



IT'S A **New Day** FOR MOCPA

By Dennis Ganahl, Ph.D.

Aside from its members, the Missouri Society of CPAs' most significant asset is its brand. Therefore, the society's long-term goals must always include maintaining and increasing its brand's value so that it never depreciates.

When I was retained to help update your association's brand, we wanted to move deliberately and be as thorough as possible to ensure the process and results successfully reflected the organization and its progressive members. Our major goal has been to update the society's brand—not replace it or change what it represents. As you know, the Missouri Society of CPAs has a strong history as a reputable statewide association with national prominence that has effectively served hundreds of thousands of CPAs since its inception.

Brands are valuable assets

The Missouri Society of CPAs formed in 1909 to serve the professional and social needs of public accountants in Missouri. It has operated continuously since that time while surviving a multitude of economic and political shifts and environments. In fact, your association has thrived, and the services it provides have grown over time because of unwavering member loyalty and increased brand value.

Some people would argue that a brand doesn't have to be updated and that doing so is a waste of resources. Think about that approach for a minute. What asset does your business have that doesn't require maintenance over time? Can you ignore your buildings, employees, client relationships or technology? You probably can't think of one asset your organization has that doesn't need an investment of time or money to remain viable in your portfolio. Why shouldn't your professional association's brand, one of its most valuable assets, receive the same type of investment?

Branding is a rational and creative process

Warren Buffett became one of the richest people in the world by investing in businesses with valuable brands like Coca Cola, Johnson & Johnson and American Express. We used the same complex methods as these major brands for our update. The steps that we took throughout this initiative included immersing ourselves in the challenge to gather research, generate ideas and evaluate creative options. Next, we solicited feedback from stakeholders,

revised our options and repeated the creative process to discover the facets of the brand that needed to be emphasized and utilized in the update. We even tested the old logo with college students to get their feedback. They found it to be stodgy, tired and unexciting.

During our immersion, we reviewed the findings from the society's last extensive membership survey to understand where members found the most value in the organization. We identified which services were most relevant and regularly used. We were happily reminded that an overwhelming majority highly value their membership. The survey also reflected that we are challenged to recruit large numbers of millennials, as well as those from historically underrepresented groups.

In addition, members said they heavily rely on the society for professional information, social networking and interaction, interpersonal communication, and support for lobbying and recruitment. However, quickly finding the association online can be a challenge, especially for non-members. There has been confusion between the MOCPA website domain and the MSCPA acronym used in the society's logo. The Montana society owns the MSCPA URL, and Massachusetts and

New Website Coming Soon!



We are updating the society's entire media presence

In addition to the updated MOCPA logo, take a careful look at this edition of *THE ASSET*. It has a revised logo and publication design. We are using modern fonts and a layout that is more flexible and easier to read. To keep our focus on the people that make this organization strong, we plan to feature more photos and additional insights and perspectives of our members. Your photos, as well as written content by members in their areas of expertise, are always welcome as submissions to *THE ASSET*.

In the coming weeks, an enhanced *mocpa.org* website will launch. In addition to its functional updates, it will be more modern and aesthetically appealing. Its fresh look and layout will also have a simplified online checkout process and more user-friendly navigation, including:

- **Improved CPE Store**—you will more quickly be able to find the courses you need. An upgraded, search function will enable you to select classes based on format, keyword, date, course code, and more. Also, registering from a mobile device will be simplified and more efficient, and firm administrators will be able to easily register multiple staff members at one time. →

Mississippi use slight variations on it. It was determined that the Missouri Society of CPAs needed to change its logotype to MOCPA so its messaging is consistent and to avoid confusion among members, accounting students and new CPA recruits. Going forward, the society will be known as "MO-C-P-A," (as four syllables) instead of M-O-C-P-A (five syllables).

Everyone was invited to be part of the process

Every logotype idea generated throughout this exhaustive process was tested against at least one group of MOCPA (did you say MO-C-P-A?) stakeholders. We also

solicited feedback from every member of the society through an online survey so everyone had the opportunity to share their thoughts.

Our creative team generated literally hundreds of logotype ideas to graphically characterize the brand's facets that were identified by MOCPA stakeholders to be important. All of the different logotypes and color palette ideas generated were constantly tested with different MOCPA stakeholders. Members favor a logotype that represents a strong, smart, progressive, socially active organization that is service minded, member focused and friendly with an eye on both its past successes as well as its future direction.

- **Increased Online Programming**—MOCPA will offer additional webcasts, webinars and on-demand courses, streamlining the registration process directly from the *mocpa.org* website, so you won't be redirected to other vendors' pages. Upon completion of each program, your certificate will be ready in your "My CPE" account on *mocpa.org*.

Be sure to explore the new *mocpa.org* website when it launches, and take a minute to update your online member profile. This will ensure you receive information and CPE course suggestions that are best tailored to your areas of interest.

MOCPA is ready for the future

Feel confident with your MOCPA brand update. The process has taken almost a year, and it will take a bit more time to fully implement. It's based on research and has been tested and re-tested. It represents who your organization is and all of the collaborative, worthwhile accomplishments of its members. Most importantly, your members and the people you are trying to recruit like it.

This was an awesome responsibility, and I truly appreciate the opportunity to be involved in the process and with your wonderful organization. 



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