

Imperial means intelligent business

Design Effectiveness Entry

Client

Imperial College Business School

Consultancy

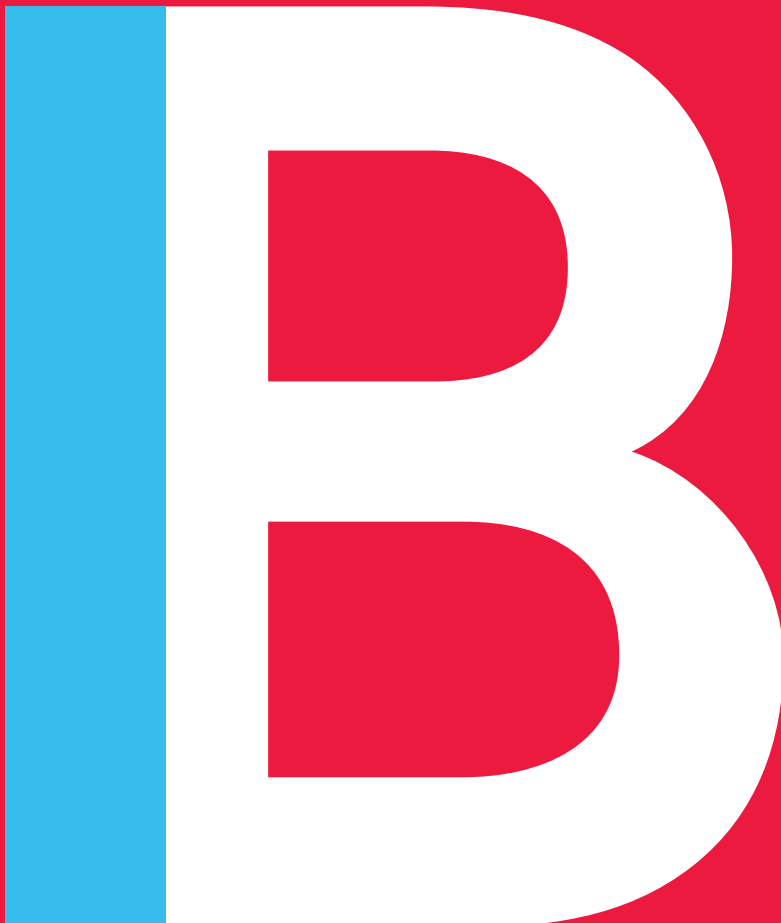
OPX

Sector

Education

Date

30 June 2017



Executive summary

By creating not just an identity but a comprehensive visual language which runs across all media, OPX has successfully propelled Imperial College Business School up to the top level of business schools.

In less than two years, the branding has:

Elevated the School into the 'premier league'

Direct competitors are now **six times** more likely to be 'premier league' schools.



Boosted connectivity with 'blue-chip' business

A **£2.3m, 10-year contract** has been secured with Edwardian Hotel Group, who previously partnered with Cambridge's Judge.



Successfully communicated the new positioning

Innovation was the top unprompted descriptor in a recent survey. **86%** of respondents saw the new identity as an improvement, **76%** saw it as distinctive and **75%** felt it would enhance engagement.



Gained more prestigious accreditations

Achieved a **five-year** EQUIS marque, and become a **Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) Member School**.



Increased the number and calibre of students

2017/18 applications for the Full-Time MBA are **more than double** that of 2014/15 and student numbers are up **20%** across all programmes.



Increased digital engagement

Web sessions are up **53%**, users by **79%**, brochure downloads for the Full-Time MBA **123%**.



Improved brand awareness

Unprompted awareness has virtually **doubled**, with the School now **ranked 4th** in unprompted brand recall behind LBS, Saïd and Judge, and significantly ahead of LSE and Cass.



Raised the quality of the faculty

Four new faculty have joined from 'premier league' schools. Staff publications on the Financial Times 'preferred publications' list are up **30%**.



Driven brand conversion through increased visibility

The 12-week brand campaign achieved a **four-fold** increase in e-news signups and a **36%** increase in web traffic to the 'Intelligence hub'.



Project overview

"Business degrees continue to be one of the most sought-after educational credentials – creating upward pressure on application volumes. The proliferation of programmes has created a more competitive environment, resulting in fewer applications for individual programmes."

