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Corporate Brand Management in Higher Education: The Case of ERAU

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Introduction

The higher education sector in the USA has become one of the fastest growing industries. According to the National Science Foundation, over the past two decades, the enrollment in US institutions of higher education (HE) rose steadily from 12.7 million students in 1986 to 16.9 million in 2004. Enrollment in higher education is projected to increase in the coming years because of a surge in the college-age population. Despite the vast number of potential students, universities are locked in a fierce competition to fill their seats. That was enhanced by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, which developed a classification system for all US-based colleges and universities in the 1970s, ratcheting up competition between institutions to attract the best students, faculty and staff (Melewar and Akel, 2005). Institutions can differentiate themselves on a number of attributes, including academic program offerings, financial aid, facilities, athletics and wellness centers, and others. The increase in competition places greater emphasis on the importance of corporate branding in HE.

Today, HE parallels similar behavior in commercial business (Bunzel, 2007; Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007; Melewar and Akel, 2005). A university as a business entity offers a large range of educational products and services to a vast array of consumers through many outlets and service providers (McAlexander et al., 2006). However, opponents of HE marketing believe that the business world morally contradicts the values of education (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). Although many university administrators have avoided viewing themselves as marketers or brand managers, universities recognize opportunities that come from engaging in marketing activities, and take a more proactive approach to understanding and shaping the meaning of the university brand (McAlexander et al., 2006). A large number of institutions are turning to marketing, advertising and public relations (Blanton, 2007; Lang, 2005).

Students will consider some institutions while ignoring others. Students will enroll at the institution if the investment seems attractive to them in terms of the economic return (Lang, 2005; Moogan et al., 2001). Institutions with well-known brands, a good reputation, and easily accessible comprehensive information will have better chances of recruiting students as well as faculty and staff (Moogan et al., 2001). According to Keller and Staelin (1987) potential students' decisions are affected by the quality and quantity of available information about the institution. Potential students and their parents compare the brands and features of alternative institutions, and assign a level of importance to each alternative. Examples of strong brands in HE include Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Columbia University and the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford in England. Those institutions actively engage in promoting their reputations as brand names (Lang, 2005). Those brands provide clear positioning in consumer's minds (Lowrie, 2007). As the result, customers know exactly what those names stand for.

Branding is considered to be one of the most important assets of any institution. Corporate brand management plays a critical role in forming positive attitudes towards the institution. The intangibility and inseparability of HE services makes branding even more important (Lowrie,

2007). The importance of the development and management of a distinctive brand helps to create and maintain a competitive advantage in the HE sector (Aaker, 2004; Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). The management of the corporate brand, which consists of periodic audits, is one of the most important tasks (Bosch et al., 2006). Currently branding in HE has become an increasingly essential issue with substantial commitment of financial resources allocated to branding activities (Chapleo, 2007). However, the degree of importance of corporate branding varies between different institutions as well as countries (Balmer and Liao, 2007).

There is evidence in the literature that suggests that organizations struggle to formulate and implement their corporate branding strategies. This might be due to its paradoxical complexity, the newness of the field, and its cross-disciplinary nature (Schultz et al., 2005). Keller (1999) maintains that many organizations are unsure of how to manage their corporate brands. Further, Knox and Bickerton (2003, p. 998) add that much of the work has been "theoretical and there has been limited empirical investigation of the processes that enable an organization to engage successfully in corporate brand management". Additionally, corporate brand management has received limited attention in academia (Chapleo, 2007). Empirical research papers on branding, identity and image in HE are relatively scarce, despite the growing importance of this subject (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007).

This study provides an overview of the corporate brand building process in HE. The case study of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, USA focuses on corporate brand management, which includes three key areas: web administration, program marketing and corporate brand positioning. The corporate brand positioning is based on the principals of the grounded theory technique and consists of four phases: a brand audit (concepts generation), positioning options evaluation, the formal university positioning statement, and the marketing campaign with establishing a benchmark.

