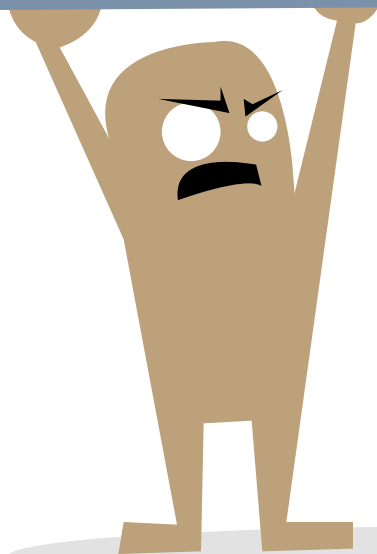


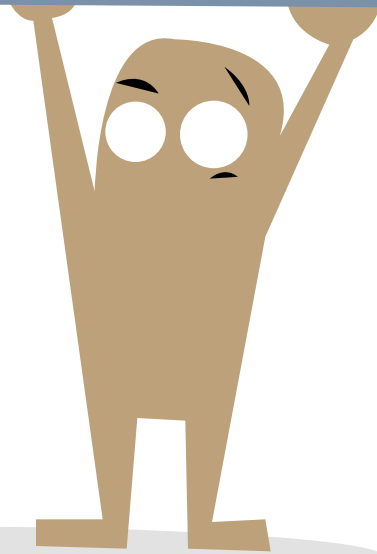
TURN

BRANDING OOPS **INTO WHOOP WHOOPS**

1.0



10





Not Sure Whether or Not This E-Book is for You?

Here is an easy way to tell before diving in:

Beginner Basics: For arts professionals and students who are new to the field or looking for foundational training. Gain the building blocks to essential marketing skills that will benefit arts organizations of all sizes. These e-books are typically “how-to” guides for those unfamiliar with the topic at hand. See also [Take the Fear Out of ROI](#).


10

Intermediate Instruction: For arts marketers who understand the basic subject or challenge at hand, but have yet to jump in. This e-book delivers material that covers the mistakes or challenges and how to solve problems on a more complex level, using real time examples from a variety of genres. For an e-book at this level, check out [Banish Online Video Marketing Blunders – For Good!](#)

Advanced Approaches: For arts leaders who have expertise in the field and are seeking to increase their knowledge on the topic. This e-book will lift your level of understanding to a marketing master and further train your proficiency on the topic. For a peek at this level, explore [8 Ways to Make Arts Organizations More Human](#).



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"A brand is the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer's decision to choose one [company] over another. If the consumer (whether it's a buyer or a donor) doesn't pay a premium, make a selection or spread the word, then no brand value exists for that consumer. A brand used to be something else. It used to be a logo or a design... Today, that's a shadow of the brand, something that might mark the brand's existence. But...if you've never heard of it, if you wouldn't choose it, if you don't recommend it, then there is no brand, at least not for you. Design is essential, but design is not brand."

-author Seth Godin

The Sci Fi's Branding Oops!

Named “perhaps the worst TV branding mistake ever,” the Sci Fi Channel’s 2009 rebranding attempt to achieve a “less geeky” image didn’t go over so well among its viewers. The network officially changed the spelling to “SyFy” after deciding that “Sci-fi” was too “niche,” and believed the change could attract a wider audience – namely, a larger portion of the 18-30 year old male demographic if they were to get rid of the “nerdy” association.

Yet the move encompassed more than just a change in the television network’s name. Changes were made in programming, for instance the channel’s decision to cancel shows such as fan favorite *Stargate Atlantis* (2004), and adding reality television to their line-up, such as *Ultimate Gamer* (2010), *Ghost Hunters* (2004), and *Marcel’s Quantum Kitchen* (2011).

Syfy

Avid viewers criticized the new name for its confusing pronunciation (calling it Si-ffy, Syffee, among other pronunciations) and pointed out that **SyFy actually means “sludge” and is a “social disease” in Polish**. The network’s new tagline, “Imagine Greater” was also criticized by fans that compared it to a rip-off of the old Apple “Think Different.”

The Takeaway from Syfy's Branding Oops

When Making a Major Change to Your Brand, Don't Alienate Longtime Fans.

In the digital age, consumer reaction to enigmatic corporate branding decisions will be quick and brutal. Because the Science Fiction channel is the sole channel devoted to this genre, its audience expects a lot. When the formally known Sci Fi channel had already established an emotional tie with its viewers through its programming and scheduling, many fans felt as if the channel had forgotten its roots.

