Printing and Mailing for the Brand: An Exploratory Qualitative Study Seeking to Understand Internal Branding and Marketing Within University and Extension Communication Services Units

Anissa Zagonel
Kansas State University

Lauri M. Baker
Kansas State University

Audrey E. H. King
Oklahoma State University

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Abstract

Investment of employees in a brand can lead to greater public understanding and positive impressions of a brand by external stakeholders. However, this can be challenging in public organizations with multiple brand segments and a large number of employees spread across great distance with limited funds for marketing. While previous work has looked at Extension agents, faculty, and volunteers' brand perceptions, no studies have looked at communication services employees' investment in the brand. The purpose of this qualitative study was to discover how well employees in a university and Extension printing and mail entity understood the Extension brand and their investment in the brand. Research questions that guided this study were: 1) What perceptions and investment do communication services employees have in the Extension brand? And 2) what are employees' perceptions of the organization's branding and marketing efforts? Each of the 18 interviews included a series of questions focusing on employees' story related to Extension and employees' thoughts on branding and marketing efforts. Results in this study with communication services employees indicate these employees are not invested in the brand with the majority having little to no understanding of the mission of Extension. This contradicts previous research with employees in other brand segments of Extension. Implications of this work include a need for training on the Extension mission for communication services employees, a shift in culture to encourage investment in the brand, and inclusion of all Extension employees in the mission of Extension.

Introduction

Employee investment in a brand can be a powerful resource or a detriment to a service-oriented business or organization (Baker, Abrams, Irani, & Meyers, 2011; Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010). When employees believe in the brand, understand its position in the marketplace, and communicate about it effectively, this can carry over to greater public understanding of the brand and more positive associations with the brand (Bitner, Booms, & Mohr, 1994; Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). Some models even indicate employee and public brand perceptions are interdependent (Fombrun, 1996; Davies & Miles, 1998; Hatch & Schultz, 1997), meaning it is equally as important to understand employees' brand perceptions as it is external stakeholders (de Chernatony, 1999; Hatch & Schultz, 2001). At its core, branding requires consistency in message and brand ideation (Healey, 2008), which can cause challenges for large public organizations that typically have multiple roles and identities to represent (Hoggett, 2006). The present study aimed to discover how well employees of a communication services entity understood the Extension brand and their investment in it. It was of additional interest to explore the understanding of employees' perceptions of branding and marketing efforts of the communication services entity.

Branding in Extension adds an additional layer of complications beyond other organizational branding. Complications are as core as explaining the Extension mission. The United States Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA) explains the Extension brand as "provid[ing] non-formal education and learning activities to people throughout the country — to farmers and other residents of rural communities as well as to people living in urban areas. It emphasizes taking knowledge gained through research and education and bringing it directly to the people to create positive changes" (USDA/NIFA, 2019, para. 1), but each state has its own version of the brand. For example, K-State Research and Extension defines this mission as "commit[ment] to expanding human capacity by delivering educational programs and technical information that result in improved leadership skills in the areas of communication, group dynamics, conflict resolution, issue analysis, and strategic planning that can enhance the economic viability and quality of life in communities" (K-State Research and Extension website, 2019, para. 1). Typically a mission is for internal audiences and a brand promise is how the employees carry out the mission (Ang, 2014; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). While the brand and mission are different concepts, at the national and often at the state level, entities have not developed a brand promise for Extension. Thus, relying on the mission of the entities as a brand promise may be necessary (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010; Kornberger, 2010; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007).

Additional complications arise related to each university's relationship with the university brand. Previous research indicates the Extension organization within the state may not be distinguished from the larger university system in the minds of the public and the media (Baker et al., 2011; Kornberger, 2010). Moreover, the public has expressed concern over money spent to advertise public organizations (Settle, Goodwin, Telg, Irani, Carter, & Wysocki, 2012; Whelan, Davies, Walsh, & Bourkea, 2010), which leaves organizations with little options for communicating brand messages directly to the public. Thus, the role of employees becomes one of brand ambassadors (de Chernatony, 2006) who can strengthen the entire brand in the mind of the public even if the employee is associated with only one segment of the brand. While some studies have investigated employee perceptions of and belief in the Extension brand (Ray, Baker, & Settle, 2015; Settle, Baker, & Stebner, 2016; Torppa & Smith, 2009), these studies have been limited to faculty at state and local levels and board members and agents. There is a gap in the

literature related to how university and Extension communication services employees perceive and internalize the extension mission, values, and brand.

