

GAUTRAIN MANAGEMENT AGENCY



GMA CASE STUDY - BRAND COMMUNICATION

DEVELOPING AN INNOVATIVE TRANSPORT BRAND FOR SOUTH AFRICA

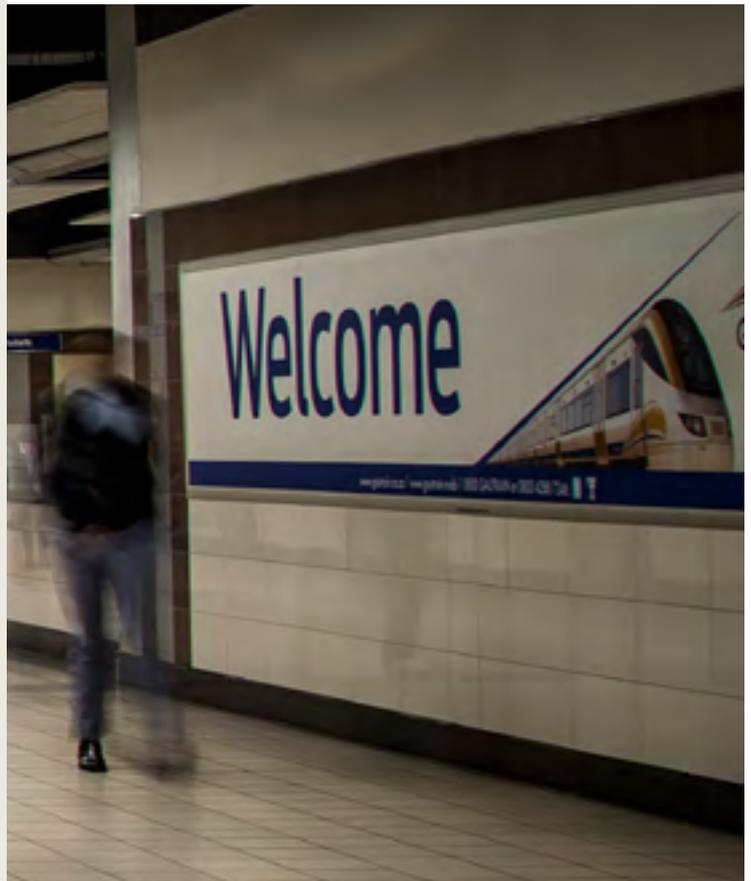
The purpose of the case study is to examine the strategic process followed to develop and launch the final Gautrain brand successfully. The process involved developing the existing Gautrain Rapid Rail Link brand into the current Gautrain brand. The case study sets out the procedure of developing and implementing a research methodology to ensure wide acceptance of the brand by the various stakeholders. The study highlights the need for continuous building and maintenance of brand equity.

LEARNING OUTCOME

To demonstrate how Gautrain's brand development took place in the public transport sector by analysing the brand development process used to update the existing Gautrain Rapid Rail Link brand and develop it into the Gautrain brand we are familiar with today.

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE

To develop and launch the Gautrain brand successfully while considering the interests of relevant stakeholders, mitigate communication risks and build and maintain brand equity.



1. BACKGROUND

For approximately six years before construction began on the Gautrain, the Gautrain Rapid Rail Link brand operated as a forerunner to the Gautrain brand of today.



This interim brand carried the Gautrain Project well and built a proud public reputation that is

still prevalent among supporters' perceptions of the brand today.

Gautrain, the first rapid rail transport system in Gauteng (South Africa's economic heartland), is also the first system of its kind in Africa. The development of the final Gautrain brand and relevant communication followed a strategic process over a period of many months. The development methodology included a process of brand development, conceptualisation of brand elements and the selection and evaluation of Gautrain brand concepts. Following these steps the selected Gautrain brand identity would be validated and intellectual property involved with the brand vetted.

The focus of this case study is on the first phase of the strategy, the brand development. To develop the Gautrain brand, research was done to determine the current awareness and attitude towards the brand at the time. New brand concepts and reactions towards these concepts were tested and analysed in focus groups before the results were validated within the broader Gauteng community.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND EARLY FINDINGS

The problem explored in this case study is how best to position the Gautrain core brand to be widely accepted by its stakeholders.

Development of the research methodology needed to further explore the positioning of the Gautrain took place strategically, coupled with innovation. The focus was on developing and implementing a research methodology that was both meticulous and innovative to ensure that Gautrain's new brand identity would reflect the inclusion of its numerous stakeholders.

