

To: Dr. Sudnick
From: Lu Dumas
Date: October 6, 2023
Subject: Nonprofit Rebranding Analysis

Introduction

The Girl Scouts of the USA recently completed a rebrand designed to better reflect the mission and vision of the more than 100-year-old historic organization that boasts 2.5 million members. Juliette Gordon “Daisy” Low founded the Girl Scouts on March 12, 1912 in Savannah, Georgia (Girls Scouts, 2023). Her vision was to create an organization that helped develop girls “...full individual potential; relate to others with increasing understanding, skill, and respect; develop values to guide their actions and provide the foundation for sound decision making; and contribute to the improvement of society through their abilities, leadership skills, and cooperation with others” (Girl Scouts, 2023.) This non-profit’s mission is, “Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place” (Girl Scouts, 2023). As that world has evolved, so too has the organization. Therefore, changes have been made to adjust to the historical moments, aligning the Girl Scouts’ mission and vision with their overall messaging. This rebrand creates a better sense of cohesion and unifies the 112 independent councils, located throughout the country; while allowing each of these councils to adapt to their specific community. The rebrand simplifies and gives clarity to the heart of the Girl Scout messaging. It provides a contemporary update to the Girl Scout mission, better reflecting the changing needs of young women in the modern world, while maintaining the integrity of its past. The rebrand was designed strategically to embrace the rich history of the organization, still utilizing the iconic and identifiable trefoil logo but with a 21st century reflection. The use of colors and geometric designs is eye-catching and purposely created as a refresh to attract new members and align with the organization’s offerings.

Background

What began as an organization created to build leadership skills in girls, who make the world a better place, has evolved into a formidable institution that believes in the power of every “G.I.R.L (Go-getter, Innovator, Risktaker, Leader) to change the world” (Girl Scouts, 2023). The rebrand was conducted by COLLINS, a professional brand consulting agency tasked with other famous rebrands. COLLINS was inspired by the renowned badges that Girl Scouts are awarded for achieving requirements in a myriad of subjects, embracing new skills (Beach, 2022). The purpose of the rebrand was to appeal to the changing role of women in the world as by empowering current members and potential members to understand that “...the goal was to affirm the Girl Scouts’ place as “an unignorable and hopeful cultural force” in the lives of young women (Tucker, 2022). The leadership of the Girl Scouts understood that a rebrand was not only necessary to maintain their membership but also to attract a new generation of girls to the organization. It was a purposeful strategy that embraced the necessary alignment of internal and external IMC (Kylander & Stone, 2012). By doing this, the Girl Scouts ensure maintenance of their long-term focus through the communications method of collaborative attentiveness. “Attentiveness begins first with a recognition that an organization can and must learn from its public relations, advertising, and marketing. These communication functions inform those outside and inside a given company about what matters and how the enterprise performs. One may not know the specifics of a company, but one can sense its character from tone, direction,

and performance” (Fritz, McManus, and Kearney, 2023, p. 202). The integration of a new brand logo has allowed the Girl Scouts to create a united message for members, stakeholders and leaders of the group to comprehend and communicate allowing Others outside the organization, in the marketplace, to learn about what the group values. “IMC assumes the importance of implementation and learning in the process of performative engagement” (Fritz et al., p. 206).

Communication Ethics

This improved refresh of the brand illuminates the assumptions of the Girl Scouts’ communications ethics. Implicitly, the Girl Scouts stand for honesty, integrity, respect, patriotism, hard work, character and courage. Explicitly, the organization encourages members to be innovative, take risks, be confident and strong, be fair, friendly, helpful, considerate, and caring. The goods that the Girl Scouts protect and promote include leadership, honesty and courage. The implications of this are that the Girl Scouts have been built on a solid foundation that has weathered the test of time. Through their 100-year history, they have promoted and protected the same goods, but have been able to successfully adapt those goods chronicled in the historical moments. What this implies for the future of the Girl Scouts is as Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott (2010) believed that “memory is historical” (Fritz et al., p.78). Although the 21st century rebrand of the Girl Scouts was necessary to change with societal evolution, it is memory that protects the past while engaging in the future, thus allowing the Girl Scouts to stay relevant. (Fritz, 2023).

With that in mind, the Girl Scouts, when measured against the contextual ethical communications lens, have shown their resilience to change. While the core of the organization has remained, the group has adapted and modified over time, mirroring the changes as our world has progressed; this, while recognizing variations in culture, persons and communication settings (Fritz et al., p. 54). The Girl Scouts have successfully adapted to different audiences, cultures and relationships. (Fritz et al., p. 54). For example, back in 1912, Juliette Gordon “Daisy” Low did not have to create the “Fair Pay Equal Pay Gender Parity Initiative” in response gender equality (Girl Scouts, 2023). But in the historical moment, in 2020, the Girl Scouts adopted this initiative for women’s equality (Girl Scouts, 2023). The modern institution also developed an anti-racism stance as well as a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion within the organization as well as an educational component for young girls to understand and promote. The group embraces multiculturalism teaching valuable life skills that celebrate cultural contributions (Girl Scouts, 2023). While ultimately the mission and goods of the organization has not changed in a century, amendments have been created to remain visionary and significant in the historical moment.

Conclusion

The 21st century rebrand of the mission-based Girls Scouts organization was a necessary makeover that transitioned a 100-year-old, non-profit organization into a new era. Purposely and symbolically retaining the memory of the group by repurposing the original trefoil logo, a brighter color palette and new typestyles were the changes this group needed to garner attention. The purpose of the rebrand, after all, was not to change the organization itself, but to capture attention through IMC. The Girl Scouts have remained in the context of the historical moments over the years, adapting their culture to the growing and changing needs of their members and stakeholders. Specifically, the group has understood the necessity of establishing a commitment of diversity, equity and inclusion while celebrating the cultural richness of their members. The implications of their adaptability and contextual communications ethics for the future shows their

dedication and resilience to upholding their mission while understanding their responsibility to remain relevant aligning with their members and promoting and protecting their goods to help build courageous female leaders. This rebrand will provide the necessary attention desired that will increase opportunities for young women in this impactful organization, proving that this group does more than just sell their infamous cookies, they are empowered to improve the world.

<https://uncw.voicethread.com/myvoice/thread/24920354>

References:

- Beach, C. (2022, September 14). *Girl Scouts earns a badge in exceptional branding thanks to a new identity by Collins*. PRINT Magazine. <https://www.printmag.com/branding-identity-design/girl-scouts-collins/>
- Fritz, J.M.H., McManus, L.M.B., & Kearney, M.R. (2023). *Communication Ethics Literacy: Dialogue and Difference*. Kendall Hunt: Dubuque, IA. ISBN: 9781524936334 3rd Edition
- Girl scouts of the USA*. Girl Scouts of the USA. (n.d.). <https://www.girlscouts.org/>
- Kylander, N., & Stone, C. (2012). The Role of Brand in the Nonprofit Sector. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 10(2), 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.48558/NV6C-3A31>
- Tucker, E. (2022, August 30). *The girl scouts rebrands with a rainbow-tinted identity*. Creative Review. <https://www.creativereview.co.uk/girl-scouts-rebrand-collins/>