

e-Brand Strategy Pyramid for ACERT

(Association of Campus Emergency Response Teams of Canada)



Prepared by Alex Drossos. July 18, 2002.

The e-Brand Strategy Pyramid was created by Tom Vassos.

This presentation has been prepared as a summary of an analysis of the current e-Branding strategy of ACERT, along with recommendations on how to improve it.

ACERT, the Association of Campus Emergency Response Teams of Canada is a national, registered charity whose purpose is to “support, promote and advocate emergency care on Canadian post-secondary campuses”. You can find out more about ACERT at ACERT.ca.

Please refer to these “Speaker Notes” for further clarification of the information on each slide.

Credits/Author

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The author of this report is [Alex Drossos](#).

It is based on the e-Brand Strategy Pyramid created by [Tom Vassos](#). [Alex Drossos](#) completed this work as partial fulfillment towards an MBA degree at the [Michael G. DeGroote School of Business at McMaster University](#) in Hamilton, Canada.

This presentation was written for the course called [Marketing in Electronic Commerce](#) taught by [Tom Vassos](#), author of [the book Strategic Internet Marketing](#).

There are also several more [e-brand presentations](#) available that analyze the e-brand strategies and tactics for other companies. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.

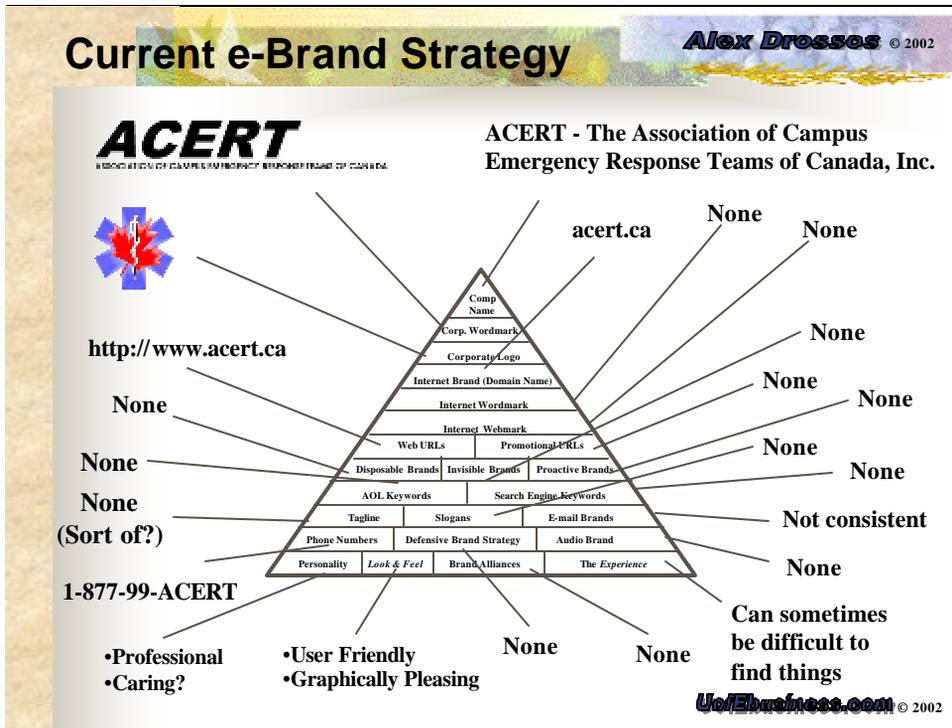
This presentation was prepared with the consultation of this company. It was prepared as a basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective management strategies.

Alex Drossos is currently pursuing a part-time MBA in Health Services Management at the McMaster University Michael G. DeGroote School of Business. At the undergraduate level Alex studied both Computer Engineering and Biology. Alex is employed at Cancer Care Ontario in Toronto, Canada as a Systems Analyst. You can find out more about Alex at [AlexDrossos.com](#).

To find out more about Tom Vassos, the creator of the e-Brand Strategy Pyramid, visit [TomVassos.com](#) and to learn more about the e-Brand Strategy Pyramid go to [UofEBusiness.com](#).

