

BRAND FOUNDATION · €1,500

CEATHRÚ

A craft butcher in Ennis, decided once — who it is for, what it actually sells, how it looks, and the one thing nobody on that street can copy inside a year.

01

idea that cannot be copied

04

rules that hold when you are not there

03

weeks, strategy and identity together

01

number this is judged on

Portfolio sample. Ceathrú is an invented butcher, built to show what a €1,500 brand foundation contains. No real business is described, named or critiqued, and every figure is illustrative. If you are opening a butcher, check the name against the CRO register and your own town before using it.

WHERE THIS STARTS

THREE BUTCHERS, ONE SUPERMARKET COUNTER, AND NOBODY WITH AN ARGUMENT.

Ennis has three independent butchers inside a ten-minute walk, plus two supermarket counters. All five sell broadly the same animals cut broadly the same way. All three independents describe themselves as *traditional, family-run, quality Irish meat* — in almost those words, on their signs and on their windows.

That is not a marketing problem. It is a positioning one. When five businesses make the same claim, the claim stops carrying information and the customer decides on parking and queue length, neither of which you can win deliberately.

The brief that arrived asked for a new sign and a logo. A new sign saying *traditional family butcher* would have been the fourth one on the street.

WHAT WE LOOKED AT

Every competing shopfront and window, photographed. What each posts, if anything. Their opening hours against the school run and the Saturday market. Prices on eight comparable cuts. The route a customer walks from the car park.

WHAT WE FOUND

Not one of the five gives anybody a reason to come in on a particular day. Every offer is permanent. A permanent offer can always be had tomorrow, which means it can always be skipped today — and skipping is free.

TRADITIONAL

Used by all three independents. Means nothing to somebody under forty and reads as *slow* rather than *good*.

FAMILY-RUN

True of all of them, including one of the supermarket concessions. A fact, not a position.

QUALITY IRISH MEAT

Legally required to be Irish or labelled otherwise. You are advertising compliance.

WHAT THE STREET ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE

WHO	WHAT THE WINDOW SAYS	OPEN	POSTS
RIVAL A	Traditional family butcher · Est. 1961	8–5.30, closed Sun & Mon	Nothing since March
RIVAL B	Quality Irish meat · Home deliveries	9–6, closed Sun	Photos of raw meat, weekly
RIVAL C	Craft butcher · Family run	8.30–6, open Sun morning	Occasional, mostly GAA
COUNTERS	Nothing — it is a supermarket aisle	7–10 daily	Not applicable

Observed from the street and from public profiles in August. Nothing here is a guess, and nothing here is a criticism of anybody — it is simply what a customer sees when they walk the ninety metres.

WHO YOU ARE FOR

THE PERSON WHO WANTS TO COOK WELL ON A TUESDAY AND HAS FORTY MINUTES.

Not the chef. Not the person who orders half a lamb for the freezer twice a year — they are lovely and there are eleven of them. The customer this brand is built around is someone in their thirties or forties who can cook a bit, wants to cook better, and is deciding what to have for dinner at about half four with no plan.

WHAT THEY ACTUALLY NEED

- To be told what is good today, not shown eleven options.
- A cut they have not cooked before, with the instruction attached.
- To be in and out in under five minutes.
- To not feel stupid for not knowing what a bavette is.

WHO YOU ARE NOT FOR

- The weekly-shop customer buying two kilos of chicken fillets on price.
- Anyone whose first question is whether you will match the supermarket.
- Restaurants, unless one walks in — trade changes the whole business and it is a decision, not a bonus.

WHAT YOU ARE ACTUALLY SELLING

Not meat. Meat is available in nine places within a mile and three of them are open at ten at night. What you are selling is **the decision** — somebody else has already worked out what is worth eating this week, cut it, and told you how to cook it. The customer is buying forty minutes of not having to think, and a dinner that turns out better than it would have.

EVERY BUTCHER ON THAT STREET SELLS MEAT. YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE SELLING THE DECISION.

THE ONE IDEA

ONE CUT A WEEK. NAMED, PRICED, COOKED FOR YOU IF YOU WANT IT.

Every Wednesday morning one cut goes up on the enamel board outside. It is chosen because it is genuinely good that week, it has a price, it comes with a card telling you exactly how to cook it, and on Thursday there is a tray of it already cooked to taste.

