

Analysis of the Branding of the Higher Education Institution

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Annotation: This article is based on an overview of the challenges faced by HEIs in the branding process and then recommends appropriate strategies for university branding. The most important challenges facing HEIs are the inability to create a brand identity, difficulties in communicating the brand through appropriate branding activities, cultural issues affecting HEIs, pros and cons of alliances and partnerships, and inadequate infrastructural facilities.

Key words: branding, challenges, higher education, strategies, HEIs, branding strategies, public acceptance.

Introduction: The process of globalization has turned higher education into a commodity that can be bought and sold, prompting higher education institutions (HEIs) to adopt marketing strategies to thrive in a highly competitive environment. In response to increased competition in the global higher education market, HEIs have chosen a vital marketing tactic known as branding.

Branding gives an institution its own identity and distinguishes it from its competitors. In a competitive environment, branding has a positive effect and mitigates risks, gives the organization a competitive advantage and ensures its stability in the market. In higher education, the power of a brand lies in the combination of ideas, emotions, perceptions, images and experiences that stakeholders associate with it. It also includes everything customers have learned, observed, imagined, and encountered about the brand over time. To attract target audiences that include students, staff, faculty, alumni, donors, government, media, and other university supporters, HEIs have made great efforts to standardize their image, reputation, and core themes perform actions.

It is noteworthy that students are often considered as customers of HEIs, and educational programs provided by these institutions are perceived as products for consumption by students. As a result, higher education institutions can incorporate students into their branding strategies because of their role as valuable customers.

Building a strong brand for higher education institutions (HEIs) is a difficult task because it is closely related to the experiences students have and the memories they have. In addition to students, the participation of other stakeholders, including alumni, employers, parents, etc., plays a crucial role in shaping the brand image of HEIs.

Material and methods: HEI branding revolves around more people and goes beyond the products or services offered in the market. Unlike the commercial sector, higher education

branding focuses on defining "who we are" rather than emphasizing "what a particular product offers to the market". Branding in education is challenging because it requires showing a true identity, which can be a challenging task compared to commercial branding approaches.

Suggested strategies include: 1) designing creative logos and slogans; 2) determining the competitive advantage and conveying it to interested parties through appropriate channels; 3) embedding the "institutional brand" as a culture among employees; 4) establishing strategic cooperation relations with other universities; 5) ensuring digital platforms and online presence. These strategies also help HEIs develop appropriate brand management practices and position themselves to gain a competitive advantage in the global marketplace.

While differentiating higher education institutions (HEIs) from their competitors through branding is a widely used strategy, it presents a more complex task than in traditional commercial contexts. The complexity stems from the unique nature of marketing in higher education, which includes many elements such as programs, pricing, incentives, placement, personnel, procedures, and popularity.

Results and discussion: The importance of branding for higher education institutions represents a commitment to provide a certain level of service that meets the expectations of its customers and students. Many studies have highlighted the importance of branding in the context of higher education.

In higher education itself, branding plays a crucial role in the growth and survival of higher education institutions (HEIs) due to their unique diversity in terms of types, working environments, infrastructure, and motives for supporting educational quality.

It has a significant impact on student and faculty selection and is a powerful tool for attracting new students, resources, and building trust. As Bhayani points out, branding plays an important role in attracting and retaining students to a particular HEI. Factors that logically attract students to an institution include a well-established historical brand, an attractive learning environment, the presence of distinguished faculty and researchers, familiar offerings, and public acceptance of HEIs' commitment to educating the next generation.

Indeed, branding is a powerful tool for higher education institutions (HEIs) to solve various problems and achieve many goals. This helps HEIs to combat enrollment declines, improve retention rates, overcome opposition or negative perceptions, and improve their overall image and reputation. Effective branding can also attract more financial assets and honor charitable donors, helping to strengthen the financial stability of the institution. In addition, branding helps HEIs align with their missions and communicate their relationships with other institutions, fostering partnerships and collaborations. In addition, a strong brand has a positive effect on the reputation of the enterprise, which can lead to an increase in revenue through the sale of products or services. Overall, the HEI brand plays a critical role in achieving growth, sustainability and success in the dynamic landscape of higher education.

According to students, community members, the university brand is essential to communicate the many aspects of the university to all audiences in order to gain a competitive advantage. It allows the community and prospective students to recognize and distinguish their university from others, and it easily fits into the social environment.

As a result, students are more likely to identify with the university they attended and graduated from. Employment of the student as a graduate student. Branding not only gives alumni an identity, but also offers them the means to express themselves as valued customers and lifelong members of the university's brand community.

In the current scenario, various industries, including hospitality, recognize the reputation and image of higher education institutions as crucial factors in recruiting graduate students. For example, in the hospitality industry, a school's brand is seen as an attractive and important element in the recruitment process.

A strong education brand has attributes and benefits that match the business criteria for graduate recruitment depending on the industry sector. In addition, students themselves recognize that the brand image of their HEIs has a direct impact on their employment prospects. Thus, branding not only affects how graduates perceive themselves, but also significantly affects their employability and career opportunities in the labor market.

SOEs face great challenges in creating an effective communication channel and other branding activities that contribute to building and identifying their brand.

Previous research highlights the importance of effective branding initiatives that should not only change customer perceptions, but also foster positive attitudes and develop loyalty. To achieve this, it may be useful to explore alternative media avenues alongside traditional advertising methods. It will be critical for HEIs to identify their unique strengths that resonate with the motivations of their target audience, aligning their strategies with what truly connects with potential students and stakeholders. After identifying their unique strengths, HSEs can reframe their brand positioning and emphasize these unique characteristics to gain a reputation in the competitive landscape.

Branding for universities can be particularly challenging due to their unique academic nature, making it difficult to articulate a real point of difference. However, despite these challenges, HSEs recognize the importance of branding as a means of differentiating themselves from their competitors. By strategically leveraging their strengths and creating a compelling brand story, universities can create a unique identity that resonates with their target audience and helps them stand out in a highly competitive education market.

Conclusion

The need to brand HEIs and the challenges HEIs face in branding their educational processes and products are the two main issues addressed in this study.

One of the challenges faced by HEIs in producing new things is: the problem of communication; forming partnerships and alliances; and use the inadequacy of infrastructure facilities to demonstrate brand value. This article describes the challenges of higher education branding and offers solutions based on recommended practices from the published literature. However, future research could focus on hearing from internal and external stakeholders about the challenges facing higher education branding and obtaining key data through interviews and qualitative analysis to create a suitable university branding strategy plan.

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