Current e-Brand Strategy

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ACERT's current e-Brand Strategy Pyramid elements are:

- The full company name is rather lengthy: ACERT – The Association of Campus Emergency Response Teams of Canada, Inc.
- ACERT's corporate wordmark is as shown in the image on the slide.
- ACERT's corporate logo is also as shown in the image on the slide.
- ACERT advertises its Internet brand as [acert.ca](http://www.acert.ca).
- Its web URL is <http://www.acert.ca> (it only has one web URL).
- ACERT doesn't exactly have a tag line, but it does use its mission/purpose statement in its place on some pages, which is quite lengthy (see the Speaker Notes for the first slide).
- ACERT has used e-mail brands, or sig files, but not with any consistency. These sig files have included the e-mail address, toll free number, and web URL as well as a message promoting the upcoming event it is sponsoring. These have not been used extensively and consistently by all ACERT staff.
- ACERT has a decent toll free number. It spent significant resources (significant for a small charity that is) to find this number.
- ACERT tries to portray a professional feel to its site and would like to be known as a caring web site.
- The look and feel is user friendly, well designed and graphically pleasing for the most part.
- At times, the structure of the web site results in difficulty finding information.

Current Home Page

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This image capture shows what ACERT's home page currently looks like. The corporate wordmark and corporate logo are used "in place" of an Internet wordmark and webmark. ACERT's web site has both an English and French section, but the French section is highly underdeveloped and still under construction.

At the bottom of the page the displayed information is in a fairly large font that takes away somewhat from the rest of the page. Also, the smaller ACERT corporate logo is actually an animated gif image that spins in a clockwise fashion. This image, apart from being somewhat annoying, also takes away from the elements on the rest of the page since the animation draws the user's eyes immediately.

ACERT lists its registered charity number on its home page to promote credibility of the organization.

Recommended e-Brand Strategy

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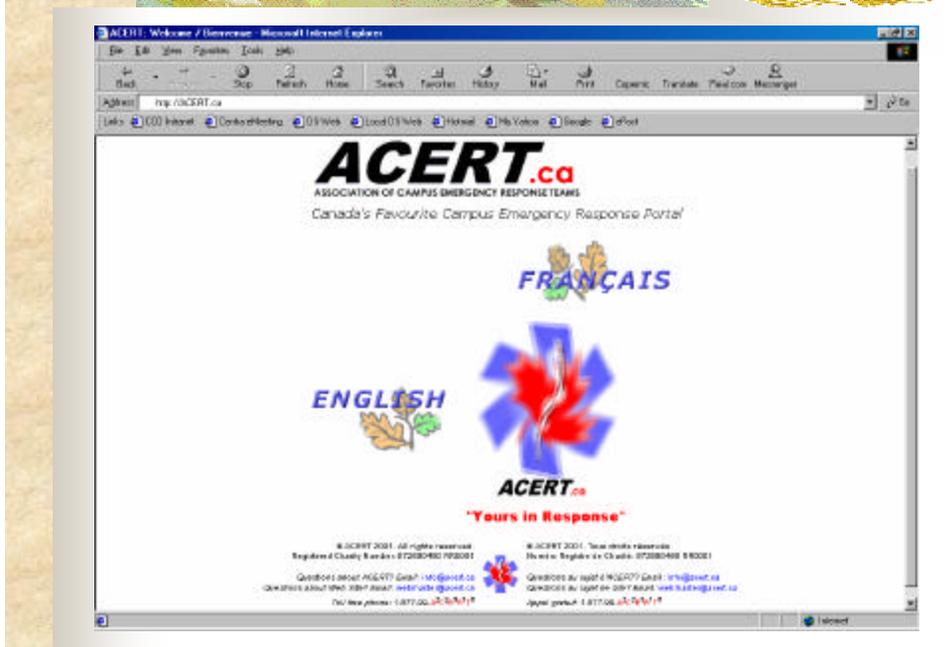


ACERT's recommended e-Brand Strategy Pyramid elements are:

- ACERT should advertise its Internet brand as ACERT.ca (i.e. with capitals, as in the acronym itself).
- ACERT should modify its corporate wordmark to create an Internet wordmark by adding .ca at the end (as in the image on the slide)
- ACERT should stylize its corporate logo and add the Internet brand at the bottom to create an Internet webmark (an example option is shown in the image on the slide).
- ACERT should register the listed promotional URLs (NCCER.ca and Mixer.ca) to promote the two major events of the year it sponsors.
- ACERT should register ASERT.ca for those spelling the Internet brand incorrectly as well as ACERT.com for US or .com traffic (ASERT.com is already taken so it can't register this one as well).
- ACERT should purchase the AOL and search engine keyword "ACERT".
- ACERT must create and consistently use a tag line that truly communicates what it does, where and with what value. ACERT should also use an appropriate slogan such as "Yours in Response", which it has used in sig files.
- ACERT could also consider purchasing defensive brands to realize a more top-of-mind Internet brand, which could also open up its market considerably.
- If ACERT truly wants a caring feel on its site it must design it with that in mind; it must also structure it so that it is more useable and easier to navigate.
- ACERT's brand alliances are not well developed. It needs to foster these relationships and make them visible on its web site.

