GreymatterFinch

WHY BRANDING AND MARKETING MATTER

JUNE 2024

> *"People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it."*
> *— Simon Sinek*

DEAR JOHN

Branding and marketing are key components for any organisation. It is how an organisation solidifies its identity and communicates with its target audience. How do these two components support integrated reporting?

Branding speaks to the visual aspects of how an organisation presents itself to the public. Branding consists of elements that organisations use to identify with their target audience. This includes logos, taglines, colours, shapes, typography, sound and imagery that people can associate with a particular brand. Establishing ***brand identity*** is not only essential for creating a loyal customer base, but it also impacts how all stakeholders perceive and engage with the organisation.

Building ***brand trust*** is instrumental in helping the organisation establish a positive reputation among its customers, competitors, employees, investors and other stakeholders.

Marketing includes all the activities involved in promoting and selling products or services, such as market research, advertising, sales, and distribution. Marketing seeks to understand and influence consumers' behaviour to effectively position and offer products or services that meet their needs and desires.

Case Study

Global athletic footwear and apparel corporation Nike has, for over 56 years, created a brand personality that is recognisable by its logo, the Swoosh, or its famous tagline "Just Do It".
In 2023, Nike spent approximately $4 billion on advertising and promotion costs.
The branding and marketing of the organisation have contributed to its global success.

Branding and marketing are also key to ***stakeholder communication*** as they help organisations communicate their vision, business model, strengths and overall corporate image. Organisations use different marketing channels to communicate with stakeholders, including email, social media, TV, radio, websites, presentations, podcasts, newsletters and external reports.

Branding and marketing can play an important role in ensuring that your external reports are impactful.

USING BRANDING AND MARKETING TO ENHANCE YOUR REPORTING SUITE

A reporting suite is a communication tool that organisations use to reach different stakeholders. External reports such as the integrated annual report (IAR), sustainability report, and impact report, include information that speak to the relevant stakeholders. In this newsletter, we provide five ways that branding and marketing can enhance your IAR.

1. THE AUDIENCE

Understanding your target audience is key to determining the relevant branding and marketing channel.

According to the International Integrated Annual Reporting Framework, "An integrated report benefits anyone who's interested in an organisation's ability to create value. This includes but is not limited to providers of financial capital, employees, customers, suppliers, business partners, local communities, legislators, regulators, and policy-makers who may also have an interest in an organisation's integrated report." Knowing your audience gives you an understanding of what branding and marketing elements will be applicable.

2. SHARE YOUR BRAND IDENTITY

Brand identity is what gives the organisation its personality. A reader should be able to get a sense of your brand identity throughout the report, starting with the cover. Brand identity is evident through the logo, brand colours, design elements and tone of the report.

An important part of brand identity is communicating the organisation's values, mission and purpose.

These elements help the organisation to communicate why and how it operates by providing the audience with an overview of the organisation and what it represents. This can be communicated in a narrative form or as a creative graphic or visual.

An integrated report provides an organisation with the opportunity to enhance its ***brand reputation***. By publishing transparent disclosure, external reports provide an opportunity to build brand trust. This can help to strengthen relations with stakeholders. Failure to do so can negatively influence perceptions about the organisation and subsequently affect its financial position.

3. SHARE YOUR STORY

Storytelling is an important part of branding and marketing. It conveys the organisation's vision in a passionate and impactful manner that its audience can relate to. It helps to create emotional connections with consumers and build brand loyalty. The brand story communicates the brand's ***history, mission, values***, and unique selling proposition.

While the <IR> Framework requires organisations to disclose key information, it does not restrict the "how". This gives organisations the creative freedom to tell a story in a way that is true to their brand and uniqueness. This should be evident through the tone, style and design choices in the report.

Need help sharing your story?

CLICK HERE

4. SHOWCASE YOUR VALUE CREATION

Through the IAR, you can showcase how your organisation creates and preserves value. This includes showing how your mav vrketing efforts support your performance.

Organisations can build brand trust by being transparent with the information disclosed in the IAR.

5. USING YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION TO MAKE AN INVESTMENT CASE

Providers of financial capital are the main audience of an IAR. If it is prepared according to the <IR> framework, it allows organisations to "market" their value proposition to their shareholders by demonstrating integrated thinking.

This can be achieved by demonstrating, for example, their resilience under the operating context, strategic objectives, competitive edge insights, governance processes and future plans.

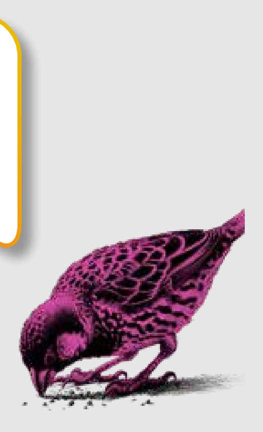
The organisation's approach to sustainability can contribute to how the organisation positions itself as a responsible corporate citizen in the sector it operates in.

GMF can help you use your organisation's branding and marketing to enhance your reporting suite

Contact our Head of Value Added Services, Lelanie Hohls, if you would like to set up an appointment.

GMF publishes a "Do you know" series that provides insight into the reporting value chain in bite-size chunks. These provide practical considerations for enhancing any organisation's reporting processes and outcomes.

Do you know if the company's data is accurate?



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