Track no. 5: Brands and the ethereal colonization of society

Branding has gone from being a potent tool of differentiation to becoming the dominant logic of marketing. Brands have transcended the domain of marketing to become relevant in wider society. This track invites papers from across the academic area of marketing and other disciplines for a discussion on branding and its meaning, both in marketing and in a society increasingly dominated by the social media.

The concept of branding has evolved from its origin as a means of differentiation among products to being viewed as a more encompassing phenomenon, with its discourse expanding across a wide range of disciplinary fields and a broad scope of activities. This trend of more arenas being "colonized" by the logic and language of branding, especially through social media, vividly exemplifies how business concepts are becoming increasingly prevalent in an area that had barely been considered previously: the ethereal atmosphere of society. This circumstance subsequently raises the following questions:

- Is the logic of branding changing the ideological ecology of society?

- If so, what are the implications of this shift for both marketing as an academic discipline and society at large?

Just as the discourse and practice of branding can change society, "branding" is itself the subject of change as evidenced by its various representations in social media. Further questions that arise are thus:

- How is branding developing?

- How are social media affecting the development of branding as a major process and strategy of marketing?

- What is the future of branding and how can it best be understood?

The purpose of this track is to attract research papers from both marketing and other disciplines on themes that include:

- Branding theory: its history and new developments.

- Branding practice and emergent strategies for marketing.

- Sustainable branding strategies and their applications in a society dominated by social media

- Arenas of branding, such as city and place-, employer- and political branding.

- The increasing importance of destination branding in understanding travel and tourism.

- Global brands and global society: a macro perspective on the role of global brands in local societies.

- The production and appropriation of brands.

- The branding of consumption.

- Multi-modal branding: acoustic/sonic, tactile, olfactory and gustatory branding.

- Cultural branding: The role and importance of culture in branding.

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