

# Five key objectives of a healthcare rebrand

An objective-focused rebrand can be the difference between attaining growth in an increasingly competitive marketplace and simply treading water



**Where brands come true.**

We're a national design company on a mission to help brands transform what is — to what could be.

# Set your brand apart.

**For healthcare entities, being the closest hospital or clinic isn't good enough anymore. People will go out of their way for what they perceive to be "better" care – and that perception begins with your brand.**

For a brand weakened by time or vagueness of message, rebranding is a tool that can effectively communicate and illustrate every facet of a healthcare organization, from the standard of quality it symbolizes and the pride of the physicians and employees who believe in it, to the satisfaction of the patients who trust in it and the generosity of the community that supports it.

Rebranding a longstanding organization now under new leadership – or reorganized enterprise resulting from a merger or consolidation – is a bold, definitive action that signals change. It sets an organization on course to meet the challenges of a rapidly-evolving marketplace, and fosters loyalty by removing the "invisible" barriers and political boundaries of formerly separate organizations.

Additionally, an objective-focused rebrand is one of the best means available to collect a wealth of data-driven insight and use it to sculpt an identity that unites an organization in mission and purpose.

Here are five key objectives of a healthcare rebrand:

# OBJECTIVE NO.

## 01 ELEVATE AND LEVERAGE A COLLECTIVE BRAND

Fragmentation fosters confusion. Is ABC physicians' group part of ABC hospital? Then why do they have a different symbol? Is ABC hospital part of ABCD medical center? Then why are they across town from each other? And if they share a campus, why do they have different names? Different logos? Can my doctor practice there?

To the consumer, a shared entity that has four different names, three logos and six taglines isn't sharing anything at all. And, if this is the case with your healthcare enterprise, even the doctors and staff may be confused. Or worse, feel as though they are in competition with each other rather than working toward the same goals.

How do you unite several hundred (or several thousand) people to fulfill one vision, one purpose?

### Rebrand.

An effective rebrand simplifies complexity and leverages a cohesive design across all touchpoints – and there can be hundreds, perhaps thousands. A rebrand will help you create a connection, encourage collaboration and educate the community.

**Designing a reliable pattern of visuals enables you to promote a reliable pattern of behavior.**

If you have a multifaceted healthcare group, a rebrand can clarify individual purpose within the organization by providing the substantive differentiation that links and highlights each unique aspect. For example, a healthcare entity with four elements: immediate care (its hospital), education (its college), outreach (its clinics) and research (its laboratories and institutes) can be united by a logo, symbol, typeface, color palate and tagline and/or brand promise.

Unifying these elements and the people they represent with a strong, compelling rebrand will elevate and leverage the collective brand in the eyes and minds of its audience.

# OBJECTIVE NO.

## DRIVE PATIENT VOLUME TO KEY SERVICES

The effort to streamline is constant and pressing, to do more with less and meet the ever-changing requirements of insurance companies and the federal government's regulations. But in that push, promoting the qualities that distinguish the care you provide can become muddled in the minds of your audience. The effort to excel is still there; your people live it every day. But to excel at what? Is orthopaedics your specialty? Oncology? Neurology? Urology? Pediatrics? Transplantation? Rehabilitation?

### **If the public is uncertain what you're good at, a rebrand will provide that clarity in the form of brand positioning.**

Like an arrow aimed at a target's center, brand positioning means your collective brand activity produces a singular positive result. It's what you want the consumer to think of first. Immediately. It's an image they will recognize anywhere. Like the Target stores' symbolic red bull's eye, it can mean only one thing. One place. One brand. My doctor thinks I may have cancer? Well, there's only one place to go for care. Positioning is the quality of a brand that makes it iconic. It is focus.

Brand positioning acts as a funnel to drive patient volume to key services by first identifying those services and, second, by recognizing those services as the best available. Did your organization earn accreditation? A higher level of designation than your competition? Recognition from U.S. News & World Report? J.D. Power and Associates? Does anyone beyond your building know? Tell the world. And tell it why. We are recognized by our peers for this service and this service and this specialty. And we are proud.

