ABOUT THE CONSULTANTS

**Dartlet, Inc.** is a reputation management consultancy recently founded by Master Brand project consultants, Scott Ochander and Tyler Borders, who are industry leaders in perception strategy and management. After delivering enterprise-level transformation together for the past decade, Scott and Tyler incorporated as Dartlet and unified their larger network of top talent. Dartlet aims to be the preeminent consultancy for reputation strategy in the nation, maintaining boutique size in order to deliver the highly specialized methodology implemented for the Master Brand project.

**Scott Ochander** pioneered a consensus-building reputation management model in sectors where stakeholders matter, like government, universities and non-profits. Now he’s bringing transformation to companies and industries of all shapes and sizes. As an active vice president at a university, Scott is regarded as one of the foremost experts in brand strategy implementation in the higher education space. Few people have had the opportunity to build and launch their own brand development program in multiple higher education institutions while simultaneously consulting for external universities to demonstrate the same success.

**Tyler Borders** is responsible for inventing original and industry-leading methodology in brand strategy and personification, quickly gaining traction as one of the most potent research models in the industry. A former agency creative director in Los Angeles and in Washington state, entrepreneur and founder of five of his own startups, Tyler has transformed dozens of brands nationwide with his unique workshop- and research-based philosophy and approach. A born-creative talent, Tyler’s system is designed to translate brand strategy into executable communication tools. He continues to speak, write and innovate in the discipline of organizational brand strategy.
ABOUT THE PROJECT

Calvin’s master brand project was commissioned to define the college’s brand strategy—an initiative that hadn’t been addressed since 2001. A clear understanding of institutional identity allows Calvin College to communicate with an authentic and consistent message. This builds reputation and recognition for the institution, aligns marketing messages to reinforce key themes, and makes Calvin College more competitive on a regional and national scale.

Our consultants led 18 consensus-driven workshops on campus, delivering their original methodology in 3-hour live workshops. These workshops included leadership, faculty, staff and students. Additionally, the consultants launched a custom online version of their workshops to reach more volume, which gathered 950 more responses. Their proprietary research methods focus on defining the human personality of Calvin College and how to translate it authentically and effectively. This document is the culmination of months of collaborative work to discover and define Calvin College’s master brand.
METHOD

CONSENSUS-DRIVEN
Sometimes more is more. A college’s master brand isn’t derived from surveys and random samples. Rather, the stories have to be built by the people who know the place like the back of their hand. We personally met with many people, using a high-volume qualitative method. In short, we talked to the masses among the most critical audience segments.

PERSONALITY WORKSHOPS
To write a great story, you must define the protagonist—Calvin College. This workshop-driven Personality definition process is original and transparent, designed for participants to experience the results of any given workshop without being overly influenced by the data of others. One week of 3-hour qualitative workshops were conducted to answer the primary question: Who is Calvin College at its best?

MESSAGING WORKSHOPS
In parallel with the personality work, one more week of 3-hour qualitative workshops and exercises were delivered to determine core messaging themes for Calvin College—18 workshops in all between the two phases. This second phase of messaging workshops focused on deeply defining and exploring themes and storylines.

ONLINE WORKSHOP
For those Calvin College stakeholders who couldn’t participate in an in-person workshop, we developed a custom online qualitative workshop which allowed us to hear hundreds of additional voices.

COMPETITIVE AUDIT
To more clearly understand the landscape and what Calvin’s competitors are doing, we audited the visual and narrative strategies of 16 different institutions in two sets: cross-application and aspirational.

EXTERNAL RESEARCH
Finally, we conducted survey-based external research to test a variety of insights and perceptions gathered from the in-person workshops. Audiences included those closest to Calvin College as well as unaffiliated respondents.
We talked to 1,290 diverse stakeholders of Calvin College—leadership, faculty, staff, alumni, students and even unaffiliated parties—to find out what the authentic personality and story of Calvin College really is. These weren’t 5-minute “check the box” interactions, either. The live workshops were comprehensive 3-hour sessions consisting of in-depth dialogue and qualitative conversation. Conversely, our online workshop is a custom-developed software tool that goes way beyond a typical survey. We’re able to deliver frameworks and gather parallel research variables with the broad-reaching online tool.

So, is 1,290 participants enough?
In research validity terms, it’s plenty. Approximately 1.5 million people live within a 50-mile radius of Grand Rapids, and 1,290 respondents can speak for 1.5 million people with 99% confidence level and a standard deviation of +/-3.6. Our robust qualitative process gave us the exhaustive insights needed to build Calvin’s authentic story.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONALITY</th>
<th></th>
<th>PLATFORM</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traits</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Storyline 1</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrary Traits</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Storyline 2</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archetype &amp; Attraction</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Storyline 3</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dichotomies</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Storyline 4</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Storyline 5</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Solution</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>NEXT STEPS</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
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</table>
OVERVIEW

The process begins by defining a compelling main character. Every great story has a protagonist that is easy to understand and relate to. We asked, “Who is Calvin College at its best, as if it were a singular personality?” Calvin College answered with clarity.

