

## The Well-Integrated Brand

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**B**rand has been the buzzword in the professional services marketing world for the last decade. But many firms still struggle with the concept. So, what is your company's brand?

Your brand is *feeling*. Your brand is *impression*. Your brand is *perception*. Your brand is a *reflection*—of your culture, how you collaborate, and how you communicate.

Your brand is defined by what you do, how you do what you do, and how you act as you do it. The importance of those actions extends to everyone in your organization—your culture. Their actions have the power to define, to build, and to communicate your brand:

- by how they impact your clients
- by how they influence your clients' clients
- by how they inform your communities

The well-integrated brand recognizes that each of these actions is reflected in the perceptions and recognition of your brand.

This Venn diagram illustrates the confluence of industry, regional, and popular brand recognition. The scale of each set within the diagram is indicative of brand value as measured by your surveys of brand recognition. The complement, or union, of each set shows your brand value in your industry, regional market, and community. This same analysis can be extended to multi-regional or even international sectors. The complements are defined as follows.

- **Industry Recognition:** Your firm is acknowledged for unique, specialized knowledge and experience based on research and practical applications as demonstrated by completed projects.
- **Regional Recognition:** Yours is the “go-to” firm for the press and the professional communities for research, presentations, and publications regarding your areas of expertise.



- **Popular Recognition:** Your firm contributes to important community efforts through volunteerism, sponsorship, and charitable participation that visibly benefit the larger populous.

To fully realize brand integration, the services you provide, the ideas you bring to a client, and the value those solutions deliver—the *what* and the *how* of the *why* of your service—define your brand. While there is no simple formula to building the brand of a professional service practice, this Venn diagram of the integrated brand illustrates those values common to the strongest brands. Developing, sustaining, and expanding your brand is a complex process.

*This is an excerpt from Craig Park's new book, The Architecture of Image: Branding Your Professional Practice (AquilanPress, 2013), available in the SMPS Bookstore at [www.smpsbooks.com](http://www.smpsbooks.com). ■*