Corporate branding

Corporate brands offer many utilities, including the communication of the brand's values, the means of differentiation from competitors and esteem and loyalty from stakeholder groups (Balmer, 2001). The foundation of corporate branding includes strategic vision, organizational culture and corporate images (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). According to Balmer and Gray (2003), corporate brand characteristics include the following: marks denoting ownership; image (building devices); symbols associated with key values; and means by which to construct individual identities; and a conduit by which pleasurable experiences may be consumed.

Corporate brands involve establishing differentiation and preference at the level of the organization rather than individual product or services. The organization itself is a brand. The target audiences for the corporate brand go further than customers to include all stakeholders – that is employees, suppliers, investors and the community at large (Morsing and Kirstensen, 2001; Schultz et al., 2005). Therefore, corporate brand management's aim is to establish a favorable disposition towards the organization by all its stakeholders. Further there is a necessity for corporate branding practices to be multi-disciplinary, combining elements of strategy, corporate communications, and culture (Knox and Bickerton, 2003; Gylling and Linderg-Repo, 2006). The advantage of the corporate brand is that it can increase the firm's visibility,

recognition, and reputation, more than products brands can (Xie and Boggs, 2006); while the drawback to corporate branding is that one problem with the organization's reputation can ruin the whole brand portfolio (Gylling and Linderg-Repo, 2006).

The critical success factors of managing corporate brands can be grouped as follows. Top management is ultimately responsible for initiating, maintaining, and for the development of the corporate branding processes (Balmer and Gray, 2003). A multi-disciplinary approach to corporate branding involving the whole organization has been encouraged. The academic disciplines that have added most to corporate branding are HR, marketing strategy, corporate communications, visual identity (Balmer, 2001; Balmer and Gray, 2003; Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Knox and Bickerton, 2003; Schultz et al., 2005; Gylling and Linderg-Repo, 2006). Hatch and Schultz (2003) argue that companies must align vision, culture and image in order to create a strong corporate brand. Strategic vision is the leadership's ambition for the company. Organizational culture is defined as the company's common set of internal values, assumption, behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs resulting from the company's history. It also includes the company's ambition about where it is going (Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Schultz et al., 2005; Hulberg, 2006). Employees play a role in transmitting the brand's value. They provide the interface between the internal and external environment. They are brand ambassadors, playing a role in communicating the corporate brand to the external audience (Balmer and Gray, 2003). Schultz et al. (2005, p. 79) state that:

The notion of consumers as passive recipients of brand meaning and products is being replaced with the notion of consumers as active co-creators of brand meaning and important contributors to an organisation's value creation.
Corporate branding is described as a process of creating, nurturing, and sustaining a mutually beneficial relationship between a company, its staff, and external stakeholders. These relationships must be long range and strategic (Schultz et al., 2005). The external stakeholders consist of customers, investors, suppliers, partners, regulators, special interest groups, and local communities (Gylling and Linderg-Repo, 2006). Bick et al. (2003, p. 852) also emphasize the need for communication "across functional areas to speak with one voice". They saw a need for the company's organizational structures, systems and processes to be "designed to project consistent and congruent messages to all stakeholders". Einwiller and Will (2002) proposed a model for the organization of the corporate communications in order to achieve coherence in messages. An organization has to re-evaluate its corporate brand on an ongoing basis. Corporate brand management is thus a continuous process rather than a series of once-off events (Abratt and Mofekeng, 2001; De Chernatony, 2002; Knox and Bickerton, 2003).

Corporate branding in higher education

Branding in HE helps students and their parents to identify the particular services offered and encourages them to purchase (Harvey, 1996). Harvey (1996) identified four groups who benefit from HE: students, parents, institution authorities, and society at large. Although the core product, such as the development and transfer of knowledge, is intangible, educators measure elements of branding in terms of assessment of students and alumni perceptions of the quality of their education and satisfaction with the educational experience (McAlexander et al., 2006). Through corporate branding, an organization can differentiate itself and build the value of its

educational institution (Blanton, 2007; Heaney and Heaney, 2008). Balmer and Greyser (2006) stressed the importance of corporate brand management, which is included in the six elements of the corporate marketing mix as "Covenant – What is promised and expected."