FRAMEWORKS CONDUCTED

Traits
The most descriptive adjectives of Calvin College’s human personality. Traits are ranked and grouped based on their meaning, and further defined. Both positive and contrary traits are examined.

Archetype & Attraction
The social stereotype, or archetype, that best defines who Calvin College is today and who it could become. Correspondingly, we identify the mode by which this archetype attracts others.

Dichotomies
Big-picture narrative strategy, based on seven polarities, to determine how Calvin College’s story is delivered today and how it ought to be told.

Cause
Why Calvin College exists. What is the deeper purpose and motivation for Calvin College?
PERSONALITY

Traits
The most descriptive adjectives of Calvin College’s human personality. Traits are ranked and grouped based on their meaning, and further defined. Both positive and negative traits are examined.
Blue words represent Death Star words. See the following spread for explanation.
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<td>persevering</td>
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<td>careful</td>
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Blue words represent Death Star words. See the following spread for explanation.
We are discoverers in constant pursuit of truth, wisdom, and meaningful concepts that benefit individual growth and culture at large. We are a people adept at discernment, taught to inquire with intellect and reason to distinguish between the complexity of life’s options. On a quest for truth and its potent application in the world today, we look ahead with passion and anticipation. These ideals are not self-serving; on the contrary, our worldview is large, and the horizon of influence we travel toward is vast.
**DISCERNING & INTELLIGENT ●**

**Visionary**

Seen by many as far from true, and others as emerging but not there yet. The campus community desires more visionary thinking.

**Non-conformist**

The research suggests that Calvin does not break the established norm for Christian colleges, but responds traditionally. A counter perspective contends that this is not accurate and that the college is more non-conformist in the space than it gets credit for.

**Fun**

Overall Calvin isn’t seen as an especially fun place. While events like campus concerts are cited, they give way instead to rules and routine.

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Death Stars were assigned to adjectives by workshop participants who felt the adjective was inaccurate, untrue, or unachievable; in many cases it indicates that while a trait was true, it’s not a quality that Calvin College wants attributed to it.
Blue words represent Death Star words. See the following spread for explanation.
As an academic institution, everything we do is built for the support and betterment of all those who rely on us. We are dedicated to taking good care of people, and that’s a responsibility that has been at Calvin’s heart since the very beginning. We must cultivate students of character and purpose who will leave an indelible mark on society; that mission starts with providing a safe environment that considers the individual holistically—body, soul and spirit. Calvin is an organization that embodies genuine compassion and consistency.
Vein 2

DEDICATED & CARING

★ Approachable
Calvin is seen by many as exclusive, with a “hard-to-crack-into” culture. This runs counter to the concept of approachability.

★ Inclusive
As previously noted, Calvin has a tendency to be exclusive, or viewed as such. The research clearly indicates a desired shift away from this tendency toward a more inclusive culture in general. However, some members of the community don’t see the college operating this way yet.

★ Careful
Seen as something Calvin is today, the research suggests a desired shift away from conservative risk-taking. This has become more popular following the institution’s financial concerns in recent years.

★ Humble
Seen as something Calvin is too much of today, it was highlighted during the workshops that “humility is a competition at Calvin.” A more extroverted presence is desired in the future.

★ Death Stars were assigned to adjectives by workshop participants who felt the adjective was inaccurate, untrue, or unachievable; in many cases it indicates that while a trait was true, it’s not a quality that Calvin College wants attributed to it.
EMPOWERING & DISTINCTIVE

We are innovators, although perhaps not in the traditional manner of speaking. Rather than producing fancy new gadgets, we inquire in matters of the heart and mind, rigorously studying and investigating the concepts and ideas most pertinent to life as we understand it. ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you.’ Calvin is a place of constant creativity and visionary curiosity, always founded in God’s truth. We are not isolated in a laboratory, left to our own devices, but we seek knowledge and newness that’s constructive and inspiring to our culture.
Blue words represent Death Star words. See the following spread for explanation.
Calvin College has a proud history dating back to 1876. As we challenge students to investigate, wonder and be courageously curious about creation, we do so anchored and established in our faith in Jesus Christ. Our Reformed tradition dates back to the 16th century, and while our influence is relevant, competitive and stimulating for today, we’re not the flavor of the week. Truth preceded us, it will survive us, and we honor our foundations humbly.
Traditional
Refers to the historical Christian Reformed Church community which included a highly exclusive insider-outsider mentality. This proves difficult for many in the campus community.

Cocky
Calvin’s culture tends to pull back from overtly egotistical behaviors, preferring instead to quickly acknowledge individual successes and then refove on the community. Many disagreed with this word choice.

Serious
There’s no doubt that Calvin is more serious than fun, but this suggests that the campus community would prefer something less serious in the future.

