

Brand'em!

Use Branded Deliverables to Increase Recognition and Visibility

By Chris Olson, Chris Olson & Associates & Angela Kangiser, Online Business Research

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The concept of branding has come a long way from the days when ranchers used hot irons to mark and track their cattle. For decades, marketing professionals have used branding to differentiate and build name recognition for their company's products and services. By promoting a product's distinguishing and value-added characteristics through the use of a unique logo or tagline and implementing other branding strategies, companies influence customers and increase sales. Deliverables can experience the same benefits of branding as commercial products do.

Much Ado About Packaging

Recent years have seen discussion about packaging research results and appropriately so. Whether presenting research findings by executive summary, overview, report, or memo, packaging the research findings into a branded deliverable adds to the perception of value of the research. In addition, packaging truly adds value when it makes the information easy to read, interpret and utilize for decision-making, thus saving the client valuable time. Finally, branding and packaging research results assists with marketing information services by giving the information center or research consultant high-profile visibility.

A well-packaged and branded deliverable:

- projects value and a sign of quality when the product itself meets quality expectations.
- casts the information professional as the producer of products that credit their expertise and knowledge.
- lends tangible qualities to intangible services.
- promotes the library's and informational professional's name, image, and services.
- facilitates ordering by giving the product characteristics, including a product name.
- builds recognition and brand loyalty.
- reinforces customer confidence.

"The key benefit with branding is recognizability," states Jim Knutsen, principal of Boatz Knutzen, a Colorado-based brand and communications consulting firm. "Clients begin to look for a product because they recognize a specific style, font, or tone of voice in the deliverable."

Whether the deliverable is hard copy paper or virtual PDF files, coordinated and cohesive brand presentation through packaging is critical for achieving high recognition and brand memory recall. Templates and stylesheets are packaging tools that can help an information center present its brand consistently and establish and trigger brand memories. [1]

Create a Template

You want me to do what? Create a template. Templates help to achieve the consistent look and feel of a brand across research findings and products by standardizing the delivery format. In addition, templates save the information professional and the client valuable time by presenting research results in a format that usually requires minimal editing for subsequent use. [2]

There are multiple ways to summarize research findings and templates; you can customize them to meet the requirements of different client markets and research products. Just be sure the look and feel of the documents remains constant. Fixed elements of any template should include the following:

- date of delivery and the research date(s)
- name of your company or information center
- name of the consultant or researcher
- project name
- contact information

Other template components could comprise these items:

- a restatement of the search query
- the search strategy or strategies
- bulleted key findings
- the secondary and primary research results
- potential next steps
- a table of contents

Templates provide consistency for documents—virtual and hardcopy—and consistency is a fundamental aspect of maintaining a brand image.

You can implement additional strategies for branding your deliverable, including inserting the company or department logo on the first page of a memo or on the cover page; using a brief letterhead; running headers and footers that include identifying information and the project name; and choosing a font style unique to your organization.

To view an example of how templates can consistently setup the presentation of a brand, look at Figure 1. It shows the cover sheet template layout for a report product called Product Primer

produced by IntelliQuest, an internal corporate information consulting service.

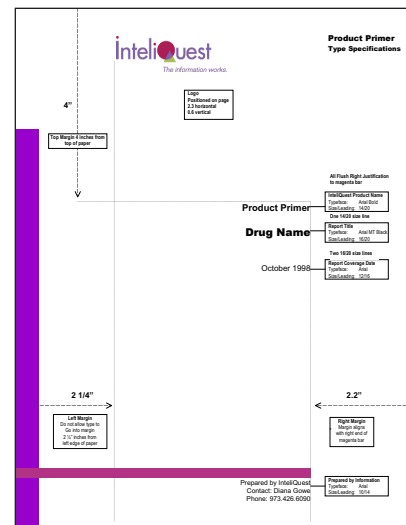


Figure 1. IntelliQuest report cover template

The template is constructed in Microsoft Word and takes into account the artwork associated with the IntelliQuest brand. All reports using this particular cover art and vertical setup follow this template and include the components shown. The packaging doesn't stop with the cover. The inside pages—table of contents, executive summary, content pages, and end page—all have separate layout templates, so reports follow a uniform format.

You can easily create templates can be created easily using Microsoft Office's Word or Corel's WordPerfect. If you have engaged the services of a graphic designer to help develop a brand image, ask them about creating report templates or laying out the placement of template components.

Stylesheets

The template should contain embedded stylesheets for the different sections of the document. Stylesheets for headers, footers, titles, subheads include font specifications, color, placement, margins, call-outs, charts, and other information components of the written product. Each of these elements contributes to the visual presentation of the product and should be treated consistently in order to reinforce the brand.

If you are unable to secure the services of a graphic designer and have no eye for design yourself, consider perusing one

of many books available which review basic design concepts. Developing attractive stylesheets for a template requires an eye for fonts, color, typesize, and type treatment, and a basic understanding of typography concepts.

The TBWA\Chiat\Day Way

Here's how another information center implemented templates to reinforce their brand identity.

