BRANDING LEED® TO MILLENNIALS

A CONSUMER-ORIENTED APPROACH TO THE MARKETING OF GREEN BUILDING CERTIFICATIONS

A Thesis in
Architecture

by
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Abstract

This research intends to systematically investigate, analyze, and make recommendations on how LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) as one of the most successful eco-brands, can be strengthened to build a greater impact in fulfilling the U.S. Green Building Council’s mission, “a prosperous environment that improves the quality of life for all.”

The prevalent concern for the environment has caused expansion of green certifications and labeling programs covering different products such as consumer packaged products, electronics, and home appliance. Similarly, the building industry has witnessed the emergence of rating systems, certifications, and eco-labels such as EPA’s ENERGY STAR, USGBC’s LEED®. Among others, although the view that eco-labels are brands is not unanimously held, this thesis argues that well-known eco-labels such as LEED® have come to represent themselves as brands because they are capable of motivating consumers and influence their behaviors in the market.

The theoretical foundation of this research is built on the notion of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) as one of the most dominant concepts in mainstream marketing academic research which indicates that consumers are the ones who decide the success, failure or economic impact of any brand. Green buildings’ certifications and labeling programs are voluntary environmental programs and they have a market-driven approach which means their success is dependent on gaining sufficient traction from the players in the market, from high-stakes investors to end-users. Building a stronger brand can increase the likelihood to attract a consumer’s favorable response and in long-term, it will increase the demand for certified-buildings.

However, certification organizations often direct their marketing programs and advertising campaigns towards business owners, real estate investors, architects, and contractors to
eventually deliver healthier products to end-users. In the meantime, the role of the end-users as the consumers of green spaces and their responses to the environmental brand are largely disregarded. In the case of LEED®, there is a shortage of comprehensive branding guidelines for direct business to consumer purposes. For the long-term success of USGBC’s mission, my thesis is that there is a necessity to target end-user consumers especially of the younger generation also known as Millennials.

With the objective of providing branding recommendations that resonate with Millennials, the wide array of USGBC’s efforts in managing the LEED® brand were studied. In these examinations, several data sets are collected, including analyzing journals’ advertisements, social media, information from ad agencies, and conducting interviews with the director of the Brand Management team of USGBC. Through a systematic review of existing knowledge on Millennials and their environmental concerns, the attitudes and priorities of Millennials are analyzed and compared with the efforts of USGBC to form recommendations specific to this clientele.

**Keywords:** Consumer-based brand equity, Marketing, LEED, USGBC, Millennials.
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1 Introduction

As concisely concluded by The Ecologist (1972), sustainability is a “survival imperative.” The fear of environmental catastrophe has elevated the level of consciousness and “the green tidal wave for sustainable development” (Addae-Dapaah, 2011). This fear is evident from the majority of literature on green buildings beginning with explaining the environmental harm of buildings. Much of these arguments put emphasis on the physical sciences to account for the nature of the problem and then, to define a solution, the analysts put emphasis on the fields of policy and economics (Henn et al, 2013). Despite the differences in explaining ideas, the bottom-lines of all of these debates form a unified voice concluding the crucial need to change our market institutions to correct our relationship to the natural world’s resources. Through this lens, any research or analytical work in the field of sustainable architecture with the focus on the marketing themes will be undeniably relevant. This thesis intends to explore ways that the “green movement” and sustainable development can borrow from marketing strategy to define new identities for people to push them towards what is worthy for the environment. The goal is to inspire creators of green certifications to think in a new and strategic way, to advance the branding of eco-labels so that the design and construction community start thinking of the certified-to-be building as special offerings deserved to carry the brand’s name. Careful branding not only will push the industry to create better products but also will train consumers to expect more of the brand; once the relationship of the brand and consumer is established, the green certifications and prevalent care for our environment will become the new norms.
1.1 Background on different marketing modes of voluntary environmental programs

Green building certifications and labeling programs are voluntary environmental programs (VEPs) and fundamentally, the success (or failure) of such programs in fulfilling their environmental mission depends on the amount of positive (or negative) response they get from the different players in the marketplace, from high-stakes investors to very end-users. Despite their influence, the role of end-users is often marginalized in the marketing and communication programs of the certification creators as the benchmarking organizations are primarily focused on the business to business (B2B) modes of marketing. The dominant assumption of the third party VEPs is that the correction of our market institutions shall be done by raising the awareness among investors, architects and contractors to eventually deliver healthier and more environmentally-responsible products to end-users. In the meantime, the role of the end-users as the consumers of green spaces in promoting eco-labels and their responses to the environmental brands are disregarded. The premise of this research is that in the long term, the potential end-users could be understood as an influential group of people who determine the future of the green market with their type of response to the certified buildings and certification organizations should use business to consumer (B2C) modes of branding and marketing.

In this thesis, LEED® as one of the most used VEPs will be examined through the lens of consumers to depict the potential adaptation of a more consumer-oriented approach in the marketing of green building certifications.
1.2 Problem statement regarding USGBC’s lack of business to consumer marketing approaches

USGBC has prepared details on the use of the LEED® trademark\(^1\) and communication guidelines for business to business (B2B) purposes. However, there is a shortage of comprehensive work on fleshing out LEED® as a brand for direct business to consumer (B2C) purposes. For the long-term success of USGBC’s mission, there is a necessity to consider the end-users who are potentially capable of creating "upstream demand" all the way up to other influentials in the B2B value chain who are making primary decisions on building approaches.

From a business point of view, the Millennial generation is an important group. Their hefty size and considerable growing economic impact are making Millennials attractive targets for many business leaders and marketing managers across different industries dealing with consumers. Furthermore, as evident from various market reports from the US and around the globe\(^2\), the Millennials become more economically active, and exert their influence, buying power, and voices, it would be beneficial to get to them early and motivate them looking for the brand, LEED® as they make their selection of hotels, living places, workspaces, etc. That being said, it is advisable for USGBC to consider what they want their brand to mean with this audience, and begin thinking

\(^{1}\) As a registered trademark, USGBC requires the correct designation of LEED®, however, in most academic work and scholarly research, LEED® is simply referred to as LEED. Likewise, throughout this manuscript for the purpose of simplicity, “LEED” will be used.

\(^{2}\) The findings of some of the most famous market research firms such as Nielsen and Gallup, Natural Marketing Institute (NMI) confirm that in comparison to the previous generations, environmental concerns are now a decision-making priority for Millennials across different markets and products from consumer goods to services.
about communications programs with value propositions that resonate with the Millennial audience.

1.3 Research purpose: development of consumer-oriented branding guidelines for LEED®

The ultimate purpose is to provide U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) with recommendations to improve the impact of LEED® as a brand.

The foundation of this research is built on the concept of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) as a dominant notion in the mainstream marketing academic research which indicates that these are the consumers who decide the success or failure of any brand.

1.4 Methods

With the objective of providing USGBC with recommendations to improve LEED branding, this study involves several steps.

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*Figure 1-1 Schematic structure of research illustrated as different steps (Y.R)*
In the primary phase of the research, the wide array of USGBC’s efforts in managing the LEED brand are studied and the contents of LEED’s current guidelines for branding are compared to one of useful branding templates called BrandScape.

To obtain the necessary data for the primary research, several methods of data collection are combined, including archival research to analyze journals’ advertisements, online research to analyze social media, collecting information from ad agencies and graphic design firms responsible for the design of LEED’s advertisements, and conducting interviews with the director of the Brand Management team of USGBC.

*Figure 1-2 First step: data collection methods on USGBC (Y.R)*
In the second step (Figure 1-3), the existing branding guidelines are analyzed with considerations towards the BrandScape.

![BrandScape analysis for LEED (Y.R)](image)

*Figure 1-3 Second step: BrandScape analysis for LEED (Y.R)*

In the third step, Millennials as the target audience of potential new guidelines are investigated through the works of well-known marketing firms (Figure 1-4). The existing studies by these firms have utilized online survey to gain insight on Millennials.
Figure 1-4 Third step: investigations on Millennials (Y.R)

Through a systematic review of existing knowledge on Millennials and their environmental concerns, the wants and priorities of Millennials are analyzed and compared with the efforts of USGBC to form final recommendations with respect to this clientele (Step 4 and 5).

Figure 1-5 Fourth and Fifth Steps: Comparative Analysis and Recommendations for USGBC (Y.R)
1.5 Thesis chapters’ organization

Chapter 2 provides a fundamental understanding of branding concepts. Starting with making the compelling case to consider eco-labels and green certification potentials as brands, the chapter will delve into one of the most significant branches of academic research in marketing known as consumer-based brand equity (CBBE). Understanding the notion of consumer-based brand equity is imperative for this thesis, thus, the thesis is largely built on the work of scholar Kevin Lane Keller. Keller is an international leader in branding and his seminal 1993 paper, “Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity” along with his book Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity are the theoretical pillars of the research.

Furthermore, the chapter clarifies the notion of consumers by the conception of a three-domain-market: certification creators as the provider of the brand, businesses as suppliers of the branded offerings and consumers as the end-users of green spaces. Such clarification is necessary to express the logic behind perusing the branding subject and illustrate why CBBE has been chosen as the basis of this thesis.

The goal of this chapter is to build a theoretical foundation for the overarching vision of the thesis that these are the consumers who will determine the long-term success of VEPs in gaining market traction and fulfilling their environmental mission.

Chapter 3- The primary objective of this chapter is to have an in-depth look into U.S. Green Building Council’s efforts in creating and managing LEED brand. The contents of the chapter are organized into different sections; the chapter begins with the general overview of USGBC’s strategic plan,
activities and the Council’s overall approach to marketing and communications. The second section introduces the brand through the lens of advertisements which USGBC has published since 2009. In the third section, the existing branding guidelines of USGBC will be introduced.

The third chapter demonstrates the existing gap between the premise of CBBE and efforts of USGBC in managing LEED brand. The collected information reveals that there is a lack of branding guidelines and communication programs to address consumers.

**Chapter 4**- This chapter seeks to relate consumer-oriented branding approaches to LEED. The chapter could be seen as an attempt to answer this question “if LEED branding wants to address consumers, what are the basics?” The first part of the chapter examines LEED through the lens of CBBE and Keller’s terminology to demonstrate LEED’s status in regards to a more consumer-oriented approach. The empirical market research consumer surveys such as Navigant Research is used to illustrate LEED’s brand awareness and favorability status in the U.S. However, the rest of this section, by decoding Keller’s terminology, challenges the application of Keller’s consumer’s knowledge structure to LEED and the goal is to showcase the similarities and differences of LEED with more conventional consumer goods brands.

The second part of the chapter takes a more practical standpoint. Since the audience of this thesis is the marketing and brand management departments of USGBC, a CBBE-driven branding template namely the “BrandScape” will be introduced. *BrandScape* is one of many useful templates to address consumers effectively. The chapter will end with the comparison of current LEED branding guidelines and the BrandScape template to reveal potential areas for improvement of current branding guidelines.
Chapter 5 is about choosing the Millennials as the target consumers. This chapter will provide insights on the Millennials as a generation, their economic impact and their expectations of contemporary marketing and branding, and finally their attitudes towards the environmental and energy-conserving concepts. The data regarding Millennials are based on Gallup database. Gallup is a leading market research firm that collects information on consumers’ attitudes globally.

Chapter 6: This chapter contains the aggregation of insights from previous chapters on Millennials and LEED. By the means of a comparative analysis of the findings, the final attempt is made for drawing conclusions. As a result, two different sets of recommendations are being put forward. The first set is concerning the guidelines for improvement based on the BrandScape template. The second set of recommendations is more specific concerning what marketing strategies that Millennials find appealing and motivating.
2 Literature Review on Branding and Consumer-Based Brand Equity

2.1 Are environmental certifications brands?

Although the view that eco-labels are brands is not universally held, this thesis argues that well-known eco-labels such as LEED are brands because they satisfy the common definitions and expectations of what constitutes to be a brand. Across the different sources, different definitions for a brand can be found which can vary depending on the context. Hence, Anna Klingmann (2007), a German architect and expert in branding, describes the brand as “an aura of meanings” with the basic function of “signaling a distinguished identity.” According to existing brand literature, a brand can be defined as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (Kotler, 1991; p.442). This definition which is now used by American Marketing Association (AMA), can be generalized for eco-labels which are designed to differentiate “Green” from “Non-green.” In the work of the Institute for the Study of Business Markets (ISBM) a brand is defined as “A relationship with a market or market segment that has an economic impact in the marketing of an offering” (Oliva, 2012, Author’s emphasis). Considering the notion of “relationship” more carefully will differentiate the brand from a trademark or logo substantially. While firms own trademarks, logos, and the economic effects of brands, the brand itself is a powerful asset that firms actually do not own. “Brands reside in the minds of customers. [...] Brands are built over time through an accumulation of experiences a customer has with a supplier firm” (Oliva, 2012. p28). In other words, consumers own a brand, not the firm who has the legal rights to the brand trademark and other brand elements.
Since the mid-80s, Americans have started to “act upon their environmental concerns in the marketplace” (Wynne, 1994). There is no surprise that “a willingness-to-pay premium for goods and services with environmental benefits” causes green markets to grow in many sectors of the economy. This expansion of green markets has promoted certification and labeling programs worldwide that cover thousands of different products (Kotchen, 2006; Moon et al, 2003). Likewise, the building industry has witnessed the emergence of rating systems, certifications and eco-labels on a global scale, for example the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ENERGY STAR, U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), U.K.’s Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM), Canada’s BOMA BEST, Tokyo Green Building Program (TGBP) and Singapore’s Green Mark (GM) are only a few to name. The well-known trademark of USGBC’s label, LEED® may now act as a brand among professionals within the construction industry. Even the label of “LEED Accredited Professional” or LEED AP can be seen next to the name of individual professionals such as architects and designers, suggesting that carrying the label “LEED AP” can impact the personal brand of an architect too.

Furthermore, by “awarding badges for building’s degree of green” (Addae-Dapaah, 2011), these labels treat buildings as branded offerings. Often, brands come with an “added value” and carrying a brand name for a commodity can mean imposing price premium on the consumers. The simple example of this is when someone spends $200 on a pair of brand shoes while she can purchase the identical non-branded version of the product for only $50. Likewise, several recent real estate studies find evidence that among comparable buildings which are similar in major attributes such as building types, size, style, location, and age, carrying an eco-label can lead to paying the price
premium for prospective buyers. Interestingly, real estate studies which have tried to correlate the projected price premium to physical features of the certified buildings couldn’t find any significant relationship between the green features and price premium (Wiley et al, 2010; Fuerst & McAllister, 2008; Fuerst & McAllister, 2009). This can suggest that the observed price premium of an eco-labeled building, more than anything can be the result of carrying the brand. Hence, there is no surprise that some developers and investors choose to peruse certification for their properties due to “excellent marketing, branding and displaying function” of the labels (Van der Heijden, 2015).

Observing these labeling trends, it seems that there is enough evidence to conclude that much of the ripples from tidal waves of “Green” movement have already developed an intimate relationship with branding.

2.1.1 Why do environmental certifications need branding?

Mattew Kotchen (2006), a professor of economics at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, describes the labeling trend as “a decentralized mechanism to encourage private provision of environmental public good” promoted by governments, nongovernmental organizations, and industries. The mechanism is to encourage a shift towards more environmentally responsible consumption as well as to enhance the environmental performance of products and services, and more importantly, it has the adjustment of the users’ behavior as a consequence (Fuerst & McAllister, 2009).

A term “decentralized mechanism” has much to say about the voluntary nature of the labels which makes them different from codes that are imposed by a central authority. Eco-labels are voluntary
environmental programs (VEPs) (Van der Heijden, 2015) and their success in fulfilling their environmental mission has to do with the traction they gain from the marketplace. In other words, even if we have a perfect assessment system in terms of mandating buildings to achieve the highest levels of conformance with environmental concerns, still the effectiveness of this system depends on the number of buildings that it will impact, making it necessary to seek ways to create higher demand in the market for certified-buildings. USGBC’s description of LEED as a “voluntary, consensus-based, market-driven” approach further supports this assumption (Rajkovich et al in Henn et al, 2013) that the performance of LEED is a function of the market.

Environmental certifications for buildings, even if they function flawlessly in terms of mandating buildings to achieve the highest level of conformance with environmental standards, still cannot achieve their environmental mission unless they could act as powerful and strong brands. These certifications as VEPs have a market-driven approach which means their success is interrelated to gaining market’s attention by definition; without achieving a greater number of buildings, the VEPs will not be able to impact the environmental sustainability of build environment to a significant extent. Building a stronger brand increases the likelihood of attracting favorable consumer’s response and in long-term it will increase the demand for certified-buildings, which will push the professional industry to increase the supply of green buildings. This is the underlying assumption of this thesis, fueling research motivations to pursue the subject of branding. This thesis also stresses the necessity for eco-labels to be endowed with the power of brand equity from the consumers’ perspective.
2.1.2 What are the motivations to study branding of eco-labels?

There are two general motivations for studying branding of eco-labels. One is an environmentally-based motivation which means the stronger brands become, the more potentials they have to affect people. Brands are of a persuasive nature, influencing us to follow them in their intended direction: they can shape our lifestyle by telling us what to eat, what to wear, what to watch, how to live, whom to choose to be friend to and so on. From the capitalist viewpoint, the dominant strategy of branding is to define new identities for people to sell products and then redefine these identities to sell newer products (Klingmann, 2007). Needless to say, in this thesis, marketing and branding shall not be reduced to selling commodities and offerings to consumers, instead branding and marketing shall be seen as building relationships with consumers (Klingmann, 2007). Once observed through the branding perspective, green-certifications and eco-labels such as LEED are capable of both creating new identities and attracting different groups of society, making people keep up with the intended green trends. If the eco-labels could act as strong brands, they can persuade people to become attracted to brands that are environmentally-friendly.

