

Exploring Difference: Positioning your Institution – Marketing and Branding

Paul Starkey

30 April 2009

What I'd like to cover

The UK HE marketplace

The Manchester Merger

Back to basics – the Manchester method

The vision for Manchester

The need to build an iconic brand

Measuring Performance

Before we start...a warm up exercise

Audi

BMW

What are your perceptions of these companies?

Where have your perceptions come from?

Have you had any experiences that confirm or contradict your perceptions?

The UK HE marketplace

HE is now openly competitive

132 higher education institutions:

88 universities, 44 specialist institutions

+143 further education colleges providing HE courses

Variable Fees introduced 2006 (review 2009)

Competing on a global scale

Need for a sustainable and competitive resource base

Positioning and differentiation are key

The UK HE marketplace

The rush for brand refinement

Is this cosmetic

‘Lets have a new logo’

‘Our competitors signage looks better than ours’

‘We want to be famous’

Logos that think they are brands

Designer-centric

The UK HE marketplace

The rush for brand refinement

Or strategic

Due to a merger for instance

Need to reposition the institution

Perception does not match our strategic direction

How are we viewed in the global marketplace

What does our brand communicate to a diverse range of audiences

We need to manage our brand architecture or brand family

Failed or attempted mergers in the UK

Birmingham and Aston

Leicester and Loughborough

Royal Holloway and Brunel

Imperial and UCL

Robert Gordon and Aberdeen

Background to the Manchester Merger



and Management

Background to the Manchester Merger



Merger Vision

To create a research-intensive university in the North of England, with the resources and intellectual power to match the academic excellence of 'The Golden Triangle' (Oxford, Cambridge and London

Enabling Factors

Shared history and co-location

Both 'good' universities, but not excellent

Recognition by external stakeholders of the importance of a strong HEI in city/ region

The Vice-Chancellors, in the right place, at the right time

Initial support from national and local government

The Communications Challenge

Invited experts from education and business who had direct experience of mergers and specialist knowledge about branding and communications to meet the Group

Commissioned a piece of independently-conducted market research to find out what key internal and external audiences knew about the merger and their reaction to it

Held a series of away days for all staff from the two Communications/PR teams to get their input into the process

The Communications Challenge

The reputations of the existing universities must be protected during the transition

Media interest during the transition is almost always a source of damaging publicity

The new brand should be launched at the beginning of the

Undergraduate recruitment cycle (i.e. 20 months before students are admitted to the new institution)

Creating a new brand is an expensive business and must be done by professionals

Staff must be central to defining the new university to develop a sense of ownership

The rush for brand refinement

What are your reasons for branding/re-branding?

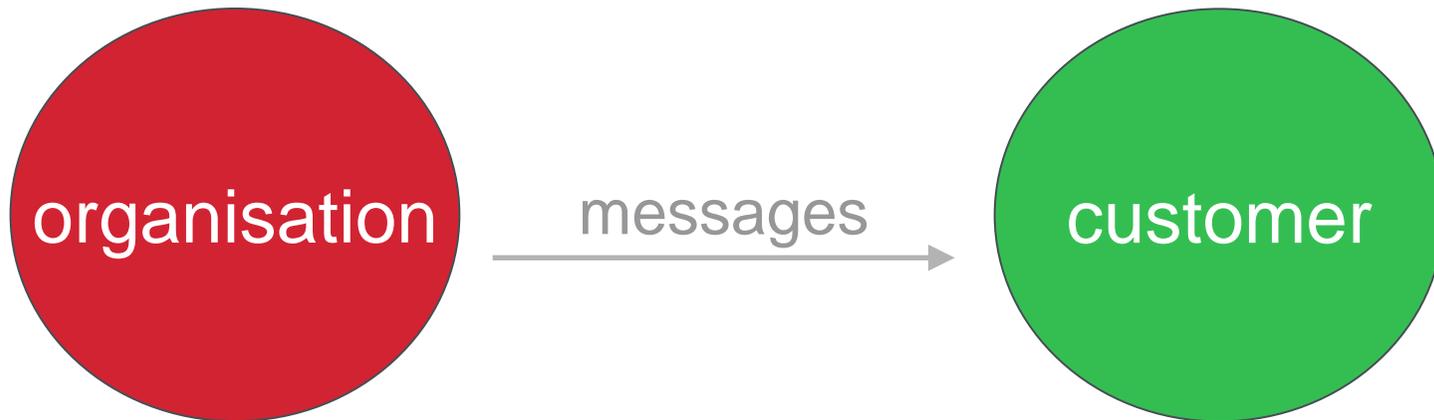
What do you hope to achieve by positioning or repositioning your institution?

Back to basics

“The brand is the **lasting impression** created by any form of contact with an organisation, whether through people, the media or any form of transaction”

“...it is the product not just of pro-active communications and marketing, but of people’s **direct and indirect experience and perception** of an organisation, its services and products”

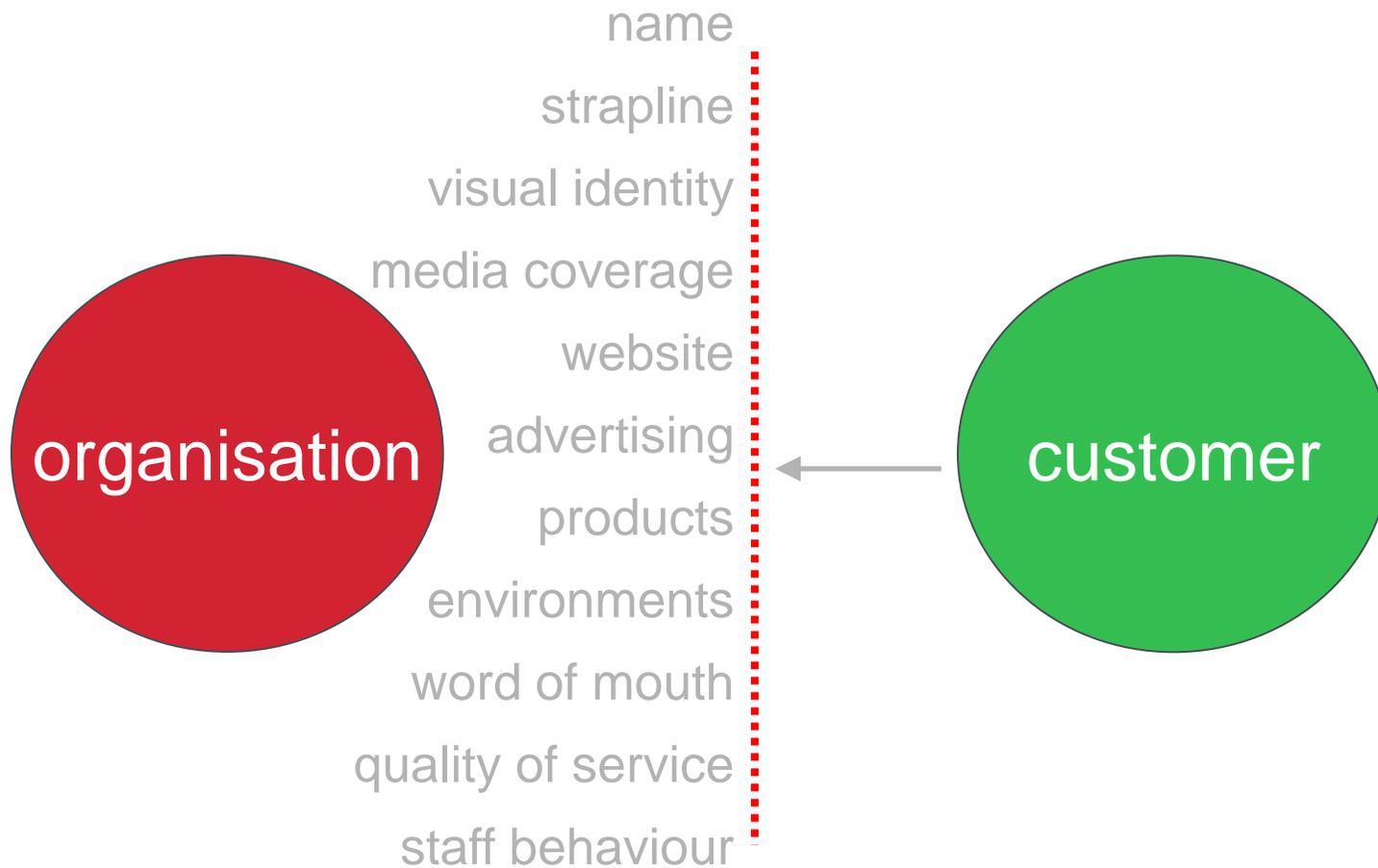
The process...



