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The Marketing Impact of the Principles of Renaming Within a Higher Education Service Organization.

Robert L. Williams, Jr., Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana
Helena A. Williams, Mar-Kadam Associates, Mishawaka, Indiana
Maktoba Omar, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, Scotland

ABSTRACT

Three Higher Education Institutions that underwent renaming are used to define and discuss: radical renaming, brand soul, Brand Flux™ and the eight principles of renaming in service organizations. A process model that depicts renaming decision-making and brand management activities that impact brand identity, image and thus brand equity is revealed.

INTRODUCTION

When a brand audit reveals the need to adjust the factors affecting the consumers' brand image in order for an organization to grow, it can elect to revitalize, refocus (rebrand/ reposition), rename, or retire the brand (Williams, 2012). Little has been written specifically about the organization renaming option, and the limited literature that discusses organization renaming mostly involves case examples analyzing a name change as a result of merger and acquisition activity (Wu, 2008). Yet, the renaming of a "company or organizational brand," as opposed to a product brand, radically impacts brand equity value of the organization. This paper investigates the impact of radically changing a service organization's name strictly as a strategic decision absent any merger influence. It offers a Renaming Process Model (RPM) that ties organization brand identity to consumer brand image highlighting the co-creation aspects critical to maintaining good brand equity. The increasingly marketized field of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) provides a lens to view this corporate renaming process model. The paper begins with a literature review that include branding and HEI issues, followed by a discussion of the eight Renaming Principles within case examples, and concludes with the Model. This paper addresses the gap in organization renaming and branding, particularly in the Higher Education service industry, and offers insight to the brand equity body of knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The U.S. Higher Education Institution service organization market can be analyzed as an avenue for growth and brand management, particularly in regard to renaming. There are nearly 4,000 degree-granting colleges in the U.S.; 60% are public while 40% are private – and 40% have fewer than 1,000 students. Additionally, 800 degree-granting for-profit institutions operate in the U.S. (Kinser, 2006). A competitive market for postsecondary education has developed with multiple stakeholders (Hoxby, 2002; Dill, 2003; Williams, 2012), and HEIs are moving toward a model of corporatization (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). As a growth platform in an increasingly marketized and competitive higher education field driven by consumer choice and market orientation, the “corporate brand” has become an important consideration not only for top administrators, but for all employees of the HEI. The issue is not whether HEIs should “adopt market-like behaviors, but whether they will be able to do so rapidly enough to remain competitive” (Pusser, 2002, p106).

HEIs are motivated to brand themselves for reasons ranging from a need to counteract declining enrollments; broadening the appeal of the school; signifying a merger between institutions; adapting to higher education markets; and to increase prestige (Koku, 1997; Lowrie, 2007; Morphew, 2001). Furey, et al. (2009) define University Brand Promises as “The implicit or explicit aspect(s) of what the university is about, that creates expectations, and/or conveys a commitment about the value the institution has to offer, and what makes it distinctive.” The often rare and unique historical pattern and brand heritage of the HEI service brand is due in part to its track record and longevity and organizational names become increasingly important (Finder, 2005; Morphew et al., 2001). Brand-images seem to be an essential part of the social status of students, alumni, and employees (Hamann, et al, 2007), and one aspect of a Higher Education degree is the bestowing of a certain level of social status. Students become life-long organizational members of a corporate brand community, and Lerman & Garbarino (2002) posit that once a brand name has been released it actually becomes the psychological property of consumers. In the case of HEI, this ownership control may be asserted by alumni, faculty, staff and/or students and cause problems when (if) the name is changed. The name is a stable reference point regardless of whether the pursuit is increased positive associations, for example prestige, or decreased negative associations, for example removing hindrance (Balmer and Gray, 2003; Urde et al., 2007). As a service brand HEI brands require greater emphasis on internal marketing, in part since all employees become consumer touch-points and service brands play a role in reducing the risk of intangibility (de Chernatony and Segal-Horn, 2003).

