20th Global Brand Conference
Mainz, 12-14 May 2027

Call for Papers

About the Global Brand Conference

Mainz University of Applied Sciences is pleased to host the 20th Global Brand Conference in Mainz, Germany, on 12-14 May 2027.

For two decades, the Global Brand Conference of the Academy of Marketing's Brand Identity and Corporate Reputation Special Interest Group has been recognized as one of the leading academic conferences on brand management worldwide. The conference brings together leading branding experts from around the world to discuss and advance the state of the art in brand management research, theory, and practice.

Conference Theme: Tensions in Brand Management

Tensions in Brand Management captures the growing complexity of building, steering, and researching brands in a world marked by competing expectations. Contemporary brands are no longer controlled exclusively by brand managers but are shaped by interactions among organizations, consumers, employees, platforms, communities, and other stakeholders (Iglesias et al., 2022). Brands' meanings are increasingly co-created (Ind and Schmidt, 2020; Vallaster and von Wallpach, 2013). As brands become open and platform-based, managers must balance stakeholder participation and consumer empowerment with the need to maintain a recognizable identity, strategic direction, and coherent brand meaning (Wichmann et al., 2022; Iglesias et al., 2013).

Brands are also increasingly expected to be consistent yet adaptive, commercially successful yet socially responsible, data-driven yet human-centered, global yet locally embedded, and authentic yet strategically managed. Brand heritage, for example, can provide authenticity, continuity, and distinctiveness, while also constraining innovation and adaptation. Moreover, strategically constructing or selectively interpreting heritage may strengthen a brand narrative but can also expose the brand to accusations of inauthenticity (Brunninge, 2023). Purpose-driven branding, for example, can strengthen consumer identification, empowerment, and social transformation, but it also raises questions about commercial motives, organizational credibility, and whether proclaimed purposes translate into meaningful practices (Fernandes et al., 2024; Hajdas & Kłeczek, 2021). Similarly, corporate activism can create social and brand value when a brand's messages, values, and actions are aligned, but it may provoke skepticism, accusations of opportunism, or consumer resistance when such alignment is absent (Cammarota et al., 2023; Schmidt et al., 2022; Sibai et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020).

Technological and societal transformations intensify these contradictions. Artificial intelligence enables greater analytical precision, automation, personalization, and scalability, while raising questions about human judgment, creativity, transparency, privacy, and the evolving role of marketing professionals (Davenport et al., 2020; Huang & Rust, 2021). Sustainability communication poses a comparable challenge: brands are expected to demonstrate environmental and social responsibility, yet ambitious sustainability claims can

undermine credibility and brand equity when consumers perceive them as exaggerated, inconsistent, or deceptive (Qayyum et al., 2023). For luxury brands, this challenge is particularly pronounced because sustainability principles such as moderation, accessibility, and resource conservation may conflict with traditional associations of exclusivity, abundance, novelty, and conspicuous consumption (Klaus et al., 2025; Kunz et al., 2020).

But discussions of tensions in brand management also raise broader questions about the impact of marketing research: The growing complexity of branding practice calls for closer interaction between academic research and managerial decision-making, while differences in objectives, time horizons, languages, and standards of evidence can impede that interaction (Redler and Schmidt, 2022).

These tensions we discussed, along with others we have not considered so far, are not necessarily problems to be solved once and for all; rather, they are constitutive of contemporary brand management. They reflect persistent paradoxes in which competing demands are individually legitimate, mutually connected, and difficult to reconcile permanently. Such tensions shape how brands create meaning, build relationships, navigate controversy, and remain relevant in rapidly changing markets and societies. Possible topics may include, but are not limited to, tensions between …

- brand purpose and commercial performance,
- heritage and adaptation,
- authenticity and strategic orchestration,
- consistency and change,
- global brand standards and local adaptation,
- human creativity and artificial intelligence,
- sustainability claims and accusations of greenwashing,
- brand openness and brand clarity,
- activism and neutrality,
- luxury exclusivity and social or environmental responsibility,
- short-term performance metrics and long-term brand equity,
- Brand management and sales,
- research and practice,
- consumer empowerment and brand control, and
- schools and paradigms within brand research.

By focusing on these tensions, the conference invites scholars to examine brand management as a field of paradoxes, trade-offs, contradictions, and productive frictions (Gyrd-Jones et al., 2013). Rather than treating competing demands as simple either-or decisions, contributions may investigate how brand actors accommodate, balance, sequence, separate, or creatively combine them. Such research can open new avenues for theory development, empirical investigation, and managerial reflection, while advancing a more dynamic and context-sensitive understanding of contemporary brand management.

