BRAND VISUAL IDENTITY

Brand Visual identity: when marketing arguments meet accounting

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This paper considers the debate on including brands in balance sheets from the viewpoint of brand visual identity (BVI), the visual symbol of a brand. Marketing scholars posit that BVI performs important marketing communication tasks. Managers spend much time and money on BVI, thus acknowledging that it is a valuable marketing asset. Yet it is virtually absent in accounting literature. The paper enumerates issues in market research that may have led to this paradox. Further, these issues indicate that those for including brand values in balance sheets and those against it assign different weights to criteria for inclusion. Hopefully, emergent research will resolve the pro- vs. anti-inclusion debate.

Keywords: Visual identity, Brand Identity, Corporate Identity, Brands in Balance Sheets, Intangible

Introduction

Many have proposed that brands, whether bought or internally generated, be recognized as assets in balance sheets (Sinclair and Keller, 2014) and that investments in them be demarcated and capitalized (Morgan and Rego, 2009). Accounting regulators have not agreed with them until now, at least not wholly. The present paper does not join the debate on either side. Its modest goal is to present a short review of visual identity (VI). It describes how VI is seen as an integral part of both product (or service) and company brands but is virtually absent in accounting literature. It enumerates certain issues in market research that may have led to this paradox and thereby extrapolates that those for including brand values in balance sheets and