APPLYING BRAND MARKETING TO ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT : STUDY FOR SHIBUYA SAKURAGAOKA REDEVELOPMENT

都市開発における建築デザインにブランド戦略を活用する試み 渋谷桜丘再開発でのスタディ

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Keywords:

Brand Value Creation, Redevelopment project, Architectural design, Brand marketing, Commercial space

キーワード:

ブランド価値創造, 再開発事業, 建築デザイン, ブランドマーケティング, 商業空間

Brand building and marketing are known effective value creation means for companies and businesses. This paper reports on the innovative application of such brand building methods (Brand Value Creation) in a large scale redevelopment project for Shibuya Sakuragaoka, and provides an assessment of its benefits: the architecture becomes distinctive brand symbols, achieving synergies with other brand marketing symbols, and delivers higher income and return on investment by delivering higher customer value.

1. Background and purpose

Countries, regions, cities, and communities engage in building brand identity (identity of place) to create sustainable advantage in a highly-competitive, globalized environment to win over economic value from residents, visitors, and investors, by drawing upon their natural and cultural assets, and their product and experience offerings. In large-scale urban redevelopment projects, like Shibuya Sakuragaoka, the magnitude of change fundamentally resets such brand identity, creating an opportunity and need to rebuild it.

Today this is done primarily through a new brand name, logos and slogans, characters, advertising and public relations campaigns, community activities and cultural events. In Japan, there are no observed cases where architectural design is deliberately programmed into the brand building of urban redevelopment projects,^{*1} despite the fact that architecture comprises a big part of total project investment and there exists a general appreciation of the Bilbao effect^{*2} which has demonstrated the potential for architecture to create identity and recognition of place.

In the Shibuya Sakuragaoka redevelopment project, a novel approach, Brand Value Creation (BVC), which applies brand-building concepts and principles developed in marketing to the process and outcome of architectural design in urban redevelopment, has been taken to ensure that its architectural design is an integral part of its newborn identity of place, its brand identity. This research reports on the innovative methods of the BVC approach at Shibuya Sakuragaoka and provides an assessment of its potential benefits.

2. Brand Value Creation

2.1 How brands create value

The American Marketing Association (AMA) has defined a brand

as a “name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers,” and also as “an intangible asset that is intended to create distinctive images and associations in the minds of stakeholders, thereby generating economic benefit/values.” Brands enable businesses to create financial value, referred to as brand equity^{*3}, through revenue and market share growth.^{ref2)} Brands are valuable to businesses, as customers associate positive experiences of the functional and emotional benefits of products and services to brands in their memory structures anchored to the brand name. Businesses invest significantly in market research to gain fact-based insights on customer needs and behaviors to deliver these benefits, and in brand marketing and communications to increase the brand's mental availability^{*4}. The more available it is in the customers' minds, the more likely to be bought, which will result in more revenue share.^{ref3)}

Unfortunately, as described by researchers at the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, customers are “uncaring cognitive misers” or “emotional, distracted viewers”^{ref4)} who rely on heuristics for purchase decisions and whose attention is hard to get. To gain their attention, businesses invest in distinctive brand assets^{*5}, besides the brand name, as listed in the above AMA definition to broaden the sensorial impact of a brand on customers' memory structures and own an additional means to anchor desired associations. A name is just a word; seeing a colorful logo or hearing a familiar jingle in TV advertising that is associated with that name provides much richer sensorial impact on memory structure. Successful brand assets are distinctive, well-known and unique, and are used consistently across different manifestations of the brand.^{ref5)}

In the Shibuya Sakuragaoka project, the term “brand symbols” is

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used in lieu of “distinctive brand assets” for ease with stakeholders who are not marketing professionals.

2.2 Advantages of BVC in Architecture and Urban Development

Applying brand-building principles to architecture and urban development by the BVC approach has several potential benefits. Per 2.1, the purpose of brand building is to have the brand name mentally available and associated with benefits in customers’ minds, and brands leverage distinctive brand assets to this end. In the case of brand-building for a newly redeveloped community, the purpose translates to having more people recognize the new community by name in order to bring more people, permanent and transient traffic, to the community and generate more revenue from their spending there. By applying BVC, where brand identity is developed prior to architectural design, the architecture is designed to incorporate brand identity and becomes a distinctive brand symbol that creates recognition of the newly-developed property with potential tenants and visitors. The architecture also achieves design consistency and synergies with other symbols used in brand marketing; for example, its name or logo. Such Brand Symbol Creation is the first advantage of the BVC approach.