Defiant
This is largely defined by those who would prefer to stay inside the lines of the church and typical college operating conditions. This adjective took on dual meaning for many—some disagreed with its application to Calvin, while others agreed with it but desired to eliminate it from the brand.

Death Stars were assigned to adjectives by workshop participants who felt the adjective was inaccurate, untrue, or unachievable; in many cases it indicates that while a trait was true, it’s not a quality that Calvin College wants attributed to it.
Traits

Blue-boxed words represent a Death Star word.
Calvin College is a place of excellence. The work we set our minds and hands to do, we do very well. Our intention is to influence, and that means progressing as a confident market leader. We’re not shy about our mission to be a role model in higher education that sets an example worthy of mirroring. We’ve been blessed and equipped with gifts and talents, and we boldly and proudly employ them for God’s glory and the culture He has called us to impact. This means we’ll cast vision, compete and be a strong, stable influence.
Contrary Traits
In contrast to the positive adjectives, “especially contrary” personality characteristics were selected to describe what Calvin College’s personality is not.
CONTRARY TRAITS

PERSONALITY

quirky, rebellious, avant-garde, easy-going, edgy, dangerous, mischievous, cocky, unruly, provocative, innovative, authoritative, charismatic, experimental, defiant, integral, efficient, inventive, nimble, forward-thinking, amusing, charismatic, heroic, loved, powerful, proud, heroic, respected, admired, determine,ingenious, remarkable, insightful, safe, entertaining, unorthodox, bold, dominating, fearless, rugged, 敬意, 不拘一格, 易于相处, 冒险, 危险, 顽皮, 好奇, 肤浅, 吐槽, 夺目, 鲜明, 果断, 坚定, 坚忍, 不屈, 狠辣, 坚韧, 勇敢, 狂野, 坚强
What Calvin is not

CALVIN COLLEGE IS NOT...

One thing is for certain: unruly, self-serving and reckless behavior is not permitted in Calvin College’s image. It’s not the institution’s propensity to seek danger and thrill, opting instead for the prudent and intelligent route. Bending practical rules and stirring up trouble to get attention is contrary to Calvin College’s personality.
Contrary Traits

easy-going
edgy
dangerous
revolutionary
playful
rugged
quirky
risk-taking
rebellious
mischievous
forward-thinking
unruly
cocky
quirky
quirky
CALVIN COLLEGE WISHES IT WAS... THE FEARLESS DISCOVERER

Among the qualities that Calvin College isn’t—but wishes it was—are those of a fearless discoverer. This speaks to the desire to look ahead and try new things, cover more ground, and inspire people with boldness and energy. The single adjective selected as most desirable from this list was **fearless**. These insights call for a new generation of storytelling for the institution, marked by adventure, investigation and enlightenment.
PERSONALITY

Archetype & Attraction
The social stereotype, or archetype, that best defines who Calvin College is today and who it could become. Correspondingly, we identify the mode by which this archetype attracts others.
These nine archetypes represent universally recognized human personalities, or social stereotypes. Each archetype is distinctive and attractive in its own way.

Over 3 days, 214 live workshop participants selected a current and aspirational archetype for Calvin College. 950 online workshop respondents completed the same set of exercises.

In all, 1,164 voices weighed in to tell us who Calvin College is today, and who College College aspires to be.
Each archetype is surrounded by **12 modes of attraction**, representing the essential methods highly persuasive people use to attract large followings.

Each respondent was asked to identify the mode of attraction that best correlated with the archetype they chose. Lastly, each archetype is equipped with eight unique personas, or specific character types (e.g. pioneer, coach, inventor, etc.) Respondents were also asked to identify which persona most authentically matched Calvin College’s personality.

Online respondents were tasked with the same exercises, albeit with a clear demarcation between current and aspiration.
**PERSONALITY**

**Archetype & Attraction**

**LIVE PERSONALITY WORKSHOPS : WHO WE ARE**

214 PARTICIPANTS

---

**CURRENT SELECTIONS**

- Discoverer: 52%
- Innovator: 66%
- Researcher: 27%
- Shepherd: 16%

**ASPIRATIONAL SELECTIONS**

- Innovator: 36%
- Discoverer: 35%
- Shepherd: 17%
- Researcher: 12%

---

**Inquisitive and Discerning**, driven by the quest for discovering the unknown to improve the world. Delivers progress and a thirst for knowledge and new approaches. Values investigation, curiosity and trailblazing. People feel

**ONLINE WORKSHOP: WHO WE ARE**

950 PARTICIPANTS

**CURRENT SELECTIONS**

- **Discoverer**: 36%
- **Researcher**: 15%
- **Theorist**: 13%
- **Contender**: 27%

**ASPIRATIONAL SELECTIONS**

- **Innovator**: 47%
- **Creator**: 19%
- **Pioneer**: 15%
- **Challenger**: 43%
- **Trailblazer**: 11%
- **Disciplinarian**: 14%
- **Shepherd**: 13%
- **Guide**: 31%

