

# Profiling strategy for Aarhus BSS

# 1. Autumn process at Aarhus BSS

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Parallel to the university-wide consultation process regarding the Senior Management Team's proposed solutions following the internal problem analysis report, the Faculty Management Team at School of Business and Social Sciences (Aarhus BSS) initiated a local process in mid-August in order to collect information on administration, branding and department structure.

A working group consisting of selected members from the Dean's Office, the Faculty Management Team and the administration was to develop a proposal for a new profiling strategy at Aarhus BSS with a deadline 1 October 2014, and to address the balance between the branding of the departments and the branding of the school, as well as the balance between the branding of the school and the branding of the university.

Members of the working group:

- Christa Thomsen, Department of Business Communication (chairman)
- Jacob Kjær Eskildsen, AU Herning
- Thomas Pallesen, Department of Political Science and Government
- Karen Brunsø, Department of Business Administration
- Peder Østergaard, Dean's Office
- Per Baltzer Overgaard, Dean's Office
- Aase Bak, BSS Communication
- Azra Kljajic, Dean's Office

In the Senior Management Team's proposal for solutions to the problems raised during the internal problem analysis, the following has been proposed regarding branding:

*The branding strategy must be fundamentally revised and renamed. The current practice of de-emphasising local units must be altered, so that a free choice may be made to emphasise university, faculty, department or centre level with regard to profiling.*

Based on its mandate, the group's task was to identify the problems caused by the university's branding strategy and suggest possible solutions to strengthen the business school identity both within the organisation and externally. In its work, the group involved all heads of department at Aarhus BSS in order to provide a solid basis for decisions to the Faculty Management Team (and the university management) on changes in the school's branding. Finally, the group consulted academic experts with a view to including professional expertise in the preparation of the profiling strategy proposal.

The group's proposal was approved by the Faculty Management Team and parts of the profiling principles were also discussed during the management team's department visits and in the academic council.

## 2. Decisions on new profiling of Aarhus BSS

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The following chapter describes the most important parts of the decisions made on the future profiling strategy for Aarhus BSS.

### **Name**

At a meeting in the Senior Management Team in the beginning of January 2015, a decision was made to allow the school to start branding itself as Aarhus BSS. This has been done in acknowledgment of Aarhus BSS' need to build its brand and business profile in order to compete with business schools and universities on attracting prospective students and faculty in Denmark and internationally. The school's official name is still *Aarhus University, School of Business and Social Sciences*, while the abbreviated *Aarhus BSS* is used as the preferred name both internally and externally, at websites, in the media, brochures etc. The abbreviated name will make it easier for e.g. the external media and stakeholders to remember it, adopt it and use it. Since the acronym 'BSS' has been adopted and used by students over the past years (BSS Books, BSS Revue, BSS Hunting club, BSS Sport, BSS Exchange, etc.) and is also used in the url BSS.au.dk., the new abbreviation Aarhus BSS is also expected to be adopted rather quickly.

Aarhus BSS recognises the importance of maintaining a clear link between Aarhus University and Aarhus BSS in the external communication, as the AU-brand in many contexts serves as an important indicator of quality within research and education both in Denmark and internationally. Also for prospective students, PhD students and researchers, it can be of great importance whether they are affiliated with e.g. political science in Aarhus, Odense or Copenhagen. The change of the school's acronym to *Aarhus BSS* will therefore serve to signal the geographical (but also organisational) affiliation and emphasise to the outside world that Aarhus has a broad business school which comprises both strong and competitive economics and management and business programmes alongside political science, law and psychology.

At a meeting in the end of March 2015, the Senior Management Team approved the school's profiling strategy described in the following.

### **Profiling principles**

Since there are rather diverse academic identities across Aarhus BSS' departments, the school's new profiling strategy must serve to support these differences and make room for both business education and e.g. the traditional psychology, political science or law programmes to coexist and thrive in Aarhus BSS. The same applies to the school's centres which at times may need to put more emphasis on the marketing of the centre name or research area to their stakeholders.

During the discussions of possible branding models at the school, an important element was that Aarhus BSS becomes more visible externally and branded as a broad business school but, at the same time, also brands its individual disciplines and shows affiliation to Aarhus University. The preferred branding model

is, therefore, that the brand Aarhus BSS is given a more central role compared to the AU-brand in the communication and marketing to prospective students and faculty in Denmark and internationally. Over time, this will contribute to developing Aarhus BSS into a strong sub-brand at Aarhus University, which will also positively reflect on the university's brand. In turn, Aarhus BSS benefits from AU's strong brand and good reputation which contribute to ensuring Aarhus BSS recognition and act as a guarantor of high quality.

Aarhus BSS' new profiling strategy must allow for the possibility of targeted marketing to various segments and of attaching importance to centre, department, discipline, school or university according to specific target goals and audiences. This will serve to ensure that Aarhus BSS is presented as a varied and embracing institution, giving room to all disciplines and environments across the former Faculty of Social Sciences and Aarhus School of Business. It is still very important that the individual products (study programmes) are not detached from the strong department brands that already exist at some departments. The study programmes should be at the heart of what Aarhus BSS stands for and the driving force in the marketing context.

The academic tradition, which exists across departments, centres and/or disciplines and is closely linked to a genuine sense of pride in many of the school's faculty members to be part of a certain research environment and Aarhus University, must also continue in Aarhus BSS and be supported by the school's new profiling strategy.