To determine adherence and continued relevancy of their strategies, tactics, positions and the effects of their marketing efforts, corporations conduct brand audits. Ambler et al. (2002) refer to Brand Health as the condition of the brand equity asset in terms of current well-being and resistance to attack from competition, and successful brand management is critical to avoiding a branding crisis or brand avoidance, either of which can lead to the accumulation of high negative brand equity (Lee et al., 2008). Decisions that can result from a brand audit which reveals an unhealthy brand basically involve fixing the brand, or killing it. Brand retirement, is the complete elimination of the brand via the sale/merger of the brand, and is the least chosen decision. Most often the decision to fix the brand is chosen, “the practice of building anew a name representative of a differentiated position in the mindframe of stakeholders and a distinctive identity from competitors” (Muzellec et al, 2003). Regardless of whether the motivation to improve an unhealthy brand is to reduce or eliminate a negative image, or build upon or increase a positive image, after analysis most often an organization attempts to refocus itself to highlight inherent market strengths, with minor adjustments at one end of a continuum such as tag line, logo, colors, etc. (rebrand), and major changes at the other, and such as a full or partial renaming (Daly and Moloney, 2004). Webster’s Dictionary (2010) defines ‘re’ as “denoting action…done over, often with the implication that the outcome of the original action was in some way impermanent or inadequate.” Williams (2012, p.242) defines radical renaming as *“an action which changes identity as a means to alter image in order to create utility through the sharing of names that have been learned and graded.”*

Of the 3,000 'mainstream' U.S. colleges and universities, at least 530 have changed their names since 1996, with the pace increasing since 2007 (Owston, 2007). Corporate renaming involves a much wider range of pre-existing associations inside and outside of the organization, such as paying attention to subcultures, aligning corporate cultures with the new corporate brand, and paying attention to employees and internal marketing **(**Gotsi et al., 2008; Jaju et al., 2006; Merrilees and Miller, 2008). Changing the name, which is a key symbol, eliminates its old associations and signals external stakeholders that something has changed in the corporation and reflects a new direction (Koku, 1997; Stuart and Muzellec, 2004). Robinson & Wu (2008) determined that companies that change their name are characterized by poor reputation, and Ferguson's study (1986) revealed that those HEI which changed names had the least effective marketing strategies, i.e. they were lulled into concluding that just changing their name would solve their enrollment problems, thus they reduced their market planning and brand management. Problems which occur during/after renaming may suggest that the wrong stakeholders were consulted as to their thoughts, and that those that really mattered were not surveyed, in part due to the power and legitimacy of select groups (Edmonson, 2002). Maas and Martin (2009) found that the most important renaming decision in the renaming process for a non-profit organization was focusing on a consumer-centric research approach, since the internal forces may have led the organization in a completely different – and incorrect – direction. Other researchers emphasize that employees are even more crucial to communicating corporate brand values, as they are the interface between external and internal environment, especially in services branding (Schneider and Bowen, 1993; Hemsley-Brown, 1998), hence they play a major role in the renaming marketing plan in large part due to the intangibility aspects of services (Gronroos, 2008). Moorer (2007) notes that while faculty involvement is not a requirement during the HEI name change process, increased faculty involvement did enhance a University's strategic name change outcomes.

Renaming has on one hand an existing brand, hence a past or heritage to build upon (Muzellec, 2005). It must, however, reposition itself in the mind of the consumer as a new entity, signaling that the company has significantly changed something in an important way which customers' value (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004). While positioning requires that consumers learn what a new brand represents, repositioning requires that they first un-learn what it *no longer* represents (Williams & Omar, 2009). Most repositioning discussion revolves around product repositioning, albeit there is agreement in the literature that even in a product repositioning a change in image perception is intended.

While there has been much work done on rebranding, and financial analysis research conducted primarily on the effects of post-merger brand retirement valuations, little has been done in the area of organizational renaming of service entities (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawarda, 2007), and it is that gap that this paper explores.

METHODOLOGY

This project utilized a multiple embedded case study process method of research allowing for the use of replication logic, where the cases are viewed as a series of experiments, each case serving to confirm or disconfirm the inferences drawn from the others to obtain an understanding of the subject. Three institutions of higher education were selected and studied. The research design was a qualitative, multiple-case-study format that incorporated open-ended interview questions with stakeholders, along with secondary data gathered from private and public sources such as press releases, articles, institution biographies and archives. Depth interviews (46) were conducted with administrators, faculty, staff, alumni and consultants using semi-structured and open term questions which were recorded, transcribed for accuracy, and analyzed for common themes and patterns.