*Inquisitive and Discerning*, driven by the quest for discovering the unknown to improve the world. Delivers progress and a thirst for knowledge and new approaches. Values investigation, curiosity and trailblazing. People feel adventurous and enlightened.
Archetype & Attraction

COMBINED PERSONALITY WORKSHOPS: WHO WE ARE

FOLLOW ME

DEDICATED
TRANSFORMATIVE
PURPOSEFUL

21%
426 Total Selections

45%
916 Total Selections
Modes of Attraction

**PRIMARY MODE**

**FOLLOW ME  DISCOVERER**

**DEDICATED | TRANSFORMATIVE | PURPOSEFUL**

Brands that attract with this mode are intensely mission-driven, focused on carrying out meaningful change with great dedication and often against adversity. Those who attract this way typically don’t ask to be followed; rather, they set an example through behavior that’s worthy of following.

*e.g. Joan of Arc, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King.*

**SECONDARY MODE**

**STUDY ME  INNOVATOR**

**INTELLIGENT | ASTUTE | RATIONAL**

Brands that attract with this mode are cerebral, skilled at reasoning through circumstances with an adept intellectual capacity. Others find this style fascinating and take confidence in the insightful and calculated approach. Although typically less expressive, brands that employ this mode are viewed as powerful and credible.

*e.g. Isaac Newton, Marie Curie, Bobby Fischer.*
LIVE PERSONALITY WORKSHOPS: WHO WE ARE

Fearless and Unconventional, driven by disrupting the norm and challenging established rules. Delivers empowerment and a sense of freedom. Values independence, guts and trailblazing behavior. People feel inspired and attractive.

Romantic and Refined, driven by the quest for experience and beauty in all forms. Delivers possibility, hope and vitality. Values expression, connection and bringing out the best. People feel inspired and attractive.
Big-picture narrative strategy, based on seven polarities, to determine how Calvin College’s story is delivered today and how it ought to be told.
Dichotomies

ECONOMY
Current: 4.606
Aspiration: 5.905

ARTISTIC
Current: 5.434
Aspiration: 5.758

INTROVERTED
Current: 4.695
Aspiration: 5.739

FEELING
Current: 5.517
Aspiration: 5.518

FUN
Current: 5.423
Aspiration: 6.054

RELAXED
Current: 4.992
Aspiration: 5.266

CONSERVATIVE
Current: 3.906
Aspiration: 5.581

LUXURY
SCIENTIFIC
EXTROVERTED
LOGIC
SERIOUS
AGGRESSIVE
PROGRESSIVE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECONOMY</strong></td>
<td>An economy brand is a practical choice in its market that appeals to a broader audience. This brand is necessity-focused, accessible and generally more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LUXURY</strong></td>
<td>A luxury brand is perceived as the premium choice in its market and caters to a narrower audience. This brand is more exclusive to buyers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ARTISTIC</strong></td>
<td>An artistic brand relies on creativity and is comfortable with abstract concepts. Explores new ideas based largely on intuition and free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCIENTIFIC</strong></td>
<td>A scientific brand depends on objectivity and factual analysis. The focus is on solutions that work efficiently, with concrete supporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTROVERTED</strong></td>
<td>An introverted brand is focused on the inner world, where ideas and experiences motivate. This brand is more private;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXTROVERTED</strong></td>
<td>An extroverted brand is focused on the outer world, where people and action decide where attention is given. This brand is very sociable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEELING</strong></td>
<td>A feeling brand uses affe ctional values as an anchor in decisions. This brand is emotionally-attuned and empathizes, recognizing that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOGIC</strong></td>
<td>A logic brand is defined by thinking over feeling. Analysis is a driving force in decision-making, guided by cause-and-effect reasoning. Prefers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUN</strong></td>
<td>A fun brand is light-hearted and playful, placing a high degree of importance on enjoyment and entertainment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SERIOUS</strong></td>
<td>A serious brand is straightforward and matter-of-fact, favoring a focused and mild-mannered disposition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELAXED</strong></td>
<td>A relaxed brand is casual and easy-going, providing a sense of calm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGGRESSIVE</strong></td>
<td>An aggressive brand is firm and assertive, providing a sense of alert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONSERVATIVE</strong></td>
<td>A conservative brand is cautiously moderate and desires to preserve existing conditions—valuing tradition and established practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROGRESSIVE</strong></td>
<td>A progressive brand favors continual advancement, change, improvement or reform; making progress toward new conditions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faith-Based Dichotomies

- **CHRISTIAN**
  - Current: 4.241
  - Aspiration: 4.603

- **CALLING**
  - Current: 4.051
  - Aspiration: 4.429

- **EGALITARIAN**
  - Current: 4.558
  - Aspiration: 4.494

- **HERITAGE**
  - Current: 3.962
  - Aspiration: 6.006

- **RELEVANT**
  - Current: 4.782
  - Aspiration: 5.914

- **TRUTH-SEEKING**
  - Current: 4.660
  - Aspiration: 5.393

- **HEART**
  - Current: 5.392
  - Aspiration: 5.090

- **DISCIPLESHIP**
  - Current: 5.020
  - Aspiration: 5.090
**A distinctively Christian brand** focuses first on being known for its Christ-centered faith. An academic brand has a reputation for excellence in pursuit of academic rigor, scholarship, rankings and awards.