However, corporate branding is not only about differentiation. It is also about belonging (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). The award of a degree offers a life-long membership to a university and provides a student with a sense of identification with the corporate brand, which can be viewed as a means of defining self, even after the graduation (Balmer and Liao, 2007). Blanton (2007) stated that people are more likely to support an institution if it has some level of recognition. Corporate brand names communicate to customers what the organization is about. It provides the employees of a company with what the corporate culture is, and with an understanding of what the brand values are (Heaney and Heaney, 2008). The strategic importance of having strong corporate brands within the HE sector is recognized by administrations of many universities (Balmer and Liao, 2007). Branding in HE is viewed differently around the globe:

The US, however, appears to be ahead of the UK in the acceptance and implementation of branding as a concept in the sector. Work by Sevier (2004) and Kotler and Fox (1995) support this, suggesting that branding in US HE has become accepted practice. This may be because the US has gone through the clash of cultures between the traditional academic values and market-focused values 10 years earlier (Sanders, 1999, cited in Chapleo, 2007, pp. 24-25). Different measures have been used to position universities relative to competitors. Quantitative criteria include faculty research productivity, student scores on entrance exams, admissions selectivity, graduate starting salary and job offers; while qualitative measures include perceptions of alumni, employers, recruiters, current and prospective students, and administration of peer institutions (Vidaver-Cohen, 2007). Ranking in higher education, such as the annual US News and World Report on best colleges, has become a tool for attracting students. Top rankings are proudly displayed by the universities websites. Millions of dollars have been spent by universities trying to enhance their images and position in these rankings (Bunzel, 2007). A number of corporate marketing strategies are being employed to improve rankings, especially if they went down.

Today, the universities branding has become an effort not only for the marketing department, but of the university as the whole (Chapleo, 2007). The marketing of education is an important component for successful recruiting of students, faculty and staff and for increasing market share of resources (Heaney and Heaney, 2008). Successful branding requires an alignment of resources within the institution, led by the institution's president, and focuses on an integrated institution's strategy (Blanton, 2007).

Corporate identity in higher education

The strategic goal of most organizations is to establish a corporate identity that will be both viable in the marketplace and accepted by society, and to create a consistent corporate image that meets the demands of all groups of stakeholders. Corporate identity is constructed internally by stakeholders of the organization. It is viewed and defined differently by researchers (Brown et al., 2006).

Originally corporate identity was synonymous with visual identification and logos. Corporate identity was based on visual cues, including physical and behavioral, which help constituencies recognize the company and distinguish it from others (Abratt, 1989). Today, corporate identity defines how the organization goes about its business, and how it behaves, thinks, feels, and interacts with the external world via its employees (Bendixen and Abratt, 2007). Corporate identity refers to an organization's unique characteristics, which are rooted in the behavior of members of the organization and has strategic importance (Van Riel and Balmer, 1997).

While there are a large number of academic studies on corporate identity, literature on university identity is scarce (Alessandri et al., 2007). University marketing and advancement officers often speak about the importance of understanding and managing the corporate identity of their institutions (McAlexander et al., 2006). Today, university management understands that a well-managed, strategic corporate identity can help institutions develop a competitive edge over its competitors (Olins, 1995). Employees of an organization play a large part in this process. The importance of employees in shaping and giving an organization its "soul" and "purpose" cannot be underestimated in the HE sector (Heaney and Heaney, 2008).

