

Brand Therapy for Communicators

Presented to:

7th Professional Seminar for
Church Communications Offices

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Agenda

- First of all...what exactly is a brand?
- Does your brand need therapy?
- How can you strengthen your brand?
- How do you know it worked?
- Discussion

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What is a brand?



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What it's not...

- Logo
- Tagline
- Website
- Style Manual
- Mission Statement
- Signage
- Events/Conferences
- Programs
- Exhibits
- Packaging, etc.

A brand is **LARGER** than all of the above...



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What it is...

- A set of expectations and associations resulting from experience with an organization, company, product or service.
- How your key constituents think and feel about what you do.

The brand answers the question:

Why should I join, partner with, fund, work for, or listen to this organization?

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At the most basic level....

It's about establishing
first a connection,
then a relationship,
with those most important
to your success.

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Beware the accidental brand...

- There is no such thing as an “unbranded” organization, company, product, approach, etc.
 - There are some who proactively develop and manage their brands
 - There are some with low brand awareness
 - There are some that allow the marketplace to define their brand for them
- Many organizations (especially nonprofits) have very positive brand perceptions across a small group of stakeholders who know them well
 - The challenge is to communicate more broadly and expand that group of stakeholders appropriately



Why is brand important*?

*in a non-profit setting

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Too many choices...

The consumer challenge:

“Give me something
where I can quickly understand
a fundamentally different benefit,
or I’ll stick with what I’ve got, thank you.”

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Brand matters...

INTERNALLY

- A brand helps an organization maintain focus on those activities, initiatives and behaviors it values
- It helps prioritize projects and programs (“...Is it on mission? On brand? Does it further the mission? Further the brand?”)
- Helps an organization communicate both effectively, and efficiently
 - No ‘making it up’ every time
 - Consistency = impact
- Helps the organization attract, hire and retain the best people to advance its mission
 - Also applies to those invaluable volunteers



Brand matters...

EXTERNALLY

- A brand is the most visible articulation of an organization's strategy...it quickly tells people what the organization stands for, and where it's going
 - Helps cut through the clutter to get your message heard
 - It allows you to “claim your space” in a crowded, noisy market
- Builds and maintains strong relationships with those most important to your success
- In times of change (or crisis), gives internal and external supporters a touchstone, reassurance, and the tools they need to actively engage on your behalf



How to strengthen your brand



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Does your brand need therapy?

- Are you changing your strategy as an institution?
- Is your core constituency changing?
- Are there seismic market shifts?
- If you ask 10 people in your organization “what is (your name here)?”, how many different answers would you get?
- Can everyone in your organization explain how all the pieces (programs and services) fit together?
- Do you feel like you’re the best kept secret in town?
- Do you feel like people know that you exist, but not why you matter?
- If you put all of your collateral on a table, would it look like it came from the same place? Is it consistent with the look and feel of your web site?
- Do you have “dueling logos?”
- Is your logo easy to use?
- Do you have brand guidelines that are consistently used by everyone creating communications?

How do you build your brand?

- Your brand perception results from every single experience or contact a person has with your organization.
- You build that brand perception on four key foundational elements:
 - A set of relevant, consistent core messages;
 - A visual brand identity (logo, fonts, color palette, imagery) that effectively (and efficiently) communicates the essence of your brand;
 - An agreed-upon set of consistent brand behaviors;
 - An integrated plan to communicate the brand across all touchpoints.



Find your unique brand opportunity



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Brand Strategy Methodology

Internal Discovery	External Discovery	Brand Strategy	Communications Plan	Creative Development
<p>Strategy session Individual interviews Focus groups Communications audit</p>	<p>PRIMARY Visitor interviews Member interviews Donor/funder interviews Partner interviews</p> <p>SECONDARY Competitive audit Secondary literature review</p>	<p>Master brand messaging</p> <p>Product/service brand hierarchy</p> <p>Audience message matrix</p>	<p><i>Recommended communications strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand maintenance • Awareness tactics • Lead gen tactics • Relationship management tactics • Communications calendar • Budget • Measurement and evaluation 	<p>Visual identity Collateral Web site Advertising Signage Direct mail, etc.</p>

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First of all...who are you?

- Develop (and instill!) a consistent elevator pitch
 - 30 second explanation of who you are and what you do
 - The answer to the question “What is (organization)?”
- Clear, concise and interesting
 - WHO you are, WHAT you do, for WHOM.
- Use your elevator pitch to win the right to tell more of your story (you don’t need to tell the whole story in 30 seconds!)
 - Capture your listener’s attention enough so that you can move into what makes you unique, how you do it, etc.
- Create (and maintain) a consistent set of proof points and supporting statistics



Know your audience

- Understand who they are, how they segment, how they view you, what they need/expect from you
- All you need to do is ask (or have someone do it for you)
 - Phone interviews/focus groups with a combination of long-term and newer members and volunteers
 - Conversations with partners, the press, other external stakeholders
- To think about...
 - They can't ALL be your most important audiences.
 - A relevant brand is NOT the same as trying to be all things to all people (and "following the funding" is one of the surest ways to muddle your brand)
 - Start with those already inclined to be receptive to your message



“It is important for nonprofits to clearly understand and target their donors and not attempt to be all things to all people.