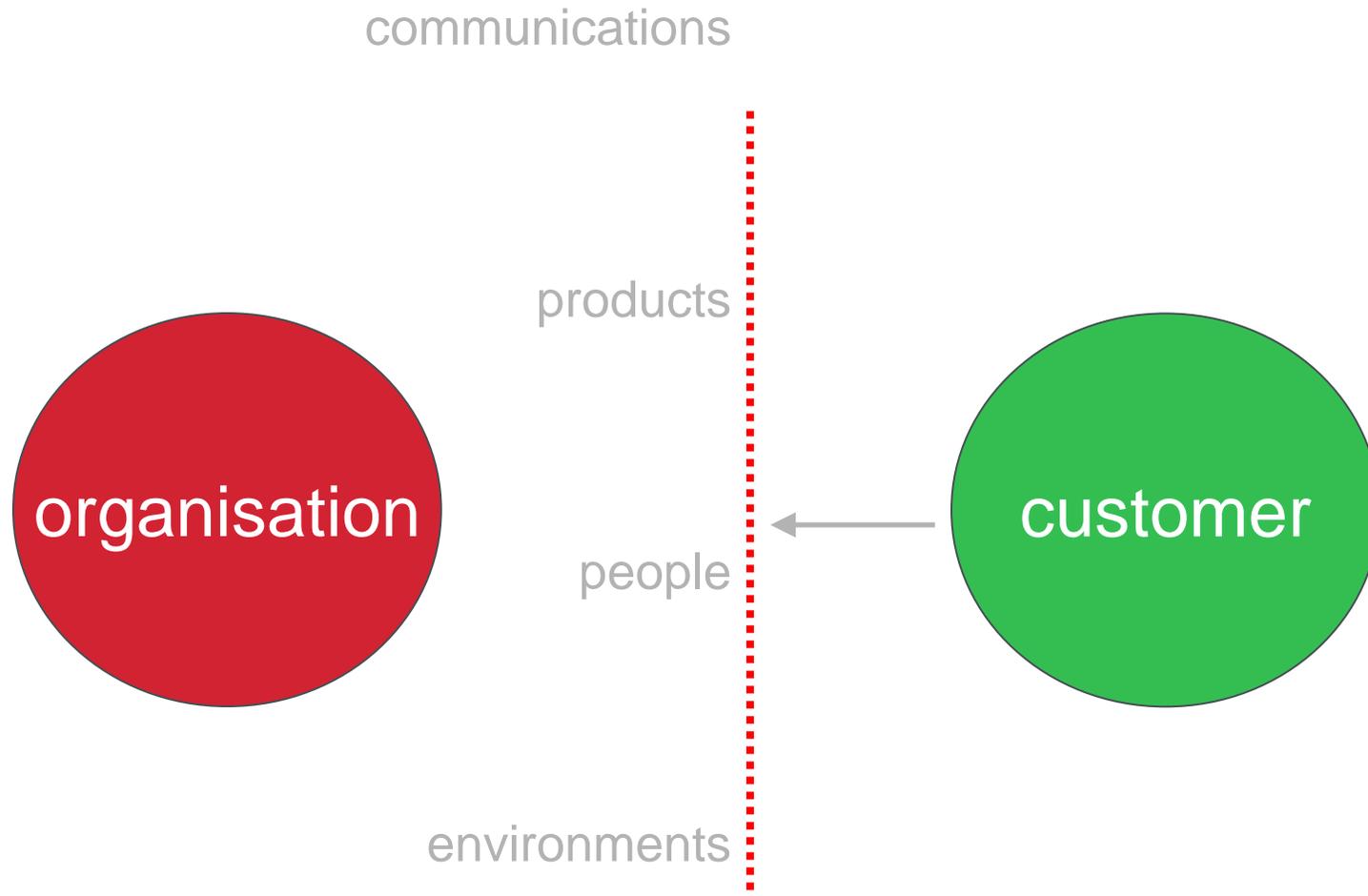
The process...



The process...



In short....



The vision for Manchester

‘The Manchester 2015 Agenda is partly a positioning exercise. A first rank international reputation becomes self sustaining in the sense that the key people attracted to such an institution by its reputation serve, through their very presence, to reinforce and enhance that reputation. Reputation-building is a process of making and substantiating self-fulfilling prophecies. It creates genuine substance and is validated by the substance it creates.’

Towards Manchester 2015

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Towards Manchester 2015

The vision for Manchester

‘The unification of UMIST and the Victoria University of Manchester has presented us with a unique opportunity to rethink the very idea of a 21st century university...’

Norman Askew
Towards Manchester 2015

The vision for Manchester

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Norman Askew
Towards Manchester 2015

The vision for Manchester

‘The unification of UMIST and the Victoria University of Manchester has presented us with a unique opportunity to rethink the very idea of a 21st century university and to formulate a blueprint for **our future as a premier international institution...**’

Norman Askew
Towards Manchester 2015

The need to become an 'iconic' institution

'Their "brands" are synonymous with excellence; their leading scholars are high profile public intellectuals; they are centres of artistic virtuosity; their names and reputations open doors for graduates to the world's most prestigious workplaces'.

Professor Alan Gilbert
Towards Manchester 2015

The need to become an 'iconic' institution

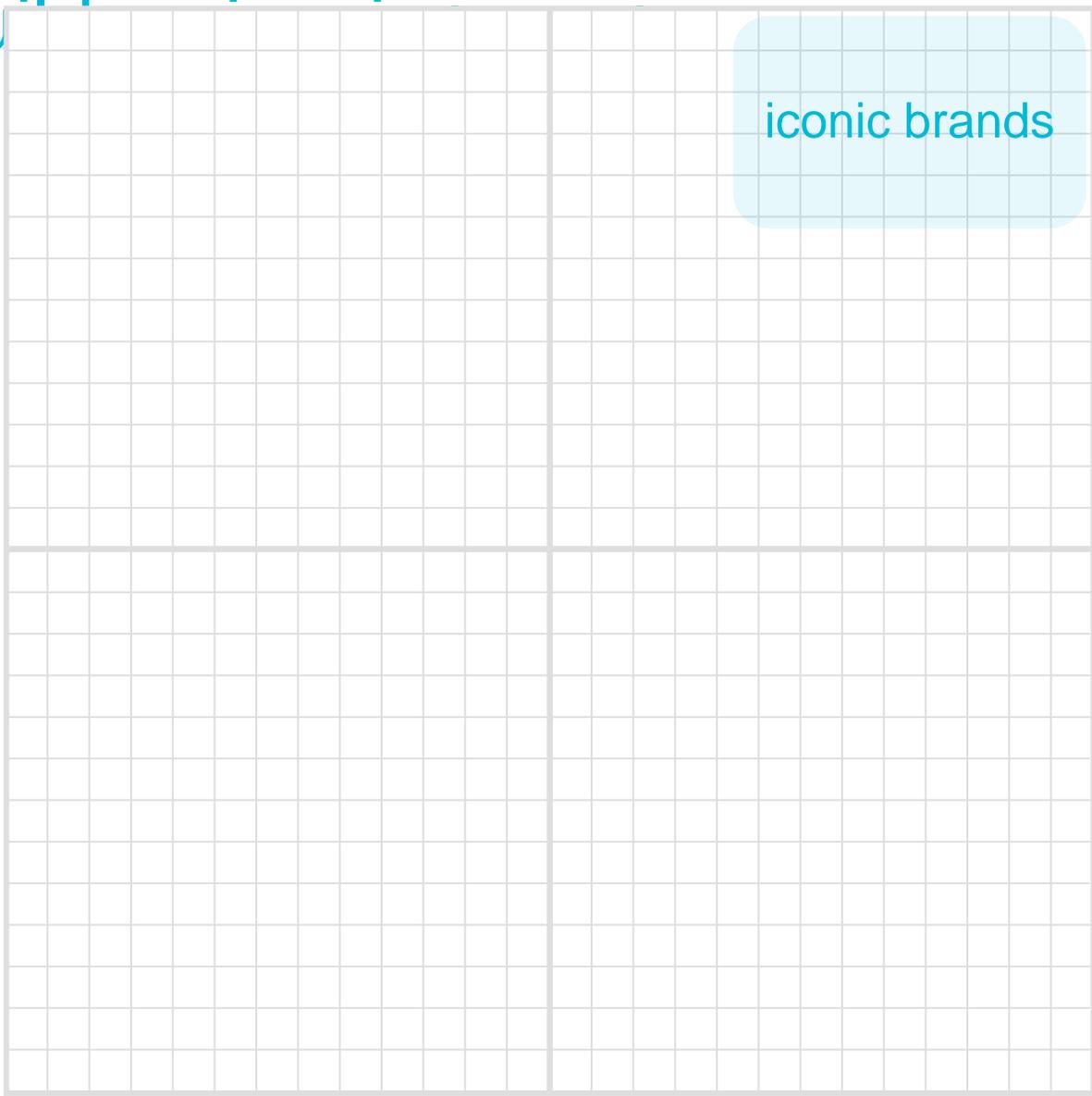
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...and build an iconic brand

