Imaging Place: Interpreting Place Identity Through Consumer Marketing Techniques for Non-Profit, Community Development and Business Improvement Organizations

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Imaging Place: Interpreting Place Identity Through Consumer Marketing Techniques for Non-Profit, Community Development and Business Improvement Organizations

Abstract
There is significant potential to further capitalize on the use of graphic images to elicit memory, fortify sense of place and communicate preservation values as a tool for neighborhood revitalization and economic development. This thesis paper researches how designed branding strategies and visual communications have been used by place-based, community and business development organization as a consumer marketing tool. By compiling graphic examples from the current brand campaigns of these organizations, a descriptive analysis informs trends and identifies the current preservation theories and values being followed. Interviews allow this thesis to study the thought-process behind the branding strategies and why organizations have changed their brand identities over time through rebranding. By documenting the state of the art, this thesis further analyzes trends across the branding images and marketing campaigns of the organizations by applying methods used in the marketing profession. The analysis and research findings inform recommendations for best-practices and conclude that there is a potential to further utilize graphic images for successful marketing and branding of place-based economic development and neighborhood revitalization organizations.

Keywords
rebranding, community branding, community identity, Main St, neighborhood revitalizations

Disciplines
Historic Preservation and Conservation | Urban, Community and Regional Planning

Comments
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IMAGING PLACE: INTERPRETING PLACE IDENTITY THROUGH CONSUMER MARKETING TECHNIQUES FOR NON-PROFIT, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Audrey Rose von Ahrens

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______________________
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Chapter One: Research Question, Methods and Hypothesis

This thesis paper researches how place-based business development organizations in historic neighborhoods use branding and marketing, the degree of importance allotted to developing their campaigns, and the strategy behind the graphic design and visual communication of their brands. The hypothesis is that, in re-thinking the role of branding and marketing campaigns of these organizations, there is significant potential to realize the ability for specific graphic representations, strategically chosen following preservation values and planning theories, to capture, strengthen and promote community identity and sense of place as a foundation for community and economic development and neighborhood revitalization. The use of images has always played a central role in the field of historic preservation: as a fundamental tool of site recording, as a key resource for research and documentation, as a tool in advocating for preservation, as a means of promoting heritage tourism, and as marketing and branding for preservation organizations.

Despite the prominent use of the image in historic preservation, there is limited literature on more interpretive forms of visual communication and few theories that analyze why certain types are used. Beyond discussion of methods for site recording and types of image resources to utilize for research and documentation, little is written on how to use graphics and images for visual interpretation. Many theories are written on how buildings illicit memory and cultural landscapes create a sense of place, contributing to neighborhood and community identity, but comparatively little is written on how to use these tangible elements through graphic representations to symbolize and visually interpret the theories and concepts. This thesis takes a multidisciplinary approach to facilitate this new discussion, incorporating preservation planning theories and practices, social research and studies, as well as concepts practiced in the marketing profession. The diagram in figure 1 maps out the
approach of the research process. By applying marketing terminology and research to the language of planning and preservation organizations, a more succinct understanding of how branding and graphic representations of preservation values can be utilized to communicate neighborhood and community identity.

This thesis uses a sample of 30 organizations, focusing on Main St and business district organizations for their existing use of marketing and promotions. These organizations are important for their efforts in revitalizing urban neighborhoods as cities are experiencing emerging populations, as well as for sustaining suburban and rural communities where the centers of life and activity are shifting from shopping malls and big-box stores back to the historic American Main St. The goal of these community-driven organizations is to facilitate and maintain positive growth and development, specific to location and place. The strategies they use enable certain transformations, dependent on their future vision of the place.

Quantitative data was collected from each of these organizations. Example graphics from their brand campaigns were collected and are compiled and categorized based on the findings from a descriptive analysis. Interviews with a small subset of these organizations add a layer of qualitative research, providing insight as to the thought process behind the designs, steps taken to establish the brands, and reasons for rebranding, documenting the state of the art. In addition to analyzing how organizations of varying size and scope develop their brands and marketing campaigns, it inventories various methods and metrics used for determining the success of an organization's brand and marketing efforts.

Using the research and data collected, this thesis applies the theories of place identity to branding in order to determine best practices for these organizations that represent specific communities. Methods used in the marketing profession are also applied
to synthesize alternative marketing communications techniques for suggested use in the non-profit sector, specifically for place-based organizations. The analysis and research findings inform future considerations for everyone working in the field. There is potential to utilize strategic designs for brand identities to accurately capture the image of a place based on the existing community identity and the organization’s mission and values to foster economic development, neighborhood revitalization and stabilization.

Figure 1. Method of Approach

Source: Author
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Place, Identity and Brand: Theories in Planning and Preservation

As stated before, non-profit community development and business district organizations intervene in the growth and development of neighborhoods. Whether the purpose is to regenerate, revitalize, stabilize, strengthen, or remain competitive, the scope of work takes place within the context of an existing built environment and its community. In his book, *Pittsburgh: A New Portrait*, Franklin Toker states, "A neighborhood that succeeds as a distinct entity must have a strong sense of community, economic viability, and security... it will have a strong self-image, both visually and socially."¹ Toker provides a unique perspective on neighborhood identity and sense of place using Pittsburgh, an exemplary case study of a city with neighborhoods that have recently experienced rapid redevelopment while remaining rooted to their historic character, preserving elements of both the built environment and community heritage.

The mission and vision of any successful community development or business district organization is therefore reliant on their interpretation of the neighborhood’s identity. With a leading role in facilitating change, it is imperative that these organizations accurately understand, interpret, and communicate a shared identity and sense of place. Toker provides a succinct summary of the complex identities of cities and their neighborhoods,

Cities are simultaneously visual environments, physical entities and mental constructs and so are the neighborhoods within them. You could even say that they achieve their greatest reality in the thousands of historical, cultural, and social memories stored away by their residents.²

The first challenge for any organization is to recognize and understand the

². Toker, 23
existing neighborhood identity, or identities. There is no written step-by-step process for recognizing a particular community’s identity and no formula for measuring a neighborhood’s relative sense of place. There are bodies of work that address the question of how we read a place, how we interact with place and how a place can leave a mental image. These writings will be used as tools to guide this thesis in understanding how to recognize what elements of a neighborhood contribute to creating a sense of place and a community identity. Literature in both Urban Planning and Historic Preservation were consulted as a foundation for this thesis paper with three key texts that will be referenced throughout. These are: The Image of the City by Kevin Lynch; “Reading Pittsburgh and Its Neighborhoods,” a chapter from Franklin Toker’s book Pittsburgh: A New Portrait; and The Power of Place by Dolores Hayden.

