

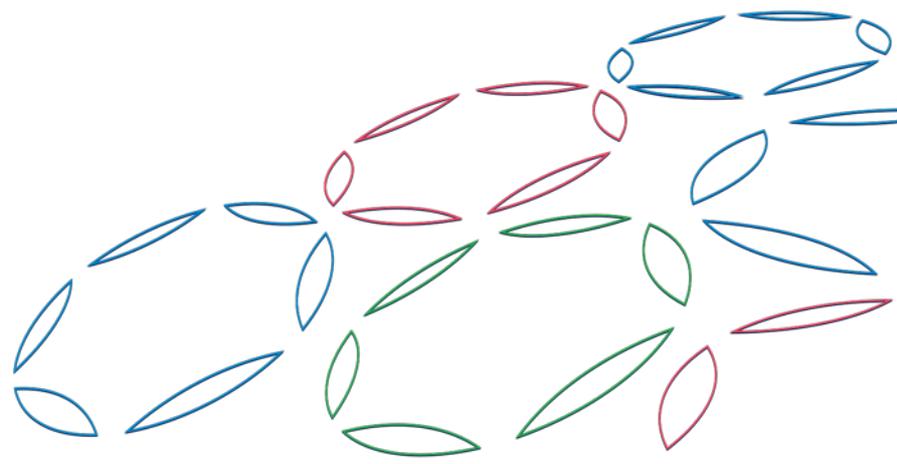


Branding Sea Urchin for the NPA (Northern Periphery and Arctic) Regions

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<i>Ágríp á íslensku:</i>	<p>Skýrsla þessi er hluti af URCHIN verkefninu sem var styrkt af NPA sjóðnum. Í skýrslunni er hugmyndafræði vörmerkja (brands) lýst og kynntar hugmyndir til að vera með eitt sameiginlegt vörumerki fyrir ígulker frá NPA (Northern Periphery and Arctic) löndunum. Í skýrslunni eru tekin dæmi af góðri reynslu annarra af notkun vörmerkja á dýrar sjávarafurðir m.a. á ígulkerum.</p> <p>Notkun vörumerkis getur verið góð leið til að markaðsetja ígulker bæði á nærmörkuðum (t.d. innanlands) og á alþjóðlegum mörkuðum. Fyrirtæki sem kemur sér upp vörumerki sem öðlast hylli hjá kaupendum og neytendum getur skapað sér sérstöðu og eftirspurn eftir merktum afurðum. Til að vörumerki ná hylli þarf rannsóknir á væntanlegum viðskiptavinum til að skilja þeirra þarfir og hvers vegna þeir vilja ígulker og hvers þeir vænta af afurðunum og söluaðilanum t.d. hvað varðar þjónustu. Án vörumerkis, er erfitt að aðskilja vöruna og fyrirtækið frá samkeppnisaðilum og þeirra vörum. Í dag hafa kaupendur og dreifendur ígulker ekki neina leið til að tengja aukin gæði við ígulker frá NPA svæðunum þar sem vörumerki vantar. Framleiðendur innan NPA svæðanna ættu að íhuga vörumerkjastefnu við markaðsetningu ígulker; merki sem annað hvort væri byggt á ímynd fyrirtækisins eða vörunnar. Til þess að ná árangri í uppbyggingu vörumerkis þarf að huga að neytendarannsóknum, IP leyfum, markaðsmálum og arðsemi fjárfestingarinnar.</p>		
<i>Lykilorð á íslensku:</i>	<i>Ígulker, vörumerki, markaður, NPA svæði</i>		

Report summary

<p><i>Summary in English:</i></p>	<p>To supplement the NPA Report, Markets for Sea Urchins: A Review of Global Supply and Markets, this branding report sets out to explain the concept and elements of branding. Examples of successful branding of sea urchin and other high value seafood products are highlighted. Considerations and steps to building a brand are also discussed and can serve as a basis for brand strategy. Branding can be a way of promoting NPA sea urchin both locally and in international markets. It could be a solution to reducing the generic, anonymous sale and distribution of NPA sea urchins to Europe and other global markets. Establishing and maintaining a brand can create demand and differentiate a company and/ or its products from competitors. Currently, branding of sea urchin is untapped and thus, there is significant branding potential.</p> <p>A brand is the over-all customer experience. It is how consumers feel or perceive your company and what you should offer in terms of services or products. Understanding who the consumers are and who would buy sea urchin and why, will be key in building and launching a sea urchin brand. To establish a brand acknowledged and known by customers, there must be sufficient research and a clear understanding of the target audience.</p> <p>Without a brand, it is difficult to differentiate a product or company from a competitor. Today, distributors, food service companies, restaurants, and other customers do not have a significant way to attach added value to NPA sea urchin. A unified vision and branding platform are needed to add value to the sea urchin.</p> <p>A key starting point for the NPA partners will be to consider a corporate and/ or product branding strategy. Consumer research, a brand strategy, IP investigation, social and media marketing, and assessing return of investment (ROI) are fundamental to building a successful brand. With these building blocks and aspects in mind, the NPA can decide whether branding is a right fit and a sensible approach to creating increased value for the NPA regions, sea urchin fisheries, and small to medium enterprises (SMEs).</p>
<p><i>English keywords:</i></p>	<p><i>Sea urchin, brands, marketing, NPA areas</i></p>

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Executive Summary

To supplement the NPA Report, Markets for Sea Urchins: A Review of Global Supply and Markets, this branding report sets out to explain the concept and elements of branding. Examples of successful branding of sea urchin and other high value seafood products are highlighted. Considerations and steps to building a brand are also discussed and can serve as a basis for brand strategy.

