

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME: Applying Place Branding Principles to Your Farm

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Fictitious farm name developed as an example.

TAKE THIS SHORT QUIZ.

See if you can easily identify the places based on the following statements:

Can you name the city famously known as “the city that never sleeps?”

Which city is often referred to as “the city of love?”

Which country comes to mind when you think of pubs, beer and the color green?

(Potential Answers: New York. Paris. Ireland)

How did you do with the questions? Chances are you recognized most, if not all, of the places mentioned. Wonder why? This isn't by chance; it's the art of place branding at work.

Every place has its own distinctive essence or character. This comes from a combination of history, lifestyle, culture and story. This uniqueness is a powerful asset that can differentiate one place from another. Capitalizing on this is what place branding is all about.

This publication explores the concept of place branding. It begins by outlining the fundamental aspects of place branding, including core components of image and positioning. Following that, the publication will guide you through a series of activities designed to help you explore and define the brand of your own location – be it a farm or any other operation. Learn how to use the power of place branding to make the most of your competitive advantage.

WHAT IS PLACE BRANDING?

Place branding is a form of branding. It involves the application of branding principles and techniques to a particular geographic place (country, state, city, farm). Place branding aims to differentiate a place based on its uniqueness. The ultimate goal of place branding is to attract resources and consumers to a particular area. Effective place branding can significantly enhance a location's visibility, reputation and profitability.

The principles of place branding that work for a country, state, city or downtown, can work for your farm business as well. All it takes is understanding the story of your farm, who you are and why you do what you do. Clearly communicating these elements to customers can build an emotional attachment to the place which can help build positive associations, customer loyalty and repeat business.

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WHAT MAKES UP A PLACE BRAND?

As shown in the figure below, place branding is composed of two components – image and positioning. These two components work together to communicate the character of a place to consumers.

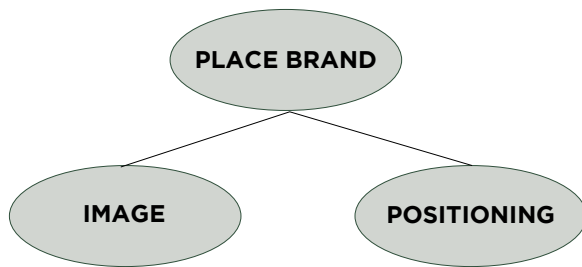


Image: the overall impression that differentiates a place from all others. You can think of this as the uniqueness of your place or farm.

(e.g. physical aspect like a river, lake or mountain; family connection; or history)

Positioning: the specific niche or target audience that a place might aim to attract.

(e.g. Millennials near your county, out-of-state tourists looking for a farm experience)

Let's consider an example:

Known as the “Big Easy,” New Orleans is the Mardi Gras capital of the United States. This city knows how to have fun. New Orleans is known for its party atmosphere, carefree spirit, vibrant live music and (spicy) cuisine. Every year the city welcomes millions of visitors who come to New Orleans to experience the city. These visitors pump billions of dollars into the local economy.

New Orleans strategically positions its image as a city brimming with cultural heritage, vibrant nightlife and a blend of music styles. This carefully crafted positioning targets travelers seeking a lively and immersive experience that goes beyond sightseeing.



Here's how this positioning can be communicated:

Cultural Heritage:

Images and videos showcasing the city's architecture, diverse festivals like Mardi Gras and historical landmarks like the French Quarter create a sense of cultural immersion.



Vibrant Nightlife:

Marketing materials emphasize the iconic music scene through images of bustling jazz bars, street performers and energetic crowds.



Blend of Music Styles:

The message highlights the city's musical heritage with jazz, brass bands, and contemporary music offerings appealing to a broad range of music lovers.



This strategic communication differentiates New Orleans from other U.S. cities known for historical sites or natural beauty. It positions the city as a destination for those seeking an **unforgettable adventure filled with music, delicious food and vibrant celebrations**. This targeted approach helps New Orleans attract visitors who will truly appreciate its offerings.

