



ECONOMIC SUMMIT WHITE PAPER

THE BRAND CALLED WISCONSIN™:

**Can we make it relevant and different
for competitive advantage?**

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THE CHARGE

The charge of this white paper is to present an educational, provocative and persuasive case for how and why Wisconsin must proactively re-brand itself. The paper will describe what branding is, what benefits it brings and what steps are needed to do it effectively. This document does not attempt to define what Wisconsin's brand positioning should be. (In fact, the paper makes it clear why no effective branding decision can be made without sophisticated qualitative research.) Rather, its goal is to define the issues that must be addressed and to provide a feasible framework for a timely branding process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wisconsin's economy is perceived to be dominated by traditional economic sectors. (In large part, that perception reflects reality.) The perception inhibits the state's ability to attract new economy employers, their employees and venture capital, all of which are needed to keep job growth and the tax base strong in the future.

To attract companies that will provide high-wage jobs for our best and brightest young people and a good living for everyone, Wisconsin must both invest in the infrastructure those companies want, and work to build a new perception of our state. But before we launch a costly effort to do what we think is right, we should do what all good marketers do—talk to the desired customer: What benefits are relevant and compelling to the new economy employees and companies we want to have in this state? What can we do to give Wisconsin differentiating competitive advantage in the economic development battleground?

Brand marketing is all about creating and communicating a compelling, relevant point of difference.

A brand is the executive summary (complete with judgments pro or con) of all the expectations, thoughts, feelings and associations that we carry in our minds. Thus, the Research Triangle is a brand, as is Silicon Valley, Hollywood, Bosnia, Britain, and Wisconsin.

Nations, states, and regions all over the world are now effectively engaging in proactive brand marketing to win coveted high tech jobs, and the brain power and venture capital that fuels them. Not only must Wisconsin catch up to this competition, but it must find a relevant differentiating niche or position in which it can lead. Wisconsin must lessen the impact of existing negative brand stereotypes as well as preempt the competition from positioning us to their advantage which puts us in an even more difficult position to control our economic destiny.

Creating a singular, compelling, relevant point of difference for a state—especially a state as diverse and independent as Wisconsin—won't be easy. But we can be ready to launch the "rebranding" of Wisconsin one year from now (at least in-state) if we apply the art and science of brand marketing as we address these top issues:

1. Precisely what are we trying to brand?
2. Who is the target of Wisconsin's branding efforts?
3. How will we determine what Wisconsin's brand positioning could or should be?
4. How can we make sure our brand image is seen as high tech and attractive to 'new economy' companies?
5. How can we pull diverse regions, industries and initiatives together under one brand umbrella?
6. What would it take to coordinate and integrate the state's brand positioning so that we speak with one voice across many web sites and trade shows, as well as in every economic development councils' sales literature?
7. What is the relationship between Wisconsin's brand position and our "price"?
8. Once we determine what our brand stands for, what will it take to build high awareness of it?
9. How will we know if this branding effort is working, and how long will it take to change our image?
10. How can we organize ourselves to maximize chances of success?

THE BRAND CALLED WISCONSIN™

PROBLEM

Today, Wisconsin's economy is both in perception and reality largely dominated by traditional economic sectors. While many facets of agriculture and manufacturing are prospering, state job growth is slowing due to global competition and our own gains in productivity. Mergers and acquisitions are taking jobs and corporate headquarters out-of-state. To grow new jobs and to diversify and balance our economy beyond agriculture and manufacturing, Wisconsin must become a hotbed of new economy enterprises.

What is more, to preserve our quality of life, the state must excel at the creation of jobs that offer high income and upward mobility. These are the jobs that attract the young, bright and ambitious and which are rich fuel for economic development. Currently, Wisconsin does not adequately retain and attract college-educated workers. Too many of Wisconsin's talented young people must leave the state to pursue their dreams. States that do attract college educated workers, such as Minnesota and Illinois, are starting to gain competitive advantage over Wisconsin.

If Wisconsin's best and brightest continue to perceive income and lifestyle opportunities in other states as more attractive than Wisconsin, even economic sectors now growing in Wisconsin will find it hard to retain and attract talented employees to fill their job openings. When large numbers of baby boomers start to retire in 2012, the labor shortage will get even worse. Then attracting new employers to the state will be next to impossible. Wisconsin parents will see more of their children move out-of-state and their grandchildren growing up far away. We will experience a sad downward spiral of weakened Main Streets, an aging tax base, and a higher per capita tax burden as the size of salaries and number of taxpayers diminishes.

SOLUTION

Fortunately, this scenario does not have to become a reality. A successful brand marketing strategy can lay the foundation for a brighter and more prosperous economic future.

"Brand marketing" is the determination of a point of competitive difference that is relevant and compelling to "customers," and then building it into all products, services, pricing, distribution and promotion. The nation's most successful businesses already understand that brand marketing works to sell cars and computers, bellbottoms and beer. Wisconsin can also

use branding to create a point of difference that is relevant and compelling to employers and employees of the new economy, and then use it to drive the development of the state's services, sites, "pricing", promotion and image development.

Our competition is doing it. Britain, France, Spain, Arizona, Virginia, North Carolina, Silicon Valley, Research Triangle, Austin, Atlanta, and others have undertaken initiatives. But Wisconsin's need for brand marketing goes beyond "keeping up with the competition." It must also be done to counteract the subconscious and unproductive stereotype of Wisconsin already in the minds of many. It must be done to pre-empt efforts by some competitors to define Wisconsin for *their* marketing advantage, as exemplified by California (with their record milk and cheese production) making fun of Wisconsin's no longer being America's Dairyland.

BRIEF ON BRANDING

Why brand?

In the marketplace, a strong brand allows a company to charge higher prices, achieve higher profit margins, expand market share, attract the best employees, and maintain higher stock prices. In the world of economic development, proactive branding can transform a region's economy by attracting employers, employees and investment capital. It can keep a region's economy strong, even in downturns. A perfect example is North Carolina's effort, started in the 1950's, to move away from its dependence on tobacco and furniture by showcasing the area's three universities as a "research triangle."

What is branding?

Branding is a word used casually and loosely in today's economy. There are many misconceptions about what it is, how it works, and how it can be strategically accomplished. (For more detailed information on branding, refer to the selected readings listed at the end of this paper.)

A brand is not just a slogan or an ad campaign. It is actually intellectual property; the totality of the thoughts, feelings, associations and expectations that come to mind when a prospect or customer is exposed to an entity's name, logo, products, services, events, or any design or symbol representing them. These thoughts and expectations affect preferences and behaviors: Would you prefer to locate your business in Bosnia or the Silicon Valley? How about the Rust Belt?

Often, location branding has to start with small steps. For example, Iowa has long resented its image of “hogs, corn and hicks,” so the state made a concerted effort to help the national media *not* promote the stereotype when covering the 2000 presidential race there. Instead, the state purposefully staged press conferences on the campuses of universities. And while not denying their agricultural roots, an effort was made to showcase high tech agriculture, like biotechnology.

More and more, however, location branding is being done on a major scale. Just as any public entity would carefully plan for the mapping of an interstate or building of a convention center, so too are governments strategically determining their brand marketing strategy with research so that it stands the test of time and public debate. Then they are leveraging and shepherding their brand like a valuable asset.