Branding can be a way of promoting NPA sea urchin both locally and in international markets. It could be a solution to reducing the generic, anonymous sale and distribution of NPA sea urchins to Europe and other global markets. Establishing and maintaining a brand can create demand and differentiate a company and/ or its products from competitors. Currently, branding of sea urchin is untapped and thus, there is significant branding potential.

A brand is the over-all customer experience. It is how consumers feel or perceive your company and what you should offer in terms of services or products. Understanding who the consumers are and who would buy sea urchin and why, will be key in building and launching a sea urchin brand. To establish a brand acknowledged and known by customers, there must be sufficient research and a clear understanding of the target audience.

Without a brand, it is difficult to differentiate a product or company from a competitor. Today, distributors, food service companies, restaurants, and other customers do not have a significant way to attach added value to NPA sea urchin. A unified vision and branding platform are needed to add value to the sea urchin.

A key starting point for the NPA partners will be to consider a corporate and/or product branding strategy. Consumer research, a brand strategy, IP investigation, social and media marketing, and assessing return of investment (ROI) are fundamental to building a successful brand. With these building blocks and aspects in mind, the NPA can decide whether branding is a right fit and a sensible approach to creating increased value for the NPA regions, sea urchin fisheries, and small to medium enterprises (SMEs).

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Urchin project

The URCHIN project – *Utilisation of the Arctic Sea Urchin Resource* – is funded by the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020. The project is a co-operation between Nofima (Norway; coordinator), Matís (Iceland), Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (Ireland), Marine Research Institute (Iceland), Arctic Caviar AS (Norway), Thorishólmi (Iceland) and Royal Greenland (Greenland). The project started in 2015 and will be completed in 2018.

The URCHIN project aims to utilise the sea urchin resource present in the Northern Periphery and Arctic (NPA) regions. The challenges of fishing, sustainable and responsible harvesting of stocks, legislation and supply chains for sea urchin products from isolated, peripheral and environmentally harsh and challenging areas in the Northern and Arctic region will be addressed. The challenges will be overcome through innovation and national and transnational technology transfer.

Currently there are small scale (<350 tonnes p.a.) intermittent fisheries for sea urchins in the Northern Periphery Area. This is despite there being enormous sea urchin resources present in the area. For example, in Norway the biomass of green urchin (*Strongylocentrotus droebachiensis*) is estimated to be a massive 80 billion individual animals or about 56,000 tonnes (Gunderson et al., 2010). There are several challenges that have prevented the development and expansion of sea urchin fisheries in the NPA area. These include environmental challenges to fishing, inadequate and inappropriate legislation and fisheries management and lack of technology and knowledge regarding sea ranching and roe enhancement of poor quality urchins. Research to overcome these challenges has been disparate and there has been no previous transfer of knowledge between the NPA partner countries.

The URCHIN project aims to gather the existing expertise from Norway, Iceland, Ireland and Greenland, together with knowledge from Canada to optimise the fishing of high value sea urchins in Northern and Arctic areas. Furthermore, roe enhancement technology from Norway for roe fattening to increase the value of low value sea urchins once they have been harvested

in the northern arctic regions will be developed and implemented in Greenland and Iceland. The project will also investigate sea ranching to repopulate areas that have been extensively overfished in the past around Ireland. Issues regarding the provision of adequate legislation and fisheries management will be identified and legislative organisations will be provided with the appropriate knowledge to provide sensible and sustainable management of sea urchin fisheries. The project will also estimate market capacity for sea urchin roe as well as identify logistic routes from the NPA to markets.

1.2 Scope of the report

This branding report supplements the NPA report *Markets for Sea Urchins: A Review of Global Supply and Markets* (Stefansson *et al.*, 2017). The report sets out to explain the concept and elements of branding. Examples are provided to give insight into these basic elements. Additionally, examples of branding of sea urchin and other high value seafood products are highlighted. Considerations and steps to building a brand are also discussed and can serve as a basis for brand strategy. It is important that the NPA sea urchin fisheries and associated partners create a branding strategy and discuss whether they want to work on building a corporate brand and/or a consumer brand. The NPA should consider the purpose of branding their regional sea urchin and what a brand will accomplish for the end customer and for the NPA as a whole.

This report fulfils Activity 6.2 (deliverable 6.2.1) in the URCHIN project.

1.3 Branding

A brand is a consumer's perception of a company and the products or services it offers. In other words, a brand is how a consumer feels about your services and products and the overall customer experience. There are two types of branding, corporate and consumer and each involves a different strategy. Corporate branding involves using the company name and associated reputation, while product branding focuses on individual products and services.

Logos are often strongly associated with companies; however, this is only one aspect of what makes a brand. A strong name and reputation associated with a company is built upon several sustainable brand elements. A long standing, well-known company with strong customer loyalty

is known for its brand. The power of a brand is emphasized by the expert Warren Buffett, “It takes years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it”.