Recommended Home Page

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This image capture shows an example of what ACERT could do with its home page that would promote its recommended e-Brand Strategy Pyramid elements.

- Firstly, notice in the address bar that the Web URL is <http://ACERT.ca> (as recommended with the capital letters); this works correctly today with the way the ACERT web server is set up.

- Other elements that have been added as described in the previous slide include:

- The Internet wordmark
- The tag line
- The Internet webmark
- The slogan
- Listing of the toll free phone number

- Notice as well that the font size for the text at the bottom of the page has been reduced by one step and the smaller logo image at the bottom is now static, and not an animated gif.

- Finally, the toll free number is not only being advertised in its “easy to remember format” (i.e. 1-877-99-ACERT), but the actual digits associated with the letters are listed in superscript, a clever way to include both the letters and digits together rather than having to repeat the phone number twice.

Tactical e-Branding Errors

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- **Creating a web site without thinking about what ACERT should be on the Internet**
 - i.e. simply making its web presence the same as its real world presence
- **Not having a tagline**
- **Jumping a bit to the “cool stage”**
- **Lacking a clear and concise Internet strategy**
- **Not communicating/advertising the web site well enough**

In 1997 ACERT decided it needed to be on the Internet. However, the organization didn't take much time to think about what ACERT would be on the Internet. It simply took its real world goals and strategy and put them on the web.

One could argue that for a young organization, and especially in 1997, this wasn't too large a mistake. But in today's day and age not having an Internet strategy is a problem, and ACERT should have probably already recognized this by now.

ACERT also jumped somewhat to the *Cool Stage* of the e-Business Roadmap, a common mistake for small business going to the net. It did this by attempting to set up chat rooms, discussion forums and other “cool” features before laying the founding of the web site. Furthermore, most of these attempts of adding *Cool* content ultimately failed, which likely resulted in the loss of some customers.

A less obvious mistake ACERT made was not having a tag line. This is especially important for ACERT given that the business it is in will typically not be obvious to most who stumble across the site without a specific purpose.

Recommended e-Branding Tactics

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- **Come up with an e-Branding strategy**
- **Design a “web presence” for ACERT**
- **Purchase invisible, defensive and promotional URLs/brands as needed**
- **Reorganize the structure of the site so it’s easier to navigate**
- **Really give the site a “caring” feel**
 - **After all, this is the Campus Emergency Response field where caring is very important**
- **Get listed on even more search engines**
 - **Purchase search engine and AOL keywords**

As a result of the Tactical Errors on the previous slide, ACERT has a few steps ahead of it to excel at e-Branding. The good news for ACERT is that these items won’t take up too many human resources nor will they cost a lot.

The e-Branding strategy that ACERT develops should be a component of the overall Internet strategy for the organization. It will include details about a “web presence” as well as some cheap ways to get more people to the web site, such as by purchasing invisible, defensive and promotional brands (see the slide entitled Recommended e-Brand Strategy) and by getting listed on search engines and purchasing search engine as well as AOL keywords.

Two things ACERT must consider doing to the structure of the web site include making it easier to find information, and truly promoting the “caring” feeling for which it is striving.

Recommended e-Branding Tactics

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- **Use ACERT.ca (and not www.acert.ca) as the Internet brand**
 - **Advertise this as much as possible - for free!**
- **Use a tag line – everywhere**
- **Use a slogan – everywhere**
- **Collaborate with others and form Brand Alliances**
- **Consistently use sig files for e-mail brands**
- **Look to reach the French market in an appropriate, culturally sensitive, and equal manner**

The tag line and slogan that ACERT develops (see slide entitled Recommended e-Brand Strategy for an example of each) must be used both consistently and extensively. ACERT also needs to use signature files and e-mail marketing effectively and consistently.

The other two items listed on this slide require ACERT to make connections and establish resources that don't already exist. Both of these items however will allow ACERT to reach a much larger market. These items are of course forming brand alliances and reaching the French market. The beauty of pursuing these in the e-Branding (and Internet) strategy is that they will also prove extremely useful in ACERT's real world endeavours.

To conclude, ACERT has done a decent job of creating a web site that is information rich and quite visually appealing. Now ACERT must become more strategic about what it does with its web site in order to meet the needs of both current members and the entire campus emergency response market.