



Not Everything Is Roses: Brand Management Challenges *Nem Tudo São Só Flores, Mas Também Gerenciamento de Marca* *No Todo Son Solo Flores, Sino También Gestión de Marca*

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Abstract

The company Agrícola da Ilha, which produces and sells flowers, has historically faced significant difficulties in sourcing selected seedlings from the market. To overcome this limitation, the company began cultivating its own selected plants and established a showroom to present the results of this selection process to its clients. Over time, the owners gradually transformed the showroom into a park open to the public. This initiative led to the creation of Parque dos Hemerocallis. Over the years, revenue from park admissions grew substantially and eventually accounted for 60% of the company's total revenue, becoming Agrícola da Ilha's primary source of income. As a result, the owners began to question whether the park should develop its own brand identity. This case is based on a real situation and aims to help students understand brand architecture and brand management while reflecting on the implications of this strategic decision. Data were collected through a personal interview with the company's owner, whose business is located in Joinville, Santa Catarina, Brazil.

Keywords: brand architecture, brand management, strategic marketing.

Resumo

A empresa Agrícola da Ilha, que produz e comercializa flores, sempre teve grandes dificuldades para encontrar mudas selecionadas no mercado. Resolveu começar o plantio e montar um showroom para mostrar o resultado da seleção aos clientes. Aos poucos, os proprietários transformaram o showroom em um parque aberto ao público. Assim surgiu o Parque dos Hemerocallis. Com o passar dos anos, o faturamento oriundo dos ingressos do parque chegou a 60% do faturamento total da empresa, sendo a principal fonte de faturamento da Agrícola da Ilha. Com isso, os proprietários passaram a questionar a necessidade de criar uma marca própria para o parque. Esse caso é real e tem como objetivo fazer com que os alunos compreendam a arquitetura e o gerenciamento de marca e reflitam os impactos dessa tomada de decisão. Os dados foram coletados em entrevista pessoal com o proprietário da empresa, localizada em Joinville, Santa Catarina.

Palavras-chave: arquitetura de marca, gerenciamento de marca, marketing estratégico.

Resumen

La empresa Agrícola da Ilha, dedicada a la producción y comercialización de flores, históricamente enfrentó grandes dificultades para encontrar plántulas seleccionadas en el mercado. Ante esta situación, decidió iniciar su propio cultivo y establecer un showroom con el fin de exhibir a los clientes los resultados del proceso de selección. Gradualmente, los propietarios transformaron el showroom en un parque abierto al público, dando origen al Parque de los Hemerocallis. Con el transcurso de los años, los ingresos provenientes de la venta de entradas del parque alcanzaron el 60 % de la facturación total de la empresa, convirtiéndose en su principal fuente de ingresos. En consecuencia, los propietarios comenzaron a cuestionar la necesidad de crear una marca propia para el parque. Este caso es real y tiene como objetivo permitir que los estudiantes comprendan la arquitectura y la gestión de marca, así como reflexionar sobre los impactos derivados de esta decisión estratégica. Los datos fueron recolectados mediante una entrevista personal con el propietario de la empresa, ubicada en Joinville, Santa Catarina.

Palabras clave: arquitectura de marca, gestión de marca, marketing estratégico.

Agrícola da Ilha, a company dedicated to the production and commercialization of flowers, experienced significant difficulties in sourcing batches of seedlings in which all flowers had the same color. For this reason, the company began cultivating its own selected seeds and established a showroom to present the results of this selection process to clients. Shortly thereafter, the owners noticed growing interest in visiting the park not only among customers but also among members of the general public. Consequently, they identified an opportunity to create a park open to visitors for tourism purposes. This initiative led to the creation of Parque dos Hemerocallis.

For several years, Parque dos Hemerocallis functioned as one of the attractions of Agrícola da Ilha. Over time, the number of visitors increased steadily, as did the revenue generated from admission tickets. As public interest in visiting the park grew, eventually surpassing the company's original business activity, the owners faced a major dilemma: Should Parque dos Hemerocallis have its own brand? What are the advantages and disadvantages of developing a new brand for the establishment? How would this affect its relationship with Agrícola da Ilha? Alternatively, if the brand remained linked to Agrícola da Ilha, what would be the advantages and disadvantages for the park? These questions needed to be addressed before the business experienced further expansion. In addition, making an incorrect decision at an early stage would still allow the company to recover from potential losses.