TBWA\Chiat\Day (<http://www.tbwachiat.com>) is one of the leading advertising agencies in the U.S. with major global clients. The TBWA\Intelligence Department (which includes the Intelligence Center or library) provides category, company and consumer overviews, reports, searches and topline for new business and existing accounts as well as proactive products such as newsletters. "Many of our products are delivered in a memo format or with a cover memo. Our memo template includes background, methodology, findings, next steps, a table of contents if we include articles or a full report, or a list of separate attachments," explains TBWA\Intelligence Department director, Velda Ruddock.

The TBWA\Intelligence logo appears prominently in the header of the first page of the memo with the name of the department on every footer. In addition to the name of their department in the left hand corner, the footer has a page number in the middle, and name of the document on the right hand side.



Figure 3. TBWA Intelligence Department's Logo

"Until very recently our department did not have a logo. We used our own fonts and styles for our work. This year we were told that our work has increasingly become a part of the core communication offerings. Because of that our deliverables – our memos, reports and newsletters – needed to adopt the look and feel of the network. And we got our own logo. (See Figure 3) The look and feel is the same as the other agency logos – white letters on a red button. It automatically goes into the header of the first page of our work, but not on the subsequent page headers," Ms. Ruddock explains.

"We also include a Memo box," Ms. Ruddock adds. "This is very straightforward, listing out who the memo is to, who is copied, who it's from, the date and the topic. In addition, we use a naming convention (see Figure 4) for all our documents so we can immediately see what it's about, who (the individual or the department) produced it, and the date it was produced. An added benefit is that we can search for the document by exact name. The initials of our department are CIA, and if the document represents the department, that is what we use."

Figure 2. TBWA\Intelligence Department's Memo Template

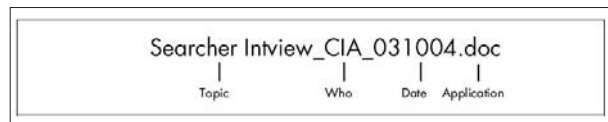


Figure 4. TBWA Intelligence Department's Naming Convention

"Finally, when we deliver a hardcopy document, we provide it on ivory paper. Our goal is to be able to walk around the agency and see ivory on every desk." she said.

The TBWA Intelligence Department's efforts in creating and

using templates has benefited both the agency and the Intelligence Department. “Organizing the findings saves the reader time and is best value-add we can provide,” said Ms. Ruddock. “Every document we send out with our name on it increases our visibility, and with visibility, comes increased usage.”

Take It One Step Further

To succeed, your brand visibility efforts need to go across all products and promotion materials. It's not enough to have a logo and ancillary design developed and apply it to just one or two items. Successful branding uses design to reinforce brand visual memories at every encounter with customers and perspective clients. Design provides the visual cues people need to create brand memories and the ability to recall their value perceptions when they see the brand again. [3]

Put the brand on PowerPoint slides, fact sheets, Web pages, feedback forms, report covers, promotion items, signage, badges—wherever and whenever your information services and products touch members of your target market.

Here's an example of an information service which reinvented itself into an information consulting service called IntelliQuest, and successfully established its brand in its target market—a corporation.

Figure 5 shows the brand logo and tagline. The key brand colors were purple and lime green. The design was clean and the tagline had a twist which expressed the essence of the IntelliQuest brand.



Figure 5. IntelliQuest logo and brand tagline

Figure 6 shows a cover design used for reports. For the initial launch of IntelliQuest, branded materials played off the geometric design elements embedded in the logo and used the logo colors to set up color brand memories. The design is clean and respects the logo design by not over-using the geometric shapes.



Figure 6. IntelliQuest cover using geometric design elements

The geometric design elements were developed into an ancillary visual theme that was applied across all types of materials—wherever the logo was to appear, the visual theme strengthened the impact of the logo and ultimately the brand identity. Presentation cards, promotion notepads, comment cards, bookmarks, pens, envelopes, mailing labels, note paper, letterhead, posters, web sites, folders, and other items all carried the IntelliQuest brand. Figure 7 depicts how the geometric design was interpreted as a side bar for PowerPoint slides. Even book stamps and journal routing slips were redesigned to include the brand.



Figure 7. IntelliQuest PowerPoint slide template

Within 12 months the IntelliQuest brand was firmly established and recognized for quality information services, as substantiated in this statement by the company's marketing director; “I always look for the purple and green covers on reports and put

those immediately into my 'Read' pile, as opposed to piles of data in black and white reports." [4]

Brands, like many other items dependent on visual recognition, are impacted by changing tastes and styles. Colors go in and out of style. Typeface preferences change. Graphics get dated. After several years, the IntelliQuest brand needed freshening to prevent it from getting visually stale. The logo was not changed. Only the ancillary graphics were redeveloped. The goal was to create a visual theme which would convey through sophisticated graphics the critical role IntelliQuest played in developing and managing the company's information assets.

Figure 8 shows one of the new graphics developed for the IntelliQuest brand. The geometric shapes were replaced by colorful graphics depicting information at work. Each product used a different graphic, but because the same designer created all the graphics, all had the same look and feel. A new set of templates and stylesheets was developed for all products, ensuring the consistent application of the new brand design across all materials the same as before.