Literature Review

History of Extension Communication Services

The land-grant system began in 1862 with the Federal Land-Grant that set aside 30,000 acres for each state. With the provided land, states could establish colleges to serve the generations of farmers and mechanics, with the option to study subjects related to those fields (Boone, Meisenbach, & Tucker, 2000; Sanderson, 1988). The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 added public research and established a national Cooperative Extension Service in addition to the land-grant system as a way to disseminate useful findings to the public and improve the lives of others (Carlson, 1970). Extension communication services units evolved in the 19th century from the need to serve the land-grant mission. While specialists, agents, and educators traveled directly to share research with people in face-to-face communication, additional methods were needed to supplement communication and gain greater reach (Baker et al., 2011). This need was fulfilled in the 1928 Capper-Ketcham Act that aided in the finances of "printing and distribution of information" (Teagarden, Johnson, & Graham, 1991, p. 85). These units made information available to the public. Extension communications units gathered technical information from subject-matter specialists, created and edited manuscripts, and produced printed materials (Snowdon & Evans, 1991). Extension clients had access to a variety of services the units provide such as print publications (Anderson-Wilk et al., 2013). Extension communication units typically contained writers, videographers, printers, mail and retail bookstore services, and in more recent years, website managers and online communicators (Telg, Irani, Hurst, & Kistler, 2007).

Over the past 30 years, legislators and the general public have had a vague understanding of the land-grant mission and its funding structure, which has created challenges for communicators within land-grant institutions (Adkins, 1981; Abrams et al., 2010; Blalock, 1964; Miller, 1988; Ray et al., 2015). One of these challenges is using cost-effective strategies and tactics in the limited marketing and promotional budgets available to Extension employees to exhibit significance (Baker et al., 2011). Previous strategies and tactics have focused on assessing and improving Extension's public relations link to the media. However, these strategies did not focus on increasing visibility to the public. This tie to the public is underdeveloped and is particularly weak when considering how employees of Extension portray the organization to the public (Settle et al., 2016).

Organizational Identity and Culture

Organizational identity and culture go hand-in-hand. Organizational identity refers to what "members perceive, feel, and think about their organization" (Hatch & Schultz, 1997, p. 357). These qualities are ever-changing within members, which can be beneficial for purposeful change and growth within the organization (Hatch & Schultz, 2002). Organizational culture combines the identity, defined above, with the organization's history, as well as the branding aspects of names, logos, and symbols (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). Similar to identity, the culture is a fluid state of mind that is open for judgment by external audiences (Hatch & Schultz, 2002). Because both organizational identity and culture are constantly evolving, it is necessary to frequently assess the organization and create benchmarks. For future improvements, it is a necessity to evaluate members', or employees', current perceptions, feelings, and thoughts, as these can be unknowingly displayed to external audiences (Ray et al., 2015). Furthermore,

previous research suggests during times of transformation, organizational identity and culture falter, but remain steady during times of stability and consistency (Torppa & Smith, 2009). Both organizational identity and culture play a significant role in supporting the need for research geared toward Extension employees in a services-focused entity.

Branding in Extension

Although Extension itself is over 150 years old, the idea of branding in Extension is a fairly recent addition in the literature. It wasn't until 1998 that anyone called for a step toward branding and effectively marketing Extension (Maddy & Kealy, 1998). Even then, a time with far less technology, Extension professionals were concerned about competing with the noise within the consumer's everyday world. Since that seminal article, several land-grant universities have taken a serious look at Extension branding (Abrams et al., 2010; Baker et al., 2011), specifically the public perception of the Extension brand. In some cases, the public was aware of research and public service activities by the university, but the public and media did not connect the work directly with the Extension function of the university (Abrams et al., 2010; Baker et al., 2011). In addition, those with previous experience with the Extension brand indicated a strong reputation for the brand. Conversely, the awareness of the brand overall was quite low. Those who had prior experience with the brand found it to be useful, trustworthy, and credible. The concept of Extension being positively known by a small number of people who interact with Extension system is commonly summed up as Extension being "the best kept secret" (DeBord, 2007).

Recently, internal marketing and branding of Extension has been explored. In a 2015 study, Ray et al. examined the organizational identity of K-State Research and Extension from the perspective of county Extension agents and board members. These focus groups revealed a strong employee connection to the Extension brand. While these results were positive concerning internal organizational identity, employees in the study were concerned this was not translated well to the public (Ray et al., 2015). Further studies have examined the internal perception of Extension brands from county and state-level audiences (Settle et al., 2016). Overall, the results of these studies indicate that local and state-level agents and employees truly believe in the brand of Extension and serve as brand ambassadors to the public. However, no studies have been conducted with employees of communication services units.