There are many theories that discuss “place” and the formation of a shared identity, or collective image but these three share a common theme of discussing the human cognition and perception of place as related to the physical landscape and built environment. Each varies in the definition of “identity” as used in relation to place. Lynch relates identity to the visual impression of notable built elements as a mental map contingent on memory. Building on Lynch’s discussion of visual landscapes and built environments, Toker adds the layer of architectural identity and cultural identity as the character of architectural styles and materials that express the community’s history. Dolores Hayden, who also discusses cultural identity, adds her take on the importance of a “shared identity” and ensuring that the social history is captured by the identity of a diverse cultural landscape. In order to apply these theories to this theses, a basic understanding of each text

Kevin Lynch, professor of city planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, approaches urban planning from the context of the users. His book, *The Image of the City*, is a summary of his findings related to the cognizant impression a built environment has on the human mind and the relationship between the natural and built forms within a city. He explains, "At every instant, there is more than the eye can see, more than the ear can hear, a setting or a view waiting to be explored. Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings..." One of the first terms Lynch introduces is "legibility," referring for the ability of a city layout to be easily grasped and organized into an identifiable pattern, an important concept in considering "the urban scale of size, time and complexity." Lynch calls attention to the fact that humans are mobile animals that carry an innate ability to conceptualize orientation, pointing out that it is actually rare for one to literally "be lost" within a city. Street signs and other identifiers give a sense of location and potential for finding one's way, but it is the ability of a city to disorient that peaked the interest of Lynch.

A legible city is one that is capable of not inflicting the anxiety of disorientation upon its visitors and inhabitants. A recognizable city layout can be easily visualized and enables one to move efficiently throughout a city, preventing disorientation. Findings from his research led Lynch to identify elements of the built environment that make a city more legible, acting as markers, or triggers of memories, to help orient people. Kevin Lynch labels five types of legible elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks.

Paths are linear elements often represented by visible routes of passage—walkways or rows of trees by which people walk—instilled in memory due to familiarity with...
of moving through a place. Edges are also linear though they act more as a barrier or mental demarcation, creating an end to spaces. Edges tend to be railroad tracks, walls or topographical changes. On a larger scale, districts refer to a bound space where things can be located within. Districts are often associated with an identity, visible within as well as outside. Districts often have a central node, often as a main plaza or square. Nodes are focal points associated with destinations being main junctions or intersections. Like nodes, landmarks are also “point references” though they are often associated with stationary objects by which one can orient themselves from multiple directions, whether they are located within the urban area or located outside of, but still visible from within. Although Lynch’s research and analysis derives from his interest in urban planning and designing for the human scale, his findings can be applied to this thesis by understanding place image and what elements specifically contribute to that image. His speaking with city inhabitants to understand how people navigate through a city, how they imagine a city and what emotions and experiences they associated with different parts of the city contribute to a “public image.” The physical elements he coins in his research have potential to be applied to identifying icons of a place and contribute to understanding place identity.

In the chapter “Reading Pittsburgh and Its Neighborhoods,” in *Pittsburgh: A New Portrait*, Franklin Toker also stresses the importance of neighborhoods having a strong “self-image.” Toker and Lynch both look for this aspect in a built environment though Toker is focused on the smaller scale of a neighborhood rather than the city as a whole. Similar to Lynch, Toker stresses the importance of monuments as elements in the built fabric. While Lynch incorporates monuments in his discussion of landmarks as contributing to the

9. Ibid, 49  
10. Ibid, 62  
11. Ibid, 65  
12. Ibid, 72  
13. Ibid, 78
legibility of a city, Toker also relates monuments to place memory and sense of community. He explains,

A successful neighborhood also has significant monuments—not necessarily a bronze statue or war memorial but some structure or open place with high visibility that everyone in the neighborhood regards as exceptional. It may be a church, an old school, the borough hall, the fire hall, a Masonic temple, a movie theater, or some other commercial or even domestic element, so long as it is imposing enough and has been around long enough to project good memories.  

To the same point as monuments, Toker also discusses “meaningful points of social interaction. Unlike nodes as centers of convergence and high traffic areas as used by Lynch, these points are moments of pause, as common destination points for the community such as a park. Toker also presents the idea that neighborhoods that have strong identity are often those that have strong boundaries. Although Lynch discusses the idea of edges being clear demarcations from other neighborhoods, Toker adds to the discussion of boundaries as a visual association for identity. Examples he gives are hills, rivers, railroads, and highways. These can also be paths of the city whole, according to Lynch, but for neighborhoods, they become edges within the built area, separating one neighborhood from the rest, strengthening each neighborhood’s core. The last type of criteria for strong neighborhoods according to Toker is an architectural identity where one thinks of a neighborhood “in terms of colors, materials, and textures common to many of its structures.” To Toker, these elements of a neighborhood conjure an image reminiscent of a mental ‘palette,’ or Sample Board rather than a “mental map” such as suggested by Lynch. Toker’s interpretation of the built forms is closely tied to cultural identity as related to the strong ethnic enclaves of Pittsburgh’s neighborhoods.

Dolores Hayden also approaches neighborhood identity as being closer to a cultural

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14. Toker, 23
15. Ibid, 26
identity, or community identity, focusing on the social and historical context. In her book, *Power of Place*, Hayden addresses her concern of making sure the perception of place identifies with every individual in a community in the shared identity, or “public identity” of a place. Hayden’s text acknowledges deep-rooted social contexts throughout the layers of a neighborhood’s history. Like Toker, Hayden also discusses cultural identity and the physical landscape, although Hayden takes a more individualized approach in considering the social and cultural components of identity than Toker. For her, a significant monument in a neighborhood does not only “project good memories” as stated by Toker, but may resonate positive memories in some and negative memories in others. The key is that there is an emotion associated with place, without regards to if it is positive or negative. Hayden’s text focuses on the social identity and the elements of the built environment as the pages of a story. She states, “Storytelling with the shapes of time uses the forms of a city, from the curve of an abandoned canal to the sweep of a field of carnations, to connect residents with urban landscape history and foster a stronger sense of belonging.”

Lynch’s theory of city image almost exclusively looks at the physical landscape and built environment as the visual quality of a city, and Toker’s approach to cultural identity looks exclusively at the identity of the majority, but all three of these professionals consider identifying a shared public identity, or in Lynch’s terms, a collective “mental image” of place.

Each author introduces another layer to place identity. This thesis will use the theories and practice of Lynch, Toker and Hayden to analyze the images used by community development business improvement organizations and how they represent the communities in which they work.

**Discussions in Place Branding and Non-profit Marketing**

16. Hayden, 227
17. Lynch, 2
Several sources were consulted in an effort to understand the structuring of the marketing campaigns and branding strategies of non-profit community development and business improvement district organizations such as those that are included in this thesis. Sources that provide information on advertising and marketing specifically for these types of organizations include publishing by the National Main Street Center and articles written by other large organizations or institutions. One such source consulted in this thesis is an online toolbox, *Downtown and Business District Market Analysis*, a series of articles on downtown business district revitalization, compiled and made available by the University of Wisconsin-Extension.¹⁸ The article pulled for review is a 'how to' on creating a brand image following a market study. To compare this public-sector influenced approach with that of working graphic designers, this thesis looks at the portfolio of work completed by one of the most well-versed consultants in the business of place branding for community development and business district organizations, Arnett, Muldrow & Associates. Lastly, literature on marketing strategies for the general non-profit sector are also referenced to enable a comprehensive analysis. In his monograph, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*,¹⁹ business consultant, author and teacher Jim Collins provides insight on the internal organizational structure of non-profits and the role marketing and branding play in determining their degree of success.

