement by employees. Follow-up questioning revealed that several organizations selected specific styles of communication based on employee feedback. For example, one organization changed from providing branded content through an intranet website, which required employees to actively seek out brand information, to an email newsletter sent directly to employees on a regular schedule. Tactics used a mix of brand related content, some pieces included specific information about the brand designed to increase employee brand knowledge, and some pieces were simply infused with brand messages, organizational values, or engaging storytelling. When asked for examples of communication pieces that strengthened or improved brand perceptions among employees a wide array of examples were shared. Training materials, email communications, and printed publications were highlighted by respondents. A common thread between all these examples was that they provided information of interest to the employee and did so in a method or channel that was preferred by the employee.

As previously mentioned, one organization referenced incorporating the organization's brand values and mission into the employee rewards system, providing them with a tangible way to measure and reward employees for acting in brand supportive ways. This was described as an effective employee-brand engagement strategy.

Corporate measurement of internal marketing and branding efforts were primarily focused on metrics of awareness and engagement with each specific tactic, focusing on open rates, views, and event attendance. Three organizations cited regular employee engagement surveys as the vehicle through which they measure internal marketing efforts. However, none of the respondents noted measurement of the effects of internal marketing on employee attitudes or behaviors, their focus was generally on employee satisfaction, not pride or support.

Higher Education Responses. The final group of interview participants came from higher education institutions. All respondents held leadership level positions focused on high-

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level communications and brand management; with titles ranging from Director to Assistant Vice President or Assistant Vice Chancellor. Institutions ranged from multicampus research land grant universities, to small single campus liberal arts private colleges.

The brands of these institutions consisted of existing legacy brands augmented through research and discovery with internal and external stakeholder groups. Only one institution said they didn't consult internal audiences in the brand development process, due to budgetary constraints. Responses show that a majority of higher ed institutions have given thought to the management and development of their brands, and have made an effort to include relevant stakeholder groups when possible.

Additionally, the important role people (staff, faculty, students) at each institution play in the development and orientation of the brand was highlighted in multiple responses. Several respondents also referenced the importance of their brand having an emotional connection with their audiences, and spoke about how that emotional resonance was found by looking at those people at the institution. Summarizing the value of a people focused brand orientation, one respondent noted of their research efforts, "this led to a more emotional brand, because it really connected to people in a way they could identify with. We boiled it down to what it meant to be a <member of specific college community>, how they behave and what they value."

Higher education respondents identified a multitude of challenges to communicating with employees, below is a summary. Some of these challenges align with those shared by agency and corporate respondents to this research study.

- Higher education institutions have large and decentralized structures, which make it difficult to effectively and efficiently disseminate information to internal audiences.
- Faculty, staff, and students sub-cultures all have unique motivations and characteristics, and communications may need to be tailored to be most effective.

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- Lack of understanding or skepticism of marketing practices and its value by internal audiences can lead to decreased participation by some. They may feel skeptical of marketing activities and not understanding the value they bring, feeling the practice devalues or trivializes their work.
- There is a wide variety of communication channels available to reach individuals. Choosing the right one for an audience, or having the ability to access it to send a message isn't always possible within higher ed institutions.
- Internal competition and desire to be unique within the organization can make it difficult to unite a broad and diverse university under one brand and identity system.
- Publicly funded institutions often have public constituents with an increased sense of ownership of the organization, and leading to higher levels of scrutiny. This situation create implications for internal audiences, because employees may be asked about the organization by external publics.
- Leadership involvement in the process of branding and communications at a university can be challenging if leaders mandate changes counter to audience needs or aren't familiar with the process of brand development and management

Though many of these challenges are shared by corporations and other organizations, responses to this survey point to universities holding the unique distinction of having to deal with multiple challenges on an ongoing basis. One respondent summed up the challenge nicely by saying: "We need to figure out how to give the right people the right information at the right time in the right way." Responses also suggest that it's important to secure "the right buy-in" with internal stakeholders as well.

When asked about how their institution felt employees contributed to the brand, only 10 had a perspective. Five of 10 universities felt their employees served as brand ambassadors and indicated they felt this was an important role. One respondent stated: "When people know

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you're affiliated with a university, they'll ask you questions." Another participant who worked in an athletics department stated: "When the guy from the equipment room answers questions, he's the expert source to his friends or whomever he's talking to." Building on this sentiment, a third respondent emphasized how critical employees can be as brand ambassadors in crisis situations, in that they can serve as a source of information to their peers. Expanding beyond the role as ambassador, another respondent saw employees as advocates who are "...part of the community, and they can advocate and vote in our favor." For public institutions, this highlights how valuable employees can be to their continued success in challenging economic times. Employees can encourage support from local and state governments through advocating on the institution's behalf to legislators and voting for representatives supportive of higher education. On the other end of the spectrum, one respondent actually felt that their institution didn't recognize the contribution employee's could make to the university's brand.

When asked about leadership's role in the brand and communicating it internally, two themes emerged. First, leaders were seen as important advocates for the brand because they could act as a source for brand information and understanding to employees. They perform this function by including brand values and messages in their speeches or communications, and modeling brand behaviors to show employees what "living the brand" looks like. Second, they were seen as gatekeepers who could help determine the success or failure of branding activities. Several respondents referenced the importance of having leadership involved in the process of developing and managing the brand, and that without their buy-in or support, branding efforts would not get off the ground or be effective. It's important to note that responses point to leadership within a higher education context referring to a wide variety of individuals or groups within the organization. For instance, leaders within administration, the faculty body, and student leadership can all be influential figureheads within a University

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community. Depending on the activity, it may be necessary to gather input and secure support from multiple leaders.

Higher education institutions take wide and varied approaches to engage employees in their brands. Branded content was a specific tactic frequently referenced by respondents, usually taking the form of email newsletters, blog posts, or other marketing materials to internal audiences. One organization spoke of the positive effects of recognizing faculty/staff through marketing materials. Featuring faculty in highly visible and public marketing pieces helped to build buy-in and create a sense of investment in the brand and the institution from internal audiences. When asked about engaging employees in the brand, one respondent stated: “the best ways are anything that involves the most amount of senses.”

Multiple institutions also mentioned events as a method for engaging employees in the brand. Four universities referenced annual communicator and brand conferences, and another highlighted student-focused pep rallies held during new student orientation. Another institution formed a branding work group that met regularly to discuss brand related matters. Members of the branding work group served as a conduit for brand information and knowledge to their colleagues and the wider university community. The respondent indicated that this workgroup has been very effective in spreading information and influencing others in the campus community. One institution created a unique series of brand training and certification classes, available to any member of the campus community. The certification course consisted of a series of classes offered through the human resources department, meeting weekly and covering a variety of topics related to the brand - design, storytelling, social media, digital communications, etc. Upon completion of the course, each participant received a brand certification. Over 100 communicators have completed the certification and the university considers it such a success they are continuing and growing the program.

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Respondents reported various levels of measurement and analysis of internal branding activities. Four individuals reported having no formal measurement of internal branding or communications activities, while an additional two respondents only reported gathering anecdotal feedback or observations from members of the campus community. Two respondents stated that internal employee engagement surveys provided some information as to the effectiveness of internal branding efforts. One respondent reported measuring effectiveness and engagement with specific communications tactics, but not measuring impact on employee attitudes or behaviors. Only one respondent reported measuring internal branding efforts. This was done through a brand tracker survey which included questions asking faculty and staff what their attitudes and behaviors are, along with their thoughts about internal branding efforts. It also measures consumption and engagement with internally focused brand content. One respondent provided some insight into why many organizations may not measure internal branding efforts, stating “we need to be cautious of the optics around surveying and measurement - to avoid giving the impression resources are being spent on this rather than student scholarships, for instance.”

All interview participants were asked for examples of effective brand communications. Though not all pointed to specific communications, several provided insightful thoughts on what made effective brand communications. Responses fell into three general categories: personal connections, brand information pieces, and other communications tactics. Personal interactions included people focused activities that include the sharing of brand information; specific examples were new employee orientation or other interactions like presentations to communicators. Brand information pieces and communication tactics that were cited included university websites and email newsletters. These personal interactions and communications pieces were deemed effective because they provided important brand information and engaged people with the brand. Interestingly, one respondent felt that the most effective brand

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communication tactic was early brand adopters. They used them as models and champions to help encourage others to adopt the brand and get excited about it.

Discussion

This study seeks to answer two central questions. First, to identify strategies, tactics, and processes through which organizations communicate their brand to internal audiences in effective ways, and second, to uncover ways that organizations encourage supportive attitudes and behaviors among their employees. Through these central research questions respondents provided insights into not only how organizations communicate their brand internally, but also how they measure and determine the effectiveness of those efforts. Further, responses from participants provided information on the specific and concrete ways organizations have worked to build supportive attitudes and behaviors among their internal employee base.

When viewed within the context of internal branding research, this study expands on that base of understanding in two ways. A majority of research in this field has explored and focused on the organizations within the customer service industry, and included surveys of employees within those organizations. This study included higher education institutions, which have not been previously included in research on internal branding, and participants held positions in marketing, brand, and communications functions in those organizations. The research sought to understand perspectives on how organizations communicate their brand internally, and build on previous research which primarily looks at how employees feel about the organizations they work for.

The internal branding definition² and framework put forth by Saleem and Iglesias is supported by the results of this research. Interview participants from agencies, corporations,

² Internal branding is the process through which organizations make a company-wide effort within supportive culture to integrate brand ideologies, leadership, human resource management, internal brand communication and internal brand communities as a strategy to enable employees to consistently co-create brand value with multiple stakeholders. (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016, p. 50)

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and higher education institutions consistently referenced one or more of the five components (brand ideologies, leadership, human-resource management, internal communications, and employee communities) when speaking of their efforts to build and extend their brand internally and leverage their employee base in the creation of brand value. Further, even when an organization stated they did not have an internal branding campaign or effort underway, they spoke of communications and efforts they had undertaken which frequently took the form of one of the five components outlined by Saleem and Iglesias. The value of the individual components of internal branding is recognized by organizations according to interview responses, however the general approach to internal branding is less comprehensive or consistent.

From an employee perspective, the results of this research highlighted the role that employees can play in the success of an organization and the impacts they can have on creating brand value. Organizations must view employees as a key element in the success for their brand, and consider their impacts during strategic planning, while also integrating them into any communications effort. Results from this study highlighted the importance of soliciting employee feedback and perspectives during internal branding efforts in order to make them most relevant, targeted, and engaging. This mimics a strategic approach taken by external marketing initiatives targeting consumers that carefully analyze and listen to consumer feedback to inform efforts.

When internalization of brand ideologies occurs with employees, they can act as advocates and ambassadors for the organization. Their clout and influence within personal networks in relation to the entity they work for can be significant. Functionally, engaged and supportive employee's can provide a wealth of benefits through speaking positively of the organization with other employees, providing positive word-of-mouth to friends and family, and defending or advocating for the organization when necessary. Additionally, employees can serve as a valuable window into any organization's consumer or constituent base, acting as a

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feedback channel and providing valuable consumer information which the organization can use to inform future strategies and efforts.

Results from interviews also provided valuable insights as to how organizations communicate their brand to internal employee groups. Leadership, digital communications and events were frequently cited as methods for sharing brand information and building brand knowledge among employees. An event as a method for engaging employees in the brand and conveying brand information is a new discovery not found in previous research. It's important to note that without this knowledge employees would be unable to articulate central organizational values or goals, let alone act on them. Organizations should consider the impact that personal and experiential brand centric interactions can have on employees, and integrate them into their regular internal branding and communications plans. Of special note, no respondents referenced social media as a key channel through which the organization communicated brand information to employees. It is surprising that this channel did not come up as a tool for communications with internal audiences when it is widely accepted as an important component of external communications and marketing practices.