The relevant target publics who were perceived to be applicable for brand communication during the construction and operation of the Gautrain were as follows: International target publics who would have the opportunity to make use of the train in their travels, other interested and affected parties, the Government, Gauteng residents and affected communities, potential passengers, the business sector and mass media.

Having selected target publics, the communication and marketing function of the Gautrain Project had to align branding goals and objectives that were relevant to these publics. This was done using a risk mitigation strategy to overcome the brand communication risks and challenges.

“Having developed a brand successfully does not equate to a happy, everlasting ending. Continuous brand assessment, reputation analysis and brand studies are required to uphold the status of a brand.”



3. ANALYSIS OF ISSUES

Following the signing of the Gautrain Concession Agreement in 2006, the Public Private Partnership (PPP) between the Gauteng Provincial Government and the Bombela Concession Company (Pty) Ltd (the Concessionaire) was sealed. This means that the Concessionaire acts on behalf of the Gauteng Province, and various partners position themselves as one entity within a core brand – Gautrain. The brand thus had to be clearly defined when construction commenced, the point at which the Gautrain would present its public persona to the world.

At this point, the Political Committee of the Gauteng Provincial Government's Executive Council, responsible for the Gautrain Project, recommended the retention of the Gautrain name and brand. The recommendation was to keep the brand identity in its initial or an adapted (possibly Africanised) format. Their request for public participation during the brand development process was also highlighted.

To action this recommendation, the communication and marketing function of Gautrain initiated a brand development strategy that consisted of a brand development phase, followed by positioning the new/amended brand within the minds of its stakeholders.

The selected brand identity would need to cement the intended Gautrain brand position within the minds of its stakeholders, a process not without its challenges. These challenges included pessimism being voiced by local and international investors who were worried about a perceived profile of fraud and corruption with the Gautrain being an African government project. Local sceptics saw Gautrain as being a 'white elephant', which was not needed in Gauteng. A project like Gautrain had, at that stage, never been attempted in Africa. Being a 'greenfields' project it attracted many critics.

The success of the Gautrain was questioned by many other transport-mode 'experts'. All



these other parties recommended other, better transport options as opposed to the Gautrain. Another problem was a lack of public faith in the Project. South Africa lacks a solid public transport tradition. This lack of tradition created a lot of 'disbelief' in the Project.

Opposition in Gauteng was also increased by the NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) syndrome. The few who thought that the Project was a good idea did not want the service offered in their community. The running of tracks through undeveloped land created questions as to Gautrain's possible negative environmental impacts. In addition, in the areas that were developed noise and vibration impacts were a concern.

The expropriation of properties was also a concern with almost 1 100 properties being expropriated. With residents not being exposed to expropriation on a frequent basis, uncertainty existed as to how expropriation was to unfold.

Having overcome most challenges, the brand had to be brought into the minds of various stakeholders in a positive light. The intended target publics were selected based on the relevance of their relationship with Gautrain and its stakeholders.

3.1 Reducing Communication Risks

The risk mitigation strategy was to develop an integrated project with an overarching brand proposition and to consider what the Gautrain brand stands for, what it does and what makes it unique. These points all need to be kept in mind in any brand communication strategy. The current perceptions of the Gautrain, as well as the communication challenges facing it, would have to be considered when choosing the most appropriate corporate identity and brand design from a list of proposed concepts. Once this was done the ideal position of the brand in the minds of South African stakeholders could be defined and brand identity and visual communication developed.

The following objectives were set for the first phase of the strategy:

- To design, develop and select new or amended concepts of the Gautrain brand during October 2005;

- To assess – quantitatively and qualitatively – five selected brand concepts among focus group members (who are representative of the Gauteng population) during February 2006;
- To assess – qualitatively – five selected brand concepts among brand opinion leaders during February 2006;
- To validate – qualitatively – two chosen brand concepts among the broader Gauteng public and among Gauteng civil servants during February 2006; and
- To apply required intellectual property legislation so as not to contravene existing brands as well as to secure trademark rights for the final brand from March to April 2006.

Target publics were identified and goals and objectives were set. All that was needed was to implement the brand development process.

3.2 Brand Development

When construction began, the Gautrain Project moved into the public sphere in a big way. The brand thus had to be defined and tested before this milestone was reached during September 2006. Apart from meeting the time schedule, the responsible team had to ensure that the final brand identity projected an integrated, overarching brand proposition for the project: what the Gautrain brand stands for, what it does and what makes it unique or different.