The definition of branding and a brand was formally defined by Pickton & Broderick, 2000, “As a marketing tool, branding is not just a case of placing a symbol or name onto products to identify the manufacturer; a brand is a set of attributes that have a meaning, an image and produce associations with the product when a person is considering that brand of product”.

When establishing a brand there are key aspects to consider: 1) what a company is about and what they believe in delivering to their customer, 2) who the target customers are and their needs, 3) and how a company sets themselves apart from the competition.

2. Brand Elements

The brand elements are marketing defined and basically are what make up a brand. As a brand becomes more developed, improved, and repositioned with time, brand attributes can become more refined. The brand elements are important to consider when creating attributes that are associated with the brand and the customer can relate to. The descriptions of a brand and brand elements are described differently by various marketing firms and experts; however, the current underlying meanings remain the same.

The reasons for developing a brand are to create and/or increase customer awareness about a company or product, develop loyalty and advantage over the competition, and establish both a premium for your product as well as demand. Established brands address customer needs (Figure 1) and have created a strong brand promise for their customers.

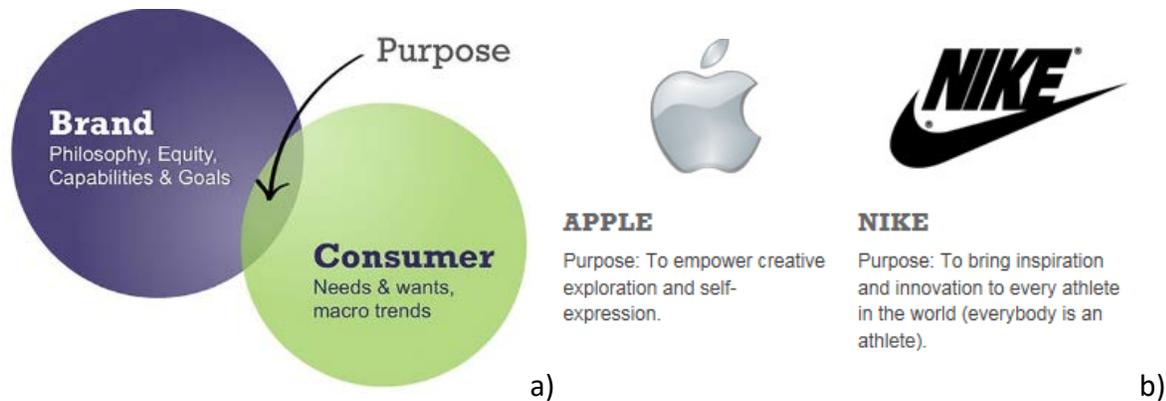


Figure 1. a) Purpose driven brands set out to satisfy the needs, wants, and trends of consumers, b) examples of well known brands and what they set out to accomplish in the market (Harbinger Communications, Inc., 2017).

2.1 Brand Equity

Brand equity can be defined as consumer recognition built over time and can be a significant contributor to the overall financial value of a company. Well known companies with brand equity include Coca Cola, Apple, Google, Nike, Pepsi, and Starbucks. Abba Kungshamn (Sweden), John West (United Kingdom) and King Oscar (Norway), Fleury Michon (France), and Saucy Fish Co. (U.K.) are all seafood companies that have established brands with equity. Examples of their known logos can be seen below in Figure 2.

Consumers will buy products based on the reputation and the established brand associated with the company. Brand equity is basically the value that a brand brings to a company, and a significant portion of these companies' market value is based on the brand value over time. Without a brand, the company cannot demand the same price, margin and profit, or volume of customers relative to the competition (Wood, 2000).



Figure 2. Logos of seafood brands in Europe.

2.2 The Brand Promise

The brand promise encompasses the vision for the target audience (the customer) as well as what a company sets out to deliver to customers based on either service or products (Brayfield, 2017). An example of a brand promise is from Oursin des Fjords. With extensive research, this brand is currently the only formally established sea urchin brand in the NPA and globally. This is a sea urchin brand established by Sea Urchin Farm AS, based out of Norway. Their promise is to provide live, high quality sea urchins to the European gourmet market throughout the year (Sea Urchin Farm, 2014).

2.3 The Brand Position

The brand position is a comprehensive statement that incorporates the brand promise, but also the detailed benefits of what the company delivers in addition to the history of the company and brand history. An example of this is in the website page below for Oursin des Fjords. This is a longer statement than the brand promise and provides more details regarding what the company and brand deliver as seen in Figure 3.