The Business

The company's activities began in 1987 as a gardening business, when Dário Bergemann and his family took over a small enterprise owned by a neighboring gardener who was about to retire. Dário's family dedicated themselves to designing and installing residential and commercial gardens, in addition to providing general gardening services such as cleaning and mowing. The company served houses, rural properties, residential complexes, commercial entrances, and, over time, began maintaining several public gardens in partnership with the Joinville City Hall, in the city where the business was located.

The inputs required for garden installation, such as plant seedlings, flowers, soil, fertilizer, and stones, were purchased from other companies and delivered to Dário's business. From preparing the budget with clients to purchasing supplies from suppliers, all procedures were handled by the family itself.

By 1990, the business had become more structured and was experiencing steady growth. The family invested heavily in workforce specialization to expand the company's portfolio of services, including the construction of ornamental lakes and fountains. During this period, the cultivation of grass and other plant species also began. In 1992, the company adopted the name Agrícola da Ilha.

In April of that same year, the company was hired to design and install a flower garden composed exclusively of Hemerocallis (commercially known as daylilies) in yellow. Dário purchased the seedlings from his usual supplier and waited for the results. In October, when the flowers bloomed, he discovered that, in addition to the yellow Hemerocallis, there were flowers of other colors. Because this did not meet the contractual requirements, the client requested that the flowers of other colors be removed and replaced with plants of the specified color. This situation resulted in rework, time loss, financial damage, and an uncomfortable situation between the client and Agrícola da Ilha.

The Solution to the Problem

In Brazil, Hemerocallis were not produced on a large scale, which frequently made it difficult for the company to obtain seedlings with uniform flower colors. In addition, the supply of pure seedlings was uncertain. In the 1990s, only five Hemerocallis varieties were available in Brazil: Amália, Flore Pleno, Harriet, Hellen, and Sophia.

In an effort to avoid delivering landscaping projects that differed from what had been agreed upon with clients, Dário recognized the difficulty of obtaining batches of seedlings with flowers of the same color. This challenge led him to identify an opportunity to produce his own seedlings. As a result, a new market opportunity emerged, since *Hemerocallis* had high landscaping potential, required relatively low maintenance, and at that time had few specialized producers.

Still in 1992, Dário and his family decided to begin cultivating the species. To do so, they studied the production process, acquired scientific knowledge, and established contacts with professionals in the field. In 1995, while attending a trade fair, they met a researcher from Campinas, São Paulo, who was investigating several plant species, including *Hemerocallis*. This encounter led to an 11-year partnership and a research project conducted by the Instituto Agrônômico de Campinas, funded by Agrícola da Ilha. During this period, the company divided and organized its cultivation area into sections for grasses, agapanthus, *Hemerocallis*, and a separate space dedicated to the development of ornamental lake projects.

In the same year, the company also began collaborating with designers and architects. These professionals were responsible for selling the project concepts and products to their clients, while Agrícola da Ilha handled the implementation. This partnership boosted the family's sales and reduced concerns about financial stability, allowing them to focus on execution, which is the activity they most enjoyed.

In May 2000, Dário traveled to the United States to deepen his knowledge of *Hemerocallis* cultivation. During this process, he received encouragement from North American producers and from the American *Hemerocallis* Society to develop new cultivars in Brazil, plant varieties improved through the modification or introduction of previously nonexistent characteristics. The following year, during another visit to the United States, Dário acquired 120 cultivars to serve as parent plants for breeding crosses. The first cultivar to germinate in Agrícola da Ilha's fields was named Bárbara. From that point forward, the company intensified its investments in genetic improvement and expanded its catalog.

In October of that same year, the family maintained a small flowering garden composed of selected *Hemerocallis* seedlings and began inviting some clients and members of the local community to visit. This first *Hemerocallis* garden became a source of great satisfaction for the family and served as a showroom, allowing Agrícola da Ilha's clients to observe the flowers used in the landscaping projects carried out by the company.

