

# Inland Bays Shellfish Branding Phase 1: Discovery

**Delaware Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service**  
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# Inland Bays Shellfish Brand Discovery: Topline Summary

# Topline Summary

## Overall Conclusions

- The brand must be a premium oyster that appeals to consumers, that supports the local culinary and tourist markets, that supports the health of the Inland Bays and has the potential to succeed beyond local markets.
- The current competition ranges from Virginia to Canada, but the primary competition is Maryland, and especially, Virginia—particularly Chincoteagues.
- The positioning of the brand must initially focus on its local origin in Southern Delaware (but not so that it prevents marketing beyond Delaware.)

# Topline Summary

## Overall Conclusions

- The brand must succeed with growers, distributors and restaurateurs as well as with local and visiting consumers.
- Current names are primarily location-based, but often with additional descriptors, like “Salts.”
- While not widely expressed, it appears there is a strong desire among some to develop an Inland Bays umbrella brand, under which local watermen can market their own brands.

# Expert Assessment: Stakeholder Interviews

# Brand Discovery: Interviews

- **Ed Lewandowski**
  - Coastal Communities Development Specialist, Delaware Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service, University of Delaware
- **Scott Kammerer**
  - President, Highwater Management, Matt Haley Companies
- **Jenn Jones**
  - Development & Marketing Coordinator, DE Center for the Inland Bays
- **Sunny Jardine**
  - Assistant Professor, School of Marine Science and Policy, University of Delaware

# Brand Discovery: Interviews

- **Maik Kecinski**
  - Postdoctoral Researcher, Center for Experimental & Applied Economics, University of Delaware
- **David Smith**
  - Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Delaware Department of Agriculture
- **Scott Thomas**
  - Executive Director, Southern Delaware Tourism
- **Doris Hicks**
  - Seafood Technology Specialist, Delaware Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service, University of Delaware

# Brand Discovery: Interviews

- **Katy O'Connell**
  - Director, Environmental Public Education, Delaware Sea Grant College Program, University of Delaware
- **Joe Baker**
  - Founder, Henlopen City Oyster House
- **John Ewart**
  - Aquaculture and Fisheries Specialist, Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service, University of Delaware
- **Steve Friend**
  - Clammer and Oyster Grower
- **Donny Merrill**
  - Owner/Chef, Skipjack Restaurant

# Descriptions of Inland Bays Shellfish

Recurring themes, most of which concern oysters:

- A brand with lots of potential, including for younger consumers; a premium brand
- A nice, plump, high quality oyster with saltiness
- A project that will restore the quality of the Inland Bays
- A brand that supports the local market; but also one that appeals to tourists—and eventually to other markets
- An opportunity to support the brand of the Inland Bays

# Descriptions of Inland Bays Shellfish

Additional comments focus on the local nature of the brand:

- It must be described in terms of its native habitat—the same environment that gives it its great taste—crisp, clean with an optimum brininess

# Strengths of the Brand

These comments echo what individuals had previously used to describe Inland Bays Shellfish:

- Positive local impact on:
- environment of the bay
- The economic benefits of employment (not just growers, but the tourism industry)
- The ability of local restaurants to offer a Southern Delaware-sourced product
- How the Inland Bays themselves are perceived

# Weaknesses of the Brand

Most of these comments identifying weaknesses fell into three categories:

- The concerns of waterfront homeowners, recreational users of the bay and clammers
- The lack of overall awareness of aquaculture and oysters in the state (and beyond Delaware, awareness of the state)
- Possible health concerns with eating raw shellfish

# Opportunities of the Brand

While many of the comments repeated comments from the strengths responses, the most comments in this section addressed the economic impact of a new industry—especially for the culinary industry.

# Competition

- The competition is seen as ranging from Virginia to Prince Edward Island. The most mentioned areas were Maryland and, especially Virginia—with Chincoteague being cited several times.
- What would set Inland Bays apart from these competitors:
  - Local, local, local was the overwhelming response to this question.

# Potential Customers & Their Perceptions

- Many different audiences were identified, from the oyster consumer (especially younger ones) up to the distributor to whom the oyster grower sells.
- Also to be included (with particular mention of restaurants):
  - Visitors and tourists (including culinary tourists)
  - Eventually beyond the local markets to other markets (like NY)
  - Wholesalers
  - Restaurants, farmers markets, fish stores

# Additional Observations

- Brand must be flexible and adaptable to the:
  - Growers
  - Restaurants
  - Local Promoters, (like tourism)
- Brand would be an umbrella for the growers, like a coalition. But important for them to be individuals as well.
- Branding depends on the audience. Local restaurants would really like to have a product like this. "It is so many miles away, it cleans the water." Talks to locavores.