Relevance to the Arts

Be strategic about your programming and be true to your audience. If your mission is to produce new American plays, don't add a Shakespeare favorite just because it might attract a new audience ONCE. Will that new audience stick around and come back for your regularly scheduled programming?

AMC's Branding Whoop Whoop

In 2009, AMC successfully shifted its brand from a classic movie network to a "network of favorite films from every genre and decade or established quality television show," and the "AMC experience became an uncompromising celebration of great stories," according to President Charlie Collier.



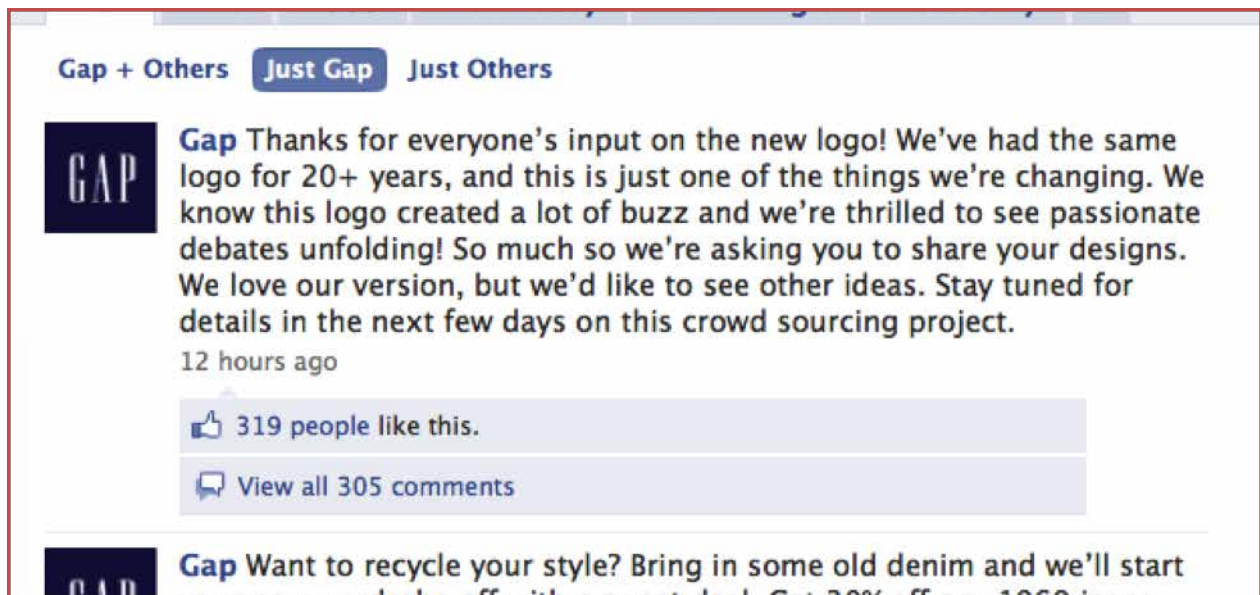
Dropping its use of the name American Movie Classics, this concept began to infiltrate the network as it added hit series to its lineup, such as *Mad Men* (2007), *Breaking Bad* (2008), and *The Walking Dead* (2010). Despite the fact that all of these shows are vastly different – from 1960's Madison Avenue advertising executives to a chemistry teacher turns meth dealer, AMC united its classic movies and new, compelling programming through a single idea: storytelling. And this storytelling concept had research and a firm marketing strategy standing behind it: according to the Wall Street Journal, AMC, "will begin grouping [its films] by themes into hosted movie nights. Monday's movies will be aimed at women, and Wednesday's lineup, dubbed "action packed," will be aimed at young men."

Gap's Logo Oops!



In 2010, the corporate retailer **Gap** introduced a new logo on their web site. Once the buzz hit the Internet, harsh criticism spread across social media platforms. The new logo replaced the widely recognized blue square that has “Gap” stamped across it in bold, capital white letters. Until 2010, the original logo had been a ubiquitous icon for consumers, appearing in **1,150** locations in North America. The new logo, designed in the font Helvetica, was dubbed by branding experts as “**lazy**,” and graphic designers compared the style to “**clip art**.”

Once Gap caught wind of the criticism, the mega-retailer added fuel to the fire when they asked the public to submit their own design ideas, turning the logo debacle into a crowd sourcing contest.