...and bu

high quality



iconic brands

low profile

high profile

*Top 500 World
Universities*
Shanghai Jiao Tong
University

low quality

high quality

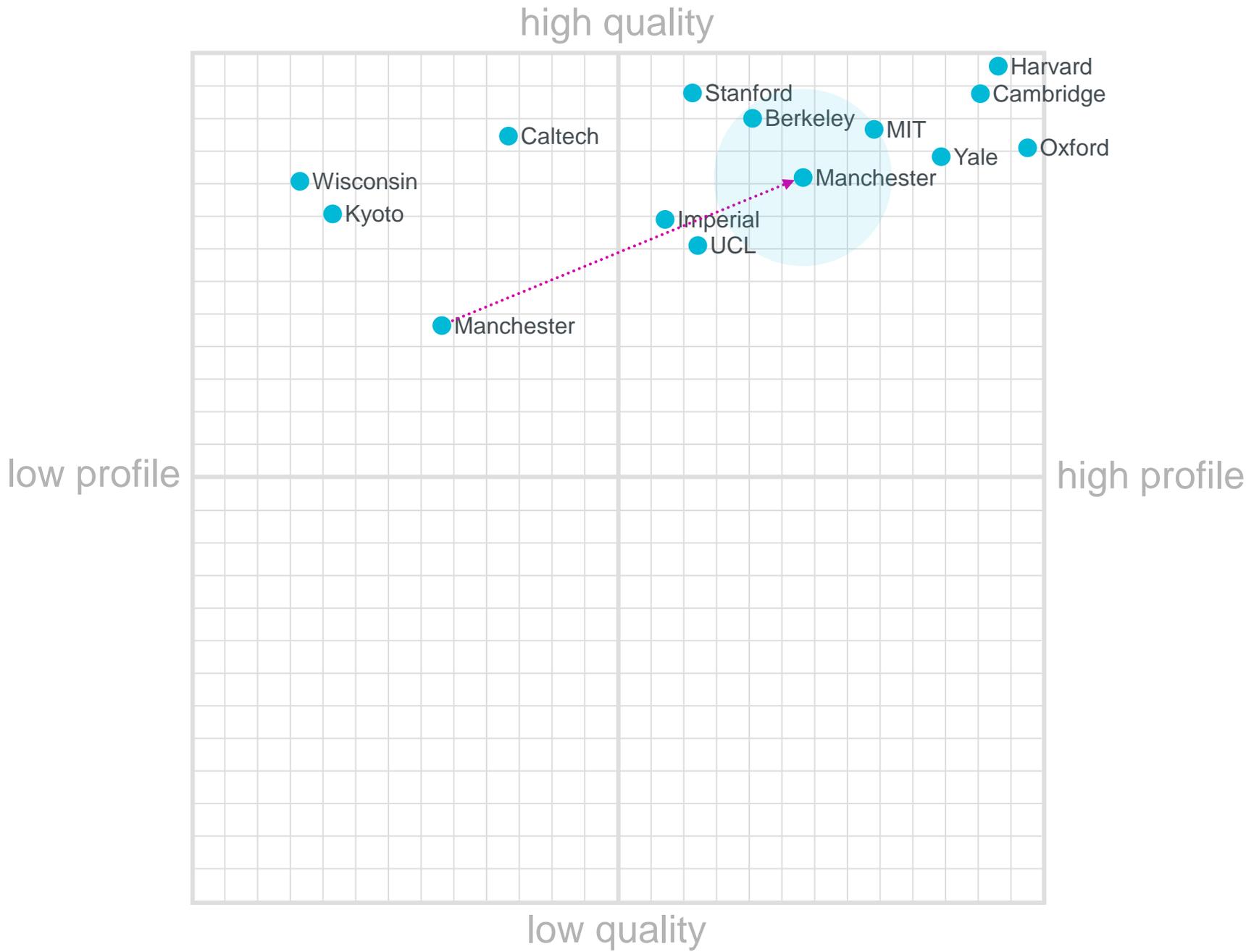


high profile

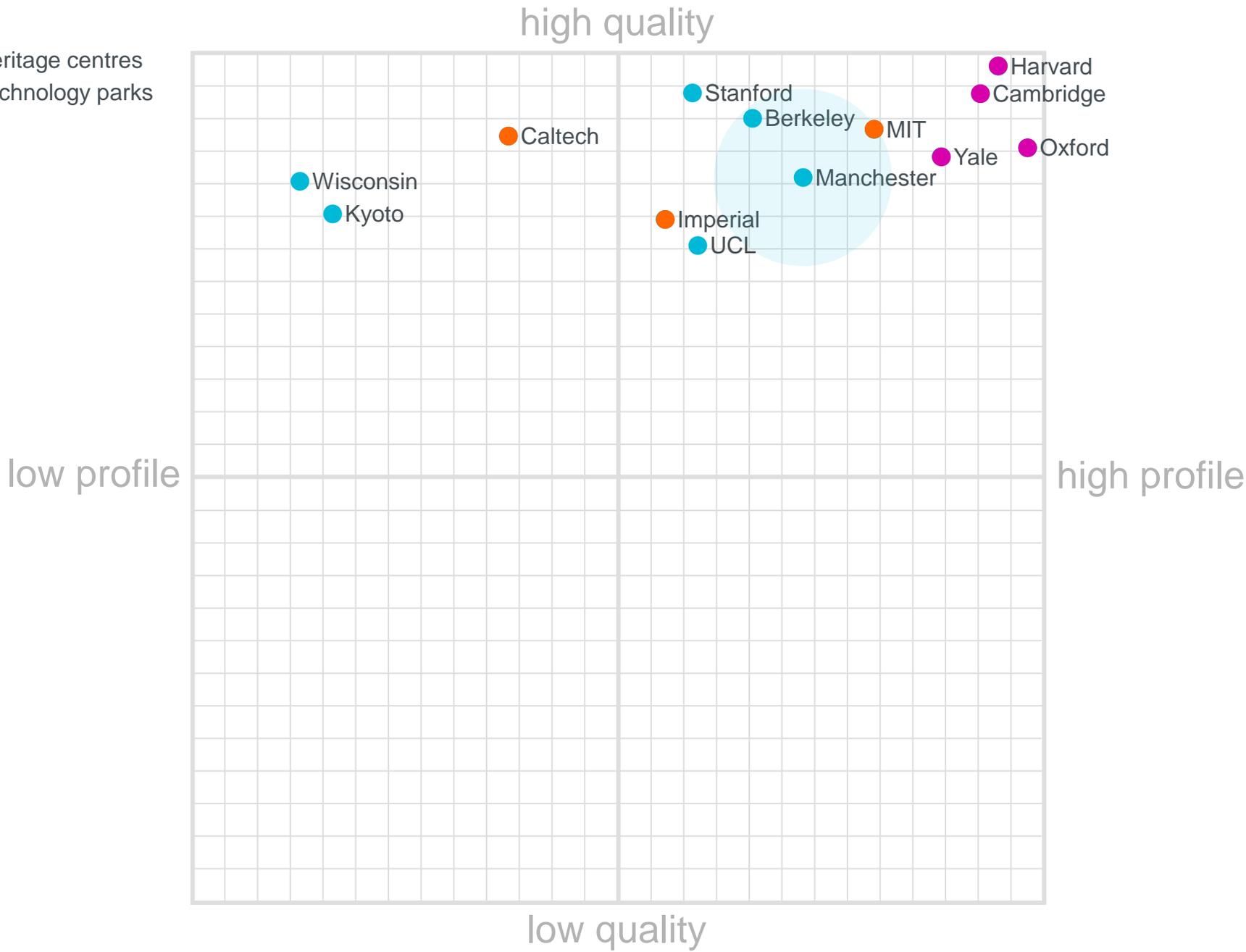
low profile

low quality

Top 500 World
Universities
Shanghai Jiao Tong
University

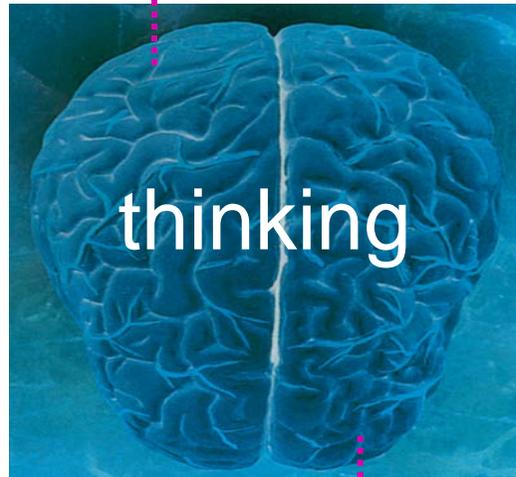


- Heritage centres
- Technology parks

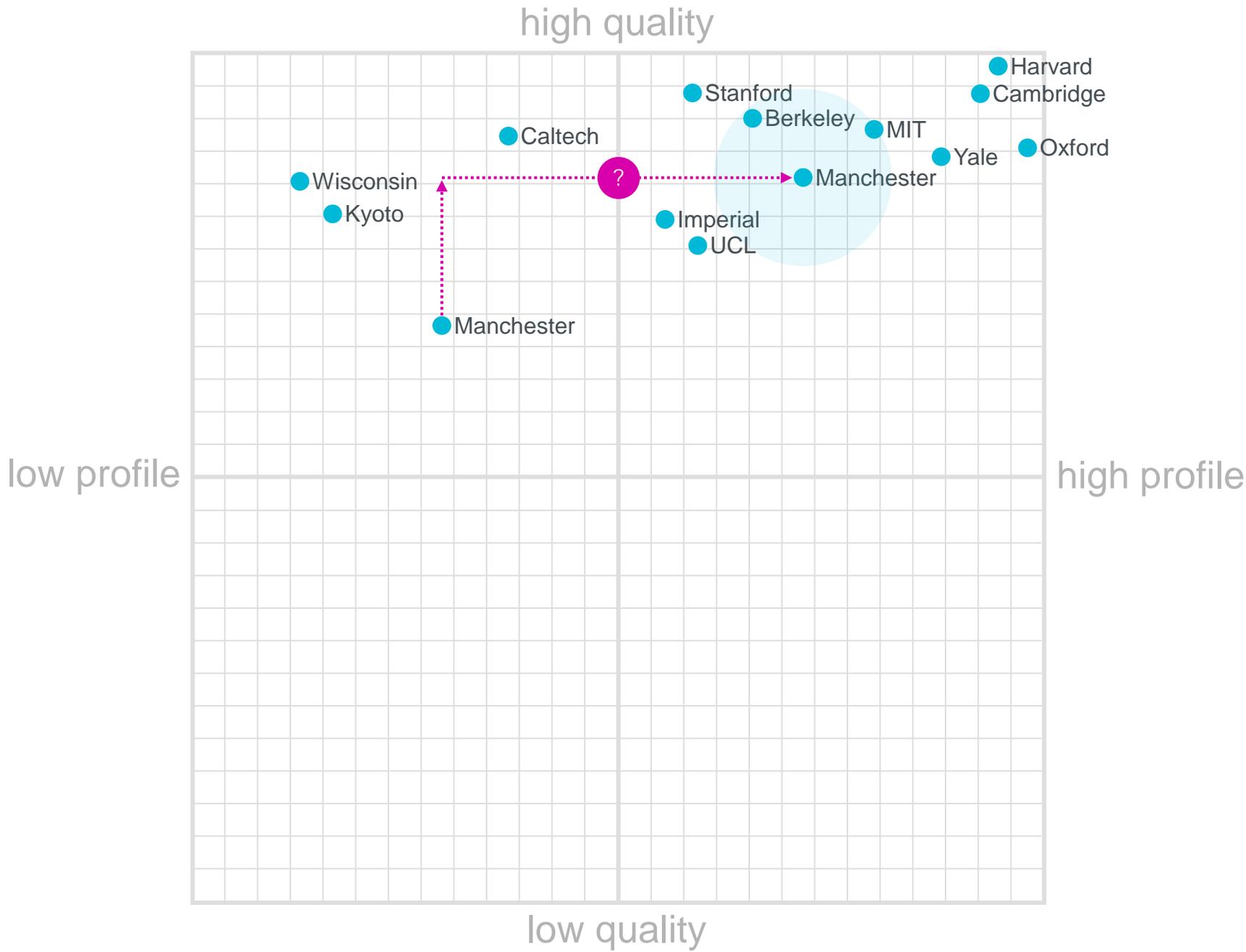


If we can develop the brand to resonate emotionally, it will be genuinely distinctive

analytical
logical
linear



creative
intuitive
holistic



The process

How do you think you go about a rebrand?

