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# Guest Editorial

## Corporate marketing and the branding of the organisation

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This special edition of the *Journal of Brand Management* draws on papers presented at the Ninth Symposium of the International Corporate Identity Group (ICIG), which is chaired by Professor John M.T. Balmer.

The symposium was held at the Balmoral Hotel in Edinburgh in March, 2007, organised by Dr Shaun Powell with the support of the other guest editors. The theme of the symposium was 'Corporate Marketing and the Branding of the Organisation'.<sup>1</sup> This special edition picks up the theme of this conference. As such, this edition reflects something of the quality, breadth and depth of the papers delivered at this event.

Over the last 15 years there has been increased practitioner and academic interests in the *branding of organisations* and, more recently, in the nascent area of *corporate and organisational marketing*. Readers of this journal will be acutely aware of the increased importance accorded to corporate brands, among other corporate-level concepts, by senior managers and from marketing/branding consultancies over recent decades. Today, both undergraduate and postgraduate electives and degrees focussing on a range of corporate marketing concepts, such as corporate brands, corporate identity and corporate marketing, are offered by many prominent Business Schools in Great Britain, Continental Europe, the Commonwealth and the USA. For instance, Harvard Business School, Strathclyde Business School, Brunel Business School and Bradford School of Management, among others, have pioneered MBA electives or MSc

courses in these areas. Not surprisingly, the above developments have resulted in a commensurate increase in books, special editions and academic papers devoted to this area. We believe that the papers selected via blind peer review for this special edition will represent an important addition to the oeuvre.

The lead paper of this special edition generated a good deal of interest, and positive comment from practitioners and scholars alike in Edinburgh. Entitled, 'Corporate Brands with a Heritage', the paper reports the findings of a major study undertaken by an international trio of well-known branding and corporate marketing scholars: Dr Mats Urde (Sweden), Professor Stephen A. Greyser (USA) and Professor John M.T. Balmer (UK). This paper introduces, and defines, what the authors see as a distinct branding category, which they term Heritage Brands. Drawing on extensive interviews undertaken with senior executives from a variety of organisations, they explain the importance of nurturing and protecting brand heritage. Their brand heritage quotient provides a managerial framework for operationalising the insights derived from their study.

The second paper co-authored by Dr Myfanwy Trueman (UK), Dr Nelarine Cornelius (UK) and Dr Alison J. Killingbeck-Widdup (UK) also chimed with many delegates with its focus on city branding. Their work focusses on the City of Bradford in England and the City's brand identity. Taking a stakeholder perspective, this paper examines the



importance of street environments (and the changes to them) in shaping corporate brand perceptions. The effects of such initiatives on corporate brand value are outlined along with the positive and negative aspects of such initiatives for those wishing to turn around the fortunes of a post-industrial city, which has been in long-term decline. Interestingly, the paper also reveals how improvements to street environments can link some of the city's diverse corporate brand communities.

The third paper by Tim O. Brexendorf (Switzerland) and Dr Joachim Kernstock (Switzerland) examines the interconnectivity between corporate branding and identity and accords particular emphasis on the relevance of behaviour on the management of identity. Taking an integrationist perspective, this paper may be seen to advance our general comprehension of the relationship between corporate identity and corporate brand management.

In the fourth paper, Dr Shaun Powell (UK) explores the interface between organisational creativity, organisational identity and the branding of small to medium size enterprises (SMEs) within the creative industries. The findings, based on case studies, revealed the complex nature of the above interfaces. The potential problems for brand building in these organisations and industries are highlighted and a number of avenues for further research on this rather under-investigated but important topic are identified.

In the fifth paper by Khanyapuss Punjaisri (Thailand) and Professor Alan Wilson (UK), the crucial role of employees in the corporate/service branding process is explored. This paper draws on research undertaken within 4- and 5-star hotels in Thailand. Specifically, it concludes that the lack of brand support on the part of employees mirror weaknesses in the brand-building process. The paper details

the dimensions that employees consider to be relevant in effecting (a) their perceptions of and (b) their performance towards the hotel brands examined.

Marshalling the work of Deephouse and drawing on a Foucauldian-oriented critique of the interplay between normalisation and differentiation, Professor Judy Motion (Australia) and Dean Shirley Leitch (Australia), in the concluding paper of this special edition, outline how this interplay represents a significant force *vis-a-vis* corporate brand strategy. The overriding conclusion from their analysis is that both academics and practitioners need to radically reappraise how they envision the management of corporate brands.

In bringing our short Guest Editorial to a close, we believe that the readership of the Journal will find that the papers forming this special edition will inform and educate, as well as stimulate.

**Shaun Powell, John M.T. Balmer  
and T.C. Melewar**  
Guest Editors

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- Note**
- (1) Further details about the history, purposes and symposia of the International Corporate Identity Group along with that of the International Centre for Corporate and Organisational Marketing can be found at: [www.corporate-marketing.org](http://www.corporate-marketing.org).

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