CASE BACKGROUND

The three case studies in the U. S. Higher Education market were chosen from the same Mid-Atlantic region; all are private institutions, each are in the same range of student size, thus to some extent they are competitors for the same students and stakeholders. Each has undertaken a radical renaming. The cases were McDaniel College (previously Western Maryland College), Arcadia University (Beaver College) and Stevenson University (Villa Julie College). Mc Daniel College was founded in 1867 as Western Maryland College, the first coeducational college below the Mason-Dixon Line, and was named for the Western Maryland Railroad. It is a selective, private Liberal Arts college which enrolled 2,250 graduate and undergraduate students in the fall semester prior to the renaming. The President was elected in 2000, having served the college for nearly 27 years. The Board of Trustees (BOT) selected the new name at a board vote in April, 2002, publicly announced it in May, and it officially took effect on July 1, 2002. The second case, Arcadia University, was founded in 1853 as Beaver College in western Pennsylvania, and moved east to Glenside, PA, in 1928. Originally a female seminary it remained a single-sex college until 1973; it is now an independent, comprehensive (Carnegie Master's 1) institution. In the fall before the 2001 name change enrollment numbered 1,971 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) students. A new President of Beaver was selected in 1985, having been employed there for nearly 27 years. In June, 2000, the BOT voted to change the college's name and to seek university status, and announced the decision at midnight on November 20, 2000. The Board voted to accept the new name in June, 2001, and a new name announcement ceremony was held on July 16, 2001. Lastly, Stevenson University, formerly Villa Julie College, was established in 1947 as a women's college under the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, and in 2000 a new president was chosen. In "a two-step process: change to a university first and a name change second" in May, 2007 the Board voted to change the designation from College to University status, then in November, 2007 voted to "…approve[s] investigation of possible name change," (Examiner.com and personal interview; NSSR). After a June 11, 2008 BOT session voted to change the name to Stevenson University, a press conference was held the next day to publicly announce the new name.

THE EIGHT PRINCIPLES OF RENAMING

If brand management within an HEI service organization is ongoing and the brand identity that the institution believes that it is promoting and projecting is indeed consistent with the brand image held by the stakeholders, radical renaming should not be necessary unless extenuating circumstances exist. Renaming is always costly both in tangible and intangible aspects and should not be over-prescribed. When a brand audit determines that an institutional brand is unhealthy, the institution should no longer reinforce it. If or when revitalizing or refocusing efforts continue to result in an unhealthy brand, the institution should consider the renaming option (Williams, 2012). They can consider a radical renaming or an even more drastic, retirement of the brand by closing, selling, or merging with another entity.

This study identified eight factors which should be considered during the planning and alignment phase of the organization renaming process, which are labeled the 8 Principles of Renaming. The degree of effort or involvement exhibited by the organization significantly impacted the success of the renaming in each HEI case.

Principle 1: *Naming Criteria*

The parameters and process of selecting a new name must be determined, reflecting the impact of the renaming motivation drivers. In all cases studied, specific guidelines were established regarding the actual name itself, which focused on the strategic focus of the renaming, i.e., future possibilities or avoidance of the past. While the cases acknowledged the necessity of establishing naming criteria, the public was generally not aware what those criteria actually were.

> *"People decided after we started investigating it that it was better to come up with a name that we could then shape what our institution was around the name instead of taking a name and then trying to get the university to live up to."(Williams, 2012, p.310, R7)*

> *"It is really difficult to come up with something that when you do world searches and you do domestic searches, that isn't going to infringe on somebody's copyright or brand, even if they didn't have it copyrighted. And then you really ran into problems when you started looking for URL's on the web." (Williams, 2012, p.310, R5)*

The importance of semantics to renaming in these cases is also significant since it corroborates the fact that a radical renaming has no semantic link to the old name (Wu, 2008). The meaning that a specific name promulgated was also recognized.

