REAFFIRMING A SENSE OF PLACE THROUGH LOCAL BRANDING

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BACKGROUND

There was a time, about 70 years ago, when all it took to be successful in business was to make good quality products. However, as competition grew the need to distinguish between high-quality and shabby products became essential. Fundamental brands, still in existence today, were some of the first companies, in the 1950s and 1960s, that characterized the kind of forward thinking that is ubiquitous today. The idea of branding grew out of the standardization of quality products in the middle of the 20th century.

This shift required that companies develop a new way to differentiate themselves from competitors. Marketing was approached differently and therefore required an understanding of the target customer. The connection the brand would form by knowing the consumer would offer not only functional, but also emotional value. Over time the emotional value would form a lifelong relationship making top brands household names throughout America.

SITE LOCATION

Savannah, Georgia was chosen as the city for this study because of the rich history, culture, and demographic diversity it offers. Savannah is a coastal Georgia city that is separated from South Carolina by the Savannah River. Savannah has a population of 142,772 (2013) and covers a total of 108.7 square miles.

Savannah has an established reputation for southern hospitality, coastal cuisine, and is the home to the nation's largest Historic Landmark District. The city of Savannah lies in the vein of the Bible Belt, an area of the southeastern United States where fundamentalist Protestant Christianity dominates. The areas strong social traditionalist perspectives come from a substantial Christian base, particularly Southern Baptists. Historically, Savannah has been grounds for slavery, states' rights, the Civil War, segregation, and racial tension. In 2015 Savannah's population was 53% black and 34% white, with other races, including Hispanic and Asian, making up the remaining 13%.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can an understanding of sense of place lead to the creation of a local brand?
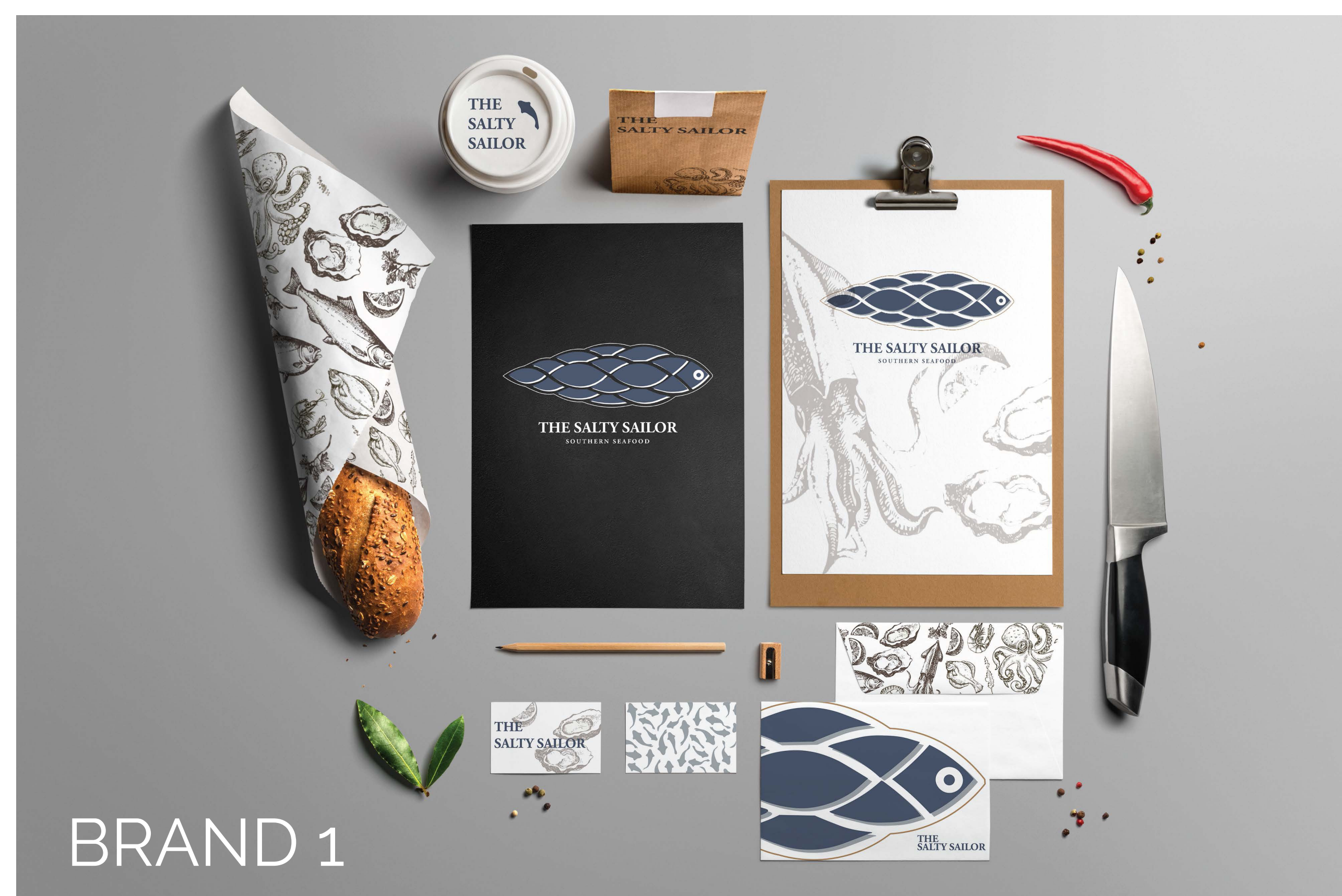
METHODOLOGY: FOCUS GROUP

MATERIAL BRAND STYLE
Utilizes grids, light, and shadow to create modern graphics

HANDCRAFTED BRAND STYLE
Logos and marketing materials look like they've been drawn by hand

MINIMALIST BRAND STYLE
Simple, straight forward, and easily decipherable

BRAND 1

BRAND 2

BRAND 3

1 CRITICALITY
Having importance to the site or providing something that is desperately needed

2 AUTHENTICITY
Being representative of bona fide materials, history, site, or culture

3 SITE-SPECIFICITY
Being unique or original to the site

4 INCLUSIVITY
Accessible by all and including those who might otherwise be excluded

METHODOLOGY: RESULTS

	BRAND 1	BRAND 2	BRAND 3	TOTAL AVERAGE
CRITICALITY	2.8	3.8	3.8	**3.5**
AUTHENTICITY	2.6	2.8	3.6	**3.0**
SITE-SPECIFICITY	3.6	3.8	4.0	**3.8**
INCLUSIVITY	3.2	2.8	3.6	**3.2**
TOTAL AVERAGE	**3.05**	**3.30**	**3.75**	

1 Most apparent within the brands

5 Least apparent within the brands

Justification for the use of brand 1 - *The Salty Sailor* - in the developing project is illustrated through the data table results. After averaging score outcomes from the determined *Principals of Sense of Place* - criticality, authenticity, site-specificity, and inclusivity - these four principals were found to be most apparent in brand 1, scoring a 3.05, and least apparent in brand 3, scoring a 3.75. Authenticity and inclusivity were shown to be the most apparent across all three brands, while site-specificity was most lacking across the board.