Jim Collins organizes his text, *Good to Great in the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great*, by listing a series of issues concerning non-profit organizations as related to his work, which he refers to as building of a "framework of greatness, articulating timeless principles that explain why some become great and others do not."²⁰

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²⁰. Ibid, 2
Although Collins offers an in-depth discussion on defining what makes an organization “great” and introducing various skills, power-structures, and constraints concerning the internal methodology and organizational structure of an organization, the two pertinent issues concerning this thesis are issue four: “The Hedgehog Concept—Rethinking the Economic Engine without a Profit Motive”21 and issue five: “Turning the Flywheel—Building Momentum by Building the Brand.”22

In this monograph, Collins applies principles originally formulated for private-sector businesses. The Hedgehog Concept for example, discussed in issue four, is about the ability for a business to pass up apparent opportunities that do not best contribute to their production of the best possible long-term results. In the monograph, he concludes that his original requirements for the concept must be adapted to the needs of non-profit sector organizations. He found what he terms as “good-to-great companies” all shared the common characteristics of having a clear and deep understanding of what they are passionate about, what they can be the best in the world at, and what best drives their economic engine.23 When talking to leaders of practicing non-profit organizations, it is this third characteristic that he found needed to be changed when applied to the social sectors. Instead of a concern about the economic engine, Collins states that a fundamental difference between the business sector and the social sectors is the shift from needing an economic engine to a "resource engine."24 For organizations, the focus is not on making the highest profit, but how to generate the most sustainable resource engine in order to carry out their mission to the best of their ability.

Collins further defines the resource engine specifically as time, money and brand.

21. Ibid, 17
22. Ibid, 23
23. Ibid, 17
24. Ibid, 18
“Time” is referred to as how you develop an interested group of willing volunteers, “money” is sustained cash flow, and “brand” is how well an organization “can cultivate a deep well of emotional goodwill and mindshare of potential supporters.” Collins explains the internal organizational need for building a strong brand and how the hedgehog concept can be applied as a framework for what an organization’s brand should convey.

The hedgehog concept then becomes the center of all the organizations efforts with constant hard work always carried out with their focused mission in mind. This repetitive grinding is referred to by Collins as “the flywheel,” depicted in figure #. For Collins, the importance of a brand is to ensure the “greatness” of an organization, but that greatness is contingent on the clarity of an organization’s mission, communication of that mission, and ability to relate to enough people to want to get on board. In order to achieve greatness for community and place-based organizations, they need to develop a brand that is consistent with the community in which they are working and evoke a great sense of belonging.

25. Ibid, 23
“Image, Branding, and Marketing” is a section of the *Downtown and Business District Market Analysis*, a toolbox created by the University of Wisconsin-Extension to be freely used by organizations. This section follows part one, “Understanding the Market,” and advises organizations on three key applications of information gathered in a market analysis: image development, branding, and marketing. Applied to this thesis, this section of the toolbox highlights the important role of a completed market analysis in developing an effective branding image and marketing campaign. A market analysis considers the demographics of the neighborhood’s communities and provides quantitative information on what the community needs.

The information provided in the article can be summarized into five basic steps to be followed: 1) define market segments, 2) identify market position, 3) assess current image, 4) develop branding strategy, and 5) implement marketing program. The article defines the marketing language used and explains the concepts behind each.

Steps one and two, defining market segments and identifying market position, are part of the first key concept of developing an image. Developing an image for downtown includes the identification of “who” and “what.” Generally, the market segments are the “who,” of ‘who’s shopping?’ Also known as the customer or consumers. Market position is ‘what are they shopping for,’ the unique “niche” that downtown provides, or alternatively, where it stands amongst competitors. According to the toolbox, together, the shoppers and the businesses create the image of downtown.

The second key component, branding, is a compilation of step three: assessing the current image, and step four: developing a brand strategy. Step three can be broken down further to include the various perceptions of downtown according to different stakeholders. They may be positive, negative or both. The toolbox tasks the downtown organization with
the decision to maintain an image, change an image, or build a new image, in the interest of all involved stakeholders. Step four, brand strategy, is then the process of selling the chosen image. The role of branding is described: “[to] foster a sense of community that keeps key market segments interested... make the community an attractive destination... [as] a core promise that is made to your consumer... a deeper, more emotionally shared vision that influences actions... critical to stimulate economic growth.”

Brand strategy thinks beyond existing sense of place and about what the place should become. This transformative branding approach is then implemented through the fifth and final step touched on in the toolbox: Marketing Programs.

Marketing Programs are chosen based on identified goals of the downtown organization: who the target audience is, what the message will be, and how best to communicate the message to the target audience. The toolbox places emphasis on marketing activities to show progress, entice people to visit, increasing attendance and consumer spending, and instill investor confidence to increase activity and boost economy. A marketing program includes a communication plan to maintain communication, coordination and a cohesive brand image amongst stakeholders. Advertisements include designing messages, merchandise, and promotions.

This toolbox identifies the findings from market analysis as one of the tool to be used to help create the image, brand, and marketing program for a downtown. This thesis will assess the possibility of inversely applying the findings of the market analysis discussed in the toolbox as a tool to measure the return on investment of existing brands and marketing campaigns.

One of the most influential consulting firms in place branding and imaging is

26. Ryan, 5
27. Ibid, 7
Arnett, Muldrow & Associates. Created in 2002, the firm specializes in planning, branding, and preservation for places and their communities across the U.S. The homepage of their website states their mission;

Every Community Has a Story. At Arnett Muldrow, we consider it our job to discover a community’s true essence. And then create the tools to help the community preserve that essence as they pursue their vision.  

Together, the three partners, Aaron Arnett, Tripp Muldrow, and Ben Muldrow carry out work within four specific areas: Town Planning, Community Branding, Economic Development, and Historic Preservation.

Although the partners often work together to carry out work for a client that blends multiple of these specified areas, partner Ben Muldrow is responsible for majority of the community marketing and branding functions, pertinent to this thesis. Ben Muldrow has designed new branding and marketing elements for over 300 communities in states across the U.S, utilizing his background as Strategic Branding Manager for NewSouth Communications and Owner of Mudduck Design.  

Throughout the firm’s work, they follow their stated approach including a “commitment to stakeholder involvement, research identifying “economic solutions” and “plans that get implemented.” What Arnett, Muldrow & Associates adds to the discussion is not only their commitment to, but emphasis on community involvement. In an article in the Municipal Association of South Carolina’s newsletter, Uptown, “Branding as Part of Economic Development Planning,” Ben Muldrow states, “gathering community input and getting everyone on the same page are key to the success of any branding effort.” He continues;

29. Ibid
30. Ibid
32. Ibid, 11
The first step in the creative process is to understand the qualities that your citizens cherish. That step should not be skipped or short-changed. The local residents are the ones who deliver any brand message that is being created. Too many times, Muldrow said, communities look to identify what they have that might be marketable to an outsider, instead of focusing on residents. That can lead to a lack of buy-in, which is essential to branding success.  

