

# DEFINING YOUR SCHOOL'S BRAND & SELECTING A PARTNER TO HELP

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JANUARY 22, 2020

Lisa Nickerson,  
Assistant VP  
Marketing,  
Communications &  
Public Relations

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- Has led brand and communications strategy for non-profit, Fortune 500 and agency organizations for over 30 years
- Leads brand initiatives and marketing/PR at Kennedy Krieger Institute
- Education in advertising, management and leadership
- Parent of child with special needs

Erika Mayerle, VP,  
Account Director

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- Helping brands win for nearly 15 years
- Largely focused on healthcare vertical
- Agency experience includes Havas San Francisco, FCB New York, and others
- Now based in Minneapolis, MN at advertising agency, Preston Kelly
- Mother taught special ed. for 30+ years

# What's most motivating about your attributes?



PERFORMANCE

What's so good about what you do?  
What's so good about how you do it?  
What makes you so much good-er  
than the competition?



PERSONALITY

What feels so good about you?  
What's so good about your  
people and culture?



PURPOSE

What good do you do for the world?  
Why would good people love you?  
How does your good work get expressed?



What brought you here today and what are you hoping to get out of this session?

# Agenda: what we'll cover today

- Background
- What is a brand?
- Characteristics of strong brands
- Why having a strong brand matters
- How to evaluate & build a strong brand
- Working with a partner
- Wrap up

# A LITTLE BACKGROUND

14,990,000,000

# The rise of CPG changed everything

In the 19th century, companies started putting their name/label on products as a way to DIFFERENTIATE.

People couldn't reach for a coke if they couldn't identify it from other caramel-flavored fizzy drinks.

Brand = non-generic name for a product



# Eventually modern-day marketing was born

But as we know, brands are more than *just* names.



So, what is a brand?



# For many, brand assets come to mind

Brand assets help us identify a brand or allow us to do a “quick read” of the product or service.

- Logo
- Tagline
- Words and language
- Colors
- Imagery
- Music
- Personality

# Essentially, a brand represents a set of expectations

It's all the things that impact how your organization is perceived:

- Employees
- Company culture
- Services
- Buildings
- And more

Your brand is ALL of the above and MORE.



“...the intangible sum of a product’s attributes.” – David Ogilvy

# The truth

Your “brand” is what your prospect *thinks* of when they hear your brand name.

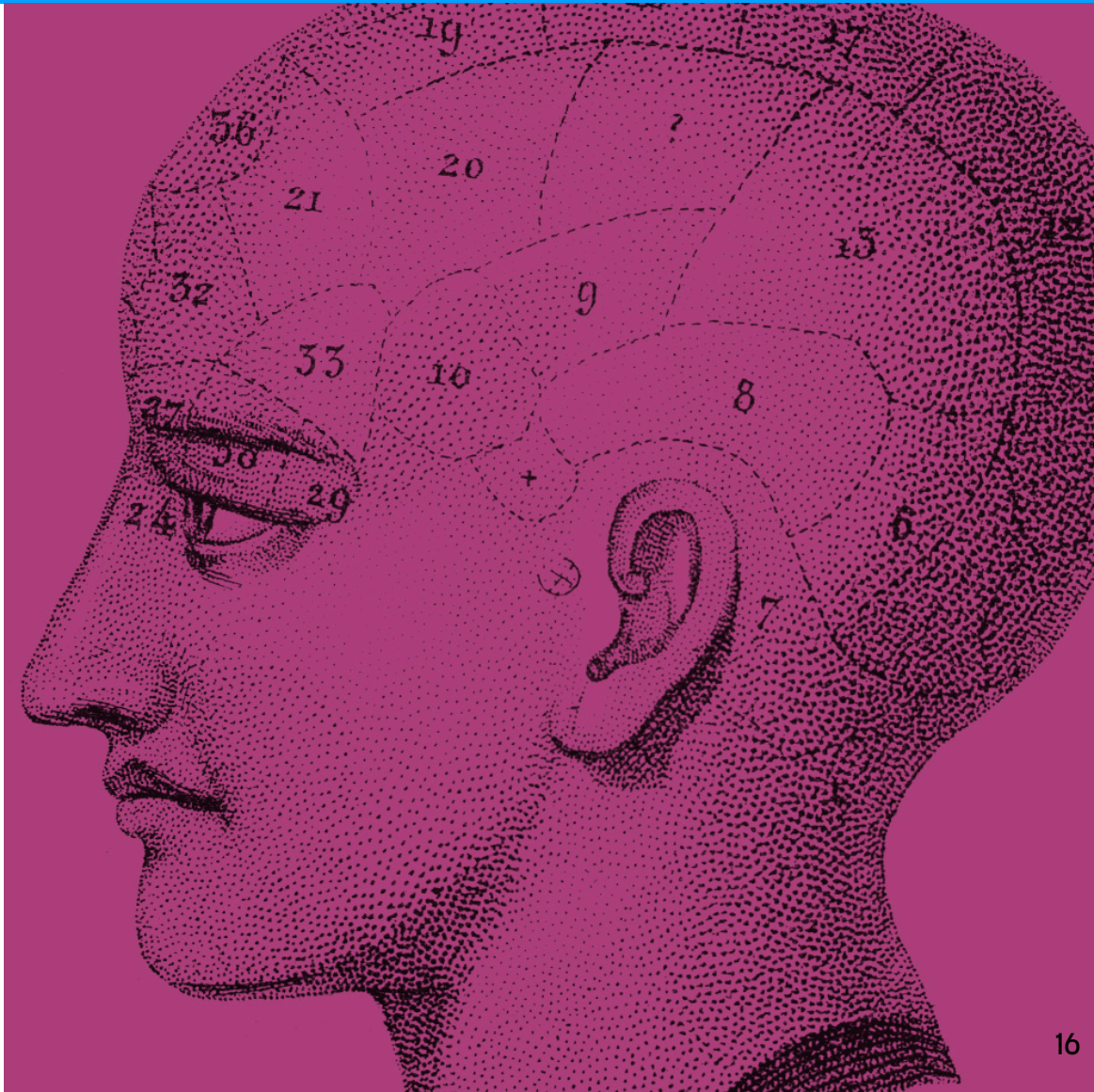
It’s everything the public *thinks* it knows about your offering—factual and emotional.