Secondly the customer-first, insights-based marketing approach embedded in BVC ensures that the property meets customer needs into the future. The redesign will leverage fact-based insights and analytical marketing methods to deliver enhanced consumer experiences of comfort, discovery, convenience, and pleasure; and improve spatial attractiveness and functionality for tenants. As a result, consumers will increase spend of time and money, tenants will earn more revenue, and investors can expect higher property value and future cashflow returns. This results in Customer Value Creation.

As building and landscape construction comprise approximately 70-80% of total redevelopment investment, investors should reasonably expect the architecture, its buildings and open spaces, to contribute to the property’s brand identity and deliver more brand equity and financial value with a deliberate programmed approach to its design, as is BVC.

Finally, guiding diverse stakeholders with divergent interests through a fact-based and methodological BVC approach prevents stakeholders from debating architectural design based on their opinions or preferences, and instead reach consensus based on fit with brand identity and customer benefits.

3 Study: Sakuragaoka District 1 Redevelopment

3.1 Sakuragaoka District 1 Redevelopment

BVC in this paper has been applied in the redevelopment of Sakuragaoka District 1 (“Sakuragaoka”), a large-scale multi-purpose (office, residence, retail, and public) urban development project of 17,000 m2 land area and 241,400 m2 floor area adjacent to Shibuya Station (Fig. 1), governed by various public benefit and traffic management regulatory requirements,

such as a vertical “Urban Core.” Project details are summarized in Fig. 2. The total project cost is estimated at ¥190 billion. Construction is expected to start in 2018 for site opening in 2023. This project does not include the entire Sakuragaoka area, one of the least developed areas in Shibuya, and continued redevelopment is expected into the 2030s.

Fig.1: Project site and image

Location	Adjacent to Shibuya Station, East Japan Railway tracks, and Route 246 on the northern side
Space Usage	office, residence, retail and public
Land Area	17,000 m2
Floor Area	241,400 m2
Construction	4 major buildings, including a 36-story, 180-meter high-rise on 2 plots separated by a 15m-wide new road (Route 18)
Access	2 bridges connect to Shibuya Station, 2 bridges connect the 2 plots
Completion	Fall 2023
Developer	Sakuragaoka Redevelopment Board (Tokyu Land Corporation and 69 land owners)

Fig.2: Project Information

The redevelopment project is overseen by the Sakuragaoka Redevelopment Board comprising the main real estate developer who will fund most of the investment and ultimately own 80% of the floor space, and 69 real estate owners who will exchange their current asset holdings for floor ownership in the new buildings. Other stakeholders include 380 tenants, a consultancy managing land title conversion, an architectural design firm, a general contractor joint-venture, and various regulators.

3.2 BVC Innovations in the Redevelopment Process

The Shibuya Sakuragaoka redevelopment project has implemented BVC innovations that are uncommon in major urban redevelopment projects.

Most urban development projects have project timelines that extend well beyond a decade varying by project size, starting with land acquisition, project organization, regulatory approvals, then moving onto architectural design and construction. In the case of Sakuragaoka scheduled to open in 2023, the architectural design firm started on the project in 2008, the initial schematic design (SD) was submitted for regulatory approval in 2012, the final design development (DD) floor plans that served as the basis for land title conversions were completed in 2018, and the deadline for detailed design drawings and related procurement is set for yearend 2019. All of the architectural plans would be effectively fixed 4 years prior to opening.

On the other hand, planning for retail tenant recruitment and selection, property signage, brand marketing and communications generally do not start until much closer to opening in part to capture the latest consumer and retail market trends. Normally by the time the redevelopment project engages marketing or retail professionals, the architectural

designs are fixed. In the case of Sakuragaoka, such planning is expected to start 3 years prior to opening.

