

# Culture is the heart of a healthcare brand

For your brand to thrive, it needs to be nurtured by a culture that embraces your organization's values and shares its vision



**Where brands come true.**

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

# Separate and unequal

If you were asked to name the most important aspects of a healthcare brand, what are the first few words that come to mind? Is one of them, “people?” If not, it should have been. The human element is what infuses a brand with energy.

People who believe in a brand become its advocates.

**They give it relevance.  
They help it come alive.**

You can have the most phenomenal logo, theme, color scheme, tagline, mission statement and marketing campaign in the universe, but if you don’t have people who live your brand, you might as well shove it all into a dumpster. Because, when they act together and consistently, when they become the collective unit known as your organization’s culture, people elevate a brand from mediocre to meaningful.

Of all the parts that make up a successful organization, culture is one of the most integral elements, and, for many healthcare entities, the most elusive. Part of the problem is historical. The healthcare industry has traditionally been defined by its professional silos. Physicians in this silo. Nurses in this silo. Researchers isolated in a different one, and therapists working in another. Medical people separated by their skills and the roles they play without understanding the impact their actions have on the organization as a whole.

There was a time when hospitals furthered these distinctions to the point of providing a “doctors’ lounge” and, somewhere down the hall or on another floor, a separate “nurses’ lounge.” Separate. And unequal.

This division based on specialty, skill and function did little to help the patients. Independence leads to isolation, and while isolation is good for disease, it is extremely detrimental for a healthcare organization and the people it serves. Communication came through notes scribbled into a chart. Units operated separately. Collaboration was nonexistent. There was no incentive to work together. Each group formed its own culture.

Through the years, as the healthcare industry evolved, words were introduced that prompted a change in thinking. “Organization.” “System.” “Medical center.” Words and concepts that began to erase the lines separating doctors, nurses, specialists, caregivers, technicians, social workers and scientists. And, as the lines disappeared, these groups were encouraged to become part of a shared culture. Sometimes the encouragement succeeded. Sometimes it didn’t. And, when it failed, quite often it was because, as these separate groups looked around, nothing had really changed. There was no unifying factor. No glue to join people together.

**Enter the rebrand.**

# Transformation

The best way to invigorate and unify a healthcare organization's culture is through rebranding. The dismantling of traditional silos brings care and people together, sparks collaboration, generates innovative treatments, fuels discovery and improves outcomes. Unification of purpose and mission creates pride across an organization, and that internal pride, when it carries over into the broader community, translates into hope and trust. A message that powerful demands an equally powerful delivery.

Rebranding is that vehicle.

**Rebranding communicates a positive transformation while building upon history and tradition. It illustrates a new path and vision while appealing to its most loyal supporters. A rebrand serves as the focal point to guide an organization through a transformational period. A rebrand can rejuvenate the spirit within the organization by bonding various factions in a shared course and purpose. It is a bulldozer for the silos.**

**Reassurance. Confidence.  
Commitment. Pride. Unity.**

**Rebranding is a powerful tool. In the right hands, it can be used to create the culture an organization needs to take it forward.**

# The shape of a culture

What kind of culture do you want? A culture of patient safety?  
A culture of openness and honesty? A culture of innovation?  
A culture of action? A culture of collaboration?

Here's the cool thing about culture. You don't have to pick just one. If you look at what a culture is, the behavioral norms and shared values that are the foundation of your organization, you would realize that culture is a combination of who, how and why. Who makes up your organization? How do they accomplish their work? Why do they do it? There is no one answer. Culture is defined both by its diversity and by its similarities.

For example, though the basics are rooted in a series of steps, how you care for a patient is likely different for each patient (at least, it should be). The same is true for the people who deliver that care. No one doctor or nurse is solely responsible for treatment. It is provided by a team. And that team should share a culture, whether it is one of patient safety, innovation or collaboration.