As a result, the company achieved three objectives: the creation of *Hemerocallis* gardens that also served as showrooms for clients; the assurance that the seedlings planted in gardens would produce flowers of the desired colors; and increased revenue through the resale of *Hemerocallis* to other gardeners.

In 2002, Agrícola da Ilha created the Brazilian *Hemerocallis* Festival, an event designed to promote the flower and held annually on the company's property. The event was open to the public as well as to landscaping professionals, allowing visitors to tour both the gardens and the production fields. In addition to serving as an important gateway for attracting customers to the park, the garden became a significant tourist attraction in the city of Joinville, which is also known as the "City of Flowers." Over time, the festival grew substantially and now receives an average of 20,000 visitors per edition, with an annual production of approximately 300,000 seedlings. This development positioned the city as the largest producer of this flower in Latin America, offering more than 70 species.

An Unexpected Business Opportunity

The company's goal was to establish *Hemerocallis* as a desirable product in the market. As its gardens expanded, the family secured a growing consumer base by participating in trade fairs, exhibitions, and conferences. The gardens themselves became a major tourist attraction. The initiative proved so successful that many people began visiting the company simply to see the various plantations, especially the *Hemerocallis* fields with their wide variety of colors.

On one occasion, a friend suggested to Dário that he should charge an admission fee to allow public access to the fields on his property. The family recognized an opportunity to open the space not only to architects and landscape designers but also to the general public, focusing on tourism and leisure activities.

The inauguration of the park enabled the planting of several flower species, the construction of ornamental lakes with fish, the creation of small walking trails, and the installation of benches along shaded paths beneath large trees. However, the park was effectively opened for tourist visitation only in 2009. With the opening, the park began participating regularly in tourism fairs and exhibitions. The intention was to promote the space as a destination where visitors could enjoy family outings, leisure activities, relaxation from daily concerns, and contact with nature. Dário and his family hoped the park would become known throughout Brazil. Nevertheless, they initially faced skepticism, with comments such as: "Who will give credibility to a small producer from Joinville, a predominantly industrial city?"

In 2014, the company introduced an admission fee, defined the visitation area separately from the production space, and reorganized the site to better serve visitors. To do so, investments were made in accessibility, restrooms, ornamental lakes, and the hiring of qualified professionals to guide visitors during their tours, providing valuable technical information about the plants, trees, and flowers.

In the first year of charging admission, park revenue represented 10% of the company's total revenue. In the following year, this figure increased to 35%, although landscaping services still accounted for the largest share (50%), with the remaining 15% coming from the sale of flowers and pots in the park's store. By 2017, park operations and landscaping services each accounted for 40% of the company's revenue, with the remainder originating from store

sales. In 2018, the park generated 50% of total profits, and in 2019 it accounted for 60% of total revenue. For 2022, Dário and his family projected that Parque dos Hemerocallis would become the company's primary source of revenue. Nevertheless, they intended to maintain landscaping services, as these activities provided financial stability to cover operating costs and proved essential during the pandemic, when the park had to remain closed.

The Dilemma

Recently, identification signs, directional signs, and motivational quotes were installed throughout the park's garden beds, all standardized with the Parque dos Hemerocallis brand. However, Dário still expressed uncertainty about whether this strategy was appropriate. He was unsure whether the entire visual communication should be redesigned to adopt exclusively the Parque dos Hemerocallis brand or whether the identity of Agrícola da Ilha, whose name was already recognized by many people, should be maintained.

Currently, most park visitors, including many residents of the city, are unaware of the connection between the park and Agrícola da Ilha, the commercial producer. This situation raises an important question: Would it be more appropriate to maintain the Agrícola da Ilha brand or to transition fully to Parque dos Hemerocallis? Would it be more advantageous to leverage the audience already familiar with the company from its long history as a producer, or would it be better to separate the businesses and invest in a brand focused on this new audience centered on tourism and leisure?

Teaching Notes

Data Source

Not Everything Is Roses: Brand Management as Well is based on a real case. The narrative presented in the case contains no fictional elements, and all names used correspond to the real individuals and organizations involved. Data used to develop the case were obtained through a personal interview with Dário Bergemann, owner of Agrícola da Ilha and Parque dos Hemerocallis, conducted between April and June 2021.

