



It takes a meaningful brand, not a mere logo, to help build a village

By Andrew Hoyne, Principal and Creative Director, Hoyne

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STEP AWAY FROM THE LOGO

A logo is not a brand; let's get that out of the way right now. It is frustrating to see people confuse the two. When it comes to creating a brand for a community – whether for a town, emerging suburb, greenfield site or a new development in an established but languishing location – branding (or re-branding) can create a sense of belonging and purpose from very early on.

Branding done correctly – combining research, strategy, creativity and long-term investment – is actually a reflection of the spirit or personality of a community. It can connect directly with existing residents, potential buyers and local business owners. It can help instill a sense of community pride, increase community cohesion, attract business investment and improve economic performance.

THINK BEYOND THE FLAGS

Since branding is not about a logo, it is also not about flags in car parks or billboards along highways or posters in bus shelters during new sales phases for residential projects. Effective branding – delivering long-lasting results and economic benefits – must be meaningful, inspiring, protected, encouraged and maintained.

When it comes to fledgling communities,

branding should establish a personality and point of view so people can jump on board, feel part of a very appealing story, then reflect that optimism and ambition in their own lives and actions.

With flagging communities, the aim is to reinstall people's pride in place, and see new expressions of confidence and energy return to and thrive in the streets where they live.

REMEMBER THE POWER OF STORY

Often branding is about stories. Most of us want to feel like we're an integral part of something bigger, special and unique. Hence, we paint our faces and head to the football with mates or we share family holiday snapshots on Facebook.

Every area has its story but sometimes that heritage or distinction has been undervalued, belittled or forgotten. Most placemaking, precinct and development branding is cookie-cutter. To brand a place, you need to determine how a community wants to see itself. This refers to all members of the community, including various age groups, socioeconomic categories, retail, local businesses and major employers. It's about tapping into that distinct persona and figuring

out how to bring it to life.

Harold Park in Glebe has done this perfectly. Mirvac's work, from the very start, embraced the area's colourful history, from bohemian culture and harness racing to tram sheds and harbour-side parklands. Hoyne combined all this with a highly recognisable Glebe persona to create an identity buyers were drawn to – authentic, not manufactured.

PROFIT FROM PERSONALITY

Old school house-and-land marketing relied on kids riding bikes, their images set against wide-open spaces. In terms of facilities on offer, beyond houses and roads, these developments might be allocated one convenience store or a utilitarian café at best and everyone needed a car to get anywhere of interest. People bought in for the price – not because that's how they wanted to live. Isolated and poorly serviced is not how any of us wants to live. It is also not a scenario that attracts or encourages entrepreneurs, vibrant business districts or thriving cultural precincts.

Branding should create an inspiring vision of a community, of how things will or should be, based on the facilities and activities in place or in progress. We need to inspire progressive businesses

to set up shop, where they can meet the needs of a community, but also grow and prosper as a commercial entity.

These businesses should be part of the initial development plan, brought on early and nurtured. A good example of this can be seen at Woodlea, 30 kilometres west of Melbourne. Eventually home to 7000 households, with a construction span of around 15 years, the developers (Mircac and Victoria Investments and Properties) know how seriously Melburnians take their food and coffee. Go West Café – from successful and fashionable restaurateur Jason M Jones and his partners – launched simultaneously with Woodlea's display village and massive adventure playground. Go West has already been favourably reviewed by Broadsheet, the urban foodie's bible. The playground has received the thumbs up from parenting blogs.

By setting up a community to have a strong, cohesive message, you make it attractive and inspiring to existing residents and businesses as well as potential visitors, new residents and new commercial opportunities. Everything becomes interconnected, be it employment, education, transport and other infrastructure. ➤