Your brand NAME exists objectively; people can see it. It’s fixed. But your brand exists only in someone’s mind.

# The bottom line

A brand is the way in which a company, organization, or individual is perceived by those who experience it.

Simply put, brands are perceptions.



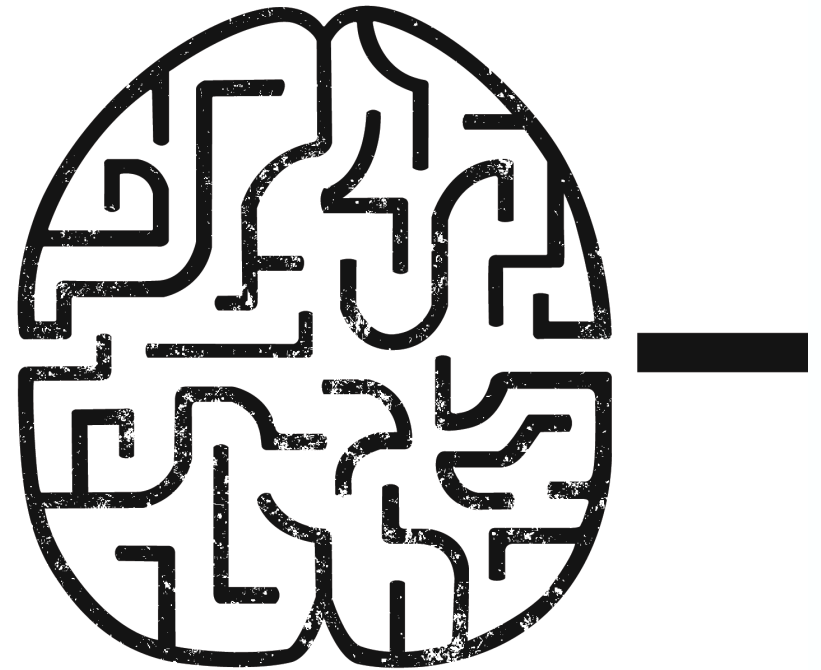




# And in a complex world, brands are a shortcut

They help consumers understand who you are and the value you provide

**SHORTCUT**  
**THROUGH THE**  
**BRAIN**





# A brand isn't just...

- ✓ A logo and name
- ✓ A luxury
- ✓ One-sized fits all
- ✓ The marketing team's responsibility
- ✓ One and done

It's a entity that must be nurtured, protected and cultivated.

# Your school's brand is a powerful force

Your brand can distinguish it from other schools.

It can remind students, parents, government officials, staff and the community of your goals, build connections and communicate perceived value, while creating a sense of ownership, pride, community and preference.

At its worst, your brand can confuse or remind constituents of any negative associations, events, or experiences.

Has anyone here ever had something bad happen at your school or organization? Did it impact your brand?