Muldrow explains that anytime they work with a client on community branding, they engage the community, whether through focus groups, public meetings, or surveys. Particularly when discussing rural communities, the need for public participation is considered essential. In the article, “Telling the Untold Story: Branding in Rural Communities,” the depth and degree of community engagement necessary is explained,

A simple tour or single interview will not suffice. Countless hours must be spent researching, touring the area, and visiting the obvious sites, as well as the places off the beaten path. One must speak with numerous individuals (in groups and one-on-one), dine in local restaurants, listen to local music, smell the smells, walk the streets, and essentially immerse oneself in the local culture. Only then can they truly understand a community and its essence.  

In this article, published in the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Forum Journal in 2010, co-authors Ben Muldrow and Randy Wilson, president of Community Design Solutions, share their professional expertise. As exemplified in the above quote, Muldrow and Wilson stress the fact that community branding must be carried out by the community themselves, instilling a degree of urgency in their readers by explaining that, if they do not brand themselves, someone else will, and that someone or someone’s may not have the best intentions. According to Muldrow and Wilson, community branding should “build community pride, stimulate the local economy, and promote a preservation spirit that compels people to be better stewards of their culture and the place the call home.”

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33. Ibid
35. Ibid
36. Ibid, 7
order to achieve this ability, three guiding principles: understanding community, redefining cultural assets and determining points of emphasis, are emphasized as best approaches.\textsuperscript{37}

One of the first statements the two authors make is that "branding and marketing addresses both the promises made and experiences created by using products and/or services."\textsuperscript{38} They apply this concept to community branding, explaining that people form an opinion of a place based on their experiences associated with that place, such as the places, the people and the cultural offerings. Because people have the tendency to reduce experiences into a single incident they often only internalize one aspect of a community. This is often conveyed through a brand by utilizing a single physical icon. Muldrow and Wilson stress that these branding tendencies, common amongst community brands, are not necessary bad, or wrong, merely incomplete.\textsuperscript{39} To them, a good brand will convey multiple interpretations of an always changing community: "a collection of perceptions."\textsuperscript{40}

The goal of a branding and marketing campaign is to re-tell these positive experiences in a compelling way to a broader audience, while diminishing the negative experiences (without being dishonest). Ideally, the negatives will eventually be turned to positives.\textsuperscript{41}

Muldrow and Wilson give examples of good branding schemes based on their understanding of communities as assets, resources, destinations, and cultural offerings, all things that are identified through the three guiding principles. Particularly useful to this thesis is how they take these potential points of emphasis one step further and define them into two categories as either being “hard” assets: “the physical characteristic, sites and destinations in a community,” or “soft” assets: “the people, the culture and the practices.”\textsuperscript{42} According to Muldrow and Wilson, successful branding schemes can either use one of these types of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 4
\item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid, 2
\item \textsuperscript{39} Ibid, 3
\item \textsuperscript{40} Ibid, 2
\item \textsuperscript{41} Ibid, 3
\item \textsuperscript{42} Ibid, 4
\end{itemize}
assets, or both, but either way, they stress that the decision must be made only after a deep understanding of all assets of a community of both types: hard and soft.43

**Basic Theories and Concepts in the Marketing Profession**

Because the literature on marketing and branding specific to the non-profit sector is so limited, texts used by marketing professionals were also consulted to gain a better understanding of how techniques are used in the private sector, with some discussions of how these techniques are applied to the public sector. The readings will be used as a comparison to gauge the degree to which marketing and branding is used by non-profits. They will also be used to inform and provide insight for new techniques that can be applied to community development and business district organizations.

An understanding of the concepts presented in these texts is necessary for this thesis.

Two main texts are cited in this thesis, presented here: the first is a summary of a chapter from William F. Arens’ text, *Contemporary Advertising*, one of the best-selling texts in the field. Arens provides a basic introduction to the theories behind integrated marketing Communications in this book that is known as “the coffee-table book” for advertising. The second text discussed in this section is a journal article written by Kevin Lane Keller, E.B. Osborn Professor of Marketing at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College. He is an international leader in brands, branding, and brand management, as well as author of the widely used text, *Strategic Brand Management*, also consulted for this thesis.

Chapter one of William Arens’ text, *Advertising Perspectives*, provides a general introduction to the world of advertising and marketing.46 Arens states the three important

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43. Ibid  
principles of advertising: 1.) know the consumer, or client, 2.) consider the placement and location of advertising, and 3.) create simple and clear representative media. He explains that advertising is a communication tool to initiate and maintain contact, more accurately called “marketing communications,” Arens defines advertising as structured verbal and nonverbal communication, typically non-personal, mass communication, paid for by a sponsor or provided by the public sector to either persuade or inform its audience about a product or service. Advertising for products either promotes tangible goods, publicizes intangible services, or advocates ideas through a channel of communication known as the “medium.” Media (plural) include addressable media, interactive media, and nontraditional media.

Arens relates advertising communication at its most basic level to the human communication process, used to describe the components of advertising. He underscores the complexity and degree of creativity and skill required in advertising using the Stern model, which explains the communication process behind advertising in more detail. The diagram in figure 4 was created for the purposes of this thesis, to provide a visual comparison of the various advertising and communication processes described in Arens’ writing.

The diagram shows how the human communication process translates into the advertising communication process: the source becomes the sponsor; the message, the ad; the receiver, the consumer or prospect; and the cacophony of outside noise becomes the competing advertisements. Also depicted is the Stern model, which describes the process behind the source, message and consumer in greater depth.

The source again begins with the sponsor, but the ad (or message) is designed by a consultant or creative group. As shown in the diagram, the hired consultant is an
in invisible component in the process, despite their important role in developing the persona of the ad, which is often what the consumer identifies as the source, in place of the actual sponsor. The persona is created by the message, which can take one of at least three forms: autobiographical, where a person, “I” speaks to “you” the consumer; narrative, where the consumer listens to a story told in third person; and drama, where the story is acted out by characters. The chosen form of message by the advertiser is tailored to the consumer.

In Stern’s model, the consumer is broken into three specific identities: the first is the “implied” consumer, or the ideal target audience for whom the advertisement is foremost designed, the second is the “sponsorial” consumer, or those that hired the design team and make the final decision for the ad, and the third is the actual consumer once the advertisement is put into action. According to Arens, two key factors to successful advertising are knowing the consumer and gathering feedback. Feedback is necessary to measure the success of the advertisement.
Arens also discusses the difference between marketing and advertising. The role of the marketing process is to bring in revenue. The process includes product development, pricing, distribution network, and promotional sales and advertising. In nonprofits, marketing is used to develop and promote services to satisfy consumer needs. Marketing goals are achieved through advertising, market research, sales, and distribution. Marketing strategy plays a role as the component of advertising that determines the target audience, the location of advertising, the type of media used, and the purpose of the ads. Marketing strategies for determining advertising include a mix of elements depending on the type of product (consumer packaged goods, services, high-tech), pricing of the product (non-priced or image advertising, regular or price-line advertising, competitive or sale advertising), the scale of distribution (global, international, national, regional, local), and the type of promotion or communication (personal selling, sales promotion, public relations activity, collateral materials).