By aligning the current mission with their target donors, nonprofits can create a brand identity that both more accurately reflects the organization's activities and mission, and resonates with their target donors and or volunteers.”

Source: Harvard Business School, “Working Knowledge” newsletter

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Know your competition

- Yes, you have competition
 - At the very least, competition for resources: financial resources, in-kind donations, volunteers, etc.
- Crucial to understand the alternatives that your supporters have for their time, money and attention
- Evaluate the brand messaging across 4-6 competitive and/or peer organizations
 - Learn from their brand best practices, and mistakes.
 - Identify any apparent norms, and ensure a unique brand strategy
- Combines a set of activities, including regular visits to competitive Web sites, attendance at events, asking your closest supporters what their competitive options are (and how they view those options)



Build a brand road map

- Context (why)
- Goals/Objectives
- Competitive landscape
- Audience insights
- Brand promise (internal rallying cry)
- Elevator pitch (external core message)
- Proof points (reason to believe that elevator pitch)
- Brand personality
- Message matrix (approved versions of messages to be used as secondary points when talking with audience segments)
- Product brand platform
- Guidelines and templates (what and how)



Sample: Umbrella brand platform

Mission	The Hull Lifesaving Museum, the museum of Boston Harbor Heritage, preserves the region's lifesaving tradition and maritime culture through collections, exhibits, experiential and interpretive education, research and service to others. The museum's open water rowing programs in Boston Harbor educate young people about themselves while developing a constituency that takes stewardship for its maritime history. The deeds, traditions, and ethics of nineteenth century coastal lifesavers--Skills, Courage, and Caring --are the foundation of the museum's exhibits and programs, and its underlying commitment to working to impact society, and individual lives, for the better.
Desired brand perception	Hull Lifesaving Museum is so much more than a museum. It's an essential part of the community, providing not only crucial lessons from our maritime heritage, but life changing, and life saving, experiences.
Elevator pitch	We are a diverse crew of individuals committed to changing lives, and sometimes saving them, by preserving and teaching maritime skills and lifesaving heritage.
Brand Personality	The team at Hull Lifesaving Museum truly epitomizes the lifesaving spirit, consistently demonstrating skills, courage and caring. It's an eclectic yet close-knit team who share a clarity of purpose and a sense of adventure...with no fear, no questions, and no turf wars. The overwhelming impression of the people and their places is a gracious one. It's an organization that draws people in and challenges them to draw the best out of themselves, while setting high expectations for shared values, collaboration and mutual respect.
Brand Proof Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• World-renowned open water rowing and experiential learning programs that teach adults and children the values and skills of 19th century lifesavers• An internationally recognized Maritime Apprentice Program that creates viable, entry-level employees for the vibrant Marine Trades industry in the Port of Boston.• An unparalleled collection of images, stories and other artifacts thoughtfully displayed and interpreted in the restored 19th century Point Allerton US Lifesaving Station - home of Joshua James and his crew of the most celebrated lifesavers in US history.• A passionate, seasoned team respected for their energy, commitment and proven results.• An individualized approach that respects the needs, expectations and skill level of each participant• An organization deeply rooted in the heritage of the Boston Harbor and the community of Hull, exposing hundreds of children and adults to the beauty of the sea, the power of teamwork and the value of lifelong physical fitness

Sample: Product brand platform

Name	Historic Properties	Collections	Archives and Publications	Educational Programs	Preservation Services
Description	35 house museums and landscapes across a variety of time periods, architectural styles and geographic locations	An extraordinarily broad collection of more than 100,000 objects of historical and aesthetic significance, family heirlooms presented in their original context, and accessible through the extensive study collection	More than one million items that document New England's architectural and cultural history. The archival collections include photographs, prints and engravings, architectural drawings, books, manuscripts, and ephemera.	A series of nationally recognized school and youth programs that use historical resources to reinforce and enrich student learning.	A program built on partnership between property owners and SPNEA, with a shared goal of protecting the unique character of historic properties throughout New England.
Supporting products and services	House and landscape tours Adult and family programs Special events Retail operations Function rentals Membership	Local, regional and national traveling exhibitions House museum exhibits Membership	Library and Archives services Historic New England magazine Books and exhibition catalogues Web site Membership	Museum field trips Programs to Go! Out of School Time Educators Resources Membership	Stewardship Program Homeowner services Membership
Positioning	The most comprehensive collection of homes and properties in New England, with a uniquely thorough and authentic approach to presenting the stories of those who lived there.	The largest assemblage of New England art and artifacts in the country.	The premier resource for researchers of New England history.	Programs that are fun, multi-disciplinary, and suited to a variety of learning styles. They allow young people to learn through a variety of approaches and include hands-on activities, role-playing, and cooperative learning.	As one of the first preservation restriction programs in the country, SPNEA's Stewardship Program is the model on which many other programs are based.
Promise	Experience, in a very real and intimate way, the lives and stories of the individuals and families who have made New England what it is today.	Develop a real understanding of the heritage of New England through the possessions of those who lived here.	Personally access a wealth of information on the people and events that defined the history of New England. Let that knowledge inform opinion and policy to shape the region's future.	Discover the entertaining side of history...the people and stories who have made your neighborhood, community, etc. what it is today. Learn how, by understanding our shared past, we can build a better future.	Let the experts show you how to preserve your historic property and architectural details for the enjoyment and education of current and future generations.