For example, under Prime Minister Tony Blair, Britain has proactively and strategically researched its brand and is using sophisticated branding tools to try to boost the country’s fortunes for the new economy by positioning itself as “cool.” (For more detail see sidebar on “The Brand Called UK.”) Blair and his cabinet know it will take years, because a brand is not ingrained in the hearts and minds of customers overnight. It can be quite an investment of money and will. But then, most things of lasting value are.

What can be branded?

Anything can be branded. Morton branded the commodity of salt. Perrier branded water. American Express branded the intangible of credit. Nutrasweet and Intel have branded ingredients. Even the exact same product, wrapped in the same white paper, can be made to stand for two very different brands—Marlboro and Virginia Slims.

Some locations, like The Amana Colonies of Iowa, have branded a way of life. For centuries geographic regions have been used to halo agricultural commodities with a value premium: Roquefort, Prosciutto di Parma, Idaho potatoes, Wisconsin cheese.

The brand positioning of most locations has evolved over time due to history, legends, famous people, star products, cultural values or arts and crafts. But what has evolved over centuries may turn out to be counter-productive in today’s marketplace. In fact, some say that in today’s global economy, states and nations will be compelled to brand or re-brand themselves or lose substantial revenue from exports, tourism, and inward investment. (See sidebar on “Trading Places” on the next page.)

THE BRAND CALLED UK From “Rule Britannia” to “Cool Britannia”

“You can’t reshape national reality without reinventing national identity,” said Geoff Mulgan, founder of the think tank Demos, and advisor to Prime Minister Tony Blair. So he and others went about to rebuild the perception of Britain—found in extensive research to be a stale, pale, male kingdom that was culturally adrift and economically uncertain with low-tech products of bad value.



Their strategy? Re-brand the country. It seemed a necessity as research revealed that foreign companies viewed Great Britain as an island that time forgot—stuck in the past, hostile to free trade, driven by labor disputes. Even potential tourists stayed away, believing that they would encounter lousy weather and crummy meals served by haughty hosts.

In truth, Britain’s image had not yet caught up with the new reality of its being a hub of fashion, food, music, and design, a destination for entrepreneurial immigrants, and home to one of the leading tech centers of Europe. So borrowing from the world of business, Mulgan prodded the government to reshape Britain’s self-concept (as well as the world’s concept of it) as being “cool.”

Advocates believe that re-branding Britain has been smart business for a modern economy, and a smart way to focus, integrate and more efficiently spend the country’s \$1.3 billion annual overseas promotional budget.

The effort has benefited far more than travel and tourism, too. When a nation builds an attractive brand, it creates an identity premium that attaches to businesses operating out of that country. Mulgan argues that if Britain’s brand is strong, then companies in that country will attract more clients, be able to charge more, and generate real economic advantages for the nation. He concludes: A modern government not only must protect the nation’s shores, it must also boost the nation’s brand equity. Supporters of the effort also note that branding the country makes the people who live there feel better and have a clearer self-concept.

Critics note that the effort has been sometimes comical, not particularly systematic, and is really only slick and dirty spin-doctoring; Mulgan counters with the argument that branding a country is nothing new. Two hundred years ago, “Britishness” was an invented identity. In America, the flag and Uncle Sam were consciously designed to brand the new republic. The point is, national identities don’t just emerge from nature, people create them. And while past national brands started out with a military focus, they now need to have an economic focus on fast companies and smart workers.

To go about its re-branding effort, Britain borrowed many of the tools of business marketing—focus groups, a national annual report, symbols of change like the Millennium Dome, publicity on new creative service industries and its open and multi-cultural society, and what it has to sell to an increasingly knowledge-driven world. The effort was led and made real by:

- A small “vision group” chaired by the Prime Minister and including key stakeholders who worked to agree on strategic objectives and insure consistency and integration of the final message.
- A branding unit at the government’s cabinet level, to provide expertise and logistical support, systematically measure performance and track changes in the identity.
- New government initiatives that would help the country live up to the brand promise—by helping Britain’s institutions become more entrepreneurial, more long-term in their visioning, more creative and fostering of things “cool.”

Sources: Leonard, Mark. “The Brand Called UK.” *Fast Company*, February-March 1999; Gilmour, Fiona. “Brand of Hope and Glory.” *The Times* (London), July 22, 2000; Anholt, Simon. “The Nation as Brand.” *Across the Brand*, November-December 2000.

Why branding works.

Branding is a natural function of human psychology and information processing. Evolution insured that survivors were those best able to abbreviate the details of their surroundings, judge and categorize them for easy storage, recall, and decision-making. The mental phenomenon that makes branding work has been around for millions of years. It is not a fad that will be out of date in 5 or 50 years.

You could call branding “stereotyping,” because the nature of human information processing is that we jump to all kinds of conclusions simply based on knowing one or two things about a person, place or thing: We “halo” a product or location with all kinds of other characteristics (rightly or wrongly) in an effort to aid quick decision-making.

In a world of increasing information overload, people are turning more and more to the decision-making telegraphy provided by branded products and services: A 1997 survey by Yankelovich found that a known and trusted brand name strongly influences the buying decisions of 63% of respondents, dramatically *up* from 51% three years earlier.

The principles of branding a state are the same as for the branding of any other product or service—be it food, insurance, product, or appliance.

The principles of effective branding.

Strong brands share many characteristics. The following six are critical to the current discussion. (For more in-depth information, see recommended readings listed later in the paper.)

- 1) A strong brand is relevant to the needs and wants of the targeted customer.
- 2) It is different from the competition in a way that is relevant and compelling to the targeted customer.
- 3) A strong brand is held in high esteem by the customer.
- 4) To be strong, a brand must have a high degree of awareness with the customer and those that influence the customer.
- 5) The brand must be consistently communicated over time.
- 6) The strongest brands are based on benefits of an emotional or social nature (rather than functional benefits) in the eyes of the customer.

TRADING PLACES

Why countries must now engage in brand marketing like companies do.

In a world where 46 of the largest 100 economies are companies, not countries—companies economically stronger and better known than nations—it is the observation of many that to succeed, smart countries are now running themselves as companies once did, and vice versa.

Countries are increasingly emphasizing nationality, while global companies increasingly ignore it. More and more governments speak of growth targets and revenue streams, while companies are taking over some of the traditional roles of government—educating workers, providing health care and long-term financial security.

Governments are dealing with questions of reputation, image and identity as they compete not only for power and influence, but in the new marketing battle to attract investments, employees, and sales in the form of exports and tourism. In other words, countries are suddenly realizing what companies have long known—brand marketing is central to their competitive edge.

Wally Olins, who has a brand consultancy in Britain and is a visiting professor at the Copenhagen Business School, argues in his book, *Trading Identities*, that brand marketing is a shrewd strategy for countries and regions to capture the biggest slice of *inward investment, exports, and tourism*.

Branding is critical to help countries capture the most attractive companies for their own economies, he argues. “Wales may compete with Hungary and with Austin to get a major investment from a Silicon Valley company—a company which may be equally ignorant of, or prejudiced about, each or all of them. So the prejudice and ignorance have to be dispelled through advertising, brochures, web sites, competitive tenders, beauty parades, presentations, and all the other paraphernalia of modern marketing.”