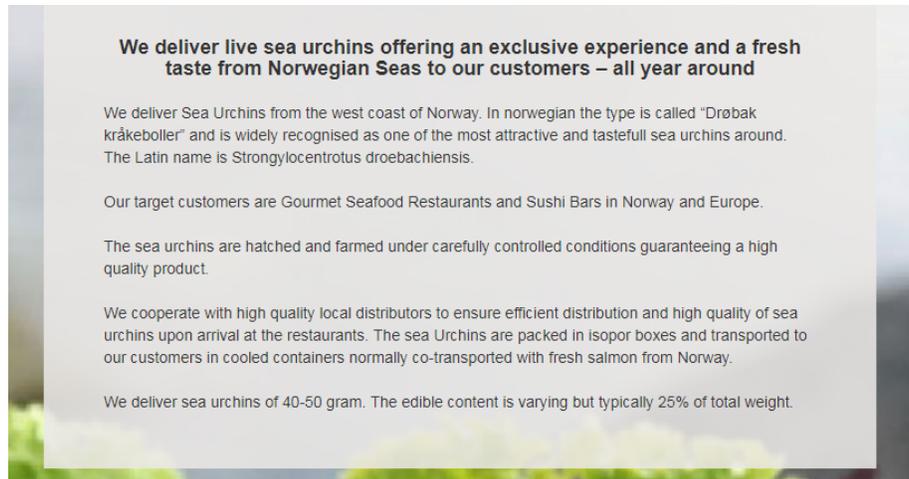


Figure 3. The brand promise as well as the brand position (Sea Urchin Farm, 2014).

2.4 Brand Identity

The brand identity is the logo, the business name, and other visual symbols associated with a brand. The brand identity, may also include an associated sound. The Oursin des Fjords example is shown in Figure 4. This logo relates to the location of the branded aquaculture sea urchins by Sea Urchin Farm, Norway.



Figure 4. Logo for Oursins des Fjords (Sea Urchin Farm, 2014).

A company name, brand name, and logo should be designed with principles in mind (Figure 5). For example, a logo should be memorable, simple and easily recognized by the consumer, and long lasting. The logo should also be versatile and easily modified while still maintaining the customer recognition. A brand pre-sells your product (Cass, 2009). It can become complicated in deciding whether the company name or the brand should dominate. It is recommended that the

brand name be at the forefront in terms of customer marketing and advertising. So, it is important to consider whether the company name and brand name are the same or if there will be a differentiation. In some cases, using the company and brand name together can be quite effective in promoting a product as well (Ries & Ries, 2002). In the case of Oursin des Fjords, the brand name dominates the product marketing strategy.

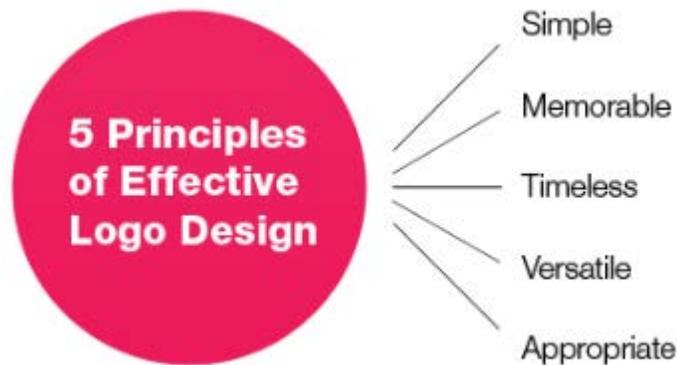


Figure 5. Principles to consider when designing a logo (Cass, 2009).

Depending on the country or region, separate registrations may be required in the European Union. A registered trademark is an asset and is critical to differentiate products and services. Trademarks can be licensed and sold. It is important to seek protection for your trademark early. It can protect your distinguishable mark and prevent the usage of it by other entities. A trademark must adhere to certain rules and can fall into various categories - it must be distinguishable. Examples to show what is distinguishable can be found in Figure 6. Ensure that the trademark is not already taken. Pending the type of trademark that you are applying for, the cost can range from 850 - 1,500 €. There are various trademark categories such as work mark, figurative mark, figurative mark containing word elements, pattern marks, color marks, etc. If the application is rejected due to it not being distinguishable or is already in use, the money is not refundable (EUIPO, 2017). The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) can serve as a good resource for understanding trademarks in Europe and how to register a trademark in Europe and globally. Research and trademark research early in the process can pay off in the end, saving significant money and time from an unwanted dispute or legal suit.

Not distinctive

A consumer would not see this bottle, as presented here, as a distinctive sign capable of distinguishing one company from another. This sign should remain available for all companies.

Too descriptive

In this case, consumers will not see the bottle as distinctive, and the word 'wine' simply describes the content of the bottle. They will see it as a product description.



Registrable trade mark

However, in this example, although the bottle alone may not be distinctive, the addition on the label of a distinctive name would make consumers see it as a trade mark indicating one particular brand.

Figure 6. The trademark should be distinctive. The trademark should not describe what you sell (EUIPO, 2017).

A registered trademark lasts 10 years and can be renewed. It is encouraged that you use the registration number and/or registration mark to show that your innovative, disguisable trademark is officially registered. In the European Union, it is illegal to display a registration[®] mark if your trademark is not registered. Globally, rules and processes to trademark registrations can vary, so it is very important to research early and also seek legal advice (EUIPO, 2017).

Individual, collective, and certified trademarks are possibilities in the European Union (EUIPO, 2017). A collective mark could be a way to create a strong brand identity for the NPA sea urchin. Cooperatives, associations, and institutions can create a visual symbol that will distinguish their products by geographical region. Collective marks can be strong tools in strengthening SMEs products, particularly in isolated areas. A company may use their own individual trademark in addition to the collective mark (WIPO, 2017). A collective awareness of the NPA sea urchin products could be significantly increased by such a collective trademark.

