

Name Calling: The Rebranding of Artis—Naples

TEACHER NOTES

Learning Objectives

- Recognize consumer perception of a brand and the goals of a brand audit.
- Analyze event marketing for an arts organization.
- Address negative customer feedback with timely and appropriate messaging.
- Evaluate a rebranding campaign in the short and long term.

Topics For Discussion

Brand Assessment

The Philharmonic Center for the Arts hired consultant Berliner Benson to lead a brand “audit” of the organization in 2012. The company conducted in-person interviews with a variety of parties from board members and senior administration to patrons and even those who had little or no engagement with the institution. An electronic survey was also distributed to some 17,000 active patrons. The goal of the audit was to gather basic demographic data along with the prevailing attitudes toward artistic programming. What did Berliner Benson find about The Phil? What major areas needed attention coming out of the audit?

- Management addressed the brand identity question immediately, but could have taken more surgical steps from results of the audit. What targeted responses could senior leaders have made to the data gathered from stakeholders, patrons, and the public?
- When Kathleen van Bergen was appointed CEO and President in 2011, she took over an enterprise that was dominated by a single personality. Marketing and sales were the professional world of Myra Daniels, but her overextension left the arts center with deep-seated dysfunction in key areas. What indicators made the board “insistent on change,” as van Bergen described it? What major areas of the business required urgent attention even in the absence of a brand audit?

Succession Planning

The case builds toward a groundbreaking decision to abandon “The Phil” as the name of its interdisciplinary arts center with help from consultant Berliner Benson to initiate a rebranding effort. Senior leadership hoped that this decision would not only modernize the enterprise but also account for its interdisciplinary artistic coverage.

- Review **Appendix 1** with the students. To what areas of a business does brand identity extend? Which of these areas could a rebranding effort exploit most effectively?

After the board approved the name Artis—Naples in 2013, the board's Communications and Marketing committee developed a campaign to announce the news to the patrons of The Phil and the Naples public more broadly. The campaign centered on a launch event to which customers as well as the press and community leaders were specially invited. Around 1,000 people attended the launch of Artis—Naples, and the evening gathering consisted of a short presentation followed by a grand reception on the premises of the art center. A traditional marketing and public relations effort followed the event to solidify the new name in the community.

- What are the goals of the new brand identity and were they achieved with the name Artis—Naples (see **Appendix 1** again)? Discuss with students the four aspects of the brand personality detailed in the case to determine which were delivered with the rebranding.
- Ask students to evaluate the decision to hold a major event at The Phil to announce the name Artis—Naples. What other options could be proposed for publicizing the name change?
- Review the invitees to the launch event of Artis—Naples. What were the benefits and risks inherent in a special invitation to this on-site announcement?
- Although the case revealed only general information about the marketing efforts following the launch event, discuss with students what an ideal marketing campaign might look like for a rebranding of this arts organization after an event of this type. What areas of the business—both internal and external—are affected by a new name? How would a tight budget affect such a campaign? What vehicles in advertising would be retained? How could the press be leveraged? What kinds of interaction with customers are appropriate following the announcement?

Negative Customer Feedback

When the board of directors of the Philharmonic Center for the Arts approved the name change to Artis—Naples in January 2013, some had reservations that a complete rebranding represented an overstep for the arts center. While the voices of dissent on the board did not constitute a majority, senior leadership was careful to reassure these stakeholders that the change was necessary given the circumstances in which the organization found itself. Some of the board room unease with the name Artis—Naples was echoed in the public, not long after the launch event that divulged the new name.