On Sunday it comes down. Next Wednesday it is something else.

WHY THAT IDEA AND NOT ANOTHER

IT CHANGES WHAT THE SHOP DOES, NOT JUST HOW IT LOOKS.

It gives a reason for a particular day. Wednesday is when it appears and Thursday is when you can taste it. Nothing else on that street has a day attached to it, so nothing else can be planned around.

It solves the actual problem. The customer's difficulty is not access to meat, it is deciding. One cut a week is the decision made for them, which is the thing they are short of at half four.

It teaches the range without a lecture. Fifty-two cuts a year, each with a card. Within a year a regular has cooked things they would never have asked for, and cheaper cuts are where your margin actually lives.

WHY IT CANNOT BE COPIED QUICKLY

Any butcher can put a cut on a board next week. What they cannot copy is two years of Wednesdays, fifty-two cards a customer has kept in a kitchen drawer, and regulars who ask *what is it this week* before they have taken their coat off. The habit is the moat, and a habit takes a year to build and cannot be bought.

WHAT WOULD KILL IT

Running the same cut twice because it sold well. Or keeping one on into a second week. The turnover is the mechanism — break it once in public and every future Wednesday becomes a maybe.

THE FIRST EIGHT WEDNESDAYS, SO IT IS REAL

WEEK	THE CUT	WHY IT, THAT WEEK	GUIDE
ONE	Bavette	Cheap, fast, and almost nobody in Ennis has cooked one. Sets the tone.	€13/kg
TWO	Lamb neck	Slow cut in the week the clocks go back. Sells itself on the weather.	€9/kg
THREE	Featherblade	The cheapest genuinely good beef in the shop. Four hours and it is better than sirloin.	€11/kg
FOUR	Pork belly	Everyone has eaten it out, almost nobody cooks it. The card does the work.	€8/kg
FIVE	Ox cheek	The one that proves the point. Two of them feed six people for under a tenner.	€7/kg
SIX	Chicken thighs, bone in	A reset week. Familiar, but cooked the way you would actually do it.	€6/kg
SEVEN	Short rib	Two weeks before Christmas, when people want something that looks like effort.	€14/kg

Week eight is spiced beef, made in the shop — the one week a year worth queueing for. Prices illustrative: set them against your own carcass costs. The point is that there is one cut, it has a number on it, and the number does not move during the week.

THE NAME

CEATHRÚ.

It means a quarter. A quarter of an animal, which is the unit a butcher actually buys and breaks down. It is also the word for a quarter of anything — a quarter of the town, a quarter of an hour.

It is short, Irish, and sayable. Three syllables, spelled the way it sounds to anybody who did Irish at school, and it does not contain the word butcher — which matters, because the word butcher is what every rival is already using and it locks you into the category rather than above it.

It has a built-in second meaning. The Wednesday cut can be *the quarter*. The card can be numbered by quarter of the year. The name is doing structural work rather than sitting on a sign.

CHECK IT BEFORE YOU USE IT

Search the CRO register, the .ie register, and — most importantly — ask three people in the town. The last one catches what the registers do not: a shop two streets away that everybody already calls something similar.



The enamel sign, as it would be made. Condensed capitals in bone on coal, with a red rule under — the way butchers' signs were made for a century before anyone called it branding.

WHAT WAS REJECTED, AND WHY

Ó Braonáin & Son. Correct, warm, and the third surname butcher on the street. Nothing to argue with and nothing to remember.

The Butcher's Block. Available, sayable, and used by roughly two hundred businesses in Ireland and Britain. You would spend a decade being confused with all of them.

Cnámh. Means bone. Striking, but it is the part of the animal people do not want to think about while buying dinner.

HOW IT IS SAID, AND WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT IS NOT

SAY IT

CAH-roo. Three syllables, stress on the first. It is on the window as *Ceathrú* and nowhere is it explained — explaining a name on your own sign is the surest sign you picked the wrong one.

WHEN SOMEBODY SAYS IT WRONG

Nothing happens. Nobody has ever left a shop because they were unsure how to pronounce it, and half the country mispronounces at least one shop they use weekly. Correcting people is worse than being mispronounced.