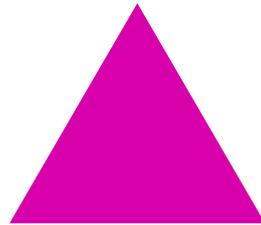
Who's responsibility is it?

The process

1 Brand research and analysis	2 Development of brand scenarios	3 Testing and evaluation	4 Brand realisation	5 Launch and brand management
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What we stand for

What Manchester
exists to do

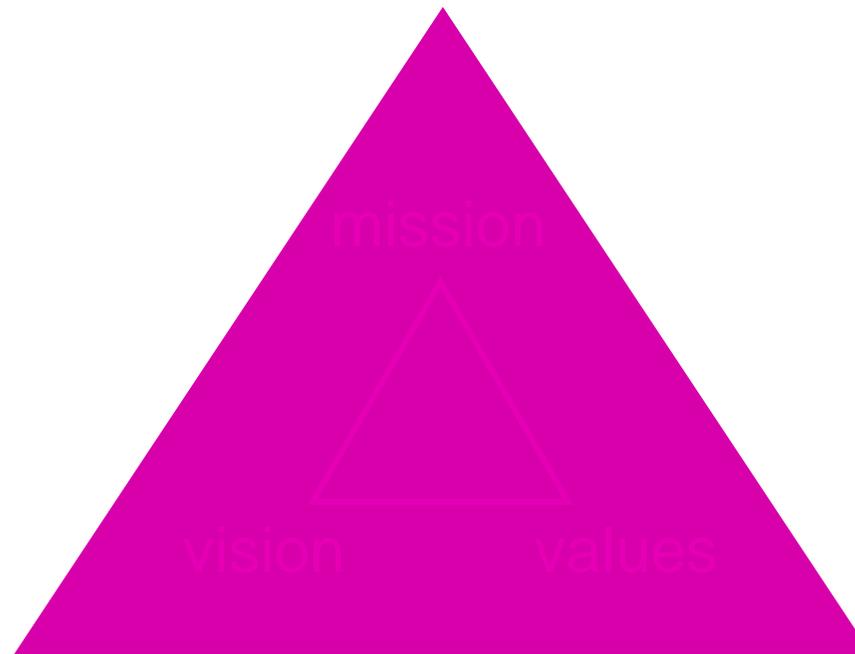


How the University
plans to change

What principles the
University lives by

How we wish to be seen and experienced

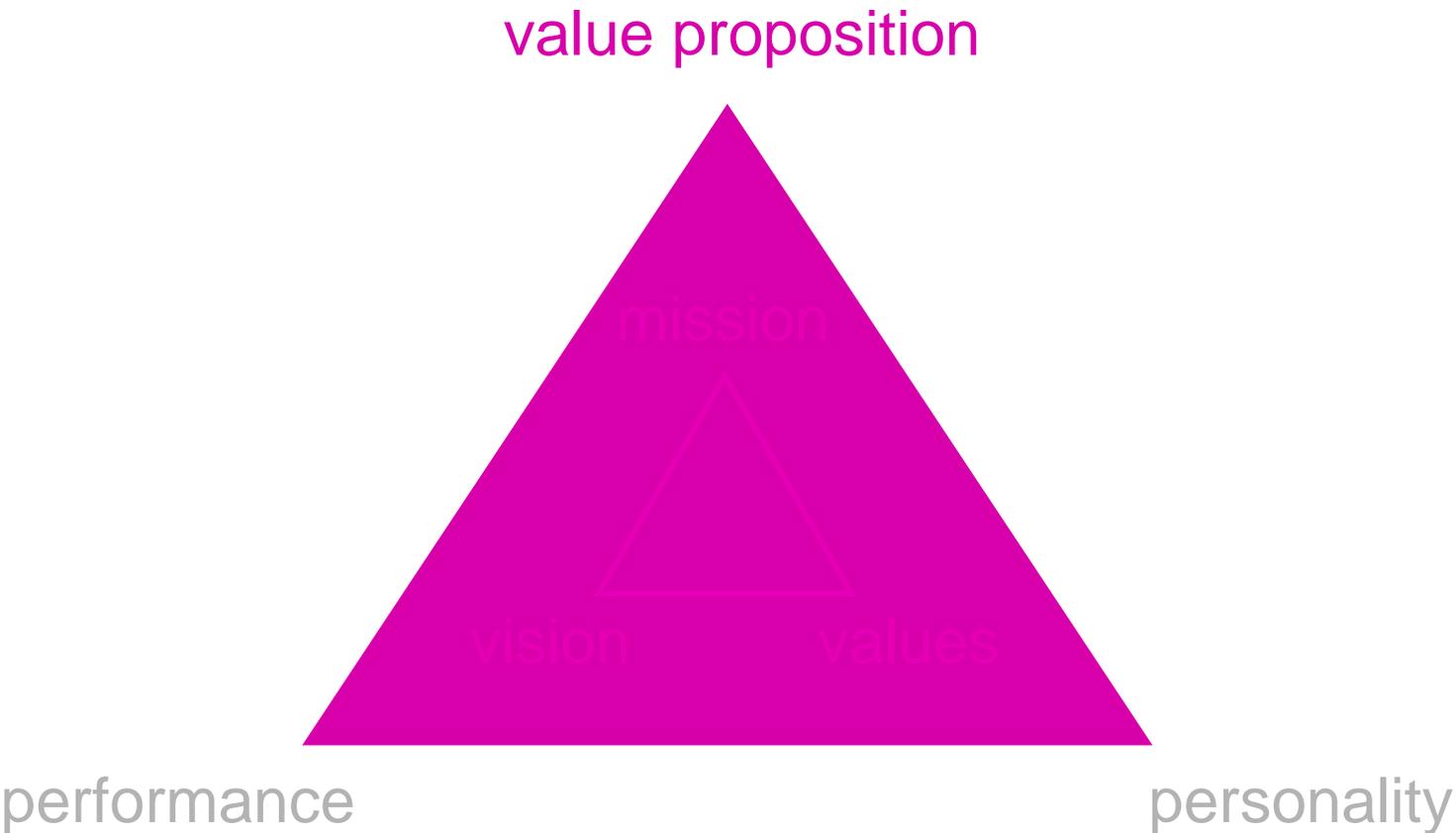
What we offer that's
compelling and distinctive