Educational Objectives

This teaching case aims to develop analytical thinking and strategic reasoning through reflection and argumentation regarding the maintenance of the Parque dos Hemerocallis brand either directly associated with Agrícola da Ilha or separated from it. The intention is that, based on the information provided, readers will be able to think strategically about the advantages and disadvantages for the business arising from each possible decision. At a second stage, the case requires readers to understand that both alternatives have implications for the two organizations.

Recommended Use

The case is primarily recommended for courses addressing branding in undergraduate programs in Marketing, Advertising, and related fields, particularly when studying brand elements. It may also be used in graduate-level courses, especially in MBA and specialization programs where similar topics are addressed. In addition, the case can serve as a review or training exercise for previously covered content, as well as a means of encouraging different perspectives on branding concepts. It is also applicable in technical programs or similar forms of professional training, with the aim of connecting theoretical knowledge with practical application. The methodology can therefore be adapted for use in distance learning environments.

Suggested Application

The case may be conducted using two types of questions: transition questions (TQ), which guide the discussion toward the central issue of the case, and discussion questions (DQ), which address the core topic and aim to resolve the dilemma presented. The use of these two types of questions should be alternated. The following sequence is suggested:

TQ1: What is an organizational brand?

TQ2: What is the function of a brand for a business?

DQ1: What are the advantages of using the brand associated with Agrícola da Ilha?

DQ2: What are the disadvantages of using the brand associated with Agrícola da Ilha?

DQ3: What are the advantages of creating an exclusive brand for the park?

DQ4: What are the disadvantages of creating an exclusive brand for the park?

DQ5: Should the brand belong exclusively to the park, or should it remain associated with Agrícola da Ilha?

The case discussion is expected to take approximately 3 hours and may be conducted according to the following structure:

- The theoretical content addressed in the case (brand: elements and objectives) should have been presented previously.
- The instructor provides the case to students for individual reading, either in printed or digital format, and allows approximately 25 minutes for reading.
- After the reading, the instructor encourages the class to identify the key elements of the case in a brief review, using questions aimed at clarifying who the characters are, the background of the story, and the situation faced by the protagonist.
- From this point, the case may be conducted in at least four different ways:

1) Using online interaction tools through which each participant individually answers the proposed questions. After each round of interaction, the instructor leads the discussion with the entire class in a face-to-face, hybrid, or synchronous remote setting;

2) Dividing the class into two groups: one group supporting the creation of a new brand and the other supporting the maintenance of the existing brand. Each group presents arguments in favor of its position and critiques the alternative option;

3) Dividing the class into small groups of three to five participants. The questions are initially discussed within these subgroups and subsequently debated in the larger class discussion;

4) Conducting the activity asynchronously online through a discussion forum.

– After the review, the instructor begins the discussion with the Transition Questions to align participants' understanding of the concept of brand. The instructor first asks (TQ1): **What is an organizational brand?** Participants should be encouraged to reflect on the concept and the elements that compose a brand. During this discussion, the function of the brand may naturally emerge, addressing (TQ2): **What is the function of a brand for a business?**

According to the American Marketing Association, "A brand is a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's goods or service as distinct from those of other sellers." From this definition, it becomes possible to understand what a brand is, the elements that compose it, and its function within an organization. Differentiation is inherent to the concept of a brand; if it fails to distinguish a product or service from competitors, as indicated in the definition, it ceases to function as a brand and becomes merely one or more visual elements.

From a more subjective perspective, which will not be the central focus of the debate but remains an important peripheral topic for the continuation of the discussion, brands represent one of the most important intangible assets of modern organizations (Gonçalves et al., 2017). Through a brand, an organization communicates what it intends to offer its audience, whether a solution to a problem or the conveyance of status, for example. More importantly, a brand has the capacity to become embedded in consumers' minds as a reference. When it becomes the first option within its segment, a brand can generate the highly valued concept of added value, i.e., when consumers are willing, in some cases, to pay a higher price for a product simply because it belongs to a particular brand.

Branding, in turn, refers to the process of developing and managing a brand. This process must be continuous and systematic so that the brand can be regularly reassessed according to market analysis and consumer behavior (Prado; Pinto, 2021).

