



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
11 April 2022

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Seventieth plenary session

Geneva, 20-22 June 2022

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Work of the High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics

Report on the work of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics in 2021

Addendum

The role of brand and reputation management, marketing, and crisis communication for statistical organisations

Prepared by the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics' Capability and Communication Group

Summary

This document is an excerpt from *The Role of Brand and Reputation Management, Marketing, and Crisis Communication for Statistical Organisations* finalized in 2021 by a Task Team under the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) Capability and Communication Group. The document is based on the experience of communications experts across the international statistical community and aims to provide support and guidance to others working in this field.

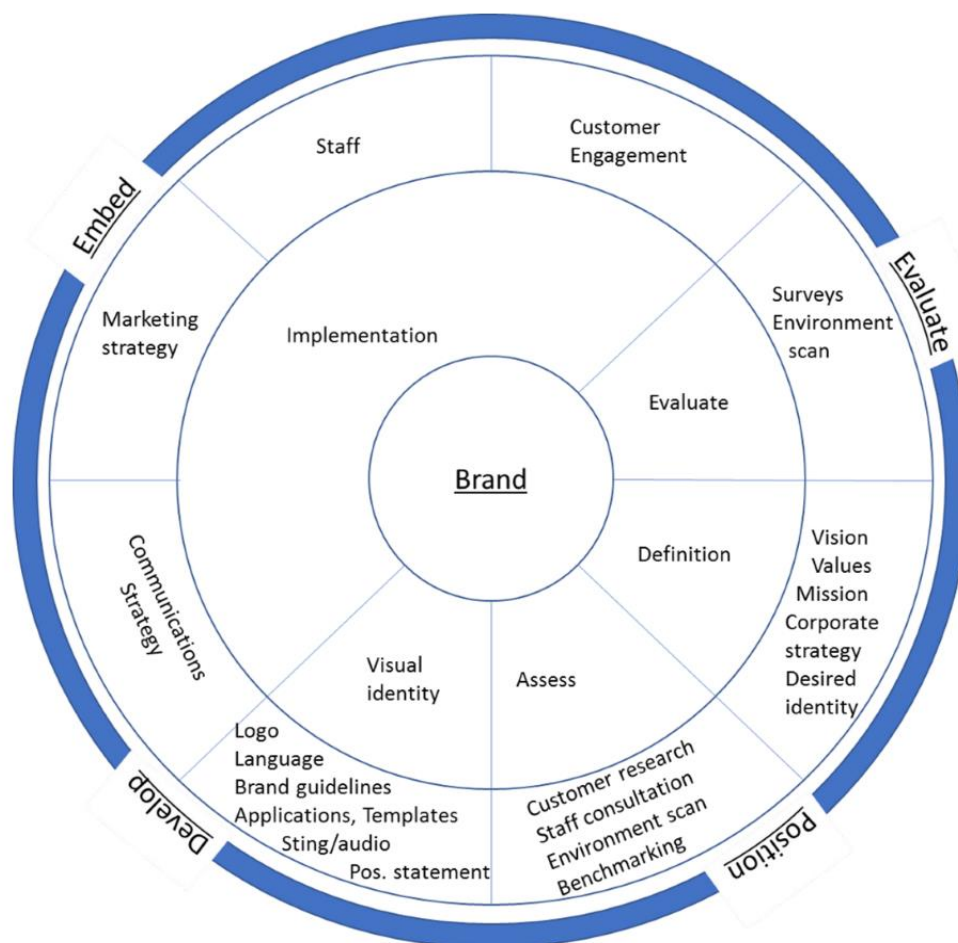
This excerpt includes the introduction, list of chapters, and conclusion from the full document. The full document and accompanying case studies from Canada, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Poland and Portugal are available at the publication's [webpage](#).