The BVC approach applied in Sakuragaoka is innovative in that the brand advisor was appointed by the Redevelopment Board in 2014 much before the beginning of the retail and brand marketing planning, and early enough to give new direction to the architectural plans and designs. The brand advisor was responsible for the design direction of the retail and public spaces with public access, which comprise only 20% of the redevelopment floor area, yet would shape the brand identity of the redevelopment. Furthermore, by the request of the brand advisor, the communications graphic creator was added to the team in the final stages of detailed design drawings. Fig. 3 shows the innovation that BVC effected in the redevelopment project structure prior to the full completion of the DD.

Fig 3: Project structure prior to finalizing the DD

The Brand Advisor programmed and executed the BVC process (Fig. 4) starting late 2014, 9 years prior to opening, to develop branding direction and redesign the architecture accordingly.

1: Stakeholder expectations hearing

Like any brand marketing process, the BVC method started by understanding stakeholder expectations: what they wanted to preserve and change, what they expected of the brand. By these hearings, it became evident that opinions were internally focused, and future-looking customer insights was necessary.

2: Customer insights research

Next step was data collection and analyses of customer insights on recognition of Sakuragaoka, its relationship with Shibuya, future retail trends, and impact of technology.

3: Brand concept development

Based on insights, a concept for Sakuragaoka's identity was developed as outlined in 3.3.

4: Creative insights research

The brand advisor and architectural design team visited notable retail and public spaces in London, Bilbao and Paris for common understanding of what makes retail and public spaces attractive and commercially successful.

5: Workshops on design principles

After a round of value engineering (VE), the brand advisor architectural design team engaged in a series of workshops to set clear design principles for the floor plans and design elements based on the brand concept and learnings from customer insights.

6: Redesign of floor plans and design for brands symbols

Detailed redesign on the post-VE SD and DD were executed from April to July 2017 under the direction of the brand advisor and

within project constraints*6 which were approved by the Sakuragaoka Board in October 2018.

7. Detailed design drawings

Detailed design work continued into 2019 for Board approval in August 2019.

Fig 4: Project timeline and BVC activities

3.3 Sakuragaoka Brand Concept

An important early step in the BVC approach was to create a brand concept based on stakeholder expectations and customer insights to be used to design brand symbols for Sakuragaoka.

Three key insights shaped the brand concept:

- 1.primary access to this site would be from Shibuya Station that was also being redeveloped;
- 2.name recognition of Sakuragaoka was low outside its community, while Shibuya's was very high;
- 3.the name Sakuragaoka was very special to stakeholders, and to most everyone familiar with Japanese, evoked very positive imagery of a hill with many cherry trees where people appreciate nature and seasonal change, beauty and enjoyment.

From these insights, "Shibuya Station Sakuragaoka (Cherry Tree Hill) Entrance" ("Shibuya-eki Sakuragaoka-guchi" in Japanese) was developed as the brand concept which positions this property as the new gateway in Shibuya to a new and inviting community Sakuragaoka*7.

As a very urban redevelopment in the center of Shibuya, a major hub in the mega-city of Tokyo, this "cherry tree hill" needs to be modern, active, vibrant, and pop in its realization in architectural design; rather than something traditionally Japanese, nostalgic, or overly refined. In order to convey this, collages were prepared in spring 2015 when the brand concept was presented to the Redevelopment Board. (Fig. 5)

Fig.5: Sakuragaoka (Cherry Tree Hill) imagery^(ref6)

4. Value Creation from BVC in Sakuragaoka

4.1.1 Brand Symbol Creation

Based on the brand concept, "Shibuya Station Cherry Tree Hill Entrance," the architecture was redesigned to incorporate brand

symbol design elements and evoke the experience of a “cherry tree hill.” The architecture would embody “hill,” the ups and downs of Sakuragaoka’s original topography that would be completely erased by the redevelopment once completed in 2023, expound on the beautiful imagery of “cherry tree,” and have a direct connection to the brand name “Sakuragaoka”

In workshops led by the Brand Advisor, robust design principles were developed to express “cherry tree hill” in a metaphorical and sensorial manner with a modern and urban look-and-feel befitting Shibuya, and a classic and quality style appropriate for a major long-term investment that must withstand changing trends. For example, the imagery of cherry trees was translated into elements of architectural design as in Fig. 6.

