

## **Workshop brief: The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA)**

With a large new grant from the European Commission, an extensive policy programme and a new director, the Centre for Policy Alternatives requires a brand strategy and visual identity to match its ambitions.

### **Location**

Berlin, Germany

### **History**

The Centre for Policy Alternatives was established in 1999 as an offshoot of the economics department of a leading German university. Founding members included a number of academics who had advised the German Government during reunification.

Many of the original economists were concerned by remaining disparities within the country and were keen to explore public policy options to address these.

As the founders moved on or retired the think tank has become increasingly independent of the university, though it continues to host a few students each year in a post-graduate programme.

A new generation of leaders has slowly taken over. This group comes from a more diverse background including social science academics and policy professionals who have worked in government or civil society. The methodology and culture of the think tank remains firmly grounded in economics and data, but the portfolio of issues has expanded to include work on environment policy, migration and governance.

The new director is the first female director of the CPA. She started out as a CPA post graduate student and spent a couple of years as a policy advisor in Brussels before returning to the CPA where she has risen fast through the ranks. She is just 36 years old and as an Italian citizen, is the first director born outside of Germany.

### **Staff**

82 total

60 research

6 admin, accounting and IT

14 communications

1 executive director plus executive assistant

### **Political context**

The CPA has ambitions to influence policy across Europe and takes part in partnerships with other European think tanks. To date, its influence to date is mainly in Germany, but it hopes the new European grant may open doors to further funding and perhaps offices in Brussels and other EU capitals.

### **Research interests and specialisms**

Migration

Welfare

Tax policy

Micro economics

Equality

Environment

Governance

### **Funding**

The main sources of funding are German foundations interested in welfare and equality

Private sector corporations

European Commission

German Government

## **Branding 101:**

Your brand is your promise – it is a commitment your organisation makes to everyone you interact with. And successful organisations consistently deliver on their promises. Your brand identity should build strong associations and create clear expectations about what you do and why you exist.

For over a decade, Soapbox has pioneered the practice of think tank branding and brand strategy – driving forward the sector, driving up standards and bringing our unrivalled experience to bear across numerous high-profile and high-impact projects.

### **We believe that good branding can help to:**

#### **1. Unify your organisation and help it become the organisation it aspires to be.**

Your brand strategy should work hand-in-hand with your organizational strategy and growth to show how communications and behaviours can turn your vision into a reality. It should help define and unify your organisation, both internally and externally, and lead to a renewed sense of purpose, clarity and loyalty.

#### **2. Help you own a piece of intellectual and cultural territory.**

The best organisations know exactly who and what they are for. They own, convene and (at their most successful) legitimise debates around the issues in which they are active. To put it another way, if a debate in one of your key issue areas does not include you, then it should be seen by your stakeholders and peers as in some way deficient.

#### **3. Help you to efficiently produce the right kinds of communications for the right audiences.**

Building the brand starts with a sound understanding of your audiences. We understand that think tanks have limited resources both in money and time, so a good brand strategy and identity is a toolkit to make communication with these audiences compelling, efficient and impactful.

Our brand process starts with building a solid understanding of where you have come from, where you are now and where you want to go. Rooted in research, we work hand-in-hand with organisations to develop a strong strategic foundation that defines who you are, what you do, how you do it and why you do it. We then bring this to life through compelling visual and verbal (tone of voice and messaging) identities that help you to express that story to the outside world in a way that is clear, distinctive and authentic.

### **You can read more about our approach in the following articles:**

- A Permanent Revolution in Think Tank Communications:  
<https://onthinktanks.org/articles/a-permanent-revolution-in-think-tank-communications>
- SEI's Communications Revolution:  
<https://onthinktanks.org/articles/seis-communications-revolution-part-1-rebranding>
- Credibility and Think Tank Communications:  
<https://onthinktanks.org/articles/credibility-and-think-tank-communications>
- In Conversation With "The Interested Public at Large":  
<https://onthinktanks.org/articles/in-conversation-with-the-interested-public-at-large>

# Branding workshop outcome example:

## Stockholm Environment Institute Brand centred communications

Each ring builds out from the middle of diagram starting with a strong brand foundation.