> *"Sounds like male students [are now] on campus; Nobody really had anything negative to say about it; But it doesn't bring the ah-hah's!; it's just not confusing." (Williams, 2012, p.310, R32)*

Principle 2: *Stakeholders*

All Stakeholders need to be recognized and feel involved in the process, not just be given status updates. In light of the importance placed on the role of the organization brand name, and the variables of a service (intangibility, etc), the study found that it is necessary that all Stakeholders truly participate and are not just 'consulted'. Stakeholder involvement is different than stakeholder solicitation or being informed. Stakeholder involvement is critical.

> *"We commissioned a name change committee on which sat faculty, students, administrators, trustees and alums that discussed it, and talked about it, and were involved in the research project in looking at the results of the research. Then everything was reported back to the board of trustees for them to ultimately accept the recommendations coming out of the committee." (Williams, 2012, p.310, R16)*

"…the objection to the name change, both by alums and in the community was largely those who interacted with us personally. The further out we went [geographically] the less concern about the name change…" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R2)

" those who were against the change or those who felt that it wasn't needed or wasn't necessary, or that we could have just as easily been [name X]...I didn't feel there was much…of an effort to get people on board with this change." (Williams, 2012, p.310, R30)

As noted by Kulvisaechana and Stiles (2003) open lines of communication with all stakeholders is critical, and an implied university brand promise (Furey et al , 2009) may elicit a negative reaction from the alumni community (Lerman and Garbarino, 2002) which feels an 'ownership' and identity (Hamann et al , 2007).

"I think if we would have understood it better we would have pitched the message differently...to say, "Of course you don't want this to happen, we understand that…I wasn't prepared for the illogical response to my logic. The one thing, the one take away, big takeaway for me was that I wish I had known that emotional response…let people have their emotional response. Of course you don't want the name of your college changed. I understand that. Don't try to give them logic…But these people said things I would never even say to my worst enemy and they don't even know me. And it was just devastating…I was stunned...It's stunning. It is stunning." (Williams, 2012, p.310, R13)

Principle 3: *Heritage*

The unique story which forms an organization's heritage is a valuable component in the process, and a building block to create brand equity. Organizational names become increasingly important due in part to the often rare and unique historical pattern and brand heritage of the HEI service brand (Finder, 2005; Morphew et al 2001).

The biggest problem with changing a name in terms of a college or university is alienating the alumni who are your donor base and so all kinds of care has to be made in recognizing, honoring, using the language of the previous name. Don't go to an alumni event and talk about the current name…You have to work on the current brand of associating the brand with the new entity and make sure you are hitting that over and over again and getting the [new] name out there so that people come to recognize it." (Williams, 2012, p.310, R1)

Not only as a motivation to change the name to resolve negative associations, heritage also must be considered during the new name vetting process, and to avoid possible stakeholder resistance.

"Because [the consultant thought] the name [chosen] was stronger in terms of our heritage. And the other name was more of a push. It would have been harder for our alums…it would have been much harder to explain…much more circuitous." (Williams, 2012, p.310, R14)

Principle 4: *Internal Marketing*

Internal marketing is critical, since as a service function customer touch-points, customer co-creation, communication, and feedback must be considered to avoid inefficiencies and brand saboteurs; there exists a need for constant communication and feedback with employees (Gotsi et al, 2008). Internal Marketing minimizes brand saboteurs, and communication and acknowledgement of service touch-points with employees is critical (Hemsley-Brown, 1998). Relationships with internal constituents as a component of stakeholder involvement can exist in a positive or negative fashion.

> *"The [faculty] support was really important because without that, if you had a high majority against it, it would be much more difficult to get the results that we got. We got significant results because of that support" (Williams, 2012, p.310).*

> *"…she can give you a very objective view because she no longer has to spout the party line for this institution" (Williams, 2012, p.310).*

This study defines Brand Soul as "*the essence or fundamental nature – the authentic energy – of a brand*", and refers to the positive way employees perceive and live the organization brand. This research found that internal marketing efforts that include the "logic" for the renaming decision, lest a resistance form, are critical, especially where customer-facing employees must satisfy often conflicting goals of "sales" and "service" (Yu, et al., 2007). This study confirmed that when changing the corporate brand, a major effort was needed to explain the situation prompting the changes to the internal publics (Kilic and Dursun, 2006). In this way the internal employees, alumni, and other stakeholders of these cases could continue to "tell the story" and new employees, students, etc. could understand and embrace the meaning of the new name (Hankinson & Lomax, 2006). The renaming becomes a significant part of the heritage of the institution, not just a singular event to eliminate a problem, and internal marketing is crucial.