Image of the word “Sakura”		Elements of architecture	
Cultural	Delicate & soft	Organic curves	Soft combination of small elements
Seasonal	Fragments	“Pop Sakura” colors	Flickering and reflecting light
Beauty	Multi-sensorial	Semi-transparency	Various contrasts and densities
Color	Light & shade	Classic & iconic	Ambiguous movement

Fig.6: Design principles derived from “Sakura”

In order to cap incremental investments and safeguard the value-engineering savings, three strategic loci for redesign were chosen for visible impact and the effect of driving desired traffic flows within the property: the façade of floors 2 to floors 4 or 5 along Routes 246 and 18, the Building A annex, and the plaza staircases in Plot B. (Fig. 7)

Fig.7: Brand Symbol Loci (diagram)

Of the three strategic loci, the facade of the lower floors was chosen for the expression of “cherry tree,” due to its scale and impact, and its adjacency to the real cherry trees that would be planted on both sides of Route 18. The façade design applies an innovative technique and computer-generated patterns to recreate the sensorial perceptions and movements one experiences when walking under cherry trees, while maintaining a modern and urban look-and-feel.

The loci naturally fit for designing “hill” are the plaza staircases in Plot B that are integral elements of the property’s overall landscape design, spacious places where people can congregate and spend time, and a key traffic flow to Building B. The plaza staircases uses materials and finishes that evoke a natural feel, such as earth, stone, cement or ceramic, and be solidly built rising as if part of the ground. In redesigning the floor plan, they were positioned right along the site boundary next to a narrow sloping public road that is not affected by redevelopment, in order to symbolize the original topography of Sakuragaoka.

Finally, the small Building A Annex was redesigned to become

an icon of Sakuragaoka, the brand symbol for the new property and community. While it only has 20 square meters of commercial space, it is perfectly located on the corner of the largest open space in this redevelopment between Plot A and B, that is highly-visible not only from Shibuya station but from the JR trains passing by. At the same time, it is at the far end of the property and can attract traffic to Sakura Plaza and Building B. The design inspiration for this icon is simple, yet ever close-to-mind and lasting, the initial letter “S” from the names Sakuragaoka and Shibuya. Its design uses computer-generated forms and materials to achieve the same modern and urban look-and-feel as the façade and a one-and-only form.

4.1.2 Benefits of Brand Symbol Creation

In three strategic loci which are highly-visible and crucial to traffic flow, the buildings and landscape have been designed to evoke the brand name “Sakuragaoka,” and become symbols that help potential tenants and visitors remember and recognize the name of this newly-developed property and community upon which to anchor positive experiences in their memory structures. The “cherry tree” façade connects directly to “Sakura,” the plaza staircase, to “Oka(hill);” and the S-inspired building, to its initial. In marketing, successful brand assets are distinctive, well-known and unique. BVC ensures that architecture becomes an effective brand symbol that is impactful and memorable owing to its scale and permanency, as well as, an attractive place and space where many personal and positive experiences can be had.

Furthermore, the BVC approach will ensure that architecture will also have design consistency (another hallmark of a successful brand symbol) and synergies with the other symbols of brand marketing as they are all components of an integrated brand building strategy under the same brand advisor. The same brand concept of “Shibuya Station Sakuragaoka (Cherry Tree Hill) Entrance” will be used to develop the property’s other brand assets, such as its name and logo for signage, advertising or marketing materials. The “S” in architecture will have the same look-and-feel as the “S” in the brand logo. The colors and textures used in the façade and S-inspired building designs will be the same as those used in the graphics.

Shibuya already has established the importance of landmarks to identify place, i.e., build brand recognition and draw traffic. There are well-known landmarks such as the Hachiko and Moai statues, as well as the Scramble Crossing*⁸ that have become a draw for overseas visitors, and is ranked #19 by traveler favorites in Top Attractions in Tokyo by Trip Advisor.^{ref 7)}

Given this recognition, the biggest redevelopment project above Shibuya Station to open in 2019 takes its brand name from the Scramble Crossing. At Sakuragaoka the architecture is designed to forge a direct connection with its brand name. None of the other landmarks will have such scale and

permanency: even the Scramble Crossing will be fundamentally changed when automobile and pedestrian traffic is separated by the redevelopment plans.