From a brand management standpoint, the results of this research highlight the need to monitor and evaluate internal brand communication effectiveness, and employee attitudes and behaviors. Benchmarking studies should be conducted in organizations to determine the most resonant and relatable attributes of the organizational brand with employees to inform strategic messaging and tactic construction as part of internal campaigns. Once a campaign has been launched, measurement and evaluation of its impact and effect on employees should be a core follow-up and evaluation strategy. This is in addition to measuring engagement levels with the campaign or specific tactics. Additionally, it is important for brand management staff to have an understanding of the common challenges associated with internal communications in their

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organizations. Identifying possible challenges in advance of an internal branding effort can provide communications professionals with time to formulate strategies to overcome them.

Results also highlight the need for multiple areas and departments within an organization to act in concert in the deliver brand information to employees, specifically alignment between human resource management, marketing and brand management, and organizational leadership. The success of internal branding efforts can largely depend on the buy-in and support from multiple areas within the organization, “going it alone” does not appear to be a workable strategy for these types of initiatives.

One of the most interesting discoveries in this research is the role the functional area of human resource management can play in the successful internalization of brand ideologies. Organizations should incorporate their brand values and attributes, and broader organizational mission and vision into the recruitment selection of new employees, to ensure that employee’s entering the organization are in alignment with the brand. During new employee onboarding and training, brand information should be communicated so that employees are immediately provided and exposed to brand information. Several organizations reported measuring performance against organizational those brand elements during annual reviews or as a rewards system to encourage brand supportive behaviors on the spot. By fully integrating the human resource management function into the delivery of brand information, organizations can ensure they are selecting and onboarding employees who align with brand values and attributes and equipping them with high levels of brand knowledge. Arming them with the information they need to speak positively about the organization and live the brand to their friends, families, colleagues, and customers.

Measurement and analysis of internal branding efforts is an important part of any internal branding effort. For communications professionals, measurement of activities and tactics is commonplace. However, results of this study have pointed to an integration of various functional

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areas within an organization, areas like human resources and leadership that may not be accustomed to measuring communications. With greater coordination of communication efforts, so to must measurement efforts be coordinated, discussed, and managed among various areas of the organization, in an effort to generate the most informative and actionable information to each area.

Finally organizational leaders must be utilized to deliver brand information to employees in a top-down format. Allowing leaders to articulate brand messages to employees enables the organization to control the delivery and format of the message. Leadership should also be encouraged to not just incorporate brand messages and information in their communications and speeches, but also reflect the brand and its attributes in their actions. They should model “living the brand” for employees to see. By fully incorporating leadership into the delivery of brand information, organizations can ensure that employees see the brand embodied in their managers and leaders, and receive accurate brand information.

Limitations & Future Research

The limitations of the findings from this research are related to the limited size and convenient nature of the sample included in the study. Participants for this study were chosen by the author of this paper through personal or professional contacts. A random sample of professionals with similar professional backgrounds and responsibilities may return more valid and projectable results.

While insights were gained from all research participants, the most informative details and insights were gathered from individuals in positions of strategic leadership and oversight of branding and communications functions. Future research should focus on gathering additional responses from individuals in those positions at a variety of organizations. Additionally, participants in this study were exclusively positioned within the marketing and communications functions in their organizations. Because of the interconnected nature of internal branding

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efforts, future research could expand to gather insights and thoughts from organizational leadership, human resources departments, and employee groups to better understand the interplay and connection between all components of internal branding efforts.

Future research should also explore the specific thoughts and perceptions of employees about their employer organization's communications, brand, and employee preferences. An online survey to employees could be an effective method for collecting this type of information.

Questions for an online survey could include, but are not limited to:

1. How much do you rely on the following sources to receive information about the organization?
 - Response options: Email, Staff Meetings, Word of Mouth, Newsletters, Website, Newspaper, Department Head, Outside News Source, etc.
2. What kind of communications are you most likely to engage with?
 - Response options: Email, Staff Meetings, Word of Mouth, Newsletters, Website, Newspaper, Department Head, Outside News Source, etc.
3. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about communication you receive from the organization?
 - Response options:
 - I trust the information I receive from my supervisor.
 - Communication from organization is thorough.
 - The organization sends too many communications to me.
 - The organization doesn't communicate with me enough.
 - I prefer to hear organizational information from a person (supervisor, leadership, colleague) rather than through an email or website.
 - I understand what the organization's brand is and how to communicate it.
 - I understand what the organization's goals and priorities are.

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4. Please indicate how much you are interested in the following topics from your organization (scale of 1-5)

○ Response options:

Updates and News

Business Goals and Objectives

Information or stories about other employees

Brand information

Event and activity information

Human Resources information

Leadership updates and information

5. Are there topics you with the organization would communicate on more frequently?

6. The organization holds these values and ideals core to who we are, please indicate on a scale of 1-5 how closely you identify with each:

○ Response options: Short description of organizational values and beliefs.

Responses from these questions should be analyzed to determine employee preferences on communications, current brand knowledge levels, and connection points to brand ideologies. A quantitative analysis along with an examination of any open ended results would provide valuable information to help communicators construct an effective internal branding communications strategy.

Another limitation of this research could be attributed to response bias from participants. Since all of the participants provided commentary and insights on the performance of branding and communications efforts related to their job functions, it's possible they viewed these efforts as more effective than they actually were. Additionally, the research highlighted the lack of measurement of internal branding efforts and employee attitudes and behaviors; so much of the

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performance evaluation was anecdotal or seen as possibly related without any data to support those claims. Combined, the above to limitations highlight that participants in this survey provided their perceptions of internal branding efforts and effectiveness - not quantifiable results from any tactics or efforts they were a part of. In this way, the variable of effectiveness which research question one sought to measure cannot be answered objectively.

To further understand how organizational communications can positively impact employee attitudes and behaviors it would be ideal to review communications that were deemed as particularly effective. This study did solicit and receive a limited number of brand communications (for example, email newsletters, brand information one-pagers, training materials, and presentations) that were described as effective by respondents who shared them. An analysis of these materials was not conducted because the variety in material type, focus, and intended audience made comparisons difficult. Further, respondents had only anecdotal evidence that they were effective. Future research could include a content analysis of internal brand communications to review the degree to which they conveyed specific brand attributes, values, information, and brand ideologies. Specific pieces of content should also include any measurement and results information from the organization. By analyzing these specific brand related communication attributes, within the context of objective measurement statistics, future research may provide concrete insight into truly effective internal branding efforts.

Conclusion

Through the research and analysis conducted for this paper, a better understanding of a brand in today's modern context has risen to the surface. An authentic organizational brand is rooted in the values, customs, and beliefs core to an organization. Communicators and marketers must understand those authentic ideologies and think of the brand as a guiding light for the organization, and that light must be projected through different lenses helping to focus on

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elements and messages core to the brand and relevant to an audience, be they internal or external to the organization.

This paper highlighted the important role employees can play in the success of an organization through their ability to co-create brand value. Armed with appropriate brand knowledge, and inspired by others in the organization modeling brand supportive behaviors, employees can be viewed as an organization's most powerful and effective brand element. This study illuminates the many ways organizations can communicate their brand values and identity to employees, in an effort to encourage brand supportive attitudes and behaviors. The positive effect events infused with brand information or messages can have on employees was a common theme. In today's cluttered communication world, an authentic and well informed brand advocate can be an organization's most powerful marketing and communications tool.

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Recommendations for the University of Minnesota

One of the unofficial goals of this research study was to provide recommendations for any organization undertaking an internal branding effort. The University of Minnesota frequently targets brand communications to internal audiences, so these recommendations present an overview of what could be done to increase employee knowledge, understanding, and support of the Driven to Discover brand. With an employee base of 20,000, the positive influence this group can have on brand value and organizational success can be tremendous.

- **Consider employees as a core brand element.** Employees at the University are a diverse group and spread throughout the state, and if properly engaged and educated in the brand they could present an entirely new channel through which positive and supportive organizational messages could be distributed. When developing communications and marketing strategies, employees should be included and considered as a channel through which messages can be conveyed and information dispersed.
- **Engage employees in the brand using multiple senses.** It is recommended that employees be engaged with the brand in multiple sensory ways. Through strategic execution of brand related events (experiential), speeches (auditory), email (visual), direct mail and print publications (physical), employees can be given many points of connection with the brand. The creation and implementation of a brand certification course is recommended as an effective tactic to engage and train members of the campus community in the brand.
- **Infuse communications with brand information.** Our University is a chatty place when it comes to communicating with employees. Consider that existing communications should reflect some form of brand information (key messages, brand values, etc) in order to maximize their effect on employee brand knowledge. In order to

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determine the current state of brand information in communications, and audit should be conducted on employee communications to measure the amounts of brand information being conveyed.

- **Bring out Leadership.** President Kaler and visible leadership should be engaged in communicating and embodying the brand to employees. Our President is the most visible and well-known leader within our organization and infusing his speeches, engagements, and activities with brand supportive information and messages will help to educate all employees about our brand. To further support brand communications, the president could be filmed speaking about the University's brand for new employee orientation. Covering how the brand came to be, what its core ideologies are, and how each person at the University reflects and connects to the brand.
- **Infuse the brand in Human Resource activities.** Incorporating brand attributes, information, and values into the hiring, onboarding, and review processes at the University can help to build a supportive employee base and recognize them for living the brand. The inclusion of a brand-centered question on annual reviews is a core recommendation. Every year, an employee should be asked to explain how they've embodied Driven to Discover in the past year. By asking employees to actively think about and understand their role in the brand, they can better identify with it.
- **Measure performance and employee feedback.** Employee feedback and perspectives are key in successful internal branding efforts in that they inform how we communicate with them, what we say to them, and when we say it to them. Taking an employee centric approach in the communication of brand information should help achieve brand relevance and engagement. Each employee engagement survey should include a measure of connection or identification to the brand. Some questions are discussed in

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the Limitations and Future Research question, but additional questions for consideration could include:

- To what extent is the University important in your life?
- In what ways do you feel connected to the University?
- How do you see your work or yourself reflecting the University's mission?
- What do you think the University's brand is?

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Appendix A - Discussion Guide

Intro

As I mentioned in my email, I'm working on my capstone/thesis project - the final requirement of my grad school program.

My thesis is focused on how organizations communicate their brands to employees in ways that build brand supportive attitudes and behaviors.

***Do you wish to remain anonymous in my report? - YES/NO.

Starting off, I'd like to ask a few background questions...

Background

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your organization, and how many employees you have?
2. What is your position in the org - your title/responsibilities?

Internal Branding

3. Can you tell me a little about the org's internal brand?
 - a. How and when was it developed?
 - b. How were internal audiences included or considered?
4. What unique challenges does your organization have related to communicating your brand to employees?

Now, I'd like to discuss the role employees play in the brand.

Employees

5. How does your organization see employees contributing to the brand?
6. How does organization leadership play a role in the brand and its communication?
7. How does your brand relate to your organizational culture?
8. What does your organization do to engage employees in the brand? What have you found to be the best/worst ways to engage with employees?

Measurement

9. How do you measure engagement and impact of the internal brand? What are the key performance indicators?

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10. Do you think your internal brand is working to engage and motivate employees? Why or why not? What would you change to make your internal brand more effective at this?
11. Are there specific communication materials or pieces that you feel have helped strengthen or improve brand perceptions with employees? What made them successful?

Thank you so much, you've given me some great info for my project. I really appreciate your time - if you'd like I can share my final report with you when it's available later this summer?

YES/NO

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Appendix B - Expert Interview Transcripts

I. Agency Participants

*****Note - questionnaires used for agency participants varied slightly due to their unique role in branding and communication activities with clients. Transcripts are presented by interview rather than consolidating responses by question.***

PARTICIPANT 1

- 1. Where do they work, time working in field, key responsibilities, how they are involved with brand management or employee communications.**

Working with B2B and B2C clients. Worked in brand strategy for 5 years - brand strategy and account planning. Strategic planning director, combining strategist with account planning.

- 2. Are there critical items an organization must have defined before beginning a branding initiative (mission, vision, values, brand promise - and beyond)? What must they know to inform their work?**

Mission vision values are valuable and worthwhile, but that is the first step. The most important angle is the elevator pitch.