How people experience
the University

What qualities people
associate with us

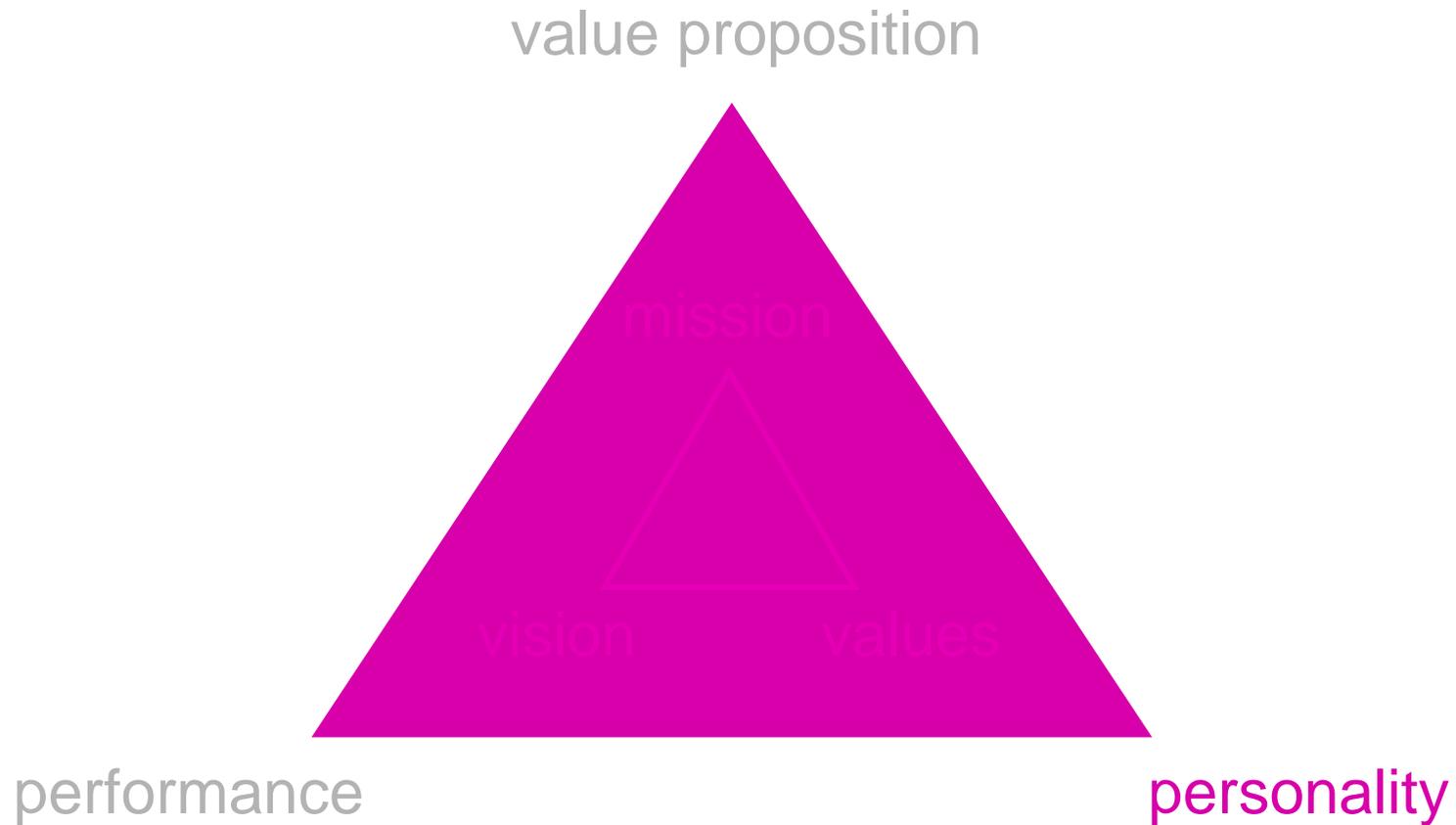
How we wish to be seen and experienced



Our proposition:

The University of Manchester, already distinguished internationally as a vibrant centre for innovation and enquiry, is committed to being one of the finest universities in the world by 2015. In its pursuit of excellence it nurtures talent from all quarters and is a force for positive change.

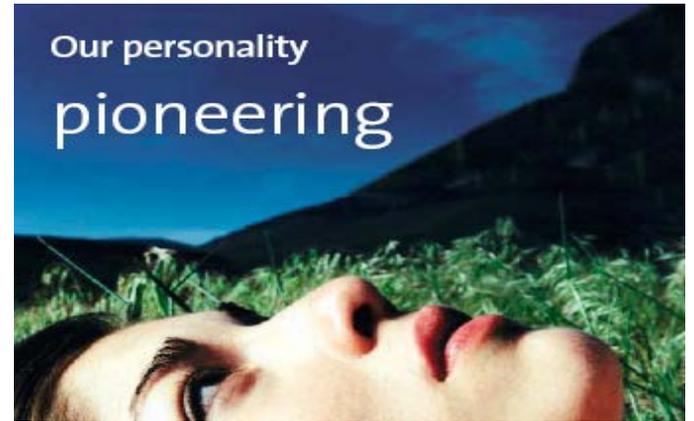
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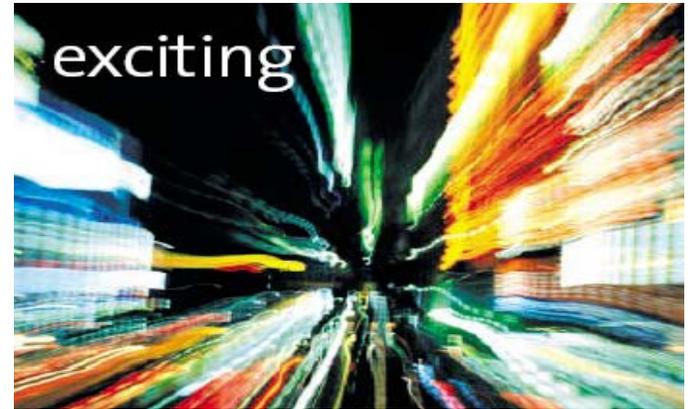
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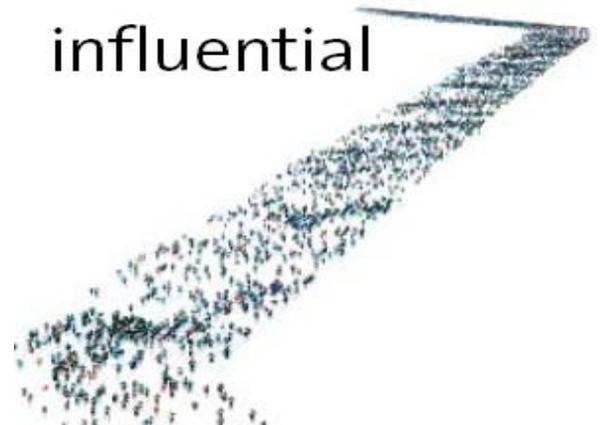
Our personality
pioneering



exciting

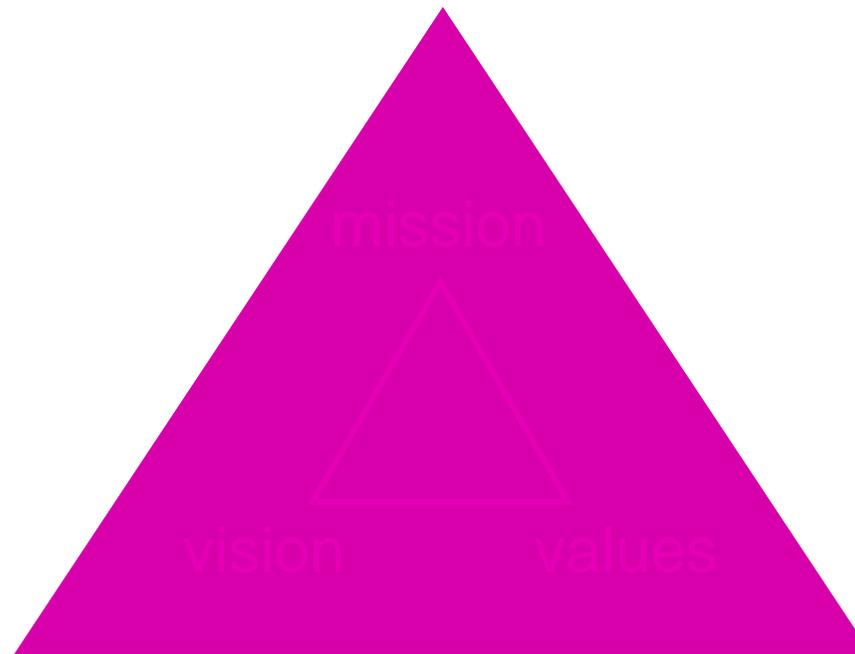


influential



How we wish to be seen and experienced

value proposition



- ...through our communications
- ...through our 'products'
- ...through our environments
- ...through our people

personality

Our communications

‘The reputation building strategies at the core of the *Manchester 2015 Agenda* place a premium on communicating, internally and externally, the scale and boldness of the vision...’

Towards Manchester 2015

Our communications

‘The reputation building strategies at the core of the *Manchester 2015 Agenda* place a premium on communicating, internally and externally, the scale and boldness of the vision...’

Towards Manchester 2015

But it's a tall order

Internal and external

Local, regional, national and international

All stakeholders: students, staff, the academic community, government, business, the media

All media: verbal and visual; online, in print, in the environment and in the media

So we...

Consider not only the attributes we want to be associated with Manchester, but also how we want people to **feel** about the University