BVC integrates architectural design into brand building of the redevelopment to maximize impact and recognition with future customers, distinguish itself from other competing properties in Shibuya and Tokyo, and thereby increase traffic, revenues and asset value of the redevelopment. With BVC architecture becomes a valuable brand asset.

4.2.1 Customer Value Creation

Besides delivering on distinctive brand symbols, the BVC process must ensure that the new property delivers both functional and emotional benefits to customers, which in turn generate higher consumer spending, tenant revenues, and property owner income. In the case of brand building for Sakuragaoka, the focus is retail space which has public access

Retail spaces in the post-VE SD and DD floor plans presented improvement opportunities to maximize prime retail area, induce desired traffic flow, and ensure visibility and stand-out.

1. Prime spaces near heavy traffic entry points and highly visible were not allocated to income-generating retail, especially on the northern side close to Shibuya Station, and instead housed uninteresting public spaces. The vertically-stacked Urban Core at the northwestern corner and other public spaces could be better designed as more interesting activity-filled spaces by integrating with retail, including eat and drink services.
2. Public accessways provided inadequate flow and line-of-sight of the areas farther from the station on the southern side of Plot A or Plot B presenting the risk of low traffic flow to these areas.
3. Most of the retail spaces faced inwards along long monotonous internal corridors with few openings to public accessways.
4. Exterior façade design did not consider floor usage and open up to the outside in high-activity spaces and attract interest.

As the first step of redesigning the floor plans, the busiest traffic flow lines were determined, and retail areas were divided into 5 zones combining 3 horizontal areas based on shopper needs and location, and 2 vertical layers, “universal versus local,” based on Shibuya Ward’s traffic analyses and redevelopment vision. ^{ref9)} Each zone was characterized by quantitative data such as traffic level, retail turnover per area, travel speed, time spend; as well as, qualitative features such as consumer benefit and tenant profile; then purposefully planned for attractive traffic movement and retail experiences. Physical features, like distance and visibility, towering scale of the high-rises, or natural light and surrounding noise, were also considered.

4.2.2 Benefits of Customer Value Creation

With a clear focus on consumer and tenant benefits, the floor plans were redesigned to achieve the following benefits that together increase commercial value of the property.

1. Increase retail space area in prime locations and increase

frontage on high traffic public accessways for higher tenant sales per square foot and retail space leasing rates*⁹.

- increase retail area closest to Shibuya Station and around the Urban Core in floors 1 to 3 increase retail frontage width and access points along major public accessways around the Urban Core, Street, and Sakura Plaza, and reduce spaces that only face an inside-mall corridor reconsider retail section plans to enable multi-floor leasing, e.g., lease the 4th floor space above a 3rd floor space with frontage on public accessways to the same tenant at higher average rent.
- Post-BVC increases in retail area in prime locations and frontage width to public accessways is summarized in Fig. 8.

	Retail Area (m ²)		Frontage width (m)
	Prime Location	Around Urban Core	
Before BVC	4890	0	645
After BVC	5200	430	825
Increase	310 (+6%)	430	180 (+28%)

Fig. 8 Comparison of Retail Area in Prime Locations*¹⁰ and Frontage Width to Public Accessways

2. Increase traffic flow to Buildings A2 and B traffic flow and enhance their spaces:

- per 4.1.1, locate iconic brand symbol architecture in Sakura Plaza between Building A2 and B, and at ground level entry to Plot B from Route 18
- reallocate usage and redesign floor plans of the 1st and 2nd floors of Building A and B under Sakura Plaza to make the spaces more attractive with natural light
- redesign Building A floor plans to connect the Urban Core and Street spaces more directly, and increase visibility of Sakura Plaza and Building B
- divide the lower floors of Building A at the 2-floor bridge, and improve access to Building A2.

Fig.9 Plan Improvements in Prime Locations*¹⁰

3. Create larger and more flexible retail floor areas with more visible direct access: enlarge area of retail spaces, and add 5 staircases, clearly visible from high-traffic points and

invitingly designed to encourage traffic to large retail spaces. All of these improvements are intended for greater consumer and tenant benefits, and in turn, will deliver greater return on investment on redevelopment through more attractive spaces that command higher rents. Fig.9 illustrates one BVC example.