The strength of your brand is your insulation.

# Now, let's think of some brands

Name a brand you trust. Why?

Name a brand that confuses you. Why?

The best brands are insistent, consistent and persistent.

And, aspirational.

What do you think your brand communicates about your organization? What do you want it to communicate?

# Market research can provide a good starting point

- Objective learning from your constituents and prospects
- Overcomes inside opinions with facts
- Helps define what matters to your customers
- Helps identify what needs to be reinforced and corrected
- Gives you a perception benchmark from which to start
- Can be repeated later to assess improvement



# CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG BRANDS

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# Focus on their audience

Strong brands think about what the people they serve want and how they want to experience “it.”



Who is your target? Write it down and think about them first and foremost as you work to refine your brand.

# Have a defined and articulated mission

Your mission should direct everything you say and everything you do.

Until you have this, you can't create content that will support it in a meaningful way.



Can you state your brand mission in 30 seconds or less?

# Know their competition

Differentiate yourself in positive ways from your competitors; you can do this with messages that resonate.



Is what you are saying about your school something that others could say, too?

# Understand their unique value/benefits

Identify what will make your organization unique in the eyes of your audience.





How would you describe your USP (unique selling proposition)?

# Employ the right “voice”

Choosing the right tone is important in connecting with your audience.



How would you describe your voice? Are you consistent?

# Tell stories

Your audience comes to know who you are, what you offer, and why they should care through the stories you tell.

**STORIES ARE MEMORABLE  
STORIES TRAVEL FARTHER  
STORIES INSPIRE ACTION**

What's your story?

# Appreciate the importance of strong visuals/language

Your logo/tagline reflect and reinforce who your organization is and what it stands for.

The logo alone can promote an organization's personality, or the name itself can be a logo. Either way, make sure yours tells a story.



What do you think your logo says about you?

# HAVING A STRONG BRAND MATTERS

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# What difference does having a strong brand make?

Brands give consumers a clear image of the company and what it stands for, potentially changing the way consumers think of you.

A strong brand impacts pricing, buying, and purchase considerations.

It can make your school shine and stand out from competitors, and makes a strong impression in the community.

# Strong brands drive preference

Over half of consumers buy or engage with brands that are familiar and/or that have been recommended by others they trust.

A recognizable and loved brand is one of the most valuable assets a company or organization can own.

**59%**

of consumers prefer to buy new products from brands familiar to them

# Brands can influence how consumers feel

Customers make decisions based on how they feel, not just what a company offers

- The Coke brand = happiness/joy
- Instead of telling you how good the product is, the brand invests in creating an idea of what life is like with it
- People choose Coke over Pepsi because they feel more *connected* to the company



*Pepsi regularly beats Coke in blind taste tests, but once people know what they're drinking, they choose Coke over Pepsi.*

# A strong brand allows you to compete on more than price

Our ability to rationally weigh the pros and cons of buying a particular item has boundaries — and brands know it.

This is especially true when there's information overload - we go to the familiar and trusted.



*The company with a stronger brand will win any sale, even if they're more expensive.*

Think about a brand you pay more for...why?

# Having a strong brand is also important for schools

You need a strong brand to build influence and trust.

When students and parents walk through the door, you want them to instantly “get” your brand. You won’t be set apart or seen as a driving force in your community without one.

Competing in a world of choice requires a powerful brand and knowing what you stand for.

Branding is about winning the heart. It is an intangible.  
A feeling. An emotion.

# You can create emotion and a feeling of belonging

A brand is basically about belonging. We all want to belong, and when we identify with a brand, we belong to that tribe.

Once done, everyone in your school community will rally around your new school brand, helping you connect and engage.



# Brands are also important *inside* an organization

A brand can be a powerful and enthusiastic leadership and management instrument.

They can help attract the right employees.

Further, they are beacons for all relevant decisions. In ever more complex environments, they provide logical orientation.

# HOW TO EVALUATE YOUR BRAND

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It doesn't hurt to check the strength of your brand,  
but it could hurt if you don't.

# Questions to evaluate your brand

Do you have a distinct & differentiating positioning?

Does your message cut through the clutter & resonate?

Do you deliver on a clear brand promise?

Do you communicate in a clear voice?

Do you have a clear visual identity?

If you answered no to any of these questions, your brand might need a check-up.