Brands that exhibit the calling are driven to deliver their vocation through the belief that God has a plan for them. Brands that are career focused factor their sense of spiritual connection through means outside the workplace while bringing that

An egalitarian brand celebrates and promotes the community as a whole, encouraging modesty and inner motivation. A heroic brand celebrates and promotes the achievements of individuals, departments or programs as strengths.

A heritage brand places high value on specific cultural roots, traditions and historical foundational principles. A diversity brand places high value on welcoming community members from various races, ethnicities, cultures, genders and abilities.

A relevant brand creates a bridge from its foundational truths and worldview to what is happening in current culture. A transformative brand is countercultural for the common good, often fighting against the cultural tide to bring renewal and

A truth-seeking brand believes strongly in its logical connections to God and the possibility of the lifelong pursuit of Truth through A truth-seeking brand ultimately believes in their understanding of God’s truth without the need for questioning.

A heart brand emphasizes liturgy in order to align our desires with God’s desires. A mind brand focuses on discernment and the development of the mind.

A Christian college discipleship brand takes responsibility for faith formation both in the classroom and student life. A Christian college degree brand takes responsibility for integrating faith and learning while focusing on imparting the necessary degree.
CONCLUSIONS

Overall, people are comfortable with the way Calvin communicates, and no drastic move is required on any one dichotomy. Instead, the tactics for how the overall story is told needs to be shifted to meet with the college’s authentic personality and external perceptions. Blended adjustments are in order, most notably:

- **Luxury to Economy**: Primarily responsive to universal market conditions. Be enticing and accessible.
- **Introversion to Extroversion**: Desire to be more energetic with the narrative and build reputation.
- **Conservative to Progressive**: More aggressive risk-taking which is congruent with a departure from “Traditional.”
CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the faith-based dichotomies, the disparities were minimal. However, the most movement was present within the following tensions:

- **Heritage to Diversity**: A significant migration toward inclusive/global/diversity, describing the need to shed the perception that Calvin is isolated and warmly welcome differing perspectives in general.

- **Relevant to Transformative**: Consistent with the expressed “follow me” attraction mode—albeit perhaps in conflict with the above dichotomy—the shift toward transformative solidifies a desire to be “countercultural for the common good, often fighting against the cultural tide.” This carries with it a “dig your feet in” mentality. More conversation and nuance is needed in regard to how these variables are handled by the college.

- **Truth-knowing to Truth-seeking**: This is an especially important dichotomy, expressing Calvin’s desire to be a discoverer. A shift in the opposite direction would have been alarming considering the personality insights.
PERSONALITY

Cause
Why Calvin College exists. What is the deeper purpose and motivation for Calvin College?
Leading brands have a cause, or deeper motivation, that transcends the products or services. A narrative that is focused on the What—or product specifics—is the most common and least differentiated strategy. After all, competitors all around the country ultimately sell most of the same things you do. Alternatively, a narrative that conveys authentic personality and an emotionally-engaging reason for existence will yield more relatability and long-term success. The Cause framework delivers the proverbial Why in a simple and powerful three-word structure:

The “Why”

Apple exists to **challenge preconceived ideas.**

Disney exists to **inspire childlike wonder.**

Coca-Cola exists to **spread classic happiness.**
LIVE PERSONALITY WORKSHOPS

**VERB**
- inspire (33.61%)
- cultivate (24.37%)
- challenge (10.08%)
- pursue
- develop
- instill
- unlock

**ADJECTIVE**
- faithful (30.00%)
- courageous (13.50%)
- authentic
- passionate
- vibrant
- restorative
The data

LIVE PERSONALITY WORKSHOPS

ABSTRACT NOUN

renewal 11.67%
wonder 10.83%
curiosity 8.33%
restoration 8.33%
discovery
efficiency
change

POPULAR COMBINATIONS

inspire faithful renewal
cultivate courageous wonder
develop thoughtful discovery
cultivate faithful renewal
inspire vibrant curiosity
cultivate passionate change
pursue courageous discovery
develop authentic faith
instill restorative change
pursue genuine growth
Calvin College’s cause statement is one that integrates many of the leading qualities and sentiments echoed in the workshops, yet is simple and provocative enough to anchor the master narrative for Calvin College. Of course, the “why” of the Cause must naturally unify the “who” as described in Calvin College’s personality. Study the structure and explanation of Calvin College’s cause provided on the following page.