When you've got too many words, you end up with too much for people to understand. People pick out what they think applies to them, and don't have an idea of what that actually means. When it comes to internal audiences, you need to communicate concisely and clearly to your employees.

If employees don't know what m/v/v/bp means, it doesn't matter.

You've got to prioritize what's important and not overload on descriptors or adjectives. Helpful exercise is to prioritize descriptors with leadership - helps to really focus what are most important. It's also important to reevaluate these, and should be done more that most company's do.

The tools that exist are not the wrong tools, they just provide too much information and needs to be simplified. Give people an idea of what the three things are most important and how they connect to the brand.

- 3. What do you see as unique challenges for organizations undertaking internal branding initiatives?**

Change is hard. Overall, people are resistant to change.

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CMO turnover is very high, especially at high levels. New leadership can come in with radical change plans, without knowing if what is there is working or not.

If a CMO is hired to shake things up, it's hard to convince them what's working.

Problems can come from the top down and bottom up.

Employee investment in the organizational brand is low. But think about how you're communicating your values and expressing them to employees. Don't overestimate how much employees care.

A lot of internal brand values are being evaluated on external audiences. Brand positioning is being built on what external audiences might think of them.

External marketing has shifted to a values based messages, and this trend has taken hold for internal branding as well. Creating false internal narratives to differentiate subgroups and products without a real connection to product attributes.

4. How important is it for internal and external branding efforts to be similar, or differentiate?

External is just harder to control, internal should be easier. It's easier to see when an internal communications plan starts to fall apart. Easier to see correlation in internal audiences, there's too many x factors with external audiences.

Internal plans usually have stronger objectives and more measurable.

5. What do you think makes a successful branding campaign (internal or external)?

Objectives and metrics don't always match. Are the KPI's attached to something that provides a positive ROI. You've got to align measures of success with communications.

Measure the effect, not the exposure. Pride vs. awareness.

6. Many organizations see employees as ambassadors who can deliver on the brand promise and increase brand equity. Do you see other ways employees can contribute to the equity of an employer brand?

Content. Having people working for a brand who have time and make the effort to develop content about why they do what they do or why they work for the organization.

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People who are passionate about the thing they are doing in their life, and when it intersects with what they do, they can provide significant value to a brand.

Organizational outreach to groups or initiatives that have importance to your employees.

7. Should internal brands be reflective in the sense that they mirror current culture and employee values within the org, or be aspirational and forward looking from the sense of promoting the values and culture the org wishes to have?

Goal is always to be aspirational, it should feel aspirational. The only thing is that you have to do the work before - you have to show how you've done that. If you want to be inclusive, you have to show your employees you're inclusive, and find ways to measure what the culture is like now - employees aren't going to say to your face what problems there are.

Simon Sinek - leaders eat last. Need to identify the people that hold you back and where the black holes are. Be honest and get tough about what's going on from a cultural perspective, make a safe space for people to raise their hand and express concerns or take action and have a part in making changes.

8. What have you found to be the best ways to engage internal audiences?

One of the coolest things I've ever seen was an open house that a company had. They positioned it as "you know our name, but do you know what we do?" recruitment event. Short preso by CEO and President, then departments held breakout presentations to tell people what they did. Creating strong sense of pride and value to employees in seeing their bosses talk, but then they also get to answer questions and talk about what they do.

Slack - internal communications tool. Helps team connect and archive projects and thoughts.

Marcomm and intra nets are awful.

PARTICIPANT 18

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your organization, and how many employees you have?

<AGENCY NAME> is a branding and design firm - 37 years old. We've been a premier brand in town working with Target, US Bank, Microsoft, etc. Worked extensively in the non-profit space and education. Passion for early child education and has a pro-bono education with "Room To Grow"

What's unique about our agency is that we've thought about building brands from the inside out - getting to the core about what is authentic and true to a brand.

2. What is your position in the org - your title/responsibilities?

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Manages account service and project management teams. Being a design firm we have 3 areas - account/strategy, creative, production & project management. I get to be a strategic lead on our business both with clients and with development of our team internally.

On US Bank project she got to serve as senior lead - developed positioning, messaging, and branding. "Thinking more broadly how a brand manifests itself internally and externally, and how it can be known for something over the long run. Not just a flash in the pan."

3. What unique challenges does your organization have related to communicating your brand to employees?

It's very hard - it's a telephone game in some respects.

Top-down communications can get muddled and lost along way. It has to make it's way through many layers of the org.

Bottom-up can also be challenging.

Employee engagement is important.

Brand communications aren't measured internally - employee performance reviews.

Influx of available channels to communicate with employees. Figuring out which channel to best reach them, and they most want to engage with is difficult.

Hourly vs. Corporate employees. Expectations vary widely between employee groups.

4. How have you seen organization view employee contributions to the brand? (How do employees contribute to finding the authentic brand?)

US Bank as an example - they were searching to find their authentic brand and central purpose statement. Silos within had many different objectives and purposes. So, Little helped find that by surveying employees to see what their focus was. They found that there were many different values and visions that needed unification.

Purpose and values help direct where a brand should go. Personality of a brand can be found in how the organization works and how parts of the organization work with each other.

Purpose and core values were used and simmons research data (to identify customer info) to craft positioning language that could be most consistent to customers and potential customers.

We needed to be sure how we position and sold the brand externally was consistent with how it was perceived internally.

5. How does organization leadership play a role in the brand and it's communication?

Communication is huge - actions speak louder than our words. So we frequently think about it as a "be, do, say" approach. US Bank for example - we had learned through research with employees that the Bank talks a lot about the orgs strong return to investors, which is a big selling point. However, when employees heard that they didn't see it as a positive, the org was doing more with less in terms of branches closing and positions going unfilled. Last year at an

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

employee event, the CEO took a step to make every employee a “stock holder” by giving employees stock in the company - that way they receive the benefits they were touting to the outside world.

It showed that the company heard employee feedback and that they cared about what was said.

6. How do you measure engagement and impact of the internal brand? What are the key performance indicators?

We have seen organizations measure performance of their branding. US Bank measures through an annual “Talk to us” survey, includes questions on brand. Also have strong internal communications team which keeps tabs. This info gives good direction to the org.

Target tracked interaction and engagement with internal focused communication tactics. Example of employee magazine mailed to homes was given.

The org has to commit to measurement for it to be most successful - it's not inexpensive or easy, but the returns can be very beneficial.

7. What's the difference between internal and external brands you worked with?

Target - they had to get very international with aligning internal and external messages. They doubled down on the “design” portion of their business and went after it with an advertising campaign both internal and external. The campaign wasn't relatable to employees, they couldn't see themselves in it, so they worked to bring employees into the story of where the Target brand was going. Providing materials and details about it, so they could help employees understand their role, while also help employees deliver on the expectations of the organizations.

2 fronts - feature employee stories, share information that store employees needed to do their jobs well.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

II. Corporation Participants

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your organization, and how many employees you have?

PARTICIPANT 2

Facilities services company. Operate in 44 states. Started in TC in 1962, with founder <FOUNDER NAME> – been a TC company for a long time. Grew through acquisitions from companies in other states. Acquisitions are approached with a light touch – administration and leadership are left in place in newly acquired companies.

Acquired companies sometimes make communications and marketing a challenge – don't want to upset smaller local offices with national "brand" when bidding for larger projects.

Org acquires clients through local sales and national sales.

3 account types – large markets, small markets, and national markets. Goal is to acquire their way to becoming a billion dollar a year company.

Operationally they're hoping to maintain internal differentiation, and from a sales/marketing perspective they're hoping to unify under the <COMPANY NAME> brand.

<COMPANY NAME> is a huge international facilities services company and a direct competitor.

10,000 employees – mostly in minimum wage areas, cleaning, security. Thin layer of management on top side. Internal communities sometimes breakdown between "operations" and "sales". Each operating company has it's own culture and identity as well. This can cause challenges when the smaller company has to represent offerings from the larger company. "Operating Companies".

Strategy is to ensure "small org" feeling for customers with individual operating companies within the org.

PARTICIPANT 5

250 staff at <COMPANY NAME>. Big chunk is the front of house staff and security guards. 450 volunteers. Range from Board of Trustees to someone who answers phones once a month. 15 in audience engagement team - <NAME>'s team.

Rebranding involved stakeholder interviews - included staff. Front of house to head of org. They're a museum focused on their audience.

We are an audience centric institution. Everything we do is with our audience in mind.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

PARTICIPANT 6

Financial services organization. Primarily focused on financial planning. Advisers in the field work with clients to help them plan for retirement.

Employees are worldwide. 3 brands - Ameriprise, Columbia Threadneedle, River Source.

Primary focus for building ameriprise brand is within the US. Approximately 10,000 advisors.

PARTICIPANT 7

Internal communications team is about 15, communications more broadly is 30-35 employees (PR and Internal). There has been significant changes to the team in the last year and a half. Internal team was reduced in size significantly (45%).

<COMPANY NAME> has a communications team which handles enterprise communications, one branch handles internal communication and public relations. There is a separate team that handles store communications, and distributions communications - these are more operational focused.

HQ has 17,000 employees (includes international and locations outside the TC). Enterprise wide there are 340,000 employees. Internal comms is focused on HQ and store leadership.

PARTICIPANT 8

Global organization with 48,000 employees across the globe. There are employees on every continent except antarctica. Structured regionally.

It's categorized as a chemical company, focused on creating products related to sanitization. Creating a purer safer world. Purifying water, keeping restaurants safe.

In last year/year and half there has been an extra focus on water use and sustainability.

Institutional - dairy plant/brewery/hospital/restaurants

Industrial - oil refineries

Communications department in the org is only 5 years old. Marketing existed before, but mostly focused on product marketing.

PARTICIPANT 10

Employee base is wide ranging, entry level employees in customer service team all the way up to executive leadership team.

Mission, Vision, and core values (respect individuals, collaborate to innovate, deliver value, act with integrity, align with clients) - ask all employees to know and embrace these in their work and life. Training session focuses on explaining these to employees.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

1400 employees, corporate office has 500.

PARTICIPANT 16

UHG is the umbrella organization, there are two groups within - United Health Care (insurance, retirement, medical), Optum (prescription side).

Global organization with about 200,000 employees. Very well known in the US and starting to build our organization and brand in other areas of the world (India, Philippines, Ireland, Brazil, UK.).

Largest employee base is in US, India is a second. Minnesota has the most employees.

2. What is your position in the org - your title/responsibilities?

PARTICIPANT 2

Brand Marketing Manager – brought on 2 years ago as combo sales coordinator and marketing specialist. He's the first national employee with official marketing responsibilities.

Initially was very responsible for sales support – but after a couple months those responsibilities were removed so he could focus more on communications and marketing.

Department is now two people – him and a newly hired Marketing Director. Dir will be able to work with executive team. Previously he reported through a sales department.

PARTICIPANT 5

Chief Engagement Officer. oversees the Audience Engagement division, including marketing, public relations, design and editorial, and custom visits. She plays a lead role in strategizing audience engagement initiatives, and has worked in the marketing field for over 15 years.

PARTICIPANT 6

Our team works on all three of the brands - we manage the Ameriprise brand guidelines. Management, building of brand, and engagement of employees and advisors. Primary go-to-market brand.

Riversource and C.Threadneedle, they consult on with other teams w/in org.

Brand management team - 5 people.

PARTICIPANT 7

Editorial role, looking across organization and finding story. Leads Enterprise Editorial and Channels Team. Signature channel - briefly, a daily email pushed to 25,000. Created in March

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

of 2016. Includes news nuggets and breaking news. Was created to convey timely communications and share information about how the org is “transforming”.

She leads the team that creates the channel on a daily basis. Also oversees visual carousel on the intranet site which shares top news/information. Including reposts/shares from other media (star tribune for instance).

Also have other content on intranet.

PARTICIPANT 8

Support HR communications. Both communications within the HR function, but also with any enterprise wide communications.

