Where Art Meets Science: Using Quantitative Research to Develop Brand Strategy

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What is branding?
What is a brand?

A brand is a promise – which must be delivered upon consistently with every interaction

- **Emotion**
  It is driven by how you want stakeholders and employees to feel when they interact with you.

- **Differentiation**
  Your promise should be different from promises made by competitors, describing a feeling only you give them.

- **Relevance**
  It should be meaningful to stakeholders, focused on where their greatest needs intersect with your strengths
Brand promise is a filter for identity, communication and action.
The role of quantitative research in branding
Brand insight is found at the intersection of three areas of exploration:

- **Competition**
  - Who are they and what do they stand for?

- **Organization**
  - What is it known for, and what does it want to be?

- **Customer**
  - Who are they, and what are they looking for?
Quantitative research serves as the customer’s (or employee’s) strongest voice

• Qualitative research:
  – Seeks to understand all the attitudes and opinions that exist within your target segment
  – Digs deeper emotionally

• Quantitative research:
  – Projects the qualitative findings on your population to understand the degree to which they exist

• Quant removes opinion or “he said/she said” discussions from the analysis. The data is incontrovertible – as a decision-maker, you can choose to listen to it, or not.

But ignore it at your own risk.
“Art is science made clear”  Wilson Mizner
What we found at UC San Diego
Developing a relevant brand for alumni audiences

• The “customer” - UC San Diego Alumni

• The objective - develop a brand promise for the UCSD Alumni Association that would dramatically increase the percentage of alumni engaged with the university through event participation, volunteerism or philanthropy.

• The methodology - combined art and science
  – Science
    Online survey of alumni (55,000 email invitations at 6% response rate = 3,272 responses. Goal was 500 responses.)
  – Art
    Communications audit, staff and board workshops, one-on-one interviews (6), analysis of all findings, development of brand promise
Segmentation by engagement level proved most meaningful (vs. age, geography, etc.)

Q19. Which of the following have you done in the last 5 years? (Select all that apply)

- Read @UCSD
- Attended UCSD event (not related to Alumni Association)
- Made donation to UCSD
- Attended Alumni Association-sponsored event
- Attended local club or chapter event/activity
- Volunteered your time
- Submitted a Class Note

Other = 10/11/13/16%
Many “engagement myths” debunked

• Myth #1:
  Alumni aren’t engaged because they didn’t have a good student experience
But alumni perceived their time at UCSD very positively

Q6. Overall, when you think back on your time spent at UCSD, how would you describe your experience?

- Very positive: 73%
- Somewhat positive: 53%
- Neutral: 54%
- Somewhat negative: 33%
- Very negative: 2%

Lapsed Members: n = 584
Current Members: n = 998
Non-Members: n = 1173

HYPER-Engaged: n = 96
Q6. Overall, when you think back on your time spent at UCSD, how would you describe your experience?
“Engagement myths” debunked

• Myth #1: Alumni aren’t engaged because they didn’t have a good student experience.

• Myth #2: Alumni don’t engage with UCSD because we’re decentralized and they relate more to their college or major.
But in reality, alumni identified most strongly with UCSD

Q7. Today, as an alumnus/a, which ONE aspect of UCSD do you most identify with?
“Engagement myths” debunked

• Myth #1:
  Alumni aren’t engaged because they didn’t have a good student experience

• Myth #2
  Alumni don’t engage with UCSD because we’re decentralized and they’re more “into” their college or major

• Myth #3
  The alumni who do engage do so out of “school spirit”
But school pride was the least important benefit to alumni

Q25. And, which ONE of these benefits would most motivate you to get, or remain involved with the UCSD Alumni Association? (Select just one)
The major insight: an engagement “quid pro quo”

“I received a degree from a great university, but once I left, the only time the school would reach out to me was to ask me for money. There is no tangible return that can be shown to me for sending the school any money.”

“I receive phone calls regarding making contributions to UCSD. I would love to make contributions. I am a lifetime member of the alumni association. But, I would prefer receiving emails regarding career opportunities so that one day I could afford to make a financial contribution.”

“Instead of reaching out to me in a way that would benefit me… UCSD instead only reaches out to me when it is trying to solicit me for money – for its own benefit. Why would I care to support undergrads when I… do not feel support from UCSD?”

“The ‘feel good’ feeling alone from donating is not enough.”
Creating engagement (and philanthropy) requires creating value

Value ➔ Engagement ➔ Philanthropy

“Making ourselves relevant to alumni is a precondition to anything else. **We are a service organization that creates money by adding value.** We exist to serve the alumni and provide useful value to them... people give money only after they appreciate what’s being done for them. Raising money shouldn’t be the end; it should be the consequence of doing a great job.”

