

**Communications Audit
for Folger Shakespeare Library**

May 1, 2003

Communication Audit

Introduction

[Folger Shakespeare Library](#) requested a communications audit to review current collateral marketing materials. Through meetings with Garland Scott, Director of Public Relations at the Folger, and key program managers, we gained insight into how some within the organization perceive the Folger and their feelings of the public's perception.

In no way does this brief situational analysis take the place of a true communication audit involving all employees and the organization.

Building the brand comes from within; it isn't just the materials presented to the public. Research results from around the world consistently demonstrate that most employees are neither enthusiasts of the companies they work for, nor brand advocates. In almost all cases, this ambivalence translates to the customer and directly effects both customer relations and brand value assessment. Brands are defined by people.

However, we have been able to evaluate a number of key issues and present some of the findings in our report. By creating materials employees can use which present the Folger Shakespeare Library both as 1) a place to enjoy diverse programming and 2) an "umbrella" organization or institution, there will be stronger feeling of the Folger as an integrated "community" so to speak, which will go a long way in reenergizing the brand.

The following situational analysis contains comments from those participating in the SWOT as well as observations we have made from numerous visits to the Folger, informal discussions and research.

Thank you all for your participation.

Situational Analysis

In describing the current programs and services, the list which consistently comes up from staff, impromptu polling and sampling from visitors:

- Theatre
- Membership (including development and fundraising)
- Exhibitions and Collection
- Gift Shop
- Consort
- PEN/Faulkner
- Poetry
- Education
- Scholarly Research
- Shakespeare's Birthday Party
- The Folger News
- Special Event and venue rental

Strengths:

The Folger Shakespeare Library is in an excellent location via metro and its proximity to The Capitol Building and Library of Congress. The programming is diverse and includes fine art treasures and priceless ephemera. The grounds, garden and building are visually appealing. Admission is free and open to the public. There is a good subscription base for the Folger Theatre. The school tours and education programming is well known. For membership building purposes, the Executive Director sends a strong message by giving to the Folger and being a "paid" member.

- Large number of programs
- Renowned scholarly and research center
- The facility is free and open to the public
- Good subscriber base for the theatre
- A "boutique" museum (perceived as high end)
- Beautiful architecturally; Interior "coolness" inviting to some
- School Tours
- Seven Ages of Man – Treasures of the Folger
- Executive Director is a member
- Near the Capitol Building, Library of Congress and Capitol South Metro

Weaknesses:

It is felt that many people only define the Folger Shakespeare Library (FSL) as the scholarly library itself and are unaware of all offered programming. The feeling is that the FSL is either only used by scholars or is too “stuffy” and can be intimidating to the average person. The heaviness of the décor and darkness adds to this feeling. There is concern that docents are either unaware of the membership programming or are hesitant to ask visitors to join. The current marketing materials do not promote the identity of Folger as a place and there is no consistency of logo, logotype, usage or tagline for the Folger itself. There is a feeling that there is a weak local presence.

- A little secret
- Low profile
- Intelligencia (perception that it is high brow only)
- Reading room not accessible to average person (except once a year)
- Interior can feel intimidating
- The Orientation Gallery (off to the corner, hard to find)
- Docents don't ask for memberships or are not comfortable asking for memberships
- Docents aren't required to be members – even at lowest level
- Weak local presence
- Parking issues
- Marketing materials do not promote Folger as it's own identity or place
- No consistency in logo, logotype, tagline on what Folger has to offer

Opportunities:

There is a need to create a consistent logo and tagline for the institution, leading to better overall brand recognition and to unify programs as well as strengthening the “Friends of the Folger” membership program. Specific programs would still have the ability to continue their individual marketing endeavors, allowing also for timed “rollout” of new pieces with consistent logo and identity to minimize budget impact. New identity offers press opportunities and media announcements and many programs lend themselves to cross-promotion. New subscription pieces lists benefits of membership. Since access to the reading room is limited, a virtual tour could be produced. There is also a desire to increase theatre subscription base. The “Folger News,” redesigned as a four-color magazine, would be a membership benefit and in fundraising endeavors.

- Number of programs lend themselves to cross-promotion
- Promoting of “total” membership at the Folger i.e. “Friends of the Folger” concept
- New round of subscription brochures being created that lists benefits
- Accessibility to reading room through virtual tours or limited basis
- Theatre architecture is an excellent example of the period
- Increasing theatre subscription base
- New orientation movie
- Market to special groups i.e Capitol Hill neighbors, Younger patrons
- Marketing opportunities via the gift shop
- Partner with hotel, convention center, travel groups, “Hill” organizations
- Promoting use of metro
- Terms of board members ending
- Create an overarching identity for the Folger

Threats:

Due to heightened concern regarding threats, the proximity to the Capitol Building and Library of Congress could now be a perceived threat. There are parking issues. In addition to the Washington Shakespeare Theatre having once been located at the Folger, theatres which offer Shakespeare add to the confusion and siphon audience base. There may be concern on whether an identity campaign will strain existing program budgets; Internal buy-in by all departments for identity marketing efforts is needed to be most effective: there may be resistance to change.