Senior Manager HR Communications.

PARTICIPANT 10

Primary responsibilities include external communications. Media relations, press releases, website content, presentations for sales teams and CEO, also helps to manage internal communications site “MTM Core”. Also manage social media accounts.

PARTICIPANT 16

I’m the internal content manager, on the internal marketing team. Our team focuses on assisting recruitment, outreach, and communications in an audience centric way. Two functions: How do we assist with the hiring of employees, and how do we assist with mobility within the organization.

She manages intranet and collaboration platform. Includes Intranet information on creating a career path or growing within the organization. Information is offered on the following 5 areas or employee journeys: New in my role, Stay and grow, Explore my field, Creating a new path, Not sure. JIVE (collaboration platform) is similar to a social network, open to employees and focused on sharing business information and networking within the organization. Helps to create a sense of community.

- 3. Can you tell me a little about the org’s internal brand?**
 - a. How and when was it developed?**
 - b. How were internal audiences included or considered?**

PARTICIPANT 2

Brand is complex. <COMPANY NAME> means something locally in the Midwest, but not as much nationally.

Virtually no consideration was given to branding or brand before he came on board.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

He'd like to get the company brand to be associated with professionalism. They're currently working on how to deal with existing logos and brands from all orgs within the company.

Able to convey value of org to national clients, but smaller clients remain a struggle.

Procter and Gamble is a good analogy of how their "brand house" is organized.

We have a consistent set of values – acquisitions person plays a role in this when looking for new orgs to acquire. Looking for "Family values" type orgs with high value and performance. As an org, we have consistent values, we just haven't articulated or written them down. Employee values and organizational values aren't strongly connected. It's just not something highlighted right now. This is an area of opportunity and growth.

PARTICIPANT 5

Our Vision - Inspiring wonder through the power of art.

Our Mission - The <COMPANY NAME> enriches the community by collecting, preserving, and making accessible outstanding works of art from the world's diverse cultures.

We recently embarked on a rebranding and launched the new brand about a year ago.

Our brand aligns with our audience centric nature. We retooled our name from an acronym to a pronounceable name as a bold way to authentically embrace our DNA and to signal to the public a fundamental institutional shift as we continue to embrace our role as the people's museum.

With the goal being that everyone who visits the museum, whether for the first time or the hundredth, will truly feel that <COMPANY NAME> is mine.

The rebranding impacted our logo, our designs (ad, posters, etc.), volunteer and employee uniforms (to ensure we are seen as inviting and informative), and our member groups - everything really.

PARTICIPANT 6

Ameriprise brand was spun off from American Express in 2005. While the company was before IDS, and has been around since 1894. In 2005 they worked with a Brand Agency to come up with a name.

Employees were engaged and asked what they thought a good name might be. They engaged employees in the process. Ameriprise = American+Enterprise. American - came up in surveys as a point of heritage for the organization. Enterprise was also a word that came up as a value and a spirit/way of the org.

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The compass symbol represents finding a direction, the star represents directions, and the arrow represents an upward movement.

Brand attributes are shared with employees - and we look for those in the messaging we put out. Also look for the opposite to ensure they don't conflict. Brands have to evolve with the time and make sure they resonate - but without any sort of revolution. Not using yachts or gold rolexes - they don't resonate with our market.

Advice, hard work - make sure the brand.

PARTICIPANT 7

Fast.Fun.Friendly. has been retired.

Over the last year, the org has been reinventing itself. Our purpose, our belief, and what we stand for - so our communications ladder back to that.

Purpose: fulfilling the needs and fueling the potential of our guests (not an emphasis in internal communications)

Belief: Innovation, inclusivity, leadership, community, and growth. (their content reinforces these beliefs and works to build culture)

Behaviors: Be accountable, be bold, be curious, be one team.

(previously there were 14 behaviors, those were hard to work into communications)

Brand is very clear about what our voice is and how we sound - it's what they call "Warm and Cool" this is now being applied to internal communication. Talking to team members the same way they would talk to guests, but with relevant.

Teammember focus groups were part of developing the beliefs and behaviors. Had opportunity to react to them and involvement in shaping them. Majority came from leadership team, but team members were also consulted.

PARTICIPANT 8

<COMPANY NAME> is a very formal brand. It reflects that a large portion of our employee base is science and research. We have a very strict color palette and formal tone of voice. "I almost want to say clinical in tone, but very formal. Intention is to come off as an expert and based in facts."

This tone is reflected in how we talk to employees.

There is a competitive nature and tone as well, because our business is competitive.

It's pretty much opposite from Target.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

I don't know that they were consulted. But there has been an employer brand that has been developed and it has heavily relied on employee input and feedback. Focused on employee recruitment.

"Based on what I've seen, I think this will end up permeating the rest of our brand" This is the beginning stages of becoming a purpose driven organization.

PARTICIPANT 10

MTM has been around since 1995, started as transportation management only, but in last 5-6 years we have expanded into other healthcare services. We focused on the brand as we expanded, ensuring there are clear guidelines and rules around the MTM brand and logos. Brand website includes info and materials to support brand within organization.

The brand was developed before contact's time at MTM.

We wanted to know what employees needed to make sure they were serving their customers and members in the call center. Survey was conducted to better understand their views and needs.

PARTICIPANT 16

Internal brand: "Your life's best work". The thought is that employees don't just come to work everyday and perform like a robot. Each employee has a unique skill set and passions that makes them human and the job real.

Focus on highlighting how interests and activities outside of work influence performance on their day job. Finding out what drives or motivates people. Really focused on showing each person's passion and drive and how that makes them a better doctor, content manager, etc.

New to the company, within the last six years. Not sure how it was created - happened before her time at the organization.

Not sure how they may have been included - created before her time at the organization.

4. What unique challenges does your organization have related to communicating your brand to employees?

PARTICIPANT 2

Most employees don't report to an office, they clean buildings but don't have an office. Some employees don't even have an email address.

Interaction between marketing and ground level service employees is minimal. Perspectives range from highly conservative and change averse, to folks who are open to new and different things.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

Divide between operations side and sales side. Primary focus has been communicating with sales side of organization, to get them aligned with who they are and what the org wants to do.

PARTICIPANT 5

****Answered based on EXTERNAL communications and audiences, not internal**** Passion and engagement - public feels they have the ability to provide feedback.

PARTICIPANT 6

Two intranets - one for advisors and one for employees. We always have to remember the audience we're communicating with. Advisors are working with clients in the field and we can't be too fluffy with them - the value of the brand is what the brand can do for them. The equity it holds in the consumer's mind.

Know it, Believe it, Live it. - their brand engagement model.

Know it - this can be a challenge because people fall on all ends of this spectrum.

Believe it - (not able to transcribe)

Live it - (not able to transcribe)

PARTICIPANT 7

Different audiences need different things. It's hard to communicate to all audiences when they have different levels of knowledge and understanding. Used "TheSkimm" as a model for their internal employee communications.

Trying to not be all things to all people - but be more focused.

Finding content can be a challenge, but not a big one. Positioning it to reinforce the beliefs and behaviors can be trickier.

Used to have a challenge sharing information in a timely manner with the internal team - now they've synched up internal communications and pr

PARTICIPANT 8

Tactical

- A lot of the work force is on the road and traveling, we're a large sales and service organization. Most of their time is also spent interfacing with customers.

- Globally, the organization translates into 17 languages. There are challenges with things that literally don't translate.

Strategic

- Due to the diverse nature (hospitality to pest elimination) it can be difficult to align messaging and internal audiences that are mostly unrelated.

- Because our business is very diverse, the separate departments sometimes run as standalone org.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

PARTICIPANT 10

I don't know if we have that many challenges. We take a proactive approach through our internal website, we use that to post information about the org, the brand and motivational messages around the org and our core values.

PARTICIPANT 16

Cultural differences - How we manage things in the US is completely different from India and Brazil. US is fast paced, India and Brazil moves more slowly and focuses on relationships. So we need to make sure we reflect that in the wording of messagings.

Legal - We also have to consider cultural differences in job postings.

Technology - Majority of people in India do not have a computer, so we need to make sure our technology is more mobile friendly.

We just rolled out a multilingual website, which is a challenge for translating.

5. How does your organization see employees contributing to the brand?

PARTICIPANT 2

Employees can sometimes be make or break for clients – and the consistency is hard to maintain among employees.

Ideally, we'd have consistent behavior among our employees in the field. And there are some good examples of that.

PARTICIPANT 5

<President> knows name of every employee. Employees are the brand here, and definitely represent the org.

<President> believes staff are the greatest asset of the museum. (Staff and art are the greatest asset).

Staff needs to be positively and authentically engaged in brand - so when they post or share on social they support the organization.

PARTICIPANT 6

We talk about employees being advocates in training.

One of the best ways you can understand what we do is become a client - we offer benefits towards employees. This is how employees can experience the brand and become and advocate through experience.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

PARTICIPANT 7

Advocates - our communications set out to create an advocacy culture. It's aspirational but we're working on it.

PARTICIPANT 8

Definitely seen as brand ambassadors, but it's also seen as a two way street. They share out to customers about what <COMPANY NAME> has to offer. But, they're also seen as the eyes and ears of our customers. Providing info on the customer base and how they might changing.

One <COMPANY NAME> - if you have a customer who has needs that are outside of what you're selling, you can still promote other <COMPANY NAME> offerings.

Employees help the brand evolve through their feedback and insights from the "road".

PARTICIPANT 10

In our customer service center, our representatives are brand ambassadors and we want them to take the core values and mission to heart as they interact with customers. If they can't do that, our customers won't understand. They are the front line to achieving the goal of having customers understand our brand.

Brand ambassador training has been implemented helping employees to promote the brand when working with clients or anyone outside the organization.

PARTICIPANT 16

We definitely do. We have "culture ambassadors" who live and breath the values day in and day out. They have special calls and retreats to learn more and provide feedback about the brand. Training, tools techniques and tips to spread the brand word.

The hope is that more employees jump on board with this.

6. How does organization leadership play a role in the brand and it's communication?

PARTICIPANT 2

Current CEO plays a significant role in communications. He's the captain and what he says goes. He started as a part time cleaner in the 70's and worked his way up.

We've only had 2 CEOs in 65 years. Old guard "top-down" communications model. To get things accomplished, you have to know the right relationships to leverage; it's a lot like chesh.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

Connection to the CEO helps get things done – nothing of substance happens at <COMPANY NAME> without the CEO’s approval. Buy-in is critical in success. But, below him there is an executive team that can be all over the map.

The thin layer of administration at the top, there can be challenges – specifically the leadership team doesn’t have admin support, which can be a challenge.

PARTICIPANT 5

Branding task force - 4 trustees, president, head curator, head of design, and chief engagement officer. They picked agency, and lead the overall project. This group was formed to ensure the final project had buy in from everyone.

Chief engagement officer handled internal communications. There were many personal communications and touch points, both with chief engagement officer and also with the agency. Meetings didn’t include feedback at this point.

Initial research included interviews with staff about what wasn’t working in current <COMPANY> brand.

PARTICIPANT 6

They provide leaders with talking points when it comes branding. Infusing their conversation, and emails, and meetings with brand points. These are both from leaders to employees, and for communications directed at leaders.

Providing them the tools they need to effectively communicate.

PARTICIPANT 7

There are times when leaders themselves send messages to the team. There are other times when the message is sent in “<COMPANY NAME>’s voice”.

They work to integrate leader voices into the channels they already have. Q&A with CEO or CMO for example, to give employees a chance to hear from the leader and about the leader.

PARTICIPANT 8

Leadership plays a really strong role, particularly the CEO. More than I’ve seen at any other company, <COMPANY NAME> relies on leadership to convey messages.

Quarterly CEO webcast helping to reinforce the vision and the purpose of the company.

**The weak point in our org is the middle managers, because communications from leadership is available directly to front line employees.