“It is about presenting a nation or a region in a powerful, attractive and differentiating way, with activities similar to those required for marketing products or services—with networks around the world and the employment of professional ‘marketeers’. The rewards are vast. Wales, one of the most successful regions in the world in winning inward investment, has attracted a staggering 12.6 billion pounds over 16 years.”

Olins adds that there is also *export* investment marketing: Corporate brands and the identities of their point of origin have always fed off each other and overlapped. For many people, Sony is Japan and Japan is Sony. Germany is unemotional engineering efficiency like Mercedes-Benz. Italy is stylish like Max Mara. Britain is traditional like Burberry. “But these national brands tend to reinforce age-old stereotypes. They are inevitably limiting and limited. What happens to a German brand that depends on emotion like Hugo Boss? Traditional, deep-rooted and often misleading stereotypes can hold countries back.”

“With tourism being the world’s fourth largest industry, growing at 9% a year, increased competition for a slice of the pie will also pressure countries and regions to brand themselves.” Olins warns that the danger here is that traditional tourism marketing will rely more and more on

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TRADING PLACES

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price, attracting more and more people who usually spend less and less. The alternative is for countries to trade up, differentiating themselves like consumer brands, emphasizing their art, culture, food, architecture, landscape and other unique characteristics through sophisticated branding.

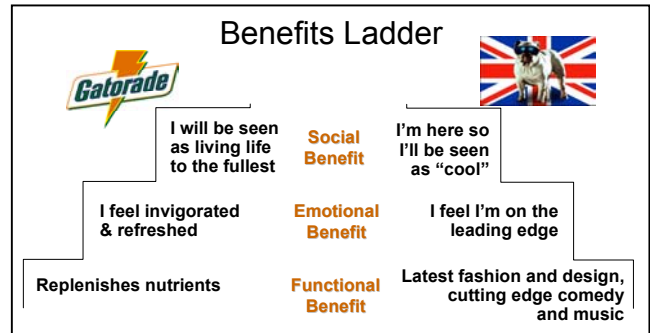
Olins concludes: Tourism joins export and inward investment in the commercial battle between nations, fought using modern marketing tools. And the images that a nation has in tourism, inward investment and brand export inevitably overlap and coalesce. Success will depend on handling this in a sophisticated and coordinated fashion so that a complex nation or region has a clear, attractive and differentiated image that meets its needs for all. That is why increasing numbers of governments are adopting the marketing techniques that companies have been using for years.

Olins offers several steps with which a government can brand its country or region:

1. Set up a work committee with representatives of government, industry, the arts, education and the media to start the program.
2. Find out how the nation is perceived both by its own people and by nations abroad, through quantitative and qualitative research.
3. Develop a process of consultation with opinion leaders to look at national strengths and weaknesses, and compare them with the results of internal and external studies.
4. Create the central idea on which the strategy is based with brand professionals. Seek a powerful and simple idea which captures the unique qualities of the nation and which can be used as a base from which the entire program can be developed. Go from describing it in a page, to a paragraph, to a phrase to only a word or two.
5. Develop ways of articulating the central idea visually—not just in a logo and tourist ad displays, but in the design of airports and embassies.
6. Look at how the messages of tourism, inward investment and export can be coordinated and modulated so they are customized for each audience but still follow the same brand identity.
7. Create a liaison system through the working party in power to launch and sustain the program and to encourage supportive action from commerce, industry, the arts, media and so on. Roll it out gradually. Look for every opportunity in which to use it—sports, industry, education, architecture, transport, and more.

Source: Olins, Wally. *Trading Identities: Why Countries and Companies are Taking on Each Other's Roles*. The Foreign Policy Centre, Panton House, 25 Haymarket, London, UK, SW1Y4EN.

Characteristic six is critical to the branding of any product or service, and location branding is no exception. Emotional benefits (how you feel when you use the brand) and social benefits (how you want others to see you) are usually more compelling to customers than functional benefits. While functional benefits (like low taxes, great schools or a critical mass of companies in e-commerce) are important, they are the easiest for competitors to also claim or duplicate.



Wisconsin has historically advertised itself with functional benefits like great schools, proximity to 50% of the U.S. population, and "work where you play." And while these are important functional benefits, they do not by themselves differentiate us from many other states making similar claims. In contrast, a higher order positioning for Wisconsin would allow it to change the battlefield on which it competes for companies and workers in the new economy. (One hypothetical example is Wisconsin as the "progressive thought leader.")

Britain has proactively chosen to communicate a social benefit as the basis of their brand positioning—that people and businesses located in Britain will be seen as cool and hip and contemporary. That's not as frivolous as it seems. Research with Britain's desired customers determined that cool was relevant to their needs in the new economy.

Smart marketers try to find a promise of benefits (i.e., a brand promise) that transcends time. France's long-held emotional/social positioning to be all about "tasteful living" still works because *how* it manifests itself today has grown to fit the times. Germany's reputation for "perfectionism" will continue to be attractive in the future to those companies for whom this is an important quality. But what perfectionism means in 2010 will likely be different than in 2001. To keep its perfectionism promise relevant, Germany will have to be proactive with initiatives for services and programs deemed "perfectionistic" to future customers.

Location brands that are built on social and emotional benefits can be differentiating and especially credible. Correctly identified, they will be seen to be truly organic to the region due to shared history, principles and beliefs. Purpose, ethos, and values from a shared heritage or experience are, after all, what bond people together into a municipality or state to begin with. But only after they are identified and articulated into a succinct and differentiated positioning, relevant to today's global economy, can they be promoted to citizens, potential employers and employees, and investors.

This is both the challenge and opportunity of Wisconsin's positioning: How do we answer the question of what is Wisconsin's shared purpose and ethos in a way that will be compellingly relevant and differentiating to new economy companies and the workforce they need? It is likely that several hypotheses will need to be constructed and tested—just as Britain ultimately tested six different potential positions before it arrived at “cool.”

Whatever Wisconsin chooses, it ultimately must be summarized succinctly in three to four words or less, like Britain's “cool” or France's “tasteful living.” This value proposition (called a “brand promise”) is used to focus and coordinate one's marketing efforts on all internal fronts so that all services and communications deliver on the promise. (Note: a brand promise should not be confused with a slogan. For example, “We like it here,” from Governor Knowles' days was clearly a slogan. While very popular in-state, for external marketing purposes it did not deliver a relevant or differentiating brand promise over our competition.)

What is the economic value of branding Wisconsin?

Building high awareness of a compelling, relevant and differentiating brand promise has been proven time and again to affect customers in one's favor; thus the term “brand equity,” meaning the added value uniquely attributed to an entity simply because of the positive stereotypes associated with it.

Such an “identity premium” can give people, products or services originating in a particular location a competitive or price advantage. German cars are generally perceived to be “worth more” due to the quality the country of origin halos them with. Sparkling wine can attract a good price, but people are willing to pay more for real “champagne.” A recent international campaign for “Spanish tiles” is an effort to establish an identity premium.