Define and prioritise our key messages

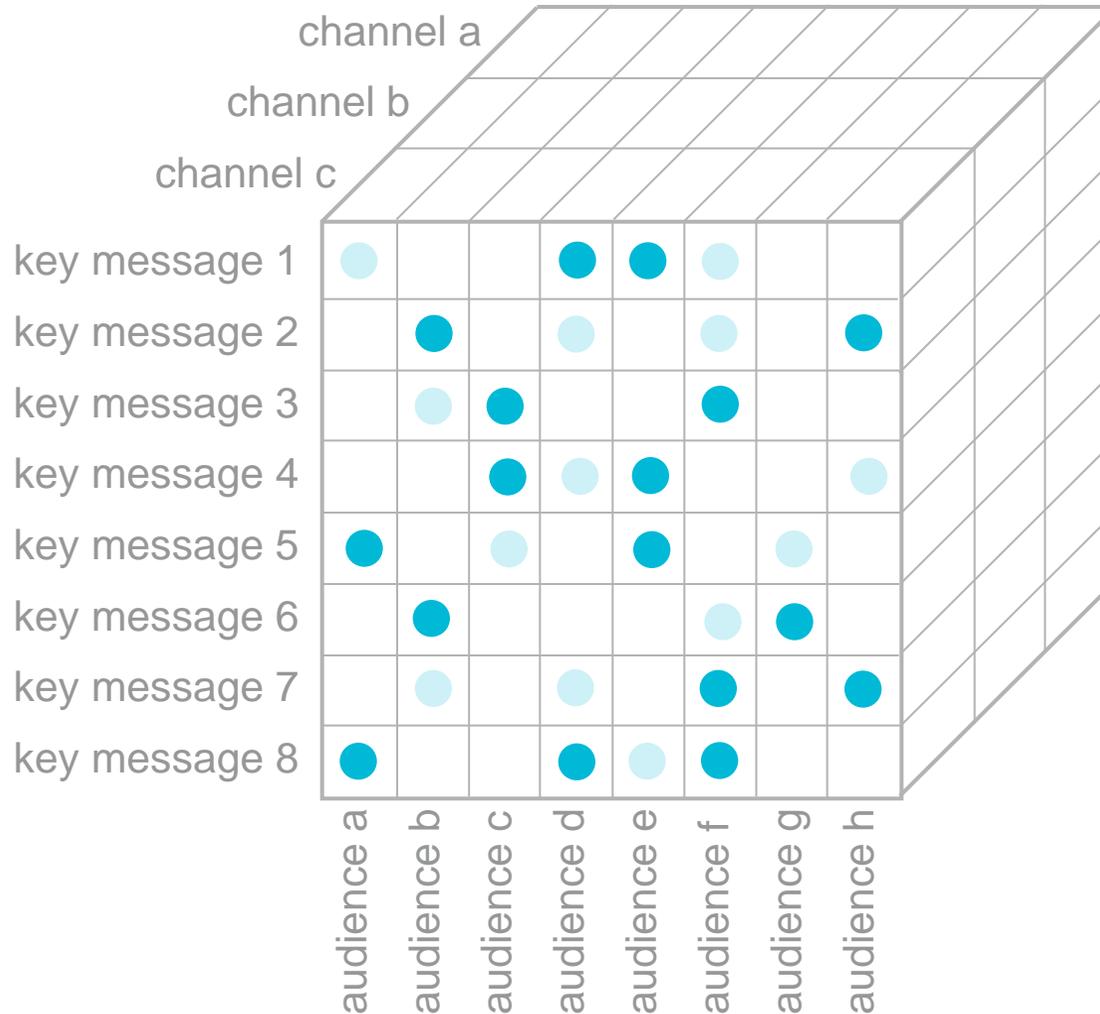
Prioritise the people we need to reach

Co-relate these two...

Aligning messages and audiences...

key message 1	●			●	●	●		
key message 2		●		●		●		●
key message 3		●	●			●		
key message 4			●	●	●			●
key message 5	●		●		●		●	
key message 6		●				●	●	
key message 7		●		●		●		●
key message 8	●			●	●	●		
	audience a	audience b	audience c	audience d	audience e	audience f	audience g	audience h

And agreeing which media works best...



Our 'products'

'...genuine international research leadership...
IP policies and practices...fee-based taught
Masters programmes...cultural agencies and
programmes...strategic partnerships with world
class universities...world class external e-learning
programmes...'

Towards Manchester 2015

Our 'products'

Not something that we normally deal with directly
(except from a branding perspective)

However, we do help facilitate the thinking around
new product development, product withdrawal etc

Our environments

We consider how we can enhance the perception of Manchester and, in particular, better deliver its brand through

- the design of the built environment
- the messages it carries
- the nature of the events that take place within it
- the experiences that people take away

Finally, our people...

‘The University has no higher priority than to develop virtuosity at all levels by consistently appointing excellent people and creating working environments in which such people may reach their full potential.

Towards Manchester 2015

Finally, our people...

‘The University has no higher priority than to develop virtuosity at all levels by **consistently appointing excellent people** and creating working environments in which such people may reach their full potential.’

Towards Manchester 2015

Finally, our people...

‘High priority is...being given to internal consultation, communication and engagement promising to secure acceptance and, wherever possible, “ownership” of key change processes.’

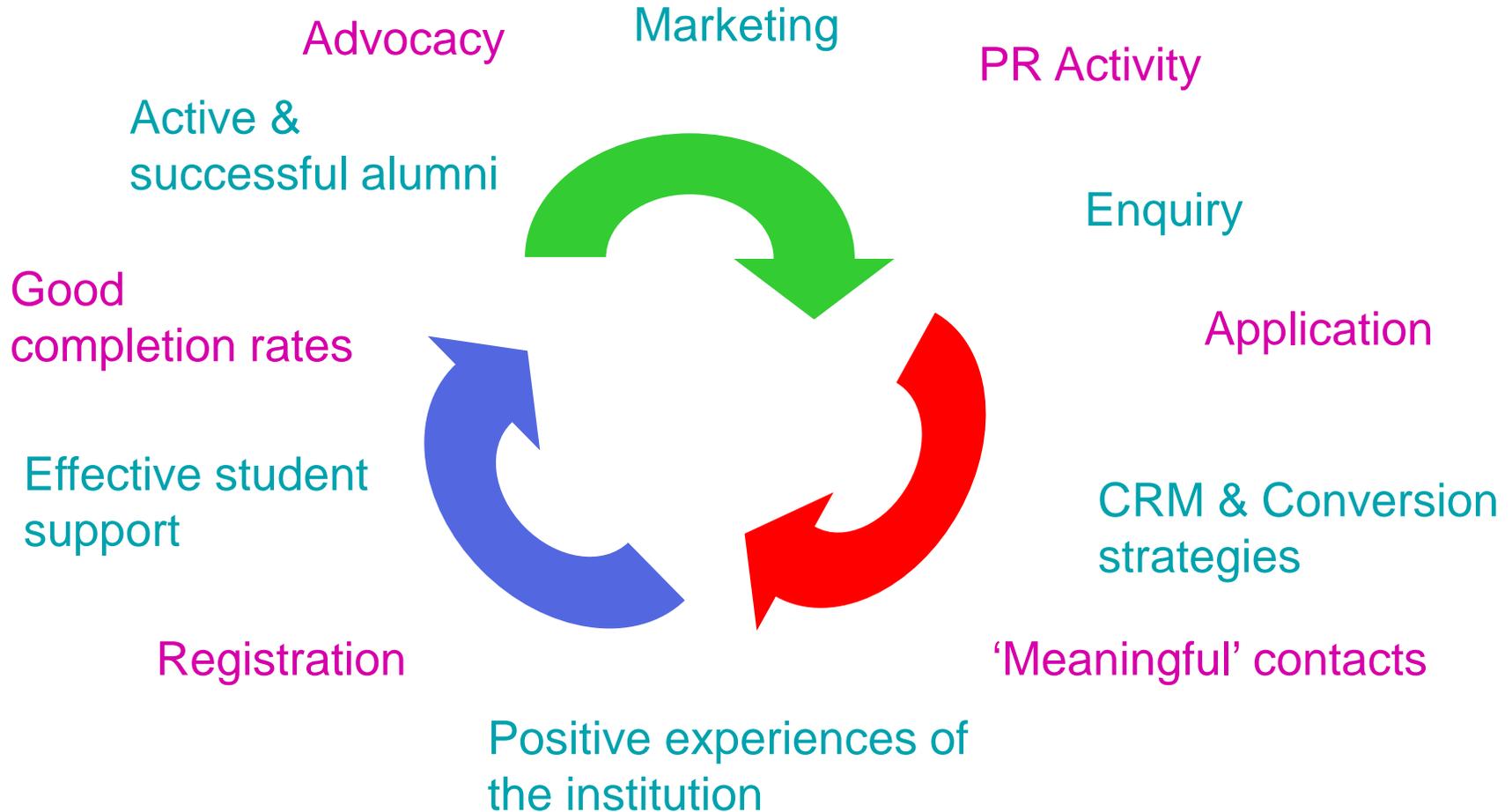
Towards Manchester 2015

Finally, our people...

‘The 2015 Agenda will either influence behaviour in the University profoundly, or it will have been in vain.’

Professor Alan Gilbert
Towards Manchester 2015

The 'total' experience



Visual Identity

Manchester 1824 device

University name-style

Demonstrates long and rich heritage

Modern positioning of University name

Recognises colloquial description of
University

Refers to UMIST's founder institution

Prestigious but modern colour

Supported by colour palette, style of
photography, writing style etc

“But our Faculty will never buy it”

What are the barriers you think you might face to a branding process?

Who will be the biggest objectors?

Brand Policy and Architecture

Research revealed...

The University must be seen to be more coherent than it is now

The University needs to be linked to its important resources and exploit the mutual value added by association

Clear frameworks for entities in the academic structure and more autonomous units should be devised and enforced

Communications audit revealed...

**Manchester
Dental School**



Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy

*The Cathie Marsh Centre for
Census and Survey Research*

PREST

Salford Royal Hospitals **NHS**
NHS Trust

RISK



Manchester
Business School
Forward thinking



CHSTM



Change Centre



THE
MANCHESTER
SCHOOL OF
ARCHITECTURE



**Stanley Foundation
International Research Centre**

CPPE



THE MANCHESTER CENTRE
M · C · H · M
FOR HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT



*Atomic, Molecular &
Laser Manipulation
Group*

School of
**Biological
Sciences**

The University of Manchester
Immunogenetics Laboratory

the department of
chemistry
The University of Manchester



centre for
Latin American Cultural Studies

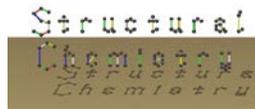


manchester
particle physics

**Research
& Graduate School**

Dental Health Unit

**GRANADA CENTRE
FOR VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY**



SPARC



MANCHESTER DENTAL SCHOOL



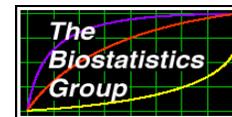
SCHOOL of NURSING
MIDWIFERY & HEALTH VISITING

THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL ETHICS AND POLICY



Centre for Integrated
Genomic Medical Research

**Jodrell Bank
Observatory**



The Manchester School of
Engineering

Condensed Matter Physics

Department of
English and American Studies



**Faculty
of Arts**

**Nonlinear and Liquid
Crystal Physics Group**

Brand Policy and Architecture

How should the University's offer be seen?

