

Pre-Board Presentation Reading

3.30 - 4.00 pm on Thursday, 18 July 2019
in PC 101, Passmore Centre, SE1 1PX

1. Fundraising and brand case for support

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BRAND ARCHITECTURE, THE UNIVERSITY AND LSBU GROUP

This paper provides an update and narrative for brand development work for the University and LSBU Group. There will be an accompanying presentation at the meeting where the graphic approach to visual identity will be demonstrated.

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: London South Bank University brand
- Section 3: LSBU Group
- Section 4: Brand architecture
- Section 5: Brand implementation

1. INTRODUCTION

We have reviewed the brand architecture and brand positioning for LSBU and LSBU Group and have made recommendations as to how this should be implemented going forwards.

This process has been based on research, feedback and engagement with students, staff and other key audiences over the course of the last 18 months. We've implemented a new look and feel for LSBU and rolled it out across our recruitment and marketing, our website and social media channels. We've put authentic storytelling at the heart of our brand and this has helped us deliver a strong recruitment position. Positive research into our brand health shows we are beginning to improve brand recognition and familiarity with a core target market of prospective students.

2. LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERSITY BRAND

As marketing and brand professionals we have a preoccupation with both the present and the future. It's our job to keep in touch with ever-changing consumer attitudes and behaviours. Trust and reassurance are indelibly linked with a brand's heritage, but the inherent danger is for brands to avoid innovation, and potentially appear old-fashioned.

Universities particularly need to strike a balance between being bold and strong in their field of expertise, but accessible and relevant to today's content brand savvy consumers.

We have redefined and refreshed our University brand to make it fit for today and flexible to meet the challenges of tomorrow. Our brand is functioning in a lot of different spaces and places. It's not just buildings and paper. It's living in a 'digital first' world across online and social platforms. It demands greater interactive relationships with a wide range of different users, and therefore needs to be relevant, grab attention and connect emotionally with people.

In rejuvenating our University brand, we have put our emphasis on authenticity. Because our consumers today are too smart to be 'marketed to' traditionally. They need to relate to and engage with brands in their own contexts. We have refreshed our brand look and feel and begun to communicate in a more engaging way, telling stories that bring to life who we are and what we do.

We're doing this by giving voice to real students, academics and graduates and their experiences – and this is working. We're seeing an improvement in brand awareness and increases in applications and acceptances from prospective students.

University brand positioning

We have distilled what we know to be the things we stand for. Our strengths and points of difference.

Through brand discovery research and scoping we identified key differences that enable us to stand out in a crowded higher education marketplace. A marketplace where universities generally do the same sort of things, make the same sort of claims and deliver similar outcomes (with differing degrees of success). So we needed to understand what *our* offer is.

Key things we learned:

- London South Bank University's focus on applied, professional and technical education, relevant for the workplace, our apprenticeship offer, our links to employers, industry and accrediting bodies, and our emphasis on achieving excellent outcomes for our graduates is of great importance to current and potential students, employers and community partners. We're doing really well here, better than most, and it's where government and policymakers think universities should be focusing their energy, in the value of higher education debate. Our focus on education ('can do') with the skills and ability to apply that knowledge ('go do') is at the heart of our brand.
- Our civic roots in our south London community makes us stand out from the pack. We are a genuinely diverse university, serving local people, many of whom are from non-traditional education backgrounds. Our students are determined, tenacious and capable of greatness. But their access to a good education is far from guaranteed. Over half our students come from low-income neighbourhoods. Many others juggle parenthood, part time work, disabilities and caring commitments along with their studies. And nearly all face money worries, invisible obstacles and limiting beliefs of some kind. Around 70% are 'mature' (over 21) and half will be the very first in their families to go to university. The resilience, determination and enterprising spirit that runs through our student, staff and alumni community is strong.
- We are ambitious. For our people, local businesses and our wider civic community. And not just in south London. We are working to bring our approach to life with international partners as well. We are reaching beyond the traditional forms of education, teaching and research and opening up access to education for people who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunities. Our people are genuinely invested in the success of our students and they care about the impact our University has on their lives. And through our 'LSBU family' model, we are creating genuine opportunities for people, businesses and civic partners to access education and training at whatever time in life they need it – including upskilling and retraining as work demands and life changes.

If we embrace our differences, and celebrate the fact that we are not like every other university, we stop trying to compete on their terms – and we stop seeing ourselves as a pale imitation of what other universities set as 'standard'.

