

Branding and Joint Marketing for Community Land Scotland sponsored by HIE

Location: Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Isle of Skye

Date: 6th June 2014

Workshop Leader: Mike Story, Marketing Argyll

Purpose of Workshop

To introduce the concept of Branding and joint Marketing to a focus group of Community Land Owners and interested parties. To assess the level of interest and knowledge of current Branding and Marketing techniques and how they could affect Community land companies.

Methodology

The group were introduced to the general principals of Branding and its use in business, the role of Branding within Sales and Marketing was discussed and examined with samples from a cross section of goods and services. The group looked at how to create a brand and how that brand represented both their companies and products.

The group were asked to think about popular brands that had entered everyday lexicography and the power of those brands has in creating trust, loyalty and influencing purchasing decisions.

The group then discussed the need for a brand within their own businesses and how that brand should affect the ethos and personality of their companies.

Branding Exercise

The group were asked to envisage the existence of a fictional company called 'The West Highlands and Islands Trading Trust' (TWHITT) and suggest how the company should develop its brand. The main thrust was designed to encourage the group to think in terms of:

- Why have brands?
- What is behind your brand?
- What story should it tell?
- How the brand should be visually represented
- What are the strengths and weaknesses that your brand brings to your organisation?
- Is there a need to have an individual brand or is an Umbrella Brand, which could represent all Community Land Scotland companies a better option?

Joint Marketing Exercise

The group then looked at how to take their brand to market, specifically utilising the medium of joint marketing. Topics discussed by the groups included:

- Choice of Joint Marketing Partners and how the choice of partner can influence effectiveness
- Choice of marketing channels, how this choice is influenced by both internal and external factors, ie:
 - Cost effectiveness
 - Customer Demographic
 - Product range

Conclusions

Given the time allowed and the wide range of subject matter and the level of engagement from within the group, a distinct appetite for more information and a significant further discussion was prevalent within the group. The level of understanding of the concept of branding and marketing was varied, with some delegates much more knowledgeable than others.

Specific interest was shown in examining the usefulness and value of an overarching umbrella brand, which would encompass all CLS members and their businesses.

While individual businesses were also interested in developing their own brands, there was a strong consensus from the group that having their own brand sit within the power of the umbrella brand (ie Fairtrade) would position and represent their organisations and ethos.

There is little doubt that the very makeup and ownership model of CLS organisations and individuals within them can lead to an extremely strong brand, which would not only commercially represent CLS and its members, but would strongly promote its ethos and values.

Recommendations

Proceeding on the basis of there being a significant demonstrable level of interest in developing an appropriate brand or brands associated with CLS and its members and examining a route to market, my recommendation is that a further series of stakeholder workshops should be developed.

The potential economic benefits that a successful CLS brand or Brands could deliver is very significant, and would allow more accurate development of a successful route to market.

- 1) The initial workshops may be determined by both geographical location and sectorial interests and would cover the more general idea of branding and joint marketing throughout the Community Land Scotland membership.
- 2) Subsequent workshops would examine both macro (umbrella) and micro (individual) branding. By using detailed and relevant case studies and interactive branding sessions we can examine the direction that the brand would develop in. These workshops would also focus on relationship between the umbrella brand and individual companies that sit within it.
- 3) The third type of workshops would look much more to the practical side of bringing a brand to life, including the importance of content, visual representation, artwork, logo design, branding wheels and brand management, maintaining brand integrity. The group would look at Identification of products, opportunities and markets and how the brand pertains to them.
- 4) Wrapping all of the above together, we would move on to the practical application of the brand. This would be included in the 'taking your brand to market' workshops where we would examine what a successful marketing strategy looks like and how to develop it and how to apply it to your company or organisation. This workshop would include choosing marketing channels, joint marketing partners, the marketing mix, unique selling points and key marketing performance indicators

Follow up

At the time of writing, I was unable to ascertain any direct feedback from the workshop attendees, however through monitoring the social media channels prior to and following the event, the workshop was well received by the attendees and significant players at government level alike. From a business point of view, the Community Land Scotland sector would benefit massively from developing its own brand.

I suggest that further discussion between myself, HIE and CLS, and other interested parties takes place in the near future, in order to properly map out where the areas of most need are, and the geographic locations that will give the most engagement, and a timeframe for the roll out of any subsequent workshops/ initiatives

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

I would like to acknowledge and thank Claire Munro and HIE for their role in this successful workshop, and for their work in researching this area. I look forwards to the opportunity of partnering them in the development of this very exciting sector.

Mike Story

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