The second motivation to study branding stems from the first motivation but arises from a long-term strategy-based viewpoint to enhance the market response to the VEPs by making new identities for a group of consumers who can form a strong voice in the promotion of the brand. The latent strategy here is to train consumers to be advocates for the environmental brand which is by nature a considerable positive step for the environment.

In regard to the second motivation, careful targeting is essential because initially, it is advisable for USGBC and other VEPs to look for the segments that can create a voice to promote the brands among their peers, family members and on a more modern side of marketing channels such as
social media. Targeting and segmentation are terms that are working closely together hence over the next section, a closer look to the market segmentation will be provided.

2.2 Insights on the market and the notion of consumer

Defining the market for green buildings is a subjective task. This thesis clarifies its position regarding the market and its players. Obviously, each market has different levels of players with different influence factors on the market and these domains have different wishes and needs. Hence, the way the brand can motivate different players could be different. It is also necessary to narrow down the area of focus to illustrate which part of the market this thesis aims to investigate.

In the following, the thesis’ vision of market players will be discussed by differentiating the domains of players in such a market.

Three distinct domains of players (see Figure 1-6) can be identified within the supply chain of green buildings:

(1) policy domain as certification creators who are the suppliers of brands,

(2) profession domain or businesses as professionals within the industry such as real estate developers, design firms and architects as the supplier of branded offerings or suppliers of green space,

(3) user domain as end users.
If the success of VEPs in impacting the environment to a significant degree is defined as supply of green space\(^3\), one serious question arises here is: "who is the target consumer of the brand - the professional industry, such as architects or the end users such as the occupants of certified buildings and prospective buyers of certified buildings? On one hand, earlier in this manuscript, it has been identified that the total number of buildings affected by the VEPs is an important indicator of the effectiveness of the VEPs in improving the environmental situation. Accordingly, it may seem that the favorable attitude of the profession domain is the determining factor in the overall number of buildings pursuing certification. So, at first one may conclude that the target consumer group shall be investigated among the profession industry such as architectural firms, real estate development firms and others. On the other hand, seeing the professional domain as

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\(^3\) By “Green Space”, it is meant each square footage of green buildings that has a more environmentally-oriented impact compared to one square foot of a conventional building.
an isolated ring, for example looking at the demand ring in isolation of the supply ring (see figure 2-6), within the chain of supply is misleading and one shall conceptualize the relationship of these players with each other in a form of a cycle or an ever-continuing rotation of actions and responses; starting with the policy creators, the third-party organizations such as USGBC create the label and then target the profession domain to pursue the certification because of the professional domain’s greater influence factor. The premise of this thesis is that the role of the end users must not be ignored. Fundamentally, the reactions of the user-domain or their responses to the certified buildings, in the long run, will determine the decisions of the professional domain (investors, developers, and architects) to acquire the certification or not. Hence, in this thesis, the analysis will be done from the perspective of the user domain. Throughout the thesis, they will be referred to as “consumers” or “consumers of branded space.”

It shall be mentioned that by “consumers,” the view of this thesis is not limited to only those who decide to purchase a property or rent a place and now they face a dilemma to whether go with a LEED building or a non-LEED one. Instead, this view of consumer covers a wider spectrum of individuals who for any reason might choose to reside in a certified building versus a non-certified one. A student who may prefer to go and study in a green-certified school is a consumer; suppose a traveler who wants to choose a hotel for a two-night stay because staying in a LEED building may mean something to her so she devises her decision based on that. The traveler is for this thesis as much a consumer as a managerial board of a firm who decides to purchase a LEED office building for its new headquarters. If there is a LEED café and there is a non-LEED similar café on somebody’s way to work, and that person will choose to buy her/his coffee in the first café with the label and “because of” that label, then we can say the brand has influenced the behavior of that consumer.
The consistent entity among these examples is the fact that carrying the label means something to those consumers that will affect their responses to the brand in one way or the other. In other words, a differential effect must be observed due to the brand’s name which in turn will affect the type of reactions or responses to the brand. This differential effect can gift a specific type of power to a brand that in branding literature is called “brand equity.”

This thesis admits the fact that there might be myriad factors impacting consumer decisions like the quality of coffee in the café example and the quality of architecture, styles and other features in the office example. But, the brand equity notion speaks about the differential effect as a result of the brand name, even if this effect is slight. If such differential effect does not exist, then, in the long run, there would be no incentive for the professional domain to supply more branded products.

2.2.1 Market segmentation

Market segmentation divides the market into distinct groups of homogeneous consumers who have similar needs and consumer behavior, and who thus must be reached with different messages (Keller, 2013, p 51).

In consumer markets, segmentation typically entails statistically grouping large numbers of consumers with similar needs who can be reached with similar marketing and advertising appeals. Because consumer marketers can often amass a huge amount of data on consumer behavior, demographics, psychographics, buying patterns and so on, advanced statistical and data mining techniques are often used to group customers into clusters who might respond similarly to the marketing of an offering (Oliva, 2012. P22).
One of the most routine types of segmentation is generational segmentation which is employed by this thesis.

### 2.2.2 The importance of choosing a correct target market

Identifying the consumer target is important because different consumers may have different perceptions and preferences for the brand. Without this understanding, it may be difficult for marketers to design an effective branding program (Keller, 2013, p 51). This thesis differentiates between selling and marketing in that selling focuses on the seller’s need to convert his product into cash, while marketing focuses on the needs of consumers to see what kinds of relationships should be built. Marketing is the aggregate of strategic initiatives designed to “sense, serve and satisfy customer needs” and more especially, marketing includes a process of strategic communication to communicate a set of values to a specific user group (Klingman, 2007). Clearly, without the correct identification of target consumer segments, the buildings eco-labels will not reach their full potential to shift the market to a more environmentally-aligned status.

Therefore, a smart marketer needs not only to adopt a broad vision of target market but also needs to anticipate the needs and wishes of potential segments that can be affected by brand. Obviously, not everyone has the same needs and wishes, and if the brand is supposed to affect, motivate and inspire people, there is a necessity to understand how it can do it. What is needed, then, is an insightful, holistic way to consider different consumer segments and the strategies of influencing them. Chapter 5 of this thesis will examine the segment analysis.
2.3 Insights on consumer-based brand equity

The research will be founded based on the widely-accepted “consumer-based brand equity” (CBBE) concept which is the key to understanding brands’ power in contemporary marketing literature.

Introduced in the 1980s, the concept of brand equity states the “added value” granted to a product as a result of carrying that brand’s name (Keller, 2013. P.29). The true essence of almost every marketing and branding activity is all about granting the offerings with the power of brand equity. As suggested by the name, the consumer-based brand equity, then, is a way to approach brand equity from the consumer’s perspective.

Understanding the notion of CBBE is imperative for this thesis because of the way it has approached the situation and framed the overarching vision that these are the consumers who will determine the long-term success of voluntary environmental programs in gaining tractions. This vision is in total alignment with the fundamental premise of the CBBE concept that the power of a brand comes from the consumers who own the brand, not the firm; because the power of a brand lies in what customers have learned, felt, seen, and heard about the brand through their experiences over time. “In other words, the power of a brand lies in what resides in the minds and hearts of consumers” (Keller, 2013. p 41). Thus, the primary approach of this thesis is to uncover what type of brand knowledge can be placed in the consumer’s mind because of the brand. In so doing, the thesis looks into the CBBE literature first.

The scholar Kevin Lane Keller, the co-author of one of the all-time best-selling introductory marketing textbooks, is an international leader in branding and his seminal 1993 paper,
“Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity” addresses the brand knowledge according to an associative network memory model in terms of two components, brand awareness and brand image. He defines a framework of brand knowledge and all the sequential discussions about strategic marketing decisions are based on the terminology from his brand knowledge model. The mentioned framework is also the backbone of his book *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity* which is often known as the “bible of branding” (Keller, 2013. P XXVIII). This book is widely taught in the brand management classrooms across U.S. universities and worldwide. Consequently, Keller’s work along with works of other marketing scholars who follow CBBE framework are the pillars of this research.

### 2.3.1 Background on consumer-based brand equity

Prior to Keller, the concept of brand equity has been the subject of the works from Aaker (1991) and other scholars such as Leuthesser (1988) and Maltz (1991). In a general sense, brand equity is described in terms of “the marketing effects uniquely attributable to the brand.” One way to notice brand equity is when specific outcomes result from the marketing of a product or service because of that product or service only carries that brand name and such outcomes would not occur if the same product or service did not have that name (Keller, 1993). For example, people may be willing to pay $100 for a pair of branded shoes while the identical sneakers without the brand are worth only $20. The willingness to pay that extra amount (price premium) is that the marketing effect is “uniquely attributable” to that brand name. Although there is a kind of agreement between different sources that brand equity relates to the incremental value endowed by the brand to an offering (French & Smith, 2013), brand equity does not always occur in terms of a premium price; the easiest way to think about it is when the branded offering is chosen among
other competitive branded or non-branded products with the same price. Purchasing a specific brand of toilet paper only because of the brand name is one good example of the brand equity for that specific brand while everyone probably agrees that there is not much difference between that brand and competitors in terms of quality and price. But, because of some underlying power of brand, that specific toilet paper brand is selected.

Aaker (1991) defines brand equity as “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and to that firm’s customers” (Aaker, 1991, p. 15). This means that brand equity could be both positive and negative, but in most academic papers or marketing reports when they speak about brand equity, the positive meaning is intended, particularly when the researcher seeks how the brand equity could be built. This thesis follows the same approach and considers brand equity in terms of positive responses from the target audience.

Although there have been different research streams conceptualizing brand equity and measuring it from different perspectives since the 1980s, it seems the most common research stream is from a cognitive psychology perspective. The majority of research in this stream has been adopted as “an umbrella term of consumer-based brand equity” or CBBE (French & Smith, 2013) to cover different range of topics that related to “Human Associative Memory (HAM) models from cognitive psychology with network analytic approaches in order to gain deeper insights into consumers’ mental representations” (Teichert & Schöntag, 2010). Fundamentally, for the CBBE research stream, the main component that creates brand equity is the consumer’s knowledge about the brand because “this knowledge” is the source of that specific marketing outcome resulting from
the brand. Accumulated brand experience inaugurated in the brand knowledge structure is the source of brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2013).

2.3.2 Keller’s definition of CBBE

Realized by scholars, brand knowledge is the main component of CBBE definitions. In a CBBE literature review paper by Christodoulides and de Chernatony (2010), an overview of literature shows that this belief about brand knowledge has been constant over time. Some research works adopt the Aaker’s model of CBBE wherein “brand knowledge” is the central component consisting of brand awareness and brand associations along with perceived quality and brand loyalty as outcomes developing from said knowledge (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010). Despite being easy to understand, Aaker’s model only provides a simplified definition of brand equity which describes the power of brand equity in terms of limited outcomes while the meaning of brand equity shall be more comprehensive than the perceived quality or being loyal to the brand. However, the Keller’s definition of CBBE provides a more flexible meaning of brand equity providing a more comprehensive account of the concept.

Keller (1993) defines consumer-based brand equity as the “differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand.” Because the focus of this thesis will be on brand knowledge part of the definition, the other components of the definition are going to be elaborated on here. In addition to brand knowledge, two other major components of the definition are as follows:

“Differential effect”: it is determined by a comparison-based approach to analyzing consumer response to the marketing of a brand compared with consumer response to a non-branded
product/service or an infamous brand. Earlier in this manuscript, some possible types of differential effect of LEED on audiences (consumers) were discussed (See section 2.1). The differential effect can happen for different people in different ways according to the context.

“Consumer response to the marketing”: it is defined in terms of consumer reactions arising from the type of relationships that brand and consumer have developed over time. This thesis will consider consumer response in either a positive and favorable way or negative way.

Keller’s definition consists of components that are beneficial to the discussion of this thesis because this thesis seeks to understand how correct messaging and branding will create “differential effect”, as if carrying the label or green certification may mean something for consumers to differentiate the LEED-labeled hotel from the non-LEED hotel, and will affect their response to it. According to Keller’s definition, the favorable consumer response will build positive consumer-based brand equity: “a brand is said to have positive (or negative) consumer-based brand equity if consumers react more (or less) favorably to the product or service” (Keller, 1993).

2.3.3 Keller’s Brand Knowledge Framework

The brand knowledge is the central part of CBBE definition. According to the previous studies, this is in fact “consumer knowledge structures” or “recallable information in the customers’ minds” that make up consumer-based brand equity (Teichert & Schöntag, 2010). Keller’s work conceptualizes brand knowledge according to an associative network model (Keller, 1993). Keller asserts that basic memory theories can be used to understand the knowledge of the brand and

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4 Generally speaking, negative brand equity can be realized in terms of “Green Washing” phenomena. For example, green labels on products which are not necessarily green or contribute effectively to sustainability can cause skepticism in the marketplace. In case of LEED, there is a great positive brand equity. In this thesis, for the purpose of simplicity, by brand equity, the positive brand equity is meant.
how it relates to brand equity. He employs the "associative network memory model" which is believed to be the most commonly-accepted model of memory (Wickelgren, 1981). This model views memory or knowledge as a set of nodes and links. Nodes are like information packages linked together (See Figure 2-7). The process of retrieving information from memory basically deals with the flow of information from node to node and this process is called “spreading activation” (Collins & Loftus, 1975). Through spreading activation, a node can evoke other nodes and help them to be recalled. “A node becomes a potential source of activation for other nodes either when external information is being encoded or when internal information is retrieved from long-term memory. [...] Thus, the strength of association between the activated node and all linked nodes determines the extent of this "spreading activation" and the particular information that can be retrieved from memory” (Keller, 1993).

![Figure 2-7 A schematic representation of concept relatedness in a stereotypical fragment of human memory. This network model shows concept relatedness for a hypothetical human memory. Source: Collins & Loftus (1975) "Links and nodes," referred to above, are illustrated in this diagram.](image-url)
In alignment with an associative network memory model, “brand knowledge is conceptualized as consisting of a brand node in memory to which a variety of associations are linked (Keller, 1993).” Hence, the brand knowledge can be understood as an aggregate of all the nodes and links that people can hold in their mind. If a brand name itself is a node in memory, then there should be more nodes linked to it. There are studies discovering the network of associations for different brands (Figure 2-8).

**Figure 2-8 An example of network of brand associations for Mayo Clinic Brand (John, D. R., et al, 2006)**

Based on associative network memory characterization, Keller (1993) introduces a construct of brand knowledge (See Figure 2-9). He breaks brand knowledge into two components of “brand

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5 There is a sophisticated and reliable methodology called Brand Concept Mapping or BCM (John, D. R., et al., 2006) to solicit brand associations from respondents and then to aggregate individual maps into one Brand Concept Map like the Mayo Clinic example.
awareness” and “brand image.” Awareness entails the consumer’s ability to distinguish a brand among other brands and image contains “any scenario that a consumer might associate with a specific brand” (Klingmann, 2007. P 41). These scenarios are all different associations that shape brand image and they are like the other informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for consumers” (Keller, 1993).

Figure 2-9 Keller’s construct of brand knowledge (1993)

Keller’s tree-shaped diagram (Figure 2-9) illustrates what components will form and impact a consumer’s knowledge of a brand, and as he describes in his book “Strategic Brand Management”, it’s a “common denominator” or unified conceptual framework that will allow marketers to interpret marketing strategies and assessing the value of a brand (Keller, 2013. P29). This framework emphasizes the importance of understanding consumer’s brand knowledge to
establish the desired awareness and image in the minds of consumers. As seen in the diagram, *brand awareness* involves the process of *recognition* and *recalling* and it has simply to do with whether consumers know about a brand or not (Keller, 2013). *Brand image* consists of different types of associations and based on the level of abstraction Keller divides associations into *attributes, benefits,* and *attitudes.* Surely, there could be numerous ways to sort different associations according to the market segments or group associations together based on the context. For example, in a 2001 paper, Belén del Río and colleagues (2001) sort associations in 4 different categories based on *functional, personal, social* and *status* dimensions to conduct a survey on the Spanish shoe market. This is said to illustrate that there are different possibilities to categorize associations. Chapter 4 of this thesis will examine LEED in the light of Keller’s framework and terminology.

Furthermore, Keller (1993, 2013) discusses the varying degree of association’s favorability, strength, and uniqueness. This is, in fact, the strength or weakness of these brand associations that determines the positive or negative consumer-based brand equity.

In particular, the favorability, strength, and uniqueness of the brand associations play a critical role in determining the differential response. If the brand is seen by consumers to be the same as a prototypical version of the product or service in the category, their response should not differ from their response to a hypothetical product or service; if the brand has some salient, unique associations, those responses should differ (Keller, 1993).

Fundamentally, high level of brand awareness and a positive image will increase the chance of consumer’s favorable response. Favorable consumer response means positive CBBE which occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand (the sufficient level of awareness does exist: the
consumer knows the brand) and he/she holds some favorable, strong, and unique associations in memory (positive brand image) (Keller, 1993).

