

After Just 1 Year, UA Creative Has Impressive Results

Marketing and Brand Management
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To tell the UA story compellingly, we need clarity and unity among those responsible for telling it. It's easy to say, but hard to do.

In April 2016, **Marketing and Brand Management** [1] crowded 90 marketing professionals into a classroom in the Richard A. Harvill Building for a frank conversation. At the time, our assessment was that the branding effort to that point had focused too much on rules and compliance, overshadowing the most important part of branding: emotional expression.

Strong brands are about emotion, not logic. James Kane, a national expert on loyalty, says, "People aren't loyal to brands. They're loyal to relationships." And branding is the act of defining the authentic and credible relationship between the University of Arizona and its stakeholders. The loyalty that follows helps the University attract the resources ? students, faculty, tuition and investment ? it needs to thrive and fulfill its mission.

Three big ideas guided us as we set out to move from brand compliance to brand expression:

- The brand must be co-created. If we want the University community to be excited about expressing the brand, then it must be included in creating the tools that make it work.
- Our UA community must feel the brand from within. Emotional expression comes from talented people who believe in the brand and see themselves in it.
- We must create space for everyone to understand and express the brand from his or her vantage point, rather than only from a central perspective.

So we asked our colleagues how we could tell a stronger UA story with the help of all the marketers across the University. It was the start of a spirited, productive and ongoing conversation. As a team, we identified 30 opportunities and worked together to refine that list to five priorities: our message platform, design, photography, video, and marketing research. We named ourselves UA Creative and assembled a team for each priority, with most of them led by marketing professionals throughout the UA community. MBM's role has been one of an expert guide and facilitator.

So what have we accomplished after just one year? We've engaged 153 marketers and communicators from nearly 100 departments across 33 colleges and divisions. The team has been dedicated, meeting every other week.

The results after just one year are impressive. The team made UA messages easier to express and launched the first UA Brand Writing Workshop for campus communicators. We are putting the finishing touches on refined graphic elements that are easier to adopt, more useful, and distinctive. We've created photo guidelines that provide creative direction and allow for a scaled approach in conveying our story through photos, and another team has taken on the same task for video. Marketing research guidelines are also available now to

help marketers understand their audiences.

But the most important outcome is that we are growing as a large, cohesive team. We are at a point of inflection at the UA and we have a core group that is excited, ready and able to support its strategic direction.

I want to extend my sincere thanks and congratulations to UA Creative. The collective work is impressive, and unprecedented, at the UA.

Please join us. If you are interested in participating, send an email to brand@email.arizona.edu [2]. And please reach out to me with questions, comments and feedback at tproudfoot@email.arizona.edu [3].

Tony Proudfoot is associate vice president for marketing and brand management. His office coordinates the annual UA Marketing Symposium, which will be held July 27.

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Links:

[1] <http://universityrelations.arizona.edu/marketing>

[2] <mailto:brand@email.arizona.edu>

[3] <mailto:tproudfoot@email.arizona.edu>