Sample: Audience message matrix

Audience	Description	Audience key concerns	Desired perceptions/behaviors	Our messages to them
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly driven, well-rounded individuals The ideal student “customer” is a visitor, and is not necessarily an art major...but they are willing to explore new things and new ways of thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing their ability to think more broadly Having an impact on their community Developing “real world” experiences Getting it all done Occasionally taking a break from getting it all done! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the role and value of DMCC within the context of the College To see DMCC as a valued resource across a variety of dimensions (and to utilize it regularly) To act as ambassadors for DMCC within their own spheres of influence 	<p>ALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are a valuable resource. We offer the unique opportunity to see real works of art in your own backyard. We can help bring new perspectives to your studies, and to your hectic life. We are accessible across a variety of channels (don’t be intimidated!) We are “safe haven”, extremely supportive of experimentation. We support experimentation and risk-taking. <p>FACULTY AND LEADERSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our collections, programs and staff can help enrich the academic experience, and help create better students. We share your high intellectual standards and can be a valuable partner in helping to differentiate the Wellesley College experience.
Faculty and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passionate, dedicated individuals engaged in the broader college community The ideal faculty/ staff “customer” is not limited to the art department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding opportunities to expose their students to real works of art and new ways of thinking Keeping their work and teaching relevant/fresh Occasionally taking a break themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the role and value of DMCC within the context of the College To have greater investment in, and ownership of, DMCC and what it offers To see DMCC as a valued resource and collaborator 	

Aligning the brand hierarchy



Behind every strong brand, there's a brand champion

- SOMEONE with the vision and clout to make it really happen...and keep it happening
- SOMEONE who owns the brand and cares passionately about its successful development and maintenance
- Probably not at the most senior leadership level (although they have to clearly sponsor and support the effort)

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Make brand matter

- A new brand (or an updated one) needs a kickoff
 - An event (staff meeting, offsite planning session, etc.)
 - A set of tools to take away (brand kit)
- Maintain through ongoing reinforcement and feedback
 - Brand training workshops
 - Integrate into board training, new hire orientation, etc.
- Build a communications program to tell the brand story
 - As simple or elaborate as your resources will allow
 - Incorporate internal and external communications
- Incorporate brand updates into staff meetings, leadership team meetings, internal and external communications, etc.



A quick sidebar on consistency

- Consistency = impact
- Think about it...if your communications are not consistent (look and feel, as well as tone and messaging), you are reintroducing yourself every single time
- There is room for variety, for versioning by type of product, by audience, etc.
 - But there has to be a master plan!
- Consistency is NOT boring for your stakeholders
 - One of the biggest mistakes organizations make?
They get bored with their brand and want to change it



Now tell your brand story...

An effective communications plan is:

- Targeted....you're not wasting money reaching people not in your target audience
- Holistic..."surrounding" that target with a variety of media likely to reach them
- Compelling....with a strong call to action
- Integrated....reflected across all your touchpoints
- Measurable...grounded in strategic goals and evaluated against those goals



Sample: Plan table of contents

- Brand blueprint (elevator pitch, message matrix, proof points, brand attributes, etc.)
- Target audience (who your audience segments are, their needs and expectations)
- Competitive landscape (a brief overview of alternative options available to your served populations and supporters)
- Communications goals (what you want your activities to accomplish)
- Communications strategies (the high level ways you plan to accomplish your goals)
- Communications tactics (specific activities you will engage in, with timing)
- Measurement and evaluation (how you plan to track results)
- Budget
- Editorial calendar
- Communications calendar



How do you know it worked?



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Integrate measurement, as well...

- Establish clear, agreed-upon success metrics up front (tangible and intangible)
- Tie the metrics to strategic goals
- Think broadly and creatively
 - Visitors/users
 - Event attendance
 - Brand tracking studies
 - Referral volume
 - Inbound inquiries
 - Hits to Web site
- Set reasonable timeframes, based on communications volume and timing
- Track what works and what doesn't, then refine as appropriate



At the very least...

- Talk the talk...consistent language and messaging
- Set the standards...brand style guidelines
- Walk the walk...make sure everyone delivers across every touchpoint (especially the further out you get from “home base”)

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Questions?



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Thank you!

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