Graduate Management Admission Council
2016 Application Trends Survey Report

Previous logo

Imperial College
London
BUSINESS SCHOOL



Brand identity

Launch date

June 2015, website
September 2015

Design fees

£30,765 (excl. VAT)

Production costs

£75,011 (excl. VAT)

Brand campaign

Duration

May–July 2016

Design fees

£35,515 (excl. VAT)

The market

Competition between business schools is fierce. Success is driven by high-calibre applicants and faculty, corporate partnerships, research activity and the track record of past students. Several of the high-profile schools in the US and UK are large and well-established, with credentials built up over more than 100 years. In comparison, Imperial College Business Schools is less than 10 years old and considerably smaller.

In a global context "Business degrees continue to be one of the most sought-after educational credentials – creating upward pressure on application volumes. The proliferation of programmes has created a more competitive environment, resulting in fewer applications for individual programmes", according to the GMAC Application Trends Survey Report for 2016.

UK business schools are expected to suffer as a result of the Brexit decision, since the international diversity of the student cohort is an important aspect of any business school. In December 2016, 11% of those schools that responded to the Chartered Association of Business Schools' annual members survey had already seen a decrease in EU applications, with another 45% expecting to see a decrease in the 2017/18 academic year.

Imperial College Business School

Imperial College Business School is one of the four Faculties of Imperial College London. Whilst the parent university is well-known, with an excellent reputation, Imperial College Business School was only established as a business school in 2008. Its MBA programme cohort is typically 50-80% smaller than its more well-established competitors.

In 2012, a decision was taken to reposition the School and create a new brand identity.

Following a period of research and strategic planning, a new positioning was created by consultancy Spencer du Bois early in 2015. This defined the core messages around the fusion of business, technology and an entrepreneurial mindset, and led to the strapline – 'Imperial means Intelligent Business'.

Outline of OPX's project brief

In 2015, following this positioning work, OPX was briefed to design the brand's visual identity. This would drive brand awareness of the School, and communicate the new positioning – 'the fusion of business and technology'.

There were three main sets of objectives for the brand identity work:

To build reputation/prestige

- 1 By elevating the School into the 'premier league'
- 2 By gaining more prestigious accreditations
- 3 By improving/raising brand awareness
- 4 Through greater connectivity with 'blue-chip' business

To grow students and staff populations (in both number and calibre)

- 5 By increasing the number and calibre of students
- 6 By raising the quality of faculty

To improve engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders

- 7 By successfully communicating the new positioning
- 8 By increasing digital engagement
- 9 By driving brand conversion through increased visibility

The identity needed to work across a broad range of materials: on and offline, within the physical School environment, as the focus for advertising and to support corporate partnerships. Digital channels were key in reflecting the School's positioning.

Success and effectiveness of the new brand identity would be measured via surveys and stakeholder feedback as well as through hard data (e.g. number of applicants, brochure downloads, staff publications).

Design solution

Logo redesign



Strapline

Imperial means
Intelligent Business



The fusion of business and technology

Imperial College Business School is a faculty within Imperial College London, one of the world's most respected universities. Its leadership wanted the Business School to be globally recognised as a distinct institution by all audiences.

Drawing on Imperial's reputation for science and technology, the new brand had to reinforce the School's key attributes – innovative, analytical, society-centric and a 'fusion of business and technology' – elements which all informed the School's central positioning: 'Imperial means Intelligent Business'.

Moving towards simply 'Imperial Business' (IB) in the longer term supports the Schools' journey to achieve a profile in the way that Saïd or Judge has from within Oxford and Cambridge.

Business credibility was critical to appeal to the savvy, tech-focused audience the School wanted to attract. To ensure the tone was right and reflected the central proposition, OPX benchmarked against contemporary business – looking towards brands like Google and Greylock rather than other business schools.

An intelligent approach

The School's business/tech positioning meant it had to appear completely at ease with technology. This meant a digital-first approach to the brand identity in every way.

Simplicity and clarity are the guiding principles behind the visual language. All content was envisaged and presented to engage, inform and perform seamlessly across multiple platforms, from favicons to video animation.

The purest expression comes in the IB graphic. IB reflects the School's long-term strategic journey and also acts as a lens through which to show the fusion of business and technology at the brand's core. It's robust enough for social media, but also billboards and large-scale branding applications around the School.

Imagery was informed by the contemporary language of business, science and technology found in publications like Wired. Portraits of students and alumni portray future business leaders and show how business can drive social transformation.

The final component is the School's location in London, appealing to global students, faculty and corporate partners by framing London as a global business and technology hub.