Arens also discusses the difference between private sponsors and non-profit organization sponsors who often facilitating non-product advertisement to seek donations, volunteers and support, or a change in consumer behavior. Awareness advertising is also common amongst non-profits where image and branding becomes important, often using direct mail ads. Because organizations do not need a strategy for pricing, they often resort to image advertising, where the image becomes a brands and personality, creating a certain perception of the organization to the prospective audience. Other promotional tools discussed, outside of media advertising, are brochures, fliers, posters, catalogs, and other forms of information distribution.

Kevin Lane Keller’s article, “Building Strong Brands in a Modern Marketing Communications Environment,” provides an introduction to a selection of theories about
brand building and marketing communications. Although his text is targeted toward product-based marketing for private companies, these concepts can also be applied to non-profit organizations: the role of branding and marketing communications; the concept of brand value; and the importance of measuring brand equity. Keller further explains how to develop and build strong brands through marketing communications using specific models.

According to Keller, the value of a brand, or strength of a brand, is something that can be measured to the extent that an organization has the capacity. The ability to measure varies according to the organization’s marketing skills and available resources, as well as their context and the circumstances of the market. To Keller, it is important for a firm to measure the value of their brand in order to increase the effectiveness of the firm’s marketing campaign. For this thesis, the concepts for measuring brand equity and the value of a brand may first be applicable to non-profit organizations in order to determine the effectiveness of the organization’s existing brand. Keller also provides a list of marketplace benefits that result from strong brands. While he uses this list to determine the value of a brand for private, consumer-based firms, some benefits apply to non-profit organizations or can be slightly altered to provide a list of marketplace benefits organizations see, or should use as benchmarks for creating their brands and marketing campaigns. The list Keller provides is,

- improved perceptions of product performance;
- greater customer loyalty;
- less vulnerability to competitive marketing actions and marketing crises;
- larger margins;
- more elastic customer response to price decreases and inelastic customer response to price increases;
- greater trade or intermediary cooperation and support;
- increased marketing communication effectiveness;
- additional licensing and brand extension opportunities.

While brands represent the ‘image’ of a company, marketing communication begins the relationship with the consumer and carries the dialogue as the ‘voice’ of the company. Keller

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47. Keller, 140
48. Ibid
describes various modes of marketing communication that can be used to communicate the brand image and build brand equity: building communities, strategically linking to other brands, creating experiences, and ingraining the brand in memory. Keller places emphasis on the customer-based brand equity model (CBBE), where “the power of the brand lies in the minds of the customers;” rooted in the ability of a brand to establish knowledgeable customers through awareness (memory trace and recall) and image (perceptions, preferences, and associations).  

In Keller’s text, the CBBE model relates to a successful company brand, which creates a brand where “brand knowledge is not the facts about the brand -- it is all the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences, and so on that become linked to the brand in the minds of consumers.” A step-by-step model for how companies should create brands for the customer, as cited by Keller, is the brand resonance pyramid, shown in Figure 13.

The brand resonance pyramid follows four ascending steps that can be used as a checklist for establishing strong brand equity with another six blocks as the body of the pyramid that focus on how the brand should build itself through marketing communications. Keller also discusses four dimensions of ‘brand resonance,’ or ‘brand loyalty.’ The four steps are: 1) behavioral loyalty, 2) attitudinal loyalty, 3) sense of community, and 4) active engagement. These four steps of brand resonance may be relatable to location-based, non-profit organizations when trying to measure the effectiveness of brands, or as a list of considerations for creating brands or for designing new brands.

Keller also gives insight to the types of media that should be used for marketing communications to maximize brand equity, and includes advice regarding the use of various

49. Ibid, 143
media outlets and what type of media used implies. He includes a list of micro and macro factors that should be considered by companies in order to develop efficient and effective marketing campaigns. Some of Keller’s points are applicable to the needs of nonprofit marketing campaigns and should be considered. Keller concludes with a diagram of the relationships between the stakeholders involved in the marketing and branding process, stating that further research will look at these concepts from the various perspectives, which “should help marketers design and implement more impactful communication programs and increase the likelihood that the best possible marketing communication programs are put into place.”

Applying Keller’s cited theories, chosen models, and discussed methodologies behind consumer marketing and building brand equity to place-based, non-profit markets will expand his conversation and might provide valuable insight on how to measure brand equity in the nonprofit world. He notes that the organization’s capacity to do so

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50. Keller, 153
successfully rests on their skill sets and resources. It may be possible to provide knowledge to expand their capacity just as it may be possible to include the perspective of marketing in the nonprofit world to expand the knowledge of private sector, CBBE and marketing communications. By applying this cross-disciplinary approach to branding and marketing strategies for non-profits, they may be able to capture currently unrealized success.
Chapter Three: Methodology

A case study approach is employed to analyze the current brands and marketing campaigns of place-based non-profit community development and business district organizations. Purposeful sampling is used to compile an inventory of current branding images of organizations. The type of purposeful sampling used is maximum variation sampling, which allows cases for a sample to be picked to show a range of variation. The organizations picked are spread across the country geographically, but concentrated within specific regions. Organizations selected had their 2014 Internal Revenue Service Informational Tax Return Form 990, enabling the selection to be categorized by revenue.

Tier 1: Organizations that have a revenue of over $500,000
Tier 2: Organizations that have a revenue between $200,000 - $500,000
Tier 3: Organizations that have a revenue under $200,000

A descriptive analysis of the current logos of the organizations is used as the foundation for this study. According to Kevin Lane Keller’s text, Strategic Brand Management, as a “brand element,” logos enhance brand awareness and facilitate the formation of strong, favorable, and unique brand associations. The test of the brand-building ability of brand elements is what consumers would think about the product if they only knew about its brand name, associated logo, and other characteristics.¹

For this reason, as well as the ease of identifying an organization’s logo and the accessibility to an organization’s logo over the internet the logo is utilized as a unit of analysis to represent the larger brand campaign.

The descriptive analysis will look for any trends or variations amongst the different organizations and their brand identities as well variation and trends within an organization’s current campaign and rebranding strategies. The descriptive analysis will

consider the logo’s syntax, (form and composition), such as color choice, shape, line, text, composition and context, as well as logo type. The semantics, or visual communication as related to the organization’s mission and vision, are also analyzed in conjunction with the results of the syntax descriptive analysis. The logos are then categorized accordingly.

An in-depth qualitative analysis of a subset of the selected organizations will supplement the descriptive analysis. In order to form a complete analysis of best practices, the qualitative analysis will include a range of organizations that have both shown forward-thinking approaches in their marketing and branding campaigns, as well as those just beginning to brand or re-brand, whether long-established or younger organizations. The use of the revenue tiers and consideration of the regional distribution of the organizations allows data gathered to account for any possible variation or trends within and across regions and states.