> *"Do it openly and honestly, because I think you will garner the greatest long term respect and appreciation for doing it that way" (Williams, 2012, p.310).*

> *"So, internal in our communications, or my communications with alumni, I always hearken back to the fact that Arcadia University today is built on the foundation of Beaver College and so what you remember from that, of that experience of Beaver College is being lived out in a different way, slightly…in Arcadia University; but it has its roots there. That's the internal, inside of the family" (Williams, 2012, p.310).*

Principle 5: *Resources*

Renaming is very costly in both direct and indirect costs. Sufficient funds and personnel time must be budgeted. The leadership and Board of Trustees involved in renaming a service organization cannot underestimate the costs involved. Brand equity is built up, painstakingly, over a long time horizon, and it cannot be transferred to a new name strictly based on a "one time event" that generates a one-point-in-time expense. It takes more effort to transfer the positive associations of the old name to the new name, and if the renaming budget is underfunded not only will the process be less effective, the organization runs the risk of alienating, confusing or even losing valuable stakeholders, especially employees, to a degree which can severely impact the organization's competitive position. Renaming is very costly, in both direct and indirect costs, affecting the process and subsequently the repositioning rollout activities. Renaming involves both acknowledged direct costs (consultants, surveys, updating signage and marketing collateral, etc.) as well as additional understood but harder to quantify indirect costs (stakeholder time, missed opportunities, frozen momentum, employee burn-out) which while expensive and ongoing even after the name change are often rationalized by the motivation to change the name.

> *"In hindsight I would say we probably should have allocated more money to continue the momentum that we had, more on a national level in the third and fourth year. We planned pretty well for the first two years but then the budgets pretty much went back to where they were [chuckle]… We could have gained a lot more if we had a little bit bigger budget to fund year three and four beyond what you normally would" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R2).*

> *"…you really need to plan at least the two years expense, and to be honest I would say there should be some contingency to increase the admissions marketing budget in that fourth and fifth year by at least 25%" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R2).*

> *"When I look back on it, the amount of work that we put into that, everything from flash presentations to presenting it to the board, the town meetings; and all the time you are getting your regular job done. It is a really, really long process. You have to have four or five really dedicated people on the campus that you are going to be able to count on to pull it off; otherwise it is not going to happen, it is not going to work the right way… It was definitely a 18,19 hour day for a couple of years working that way" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R4).*

> *"…you have to remember, the board must remember, you will get very sick and tired of this [new name] slogan right away because you've heard it, you've paid attention to it, you've studied it, you're done with it. But the general public will not. So, you have to put it out there, and let [the name] stay out there, and keep it out there for much longer than you think …You want them to get the whole message and it will take a long time for them to get that whole message" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R1).*

Failure to honestly budget will impact the success of the repositioning (Kilic and Dursun, 2006), and can result in sub-optimal post-announcement marketing activities, and a miss-belief that the name announcement alone, rather than the continued development and marketing of the new positioning statement, will suffice.

> *"The [name change] launch…that was really a [one quarter] launch and we did that because we had announced it [six months earlier], we couldn't do anything before that, we didn't have the time to prepare for all of this while we were finishing up the University name change, so we decided to announce it and then by [the launch] we were in full bloom…But different from what we do mostly, which is pitch products [degrees]…we were actually pitching the university itself. That's gone now. Now we are going to add more to the branding by going back and selling the products themselves" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R33).*

Principle 6: *Timing*

The renaming process must not be rushed or it may negatively affect stakeholders and create resistance, yet not drag out and risk losing market place momentum. The Principle of Timing first involves deciding when to initiate the process, since the issue of whether to begin the renaming process often arises more than once before factors align sufficiently to proceed. A second timing consideration involves keeping the decision whether to rename separate from decisions involved with the name-picking process, so that the early decision is not contaminated by appeal or lack of appeal to a new name.

