

# Five things your healthcare brand should be

Saying the same thing as everyone else will never distinguish your healthcare organization from your competitors. Don't be obvious. Be different.



**Where brands come true.**

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

# Be Different.

Consumers want one thing when they go to a dry cleaner: clean clothes. And, when they go to a physicians' clinic, hospital or medical center, they also want one thing: to get better. Whether it is physical therapy or treatment for a life-threatening disease, people – patients and their families – want to get better. So, how does your brand communicate that you are better than your competitors at getting people better?

## **Don't be obvious.**

Every healthcare entity on the planet can say it is the best place for medical care. It is very subjective and, after all, what most people want to hear. In some cases, particularly concerning the world-renowned medical powerhouses, there are rankings that place one entity at the top in specific fields of care. They can refer to this report or that publication and proclaim, "See? We are Number One in (fill in the blank)."

What about the thousands of other healthcare entities that are not Number One? How do their brands communicate that a hospital and its caregivers don't have to be ranked first on a list in order to expertly treat disease, heal wounds and instill hope?

**We know five ways a strong brand can help deliver that message.**

# BE unique

Whether there are 10 hospitals in your city or only two, none shares your history. That history, literally, the last five letters of the word, is “story.” And your story, from admitting your very first patient to where you are today, is equity. Brand equity. As the foundation for your brand, historical equity is the difference between building blocks formed from clay and those cut from granite. It is strength. The more vibrant your history, the stronger and more valuable your brand equity.

What sets you apart? Is it location? Affiliation? Do you have the only certified cancer care center in the region? A Level I trauma center? How about your nursing care? Clinical care? Rehabilitation? Are you a teaching hospital? All or a combination of these factors provide a uniqueness that increases brand equity. It enriches your story. It is the mortar that binds past, present and your vision for the years to come.

If your organization has recently merged with a regional or national health system, you still have a story that is yours. A new name does not wipe away history. It is an opportunity to channel it into an even greater story.

People know the blue street sign with the large white “H” designates a hospital. But that sign only tells people where a hospital is. It does not tell your hospital’s story. That is up to you and your brand. You can communicate it across a variety of media and methods, but it has to be your story, expressed in a way that captures and capitalizes upon your unique qualities.

# BE focused

A point of convergence. The clarity of an image. The center of interest. The most important information being presented. Like an arrow aimed at a target's center, your brand identity aims for recognition. It is what you want the public to think every time people experience your brand. Not a random collection of thoughts. One thought. One place. One brand.

What can provide that recognition? Focus.

Focus makes a brand important and enduring. It is your promise. Heart care? Well, that is the specialty at Hospital ABC. Cancer care? Hospital DEF won all those awards. Why on Earth would you want to go anywhere else?

The most successful rebranding begins with definition and brings clarity through focus. Focus creates a place in the market that only your brand can occupy. Distinctive. Recognizable.

Focus will not eliminate your competition.  
But it will set you apart.

**One place. One brand. Yours.**

# BE relevant

You were the region's first hospital with a Newborn Intensive Care Unit. Impressive. But, how long ago was that? How many NICUs are there now?

## What makes you relevant today?

At a time when healthcare regulations and policies are juggled by politicians, there is increasing emphasis on balancing the quality of care and the cost of its delivery. Outcomes determine cost effectiveness. Personalized care and targeted therapies are coupled to increase survivability. Healthcare itself has been pushed beyond medical care and healing to preventive care and wellness.

How has your organization responded? Do you not only treat the community you serve but also educate its most vulnerable members? Do you practice what you teach? Have your efforts led to the reduction of medical conditions such as obesity, or the resulting diseases such as high blood pressure or diabetes?

**Relevancy is defined as being meaningful in today's society or culture. Taking a proactive approach to healthcare will not put hospitals out of business. It will make them more meaningful for society today and tomorrow. Vaccines that prevent the flu do not result in empty hospital beds, they free those beds for patients whose complex conditions require a multidisciplinary team of specialists. Your team of specialists.**

Being innovative is not limited to technologies or treatments. Ideas that improve the health of target groups or entire communities also increase a healthcare organization's value and solidify its place in the community. After all, any hospital emergency department can set a broken arm. But the healthcare system that works with architects to design a skate park that limits the risk of broken bones and other injuries has the kind of vision that will be relevant for generations to come.

# BE personal

Not so long ago, hospitals were not so quick to tout “the patient experience.” That is because patients did not have many positive things to say. The food was bland or worse. The rooms were cold, clinical and noisy. There was a television on the wall that had five channels to choose from, four of which were blizzards of static. Hospitals were “the worst place in the world to get any rest.”

Not today. Hospitals and medical centers have well-trained personal liaisons who act as medical concierges, navigating complexities, answering questions and scheduling appointments to conveniently align. They offer valet parking, soft robes and comfy slippers. Patients receive individualized attention, from targeted treatments down to customized menus. And the medical teams do more than diagnose and treat, they involve the patients and their families in every step of the decision-making process.

The patient experience is being personalized and humanized, rapidly moving away from sterile linoleum and white lab coats to the white glove treatment of fine hotels. But, while hospitals have changed, many of their brands have not.

## It is time for brands to get personal.

Weave the new patient experience into a uniquely personalized brand identity. Connect on an emotional level and on a human level. Appeal to every individual. You want the world to know that you go beyond providing medical care. You care.

**Rebranding can transform a sterile, anonymous image into an identity that comforts like a lifelong friend. To succeed, your brand and every component, from advertisements to websites, must treat each patient, potential patient and family member as a person. The most important person you will treat today.**

# BE yourself

**Unless you are the Mayo Clinic, you cannot be the Mayo Clinic. Do not try to force your brand to be something that you are not.**

Every CEO no matter the industry knows the value of their organization is more than buildings, equipment and land. There are two assets whose worth should not be underestimated. One is your people. The second is your reputation.

Buildings provide distinctive style and beauty but people produce distinction. A scalpel in the hand of a carpenter will still make an incision, but in the hand of a trained surgeon, it will save many lives. Your medical staff's knowledge, experience, skills and dedication are key to establishing your services among the best in the city, region or nation. Other facilities may have the same equipment, but no one else has your people. Every person you employ is an advocate and a champion for your reputation and your brand.




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Successful rebranding begins with discovery.  
One of the best ways to discover who you are is  
to determine your archetype.

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Every brand has an archetype – a model that describes its foundational strengths. Are you a Hero or a Sage? An Innovator or a Visionary? Identifying the core principles that drive your organization will help determine your archetype and create a brand that truly represents who you are. Because, if organizations don't understand what they represent, they cannot recognize what best represents them.

Rebranding is about more than market share. It is about recognition, renewed enthusiasm, respect, loyalty and communicating authenticity.



**To truly represent who  
you are and your unique  
pledge to the community  
you serve, the most  
successful Rebrand  
requires a mirror, not a  
magic wand.**

Rebranding  
is the most  
effective way  
for leaders  
to signal  
significant  
change.

# Considering a rebrand?

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