PARTICIPANT 10

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

President and CEO gives monthly vision presentation. Helps connect everyone across the country with goals, performance, and highlights people who are living the org mission and values. It helps incentivise everyone to do the same.

Managers also incentivise employees through the Drive Rewards Portal, used to recognize employees who are living the brand. Peers can also recognize each other for doing a good job and send notes/messages about how they are supporting/living core values.

PARTICIPANT 16

Leadership was the first group of culture ambassadors. Anytime something changes from a brand perspective (imagery as an example) they convey and communicate those changes and solicit feedback from constituents.

Leadership also holds yearly brand conference to talk about brand every year.

7. How does your brand relate to your organizational culture?

PARTICIPANT 2

Yes – it's been challenging to get brand initiatives off the ground. The culture is not focused on brand or used to thinking about that, they are focused on operations. They have no frame of reference for brand.

Organization is comfortable with the status quo – however, the org is growing tremendously and that has caused significant friction.

PARTICIPANT 5

Part of the culture here was to respect people's expertise-for instance when the design team created something and liked it, everyone respected that they knew what they were doing.

Culture and brand were symbiotic. The culture supported and respected the brand work.

Internal culture plan - agility, positivity, driving results, and self awareness, and one other... the brand reflects who we are as an organization and a culture.

PARTICIPANT 6

Attributes and values are aligned between culture and brand.

PARTICIPANT 7

Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 8

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

Our culture is very science based, our buildings are a lot of labs. Our culture is very competitive, but not in a “mean” way. It’s a little more formal, which also comes through to the brand.

PARTICIPANT 10

Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 16

Skipped for time.

8. What does your organization do to engage employees in the brand? What have you found to be the best/worst ways to engage with employees?

PARTICIPANT 2

Newsletter is main communication vehicle to employees. Launching a new intranet with info and resources for salespeople and other employees. Used to promote new clients and other positive org news. Helps sales people have conversation fodder when they go into the field.

PARTICIPANT 5

During rollout - we had a brand party. Everyone got a t-shirt, lanyard, button. Do not plan to continually do events.

From an ongoing prospective rolling the brand out and seeing results has helped.

Formal culture plan has 5 attributes that are measured during reviews.

Formal rewards are also based on culture points - as well as in hiring points.

PARTICIPANT 6

Mostly through the intranet, through townhalls, and local meetings.

CEO does quarterly town hall. He’s quite accessible.

Leaders have meetings to discuss results, vision, how they’re meeting goals. They also bring in speakers to keep folks up to date.

We also keep employees up to date on what’s happening in the industry.

Email is used sometimes also, but they try to keep that to emails from immediate leaders and teams, not from the CEO.

Environment branding - artwork, mission/vision/values, office branding program for advisors allowing them to brand their space.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

PARTICIPANT 7

Email, intranet. Focus on pushing content to employees rather than having them pull info from an intranet.

Annual Employee meeting - includes leadership of stores.

HQ has added focus on recovering from challenges and layoffs of 2015. So they've started having events called "red talks" - opportunity for a leader of a business area to present to employees and share information. Recorded and shared to whole org. Gives people insight into dif areas of the business.

Outer spaces - monthly series where external speakers are brought in to inspire team members about the organizational change.

PARTICIPANT 8

<COMPANY NAME> does division sales meetings. IMPACT, employee magazine that is created every year and sent to employee's homes. It's a showcase piece, and is sent to homes so that people can leave it on their coffee table and share with friends and family. This doesn't talk about operational updates, but tells stories about the org.

Intranet conveys brand info.

Teams have internal meetings and division have quarterly townhalls.

PARTICIPANT 10

We try to have fun events year round that celebrate the employees. In CSC they have a week of celebrations meant to thank employees for achieving goals and work.

Monthly vision statement from CEO really helps to engage employees and increases transparency.

Drive Rewards - Employee rewards system available to all.

CORE - internal communications system, like an intranet. Daily news updates are posted here.

Employees can comment on stories and submit story ideas. It's a way to communicate organizational news.

Weekly newsletter goes out to employees to promote content on site.

PARTICIPANT 16

Effectiveness totally depends on the words being used, and the stories being told. In every external and internal piece, there's a story behind it. To highlight the passion and drive behind the individual and make it more relevant to the audience and easier to connect with and put that personal touch on it. It humanizes everything.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

9. How do you measure engagement and impact of the internal brand? What are the key performance indicators?

PARTICIPANT 2

Revenue is the primary source for success/failure measurements.

PARTICIPANT 5

Don't do any internal employee surveying. Externally, the organization measures "Net promoter" - likelihood of people to recommend to friends. (current in the 80s), and monitors membership levels. Attendance to museum. 2015 - 850,000, a 70% increase visitors.

PARTICIPANT 6

Employee satisfaction survey.

PARTICIPANT 7

Looking at open and click rates on email. Also looking for anecdotal feedback. New email format has received a lot of positive feedback.

Events include follow-up survey for feedback.

PARTICIPANT 8

From a measurement standpoint it's very standard - use google analytics to see how the material we make available online is read. A lot of follow-up surveys - to webcasts, and each issue of IMPACT.

Loosely, we look at attendance at events.

Also looking to align units and communications internally to ensure messages are received by employees.

PARTICIPANT 10

No we don't have any formalized processes. We do keep track of comments on CORE website on stories posted. We're able to track readership and level engagement.

I would love to be able to track better.

PARTICIPANT 16

Survey to internal groups - measures positive or negative sentiment about their job, their bosses, the organization as a whole.

Web metrics related to actions and engagement online. Using data to determine what employees are clicking on and staying on.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

10. Do you think your internal brand is working to engage and motivate employees? Why or why not? What would you change to make your internal brand more effective at this?

PARTICIPANT 2

Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 5

Internally 100%, no pushback. Love great design - so there aren't any problems.

Publicly - it just takes time.

PARTICIPANT 6

Yes. Employees are asked if they believe in the purpose of Ameriprise and if they value the brand and responses

PARTICIPANT 7

Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 8

For field based employees - it's absolutely working. Sales and service employees absolutely understand the brand they are trying to represent and are comfortable doing so.

The struggle can be at headquarters. The connection to results are not as direct, and it's important to help them understand how they connect back to the purpose and objectives of the org.

PARTICIPANT 10

I believe we've made great strides in improving employee engagement over the last few years.

PARTICIPANT 16

Skipped for time.

11. Are there specific communication materials or pieces that you feel have helped strengthen or improve brand perceptions with employees? What made them successful?

PARTICIPANT 2

Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 5

Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 6

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

Living our brand training available through the intranet “Ameriprise University” it’s a 20 minute course.

Resources online about who they are, and guidelines online for logo and whatnot.

PARTICIPANT 7

Email is hands down done that. We have seen on survey for years that team members wanted a “push communication”. We were resistant and wanted people to pull the content themselves - they listened to employee feedback about being too busy to do that and wanted an email.

Successful because it was giving them what they were asking for. It also came at a time when people were hungry and uncertain about what would happen. Voice is also friendly and relatable. It’s very short - there are three max stories, and each is less than 150 words, links are included to additional content.

PARTICIPANT 8

IMPACT Magazine is best. It’s compelling storytelling, and that it is the employees telling the story. It’s an interesting story and the person who’s telling it.

Because they see their peers and colleagues, it connects employees together.

Working on 5th edition, and they’ve done a good job highlight all areas of the org, not just a star unit or department.

PARTICIPANT 10

Motivational Monday pieces have been really successful in communicating the brand and information. She’s going to check and share some examples.

PARTICIPANT 16

For internal employees, it was identifying where they could potentially be in their career journey. And giving them/offering them information to support them. It gave people the voice and the power to say it was ok to move within the org. I think that internal campaign helped a lot. Leadership even shared stories of their own journey within UHG.

“Just being able to meet them where they are, it’s not the baby boomer generation, they want to reach out and know what their resources are. And being able to show them they can have a career at UHG and that there are opportunities.”

12. Additional thoughts/comments?

PARTICIPANT 2

Website hasn’t changed in 10 years. It’s an exciting time for me and for the brand – but sometimes it’s challenging for others.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

Marketing department is becoming more authoritative in how it supports and engages with sales – providing expertise, not just designing materials.

Sales training sessions help to build a common culture within the sales team. Onboarding and new employee training presents the best opportunity to educate the team on the brand and products of the organization. Anyway we can make the sales team feel supported by the org is important to the marketing team.

PARTICIPANT 5

The value of the work we did with the brand was great. We're a mission driven institution and we had to be good stewards of our brand.

PARTICIPANT 6

None

PARTICIPANT 7

None

PARTICIPANT 10

None

PARTICIPANT 16

None

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

III. Education Participants

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your organization, and how many employees you have?

PARTICIPANT 3

Community's form by length of time at the org – shared history, shared stories.

Coaching staffs also cluster together.

Functional teams cluster – creative, marketing, etc.

A lot of people in college athletics are young – and young people tend to build social circles with their colleagues – more so than older individuals. Sometimes familiarity doesn't help in the workplace.

200-300 people work in athletics department, 105MM revenue

PARTICIPANT 4

60,000 students, 5 campuses, BOR governance - 12 people.

Job family, organization structure helps to give background on the classifications of jobs at the University (communications, HR, finance, etc). Helps to identify a path for growth for employees.

Faculty and faculty governance. Faculty Senate and FCC.

PARTICIPANT 9

9,000 employees, includes faculty and staff. Probably 1,500 faculty and the rest are staff.

Land grant and big research institution. 50,000 students.

PARTICIPANT 11

University has 25,000 students, all in Lincoln Nebraska. There are three city campuses - City Campus (main), East Campus (primarily ag programs), and Innovation Campus (public/private research partnerships).

Faculty and Staff total around 2,000. We have typical channels of a University, 3 times weekly faculty/staff e-newsletter. Also have semi regular emails from administrators. E newsletter is connected to our news website. Those are main outreach/communication channels (in addition to any departmental communications).

PARTICIPANT 12

We have about 300 employees, 90 tenured faculty. Student to Teacher ratio or 11:1.

On the staff side, we have typical divisions. Recruitment, fundraising, student development, athletics, marketing/communications.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

College is pretty athletics focused, 40% of incoming freshman are part of their HS varsity team. High compared to others our size across the country. Athletics is important to our school.

PARTICIPANT 13

As in many universities, not all groups of internal audiences consider themselves employees. Faculty generally don't consider themselves "employees". So, we have many groups internally. Students also wouldn't classify themselves as employees, but again they are internal.

Faculty - 4,000

Staff (50% time or more) - 13,000

NOT part of the UCLA system. University of Southern California is a private research University with two campuses in Los Angeles. Also includes several other outreach centers in other areas of Los Angeles.

375,000 living alumni, with clubs on every continent.

PARTICIPANT 14

<COLLEGE NAME> is a top rank research university in <TOWN>. 12 schools, 8,000 undergraduates, 8,000 grads. In the BigTen, but a private school. We're most known for our academic rigor.

Employees crossover Faculty/Staff roles. Administrative and support roles.

PARTICIPANT 15

52,000 students, Faculty 3,000, Admin 21,000. One campus, but does include centers and institutes.

PARTICIPANT 17

<COLLEGE NAME> in general is a research 1 University. Member of the American Association of University, land grant University for Indiana. 3 pronged mission as land grant - learning, discovery, and engagement. So we try to look at all three of those elements in most of our messaging and branding.

From an internal perspective we have approx. 14,000 full-time employees on <TOWN> campus (includes faculty & staff). When we talk about internal communication we consider our primary audience to be faculty and staff, but there are additional internal audiences like students, alumni to some extent (part of the <COLLEGE NAME> family, but we go back on forth on whether we consider them internal or external). We also consider retirees as an internal audience.

PARTICIPANT 19

Research 1 University with an academic medical campus. Risen in stature in the last 30 years from being a regional player to an international one. Very stable and long tenured workforce,

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

which means that there's a lot of folks who may not necessarily believe "we've arrived". There's a midwestern chip on their shoulder. It's fairly conservative, not terrible nimble or big on risk taking.

