Northern Michigan University
Answers and Conversation

Chuck Reed
Senior VP for Client Services

Stamats, Inc.
chuck.reed@stamats.com
800-553-8878
The Big Question

How will Northern Michigan University differentiate itself from its competitors in ways that your target audiences value?
What Is a Brand?

• Contrary to popular opinion, a brand is not just a look
• Rather, a brand is a valued trustmark, a warrant, and a promise
• A brand is a promise expressed as a benefit that all internal and external Northern target audiences value and is based on meaningful research

When you hear “Northern Michigan University” you think of what?
What We’re Considering Today

• Branding and branding v. marketing
• The Work Plan
• Timetables
• Deliverables
• Questions (and answers)
What Is a Brand?

Branding should precede marketing.

Branding builds your strategic base and gives you direction for your marketing.
Essential Components of an Effective Brand
What We Believe About Brands

• Strong brands are built on three sturdy legs:
  1. Current and comprehensive market research
  2. Respect for an institution’s heritage
  3. A clear and shared vision for its future

• A brand strategy is more to clarify and translate, and re-commit to, an institution’s current core values rather than create new core values
What We Believe About Brands

• The brand clarification process should engage, equip, and energize your campus community

• Strong brands generate passion among stakeholders and excitement in your external marketplace

• The goal of a brand strategy is to establish and hold a position of perceived and real value in the minds of your most important audiences
What We Believe About Brands

• Brand architecture is a systematic way of viewing and organizing Northern Michigan University and your sub-brands, attributes, and graphic identity so as to achieve greater clarity, synergy, and leverage.
Focus On This Tiny, Tiny Space

What Stakeholders Value

What External Audiences Value

What Northern Competitors Do Well and/or Already Own
Building a Brand

1. Make a Brand Promise That Matters
2. Communicate Your Promise
3. Live Your Promise
4. Strengthen Your Promise
Death wish

Die-hard Aggie will take his allegiance with him

By RICHARD STEWART
Houston Chronicle East Texas Bureau

Jack Worthington has been connected with Texas A&M since 1937 and he's determined to stay true to the school for all eternity.

He'll probably be buried at Kyle Field if they would let him, but that honor is reserved for Aggie mascots.

But when Worthington takes his final trip, he's going out in a gleaming, five-foot-long maroon-tan glass casket with the official Texas A&M seal, set into the outside and the familiar A&M logo sewn right into the white satin headliner.

If archaeologists ever come across Worthington several moons from now, there'll be no doubt where his allegiance lies.

Worthington, 63, has no plans to take that trip any time soon. However, he recently became one of the first in the nation to buy an official Aggie casket when he made prepayment funeral arrangements with Southwood Funeral Home in College Station. That's when he saw the maroon and white coffin on display.

"I fell in love with it," Worthington said. "It's just beautiful."

See CASKET on Page 3E.
The NMU Work Plan
The NMU Work Plan: The Research

• July and August
  – Data and Document Review
  – Competitor brand review

• End of August, first of September
  – Engagement and Assessment
    ▪ Three days
    ▪ Campus interviews
    ▪ Community meetings
The NMU Work Plan: The Research

- September-October
  - Web Survey: Guidance Counselors and Teachers
    - Up to 5,000 e-mail invites administered by Stamats
  - Telephone Survey: Prospective High School Students
    - Up to 600 completed interviews
    - Attempting 200 completes each of:
      - UP students
      - Lower Michigan students
      - Out-of-state students
  - Telephone Survey: Parents of Prospective High School Students
    - Up to 200 completed interviews
Research Methodology

- Hold Preliminary Planning Meeting
- Settle Sampling Methodology
- Write First Drafts of Surveys
- Review Drafts with Client
- Field Test Revised Surveys
- Finalize Surveys
- Execute Studies
- Verify and Input All Data
- Write Initial Draft of Reports
- Send Reports to Client for Input
- Revise Drafts
- Hold On-Campus Presentation
Sample Questions for Audiences

• What do you value most about Northern?
• How do you describe Northern?
• How do (suspected brand attributes) fit with your perception of Northern?
• Are you aware of the “Northern. Naturally.” campaign, and what is your reaction to it?
• What makes Northern truly distinctive?
• What do you think Northern does better than/not as well as other schools?
• What kinds of students does Northern serve now?
• What kinds of students would you like Northern to serve in five years?
• How does Northern contribute to the overall enrichment of the Upper Peninsula? Michigan? The nation? The world?
Perceptual Map Example

Core Attributes

**EF College**
- Small classes
- Liberal arts commitment
- Cost
- Appearance of campus and quality of facilities

**AB College**
- Extracurricular
- Location
- Quality of academic facilities
- Reputation and recognition
- Honors program

**Client**
- Academic challenge
- Faculty skill
- Academic facilities
- Honors program
- Reputation, recognition
The NMU Work Plan: The Research

- November
  - Clarification and Development
  - Brand Workshop I
    - First of two on-campus workshops
    - Presentation of research
    - Develop up to five testable brand promises
      - What kind of institution are you?
      - Who do you serve?
      - What students want you to help them do/become?

NMU is the _______ institution for _____ who ________.
The Promise Test

• A promise test is about *relevance*

• Go back and ask all critical audiences, via quantitative research, which of the handful of promises is:
  – Most important
  – Most believable
  – Most distinctive (especially external audiences)
  – Most emotionally engaging
Statement 5: Most Appealing Components

Statement 5: *** University prepares future leaders in a supportive educational setting where students enjoy personal relationships with faculty and staff committed to transforming lives.

- 10%
- 11%
- 27%
- 52%
The NMU Work Plan: The Research

- November (pre-Thanksgiving)
  - Promise testing via Web (five-minute survey)
  - Send up to 30,000 potential respondents

- December (between Thanksgiving and Christmas)
  - Finalize brand promise, develop attributes, and discuss proof points
  - Brand Workshop II
    - Deliverables
      - Brand Portfolio
      - Finalized brand promise
      - Brand rationale
      - Brand attributes
      - Messaging matrix
# Messaging Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Attributes</th>
<th>UP Traditional students</th>
<th>Out-of-state Traditional students</th>
<th>Donors</th>
<th>Alumni</th>
<th>Others?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attribute 1 translated for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribute 2 translated for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribute 3 translated for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribute 4 translated for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The NMU Work Plan: Research Deliverables

• Comprehensive data analysis (PowerPoint and other)
  – Specific to NMU
    ▪ Not simply a recounting of the data
    ▪ What does it all *mean*?
  – You vs. best practices, competitors
  – Cross-cuts for all applicable audiences

• Detailed *actionable* recommendations for the institution and each audience as appropriate

• Presentations to the Board, the Committee, campus leadership, and the overall community as needed
  – Which might be often

• You own all the data, instruments, and work to date
Questions?