The ability of a strong brand to “halo” a location and all it produces with perceptions of added value is one reason that branding is a hot topic in many countries and cities all over the world today. Leaders are

COULD WISCONSIN BE “BIOTECH ALLEY?”

Long heralded in-state as a strong contender for Wisconsin's brand positioning, biotechnology has a fundamental weakness: it is a functional differentiation, which means leadership in biotechnology is something that has and can easily be copied by other states.

As a result, Wisconsin's critical mass of research, facilities and companies in this industry, great as they are, don't differentiate Wisconsin from several other states. In fact, independent sources site Wisconsin as, at best, tenth in the nation as a biotech center—behind states that are far ahead both in reality and perception: California, Texas, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina, Georgia, New York, Florida, and Minnesota. (Source: *Business Facilities* “Exclusive ranking of the top 15 locations that sow the seeds of biotechnology success,” October 1999.)

At best, branding experts would suggest that Wisconsin's functional capabilities and facilities in biotechnology are more likely to be support points for a larger claim we make—that is, an emotional or social benefit positioning.

realizing that competitiveness and “identity premiums” are really determined by the sales value of what one offers in the customer's eyes. And sales value is driven not by things like low pricing or functionality, but by the perception of compelling and differentiating emotional and social benefits. The more relevant and differentiating the perceived benefits, the stronger the brand equity if there is high awareness of it.

The value of strong perceptions in the eyes of customers means a company (or location) will have a more stable economic base from on-going demand and a more predictable future. That probability gives the brand great value. It's why the CFO of Coke brags that, if all their plants and equipment were obliterated off the face of the earth, he could walk right over to his bank and borrow \$100 million just on the strength of what the name Coca-Cola stands for. Brand equity is why real estate in Silicon Valley can be priced higher than similar real estate 50 miles away. And why governing agencies in Silicon Valley probably don't have to discount their taxes to get businesses to locate there.

A strong brand makes customers overlook or rationalize potential negatives, too. That is why building a strong brand for Wisconsin would help us overcome some factors that otherwise might limit our economic development appeal, like cold winters, high unionization, mid-continental location, and relatively high taxes.

In America today, CEOs, bankers and Wall Street, site selectors and employees “invest” in brands, because:

- A loyal brand following means predictable sales, repetitive profits and greater stability. (Witness the economy around the Research Triangle.)

- A strong brand is assurance against low-cost competitors, management mistakes, or acts of God, because with a strong brand, customers stay loyal and business is more stable. (The 1998 hurricane devastated Key West, but the strength of the brand lured tourists back within weeks.)
- A strong brand can mean higher margins, because people prefer you even if you cost a little bit more. (“The other industrial park sites are cheaper but I’ve chosen this park because it has ties to MIT.”)
- A strong brand gives you more clout with vendors, developers, banks, and elected officials.
- A strong brand attracts employees even in a tight labor market. (“Dad, I could work for brand X or Harley-Davidson. Which would impress my friends and look better on my resume?”)
- A strong brand makes advertising and promotion dollars work harder and more efficiently, for messages can be more focused, consistent and persuasive over time.

Reasons like these are why so many say that the brand identity of a country or region or state may be more valuable than its hard assets. After all, what could be more valuable than getting a CEO to prefer Wisconsin as a location for a new plant, with something that doesn’t require us to be the low-cost provider?

As management consultant Tom Peters says: “In an increasingly crowded marketplace, fools will try to compete on price. Winners will find a way to create lasting value in the customer’s mind.”

TEN ISSUES AFFECTING THE EFFORT TO STRATEGICALLY BRAND WISCONSIN

What would it take to create compelling perceptions of relevant differentiation for Wisconsin in the minds of high tech companies, their employees and support services? Is it even possible?

The ten issues below outline a path by which Wisconsin can answer these questions and be ready to launch its brand in a year. Note, however, that the path is not linear. It is more like a spiral. That is because answers from a discussion of later issues double back to affect decisions from earlier issues, which in turn affect later decisions all over again. Such is the nature of branding and marketing. It requires that specialized research be conducted and analyzed by experienced brand marketers for customer insights. It often calls for various hypotheses to be constructed and tested to gain clarity. Most critically, it often calls for leadership whenever there can’t be consensus.

1. Precisely what are we trying to brand—the whole state? Each region? A single critical mass of capabilities like biotechnology?

Defining a brand begins with the scope of the product, service, or region to be branded. A scope too broad, such as all of Europe versus just France, results in a brand built upon the lowest common denominator. That makes it difficult to arrive at a brand promise that is relevant or compelling to anyone. On the other hand, a scope that is too narrow may keep a location from achieving a critical economic mass to sustain its needs or propel continuing growth. Las Vegas has worked hard to evolve from the narrow scope of gambling to the broader scope of entertainment center/theme park. That has allowed them to move from an easy-to-copy, functional brand promise of “gamblers paradise” to the more emotional brand promise of “adult freedom.”

Is Wisconsin like Britain, where the boundaries of the state are the boundaries of the brand? Or, like the Research Triangle or Silicon Valley, will making a region famous be the most effective strategy to fulfill the state’s need to attract more high-paying new economy jobs and employees?

We can’t answer that question by ourselves. The brand scope cannot be determined by residents with their regional biases, nor by elected officials bent on getting stardom for their district, nor by narrow special-interest groups like trade associations. Rather, the scope must be determined by the customers we want to attract.

So to determine what Wisconsin should brand, we must first ask who we are trying to attract and how do *they* view the marketplace? If we are driven only by our own in-state need to be all things to all people, we may close off the opportunity to be something of significance in the eyes of the new economy outside our borders.

Thus, among the first issues for Wisconsin is to agree on scope. Are we willing to let our targeted customer help define it? Or are there political realities that override the marketplace? Ideally, Wisconsin marketers will agree on a scope that allows enough flexibility to succeed across diverse categories of targeted employers, while still capturing emotional and social synergies that are compelling and relevant to all of them.

2. Who is the target of our branding effort?

We need a detailed hypothesis of who the ideal target is in order to do research with them. For it is the customer who must tell us who they see as Wisconsin’s competition. It is the customer who must tell us what would make Wisconsin different from the competition in ways that are relevant to them.

There are at least three possible customer targets for Wisconsin's brand marketing efforts.

- A. The best and the brightest available for hire as employees. This is often defined as young graduates of our colleges who leave to take jobs out-of-state at great cost to both the Wisconsin employer who'd like to hire them and the taxpayers who educated them but get no return on their investment. Given the labor shortage in Wisconsin, should we also be looking to retain older workers? Attract foreign workers? (For example, India has one of the highest numbers of information technology specialists.)
- B. The employers. This is a group that can be defined broadly or narrowly, based on vastly different marketing strategies. For example, they can be "niched" as entrepreneurs, by geography (in-state "grow your own" versus out-of-state), by SIC code, or by the so-called broadly defined new high tech economy or old economy.
- C. The service network. This is defined as the infrastructure needed to support high tech companies, including venture capitalists, banks, law and accounting firms familiar and comfortable with the new economy risk and needs. Who of this group should be a factor in our brand development? And do we need to consider the global economy and include, for example, potential overseas investors?