2.5 Brand Experience

The brand experience includes all customer associations that a customer associates with the brand. This includes all marketing touch points, including the logo as well as the taste of your

product, what a customer sees (for example: brand color pallet or store/place of purchase of a company's product), customer service, images and pictures, advertising, and social media experiences.

2.6 Brand Personality

Are descriptors or associated human qualities that allow the customer to relate to the brand and the product or service that is offered. In the case of Oursin des Fjords, there are main personal attributes that can be gathered that relate to the sea urchin and that serve as human descriptors of the target audience (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Examples of brand personality keywords for sea urchins from Oursin des Fjords.

Understanding the future customers of your product and why they would buy your product will be key in building and launching a brand. This would include understanding lifestyles associated with consumers of those seafood products, preferences, demographics, why a person eats a seafood product, etc. This information will all help in building the brand personality and relating to and engaging the customer.

2.7 Brand Core Values

The brand core values describe what the company stands for in key words. These are core values that the company can live by and revisit to ensure that they are satisfying what they set out to do and what they promise to deliver to their customers. This will also be important when establishing an initial brand brief report and a formal manual for a formally established brand. These core values should be key to the brand purpose for customers and should also set them apart from competitors.

3. High Value Seafood Branding

Today, aside from the Oursin des Fjords, a Norwegian brand mentioned earlier in this report, the only significant market identifiers globally for sea urchins are generic and informal. Identifiers may include place of origin such as “Hokkaido” and “California” or external color (purple, red, green). In the marketplace, there is limited information associated with the differentiators of sea urchin regarding regions of origin, characteristics, or quality (production, taste, aesthetics, etc.). There is also little information regarding supply source and quality differentiation. Due to the lack of sea urchin branding in Europe, a few examples of high value seafood product brands and their successful brand elements are discussed in this section.

3.1 Branding in Europe

Speciales Gillardeu, <http://www.maisongillardeau.fr/> is an example of an oyster brand with a “gastronomic heritage” and geographical region, Marennes Oleron. The branding history and region set this company apart in their branding position from other oyster distributors, processors, food service, and consumers. The brand has a history of the first company establishing a quality product standard for farmed oyster. Over a century of operation for the enterprise and emphasizing that three generations of leaders have brought the company to where it is today is a brand story that customers can relate to. The company relates to customers on an empathetic, emotional level establishing why they stand out from the competitors. Brand core values for the company could include: adventurous, focused, committed, innovating, passionate. The company makes a brand promise to adhere to and an ongoing commitment to quality; they deliver oysters with attentive care and take the necessary steps to ensure that each oyster is of highest quality (Speciales Gillardeu, 2017).

Nutritional information pertaining to well-being is also mentioned and this very much speaks to the buyers and consumers of today and contributes to the personality of the brand and emphasizes that buyers of this product are healthy. Recipes also speak to the consumer and further build the brand personality. Recipes created by chefs from different restaurants in France are featured, creating a sense of elegance and refinement that is also associated with expected consumers of oysters. The company is also advanced as it has developed vending machines for the “Rolls-Royce” of oysters. The Rolls-Royce associated description is another

good example of relating to the customer that is of a gourmet and luxury lifestyle. The technological advancements and abilities of the company also strengthens the brand position over the competition (Speciales Gillardeau, 2017).

Brand identity, which includes the name of the company and brand in this case, emphasizes the special service, quality, and products the company offers. Additionally, the trademark (Figure 8) remains true to the family name and heritage. It is registered and the logo is elegant and simple. The trademark is displayed on the side of the shipping containers and this is a strong, strategic visual for the brand.



Figure 8. Speciales Gillardeau trademark (Speciales Gillardeau, 2017).

Consistency is crucial to the success of a brand experience from message, to color and logo, and design on webpages and in social media. Establishing websites, both for your main homepage as well as social media will be something to consider early on as well. Are the domains you seek available and what is the cost? The Speciales Gillardeau main homepage does have a Facebook link. The Facebook webpage, <https://www.facebook.com/huitresgillardeau/>, features professional, vibrant personal pictures and photos which will instantly grab customers attention, inspiring an emotional response. Pictures featuring the employees that handle the quality and distribution as well as the chefs using the oysters in their restaurants really help develop another layer of the brand personality. There is consistency in what Speciales Gillardeau ® represents in both the website and in their social media. It is important to pick a few social media touch points for consumers, keeping it simple and allowing customers to engage and share their experience. Other, media touch points include Speciales Gillardeau

serving their oysters at gala dinners or pop up events at Paris train stations for “gourmet break on your journey.”

Macduff Shellfish Ltd., based out of Scotland, is a company with a cooperate brand and is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Clearwater, based in Nova Scotia Canada (Macduff, 2017). The brand position is emphasized by the catchy slogan, “Wild about shellfish,” and accompanying description, “We process more wild shellfish than anyone else in Europe and that’s all we do. We are masters of our trade”. This is captured in the trademark (Figure 9). The brand position is further created by the company sharing their 130 year Scotland tradition, “A century at sea”. Macduff Shellfish brand core values could be described as prepared and ready, dependable, focused, trustworthy, dedicated, consistent, and experienced. The company is focused on sustainable and quality harvest and the brand promise is to specialize and provide the best in wild scallops, langoustines, crabs and whelks. The design, color pallets, marketing, and social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest) are all very consistent in presentation which creates a very nice visual, and informative experience for the consumer. Pinterest can be a powerful tool and should not be overlooked, as the pictures will inspire and excite consumers and are a strong link back to the original brand homepage.