In order for a culture change to succeed, the change process must consider the different parts – the people – and the various roles they play. You can't fit a square peg into a round hole. But if you see a healthcare organization for what it is – a vast collection of square pegs and round pegs and triangles and round holes and square openings and diamond shapes, you will understand that for a culture to be accepted by all of the parts, all the parts have to be accepted for what they are.

**They have different roles  
– but each is equally  
important when it comes  
to the culture, and success,  
of your organization.**

# The gift of buy-in

Hate change? A lot of people say they do.

It isn't so much that people don't like change. They don't like being changed. They don't like being forced into something they don't understand. That is why, for a rebrand to be successful in shaping a supportive culture, creating buy-in is essential.

It can be as simple as a new pair of scrubs.

Wearing scrubs is like staying in your pajamas all day long. They're comfortable. They eliminate the daily "what do I wear?" question. In many healthcare environments, their colors, patterns and designs signal a certain area of care or level of expertise. They create a casual commonality.

**Then, along comes a rebrand, and with it a new name and logo. That means new lab coats. New stationery. New signage. And, new scrubs. Out with the old. Forced to buy all new. The first thought for people in your organization is not the new culture behind the change. They see another hassle. In an instant, that can create opposition.**

The culture you have today wasn't created overnight. Likewise, the culture you hope to create won't come about with the flick of a switch or the unveiling of a new logo. Your culture change will take time. But you can help ensure its acceptance by creating buy-in. The people in your organization want to know, "What's in it for me?" You can start by explaining the new roles, responsibilities and opportunities that a merger, expansion or new vision will create.

## Or, you can start with a gift.

Consider the excitement that has been building during the course of your rebrand. Everyone is talking about what it means to them. They are guessing at the organization's new name, its direction, its leadership – and how it affects them. The moment the rebrand is unveiled is the moment to create buy-in, and it can be sparked by a reward.

**Knowing the significant financial investment you've made in the rebrand, and how important its success is, it is time to make an investment in your people. Tap into the excitement of the new identity and what it symbolizes by presenting each member of your organization a gift bag. In it, place a water bottle, a coffee mug, a certificate for a discount on new work clothing, maybe a fleece top – and a new set of scrubs – each adorned with the organization's new logo. In the same instant they are excited by the new brand, they are given something new to use and wear. Something they didn't have to immediately go out and purchase. They are enthused – and grateful. And, they feel a part of a new team. One team. A new culture. It says so right here, on my new scrubs.**

**Culture change won't take place overnight. But providing the incentive of a reward is a very good place to start.**

# Two-way culture

Rebranding is a process. It begins with discovery and culminates in the much-anticipated reveal of a new vision expressed by an identity, a logo, a symbol, a tagline – and a culture. And while those changes appear to take place internally, a change in culture must be expressed and accepted externally as well.

Some healthcare organizations have historically strong cultures in place. They know their mission and have a clear vision for the future. They have become a part of a community. Their logo and tagline are well-recognized and accepted. Then, suddenly and without warning to the community they serve, the ground quakes and whether through purchase or merger, they are swallowed up by another organization. The people who have come to rely on “Organization ABC” for care through two generations now must face the uncertainty of “Organization XYZ.” Their healthcare is important to them, as is the familiarity with the organization that they rely on for that care. How do you reassure them it will all be OK?

## Share.

Share with the community the reasons behind the change. Share the goals and aspirations of the new vision. Share the improvements and opportunities, whether it's more clinics, better accessibility, newer equipment or the revolutionary treatments that will be made available to them. Most of all, share the culture behind the change. No one wants to make things worse. No one wants to make things more difficult. A better facility, better care, better treatment – built upon everything you've come to know and rely upon. It is all still here. So are the people you have come to trust.

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An organization's culture can be seen and felt and shared. When it is segmented by silos and factions, it sends a negative vibe that ripples out into the community. But, when it is a culture of unity, it instills pride internally and confidence externally.

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**That is a change  
for the better.**

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

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