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# How Randstad is using MOM to drive branding

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## MOM ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

Marketing operations management (MOM) can play a key role in implementing and managing your brand. Implement software solution X, the claim goes, and you will enjoy all the benefits of alignment, efficiency and cost reduction. So far, so good; but there's a problem: there are enough examples around to prove that implementing an IT solution — automation — doesn't automatically lead to improved efficiency and increased brand impact. With regard to the role of MOM in branding, clearly, something is missing.

In NykampNyboer's experience, the key challenge is to integrate the MOM solution into both the overall brand strategy and the marketers' way of working. Unless this is done, MOM ends up in a kind of limbo. For management, it is seen as little more than a means to reduce costs, while for the marketer it remains little more than a storeroom. The result is that MOM never becomes woven into the fabric of the organisation. It never becomes central to the way the organisation approaches branding. And

it delivers neither the alignment nor the cost-savings that were expected at the outset.

## ORGANISATION APPROACH

Our experience is that MOM can play a central role in branding as long as it is approached as an organisational process and way of working and not as an IT tool, a control mechanism or a cost-efficiency programme.

In the 15 years since NykampNyboer was founded, the company has grown to cover the whole field of what it calls 'visual performance management'. It not only advises clients on ways they can implement their brand strategies and creative translations more quickly, at lower cost and with increased efficiency — but also actively supports the ongoing project and process management. This second part, the less sexy side of MOM — the workflow, ordering, delivery and other brand-related and marketing processes — is actually crucial to making MOM the central nervous system of an organisation's branding and marketing.

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## The Randstad brand strategy

Past...



Present...



**Today, branding is one of Randstad's four building blocks:**

- strong concepts
  - the best people
  - excellent execution
  - **superior brand**, meaning: a well-respected brand and a guarantee that clients receive top-level service worldwide
- **Strong-brand approach:**
    - means clients recognize Randstad immediately
    - generates internal pride as employees know and see that they work for a worldwide leader in its field
  - **Resulting in:**
    - Integrated Marketing Communications by means of embedding the brand into our company culture and all our internal and external activities

**Figure 1:** Randstad's brand strategy

### DIGITAL-BASED MARKETING EXECUTION

Randstad is a good example of how effective a role MOM can play in branding. In the space of three years, the company's MOM solution, Randstad ID — a modular software solution developed by NykampNyboer and IT specialists Capital ID — has evolved from an online brand guide and image library to a digital-based tool for marketing execution. In practice, this means that for Randstad's marketers, the system is now much more than just a database of downloadable assets, it is an integral part of their daily work. As such, it has succeeded in aligning the Randstad brand across the 17 countries in which the company operates simply by providing the tools, workflows and process steps the Randstad marketer needs to get the job done.

As the following case study details, ID has helped Randstad achieve some

remarkable results across the whole branding spectrum, from visual consistency and organisational efficiency, to improved processes and major financial savings.

### A FRAGMENTED BRAND

Before explaining more about the role of MOM in Randstad's marketing and branding, it is probably useful to understand why the company decided to go down the MOM route.

Randstad began life in 1960 in a small town near Amsterdam, the Netherlands. At a time when temporary work was regarded as another term for low wage, low skill, hire-and-fire jobs, Randstad's founders wanted to build a temporary staffing organisation that operated on the principle of knowing, serving and trusting its business customers and work-seeking clients.

The Randstad concept touched a chord, proving so successful that by the

end of the decade it had branches throughout the Netherlands. This success continued over the next 20 years as Randstad opened largely green field operations in Germany, Belgium and France, among others.

Then, in the early 1990s, Randstad changed strategy. It began buying companies in the countries it already operated in and as a way of entering new markets, such as the USA. An unforeseen side-effect was that a once-cohesive organisation became a collection of largely stand-alone businesses, each with its own culture, brand positioning and approach to the market. They operated under the Randstad name, but, in reality, the company was no longer acting as one brand — a problem that was thrown into sharp relief by the economic crisis in 2000, which left Randstad needing to rethink its approach.

### **BRANDING AS STRATEGY**

Randstad's move into MOM began with a desire to save money and to rediscover what had made it successful in the past. The result was that 'superior brand' was made one of Randstad's four strategic building blocks (the others are 'strong concepts', 'best people' and 'excellent execution' — see Figure 1). Randstad would once again become one brand, speaking with one voice — and at lower cost.

The next step was to brief Randstad's advertising agency, FHV/BBDO, for a brand positioning, communication concept and brand architecture that could be used internationally and which, while being managed centrally, could be adapted and implemented by Randstad's country organisations. The same specifications were given to its design supplier, Studio Dumbar, for a new house style.

### **INVOLVEMENT THROUGH MOM**

The communication concept that emerged (summarised in the international communication concept and strapline 'Good to know you') reflected the traditional Randstad values ('to know', 'to serve' and 'to trust'). The brand strategy and brand architecture, which, briefly put, focused on building the Randstad brand rather than diverting money to sub-brands and labels, was logical given the circumstances and Randstad's goals. Even so, logic doesn't always win, and — as most organisations have found — no matter how good the proposal, it doesn't take long for the 'yes, but' brigade to get busy.

