

Improving the image of Local Government

Research findings and Brand Strategy recommendations

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MALLESONS STEPHEN JAQUES



What this presentation covers

- Our brief
- What is branding and why does it matter?
- Overview of research
- Brand strategy
- Next Steps

Our brief

- Help LGSA develop a strategy to improve the understanding and perception of the Local Government brand (image and reputation) within NSW
- Create a platform that will help raise the profile of Local Government in preparation for a referendum on Constitutional Recognition
- Create communications tools and support to help local councils better communicate the positioning and key messages of Local Government to the broader community
- Engage LGSA members to ensure they 'get on board' to support the overall strategic approach

What is branding and why does it matter?

The measures of brand success

Commitment: are they loyal to your brand



Preference: Do they prefer your brand



Advantage: Do they recognise what's different about your brand?



Rapport: Do people engage with your brand?



Expertise: are you recognised for your skills



Presence: Are people aware of the brand?

**Local
Government**

The biggest question...

That brands, companies and organisations face is:

What do we stand for in the minds of audiences?

Who is this?

Wholesome American values

No cynicism

Creativity, dreams and imagination

Magic

Who is this?



**... the language of
successful brands**

The power of language in branding

BEFORE

Dear Mrs Murphy

The cheque(s) detailed below have been returned unpaid as your account contained insufficient funds. It is possible that the payee's bank may represent these cheque(s) to your account for payment.

Please ensure that there are sufficient available funds in your account immediately.

AFTER

Dear Mrs Murphy

I'm sorry to tell you that we've had to bounce a cheque you wrote recently, as there isn't enough money in your account.

It's cheque number 001063, written on 3rd March, for \$37.88

You need to pay in enough money now to cover the cost. And, because the person you were paying hasn't received the money yet, you will need to send them another cheque.

The new rule of brand language

Keep it real



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2 for £20.
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The new rule of brand language

Keep it real



Cheese.
Can cause nightmares.
Like you shopping elsewhere.
Scary.
That's why this piece
is only 87p.

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January 2011. From the counter at selected UK stores. 87p/kg.

The new rule of brand language

Keep it real



Bran.
97p.
Why so cheap?
We want to
keep you regular.

TESCO | Every little helps

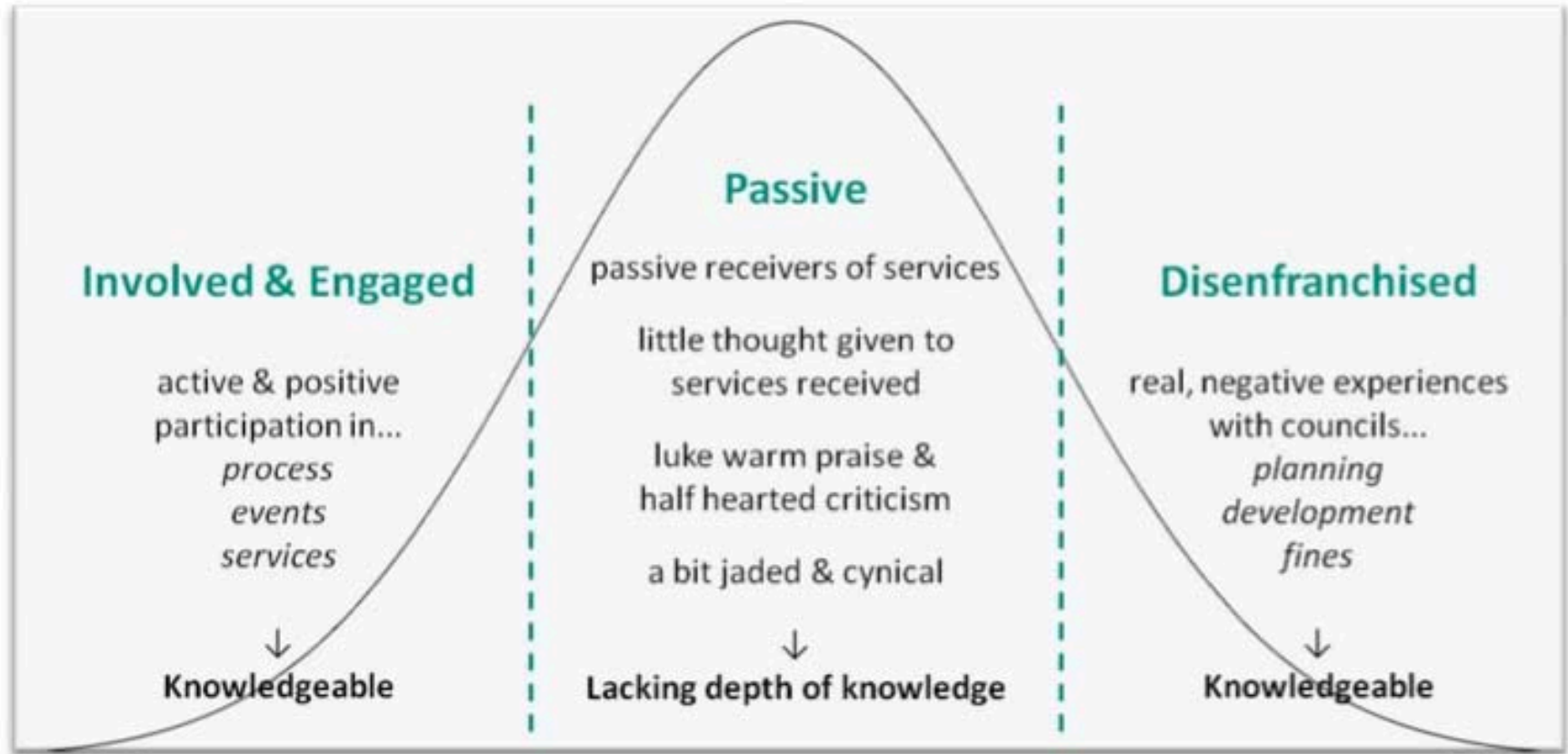
Price applies to selected UK stores. 12 for 100.