# Successful brands share these characteristics

- ✓ Competitive: go above and beyond to exceed
- ✓ Distinct: give customers a clear reason to choose them
- ✓ Passionate: apply authentic energy and enthusiasm
- ✓ Constant: consistent with message and image
- ✓ Inspired: led by an impactful leader
- ✓ Visible: get their message out there
- ✓ Customer: relevant, know their audience

# HOW TO BUILD A STRONG BRAND?

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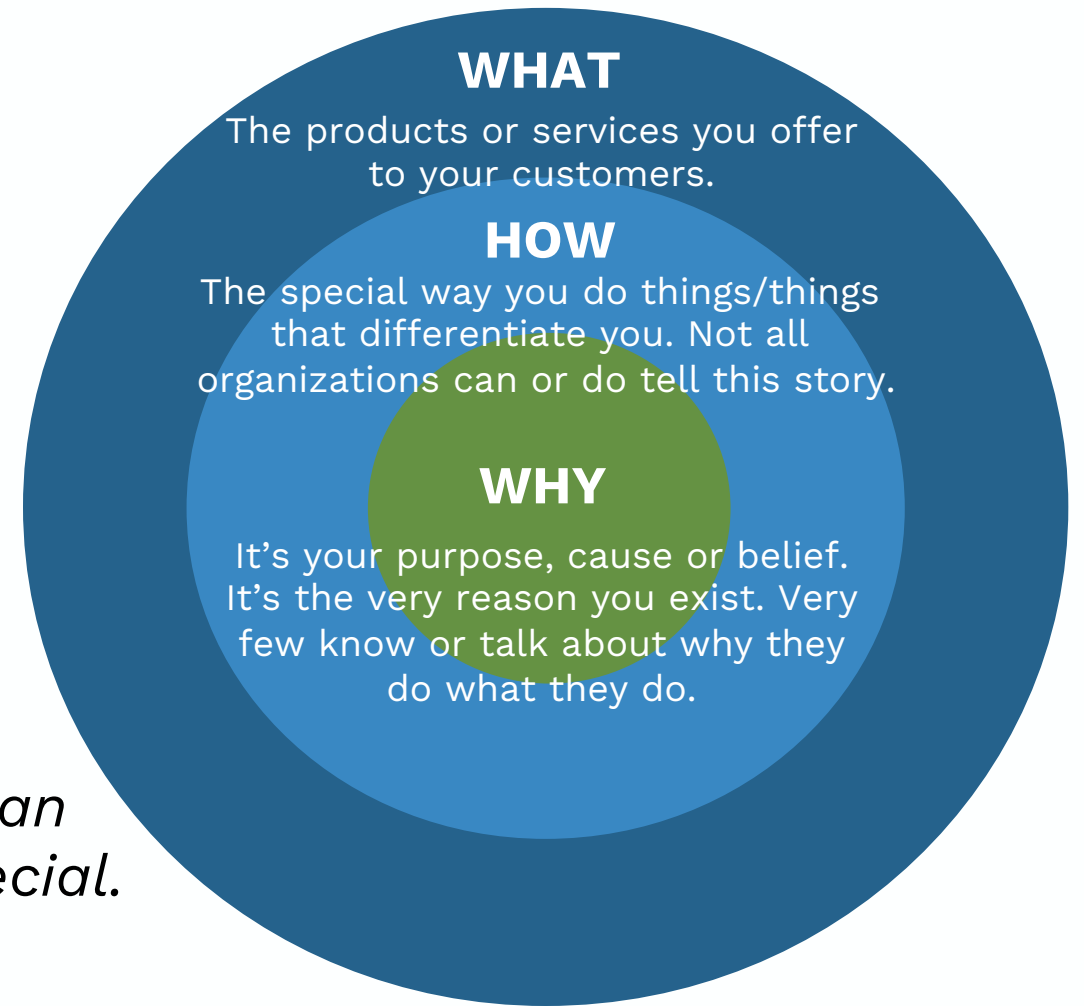
Building a brand is definitely a process, but the effort will result in long-term relationships, sales, projects, referrals, and advocacy.



# Step 1: Define your brand purpose

- Why does your company exist?
- What differentiates you?
- What's the problem you solve?
- Why should people care?

## The Golden Circle



*Find what distinguishes you; the golden circle can help you articulate what makes your school special.*

## Step 2: Research your competitors

Examine how your competitors are presenting themselves and what they're emphasizing to make emotional connections with current and potential students.

Then outline what makes you unique:

- Focus on the qualities/benefits that make your school unique.
- Give your target (students, parents, community) a reason to choose you over others.