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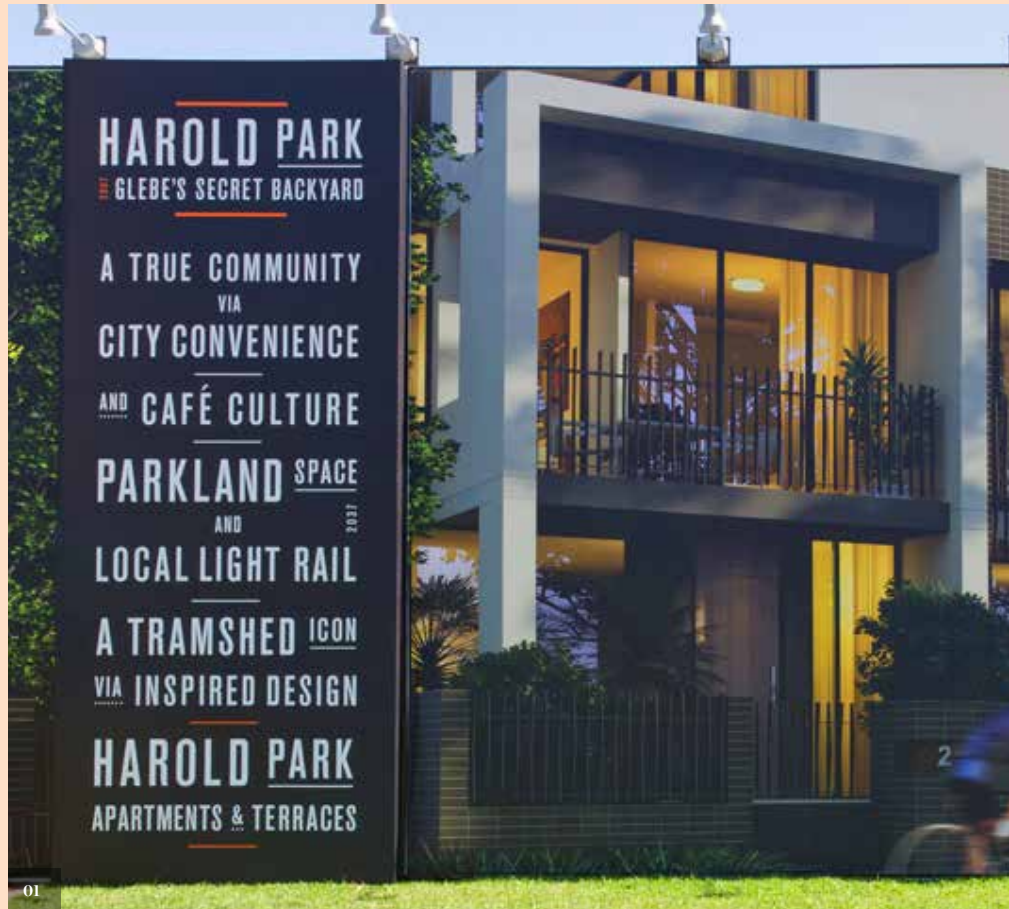
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TAKE A LEAF OUT OF MAROOCHYDORE

A new city centre for Maroochydore in Queensland is one of my favourite examples of how branding is now being leveraged at the very beginning of the development phase in order to establish a really strong message, engage the local community and attract business from interstate and overseas.

We are working with SunCentral, a corporation set up by the Sunshine Coast Council, to oversee the development of what we've positioned as 'The Bright City'.

As the capital of the Sunshine Coast region, Maroochydore has grown organically with little planning. Currently it's perceived as being a holiday destination, with a relaxed lifestyle. The people of Maroochydore are warm and friendly, but the town lacks diversity and a young population. As soon as kids are old enough they leave for work prospects in the cities or to live somewhere with more energy, where restaurants are open past 10pm!

Our challenge is to shift the perception of Maroochydore away from being a sleepy seaside town to an energised, thriving, future-focused city.

The new city centre is a 53-hectare development, and the project is unique as it is Australia's only CBD greenfield development within an existing urban area. It provides the opportunity to create a city of the future, where sustainable design and state-of-the-art technology connects a flourishing subtropical coastal region to the rest of the country and the world.

Approximately 500,000 people are

expected to call the region home by 2036 and the plan is that its heart will be Maroochydore's vibrant new commercial, residential, cultural and entertainment precinct, purpose-built to cater for the region's growth.

Prime commercial zones will sit alongside dining and entertainment precincts. Efficient public transport, new city streets and a network of paths for cyclists and pedestrians will encourage the city's workers, residents and visitors to move seamlessly from work to play and day to night. More than 2000 residential apartments will be a five-minute walk from the CBD's professional and business services as well as hotels, restaurants, shopping and waterways.

Most importantly for the brand positioning, the new city will also be 'smart', with state-of-the-art technology providing digital solutions for street lighting, car parking, water, power and signage and it will be serviced by an underground automated waste-collection system.

The idea is to position Maroochydore as a breeding ground for success. We are creating a prosperous ecosystem where people will be proud, and where business can thrive.

This is a great example of a community that wants to evolve. There is a collective desire for a better future and the brand is used to illustrate the vision, setting forward a blueprint to achieve that success. It also demonstrates how clever thinking in the early stages will substantially speed up the process of securing investment, creating social and economic benefits for decades to come. — ●