

Burgundy Farm Country Day School

- Situation** Burgundy Farm Country Day School, an independent JK to 8th grade school in Alexandria, Virginia, was seeing its long-held progressive educational approach being increasingly adopted by competitors. It sought a partner to help differentiate its market position and to develop assets that effectively communicated its unique qualities to prospective families sharing its values. Further, Burgundy wanted solutions to better understand if existing marketing materials were accurately communicating its offerings, how those messages were perceived, and what mission-appropriate prospect families would benefit from its marketing outreach.
- Solution** After being selected by Burgundy, TDC embarked on an extensive research and materials review process. We reviewed years of surveys Burgundy conducted among internal stakeholders, including staff, faculty, board members, and parents of students. This was followed by a discovery process involving interviews with external audiences and influencers such as educational consultants, admissions officers of high school programs with Burgundy graduates, community program leaders working with Burgundy, parents of past graduates, and prospective parents who had attended an Open House. We also conducted an audit of Burgundy's marketing materials, a brand benchmarking study of competitors' marketing efforts, and a series of interviews with current Burgundy students. We synthesized the information gathered from this discovery into insights that informed a new brand look-and-feel, positioning statement, signature line, message platform, as well as a refined logo.
- Result** The school enthusiastically embraced the assets we developed and gave us the green light to proceed with the creation of tactical materials such as a viewbook, a refreshed website, an admissions packet, and many other pieces. Overall, our work helped Burgundy strengthen its brand presence in a highly competitive marketplace and boost awareness of its leadership position in progressive education. In addition, our campaign earned a 2020 Gold Award of Excellence from the Communicator Awards.

Research Modes Used:

- Review of Secondary Research
- Interviews of Pre-inquiry Families
- Interviews with Educational Consultants
- Interviews with High School Admissions Officers
- Interviews with Community Partners
- Interviews with Parents of Recent Graduates
- Video Interviews with Current Students
- Competitive Brand Benchmarking
- Communications Audit

Burgundy Farm Country Day School

COMPETITOR BRAND BENCHMARKING

The Design Channel
January 2018

Competitors

Institution	Positioning	Key Messaging
Alexandria Country Day School	Students learn deeply, play exuberantly, and reflect thoughtfully.	We challenge students intellectually, inspire their confidence, curiosity, and creativity, and prepare them to thrive in a diverse and complex world by ensuring that they are independent learners, effective communicators, community-minded citizens, and balanced individuals.
Browne Academy	A K-8 day school that empowers students to be critical thinkers, inspired innovators, engaged peers, and ethical leaders.	Browne Academy is a diverse independent day school committed to developing the whole child through teaching, exceptional academic programs, and a nurturing community.
Congressional School	Congressional School ignites the spark in young learners (infants to 8th grade) to become great thinkers and leaders who will positively impact the world!	We provide an inspirational and challenging student-centered educational experience within our diverse and supportive community where children question, collaborate, create, and lead.
St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School	SSAS is an academically rigorous college preparatory Episcopal school for children JK-12. Students are held to the highest standards of achievement.	To help our students succeed in a complex and changing world, we seek to inspire a passion for learning, an enthusiasm for athletic and artistic endeavors, a striving for excellence, a celebration of diversity, and a commitment to service.

Competitors

name	overview	key messaging	look and feel
Browne Academy	Browne Academy was founded in 1981 as one of the first independent schools in Virginia. Today the school is committed to developing the whole child through teaching, exceptional academic programs, and a nurturing community. We encourage that supports critical thinking and creative problem-solving. We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our students and staff.	Mission: Browne Academy is a diverse independent day school committed to developing the whole child through teaching, exceptional academic programs, and a nurturing community. We encourage that supports critical thinking and creative problem-solving. We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our students and staff.	The design look and feel is clean, classic, traditional, and sophisticated. The palette is muted and earthy. The color palette is muted but vibrant. The look and feel is clean, classic, traditional, and sophisticated. The palette is muted and earthy. The color palette is muted but vibrant.