Just like New Orleans, your farm also has an identity all its own. What sets your farm apart might be your location such as sweeping views of the Tennessee Valley or Mississippi River. Or, it could be your farm's legacy or heritage. Or, perhaps, you have an interesting story of how your farm was established. Regardless, place branding would encourage you to identify what makes you unique and strategically use that to drive customers and sales.

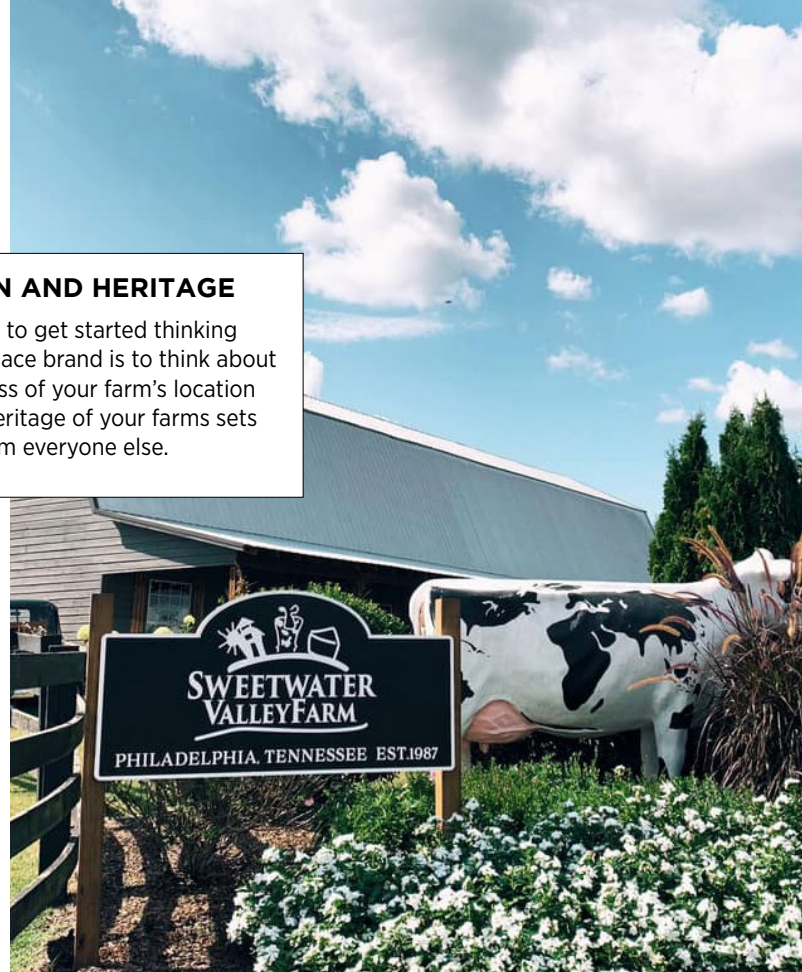
HOW DO YOU GET STARTED?

A big part of place branding is telling your story – the story of you, your family, your location, your farm, your product. Stories are “sticky” and are remembered by people longer than other types of information. As you think about your story, consider the following:

1. **The Subject** – What are you sharing about – your farm, your products, your history and your location? Chances are all of these will be part of your place brand.
2. **The Audience** – Who are you telling your story to? Who is your target consumer? What do they want to hear about you?
3. **The Method** – How will you tell your story (over and over)? What techniques will you use to get your message to your consumers? How can you help the consumer connect with your place on a personal level? Where does your target audience get their information and how do you align your method with this preference?

LOCATION AND HERITAGE

A great place to get started thinking about your place brand is to think about the uniqueness of your farm's location or how the heritage of your farms sets you apart from everyone else.



Use the space below, describe your farm, your place.

Brainstorm all the adjectives you would use to describe your farm.

(Remember, when brainstorming all ideas are good ideas.)