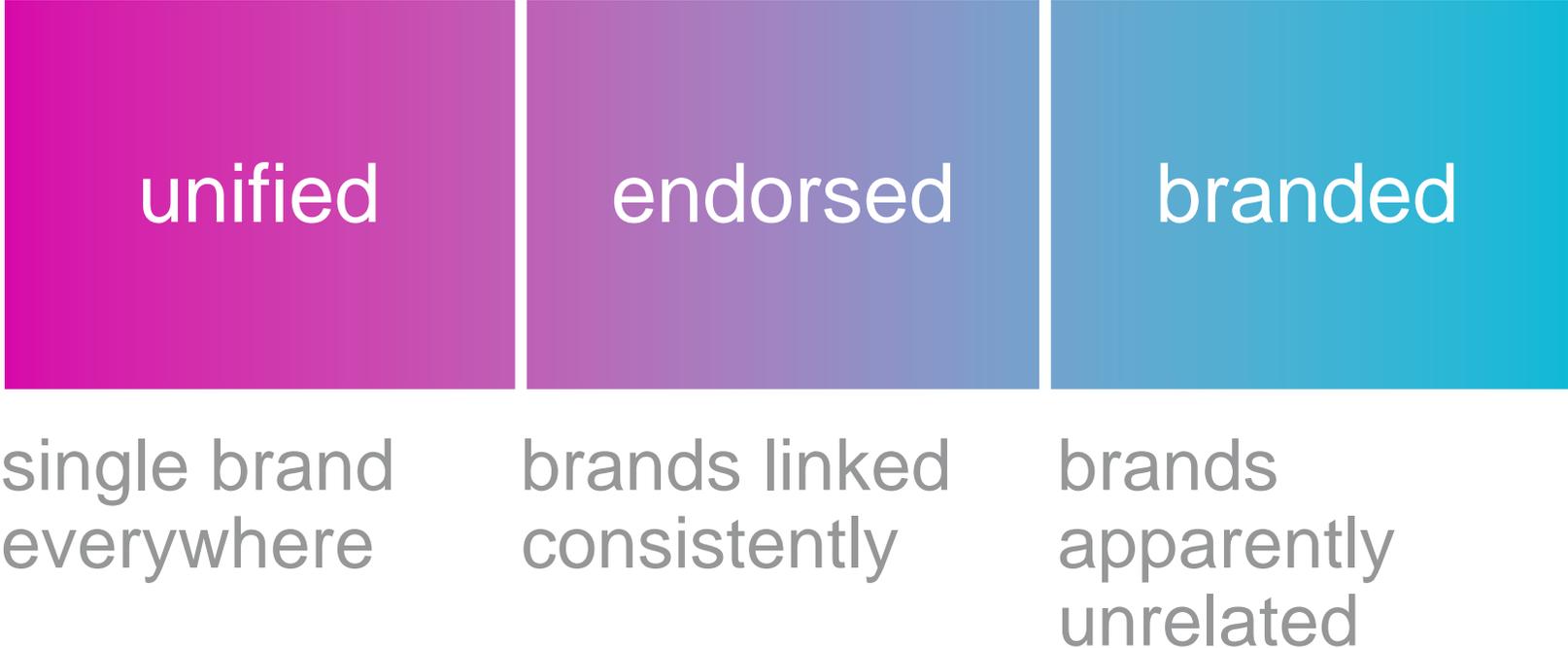


integrated

disparate

Brand Policy and Architecture

How should the University's offer be seen?



unified

single brand
everywhere

endorsed

brands linked
consistently

branded

brands
apparently
unrelated

Brand Policy and Architecture

A unified identity system for entities within the academic and administrative structure

A endorsed identity system for specific university facilities

Decision taken by senior management

The Manchester 2015 Agenda

Recruitment of research stars

Major review of teaching and learning

Strategic alliance with International partners
and industry

£40m+ IT system replacement plan

£650m estate development plan

Faculty devolution and realignment of the
administration

Internal communication improvements

The Manchester 2015 Agenda

2006

where we
are now

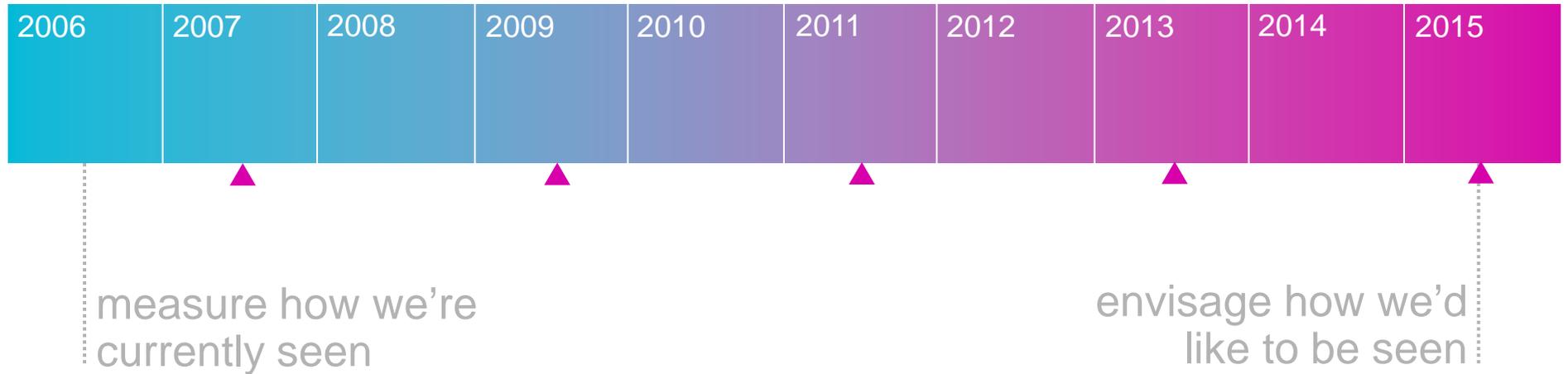
2015

where we
plan to be

In parallel with this...



And that tracks progress along the way



How this often works best



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Open for excellence

Manchester proves once again that elite doesn't have to mean elitist as it tops the tables for state schools entrants gaining first-class degrees

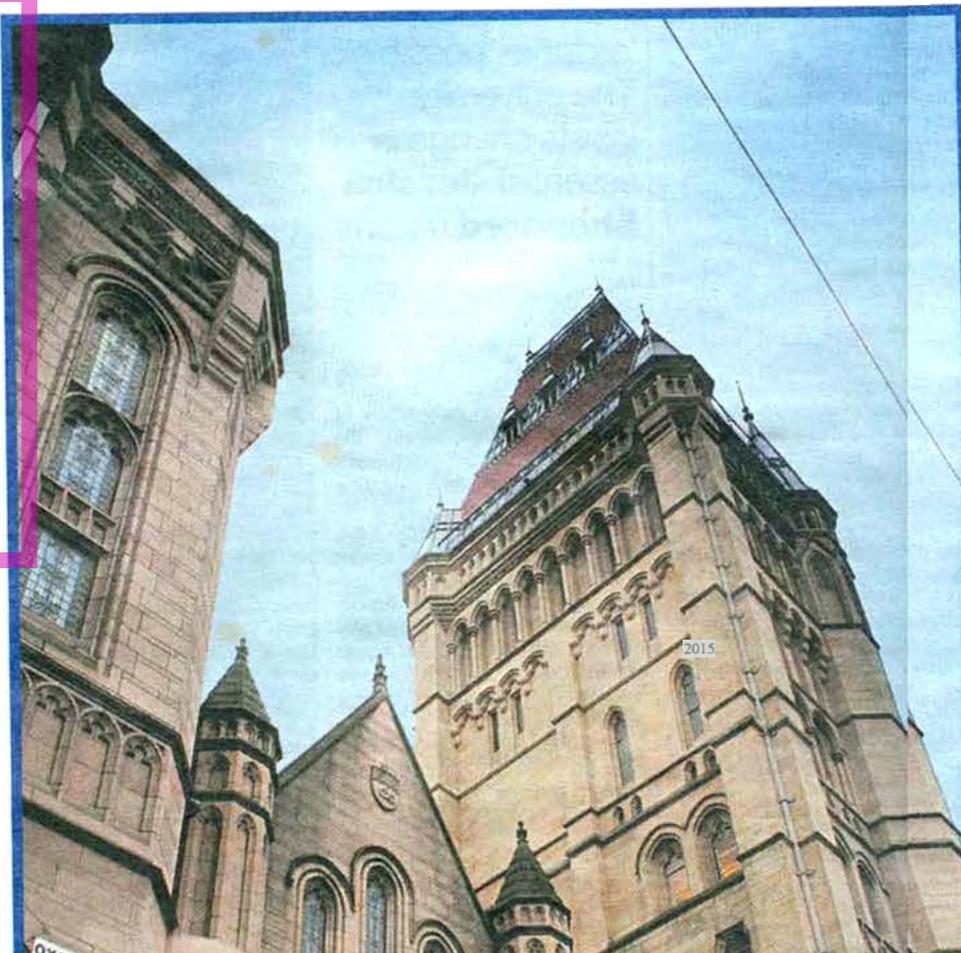
Phil Baty

An urgent debate on the responsibilities of academics when authoring research papers was demanded this week after it emerged that university researchers collaborating with a pharmaceutical company had published findings without full access to the drug trial data on which the conclusions were based.

The case has highlighted a divide between academics and industry over what is considered acceptable practice when companies sponsor academics to produce joint research papers.

Documents obtained by *The Times Higher* reveal that research findings on Procter & Gamble Pharmaceutical's osteoporosis drug Actonel were released under the name of Sheffield University researchers despite the fact that the academics had not carried out their own independent analyses of the firm's drug trial data. The academics, from Sheffield's Bone Metabolism Research Unit, published a journal article with the incorrect declaration that "all authors had full access to the data and analyses".