A growing number of universities started to develop and implement corporate identity management programs as a part of their strategic growth and expansion (Melewar and Akel, 2005). Van Riel and Balmer (1997) stated that corporate identity is influenced by various factors, including the change in external environment, corporate reputation, and organizational performance. Balmer (2001) addressed corporate identity as the "identity wheel of change," where change is a constant feature of organizational life. Expansions into new areas of operation, industry pressure, or the change of management can trigger the need for a corporate identity change (Melewar and Akel, 2005).

Corporate image in higher education

Corporate image is defined as "views of the organization developed by its stakeholders; the outside world's overall impression of the company including the views of customers, shareholders, the media, the general public, and so on" (Hatch and Schultz, 2003, p. 1048). Bendixen and Abratt (2007) stated that there is a distinction between corporate identity (what the firm is) and corporate image (what the firm is perceived to be). The corporate image represents the end-product of corporate branding. In the HE environment, universities with distinct images are in a better competitive position in the marketplace (Parameswaran and Glowacka, 1995). A number of institutions have increased their investments in order to distinguish themselves from their competitors by strengthening their image of "prestige" or "quality" (Behrman et al., 1998).

According to Theus (1993), while significant research into corporate image has been established in all fields of marketing and management, relatively less image research has been conducted on service-oriented organizations, including education, hospitals or churches. Theus (1993) stated that for the university that seeks to improve its image or to create and manage the new desirable image, consideration of the multiplicity of university stakeholders and the effects of numerous factors, such as organizational, situational, personal, and business, are critical in the creation and management of the university image.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was used for this research, as this method allows complex issues such as branding to be investigated in depth (Yin, 2003). A single case study method was selected for this research. Specifically, one organization, ERAU and its corporate brand was selected for this research. According to Creswell (2006) qualitative case studies employ theory in different ways. Theories might be absent from the study with a focus on a description of the case and its issues; theories can guide the study in the explanatory way; or theories can be employed toward the end of the study (Creswell, 2006). This research starts with theoretical perspectives by addressed corporate branding, corporate identity, and corporate image with the focus on Higher Education. The study then discusses the corporate brand management process on the example of ERAU.

Following the recommendations of Yin (2003), data for this study was collected from a variety of sources, including secondary sources (e.g. the university's documents and internet site), as well as interviews with top university administrations and officials. Archival data was also obtained to gather additional insight. This method was likely to increase the internal validity and reliability of the evidence.

Interviews were held with university administration. A discussion document was drawn up based on the literature review. Discussion focused on the branding management process, which at that time, was being conducted at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Open-ended questions with university administration were aimed to identify the purpose of the ERAU corporate brand management process and its logistics. The external and internal environment influences ERAU recruitment and retention strategies. The corporate brand management process was a necessary measure in order to stay competitive in the Higher Education Industry, which was affected by the recent economic downturn. The improved web administration made the new university web site more appealing to the new and current students, faculty, staff, and other constituents. Program marketing allowed an increase in the visibility of the select programs. The corporate brand positioning included the evaluation of the current brand through the brand audit and creating the formal university positioning statement.

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) has a long history related to aviation, starting in 1925 as the Embry-Riddle Company in Cincinnati, Ohio by John Paul Riddle and T. Higbee Embry. During the second world war, the school opened several flight centers and become one of the world's largest training centers for pilots, mechanics and aviation technicians, training US and allied countries' personnel. Approximately 25,000 aviation specialists were trained during the war. In 1960s aviation programs from different centers were consolidated into one location, followed by the name change from the "institution" to the "university" (www.erau/about/fast-facts.html).

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University is one of the largest universities specializing in aviation and aerospace education in 2008. ERAU offers more than 30 programs at Bachelor and Master's levels and pending two doctoral level programs. In addition to two residential campuses, the university provides a number of degree and certification programs online and at training facilities

around the world, which are managed from their worldwide campus. The annual undergraduate and graduate student enrollment is approximately 34,000 students. The primary mission of the university is to serve the education needs of aviation and aerospace related industries. ERAU was ranked many times by US News and World Report as the number 1 in the nation in the category "Best aerospace/aeronautical/astronautical engineering programs at schools whose highest degree is a Bachelor's or Master's" (www.erau/about/fast-facts.html). Flagship programs include aeronautical science, aerospace engineering, and engineering physics.