We know who we are. We know who we serve. We know we are transforming lives, businesses, communities and societies through the work we do. That makes us proud.

So we stand up for who we are.

Differentiating ourselves with brand attitude shows we are confident and proud of our role and impact in our colourful, vibrant and diverse south London community and beyond.

London South Bank University: brand positioning statement

LSBU is the can do, go do university.

We arm our students with the professional and technical knowledge they need to build a successful life and career. And just as importantly, the skills to apply that knowledge in the real world. We're here to give everyone – whoever they are, wherever they're from – the opportunity to unlock their potential and get the future they want through education.

Employability matters to us – we're here to help our graduates hit the ground running. Our teaching is applied, with nearly every course including an industry placement or internship. It's accredited, with recognition from relevant institutes giving students a head start in their chosen profession. And it's professional – our academics are leaders in their field, with up-to-date industry knowledge or experience.

Our relationships with business and communities means our research is designed to deliver practical economic and cultural benefits to society, business and the professions. Our staff and students challenge ways of working and look to make a real difference. Our research is grounded and relevant to people now, through our community and industry links. Our partnerships with businesses and social enterprises create a learning environment that benefits staff and students through the way they learn, the resources they can access, and the opportunities to get involved with their community. It all adds up to a real sense of belonging that we believe stays with LSBU graduates for life.

We're flexible. Our students often don't fit the traditional academic mould – we base our entry tariff on potential rather than past achievement – so we tailor their learning to them. We know they're resourceful people. They need to be, just to get where they are. We build on that, helping them develop the confidence and can do attitude they need to succeed. And we believe they will succeed and go on to shape and lead their chosen fields and industries, because these creative, driven, savvy graduates are exactly what today's changing workplace requires.

Our work has impact. As do our graduates. Across industry and in communities both locally and globally, through ground-breaking research, high-quality teaching and our dedication to break down barriers to opportunity we are creating a stronger, better world. And we will keep on doing what we do until the playing field is level for everyone.

At the meeting we will show you examples of how the brand is being implemented and how we are developing a strong cohesive narrative and visual identity.

3. LSBU GROUP

Creating LSBU Group brand from the University's identity

LSBU Group is a blank slate as a brand. Of itself it means nothing. It is through its association with London South Bank University that it begins to have meaning. This requires two things:

- For 'LSBU' to be clearly associated with London South Bank University so that the connection between the University and LSBU Group can be drawn;
- For London South Bank University to be a strong brand in its own right, with clear credentials, visibility and strength so that it creates equity in 'LSBU' and therefore LSBU Group.

It is from the London South Bank University brand that we create LSBU Group brand – an overarching brand that connects, supports and strengthens the individual institutional brands within the LSBU family. The individual institutional brands are important, because our users relate to the local, relevant brand within LSBU Group. Each of those brands need to share some common features, but maintain distinct identities appropriate to their markets and audiences.

From the London South Bank University brand there is a shared set of values, our education framework, and real world, work-ready focus. These elements form the basis of LSBU Group Corporate Strategy 2020-2025. Our education framework is a vital part of our shared approach - it provides clarity of our commitment to inclusive education practice, and that is at the heart of our University and LSBU Group purpose.

From our LSBU Group Strategy 2020-2025:

LSBU Group mission

To transform lives, communities, businesses and society through applied education and insight.

LSBU Group Values

- Excellence
- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Inclusivity
- Creativity

LSBU Group

The 2020-2025 strategy aspires to impact positively on one million lives by 2025 through education, business and community engagement.

In developing a positioning statement for LSBU Group I believe we need to articulate our shared motivation in serving our local communities. We share a desire to create wider access for people beyond groups that traditionally access education. Our belief that everyone can improve their life and work chances through education, and our practical, 'can do, go do' approach are differentiators. The passion that we see across the Academy schools, the College and the University to raise the aspirations and ambitions of our students, as well as providing them with skills and knowledge is something special. It inspires so many of our staff, and the care and commitment that stems from that is something we can and should be proud of.

Recommended: LSBU Group: brand positioning statement

LSBU Group is a family of education providers, led by London South Bank University. We work to a shared educational framework across secondary, further, higher education and beyond.

We're here to banish the idea that you need a certain kind of background to succeed. To break the cycle of social inequality from one generation to the next. And give everyone – whoever they are, wherever they're from – the skills and self-belief to get the future they want.

We arm our students with the professional and technical knowledge they need to develop a successful life and career. And we teach them how to apply that knowledge in the real world. Our 'can do, go do' approach gives our resourceful learners and graduates the knowledge, skills and confidence to gain employment and add value at work – now and in the future.