Brand positioning creates a place in the market that only your brand can occupy. It won't eliminate your competitors. It will set you apart. And when it works, when it is truly distinctive, it places you ahead of them. It is the reason customers come to you and keep coming back. It's the offer you make and the promise you fulfill all rolled into one concept.

If your brand isn't positioning you as the best at what you do, a rebrand will.

# OBJECTIVE NO.

## 03 IMPROVE METHODS TO LINK PATIENTS AND SERVICES

Consolidation, relocation and mergers have turned once easy-to-navigate hospitals into mammoth complexes complete with acres of parking and mazes of walkways. How can you present an image of comfort and accessibility when all the public sees is the imposing behemoth you've become?

Put yourself in your patients' shoes and make it easier for them to get where they're going. The best ways to link patients with services is visually and electronically.

A rebrand will examine every web page, app and portal to be certain the path to services is as short and as easy as it can be.

Whether it is finding a doctor, making an appointment, tracking an account or paying a bill, empower your patients with technology that is logical and simple to navigate. The less frustration, the greater the satisfaction.

When patients come to your facilities, make their visit equally simple to navigate. Services like valet parking, signage that is clear and consistent, a staff that looks for people who seem lost and is eager to set them in the right direction are elements of the white-glove treatment that enhances a visitor's experience. For so many of your patients, the anxiety of coming to a hospital or a clinic can be overwhelming. Work to eliminate stress. Handing them a map won't do it. Lending them a hand will.

# OBJECTIVE NO.

## REINFORCE RELEVANCE AND REPUTATION

A proud history is something to be noted and celebrated. But if your brand looks like it belongs in a museum, the public will have the impression you should be there with it.

Brands that you see in the rearview mirror are doomed to stay there and eventually fade from view – unless you take action to reinvigorate them. Not reinvent. Revive. Brands that have gone stale may still have some life left in them. They are like a heart that will function if only we jolt it back to a strong rhythm. Especially if a good brand strategist can tap into the legacy, the history that once gave the brand in question prominence and market share.

A rebrand will carry over elements that evoke your historically strong foundation while also emphasizing your reputation in the community and the medical world. Are you the only healthcare provider in the region with a specific service or expertise? Have you partnered with nationally-recognized medical entities on research, procedures or techniques? These are the factors that erase the tarnish from an aging brand and position it for a bright future.

In a rebrand, not every element of a current brand needs to be completely discarded. Take a look in that rearview mirror and decide what elements you like. A color? A word or two? An image? Then take a good hard look ahead. And don't forget to listen to what your patients – your consumers – are saying about your brand. Then use what you've put together to reestablish your relevance for not only today but also for tomorrow.

A great rebrand will communicate the reputation you've worked so hard to earn and remind people why you are the best choice they can make.



# OBJECTIVE NO.

# 05 EMPOWER TRANSITIONAL LEADERSHIP

**Systemic institutional rebranding – when used as directional positioning and culture motivation – can be one of the most effective tools available to a transformational leader. It can be the power, opportunity and the means to unify a healthcare entity.**

There are so many “what ifs?” that accompany transformational leadership. Uncertainty not only detracts from productivity, it also has an impact on morale. Rumors, misconceptions and incorrect information can be extremely damaging to an organization if allowed to spread uncontrolled.

A rebrand signals change more than any other single communications tool for a new leader. It proclaims strength, direction, vision and focus. Like a spring rainstorm, a rebrand clears the sky of dark rumor clouds and washes away misinformation, clearing the pathway to a fresh, hope-filled future.

Being present when a new leader unveils a striking rebrand is like witnessing a home run in the bottom of the ninth at Game Seven of the World Series. Seeing an audience go from apprehension and uncertainty to full-throttle enthusiasm is electrifying.

Because rebranding is much more than changing the signs on some buildings.

It's about leading the people inside those buildings in a new direction – together with the people they serve.

# Considering a rebrand?

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