In 2006, a new university president was appointed following a national search. The Board of Trustees (BOT) gave a number of responsibilities to the newly appointed president including the expansion of the university's research activities, the establishment of new degree programs, including doctoral level, and the development of a global strategy by expanding beyond the US domain.

In the past, the structure of university was very centralized. The decisions were made from the top and then passed down to the campuses. In contrast, the new administration promoted one university system consisting of three individual entities (two residential campuses and the worldwide campus). The ERAU Marketing department was tasked to promote a brand positioning for the university and to help generate global brand awareness. With the administrative restructuring of the university, each campus has been tasked to maintain its own individuality while being consistent with the overall ERAU brand. This allows freedom to inject distinctiveness in each campus under the ERAU communication and marketing umbrella.

Corporate brand management

After the change in the administration, the Communications and Marketing Department, which is the part of the large group of Institutional Advancement, went through several re-organizations. The newly formed department of Marketing and Image Advertising was created with the overall goal of managing the ERAU brand and enhancing the university public image. The Marketing and Image Advertising Department was tasked to create a single platform for the Embry-Riddle brand under which three campuses would operate. Several other departments, including information technology, were assigned to provide the support to Marketing and Image Advertising in creating and carrying out the marketing plan for generating Embry-Riddle brand awareness and achieving a global recognition.

The biggest challenge was that there was no unity among university constituencies on the brand, image and identity that Embry-Riddle should possess in order to maintain and enhance its competitive advantage while expanding programs offerings and research capabilities domestically and internationally. As the result, the main task was to identify what Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University presently is and what it stands for.

The Marketing and Image Advertising Department proposed that corporate brand management process should address three key areas: web administration, program marketing and corporate brand positioning.

Web administration
The university's web site is one of the first visual and audio points that prospective students and other constituencies have with the university. The present web site of ERAU did not reflect the new president's vision to form a single university system while maintaining three distinctive campuses. Modern technologies were employed to update the website in order to reflect the change in the overall university strategy. New online videos replaced the old one with the goal to be more informative and to make a web site more user friendly, appealing to different categories of prospective students and other constituencies. The new web design included different areas by professional interest as well as separate areas for two residential campuses and the worldwide campus. This makes it easier to navigate and to obtain the needed information faster. The overall goal of the newly created web site is to increase prospects' web visitations and the overall stakeholders' utilization of the ERAU web site.

Program marketing
Program marketing includes a planned experiment with one of the search engines, which will be used for the first time at the university. Two academic programs were identified by campus chancellors to participate in the experiment. During the test period, the paid search engine will provide easier and faster web access to the "experiment academic programs". The reports will be generated on the number of program's web visits and the number of information requests. Statistical analyses will be conducted using the above external reports and matched with internal reports for the number of applications and actual student enrollment. The pre-test data will be compared with test period data holding general economic conditions stable. The higher online program visibility should result in the increase number of programs web visits, an increase in the number of information requests, an increase in the number of submitted applications and, finally, an increase in new student enrollments.

Corporate brand positioning
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University is well identified within aviation and aerospace-related communities since its inception. However, through a number of changes in the marketplace, including the increased competition among HE institutions, September 11, 2001 events followed by the downturn in the airline industry and globalization as well as internal changes, including the administrative re-organization and new program offerings, the key stakeholders began to debate where it is sufficient enough to be a niche aviation institution. For example, Apple Inc. dropped the word "computer" from its name in 2007 to better reflect the strategic move into the field of consumer electronics, including new software, retail, electronic media, home entertainment, digital audio players, cell phones and computers.