– Once the role of the organizational brand has been established, the discussion can move toward the central dilemma through the DQs. When addressing (DQ1) **What are the advantages of using the brand associated with Agrícola da Ilha?**, (DQ2) **What are the disadvantages of using the brand associated with Agrícola da Ilha?**, (DQ3) **What are the advantages of an exclusive brand for the park?**, and (DQ4) **What are the disadvantages of an exclusive brand for the park?**, the instructor should encourage students to raise points related to strategic business thinking. Students should also be prompted to consider the various organizational dimensions that may be affected by the decision, both positively and negatively, from the conception of the brand to its consolidation and eventual results.

The theoretical discussion of questions DQ1, DQ2, DQ3, and DQ4 should be approached comparatively between the two alternatives. Some aspects may be inversely associated with one option or the other, while other aspects are specific to each choice.

The model below may assist the instructor in organizing the discussion on the board as the arguments emerge during the debate.

	AGRÍCOLA DA ILHA	PARQUE DOS HEMEROCALLIS
A D V A N T A G E S	+ Brand already recognized + No costs associated with developing a new brand + No costs associated with new visual communication materials + Large existing customer base for other services	+ Greater communication alignment with the target audience + Clearer transmission of the brand's intended message

D I S A D V A N T A G E S	– Distinct audiences	
	– Audiences with different interests	– Additional costs for developing a new brand
	– Risk of association with other services provided	– Additional costs for visual communication materials
	– Risk of association with a “new direction” for long-standing park visitors	– Need to prospect new clients without the support of the previous brand
	– Risk of association with repositioning among long-standing gardening clients	– Time required to consolidate the new brand

The work of Pereira, Limberger, and Flore (2018) emphasizes that branding strengthens reputation, stimulates customer loyalty, ensures perceived quality, and conveys a perception of higher value for the product or service offered under a given brand.

Cost and Time Required to Develop the New Brand and Visual Communication

Once the decision to create a new brand has been made, the first step is likely the one that requires the greatest attention, cost, and time: developing the new brand and consolidating it in the market. In the case analyzed here, Parque dos Hemerocallis already has a newly developed brand, which significantly reduces both the time and the cost associated with this process.

Under such circumstances, the cost and time required for brand development do not represent a disadvantage for adopting the new brand. However, if no materials had yet been developed, these aspects would represent disadvantages for creating a new brand and, consequently, advantages for maintaining the existing brand.

To illustrate this point, brand development may cost between approximately BRL 200, when hiring a freelance professional, and BRL 25,000, according to the reference price table of the Sindicato das Agências de Propaganda de Santa Catarina, when contracting a larger advertising agency to carry out the work, including the creation of the company name, logo, brand application manual, and slogan (Sinaprosoc, 2022).

The time required for development varies according to the maturity of the concept and the professional's ability to meet the entrepreneur's expectations. For example, the development of the brand for the U.S. airline Breeze, designed by the Brazilian professional Gianfranco Betting, involved 40 proposals before reaching the final version after 12 months of work, according to the designer's statement on social media when celebrating the project's launch. In contrast, some projects are completed in less time and still achieve successful outcomes (Beting, 2020).

After the brand has been developed, it must become visible through visual communication materials, which also require financial resources and time for development. The case indicates that the park already has some materials produced with the new visual identity. If the owners choose to maintain the Agrícola da Ilha brand, they would lose the materials already developed for the park. Conversely, if they decide to maintain the park's brand, they will need to continue developing the remaining visual communication materials under the new identity. Therefore, regarding brand development and visual communication, choosing one brand or the other may not significantly affect what still needs to be done.

Brand Consolidation and Communication Effectiveness

The Agrícola da Ilha brand has been consolidated in the market for several years and has gradually entered the tourism sector through participation in events aimed at promoting the park. However, the case shows that a large portion of the park's visitors are unaware of the company's service operations. In other words, they are primarily customers of the park itself.

The main advantage of maintaining Agrícola da Ilha as the leading brand lies in its extensive client portfolio, which could potentially migrate to the park. However, this movement has not yet materialized, partly because the park's target audience has different objectives from those served by the company's other services. This mismatch in interests and audiences means that the existing clientele and brand consolidation of Agrícola da Ilha do not necessarily influence the park's performance.

