How to brand a public school – a 600 year old institution is rebranded for 2019

The process of rebranding Winchester College for 2019.

Prestigious boys boarding school Winchester College recently underwent a transformative repositioning project and new website launch with , bringing the 600-year-old brand into the present with greater relevance and appeal.

Founded in 1382, Winchester College has the longest history of any English school and continues to bear the original crest belonging to its founder, William of Wykeham. For an institution steeped in historical values and traditions, the challenge of making it accessible and engaging for families today was becoming more prominent. So how did Marmalade on Toast achieve this small miracle of rebranding a 600-year old brand? Find out below from the Winchester-based agency.

Logo and Legacy

“Before embarking on the evolution of the College crest, we took time to absorb the school’s history and culture. This involved looking through the school’s extensive archives, in-depth school tours, researching and taking photography of the crests that appear throughout the College grounds, as well as an audit of what had been documented digitally.

“The College crest is heavily rooted in its founder. We took each element carefully apart, weighing up their relevance to the school in 2019. We then refined and put the elements back together piece by piece, to create the evolved crest.

“The coat of arms originally belonged to the school’s founder,

William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester and Chancellor of England in the late 1300s. His Hampshire heritage is represented in the roses, and his hardworking origins are shown by the chevrons, a protective symbol granted to master builders who served the king and the church – both key components to the crest.

“The shield has come to the fore, emphasising that it’s this ethos of powerful servant leadership that the school takes forward.

“The redrawn fringed tippet and mitre are less dominant, to suggest an ecclesiastical presence rather than preeminence

“The motto, so important to the school, is now more legible,

given more space and less decoration.”

Colour and Character

“By looking through the school archives, we came across manuscripts, all types of documents (both hard and soft) and engravings which resulted in multiple versions of how the crest itself had existed previously and had evolved throughout the varying ages – all of which you’d expect over a 600-year period.

“Through our research, we discovered the school colours had also evolved over the years. The school had previously modernised its colours with a combination of bright pink, cyan and brown. We agreed these colours felt disconnected from the

true personality of the College, and collated a more appropriate suite of colours.

“The new colour palette interestingly moves back to the original boarding house colours but with a more modern take including a new distinctive yet understated Winchester Blue. Inspired by the school environment, we drew on the natural materials and atmosphere to create this evocative and authentic brand palette.”

Appealing to modern markets

“We helped to reposition the school’s focus from the internal environment, to an external audience – families, and the boys themselves. We asked, ‘Why choose Winchester?’

“In sifting through the lengthy and intelligent answers, we saw gold – a way to describe the unique teaching style that became the emotional, motivating purpose for the brand: Filling Minds With Wonder.

“Wonder then informed everything, from the brand palette, to the website transitions, to art directing the photography, to the brand comms and tone of voice.”

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