Design solution

A flexible identity

The identity had to work across all media. It has a strong, consistent core, but also can reflect evolving offers and priorities. Two examples of this include:

1 Brand campaign

The purpose of the brand campaign (which ran for 12 weeks from May – July 2016) was to raise awareness. It showed technology as a disruptor, asserting the value of the School's knowledge and thought leadership in this area. The typographic campaign featured a provocative play on words and a series of unanswered questions to engage with a variety of audiences.

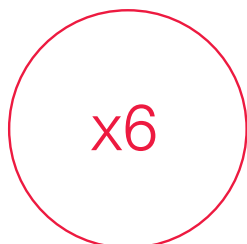


2 Imperial Business Analytics

Imperial Business Analytics is an alliance with KPMG, and shows the School 'walking the talk' in its fusion of business and technology. It demystifies big data for UK business leaders, and illustrates how innovative approaches to data visualisation can exploit opportunities and add value. Video, animations and micro-interactions bring the brand to life across the website and the user experience is enhanced by pixels that change colour as users scroll, guiding them through the site.

B Imperial
Business
Analytics
with KPMG





Direct competitors are now six times more likely to be 'premier league' schools

"The alumni whom the Peer Review Team members met were passionate and enthused about what they see as a new era for the School."

Assessor's comments
EQUIS report, October 2015



First ever five-year EQUIS marque, a two-year increase from the previous accreditation



OPX

Summary of results



1. Elevated the School into the 'premier league'

A good measure of the School's status are the other schools that applicants applied to, and which school they accepted instead if they turned down a place. If the School's direct competitors have changed – their competitive set – this indicates that they are moving up to a different level.

The table below shows that an increasing number of Imperial College Business School students also applied to a 'premier league' school. In 2016/17, applicants were **six times** more likely to decline their offer in favour of a 'premier league' school.

Shifting competitive set in this way is a huge undertaking and is just the beginning. Over time, it is anticipated that an increasing number of these higher calibre applicants will make Imperial College Business School their school of choice.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Applied to LBS, Saïd or Judge ('premier league' schools)	20	33	59
Declined IB place in favour of LBS, Saïd or Judge	4	9	26
Applied to Cass, Cranfield or Warwick ('second division' schools)	15	20	13
Declined IB place in favour of Cass, Cranfield or Warwick	4	5	4



2. Gained more prestigious accreditations

Accreditations form a key part of a school's reputation and are hard-won. In previous years, the only accreditations that the School had held were a sequential three-year EQUIS, an AMBA and an AACSB International accreditation.

- In June 2015, Imperial College Business School achieved its first ever five-year EQUIS accreditation after an assessment in which the new visual identity played a key role. Previous EQUIS accreditations (2006, 2009 and 2012) were only for three years.
- In April 2016, the School was accepted as a Forté Foundation School Sponsor. **Only two out of 25** schools were successful in their application and Imperial College Business School is **one of only four** UK schools to be admitted to this consortium of companies and top business schools.
- In June 2016, the School was approached by GMAC to become a member school. Only **216 out of 2000** business schools are GMAC members and it is an 'invitation-only' accreditation.
- In October 2016, the School received an Athena SWAN Bronze Award in recognition of its commitment to tackling gender inequality in higher education. It is one of only a **handful of business schools** to receive this award.

Forté
FOUNDATION

Graduate
Management
Admission
Council®

Athena
SWAN

Summary of results

"There is no doubt that the new branding has been effective in helping the Edtech Lab gain more exposure. This year has seen a significant increase in the attention that the Lab has received in the media and from peer institutions. The branding enables us to quickly and effectively communicate our key messages at each touch point and to present ourselves in a positive manner."

David Lefevre
Director of Imperial College Business School's Edtech Lab



26% cited Imperial College Business School in their three 'front of mind' schools



3. Improved brand awareness

Raised awareness is key for the School's newer initiatives. A recent survey of 87 respondents not associated with the School put it in **4th place** for unprompted recall behind London Business School, Said and Judge and significantly above its previous competitors: LSE, Cass and Warwick.

23 out of the 87 respondents (**26%**) cited Imperial College Business School in their three 'front of mind' schools, compared to 19% in 2012¹.

