What We Know - Quick Review
Who We Are - Brand Identity
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WHAT WE KNOW
STAMATS: “see blue.” SWAGGER

The marketing messages used by the university should be revised to focus upon its market position as the most preferred and most well-known university in the state. UK needs to develop a swagger that is sorely lacking in its communications.

- Brand Awareness Message: “see blue.”
- Brand Position: Academic Excellence
WHO WE ARE
WHY A BRAND GUIDE?

Simply put, it guides the brand.

• Every brand has a unique personality.
  • If identity is not defined, brand personality gets lost.
BRAND GUIDE BENEFITS

• Be cohesive and consistent, internally and externally.
• Eliminate guesswork. Is this who we are? Then go for it.
  • Spend less energy explaining your brand and make more valuable connections with your target audience.
  • Celebrate new initiatives without being distracted away from your core.
“see blue.” has been a successful marketing platform for UK for several years. It has transcended its initial purpose as a student recruitment tool, and has now come to define the University’s brand. Our intention is to inject further purpose and meaning into the UK brand through deeper understanding, allowing powerful and unified messaging that will establish an emotional connection with our next generation of students and our constituents.

**OUR GOAL IS TO ANSWER THE QUESTION:**

**WHAT IS THE “see blue.” STORY?**

This is an opportunity to step back and identify what about the brand is most important. Throughout the guide, we identify insights and inspiration that have built the University’s brand, allowing us to maintain a consistent look, voice and message, regardless of the medium or circumstances.
TARGET PROFILE
A NEW PROSPECTIVE STUDENT: GEN-Z (BORN AFTER 1995)

The first step in establishing real emotional connections with our next generation of students is truly understanding their needs, desires, habits and outlook.

- Have been heavily influenced and **shaped by technology, the internet, terrorism, war, the recession and social media**
- Saw their parents experience the recession during their formative years (age 11-13), making them more **cost and value conscious**, especially in family decisions
- **IQ scores are higher** than previous generations
- **Always connected** in a seamless cloud-based world of friends, data, and entertainment—tech savvy, digital natives who are globally connected through social media and the web’s expansive wealth of knowledge
- **Closer to their parents** than the previous generations, share more common interests
- **More socially responsible** due to greater access to a large online information pool—more acutely aware of modern day challenges
With a history of visionary leaders dating back to its very first president, UK has always been a progressive place of learning — a place that has had a noble mission to serve the best interests of the Commonwealth, and the country, ever since its charter as a land-grant institution. The “see” in “see blue” speaks to this sense of vision and progressivism. As the state’s flagship institution, especially one that is so research-intensive, UK is seen as a leader. Beyond what “see” means in the University’s heritage and purpose, it also is a call to our future scholars to see their own place in UK’s mission to change the world for the better.

The University’s spirit, tradition, heritage, pride and geography are all represented by a very particular shade of blue. The color is an unmistakable symbol of the emotional side of the University of Kentucky experience, one that is unique to the University and differentiating from its competitors. Beyond its direct ties to the University and region, “blue” symbolizes endless opportunity and optimism — only strengthening the “see” part of our message.
An integral part of charting the future of “see blue.” is clearly identifying its place in the University’s history and heritage.

“see blue.” represents everything the University has stood for since its founding, and that brand story belongs in our communications. For this reason, we should look to identify the key ideals and long-standing characteristics that defined the institution from the start, making for an interesting and authentic story for the brand.

The Morril Act of 1865 established (what would eventually become) the University of Kentucky as an industry and agriculture-builder, an institution with a concrete mission. As a land-grant university, this meant facing new challenges while preparing students for the practical vocations that the Commonwealth and recently war-torn country demanded. This marked the beginning of the University’s dedication to research.
VISIONARY LEADERSHIP: JAMES KENNEDY PATTERSON

Patterson’s statue and namesake building are two of the most recognizable campus landmarks, and deservedly so. An incredible scholar and leader, Patterson established and maintained a progressive vision for the University in more than 30 years as president. Instrumental in securing funding to see the college expand in size and endowment, Patterson’s dedication even drove him to take out a personal loan to cover some of the expenses. Patterson’s progressive standard laid the groundwork for the modern growth of UK and set precedence for the University as the leader in the state.
MODERN HISTORY

UK’s modern history, from the early 20th century through the present, has been a reflection of the ideals established at its founding, always progressively adapting to the times. The fact that UK is one of only eight public institutions in the U.S. with colleges of agriculture, engineering, medicine and pharmacy on a single campus further confirms this. As stated by the Office of the Provost,

