

# (Brand) New Thinking for Your College Store

*Panelists:*

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**camex**  
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## Objectives

- ✓ Determine who controls your brand.
- ✓ Understand branding concepts and determine how customers perceive you.
- ✓ Discover how to use campus resources to support your brand.
- ✓ Learn how basic branding methods are put in motion and boost brand recognition.

## Branding – Key Terms

*Brand:* A promise. Everything that defines your offering and distinguishes it from its competitors.

*Brand Identity:* The marketers' depiction of the brand. Physical, emotional, visual and verbal messages in an attempt to form a perception in consumers' minds.

*Brand Image:* The consumers' perception of the brand.

*Brand Essence:* The brand's mission statement – an internal statement used to guide a company's practices.

*Embrace your brand: Like it or not, your organization has a brand. And your brand is a lot more than a carefully crafted mission statement. It's everything. From your ads and web site to your handshake and punctuality.*

## **Determine who controls your brand.**

College stores – public, private, institutional and independent alike – must first determine what administrative department controls the store's branding image. Consult as to whether or not university approval is needed for design creation or modification. This includes changes to the mascot or logo, typeface and design color and size. Large stores may have a campus marketing department available for consultation and assistance, which offers savings on expenses. Small or independent stores should draw from as many resources as possible when developing a new or revising an existing graphic representation. Even if approval is not required, involving other university officials when developing a branding effort promotes the store's objectives and can save time and money. Creating buy-in is important. Additionally, outside agencies typically charge a significant amount for branding and logo development. Your college or university may be able to maximize efforts and dollars by approaching agencies with a collective need rather than for piece-meal work.

**Action Item: Set up a meeting between your public relations and/or marketing departments and college store management team before beginning the design phase.**

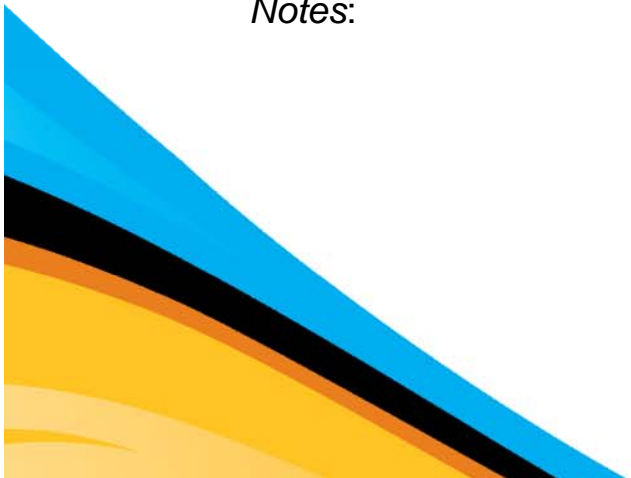
*Notes:*

## **Understand branding concepts and determine how customers perceive you.**

Interviews, surveys, and focus groups – no matter which channel you use to determine customer perception, the NACS Campus Relations Toolkit (available free to NACS members) is a well-rounded resource. Or consider a professional third-party interviewing and survey distribution agency. It's not only important to interview campus constituencies (faculty, students & staff) but non-university customers (such as local community members and online shoppers) as well. Don't forget to allow your internal store staff to anonymously contribute feedback.

**Action Item: Benchmark with comparable institutions to see what you are doing (or not doing) that a new branding effort could support. Visit [NACS.org](http://NACS.org) to draw from association resources.**

*Notes:*



## **Use campus/other resources to support your brand campaign.**

Consider these campus resources when promoting your brand:

Campus Marketing/Communications department

Department of Graphic & Visual Design and/or Multimedia - academic functions

Students bring fresh perspectives and may provide their services free of charge.

The local Chamber of Commerce

Campus Conference Operations

Student, Staff and Faculty Newspapers or Newsletters

Alumni

Student Affairs Staff & Student Groups

*Other:*

**Action Item: Draw ideas and suggestions from your campus experts/stakeholders.**

**Get excited! That emotion will carry through to others.**

*Notes:*

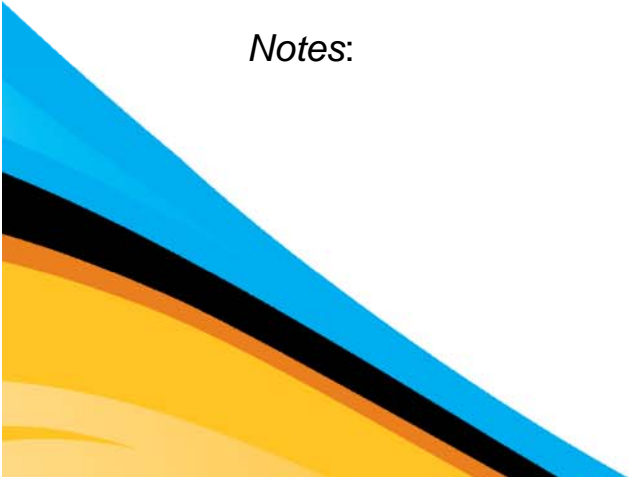
## Set branding methods in motion. “Live the Brand”

Promoting a new brand can be a slow and challenging process. Store staff buy-in is one of the most important factors in successful branding. Staff are a key conduit for communicating the brand message and carrying out the store's mission. At times, long-time team members have difficulty adjusting to the change. There can be apathy, even resentment, toward the new brand, and this needs to be managed by the store administration and other university officials. It's important to get everyone in the organization on the same page. Without the support of the team members, it will be much more difficult to get customers and others excited about the transformation.

Good branding involves HEART: soul, story, characters and legacy.

**Action Item: Brush up on your transformation leadership skills. Involve your staff in the process and reward positive behaviors that support the effort.**

*Notes:*



**Notes:**



## Resources

National Association of College Stores – [www.nacs.org](http://www.nacs.org)

*The College Store* magazine

Marketing Toolkits – promotional ad slicks and posters

Campus Relations Toolkit - annual report templates and surveys/focus group samples

Destination Point – product trials and sampling

Customer, Faculty, and Technology Satisfaction Survey Services

American Marketing Association – [www.marketingpower.com](http://www.marketingpower.com)

Branding Concepts & Customer Relations

*Married to the Brand: Why Consumers Bond with Some Brands for Life*

by William J. McEwen; Gallup Press (November, 2005)