Consumer-based brand equity will provide us with new insightful ways to start looking at green building certifications. The realization that eco-labels in green building industry must eventually start building relationships with end-user consumers is not that farfetched but is extremely overlooked at the time of this research and the aim here, from now on, would be demonstrating this serious gap and ways to meditate that.
3 Consumers as a Missing Piece in USGBC’s Efforts to Manage the LEED Brand

In previous chapters, green building certifications and labeling programs are introduced as emerging brands which their success (or failure) in fulfilling their environmental mission depends on the amount of positive (or negative) response they get from both influential businesses to end-user consumers. This thesis argues that the role of end-users is largely marginalized in the marketing and communication programs of the certification creators. As supported by evidence, the benchmarking organizations are primarily focused on the business to business (B2B) modes of marketing. The premise of this chapter is to demonstrate a lack of comprehensive means to address end-user consumers in USGBC’s past and current performance.

3.1 Insights on U.S. Green Building Council, its programs, and its marketing strategies

The main mission of USGBC is “to transform the way buildings and communities are designed, built and operated, enabling an environmentally and socially responsible, healthy and prosperous environment that improves the quality of life” (USGBC, 2009 in Rajkovich et al, 2013). Throughout the years, there has been only a slight change in the phrasing of the organization’s mission (See Table 3-1) to add more emphasis on the all-inclusive approach of the organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Plan of</td>
<td>“Buildings and communities will regenerate and sustain the”</td>
<td>“To transform the way buildings and communities are designed, built and”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-1 Mission and vision of USGBC based on comparison of USGBC’s strategic plans (Y.R)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Mission Statement</th>
<th>Strategic Plan of 2013–2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009–2013</td>
<td><em>health and vitality of all life within a generation.</em></td>
<td>operated, enabling an environmentally and socially responsible, healthy, and prosperous environment that improves the quality of life.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Same as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Plan of 2013–2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>“To transform the way buildings and communities are designed, built and operated, enabling an environmentally and socially responsible, healthy, and prosperous environment that improves the quality of life for all.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Plan of 2017–2019</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3-2 The comparison of USGBC’s organizational goals based on different strategic plans\(^6\) (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Catalyze and lead the building sector’s active participation in the movement to achieve sustainable cities and communities.</td>
<td>1. Expand the green building marketplace</td>
<td>1. Expand the green building marketplace;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lead the dramatic reduction and eventual elimination of building construction and operations’ contribution to climate change and natural resource depletion.</td>
<td>2. Cultivate sustainable cities and communities</td>
<td>2. Expand sustainable, healthy and resilient communities, cities, and cultures;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Accelerate green building demand, delivery, and accessibility.</td>
<td>3. Influence green building policy at all levels of government</td>
<td>3. Calibrate and communicate the full benefit of green building, communities, cities, cultures;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Advocate for effective and comprehensive green building policy and codes at all levels of government.</td>
<td>4. Calibrate and enhance the environmental benefits of green building</td>
<td>4. Ensure viability through organizational and community excellence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Advance green building around the world by developing certification capacity, sharing knowledge, and collaboratively advancing regionally appropriate and effective green building practices and policies.</td>
<td>5. Strengthen the links between green building and human health and well-being</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Leverage USGBC’s organizational structure and capacity to support and catalyze the market transformation required to achieve its mission.</td>
<td>6. Achieve higher mission impact through organizational and community excellence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^6\) The earlier versions of strategic plans are not found.
The comparison of the strategic plan of 2013-2015 with 2017-2019 reveals the elimination of the goal (3) and (5) of 2013 version from 2017 version. The dissolution of goal (3) which is related to the government involvement is hypothetically related to the change of administration in the US around that time, and more detailed exploration is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the alteration of goal 5, *strengthening the links between green building and human health and well-being*, can reveal an important shift in branding strategy for LEED and potentially is related to the launch of WELL Building Standard by Green Business Certification Institute (GBCI), a sister organization of USGBC. WELL certification’s main point of focus is human health and wellness. Introduction of WELL standards means a new opportunity for a new brand with a different value proposition. Hence, it seems that GBCI has used the launch of WELL as an opportunity to promote the messaging around human well-being.

### 3.1.1 History of USGBC

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is a nonprofit organization, established in 1993 by Rick Fedrizzi, David Gottfried and Mike Italiano (http://stg.usgbc.org/about/history). The organization’s founding members recognized the urgent need for the sustainable building industry to define a measurement system for green buildings (USGBC, 2011. P88). In April of 1993, “representatives from approximately 60 firms and a few nonprofit organizations met in the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for the council’s founding meeting. It was there that ideas were first aired for an open and balanced coalition spanning the entire building industry and a green building rating system,” which later became LEED (http://stg.usgbc.org/about/history).
USGBC started the process by studying existing building metrics and rating systems, and based on the initial findings a committee was established to focus on the rating system. “The composition of the committee was diverse: architects, real estate agents, a building owner, a lawyer, an environmentalist, and industry representatives. This diversity of people and professions added a richness and depth both to the process and to the outcome. The initial process undertaken by this group embodied the community-based governance process that remains at the core of USGBC’s work” (USGBC, 2011. P88). The committee set the foundation for LEED rating system and finally in 1998, the first version of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green building certification system was launched. Since then, there are numerous updates in the rating system (Figure 3-10). The latest version of LEED as of the time of this research is version 4 which has been launched in 2013 (LEED v4).

With regards to different upgrades, in an advertisement for the Architecture, Engineering & Construction (AEC) industry, USGBC asserts “LEED’s strength has always come from its constant, consensus-driven improvement cycle. By design, LEED is meant to grow and evolve along with our understanding of building science, the emergence of new technologies, the needs of the marketplace and the deepening of our environmental priorities” (GreenSource Journal, May-June 2009 Issue).
As a benchmarking tool, LEED rating system consists of a credit scorecard allocated to different credit categories covering various aspects of sustainable design and construction. 6 key categories developed for LEED v4 underscore how a project can benefit their local communities and environment. These categories are as follows:

- Location and Transport
- Sustainable Sites
- Water Efficiency
- Energy and Atmosphere
- Materials and Resources
- Indoor Environmental Quality
There are two other categories dedicated to Regional Priority and Innovation. The categories and their contents are designed in a way to “incentivize pursuing higher-point valued credits and higher certification levels that achieve better environmental economic and social impacts” (https://new.usgbc.org/leed-v4). Points are allocated through a weighting method where a credit receives one or more LEED points based on each credit’s relative effectiveness at accomplishing the goals defined by the guidelines. “The more effective the credit requirements are at addressing the goals of the system, the more recognition (or points) it receives. The point allocation process will help to shape the dominant discourse of the buildings industry” (https://new.usgbc.org/leed-v4).

3.1.2 USGBC’s Marketing approach and strategies

Since the foundation, USGBC is focusing its communications – quite logically – upstream on key influences early in the value chain (policy-makers, thought leaders, and business leaders, real estate developers, property managers and those within the construction industry: architects, contractors and etc.). In marketing theories, this is called business to business (B2B) modes of marketing (for a better understanding of terms B2B and B2C see Figure 3-11 and compare it to Figure 2-6). According to Director of Brand Management team of USGBC⁷, it was never part of USGBC’s plan to do direct marketing to the consumer.

The president of one the famous green marketing consultancy firms, Natural Marketing Institute (NMI)⁸, asserts that USGBC has done no direct to consumer mode of marketing. All communication

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⁷ The Phone interview with Director of Brand Management team of USGBC was conducted on 03/31/2017.
⁸ The phone interview with president of NMI was conducted on 02/28/2017.
and marketing, they've done has been business-to-business, up the value chain working with architects, builders, property owners, and other influentials. The president of NMI feels that USGBC hasn't seen much importance in going down the value chain. Part of this, is clearly that they do not have the sort of resources to do major media investments. His first suggestion is that the US Green Building Council might build better "tools" to allow people up the value chain to be more effective and influential when approaching customers farther down the value chain.

Figure 3-11 demonstrates the main marketing mechanism of USGBC as well as the most common marketing strategies used by the USGBC and its targeted businesses to finally carry the brand's message down the value chain.
In the following, a couple of USGBC’s indirect B2C marketing strategies will be briefly introduced.

3.1.2.1 Plaque ceremony and press release

USGBC encourages newly-certified projects to hold a plaque ceremony to showcase their projects to others (Figure 3-12). Through this strategy, USGBC expects institutions, organizations and building owners to act as an advertising agent to showcase LEED to their customers, employees and occupants!
As stated in the Public Relation (PR) guideline of USGBC version 2017, projects are encouraged to hold a plaque ceremony and distribute a press release. The Director of Brand Management team of USGBC says “Our Public Relation Department [PR] works with the recent certified projects to make sure that they communicate a vetted message to the consumers.”

The PR guideline contains quote samples to be used in certification ceremony. The table below contains the analysis of these sample quotes.

**Table 3-3 Sample quotes by Public Relations Department of USGBC (Y.R)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Sustainability Keywords</th>
<th>Stimulating branding Keywords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“XXX’s LEED certification demonstrates tremendous green building leadership,” said Mahesh Ramanujam, president and CEO, USGBC. “LEED was created to make the world a better place and revolutionize the built environment by</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Better place</td>
<td>▪ Healthy</td>
<td>▪ Tremendous Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Healthy</td>
<td>▪ Green</td>
<td>▪ Revolutionize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Green</td>
<td>▪ High performing</td>
<td>▪ Innovative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

9 The Phone interview with Director of Brand Management team of USGBC was conducted on 03/31/2017.
providing everyone with a healthy, green and high performing buildings. XXX serves as a prime example of how the work of innovative building projects can use local solutions to make a global impact on the environment.”

“The work of innovative building projects such as XXX is a fundamental driving force in transforming the way buildings are built, design and operated,” said Mahesh Ramanujam, president and CEO, USGBC. “Buildings that achieve LEED certification are lowering carbon emissions, creating a healthier environment and reducing operating costs while prioritizing sustainable practices. Because of XXX, we are increasing the number of green buildings and getting closer to USGBC’s goal to outpace conventional buildings, while being environmentally and socially responsible and improving the quality of life for generations to come.”

“LEED is a transformative tool that ensures a building is designed and operating to achieve high performance in key areas of human and environmental health while enhancing the triple bottom line - people, planet and profit,” said Mahesh Ramanujam, president and CEO, USGBC. “By prioritizing sustainability, XXX project is leading the way in their industry and helping USGBC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Local solutions</th>
<th>Global impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowering Carbon emissions</td>
<td>Built</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthier environment</td>
<td>operating costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving the quality of life</td>
<td>environmentally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and socially responsible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High performance</td>
<td>Human and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People, planet, profit</td>
<td>environmental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Innovative
- Driving force
- Outpace conventional
- Socially responsible
- Generations to come
- Transformative tool
- Leading the way
continue toward our vision of a sustainable built environment within a generation.”

“Market transformation happens one building at a time. XXX project understands the value of LEED and has exemplified extraordinary leadership in reshaping their sector,” said Mahesh Ramanujam, president and CEO, USGBC. “The success of LEED is due to the partnership and support of those committed to advancing green building and sustainability. Each new LEED certification is one step closer to revolutionizing the environment in which live, work and play.”

“Achieving LEED certification is more than implementing sustainable practices. It represents a commitment to making the world a better place and influencing others to do better,” said Mahesh Ramanujam, president and CEO, USGBC. "Given the extraordinary importance of climate protection and the central role of the building industry in that effort, XXX demonstrates their leadership through their LEED certification of XXX.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Green building</th>
<th>Extraordinary leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Live, work, play</td>
<td>Reshaping the sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Advancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Revolutionizing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>climate protection</th>
<th>commitment to making the world a better place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sustainable practices</td>
<td>influencing others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>extraordinary importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally, it can be observed that these “vetted” messaging means promoting of “leadership” and conveying this message that how LEED pursuers have a “transformative power” and they
“influence” others. However, creating a powerful brand image through this strategy is not expected because of two reasons: first, despite the PR guidelines, it is hard to control what is going to be said about LEED. Second, the ceremony is a one-time event, and basically, it is not enough to create sustaining memories of the brand associations in the minds of consumers.

3.1.2.2 Green Building Tours

The tour is considered an “Education Outreach Program”, which means earning projects a point under the LEED Innovation credit, IDc1. So, there is already an incentive mechanism for providing green building tours to widen the public’s knowledge and awareness of green building strategies and LEED brand awareness. By inviting people to tour of different projects, firms or institutions are able to share their stories on how the project came together and use the space as a teaching tool by outlining its environmental features and benefits.

Figure 3-13 A tour guide in Phipps Conservatory provide information about LEED certification (Photo by Y.R-January 2017)
In the paper “Conveying Greenness: Sustainable Ideals and Organizational Narratives about LEED-Certified Buildings”, Beth M. Duckles (2013), an organizational behavior scientist describes her observations based on attending tours of twenty-four LEED-certified buildings between 2007 and 2009. She toured six corporate buildings, four education facilities, eight government buildings, three nonprofit buildings, and two religious buildings. In these tours, she learned how each building was conceived, how challenges were overcome, and choices were made in the process.

Her field studies show that different organizations choose different narratives to convey greenness to the attendees of green tours. For example, Corporations or firms are more likely to employ the profit motive to showcase how their business’s bottom line could be positively affected by the choice to build green. In the tours of these buildings usually the energy saving costs and pay off periods are discussed. In another example, educational organizations such as college campuses and K–12 schools “use the practicality argument primarily responding to the research on better student learning in green schools” (Duckles, 2013).

Although green building tours could play an important role in raising LEED brand awareness, USGBC has a minimized control over the message that are conveyed through such tours. The personal experience of the author of this research during a green building tour confirms that tour leaders may not have the sufficient knowledge or expertise to answer potential questions about LEED and its certification process, hence the brand image that is going to be built in consumers’ minds can defer case by case according to the tour leader’s qualifications and personal views.
3.1.2.3 The working scope of USGBC’s Marketing Department

Conducting a phone interview with the Brand Managing Director of USGBC reveals that the current communication of LEED might be fragmented. The brand manager handles everything she calls "market communications" and USGBC’s PR handles other communications that are working with recently certified projects (refer to PR guidelines earlier in this chapter section 3.1.2.1). Currently, the scope of the work by the Marketing Department and specifically the Brand Management team is dealing with in-house production of visual materials such as advertisements and other graphical components for marketing purposes. In the past, different advertising agencies have been employed to create advertisement campaigns. Future sections will have a more in depth focus on the previously published advertisements for LEED as well as the current branding guidelines in use.

3.2 Thematic narrative elements of LEED in published advertisements

3.2.1 USGBC’s different programs and initiatives’ advertisements

USGBC has different programs and initiatives that are all designed in alignment with the main mission. These programs are either working as a chapter within USGBC or as partner organizations.

LEED® Green Building certification program: The LEED green building rating system is the most well-known program for rating the design, construction and operation of green buildings and neighborhoods (GreenSource, 2011).

LEED Professional Credentialing program: This program recognizes professionals who have demonstrated acceptable knowledge of LEED and green building.
GREENBUILD: Greenbuild is an international conference and expo series dedicated to green building. Launched in 2002, it has become an important annual event for the green building industry (USGBC, 2011, p 89). Each year, professionals from all over the world participate in Greenbuild’s educational sessions, green building tours, special seminars and networking events, and an exhibit hall featuring the newest products and technologies (GreenSource, 2010).

EDUCATION: USGBC offers a wide variety of educational opportunities, including in-person workshops, online trainings and webinars, and publications to enable people at all levels of green building experience to access the information they need (GreenSource, 2010).

THE CENTER FOR GREEN SCHOOLS: Established in fall 2010, the Center for Green Schools is an initiative designed to “provide the resources and support to elevate dialogue, accelerate policy and institute innovation toward green schools and campuses. [...] The Center works directly with staff, teachers, faculty, students, administrators, elected officials and communities to drive the transformation of all schools into sustainable places to live and learn, work and play” (GreenSource, 2010).

In order to introduce these different programs, USGBC has published many advertisements in GreenSource Magazine, a bimonthly trade magazine published by McGraw-Hill Construction which had served as a primary source for sustainable design until the magazine ceased publication following the November/December 2013 issue (Society of Publication Designers’ blog, 2013).

GreenSource Magazine was the member publication of USGBC featuring articles on projects, sustainable design processes and technology, products, as well as case studies of LEED certified
buildings with technical information, weather charts, plans, illustrations, key project energy performance data, and green products used. USGBC was publishing advertisements regularly in GreenSource between 2009 and 2013.

Although the majority of the magazine's content is dedicated to illustrating USGBC's footprint through case studies and policy reviews, for the purposes of this analysis those pages designated with an "Advertisement" tag are considered.

During this period (2009-2013), more than 100 pages of advertisement (total of 134 pages) had been published. These advertisement packages usually started with a letter from USGBC’s principals and were followed by informational pages introducing or elaborating on a program or service such as the LEED rating system or Educational components of USGBC.

![Figure 3-14 Frequency of different programs and initiatives advertisements based on the number of allocated pages in GreenSource Magazine between 2009-2013 (Y.R)](image)

As seen above, LEED rating tools and LEED credentialing programs have appeared most frequently, with 26 and 24 pages of advertisement respectively. Figure 15,16 and 17 demonstrate the details of the ads.
Figure 3-15 The timeline of published ads in GreenSource Magazine between 2009-2013 (Y.R)
Figure 3-16 The timeline of published ads for different initiatives (Y.R)
3.2.2 Thematic analysis of Letters from USGBC’s principals and advertisements

As seen in Figure 3-18, from 2009 to 2013, 19 letters from USGBC’s principals were published. These letters serve as a prelude of advertisement pages in each issue of the magazine. From the marketing viewpoint, the letters play a crucial role in communicating the USGBC’s marketing plans.
and they are best reflective of what USGBC’s high-rank members want to communicate about the brand, thus the letters were given a careful consideration for this analysis.