“The University has set a course to become A MODEL FOR LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES OF THE 21ST CENTURY, fully engaging its teaching and research resources in the service of the state and the nation.”
EMBRACING OUR HISTORY TO STRENGTHEN OUR MARKETING EFFORTS

So how does this all fit in to attracting bright young scholars to UK? Well, it only strengthens our “see blue.” story. UK continues to honor its roots with a set of solid beliefs, values and standards – something that few brands and universities claim with clarity and conviction. Brands that build their message around shared beliefs see more success than those that simply shout selling points. A clearly and confidently expressed set of beliefs, used to shape the messaging, is the path to strong branding and marketing success.

Our research has shown that the new generation of students are realists, aware of modern challenges and involved in social causes. Messaging that keeps these considerations in mind will focus not only on individual student benefits, but embrace their journey to make change in the world.

THE UNIVERSITY’S PROUD ACADEMIC HERITAGE AND MISSION IS ONLY STRENGTHENED BY ITS UNIQUE CULTURE. WHAT UK CAN OFFER TO A PROSPECTIVE STUDENT IS RARE.

It’s a convergence of tradition and progress in an urban setting surrounded by rural beauty. It’s a place with Midwest sensibilities and southern charm, made up of a student body that’s as diverse as it is unified. Few competing universities can claim this level of diversity and connectivity in its offerings.

“see blue.” is the means of connecting these experiences for our audience, helping to provide a clear vision for their place in it all. Identifying what is unique and ownable to the university allows us to maintain a voice and aesthetic that exudes confidence and honesty.
WE OWN BLUE.

It’s true. Very few competing universities within the state and region can claim blue as their definitive color. That’s a strength in itself. And it’s all owed to Richard C. Stoll, whose serendipitous choice of necktie in 1891 established the University’s signature color. The powerful psychological and emotional responses associated with blue happen to mirror many of the founding ideals of the University.

Blue is linked to CONSCIOUSNESS and INTELLECT. It is associated with DEPTH, EXPERTISE & STABILITY. It represents KNOWLEDGE, POWER, INTEGRITY & SERIOUSNESS. Considered beneficial to the MIND and BODY, blue is strongly associated with TRANQUILITY and CALMNESS. It symbolizes TRUST, LOYALTY, WISDOM, HONESTY, INTELLIGENCE & CONFIDENCE.

DEFINING THE “see blue.” VOICE

The University’s voice needs to not only compliment, but augment the emotional response that its color and aesthetics establish. This means REFLECTING A SENSE OF CONFIDENCE, OR BETTER YET, SWAGGER, WHILE MAINTAINING TRUST THROUGH HONESTY – all attributes that resonate with our prospective student.
CONFIDENCE —> SWAGGER

Incorporating “swagger” into “see blue.” will be accomplished through maintaining a smart and confident voice. Pride and confidence should shine through on all communications, without sounding boastful. Positioning UK as an exclusive place to be can go a long way in changing false perceptions about its academic standards. And UK has every reason to be confident—many highly ranked programs, a strong set of standards and beliefs, focused leadership, vibrant student life (and a dedication to further improving it), one of the country’s best libraries, a firm commitment to growth, storied traditions and a beautiful campus surrounded by a unique city culture—to name a few. The University’s voice can be fun, it can be playful, but it should always be grounded in a sense of smart confidence.

HONESTY —> AUTHENTICITY

In conjunction with introducing more swagger, there should be a focused effort toward honesty in communications. This all plays into the “see” aspect of the “see blue.” platform. It’s about finding the truth in the brand story (which has been defined in the preceding pages), and communicating it in an honest, sincere way. The voice can (and should) be ambitious, zealous and even lofty at times, as long as it has the University’s heritage, ideals and goals in mind. Honesty results in authenticity, which is the means of establishing trust with the audience.
SO HOW DOES IT ALL COME TOGETHER?

Everything we create must have the University's original mission and ideals in mind. This is the message that must be communicated, no matter the medium:

“We are all FORWARD-THINKING VISIONARIES, with a PROUD HERITAGE and a BRIGHT FUTURE. WE ARE LEADERS. We KNOW what we believe in, and it hasn’t changed from the very start. WE ARE BUILDING GREAT THINGS and changing the world TOGETHER. You need to be a part of this.”

That’s exactly what it means to “see blue.”