Randstad could have tried to impose the new approach from the centre, using MOM as a control mechanism. Instead, we decided to use MOM as a facilitator. The belief was that MOM would be more effective in building and managing the new brand positioning in the long run if it was used from the outset to win support for the new approach.

The first step was to internationalise the branding project by involving all the company's marketeers. Over a two-day workshop, they were taken through the research, invited to kick around the brand positioning, brand architecture and related issues and then confronted with the huge differences in Randstad's existing marketing and advertising. The upshot was that they came to view 'Good to know you' as their baby too, rather than as a threat to their independence. Meanwhile, the Randstad board played an active role as well, going on a road show to explain the need for a 'superior brand' and the implications of making branding part of the company's overall strategy. A CD-ROM featuring an animation explaining the branding, the reasons for the new approach and what it means to be a more brand-driven organisation was sent to all employees, while other

communication efforts included teleconferences and meetings with country managers. Throughout, the common denominator was an emphasis on local ownership and top-down involvement to get everyone pointing in the same direction as quickly as possible.

### **START SMALL, MOVE FAST**

Having won the marketers' support, it was crucial to maintain the momentum. It was here that NykampNyboer/Capital ID's MOM solution came in. A modular solution, it could be expanded over time with new functionalities and features.

That, though, was something for the future. Randstad ID, as it is called, began life very simply. In essence, it was an extranet for Randstad marketeers and suppliers involved in the brand project. This approach did have one major advantage, however: speed. Because of this, ID went live as soon as the workshop ended, featuring summaries of what had just been discussed, photos from the meeting, an archive of key presentations and everyone's contact details.

As the launch of 'Good to know you' approached, it became important to expand ID's role. This was the initial step towards embedding it into our marketeers' way of working.

First, it was turned into a library of information about the brand, the strategy, the communication concept and so on. A brand book, for example, was added. This set out Randstad's strategy in the context of its history, explained the brand architecture, the thinking behind 'Good to know you' and the look and feel of the concept. Subsequent additions included a house style guide, and later a guide explaining the new look and feel that is now being introduced in Randstad's

network of branches.

The key change came with the transformation of ID into a brand toolbox, however. It was this that made central standards compatible with local adaptation and flexibility. In went 500-plus multi-language files (now 750 files), including templates and wizards, so that our marketers can create their own adverts, brochures, window posters, business cards and stationery, among many other things. A 500-strong image database of Randstad-commissioned photographs was also included. Further additions include a best practice section, so marketeers can learn from their colleagues in other countries, and a web shop for ordering marketing and promotional materials and items out of Randstad's catalogue of branch fixtures and fittings.

The transformation of ID into a brand toolbox — the combination of resources and the wizards and templates by which to use them — made it an integral part of Randstad's marketing execution. It was at this point that the use of ID was made mandatory, although with so many interactive tools available, this was already virtually unavoidable.

### **PUBLISHING ON DEMAND**

One of the key reasons Randstad opted for the ID solution was that it could be used to facilitate everyday marketing tasks: printing on demand for window posters, job vacancy cards and the like.

A good example of what the future holds can be seen in a pilot project currently being run in Germany, where Randstad is experimenting with an advertising-generator package. This enables a marketing manager to create an ad just by using the wizards to decide and select the type of ad that is wanted, the colours to use, the number of columns, the image to go with it, the

version of the logo to use and so on — all within the ID environment. In addition, however, this same manager can preview, generate, order and publish the ad, down to scheduling which media to target and when, all from his/her computer. Ultimately, he or she will also be able to enter the ad in a magazine or newspaper's publishing calendar and get a cost indication. No more calling the ad agency to make a new ad, DTP it, proof it and so on. No need to go through a media-buying agency or ad agency. That's bad news for the media and ad agencies, but it reduces costs for Randstad.

### **THE BOTTOM LINE**

It's fair to say that the impact of MOM on Randstad's branding has been bigger and more far-reaching than anyone expected. Less than a year after Randstad implemented 'Good to know', a glance into our brand room or a walk down the high street confirmed that we were starting to talk with one voice and to present the brand consistently. And while

a few of our marketers decided that adapting company-wide materials rather than developing their own was a step too far, the vast majority have seen it as an opportunity to get on with real, flesh and blood marketing.

In the two years that have passed since, the benefits have become even more clear. Visually, Randstad clearly has one brand, one voice and increase a visibility. Organisationally, efficiency has gone up, while in terms of processes, the time between decision and implementation has been cut and the impact increased, thanks to the introduction of a multi-channel marketing tool that covers email, websites and print. And financially? Randstad is seeing a 30 per cent reduction in creative and design costs; a 20 per cent reduction in traffic and media-bureau costs; a 100 per cent reduction in the cost of distributing marketing materials; and a 25 per cent reduction in printing costs. As for the publishing on demand project, that looks set to reduce costs by a further 30 per cent.