

Branding your ministry

A couple of years ago we decided to hire a design firm to help us brand Campus Crusade for Christ at Penn State. Essentially that means we wanted them to help us think through a visual way to consistently represent the essence of Cru to the students here. In particular we wanted a recognizable, cost-effective way to repeat over and over that Cru is a place on campus where you can find authentic relationships, and thoughtful answers to life's questions.

The ultimate solution Alliant Studios came up with utilizes a simple square blue logo that can be used to adorn any number of black and white photos of students in relationships. There is also a standard typeface (DIN) for all headlines and copy, and rules governing how the brand is to be used. To download a packet with several samples of our branded publicity and evangelism campaigns, [click here](#).

Why Brand?

While there may or may not be an obvious advantage to branding the ministry on your campus(es), we have found several benefits at Penn State. The whole process has helped us think through what we value, and has given us a way to champion and showcase it to the students in our movement and those we are trying to reach. We think it also helps us to have a clear, repeated, and recognizable visual image as we try to help 42,000 students know we are here. The bulletin boards crowd up quickly and I think a consistent image sticks better in student's minds. Finally, it has made all of our promotion simpler and less taxing. Instead of trying to come up with a creative ad for every event, outreach, retreat, meeting, etc., we just take a cool picture, give it a headline and put the logo on. Having a template that's been thought through and which gives us both consistency and flexibility is really nice in the middle of a busy year.



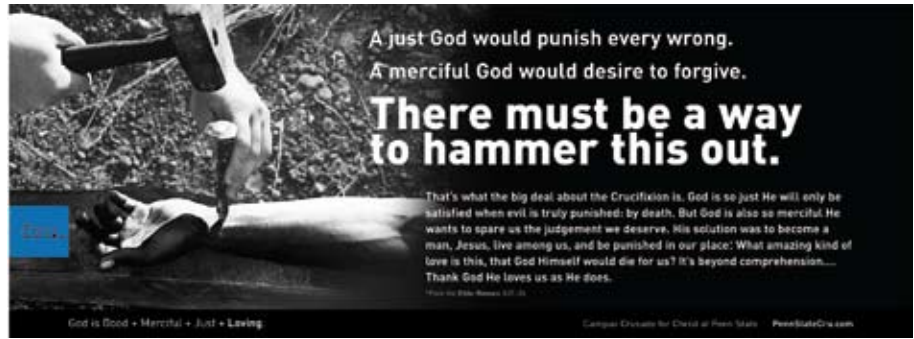
If you would like to adopt the same brand, you are welcome to. All we would ask is that you use it consistently and according to the usage rules described in the logo packet, available [here](#). You are however free to choose a new color for the mark and use that instead of the blue. Some ministries have chosen to reproduce



the mark in one of their school colors. We use Pantone Process Blue, which by virtue of being a process color is easily available. You might want to limit yourself to a standard palette as well.

If you don't wish to be constrained by the usage rules for this particular branding concept, you can of course create a new look on your own or hire someone to help you come up with a design that works better in your particular context. I'd just ask you to start from scratch and not modify what we are using at Penn State.

If you do choose to replicate this brand, it could make it easier for you to adapt and use other resources we create here that might be helpful to you. For instance, we created a series of evangelistic ads to run inside the buses on campus. I believe that the heart of evangelism is praise. Whenever we share the gospel we are really “declaring the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness and into his wonderful light.” This campaign is



explicitly based on that understanding of evangelism. There are five ads, each of which describes an attribute of God. Slowly over the course of the year we cycle through these ads, explaining the gospel as we go. We first talk about God’s goodness, then his mercy, then justice, then love. The invitation to respond comes in the fifth ad which says that he is personal. You should check them out. You can download pdfs of all five ads here, and the full InDesign files here.

Thoughts to Consider

If you do decide to pursue this or another branding concept, here are a few principals to consider:

As cultures change over time, the strongest connection to the gospel changes as well. But in every society and every person there is always a point of need that the gospel alone can meet. One of our jobs is to figure out which of the universal longings of the heart that only Jesus can satisfy is currently at the forefront of our culture. We have found that students’ thirst for community is one of those connections and thus have built our brand around that concept. There may be a different or stronger connection in your context. Whatever it is I’d try to design the brand with that in mind.

The above notion only works if you really are able to offer what you claim to have. We genuinely have a pretty strong community at Penn State, which has enabled us to leverage those relationships to a strong evangelistic end. An empty brand that makes vain promises isn’t worth anything. Students will figure out pretty quickly if there’s no truth behind a pretty logo. Make sure you are focusing on the reality of what you have to offer, not just the symbolic representation of it.

If you do use a brand, try to use it consistently. Think about how the values you are championing can be expressed in everything you do. Think about all the modes in which you communicate and look for ways to reinforce both the visual identity, and the reality that lies behind it. We have found this to be really challenging. I’d strive for consistency in your publicity, powerpoint presentations, at weekly meetings, t-shirts, web site, fall retreat, etc.

Finally, bear in mind that a slick ad campaign is no substitute for spirit-filled believers, living holy lives and walking by faith. A good brand can help you communicate your message more effectively, but the power of the gospel isn’t predicated on typefaces and logos. This is just a tool that can be helpful in the hands of godly students who are trusting God to help them reach their campus.

By the way, if you’d like to understand more about the concept of branding, I’d recommend you check out Fast Company magazine. It’s a great secular source for current, thoughtful, ethical lessons on leadership. 100% of their content is online and searchable for free. I highly recommend it.

Resources

Finally, for those of you who might want to make use of the Cru brand here are some links and resources that could be helpful to you.

Photos (20 megs)

Ultimately it's in your best interest to use photographs of your own students at your schools, but in the meantime here are some reasonably good shots that might help you get started.

Logo Packet (11 megs)

This contains the mark in several file formats as well as the document defining acceptable usage.

Samples (11 megs)

Here you can find a handful of examples of posters, postcards and such that utilize the brand. Also included are pdfs of the bus ads.

Bus ads (52 megs)

This huge file has all of the InDesign 2.0 documents and images you would need to modify the contact info on the bus ads and run them on your campus. You would also need to purchase the fonts which you can find below.

Fonts

Our brand uses a typeface called DIN which you can buy from FontFont. You should probably purchase two packets. One containing DIN Regular and DIN Regular Alternate. The second containing DIN Bold and DIN Bold Alternate. Each is \$40 and come with five licenses. There are other weights and variations as well, but Regular and Bold would be the two you really need.

Labels

Because we have a color logo but don't want to pay for color copies every time we make a poster we had our logo printed on one square in stickers that we adhere to the black and white posters. We had them made at Consolidated Label. Time Meck was our account representative.

Postcards

We have created and mailed to the students several different postcards. (See sample packet.) Some are evangelistic, some to invite them to events. We've always used Modern Postcard for the production. They do a fabulous job.

Web site

You might also check out our public web site, PennStateCru.com to see how the brand is used there. There is a secondary site as well for the involved students, WeAre.PennStateCru.com

Centerfield Productions is a division of CruPress, a publishing house of Campus Crusade for Christ. The team consists of Crusade staff with other full-time roles, primarily in the field. Centerfield's Ideas, Strategies, and Tools are born out of the experience of these staff and their attempts to solve the problems they face on campus.

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