*Board Interview*
Even among the hyper-engaged, UCSD is not perceived as providing value to alumni

Q9. Now that you’re an alumnus/a, how much value do you feel UCSD provides you today? (outside of your degree)? Is your relationship with the university… (Select one)
When aggregated only 28% saw the UCSD relationship as very or extremely valuable

Q9. Now that you’re an alumnus/a, how much value do you feel UCSD provides you today? (outside of your degree)? Is your relationship with the university... (Select one)

Total n = 3,272
How research informed our alumni positioning
The Science
An understanding of what alumni most valued

Q24. How big of a benefit to getting involved with the UCSD Alumni Association would you consider each of the following to be to you personally? Significant benefit, slight benefit or no benefit at all.

- Professional Networking: 48%
- Intellectual growth: 42%
- Personal networking: 36%
- Improving student life: 30%
- School pride: 26%

Total: n = 3,271
The Art
An appreciation of what this meant for UCSD

Together, alumni want to keep themselves – and UCSD – on the leading edge

“I have pride when saying I graduated from UCSD, and if the school doesn’t stay at the top of the class, then what am I proud of?”

“With the professional/personal networking I will be able to grow intellectually to provide feedback in order to improve the UCSD experience for students.”

“I want to be a world class citizen. I want the knowledge and expertise of our world class professors to make life decisions. I want to be constantly updated in what they are doing, in influencing policies, science, health, culture, etc.”

Alumni Survey
Representative Open End Responses
# The UCSD Alumni Brand Platform

| **WHO we’re for** | All UCSD Alumni who want to remain on the forefront of professional, intellectual and personal pursuits |
| **WHAT we do** | **Foster affinity** among alumni themselves, between alumni and the university, and between the university and the world |
| **WHY we do it** | So you – and UCSD – always remain **world class** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>HOW we do it</strong></th>
<th>Know Alumni</th>
<th>Enable Connections</th>
<th>Inspire Discovery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHO we are</strong></td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Stimulating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The UCSD Alumni brand promise

The UCSD Alumni Association helps alumni remain on the forefront of their professional, intellectual and personal pursuits. By helping alumni build meaningful and valuable relationships, we foster a deeper affinity among our alumni, between alumni and the university, and between the university and the world. **Our programs, events and communications are designed to ensure that you – and UCSD – always remain world class.**
Results To Date
Understanding accountabilities

Value
All Campus

Engagement
Alumni Association

Philanthropy
Development
Aligning an organization to deliver value through a brand promise

Customer Experience Mapping

Touch Point Evaluation
Quantitative research
OR
Qualitative with employees

Touch Point Optimization

Measurement
Measure impact of touch point changes on brand perception and business performance

Employee Engagement
Launch/Communications
Training at critical touch points

Operational Alignment
Design
Simplification
Web strategy + development
Alumni Association has begun to evaluate and optimize touch points.

### Higher Brand Importance
- Outstanding Young Alumni Award & Event (2.1)
- SAGA Institute (2.1)
- UCSD Alumni Social Networks (2.2)
- Senior Class Gift (2.3)
- Welcome New Grad Mixers (2.3)
- Monthly Campus Loop E-News (2.4)
- UCSD Extension Partnership (2.4)
- @UCSD Magazine (1)
- Awards for Excellence (1)
- UCSD Near You (1)
- Alumni Weekend (1.4)
- Farm to Table Events (1.4)
- Grad Night at the Bookstore (1.5)
- Webinars (1.8)
- Chapters/Clubs/Councils (1.9)

### Lower Brand Performance
- Commencement (2.5)
- Sun God Festival (2.6)
- Alumni Membership (2.9)
- Alumni Travel (3)
- Society 60 (3)

### Lower Brand Importance
- Advocacy and Advocacy Programming
- All-Campus Graduation Celebration
- Alumni Employer Resources
- Leadership Scholarship Giving Program
- Convocation
- Auto Insurance
- Health & Life Insurance
- Homecoming weekend
- Order of the Tritons
- Scholars Society
- Scholarship Fundraising

### Higher Brand Performance
- Student Foundation
- Student Travel
- Summer Send-Off for Incoming Students
- Triton Credit/Debit Card
- Triton Online Community
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Voluntourism

*Note: Lower Importance activities were NOT sorted according to their performance.*
Dramatic results at UCSD

- **Alumni Donors**: FY10: 7400, FY09: 5300
- **Engaged Alumni**: FY10: 10,383, FY09: 5040
- **Student Donors**: FY10: 1295, FY09: 850

6.5% participation rate
How you can apply quantitative research in brand development

Use research to understand these three elements:

• “Customers” – who are they (demographics and psychographics,) and what do they care about most?

• Competitors – who are they, and what do they stand for in the minds of your customers?

• The Organization – what do your customers think about you?
After the research is done

- Don’t just tell people what they want to hear
- Only make brand promises you are prepared to keep

*Promises made and promises kept result in strong and lasting bonds.*
Thank you.
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