Big stakeholder groups - development office, undergraduate admissions.

Leadership changes are on the horizon - undergraduate admissions, chancellor, head of development. All planned for.

2. What is your position in the org - your title/responsibilities?

PARTICIPANT 3

Licensing, communications, social media, creative, IT. Overall positioning and branding of Athletics within the University. Ensuring that it ladders up to the University's brand.

PARTICIPANT 4

Responsible for building the reputation of the university and protecting its reputation.

PARTICIPANT 9

Assistant Vice President for Marketing

PARTICIPANT 11

Part of University Comm Office. Hybrid office has news/media group, plus all other communications units that serve a variety of functions. Client services and serving chancellor's office. Web, interactive, creative, brand management, social media, project management, events.

Leads project management and strategy across all units. Leads in strategic development and management brand.

PARTICIPANT 12

Primarily responsible for media relations, and steward of the brand. Handles most of news releases and media relations. Also oversees alumni magazine, website, governmental relations, mascot scheduling, and other communications work for the college.

He wears a lot of hats and has a wide variety of responsibilities.

PARTICIPANT 13

AVP - been at the University for 5 years.

PARTICIPANT 14

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

Asst. Vice President for global marketing, new department as of two years ago. Previously we marketed through each school (ext/int), but 3 years ago it was decided to centralize marketing and communications and this department came of that committee/white paper.

The first year we audited how marcomm got done at <COLLEGE NAME>, then we did research on what the <COLLEGE NAME> brand stood for.

PARTICIPANT 15

Director of Marketing and Business Strategy. Responsible for Homepage, social, mobile app, some advertising (mostly digital in nature). Working on new institutional TV ad.

PARTICIPANT 17

Asst. VP of Strategic Communications. Our mar/comm org is split into two areas: Marketing (the creative area handling our website, magazines, brochures, online materials, advertising, brand management), Communications (Media Relations, internal communications, executive comm).

PARTICIPANT 19

Assistant Vice Chancellor, Integrated Marketing and Brand Strategy. Works with all of the Public Affairs teams to help align our work against both departmental and institutional priorities.

- 3. Can you tell me a little about the org's internal brand?**
 - a. How and when was it developed?**
 - b. How were internal audiences included or considered?**

PARTICIPANT 3

We take pieces of master UMN brand that fit with us. Excellence, greater mn (ties to student athletes from all over the state), education and development.

At the same time, we have to be more visceral – we're hard working, do more with less, we're Bud Grant.

We're only starting now to convey the Athletics Brand. For a long time we didn't convey our brand, so other people did it for us.

Our brand has roots in the state, it's not flashy, we're true to what Minnesotans connect with.

We created an internal blog about a year ago. www.athletics.umn.edu/gopherdaily

- set as default landing page on chrome browsers by IT department.

- Features video and stories of staff who are living the brand or showing outstanding support.

**Vision and Values handout outlined all these. This helps infuse these values into all staff – the position of this org is the responsibility of all employees.

PARTICIPANT 4

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

The University's brand was developed from the inside out. The majority of input about the brand was all internal. We met with 50 different internal focus groups and individuals, representing all different areas of the U. We knew we could find the essence of the brand internally - these are the people that make the brand what it is.

We explored how our mission manifests itself - what are the words and images people use to describe who we are.

Follow-up question: How was the existing brand or identity considered in the new brand? No one had tried to codify the brand, we had elements but nothing cohesive. So we explored what people felt about the University, what makes them work here rather than somewhere else. The brand was always here, it just needed to be pulled out and articulated in a compelling way.

It helps to articulate our reason for being, why the University exists and how everyone connects to it. It's articulated best in the Driven to Discover Mantra - it evokes feelings and makes people proud. M/V/V is kind of academic.

Brand Promise is the mantra - we're all connected by curiosity.

PARTICIPANT 9

Spartans Will - Back in 2009 they worked with the President to determine how to better define the MSU brand. They were all over the place from a look and feel and messaging perspective.

Research included perspectives from faculty and staff. Prospective students, Alumni, peers, general public were also included. Used input from all those groups to define the brand and identify key messages.

In the last three years, we've looked more to what it meant to be a spartan and what it meant to be at MSU. We talked to faculty, alumni, students. We did in depth interviews to understand and define what really differentiates us, why they came here. Tried to find the sweet spot about what makes us different from other BigTens. Developed a brand platform from that research and our current brand campaign. Research based, 1-1, emotional inquiry format.

"This led to a more emotional brand, because it really connected to people in a way they can identify with. We boiled it down to what it meant to be a spartan, how they behave and what they value."

PARTICIPANT 11

When we sought to better define our brand, we realized that many of us had an internal definition of what our brand was. The narrative was out there, and somewhat understood, but we didn't have anything written down or outlined for the brand.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

We wanted to outline our attributes and our differentiators. Including an anthem, positioning statements for specific audiences to speak to their unique relationship to the org. (starts on page 79 of brand book).

Majority of our work in defining the sub-messaging was working with our brand council. They represented many areas within the org (alumni, athletics, colleges, etc). Faculty and staff were primary shapers in the messages developed, students were consulted but only for review not for creation.

PARTICIPANT 12

We've been through 2 or 3 branding exercises. Most recent in 2014 with a new president. We have a great institutional researcher who surveyed on campus and off campus individuals to inform the brand. **Participant shared 1 page document overviewing College brand.

We determined what attributes are most important to prospective students.

Key Attributes: Academic rep, student centered culture, location. Location is a key differentiator because most smaller private colleges are in smaller rural towns with limited opportunities from internship and cultural opportunities.

Renewed emphasis on place in community by new president.

College doesn't have a logo/tagline, we have a "theme". A higher brow way to view marketing.

Started with nearly 100 themes, then boiled it down through internal review by 5 person team consisting of members from student, faculty, and other groups.

Went with "<COLLEGE NAME> makes it possible. You make it happen" theme because they felt it was the best and conveyed the benefit the College can bring, and the responsibility the student has in the equation.

New president asked for "brighter colors" - so they updated to more vibrant versions of their existing crimson and gold colors. Some resistance to this from campus community.

PARTICIPANT 13

Our brand depends on who you ask. Our overarching brand is to present ourselves as a leading private research institution in southern california with an international presence, and national prominence. Highly ranked, distinguished research faculty, and federal grant funded research.

Messages change based on Audience:

- Potential students - focus on undergraduate experience, resources for learning, location, student life, internship and career opportunities. (breadth and depth, intimate setting, wide academic offerings).

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

- Staff - messages are more about the culture of USC. Something they call the “<COLLEGE MASCOT> Family” a set of values that is easy for our campus community to internalize. A supportive network of people here to help students grow and have the best experience.

Our brand has been in place for a long time. These are core areas of excellence and expression of values that have been in place for a long time. The brand is true to the personality and nature of the institution. We work to cultivate and have on-going discussions around our mission, values.

PARTICIPANT 14

Research told us what differentiated us was our “multidimensionality” (people/place), “collaboration” intersections of perspectives and points of view, “innovation” and the impact those can have. These are brand pillars that can be translated into a brand narrative the “<COLLEGE NAME> Direction”. “AND is in our DNA” which is a rally cry we use.

We developed a brand identity and guidelines for all units internally to align our identity. And asked all units internally to use so that we would start looking like a “family” - and no longer using different shades of purple, and multiple logos for each school.

We wanted to make sure we differentiated ourselves on unique attributes.

We looked at ivy leagues and found they had deep histories to draw on, and connected strongly to that. We found that we didn’t have just “one thing” we are creative and analytical, we’re tied to Chicago and the globe.

Research took place among many internal audiences, to get an idea of what <COLLEGE NAME> stood for to all these groups. So we could develop a brand platform and promise. An internal branding work group was created, and at major milestones we presented work to other internal groups sharing what we learned and giving them insight into where we were headed. Their feedback and buy in helped to move things forward.

PARTICIPANT 15

It was put together before my time here, but came together from external marketing research focused on alumni. Less focused on current faculty/staff/students.

Tagline is one of the most famous/recognized in community. “What starts here, changes the world”. Walter Cronkite is an alum and helped launch this.

Brand personality pulls from Texas “swagger” - bold, competitive, loyal. Resonates with community.

Our brand messaging has been in place for 5-6 years now. Close to needing a refresh.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

Engage, Innovate, Impact - brand pillars. They want to be the best public research university and they communicate the value of that with audiences.

Internal audiences were not considered. They were not included for budgetary concerns. They couldn't do as in depth research as they wanted, so had to focus on external audiences. In early stages of capital campaign during this development - so they focused on future donor.

PARTICIPANT 17

We're currently assessing the brand and our marks. Surveys were sent out in the spring of various constituent groups (fac/staff/students/alum/corp partners/donors). Brand research and licensing partner did surveys, individual interviews, and focus groups. Asked what the current brand marks signified to these audiences - getting ready to come back with a proposal for marks (consolidation/simplification).

Internal audience does get a say in the brand. Before we make any change we would consult internal audiences and review research and proposals.

PARTICIPANT 19

"Sharing your story" is internal brand program.

We spent 6 months with stakeholders just shaping the research. Wanted everyone to feel engaged. Talked about the notion of internal alignment with stakeholders. We didn't engage a lot of people in the planning - because many folks weren't knowledgeable about this kind of work.

They spoke with a partner agency (fleishman hillard) about internal alignment campaigns. They took inspiration from that. People want to understand the WHY of the organization, and then give them information on that point.

First session was in October of 2015. 30-40 people participated, and based on feedback adjustments were made to the program.

4. What unique challenges does your organization have related to communicating your brand to employees?

PARTICIPANT 3

The public fan ownership of this brand – similar to coke or "everywhere" type brands – everyone in the state feels like they own the University and Athletics, and has an idea of what it is or should be.

People bring their own personal experiences that lead –

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

There is a need for timely information to be shared with staff because of the public interest in what happens here. Everything that happens here is public and the staff needs to know about it before they get asked about it, and they need to be armed with information so they can speak to an issue or complaint from a member of the public.

This is a unique need here that I haven't experienced to this degree anywhere else.

PARTICIPANT 4

Large/Decentralized. Communications is highly decentralized. One challenge here is the size and subcultures within the org. Faculty vs. Staff, Sciences vs. Arts. Finding one brand is challenging.

Some of the colleges feel like they compete with each other. Some feel they need to differentiate between each other. Communicating the value of connecting to the big brand has helped address this.

Traditionally, academics have been suspicious of marketing and advertising. Thinking it devalues or trivializes their work. (listen to recording for more info).

PARTICIPANT 9

We don't have a specific channel. We've got the message write, but we don't have a specific channel. We have an intranet, we don't have an employee newsletter. We don't have a way to consistently communicate with internal audiences unless they come to us.

MSU Today is our news site, but it's research and brand messages, for external audiences.

Faculty and Staff have totally different needs and motivators than students.

The Spartan Experience - how do you create an experience for anyone at the University. This is an optional training available to staff and employees, but it's not required.

Brand certification series is also offered. This is focused on staff.

On campus signage last year hopefully helped inform people about the brand and views.

PARTICIPANT 11

From our perspective, our work is always University-wide. However, we often see that faculty and staff are less likely to think about audiences or their relationship to the University's brand. They tend to focus on the area, department, college they serve and see that Unit as the brand rather than a part of the larger brand.

Most people who are our key audiences outside the University - prospective students, alumni, general public - view us as one university, not separate Units. When faculty and staff don't have

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that perspective in mind when they shape and send communications, it can lead to inconsistency in delivery on the brand promise.

PARTICIPANT 12

As part of rebranding, one of the things we did was (fall of 2014) create a one-pager newsletter "Today at <COLLEGE NAME>". It goes out every morning during school and gives an overview of everything happening on campus each day. Very popular. They strive to keep it short and succinct.

Also do a longer Weekly Newsletter - during school year only. Not heavily read by student body but some faculty do read.

Generally, how to communicate with students is challenging giving the changing nature of their communication habits. We tell them that they have to check their email to learn what's going on.