> *"Everything had to align correctly. We had to have the finances, we had to have the [stakeholder] backing. The internet played a big part in it...The resistance was mostly from the development office. They felt the alumni would be outraged. The school had been around for such a long time, [they feared] that donations would fall off…and the fear was that that momentum would get lost…they would go back down to zero [brand] equity. So that's where most of the resistance was. It was a topic that the Vice President for development did not even want mentioned, to anybody" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R16).*

> *"Whenever the discussion would get more intense about changing the name in order to help enrollment, the countervailing aspect would be let's spend that enormous amount of time and money and effort on things that actually help the students, buildings, programmes, and that type of thing. So it see-sawed back and forth for a decade or two"(Williams, 2012, p.310, R5).*

As a Principle, the timing of the renaming announcement has a great impact on the operation of the institution, and on enrollment. The timing of the renaming process must not be rushed or it may negatively affect stakeholders and create resistance, yet not drag out and risk losing employee participation, demoralizing employees, and potentially creating negative word-of-mouth and slowing marketplace momentum.

> *"I can't tell you the number of times I heard faculty, division directors, administrators say, good grief, if you want to change the name, just change it! Get over all this nonsense and the spending of money and endless committee meetings that don't amount to anything. If the president wants to change it, he's going to change it anyway so just go change it and be done with it. That comment, almost verbatim, came from all over the campus" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R30).*

Principle 7: *Management Team*

The relationship and trust between the organization's key Leadership (President and Board of Trustees) and the chosen Renaming Management Team impacts the plan that will be developed to manage the renaming. The right mix of stakeholders is an important factor in the overall success of the renaming. The relationship between the President and the Board of Trustees, influences the leadership of the organization regarding the decision factors to change the organizations' name, as well as impacting the success of the outcome. While it is not always clear whether the power lies in the Board of Trustees or with the President, in all cases it takes a strong driving force to conduct a renaming process.

> *"…we had a 130-some year tradition, we had people who were going to throw their body in front of the bus. And we knew that from every other time that we tried to talk about this, it was just not going to happen with our alums. So we had to have a different strategy; it was do it [first] and then explain it… The name change started and ended right with [the President]. She took the lead, and she got the arrows…[the Board] all stood one together with [the President]. She had a group of vice presidents, the provost…the real entrenched*

tenured faculty, they supported [the president], they knew her, they wanted the name change" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R12).

"…and I thought, how ridiculous…what does that have to do with changing a brand, the fact that the students didn't want it done? Did you think they were going to want to change the name? Do you think that was a good way to make the decision" (Williams, 2012, p.310 R33).

Renaming is a stressful and arduous process. The leader needs "political capital" and a renaming management team that trusts leadership, and is in turn trusted.

"I can't overstate the value of [the president] to the institution at the time, because she was beloved, not just by the alums, she was the first woman president at what had formerly been an all woman's institution so you had a lot of alums out there who were way proud of having a woman as the president of the university. She garnered tremendous love, affection and support of everybody that worked at the university and I think people wanted to pull this off as much for [her] as it was for anyone else…I just have to underscore that. People just loved Bette; people would have fallen on their swords ten times if she asked them to" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R2).

"[The President] drove this whole thing from beginning to end…I think the leaders of the institution just beat the issue to death. They allowed all kinds of expression until people finally got the message, this is gonna happen. We've had our say, let's make peace and go on" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R38).

Consequently, since not all stakeholders will agree with the decision to rename, the size and scope of the renaming management team is dictated by the ability to trust and to maintain clear goals.

"But when you look at it from the standpoint of the outcome, if you think about how monumental it is to change the name of any organization, and we had maybe six [external] letters after the change was made, three that were positive and three that were negative… there were no internal. There was nobody complaining…Why do you think that is? Transparency - everybody knew what we were doing all along. So by the time we got to that name, they almost could have picked it themselves" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R33).