Wait a second. Was this just a weak new logo, a publicity stunt to attract attention, a social media experiment gone wrong, or just a big branding misstep?

Think about it. “We love our version, but we’d like to see other ideas.” How can Gap “love” their new logo, but then open up the floodgates for a crowdsource contest? (note: the contest received over 200 submissions, all of which can be seen [here](#)).

One week later in a sudden move, Gap closed the floodgates to the crowdsourcing contest and reinstated its original, iconic logo.

The Takeaway from Gap's Logo Oops

Embrace Social Networks and Listen to Your Consumers before Making a Major Rebranding Decision.

In Gap's rebranding misstep, the company discovered that their buyers were passionate about their classic logo. They failed to engage with their online community when they asked their consumers to redesign the logo that they already criticized. Then, within one week, Gap closed the door to consumer creativity. This mistake was indicative of Gap's absolute misinterpretation of establishing your corporate identity through your engagement with your consumers.

Relevance to the Arts

If you are going to invite your audience into the creative process, be honest with yourself, your artists, and your contributors. Don't ask for input if you aren't going to listen. Crowdsourcing is a great tool to encourage audience participation, but it can backfire if you don't embrace your audience's ideas.

10 →

Toys R Us Logo Whoop Whoop

In October 2007, Toys R Us underwent a successful rebrand when the toy store trimmed a thread of frivolous grammatical imposition from its logo. The strategy was simplistic: lose the quotation marks and move the star inside of the R in the hopes of making the logo more kid friendly and more fun. In short, it worked: branding experts said it made a “cleaner, more innovative look.”



This example proves that a slight tweak to a logo can make a big difference while still leveraging existing brand equity.

1.0

Cosmo's Extension Oops!

Cosmopolitan magazine is undoubtedly a globally recognized and successful brand in the publishing world. But in 1999 the world's largest selling women's magazine made a major branding failure. Cosmopolitan went against its own image in rolling out a new product: low fat yogurt. The slumping profit spoke for itself, within 18 months the yogurt was discontinued and taken off of store shelves.



In selling yogurt, Cosmo had attempted **brand extension**, a strategy used by companies to exploit their brand loyalty by entering into new markets (also known as piggyback marketing). The brand failed because their female consumers were unable to associate a dairy product with their favorite magazine.



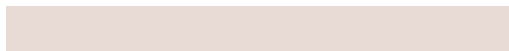
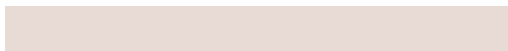
The Takeaway from Cosmo's Extension Oops

Know What Side You're On.

Cosmopolitan has a distinct personality associated with its brand, one that encompasses trends, beauty, and sex for women – and this personality definitely does not include food. Having a clear idea of what makes a brand successful (what you are selling) and what your consumers are buying (i.e. advice on fashion, beauty tips, and sex secrets) will provide you with the keys to understanding what market you might be successful extending into. Brand extension can be tricky; it needs to be relevant for your audience so that it won't tarnish the original brand.

Relevance for the Arts

There are many common brand extensions at arts organizations – family series, school programming, merchandising, books, at-home art kits, one-to-one dance lessons, and many more. Be sure that the added programming or products that you develop stay true to your artistic vision and core mission.



10

Amazon's Extension Whoop Whoop

Known for its online expediency and enormous stock of products, Amazon.com is an online publisher with extreme brand loyalty. In 2011, Amazon.com proved successful brand extension when they put their e-reader, the Kindle on the market which ranked #1.



Amazon.com had a clear vision of what they were selling (books) and what their consumers were buying (books with a convenience factor attached). When it introduced a product that bolstered its mother brand – an easy e-reader for an already user friendly and highly stocked online book publishing company – sales skyrocketed. **Forbes** commented, “the Kindle is not just a device; it’s an Amazon brand extension, backed by Amazon brand equity.”

1.0

Netflix Brand Loyalty Oops!



When Netflix split its business into two divisions, the company took a major PR hit in the area of **brand loyalty**. The company decided to keep its movie streaming business under the name Netflix but move its DVDs by mail business to a new company called **Qwikster**, and increase its prices by a whopping 60%.

Besides this drastic price increase, the brand was made less accessible to its

customers. By dividing the brand, each customer needed to access two websites, maintain two accounts with two passwords, and pay two separate bills. Not surprisingly, customers were in an uproar over the doubled price and distribution change, and Netflix **lost close to 1 million customers** during the second half of 2011.