# Inland Bays Shellfish Brand Development: Draft Brand Proposal

# Our Branding Process

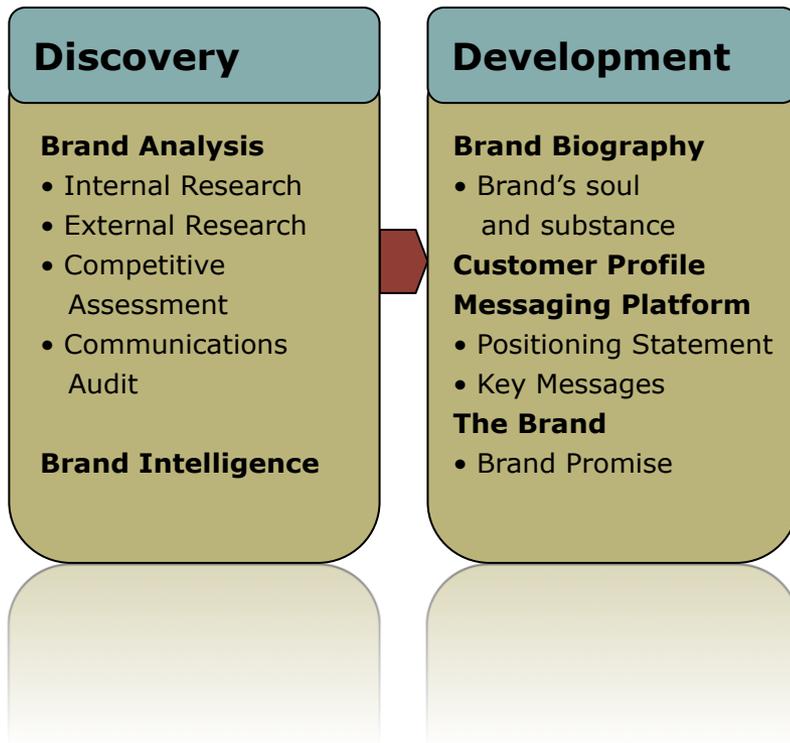
## Discovery

### Brand Analysis

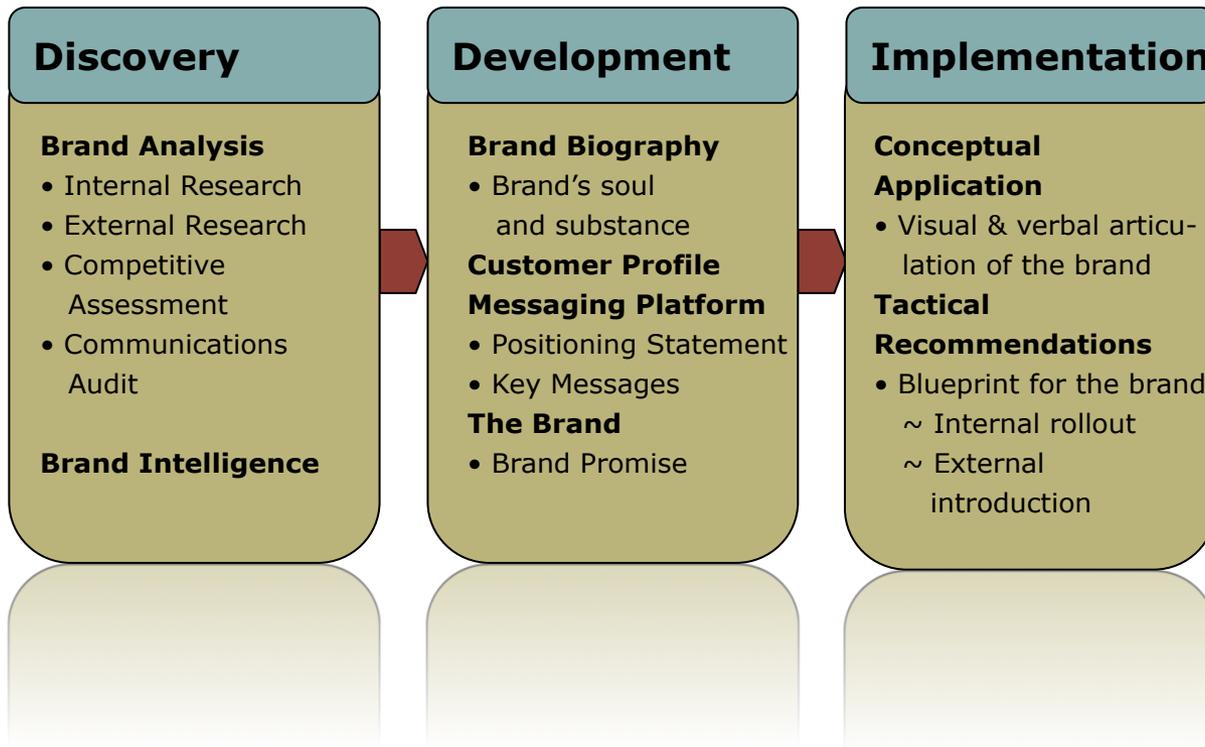
- Internal Research
- External Research
- Competitive Assessment
- Communications Audit