We're always looking and evaluating ways to communicate better with students.

PARTICIPANT 13

That people have tremendous differences in their roles at the University, not everyone experiences the same slice of life. We have a widespread base of employees - folks who work in the counseling center, vs. faculty, vs. doctor contribute to the campus experience, but have different perspectives. Every college or university is a microcosm of a city.

PARTICIPANT 14

There is a difference between Faculty and Staff. Tenured faculty have very strong opinions and beliefs and are very vocal. In the beginning we were sensitive to them and didn't want to come out guns blazing with new ads. We started with research and came to them with data about who we are, what we stand for, what we're good at, and what attracted people to us.

We presented all this work, which lead to a positioning from those meetings. The insights came straight out of the data.

Our school brands are sometimes better know than our University brands. Those sub brands are stronger in other regions than the <COLLEGE NAME> brand. So we are working to integrate those internal sub-brands into the institution brand.

PARTICIPANT 15

Email is primary channel, and this causes blow back from faculty and feedback from students that they don't read because there's too much. So, we know it's not the best.

No internal website. No instant messenger or shared calendar system.

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We have been successful in communicating with students through Facebook groups. We've created FB groups for each class - in an effort to help retention rates. Heavily used by students.

PARTICIPANT 17

The biggest challenge is getting to them when they want to hear something. We have a daily email newsletter that goes to all employees - but people will read when it applies to them. Getting the right message to the right audience and the right time is the biggest challenge. So trying to figure out if there is a better way to reach people is something we're always looking at.

Given that we aren't a corporation - we're not top-down driven. And that's a challenge.

PARTICIPANT 19

We think a lot of our challenge is internal - research has shown that faculty don't feel a lot of pride in the institution.

Internal groups receive many communications, and frequently don't read any of them.

The Record - internal newsletter. Faculty wants coverage in that piece. This is the main vehicle for communicating with internal groups.

No internal mass email system, or CRM. It's hard for groups to opt in or out of things that they want or don't want.

"We need to figure out how to give the right people, the right information, at the right time, in the right way."

5. How does your organization see employees contributing to the brand?

PARTICIPANT 3

We view staff as ambassadors. That's the most authentic message we can deliver. When the guy from the equipment room answers questions, he's the expert source to his friends or whoever he's talking to.

PARTICIPANT 4

Not aware of a shared understanding, other than the jobs they perform. Personally, I see employees as brand ambassadors.

PARTICIPANT 9

They're a critical piece for us. But, we're just starting to embrace the power of that army of advocates. We have a "Spartan Insider" program that we're developing that will help people live the brand.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

Working on this by exploring some questions: How do we get students to understand the value of a research institution, how do we get faculty to recruit other faculty.

We're working to build advocates and get them to understand what happens here beyond "sports and partying".

PARTICIPANT 11

I've spent 8 years in University communications, prior to that I spent 7 years in a similar role in admissions. I would say the strongest framework for encouraging employees to be brand ambassadors is within the office of admissions. They were focused on a common mission of showing students how they can build a life at the University. And in general, higher education marketing is missing that a bit. This is an opportunity we can seize University wide.

One other thing is that we are known for being friendly, authentic, and approachable. This is a part of our brand that is internalized because of the culture here. It's reflected in interactions with the outside public.

PARTICIPANT 12

Used example of big mac in advertising and big mac in reality as showing the "Value Proposition Gap" and how employees can play a role in closing this gap. He presented this internally to leadership as an example of how important it is to consider employees in how people view their organization.

Feel's that older faculty doesn't quite understand this, but younger faculty do. Older faculty may not be plugged into the competitive nature of higher ed these days.

PARTICIPANT 13

They are ambassadors for the brand. Some more actively than others. When people know that you're affiliated with a University, they'll ask you questions. Especially folks with college age children. And also prospective employees of current employees. Current employees can be a positive ambassador.

It's important to keep employees informed of the direction of the University. Especially in situations of crisis. Providing accurate and factual information to employees can do a lot to dispel wrongly held perceptions of the University.

Our employees are part of the community, and they can advocate and vote in our favor.

Study of custodians across different organizations - those in hospitals tended to have higher levels of satisfaction. Why? Because they are part of helping other people heal or benefiting other people. This is something that can transfer when helping students.

PARTICIPANT 14

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

We see them being the living embodiment of the brand. We didn't do anything externally in terms of marketing until everyone in the University saw our new brand. We needed to make sure everyone understood it and saw themselves in it - from the cafeteria worker, to the current student, to a 50 year alumni. They needed to see it and say "Yes, I am <COLLGE NAME>".

PARTICIPANT 15

Absolutely not, unfortunately it's not part of the culture here to see employees contributing to the University's brand. It's very much that faculty are put on a pedestal and taken very well care of. And then Students and Employees are below.

We don't have a strong central "internal" communications department, and that's not part of our mar/comm responsibility list. Each internal audience is handled by separate departments (students-provost, employees-hr, for example). I can't even send email to those groups without approval from those "gatekeepers". This is also a challenge.

PARTICIPANT 17

I would say yes, we do consider our employees brand ambassadors. But it's not explicitly or overtly delivered directly to them. We don't say "you all are brand ambassadors." We communicate that in more subtle ways and it's communicated at the department level more so than a top-down edict.

PARTICIPANT 19

Skipped for time.

6. How does organization leadership play a role in the brand and it's communication?

PARTICIPANT 3

They are actively involved in communicating the context and the why behind what's happening in the department to staff. It's top down, sharing from top down is important – from the AD down.

They also live and model the behavior for other staff – otherwise they don't mean anything.

PARTICIPANT 4

Leaders should all be living the brand, but also speaking the brand. Specifically, incorporating brand words in their speeches, etc.

Living the brand - if it's D2D, it would be finding different ways of doing things, to solve problems, to go the extra mile to discover a new way of answering questions and doing your work. That there is a drive to the way you behave.

Target had Fast. Fun. Friendly. In your daily work, you act out those elements in the brand.

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PARTICIPANT 9

Presentation at AMA - Emotional branding. Value of getting buy in.

Created two leadership buy in panels. Advisor group 1: Core presidents running the university, Deans, faculty, admissions, etc. Advisor group 2: communicators.

Included in every aspect of the brand planning. Included in research, results, brand platform development (help articulate in a way that would ring true with their groups), creative development.

Their involvement helped create ownership and investment in the project. Especially in such a decentralized environment.

We had leaders talk about what the brand meant to them, what their vision was for the university, and other.

Also working with colleges to modify brand messages and other elements to fit the specific colleges.

PARTICIPANT 11

Leaders model brand behavior.

We've hired a new chancellor (CEO of the University), just this week, after 15 years of a previous leader. He's an internal candidate but we are working to identify how his attributes sync up with our brand. As we've worked on communications projects, we work to identify who he is and how he aligns with the University brand.

PARTICIPANT 12

President played a role in the development of the new brand, and had specific requests/directives at various points in the project. See response to Q3.

PARTICIPANT 13

Our president does an annual address (3 separate times - early morning for doctors, midday for faculty, and then later in day for all staff).

We recently had a cross campus symposium on the "customer experience" on campus. How visitors (parents, students, etc) perceive the university and how they can ensure the best experience. And how can all employees play apart. Initiated by the president with one of their trustees.

PARTICIPANT 14

Leadership plays a critical role. Not in terms of enforcement, but by endorsing and speaking in the language of the brand helps to show their support in a less overt way. By them living the

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

brand, they're a great role model to the rest of the community. (speeches, letters, panel moderation, websites, etc.)

President, provost were visible early adopters.

PARTICIPANT 15

We have a new president (just over a year), the previous president was absolutely involved in setting up the brand messages, because he was involved in the capital campaign.

The new president has the most basic understanding of the brand, probably doesn't even know our messaging. He uses a different tagline as well. We're in a place where we need to refresh brand messaging to be in alignment with new president.

PARTICIPANT 17

Our leadership (president and trustees) are very clear on our priorities - affordability, student success, world changing research, and STEM leadership. They all convey those messages when they are out or communicating with others.

PARTICIPANT 19

They are a little more silent and stepped back on brand communications, which we're hoping to change. We need to be more assertive with them to let them know we want to see more brand messages reflected in their work.

Our chancellor was not directly involved in this work, but he knew the value (from the research data). Provost & exec chancellor for administration at the time were very involved in steering the process, but not hands on in the execution.

7. How does your brand relate to your organizational culture?

PARTICIPANT 3

I don't know if we've been talking about the brand long enough to know if it's connected to the culture. The AD came in for three years and worked on the culture, but now they're gone and in some ways that creates a disconnect.

He thinks they are connected but people don't know it.

The brand needs to reflect what the org actually is and the culture; otherwise it's not authentic. Many people think brand and culture is separate but it's really the same.

PARTICIPANT 4

The people are the culture, and they made the brand.

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Some people just don't care, or it's not important to them. There's probably a certain group of people who aren't the brand, they are the antithesis and can be problematic. We're very bureaucratic and slow, but it's part of our culture.

PARTICIPANT 9

- Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 11

- Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 12

- Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 13

- Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 14

- Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 15

- Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 17

- Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 19

- Skipped for time.

8. What does your organization do to engage employees in the brand? What have you found to be the best/worst ways to engage with employees?

PARTICIPANT 3

Blog, all staff meetings (quarterly), directors meetings, coaches meeting – these are general points for info flow and feedback.

There are always athletic events taking place that offer an opportunity for staff to gather and connect outside of office hours. This is really helpful for building connections. More info gets spread this way. Catch is that these aren't always stable or programmed so sometimes need to address.

Best ways are anything that involves the most amount of senses. The more authentic you can be and deliver information that people will remember. It needs to be visual and interactive.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

Employee updates in blog helped drive traffic.

Most effective stuff is when you can put multiple cues – email is tough.

PARTICIPANT 4

Could do more with events and finding ways to bring people together. Either at the University level or smaller departments. Target Sales Meeting - represented external and internal brands. (PGK - also makes me think about Aveda summer conferences)

PARTICIPANT 9

Annual conference every year for Communicators on campus. Bring in external speakers and provide more information about the brand.

Monthly meeting with communicators - talk about social media, PR, etc.
College work has been good. We're working to connect messaging with the Dean, Asst. Dean, and faculty.

Brand Certification - a series through HR. 5 class series. Fall and spring. Every wednesday morning from 9am-Noon. Brand, Design, Storytelling, Social Media, Digital. And then certified through HR - any employee can take it but it tends to be more communications staff. 100 people so far. 45 people at a time. Very one-on-one. We hope that it makes advocates.
Advisory group - provides input but also helps educate them on the brand.

Asked deans to identify faculty from their college who personify the Spartan brand. They would be featured in communications and marketing to external audiences and on campus.

Created 50 faculty billboards to run on a digital billboard on campus. Rotated and helped build buy in and investment in the brand and the institution.

PARTICIPANT 11

Most formalized ways we engage employees are through encouraging use of branded materials and communications provided to campus. We strive for consistency in the tools and assistance we provide, and making it easy for people to conform with brand standards.

Logo factory - online tool that allows units to input their names and generate brand compliant logos.

We do a brand summit every summer, and every May we have a conference on campus for University communicators. It's a pep rally type event to get people excited about the brand - we hand out swag.

PARTICIPANT 12

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Email signatures.

Advancement team has a day of giving each year - during that day they encourage all employees to wear <COLLEGE NAME> gear. They also use this as an opportunity to celebrate the college.

We're working to get faculty to rally more and more around branding.

PARTICIPANT 13

Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 14

I would say the most effective way was really the branding workgroup of marketers and communicators. They were brought on to help disperse information across the University. They were helping to share news with their departments and schools. That was highly influential and effective in spreading the news.

PARTICIPANT 15

Students - There is one activity we do with incoming students. At orientation and the night before the first day of classes. It's basically a pep rally put together by our department, so we heavily leverage brand messaging and guidelines in that event so students are exposed to it. Then it doesn't really come back until commencement. Those are the two events we own, so between those there isn't much.

