McHenry County College
August 11, 2011

Brand Communication Plan
Guiding Principles

• Culture shift
• Listen
• Empower
• Starts now
• Live our brand (don’t buy it)
• Bold
• One College, one brand
• Complement
Plan Overview

- Introduction
- Foundational Documents
- SWOT Analysis
- Competitors Brief
- Brand Marketing Overview
- The MCC Brand
Introduction

• Plan Purpose:
  Outline overarching strategies and tactics to help clarify and favorably position the MCC brand with internal and external audiences.

• Focus:
  A series of brand communication action plans (CAPs) that outline specific brand-building initiatives. Built for Year One (the 2011-2012 academic year).
The MCC Brand

• Brand Pledge
  McHenry County College makes a valuable difference in our community by inspiring, engaging and transforming learners through quality, meaningful, educational opportunities.

• Brand Attributes
  • Quality
  • Change-Ready
  • Community
Prioritized Target Audiences

- Tier 1 — Internal Stakeholders/Torchbearers
  - Employees
  - Current students
  - Board of Trustees
  - Foundation Board of Directors
- Tier 2 — Influencers
- Tier 3 — Prospects and Pipeline Audiences
Brand Marketing Communication Goals

1. Create a solid brand launch and foundation among MCC’s Tier One Stakeholders to develop this group as the College’s best ambassadors for the brand.

Measurements:

a. Bring internal audience ratings of MCC up to 3.9 or above when Brand Monitor baseline perception research is repeated. (CAP 4.3)

b. Increased participation in MCC special events, forums
2. Build a platform to consistently communicate the MCC brand to internal and external audiences, differentiating MCC in the marketplace.

Measurement:

a. Unaided recall of at least one brand attribute or portion of the brand pledge. (Goal: 25% of target audiences)
Brand Marketing Communication Goals, continued

3. Enhance the reputation of MCC.
   Measurement:
   a. Boost by 5% the number of respondents who rank MCC quality as “very good” when Brand Monitor baseline perception research is repeated. (CAP 4.3)
Brand Marketing Communication Goals, continued

4. Ensure the MCC Brand drives College decisions large and small, from informing the MCC Master Plan and Education Plan to aligning sub-brands and guiding hiring decisions.

Measurement:

a. Strategic plan reviews, board meetings, faculty meetings—is the brand alive? Is this plan being executed, revised, and lived?
Communication Action Plans

• **CAP 1.1 — Launch Rally**

**Audience:** Faculty, staff, administration, foundation members, trustees

**Description:** Key leadership hosts event on campus, shares key brand elements, entices buy-in, announces brand teams, awards program.

**Evaluation:** Number of attendees at launch event, traffic driven to microsite, applications for Brand Teams, award nominations
Communication Action Plans, continued

• **CAP 1.2 — Create an MCC Brand Microsite**

• **Audience:** All internal and external MCC audiences

• **Description:** Provide an overview of the brand, FAQ, tools for brand story submission, drive action, set expectations (MCC, one brand), plus other key elements

• **Evaluation:** Web traffic page views, continued update and use of tools, story submission
Communication Action Plans, continued

• **CAP 1.3 — Let Leaders Lead**

• **Audience:** Senior leadership, trustees, foundation members

• **Description:** Hire an executive consultant to conduct media/spokesperson training for the senior leadership to ensure the brand is well understood and will be well communicated universally.

• **Evaluation:** Attendance by MCC leadership at training sessions; performance of MCC leadership in meetings
Communication Action Plans, continued

• CAP 1.4 — Departmental Forums

• **Audience:** MCC employees (faculty, staff, administrators)

• **Description:** Meetings conducted by department managers to discuss how individuals and departments can embrace this culture shift. Managers provided with talking points.

• **Evaluation:** Number of departmental forums completed by Oct. 31. Traffic driven to microsite, applications for Brand Teams, award nominations. Expect at least 50% of MCC employees to know College’s brand attributes by January 2012.
Communication Action Plans, continued

• **CAP 2.1 — Inventory and Align Events**

• **Audience:** Internal and external events participants

• **Description:** Strategically inventory campuswide events; have Brand Teams work with event planners to build a campus lifecycle around the brand.

• **Evaluation:** Strategic realignment of calendar; campus satisfaction with revised programs
Communication Action Plans, continued

• **CAP 2.2 — Inventory Internal Communications**

• **Audience:** Staff, faculty, administrators, students

• **Description:** Establish an inventory process and record-keeping system, strategically assess and prioritize

• **Evaluation:** Completed inventory documentation, ready for use in Phase II
Communication Action Plans, continued

- **CAP 2.3 — Inventory All External Communications**

- **Audience:** All external audiences

- **Description:** Establish an inventory process and record-keeping system, strategically assess and prioritize. (This system should mirror that being established for internal-facing communications.)

- **Evaluation:** Completed inventory system, ready for use in Phase II
Communication Action Plans, continued

• **CAP 2.4 — Assess the MCC Website, Social Media**

• **Audience:** All internal and external MCC audiences

• **Description:** Continue the assessment of MCC’s website and social media strategies that’s underway. Ensure brand compliance, and determine areas in need of content enhancement. Pay close attention to needs of sub-brands, online tools being used, and what’s needed to serve constituents. Develop timeline and prioritize for Phase II.