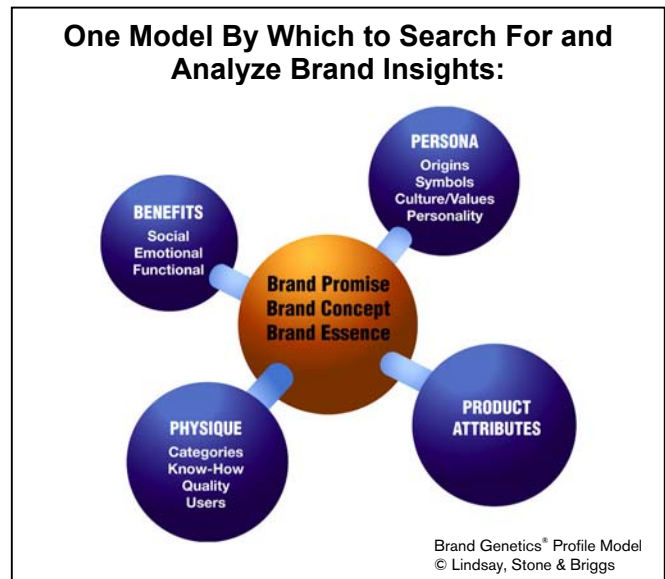
In the debate to settle who the target is, many things should be weighed:

- Are all three to be targeted, or just one or two?
- If we attract one, like new economy employers, will the others follow? Or would it be impossible to attract the employers if we didn't also have the workforce they'd need to hire?
- Can we communicate a relevant, differentiating promise that is compelling to all three? Or is that too broad and ambitious?
- Could we agree on the employment base, average wage, job type, etc. we'd like in the state, then see what employers and support services that model has in common?
- And finally, is there a more innovative way to think about whom the target is that gives us insights our competitors may not have? For example, what if our target is not determined by SIC code or geography or age, but rather by attitude? In 1991, Forward Wisconsin did attitudinal market segmentation research, aggregating the answers from CEOs and site selectors of ten diverse SIC codes. The research discovered that there were four distinct sets of attitudes that compelled people to prefer or reject Wisconsin regardless of the SIC code or location of their business: Two groups found Wisconsin's reality attractive. One even said high

taxes and cold weather were not a problem. The two other segments revealed they would never consider Wisconsin's northern climate or high taxes, no matter what else changed. The research defined not only each customer segment's hot buttons for brand positioning purposes, but also who the competition was in their eyes.

3. How do we figure out what our brand positioning could or should be?

We ask the targeted customer. We ask with the "end" in mind—that is, we ask questions that lead to insights applicable for branding purposes. We ask the customer certain things with specialized techniques to find out information that our competition doesn't have—things that the targeted customer may not have yet revealed, not even realize themselves. There are many research and positioning models used to get at brand insights.



Most often, brand-oriented research starts with qualitative techniques as opposed to quantitative. Exercises and questions are used to get insights about the functional, emotional and social benefits of the brand and its competition. In addition, research methods are used to reveal insights on the persona which may derive from heritage, symbols, culture and personality. (See brand DNA model, above.)

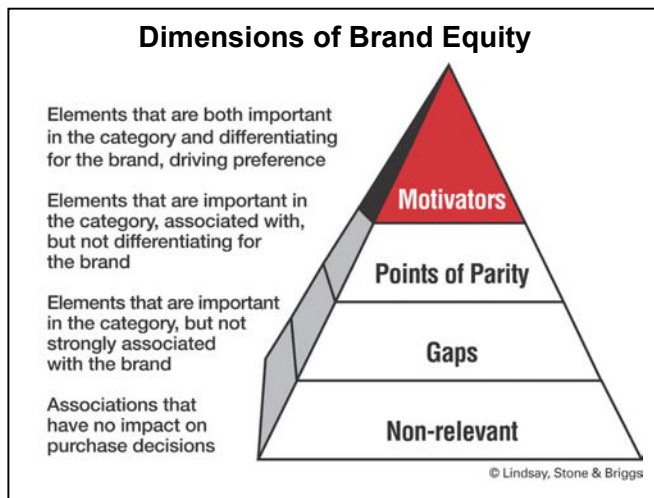
The research then goes on to seek insights on the competition for the same factors. The results are analyzed for what it would take to drive brand preference. The discoveries are not always crystal clear and often require further research and innovative thinking. It was not unusual that Britain ultimately developed six hypothetical brand promises from its first phase of qualitative research, testing them further with the target customer in order to decide that "cool" was the most relevant, differentiating and compelling.

4. How can we make sure our brand image is seen as high tech, relevant and compelling to new economy companies?

Research and experience over the years, across many categories of endeavor, tells us that:

- A. If we immediately offer up a brand image that is far from current perceptions of Wisconsin, our target will never believe it.
- B. If we want to end up someday with an image vastly different from the one we have today, we'll have to build it in increments.
- C. If we can't deliver now what the new economy target seeks, we'll have to build it before we can tout it.

The only way to find out what characteristics and benefits Wisconsin now possesses, or should have in order to be seen as high tech and relevant to new economy companies, is to do research with the targeted customer. Since most other states and countries are also trying to position themselves for the new economy, our research objective should be to find out what gaps we have to fill, or what motivators we have or could create to be competitive. (See illustration below.)



Once known, it may take lots of effort and several years simply to close gaps with the competition, or to keep from falling behind them further. If we find that it will take several years to be able to deliver motivators, we may need to craft a relevant brand position that we can launch now, but that can also grow with the state as various initiatives get us closer to delivering on true relevant differentiation.

Perhaps the biggest issue for Wisconsin to address in this particular discussion is timing. For it is possible that Wisconsin will need to hold off on promoting itself with a new brand image until we have invested in the programs, services, funding mechanisms or whatever is needed to deliver truly relevant and competitive differentiation in the eyes of the target customer.

The experience of Malaysia points out the dangers of making claims before you're certain you can deliver on them. (See below on "Malaysia's Branding Backfires.") The success of Ireland shows the wisdom of quietly making sure you can deliver on your promises before bragging about them. (See sidebar on "Ireland: Economic Miracle" on the next page.)

MALAYSIA'S BRANDING BACKFIRES
Promoting itself before it was ready

Sound brand marketing requires that you not brag about your positioning unless or until it is real. For a country or region, this can be difficult, as political impatience to promote oneself to the marketplace may overtake common sense to take the time to build the infrastructure required to deliver on the brand promise.

A perfect case in point is Malaysia. In the first half of 1999 it launched an ad campaign in *The Economist* and other major publications charting its "now stable democracy and recovery from near economic collapse." But the campaign's launch coincided with headline-grabbing, scandalous political upheavals, flagrant police violence, and courtroom stories about current and past leaders that raised serious questions about the country's political freedom.

Calling extra attention to itself when it couldn't deliver on its promise of a stable democracy only served to more deeply ingrain negative perceptions of the country that will take even longer to reverse, if ever they can.

Source: Olins, Wally. *Trading Identities: Why Countries and Companies are Taking on Each Other's Roles*. The Foreign Policy Centre, Panton House, 25 Haymarket, London, UK, SW1Y4EN.

5. How can we pull diverse regions, industries and initiatives in the state together under one brand umbrella?

Whatever Wisconsin's ultimate brand promise, it is still likely that some city, region or initiative in the state will feel it doesn't fit them. They will argue that they must have their own brand.