### Brand Intelligence

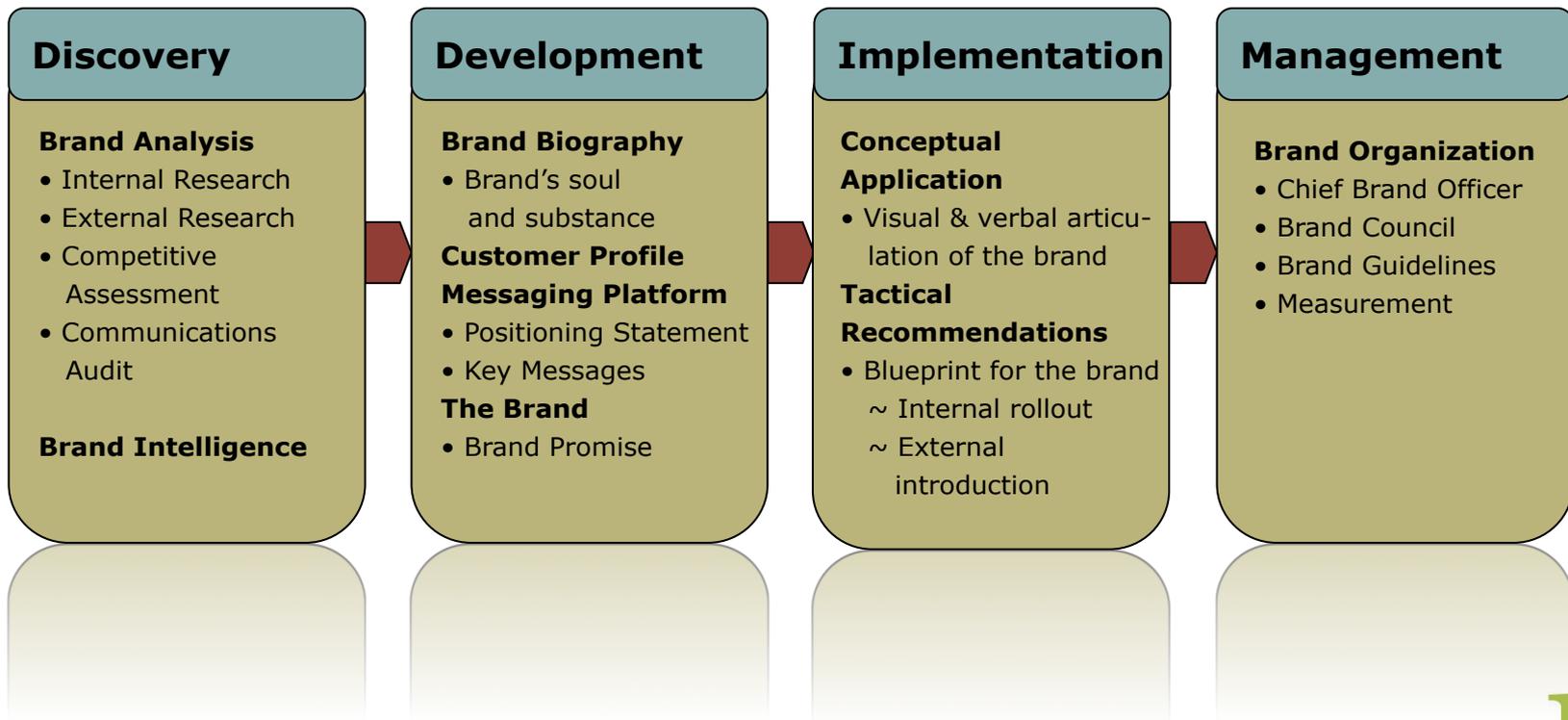
# Our Branding Process



# Our Branding Process



# Our Branding Process



# Brand Promise Development

## The “Heart and Soul” of Inland Bays Shellfish

- A new product that supports Delaware’s “culinary coast”—and the restaurants that exemplify it.
- A valuable resource that supports the cleanliness and health of Delaware’s inland bays.
- A stimulus to improving the economic health of Southern Delaware.

# Brand Promise Development

## The Substance of Inland Bays Shellfish

- The Inland Bays oyster is plump, with a deep cup, and a sought-after brininess that consumers desire.
- Each oyster filters upwards of 50 gallons of water a day, removing excess nutrients, thereby improving the water quality of Delaware's inland bays.
- It creates new jobs and income for those engaged in the farming, distribution, processing, preparation and serving of oysters in Southern Delaware.

# Recommended Brand Promise

We promise to deliver a superior shellfish product —to the benefit of all oyster stakeholders\*— derived from:

- An exceptionally attractive flavor, texture and size profile,
- That will support the culinary, cultural and economic life of Southern Delaware,
- All the while improving the water quality of Delaware's Inland Bays.

\* Oyster consumers, especially the younger ones

Visitors and tourists (including culinary tourists)

Eventually beyond the local markets to other markets (like NY)

Oyster farmers

Distributors & Wholesalers

Restaurants, farmers markets, fish stores

# Brand Personality

## Your friendly local bartender

- Inland Bays Oyster is the friendly guy who serves up drinks at the neighborhood bar. A sharp dresser, he still knows it his job to know everybody's name. And while he makes an effort to please everyone, he does not hide his personality—he speaks his mind with authority, and uses salty (but not inappropriate) language.
- Like his friend Dogfish, he knows that local color is important. As a local business owner, he also supports the local economy, and he is also concerned with keeping his block nice and clean. After all, he doesn't just like his local regulars, he loves to introduce tourists and other visitors to his neighborhood.