Figure 9. Macduff trademark (Macduff, 2017).

An example of collective branding, versus an individual enterprise brand above is “Seafood from Norway,” as well as the Skrei[®]. The trademarks are licensed by the Norwegian Seafood Council (NSC) (Figure 10). Individual companies, along with their own brands, can then further and distinctively differentiate themselves from the competition. As a collective, companies that utilize the “Seafood from Norway” trademark can create a stronger brand position. The brand experience, essence, and brand promise are further strengthened. The NSC has a clear, detailed

set of guidelines, license stipulations, and marketing support for use of these collective trademarks.



Figure 10. Collective branding and trademark established by the Norwegian Seafood Council (NSC) (Norwegian Seafood Council, 2017).

3.2 Branding Globally

Oysters and scallops are examples of high value seafood that have seen an increase in value globally due to branding efforts related to place of origin. Coffin Bay Oyster Farm is a successful brand based out of Coffin Bay, Port Lincoln, South Australia. The product was once sold on an unbranded commodity basis in hessian bags under the name Marshel Aquaculture. The company developed a premium brand that is now highly successful and various high value restaurants will feature these oysters on their menu. Additionally, the brand portfolio includes 4 different sub-brands (Figure 11) with differing price points. For example, Cupid Coffin Bay Farm oysters are 40-50 millimeters in size and they are double the price of a typical oyster (Truly Deeply, 2017).



Figure 11. Coffin Bay Oyster Farm, South Australia and sub-brands based on size and qualities and for different occasions (Coffin Bay Oyster Farm, 2017).

The Nantucket Shellfish Association trademarked the Nantucket bay scallop, Nantucket Bay Scallops[®]. To maintain and preserve the value of the bay scallop abroad, reduce fraudulent sales, and to ensure that the Nantucket scallop was not diluted or misrepresented in the seafood market, the trademark was established. Additionally, branded shellfish tags and packing stickers are clear visual identifiers of the product. Local retailers and shippers also are equipped with selling tools including retail tags and brochures (Figures 12 a, b, c) (Nantucket Shellfish Association, 2017).

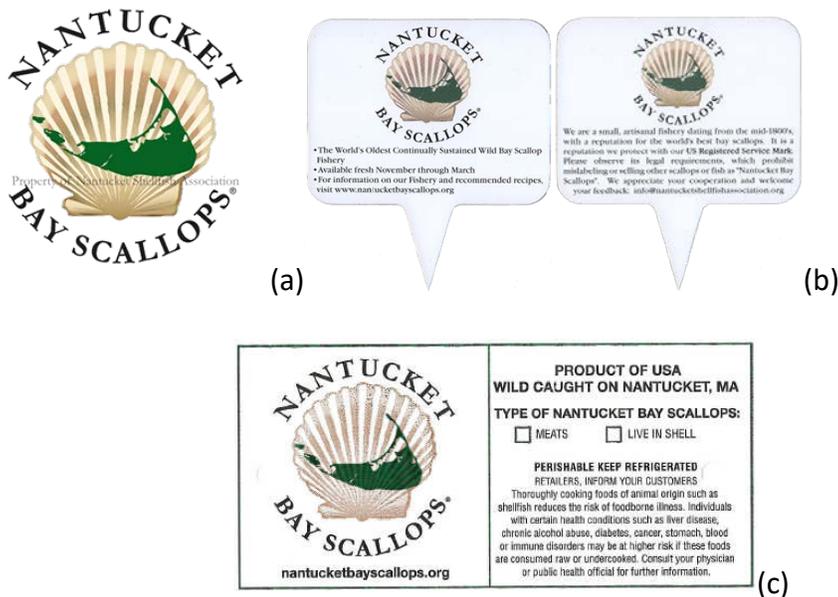


Figure 12. Nantucket Bay Scallops[®] (a) trademark logo (b) labels for fish market that sells Nantucket Bay Scallops (c) labels for shipped scallops (Nantucket Shellfish Association, 2017).

The California Sea Urchin commission has set out to further the awareness of sea urchin through brand identity, the mascot symbol, Spike. The commission supports sustainable sea urchin harvest, working with divers and handlers. Their mission statement, or brand promise, is "To ensure a reliable, sustainable supply of quality sea urchin products to consumers and enhance the performance of California's sea urchin industry". On the website, visitors can learn more about sea urchins in general, about the nutritional value and quality of the sea urchin, learn about events as well as read press and articles (California Sea Urchin Commission, 2017).

4. Steps to NPA Branding Sea Urchin

The value of branding begins with a story behind the product in addition to a strong product differentiation. Fraudulent substitutions of seafood are less likely to occur when there are unique brand attributes assigned to a product both in distribution, in food service, and to the end consumer. For example, chefs can charge more for a product on their menu if it is distinguishable and has a brand presence.