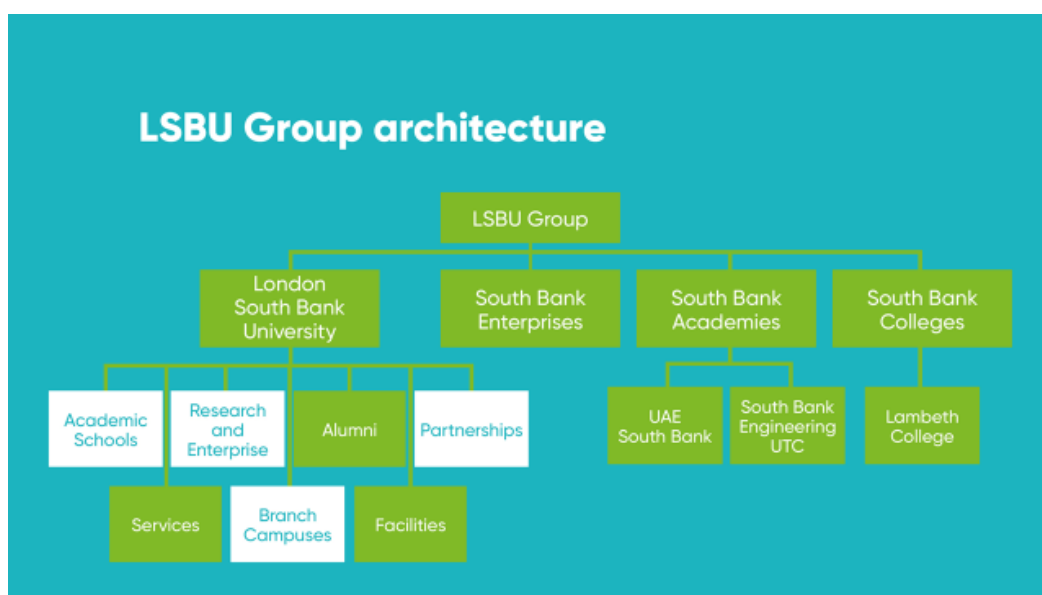
We work in collaboration with our wealth of business, professional and community partners to create the opportunities our students deserve, and the future change makers our businesses and society needs.

We know that barriers to education start early and run deep. Access to a good education is far from guaranteed. Our growing family of like-minded institutions offers learners of all ages a genuine choice between different styles of learning, centred on the needs of each individual. People and businesses can access a broad range of academic, vocational, professional and technical education and qualifications that best suits their needs – including retraining and upskilling throughout life.

We share a passion: to provide excellent, accessible, supportive and flexible education that creates better life chances – from enhanced career outcomes to improved health and wellbeing.

Our work has impact. It changes lives, builds communities, strengthens society and breaks down barriers to brilliance. And we will keep working until the playing field is level for everyone.

4. BRAND ARCHITECTURE



LSBU GROUP

LSBU Group is the overarching brand. Within in that, at the top level, sit the University, and the three legal entities South Bank Academies (SBA), South Bank Colleges (SBC) and South Bank Enterprises (SBE).

Principles:

- LSBU Group will be an endorser brand that connects and underpins the institutional brands and other brands or sub-brands that form part of LSBU Group
- Each institutional brand within LSBU Group will maintain a distinctive identity and will incorporate features of LSBU Group brand – visual, tone of voice and supporting messaging.
- South Bank Academies, South Bank Colleges and South Bank Enterprises are legal entities that form LSBU Group and should be treated as B2B brands, used for funding, regulatory and business development purposes. They are not consumer-facing brands – it is ‘LSBU Group’ that is the key feature of the brand offer to potential colleges or schools that may become part of LSBU Group as it grows and therefore the consumer brands we invest effort in promoting.
- South Bank Enterprises will require a separate sub-brand identity as it needs flexibility to operate at arm’s length from the University for some of its commercial activities; consumer activities, such as IBCs, would form part of the University’s brand architecture. South Bank Academies already has a sub-brand which can be developed and aligned with LSBU Group. If required in future, SBC can be treated similarly.

We have developed a proposal for LSBU Group logo and will demonstrate how this will be deployed visually with the individual identities of LSBU Group members at the meeting.

We propose that ‘LSBU Group’ endorser should be used with every institutional brand in LSBU Group, including the University at the top level, as this helps reinforce the connection between ‘LSBU’ and London South Bank University.