Conceptual Framework

Internal Branding and Marketing through Organizational Communication

To determine the effectiveness of internal brand management, the organizational identity first needs to be evaluated by "identifying how members perceive, feel, and think about their organization" (Hatch & Schultz, 1997, p. 357). An organization is defined by Baldwin, Perry, and Moffitt (2004) as a group of people dedicated to fulfilling a communal objective or mission of said organization. These variables contributing to organizational identity show how the organization is viewed by external stakeholders, another critical element for successful branding (Hatch & Schultz, 2002). If all members of the organization are not fully championing the brand and embracing the mission, some external audiences may be given an unfavorable perception of the organization. Hatch and Schultz (2002) claimed an organizational member can influence external brand perception through explicit assertions. Communication, both external and internal, played an integral role in how members formally or informally represented the organization's brand (Baldwin, Perry, & Moffit, 2004). In order to improve an organization's future marketing

services and increase overall brand recognition, a benchmark of current organizational structure and identity must be established. While segments of internal organizational identity have been investigated (Baker et al., 2011; Ray et al., 2015; Settle et al., 2016), there is a gap in the literature related to the employee segment of communication services units.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to discover how well employees in a Kansas State University and Extension printing and K-State Research and Extension mail entity understood the Extension brand and their investment in it, as well as understanding employees' perceptions of branding and marketing efforts. The specific research questions that guided this study were: RQ1: What perceptions and investment do communication services employees have in the K-State Research and Extension brand? RQ2: What are employees' perceptions of the organization's branding and marketing efforts?

Methodology

Qualitative research methods were used "to provide a rich account of meaning or behavior in a specific context" (Baldwin, Perry, & Moffitt, 2004, p. 47). The total population sample, or census, consisted of all 18 employees ranging from printers, supervisors, and business managers to accurately understand the structure and investment in the brand by every employee within the printing and mailing service centers. In this sample, employees' funding structures were different dependent on the position. To avoid revealing the identity of employees in such a small sample, those details, as well as ages, gender, and years of employment, are not included in the results.

Sampling and Recruitment

Employees were selected through purposive sampling of the total population and recruited through a face-to-face sign up. Interviews were scheduled and conducted between October 10 and December 13, 2017. It should be noted that during this time the department that houses these units had an interim department head. This uncertainty may have influenced responses. In addition, a portion of this unit merged with another unit within the last 10 years, which may be reflected in some of the nature of participants' responses and investment in the Extension brand.

As with the majority of employees in a land-grant system, the funding structure is complicated. It should be noted that the funding structure for employees within this study varied. The majority of funding for full-time employees within both the printing and mailing units comes from K-State Research and Extension. However, both units are income-earning units and have the ability to bill other clients who have an affiliation with the university. These funds allow a portion of some employees' salaries to be paid outside of the Extension budget. These funds also allow for additional operating expenses and part-time employees. K-State Research and Extension remains the largest client for both units.

Instrumentation

This study used semi-structured, in-depth interviews to collect data. Each interview included a series of questions focusing on employees' story related to Extension and employees' thoughts on branding and marketing efforts. Specific questions included were: 1) What is your role, and who do you interact with? 2) What is your story related to Extension? 3) How do you tell the Extension story through your work? 4) What is your role in marketing for K-State Research and Extension printing and mailing service centers? 5) Why do you think it's important for you, or

someone in your role, to be involved in bringing new customers in? IRB approval was obtained prior to participant recruitment. The questioning route was reviewed by a panel of experts for face and content validity.

Procedure

To ensure procedural dependability of the raw data and the syntheses of the results, these 10-50 minute interviews were audio recorded and documented through field notes (Flick, 2009). Internal validity was obtained by comparing interviewer's notes and participants' transcribed and recorded responses. A trained graduate student conducted all interviews and followed a question route developed by the research team. The graduate student read all questions directly from the question route to ensure consistency among interviews. After each interview, the moderator recapped the discussion and asked participants if this was an accurate reflection, which served as a member check (Creswell, 2007). Every participant in this study approved their reflection of the interview provided by the moderator. Interviews were transcribed verbatim by the research team, and pseudonyms were assigned to each participant.