Principle 8: *Detailed Rollout*

A full blown "relaunch" of the new name involves significant planning that includes an announcement event, and an internal & external branding campaign for multiple years, involving intense time and commitment. The ability to plan an effective external campaign depends in large part upon the amount of time an organization has to prepare, and the effectiveness of the rollout in a large part is dependent upon the people selected and time available to implement the many individual components of the rollout in order to link the new name to the positive old name associations and brand equity. The first Detailed Rollout step is to assemble an implementation team to determine and attend to the thousands of details necessary for the renaming rollout. Timelines, deadlines, and other time sensitive elements are woven throughout the entire renaming process and should be given more attention and emphasis in branding and renaming literature.

"The Name Implementation Team was listing every possible thing that would need to be changed…hundreds and hundreds of things; right down to calling taxi cab companies to change the name" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R7).

A key ingredient to the rollout by the three cases was their crafting of a new positioning statement and message (Kapferer, 1992). It was critical to repeatedly explain the new direction and benefits which will accrue from a new name (Hatch and Schultz, 2001); not justify the renaming by discussing the fact that the old name was a hindrance.

"It will take a long time for them to get that whole message. You have to continually get the new name out there but connect it in some way to the old one, because you don't want to lose all the people who knew, and loved, and used and were happy with the old name. It's just a terrific concentration in funds and in effort, and promoting in every way" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R1).

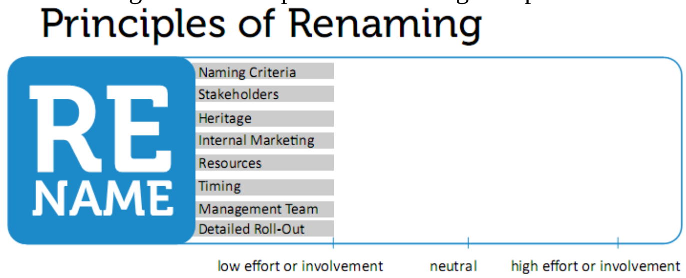
"You have to work on associating the current brand with the new entity and make sure you are hitting that over and over again and getting the name out there so that people come to recognize it" (Williams, 2012, p.310, R1).

The naming event itself should be a culmination of the years of research and renaming preparation, be a dramatic illustration of the message, and establish the new identity of the school in the mind of the stakeholders. In this way the three forms of brand equity - FBBE (Firm-Based Brand Equity), or brand identity; CBBE (Customer-Based Brand Equity) brand image; and EBBE (Employee-Based Brand Equity), or brand soul, are aligned around the new brand name.

Implentation of Principles

The researchers of this study found that these 8 Principles were present and essential to the marketing of the new brand identity in each of the respective HEI cases after content analysis of the 46 interviews. Principles 2, 4, 7 & 8 refer to the participants involved in the renaming process. Principles 1, 3, 5 & 6 are more 'technical' issues, and Principles 5, 6, 7 & 8 also addressed the actual implementation of the renaming. The degree to which each HEI valued and respected each Principle was tracked and charted (figure 1). The template can be a tool for practitioners to measure and adjust the effort or involvement applied to the principles.

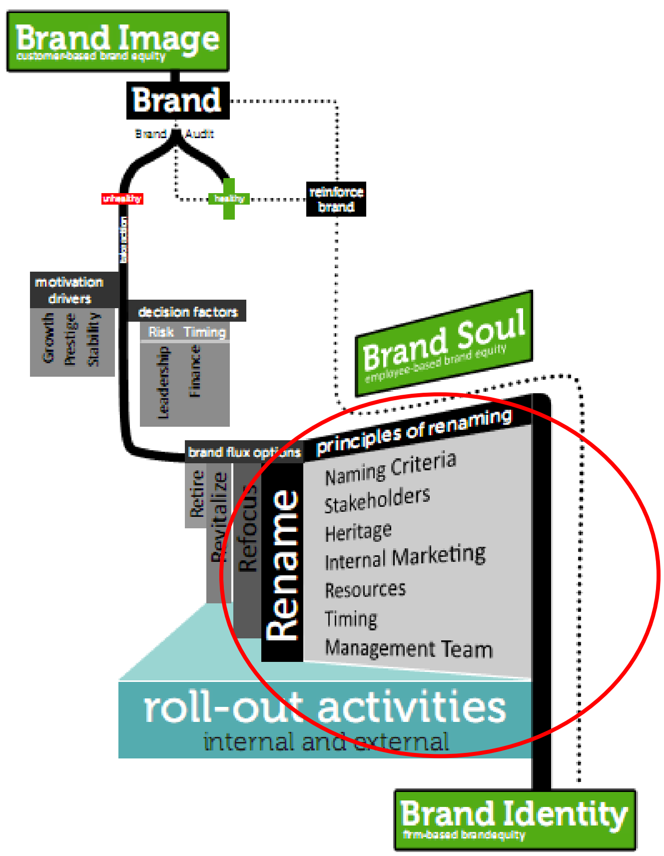
Figure 1: Principles of Renaming Template