Netflix also didn't do much to repair their customer relationships. The company's response was criticized as **offensive** as a result of a CFO casually stating that the PR crisis will "**dissipate over time**," showing a lack of genuine concern for his consumers' experience. However within weeks, as the outrage continued with no end in sight, the company announced that they were **abandoning** the split between the two services, but keeping the price increases.

The Takeaway from the Netflix Loyalty Oops

Trust and Consistency Goes a Long Way.

Between the sharp increase in price and the betrayal that customers felt as a result of the split in products, Netflix lost the trust of their customers. When a brand makes a sudden change in direction that in turn makes it more difficult for customers to access its services, it negatively impacts a brand's consistency. When this consistency is disrupted, you'll find customer loyalty on a steep decline.

Relevance for the Arts

Ease of access and trust are key, especially if your organization has subscription or membership programs. Keep membership benefits easy to use and access. Subscription options should be straight forward and consistent from season to season. If you are going to make adjustments, ensure that the changes respond to the needs of your audience first, and the needs of your organization second.



Starwood's Loyalty Whoop Whoop

The Starwood Company is made up of nine *different brands*. These include the St. Regis, The Luxury Collection, W, Westin, Le Méridien, and Sheraton, to name a few. Yet these multiple brands, each with multiple price points and distinct personalities, have maintained respect and a following. This is due to the loyalty of their customers and **consistency** in three key areas.



First, one of the core elements of The Starwood Company is **sustainability** – their “green” brand, **Element**, serves as a laboratory to explore ways to reduce its energy footprint. These findings are then applied across the entire Starwood Company portfolio because it **reflects the interests of consumers**.

Next, Starwood places **guest trust** as a top priority, owning the belief that “great service is price of entry for brands, but it needs to be enhanced by the **experience that the customer has with the brand**.” Starwood demonstrated this when they introduced their Loyalty Program which offers **features** such as lifetime status for members, 24-hour check-in and check-out times, and personal travel assistants.

Lastly, Starwood admits that when it comes to customer feedback, they are proactive and track comments because they find value in engaging with their customers. Not only does it deepen a level of trust, but it helps improve service.

In 2008, United Airlines learned that when your brand fails to demonstrate good customer service, plenty of damage can be done. When passenger David Carroll boarded a plane in Chicago, he looked out the window only to witness that his \$3,500 guitar had been aggressively thrown by United Airline baggage handlers from the tarmac into the plane. He immediately alerted four members of the airline crew, but according to Carroll they brushed off his concern. It turned out that Carroll's suspicions were correct. When he landed in Omaha, he discovered that the commercial airline had broken his guitar. Even worse, United refused to pay the \$1,200 fee for the guitar's repair. In fact, United told Carroll they would do nothing to compensate for his broken guitar.

As a result, Carroll produced a song about the incident, called "**United Breaks Guitars**" which has received over 12 million views on YouTube. This served as a viral payback for bad customer service, and the damage to United's brand was unquestionable.



The Takeaway from United's Service Oops

Customer Service is Key.

When a brand ignores customer service and doesn't make it a top priority, it suffers. Most purchases are driven by word-of-mouth marketing, and Carroll's video going viral suggests that customers are listening to the experience of others. As the United Airlines saga proved, just one negative review can be detrimental to a brand. As the number of views continued to climb on "United Breaks Guitars," the more impact it had on the United brand. However, a brand truly thrives when it embraces customer service as an essential aspect of its business model and shows that it cares about its customers.

Relevance to the Arts

David Carroll's customer service experience with United Airlines is something that as arts marketers, we can all learn a valuable lesson from: the creation of your brand's value is just as much about good customer service as it is about mission statements, print advertising, or logos. Commendable customer care not only distinguishes your arts organizations from others, but it is the best form of word-of-mouth marketing. Your patrons are sure to tell their family and friends about an usher, docent, or box office attendant that went the extra mile at your arts event, creating an experience that will bring in repeat business.

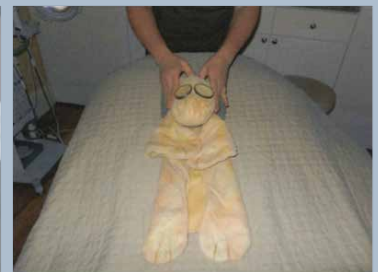
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The Ritz's Service Whoop Whoop

The Ritz Carlton has distinguished its brand among other hotel chains for a few reasons, one is their terrific customer service. When guest Chris Hurn experienced this firsthand, he shared his touching story with the [Huffington Post](#).