Data Analysis

The individual question responses were coded independently by a single coder for themes using Glaser's (1965) constant comparative method, a process of reviewing transcripts to determine major themes within the data while constantly comparing to previously established themes. Together, the research team used the constant comparative method while reviewing the data, codes, and themes to ensure an accurate representation. Data were analyzed for themes using Nvivo 11.4.3 to manage the data. Internal consistency was assured through the comparison of the interviewer's notes and participants' recorded and transcribed responses.

Following the transcription process, each question of every interview was coded to link words or phrases of the data with significance (Bhattacharya, 2007). Within the data of this study, some codes included: service-center promotion, outreach, departmental support, talking about my job, helping customers, continuous customers, legislative funding, little knowledge of brand, and my role is printing for the brand. Together, the research team triangulated the coded data into themes to increase credibility of the study, which included: importance of creative ways to market, perception of role in the brand, Extension brand, marketing position, team mindset, emotional and engaging investment, and self promotion.

Researchers Subjectivity Statements

In qualitative research, researcher subjectivity can influence the way a study is examined. According to Preissle (2008), a researcher should directly state his or her subjectivity that could affect their research, and for the readers to make an informed decision on the credibility and quality of the study. For this study, the lead researcher and coder was an agricultural education and communications graduate student with limited exposure to Extension and the printing industry. The researcher was on a department-supported assistantship to help Extension services units better understand marketing, branding, and communication. The secondary researcher reviewed the moderator's guide prior to conducting the study, supervised the graduate student through the process of collecting data, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting. This researcher took the lead on developing conclusions, implications, and recommendations. This researcher was a tenured faculty member in an agricultural communications program with a 30% research appointment with one vein of research dedicated to Extension communications. The tertiary

researcher was an instructor in an agricultural communications program. This researcher provided support to the lead researcher in analyzing and interpreting data and has a background of research work in Extension communications.

Results
RQ 1: What perceptions and investment do communication services employees have in the K-State Research and Extension brand?

Participants' interview responses yielded a varied perception of understanding and investment in the brand with the following major themes: 1) disconnected from the brand mission 2) self-proclaimed brand ambassadors. A majority of participants also expressed an unclear understanding of the Extension mission and brand.

Various perceptions of employees' investment in the Extension brand:
Disconnected with the brand mission

When participants were asked about their story and role in Extension, 13 of 18 employees clearly identified they were disconnected with the brand mission. Seven participants described their role as "just printing for Extension." Brian, a printing specialist said, "There was no, 'Oh Extension yeah!' No, it's just printing. It's a job. This is what I do." On a similar note, Brooke, a large format printer, said, "Since that's not what I do, we were just kind of grouped in with Extension, so it's kind of like we're under their umbrella." Participants did not see themselves as playing an integral role in the Extension mission and brand. Many described their position as being a part of an organizational merge. Albert, a printer specialist and mail center employee, said, "I'm originally with [printing] and during the department merges that happened a few years ago, we came over to Extension. And, then they took care of the who's gonna be with who and their jobs." Participants identified more with the Kansas State University brand rather than the brand segment of University Printing brand or Extension brand. In fact, Addison, a bookstore associate said, "If someone says, 'Well where do you work?'… [and I] say 'Well, Extension.' 'What's Extension?' So, most the time I don't ever say Extension because it's just like, I just work at Kansas State University distribution."

Another less common perception that five participants had was a positive view of the Extension brand, but no known relation or role in it. Brad, a printing coordinator, said:

> The place I was at before, we actually did some printing for them, so I knew about K-State Research and Extension from that, and when I had the opportunity to come here, I jumped at it and have been very pleased with the work environment.

Bruce, a digital production center supervisor, had similar thoughts about the work atmosphere but noted, "Actually, all I know about Extension is that we're a part of it, to be very honest with you." These select participants felt they weren't associated with Extension but felt positive toward the overall Extension idea and brand segment.

It is important to note that 11 of the eighteen employees portrayed little to no current understanding of the Extension brand and land-grant mission. Some expressed that they were gradually learning more about Extension's programs and services, but had no training or information shared with them about Extension as a whole.

Self-proclaimed brand ambassadors
The five dissenting participants held perceptions that they clearly identified with Extension and saw their role in the brand. Participants recalled conversations with external audiences where they were proud to tell people they print for K-State Research and Extension. Bryce, a publications coordinator, said in a conversation with an elementary student, "I said, 'I work for Extension.' He asked, 'Oh really, what's that?' I said, 'You see that printed pie chart? I printed those, and they're all over schools.'" Employees in this group feel they represent and even live the brand outside of working hours. Billy, the director, said:

> I live it. I live it every day, all day. Even when I'm not at work, I'm still trying to represent University Printing. I have several employees that do that as well. They are proud to work here and take pride in what we do, so I like being associated with it. I try to conduct myself in a fashion where I will not cause us any damage or harm and promote us.

