

CASE STUDY

Modernising chambers

Beverly Landais shares her experiences in modernising a legal brand with historic roots

In today's highly competitive legal services market, a strong, consistent and recognisable brand is essential. It not only identifies you, but also helps to communicate who you are, what you do and the way you do it.

A brand is a distinct identity, ethos and visual language that can differentiate you from the competition. It establishes the organisation's unique personality and allows you to build deep connections with clients, members and staff.

A brand is not just represented by the visual aspects, such as the logo, literature and website, but is also reflected in:

- the behaviour and attitudes of your people;
- the physical environment of your offices;
- the quality of the services you offer; and
- the manner in which they are delivered.

Branding is the creation and management of all the experiences people have with your organisation at every point of contact.

The reputation of the brand is never static. Each time a client deals with you is a moment of truth for the brand. The experience they take away will either enhance or diminish your reputation in their eyes.

Successful brands achieve a high degree of recognition by clients who find what is on offer to have appeal and credibility. If a client's experience is such that they no longer believe in the authenticity and reliability of the brand to deliver what it promises, then it will fail. Put another way, a brand is a recognisable and trustworthy hallmark of origin, a promise of performance which is consistently communicated and experienced.

Branding acts as a group identifier for members and staff. It makes possible the communication of a clear positive message to clients, potential new recruits

as well as third parties who can influence opinion. The brand is an expression of the attributes that shape your organisation and affects perceptions about it, not only through what you say but how you say it.

All members of your organisation must have ownership of the brand. The individual reputations of members add to the equity that resides in the brand. In turn, each member can derive personal and professional benefit from being associated with a strong brand.

An inside-out approach

We recently decided to refresh the branding of our London barristers' chambers, Devereux.

Our branding project involved developing a strategic approach, obtaining buy-in from members and staff by running workshops, briefing and directing the design and development, fielding feedback and managing expectations.

We took an inside-out approach to identifying what makes us special and

KEY TAKEAWAY POINTS

1

Engage with all internal and external stakeholders from the start.

2

Invest time in listening to client feedback about your services.

3

Distil this learning into the key values, attributes and ethos that epitomise best practice.

4

Identify what needs to be done so that people are at their best more often.

5

Support this with training and communication, as well as systems and processes.

6

Express the brand visually and be consistent in its application.

differentiates us in the market. We reviewed client feedback and market commentary, and also took on board the views of members and staff.

In spring 2011, we ran four separate workshops with members and staff to explore internal views. This was supplemented with member feedback via a survey. We also had the benefit of input from members who formed a sounding board committee for the rebranding ideas.

The final design was presented to members and the rollout of the agreed branding commencing in September 2011.

When we asked clients, members and staff what we are like at our best, the results revealed four key attributes.

1. We are focused on what really matters

We demonstrate our commitment by taking the time to understand clients' goals. We are well prepared, disciplined and in control. Considered, driven and passionate about what we do, we care about outcomes.

2. We are commercially astute

We deliver pragmatic solutions to meet clients' goals. Clients respect our ability to make complex issues simple and to get to the heart of the matter.

3. We possess excellence in depth

Our barristers are skilled, resourceful and effective advocates who are

intellectually astute and provide advice and representation that is clear, precise and of the highest technical quality.

4. We are easy to deal with

We have a reputation for being friendly and unpretentious. We invest time in building and maintaining strong working relationships.

These key attributes are the critical brand building blocks of our client-centric strategy.


Modernising the brand

Having defined the key attributes, we worked with Sears Davies Designers to create new branding that helps to express these characteristics and give a visual embodiment of our ethos.

The new branding is rooted in our heritage; the Devereux name is unique amongst chambers and is derived from

WHAT GREAT BRANDING CAN DO

- ✓ Create awareness of who you are
- ✓ Communicate your capabilities and their relevance to clients
- ✓ Develop credibility and trust that you will perform what your brand promises
- ✓ Make it easier for clients to choose you



“The central devices of the Devereux coat of arms have provided the inspiration for our modern twist of the brand”

THE DEVEREUX LOGO

Before



After



a proud history and long association with the Temple.

The name derives from Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex. A favourite of the first Queen Elizabeth, he was awarded lands in and around Temple for his service to the Crown (hence names such as Devereux Court, Essex Court and Essex Street).

The central devices of the Devereux coat of arms have provided the inspiration for our modern twist of the brand. The heraldic meaning of these elements sits very well with our newly-refined key attributes. The red bar is a belt known as a 'fess'. It is a 'girdle of honour' and signifies a readiness to serve. The roundels signify someone who is worthy of trust and the colour red signifies strength.

Our new Devereux logo is contemporary, but not overly quirky or trendy. It has a gravitas that looks to a proud heritage but still speaks to a modern audience. There is a strength and robustness that gives a feeling of confidence to the viewer of being in safe hands. It also speaks to the notion of working together and being part of a team.

Our rebranding project included building a new website. Again, we sought client input and created a review panel that included some of our top instructing solicitors and in-house counsel. This provided valuable ideas on functionality and content, as well as feedback on design. It also demonstrates another aspect of our client-centric approach.

The website was successfully launched in May 2012 to superb client feedback and provided a springboard for our marketing drive.

Bringing it to life

We try to bring our branding to life in everything we do. We have restructured the clerks' room as well as the management of chambers and invested in resources to deliver a client-centric culture.

We support this in a number of ways. Members are on their feet honing their advocacy skills and are involved in client care activities from an early start. Junior members are supported by a mentoring scheme, as well

as regular know-how talks by senior members that enable learning to be shared at every level.

Members are also contributing editors to industry handbooks and regularly join panels at industry seminars, lectures and masterclasses. We also run our own CPD-accredited programme of roundtables and seminars.

Our client service review programme is also used to further improve the services

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provided and to innovate. Staff appraisals and rewards are linked to the achievement of the client service principles that underpin our key brand attributes. We invest in tailored client service training for all staff.

We have also structured our clerks into practice management teams. They hold meetings with individual members, where goals are reviewed and targets set.

The rebranding included the refurbishment of chambers to a high standard. The building has been organised to enhance communication and the décor chosen to provide a professional yet friendly and unintimidating ambiance.

Branding is not just about the look and feel of a logo, marketing materials, website or advertising. It is about the substance of the service and the excellence of the work. It is about providing a compelling reason as to why a client should choose to work with you instead of someone else. Ultimately, it is about performance.

We believe our new branding reflects the modern, dynamic and client-centric chambers that Devereux is today. Our efforts have also been externally recognised, with Devereux being commended in *Chambers UK 2013* for the provision of quality client services. ¹⁰⁰

Beverly Landais is the CEO at London barristers' chambers Devereux