# Positioning Statement

- Inland Bays Shellfish provide its various audiences with a product that uniquely captures the flavor of Delaware's Inland Bays:
  - A superior shellfish product with an exceptionally attractive flavor, texture and size profile,
  - That will support the culinary, cultural and economic life of Southern Delaware,
  - All the while improving the water quality of Delaware's Inland Bays.

# Inland Bays Shellfish Brand Development: Naming Considerations

# Naming Considerations

## One Brand Name—or a Branding Family?

- Branding Issue—Will we have:
  - One brand name
  - A brand umbrella, that can be customized by individual growers, or
  - The branding as a descriptor line for Inland Bays shellfish that accompanies a single brand name or a brand family.

# Naming Considerations

## Local Culture, Agriculture, Recreation or History

- Indian Names—There are several current oysters with American Indian names. Unfortunately, the one candidate for this—Nanticoke—is also a river, but one that feeds the Chesapeake Bay, and so it is a potentially misleading or confusing name.
- Agriculture—Chickens, corn & soybeans and lima beans do not really lend themselves to oysters.
- Recreation—There may be much potential in looking at the branding potential of words like sport fishing and windsurfing.

# Naming Considerations

## Local Geography

- A majority of existing names focus on the oysters' geography (from Chesapeake Bay to Glidden Point). So it's a logical starting point:
  - Inland Bays—it is hard to imagine that Inland Bays will not be part of the branding.
  - Components of the Inland Bays:
    - Rehoboth Bay
    - Indian River Bay
    - Little Assawoman Bay
  - The fact that two of these are long is problematic. And is “Assawoman” even suitable a brand name?

# Naming Considerations

## Local Geography

- Alternate Regional Names—Several streams and rivers feed the bays, but these “prongs” and “branches” are too specifically located for a brand that will cover the entire Inland Bays. The same would go for the various “points”.
- Please note that does not mean that area names like Drum Point, Frame’s Point or Stockley Creek would not be suitable as sub-brand names under an Inland Bays umbrella.
- County Names—Sussex may actually work well as part of a name.

# Inland Bays Shellfish Brand Development: Next Steps