• **Evaluation:** Completion of the assessment, ready for use in Phase II
Communication Action Plans, continued

• **CAP 2.5 — Ensure Communications are On Message**

• **Audience:** All internal and external MCC audiences

• **Description:** While OMPR reviews current materials and tactics, work will continue to flow through the office. News releases, features, Facebook posts, and more will be created. As that daily work is planned and executed, it will be done with the new Brand Pledge and attributes in mind. Ensure sub-brand communiqués align as well, perhaps through tip sheets or workshops. “If you’re touching it, you should be fixing it.”

• **Evaluation:** Established measures in CAP 4.3
Communication Action Plans, continued

- **CAP 2.6 — Email Footers**
  - **Audience:** All internal and external MCC audiences
  - **Description:** Create a footer bearing the attributes and the MCC logo, to be used institution-wide (include sub-brands).
  - **Evaluation:** Percent of MCC using footer January 16, 2012
Communication Action Plans, continued

- **CAP 2.7 — Lay the Foundation for Phase II**

- **Audience:** All internal and external MCC audiences

- **Description:** Review previous research, plus assessments collected thus far: CAPs debriefing notes, internal and external communications inventories, events inventory, website and social media audit.

  Launch plans for Phase II, development of visual identity. Include sub-brands: Athletics, MCC Foundation, Shah Center, Student Life.

- **Evaluation:** Smooth launch of Phase II
Communication Action Plans, continued

- **CAP 3.1 — Living the Brand Awards**
- **Audience:** All internal and external MCC audiences
- **Description:** Create an awards program honoring brand champions. Timeline:
  - Announce at launch rally
  - Begin processing first applicants fall 2011
  - Give first award during week of January 16, 2012
  - Continue monthly awards, ongoing celebration/promotion
- **Evaluation:** Continuing nominations, attendance at award ceremonies, attribute recall among internal audiences
Communication Action Plans, continued

- **CAP 3.2 — Showcase the Brand**

- **Audience:** All internal and external MCC audiences

- **Description:** Collect stories that bring the MCC brand to life. Use stories to enrich MCC publications and leadership presentations. Ensure those narratives are brand-aligned and showcase the College’s pledge and attributes. Create a repository for storage, and opportunities for sharing.

- **Evaluation:** President’s and senior leaders’ use of anecdotes in speeches. Improved perception rankings in CAP 4.3 evaluation
Communication Action Plans, continued

- **CAP 4.1 — Create Brand Teams**

- **Audience:** Faculty, staff, administration, students who plan campus events

- **Description:** Create three-person working teams with at least one member per team who has served on the MCC Brand Facilitating Committee. Equip the teams to facilitate brainstorming sessions with MCC employees and students who may not recognize opportunity for aligning their work with the College’s brand. A good starting point may be MCC events.

- **Evaluation:** Number of attendees at events, individual events evaluations
Communication Action Plans, continued

• **CAP 4.2 — Think Brand MCC**

• **Audience:** MCC Decision Makers

• **Description:** Ensure MCC leaders and decisions makers make the brand part of strategies before buying, deciding or acting. For example:
  - Integrated strategic planning and well-planned communication
  - Performance reviews that reward “living the brand”
  - Master Plan naming opportunities
  - Fighting against sub-brand confusion and/or sub-brands that don’t enhance your reputation in the marketplace

• **Evaluation:** Brand alignment, perception testing CAP 4.3
Communication Action Plans, continued

- **CAP 4.3 — Build in Evaluation**

- **Audience:** OMPR, MCC Leadership, MCC Brand Facilitating Committee

- **Description:** Debrief after each CAP, adjust as needed. Plan for Phase II. Repeat elements of Brand Monitor study, add new brand perception components. Specifically:
  - Unaided recall of at least one brand attribute or portion of the brand pledge by 25% of target audiences
  - Boost by 5% the number of respondents who rank MCC’s overall quality/reputation as “very good”
  - Bring internal audience ratings of MCC up to a mean rating of 3.9 or above on reputation quality rankings
## Brand Marketing Calendar/Timeline

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<td>2.5 – Ensure ongoing communications are on message... “If you’re touching it, fix it. Live the brand.”</td>
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<td>3.2 – Immediate, ongoing: Showcase the brand; collect, share stories that bring the brand to life</td>
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<td>4.2 – Immediate, ongoing: Senior management leads the culture shift—think then deliver Brand MCC</td>
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<td>1.2 – Build Microsite</td>
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<td>1.1 – Launch materials (PPT, talking pts)</td>
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<td>3.1 Develop awards</td>
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<td>1.3 Sept. – Nov. Executive training for key leaders</td>
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<td>4.3 Debrief, Plan, Evaluate — ensure this plan becomes a working document</td>
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<td>3.1 – Finalize award criteria, vet nominees by Dec. 2*</td>
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<td>4.1 – Recruit, train Brand Teams</td>
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<td>2.1 – Jan. Brand Teams begin work</td>
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<td>3.1 – Begin monthly awards Jan. 16</td>
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Your Questions