The qualitative analysis follows a free-flowing interview format using a questionnaire of ten strategic, open-ended questions. A qualitative content analysis is used to categorize the summation of responses based on the type of questions and content provided in the answers, when pertinent to this study. Secondary data was collected from news articles, the organization websites and other sources with relevant information when necessary. Supplemental information includes the organization’s background context, and factors behind or opinion on rebranding strategies.

Taking the survey results, a quantitative analysis attempts to account for and enable the ability to control for the marketing capacity of the organizations in this study using factors such as the amount of revenue based on the revenue tiers, the age of the organizations, the number of media outlets utilized, the number of designated marketing staff, if any, and the degree of resourcefulness in utilizing volunteers and outsourcing
marketing and branding related work when necessary. Supplemental information gathered for this part of the analysis include the demographic context and the market context. For this information, reports about the communities and neighborhoods represented by the organizations, such as planning documents, market reports and census data were consulted.

Figure 6. Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I: Brand Campaigns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you have designated marketing staff?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How much do you budget annually for promotions and marketing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How long have you had your current brand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Have you ever rebranded? How many times?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How much did the current brand campaign cost?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Why this campaign?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) How many graphics? Variations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) What do the graphics and/or images represent to you/for your organization?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is there a program or parent organization that guided you or provided reference materials on how to create a campaign in advance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What is the process that you went through to choose the current brand campaign?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Did you hire an outside consultant? Did they visit before creating the designs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) How many RFP’s were sent out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) How many final designs were chosen from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) What was the vetting process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Did you consider the brand’s ability to stand out amongst competing organizations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What is distinctive about your brand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. What did you learn from this process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Would you do the same again?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) What would you do differently?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part II: Marketing and Promotions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. How many different media outlets do you use?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Website: __ Yes __ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who designed the website?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often is it updated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Facebook: __ Yes __ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Twitter: __ Yes __ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Instagram: __ Yes __ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Yes: What photos do you post?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If No: What would post, if at all?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Print Media: __ Yes __ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Yes: What types?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Merchandise: __ Yes __ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Yes: Please provide examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Other:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Of the list of media types indicated as not used, why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. After what your organization has invested in branding and marketing, what metric do you use, if any, to measure the effectiveness of the campaign?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author
Chapter Four: Research and Findings

Descriptive Analysis: Brand Elements and Brand Identity

The descriptive analysis uses concepts from visual communications, analyzing the logos based on visual literacy. The first part of the analysis focuses on syntax. The syntax of a logo typically falls within the spectrum of two extreme categories. The first is logos that use only the name or trademark of the corporation or organization. This type of logo is generally known as a logotype, referring to the use of text, while more specifically referred to as a wordmark when the full name is used, and a lettermark when the acronym or abbreviation is used. The second category is abstract logos, where symbols are used absent of, and unrelated to, a wordmark. ¹ This type is referred to as a symbol, icon, or brandmark.

These definitions of types of logos, based on syntax, are too broad to use as a framework for organizing the sample logos collected from each organization. See Appendix B for the full compilation of logos. Looking at the sample of logos, it is evident that none of the organizations simply use a wordmark or lettermark, using only the organization name or acronym, and few are examples of brandmarks, where a symbol is used without at least some text associated with the organization name. Most of the sample logos use a combination mark, or iconic logotype: logos that have both text and symbols. Because the logos are not diverse enough along the spectrum according to basic marketing terminology, it is evident that another categorization needs be applied for this analysis.

One such categorization is in accordance with Ben Muldrow and Randy Wilson’s identification of the use of community assets for branding. Applying the terminology introduced by Muldrow and Wilson, the logos of the surveyed organizations exemplify logos that place emphasis on “hard” assets, such as physical characteristic, sites, and destinations;

¹ Keller, “Choosing Brand Elements to Build Brand Equity,” 143
and logos that emphasize the “soft” assets, such as the people and culture. Although the logos are majority combination marks, by distributing the logos along this spectrum, where soft assets are emphasized, there is a stronger use of logotypes, using words in general as shown in figure 7. Where hard assets are emphasized, symbols, or brandmarks, are used more prominently. Looking at figure 8 for example, the logos of Shaw Main St. and the Studio City Improvement Association both utilize hard assets, depicting iconic physical structures within their community as the symbol of their logo. Others clearly utilize a mixture of both, such as Downtown Danville Inc.’s logo, which includes an image of the Landmark, Bresee Tower; accompanied by the words, “work, play, live,” describing the lifestyle and culture of the community (figure 9).

Others still are more ambiguous, requiring background knowledge of the history, culture or location. These graphics are more complex in their meaning, using symbols to represent certain physical characteristics or cultural elements, and slogans or phrases that are meant to induce a certain feeling, evoke a certain sense of belonging, or convey a certain perception of that place. For these organization's, combination marks or brandmarks are used to emphasize a soft asset, rather than a hard asset. Here, further analysis and categorization of the logo's syntax is needed, apart from simply depicting hard assets or conveying soft assets.

Beyond syntax as the basic form and composition of the logo (text versus symbol, or both) a more in-depth analysis of the individual elements in the graphic compositions, such as the scale of the images used, the visual/text relationship, and their symbolism begins the discussion of visual semantics. Visual semantics pertains to the contribution of the various logos as part of the organization's broader brand campaigns. Building on Muldrow and Wilson's logo typologies in combination of Keller's marketing approach, this analysis groups the logos into six specific categories:

1.) Literal symbol of individual hard asset;
2.) Abstract symbol of individual hard asset;
3.) Abstract symbol of soft asset(s);
4.) Literal symbols of composite hard assets;
5.) Representative text of soft asset(s);
6.) Literal text of hard asset.

The first group uses symbols as literal representations of an individual hard asset, typically an historic iconic built structure. These are typically of a historic context. Six of the organization's brand campaigns use this type of symbolism as an identity of their organization, as exemplified in their logos, shown in figure 10.
The second group, abstract symbols of an individual hard asset, use repetitive symbolism of a recognizable hard asset. These are typically physical sites and landmarks of a larger scale (such as a border, edge or path) with which people identify. Four of the organizations use this type of symbolism as their brand identity, as shown in figure 11.
The third group, abstract symbols of soft assets, are symbolic representations of the community, such as character, attitudes, beliefs and cultural context, whether of current demographics, heritage of the existing community, or of the vernacular built environment. Three organizations use this type of brand identity, shown by the logos in figure 12.

![Logos using abstract symbols of soft assets](image)

The fourth group, literal symbols of composite hard assets, use pictorial representations of the built landscape, natural landscapes, or a combination of both. These logos typically depict one or more iconic structures and/or landmarks. Six of the organizations, shown in figure 13, have logos using this type of symbolism.

The last two groups consist of logotypes, defined here as the use of text, rather than symbols or brandmarks. The fifth group, text representative of soft assets, emphasizes words or a phrase as a slogan or tagline of the brand. The typography, font and style of the text, are symbolic of the organization’s overall brand. Example logos are depicted in figure 14. The sixth group is most similar to Keller’s definition of a traditional logotype or wordmark as previously discussed, using the literal text of a hard asset--specifically the organization name--as the primary identity. Where they differ is in the inclusion of a symbol accompanying the text. As shown in figure 15, these are very simple and straightforward logos, using stylized typography for the name of the organization and a simple icon with
minimal symbolic interpretation.