- Near the Capitol Building (perceived threat re: terrorism)
- Parking issues
- Theatres that offer Shakespeare cause confusion and also siphon audience base
- Washington Shakespeare Theatre used to be at the Folger and causes confusion
- Concern that limited budget resources would be stretched further by using funds from individual programs to create a unified consistent brand
- Status quo – Change is often seen as a threat; it's always easier to do nothing

Strategic Branding Elements

Creating a Consistent Identity

The Folger Shakespeare Library would benefit with a consistent logo, logotype, usage guidelines, tagline and descriptor. A review of all collateral materials reveals that the logo that identifies the institution when used with specific programming doesn't support the brand. The descriptor would help identify all that exists at the Library. The tagline would help support the "umbrella" organization. Our recommendation is to build the brand of "Folger" with the programming as separate identities all under one roof.

Realigning the Folger Brand

- Logo and logotype
- Tagline
- Descriptor
- Usage guidelines
- Advertising Templates
- Folger Identity Program
- Four-color Magazine
- Development and Membership Materials
- Website Design

- Logo and logotype**
 - A new, easily identifiable logo and logotype will build brand awareness of the Folger and the family of programming

- The tagline offers an emotional tie-in**
 - "Just do it"
 - "Smile"
 - "Classical 103.5 The shortest distance between 9 and 5."
 - "A place to contemplate. Life and Art"

❑ **Descriptor**

“Complete electrical supplies under one roof”

“The world’s finest collection of 18th Century art”

“35 offices throughout the area to serve your banking needs”

“The National Museum of Asian Art”

❑ **Usage guidelines**

Placement of the logo, color, size, usage within co-branded materials, such as those used by PEN/Faulkner and on program materials and the website home page;

Examples of usage in black and white, color, in newsprint or brochures

❑ **Advertising Templates**

Showing a variety of ways the logo, logotype or tagline and descriptor can be used depending upon size and color

❑ **Folger Identity Package**

This piece would help further define the Folger as a brand. The piece features the Folger, but also allows for each program to have its own post card. The cards could be designed, for example, to create a “jigsaw” puzzle of Elizabeth I, but each one carries its own identity. One specifically describes the Folger, one the Theatre, and so forth. All the cards fit into a tastefully designed carrier.

❑ **Four color magazine**

Our suggestion is to redesign “*Folger News*” into a four-color magazine. Use to define the Folger brand; cross-promote membership and giving; cross-promote programs; cross-promote Folger as a business meeting venue; use one issue per year to announce Theatrical Season; It becomes a value add to membership and can be used as a handout for persons requesting information. According to studies, color increases readership and perceived “value,” especially among ages 18-34. The magazine can be designed as a self-mailer to help in mailing costs or could be polybagged when needed for special promotional post cards or other offers.

□ **Development and Planned Giving**

Our understanding is that the Leadership Giving brochure is to be replaced with easier-to-follow levels of giving and ways to give. Materials are being redesigned to define membership advantages, levels of membership and methods of giving, but should reflect the new corporate identity as soon as possible. We also suggest a direct mail postcard campaign to businesses in and around the Capitol Hill area to raise awareness of the Folger as a business meeting venue.

□ **Website Design**

It is vital that the Folger Identity items be integrated into any website design and that the secondary pages follow usage guidelines when referring to specific programs and the institution. All printed materials should direct readers to the website address; there will also be marketing opportunities to simply draw focus to the website and it should have a “look and feel” that complements and supports the identity campaign.

Rationalization for Brand and Cross-marketing

In creating the consistent logo, usage guidelines, the four color magazine and Folger Identity Package, programs will be able to cross-promote more effectively and “ride the coattails” of the institution. There is no need for a major overhaul of existing items, but some can be eliminated or redesigned to utilize budget resources and cross-promote more effectively. For example, with the corporate Identity package, the general brochure can be eliminated and created into a 4 x 9 rack card for general information about the Folger directing the reader to the website or to call for more information. Membership can use the package to send to donor prospects on everything the Folger has to offer along with an individualized letter addressed to the recipient. Cards within the Folger package can be handed out at specific events designed around specific programs. The four color magazine, replacing the “Folger News,” becomes a members benefit, allows cross promotion of the programs, strengthens the brand – columns can spotlight docents, new members, new programs, etc. – and can also be used in membership drives, as hand outs at fundraising events and mailed to potential high-profile donors.

Individual program directors and managers continue designing pieces they feel are an effective means of marketing their own programs. In addition, by creating the identity

package, as items are extinguished through use, new individual program pieces are updated by following the corporate identity guidelines. Eventually, all the materials are branded under the “Folger” umbrella, which promote the venue as well as the programs.

Budgeting for the identity package and four color magazine could be funded in part by set-aside budgets from each individual program with the understanding that over time all marketing efforts benefit all programs.

Consistent identity, use of taglines and descriptor, when combined with cross-marketing, builds your brand awareness and ultimately results in increased participation by customers, stakeholders, audiences, members and employees.

(Cost estimates in preparing suggested materials, including the re-design of the website, logo and positioning statements, have been removed from the original audit.)