

1. Intro

Hello everyone. I'm Al Aasman, Sr brand strategist at ABC Inc. I've spent my entire adult life in communications and advertising and have focused almost exclusively on branding for the last 12. I've worked with over a hundred small businesses, not for profit organizations, educational institutions, crown corporations and government departments to help them clarify and articulate their brands.



One of the Yukon Agricultural Association's current strategic goals has to do with branding. Your board has started to explore what branding and brand alignment is and what YAA should consider if it enters into "brand clarification."

2. Intro -2

The board recognizes how important it is for YAA members to be looped into — and be part of — this discussion.

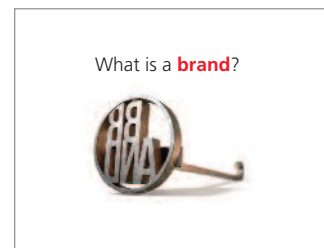
So, as the first step, I have worked with them to put together this training session about branding, brand awareness and the process of brand clarification.



3. What is a brand?

The practice of identifying cattle with a brand has become the dominant analogy for business and organizational identities.

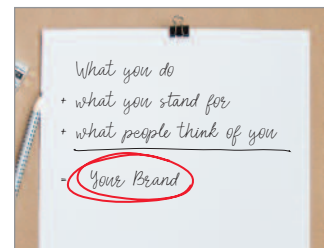
As with many analogies or metaphors, however, it suggests some of the superficial ideas about branding while skipping over the more important ones.



4. What you do and stand for + What the outside world thinks of you = YOUR BRAND

Ultimately, your brand isn't so much your logo or even what you say it is; it's what your audience says it is. In fact, your true and authentic brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room.

Managing your brand means you act and conduct your business in such a way that what they say about you is the same whether you're in the room or not.

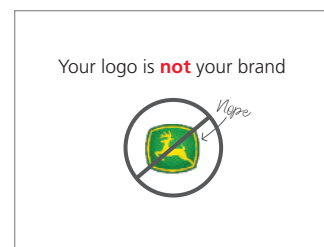


Question: Do you know what people say about YAA when you're not in the room?

Because you already have a brand, the work ahead comes down to articulating the brand or putting it into words. That's why we call it brand clarification rather than re-branding.

5. Your Logo is not your brand

It bears pointing out that your logo — the branding iron mark — is not your brand, merely a part of its visible identity. It helps your audience to find you and to get a basic idea of what your organization is about.



6. What is a logo?

The term logo derives from a Greek word, *logotype*. Logos means “word” and typos means “imprint.” The logo’s job is to “promote instant public recognition.”

People see the visual mark and recognize its color, shape and form. Ideally the logo will become associated with the brand.

A good logo is short-hand for what your brand represents. For instance:

Yukon Agricultural Association seems to represent robust agrarian individuals who use the tools of the land to generate produce.

Yukon Farm Products & Services Guide cleverly combines pitchfork/dinner fork imagery with spoon/leaf imagery on plate imagery to help connect the dots for its audience

Lendrum Ross Farm has people working with goats in a boreal forest environment

Fox Ridge Farm uses classic banner/blue ribbon iconography to suggest the quality of its product

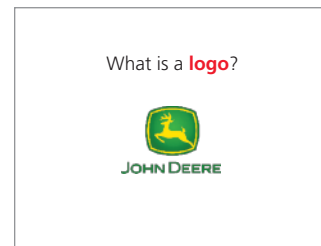


7. What is a logo? –2

I think we’re all agreed that this is a logo.

A very recognizable logo.

Question: what does the John Deere logo represent to you? Anyone?



8. John Deere history

The logo of the leaping deer has been used by this company for over 155 years.

This is in keeping with the “don’t mess with a good thing,” attitude that sums up the brand-management strategy at Deere.

In fact, the strong colour scheme also goes back a ways — to the pre gold rush era of the 1880’s.

Most recently, the logo was updated to better represent the brand’s commitment to its core values of innovation + quality, while moving into high tech and digital solutions. So they changed the deer.



Notice how the older style logos have the deer leaping down and over a log.

The newest version has a sharpened, more angular deer leaping upward and forward.