Which three UK-based universities or business schools are front of mind for you when thinking about world-class business education?	Front of mind	Most aware of
London Business School (LBS)	77%	83%
Oxford Said Business School	55%	36%
Cambridge Judge Business School	46%	37%
Imperial College Business School	26%	32%
London School of Economics (LSE)	16%	22%
Warwick Business School	12%	17%
Cass Business School	9%	18%

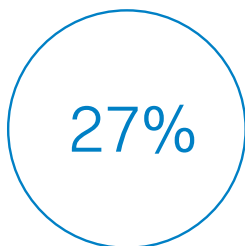
In addition, in 2012 unprompted recall was very low – 14% amongst potential students and 10%² amongst potential Executive Education participants. Many potential employers failed to distinguish between Imperial College London and the Business School³.

¹ Online survey conducted between February and April 2012 with prospective students who had attended an international QS MBA Fair in the previous two years and identified the UK as one of their top three study destinations

² Online survey conducted in June and July 2012 to 126 potential Executive Education participants, 60% of whom were currently working at Director-level or above

³ In-depth telephone interview in 2012 with 30 graduate employers, 66% of whom were 'clients' and currently employing Imperial College Business School graduates





Since September 2015 the number of companies attending events on campus has risen by 27%

“Our relationship with Imperial College Business School is a first in the hospitality sector. Whilst we previously enjoyed a very successful 20-year partnership with Cambridge Judge, our positioning as a forward-thinking hotel group fits perfectly with the School’s fusion of business and technology and focus on innovation.”

Siraj Singh
Director of Marketing and E-Commerce
Edwardian Hotels London



Contract signing with Siraj Singh (Edwardian Hotels London) and Professor G. Anandalingam (Imperial College Business School), which included a development project for 180 senior and high-potential managers in the organisation.

Summary of results



4. Boosted connectivity with 'blue-chip' business

Since September 2015 the number of companies attending events on campus has risen by 27%.

Relationships with the corporate sector are crucial for many reasons. Firstly, the School offers Executive MBAs and Executive Education (short courses for executives) where employees can study whilst still working.

Secondly, the School’s research centres rely on high-profile, blue-chip corporate partnerships and funding.

Thirdly, the School’s reputation and rankings will be heavily influenced by the employment and salary achievement of its graduates (three years post-MBA for the FT rankings). Networking opportunities exploit all these relationships, for the benefit of the School and its students.

In December 2015, Edwardian Hotel Group moved over to Imperial College Business School from a long-term partnership with Judge. The company, who own the Radisson chain of prestige hotels, signed a **£2.3m** contract for an Executive Education programme for hotel managers and senior executives over a **10-year period**. Since the start of this contract in March 2016 the company has also become an Imperial Business Partner, collaborating with the School in return for professional development, mentoring and consultancy services.

Imperial College Business School launched its first ever corporate conference, **Mobilising Business, Acting on Climate**, in April 2016 using the new identity. This was attended by delegates from companies such as PepsiCo, Aviva Investors and Statoil, and led to the opening of a Centre for Climate Finance & Investment in November 2016 with a three year £0.5m funding from Quinbrook Infrastructure Partners. Since then, the School has hosted a second conference entitled **Mobilising Business, Acting on Future Health**, with plans in place for a third focused on financial technology. Each conference was attended by over 100 delegates.

Other research centres have also seen new or raised commitment because of the new identity. Citibank’s investment in the School’s Centre for Global Finance and Technology has increased by £750,000 since 2015, whilst Thomson Reuters has committed £1m to the College’s 'Big Data' project, which the School is a major leader in. IBM and McKinsey have both joined KPMG on the MSc Business Analytics Advisory Group.

Investors and Partners

McKinsey&Company



citibank



THOMSON REUTERS





2017/18 MBA applications expected to exceed 2014/15 by more than double

"I came to Imperial College Business School because I had watched the School's extreme success in communicating its focus on the fusion of business and technology. Everything you see about Imperial College Business School stays true to this and it's created a real buzz in the industry. It's one of the reasons I chose to move here."

Jaemin Lee
Assistant Professor
Innovation & Entrepreneurship Department
Joined Imperial College Business School from INSEAD



Staff publications up 30% and four new faculty from 'premier league' schools

Summary of results

Apply

5. Increased number and calibre of student applications

Competition for places will drive reputation and allow the School to select the highest calibre applicants. Full-Time MBA applications for the 2017/18 academic year are set to exceed 500, with 405 applications already received and two rounds of applications still to go. This is more than double the 228 applications received for the 2014/15 academic year, despite the Brexit decision which has led 11% of UK business schools to see a decline in European students for 2015/16 and another 45% to say this is likely for the 2017/18 academic year. 27% also expected a decline in non-EU student applications. (Chartered Association of Business Schools' Annual Survey December 2016)

2014/15	2015/16	Increase	2016/17	Increase	2017/18 (as at 20.04.17)	2017/18 estimate	Increase
228	269	+18%	337	+25%	405	500	+48%

- Application numbers across all programmes (excluding Summer School) were **up 20%** between 2014/15 and 2016/17.
- GMAT scores (an international test for prospective MBA students) are **up by over 3%** since 2014, indicating a small but significant rise in the calibre of applicants. Given the growth in student numbers, this is a huge achievement.