Top-rated words from the raw data in each category aren’t always taken verbatim to form the final cause for a few reasons: Top-rated words are not guaranteed to work well together or mean anything in particular. More than pure data, strategic thinking must be applied to weave insights gained throughout the project into the cause. Thus, the most sensible structure is one that best complements the entirety of the strategy.

The cause serves as a primary anchor for Calvin College’s master narrative, and all internal behavior and external communication should strive to reflect the essence of this cause. You will find the spirit of this statement reflected in the college’s Platform to follow.
Calvin College exists to...

The Calvin spirit is to provide good soil which bears much fruit. Lasting growth takes work and time, and the development of the whole person is Calvin’s priority. The institution is fervently committed to cultivating the heart and mind to bear fruit of wisdom, conviction and renewal to a culture we’re called to reach. Calvin is the good soil where fearless inquiry and discovery make deep roots.

Calvin College is a determined and dedicated discoverer, in pursuit of truth, wisdom and groundbreaking new concepts. Often times, wrestling with tough issues and challenging convention isn’t very popular, and this takes great courage. Calvin insists that its students—and all those who influence them—maintain resolve to think and live courageously. “But take courage, for I have conquered the world!”

Calvin College is an institution that encourages fearless wonder and curiosity, compelling people to think critically and investigate deeply. Calvin believes in the value of the pursuit, and the growth realized in the process of discovery and inquiry. Wonder constantly, ask intelligent questions, and seek truthful answers that benefit others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERN</th>
<th>ADJECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CALVIN</td>
<td>courageous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABSTRACT NOUN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wonder</td>
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</table>

that transforms individuals and the culture they influence.

When the the heart and mind is continually empowered to wonder and discover without condemnation, the individual is thoroughly changed. A renewed person plants seed wherever they go, and this life-bearing behavior is irresistible to culture in no small measure. Our motivation is not isolated to oneself, but all those in need of truth and transformation. “Here I am, Lord. Send me.”
Calvin College is a personality that’s predominantly characterized by the Discoverer archetype—an inquisitive and discerning person that thirsts for knowledge and the unknown. Calvin is intelligent, curious, discerning, investigative, and embodies a sense of wonder that inspires others. These characteristics are supported by the complementary Innovator archetype as a major accent. However, it’s essential to note that the Innovator—led by captivating with gifts and talents—is a very aspirational personality position.

We also see that the personality trait veins support the archetype selections perfectly. The predominant vein, Discerning and Intelligent, speaks directly to “quest” behavior, and seeking to uncover truth and new ideas. Vein 3, Empowering and Distinctive, integrates nicely with the aspirational Innovator personality type.

To complement this mix, the Guide archetype—characterized by caring and positivity—makes a noteworthy appearance in the personality conversation as a minor accent. Calvin College absolutely embodies Guide behavior today, defined by its intense dedication and care for others. However, it must be stated that this “purple” personality position is used by the vast majority of Calvin’s higher education competitors, and well beyond. It’s not distinctive.

Finally, the Challenger archetype further accents the overall story by staking a claim for the history and establishment of the college. This minor accent reminds Calvin that it is to be relevant and competitive, without bending to the changing whims of popular culture. Roots and legacy are valuable.

Finally, Calvin’s cause cements the entirety of the macro personality solution: Cultivate courageous wonder.

To be most authentic, all of this represents the personality that Calvin College must communicate moving forward.
We are discoverers in constant pursuit of God’s truth and biblical wisdom, which benefit both individuals and cultures at large. We are adept at discernment, taught to inquire with intellect about the complexity of life. We strive to follow Christ to find what is good and explore its potent application in the world today. Our influence goes beyond classroom walls and changes the way we look at the world.

We are innovators, although perhaps not in the traditional manner of speaking. Rather than producing fancy new gadgets, we inquire in manners of the heart and mind, rigorously studying and investigating the concepts and ideas most pertinent to life as we understand it. Calvin is a place of constant creativity and visionary curiosity, always founded in God’s truth. We’re not isolated in a laboratory left to our own devices, but seek knowledge and newness that are constructive and inspiring to our world.

As an academic institution, everything we do is purpose-built for the support and betterment of all those who rely on us. We are dedicated to taking good care of people, and that’s a responsibility that has been at Calvin’s heart since the very beginning. We must cultivate students of character and purpose who will leave an indelible mark on society; that mission starts with providing a safe environment that considers the individual holistically—body, soul and spirit. Calvin is an organization that embodies genuine compassion and consistency.