![Figure 3-18 Letters from USGBC's leaders (Y.R)](image)

This data allows a discussion of a sample of narrative types that are in use by USGBC. To analyze the data, each letter’s text is coded using the software package Atlas.ti and used open codes to find thematic narrative elements and determine a better understanding of the concept relatedness of these narratives. Furthermore, image advertisements and pages including text information are considered to encode the most dominant themes and narratives that are used for the purpose of advertising.
In chapter 2, the existing literature on branding introduced brand image as a bundle of associations as if they are different scenarios and stories that consumers hold in mind for that brand. The narratives could be understood equivalent of brand associations.

Although many themes can be seen in a single letter or an issue’s advertisement packages for the purpose of simplicity the narratives can be grouped in three larger categories of profit-driven, green and leadership narratives. In the following section these narratives are introduced.

Figure 3-19 Dominant narratives in LEED’s advertisements (Y.R)
3.2.2.1 Profit-driven narratives

The profit-driven narratives are those that focus on the economic and financial bottom line and includes a range of concepts from profitability of LEED buildings in terms of reduced costs pre or post construction periods to the profits gained by organizations who can impact their consumers’ perception of social good and corporate social responsibilities and attract consumers’ attitude toward their organizations. The latter is depicted in full detail in “Doing well by doing good?” a 2010 influential paper in “The American Economic Review” (Eichholtz et al., 2010), in which the authors claim that nowadays some consumers are willing to spend their money where there is social good.

![Figure 3-20 Two different advertisements using profit narratives (Source: GreenSource Magazine 2010 and 2011)](image-url)
3.2.2.2 Green narratives

Green narratives are simply those that promote the environmental sustainability, however, like other narratives it shall be mentioned that green narratives are not used solely or as the main theme in any of the USGBC's advertisements. This group of narratives is usually used simultaneously with profit-driven narratives. For example, reducing buildings’ greenhouse emissions is a green narrative itself but the ad on the following page (Figure 3-21) puts the stress on the cost of implementing strategies for emission reduction. In fact, from the body of published ads, it seems that USGBC has intentionally used the "economic" aspect of the sustainability triple-bottom-line (environmental, social and economic) to legitimate their environmental efforts.

Figure 3-21 Legitimitizing a green narrative by leveraging a financial cause (Part of “Realize the Potential” campaign source : www.posttypography.com)
3.2.2.3 Leadership narratives

Leadership narratives include all possible scenarios that evoke the sense of leadership and having transformational power. Leadership narratives induce feelings in the target audience that they are in the frontline of “something greater.” The network analysis produced by Atlas.ti software reveals how USGBC evokes the sense of leadership in their audience both by relying on career success, making global impact, and active engagement sub-narratives.

Figure 3-22 Network analysis of Leadership narratives and concept relatedness of different themes (Produced by Atlas.ti – Y.R)

Figure 3-23 A bundle of advertisements with leadership narratives: the two ads on left endorsing leadership theme while the two on right expressing career development themes

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10 This phrase is the tagline of one of USGBC’s ad seen in Architect Magazine and GreenSource.
3.2.3 Distinct LEED advertising campaigns

3.2.3.1 “Realize the Potential” campaign

This advertising campaign was designed by a Washington DC-based Graphic Design firm, Post Typography in 2009. Each advertisement is vertically divided in two sections “pairing striking before-and-after photo-illustrations with concrete statistics” (http://www.posttypography.com/). Each pair tries to contrast redundancy and profusion with saving.

![Figure 3-24 Realize the Potential by Post Typography](image)

The campaign asks viewers to realize the potential energy, water, and carbon-emissions savings of green buildings as reflected by USGBC’s LEED Rating System.

Bruce Willen, the senior designer at Post Typography says “there were two parts/targets of the campaign: magazine ads that ran primarily in trade magazines related to architecture, building design, and management. A second part of the campaign was directed more at policy-makers, thought leaders, and business leaders. This included running some of the ads in business
magazines, as well as a campaign that appeared on the Washington, DC metro." Post Typography’s website includes the image of the ad in public transportation (Figure 3-25).

Willen continues “the broad goal was to raise awareness of the enormous potential benefits of green buildings. In particular, we wanted to convey the benefits of green building to go beyond the environment, but impact the economy and business’s bottom lines as well.”

The profit-driven associations are the main narratives of this campaign as Willen confirms “ideally the target audiences would start thinking about LEED and green building as pathways for achieving

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11 The information regarding this campaign has been solicited through email correspondence with Bruce Willen in March, 2017.
economic as well as environmental goals such as saving money, reducing energy consumption, and creating jobs.”

3.2.3.2 “LEED ON” campaign

The LEED ON campaign was designed in 2013 by Polygraph, another DC-based branding and visual communication firm. This campaign depicts the face of people with top managing positions such as Senior Vice Presidents of Green Markets and Senior Manager of Sustainability of several companies which are in partnership with USGBC. Polygraph writes on its website “our concept, which became the campaign’s rallying cry, LEED ON, visually blends custom portraits of actual industry professionals and images of LEED certified projects from around the world in a dynamic
range of exposures to create an almost heroic atmosphere and a clear connection of person to place. The ads, intended to communicate the optimism, strength and pride of green construction, call on audiences to keep thinking green” (http://www.polygraphcreative.com/LEEDON.html).

Taryn Holowka, Senior Vice President, Marketing, Communications & Advocacy, USGBC writes in a press release dated 6 March 2014, “LEED means leadership. It means going the extra mile, embracing transparency and not shying away from rigor. And those of us who are creating LEED, applying LEED and advocating for LEED in any and every capacity are the leaders of today’s (and tomorrow’s) green building industry.”

The leadership narrative is a dominant element of this ad series.
3.2.3.3 “Find Your LEED” campaign

This ad campaign is designed by USGBC’s marketing team in 2016 and in fact it is an in-house production. The team has created a printable leaf similar to USGBC’s main logo so people can print the leaf, cut it out and drop it into a shot of their favorite LEED-certified project. The main concept of the ad is to use the hashtag #FindYourLEED on social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to spread the word about LEED. The idea is about creating a greater brand awareness through motivating consumers to promote the brand through their social media.

Figure 3-28 Find Your LEED campaign (Source: Architect Magazine, 2017)
The survey of Instagram hashtags was conducted during January- March 2017.

Although LEED’s Brand Manager claims that this campaign has been a successful move, the analysis of social media channels of USGBC, namely Instagram and Twitter shows that a considerable amount of user accounts who share a post in response to the ad are USGBC and USGBC’s employees (Figure 3-30).

Figure 3-31 shows that USGBC’s employees and individuals have responded better to the ad by posting the relevant content and follow the campaign instruction (using the pink leaf). Compared to other groups, USGBC employees tend to use the pink leaf more in other occasions rather than showing a LEED plaque or a LEED building (Figure 3-33).
Figure 3-30 Analysis of Instagram as one of the most popular social media platform for sharing photos (Y.R)

* Those who no direct relationship with USGBC is found on them.
Figure 3-31 The response of different groups to the FindYourLEED ad campaign (Y.R)

Figure 3-32 The samples of photos for FindYourLEED shared by different groups (Y.R)
Figure 3.33 Details of shared photos for FindYourLEED by different groups (Y.R)
3.3 The existing branding guidelines

As of the time of this research, there are three guidelines documents which are in use by USGBC’s Marketing and Communication Teams:

- Trademark Policy and Branding Guidelines
- USGBC Brand Strategy
- USGBC Style Guide

3.3.1 Trademark Policy and Branding Guidelines

The purpose of this document is to help USGBC’s members, stakeholders of certified projects and the larger community use LEED and other brand assets with a consistent and correct style. The document does not include any information on what their brands mean, but it contains common uses and misuses of USGBC’s brand elements, trademarks, and logos. This document is openly available to the public and can be downloaded from USGBC.org. This document does not address consumers or the broader audience.
USGBC

USING THE LOGO

USGBC COMMUNITY

USING THE MARK

USGBC MEMBERS

USING THE LOGO

The standard color for the USGBC member logo is PMS 434U or 60% black. The black and white versions of the logo can be used when necessary.

LEED

USING THE LOGO

The LEED program logo should not be resized smaller than 1.5" diameter, and must always appear in its standard colors 60% and 50% black.

USING THE MARKS

The LEED certification marks must appear in 50% and 60% black.

Figure 3-34 Sample of information can be found on USGBC’s Branding Guidelines Version March 2017
3.3.2 USGBC Brand Strategy

This document is described as a “Guide to the Brands of the U.S. Green Building Council” on the title page of the document. It contains a general overview of core initiatives, the LEED brand and other sister brands (Figure 3-35). Compared to the previous document, this document has more details about the brand and it contains information about the brand value of LEED and each sister brand as well. Although this document does not directly address consumers, it contains elements contributing to a more consumer-oriented approach.

According to the current USGBC’s branding guideline, USGBC is defined as the mother or “master brand” and LEED is a sub-brand. The current guideline also designates GREENBUILD and GBCI as stand-alone brands. The document indicates “the LEED brand began with the LEED rating system.” Also, LEED professional credentials are situated under the umbrella of the LEED brand.

![Figure 3-35 Architecture of USGBC’s brand assets and programs (USGBC Brand Strategy, 2016)](image-url)
3.3.3 USGBC Style Guide

This document serves as an internal guide for USGBC’s staff and it contains information on how the internal team members (either from Marketing department or other departments) should utilize different textual or visual elements to illustrate the brand contents. This is a 30-page document which has more of its focus on the use of correct typography (Font style and size) and color palette for design applications. However, some important insights on the brand itself are missing.

**ILLUSTRATIONS**

The style and composition of our illustrations are warm, human, friendly, clean, simple. The composition should be constructed of simple shapes, primarily using a flat design style. Use colors sparingly, purposefully, and for pacing. This helps maintain a clean aesthetic while also placing more emphasis on the content.

**DESIGN**

An important note about our general design is to remember that white space is important. White space makes important content more noticeable and easier to understand. It relays a sense of calm and efficiency.

*Figure 3-36 Sample snapshots from USGBC Style Guide (USGBC, Style Guide, 2016)*
This chapter has examined USGBC’s efforts in managing LEED brand from three different aspects: their overall strategy and marketing agenda, their published advertisements and the current branding guidelines. In conclusion, current branding guidelines for LEED barely address an essential ingredient: brand audience or target consumers.
4 LEED through the Lens of a Consumer-oriented Approach

4.1 Keller’s consumer-oriented framework’s terminology and definitions in regards to LEED

Keller’s Brand Knowledge framework is an insightful way to represent how eco-label knowledge can exist in consumer memory. In so doing, LEED as one of the most—if not the most—successful eco-brands will be analyzed through Keller’s knowledge framework to establish a common ground of CBBE terminologies for the next stages of the research. The prominent reason for using Keller’s framework is to break conventional thinking about the brand for those who think of brands as logos, and trademarks\(^\text{12}\). Brands are what consumers think of them.

4.1.1 LEED Brand awareness

LEED brand awareness is related to the “strength of brand node or trace in memory, which we can measure as the consumer ability to identify the brand under different conditions” (Keller, 2013, p.44).

Based on Keller’s framework awareness consists of the recognition and recall process. Recognition process relates to “consumers' ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand when given the brand as a cue (Keller, 1993)”. Prior exposure to the brand is based on whether a person had purchased the brand before as well as whether they had seen or heard about the brand.

Recall process relates to a “consumers’ ability to retrieve the brand when given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category, or some other type of probe as a cue. In other words, brand recall requires that consumers correctly generate the brand from memory” (Keller, 1993).

\(^{12}\) Names, Logos, trademarks, URLs, slogans and … are brand elements (Keller, 2013).
From these definitions, it can be implied that recognition is a prerequisite of recalling; no one can recall a brand that he/she cannot recognize. Based on these definitions brand awareness for LEED can be summarized as follows:

*Table 4-4 Brand Awareness components for LEED (Y.R)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEED brand awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having the prior exposure to LEED, at least in some form is necessary. For example, when an individual sees a LEED plaque on the wall or hears from the realtor that the building is a “LEED” property, will he be able to recognize the brand as one to which he has already been exposed to?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Awareness is a necessary first step in creating a differential effect. For instance, in making a rental or purchasing decision when both certified and non-certified options are available in the market for sale, consumers need to know what LEED is about in order to increase the likelihood that the LEED-certified building will be a member of the “consideration set”. The consideration set refers to the short-list of options which receive serious consideration for purchase (Keller, 2013, p.46). If a prospective buyer or tenant has no prior exposure to the LEED concept, then he/she will be indifferent about whether the building has such certification at all.

Despite the necessity of awareness in the consumer mindset, it is not always a sufficient step to create brand equity; other considerations such as the strength of brand image will come into play.
(Keller, 2012. P44) in high-involvement decision settings that require more serious considerations. The decision situation that consumers of LEED will find themselves can be both low-involvement and high-involvement. For example, choosing to have your coffee in a LEED-certified café is a low-involvement setting, but choosing to buy a LEED certified home over a non-LEED certified home is a high-involvement setting. Although having the basic awareness about LEED can motivate the consumers in a few situations, in general only knowing the brand of LEED may not be meaningful to consumers so we cannot expect a high level of brand equity. This implies that more attention must be paid to the creating a strong brand image of LEED. Once a sufficient level of brand awareness is created, marketers can put more emphasis on crafting a brand image.

Thus, this thesis deals with the brand awareness as a prerequisite to create the brand equity not the sufficient reason.

It shall be noted that brand awareness is in fact not a part of the consumer’s associative network memory, but awareness is a prerequisite for image creation and brand image can be seen as a network of different associations.

Figure 4-37 Distinguishing two main components of Keller’s model
4.1.1.1 Existing studies on LEED Brand Awareness and Favorability

As mentioned before, the studies focusing on LEED and other building’s green certifications as brands are scarce and there is no single comprehensive study demonstrating the status of LEED awareness among the US general population. In the third quarter of 2013 Navigant Research (2013), a market research and consulting team specializing in global clean technology markets, conducted “a consumer survey of 1,084 U.S. adults, based on a nationally representative and demographically balanced sample.” The survey comprised of a variety of energy topics, namely clean energies, clean transportation, smart grid technologies and LEED certification.

As shown in Figure 3-38, Chart 1.3, the number of respondents who have no opinion of LEED is significantly more in comparison to other energy topics which shows that, generally, people have a low brand awareness (Figure 3-38).
Figure 4-38 The status of LEED certification awareness based on consumer survey (Navigant Research, 2013)
According to the Navigant report, LEED certification “showed the least level of favorability (22%), largely due to low awareness of the topic.” When less than one-quarter of respondents indicate a favorable or very favorable impression of LEED certification, it may suggest that the LEED concept is relatively unappealing to consumers. However, Figure 4-39 demonstrates a more detailed picture of how consumers view the concept. The majority of consumers (73%) are simply unfamiliar with or have no opinion of this green building certification program. Although in Navigant previous years’ studies, LEED certification was unfamiliar to more consumers than any other energy or environmental concept identified in the survey, it can be concluded that among those who are familiar with the concept, LEED is not as unappealing as it seems from the survey data. If the 41 percent of the respondents with N/A answer are considered those with no or very little LEED brand awareness, they might be excluded from the population to get a more optimistic view of the LEED brand among those who at least know the brand. The new percentage can be calculated then.

*Figure 4-39 Consumer Favorability for LEED Certification (Navigant, 2013)*
New population of respondents with sufficient level of brand awareness to express their opinion about LEED: \[ n = (100-41)\% \times 1,084 = 639 \]

Number of respondents with favorable response: \[ 22\% \times 1,084 = 238 \]

New percentage: \[ \frac{238}{639} \times 100 = 37\% \]

The new percentage shows a more encouraging level of favorability among those consumers with sufficient level of brand awareness\(^{13}\).

### 4.1.2 Brand Image

Brand image is defined “as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory” (Keller, 1993). As seen from the definition, the brand associations are the major components of image. These are like informational nodes that all attached to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for consumers. Associations come in all forms and may contain “the characteristics of the product or aspects independent of product” (Keller, 2013. P44). For LEED as an example of green certification, the mental picture of a green roof, green wall or even specific type of window (or any other architectural element) that may be present in the consumer mind as a result of former experience of living, working or a short-stay in a LEED building, or bigger notions and concepts such as environmental protection could also be the brand associations of LEED for a particular consumer.

Brand associations are all those things that come to mind when an individual thinks about the brand. If we ask someone what comes to her/his mind when she/he thinks of Apple computers,\[\]

\(^{13}\) This interpretation of data may not be accounted as the ultimate favorability status of LEED brand as we cannot be certain about the brand awareness level of those respondents who provide Neutral answers.
we may hear “well-designed”, “easy to use”, “high tech” and “great customer service” as adjectives describing what Apple means to people. We may also hear Steve Jobs, iPhone or even the name of competitors such as Microsoft or Samsung. The associations that come to mind when someone thinks of Apple make up the Apple brand image for that person.

Keller (2013, p.45) explains:

Through breakthrough products and skillful marketing, Apple has been able to achieve a rich brand image made up of a host of brand associations. Many are likely to be shared by a majority of consumers, so we can refer to ‘the’ brand image of Apple, but at the same time, we recognize that this image varies, perhaps even considerably, depending on the consumer or market segment.