This is a good example of a company maintaining continuity with its history and brand identity while reflecting its current global, diversified and technological status, making the brand relevant for today’s audiences.

9. Branding versus marketing

While many lump branding and marketing together, they are different activities.

Marketing is essentially a tactical activity.

It is a “push” tactic that actively promotes a product or service.

It deals with advertising, promotions, trade shows, sales, etc.

It says: *Buy my product because it is better than theirs.*



10. Branding versus marketing

Branding is a more strategic activity.

It is not push, but “pull,” communicating what the brand is and isn’t.

It deals with foundational issues like purpose, reputation, vision values.

A brand will help encourage someone to buy a product, but the brand does not explicitly say “buy me.”

It says *“This is what I am. This is why I exist. If you agree, if you like me, you can buy me, support me, and recommend me to your friends.”*



11. Why does branding matter?

It is about keeping the promise you make to your audiences.



12. Branding simplifies promise-making and promise-keeping

Every organization, business, association makes an inherent promise of value to its audiences — both internal and external. It promises something that will improve their lives or situation, in one way or another.

Branding articulates that promise in a way that gets through to those audiences in order to motivate them.

When you can be clear about the real value your brand delivers, you can also bring clarity and focus to your association’s activities.

Questions:

What value do you promise your customers — as a farmer?

What value does YAA promise its members?

What does it promise to its wider, public audience?

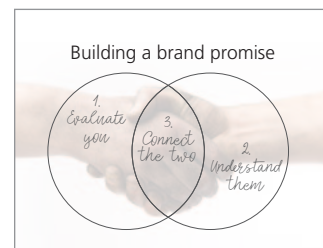
Do you know what people think of you — either as a business or as an association?



13. Building a brand promise

There are 3 key pieces to building that promise:

1. Evaluate what you do, and what you stand for. Put it into words.
2. Understand who your audience actually is and what they really need or want from you or an organization such as yours
3. Connect those two in all the things you say and do as an association.



Once you understand those 3 pieces, you are well on the way to having clarity about your brand

14. If we already have a brand, why clarify it now?

There are a number of good reasons starting with:

refresh — it's an opportunity to welcome and put into words why you, a member or potential member, belong here. The refreshed look and language says: *the Yukon agriculture sector is relevant today.*

This is important for attracting and retaining members, but also to *send the right message* to those who support you in the Yukon public and Government about the *value* YAA and farmers bring to Yukon.



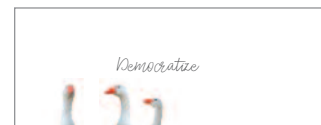
15. If we already have a brand, why clarify it now? –2

engage — as a step in your current revitalization efforts, brand clarification will help members maintain a mission and vision focus while implementing your strategic initiatives. This contributes to internal cohesion and engagement.



16. If we already have a brand, why clarify it now? –3

democratize — core brand messaging will help members to better understand YAA. This is a way of “democratizing” the brand, so that all members can talk about it in ways that are meaningful to them, not just to the communications or marketing people.



17. If we already have a brand, why clarify it now? –4

framework — the clear, differentiated positioning, messages and visuals of a clarified brand provides a consistent framework for all your communications and marketing activities.



18. If we already have a brand, why clarify it now? –5

continuity — a clarified brand puts you on a course that will endure to the benefit of the organization, guiding it forward even as the executive — and the membership itself — changes.



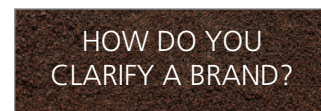
19. If we already have a brand, why clarify it now? –6

and finally, it will act as a **catalyst** — a strong and credible brand acts as a catalyst to attract people, partnerships and funding opportunities to the association



20. How do you clarify a brand?

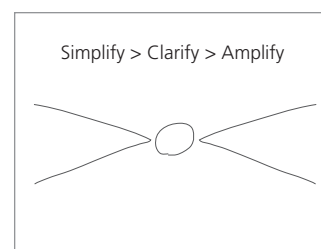
The starting point or brand foundation is to Put it into words.