Faculty/Staff - not much we do. We're not an internally focused organization.

PARTICIPANT 17

We try within media relations and internal comms to connect anything we do back to those pillars. It takes a while for people to pick them up, so we look for new and different ways to spread those messages.

We have "<COLLEGE NAME> Today" e newsletter to all faculty and staff. We have weekly stories on one of the "pillars". Annually, we also run a series of updates on org performance on each pillar and an internal communication campaign around them. To remind people what they are, where we're at in achieving them, what our goals are, etc. It was a coordinated effort with college communicators and central communications office. Campaign leveraged email, social media, college communications.

We felt good about engagement in those efforts.

The president sends a newsletter at the beginning of every calendar year which hits on those themes and talks about who we are at the University. (internal and external audiences). This communication focuses on University priorities and is widely read and engaged with.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

PARTICIPANT 19

Not so much in the brand. We've gone through about 200 folks in our Share your story sessions.

Now we're talking about how to meld this into new employee orientation, new student orientation. How do we put together materials for other folks to lead these sessions. Essentially we're looking to equip others to do the same.

9. How do you measure engagement and impact of the internal brand? What are the key performance indicators?

PARTICIPANT 3

We don't have specifics, but we watch behaviors to see if they're in line with the mission. How do staff interact with folks outside the department – public or other members of the University.

We see the employee engagement survey results and use them to some level, but don't put a lot of weight in them.

PARTICIPANT 4

We don't do a good job of measuring the internal brand, and getting a sense of how people are reacting.

We haven't asked specific internal branding questions, but there are elements of the employee engagement survey that get to connectedness to the mission.

What <participant> would want to ask in a survey:

Want to know how it makes them feel, more or less connected?

Do they know it exists?

Are there other ways people would feel more connected that we aren't thinking of?

Ideally a before and after benchmarking would be done.

PARTICIPANT 9

Communications group does a brand tracker that includes faculty and staff. We ask how people feel about <COLLEGE NAME>, what their attitudes are, and how they behave. It's not solely focused on measuring internal brand, but does speak to how their efforts are being received.

Measure reach, consumption, and engagement.

- Consumption - did you watch a video, read a post, etc.
- Engagement - did you interact or share a piece of content.

Ultimately trying to determine if people understand the brand and embrace.

BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

PARTICIPANT 11

We don't have a good quantitative way of measuring, we could probably measure the incidence rate (any time we see something that isn't right, off brand communications). Anecdotally, it's moving in a positive direction.

No specific KPI's.

PARTICIPANT 12

Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 13

No, the communications people do not measure internal communications. Internal Comms are managed by several different departments - HR, new employee orientation.

PARTICIPANT 14

We track engagement on our website. We do an internal communications survey, which isn't brand related, more so focuses on channels used and how folks get their information about the University.

A lot of our feedback is anecdotal - at meetings and other places. People will give us feedback on having difficulty finding things, or where things are working and coming through.

We have long term goals about how many press mentions we get, and that eventually rolls down into admissions, donations, alumni engagement, student satisfaction.

Nothing is directly tied to brand understanding, because we think it influences decisions and helps --- cut off. Increased <COLLEGE NAME> awareness in general influences research grants, prospective student interest, alumni pride and engagement, donations and fundraising. If we can get into the blogosphere, it can be a source of pride for alumni in what their alma-mater is doing and discovering.

PARTICIPANT 15

Use an external public relations firm to give us a quarterly report. They examine each mention of the org in the media, and measure it against our brand pillars. To determine exposure and reach of brand messages to the public. (Q: How does this article tie to org engaging, innovating, or impacting?)

This is then measured against our historic benchmarks. They've created a dashboard that measures several metrics aligned to this central question.

PARTICIPANT 17

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We do track clicks on email and website content and we would make adjustments accordingly or inform future efforts.

PARTICIPANT 19

We have to be somewhat careful, because we don't want to telegraph a message that there is a ton of resources being put into branding efforts (as compared to student scholarships). There are follow-up surveys that go out to groups. Employee engagement surveys are also sent out to the university.

There will be follow-up research to see if the gaps identified in the pre-research have been moved. We asked about attributes of world class universities

Gaps

- Innovation and entrepreneurship
- Academic rigor (faculty felt this was low, others thought high)
- Academic collaboration
- Inclusive/welcoming place

There are some things that communications can influence, but there are some operational things that we can't drive change in.

10. Do you think your internal brand is working to engage and motivate employees? Why or why not? What would you change to make your internal brand more effective at this?

PARTICIPANT 3

Not asked.

PARTICIPANT 4

Not asked.

PARTICIPANT 9

I feel strong that we have the right messaging platform, I don't think we had that before. It's not what we do, but how and why we do it. It's about the different we are making - and that resonates with people more than just telling people we're a "BigTen research university."

We have an emotional foundation that resonates.

I do think we have a ways to go. And it's challenging because we're so decentralized and have so many audiences.

We focus on external audiences because they have checkbooks, and students who will come here. But employees can be advocates and I think there's more we can do.

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PARTICIPANT 11

To some degree, what we are doing now is good. I believe face-to-face is really the killer app. The more we are able to meet in person and remind people across campus that we're all in this together. Sharing best practices and talk about issues that are important. We're seeing progress on this, and having people recognize there are consequences to not complying with brand rules.

Leadership has helped to voice the importance of brand consistency. The chancellor has helped to convey this message (via a recorded video aired at the summer brand summit).

PARTICIPANT 12

Skipped for time

PARTICIPANT 13

Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 14

Yes, directionally speaking the majority of the comments we've received have been positive. I think a lot of this is related to the fact that there wasn't much there before. We're provided something smart, strategic, data-based, and relevant to all groups across campus. It's like we finally gave them something to hook into.

We lacked the "30 second" elevator speech, and everyone was trying to make their own up. So we helped to provide consistency, and provide intellectual and academic gravitas.

PARTICIPANT 15

Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 17

I think as with any communication - we're working to motivate a lot of them, but it doesn't resonate with all. I do think employees are motivated and proud of the pillars that the University is focused on. The messaging that we put out, gives them the pride points they can use to be proud themselves of what they do, but then also share with others when they tell our story.

There are certainly people who feel they are not represented by these pillars. So, that can be a challenge to engage them and help them understand how they fit in.

With a comprehensive research university, we struggle to focus on STEM but then connect with more liberal arts employees and faculty. We try very hard to acknowledge all successes, but there is a lot and it can be a challenge.

We are always looking at ways to acknowledge and encourage internal audiences to feel that they are values and part of the orgs success. Whether they're featured in the NYTimes or supporting in another way.

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PARTICIPANT 19

Skipped for time.

11. Are there specific communication materials or pieces that you feel have helped strengthen or improve brand perceptions with employees? What made them successful?

PARTICIPANT 3

What's important to employees It depends on each person. If I'm from a particular area of the state, I likely connect to greater MN more.

Part of the trick is getting people to understand the University's mission, to help them align.

Part of it is also personal, finding a personal connection point.

PARTICIPANT 4

I think it's about the Why. Why they're here. It's important that the brand resonates emotionally and internally - if you can do that, it's more meaningful to people.

PARTICIPANT 9

Top down buy-in is key. It's not a tactic so to speak, but it's an important part and has been really helpful. We can say it was grounded in the leadership's vision, and grounded in what the place stands for, and the people here.

I don't know if there's a single tactic. Our messaging platform emotionally connects and then the rest comes.

PARTICIPANT 11

When we rolled out our brand guide, we delivered coffee mugs and flyers with anthem and brand attributes. He didn't have hard evidence of that having worked, but he feels it did. We wanted to give them something that was a visible reminder of what the right branding is. We hope the t-shirts we designed and distributed this year was something that people were excited about and showed good branding.

PARTICIPANT 12

Yes - going to share a sample of what was sent out during the 2014 launch. "<COLLEGE NAME> College Brand". It conveyed brand information and details, and did so in one page.

PARTICIPANT 13

We have an onboarding session that is personalized for each head of a communications Unit when they start at the U. We meet with them for an hour, give them an overview of key

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resources available to them. This allows folks to understand the bigger picture and priorities, as well as their own responsibility.

We also have a bi-monthly all communications council that meets to share info and experiences for communications on campus.

PARTICIPANT 14

I think our road-show brand presentation we have really helped. It was a full story that told what the research told us, what our brand narrative is, how it translated into a visual language. That helped.

Knowing that people search and consume information through primarily digital channels now - the first thing we changed was the top level homepage. It's the first touch point for everyone - staff, prospects, media, alumni. Changing that digital experience was really a smart and the best place to evolve and announce the brand. It was the gateway for everyone to every piece of information about the University.

We then phased it into other channels, social media, print channels, colleges, etc.

PARTICIPANT 15

Skipped for time.

PARTICIPANT 17

I think in general, our daily e newsletter is a good vehicle to support the orgs brand. Just the fact that we communicate with employees everyday. We acknowledge what they do everyday, tell the stories of their success, and do that everyday.

PARTICIPANT 19

Some of the work we have done early on through our creative services - annual report for example. Have telegraphed our messages, but also tone and look/feel. Once those came out, people got it and wanted to jump on board.

We just have to find people in the organization who want to be first and try something new, and they help onboard others and spread awareness about the brand positioning.

12. Additional thoughts/comments?

PARTICIPANT 3

None

PARTICIPANT 4

None

PARTICIPANT 9

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None

PARTICIPANT 11

None

PARTICIPANT 12

None

PARTICIPANT 13

“One of the biggest differences in higher ed communications is that from external comm perspectives - EVERYONE has heard of you at one point or another. If you’re a private organization they may have never heard of you. And that can lead to more questions being directed at you if you work at a public organization.”

“If you work at Nestle, no tells you about the last bad cup of cocoa they had and asks you how you’re going fix it.”

PARTICIPANT 14

“Employee adoption and employee belief was really critical to us, because it would be false otherwise. It would just be institutional speech if the people who lived and breathed it every didn’t buy into it.”

PARTICIPANT 15

Do you think not having internal communications is a missed opportunity??

I think it’s a huge missed opportunity. I’ve advocated for a number of years for a full time internal communications person. I worked at Dell before here, and they had a robust internal campaign focused on building employees into brand ambassadors. It was an investment and value was seen in that.

Our internal audience is sizeable and fiercely loyal about our org and would make great advocates. There just hasn’t been any kind of interest.

**One program that failed but might be interesting - we asked internal audiences to share their ideas and suggestions. Because it wasn’t advertised or promoted it wasn’t widely used, and the ideas that were given required funding to execute, which we didn’t have allocated. I decided to “kill” the program because it seemed to be doing more harm - we were asking for ideas and getting investment but then nothing was happening.

**We also have athletic brand which is something our academic departments want to leverage, but it is so heavily guarded and locked down that they aren’t allowed to. There is a process involved for requesting use - and 95% of those requests are denied.

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**We did a rebranding process on our academic logo about 18 months ago. No internal audiences were included - only deans , focused mostly on alumni. Currently at 75% acceptance/adoption rate internally.

PARTICIPANT 19

Q: Talk more about the “Share your story” brand sessions - who is invited, how are they conducted, what has the response been?

Session overview

- Breakfast/welcome
- What comes to mind game (branding/positioning)
- Research overview (what we did, what we learned, where the gaps are)
- Positioning platform, pillars, messaging
- Exercise I - practice in small groups how their work supports the brand platform
- BREAK (Q&A cards can be submitted for answering)
- Exercise II - elevator speech (why work at washU, for example)
- LUNCH
- Overview of brand guidelines, assets, logos.
- Panel discussion - Q&A cards answered along with other questions
- Formal course evaluation (P.I.N - positive, interesting, needs improvement)

Found that people wanted more time for Q&A. We also cut back on the elevator speech because it needed more time to do effectively.

PANEL - Sr Creative Director, Public Affairs, Internal Communications Dir - any question is open for asking, from how do I “talk about tuition hikes”, to “why did color changes take place?”