Visual expressions

Competitors

name	overview	key messaging	look and feel
St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School	St. Stephen's was founded in 1882 and St. Agnes was founded in 1885. The two schools merged to form the present-day school in 1998. The school is currently enrolling 4-1200 in the district. The school is currently enrolling 4-1200 in the district.	Mission: To help our students succeed in a complex and changing world, we seek to inspire a passion for learning, an enthusiasm for athletic and artistic endeavors, a striving for excellence, a celebration of diversity, and a commitment to service.	The look and feel is clean and sophisticated. The color palette is muted and earthy. The design is clean and sophisticated. The color palette is muted and earthy.

Visual expressions

Admired Schools

name	overview	key messaging	look and feel
Barrie School	Barrie School is an independent, co-educational, non-profit school for boys and girls in the greater Washington, DC area. The school is currently enrolling 4-1200 in the district. The school is currently enrolling 4-1200 in the district.	Philosophy: Barrie provides a nurturing and exciting environment for our students. We encourage that supports critical thinking and creative problem-solving. We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our students and staff.	The design look and feel is clean, classic, traditional, and sophisticated. The palette is muted and earthy. The color palette is muted but vibrant.

Visual expressions

Burgundy Farm Country Day School

COMMUNICATIONS BRAND AUDIT

The Design Channel
January 2018

Brand Audit

Definition and Purpose

This audit is a strategic process of discovery. It involves examining all existing branded communications created and produced by Burgundy. The audit provides critical analysis of strengths and weaknesses in the existing communications effort and, at the same time, provides important information in helping to bring change to the brand. The process can also assist in generating the necessary support for implementing strategic change.

Perceived Value and Benefits

By studying the existing communications, awareness is built around Burgundy's brand identity and the message it is projecting. The brand audit will help define a strategy for improving the whole communications effort. It includes strengths and weaknesses of individual pieces through an objective framework and where these findings are a strategic guide. The greater perspective about Burgundy's present course of action to enhance and maximize its branding and communications effort.

Methodology

The analysis is based on visual and messaging content and objectively on the existing brand communications research with a set of fundamental brand qualities associated with good branding and marketing communications and following fundamental elements are selected to be "observable characteristics" that provide the backbone for evaluating an organization's existing communications.

These components are:

- Consistency** - uniformity within a greater whole
- Distinctiveness** - memorability, recognizability
- Subtlety** - appropriateness and compatibility with the organization's purpose and general nature
- Clarity of messaging** - coherence, simplicity, directness, transparency of content
- Authenticity** - ability to capture attention, staying power
- Versatility** - adaptability to various media
- Memorability** - openness for reacting to visual, your name, or any other brand element
- Technical quality** - the following guidelines for creating the present and future of the brand identity, and for form or marketplace

Existing Communications

Feedback

The Burgundy Feedback is a collection of all existing branded communications created and produced by Burgundy. The audit provides critical analysis of strengths and weaknesses in the existing communications effort and, at the same time, provides important information in helping to bring change to the brand. The process can also assist in generating the necessary support for implementing strategic change.

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Existing Communications

Primary Logos

Sub-Brand Logos

Current Logos and Sub-Brand Identity Marks

The logo and the logotype should be considered throughout all marketing material. These elements are the visual identity of the school. The logo and the logotype should be considered throughout all marketing material. These elements are the visual identity of the school.

Sub-Brand Identifiers

Primary Colors

Secondary Colors

Font

Graphic Elements

Photography

Illustration

Website

The Burgundy School website is the primary digital presence of the school. The website should be considered throughout all marketing material. These elements are the visual identity of the school.

- positioning and signature line
- brand identity guidelines

Burgundy is an independent JK–8th grade school that helps children develop a strong sense of community, self-worth, and intellectual curiosity. It values the perspectives and experiences of childhood while advancing personal abilities and interests, and responsible citizenship.

Burgundy offers an ideal environment for families who want an education for children that supports connection with the natural world, demonstrates authentic diversity, employs hands-on learning, and offers experiences beyond what is available in other independent schools.