21. Simplify >Clarify >Amplify

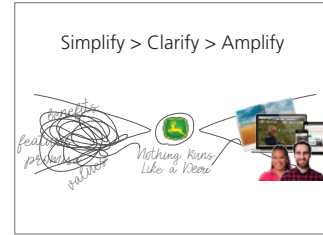
Putting your brand into words consists of a three-part process of Simplify–Clarify–Amplify

It's a process of self-reflection, making declarations and then sharing them



22. Simplify >Clarify >Amplify –2

1. **Simplify** — listing an organization’s *features* and attributes, converting those into *benefits* that your audience cares about, expressing the underlying *values* that your audience cares about then pulling it all together in a *positioning statement* and drawing the *brand promise* out of that.

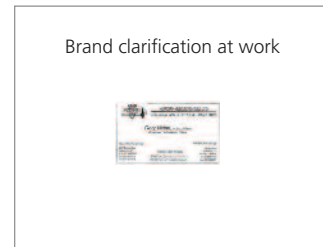


2. **Clarify** — put together the brand Road Map or blueprint that shows you how to talk about your brand, what it looks like and represents, its core messages, personality, logo and imagery

3. **Amplify** — this is the plan for how your brand will go out into the world in a cohesive way, aligned across your marketing and communications, your practices and services, your people, etc.

23. Brand clarification at work

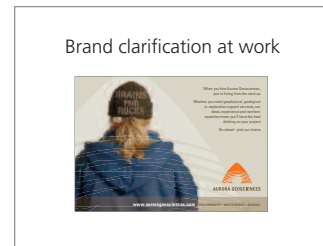
About 12 yrs ago, Aurora Geosciences came to us with a problem. The company had grown to two office locations and 50+ employees, but had no brand presence beyond the original logo and tagline: Aurora Geosciences Ltd., Geological & Geophysical Consultants. They recognized that their image was homey, unprofessional and uninspired — the very opposite of the dynamic company they really were.



24. Brand clarification at work –2

Brand clarification illuminated their key differentiation which is: *engaged minds, smart thinking and innovative solutions applied creatively to the uniquely northern geological context.*

This was captured in the brand promise and signature *“Brains for rocks”*



and in core messaging and communications that was smart, clever, and always reinforced the brand promise of being the best minds in the business in the North.

NOTE: The Internal audience, many of them professional engineers proud of their scientific credentials, disliked it intensely. They said *it’s unprofessional, makes us look foolish, our industry peers will laugh at us, I hate it, etc.* In the end, **Brains for Rocks** was used for a one year ad campaign, then retired.

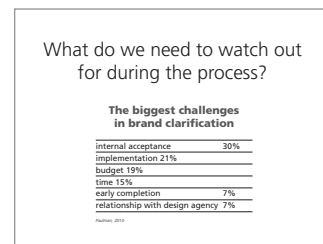
However, at trade shows in the subsequent year, Aurora staff were being asked repeatedly *“whatever happened to that great campaign you guys were running?”* The message totally resonated with the *intended* audience, those buying their services, and Aurora immediately — and broadly — adopted it as their brand promise and signature, and continue to use it to this day.

Two things to take from this example and experience:

1. Your intended audience is not necessarily internal, not the ones on the factory floor
2. But you need to engage this audience right from the get-go in order to get to the real audience

25. What do we need to watch out for during the process?

Both the research and our own experience in clarifying numerous brands, is that if you cannot achieve internal acceptance, if your stakeholders are not on board through the process, they will have a hard time accepting the results, and even harder time supporting it.



26. Change resistance, emotional attachment, directional bias, personal taste

There are many reasons that stakeholders do not get on board in a brand clarification (or, as its commonly called, a re-brand). They include:

Change resistance. As a general principle, most people don't like change. It complicates their lives.

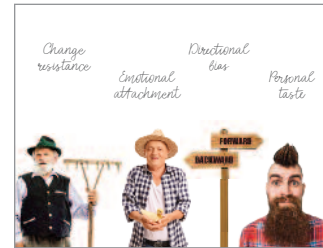
Emotional attachment. the old logo brings up fond memories of earlier associations with the organization, family ties, respect for the founders/original designers, etc.

