

## Portrait of a Contender:



Corey Morris, Alumni Relations Manager

“Language at Work – Bridging Theory and Practice” caught up with busy Corey Morris on a cold and rainy November day in Denmark. We had two main reasons for looking up Corey at his work. First, we knew that his work takes him to the four corners of the world of branding on a daily basis. Second, we were well aware that Corey would be the right person to ask questions as to where branding is going these days.

Today, Corey Morris is the Alumni Relations Manager at the Aarhus School of Business (ASB), in Aarhus, Denmark. However his journey to this position has been quite unique.

After a diverse professional background, which includes 5 years in the United States Navy working with meteorology and oceanography, followed by 2 years with a global shipping company, Corey finally dropped anchor in Aarhus Harbor to pursue a Bachelor’s degree in marketing and communications.

The university environment provided an opportunity for Corey to develop his network by creating strategic relationships within and outside of the school setting. Corey’s ability to connect with people did not go unnoticed, as he was offered a job from the Director of Communications at the ASB just a few weeks before graduation.

## **The ASB Alumni brand**

As the Alumni Relations Manager, Corey works to help alumni of the Aarhus School of Business re-connect with their alma mater, as well as with each other among three key areas: *knowledge, network and career*.

From a branding perspective, Corey took the knowledge still fresh from his recent degree, and applied it to develop and implement the Alumni Office's 'brand platform'. This platform acts as a guide for all communication with its stakeholders with respect to brand values, brand personality, and its brand nomenclature. As a result the ASB Alumni Office, with its [red and black](#) color scheme, has become well known and easily recognized around campus and across multiple communication platforms.

## **Branding Q&A**

When asked about what aspect of 'branding' that Corey finds interesting to work with, he says:

*"Simply put, branding has always fascinated me. I think I'm cursed/blessed with an insatiable curiosity for why we do what we do and how the power of branding shapes perception and influences many of the choices we make.*

*Branding is just one part of my job, but an essential part nonetheless. I believe that establishing an indelible position in the minds and hearts of your target audience through remarkable experiences and engaging your constituency positively at every touch point is key to every brand."*

Because of the power that a brand has with consumers, and its influence on decisions that are made in the marketplace, Corey highlights a recent example with the 'Gap' brand and its failed logo change.

*"Basically what happened was Gap gave the logo a facelift. No harm done, right? Well, they forgot to solicit the approval of one key person – the user – who in this case lambasted the design and demanded the original logo be reinstated. The backlash that ensued and even more so the rate and means at which it spread via social media speaks volumes about how the branding landscape is changing. The new Gap logo lasted a mere week, so to me, the question raised is: who in actuality controls the brand now that the consumer can voice their disapproval in other ways than their pocketbooks?"*

The Gap example recognizes the explosion of social media adoption among consumers and the affordances of ‘Web 2.0’. This is highlighted in the way Corey and the Alumni Office have incorporated this technology into their communication strategy, namely through the online community exclusively for ASB alumni called [‘CONNECT’](#).

As reflected through the CONNECT online community, Corey considers social media as the #1 game changing factor for branding and marketing communications because of the potential for immediate and genuine communication. In addition to this, he considers the adoption of smart phones and mobile web apps as offering the potential to communicate in a fast, fun and personal way. Might we be seeing an ASB Alumni app available in the future? We’ll leave that up to Corey and his team.

As for you, Corey, “Where do you see yourself in the next ten years?”

*“Not sure, but what I do know is that I’ve been blessed with a drive and fortitude that’s taken me further than I’d ever imagined – both personally and professionally. So I’m sure that if I stay on that trajectory then I’ll end up somewhere great, surrounded by exceptional people and doing something I deeply love. I really couldn’t ask for more.”*

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