Participants in this theme had fond recollections of their relationship with Extension and their history with the brand. Although it should be noted not all had an extensive history with the brand.

RQ 2: What are employees' perceptions of the organization's branding and marketing efforts?
Major themes gathered from this series of questions were: 1) audience assessment and identification needed for growth in the organization 2) employees' had potential ideas for marketing.
     Throughout many of the interviews, participants identified a need for refining the target audiences for the multi-faceted organization. Furthermore, potential marketing ideas were proposed by almost all participants in interviews; however, nearly all participants felt they were unaware of branding and marketing efforts currently taking place.

Audience assessment and identification needed for growth in the organization
During interviews, some participants felt there was a divide between the two locations of University Printing. These participants expressed a need for audience assessment and identification to improve marketing efforts and bring in new customers. Billy, the director, thought, "Defining the audiences to market to and the different styles of marketing it might take for those groups is important." Brody, location manager and senior administrative assistant also felt there was a need for distinguishing audiences and different marketing tactics. He said:

> We need to find ways in order to reach out to our customers more and…reach out to the younger generations…to help us find new avenues and new ways…there's technology that we don't dip into that I think would be beneficial for us to.

Employees' ideas for potential marketing avenues
Throughout nearly all interviews, participants mentioned ideas for marketing efforts for the brand segment of printing. Most ideas focused on interpersonal communications, such as word-of-mouth promotion and face-to-face interaction, and public relations practices. Moreover, some

also felt an online presence and social-media presence would be more beneficial for marketing directed to the target audience of students.

Participants felt there should be an increase of current marketing efforts and an addition of various other methods to maintain vitality of the organization. Bruce felt an employee in a marketing position for University Printing should not "be in this building. They should always be out touching someone…[and] be out shmoozing." In addition, some participants thought further word-of-mouth promotion could spread through customer interactions. Brett, a graphic designer, said, "I mean really word-of-mouth, as far as I know, between departmental entities is our only marketing…you know customer service is going to be that top one." These marketing efforts were prevalent in most interviews, but public relations practices were also a frequently mentioned marketing tactic. Bob, a customer service specialist, said, "I can reach some of them by word-of-mouth, but I'm not getting to all of them."

Although participants considered both interpersonal communication methods and public relations practices an important methods for marketing efforts, nearly all felt there should also be incorporation of an online presence and potentially social-media presence for a specific targeted audience. Arlene, a bookstore coordinator, said:

> If that means we have maybe some student help come in and…schedule all the tweets for the week…because [we can say] 'Hey! Look what we just did! Look what kinds of things are available that you might not know about! Here's a five-fold brochure that you've never seen before or [we're] just putting out in front of people!' I mean that's basically the whole point of all of that is just getting it out in front of people…

Overall, many ideas were suggested by participants, but some felt they were unaware of current marketing efforts, which they thought may inhibit them from making informed propositions for potential ideas.

Conclusions and Discussion

Overwhelmingly, employees of the communication services unit in this study were not invested or familiar with the Extension mission and brand. Many participants thought printing and mailing for Extension was "just a job." This is a major problem from an internal branding perspective, as previous work indicates employee investment in the brand leads to greater external audience understanding of the brand and more positive associations with the brand (Davies & Miles, 1998; de Chernatony, 1999; Fombrun, 1996; Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Hatch & Schultz, 2001). It is no wonder that previous studies have documented a lack of investment and perceived value in Extension (Abrams et al., 2010; Maddy & Kealy, 1998; Telg et al., 2007; Torppa & Smith, 2009) when its own employees are not invested in it. This study contradicts work by Ray et al. (2015) and Settle et al. (2016) where Extension employees were invested in the brand, as the majority of the participants in the present study were not invested in the Extension mission. It should be noted that this study was the first conducted with communication services unit employees, so this internal audience segment may be unique in its lack of investment in the Extension brand. Additionally, it should be noted that these employees print for and mail for other elements of Kansas State University, this may split their investment in the Extension brand. Additionally, this group of employees may not receive much training related to the Extension mission and brand because of their role in other facets of the University.