4.3 Buy-in by Subscribers

Another benefit of BVC from a process point-of-view is building common understanding and consensus among diverse stakeholders through shared fact-based insights, focus on one brand concept, alignment on design principles for brand symbols, execution against functional and emotional benefits to customers, and a disciplined method. Stakeholders can come together on the architectural redesign with a common goal and language, clear purpose and criteria, and team-building experiences. The proposed redesign has been approved by the Sakuragaoka Board, the redesigned floor plans have been used for official ownership contracting, and work is ongoing to finalize the design schematics, material selection, and cost estimates of the brand symbol architecture. Demolition of the site has started in late 2018, and construction is on plan fully incorporating the architectural plan and design changes recommended through the BVC approach for opening in autumn 2023.

5. Conclusion

The BVC approach is innovative in that it applies brand marketing principles and methods to architectural design, and realigns project structure and timelines to integrate architectural design with brand building. This approach has delivered architectural design improvements to the Sakuragaoka redevelopment that deliver greater brand equity and property value by creating distinctive brand symbols for greater brand recognition, and by better meeting consumer and tenant needs for greater real estate income. Furthermore, the architectural designs will be congruent with ensuing brand building activities. Still 4 years prior to opening there is a limit to assessing these benefits; nonetheless, these changes would not have been possible without BVC.

So far, the Sakuragaoka redevelopment project has focused on architecture. Work has just started on landscape and interior design. In a year or so, work will begin on developing a brand story and mission statement, and the many marketing and operational aspects, including retail concepts, tenant selection and contracting, digital infrastructure, facility operations, public relations and communications, promotions, visual identity systems, marketing tools, and consumer loyalty programs, to create more brand symbols and deliver more customer benefits. All this work will inherit and preserve the same brand concept and design principles established for the architectural design, ensuring that the architecture will harmonize with and reinforce future branding of this property and community and contribute to its brand equity.

Notes

- *1 Existing urban development research include studies of place branding, area management, and regional brands where a city or region is branded. However, there is no study specifically on the relationship between brand building and architectural planning or on precedents where methods similar to BVC have been applied in redevelopments in other cities, which is an advancement made by this research.
- *2 The phenomenon that occurred when a single iconic museum building became the catalyst to revive an economically-distressed city and a widely-recognized symbol of the city. ^{ref 1)}
- *3 Brand equity is defined by the AMA Marketing Dictionary as the value of the premium price customers are willing to pay for a brand they trust and find relevant over competing offerings. Research firms measure brand equity from consumer attitudes, while accountants quantify brand equity as goodwill.
- *4 Also known as brand salience, mental availability is a brand's propensity to be thought of or come to mind in buying situations.
- *5 There are various types of distinctive brand assets, such as logos, package shapes, color schemes, taglines, songs, characters, etc.
- *6 The redesign was constrained by 3 factors typical of major redevelopment projects: minimal impact on the high-rise structure or upper-floor plans which accounted for the lion's share of floor area and commercial income; prudent increase on post-value engineering construction costs; and regulatory requirements for the purposes of traffic management, public service, or harmonization with the greater Shibuya redevelopment.
- *7 Sakuragaoka literally translates to Cherry Tree Hill. It is part of the development address (also possibly the name for the new entrance to Shibuya station), and more importantly, the community identity to which stakeholders are very emotionally attached.
- *8 Scramble (or Shibuya) Crossing*, is a popular destination for overseas visitors to watch more than 1000 pedestrians cross every 2 minutes, featured in many English-language tourist websites, including the official government Japan National Tourism Organization website. ^{ref 8)}
- *9 The leasing rates of retail spaces with direct access to public accessways is 1.5 to 2 times those of inner mall spaces in central Tokyo according to developer estimate.
- *10 prime locations defined as floors 1-3 in the northern section of Building A between Route 246 and Street, noted in Fig. 7. (Calculations by general contractor JV)

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[2019年6月5日原稿受理 2019年8月22日採用決定]