DEFINE WHAT DIFFERENTIATES YOUR FARM?

You know your farm and your business better than anyone. Now is the time to communicate that message to everyone else. This is also the time to think about why you do what you do and why your farm is so special.

Use the prompts below to begin telling your story. Don't try to make your story "fancy" or "formal." Tell your story just like you would tell your children, grandchildren or a friend a story about your farm. You are passionate about your operation; you love what you do and the products you offer. This is the time to show your passion and love!

Once you understand who you are, you can use this information to help you craft messages to your customers. You can incorporate this information as part of your overall brand, thus helping to set you apart in the consumer's mind.

<p>What makes your place unique?</p>	<p>What is the history of your farm? How did you get to where you are today?</p>	<p>Describe your location. What do you see, hear, feel, taste, touch?</p>	<p>What is your farm name? Why did you choose that particular name?</p>

<p>What is your farm logo? How does it communicate the value of your place?</p>	<p>What values do you hold? Why do you do the work that you do? How do your values and motivations impact your location or day-to-day operations?</p>	<p>What certifications or special claims do you have or use to communicate product characteristics or farm values to consumers?</p>

IN CLOSING:

Take time over the next days, weeks, months to think about your place brand. As you think about place branding and how it relates to your operation consider the following:

Define Your Farm's Identity:

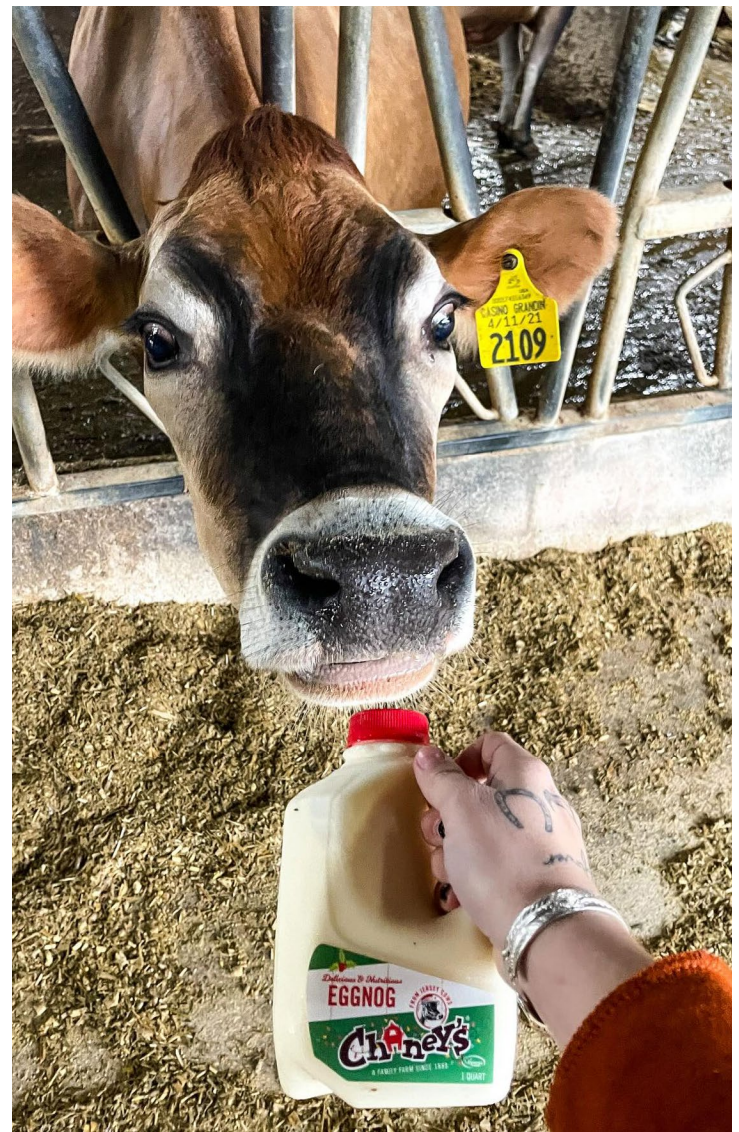
- Identify the unique characteristics, values and strengths of your farm.
- Determine what sets your farm apart from competitors.
- Consider the farm's history, location, products and sustainable practices.