Other Topics

The conference is built around the conference theme. Nevertheless, we also invite original research and in-depth conceptual papers in all areas of brand management, identity, and reputation, including but not limited to:

- B2B Brands
- Big Data Analytics and Brands
- Brand Activism
- Brand Co-Creation
- Brand Equity
- Brand Experience
- Brand Image and Identity
- Brand Love, Hate, and Brand Polarization
- Brand Orientation
- Corporate and Umbrella Brands
- Ethical, Charity, and Green Brands
- Heritage Brands
- Internal Branding
- Multisensory Branding
- Online/Digital Brands
- Place and Event Branding
- Product Branding
- Service Brands
- Corporate Reputation and Identity Issues

Special Issue

A Special Issue in an ABS-listed journal will be connected with the conference and its theme. For all details, please see the separate Call for Papers, which is expected to be published later in 2026.

Submission Guidelines

Authors wishing to present a paper are invited to submit an extended abstract by ~~8~~ 18 November 2026. The submission link will open on 3 August 2026. All submissions must be made electronically via the EasyChair platform, using the conference's dedicated EasyChair submission link.

EasyChair submission link: https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=20gbc

The workflow for creating a new submission in EasyChair is as follows:

1. Create an EasyChair account (if you do not have one yet).
2. Follow the submission link from the conference website.
3. Log in to EasyChair.
4. Click on "New submission".
5. Fill out the submission form and click "Submit".

All papers will undergo double-blind review, so authors must not be identified in the text or in the document properties. If the paper is accepted for the conference, the authors will have the opportunity to revise their paper based on the reviewer feedback.

The extended abstract should be between 1,400–1,700 words (and should follow the following structure):

- Title and Keywords (3–5)
- Abstract (max. 200 words)
- Purpose
- Methodology/Approach
- Findings
- Theoretical Implications
- Practical Implications (if applicable)
- Originality/Value
- List of References

If your submission is a work-in-progress paper, please indicate this in the relevant section (e.g., Findings) and provide as much detail/discussion as possible for the other sections.

Please respect the following formatting details:

- File Naming: The files must contain the last name of the submitting author, the abstract's title (up to first five words), and the date of submission. Example: Author_document_title_day_month_year
- Margins: Normal
- Font Type & Size: Times New Roman, 12 pt
- Line-spacing: 1.5
- References: Please follow APA system

Submitting authors should specify who will present the paper.

Submission Types

Submissions will be possible for various sessions. When submitting your work, please choose the session you are submitting your paper to. After reviewing and discussing the reviewers' findings, the committee reserves the right to reassign submissions intended for the competitive sessions to the development sessions.

Competitive Sessions

Competitive papers and well-advanced work-in-progress papers can be submitted to the competitive sessions. These sessions build the backbone of this year's conference and will play the most prominent role. Only papers submitted to these sessions are eligible for the Best Paper Award.

Development Sessions

Less advanced research, less-developed work-in-progress papers, and early-career research can be submitted to one of the development sessions. These sessions will be chaired by at least two experienced brand management researchers, who will provide extensive feedback on the work presented. This type of session is meant to give extra support to the authors on their way towards a promising research paper.

Science Slam

Aside from the competitive and development sessions, the conference offers the exciting opportunity to (exclusively or additionally) present academic work in a science slam format. A science slam is a public event in which researchers present their scientific work in a short, entertaining, and understandable way, usually in 5-10 minutes. The audience will vote for the best presentation in this session. The winner will receive the audience's appreciation, as well as additional recognition in the form of an attractive prize. If authors would like to present a paper in one of the scientific sessions AND in the science slam, they must submit it twice (once for each session).

Important Dates

- Submission window opens: 3 August 2026
- Deadline for submissions: ~~8~~ 18 November 2026
- Authors will be notified about possible acceptance: Early January 2027
- Early bird registration starts: 1 March 2027
- First conference day: 12 May 2027

Conference Chairs

- Dr. Isabelle Hillebrandt, Mainz University of Applied Sciences, Germany
- Dr. Joern Redler, Mainz University of Applied Sciences, Germany
- Dr. Holger J. Schmidt, International University of Monaco, Monaco

Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee of this conference consists of the Conference Chairs plus the members of the Academy of Marketing's Brand, Identity and Corporate Reputation SIG Committee:

- Dr. Joana César Machado, Universidade Católica, Porto, Portugal (SIG Chair)
- Dr. Daniela Andreini, University of Bergamo, Italy
- Dr. Francisco Guzman, University of North Texas, USA
- Dr. Nicholas Ind, Kristiania University College, Oslo, Norway
- Dr. Oriol Iglesias, ESADE, Spain
- Dr. Stuart Roper, Northumbria University, Newcastle, UK
- Dr. Zoe Lee, Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University, Wales, UK

Attendance Policy

At least one author of accepted papers needs to attend the conference and present and defend the paper.

Code of Ethics

Authors submitting papers must adhere to the following code of ethics:

- Submissions should not already be published in any journal or publication (including online journals, books, and book chapters).
- Competitive paper submissions should not include content that has been presented at an earlier Global Brand Conference.

Conference Website

www.gbc2027.org

We are very much looking forward to seeing you in Mainz!

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