Conversely, if the new brand is adopted, communication with the park's audience may become more precise, both in terms of identifying the target audience and addressing its interests. Moreover, adopting a separate brand allows greater freedom in communication strategies, without concern that clients seeking professional landscaping services, who expect seriousness and professionalism, might encounter highly informal or entertainment-focused promotional content designed for the park's visitors.

From this perspective, the park would need to focus on attracting new visitors, establishing itself within the tourism sector, and consolidating its brand independently from Agrícola da Ilha. This process could occur quickly

and at relatively low cost (e.g., through a viral video on the internet) but it could also take longer and require greater investment for the brand to gain recognition. The decision will also depend on the market the company intends to reach (e.g., geographically) as well as on its capacity to absorb demand. Over time, it will also be necessary to ensure that operational capacity grows proportionally to increasing demand.

Risks

Both options involve temporary risks and, in principle, do not generate severe problems. Maintaining the Agrícola brand may lead to the association of any negative experiences related to the company's other services with the park itself. Conversely, a negative experience at the park could influence clients' decisions when hiring Agrícola's landscaping services. If the brands are managed separately, however, occasional inconveniences, such as negative reactions on social media or issues involving one of the brands, would not necessarily affect the other. Thus, separating the brands may function as a safeguard for both.

If the Agrícola brand continues to be used, clients of the landscaping services, and eventually park visitors, may perceive that the company is repositioning itself by concentrating primarily on park-related activities rather than on external services. Additionally, this strategy could lead park visitors who were previously unfamiliar with the Agrícola brand to interpret the change as a "new direction" for the company.

– To conclude the discussion, it is useful to return to the central dilemma of the case (DQ5): **Should the brand belong exclusively to the park, or should it remain associated with Agrícola da Ilha?** It may be helpful to pose this question at the beginning of the discussion so that students initially reflect on the decision with limited information. At the end of the discussion, they can revisit the same question after considering the various arguments raised during the analysis. The difference between the two responses highlights the importance of strategic thinking and analytical reasoning in decision-making.

Discussing strategic decisions is often challenging because, although theoretical frameworks provide guidance, there is rarely a single correct answer. Numerous variables influence a business, and many aspects change according to context. Nevertheless, branding theory offers explanations and guidelines regarding brand architecture and brand management. However, most of these theoretical approaches focus on examples and contexts involving large multinational corporations (Calkins, 2017).

In this case, the dilemma is not immediately explicit but can be analyzed through the lens of product portfolio and brand portfolio strategies. Agrícola da Ilha operates as a landscaping service provider, supplying the inputs necessary for the execution of contracted services. Parque dos Hemerocallis, although it supports Agrícola da Ilha's services by providing a space for cultivating plants used in landscaping projects and functioning as a showroom for gardening clients, operates in a different sector, tourism and leisure.

If the company continues to use the Agrícola da Ilha brand, it would be expanding its product portfolio. This strategy can be effective for developing and offering products or services within the same category but with specific characteristics that meet the needs of different market segments. Such an approach helps avoid internal competition while ensuring that consumers in the category have options aligned with their preferences. An example is Coca-Cola's product portfolio in Brazil: while some consumers prefer the original flavor, others who wish to consume fewer calories, whether for health or aesthetic reasons, can choose the light version (Rocha, 2017). So, product portfolio expansion does not fully correspond to the situation of Parque dos Hemerocallis.

Alternatively, adopting a new brand for Parque dos Hemerocallis would represent an expansion of the company's brand portfolio. As mentioned earlier, this strategy is common among large multinational corporations that operate under a corporate brand structure, such as P&G, PepsiCo, and Nestlé. Unilever, for instance, is a corporate brand that owns multiple brands across different categories, including personal care, cleaning products, and food (Unilever, 2023). This alternative appears more consistent with the case's dilemma, particularly considering what the brand seeks to communicate and deliver to its audience, as well as the characteristics of that audience. According to branding theory, therefore, the situation analogous to the dilemma presented in the case would suggest a strategic direction in which Parque dos Hemerocallis develops its own brand and identity.

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