Hurn and his family had recently returned from a stay at the Ritz when they realized that their son's adored stuff giraffe, Joshie, had been left at the hotel. Hurn called the Ritz, and the hotel said that it would send Joshie back right away. To soothe his son's panic, Hurn said that Joshie was taking an extended vacation at the Ritz and would be home soon. According to Hurn:

"A couple days went by, and we received a package from the hotel. It was my son's Joshie, along with some Ritz-Carlton-branded "goodies" (a frisbee, football, etc.). Also included in the package was a binder that meticulously documented his extended stay at the Ritz. It showed Joshie wearing shades by the pool, Joshie getting a massage at the spa..."



The Ritz created an experience that Hurn and his family will never forget. By going the extra mile in taking care of their guests, the Ritz showed that when you create a memorable customer service experience, it pays off.

1.0

Dish Network's Identity Oops!

When 24/7 Wall St. **examined** employee reviews at the online job site Glassdoor, they found that the Dish Network scored as the **worst company** to work for in America. Why? Poor company culture.



Here's the breakdown: the Dish Network handles an overwhelming 14 million accounts and currently employs 34,000 overworked people. It's no surprise then when the employee reviews say the Dish Network has extremely poor management, a lack of flexible hours with mandatory overtime, no holidays, low wages, and an overall disgruntlement among staff. The poor rapport that the Dish Network has with its employees has had a direct impact on the way its customers feel about the service. The Dish Network **received** among the lowest ratings in their sector on the American Customer Satisfaction Index, and **found itself** among MSN Money's fifth annual customer service Hall of Shame because they "prioritize sales over quality service."

The Takeaway from Dish Network's Identity Oops

Keep Your Employees Satisfied.

The Dish Network has illustrated how poor corporate culture can translate into poor performance among employees and low financial results. Inner company culture – which can be defined as the way your employees feel when they enter the work environment, take action, work together, and interact with others - can have a huge impact on your brand's identity. If your staff is disgruntled all the time and you don't amend the issues to create a comfortable and happy working environment, your operations won't flow smoothly and it will negatively impact your brand. Your customers on the outside can see and hear what your employees feel on the inside.

Relevance to the Arts

The success of your arts organization can be equally measured by your focus on company culture. The desire to meet or exceed ticket sales or customer service expectations carries through to every aspect of your theater, museum, or performing arts space: from building team relationships, to patron relationships, to the workspace itself. A positive inner company culture should not be overlooked because it actually feeds and inspires the creative process among employees. Listen to your employees regularly and read what your patrons have to say about their experiences at your arts events to ensure that your organization's culture is drumming to the same beat as your brand identity.

10

Zappos' Identity Whoop Whoop

Zappos is a seller of products that has built its reputation on its service, yet this corporation prides itself on its focus on inner company culture. The employee satisfaction that exudes from inside the walls of the Zappos headquarters is also reflected in its positive financial results. How do they do it? Well, at its essence, Zappos believes that your company culture is your brand.



Photo Credit: [toprankonlinemarketing's flickr photostream](#).

Zappos sets “happiness” as its primary goal across the board, whether it be for its employees or customers. It sounds simplistic, but it leverages incredible revenue and has given Zappos its reputation for excellence. According to Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh, the best way to build a brand for the long term is culture, and that's why Zappos holds the core belief that customer service shouldn't just be a department, it should be **the entire company**.



Resources

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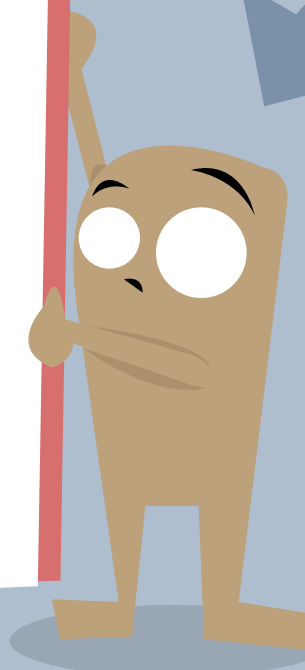
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Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. With more than 50 years of service, it is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts.



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