THE RENAMING PROCESS MODEL

The Renaming Process Model below (figure 2) depicts the entire process an HEI experiences after a brand audit, which if the brand is healthy results in brand reinforcement, yet if it is unhealthy begins the deliberative process leading to a brand flux decision. This qualitative research is one of the first studies to place significant emphasis upon the flux environment that generally proceeds a radical renaming and has presented the following definition for Brand Flux: "*A state where the identity, image or reputation of an organization is reinforced over long periods of time in equilibrium with its environment, yet with environmental challenges can adapt by altering the branding and/or positioning via revitalization, refocusing, or renaming*." As seen in Figure 2 below the audit loop and the Brand Flux options depict this fluxing. This paper concentrated on the impact factors that are present once the brand flux option to rename has been made, as opposed to revitalize, refocus, or retire, and has focused on the renaming option involving the eight Principles of Renaming: Naming Criteria, Stakeholders, Heritage, Internal Marketing, Resources, Timing, Management Team, and Detailed Rollout. The brand soul concept (depicted in a box above the Principles) is strongly linked to stakeholder involvement, resources, and internal marketing.

Figure 2: Renaming Process Model



CONCLUSION

Radically renaming an organization brand is different than a decision to revitalize or refocus (rebrand or reposition) the organization brand. While both renaming and refocusing actions involve internal and external activities, a radical renaming must deal with bridging the past and future brand equity, and includes stronger emotional ramifications. If brand management within an HEI service organization is ongoing, and the brand identity that the institution believes that it is promoting and projecting is indeed consistent with the brand image held by the stakeholders, renaming should not be necessary unless extenuating circumstances exist, since renaming is costly both in tangible and intangible aspects and should not be underestimated or over-prescribed.

When a decision to rename is ultimately determined, in order to reposition all stakeholders to the new healthy brand name, especially given the characteristics of a service brand, real stakeholder involvement that includes a reverence for the institutions' heritage is essential. Even though the early decision to rename is strongly influenced by the organization's leadership, finances, timing and risk tolerance, the objectives behind the motivation to rename must be transparent to major stakeholders. If the renaming process is closely controlled, and not very transparent, many if not all stakeholders may become alienated and angry. The same lack of openness and inclusiveness can breed resentment, thus internal marketing with an emphasis on heritage is a key factor to avoid brand saboteurs and make adherence to the principles of renaming more easily manageable.

Unlike a product brand, the manager of a service brand needs to be cognizant of the wider range of touch points involved, and the customer and employee co-creation of brand soul inherent in a renaming. It is not a one-way communication process, thus the marketing effort towards internal as well as external stakeholders is critical. Renaming signals something is changing, and the actions of the leadership heavily influence whether the motivation is more reactive and defensive or whether it is proactive and positive. Organization names encompass associations that rely upon heritage and long-term accumulation of brand equity. Additionally, once the decision to rename has been made, the degree to which the Principles of Renaming are valued and respected, through the level of effort or involvement applied, will significantly impact the effectiveness of the renaming process. Each of the eight Principles of Renaming is critical to an organization considering a radical renaming and in combination assist or hinder the ability to plan and align the renaming process to the strategic plan. The eight Principles of Renaming, within the Renaming Process Model, are practical checkpoints that can be used to guide and monitor a renaming process within the increasingly marketized Higher Education arena.

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For further information contact:
Dr. Robert L. Williams, Jr.
Saint Mary's College,
Room 360 Spes Unica Hall
Notre Dame, Indiana, 46556-5001
717-805-7041
rwrenaming@gmail.com