

Branding Initiative Update June 2012

Submitted by
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Dear Brothers,

In the December 2011 Winter Edition of the Garnet and White, I spoke to you about an initiative that we were undertaking to define the Alpha Chi Rho Brand and help reposition ourselves in the Greek organization community. Since December, I feel we have made significant progress and now is an appropriate time to provide you with an update.

Shortly after the publication of the Winter Edition of the G&W, we formed a Branding Committee representing Council, Trustees, Graduates and Undergraduates to brainstorm what branding means to us and how we have incorporated it into our message to everyone that has contact with us, which we previously defined as our Donors, Alumni, Undergraduates, Parents, Colleges/Universities, Friends, Families, and even complete strangers. After much discussion the committee felt that branding was important enough to engage a professional marketing company that specialized in helping Greek organizations. By late January we entered into an agreement with a firm located in Indianapolis called Willow Marketing (Willow) and proceeded to provide them with mountains of files and data so they could begin their initial assessment.

At our Annual Member and Trustee Meeting at Ruth Bedford's house on April 21, Willow Marketing gave us their report. I have to give Willow credit where credit is due because their presentation was very impressive and thorough and really went "outside the box" so to speak to analyze our situation and compare us to our peers. In a four hour interactive meeting, Willow Marketing illustrated what we are doing right and more so what we are doing wrong. The good thing is that Willow thinks we do a good job communicating to our existing members. If you take this finding and add our President's focus on increasing communications, then I have no doubt we will continue to do well here and keep improving.

The downsides of Willow's findings were a lot of what we know but do not like to openly admit. Their general observations were that our existing brand lacks a promise or personality; our curb appeal was not competitive within the fraternal market and is not vibrant and thriving which is indicative of growing Fraternity; our printed materials and communications are not modernized and riddled with inconsistent imagery.

Willow's message to us was clear and it was exactly what we needed to hear; and that is we needed to overhaul our brand and focus on who our audience is. For two hours we discussed the "Branding Funnel" which begins with our attributes (our physical/functional characteristics of the brand) followed by benefits and values (what the brand does for me and how it makes me feel) leading to personality (who represents our brand) and finally to distillation, (the true nature of the brand).

All of us left the meeting feeling fatigued, but as the saying goes, "no pain, no gain". From here we are continuing to work with our partners at Willow marketing to formulate our brand, define our audiences and to find new ways to reinvest in ourselves so we can grow our beloved Fraternity from something good to something great. No doubt, developing branding is a long process, but with great ideas, patience and determination, we will prevail in having a very attractive branding campaign that is second to none.

If you would like to find out more or become a contributing member of the Branding Committee, please contact me at kchapel@comcast.net.

In the Bond,

Ken