Following the same logic, this thesis recognizes that LEED may not have “the” image because the fragmented market (as illustrated in the introduction) renders different needs and expectations from the brand, therefore different segments might attach different nodes to the brand concept. Furthermore, this thesis does not intend to capture what exactly is happening in the consumer mindset because, even through empirical tests with large sample selection, it would be “difficult to pin down and psychologically complicated” (Almquist & Bloch, 2016). Instead, this thesis tries to frame a wide range of different opportunities and constraints under the umbrella of the CBBE framework by uncovering different types of associations that can be attached to the environmental brand rather than its basic functional aspects such as energy efficiency and environmental protection. Consequently, it is useful first to examine what different types of brand associations may be present in consumer memory, to use them as a foundation for next stages of analysis.
4.1.2.1 Different types of brand associations

The CBBE literature review paper by Christodoulides and de Chernatony (2010) concludes that brand associations, as the core component of CBBE, are adopted in the majority of theoretical studies (French & Smith, 2013). Keller (1993, 1998) classifies brand associations into three major categories of attributes, benefits and attitudes. This division is based on the level of abstraction, that is “how much information is summarized or subsumed in the association.” Therefore, it is expected that this classification renders “increasing scopes” (Keller, 1993). For example, a benefit association may be created in mind because of several attributes so the benefit association has more information inside it rather than a mere attribute, and positive brand attitude can result from several brand benefits. In the following, these associations will be introduced in more detail.

4.1.2.1.1 Attributes

Attributes are “descriptive” characteristics that describe a brand or “what a consumer thinks the brand is or has and what is involved with its purchase or consumption,” such as product-related or non-product related attributes. The former usually deals with physical features of the product while the latter deals with some external aspects of a product in regards to its purchase or consumption like price information. “The price of the product or service is considered a non-product-related attribute because it represents a necessary step in the purchase process but typically does not relate directly to the product performance or service function. Price is a particularly important attribute association because consumers often have strong beliefs about the price and value of a brand and may organize their product category knowledge in terms of the price tiers of different brands” (Keller, 1993).
Assuming the building is the product, there could be some common beliefs about architecture and building related attributes in the mind of the consumer. Descriptive features such as “high performance” and “energy efficient buildings”, “non-toxic or natural materials”, and “high-quality indoor air can be different brand attributes for different audiences.

When a consumer thinks about LEED and LEED buildings, some other type of product-related features might come to his mind. These types of associations may not be necessarily present in all LEED buildings, but people can create the mental images based on their own former experience in a LEED building that they have had exposure to. Also, this kind of association can be communicated through random Internet pictures one may see during an accidental search on LEED buildings or the pictures that different sites—including USGBC – use to showcase LEED-buildings.

Essentially, the large portion of the LEED brand image comes from building-related attributes. In a letter with the title “Imagine it” from Rick Fedrizzi, founding chairman and CEO of USGBC, the strong bond can be observed between the product-related attributes and the image that USGBC tries to convey to the consumers. Fedrizzi (USGBC,2014) writes:

Imagine getting to your desk and sitting down without flipping a light switch—the huge floor-to-ceiling windows nearby provide plenty of natural springtime light, and if it gets cloudy this afternoon, sensors in your work area will kick on overhead lighting to an appropriate level of brightness. Meanwhile, your personal control of the temperature in your work area allows you to stay warm even as your neighbor, who has a higher cold tolerance, works at a temperature that's comfortable for him.
Fedrizzi’s words illustrate descriptive associations such “shiny and full of light spaces”, “high technology” and “high thermal comfort” and also suggest physical features such as “large windows” and “sensors.” He also describes what may differentiate a LEED building from others:

Imagine being surrounded by decorative elements that invoke nature and keep you connected to the natural world even while you're inside. Imagine an herb garden in the office cafeteria and an educational display in the office lobby—constant reminders for you and your company's visitors of just what it is that makes your building so special.

A pool of different attributes and keywords, which the creator of LEED envisions for the brand, are summarized in Table 4-5.

Table 4-5 A compilation of building-related attributes USGBC’s CEO envisions for LEED (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of LEED brand product-related attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive features</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local reclaimed material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart, low-maintenance operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermally comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection to nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low energy and water costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The image that Fedrizzi depicts from a LEED building encompasses the core concepts behind LEED assessment criteria, suggesting that LEED creators assume that their assessment system has an important role in controlling the products unique characteristics that are only atributable to the
brand. In other words, Fedrizzi’s letter demonstrates the way the brand seeks to position itself in a unique situation due to the intrinsic characteristics of the assessment criteria. From this standpoint, the differential effect (also known as brand equity) is considered to be the pure result of the qualities gifted to a product by the brand. This situation, perhaps, rarely occurs with other brands but we need to consider the unique nature of the brand we here dealt with: an assessment system after all.

The other way to envision the rationale is to start thinking this way: in the first place the design team had decided to acquire the certification, so they adjusted their design in conformance with LEED criteria. Had they not decided to design a LEED building, they would not have come up with the same design ideas. To further support the assumption that LEED is beyond just a one-page checklist, in the paper “LEED, Collaborative Rationality and Green Building Public Policy”, the authors demonstrate a failed attempt of a design team who sought to build Green in the absence of certification and contrast it with the success of a team seeking LEED certification. The authors believe that a “one-page checklist with different point categories” is a driving force of more holistic way of thinking, fueling “collaborative rationality” (Rajkovich et al, 2013).

To end this section, it can be assumed that product-related attributes to some extent are the result of the brand –LEED’s assessment system control over the offerings –in this case certified buildings though in contrast with most brands, we do not deal with homogeneous and identical offerings every time.\textsuperscript{14} LEED is more a promise about intrinsic qualities of the product-related attributes.

\textsuperscript{14} In his online Journal, Fedrizzi tries to make a case that his creation – LEED – is now a brand. He writes with zeal “About 20 years ago, someone tried to describe a brand to me thusly: imagine in your mind a small, long rectangular white box on a store shelf. By itself, that box means nothing to the average consumer. But place a small red triangle on that box, along with the letters...C...r...e...s...t...and what you have is something else altogether. At that point, to
4.1.2.1.2 Benefits

Brand benefits are the values that consumers personally attach to the brand attributes, that is, what consumers think the brand can do for them (In section 4.2, “Brand Values” are equivalent of brand benefits, but in a more practical manner for executive and managerial purposes). Keller (1993) categorizes benefits according to “the underlying motivations to which they relate” in terms of functional benefits, experiential benefits, and symbolic benefits.

The very basic form of advantage can be understood as functional benefits which, according to Keller (1993), are related to the lowest levels of physiological and safety needs from Maslow’s (1970) hierarchy of needs. This type of association is usually linked to product-related attribute (Keller, 1993) but Keller does not clearly distinguish the boundary between functional benefits and product-related attributes. Yet, according to the definition, we can assume that a functional benefit can cover a wide range of product-related attributes of Table 5. For example, the benefit of saving money can relate to several features at the same time like use of PV panels, double-glazed windows or a smart energy meter.

Similarly, experiential benefits are related to sensory pleasure and they correspond to product-related attributes. Experiential benefits relate to “what it feels like to use the product or service.” (Keller, 1993). Hence, we can assert that the LEED benefits people perceive from their increased millions of Americans that small box immediately means to them fewer cavities, fresher breath and whiter teeth... Now, take that concept and apply it to luxury products and companies, like Four Seasons Hotels, Rolex Watches, Cartier Jewelers or Tiffany & Co., to name just a few. ...That’s where we at the USGBC find ourselves at Greenbuild 2013. And that’s why I continue to hear the word “brand” being bandied about in numerous conversations in and around a number of sessions and on the exhibit floor. This organization has spent almost a quarter of a century in the dogged pursuit of creating a luxury product [LEED].” One critical note here is his logic of comparing Crest toothpaste with LEED while the latter does not cover identical offerings on shelves across the globe, coming from same factories with identical formulas.
quality of life shall constitute the experiential benefits for LEED. In literature about green buildings, health and productivity benefits are among the mostly-referred experiential benefits of LEED-certified buildings or other green buildings in general (Henn et al, 2013; Kats, 2013; Addae-Dapaah, 2011). These benefits are usually perceived to be the result of improved indoor environment quality. In accordance with Keller’s explanation of increasing scope, health and productivity benefits are the result of some smaller scope product-related attributes such as high-performance lighting systems, improved indoor air quality and improved access to the natural environment (Kats, 2013. pp46-58).

In contrast with the two other categories, symbolic benefits are usually related to non-product-related attributes and “to underlying needs for social approval or personal expression and outer directed self-esteem. Hence, consumers may value the prestige, exclusivity, or fashionability of a brand because of how it relates to their self-concept (Keller, 1993).” Keller believes symbolic benefits are more relevant for “socially visible, "badge" products.” LEED-certified buildings are really similar to badge products, even when the LEED plaque is not easily visible to the public, in the websites of corporate and educational institutions, they promote their newly certified buildings. In such cases, reasons such as corporate branding and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are major incentives for firms and public institutions to showcase their green credentials by getting certifications for their buildings (Smith, 2007; Yoshida & Sugiura, 2015).

In the book *Greening Our Built Environment: Costs, benefits and Strategies*, Kats (2013) investigates a wide range of green building benefits and these benefits can be categorized based on Keller’s classification (Table 6).
Table 4-6 Sorting Kats’ benefits based on Keller’s classification (Y.R)

Examples of LEED benefits according to Kat’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Benefits</th>
<th>Experiential Benefits</th>
<th>Symbolic benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water-related savings</td>
<td>Health Benefits</td>
<td>Social Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy-Use Reduction</td>
<td>Productivity Benefits</td>
<td>International Image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Cost</td>
<td>Employment Benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above chart illustrates only some of many possible benefits that are supported by academic literature. Later in section 4.2, the brand benefits or “brand values” will be looked out from a more personal side in consumer’s journey.

4.1.2.1.3 Attitudes

Attitudes are consumers' overall evaluations of a brand (Wilkie, 1986). Brand attitudes often form the basis for consumer behavior for example having a pro-environmental attitude can more easily push the consumer toward eco-labels. Keller (1993) refers to a widely accepted “multi attribute” model for brand attitudes that suggests “attitudes are a function of the associated attributes and benefits that are salient for brand.” The beliefs a consumer has about the product or service and the evaluative judgment of those beliefs (how good or bad is the brand’s specific attributes or benefits) create the overall brand attitude. Although brand attitude can be positive or negative, for the purpose of simplicity and because of the goal of the research, this thesis only considers positive attitudes toward LEED brand.
Brand attitude for LEED can be related to the beliefs about building-related attributes and the consequential perceived functional or experiential benefits. For example, the stronger someone believes that LEED-certified buildings have proper insulation, the stronger beliefs he holds about the energy-efficiency of a LEED-building and therefore, his overall attitude toward the brand is positive. This rationalization explains the interconnectedness between attribute, benefits and overall attitudes.

In summary, the brand associations make the brand image, and they include product-related or non-product-related attributes; functional, experiential, or symbolic benefits; and overall brand attitudes.

4.2 The BrandScape template

The BrandScape template is one of many templates that can be used for branding purposes by firms. The components of this template is based on the concept of consumer-based brand equity. The premise of this template is that the true brand is owned by the Customer/Segment, as opposed to trademarks, logos and other brand “elements” which are owned by the firm. This template which is taught in Penn State’s MBA Brand Management classes, is useful in defining what a company or firm wants their brand to mean, or it can also be used as a framework for customer research to better understand what the brand really means in the eyes of the customer. In reality, the latter can only be done based on the feedback from target consumer audience. In the following, the components of the BrandScape template will be introduced.

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15 This template was taught in Penn State’s “Mktg532 Strategic Brand Management” in fall 2016 and 2017.
4.2.1 Brand Footprint

Brand Footprint is corresponding to Keller’s brand image and consumer’s associative network. Footprint discusses the component that are present deeply in subconscious of consumers, always working, powerfully emotional. Brand footprint often works without consumer knowing it. Brand footprint consists of the following components.

**Core Values:** From the executive viewpoint, “Core Values” are a highest level of guiding principle.

Core values cannot be invented, but have to be earned and proved over and over again – and they must never be jeopardized. In order to endure and achieve business success, every corporation must have a sound set of beliefs or core values, which must always come before policies, practices, and goals (AB Volvo, 1997, p. 14).

From consumer’s viewpoint, values could be comparable to the Keller’s definition of benefits “the values that consumers personally attach to the brand attributes”, that is, what consumers think
the brand can do for them. However, different firms may use different values in their branding guidelines that may not necessarily reflect Keller’s definition, and are more aligned with corporate and organizational values. In the paper “Core value-based corporate brand building”, Mats Urde (2003) argues for the lack of terminology consensus when it comes to “core values.” Urde writes:

The organizational values answer, in principle, the questions of what we, as an organization stand for and what makes us who we are. These internal values are an important point of departure for the core values, which in turn summarize the brand’s identity. The most important task of the core value is to be the guiding light of the brand building process.

![Diagram showing the continuous interaction between brand value at different levels](Source: Doctoral thesis of Urde, 1997)

A helpful framework for the purpose of analysis is “The elements of Value Pyramid” by Bain & Company (2016) (Figure 4-42). This framework entails personal values from the perspective of an individual consumer and has a base built on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Figure 4-43).

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16 As stated in the paper this framework is the result of three decades of experience doing consumer research and observation for corporate clients which it is derived from scores of quantitative and qualitative customer studies.
Figure 4-42 The elements of Value Pyramid by Bain & Company (2016)

Figure 4-43 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Created by Boundless.com)
**Personality:** Brand Personality are traits that would describe the brand if it were a person.

**Brand Essence:** is the central point of the brand’s relationship with the consumer and it indicates how the firms want the consumer to “feel about themselves” when choosing the brand. Philip Kotler (2016) writes “the essence of your brand is not how or what customers feel about your brand... The essence of your brand is how and what your customers feel about THEMSELVES when they encounter your brand.”

### 4.2.2 Brand positioning

Brand positioning means placing a brand in a competitive frame of reference, and selecting a (unique) benefit for brand. In the figure below, the relationship of positioning with messaging can be seen.

![Figure 4-44 The relationship of positioning with messaging (Penn State ISBM, 2016)](image)
4.2.3 Brand Capsule

The Brand Capsule is a simple phrase, one idea that describes the brand. Brand Capsule can be relatively timeless or a capsule can also be a campaign slogan which may change every few years. Slogans can be quick embodiments of the brand that change over time.

4.2.4 Brand Elements

The trademarks, logos, visual, audio, and other methods which “Trigger the Brand Response” are all considered brand elements. These brand elements can be brand name, logo, symbol and are owned by the firm and should not be mistaken with the brand.

Figure 4-45 Examples of brand elements
(https://lottevanhedegemptsb.wordpress.com/2015/09/28/task-4-how-to-visualize-brand-identity)
4.3 The BrandScape presence in the existing brand guidelines of LEED

The presence of the BrandScape template components within the current USGBC guidelines demonstrates in the following Table.

Table 4-7 Comparison of the existing branding guidelines with the BrandScape template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Guidelines</th>
<th>Brand Values</th>
<th>Brand Personality</th>
<th>Brand Essences</th>
<th>Brand Positioning</th>
<th>Brand Capsule</th>
<th>Brand elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trademark Policy and Branding Guidelines</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGBC Brand Strategy</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Not-directly</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGBC Style Guide</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Not-directly</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over the course of following sections, each component will be introduced. The above chart demonstrates the lack of information on how USGBC wants to position their brand in comparison to other rating tools in the current guidelines. Hence, the information regarding the Marketing Department on this issue is solicited during a phone interview with the director of the Brand Management team (For further information refer to Appendix A).

17 The document contains the Capsule without explicitly introducing the slogan as the brand capsule.
4.3.1 LEED Brand Values

In section 4.2.1, it is seen that corporate and brand values are working closely together. According to the 2016 version of USGBC Brand Strategy, USGBC as an organization brand and LEED as a brand have values defined as:

USGBC’s values:

- **“Lead the Movement:”** Drive change by fearlessly raising the bar, taking risks and challenging our community to go further, faster.
- **Rally the Troops:** Create a gathering place, figuratively and literally, for the building community to connect and collaborate.
- **Education as Foundation:** Spread the word far and wide about the benefits of green building, and help produce the best intelligence and education on the subject.
- **Focus on Results:** Our impact is measured in outcomes. We will continue to measure and track the success of green building.”

LEED values:

- **“Foster Innovation:”** Support and learn from new technologies and strategies, and continue to incorporate them into the LEED rating system.
- **Challenge the Industry:** LEED wasn’t created to be easy. We’d rather shake up the system and spark real, meaningful change than preserve the status quo.
- **Embrace Flexibility:** Make LEED adaptable and available to all projects with an interest in green building, regardless of project type or geography—while preserving the rigor of the rating system.
- **Celebrate Leadership:** Utilize the LEED platform as a rallying point to celebrate outstanding green building achievement.”
4.3.2 LEED Brand Personality

In the Style guide version 2016, it is briefly mentioned that USGBC’s brand personality “Cheerful, optimistic. The future is amazing. We know because we’re building it that way.”

The guidelines clearly suggest that LEED does not want to project a rigid personality and cheerfulness and fun matter is evident from suggested color palette for graphics and other design illustrations (For the sample snapshots of element design refer to 3.3.3).

4.3.3 LEED Brand Essence

In the Brand guideline version 2016, it is briefly mentioned that USGBC’s brand essence is “forward-thinking. We’re using inventive ideas to solve real problems.”

4.3.4 LEED Brand positioning

As seen in Table 7, none of existing branding guidelines give attention to the brand positioning issue. According to the LEED brand manager, the USGBC’s Marketing, Communication and Public Relation departments do not really focus on competing brands. The main reason for this is because LEED acts as the brand leader. Although there are some competitors in the space of green rating systems, LEED is the clear forerunner, and therefore USGBC is not overly concerned about competition.