Calvin College has a proud history of influence dating back to 1876. As we challenge students to investigate, wonder, and be courageously curious about creation, we do so anchored and established in our faith in Jesus Christ. Our Reformed tradition dates back to the 16th century, and while our influence is relevant, competitive and stimulating for today, we’re not the flavor of the week. Truth preceded us, and it will survive us. We honor our foundations humbly.
PLATFORM
OVERVIEW

With Calvin College’s personality defined, we identify what the college now talks about. Dozens of key language themes are identified throughout the research and condensed into 5 master storylines. Together, these storylines create a cohesive messaging platform—infused with Calvin College’s personality—to focus the master narrative.
**STORYLINE 1**

DETERMINED QUEST FOR TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE

- Discerning
- Multi-faceted
- Courageous
- Global
- Inquisitive
- Hearing the call
- Analytical
- Reformed

**STORYLINE 2**

LIVE AND LEAD WITH COURAGEOUS CONVICTION

- Passionate
- Edgy
- Empowering
- Renewal
- Defiant
- Fearless

**STORYLINE 3**

UNITING THE HEART & MIND TO ENGAGE THE WORLD
Calvin demonstrates unwavering focus on the discovery of knowledge and engagement with Christ’s ultimate renewal of the world. We prepare the heart and mind for rigorous inquiry to seek vocation and God’s truth.
Dimensions

**Discerning**

Our approach to listening, sifting and grappling with God’s world to teach students how to be truth seekers.

**ULTIMATE WHY: GOD’S IMAGE**
**V1: DISCERNING & INTELLIGENT**

**Evidence:**
- Student Activities Office
- Chapel offerings
- Developing a Christian Mind
- Off-campus programs: approach to global engagement
- Service-Learning Center: discerning approach to outreach
- Festival of Faith and Music
- Festival of Faith and Writing
- Faith and International Development Conference

Inspiring students to acquire new knowledge through inquiry that creates appreciation and action.

**ULTIMATE WHY: SERVE GOD**
**V1: DISCERNING & INTELLIGENT**

**Evidence:**
- Philosophy program
- Honors living-learning community
- Phage first-year research program
- Summer research
- Center for Social Research
- McGregor Fellows
- January Series

Encouraging broad interdisciplinary learning to foster stronger stewardship and contribution.

**ULTIMATE WHY: GOD’S IMAGE**
**V1: DISCERNING & INTELLIGENT**

**Evidence:**
- Core curriculum
- Integrated Science Research Lab
- Co-curricular learning philosophy
- Spiritual formation
- Clean Water Institute of Calvin College
- Academically based service-learning
- Variety of majors
- Professional programs
- Centers and institutes

Nurturing the self discovery of abilities, desires and readiness for purposeful service to the world.

**ULTIMATE WHY: VOCATION**
**V1: DISCERNING & INTELLIGENT**

Evidence:
- Alumni outcomes, vocations
- Faculty connections with students help clarify calling
- Senior seminar courses explore calling
- Worship Apprentices
- Jubilee Fellows
- Comenius Scholars
- Career development
Calvin unabashedly engages messiness and teaching students to fearlessly explore God’s creation, seek truth and take action. We instill the ability to persevere, overwhelm adversity, question, debate and live boldly for Christ.
Dimensions

Edgy

[A]

Boldly challenging the expected to engage in the process of reimagining the Christian way of living.

Evidence:
- Origins seminars
- Concerts with non-Christian artists
- LGBTQ conversations
- Faculty scholarship
- Sexuality Series
- Responsible freedom policy

Fearless

Loving boldly and inspiring engagement with the world through deeper understanding of personal beliefs.

Evidence:
- Approach to student and faculty scholarship, exploring all things
- Professors encourage students to ask tough questions
- Welcoming of other perspectives, dialogue
- Spring break trips to areas of the U.S. facing complex issues

Passionate

Developing and acting on deep-seated convictions and serving people with energy, commitment and positivity.

Evidence:
- Athletics
- Centers and institutes
- Environmental efforts, including Plaster Creek Stewards
- Tree Campus USA designation (three years in a row)
- Friday chapel services
- Food Recovery Network

Defiant

[W]

Willingness to stand up for its principles and challenge the church and secular society when necessary.

Evidence:
- Defying non-academic stereotype of some Christian institutions
- Students pushing further conversations on race and LGBTQ issues
- Faculty exploring previously “taboo” subjects

Ultimate Why: Renewal

V3: Empowering & Distinctive

Ultimate Why: Restore

V3: Empowering & Distinctive

Ultimate Why: Serve God

V3: Empowering & Distinctive

Ultimate Why: Reform

V4: Established

[A] - Aspirational
Calvin affects meaningful change by preparing students to connect their minds, hearts and hands to serve Jesus Christ and the world. We encourage a mindset of openness and discovery to provoke new ideas, and the resolve to take action.
Creating openness to investigate all things through a faith-lens resulting in the formation of conviction.