6. Raised the quality of the faculty

The two key measures of faculty calibre in a research-driven school such as Imperial College Business School are previous employer/university, and the number of published papers in the FT's 'preferred journals' list.

- Nine new faculty joined the School in 2016, **four** of whom came from competitive 'premier league' business schools compared to only **one** in the previous two years.
- The number of staff publications on the FT's 'preferred journals' list was **up by 30%** in the 2015/2016 academic year.



"The identity brings the old into the new century. It was certainly timed correctly, with re-establishment of brands a key aspect of marketing to the new millennial generation as well as gaining new respect amongst the perennial generations. It is easily recognisable and distinct. You cannot ask more from a brand."

Adrian Radu

Current MSc Investment & Wealth Management programme student



Awarded Bronze at the 2016 Transform Awards Europe for 'Best Visual Identity in the Education Sector'



Summary of results



7. Successfully communicated the new positioning

Imperial College Business School recently ran a survey (with both 'internal/familiar' and 'external/unconnected' audiences) to measure how effectively the new identity had communicated the fusion of business and technology positioning and shifted perceptions of the School⁴.

When asked what three words or phrases best described Imperial College Business School, the most repeated word was "innovation" which scored 129, 24% higher than the second most popular: the School's London location. Its entrepreneurial spirit and focus on technology came 3rd and 4th respectively. Whilst associations with Imperial College London remain an asset and hugely important, its position in 5th place is evidence that the Business School is forging its own unique character and reputation in the very different business education market.

Word/phrase	Number of mentions (internal audience)	Number of mentions (external audience)	Total
Innovation/innovative	120	9	129
London location	76	28	104
Entrepreneurial	64	7	71
Emphasis on technology	56	15	71
Associations with Imperial College London	54	10	64

Various stakeholders have commented on how the new identity is helping to reposition Imperial College Business School. When the School's EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) assessment was due in May 2015, the new identity became a key focus of the visit. The resulting report noted that "Among the areas in which the School excels are... the creation of a culture of excitement and commitment about the School's vision, mission and strategic plan for the future... the embedding of a shared sense of the School's mission, vision and strategic direction across all the School's stakeholders".

The new identity has already won a Bronze at the 2016 Transform Awards Europe for 'Best Visual Identity in the Education Sector'. Judges included senior marketing personnel at organisations like Save the Children and TfL.

86%

of the 400+ respondents saw the new identity as an improvement

76%

of the 400+ respondents saw it as distinctive

75%

felt it would enhance the School's ability to engage with its various audiences

⁴ Survey conducted in February 2017 by Imperial College Business School with a total of 421 respondents of which 334 were internal/familiar with the School and 87 were external/unconnected to the School. The survey covered all audiences including students, faculty, alumni and employers.



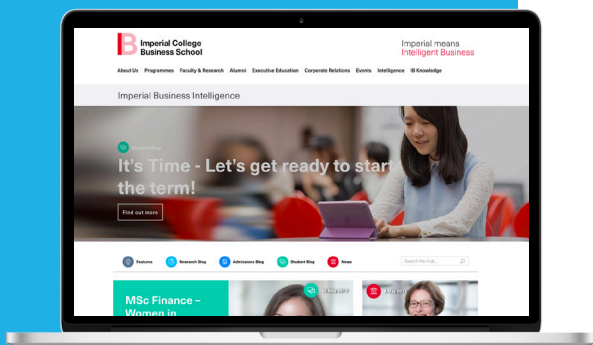
Web sessions up by more than 50%,
users by more than 70%

"The campaign was positive and important for visibility for the School and Executive Education in particular. Our offering is different and it's vital we get the message out and show what Executive Education is doing."

Patrick Murray
Director of Business Development,
Executive Education



Total engagement rate
for the brand campaign
was 0.39% against an industry
average of 0.16%



Summary of results



8. Increased digital engagement

The website was re-skinned in September 2015. The only change was laying on the new identity – navigation and functionality stayed the same.