Hence, there is no “unique focus positioning” for their brand other than USGBC and LEED are “the most comprehensive, most excellent, and the highest bar”. “LEED is just more than an assembly
of codes, but a standard – about “Leadership” – about a way to showcase excellence,” says the Director of USGBC’s brand management team\textsuperscript{18}.

This view that LEED is “the most widely used /top/leading” brand is how LEED positions itself among “other brands of green buildings.” From the most recent advertisement for the general audience of “US Tax Payers” published on New York Times in February 2017 (Figure 4-46), this positioning strategy is apparent.

\textbf{Figure 4-46 LEED brand positioning Strategy (NewYork Times, Feb 2017)}

\textsuperscript{18} The Phone interview with Director of Brand Management team of USGBC was conducted on 03/31/2017.
4.3.5 LEED Brand Capsule

The key line for USGBC or their brand capsule is: "Better buildings are our legacy". This tag line has been in use for a couple of years.

4.3.6 LEED Brand Elements

LEED logo, plaques on the wall of certified projects, educational products and materials are all considered elements that can trigger the brand response. Among these elements, the LEED plaque is perhaps the most important brand element. In 2006, a new plaque was introduced to incorporate the key design elements of the new USGBC logo at that time.

Figure 3-47 The new LEED plaques are made of recycled content glass to increase the demand for recycled glass.

In a document dated 2006, USGBC stated: “Because we want the plaque to reflect the significance of your accomplishment, elevating the aesthetic quality was critical.” USGBC’s efforts in making
their plaques “more beautiful and attractive” endorse the evolving badge-value of LEED plaques, making Keller’s symbolic benefits more relevant for in case of LEED buildings.

This virtually shifted LEED buildings from the holders of an energy label to a “socially visible, badge" overall offering.

---

**Figure 3-48 From label to brand: a conceptual comparison of ASHRAE Prototype of Building Energy Label with LEED certification plaque (Y.R)**

Upon earning the certification, a LEED project will receive the following free of charge:

- High-resolution download of their LEED certificate (ordering through greenplaque.com)
- Five or ten 11”x14” hard copy certificates and a formal letter of certification free of charge.

But for receiving plaques, USGBC refers projects to two partner websites\(^{19}\) to purchase their intended design from various plaques and signage options.

---

\(^{19}\) [www. Greenplaque.com](http://www.greenplaque.com) offers various plaques and signage options. Buildingplaques.com offers signage that identifies the elements of green building design that earn LEED certification for the subject project.
Table 4-8 Different available Plaque options (By Y.R based on the information retrieved from . Greenplaque.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glass</th>
<th>Aluminium</th>
<th>Stone</th>
<th>Wood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLEAR SAND BLOWED PLAQUE</td>
<td>POLISHED ALUMINUM PLATE - CLEAR COATED</td>
<td>SAND BLASTED GRANITE PLATE</td>
<td>SAND BLASTED MAHOGANY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| From: $396.00  
Brackets From: $154.00  
Total min : $550 | From: $1,210.00 | From: $583.00 | From: $350.00 |
| • the standard plaque for LEED Certified buildings  
• Claimed to be recycled glass | These plaques are machined from solid aluminum sheet stock composed of up to 85% recycled material. This process is inherently friendlier to the environment than the sand casting process used by competitors to produce plaques. | made from the Absolute Black Granite | Wood is the most renewable source of construction material. Its light weight reduces transportation costs and its softness reduces production costs. |
| SILVER LEAF GLASS PLAQUE $990.00 | BRUSHED ALUMINUM PLATE - CLEAR COATED From: $968.00 | LASER ETCHED GRANITE PLATE | SAND BLASTED WHITE OAK From: $350.00 |
| ultra-clear glass and are hand-gilded with pure silver leaf. | BRUSHED ALUMINUM PLATE - GOLD ANODIZD $1,309.00 | | |
Table 4-9 The square-shape plaque options (By Y.R based on the information retrieved from Greenplaque.com and Buildingplaques.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aluminum</th>
<th>Anodized aluminum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Aluminum plaque" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Anodized aluminum plaque" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CABLE SUSPENSION GOLD ANODIZED LEED PLAQUE AND HARDWARE SYSTEM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From: $1,300.00</th>
<th>From: $750.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 85% recycled aluminum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Aluminum is gold anodized</td>
<td>- Customized to display the design elements that earned the project LEED certification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- photo-quality images on anodized aluminum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Nothing mentioned about the use of recycled material but says all material are recyclable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Aluminum look**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From: $1,800.00</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 85% recycled aluminum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.6.1 LEED® DYNAMIC PLAQUE™

In the USGBC Brand Strategy Guide (2016 version), the LEED Dynamic Plaque is recognized as a marketing strategy:

A beautifully designed building performance monitoring system, the LEED Dynamic Plaque uses building data inputs and occupant surveys to generate a live performance score. Buildings are alive, constantly changing through seasons and even from day to day [...]. The LEED Dynamic Plaque ensures that building performance is a journey, not just a one-time certification event.


Through the BrandScape lens, the careful design of brand elements has an important role in building a powerful and lasting brand image. LEED Dynamic Plaque can create a memorable interaction with consumers and it has the potential to display information on building performances integrated with hidden marketing messages.
The review of Keller’s consumer-oriented branding framework reveals the various aspects of LEED as a brand as well as the various expectations of consumers from the brand that consumers may view as the brand promises they attach to the brand from visible product-related attributes such as the enhanced energy performance to personal and emotional benefits such as being socially responsible.

The comparison of BrandScape template with the existing branding guidelines will set the stage for potential areas of improvement in the current guidelines. Chapter 6 of this thesis will examine each component of BrandScape with regards to the target audience of Millennials. Hence, in the next chapter, some fundamental insights on this clientele will be provided.
5 Addressing Consumers: Selection of Millennials as the Target Segment for Consumer-oriented Branding

5.1 Why Millennials?

Millennials, also called Generation Y, are the biggest generational group since the baby boomers. According to U.S Census Bureau, Millennials who were born between 1980 and 1996 (Age between 21-37 in 2017) comprise of roughly 80 million of the US population as of December 2015. Their hefty size and buying power are making them attractive targets for many business leaders and marketing managers across different industries dealing with consumers (Gallup, 2016).

Generally, there are two major motivations behind marketers’ interest in Millennials: their large population and their considerable growing impact on the long-term economic perspective. According to Accenture (2016), a management consultant company, millennials spend roughly $600 billion each year. This figure will be projected to reach $1.4 trillion by the year 2020 as
millennials fully shift into the workforce and begin making larger purchases, such as homes and automobiles.

This buying influential power is important and attractive to businesses in building design and construction industries. In fact, the actual economic impact of Millennial generation has yet several years to come. With a voice of approximately 80 million, the Millennial generation can dramatically influence the green building markets. Green-certified buildings or as this thesis argues the green branded spaces - are among the places that Millennials choose to work, study, shop, eat and live in. Careful branding can definitely increase the number of Millennials who resonate with the brand.

This chapter will provide evidence of both market and academic research on Millennials tendency towards sustainability plus some insights on Millennials as a generation and some of their relevant characteristics which may have implications for contemporary marketing and branding.

5.1.1 Evidence that Millennials do care about environment

While there have been a variety of studies on green marketing, there has been little academic research on green marketing to Millennials. In this section, the related studies are presented to provide enough evidence that Millennials do actually care about the environment.

2007: California Green Solutions (2007) reports that environmentally friendly products have positive images to most of Millennials. Research shows that 47% of Millennials would be willing to pay more for environmentally friendly services, products, or brands. The majority, 77% of those paying more, state that they would do so because they ‘care about the environment’ (Green Solutions, 2007).
2008: According to Gunelius (2008), Millennials are seeking brands that are regarded as making a positive effect on the environment. Gunelius (2008) quotes a study by Outlaw Consulting. In Outlaw’s study the four characteristics are identified that make some green brands more attractive than others or at least they appear to be more reliable than others in attracting Millennials:

“(1) Green brands that are the first in their product category.

(2) Green brands that practice minimalism, meaning that they use clean designs, packaging, and advertising; this translates to environmentally friendly, even if the companies are not actually doing much to benefit the environment.

(3) The brand category is a factor in green brands. For example, food products should be green but being green is not that important for technology products and clothing.

(4) Green brands that are part of the social networking culture are more favorably perceived”.

2008: According to a Bentley College study of Millennials, a perception of being environmentally friendly is a key factor in attracting the interest of the Millennials (Henrichs, 2008). According to the study, “green” is a broad term allowing multiple meanings to be perceived. Respondents consider the term ‘green’ as covering environmental issues, but also “social responsibility and the ethical treatment of animals” (Like cruelty-free cosmetics). The study also found younger students were less interested in green than older students.

2009-2011: According to Dr. Katherine Taken Smith a professor of Marketing at Texas A&M University, there has been little academic research on green marketing to Millennials. Her study seeks to add to the research literature by identifying emerging marketing strategies that are
influencing the environmentally conscious consumption behavior of Millennials (Smith, 2010). This is accomplished by conducting a longitudinal comparison of Millennials’ perceptions of green marketing strategies (Smith, 2011). Generally, her studies show the positive attitudes of Millennials toward environmental concepts.

In the longitudinal study by Smith and Brower (2012), data were collected over a three-year period via survey in an American college. Results demonstrate “Millennials are taking note of a company’s reputation, reading product labels, and looking for clues on product packaging to discern if a product is environmentally preferable. Specific symbols and terms are identified as being effective in conveying the green message.” Although this study is more applicable to the packaged products, a few insights can be beneficial to this thesis:

- **Word Choice:** The study examines the words linked with ‘environmentally preferable’ in the consumer’s mind. In a questionnaire, the respondents were asked to select words that most strongly convey the impression of being environmentally friendly for them. From 2009 to 2011, the three words are equally being used to convey the idea of being environmentally are “eco-friendly”, “recycled”, and “green”.

  
  
  
  Table 5-10 Words that are analogous to being environmentally friendly (Smith, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eco-friendly</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycled</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bio-degradable</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009 2010 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco-friendly</td>
<td>65 71 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycled</td>
<td>63 59 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>60 60 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bio-degradable</td>
<td>47 41 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic</td>
<td>38 38 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>21 26 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable</td>
<td>n/a 13 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is notable that the term “sustainable” is selected by the fewest number of people as conveying the concept of environmentally preferable.

- **Brand Reputation**: In the period of three years, consumers were most influenced by company or brand reputation. If the company had a reputation for being concerned about the environment, then the consumer perceived its products to be environmentally preferable.

Table 11 shows the list of items that influence the environmentally conscious consumer. “The order of the ranking remained the same each year, lending some longitudinal validity to the results” (Smith, 2012).

*Table 5-11 Items that influence consumer perception of eco-friendly (Smith, 2012)*

| The following items influence my perception of whether a product is environmentally friendly: | Means |
|---|---|---|
| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
| The company’s reputation | 4.15 | 4.03 | 4.06 |
| Advertising | 4.13<sup>a</sup> | 4.00<sup>a</sup> | 3.98<sup>a</sup> |
| The product’s packaging | 3.87<sup>b</sup> | 3.78<sup>b</sup> | 3.74<sup>b</sup> |
| What I hear from my peers | 3.74 | 3.72 | 3.62 |
| Consumer reports | 3.71 | 3.58 | 3.57 |

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Significantly different means for males and females, with females having a higher mean in each case (2009: male 3.97, female 4.27; 2010: male 3.81, female 4.12; 2011: male 3.82, female 4.10). <sup>b</sup>Significantly different means for males and females, with females having a higher mean in each case (2009: male 3.72, female 4.0; 2010: male 3.67, female 3.86; 2011: male 3.59, female 3.84). Scores range from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. All items have means significantly different from neutral (3).

**2014**: The Deloitte Millennials Survey asking about Millennials top concerns and climate change and resource scarcity, taken together, topped the list.

**2015**: A recent Nielsen global online study found that Millennials continue to be most willing to pay extra for sustainable offerings—almost three-out-of-four respondents in the latest findings (Nielsen, 2015).
5.1.2 Millennials attitude toward LEED
Chapter 4, Figure 4-38 reveals the low brand awareness of LEED among the respondents of the US consumer survey by Navigant research (2013).

In regard to demographic breakouts, favorability which is one of the measurements against (having no opinion) increased in younger generations. This implies that probably Millennials have a higher LEED brand awareness.

5.2 Millennials’ characteristics, needs, and priorities that have marketing implications
“It is impossible and unadvisable to say that all millennials are “this” or “that” (Gallup,2016). This generation consists of members who were born between 1980 and 1996, and are in various stages of their lives, with different needs and wants. Younger millennials are college-age meaning that they are just attending college or entering their first full-time jobs, while many older millennials have already spent several years in the workplace.
Gallup is an American research-based management consulting company which conducts public opinion polls worldwide. Gallup’s 2016 report on Millennials, “How Millennials Want to Work and Live: The Six Big Changes Leaders Have to Make”, is a comprehensive research effort revealing widespread social and cultural trends among members of this generation. Gallup’s findings provide insight into “millennials’ defining characteristics, their motivations and connections, and their participation or lack thereof — in traditional American institutions” (Gallup, 2016).

In regards to branding to Millennials, the Gallup 2016 research found that many companies are creating brand destroyers instead of building brand ambassadors among Millennials because companies are largely failing to deliver on their brand promises. Gallup’s customer engagement data reveal that less than half of millennial consumers (41%) strongly agree that the companies they do business with “always deliver on what they promise.” Comparatively, 55% of traditionalists, 47% of baby boomers and 43% of Gen Xers feel the same about the companies with which they do business.

The promises offered by a brand act as an agreement between a company and its customers. It is the unique statement of what the company offers, what separates it from its rivals and what makes it worthy of customers’ consideration. A brand promise is important, and it has a considerable influence on customer engagement. For brands to succeed with any generation, they have to send the right message at the right time and reinforce that message with the right experiences (by delivering on their brand promise). However, it’s difficult for brands to find this success with their millennial audience. Millennials don’t believe brands are following through on their promises; on top of that, they have unrestricted access to the online world to share their messages of dissatisfaction. The high online involvement of Millennials can make the brand both vulnerable or
powerful. In the following sections, some of Millennials characteristics will be introduced based on Gallup data.

5.2.1 Demographic characteristic: Ethnic diversity

According to Gallup (2016), Millennials are the most ethnically-diverse in comparison to the other generations: while majorities of traditionalists (85%), baby boomers (77%) and Gen Xers (64%) are white, a smaller majority of millennials (54%) fall into the same category. Nearly half of millennials (47%) are not white, demonstrating a surge of immigration to the US that started in the 1940s (Gallup, 2016, p 58).

![Figure 5-52 The breakdown of different generations based on ethnic groups (Adapted from Gallup Millennials Report (2016), Visualized by Y.R)](image-url)
5.2.2 Demographic characteristic: Employment and income

Millennials have invested more heavily in their education than previous generations. As they move into the job market in greater numbers, it will be exciting to see the effect of these highly educated workers on the U.S. workplace and the economy. According to Gallup, currently, two important economic trends are working against this generation:

First, millennials have the highest rates of unemployment and underemployment of any generation studied. Gallup (2016) defines “underemployment” as the percentage of adults in the workforce who are unemployed and those who are working part-time but desire full-time work (Figure 5-53).

Second, Millennials’ income is substantially less than other generations: “12% of millennials’ household income level falls at or below the 2014 federal poverty level of $12,316 per year. Nearly four out of 10 earn less than $3,000 per month — also the highest among all generations. At the other end of the income scale, significantly fewer millennials are currently earning over $15,000 or more per month compared with all other generations except traditionalists [retired people]” (Gallup, 2016) (Figure 5-54).
Figure 5-53 Employment situation of Millennials (Gallup, 2016)

Figure 5-54 Millennials population breakout based on the income tiers (Adapted from Gallup Millennials dataset (2016), Visualized by Y.R)
5.2.3 Psychographic characteristic: Empathy and adoptability

A common fallacy of Millennials is that “they are selfish, self-indulgent or only capable of interacting online. [...] Millennials are an empathetic generation; they recognize and care about people and their feelings. [...Due to constant connectivity via social media and exposure to different viewpoints], they likely have a higher propensity for seeing the world through someone else’s eyes. They anticipate and think about the needs of others, which contradicts conventional wisdom about this group.” (Gallup, 2016).

Gallup quoted CliftonStrengths\textsuperscript{20} to reveal Millennials’ five most common strengths: Achiever, Empathy, Learner, Adaptability and Responsibility: “Millennials have an intense need to feel productive (Achiever), to take ownership of their work (Responsibility) and to continuously expand their knowledge (Learner). They are compassionate (Empathy) and inclined to live in the moment (Adaptability).”

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{CliftonStrengths.png}
\caption{Figure 5-55 Generational personality trait and strength (Gallup, 2016)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{20} CliftonStrengths is an online assessment that measures a person’s natural talents within 34 themes and then identifies their top themes.
5.2.4 Connectivity and communication status

Millennials are the first generation who can be considered as “digital natives who feel at home on the Internet” (Gallup, 2016). Compared to other generations, Millennials are more likely to use social media platforms.

![Figure 5-56 Millennials preference for communication device (Gallup, 2016)](image1)

![Figure 5-57 Millennials use of social media (Gallup, 2016)](image2)
The figure above demonstrates that Millennials have largely ignored newspapers, radio, and magazines as information sources. They frequently turn to the Internet to find information, for entertainment and shopping. Gallup’s findings speak loudly to advertisers and marketers who try to communicate with a younger audience through more traditional mediums.