- The first wave of public disapproval came in the form of letters to the editor of the *Naples Daily News*. **Appendix 2** reveals a range of letters that were published by the newspaper. Very few positive letters were published, giving the impression that the public was almost uniformly opposed to Artis—Naples as the new name of the interdisciplinary arts center. The administration of Artis—Naples was not prepared to handle the opposition. What steps could it have taken immediately as members of the public registered their initial discontent in the press?
- One of the most damaging setbacks in the rebranding campaign was the reaction of The Phil's founder and former

CEO Myra Janco Daniels. Daniels had retired from her position, but was always its biggest champion and a charismatic leader. She was blindsided by the name change, sensing that it was an affront to her legacy and believing that there was not enough reason to fix something that wasn't broken. Daniels' absence from the launch event was a sign that she did not support the rebranding. Her appearance on local television to voice her opposition to Artis—Naples was an unanticipated slight to the organization she had founded. Keeping in mind the former CEO's legacy with The Phil and her present actions against it, what would have been an appropriate posture by the current administration toward Daniels?

- Daniels' response prompted her supporters in the Naples community to push their opposition. By the end of May 2013, the website savethephil.com was launched, and organizers staged a public protest outside the arts center. What options would be available for the current administration to respond to the leaders of the movement against the rebranding? Survey the students' ideas for handling this delicate public dispute over one of the city's most important institutions.
- The editorial board of the *Naples Daily News* defended the rebranding of Artis—Naples in July 2013. Using **Appendix 3**, how was the argument constructed? What is the most convincing part of the editorial?
- Following the publication of the *Naples Daily News* editorial, CEO van Bergen prepared to address the patrons of Artis—Naples in a three-minute video that would be emailed to its 10,000 subscribers. The case asks students to develop a 500-word script for the video. Encourage them to exchange their prepared scripts in small groups and to discuss the key points that were emphasized in each "speech." What do the scripts have in common? Which scripts would sound most convincing to current subscribers? How do the arguments differ from those found in the *Naples Daily News* editorial (**Appendix 3**)? Have the small groups nominate their strongest scripts for closer examination by the class at large.

Long-Term Results

The "B" case on Artis—Naples is intended to be distributed after students have discussed the principal case study on Artis—Naples. It provides students with a window into Artis—Naples almost five years after the rebranding campaign. The addendum describes two key accomplishments within the organization. First is a three-year residency completed by the Vienna Philharmonic. This momentous event was preceded by the unveiling of a Master Plan for the campus of Artis—Naples, the manifestation of a modern vision for the interdisciplinary arts center in the city of Naples. The postscript also reveals trends in revenue and sales of Artis—Naples over the past four seasons and an endowment campaign in progress. The organization had clearly moved well beyond the public outcry against its name change that formed the substance of the case.

- Discuss with the students how the residency, the Master Plan, and the endowment campaign signal a fresh direction for Artis—Naples. What are the benefits of such undertakings?
- Invite students to examine the data given in **Appendix 4**. This chart presents four full seasons of revenue and sales for Artis—Naples following the rebranding campaign. From the metrics presented, which show the strongest performance and which show more inconsistency?
- Review the process and goals of an endowment campaign. Is Artis—Naples well positioned for this campaign?

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The audience stood immediately—some with tears in their eyes. Venezuelan-born conductor Gustavo Dudamel, an international champion of access to music for all people, had just finished directing the second of two performances of the Vienna Philharmonic in Hayes Hall on February 28, 2018. Earlier that day, musicians of the Naples Philharmonic joined their colleagues from Vienna in a collaborative chamber concert. It was an exhilarating conclusion to the Vienna Philharmonic's three-year residency at Artis—Naples, an achievement worthy of international notice after a series of concert presentations, master classes, and school performances by an orchestra steeped in musical and cultural history. "We are a changed community. Our minds, our ears, and our hearts have been changed," said Kathleen van Bergen. The culminating evening with the Vienna Philharmonic came on the heels of a long-term Master Plan process at Artis—Naples, a vision for an interdisciplinary arts campus recently unveiled to the public.

Not more than five years had passed since the rebranding of Artis—Naples, but it all seemed to be a distant memory. The organization had more than stabilized since the rebranding. Revenue and subscriptions, key metrics for long-term health, were growing (**Appendix 4**). And a multi-year campaign was also underway, which had already brought in major gifts totaling more than \$50 million, increasing the endowment of Artis—Naples to more than \$100 million.

Artis—Naples

*Home of The Baker Museum
and the Naples Philharmonic*