We are increasingly dependent upon our audiences recognising the shorthand version of our name as ‘LSBU’ – as this is what we become in URLs and hashtags for social platforms. And this becomes a critical need if we are to share brand equity with LSBU Group. Our research also shows that in conversation we are known informally as ‘South Bank’ – which of course confuses us with the South Bank Centre and the South Bank as a geographical location, outside a university context. We therefore need to make a concerted investment to use ‘LSBU’ more consistently, if that is to be the short form of our name. And we think it should be.

We recommend a conscious approach to build up recognition of ‘LSBU’ as the short form name for London South Bank University, to achieve recognition in the same way LSE and UCL have done with their names. That means simplifying our brand ‘mark’ (name and logo) so we can build up the University and Group recognition and brand equity faster and more effectively. The full name and crest would continue to be deployed in appropriate formal settings and occasions.

5. BRAND IMPLEMENTATION

External promotion of LSBU brand

The brand we have created has flexibility to work across a broad range of audiences and in various styles. We will present examples of how we have been successfully rolling out the refreshed brand

and a bolder, stronger narrative over the past 16 months across a range of marketing and recruitment collateral around the University. We are gradually updating our 'owned channels' – after the initial re-skinning of the website we are now developing its capabilities and it will get another refresh in the coming months. We will show you at the meeting how the brand and positioning is feeding through to our Clearing campaign, and our philanthropic and alumni engagement.

Embedding the brand in all we do: internal requirements

Brand is all about experience – we talk about 'touchpoints' – where our customers/potential customers and other stakeholders interact with our organisation. Every interaction is part of the brand experience. That has implications for:

- customer service – staff and student enquiries, admissions, enrolment and re-enrolment, student services, reception and security, academic support, timetabling, catering, IT, fees and registry, complaints
- our physical environment – reception areas, catering spaces, teaching and learning spaces, study spaces, signage and wayfinding, our infrastructure (whether toilets or technology)
- events – open days, graduation, welcome week, careers fairs, outreach, staff conference, student events, public lectures and conferences, civic and community activities
- our digital presence – website, social platforms & channels, partnerships, third party sites

Delivering an 'on brand' experience means that everyone needs to understand what LSBU stands for and the implications that has for what we deliver and how we do it. That means embedding our brand values in our culture.

Our academic and professional support staff need to be aligned and involved with the LSBU brand. If they are to deliver an experience which matches our brand promise they need to know what LSBU stands for and be committed to reinforcing it with their actions. Our colleagues should:

- *feel united in a common vision, mission and goal*, understanding how their role contributes to achieving this. Our academic colleagues, our professional support staff, colleagues in back office/support functions understand how they are contributing to a brand-led customer experience as well as those in direct customer-facing roles.
- *feel an emotional connection* with the brand, so they choose to act as brand ambassadors, actively sharing positive information about LSBU with their friends, families, and communities and recommending us to them.
- *understand our brand strategy*, so they recognise what LSBU stands for, who we are reaching and serving, what makes us unique and valuable from a student/prospective student's perspective – and how we are different from other universities
- *nurture and reinforce high quality customer experiences* at every touchpoint – so everyone can deliver an 'on brand' experience through their day-to-day actions, whatever their job.

Embedding a brand takes time to achieve. To achieve this, we need to inform, inspire and involve our staff so that they want to support and advance the brand. Only then will they think and act in the specific ways that bring our promised experience to life. It's our academic and professional and support staff who will design and deliver on-brand customer experiences that strengthen the brand's competitive position and build equity in our brand.

Our roll-out plan has three core elements:

- **Strategic integration:** Bring the brand thinking together with the LSBU Group corporate strategy to 2025 – ‘brand’ is the set of clothes we put on, the personality we assume, to deliver our vision, mission and values, and articulating that at the heart of our group strategy puts the ‘why’ and the ‘how’ with the ‘what’. Integrate brand thinking into the heart of our major change programmes: LEAP, Lambeth integration etc.
- **Promote the brand story and its impact on what and how we do things:** Share the strategy and brand thinking with teams across the University and initiate discussions that enable them to identify what it means for them in practice – how they will deliver this and what support they need to do that.
- **Provide facilitation, tools and support:** Implement the enabling and tactical support that will deliver the brand across all touchpoints.

It should inform and shape our change programmes and organisational development work, which in turn creates and drives a culture that is delivering the LSBU brand values and behaviours across the University and LSBU Group.

Judith Barnard

Director, Brand & Communications