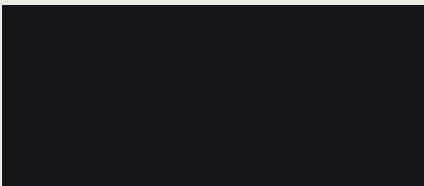
THE ENGLISH FALLBACK

There is not one, deliberately. A name with an English version underneath is a name that does not trust itself, and the second line always ends up being the one people use.

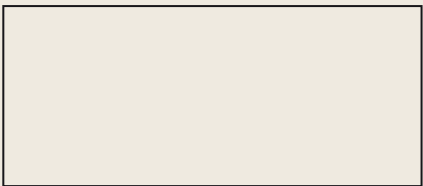
THE PALETTE

THREE COLOURS. ONE OF THEM IS ONLY EVER A PRICE.

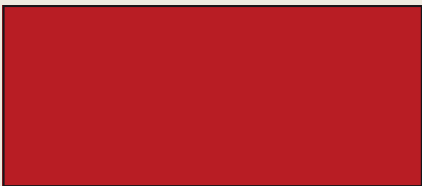
Butchery has a colour problem: the product is red, so a red-heavy brand competes with the counter and everything turns muddy under shop lighting. This palette leaves the red to the meat and one signal, and does everything else in coal and bone.



Coal #17161A
Every word. The sign, the aprons, the paper. Never pure black — it goes flat under fluorescent light.



Bone #EFEAE0
The paper, the tiles, the card. Warm enough that the counter looks appetising rather than clinical.



Signal #B81D24
Prices, and the Wednesday cut. Nothing else, ever.

WHY SIGNAL RED IS RESTRICTED

If red marks prices and the cut of the week, then a customer walking past learns in about two seconds where to look. The moment red is also used for headings, a sale sticker and the opening hours, it points at nothing and you are back to a wall of information.

CONTRAST, CHECKED

Passes. Bone on Coal 14.2:1 · Coal on Bone 14.2:1 · White on Signal 5.8:1 · Coal on Sand 9.1:1.

Never. Signal on Coal 2.1:1 — it looks powerful on a screen and is unreadable on a sign at four metres in November.

SAND, AND WHEN IT IS ALLOWED



Sand #C9BFA8 is a fourth colour and it exists for one job: the recipe cards, so they are distinguishable from everything else in a kitchen drawer at a glance. It appears nowhere in the shop and nowhere online. A fourth colour with one job stays useful; a fourth colour with several becomes a palette of four and the discipline is gone.

WHERE EACH COLOUR LIVES

SURFACE	GROUND	TYPE	SIGNAL USED FOR
SIGN	Coal	Bone	A single rule beneath the name. Nothing else.
WINDOW	Glass	Coal vinyl	Not used. The window carries the name only.
COUNTER TICKET	Bone	Coal	The price, and the words <i>this week</i> .
COOKING CARD	Sand	Coal	The card number only.
PAPER & BAG	Bone	Coal stamp	Not used.
APRON	Coal	Bone	Not used.

THE TYPE

CONDENSED CAPITALS, AND SOMETHING PLAIN TO READ.

FEATHERBLADE

BIG SHOULDERS DISPLAY

Tall, narrow, and built for signage. It fits a long cut name across a board without shrinking, which is the actual constraint — *featherblade* and *bavette* have to be legible from across a road.

Capitals only, weight 800 or 900. Lowercase softens it into something that looks like a coffee shop, and lighter weights lose the enamel-sign density that is the whole reason for the choice.

Two hours at 140°C,
uncovered.

Rest it as long as you
cooked it.

Slice across the grain,
always.

CHIVO

Everything a person has to actually read — the cooking cards, the allergens, the prices in a list, the captions. Plain, slightly mechanical, and completely legible at card size in a kitchen with wet hands.

Regular for instructions, bold for the one number that matters. Never italic on a card; it slows reading down and a card is read while something is on the heat.

THE TWO OF THEM, DOING THEIR JOB

OX CHEEK

THIS WEEK · TO SUNDAY

€7/kg

BAVETTE

THIS WEEK · TO SUNDAY

€13/kg

THE COUNTER TICKET

One shape, printed on bone card, written on in marker. The cut in display, the limit in signal, the price large enough to read while queueing. Every ticket in the shop is this — no exceptions, no handwritten scraps.