This was achieved through a brand-development process in which the logo in use at the time was modified and several new potential brands were developed. The brand assessment included testing all possible brand identities in focus groups and with opinion leaders. Brand validation through a public competition enabled the broader Gauteng and national community to be involved in the final selection process. A rigorous intellectual property clearance process for the brand was also undertaken to ensure the chosen brand identity was distinctive and exclusive to the Gautrain brand.



During October 2006, creative design and branding companies were briefed about the development for the new Gautrain brand. The brief clearly outlined design requirements for the new brand, the process, timelines, assessment criteria and submission requirements.

The conceptualisation and presentation of a modified design for the existing logo was to include:

- Africanisation/modification of the logo;
- Africanisation/modification of the name 'Gautrain', retaining 'Gautrain' as the core;
- Colours;
- Typefaces; and
- Slogan.

The brief specified the following elements to be included:

- Corporate identity/brand manual;
- Symbol/s, e.g. public information;
- Buildings and stations;
- Signage on vehicles, etc;
- Literature;
- Advertising;
- Style of dress/uniform;
- Name tags;
- Special events;
- Stationery – printed and electronic;
- Website;
- Brand culture; and
- Style of service delivery.

The brief required that the current name, Gautrain, be retained while the brand be Africanised so as to reflect South Africa in general with a focus on Gauteng. It also required that the Private Public Partnership nature of the project be taken into account and that as a flagship project, the Gautrain should reflect a pride in Gauteng and South Africa.

The brand identity also needed to be representative of the full Gautrain service and be applicable to all visual elements of the entire system such as the trains, feeder and distribution service, stations and parking. The identity developed would need to be the clearest and easiest way to represent the Gautrain.



3.3 Brand Assessment

Brand assessment took place during November 2005. The process involved gathering insights from internal and external stakeholders about the existing brand – as well as five newly developed brands – through four qualitative and quantitative focus groups, with participants representing Gauteng's population in respect of gender, race, geographical area and diverse transport use.

Participants included:

- Scholars and students;
- Business people;
- Business commuters;
- Private car owners;
- Public transport users;
- Travel agents; and
- Travellers who had used OR Tambo, Johannesburg's international airport, in the past year for international or domestic flights.

Seven quantitative in-depth interviews with opinion leaders in the following sectors were carried out:

- National Government;
- Provincial Government;
- Communication specialists;
- Media representatives;
- Investment analysts; and
- Brand specialists.

The comparative brand rating resulted in two brand identities – the “SA Flag” and the “Retro” – being selected for brand validation among the larger Gauteng community.



The brand validation process – which took place during February 2006 – ensured that the final selected brand identity was the result of an inclusive process incorporating input from all key stakeholders in Gauteng: public, commercial and political. It consisted of a competition in which participants would vote for their favourite brand identity between the two selected.

The final brand selected would need to represent the ideals and positioning of the Gautrain brand. It would need to be easily recognisable, create top-of-mind presence with potential consumers and resonate with stakeholders.

Entry forms for the general public were available on the Gautrain website and in three daily newspapers. For Gauteng Provincial

Government employees, entry forms were available at all Gauteng departmental head offices. Public participants could submit their decisions via a web campaign, voicemail and sms, while civil servants could also submit via a hard-copy entry form.

There were six cash prizes of R1 000.00 each – one for the website submission, one for the voicemail, one for the sms and three for the hard-copy entry forms.

Part of the brand development process consisted of vetting the intellectual property rights of Gauteng Rapid Rail Link and its brand. A rigorous intellectual property clearance process was employed at the same time as part of the creative brand development. This process

consisted of searching for – and comparing – proposed brand identities to ensure there were no similarities or confusion regarding these within and outside the geographic markets and service category of the Gautrain Rapid Rail Link touch points. In addition, it was ascertained that no elements within the brand identity were used that could not be protected.

3.4 The Gautrain Brand as of 2014

In order to determine the equity and monetary value of the Gautrain brand, a brand valuation was conducted in 2014. Not only did the brand valuation exercise give input as to the equity of

the Gautrain brand, it also related the equity to the perception of the brand. According to the Aaker's Brand Equity Model, brand value is linked to brand equity which has five main components; brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and other proprietary assets.

The monetary value of the Gautrain brand as at 31 March 2014 was between R218 and R280 million with a core value of R250 million. There is no industry standard on which to gauge whether this is a good or bad rating. The value of this assessment comes in when partnering and benchmarking.