Millennials’ online preferences also tell managers, marketing and PR departments that the most effective way to grasp these consumers’ attention is through digital channels.

This chapter provides some general insights on Millennials. Although there are numerous ways to study this influential generation, the limited time frame of this research does not allow for the study of all possible aspects of Millennials’ lives. Furthermore, limited academic research on green marketing to Millennials was another factor to limit the scope of this chapter.
6 Discussion and Recommendations for USGBC

Based on a culmination of the existing literature and comparison of USGBC’s efforts with the wants of the Millennials, as well as the insights from the interviews conducted with USGBC’s staff and Marketing leaders, some strategic recommendations have been formed for addressing the Millennial consumers.

In this chapter, two different sets of recommendations are being put forward. The first set is concerning the guidelines for improvement based on the BrandScape template. Although brief, the BrandScape can be seen as the philosophy of the organization in regards to the brand. These recommendations are made with the mentality that the main goal of every guideline must be first to train the internal teams like brand management team or other employees. The better the staff are aware of the values and brand architecture, the better they can perform when it comes to communication with the external audience, writing content for social media and designing ad campaigns.

The second set of recommendations has a more detailed focus. Seeking what type of content on social media, mostly in visual forms, Millennials find appealing and motivating. The second set of recommendations is proposed in regards to the BrandScape but the prominent view has been shifted from a philosophical side into a more practical set of suggestions.
6.1 Guidelines recommendations: The BrandScape improvements

6.1.1 LEED Brand Core Values

Table 6-12 Presence of the BrandScape elements with the existing brand-values (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Guidelines</th>
<th>Brand Values</th>
<th>LEED Brand Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trademark Policy and Branding Guidelines</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Foster Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGBC Brand Strategy</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Challenge the Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGBC Style Guide</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Embrace Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Celebrate Leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6-13 Comparison of the existing brand-values with Millennials' concerns (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEED Brand Values</th>
<th>Findings on Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster Innovation</td>
<td>Deloitte’s Millennial Survey (2017) has found out that Millennials value innovation. They will be more easily attracted to the companies founding based on innovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge the Industry</td>
<td>Deloitte’s Survey (2017) indicates that Millennials are constantly expecting more from businesses and industries thus their view of large and multinational organization is that they can perform better and must be challenged to take more responsible actions. “Millennials do expect businesses to do more than simply seek financial success [...in Millennials’ viewpoint] businesses are</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
possibly falling short of their potential to address the societal challenges that are most important to millennials. [...] In particular, they thought business could help with respect to: education, skills, and training; economic stability, cybersecurity, health care and disease prevention, climate change, and unemployment. But, it was only for the first three that business was widely considered to be having a positive impact.” These findings indicate that LEED could be a manifestation of how the perusing organization has been challenged in regards to human, society and plant health and physical and social well-being.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embrace Flexibility</th>
<th>Within the existing guidelines by flexibility, it is meant the potential of the rating tool to be applied to different projects with different uses and sizes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate Leadership</td>
<td>Millennials like to take responsibility for their actions and they like to have a voice over many issues concerning them. Deloitte’s (2017) states that “they feel they have more influence on their peers, customers, and suppliers than on leaders or “big issues,” and their influence can, therefore, be regarded as being exerted through smaller scale, immediate, and local actions—more so when employers provide the requisite tools.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a generation who feel a greater sense of empowerment and leadership, who like to be an active participant rather than a bystander, it is a wise strategy to enable them to exert their voice through social media to influence their peers over the issues and “good causes” which they feel they have a responsibility.
Figure 6-59 “Big issues” that Millennials feel accountable and influential (Deloitte, 2017)

Through value-mapping of both organization values (for USGBC’s value see 4.3.1) and brand values, one notable fact is the environmental stewardship has been taken for granted. Part of this is because of the fear of green-washing as it is stated by the Brand Management Director during a phone interview.21 The important point for USGBC’s marketing and branding leaders is that the main aim of all guidelines is to “inform your team” and keep them constantly reminded of the values that USGBC and LEED are standing for.

✓ Recommendations

• Add environmental stewardship to the core-values. The concern for environment must be treated as a standalone value. No worry for green-washing, just add a “prosperous environment for all” to the current set of values.

21 The Phone interview with Director of Brand Management team of USGBC was conducted on 03/31/2017.
Although USGBC’s involvement in social issues, “good causes” and environmental protection efforts is beyond satisfying, the more tangible impact could be made by reminding its own employees what the main concern is.

- Create a set of sub-values from the consumer’s perspective for USGBC teams’ reference.

One problem with most guidelines is that the contents, especially values, are too general with a top-down approach. As is the case with USGBC, brand values are not well-defined from the consumer’s perspective and prioritize a top-down view. For defining more consumer-oriented values, the current values can be revised based on Bain’s elements of the value pyramid (Figure 4-42). Figure 6-60 (next page) is a modified version of the pyramid, after omitting irrelevant elements and replacing them with more relevant values for the Millennial audience.
Figure 6-60 A reference set of values adopted from Bain’s value"22 pyramid and modified based on the needs of Millennials (Y.R)

22 The blue marks indicate modified values.
6.1.2 LEED Brand Personality

Table 6-14 Presence of the BrandScape elements with the existing brand-personality (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Guidelines</th>
<th>Brand Personality</th>
<th>LEED Brand Personality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trademark Policy and Branding Guidelines</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Optimistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGBC Brand Strategy</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Cheerful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGBC Style Guide</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6-15 Comparison of the existing brand-personalities with Millennials’ concern (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEED Brand Personality</th>
<th>Findings on Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheerful</td>
<td>According to Gallup (2016), authenticity and fun matter to Millennials. Millennials want their brand experience to be authentic. When brands push or shove their way into millennials’ online lives, it can feel intrusive and forced. They can easily spot an insincere, generic tone, and they know when brands are trying too hard to fit in. Beyond authenticity, brands also need to be appealing — they have to give consumers what they want. In many cases for millennials, what they want is fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>Millennials want to connect with brands that offer them something fun, creative and novel. Millennials expect their brand experience to be enriching, rewarding and entertaining. Gallup research shows that, contrary to popular belief, Millennials don’t expect work to be fun; instead, they expect fun from their consumer experience. Both Gallup (2016) and Deloitte (2017) studies confirm that Millennials are optimistic about future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The current guidelines do not focus on a specific target audience, and targeting a specific segment will help to reflect the segmentation personality in the brand personality. Studies by Gallup and Deloitte can prove helpful to gain a wider perspective of Millennials as the potential target segment.

The Gallup research shows a dramatic shift of views and perspective on life and workplace in Millennials.

Millennials have led the charge to break down traditional organizational structures and policies and have pushed companies to rethink their work environments. Leaders are reimagining their human capital strategies — from attraction to development — to meet this generation’s wants and needs. In the past, people accepted a job and stuck with it, largely without complaint, because they received a paycheck and some benefits; that was the status quo. Workers did what their bosses told them to do and many likely felt rather unattached to their job, leaving it behind at 5 p.m. without much of an afterthought.

That scenario does not reflect the workplace today. Employees choose careers for more than a paycheck — they want a sense of purpose. They see their jobs and lives as closely integrated. Employees look for and stay with companies that emphasize their development, not their satisfaction. They expect managers to go beyond the role of “boss” and serve as coaches, holding ongoing conversations with them focused on their strengths. Employees do not want communication and progress conversations relegated to once-a-year reviews focused on what they’ve been doing wrong (Gallup, 2016, pp14-15).
In section 5.2.3 some other traits of Millennials are introduced. By examining Millennials’ collective CliftonStrengths data, Gallup finds the opposite of a major misconception about Millennials, that they want to sidestep accountability and skip responsibility.

Millennials have high Responsibility and Achiever, meaning they care greatly about seeing tasks and projects completed. Millennials want managers to hold them accountable and possess an innate sense of ownership of their work. They need to feel productive, and this need resets itself each day. Their accomplishments only fuel them to do more...Millennials’ collective strengths data portray them as high achievers. Within this generation, many millennials like to take on work and are driven to get that work done (Gallup, 2016, pp 48-49).

✔️ **Recommendation**

- *Create and maintain a comprehensive list of the target segment’s personality traits. Align brand personality with the characteristics of your target.*

The current guidelines illustrate only a few limited personality characteristics and a more comprehensive set (See Table 6-16 as an example) can better enable the USGBC team members to make informed decisions based on Millennials’ personality traits.
Table 6-16 A compilation of brand-personality based on Millennial’s trait (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental concern</th>
<th>Mentorship</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Cheerfulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountable</td>
<td>Achiever</td>
<td>Empathic</td>
<td>Fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Supporter of personal development</td>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>Authentic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1.3 LEED Brand Essence

Table 6-17 Presence of the BrandScape elements with the existing brand-essence (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of the BrandScape Template</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of the Guidelines</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trademark Policy and Branding Guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGBC Brand Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGBC Style Guide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6-18 Comparison of the existing brand-essence with Millennials’ concern (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEED Brand Essence</th>
<th>Findings on Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forward-thinking. We’re using inventive ideas to solve real problems.</td>
<td>While the brand essence depicted in the current guidelines, correlates the forward-thinking with innovation inherent within LEED, there is interesting insight within Deloitte’s study (2017) on how Millennials perceive future generations. Millennials tend to have a broadly positive opinion of GenZ (born on and after year 2000). While Millennials see great potential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
within GenZ, they also believe these younger ones will need a lot of support.

Furthermore, the research by Haws et. al (2014) on green consumption values utilized students (Millennials at the time of research) as survey’s respondents. The research indicates the linkage between green consumption patterns and the inner desire to preserve the resources for future generations, the children and the grandchildren.

According to the BrandScape template, brand essence is the central point of the brand’s relationship with the target segment. The brand essence is the aggregate of all the qualities, brand values and personality.

The ‘new brand essence’ can be defined by re-imagining the way the target audience must feel about themselves. The brand essence could rest on the underlying characteristics of the concern for the environment, and also the more universal notion of socially responsible behavior.

✓ Recommendation

- Think deeper in terms of essence. The LEED brand essence is that the target audience would think of themselves as consciously accountable and responsible for making the prosperous environment for current and future generations.
6.1.4 LEED Brand positioning

Table 6-19 Presence of the BrandScape elements with the existing brand-positioning (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Guidelines</th>
<th>Brand Positioning</th>
<th>LEED Brand Positioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trademark Policy and Branding Guidelines</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>LEED is the most comprehensive, most excellent, and the highest bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGBC Brand Strategy</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>LEED is the most widely used /top/leading green building system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGBC Style Guide</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6-20 Comparison of the existing brand positioning with Millennials’ concern (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEED Brand positioning</th>
<th>Findings on Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEED is the most comprehensive, most excellent, and the highest bar.</td>
<td>According to Gunelius (2008), Millennials are seeking green brands that are the first in their product category, stated by Smith (2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEED is the most widely used /top/leading green building system.</td>
<td>A longitudinal study on Millennials by Smith (2012) reveals that among items that influence Millennials’ perception of environmentally-friendliness, a company’s reputation is the most influential.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- At the time of this research, no recommendation is made for the new brand positioning.

It seems the current positioning of LEED works well with the Millennial audience. On the other hand, the lack of USGBC’s concern for other competing brands (refer to 4.3.4) does not necessitate the modification of current brand positioning at this time. However, the Brand Management team must be alert about rising competitions in future.
6.1.5 LEED Brand Capsule

Table 6-21 Presence of the BrandScape elements with the existing brand-positioning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Guidelines</th>
<th>Brand Capsule</th>
<th>LEED Brand Capsule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trademark Policy and Branding Guidelines</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Better buildings are our legacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGBC Brand Strategy</td>
<td>Not-directly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGBC Style Guide</td>
<td>Not-directly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6-22 Comparison of the existing brand capsule with Millennials’ concern (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEED Brand Capsule</th>
<th>Findings on Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better buildings are our legacy.</td>
<td>For Millennials involvement in social issues and “good causes,” is highly valued (Deloitte, 2017). “Better” in the better buildings can contain a wider array of good causes such as “better in sense of social equity, economic benefit” and etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Furthermore, the sense of empowerment is important for Millennials. Millennials want to achieve a greater purpose through their actions (Gallup, 2016). The word “legacy” can best fulfill this need.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the time of this research, no recommendation is made for the new brand Capsule.

It seems the current Capsule of LEED works well with the Millennial audience. Furthermore, proposing new Capsule is largely dependent on the occasions in which the slogan would be used. For example, different ad campaigns may utilize different slogans.

6.1.6 LEED Brand’s Elements

Rob Freeman, a sustainable business consultant who has been working actively with USGBC and USGBC’s major members such as Starbucks, Staples, Johnson Controls, Turner, Marriott, Siemens, Yale, Stanford, SOM, Gensler, Skanska, Kohls, Target and JP Morgan stated in a web-article that the consumers’ experiences of LEED certified stores (retail category) could significantly evolve, if USGBC adopted a more aggressive marketing strategy for LEED for Retail, one that incorporated the new LEED Dynamic Plaque...The LEED Dynamic Plaque is a unique and eye catching digital display that tells the story of green building performance. [...] USGBC would promote awareness of the program among its many architectural design team members...In return for designing a unique and prominent place for the LEED Dynamic Plaques, such as near the entrance of the store, USGBC could offer to waive or offer steep discounts on the $6,000 annual subscription fee associated with the plaque (Freeman, 2014).

Practically, Freeman is suggesting an incentive mechanism for design teams so that the architect or designer can use their imagination to make the plaque an intrinsic part of the certified project.

Furthermore, the preference of Millennials for authenticity (refer to 6.1.2) suggests that Millennials might see a plaque as an add-on, a device for showing off. But, careful integration of the LEED plaque into architecture is capable of creating a higher brand awareness and the sense
of originality and authenticity. On the other hand, Millennials distrust that companies stay true to their advertising and use of the Dynamic Plaque would help to address this.

✓ Recommendation

- Consider potential credits under innovation category for integration of the LEED plaque into the interior and architectural design of the projects.

6.2 Specific recommendations to address Millennials in social media and through visual content

This section mostly borrowed ideas from Think with Google, a group of creative minds conducting massive digital marketing research on social media platforms.

6.2.1 Addressing ethnic diversity in LEED ads

The timeline of published ads (Figure 6-62) demonstrates a lack of racial diversity in LEED related advertisements.

In Architect Magazine, only 2 out of 11 ads with human subject include people of colors: one in 2014 from LEED ON campaign and another one three (3) years later appearing as a part of 2017 LEED Legacy ad series.

Table 6-23, likewise, contains the comparison across different LEED related advertisements. The percentage is calculated based on the number of the time that people of color appeared in the published ads.
Figure 6-62 Timeline of LEED advertisements seen in Architect Magazine 2014-2017: Only two ads feature people of color (Y.R)
Table 6-23 A comparison of LEED-related advertisements depicting human face (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campaign Name</th>
<th>Ad details</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEED Credentials(^{23}) 2011-2013</td>
<td>Count of appearance in GreenSource Magazine: Left (6) Right (2)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{23}\) This ad is seen in Green Source Mag and Architect Mag. The percentage is calculated based on the number of appearance in GreenSource Magazine.
Lafarge is a company offering professional design services. The ad series feature a new “superhero” who are LEED APs. This add is published in 6 publications; Architect, GreenSource, Environmental Design & Construction, The Construction Specifier, Construction Canada and Sustainable Architecture & Building Magazine. There is no black superhero!
LEED ON
Late 2013-2016

Published in GreenSourse and Architect Magazine.
As seen in 5.2.1, the Millennial generation is the most diverse compared to the previous generations.

✓ **Marketing implication**

- As the U.S. has grown increasingly racially and ethnically diverse, Millennials have become the poster children for the new America, therefore especial attention must be given to representing ethnic minorities.

There exists prior academic research on African Americans, minorities, people of color, and racial diversity and the fact that these minorities are often underrepresented in advertising campaigns (Allen, 2017). Oona King (2017) from Think with Google\(^{26}\) believes that “the demographic shift of the ad audience [pointing to Millennials] has far outpaced the demographic shift of the ad industry. As the minority becomes the majority, they are eager to see ads that openly address diversity and race-related issues.” Think with Google partnered with Ipsos and Nielsen\(^{27}\) to better

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\(^{26}\) Think with Google is one of many Google initiatives known for a one-stop shop for consumer trends, marketing insights and industry research.

\(^{27}\) Two major market research and opinion research specialty companies.
understand how black Millennials think about media and advertising, and the results show a preference for brands that adequately respond to African-American expectations and “make inclusive advertising a brand imperative.” (King, 2017)

Figure 6-63 Millennials and ethnic diversity (Source: Oona King, Think with Google)

✓ Recommendation

- Respect ethnic diversity. Include different racial groups in the advertisements.

Inclusion of black Millennials in recent LEED advertisement shows USGBC’s ad agencies have realized the importance of depicting racial diversity in their campaigns, however there is still a missing spot for other ethnic groups. Including other racial groups in advertisements is suggested.

Figure 6-64 Inclusion of black Millennials in recent ads (left is seen online, Right is published in the Architect Mag)
6.2.2 Addressing Millennials with well-being and health

Well-being covers a range of different concepts such as purpose, social, financial, community and physical well-being. Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index defines “thriving” status of physical well-being as “Well-being that is strong, consistent and progressing in having good health and enough energy to get things done daily”. Compared to other generations, more Millennials are thriving in physical well-being except than traditionalists (Gallup, 2016). According to the result of a survey by Google/Ipsos Connect (done between April 27, 2017 and May 5, 2017), YouTube plays a significant role in informing Millennials about health-related issues.