APPLIED

THE WEEK, AS THE SHOP RUNS IT.

WED**The cut goes up.**

Enamel board out at eight. One photograph, one caption naming the cut and the price. The card goes into the tray on the counter.

THU**The tasting tray.**

A tray of it cooked, out on the counter from half three. This is the single highest-return thing in the whole system and it costs about €9 of meat.

FRI**The card, photographed.**

One post: the cooking card itself, readable. People screenshot these, which is free distribution to exactly the right person.

SAT**Nothing scheduled.**

Saturday is your busiest day and you will not have time. A system that requires anything on a Saturday is a system that fails in month two.

SUN**It comes down.**

Board wiped. No announcement, no last chance. The ending is quiet and absolute, which is what makes the next one matter.

THE CARD

Front — the cut in display capitals, numbered (No. 03 of 52), the weight it serves, and the price it was.

Back — four lines of method. Temperature, time, one thing not to do, and how to tell it is done. Never a recipe with ingredients — that is a different product and it makes the card too long to read at the counter.

Sand card, coal type, about four cent each at a thousand. The cheapest object in this document and the one that builds the habit.

PAPER AND BAG

Plain bone paper, one coal stamp of the wordmark, applied by hand with a rubber stamp. Cheaper than printed paper, and the slight unevenness is the only decoration the brand needs.

THREE POSTS A WEEK, AND THAT IS THE WHOLE CONTENT PLAN**WEDNESDAY**

The cut, on the board, with the price. One photograph taken from where a customer stands. Caption: the cut, the price, the date it goes.

Three posts, all of them by-products of things already happening. No content calendar, no batching evenings, no photographer. If the week is chaos, Wednesday alone still holds the whole thing together.

THURSDAY

The tray, cooked, at half three. This is the only one that needs any timing and it is the one that works hardest.

FRIDAY

The card itself, photographed flat so it is readable. People save these, and a saved post reaches further than a liked one.

FOUR RULES

THINGS A MEMBER OF STAFF CAN FOLLOW WITHOUT RINGING YOU.

ONE. WEDNESDAY TO SUNDAY, THEN IT IS GONE.

The cut of the week is never extended, never repeated inside three months, and never brought back because somebody asked. If it sells out on Friday, it sold out.

TWO. RED IS ONLY A PRICE OR THE CUT.

Not a heading, not a Christmas message, not a sale sign. Two other red things and the system stops pointing at anything.

THREE. EVERY TICKET IS THE TICKET.

No handwritten scraps of paper in the counter, ever. If a ticket is needed and none is printed, print one. This is the rule most shops break first and it undoes the rest.

FOUR. NEVER EXPLAIN A CUT UNASKED.

The card explains it. Telling somebody what a bavette is, unprompted, is the exact experience the customer is avoiding. Hand them the card and let them find out at home.

WHAT TO STOP DOING

THE WORD TRADITIONAL

Off the sign, off the window, out of the captions. The three rivals own it collectively, which means nobody does.

COMPETING ON THE MINCE PRICE

You cannot win it and every euro spent trying is a euro not spent on the thing that does work.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF RAW MEAT ON A BOARD

Every butcher posts them and they are indistinguishable. The card and the cooked tray photograph far better and say something.

THE RULE BEHIND THE RULES

Every one of the four is a restriction, not an instruction. That is deliberate. A brand held together by things you *must* do needs somebody policing it; a brand held together by four things nobody may do survives a busy Saturday, a new member of staff and a year in which you are thinking about something else entirely. If a fifth rule is ever needed, one of these four should go — four is the number a person can hold without a manual.

HOW IT SOUNDS

FLAT, CERTAIN, AND NEVER SELLING.

The tone follows from the position. If you are the one who has already made the decision, you do not need to persuade — you state what it is, what it costs, and what to do with it.

Enthusiasm is what people use when they are not sure.

SAY THIS

“Ox cheek this week. Two of them feed six. Four hours at 140, and do not lift the lid.”

“€7 a kilo. It is the cheapest good thing in the shop and it always has been.”

“Gone Sunday. Back some time in spring.”

NOT THIS

“We are SO excited to share this week’s amazing special with you all!!!”

“Passionate about quality, tradition and craft since 1994.”