**Dimensions**

**Receptive**
- Collaborative space for discovery and engagement to unleash fresh ideas for Christ’s kingdom.

**Inventive**
- Empowering the campus through opportunities for integrated growth, to use and share gifts in new ways.

**Empowering**
- Embracing differences as a community while learning to bridge the space between stranger and friend.

**Approachable**
- Receptive Inventive Approachable Empowering

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**Evidence:**
- Consensus-driven strategic plan, branding, master plan
- Employing gifts of new students, faculty and staff
- Open to starting new initiatives, programs, organizations

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**Evidence:**
- Inmate education program
- Senior design projects in engineering
- DisArt Festival: changing the way society views disability
- Partnership with Mission to Heal
- Cancer education curriculum for kids
- Symposium on Common

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**Evidence:**
- Senior honors projects
- Hosting Q Commons: exploring how to advance the common good
- Undergraduate research and publications

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**Evidence:**
- Broene Counseling Center
- Pastoral care through Campus Ministries
- Admissions visit program
- “To College, Through College” initiative for greater access to college
A DEDICATED COMMUNITY OF FAITH AND DISCOVERY

Calvin fosters communal connection that inspires wonder, curiosity and, ultimately, action. We produce faith and understanding through integrating the formation of strong Christian foundations, and the constant quest for knowledge.
Dimensions

Faith
Providing a rich environment for Christian discovery, faith formation and engagement with God’s work everywhere.

ULTIMATE WHY: GOD’S TRUTH
V1: DISCERNING & INTELLIGENT
Evidence:
- LOFT
- CICW and Worship Symposium
- Intentional application of faith in all courses
- Campus-wide Bible studies
- Faith activities in dorms: Barnabas, dorm worship
- Service-Learning Center
- Project Neighborhood partnerships
- ReigKnight/Verve worship

Captivating
Cultivating a sense of wonder, excitement and innovation through a life of faith, learning and action.

ULTIMATE WHY: FULFILL GOD’S PLAN
V3: EMPOWERING & DISTINCTIVE
Evidence:
- The Artist Collaborative
- Festival of Faith and Writing
- Larry Louters’ chemistry demos
- Ecosystem Preserve programs and camps
- Alumni work around the world in various fields
- Summer research with clear connections to problems like cancer, AIDS, water

Stewarding
Developing students’ capabilities for broad and lifelong learning to inspire ongoing stewardship.

ULTIMATE WHY: GOD’S IMAGE
V2: DEDICATED & CARING
Evidence:
- Mentoring
- Academic advising
- Student life and student orgs
- Plaster Creek Stewards
- Peace Corps’ top school rankings
- Recognized by Carnegie Foundation for commitment to community engagement
- Partnership with Mother Patern College of Health Sciences in Liberia

Inclusive
Calvin aspires to known for its inclusive environment, which celebrates differences in all aspects of the college journey.

ULTIMATE WHY: CHRIST-LIKE LIVING
V2: DEDICATED & CARING
Evidence:
- Sexuality Series
- Committed to making campus an increasingly hospitable space
- Rangeela
- Achieved Level II Partner status from Partners for a Racism Free Community
- Girls Who Code: an on-ramp for women in computer science

[A] - Aspirational
Through Calvin's well-established mission of academic excellence and grounding in the Reformed Christian faith, we commit to renewal in ourselves and creation, daring to push boundaries, overcome obstacles and influence our community and the world.
An authentic and integrated Christian faith that drives dedication to learning, service and perpetual growth.

**ULTIMATE WHY: Vocation/Renewal**

### Evidence:
- Graphic design major
- Master plan
- Speech pathology program growth
- Spoelhof Fieldhouse Complex
- Successful debt relief campaign

### Evidence:
- 24 academic All-Americans in the last five years, spanning virtually all varsity sports
- Symposium on Worship (25-plus years of learning)
- High-achieving professors who still make time for student interaction
- Committed, all-Christian faculty

### Evidence:
- International Journal of Christianity and Education
- A top producer of Fulbright U.S. Scholars (consistently awarded Fulbrights)
- Asian studies program
- "Improving teacher quality” grants

### Evidence:
- bizPlan and Elevator Pitch competitions
- Students consulting for real clients with Calvin Action Projects
- Students producing Ford Go Further video
- Aspirational master plan
- Engaging community partners
- Student Activities Office concerts
- Diversity efforts

Passionate Growth

Dedicated

Influential

Risk-taking

Inspiring confidence grounded in truth that reduces fear and prompts exploration beyond the common or the known.

**ULTIMATE WHY: Boldness**

### V3: Empowering & Distinctive

Sharing God’s love and truth shapes thought and provokes action in our communities and around the world.

**ULTIMATE WHY: Serve God**

### V1: Discerning & Intelligent

Dedicated to preserving the Christian perspective in a secularizing culture and inspiring the next generation.

**ULTIMATE WHY: Renewal**

### V1: Warm & Welcoming

Passionate

Growth

Dedicated

Influential

Risk-taking

[Aspirational]
Embody the brand personality.

Anchor all communication in your authentic sense of self.
Speak from the platform.

Stay on message all the time. Abandon saturated higher education language.
Refine the visual identity.

Visual change is necessary to fully support the strategy.
Create high-visibility tools.

A new story requires new and integrated multimedia.
Tell the story.

A clear and compelling story is an intentional union of the visual and the verbal. As with people, reputation is built when others “get you” over time.
Stay focused.

Reputation change is a continual, longterm process. Be consistent.