



CAMP BRANDING

Design Reference for Camp Branding

WHAT IS A BRAND?

Although the term “brand” is sometimes used as a synonym for a “trademark”, in commercial circles the term “brand” is frequently used in a wider sense to refer to a combination of tangible and intangible elements, such as a logo, image and/or reputation in which those elements transmit respect to specified product and/or services.

A brand is more than a name. It is an “emotional feeling” related to an experience with a product that ultimately is developed by a process that reflects managed values. A brand is an organization’s “reason for being.” Built over time, a brand is ultimately what people expect from the organization. The BSA’s brand essence is found in the five pillars of Scouting:

- Leadership
- Achievement
- Character
- Service
- Outdoors

It is the brand image as a whole, and not merely a trademark or design as a stand-alone element, that differentiates one’s goods and/or services from those of competitors. It denotes a certain quality and, over the long term, attracts and nourishes consumer loyalty. Experience has shown that the potential commercial value of a brand cannot be underestimated. The brand is the central nexus of communication between a council and its membership.

WHAT IS CAMP BRANDING?

Some local councils do not yet understand, or are not truly convinced, that a brand image can be a powerful tool for promoting and marketing their camps. Some councils may recognize its importance. Still others, especially small- and medium-sized councils, may not know how to go about developing a brand image. Camp brands today are generally recognized as a key asset for creating value for a camp. Any council camp, in the wide sense of that term, can develop a brand image. Your camp’s brand is a collection of experiences. It’s not just a logo or a tagline; it is a set of fundamental principles understood by anyone who comes in contact with your camp.



Your camp already has a brand. It may be shaped by random events beyond your control, but your brand consists of (1) Who you are as a council and (2) What your camp experience is like. Are you managing your camp's brand?

A camp's brand is an implied promise of the level of quality that your customers have come to expect from your council's camp. The camp brand distinguishes your camp and camp experience within your market.

Your camp should have its own identity, but it should also send a clear message that it is part of and promotes the values and culture of the Boy Scouts of America. The question you should constantly ask yourself is "When people think of this camp, what do I want them to visualize?"

Great branding attracts ideal customers.

HOW TO DEVELOP A CAMP BRAND

Developing a brand image should not be treated as a last priority. This is a short-sighted attitude which may prove fatal for a council. To the contrary, a camp's brand image should be developed in parallel to the council's brand; a branding strategy should constitute an integral part of your business plan. What is the use of making major investments into developing a quality camp if that reputation cannot be captured and developed in a brand image? It is through its brand image that a camp will attract and retain consumer loyalty for the quality camp experience, thus bringing concrete value to the council.

Developing a brand image requires time, effort, commitment, and financial resources, but not as much as might be expected. Moreover, experience and knowledge of the market, a creative and flexible approach to problem solving, enthusiasm about your camp, and the courage to take risks are also important factors in developing a powerful brand image. These are common attributes of most successful camps.

The council can build brand recognition through their camp conditions, camp appearance, signage, website, electronic media, correspondence, clothing, patches and other dry goods. The camp brand may be communicated within a logo or image that becomes immediately recognized and communicates your desired message.

How do we manage a camp brand?

- By applying techniques to a specific camp that will increase its perceived value to the customer

- By developing a brand language that creates a memorable experience for the consumer, encourages repeat business and boosts the council's economic health

Techniques to improve your camp's brand through appearance, experience, and emotional connection:

A. Improved Appearance

- Develop a theme of colors and materials for use throughout the camp
- Signage appearance (on-site and highway), design and placement.
- Well-kept facilities
- Sanitary facilities should be modernized
- Landscaping

B. Exciting Program Delivery

- Organized, well-trained, enthusiastic staff
- Innovative programs. What can you provide that they can't get at another camp? Exploit that difference.
- Great food (no cutting corners here!)
- Don't try to be something you're not. If your camp is in the sub-tropics, don't market as if you're in the Rockies.

C. Brand symbols, logos, and image considerations

- Boys are visually oriented and stimulated, so make your symbols exciting
- Go for impact that is memorable and sizzles. For example: Campsite John Smith Jr. isn't as exciting as Campsite Grizzly or Campsite Black Arrow
- Seek the help of a graphic designer to create a compelling brand image and theme.

D. Protect your symbol, logo, image etc.

- Resist the notion of letting anyone put it on anything
- Limit it to well considered and approved uses

Remember, your goal is to enhance the mental connections that merge your camp's name with what your council standards.

"When people think of this camp, what do you want them to visualize?"



Here's an actual BSA camp's internal directional sign. What does this image say about the council and its commitment to a quality camping experience?



If we add some simple, inexpensive signage, decorative rocks, and relocate unsightly facilities to more appropriate locations, we send a message that enhances the camp's brand.



Here's an example of a typical camp's internal directional signs. This image is not exciting; it doesn't have a high impact nor does it create an expectation of a high-quality camping experience.



A simple, inexpensive sign, a few rocks, and simple landscaping has been installed. This image sends quite a different message to your customer than the image shown above.



This image does not create an expectation of a high-quality housing experience, nor does it communicate the idea that a quality camping experience awaits you. This is poor brand management.