How can cities, regions, and industry segments in the state (essentially, all components of Wisconsin's brand portfolio) create a needed identity for themselves, yet remain under the larger brand that is Wisconsin?

The answer lies in the mechanics of what is called "branding architecture." One of the foremost authorities on brands, Professor David Aaker of the University of California at Berkeley, defines brand architecture as "that which organizes and structures a brand portfolio by specifying brand roles and the nature of relationships between them and their markets." Well designed and executed, the architecture of a brand portfolio can generate clarity, synergy, brand leverage and marketing efficiency.

IRELAND: ECONOMIC MIRACLE Build it first and they will come

Ireland today boasts one of the most vibrant high technology economies in Europe if not the world. Now referred to as “The Celtic Tiger,” it’s a perfect example of spending the time necessary to build up a country before promoting it.

Twelve years ago, the stereotype of Ireland was that of being rural and reactionary, marginal to the world economy and somewhat backward. Referred to as poverty stricken and de-populated, great numbers of its youth moved away in search of a better life.

Due to the decade-long strategic effort (called the social partnership) between government, unions, employers, farming and community organizations, Ireland has methodically built the economic infrastructure necessary to now become a viable player in the new world economy.

- Over the last three years the economy has grown at an average rate of more than 7%.
- The country now records a large balance of payments surplus and current budget surplus.
- Exports account for three-quarters of national output, which is a level unique in Europe.
- It is the second biggest exporter of software in the world after the United States.
- It wins close to a quarter of all available US manufacturing investments in Europe, although it accounts for just 1% of the population.
- Forty-five percent of Irish workers are now employed by trans-national corporations, such as Intel, IBM, Hewlett-Packard, Compaq and Sandoz.
- Fifty-three percent of immigrants are natives—people who left Ireland to work elsewhere and are returning.
- A decade ago, Irish incomes were less than two-thirds of British incomes; last year they surpassed them.

To “build it so they will come,” Ireland’s social partnership worked to achieve three economic goals (high growth, full employment and an acceptable distribution of income and wealth) with such initiatives as:

- Reducing company tax rates from 50 percent in 1988 to 36 percent by 1996, with a goal to be reduced to 12.5 percent by 2010.
- Increasing the say of trade unions in the management of the economy.
- Instituting the Millennium Fund to encourage Irish expatriates who are fairly advanced in technology to come back to Ireland and establish a company there.
- Promotion of a consistently positive approach on the part of governments to the development of business. This approach ensured the ready availability of world-class support services, from banking and trade finance to efficient transport logistics and sophisticated communications.
- Making it the Irish Trade Board’s main mission to assist Irish firms to develop sustainable markets at home and overseas, with offices around the country and 23 overseas locations.
- Have its Industrial Development Authority aggressively market Ireland around the world.

Sources: Tobin, Paul. “Ireland, The Celtic Tiger: A Winning Economy.” *CBS James Street*, 1997; Rushworth, Nick. “The Celtic Tiger and the Wild Geese.” *abc.net*, September 5, 1999; Hyland, Julie. “What makes the Celtic Tiger Run?” *World Socialist Web Site*, June 16, 1998; “In Step with the Celtic Tiger.” *www.ICEM.org*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1999.

Applied to the state, brand architecture might allow for an umbrella brand for Wisconsin with several sub-brands that fall beneath it. One example of an umbrella brand is the British company Virgin. The vastly different sub-brands of Virgin Records, Virgin Mega-stores, Virgin Cola and Virgin Airlines all share an umbrella lifestyle positioning but make it relevant to their own target markets by different products and promotional means. In the same way, sub-brands such as Milwaukee, the Fox Valley, or BioStar could make the positioning of a larger brand (Wisconsin) relevant to the needs of diverse target markets.

We will have to craft the Wisconsin brand with careful attention to what *is* our portfolio, what brands or sub-brands drive decision-making, what brand could add value as an endorser, or as an ingredient brand.

“Intel Inside” and “NutraSweet” are examples of brand architecture—specifically “ingredient branding” that elevate the perception of products they are in. At some point, Wisconsin may want to include in its marketing arsenal an ingredient branding strategy (BioStar “inside”) or “new products” developed specifically to further our positioning as Georgia is doing.

Georgia’s *Wall Street Journal* ads tout three branded services all in support of the state’s overall “we’ve got the people you need” position:

“You can put a building anywhere. But the right expansion or location decision hinges on putting a qualified workforce into place. That’s the first thing you’ll get from Georgia. Here, you can take advantage of “QuickStart,” the model for customized job training. You can literally create prototypical employees using the “*Intellectual Capital Partnership Program*” (ICAPP), the only business-university partnership designed to provide knowledgeable workers perfectly matched to employer needs. And you can be sure qualified job applicants will be plentiful, because Georgia’s groundbreaking *HOPE Scholarship Program* makes higher education free to thousands of our best and brightest. We’re ready. How about you?”

There is much more to how the practice of brand architecture might help all of Wisconsin’s diverse regions, cities and offerings “work” under one brand umbrella. But first the scope of what we are trying to brand must be defined, then its target market, then the brand’s positioning. Then it must be assessed if/which various regions, cities and offerings of Wisconsin have a discrete and meaningful niche in the overall Wisconsin brand portfolio.

However, once designed, Wisconsin's brand architecture can be applied to integrate all of the state's economic development marketing efforts and more.

6. What would it take to coordinate and integrate the state's brand positioning?

Once we have developed a brand, we will need to manage it so that we speak with one voice across many web sites and trade shows, as well as in every economic development council's sales literature.

There are many parts to speaking with one voice. First we will need to agree on a common language to express our position. That is the brand promise. Second, we will want everyone to use the same look, symbols or graphics in their communications. (See "A common symbol and graphic identity" below.) Third, we will have to develop a well-thought-out brand architecture, so everyone understands how the various parts reinforce each other.



A common symbol and graphic identity

Moving from the image produced by Franco's authoritarian and isolated rule of over 25 years ago, Spain has finally made inroads to a new brand identity more reflective of its modern democracy.

Experts on location branding note that Spain is among the best examples of modern, successful national branding because it keeps on building on what truly exists. Its branding efforts incorporate, absorb, and embrace a wide variety of activities under one graphic identity to form and project a multi-faceted yet coherent, interlocking, and mutually supportive whole.

Joan Miro's sun is the common brand symbolism for Spain's massive promotional program. It is used to graphically unify a myriad of activities, publicity events and ads even though the different programs are driven by both the public and private sectors. The net result is that Spain's branding effort is both efficient and impactful—one symbol leverages everything together in the eyes of Spain, and the world.

Source: Preston, Peter. "Branding is Cool." *The Guardian* (Manchester, England), November 15, 1999.

However, having the right brand ingredients, and ensuring that they are used consistently and correctly by every faction in the state, are two different things. Thus, Wisconsin should consider putting one person in charge of its brand. There is precedent: Britain established a cabinet level post to be the keeper of its brand. Might Wisconsin want a similar position of "Brand Czar?"