What we have done and what we have concluded

What we have done

- Historic research review including LGSA, other State Associations and ALGA
- 10 LGSA executive board interviews
- Management team focus group
- Council media/communications officers focus group
- **Online survey with Executive Members, Mayors & General Managers**
- Rural and regional Community Online Forum – July 2011
- Audit of 6 interstate and overseas peers and review of best practice Council communications material
- Audit of LGSA communications material
- Presented findings to Local Government Operations and Reform Committee September 2011
- **Tested our findings in 6 Focus Groups: 4 metro and 2 regional testing propositions with residents**

Three key segments



The research uncovered 3 different attitudinal segments based on their level of engagement with their council and the experience (positive or negative) that they have had with them.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Roads, rates and waste collection as part of a recognised wider services remit
- Strength in broader local services
- Local knowledge
- Strong community focus
- Prominent in the media

Weaknesses

- Confusion about which level of government is responsible for which services
- The belief that all Local Government does is roads, rates and rubbish
- Belief that all councils are corrupt
- “Scandals” played out in the press

Opportunities

- Greater awareness of the wide role performed by Local Government
- A belief that Local Government is key in providing Local Services in your area
- A reputation for efficiency, value for money
- A reputation for taking responsibility

This is not **believable**

**Local
community
champions**

You can champion things

But you are not
champions

**The heart
and soul of
local
communities**

Too soft, too fuzzy

**Managers of
vital
community
services**

You're not that.

That's the police and the
fire service

This is **government speak**

Services
Regulation
Governance

Formal

Authoritarian

Services
Infrastructure
Participation

What is infrastructure?

Who is participating?

Residents or Local Government?

This is **government speak**

**Environments
Services
Participation**

Which environment?

Physical environment or
green issues?

**Services
Sustainability
Community**

What is sustainability?

Green issues or the sustainability of our
community?

This is business speak

Community service partners

Partners?

It's a cliché

This is what businesses say

Yes, this is what we want you **to be**

Local Knowledge
Local services
Local communities

Local, local, local.

Yes, Yes Yes.

**In each community
we serve**

Everything works as it should
and provides value for money

The local services we provide
enrich community life.

People know what's going on and
feel listened to in their
community

Key lessons from research

- Avoid what is seen as business and government jargon at all costs
- Talk practically about what you do and provide evidence for it rather than stating high minded goals and philosophies
- Be crystal clear – in terms of language and messages
- Under promise and over deliver
- Talk about being local and emphasise your local knowledge
- Establish what you are responsible for and what you are good at and how communities benefit

Brand Strategy

Recommendations the from/to brand journey

From **To**

Local Government	Local services
Roads rates and rubbish	Essential local services
Regulation, services and governance	Services and community involvement
Slow and bureaucratic	Responsive, responsible, service oriented
Dealing with the public	Providing services to people
You come to us	We come to you
The whipping boy of the press	In charge of the agenda
Speak out on matters it's not their business to do	Completely focused on the local communities you service

The other branch of government

Local Services for local communities

Draft Brand Purpose

Proposed purpose for Local Government

**Local Government provides
local services for local communities**

Brand Strategy

How will we deliver our purpose?