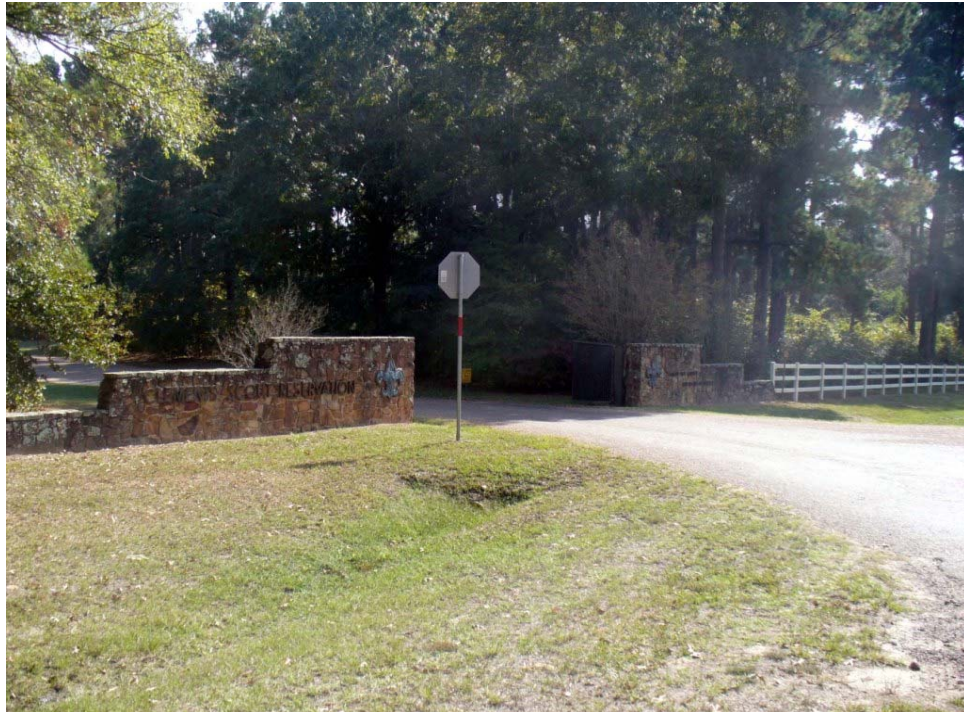
Simple signage, bright exterior paint, and new roofs send an entirely new visual message. This message is high-quality housing and quality camp operations. This is good brand management.



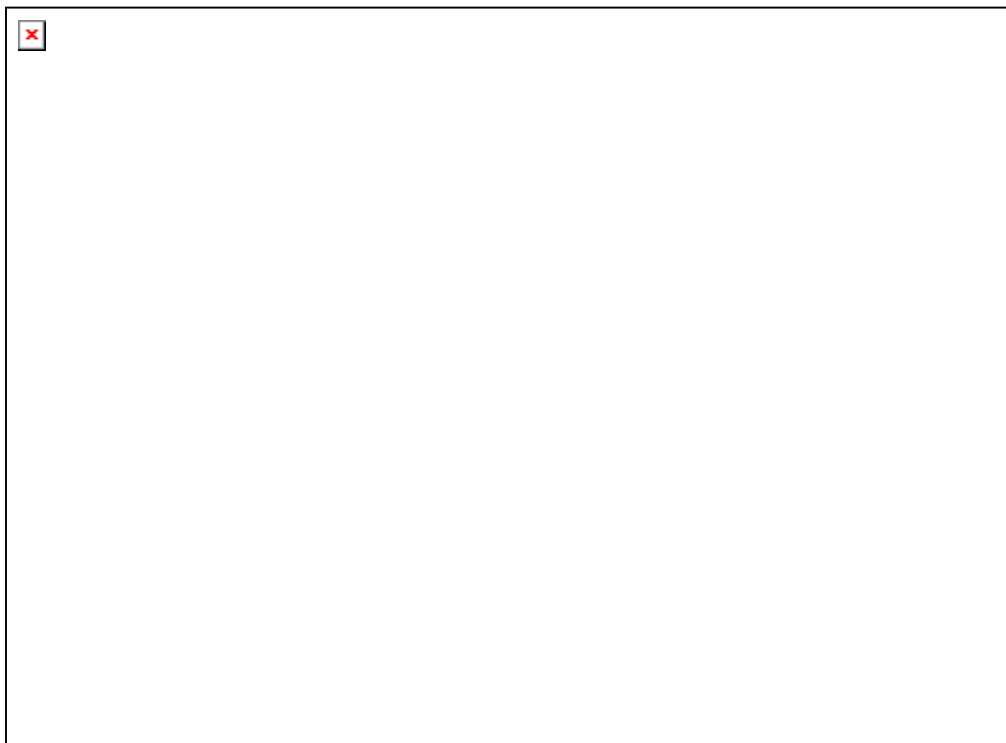
This is an example of an existing campsite latrine. What does this image say about the local council? Is it an exciting organization serving modern youth? Or, does this image say it is an out-of-date operation in financial distress?



This is good brand management. Changes were to install a simple new roof, apply exterior stain, clean up the area, and add a simple gravel walkway. This image communicates an entirely new message about the quality of the camp's operation.



Here's an example of a modest camp gateway. It misses an opportunity to excite the members and announce that a modern BSA adventure is waiting for them within.



A simple modernization of the BSA emblem, new letters and colorful silhouettes create a great branding imagery at the front door to the camp.



This is an example of exciting external camp signage. Doesn't this communicate that a modern and exciting adventure awaits you in this camp? This is great branding imagery.