This individual should be a high-level appointment so he or she would have the authority to coordinate the efforts of the state Department of Development, Forward Wisconsin, the University system, and regional economic councils. Because branding is a long-term undertaking, the function should be apolitical so it can transcend administrations.

Finally, the person must be both a respected brand practitioner and be strong at the skills really needed to get the job done—cajoling, salesmanship, leadership.

7. What is the relation between Wisconsin's brand position and our price?

For any product or service, there is a perceived value that results from the relationship between an item's cost and promised benefit. That is to say, even if a Wisconsin location is really exceptional at providing new economy employers with some benefits they cannot find anywhere else, there is probably a point where price exceeds the value they feel they'd receive. If and when this happens, they'll locate elsewhere.

As a result, Wisconsin's brand positioning must take into account the costs and benefits of doing business in Wisconsin. What could be considered the costs that we will need to overcome with a compelling value? In the case of economic development, it is likely to include any number of the following:

- Taxes: Wisconsin taxes are perceived by many to be high compared to the rest of the nation. But while we may want to reduce taxes from current levels, we must also accept that we can never be the "low tax provider."
- Weather: Our weather may be an attraction to some people and a barrier to others.
- Transportation: Costs include not just shipping, but the time and cost it takes Wisconsin business people to take two airline flights to get to most U.S. destinations, three flights minimum overseas.
- Utilities: Costs include not just dollars, but the insecurity surrounding availability.
- Lack of skilled employees and the cost of training.
- The relative difficulty of obtaining venture capital.
- Missed opportunity costs: If the high tech network of like-minded companies is elsewhere, what does it do to a business to locate away from that mainstream of ideas, stimulation, and key potential hires?
- Inconvenience: A lot of Wisconsin new economy companies claim that in-state banks and law firms do not know high tech business. So they pay a cost and time penalty to obtain specialized banking and legal services out-of-state.

Some of these costs may be offset by tangible benefits, including low utility prices, a well-educated work force, cooperative government agencies, tax incentives, technical partnerships with the university system, good roads and transportation facilities, and the proximity of raw materials.

Even so, many new economy companies are likely to perceive the above list as representing a high cost to locating in Wisconsin. Thus a winning brand marketing strategy must combine a commitment to lower costs with the creation of something compelling and relevant to our customer over competitive locations. This can help overcome Wisconsin's cost disadvantages without forcing us to have to underbid the competition in an attempt to win every opportunity that comes along.

8. Once we determine what our brand stands for, what will it take to build high awareness of it?

Does Wisconsin need to advertise on national TV? Advertise in *Fortune* and *Fast Company*? This is the first thing many people jump to when talking about branding Wisconsin. But it is drastically premature to arrive at communication executions before the brand target or brand marketing strategy is determined.

Yet when that time is right, executions and budgets should be determined by what it would take to dominate the awareness of a carefully defined target customer. It will be important to narrow our target and executions to a level that lets us dominate to a persuasive degree.

It is safe to say that waging any kind of a dominating national campaign could easily cost \$15-20 million annually. (By comparison, Wisconsin's annual tourism budget alone is approximately \$13.5 million, and that is concentrated in only a select number of states.)

If Wisconsin's brand marketing effort has a global component, the costs may be considerably more. Furthermore, like any effort to change perceptions and move behaviors, the spending must be done consistently, annually, and at a high enough level to have an impact: Building a brand is not a sometime thing. It is a constant endeavor, especially if we are trying to over-come ingrained stereotypes of the state. (The City of Cleveland has worked hard to rebuild its old-fashioned "rust belt" image. Yet officials found that they were still losing business and conventions to, of all places, cities like Buffalo. Their analysis? Their \$700,000 annual promotional budget is weak compared to cities like Buffalo [\$5 million budget], Baltimore [\$2.4 million] and Pittsburgh [total of \$8 million]. Thus, Cleveland's "share of voice" does not allow them to gain any ground in their re-branding effort.)

9. How will we know if this branding effort is working? If we are widely perceived to have a "non-productive" brand image, how fast can it be changed?

Any responsible campaign trying to attract new economy employers and build perception of specific associations and equities will measure progress from a base level over time. This is common in brand marketing, and there are many mechanisms and measurement systems by which to track the meeting of objectives:

- Performance metrics like the number of new jobs or average wages compared with the competition.
- The ability to extend the brand over new categories of business or new targets.
- Current customer loyalty.
- Consistently being identified with certain relevant and differentiating characteristics.
- Ability to charge a price premium over a direct competitor.

Wisconsin will want to establish specific goals and then allocate dollars *annually* to track progress in achieving them.

We must be realistic, too. Ingrained images may take decades and generations to change. Like Iowa's image of hogs and corn, some of Wisconsin's current image may never entirely go away. Our best hope is to re-brand in a way that is compatible with our current image. For example, branding as the biotech capitol of the USA *would* be compatible with the beer, brats and cheesehead image of the state. Our only other alternative is to ignore the cheesehead identity; there is no middle ground to explain it away.

10. How can we organize ourselves to maximize chances of success?

Branding isn't cheap or easy. But we have no good alternative. As the war for a slice of the new economy heats up around the world, the countries, states and regions that do nothing will lose out to more aggressive, proactive and strategic competitors.

The following recommendations are offered to increase the probability of Wisconsin's success at re-branding itself. (For a suggested timetable by which the "rebranding" effort could launch one year from now—go right to "G.")

- A. Have a small executive group of decision-makers that can lead the effort to address the nine issues above before turning over maintenance to a Branding Czar. These people would be THE group responsible, a group with clout, the decisions of whom would transcend government administrations.

**TWELVE PRINCIPLES FOR
CULTURE CHANGERS**
*Considerations Britain Made When Seeking to
Re-brand Itself*

Be distinctive	Seventeen out of twenty new brands fail—usually because the brand doesn't offer the consumer anything new. In a world where countries have very little 'brand recognition,' it is vital to isolate a unique selling proposition.
Branding starts at home	If your identity is going to convince anyone outside the country, it has to be believed by people living in it.
Hype is unsustainable	No image which is fundamentally at variance with reality can be convincing.
Be simple	Although there can be a complex emotional or intellectual subtext, the basic brand proposition needs to be simple and credible.
Be strategic and repeat yourself	It takes time to change perceptions. Research shows that one-off initiatives have very little impact on attitudes. The basic message needs to be continually reinforced using different media in different contexts.
Soft touch	Hard sells are treated with extreme skepticism by sophisticated audiences.
Balancing continuity with change	You can't create something from nothing—all identities are based on history—even if they use it selectively. When Eastern European countries reinvented identities they all used things that were at least 200 years old.
Isolate givens from things to fight for	Some perceptions are already so entrenched and powerful that they do not need to be pursued, others are more up for grabs.
Diversity, but within coherent environment	The British story is obviously complex and must be inclusive enough for all agencies and people who live in Britain to buy into.
Go with the grain, but also tackle negatives	It is wise to go with the grain of existing attitudes, but also to tackle head-on any negative perceptions.
Set objectives and track progress	Identities should be managed with the same professionalism as other assets.
Benchmark and know your enemy	Other countries are making rapid strides in improving and managing their identities. Systematically keep an eye on best practices elsewhere.

Source: Leonard, Mark. *Britain™: Renewing Our Identity*. Demos, 9 Bridewell Place, London, UK, EC4V6AP.