Directional bias. Some people prefer to look to the past for reassurance and believe the organization should stick with what's worked in the past. Others prefer to go in new directions to capitalize on new developments in strategy, audience, marketplace and product.

Personal taste. For many, deciding on a logo is merely a question of what they like and don't like. What they do not understand is that brand decisions should be all about your organization's promise and your audience's needs.

Overcoming this resistance is not always possible. But it can be reduced or at least justified by being clear about the purpose of the rebrand (as we've discussed earlier).

But the most important thing an organization can do is to *regularly include the membership* in communications and in the process itself, from the very beginning.



27. How do we include members in the process?

They need to:

- **hear & be heard**, about the purpose and rationale for clarifying the brand.
- **participate** in surveys or audits to gather their input on the brand
- **be invited** onto the brand workshop team or onto the Brand Approval Committee.
- **review** the plans before anything changes to see how it will impact them and the organization
- **receive communications** and information to understand the new "brand narrative."
- **know the approval process** that the organization will use to make decisions on the brand.



28. Brand Approval Committee

The approval process is one of the most critical things an organization should manage to assure stakeholders that their interests are being met.

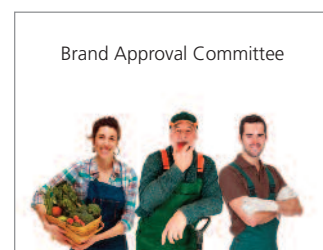
It should include key executive, management or communications staff, and internal audience or stakeholder members.

Their task is to approve:

first, the strategic documents that serve to lay out the brand position and

second, the concepts that reflect that agreed brand strategy and positioning.

Rather than a subjective-based decision process, brand clarification becomes a rational one, following a series of review-evaluation and decision-making steps that the committee pre-approves.



29. How long does it take?

3-6 months is the usual timeframe for a brand clarification.

Considering the member-inclusive process that YAA wants to pursue, 6-12 months would be an appropriate timeframe.

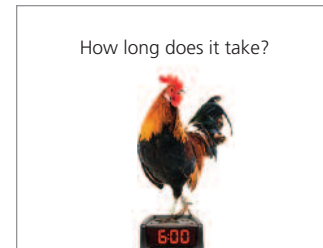
Much of the work itself will be done by the branding agency, with membership input at specific points, such as

- participation in preliminary survey,
- a 3-hour workshop that would include about a dozen members,
- review and comment on preliminary strategic document
- 2-3 meetings of the brand approval committee
- review of final brand proposal

For the *typical, engaged member, 2-3 hours commitment* over the course of the entire process

For those participating in a *brand workshop, an additional 3 hours*

For those on a *brand approval committee, an additional 4-6 hours*



30. How does branding relate to strategic planning?

Strategic planning and branding are different — but one sets the stage for the other. And the other supports it right back.

If *strategic planning* is the blueprint for how to build your house, then *Branding* is the plan for making that house a home.

It is the furnishings, finishes, landscaping, atmosphere and the kind of livable house rules and welcome that makes people want to spend time in it...

One of the key things branding does is to translate the strategic plan, which was written for the work that goes on *inside* the boardroom and factory walls, to engaging communications with your external audiences *outside* the boardroom and factory walls.

Those who are your true audience will be drawn to the welcome mat your brand lays out because it communicates a shared vision, values and purpose while extending a promise of how you make a difference for them.



31. What happens after brand clarification is complete?

Will the brand do the job on its own or does it need some help?



32. A wolf in sheep's clothing

If only it were that simple...

Rather than Mad Men advertising, our approach should be one rooted in authenticity.

Both because we live in a completely connected world that balks at "advertising lies," but also because an inauthentic brand will not further your aims and activities.

The tasks you would typically need to plan for include:

- i. Stakeholder, internal audience and public audience communications, both during and after the process
- ii. Engage top management in "brand purpose" activities to communicate how YAA delivers on its brand promise
- iii. Developing brand rollout and implementation plans complete with inventories of your current brand presence and work plans for various brand implementation, printing, website and communications updates.



33. Thank you

questions?

discussion?