- By **maintaining essential services** such as roads, rates and waste collection
- By **taking a lead on services** (such as childcare and libraries) that make a real difference to the life of communities
- By **managing important local legislation** (planning applications, health & safety, parking etc)
- By **using our local knowledge** to best effect on behalf of the community
- By **keeping communities well informed** on matters that are important to them – via contemporary and relevant channels
- By **regularly listening and responding** to community views and ensuring that where possible these views are taken into account and acted on
- By **reporting regularly and openly** on how we are doing
- By **being accountable** for the management of essential local community services
- By continuing to **be an employer of choice** in local communities

Brand values

what we stand for

Local knowledge

We live locally so we know the area as well as you do. And we use our knowledge and experience to maintain and improve services to communities.

Efficiency

We run essential local services efficiently and in the best interests of communities.

Keeping people informed

We keep communities well informed on what's going on in their local area and how we are looking after their interests.

Representing communities

We listen to communities and deliver on their requests. We create a two way dialogue between councils and communities.

Brand personality

how we communicate...in person, online, in marketing

On your level

The 'parent to child' dynamic is old news. Today I talk to everyone as a real person; grounded, insightful and relevant. And with my first hand knowledge of communities I'm always 'on the level'.

Effective

I'm not just all talk – I'm actively demonstrating my effectiveness through language. I'm more about doing than saying. And when I say I'll do something, I will.

In the know

I connect with my audiences by giving them the right information, when they need it, so they are kept informed and up to date, and make decisions accordingly.

Brand idea

the role of the brand idea

What it's not

- It's not a tagline
- It doesn't need to be a literal description of what you do

What it is

- It's a descriptor that you use with internal audiences
- It should evoke what's at the heart of your business - literally and philosophically
- Ideally, it should sum up an attitude, a feeling, a sense of purpose
- You should be comfortable saying, our business is about 'brand idea'
- It should be aspirational and motivating
- You should be able to ask the question 'have we demonstrated that we are about "brand idea" in... this communication, event, speech, website?' etc.

Brand idea
the driving force behind our brand

Locally responsible

Brand idea

the driving force behind our brand

Locally responsible

- We are accountable and responsible for the creation, management, maintenance and improvement of your essential local services – from roads and waste collection to parks, gardens, swimming pools, childcare centres and libraries, as well as looking after regulations, such as planning applications and health and safety
- We are concerned only with local issues and we use our local knowledge and experience to maintain and improve the quality of life in your local community. We put local needs first and we are answerable for how we deliver on these needs
- We make ourselves accountable by communicating openly and regularly on community issues and by being available to hear your views on how we are performing

That's what we mean by Locally responsible

Our brand model

Our
purpose

Brand
strategy

Brand
values

**Brand
personality**

=

**Brand
idea**

**Local
Government
provides local
services for
local
communities**

**By using our local
knowledge to best
effect**

**By keeping
communities well
informed**

**By regularly listening
and responding**

By reporting regularly

**By being
accountable**

**Local
knowledge**

Efficiency

**Keeping people
informed**

**Representing
communities**

On your level

Effective

In the know

**Locally
responsible**

Next Steps

Next Steps (for the next 12 months)

1. Commence discussions with councils about bringing Brand Strategy to life

- Talk with councils across NSW to understand the opportunities, barriers and options for rolling out the Brand Strategy across NSW
- Further test language and tone of voice concepts and explore how they can be best implemented

2. Develop practical resource kits and templates for councils to start using

- For e.g. advertising, brochures, online communications and scope out all the elements of the toolkit (how to guides, tone of voice guidelines, templates)

3. Consider the longer term demand and needs for building the Local Government brand and strengthening communications

- Evaluate the potential for potentially higher profile initiatives such as advertising, and longer term campaigns - if budgets permit

Contact the LGSA Communications team for more information on communications@lgsa.org.au or phone 02 9242 4000