However, a small number of employees (five out of 18) were fully committed to the brand. These employees proudly represented the brand during and off-work hours. These participants truly met the standards for what branding literature describes as brand ambassadors (de Chernatony, 2006). Four of the five brand ambassadors in the study were upper-level employees with management responsibilities. It is possible that their roles provided them with additional training or insight into the value of the Extension brand. Moreover, they would be more likely to interact with the other brand segments, which research has identified as having more positive associations with the brand (Ray et al., 2015; Settle et al., 2016).

Another small subset of employees (five out of 18) had positive associations for the Extension brand even though they were not invested enough to be considered brand ambassadors. This aligns with previous work with external Extension audiences that have identified those who have had contact with Extension have positive associations with it (Abrams et al., 2010; Baker et al., 2011). Unfortunately, these types of results continue to perpetuate the idea that Extension is "the best kept secret" (DeBord, 2007); and, in the case of the present study, its value is a "secret" to some internal audiences too. Similar to results from external branding in Extension work (Baker et al., 2011; Kornberger, 2010), some participants in this study did not distinguish between the Kansas State University Printing brand and the Extension brand. This can be a challenge when legislative funding is prioritized. If funding is considered under the Kansas State University brand, then keeping recognition under the larger brand may be adequate. But, funding for specific Extension categories is often considered separately at the state and local levels. Thus, brand recognition for Extension may be necessary to rally both internal and external support for Extension as a legislative priority.

Most employees in the study contributed to ideas for improving marketing of services. Employees felt that the different locations on campus serve different audiences, and that this should be considered in marketing efforts. Overall, employees felt there was a need to determine audiences' needs for services and communication preferences. Predominantly, employees thought interpersonal communications would be of the most value to market services offered; however, the need for social media was discussed particularly when talking about reaching younger audiences. The majority of participants had no idea what was currently being done to market services, which could point to a larger need for including all employees in the needs and purposes of marketing. This may stem from the issue of investment in the overall brand. It is difficult for employees to be invested in what they don't understand or when they are not asked to be involved in the bigger picture of the organization (Hatch & Schultz, 1997).

Recommendations for Practice

The results of this study generated many ideas for how to improve internal branding and culture in communication services units. It is recommended that employees in communication services units receive training on the mission and value of the land-grant institution. This training should include the value their jobs have in serving the larger mission. Because in this unit, there are some clear brand ambassadors, these would be ideal candidates to either conduct the training or provide input and testimonials on their investment in the brand. This will be a shift in culture for this segment of the brand, thus it cannot be a one-time training. The value of these employees to the brand should be communicated regularly by direct and higher management. Employees should be recognized for their investment in the brand and service to the Extension mission. Administrators should prioritize employee investment in the mission to develop brand

ambassadors as recommended by de Chernatony (2007) and to get employees beyond thinking about their work as "just a job."

Recommendations for Research

Research should be conducted within this communication services unit to understand current and potential audiences. Employees within the unit should be asked to participate in the process, so they will be more invested in the outcome and in the brand as a whole, and they should be told that their opinions in the current research were used to build future research projects. After the initial audience identification, a needs assessment should be conducted with current and potential audiences to understand what services could meet audience needs and to understand the external branding component of stakeholders specific to communication services brand segments of Extension.

While this research may be transferable to other state university and Extension brands with similar structure and services, it is recommended that other printing and mail services for universities and Extension conduct similar studies to understand internal branding in communication services units. If even one employee misrepresents the brand, external marketing and branding efforts could be jeopardized. In addition, other communication services for university and Extension should be included in internal branding research to gain a complete picture of the role of all employees within university and Extension systems. Within the present study and previous work (Baker et al., 2011) the lack of clarity and distinction between the university brand and the state Extension brand were noted. Thus, more research should be conducted to understand the relationship between the Kansas State University brand and Extension brand and the role this plays in legislative funding and stakeholder engagement both internal and external.

Limitations of this study include a lack of generalizability, which is a part of all qualitative research (Creswell, 2007). This reflects one university and Extension communication services unit at one particular time. However, it is possible this work may be transferable to other populations with similar structure and challenges.

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Anissa Zagonel is a master's student in the Department of Communications and Agricultural Education at Kansas State University.

Dr. Lauri M. Baker is an associate professor of agricultural communications at Kansas State University where she is the co-creator of the Center for Rural Enterprise Engagement, which focuses on new-media marketing research to improve the economic viability of rural communities.

Audrey King is a doctoral student in the Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership at Oklahoma State University.