I. Introduction

1. The main function of national statistical offices (NSOs) and international statistical organisations is to collect and analyse data and publish statistics providing insight into our societies and opportunities for international comparison. However, if there is no awareness of our statistics or their application in our societies, then there is essentially no purpose to producing them.
2. It is widely accepted that the capacity for both information and disinformation to spread globally at a rapid pace has had a profound impact on the production of official statistics. Independent, robust, ethically produced statistics, as critically important as they have ever been, are challenged by the deluge of alternative data sources, as well as those actively seeking to undermine our societies through disinformation. In addition to providing high quality, timely and relevant statistics and ensuring access and understanding, NSOs now have an additional responsibility to amplify their outputs above the ‘noise’ of the information deluge and highlight the differentiators that make official statistics a trusted and ‘go to’ brand.
3. Over the last two years, a Conference of European Statisticians’ Task Force has been considering how to measure the value of official statistics and how to communicate this value to both users and the wider public. The inherent value of official statistics is ultimately decided by users. They will attach value to what is relevant, timely and meets their needs.
4. In addition, there is ongoing discussion and work across the international statistical system, on combatting disinformation and the active attempts of those who use it to manipulate and destabilise our societies. This work includes defining what disinformation is and identifying tools and practices which can help to combat its influence.
5. In summary, two of the key challenges facing the official statistics are;
 - Building awareness of and trust in our reputation and our products, their quality, relevance and importance in the information age
 - Developing strategies as providers of independent, objective statistics to combat the disinformation.
6. Meeting these challenges requires a multi-dimensional, multi-layered response from NSOs. One key strategic asset is a well-developed, well-managed brand and reputation. Brand is the vehicle through which NSOs can build awareness of outputs, build relationships with users and create a link or association with the organisation’s values. A brand must tell the story or paint a picture of your organisation. In the case of NSOs, this needs to be the story of trustworthy, independent information and a secure repository for citizens’ or businesses’ personal data. In some cases, it may also need to be the story of an exciting, innovative and important place to work.
7. This would seem to be a lot of weight to place on a logo or ‘look and feel’ of an organisation. However, ‘brand’ is a much broader concept than this. It is the personality of the organisation. It incorporates the values, the tone of voice, the messaging and generally how the organisation presents itself to the outside world. While the foundation of statistical organisations may be high-quality, relevant statistics, the brand and reputation are how the outside world perceives them and makes decisions about their value and relevance.

Figure 1
Elements of Brand Development and Maintenance



8. Figure 1 outlines the elements involved in brand development and the importance of ensuring that the values and identity of the organisation are linked closely with how it is presented to the outside world. The ‘value’ of official statistics is largely determined by users/customers. However, the brand ensures that the link between the organisation and that ‘value’ is embedded in the consciousness.

9. As outlined in figure 1, positioning, developing, embedding and evaluating the brand involves multiple elements, including customer consultation, staff engagement and communication and marketing strategies.

10. The full document provides some guidance, tools and strategies relating to developing a brand, building awareness and trust in the brand, and the ongoing management of the brand and reputation, including through crisis situations. It includes guidelines for initial brand development and consistency, opportunities for education and awareness, and developing social media and digital marketing strategies.

II. Chapters

11. The full document includes the following chapters not included in this excerpt:

- Chapter 1 – Developing, building and maintaining a brand
- Chapter 2 – Branding & marketing activities
- Chapter 3 – Tools and channels for building and maintaining brand and reputation

- Chapter 4 – Managing brand and reputation through a crisis.

III. Conclusion

12. Official statistics are a cornerstone of a functioning society. In the current environment, it is critical for the widest possible audience to be aware of official statistics and the organisations that produce them as a source of independent, reliable and trustworthy information. Ensuring that this is the case requires a multi-layered and multi-faceted approach to communications and marketing.

13. A well-developed brand and reputation are a key strategic asset in promoting the value of official statistics and combatting the impact of disinformation on our societies.

14. Responsibility for the brand lies with staff at all levels of the organisation. A strong brand requires quality outputs, a strong communication strategy and active engagement with users.

15. Reputation is built upon the set of public perceptions about the organisation's actions; the alignment between what was promised and what was delivered; and the story everyone tells about the organisation.

16. If a crisis occurs, reputation can be deeply affected. However, an organisation that has a reputable heritage will create a buffer and should be able to mitigate or even eliminate potential damage if it manages the crisis appropriately, including the communication aspect.

17. Marketing and reputation management are key to ensuring a visible and recognisable brand which reflects the values of the organisation and can support the organisation in times of challenge or crisis.
