

Strengthening the Impact of a Humanitarian Engineering Group Through Branding

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Introduction

The Humanitarian Engineering research and education group at the University of Twente addresses social, environmental, and economic challenges faced by underserved and marginalised communities worldwide. They apply engineering principles, design thinking, and technology to achieve sustainable solutions that improve the quality of life for people in need.

Problem Definition

As a relatively new group, they currently struggle with attaining impactful projects, establishing partnerships, and emphasizing the importance of Humanitarian Engineering to stakeholders. Therefore, they aim to increase their impact in the field by developing a brand, strategic positioning, and communication strategies.

Research

Prior to conducting the research several research questions as well as methodologies were used to guide the process. The research began with a literature study on Humanitarian Engineering and branding to gain a better understanding of both fields. Then interviews with the group members were carried out to better understand their principles, experiences, and goals. Next, a competition marketing analysis was executed to better understand the branding and communication efforts of similar educational programmes. Finally, a situational analysis of the group allowed for a reflection of the group's current efforts and positioning, and how it compares with the competition.

Design Process

These findings allow for informed decision-making throughout the brand and communication strategy development process. Utilizing Kapferer's brand identity prism [1], a brand identity framework found during the research phase, the brand identity of the group was developed (Figure 1). The framework's six dimensions; physique, personality, culture, self-image, reflection and relationships, were utilized, developed and defined.

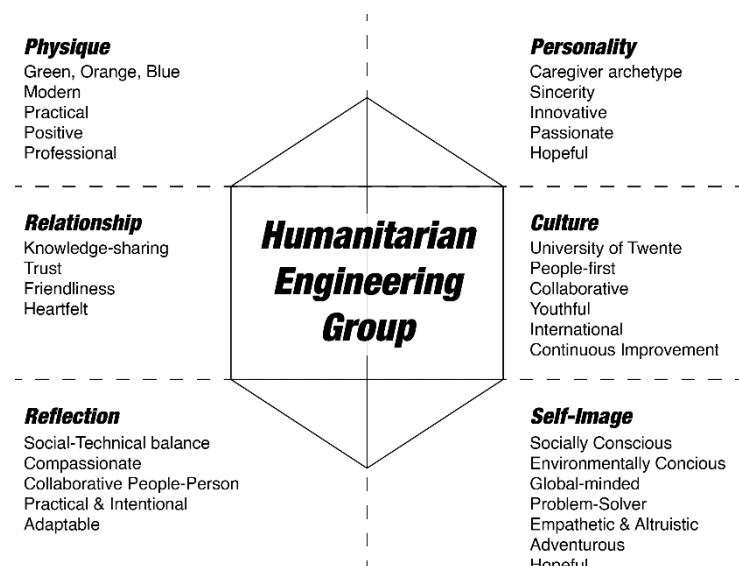


Figure 1: Humanitarian Engineering Group Brand Identity

Key messages were curated for a cohesive and consistent tone of voice to be used in communicating the group’s mission, vision, and values, as well as several memorable taglines. The communication channels to be used were also defined, consisting of several social media platforms to target and segment audiences, a website to act as a hub for all of the group’s activities, publications to showcase the group’s expertise and contributions, and physical spaces such as an office and attending events to build relationships.

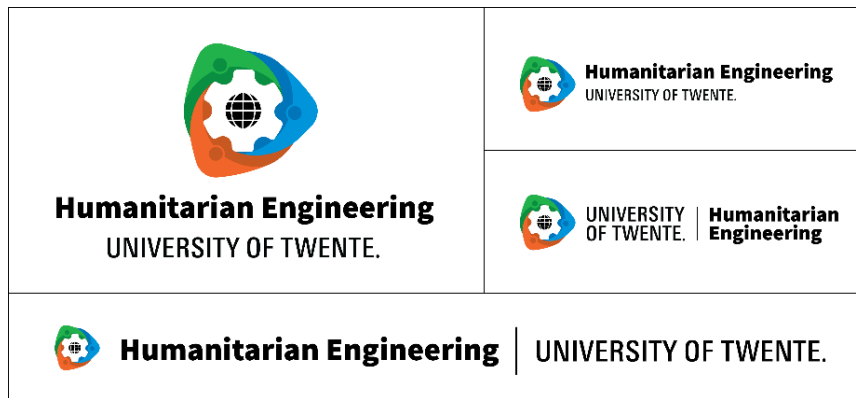


Figure 2: Humanitarian Engineering Group Logo

Next, the logo development began with ideation utilizing the requirements and insights from the research. Three concepts were then developed and evaluated using a survey in order to select a final concept. Each logo was assessed on suitability, the elements visible in the logo, colour preference, a rating on a number of dimensions, and finally what logo was most considered representative. This resulted in a final concept that was improved and finalized based on the survey results. The final brand visual identity is then produced including the logo (Figure 2), the colours used, typography, other visual elements, and a photography style. Thereafter, several examples were created of how the brand can be applied in the different communication channels (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Humanitarian Engineering Group Brand Application

In order for the brand to be implemented and utilized successfully, an implementation roadmap was created containing key initiatives and steps to take, as well as a time frame for when they are to be implemented (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Humanitarian Engineering Group Brand Implementation Roadmap

Recommendation and Conclusion

By evaluating the requirements made throughout the research and development process, the brand was deemed successful due to most requirements being met with absolute certainty. However, further evaluation should be done by comparing the brand with that of competitors and by performing a brand audit. Additionally, the efforts required in implementing and maintaining the brand and communication strategy may shift the efforts and focus of some members away from Humanitarian Engineering and towards branding which is not the intention. Therefore, these tasks could be allocated externally or by potential new members of the group.

Ultimately, the brand identity and communication channels should lead to the Humanitarian Engineering research and education group having a greater impact within the Humanitarian Engineering sphere. The consistent, coherent, and strategic use of the brand should lead to increased recognition, credibility, and opportunity to drive positive change.

References

- [1] J.-N. Kapferer, *Strategic Brand Management: New Approaches to Creating and Evaluating Brand Equity*, Simon and Schuster, 1994.