The natural setting, farm animals, and Center for Wildlife Studies campus give Burgundy an unequalled range of environmental resources. Combined with its learning approach, enduring values, and supportive faculty/staff, Burgundy--more than any comparable school--gives students space and freedom to become well-rounded thinkers, innovative problem solvers, and compassionate leaders throughout their lives.

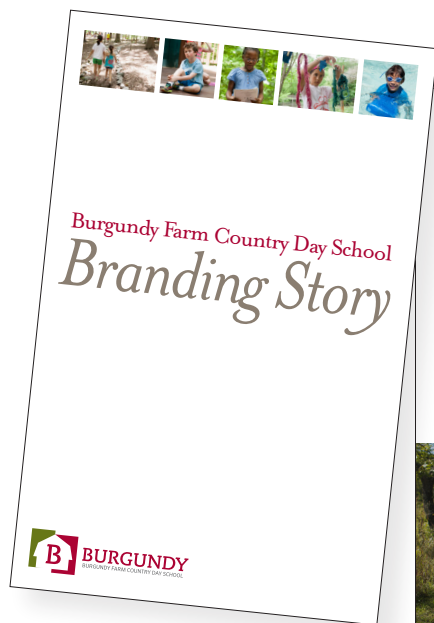
Grow
beyond
the boundaries



- one voice message platform
- branding story for the burgundy community

Message Platform

Brand Promise (Positioning Statement)	Burgundy is an independent JK–8th grade school that helps children develop a strong sense of community, self-worth, and intellectual curiosity. It values the perspectives and experiences of childhood while advancing personal abilities and interests, and responsible citizenship. Burgundy offers an ideal environment for families who want an education for children that supports connection with the natural world, demonstrates authentic diversity, employs hands-on learning, and offers experiences beyond what is available in other independent schools. The natural setting, farm animals, and Center for Wildlife Studies campus give Burgundy an unequaled range of environmental resources. Combined with its learning approach, enduring values, and supportive faculty/staff, Burgundy—more than any comparable school—gives students space and freedom to become well-rounded thinkers, innovative problem solvers, and compassionate leaders throughout their lives.				
Signature/Tagline	Grow beyond the boundaries				
Values (Themes and concepts that are integral to Burgundy's legacy)	Outdoor/Nature Connection Burgundy meets children's needs for outdoor activity and engagement by offering plentiful opportunities to play, explore, and learn in naturally beautiful wooded surroundings.	Close-knit Community Students are immersed in an environment that emphasizes the importance of contributing to the collective wellbeing of the school and establishing positive relationships with all students, teachers, and staff members.	Foundational Diversity Burgundy's identity is grounded in its founding and ongoing growth as a school committed to serving students and families representing a wide range of racial, cultural, and personal identity backgrounds.	First-Person Learning Students learn through a wide range of active experiences, engaging their bodies, senses, and minds in acquiring new knowledge and understanding via guided exploration, collaborative work, and constructive play.	Honoring Childhood The value of play, imagination, and personal discovery is recognized at Burgundy, leading to greater enjoyment of learning, lower anxiety, and age-appropriate development among students.
Character (Attributes expressed in human characteristics and personality traits)	Respectful Students learn to be mindful of the people and resources around them—accordingly, their perspectives and voices are valued and taken into account in school/class decisions as well.	Nurturing Faculty and staff want students to succeed in all areas of their Burgundy experience and do their best to provide guidance and support inside and outside the classroom.	Trusting Burgundy builds confidence in its students, allowing children to walk across campus, play outdoors, and move freely from classroom to classroom without direct adult supervision.	Genuine/Authentic Burgundy offers a relaxed, down-to-earth environment that is welcoming to all and values authenticity and personal connection over social and economic status.	Independent Students are encouraged to think about and approach problems in novel ways, to be receptive to non-traditional ideas, and to actively search for new solutions.
Differentiators (Qualities that are unique, ownable, and telegraphic)	One-of-Kind Campuses Burgundy's rustic setting, farm animals, and charming buildings immediately captivate visitors and convey the unique spirit of the school—and the unique Cove experience further sets the school apart from others.	Parent Involvement Parents are encouraged to take part in developmentally appropriate classroom activities and school functions, an extension of the school's history as a parent-founded institution.	Stimulating Learning Environment Students are provided wide-ranging learning experiences and opportunities at all ages that de-emphasize competition and testing and highlight collaboration and creativity.	Rigorous Thinking Burgundy students develop analytical tools for approaching problems and challenges in a systematic and thorough manner that yields dividends at all stages of their education.	Inherently Progressive While Burgundy follows progressive education practices, these are ingrained in its already established set of values and principles, resulting in an experience that is uniquely Burgundy's and transcends simple labels and trendy approaches.
Benefits to Students & Families (Aspirations)	Preparation for Success Burgundy provides a joyful learning experience that cultivates self-awareness, critical thinking, interpretive skills, and a thirst for knowledge, all of which lay the foundation for academic achievement.	Addressing Individualized Needs Burgundy provides small class sizes that allow teachers to discover and appreciate each student's strengths, as well as identify opportunities for growth.	Self-Awareness/Self-Advocacy Students develop their personal voice, independence, and self-reliance, and are proactive in seeking answers to their questions and gathering information they need.	Impactful Individuals Burgundy graduates are consistently seen by high school staff as exceptionally interesting, dynamic, and well liked, and remembered by the entire school community for their positive contributions.	Conscientious Citizens Burgundy develops self-motivated, engaged individuals who are accountable for their actions and who actively support the advancement of social justice, environmental stewardship, and their communities at large.