There is precedence for such a group in both Britain and Spain. For example, in Spain, clothes designer Adolfo Dominguez, film maker Pedro Almodovar, and architect Santiago Calatrava came together to work on the government's effort. Their artistic sensibilities were felt to reflect the very positioning Spain wanted to manifest in its brand image, and they worked with the Spanish government and various regions over several years to create and project a fresh, free and more competitive Spain.

In Wisconsin's case, it is recommended that the group be small (no more than seven), close to the subjects at hand (economic development and branding) and executive in nature. As an example, an ideal team would consist of the President of the Board of Regents, the head of Forward Wisconsin, the Secretary of the Department of Development and three to four leaders from the private sector that are extremely knowledgeable practitioners of branding.

This team would need a small, temporary but professional staff of experienced brand marketers. It might consist of loaned executives from Wisconsin industry like the staffing model used by the Strategic Development Commission of a few years back. The staff would need to be headed by an objective, proven marketing executive who understands branding and has administered it nationally and perhaps internationally.

Responsibilities of the team of seven and their staff would include brand scope, target market definition, the direction of specialized brand research and its analysis, making the ultimate decision on brand positioning/promise and architecture, drafting a job description for and hiring the Brand Czar, and contracting with any outside specialists. They would also direct the items below.

- B. Plan and implement a major campaign to get in-state constituencies on the bandwagon. (The executive "Team of Seven" might do this through the larger Economic Summit Planning Committee or the task force suggested in point F below.)

As Ireland has proven, citizens, governments, businesses and economic development agencies in-state embrace and live the Wisconsin brand will have more impact than our out-of-state marketing efforts. What is more, we can't—and shouldn't—advertise something that we cannot deliver. So there first needs to be a major in-state effort to cultivate a state-wide consensus on the brand and inspire people to "live up to it." The motivating effect of this can be seen in Canada, where Molson Beer launched its own TV ad to take on the image of Canada that so frustrated its citizens. It has become a movement in that country which is testimony to the power of pride in one's brand identity.

- C. Jumpstart state, county and municipal governments to undertake the initiatives necessary to manifest the state's brand promise in new or improved economic development programs, products and services.
- D. Determine when Wisconsin can deliver on its brand promise to the target and thus, when to launch the positioning campaign. Determine communications strategy and tactics. Commission a brand marketing communication plan with detailed executions and budget.
- E. Establish a mechanism such as a Brand Czar to manage and track the entire effort.
- F. Create a body to continuously be a catalyst of the brand identity's use at the grass roots. As the British brand consultant Wally Olins suggests, this is a group that fights to have the brand reflected in local, regional and national events, sports, industry, education, architecture, transport, and more. Ideally, this broad group would represent trade associations, unions, the arts, and commerce. Their mission would be to provide strong central coordination that links the visioning body (the team of seven in A above) with day-to-day life:
- Making sure the brand identity is coordinated throughout all promotional opportunities.
 - Disseminating briefing material, templates, best practices, thematic material.
 - Commissioning events and activities in the brand spirit.
 - Coordinating cross regional activities, exhibitions, speakers, road shows.
 - Providing knowledgeable support for cities and regions seeking to develop their own coordinated brand identities.
- G. Commit to an aggressive but reasonable timetable so that one year from now, we know the Wisconsin brand promise and can be well on our way to making it a reality. A suggested timetable would be as follows”

December 2000: By executive order create (and recruit) the small executive group of decision makers (Team of Seven) and their staff.

Q1 2001: Team of Seven tackles Issues 1 through 3, determines hypotheses to be tested, hires research firm(s), starts search for “Brand Czar” (Issues 6 and 10 E) and staff.

Q2 2001: Brand Czar is hired. Research is completed and begins to be analyzed, tackling Issue 4. Further research is done as necessary to clarify or confirm brand's characteristics, points of difference, and potential positioning statement.

Q3 2001: The Team of Seven, its staff and advisors analyzes the research, finalizes the brand promise, and other necessary “case statement” material in support of it. Brand architecture (Issue 5) is tackled. The brand promise and its architecture are reviewed by the Governor and key stakeholders. Team of Seven also works on and/or commissions the development of three plans:

1. How to build brand promise into programs of the state (Issues 6, 7 and more).
2. How to launch it in-state (Issues 8, 9, and 10 B).
3. How/when to launch out-of-state (Issues 8, 9, and 10 D).

Q4 2001: The above plans are finalized, presented to Team of Seven, and prepared for presentation to the “Second Annual Wisconsin Economic Summit.”

Q1 2002: The brand effort is launched in-state (Issue 10 B); the Team of Seven works to jumpstart in-state initiatives (Issue 10 C). Tracking mechanisms are baselined (Issue 10 E). A larger grass roots group is recruited (Issue 10 F).

2002 and beyond: The brand is launched out-of-state when appropriate.

CONCLUSION

A state's leading industry may succumb to market changes. A tornado might destroy a major factory or industrial park. Inexpensive overseas labor can take jobs offshore. A large employer could be bought by an out-of-state company and moved off the tax rolls. But there is one type of asset that a state need never lose: a strong brand image.

All any of us really have for competitive advantage in this world is the sum total of perceptions and expectations people have about us. If we let perceptions about Wisconsin turn negative, we may never recover. Or at minimum, we will spend lots of money and decades trying. If those perceptions are never differentiated and people are never made aware of them, we're wasting our potential, cutting off potential returns.

In Wisconsin's case, the changing economy and the changing world market mean we can no longer allow others to define and control our most important asset—our brand. We must instead take the lead in targeting the decision makers who can help us reach our economic goals, strategically identifying what relevant and different benefits Wisconsin can provide them, build the benefits into all facets of the state, then aggressively build awareness of them.

If we can all put the larger goal of brand marketing ahead of our own opinions and wishes, we can build a new Wisconsin brand and make it an engine for profitability and growth.

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Marsha is in demand as a consultant on branding, speaking and teaching at conferences throughout the United States and Mexico, quoted in *ADWEEK*, *Advertising Age*, *Marketing News*, and more. She writes a regular column for *Brand Marketing*. Brandworks[®] University, her company's annual conference on branding, has received kudos as the nation's premier conference on the subject from *Nations Business* and other publications.

Her innovative thinking has made her a top recruit for numerous boards and task forces through the years, including Governor Earl's Task Force to Market the State (which created Forward Wisconsin), and Governor Thompson's Task Force on Jobs for the 21st Century. She has been a board member of Competitive Wisconsin since 1984, and is a past board member of Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce. Marsha has also served on the national board of the American Association of Advertising Agencies—her industry's premier trade group.

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In 1984, she was named Wisconsin Woman Entrepreneur of the year. In 1990, the *Milwaukee Journal* named her one of 90 Wisconsin leaders for the 90's. In 1997, she received the highly regarded American Advertising Federation's Silver Medal for lifetime achievement. And in 2000, she was presented the University of Wisconsin Award for Distinguished Service to Journalism.

Marsha has her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Wisconsin, where she did extensive research in the psychology of persuasion. Prior to graduate school and founding her firm in 1978, she worked for Madison Square Garden Corporation's holdings in Chicago.