Develop a Compelling Story:

- Craft a narrative that reflects the farm's heritage, mission and vision.
- Emphasize the farm's connection to the local community.
- Highlight any certifications, awards or partnerships that enhance your farm's credibility.

Communicate Your Unique Identity and Story:

- Ensure consistency across all marketing materials (logo, colors, signage, packaging, online platforms, etc.)
- Participate in local events, farmers' markets and community initiatives.
- Collaborate with other local businesses organizations, or schools.
- Offer farm tours, workshops or educational programs to build relationships and trust.



PLACE BRANDING: A FARM EXAMPLE

Started in 1940 near Bowling Green, Kentucky, Chaney's Dairy has "Dairy Deep Roots."

While the property has been involved in farming since the late 1880's, James Riley Chaney introduced the Chaney family to dairy farming in the 40s as he began milking Jersey cows by hand. In 1985, James sold the herd to his son, Carl and worked alongside him until he passed in 2011.

Thanks to continued innovation and a love for dairy farming, Chaney's Dairy was able to incorporate operating from "cow to cone" as of 2019. Chaney's is proud to be the only dairy operation in Kentucky using their own fluid milk to create the ice cream mix used in their storefront and restaurant and sold through several other retailers.

Themes of the Chaney's Brand

As the Chaney's Dairy brand has developed over the years, several important themes have been woven in to portray Chaney's identity, many of which relate to the place and heritage of the farm and family. These include:

- Farm and family history
- Current dedication to farm, family and community
- A love for Jersey cows and the characteristics of the breed's milk
- Innovation
- Fresh ingredients
- Dedication to quality
- Red barn



Chaney's brand emphasizes its commitment to quality and the special care they provide to their animals. There is a rich history between the Chaney family and their favorite breed of dairy cattle – the Jersey. Milk produced by the Jersey breed is higher overall in butterfat content, something that the Chaney brand prides itself on.

The Chaney's claim to have "the best milk from the happiest cows in Kentucky," and they invite consumers to see the herd for themselves as part of an interactive farm tour. Consumers can see the cows and the automated milking systems during farm tours, with either a self-guided or group tour available to visitors.

The Chaney family uses their website and social media channels to tell their farm story. Both on-farm visitors and Chaney's online followers can see the famous Jersey cows and where they spend their time on the farm thanks to the Chaney family's dedication to transparency.

The Chaney's are proud of their Bowling Green roots and share a strong place branding message, featured in a video on their website, that states "Our milk comes from our cows, on our farm, under our care, from our family to yours." The Chaney family invites the community to spend time on the farm, making their dairy farm a favorite place for both Bowling Green natives and visitors from afar. The farm has built an expansive playground, which is open for free during business hours and operates a corn maze in the fall. Chaney's also offers special events throughout the year such as private birthday parties, National Ice Cream for Breakfast Day, summertime Ice Cream and a Moovie events, Breakfast with Santa and more.

The Chaney's use a few logo variations to represent the themes and various products that fall under the Chaney brand. The logo design is unique and has become easily recognizable around the Bowling Green area.

The iconic red barn is featured as the "a" that spells Chaney's surrounded by brown and white lettering. The red barn connects the brand back to its farming roots and is symbolic of the red dairy barn that still stands on the Chaney property today. Red also happens to be the same color as the Lely automatic milking system used in the dairy. The brown and white lettering is another nod to the family's beloved Jersey cows and to the quality of their farm-fresh milk. The tagline "since 2003" is also included in Chaney's Dairy barn logo in a yellow-gold font, communicating both the brand's history and adding a sense of warmth and creativity.



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