Figure 13. Logos using literal symbols of composite hard assets

Figure 14. Logos using text representative of soft assets
Chart 1. Organizations Included in Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Total Revenue (2014 IRS Form 990)</th>
<th>Tier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th Street Development Corp., Allentown</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>19,202,260</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erie Downtown Partnership</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>510,451</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Passyunk Ave. BID Philadelphia</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>BID</td>
<td>310,963</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacony Community Development Corp., Philadelphia</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>196,884</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrobe Community Revitalization Program</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>176,953</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kutztown Community</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>38,697</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicker Park Backtowa Special Service Area, Chicago</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>1,119,899</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Town Merchants and Residents Assoc.</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>SSA, Main St-AP</td>
<td>562,812</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Six Corners Assoc.</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>SSA, Main St-AP</td>
<td>291,611</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andersonville Development Corp., Chicago</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>CDC, SSA</td>
<td>212,987</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Danville Inc., Chicago</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>61,929</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uptown United, Chicago</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>75,275</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Villages Community Development Corp., Detroit</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>691,110</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferndale Development Authority</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>1,110,100</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street Area Association, Ann Arbor</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>BIZ</td>
<td>255,937</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Town Commercial Assoc., Lansing</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>278,391</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saine Main Street</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>177,050</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Mile Boulevard Assoc., Detroit</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>164,526</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Core BID, Los Angeles</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>BID</td>
<td>1,632,325</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Stockton Alliance</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>1,156,939</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoga Park Improvement Assoc.</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>BID</td>
<td>231,826</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond Main Street Initiative</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>424,673</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livermore Downtown</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>309,215</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio City Business District</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>BID</td>
<td>195,854</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son Valley Merchants Assoc., San Francisco</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Business League</td>
<td>47,701</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaw Main Streets</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>BID, Main St-AP</td>
<td>582,132</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anacortes BID</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>BID</td>
<td>330,614</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Ellitt City Inc.</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>113,344</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Milford, Inc.</td>
<td>DE</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>247,534</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Valley Junction Foundation, West Des Moines</td>
<td>IA</td>
<td>Main St-AP</td>
<td>395,861</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author
Quantitative Analysis: The “Five W’s” of Marketing in Non-Profit Organizations

In addition to the descriptive analysis of the logos, representing the organization’s broader brand campaigns, quantitative data about the types of advertising and social media outlets used by each organization was gathered (chart 6), summarized in chart 5. Of the final sample of thirty organizations, twelve were originally targeted for interviews. Of the twelve originally contacted, only eight responded. Additional organizations were added to the potential list for interviews to make up for the lack of response. After having reached out to a total of fifteen organizations, ten interviews were completed (chart 1). The interviews provide additional quantitative data, shown in chart 4, as well as insightful qualitative information as to how marketing and branding is approached by the organizations, applied in Chapter 5. See Appendix B for typed iterations of each interview conducted.

First looking at the quantitative data gathered by the interviews, the initial questions gathered information about the marketing capacity of each organization. The results from this portion of the interview are shown in chart 2. Interestingly, only one organization, Valley Junction, specified having designated marketing staff. The rest of the organizations either claimed to “hire as needed,” or rely on volunteers among board members and/or committee members. Two organizations, Six Corners Association, and Old Town Merchant’s Association, shared current plans to hire a firm to contract out work pertaining to marketing and promotions. Both of these organizations quoted their annual marketing budgets on the higher end compared to the other organizations interviewed, at $20,000 or more with the addition of sponsorship. Those with smaller annual marketing budgets, such as Richmond Main Street Initiative and Kutztown Community Partners noted their strategic utilization of local volunteers and community members, particularly from resources such as local educational institutions or by engaging local artist communities.
Chart 2. Interview Results: Part 1 - Marketing Capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Designated Marketing Staff</th>
<th>Hire as Needed (contractors)</th>
<th>Volunteers/Committee Members</th>
<th>Annual Marketing Budget (Range with Sponsorships)</th>
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Source: Author, based on interview results

Chart 3. Interview Results: Part 2 - Brand Campaign

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Source: Author, based on interview results

Chart 4. Interview Results: Part 3 - Marketing Strategy

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Source: Author, based on interview results
The second set of interview questions, summarized in chart 3, inquired about current brand campaigns. The dollar amounts spent by the organizations to create their campaign varied. Looking at the chart, the three organizations that spent the most estimated that over $30,000 went towards marketing and branding in the initial year of brand development. The three organizations, Old Town Merchant’s Association (OTMA), Historic Valley Junction Foundation (HVJF), and Kutztown Community Partnership (KCP), each represent a different revenue tier. As part of an explanation for this variation, KCP is one of three organizations that noted the use of financial assistance in establishing their brand. The two other organizations are Tacony Community Development Corp. and Noe Valley Merchant’s Assoc. (NVMA). All five of these brands, those at the top of the spending tree, and those with financial assistance, in addition to Richmond Main St. Initiative, hired an outside consultant. Of the six total organizations to use an outside consultant to design their brand, all of them confirmed that the consultant did visit their downtowns or neighborhoods in preparation for the design.

One of the questions inquiring about the process of creating their design asked interviewees what the vetting process was for choosing the final design. Most of the organizations stated that the process included agreement amongst the executive director and board or committee members. Only two of the organizations reported the inclusion of the community in the process of selecting a brand identity for their town. These organizations are Richmond Main St. Initiative and Historic Valley Junction. On the opposite extreme, at least two organizations reported strong reliance on the executive director to make the final decision, on behalf of the organization members and community as a whole.

A majority of the organizations reported having gone through at least one re-branding campaign since the establishment of their organization. Six of the organizations
interviewed explained that they had undergone an organizational re-branding, with three of them having gone through at least two re-branding processes already, although majority of the brands, six of them, are between five and nine years old. Only two are over ten years old, those being Noe Valley Merchant’s Assoc., one of the oldest organizations around for about 93 years, and Six Corners Assoc., a fairly younger organization around for about 11 years now.