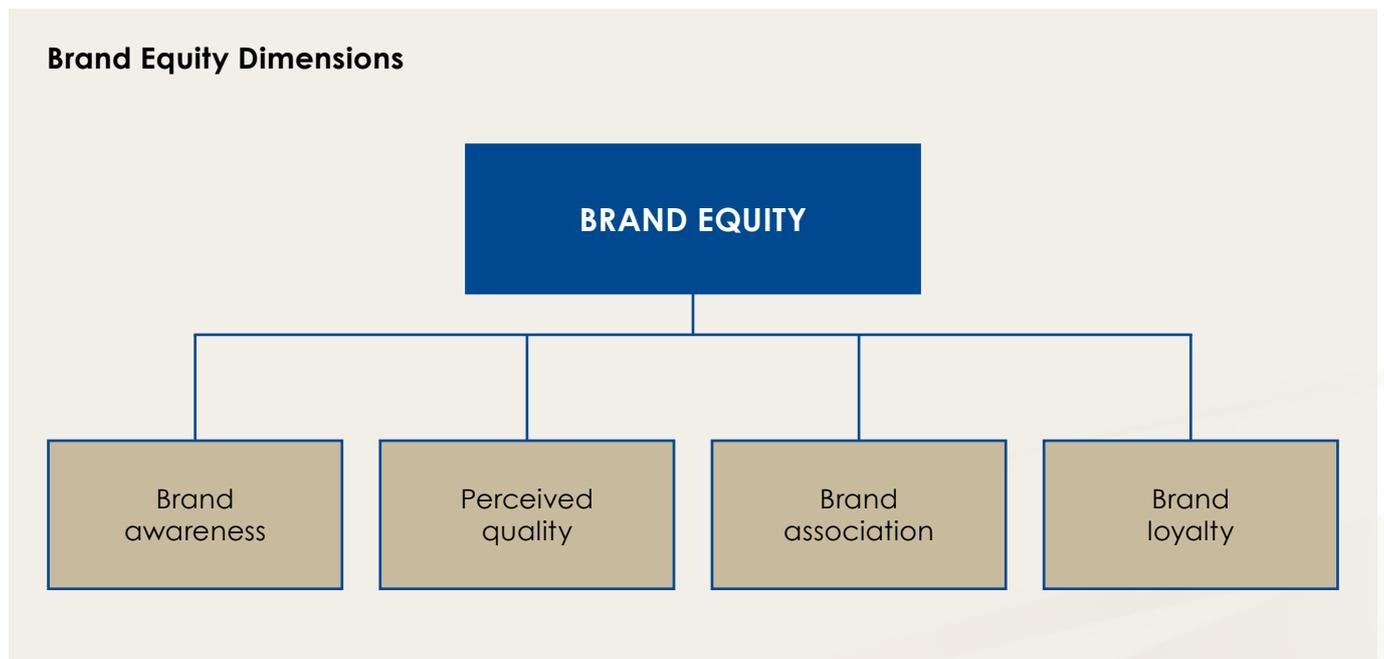


Figure 1: Aaker's Brand Equity Model



4. LESSONS LEARNT

Results of the various stages of the brand development process were as follows:

Developed brand proposals were measured according to assessment criteria as prescribed in the brand-briefing document and the quality of the selected brand concepts. In order to ensure the four focus groups showed standardised results, the administration, moderation and analysis were done according to a moderators' guide, a focus group score sheet and the final outcome of the focus groups as per the brand assessment report. The results of the validation process conducted among the public indicated a clear preference for logo 2 – the Retro logo.

Voting mechanism	Logo 1	Logo 2
IVR Line	3 419	7 327
SMS	734	286
Website	7 682	16 086
GPG process	1 230	1 198
Total	13 065	24 897

Table 1: Results of the validation process

Secondary research on the development of a new brand provided a sound foundation for Gautrain's brand development. However, a larger part of this development was innovative as it involved – for the first time in Africa – the adoption of standard industry practice in the brand development of a transport infrastructure project. Such innovations contributed to Gautrain's successful brand development as it used an inclusive decision-making and selection process to build up the brand. The innovative elements, which contributed to the success, were the research into brand attitude and awareness of the brand in use at the time and the development of new brand concepts.

Having developed a brand successfully does not equate to a happy, everlasting ending. Continuous brand assessment, reputation analysis and brand studies are required to uphold the status of a brand. Continuous research into brand awareness, equity and perception should be carried out to make sure the brand continues to perform well, keeps the interests of its stakeholders at heart and keeps a positive public image. This will equate to positive increases in the equity of the Gautrain brand.

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