What strategic direction should Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University take in order to maintain its strong current position in aviation and the aerospace arena, and at the same time to attract new students who might not be specifically interested in aviation or aerospace? Should Embry-Riddle become known as a premium provider of comprehensive education including doctoral degrees? Should Embry-Riddle concentrate more efforts and resources on its recognition on the domestic or international markets? Different ERAU stakeholders will have different opinions to these questions. To address these questions, the ERAU Marketing and Image Advertising Department was tasked to conduct a brand audit to identify the Embry-Riddle brand position and its future direction. The brand positioning process model is shown in Figure 1.

Corporate brand positioning at ERAU

The process was conducted in four phases.

Phase one: brand audit (concepts generation)

The objective of the brand audit is to identify ERAU's direction from key stakeholders regarding its present and the future. In addition, the Brand Audit process creates the initial buy-in to the brand positioning development process. Interviews with stakeholders include two categories of open-ended questions. The first category included questions of self-reflection and desired future positioning to identify corporate identity; and the second consisted of questions dealing with other reflections and the desired future positioning to identify corporate image.

The corporate brand audit was conducted using an online survey (see Appendix). The survey participants were selected from the two following groups:

1. *Internal groups*. Members of the cabinet, deans, department heads, select professional staff including admission, strategic planning and institutional research staff.
2. *External groups*. Board of trustee members, select donors and select alumni.

The brand audit measures the three aspects: awareness, key attributes, and relationship outcomes:

1. Awareness among key segments by geographical areas. What geographical segments have higher Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University awareness?
2. Key attribute ratings measured as percentages for identified geographical segments. Examples include the following statements, which the survey participants were asked to select as the best choice: "Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University is an education provider … "
   - of broad selection of programs (depth of portfolio, "fits my needs");
   - of niche aviation/aerospace related programs (niche portfolio);
   - offers choice of locations (flexible locations, "convenient");
   - that deliverers value (value, "valuable resource for me");
   - that you feel connected to (connection, "fits my lifestyle");
   - that is approachable (better related, "welcoming");
   - that helps you get a job or advance in your current job (career advancement, "better than other alternatives").
3. Relationship outcomes among key student prospect segments measured as percentages for identified geographical segments. Examples include the following questions, for which the survey participants were asked to provide answers:
   - Would you consider Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University if you were planning to obtain an aviation/aerospace or general education?
   - Would you advise a co-worker, family member or a friend to consider Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University if they were planning to obtain an aviation/aerospace education or general education?
   - Would you consider Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University if you were planning to obtain a continuing education or a professional development?

The survey questions asked participants about their perceptions of the university and the Embry-Riddle brand. The survey participants were presented with an idea, a concept, an image or a question and asked for their responses. Many questions require multiple responses. The corporate brand audit is designed to capture the "top-of-the-mind" responses as well as the thoughts, feelings and attributes associated at a more conscious level. The participants were unable to scroll through or work through the entire audit and then go back to change responses. Exercises must be completed in the order of the presentation. Brands exist in a world of impressions and perceptions, many of which operate at a subconscious level. The participants were asked to complete exercises based on the first impression and perception without any additional analysis or research. The participants were asked about different areas of Embry-Riddle attributes, including the university past and present missions; note to a prospective student; brand image and attribute sort; a description of the Embry-Riddle student; competitors and their strength; Embry-Riddle's biggest challenges and areas for improvement; and note to a prospective faculty member. In total, 198 surveys were distributed with follow up e-mails.

The results of the brand audit will be used for the generation of a concept, which in turn will be used for the development of the university brand positioning statement. The example of generated concepts might include the following:

- *University*. Education, career-driven, field training, knowledge, global, research, serious students.
- *Best*. Elite, advanced, expert, driving force, dominate, skilled, most respected, prestigious, specialists, top-of-the-line, competitive.
- *Innovators*. High-aptitude, high-degree, high-pressure, high-speed, high-tech, modern, cutting edge, future leaders, state-of-the-art.
- *Military*. Army, Navy, Air Force, ROTC training.
- *Eco‑friendly*. Environmental science, solar energy, green, alternative fuel sources.
- *Global*. Culturally diverse, international.
- *Historical*. Traditional, generational, notable, memorable, famous, legendary.