![Figure 6-65 Millennials physical well-being status (Gallup, 2016)](image)

Matt Anderson (2017), a Millennial and a YouTube ads marketer, writes “Millennials don’t come to YouTube to find a picture-perfect version of their lives—they come to watch video and connect
with supportive communities, often led by creators who don’t shy away from sharing their own struggles. So it’s no surprise that some of the top YouTube creators are strong health advocates.”

Health [Well-being] can be a differentiator for USGBC in its branding messaging. 28

✓ Recommendations

- Consider top YouTube creators or so-called “influencers” who are well-known for their work on health related issues. They can be mobilized to act as LEED advocates.

Creators such as Markiplier or John Green who have gained the trust of their subscribers with health supportive activities, could be the fit candidates

- Demonstrate how LEED buildings can contribute to well-being both physical and mental.

The most straight-forward strategy is mentioning or introducing the features of LEED buildings that can contribute to well-being. Recapping from Chapter 4 of this thesis, there are several building attributes and benefits which are responding to health issues.

Table 6-24 Examples of health related brand associates that can be used in marketing efforts (Y.R)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical health</th>
<th>Mental health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High quality indoor air: Essentially pollutant-free spaces and higher level of Oxygen will not only reduce the risk of many heart and pulmonary diseases, but clean air can improve mental ability.</td>
<td>Quality views: Access to views such as nature can contribute to mental health and reduce anxiety and increase productivity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-toxic materials : LEED controls volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions in the indoor air and the VOC content of materials.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28 As mentioned in page 29 of this thesis, due to emergence of WELL Standard, it may be advisable for USGBC to not mix-up the branding strategies of the two sister brands to allow each brand to have its unique positioning. That is why the term health is preferred over well-being.
Mobilize projects with LEED certifications - namely organizations- to have wellness programs. Allocate potential 2 credits under the Innovation category for wellness programs to incentivize organizations to adopt wellness programs.

Wellness program is a holistic approach to assisting each employee to lead a life well-lived. As part of their own marketing and corporate branding, organizations with LEED can emphasize their focus on well-being and how within a LEED building, employees can be helped to reach their physical, community, and social purpose, and financial goals.

6.2.3 Connecting with Millennial parents

Based on the new conception of Brand Essence encompassing stewardship for future generations and Millennials’ sense of commitment to make a better, prosperous habitable planet for their kids (refer to 6.1.3), addressing Millennial parents can be a beneficial strategy. Remarkably, current LEED advertisements lack the conventional portrayal of “happy family” or “family moments” even in the ads that are directly about LEED for Homes.

![Figure 6-67 Empty frame of LEED ads from relatable family personage (Y.R)](image-url)
Millennial parents refer to YouTube for guidance on everything from parenting to products. If they see some brands as thought leaders in this space, they will be open to hearing from them (Gross and O’Neil-Hart, 2017).

Millennial parents break down the stereotypical gender roles, and Millennial dads are taking active roles as parents more than ever. In particular, on YouTube, the research of *Think with Google* proves that dads watch more parenting-related content than mothers (Gross and O’Neil-Hart, 2017) (Figure 6-69).
Figure 6-69 Untraditional Gender Role in Millennials’ parenting trends (Gross and O’Neil-Hart, 2017)

✓ Recommendations

▪ Inclusion of family portrayal in digital contents, either video or other forms of visuals is recommended.

Figure 6-70 Alternate way of depicting family in visual contents for LEED (Y.R)
If you're marketing to parents or pairing your ads with parenting content, don't assume you're talking only to moms, address dads as well.

Figure 6-71 Alternate way of depicting Millennials in visual contents for LEED (Y.R)
7 Closing Thoughts

The representations of branding are ubiquitous, far more prevalent and pervasive than most people realize. Not because of the truism that we all are inescapably targeted by marketers even if we do not want so, but because brands have a funny way of popping up everywhere without announcing themselves as a brand. The journey of LEED - once a benchmarking tool and later a brand with “luxury status”\(^{29}\) – is more or less the same: while some within the professional domain may argue that LEED is not a brand, ironically, the very same individuals might use the LEED-AP tag to improve their personal brand.

Earlier, the existing literature on branding introduced brand image as a bundle of associations as if they are different scenarios and stories that consumers hold in mind for that brand\(^ {30}\). Brand advertisements that are infused with strategically influential and memorable narratives are devices not only for triggering a positive brand response but also for exploring vast domains of audience thoughts, feelings, experiences and actions in the *economic sphere* - a term borrowed from the social sphere; if social sphere relates to the public life of an individual and all of its various

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\(^{29}\) Rick Fedrizzi, a former CEO of USGBC, on 21 Nov 2013 writes in his blog: “this organization [USGBC] has spent almost a quarter of a century in the dogged pursuit of creating a luxury product, one full of hopes and dreams – in our case, that product is the Platinum level of our LEED v4 rating system – and we must now treat that luxury product of ours with the same missionary-like zeal that Tiffany for over 100 years has treated everything from its store windows at Christmastime and its high-end clientele to its precious (and now patent-protected) color blue.” Also in a response to a comment of one his blog readers who was criticizing Rick’s position with the concern of missing the real point, Fredrizzi replies “… though we feel LEED’s brand has reached "luxury" status, it doesn’t mean that LEED comes with a luxury price tag.” (Source: https://www.usgbc.org/articles/building-luxury-brand)

\(^{30}\) In branding there is a concept called Signature Brand Stories as an authentic, involving narrative (as opposed to a stand-alone set of facts or features) with a strategic message that enables growth by clarifying or enhancing the brand, the customer relationship, the organization or the business strategy. (Source: https://www.ama.org/publications/MarketingNews/Pages/signature-brand-stories.aspx)
aspects, the economic sphere contains all the actions of the same individual that have economic impact.

Existing LEED advertising solicits volatile ideas as we have witnessed different themes in several key campaigns over the years. Yet, somehow, these campaigns haven’t been able to create a powerful message to resonate with a wider audience outside of construction and real estate industries.

Addressing prospective group of consumers, especially Millennials, is missing in the current branding programs for LEED even though research shows the benefits of more direct consumers branding are plentiful. Millennials are not only the largest demographic in the U.S., they are seemingly the most-educated. As millennials grow up, so will their purchasing power and many of them will make big purchasing decisions such as buying a home, hence it will be vital for brands marketing to Millennials to connect with them sooner than later.

Furthermore, Millennial consumers are demanding more from brands and advertisers compared to previous generations. They are a shaping the future of the world by turning it into “a more inclusive place. A place where self-improvement trumps self-promotion, where authenticity is celebrated, and the ideals of equality are strongly upheld” (Anderson, 2017).

However, investigating Millennials’ characteristics, needs and wants comprehensively—if possible at all, is enormously a time-consuming task. Today’s young group of consumers are no longer single race, heterosexual couples with two kids and a white dream house with a perfectly-cut hedge. Millennials, many still struggling with managing their student loan or credit debts, their education, or job finding, want the advertisements addressing them to reflect real people.
Millennials want brands to demonstrate inclusion and will support them in return (Think with Google, 2017).

In the penultimate chapter of this thesis, recommendations of different scales are put forward. I am hesitant to call these recommendations the final product or outcome of the research as in marketing, there is no such thing as a final fixed piece of advice. There is a need for constant revisions and improvements. Therefore, I prefer to see the recommendations as a start of something new, something that has never been tried before in the context of green building certifications.

The recommendations of this thesis are of a modest nature without claiming for a greater creativity, innovation or magic problem-solving abilities to revolutionize LEED branding overnight. Instead, the efforts have been made to create recommendations to act as a differentiation tool by allowing for a more genuine and environmentally-sensitive messaging and campaign creation.

The ultimate goal is, of course, to ensure better resonance with today’s ever-changing diverse Millennial consumers and beyond, to have a better, greener and healthier planet for the coming generations.
7.1 Limitations
This thesis research consists of recommendations to improve the branding of LEED among Millennials. The recommendations are the outcome of an extensive literature review in branding, observing communication methods of USGBC, collection of different advertisements addressing LEED, systematic literature review at the intersection of three subjects Millennials, Green marketing and marketing and comparison of several existing branding guidelines for LEED. However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to test or validate the recommendations.

At the time of current research, consumers are not the main target of USGBC’s marketing efforts and the discussed issues are merely a set of suggestions rather than solutions to respond to all the challenges that LEED branding faces. The first and the most important limitation of the current research is that because the end-user consumers were never targeted, measuring the consumer’s response to the branding of LEED through interviews or surveys does not make any logical sense.

If targeting consumers directly becomes an agenda for USGBC, then other processes for monitoring the brand performance may be needed according to the requirements of that time. Feedback from target consumers is the basic step of every marketing program to allow for future improvements. All successful branding plans require constant market monitoring and feedback loop. Due to time and space limitation, this thesis does not concentrate on the design and implementation of feedback programs.

In the current version of recommendations provided by this thesis, the extent that each recommendation should be pursued is not defined clearly. Partial fulfillment of strategies could be determined more clearly in the future and once USGBC starts exercising direct B2C marketing.
7.2 Future research
The gaps revealed after conducting a review of the existing knowledge in CBBE and making a comparison with the current branding practices of LEED, present an opportunity for future research. There seems to be a gap in the literature and research that tests specifically the consumers’ perception of eco-labels as brands, also there is a shortage of academic work to measure Millennials’ reactions and attitudes towards LEED as the most dominant brand of green building practices.

The current advertising of LEED can be enhanced to be more appealing to the Millennial consumers- something that this research accounts for. But, there is still a great path for future research. To test Millennials’ attitudes towards branding strategies and advertisements on online channels, there are different possibilities. For example, focus groups could be formed with consumers of different ages. In each focus group, a collection of advertisements could be shown that meets pre-mentioned recommendations, but each group consists a different generation consumer segment. Then, it can be observed if different generations express different attitudes or not. Positive attitudes towards the advertisements could be indications of message resonance (Allen, 2017) and negative attitudes towards the advertisements could imply that the implemented recommendation will affect consumers’ behavior towards LEED in a negative way.

Furthermore, longitudinal examinations of social media channels such as YouTube, Twitter and Instagram can be beneficial if different postings from USGBC can be analyzed based on the impressions each post will receive from different age groups and based on the content of the posting.
References


Web References


57. Freepik, Graphical Vectors used in ad timeline graphical diagram are designed by Freepik: [https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/web-icons-collection_864847](https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/web-icons-collection_864847)


Appendix A - The interview questions for the Director of LEED Brand Management

Objective/some background:

As part of my M.S. in Architecture Research, I would investigate the current work that the USGBC is doing to communicate and manage the LEED brand, and investigate possible approaches to improving the understanding and impact of the brand, especially among end-users. Hopefully, this work might be found helpful in achieving the sort of impact on our environment that is at the core of the objectives of the US Green Building Council.

My overall line of query is to investigate, better understand, and perhaps provide some helpful additional information on whether it would make business and strategic sense to do more extensive communications and brand development for LEED down the value chain to the end-user. These end-users are people who occupy LEED buildings, or choose to occupy LEED buildings for any other reason rather than living such as the place of employment, study, eat, shop etc. These end-users are potentially capable of creating "upstream demand" all the way up to other influencers in the business-to-business value chain who are making decisions on building approaches. In particular, my work focuses on an influential sustainability psychographic segmentation, called LOHAS within the millennial generation cluster. For numerous reasons, millennial could be an important group for USGBC to focus on, and LOHAS could be our champions to even advocate for LEED among other segmentations.

From my preliminary investigation, it would seem as if the USGBC is focusing its communications – quite logically – upstream on key influentials early in the value chain (policy-makers, thought leaders, and business leaders, real estate developers, property managers and those within the construction industry: architects, contractors and etc.). Communications down the value chain, closer to the end-users would be more expensive, and may or may not be advisable for the USGBC although recently some direct advertisements in vehicles such as the New York Times have been seen.

By connecting directly with you, I hope to better understand your current plans, better than what I can determine from an "outside in" look. In accordance with Penn State Research protocol I certainly want to say a special thank you for any time you may be able to give me. These questions are simply intended to help me to complete my master’s thesis. Of course please don’t answer any questions you are uncomfortable with, and you’re certainly under no obligation to answer any of these questions.

My key questions fall into two clusters (Please note that the questions to be answered are in **BOLD**):

- General questions: the objective of these questions is to understand the scope of the work of USGBC’s Brand Management/Marketing team and your efforts consisting the market research you might have done.

- Specific queries concerning the current LEED Brand itself: the objective of these questions is to verify some of the observations that I have made done so far and -if possible – to ask for the permission to gain access to some of the agenda or guideline documents that are probably used only internally and only by the USGBC team. Wondering whether or not you
have produced a "Brandscape" or something like it to flesh out what you want the brand to mean, beyond guidelines for the use of the LEED identity and/or trademarks. (If not, we might work with your input to develop such a set of guidelines.)

General Questions

I shall first provide a brief introduction about BrandScape concept: it is one of many templates useful in defining what you want your brand to mean, or it can also be used as a framework for customer research to better understand what your brand really means in the eyes of the customer. In reality, the latter can only be done based on the feedback from target consumer audience.

□ That being said, I would like to know if the marketing team has conducted any type of research related to the brand and the perceptions about the LEED brand, anything involves the input from your customer audience, e.g. routine branding opinion survey like thought associations, asking people what comes to their mind when they think of the brand, how they feel about the brand, or other brand tracking research.... (This question tries to understand whether there is any actual study done by USGBC to measure the actual Brandscape - the Brandscape returned by the consumer audience, not the one that USGBC tries to communicate)

□ I acknowledge since the beginning LEED has been aimed for professional industries and those at the top of the value chain like real estate developers, CEO’s of top Fortune businesses, architects. .... However, just recently USGBC has launched an advertisement in the NY Times- there is also other examples such as social media-based campaigns (like #findyourleed) which are solid proofs that USGBC tries to engage those who are at the bottom of the Value Chain.

I would like to know to what extent this is in USGBC’s agenda to do B2C marketing, targeting consumer segments beyond B2B who are not building owners, developers, people in the construction industry ...

If USGBC and marketing team have the intention to do direct B2C marketing, has USGBC ever considered a specific target segment to cast its messaging toward those? (If not, I have done research in regards to what could be the right segmentation within millennial clusters to cast your messaging towards them and I would be happy to share the result of my research with you).

□ To better analyze the USGBC’s marketing strategies, is there a document consisting the list of all of USGBC’s previous ads-including online- and where they were published?
BrandScape Questions

- I imagine there might be some kind of guideline or agenda that marketing team uses internally to guide their decisions, a guideline indicating what LEED brand should or should not be associated with. If such document exists, I would like to know about USGBC's policy in regards to sharing those documents for research purpose.

- What does USGBC want the LEED brand to mean? What are LEED core values? If you want to describe LEED brand in a very short phrase what it would be?

  “LEED ON” Campaign suggests that the dominant image USGBC is trying to communicate is around the leadership message. If “LEED On” is the brand mantra for LEED, to what extent this could be a suitable theme for people who are at the bottom of the value chain?

- LEED is a benchmarking tool for buildings in a way that they meet the triple bottom line. Many believe that LEED brand must be about energy performance and environment— but the environment part of the bottom line is one part that has been taken for granted through USGBC’s communications, and USGBC has created a brand toward economic benefits of LEED. My observation shows that most communications efforts of USGBC have gone beyond the environment to convey the economy and business’s bottom lines by putting the stress on messages like creating jobs, saving money, “doing well by doing good” type of messaging for business and thought leaders...

  To engage the bottom of value chain, one good strategy might be to focus on those who care about environment and create a messaging towards environmental aspects or benefits of LEED rather than to keep it about tax benefits, job creation, money saving. (These are the themes used in recent New York Times advertisement). Have you considered more extensive messaging around the environment part- or anything related to human health/ planetary health?

- The competitive frame of reference is important for most brands to know who they are competing with- Although I believe this is not the case with LEED, to what extent marketing team is concerned with other certifications outside GBCI’s brands -like Energy Star, Living Building Challenge and...? Does USGBC see them as competitors at all?
Appendix B - The IRB Approval for the Study

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

Date: March 31, 2017
From: Stephanie Krout, IRB Analyst
To: Yasaman Roostaeian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Submission</th>
<th>Initial Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of Study</td>
<td>Environmental BrandScape: Towards consumer-based brand equity for buildings' eco-labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Investigator</td>
<td>Yasaman Roostaeian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study ID</td>
<td>STUDY00007150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission ID</td>
<td>STUDY00007150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Documents Approved | • Protocol for discussion on the LEED brand (March 31), Category: IRB Protocol  
                        • Questions for LEED phone discussion (March 28), Category: Data Collection Instrument |

The Office for Research Protections determined that the proposed activity, as described in the above-referenced submission, does not require formal IRB review because the research met the criteria for exempt research according to the policies of this institution and the provisions of applicable federal regulations.

Continuing Progress Reports are not required for exempt research. Record of this research determined to be exempt will be maintained for five years from the date of this notification. If your research will continue beyond five years, please contact the Office for Research Protections closer to the determination end date.

Changes to exempt research only need to be submitted to the Office for Research Protections in limited circumstances described in the below-referenced Investigator Manual. If changes are being considered and there are questions about whether IRB review is needed, please contact the Office for Research Protections.

Penn State researchers are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within CATS IRB (http://irb.psu.edu).

This correspondence should be maintained with your records.