The company initially refused requests to allow the academics to



Boris hails winners at 15th annual awards

Alan Thomson

Boris Johnson hailed the achievements of the UK's world-beating higher education institutions in a filmed message for this week's *Times Higher Awards*, which revealed that Manchester University had been named Institution of the Year 2005.

The Prime Minister sent a video message to the 450 guests at the inaugural awards ceremony at London's Dorchester Hotel.

"I am very sorry that I can't be with you in person tonight," Mr Blair said. "But I wanted to take this chance to express my personal support for *The Times Higher Awards* and to send my congratulations to all of tonight's winners.

"I welcome these awards. They give us a chance to celebrate the

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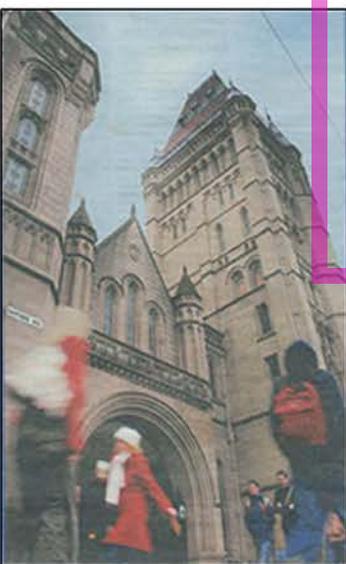
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CAREER & MONEY

Property & G

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Men's Style



Royal Society opens Manchester office

History was made today as the 350 year-old London intitution founded by Christopher Wren acknowledged the powerful pull northwards from the increasing importance of the university of Manchester. So many fellows of recent years have been from Manchester that it made sense to open up an office on their doorstep. As Society Chairman, Lord Brainbox remarked...

[The Vision realised: What is Manchester's secret](#)

UN split over missile tests

Both China and Russia have moved to block attempts to impose UN sanctions on North Korea as the reclusive nation fired a seventh ballistic missile

[Just what has made everyone so jittery?](#)

[Graphic: North Korea's nuclear missiles](#)



Bombay's blocked drains

City's 150-year-old drainage system struggling to cope with monsoon

[UK storms](#) | [Sydney chill](#)

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BRAIN DRAIN TO MANCHESTER APPEARS UNSTOPPABLE

Ivy League colleges are becoming increasingly nervous as top academics cross the Atlantic to join Europe's premier University, lured by the prospect of joining an institution that boasts no fewer than 15 Nobel prize winners, and whose facilities have become the envy of the academic world, Professor Jim Fastbucker, formerly of MIT remarked.

From This Week's Chronicle



BRAIN DRAIN TO MANCHESTER APPEARS UNSTOPPABLE

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Russell Group peers attempt to emulate the 'Manchester Effect'

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Aliquam erat volutpat. Curabitur eu lectus. In luctus iaculis leo. Suspendisse porttitor neque eget felis. Etiam vulputate. Duis mi. Fusce pretium posuere metus. Aenean faucibus, Lorem sed cursus sodales, necque ante

How might you measure your success?

What are the key performance indicators for your University?

How might 'marketing' help you measure the performance of the brand?

Measuring Performance

Branding key to building an internationally competitive resource base

Tripling the fee-income from overseas student recruitment

Doubling external grant income for research

Doubling the number of postgraduate research students

Annual increases of 10% in the value of third party investments in university spin-out companies

Measuring Performance

The value of reputation, relationships, brand awareness and customer attitudes are impossible to measure just on financial return

Benchmarking is the key...

Measuring Performance

Benchmarking is the key...

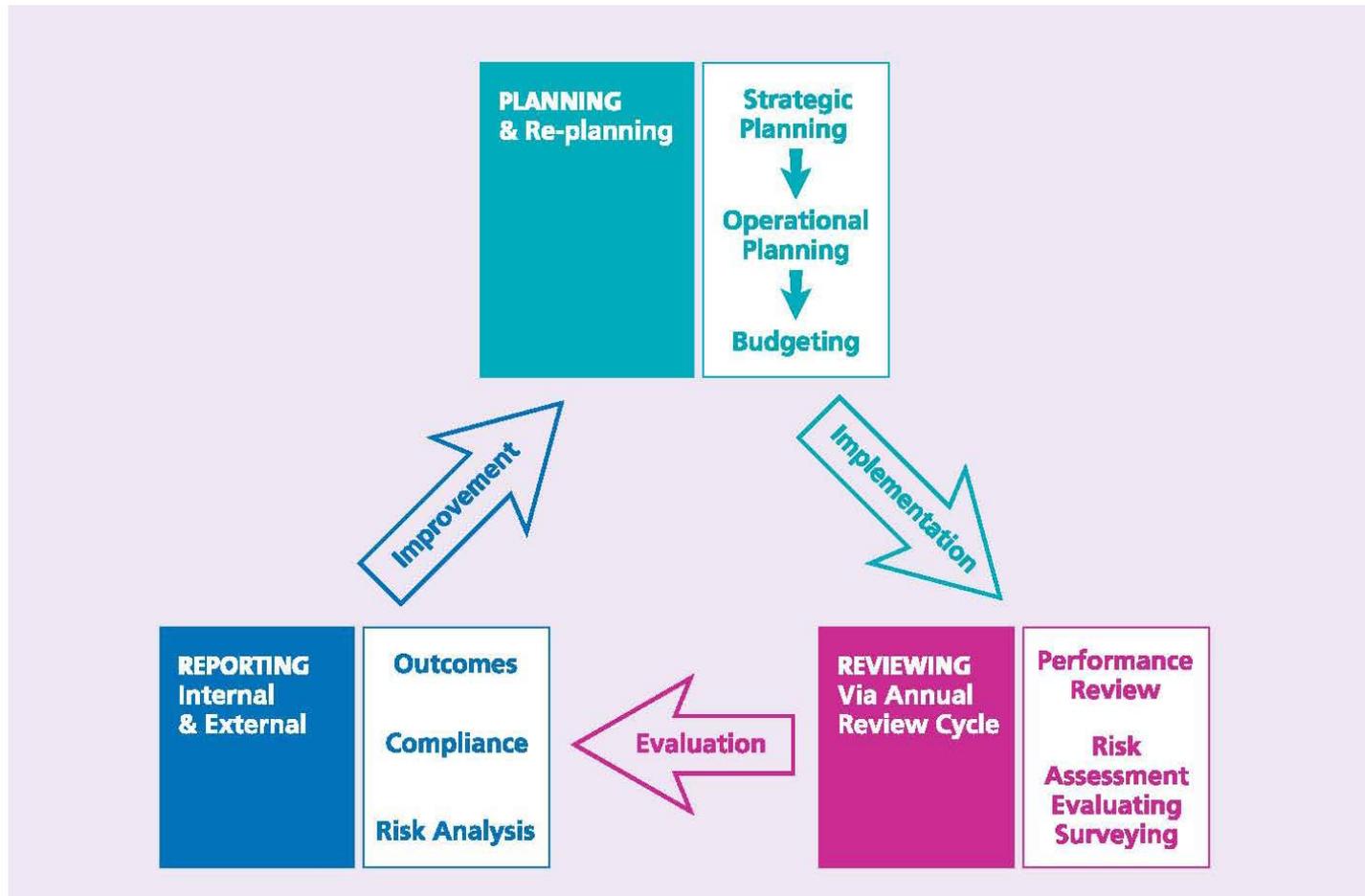
What you know about your institution versus
your competitors

Informs the planning process

Check for refinement and development

Measuring Performance

The planning and accountability cycle



Measuring Performance

Market intelligence and research informs the development of USPs and is a key driver in managing the brand

Survey of External Stakeholders – every 2 years

Survey of Employers – every 2 years

Staff Survey – every 2 years

Student Surveys – every year

Brand Health checks in UG and PG markets

International Barometer Survey

Ad-hoc studies inc. decliner surveys, welcome surveys, no-show surveys

Measuring Performance

Other benchmarks

Monitoring of media volume and quality
Regular internal communications audits
Evaluation of marketing campaigns, open days, publications etc
On-going web user testing
Competitor monitoring

Summary

Differentiation and Positioning

Vital for economic sustainability

Clarity regarding the competition – realistic benchmarking

Deliver the value that customers seek

Not just students – staff and other stakeholders too

Summary

Adapting to changes in the market

What and where is the market?

Articulating institution USPs

Update or modify market empathy and understanding

Provide a clear 'offer'

Create your own market - or join where there is room

Sustainability is financially driven – marketing must be central to planning

Questions or Comments

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Conclusions

How did we do?

- Maintained application numbers during the merger process and for 2005 entry
- Full support of senior management team in implementing recommended policies
- Less reluctance from staff than anticipated and very little negative feedback
- Achieved rollout of new brand across publications, signage, web – on time
- Key brand messages featured in local, national & international media at launch
- Winner of Gold Award for Market Research element of the project from HEIST
- Winner of Gold Award for Institution Wide Branding Campaign from CASE

Conclusions

Some of the problems

- General misunderstanding of 'branding' and what it can do
- Subjective nature of the visual side of the project
- Difficulties working with an outside agency
- Equally complex decisions taking place elsewhere in the universities
- Senior appointments made during the process
- Cost and investment involved in doing it properly

Summary

Don't underestimate the importance of key stakeholders especially staff

Get senior buy-in from the start

Learn valuable lessons from others, rather than from painful experience

Use professional market research to discover what people really think and feel

Dedicate resources to the project – even if using consultants someone has to manage
and control the project

Be realistic in your positioning

Keep an eye on the long-term

Likely to have less resistance than anticipated