We have seen increases in website sessions, users and e-news sign ups during the 2015/16 academic year (between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2016) and even greater increases when compared to the 2013/14 academic year:

Google Analytics	Increase in 2015/16 academic year	Increase since 2013/14 academic year
Sessions	53%	124%
Users	79%	143%
E-news sign ups	57%	263%
Sessions (Full-Time MBA)	58%	134%
Users (Full-Time MBA)	72%	157%

Brochure downloads are a key call to action on the site. Since the new identity, brochure downloads have increased by 123% for the Full-Time MBA, and by over 50% for MSc Strategic Marketing and MSc Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Management.



9. Driving brand conversion through increased visibility

The 12-week brand campaign increased web traffic, e-news sign ups and conversion. The members of the Alumni Advisory Board "felt that the (brand) campaign was bold, eye-catching and contemporaneous and liked that the Business School was prepared to be edgy in its brand positioning" (Joanne Linder, Chair – Alumni Advisory Board and Business School Advisory Board Member).

- During the 12 weeks of the brand campaign in 2016, traffic to the 'Intelligence Hub' section of the website, which hosted the School's thought leadership content, increased by **36%** compared to the previous three-month period, with a notable spike throughout June.
- The average number of Intelligence Hub sessions per month during the campaign was over 21,000, a **59%** increase on the monthly average in the 12 months prior. 30% of this traffic came via bought media and 90% of this was new visitors – suggesting the brand campaign was reaching a new audience.
- It achieved over 23m digital impressions, 29,000 web engagements and 111,000 video views. The total engagement rate – the number of interactions (clicks, video views) as a percentage of the number of impressions served – was **0.39%** against an industry average of 0.16%⁵. Social media reach – the total number of people who saw the brand campaign – increased **182%** on LinkedIn and 209% on YouTube.
- There were more than 3,000 brand conversions – key page views, brochure downloads, event registrations, contact requests and 'apply now' clicks – and more than 2,500 wider Business School conversions. Measured against programme-specific advertising, the brand campaign accounted for **25%** of all conversions during this period. It also achieved a **four-fold increase** in e-news sign ups.

⁵ According to our media agency, Media Minds Global

Other influencing factors

“The new identity is a simple and bold expression of our brand which captures our personality: dynamic, creative, bold, analytical, rigorous, pioneering.”

Professor G 'Anand' Anandalingam
Previous Dean
Imperial College Business School



There are many inter-related factors that make a business school successful. In the previous pages we have identified the results that we feel can be attributed to the new identity and visual language, and explained why this is the case.

Wherever possible we have compared with previous years to show that these results have only come about after the new identity launched. There are three influencing factors we would like to draw to the attention of the judges:

PR

There has been significant press coverage as a result of the identity but we have discounted this since the spend has also increased.

Rankings

These generally give significant weighting to employment and salary three years post-degree. As such the new identity is unlikely to influence rankings until 2018 or 2019.

Advertising

Advertising is usually an 'influencing factor' that needs to be extrapolated from the impact of design investment, but in this case the brand campaign was designed by OPX as an integral part of the identity and visual language. Its sole purpose was to raise awareness of the School and the new identity.

For clarity, we have listed below where and when the campaign featured, and the associated advertising costs:

- Bought digital media (Bloomberg, Economist, Facebook, FT.com, Google, LinkedIn, Twitter & Wired.co.uk) = £166K
- Bought outdoor media (London Underground and Reuters digital screen at Canary Wharf) = £32K
- Content production = £32K
- Press and PR = £58K
- SEO strategy and training = £18K
- Agency and outdoor production costs = £17.5K

Programmes

Programme content will inevitably change year by year, but the only programme to launch under the new identity, and with a first year cohort in September 2016, was the MSc Climate Change, Management & Finance. This is a total of 40 students, and as such has little effect on the overall student numbers.

London location and association with Imperial College University

These undoubtedly play an important role in attracting students to the Business School. However, they have remained unchanged. The imagery used in the identity also deliberately draws on the School's London location.

Research resources

Creative agency brief, January 2015

Imperial College Business School surveys, conducted from January to August 2012

'Entry' surveys to new students, run every autumn

February 2017 surveys to internal and external audiences, to measure brand recall and test current positioning

Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) 2016 Application Trends Survey Report

EQUIS report for accreditation, October 2015

Google Analytics

Chartered Association of Business Schools' Annual Survey, December 2016