Phase two: positioning options evaluation

Phase two of the corporate brand positioning is to gain feedback from students, prospects and other key stakeholders regarding the top ERAU brand's positioning concepts generated in the first phase. Face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, web interviews and focus groups will be conducted with the following ERAU stakeholders:

- *Industry/employers*. Airline management, space management, and defense industry management
- *Key influencers*. Congressional, key government organizations, foundations, outside of US, others
- *Students/prospective*.
- *Students*. Those who chose Embry-Riddle and those who did not choose Embry-Riddle.

The feedback from ERAU stakeholders will help to determine the optimal marketing position for the university to provide the highest competitive advantage.

Phase three: the formal university positioning statement

After identifying the top main ERAU concepts and evaluating them, the formal university positioning statement will be generated. The positioning statement will help to resolve the ongoing debate among key stakeholders regarding what direction the university needs to take. The positioning statement will be based on the following framework: FOR (target audience); Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University; IS THE (frame of reference); THAT (benefit or point of difference).

The identified concepts and the university positioning statement will be presented to the board of trustees and the cabinet for their approval. The Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University formal positioning statement will be used as the basis for conducting communication and marketing at three campuses under one Embry-Riddle brand while each retains its own distinctiveness.

Phase four: marketing campaign and establishing benchmark

Revision of the corporate brand will result in the setting of a new direction for the university. The marketing campaign will be based on the revised corporate brand, and the internal marketing based on the revised corporate identity. The translation of marketing strategies into goals with metrics is the necessity. Yearly benchmark will be established to evaluate the level of awareness among key segments, key attribute ratings, and relationship outcomes among key student prospect segments. In addition, web visitations and the overall stakeholder utilization of the ERAU website will be measured.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated the importance of the corporate brand management in higher education, and specifically the process of the corporate brand management at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. In order to compete in the marketplace for the best students, qualified faculty and staff, as well as donors, universities should have a strong corporate brand. The harmonized relationship between corporate identity and corporate image for the multiple stakeholders at the multiple-campus system can be a challenging task. The clear definition of the university brand combined with the strong leadership is one of the important aspects to be successful. Higher education provides many similar "products." Universities with strong historical and cultural legacies have benefits in offering a clear foundation for their corporate branding efforts. The alignment between corporate branding, which consists of the corporate identity and perceived corporate image and reputation, and organizational culture contribute to awareness among all stakeholders about who the university is and what it stands for. The internal acceptance of the revised brand at all levels plays a critical role in promoting the corporate brand to external stakeholders and making the institution sustainable in the long run.

Implications for management

It should be acknowledged that the results of a single case study cannot be generalized. However, we do believe that management can learn from the corporate brand building process at ERAU. This would apply to all organizations, not only those in the higher education sector.

As we have stated previously, organizations struggle to manage and implement their corporate brand strategies. There are a number of implications we can draw from this study. First, an organization must have an organization structure that supports the task of managing the corporate brand. A department must be tasked with the overall goal of managing the brand and enhancing the organization's reputation. Second, an organization needs to decide what needs to be addressed in order to decide what it currently is and stands for. In the case of ERAU, they decided to address three key areas, web administration, program marketing and corporate brand positioning. The reasons for this choice was that their website was an important first visual for the university's stakeholders, program marketing addressed the university's "products', and the corporate brand positioning is what sets it apart from its competition. The implication is that in order to establish an organizations brand positioning, a four phased process needs to be conducted. First, a brand audit has to be performed, second, the positioning options evaluation has to take place; third, a formal organization positioning statement must be developed and forth, a marketing communication campaign must be developed. When management follows this procedure, the process of managing and implementing the corporate brand becomes much easier.

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