The data collected for the sample of 30 organizations, as well as for the ten organizations interviewed, presents some interested finds. There is a lack of obvious trends within the data. Using the qualitative results from the interviews, an interpretive analysis can made in an effort to understand the quantitative data presented in this chapter.
Chart 5. Research Results: summary of advertising and social media outlets

Types of Advertising and Social Media Outlets Used

- Website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Print
- Merchandise
- Streetvertising

Source: Author, based on interview results

Chart 6. Research Results: advertising and social media outlets

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<th>State</th>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Tier</th>
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<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
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<th>Print</th>
<th>Merchandise</th>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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Source: Author, based on interview results
Chapter Five: Interpretive Analysis and Future Considerations

The data in chapter four presented few obvious trends. Outliers skew any assumed trends or correlations, such as the assumptive that organizations with a larger revenue spend more on marketing. The results do not show this. If the organizations with a larger revenue have more to spend on marketing, they do not necessarily do so. Looking at chart 2, Richmond Main St. Initiative, a 2nd tier organization with revenue between $200,000 and $500,000, and 7th St. Development Corp., a 1st tier organization with over $500,000 in revenue, both stated they have an annual marketing budget of under $5,000, budgeting a smaller annual amount to marketing than any other organization, even less than the three 3rd tier organizations that gave a response. By analyzing the qualitative information gathered through the interviews, and applying the relevant information to the quantitative data, it is evident that there are many factors that come into play when discussing the marketing and branding approaches of these place-based non-profits. This chapter integrates the data presented in chapter four with the results of the interviews shown in Appendix B, in an attempt to use the qualitative data to interpret the quantitative date. Based on the results, the information presented in chapter two’s literature review is then applied to the analysis.

The interview results revealed information about the specific brand identities of the organizations, describing the design intent and what the brand identities represented to each of the interviewees as executive directors of the organization and as community members themselves. There are many recurring themes that were heard throughout the interviews. The most common responses mentioned included references to: the community, the neighborhood context, the organization itself, historic references, and the future vision of the area. The results are shown in chart 6 which shows the references noted by each of
the organizations as the source of their brand identity. For any given category, the box was only marked off if explicitly noted by the interviewee at any point during the interview. The most common response the organizations gave is that the brand identity represents the community. The second most common answer is that the brand identity represents the neighborhood context. This specifically included the character of the built environment and characteristics related to the spatial elements of place, such as location, rather than to the people. Half of the respondents noted the brand identity as pertaining specifically to the identity of the organization, and half mentioned their brand identity’s reference to heritage or historic assets. The last category, and the least specifically mentioned, is the brand identity as a vision of the area’s future, and what or who the organization wants to attract.

For those that mentioned the brand identity as being specific to the image of the community, such as 7th St. Development Corp, Old Town Merchant Assoc. and Kutztown Community Partnership, they specifically noted the use of colors in their graphics and the slogans or taglines used. One of the organizations that noted their historic reference was Noe Valley Merchant’s and Professionals Assoc., citing the two mountain peaks, "twin-
peaks,” in the center of their emblem-like logo, as a historic landmark for the town.¹ Alex Balloon, Executive Director of Tacony Community Development Corp. explained their logo as resembling a beer label—a nod to the gritty feel and rust-belt roots of Tacony’s historic working-class rowhomes that give the neighborhood character.²

Going back to the readings of Lynch, Toker and Hayden, the common theme of iconic images, architectural identities, and historic references can be applied to how the organizations choose to represent their identities. As noted in Chapter Two, Kevin Lynch labels five types of legible elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks.

Paths, being linear elements often represented by visible routes of passage—walkways or rows of trees by which people walk—are instilled in memory due to familiarity of moving through a place. As we have seen, paths are commonly used as images to represent a place. The organization’s often represent significant paths themselves: the shopping district commercial corridors and Main St.’s of which most people in the community are familiar with. Therefore, it makes perfect sense that the images of the built landscapes of the downtown and commercial corridors are often used to create a brand identity, as a common point of reference of the community. Relating this concept to Muldrow and Wilson’s concept of brand identity, we can see in figure 16 how a literal symbol is used to represent a hard asset, Lynch’s identifiable path of downtown.

Comparatively, in figure 17, we see how others use abstract symbols to represent the same type of hard asset. Lynch’s coined “paths,” and Toker’s termed “boundaries” make an appearance in the logo design of Saline Main St. who specifically mentions the brand identity being associated with the highway route along which the shopping district

¹ Roddick, Robert T. “Branding and Marketing Research Survey Interview: Noe Valley Merchant’s and Professionals Assoc.” Telephone interview by author. April 12, 2016  
is located, and therefore is symbolized by the license plate logo design. The same theme appears in the brand campaign of 7th St. Development Assoc.

Another term used by Lynch is a “Landmark.” Landmarks are “point references” though they are often associated with stationary objects by which one can orient themselves from multiple directions, whether they are located within the urban area or located outside of, but still visible from within. Looking again at Noe Valley’s logo image in figure 16, the twin peaks are noted as having been included in Noe Valley’s logo for their historic reference, though Lynch and Toker would relate their inclusion to their contribution to
a sense of identity as a landmark, visible from all vantage points in Noe Valley. Figure
18 shows photographs of other landmarks, or point references, that inspired the brand
identities of other organizations.

The brands used by the organizations underscore the legibility of Lynch’s elements,
their contribution to sense of place, and their applicability to creating a brand identity for
non-profit community development and business district organizations. These themes stand

Figure 18. Landmarks as brand identities

Source: dc.curbed.com
Source: www.anacostiabid.org
Source: www.landmarks.org
Source: www.downtowndanville.org
Source: www.lightshowwest.com
Source: http://historiccore.bid
out in just a small sample of organizations and opportunities to explore the effects of these brand campaigns versus the image-less campaigns holds potential.

By applying concepts discussed in Arens’ text, *Advertising Perspectives*, we begin to see how the process of creating an advertisement translates to the process of creating a promotions campaign through the formation of a brand identity in these place-based non-profit organizations. Figure 19 shows how the process, discussed in the literature review, is interpreted for non-profits, based off of findings from the interviews.

The far right diagram in the top row depicts how organizations form their brand identity, grounded in their values, and interpreted by the relevant stakeholders. The diagram at the bottom shows the translation of the Stern Model to the use of these organizations, where consultants were used to develop their brand identity. It was found that one of the major trends was a lack of including the community in the vetting process for choosing a
brand identity, a curious find considering 70% of the organizations interviewed stated their brand identity represented the community.

Four of the organizations interviewed explained that they had undergone an organizational rebranding, reflecting the trend of organizations shifting their focus from a business-professional aspect, to a more approachable community-centric and neighborhood-level feel. Interestingly, that being said, only three of the organizations included the community in the vetting process of their current brand identities. Future studies should look more in depth at the possibility of integrating the models applied from Arens’ text, with Muldrow’s conceptual use of place-based assets and insistence on community involvement in the process of creating a successful brand identity for non-profit community development and business district organizations.

Those that included board members and committee members in the vetting process noted the difficulty in choosing a design that satisfies everyone. Some of the most satisfied organizations with their brand-creation process, noted the rewarding experience of working together to think deeply about what their neighborhood means to them, and what sort of brand identities convey their self-reflection. One organization in particular, OTMA, reminisced on the unique experience that the process allowed, both for the board as a whole by reflecting on their role in the community, and for the individual members in realizing their sense of identity and attachment to the place they live. Their ability to successfully translate their found sense of identity into a place brand of visual and words exemplifies the possibilities for other organizations. For them, creating a brand identity for their organization was a team-building experience. Here-in-lies the potential of creating a brand identity, not just as an organization's team-building experiencing, but taking the process to the next level as explained by Muldrow, as a community-building experience.
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APPENDIX A- Study Organization’s Logos

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