

Rebranding for Cultural Organisations

What's in a name?

For many institutions the decision to rebrand or rename represents both a risk and opportunity for growth, and signals a shift in direction. It carries with it the potential to attract new audiences, and inadvertently lose old ones.

Your brand describes the 'who' behind your institution identity. It embodies the vision and purpose of what your institution stands for and it defines the difference of how you stand apart.

If authentic, a brand is the engine driving your place making and community service role. It's the draw card behind your action and impact, and the marker of your local, regional and international connections.

Consider these questions to determine what your brand means and how it is relevant:

1. What's happening and what's not?
2. What are we working on and what else should we be doing?
3. What does success look and feel like?
4. Does what we say and do have a common voice?

Organisation names with succinct acronyms have grown in use internationally. In marketing terms, a well chosen acronym can go a long way. It can be exercised in word play, bold in visual design and memorable in associations.

Recently, the Albury Regional Art Gallery launched their new brand and name as MAMA (Murray Art Museum Albury). The personification of the regional art museum into the female nurturer introduces what we can expect from the institution later in September with the official unveiling of the complete gallery rebuild and facility revitalisation. "MAMA is welcoming" we are told, "MAMA is sophisticated" and even "MAMA's skin" is part and parcel of the new organisation that aims to showcase art from the inside and out, where the building exterior will

host 24 hour art projections and public art displays. MAMA is both brand and persona, and one with wide public connection and expectations.

The Powerhouse Museum has also changed names recently and has adopted the approach of a gradual transition in their rebranding initiative to the current title the Museum of Applied Art & Sciences (MAAS) giving audiences time to compute the changes. In reality, MAAS is a return to the institution's original name from 1879, yet the new branding encompasses a cohesive presentation of the museum's other entities – the Sydney Observatory and Discovery Centre under an umbrella term and reworks the MAAS abbreviation to build familiarity.

Integrated into the museum's public programs like their MAASive Lates after hours events, the rebranding for MAAS showcases new activities and its overall mission and vision to reposition itself as both local centric and globally connected:

Director Rose Hiscock said: *I will ensure the Powerhouse Museum is positioned internationally as an acclaimed and innovative museum of science and design and locally as a thriving hub for curiosity and creativity.*



You might also like ...

MAMA

Murray Art Museum Albury

<http://www.alburycity.nsw.gov.au/leisure-and-culture/Alburys-new-art-museum>

MAAS

Museum of Applied Art & Sciences

<https://maas.museum/>

Describing Your Brand

with Lisa Havilah, CEO, Carriageworks

<http://mgnsw.org.au/sector/resources/online-resources/organisation-management/describing-your-brand/>

If you are thinking of rebranding or changing the name of your organisation, connecting to and reflecting your communities' interests, identities and assets these factors will ensure your brand remains true and flies successfully:

Act local, think global

- Be aware of your sense of place and uniqueness. Clones of other models do not carry authenticity.
- Know your neighbours and the networks you operate amongst.
- A mixture of large and small focus is at the heart of connectivity to 'grass roots' and to 'world class'.

The purpose behind identity

- Be legible, clear in your mission and show where you are heading.
- Be true to what you say you are and what you say you'll do.
- Civic outcomes and social impact drive purpose.

Be transparent, dynamic and socially porous

- Be democratic and socially open. Your audience and community voices are diverse and have needs that shift.
- Link your conversations with your communities and networks.
- Plan for foundations that are flexible to change with developments in technology.

Be intrepid, be ambitious, be bold

- Intrepidity, ambition and boldness of thought and action have always engendered the arts with the respect and place in a community. To lose this is to lose a unique position in the public mind.
- Engage the heart and mind. Stimulate, challenge and question.