The Process

In recent years, Burgundy has been seeing its unique educational approach being replicated among greater numbers of peer independent schools and increasingly some public schools as well. To address this trend and to support efforts to fulfill the goals outlined in its strategic plan, Burgundy issued a Request For Proposal to engage a marketing agency.

Burgundy needed a partner to guide it through a discovery process that would help the school build a foundation for effectively communicating its differentiators and connecting to families with children who would be optimally served by its educational experience. Specifically, the school sought a marketing partner to help it answer three questions:

- How are we successfully communicating who we are in our marketing?
- How are we currently perceived in the marketplace?
- What mission-appropriate families are literally and figuratively not getting our message?

Burgundy selected The Design Channel (TDC) to develop a discovery process for gaining deeper insights into the Burgundy brand from its stakeholders and audiences, and to leverage that understanding into a more advantageous positioning for the school.



Key Takeaways

- The Alexandria campus is Burgundy's main advantage over other schools**
 Burgundy's main campus setting is widely seen as a key differentiator from other schools in the surrounding area. The natural surroundings, presence of farm animals, and spacious campus are immediately attractive to parents/visitors, who can readily see the benefits they provide students.
- Respect for all others permeates the Burgundy community**
 From having their voice factor into meaningful school decisions to learning about their role in caring for the environment and supporting all members of the Burgundy community, students develop a strong sense of citizenship, responsibility, and service to others.
- Burgundy graduates leave their mark**
 When Burgundy students move on to the next step in their education, they often have a notable impact on their schools, such as high acceptance into STEM programs, graduating as class valedictorians, bringing an understanding of design thinking to their work, and being well-remembered individually by school administration.
- A stimulating learning environment prepares students for success**
 Burgundy provides individualized attention and collaborative work, which helps create students and graduates with low levels of anxiety over learning processes. These students thrive in high school both academically and socially, have genuine curiosity about various subjects, and seek deeper understanding in those that interest them.

(Continued)

"Burgundy is a good fit for a family that might not necessarily think of themselves as a typical private school family."

Advancing the Burgundy Story

We have a steadfast commitment to positioning, branding, and messaging for Burgundy. We know that all who are part of the school community contribute to the richness and depth of Burgundy's story, and we know you can be a powerful voice for that narrative to families whose lives would be enriched by the Burgundy experience.