Figure 8. Revitalized IntelliQuest brand graphics on new report cover template

Graphics were also assembled into collages to accommodate situations requiring banners. Figures 9 and 10 show the application of the graphics on a fact sheet and the IntelliQuest web site.



Figure 9. New brand graphics collage on IntelliQuest web site



Figure 10. New brand graphics collage on IntelliQuest fact sheet template

In-House or Hire

When you're ready to implement the visual components of a brand, you may have several resource options available to you. In-house design department resources. A talented staff member. Local design students. Graphic design agencies.

Before you do anything, identify what you want your brand to stand for. What do you want people to say and remember about your brand? What makes it unique? Determine what

designs, colors and graphic styles you like and dislike. If available, get a copy of the organization brand identity guidelines with examples.

Make a list of what you expect as the end product. A logo? A set of designs to complement an existing logo? A logo update? New color applications? Be ready to explain how you and your staff will use the design work. What products will be affected? Will the design be used in only electronic products or will it also be printed on paper? Will the design be incorporated into a web site and then used on fact sheets printed on in-house color laser printers. Your usage description will help the designer understand the limitations for the design and how the design will need to perform under different conditions.

All set? Now, you are ready to contact potential design suppliers. In-house graphics departments will be familiar with organization graphic guidelines, but their style or availability may not suit your needs. A talented staff member is a rare find because most people who are good designers are already earning their living by design, not by sitting in your information center. Holding a design contest is asking for trouble, unless you intend to "seed" the entries with a couple of professional designs. Using the students from a local design institute can yield award-winning designs, but you can spend a lot of time working with the students (after all, they are learning) only to realize in the end that none of the designs fit the bill. Graphic design agencies come in all shapes and sizes. Select the agency which fits your budget, design style, and schedule. In today's electronic world, location is not a factor, so don't let geographic propinquity dominate your selection process.

If at all possible, the best advice is to go beyond the in-house art department. "They are just too close to the subject to render a detached opinion. In the same way, in-house graphic departments can become very compliant to the corporate personality. Not that there is anything wrong with that so long as the end consumer is happy with that corporate personality. An outside firm may provide a fresh perspective to your design challenge and render a solution your inside people may have never considered, to the possible delight and surprise of your customers," explains Chris Straka, director of new business development for Cukjati Market Intelligence & Creative, a Colorado Springs-based design and advertising agency.

Brand and Packaging Guidelines

An important product of the design process is the development of brand guidelines or standards. These specifications will help you maintain the visual integrity of the brand. Logo, color and typeface usage are spelled out. Packaging specifications are usually outlined in the brand guidelines, with template files, stylesheets, usage instructions and examples included as electronic resources.

Brand guidelines help ensure the projection of a consistent image. Image includes written presentation, and most brand guidelines spell out the brand's written tone and preferred vocabulary for writing brand items. The objective behind brand and packaging guidelines is to ensure that regardless of who is producing the product, the brand will be presented in a consistent and desirable manner.

Conclusion

Branding is about establishing memories and recall. Establishing a consistent look and feel to your deliverables will help you build a highly recognizable brand. Templates and stylesheets will save the time it takes you and your staff to produce branded deliverables. If you don't now pay any attention to packaging of your deliverables or the presentation of your brand identity, it's past time to step back and reconsider. Although the saying goes "Don't judge a book by its cover," in today's world, "the cover" is what "sells" the book. Just ask any book dealer.

Chris Olson is the Principal Consultant at Chris Olson & Associates. For more than 20 years she has helped information professionals apply marketing and branding techniques to information services and products. She can be reached at Chris@ChrisOlson.com.

Angela Kangiser is president of Online Business Research, a Colorado Springs-based research firm that provides market and business intelligence. She offers workshops on creating Dynamic Deliverables. E-mail at akangiser@onlinebusinessresearch.com.

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Christine A. Olson, M.L.S., M.A.S.
Principal Consultant
Chris Olson & Associates

Since founding Chris Olson & Associates in 1984 Chris has been engaged by a wide range of clients to consult on a variety of marketing projects including:

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| marketing plans | product development |
| pricing strategies | product launches |
| packaging plans | conference exhibits |
| logo designs | public relations & outreach |
| promotion pieces | electronic surveys |
| training materials | personal interviews |
| personal sales programs | focus groups |
| image assessments | branding strategies |
| advertising campaigns | product portfolio analysis |
| intra- and internet web sites | library reinventions |

Over the years Chris has developed and led dozens of workshops and seminars on various library marketing topics. Her teaching experience includes several years as an Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Maryland College of Library and Information Services where she taught graduate courses in marketing management to librarians. Chris has given scores of presentations, has been the invited keynote speaker at international library and information service conferences, and she has written extensively about library marketing topics in her newsletter, Marketing Treasures.

Additional information about Chris Olson, client projects and the marketing services offered by Chris Olson & Associates can be found at www.ChrisOlson.com. Chris accepts marketing projects, consultations, and speaking engagements around the world.