The NPA consortium could strengthen the value in the supply chain by creating a brand with an associated name, quality, service and experience, region of origin, as well as a visual identifier that is associated with a certain standard of quality. A significant selling point for NPA is the associated mystique and uniqueness of the region. Additionally, branding would allow for sea urchin, with a specific story and tasting points, to pair with other products from the same region or with products in international regions (Polished Brands, 2017).

Phase 1. Creating the platform and strategy

This would entail looking at the existing urchin marketplace to formulate a branding and sales strategy. An established team, branding agency or consultancy expert (s) would gain an understanding of the product, fishery, and processing specific to the NPA region sea urchin. This information would leverage touch points in the various marketplaces and create sales materials that would resonate with customers. Additionally, a company name, a protected brand name, brand personality, a look and logo, and a PR (public relations) campaign would need to be

formulated and planned (Polished Brands, 2017). A visual representation of this phase is below (Figure 13). Compiling the findings from the steps in Phase 1 in a brand brief and later in a company brand manual, will help the company employees understand what the brand is about in addition to appropriate touch points, through design, advertising, social media, etc. This will ensure consistency in brand representation.



Figure 13. Progression in developing a brand (Lamson, 2017).

Phase 2. Launching the brand and creating value

This would entail implementing the strategy and tools established in Phase 1. into the identified target marketplaces. Timing and cost for establishing a brand in the marketplace would be highly dependent on Phase 1 goals and developments as well as designated market reach. Completing Phase 2 could result in creating a significant presence in the seafood and sea urchin market place (Polished Brands, 2017).

5. Brand Considerations

- 1) **Develop a team.** A cross-functional team will be important in developing a brand strategy and associated marketing and in considering the overall value and ROI (return of

investment) a brand could bring for NPA sea urchin. The team could incorporate appointed members of NPA and Artic sea urchin partners. It is also important to have other members be a part of the brand exploration and strategy discussion.

- 2) **Brain-storm and define your goals.** Design Thinking is a strong and proven, effective way to develop solutions efficiently, and successfully. Design Thinking involves 6 key steps: Empathize, define, ideate, prototype, test, and implement (Figure 14). The steps can be described differently, but the process is consistent. Design Thinking can help a company find innovative solutions to help build a brand and create a strong image to draw in buyers and consumers of a product. Understanding and empathizing with the sea urchin buyers, distributors, wholesalers, processors, food service establishments and consumers will help in gaining insight into preferences and tailor to their needs. Be sure to conduct the target market research.

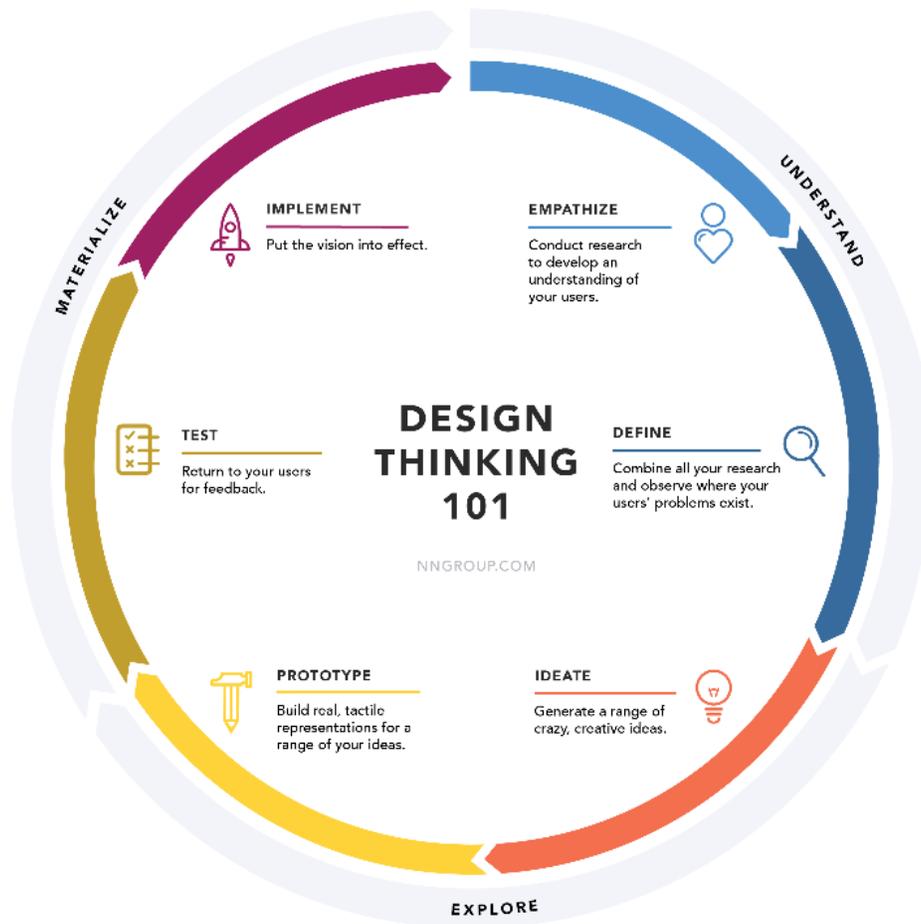


Figure 14. Design thinking schematic (Gibbons, 2016).