It is imperative that the new profiling strategy for Aarhus University, when developed, allows for an adequate level of freedom and diversity at university and faculty levels and avoids micro management and generalisation which were characteristics of the university's former branding strategy. It is also essential that faculties are given the possibility of separate profiling and marketing of activities within the university which enable them to work determinedly and effectively with their brands and identity.

## **Logo**

There is great value and pride connected to being part of a recognised university, ranked among the top 100 universities in the world, and Aarhus BSS must also benefit from that value in its own marketing and profiling by making the connection to the university's brand clear and mutually reinforcing. This may also apply for the rest of the university's faculties which, through marketing and branding of their strong research environments and study programmes, can positively contribute to Aarhus University's reputation and brand.

As part of the new profiling strategy, Aarhus BSS is implementing a new logo, which on the one hand symbolises something known, traditional and a part of a renowned university, and on the other hand something modern and a visionary, broad business school. The new logo for the school moves away from the fifth element (peto) and combines instead Aarhus University's traditional seal with the new name *Aarhus BSS* – as illustrated in the following.



**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
AARHUS UNIVERSITY



**DEPARTMENT OF LAW**  
AARHUS UNIVERSITY



**THE DANISH CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN  
RESEARCH AND RESEARCH POLICY**  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
AARHUS UNIVERSITY



The new logo signals that Aarhus BSS is closely linked with Aarhus University, but at the same time is an innovative business school with own sub-brand which both associates with the university tradition and the business school tradition. The close link to Aarhus University is illustrated by using a portion of the original seal for Aarhus University. Using a portion which includes the words *Universitas Arhus*” enables scaling of the logo (e.g. for thumbnails on the web) while still maintaining high readability in the logo and recognition of the mother brand Aarhus University.

In addition to the colour field with a part of the seal and the name Aarhus BSS, there are ample opportunities to combine the logo with both the names of Aarhus University and the departments and centres as illustrated above. Aarhus BSS’ logo can be combined with the department or centre name, but the logo cannot be replaced by a sub-logo for a department or a centre. However, the Faculty Management Team can decide that research centres with a special status can use a sub-logo with Aarhus BSS logo.

The new logo for Aarhus BSS has been tested on selected key stakeholders of Aarhus BSS: alumni, partner companies, current Executive students, current Danish and international students as well as prospective students. Many respondents stated that it is positive that the seal creates a sense of connectedness with AU. In many cases, explicitly outlining that Aarhus BSS is part of Aarhus University will also contribute to strengthening the school's brand.

## Use and implementation

The name Aarhus BSS and the new logo are used on all platforms, channels, media and products which represent the school, its departments, centres and the administrative units.

The school level *Aarhus BSS* must always be present in some form in the marketing of programmes, departments and/or centres, but of course the units must maintain some degree of freedom under the school level and be able to brand themselves through different platforms according to their target audiences, e.g.:

- *Professor/Ass. professor in commercial law, political science, economics, corporate communication, etc. at Aarhus BSS; Economics and business administration programmes at Aarhus BSS*
- *Department of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences at Aarhus BSS/[Department of] Political Science at Aarhus BSS*

Furthermore, the administrative units associated with the school are included in the branding considerations and change their names, e.g. *Aarhus BSS External Relations, Aarhus BSS Career, Aarhus BSS Communication, etc.*

The new logo and name will be implemented throughout 2015 and 2016 (a proposal for an implementation plan has been drafted). The plan implies i.a. that Aarhus BSS can draw on support from AU IT and Digital Media in various phases of implementation. As a rule, printed publications will be replaced over time while online platforms, channels and media will be adjusted as soon as possible in the spring/summer 2015.

Aarhus BSS will initiate profiling activities in the form of promotions, marketing, advertising, etc., but also in the form of more relationship building activities in which the school strives to strengthen its brand by building communities which engage, debate and support the school. It is important to have a clear connection between Aarhus BSS as an organisation and the products and services that the school provides - a connection which has been missing in the previous organisation, in which the activities of Aarhus BSS were scattered across several administrative divisions and primarily presented through the AU product portals.

Specifically, the school's profiling activities and implementation entail:

- that the brand Aarhus BSS has a more central role compared to the mother brand (AU) when Aarhus BSS brands itself and communicates to prospective students and faculty in Denmark and

internationally. This implies development of specific marketing and communication policies at the school.

- that Aarhus BSS controls own web within the future design frameworks of AU and Aarhus BSS, taking into account Aarhus BSS' visual identity and logo. A digital strategy must be developed which ensures that Aarhus BSS is able to brand the organisation and structure its own digital activities and services in order to create a clear link between the organisation and the core activities of the school, e.g. programmes, talent development, career services, continuing education offers, etc.
- that Aarhus BSS increases its presence on platforms such as e.g. LinkedIn and Facebook, which focus on Aarhus BSS' educational brands, research and external relations and that Aarhus BSS creates its own YouTube channel under the university's general channel, which the school can use to structure its videos and apply them actively in its marketing and recruitment activities.
- that Aarhus BSS over time becomes more emphasised on AU's main websites as Aarhus University's broad business school so that AU to a higher extent than before acts as an endorser of the school Aarhus BSS.