“Don’t miss out — limited stock available, DM to reserve yours today.”

THE FIVE THINGS TO REPEAT UNTIL YOU ARE SICK OF THEM

One cut a week. Wednesday to Sunday.

The card tells you how. Four lines, no recipe.

Thursday you can taste it. Half three, on the counter.

Cheap cuts, cooked properly. The good stuff is rarely the dear stuff.

We have already decided. You do not have to.

Say each of them a hundred times. You will be bored of them long before a customer has heard one twice.

THE WORDS TO RETIRE

Artisan. Means nothing and is claimed by supermarket ranges. **Premium.** A price signal pretending to be a quality one. **Locally sourced.** True of every butcher within fifty miles and therefore not a difference.

Hand-cut. All of it is. **Passionate.** Nobody has ever bought meat because of somebody’s feelings. **Family-run since.** Keep the fact, lose it as a headline — put it on the back of a card where it reads as true rather than as a claim.

WHAT THIS IS JUDGED ON

AVERAGE SPEND PER CUSTOMER, ON A WEDNESDAY AND A THURSDAY.

Not followers. Not footfall. Not how the sign feels. One number, and your till already knows it.

TODAY

€11.40

Illustrative. Pull the real figure for the last eight Wednesdays before you start, so there is a before.

NINETY DAYS

€15

If the cut of the week is doing its job, it shows up here — people come for the one thing and buy two others while they are in.

IF THAT NUMBER HAS NOT
MOVED IN NINETY DAYS, THE
IDEA IS WRONG AND I WILL TELL
YOU SO.

WHAT YOU ARE GETTING, AND WHAT IT COSTS TO BUILD

THE PRODUCTION LIST, WITH REAL NUMBERS.

ITEM	SPEC	WHERE	ROUGH COST
ENAMEL SIGN	Coal ground, bone capitals, signal rule. 1200 × 400mm.	Sign maker, Limerick	€380
THE BOARD	Slate or painted ply, 900 × 600mm, wiped weekly.	Made locally	€90
COOKING CARDS	Sand card, coal type, A6, printed 1,000 at a time.	Local printer	€45
COUNTER TICKETS	Bone card, one die-cut shape, 500.	Same printer	€38
RUBBER STAMP	Wordmark only, 60mm, for bags and paper.	Stamp maker	€28
APRONS	Coal, wordmark on the chest in bone. Six of them.	Workwear supplier	€140
WINDOW VINYL	Name only. No phone number, no list of services.	Sign maker	€120

Roughly €840 all in, once. Illustrative — get your own quotes. The point is that the whole identity is buildable for less than a month of advertising, because it is made of type and two colours rather than anything that needs a photographer.

THE PRODUCTION FILES

Wordmark as vector, the ticket and card as editable templates, the two typefaces (both free and licensed for commercial use), and the three colours as hex, CMYK and a Pantone nearest for the enamel. Everything a sign maker or printer will ask for, so nobody has to redraw anything.

WHAT IS DELIBERATELY NOT HERE

No website build, no photography, no social media management. This is what to do and how it looks — you or your staff press publish. That boundary is why the account still sounds like the shop.

WHAT TO DO FIRST

SIX WEEKS, IN THE ORDER THAT COSTS LEAST.

Week one. Pull the Wednesday and Thursday spend figures for the last two months, so there is a before. Order the cards and the tickets — they are €83 and they are the whole system.

Week two. Choose the first eight cuts and write the eight cards. Doing all eight at once means you are never writing one at seven in the morning.

Week three. Start. Board, cut, card, Thursday tray. The sign has not arrived and it does not matter — the system works before the signage does.

Week four. Order the enamel sign and the window vinyl once you have run it three times and know it holds.

Week six. Look at the number. Not before — three weeks of data is noise, and looking too early is how good ideas get killed.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING

The Thursday tray. Nine euro of meat, cooked, out on the counter at half three. It does more than the sign, the vinyl and the aprons put together.

Ceathrú is invented. It exists to show what a €1,500 brand foundation contains — who the business is for, what it is really selling, the name and why, palette and type fixed with the contrast checked, four rules that hold when the owner is not in the room, one idea that cannot be copied in a season, a costed production list, and the single number the whole thing should be judged on.