- 3) **Ask key questions about your purpose.** Questions could include: What makes the NPA region sea urchin different and stand out from competitors? Why brand the NPA region sea urchin and what is the NPA vision? What are your core values? What does the company or product represent and what does it stand against? Who are your customers? Who are your competitors? What are consumers of the sea urchin seeking and what are their needs? It is important to address these questions to best speak to the buyers and end consumers when establishing a brand.
- 4) **Investigate IP opportunities in the beginning.** IP opportunities must be investigated for all markets that the product will be distributed or marketed to. Use your B-to-B connections, internal knowledge, and potentially hire a law firm and/or consulting agency to do investigation for you. If the research is not done early on, there could be

significant future hurdles in launch of your brand and its success. Consider a collective registered trademark. Consider what the company name, brand name, and trademark will be if applicable.

- 5) **Investigate and consider return of investment (ROI).** Does it make sense to brand? It can take years to establish a recognizable brand and a strong committed team will be crucial to building a brand and long-term success.
- 6) **Keep it simple.** For example, focus on a few products or social media outlets.
- 7) **Establish a marketing strategy and campaign.** Consider early on how you might market yourself? The marketing and functional channels, or touch points, with a brand should be managed by a cross-sectoral team. This will help in establishing consistency within the company and thus a consistent image. These communication channels include advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct email, internet and social media channels, etc.
- 8) **Encourage consumer and customer involvement.** This could include blogs, question and answer posts, opportunity for customers to post comments and pictures.
- 9) **Consider and use existing social media and marketing touch points.** Search engine results, YouTube (for example: videos), email, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc. Pictures provide instant experience and inspiration and pictures posted of individuals catching, holding, eating, and preparing sea urchin are a viral marketing scheme that can draw consumers to your primary website or other social media marketing channels. Examples of colorful sea urchin pictures can be found at <https://www.pinterest.com/courtpayen/oursin/>. Social media can include stories and events. Additionally, events, live and recorded, can provide an opportunity for customers to learn about how to enjoy the roe from whole sea urchin. Give the customers a “farm to fork” experience, such as in the chef showing how to prepare recipes and “shuck and serve” fresh scallops and sea urchin (Robinson, 2010). Virtual reality is another way to establish connection with customers. Educate the customers on sea urchin cultivation, sustainability, vibrant colors and taste. Give them an experience,

reason, and appreciation for the delicate and interesting flavor of sea urchin and how you can enjoy the NPA region sea urchin.

- 10) **Use existing educational material.** This includes white papers and reports. Use the current knowledge of sea urchin experts, marketers, fisheries, distributors, buyers and processors to create a collective wealth of useful customer-centric information. This will strengthen the appealing experience, ultimately encouraging consumption and demand for sea urchin on your website and in your social media channels. Consolidate the material and ensure that it is both educational and engaging.
- 11) **Be consistent.** It is very important to be consistent in all forms of communication and be integrated in marketing efforts and brand touch points. This includes everything from using the same color scheme, to delivering the same core values, letter size, customer service, etc.
- 12) **Establish ways to measure ROI.** This includes financial results of branding, communications, and marketing strategy.

6. Conclusion

There can be lessons learned from high value seafood brands with strong elements in place, based on various attributes, quality, region of origin, history, etc. Successful, recognized branding of sea urchin is significantly missing in the seafood marketplace. There is significant room for developing sea urchin as a well-known offering in the seafood supply chain and to be competitive with other global sea urchin suppliers. To expand further into local and international markets, branding will be key in creating demand, encouraging consumption, and a way forward in establishing market presence in the seafood markets and restaurants, in the retail space and with chefs and consumers.

Without branding, sea urchins will not establish added value above commodity status and price. Sea urchins are a developing ingredient in the market and demand is ever increasing. Because there is already an established supply and demand pipeline, consumer and chef awareness/ consumption, and sustainability associated with sea urchin, there is significant justification to

pursue branding for the NPA region. Branding of sea urchin and/or associated ingredients could significantly increase value and consumer recognition in the distribution, retail, and food service space in Europe and globally. The brand elements are there, however, the aspects that must be considered are comprehensive, exciting, and require a great deal of commitment both short and long term.

NPA should consider all brand elements and how they will create a customer experience and whether a cooperate, collective, or product brand is more appropriate. Also, does the NPA want to establish a brand entity that is individual, collective, or certification oriented or all of the above. A collective brand identity may be the best starting option for an NPA sea urchin brand. The research should be conducted early on for the IP aspects of the brand (website, company name, trademarks, etc.). This aspect could result in the greatest costs if not done in the beginning and properly.

A brand is the over-all customer association and experience. Creating a brand, acknowledged and trusted by customers, requires sufficient research and a clear understanding of the target audience (distributors, food service, processors, end consumer) and a clear purpose. The NPA can really build and create a sea urchin brand that delivers on quality and product of origin, while educating and engaging customers in the experience of consuming sea urchin. There are many elements to consider and if done right and well, a brand can have a lasting effect on the sea urchin customers and consumers of the future globally, and the NPA can be the preferred brand.

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