The guide is focused on how we can best articulate the benefits and opportunities offered by the school. As we mentioned earlier, the goal is to make a positive initial impression to prospective families—and there are many avenues through which we can all help to achieve that. Perhaps one day, through our collective efforts, those who have yet to discover the school will become members of its community too, and will also become witnesses to the extraordinary qualities and values of Burgundy.

"I honestly don't know of another school that is similar to Burgundy that offers everything it does."





Think beyond the barriers

Elementary School

From First through Fifth Grades, we emphasize active, first-person learning that encourages children to engage their minds, bodies, and senses in gaining new knowledge and skills. Through guided exploration, collaborative work, and constructive play, students are provided wide-ranging experiences that strengthen foundational abilities as well as creative thinking.

Reading proficiency is gained through games, projects, puzzles, workbooks, textbooks, and homework.

Writing skills are developed and advanced through journals, essays, and reports on topics of interest to students.

Mathematics skills are mastered through hands-on activities and traditional approaches to prepare students for higher-level studies. Students learn strategies to develop number skills and automaticity of math facts and practice using math concepts through problem solving and games.

Science concepts are learned through application of the scientific method and gaining understanding of our natural environment and our relationship to it.

Social studies understanding is developed through investigation of the interdependence of humans, social structures, and processes for resolving conflict.

Additional components of the elementary school curriculum include:

- Thematic units which challenge students to become more rigorous and analytical thinkers and problem-solvers
- Laptop computers and iPads in the classrooms to facilitate development of research skills and computer



Imagine beyond the blackboard

One-Of-A-Kind Learning Environments

Our Alexandria main campus and our Wildlife Studies campus in West Virginia provide students with a connection to nature that is unparalleled in area independent schools. The peaceful, wooded surroundings of our locations offer plentiful opportunities and space to explore, nurture our animal and plant life, think creatively, and gain a deep understanding of our stewardship responsibilities for our natural environment.

Alexandria

Our 20-acre home campus is enveloped by trees and green spaces, and provides the Burgundy community with a secluded learning haven that is also easily accessible from the Capital Beltway. **Outdoor space** features a barn with farm animals, a pond, ball fields and extensive play areas, swimming pool, indoor and outdoor performance areas, and an expansive commons area for school-wide gatherings and events.

Our **indoor learning environments**, including our new Arts & Community Center, offer:

- Fully-equipped science lab
- A maker space lab
- Theater with mezzanine
- Gallery/exhibition space
- Drama/music classrooms
- Gymnasium
- Art studios
- Library and technology center
- Classrooms that open directly to outdoor spaces

West Virginia

The Burgundy Center for Wildlife Studies at Cooper's Cove ("the Cove") is a 500-acre wildlife sanctuary and learning center located 20 hours by car from Alexandria near Cassin Bridge, West Virginia. Nestled in a breathtaking Appalachian Mountain valley, the Cove hosts visits from Burgundy First Graders through Eighth Graders in the fall and spring for immersion in environmental and animal studies. Workshops and outings introduce students to experiences that apply to virtually all natural science disciplines, from geology and fossil hunting to water chemistry and vertebrate/invertebrate research.



"The teachers here are like family and friends—because of this, they really want to help you. As a result, you're more willing to learn from mistakes."

- admissions packet
- insert sheets
- at-a-glance card



- print ads
- website



*Grow
beyond
the boundaries*

You're invited to an upcoming Open House!
December 2, 2-4 p.m.
January 7, 2-4 p.m.

Discover a one-of-a-kind independent school for students age 4 through grade 8. We believe children learn best in an inclusive, creative, and nurturing environment that engages the whole child.

Reserve your spot at burgundyfarm.org/visit of call 703.329.6968.

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BURGUNDY FARM COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

3700 Burgundy Road Alexandria, VA



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NEWS CALENDAR ALUMNI LOGIN

ABOUT ADMISSIONS ACADEMICS COMMUNITY DIVERSITY & EQUITY SUPPORT CENTER FOR WILDLIFE STUDIES SUMMER CAMPS

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the boundaries*