# What can you uniquely own?

This will help you map out where you can play relative to competitors

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do you do well?</li><li>• What unique resources can you draw on?</li><li>• What do others see as your strengths?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What could you improve?</li><li>• Where do you have fewer resources than others?</li><li>• What are others likely to see as a weakness?</li></ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What opportunities are open to you?</li><li>• What trends could you take advantage of?</li><li>• How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What threats could harm you?</li><li>• What is your competition doing?</li><li>• What threats do your weaknesses expose you to?</li></ul>

# SWOT – what stands out about you?

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

# Competitive audit – what are the whitespace opportunities?

Competitor	Message & Visuals	Quality of Products or Services	Review & Mentions	Marketing Efforts

# Step 3: Define & understand your audience

- Keep in mind who exactly you're trying to reach.
- Tailor your mission/message.
  - This will help you deliver on their needs and resonate in a more meaningful way.

## Key characteristics:

- Age
- Gender
- Location
- Income
- Education level

# Elizabeth, 35 years old (Chief Household Officer)

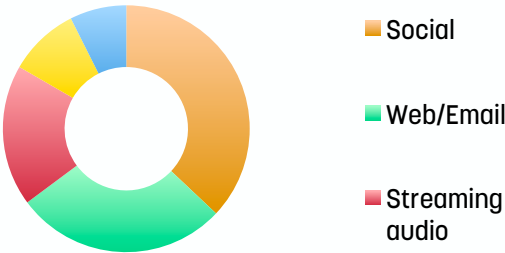


"I'll buy organic and natural foods, for my family, if I see value in the higher cost."

Work: Substitute teacher  
Family: Married with 2 kids (8 and 5 years old)  
Education: Bachelor's degree  
Location: Metro/suburban household  
Dual-Income HH: \$110,000

"I'm the primary decision-maker when it comes to shopping for groceries for my family. When cooking meals, I try to pay attention to nutrition and prefer to use fresh food. I love reading and talk to friends about food trends and new products. It's not easy to truly know if certain brands are better than others. However, I do know, if a company cares about animal welfare and promotes healthy-eating I'm more likely to buy their products."

Preferred Channels



Goal: Find healthy food choices my family likes.

Values: Empathy Loyalty Curiosity	Traits: Nurturing Generous Cost-conscious	Passions: Family Fitness Food
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Brand Relationships

- Amazon
- Meijer
- Fitbit
- Walgreens

Media Influencers

- Instagram, Pinterest
- Lifestyle blogs
- Pandora, Spotify
- Taste of Home

## Step 4: Establish your mission

This should define your purpose for existing, informing every other aspect of your brand building efforts.

Your mission declares the purpose of your organization to your audience.

It's your roadmap intended to clarify the "what," "who," and "why" of a company.



# Crafting your mission

Generally it has three parts:

- Description of the organization or the vision
- Function / core values
- Goals & objectives

Keep it short, make sure it has longevity, and ask your employees for feedback.

# Step 6: Form your unique voice

Choose a brand voice that will help you better connect with your audience and apply it consistently across your content.

Voice characteristic	Description	Do	Don't
Passionate	We're passionate about changing the way the world works.	Use strong verbs Be champions for (industry) Be cheerleaders	Be lukewarm, wishy-washy Use passive voice
Quirky	We're not afraid to challenge the status quo and be ourselves.	Use unexpected examples Take the contrarian viewpoint Express yourself	Use too much slang or too many obscure references Use jargon, overplayed examples Lose sight of the audience and core message
<i>Irreverent</i> (secondary characteristic of quirky)	We take our product seriously; we don't take ourselves seriously.	Be playful Use colorful illustrations or examples	Be too casual Use too many obscure, pop-culture examples
Authentic	We're going to give you the tools and insight you need to make your job easier. That may not always be through our product.	Be honest and direct Own any issues or mistakes, and show how you will address them Stick to your word	Use marketing jargon or superlatives Overpromise Oversell the product's capabilities

# Brand voice chart

Come up with a few words that describe your school as if it were a person

Voice characteristic	Description	Do	Don't
Passionate	We're passionate about changing education in this country.	Use strong verbs Be confident Act like an advocate	Be lukewarm or wishy-washy

## Step 7: Define your brand personality

A brand personality is a set of human characteristics that are attributed to a brand. This helps consumers better relate to you.

Your school is different from every other one. Make sure this is reflected in your brand personality.

# Brand personality spectrum

Where is your school or organization on this spectrum?

Personable and friendly \_\_\_\_\_ Corporate, professional  
Spontaneous, high energy \_\_\_\_\_ Careful thinking, planning  
Modern or high tech \_\_\_\_\_ Classic and traditional  
Cutting edge \_\_\_\_\_ Established  
Fun \_\_\_\_\_ Serious  
Accessible to all \_\_\_\_\_ Upscale

# Making sense of your brand personality

If most of your dots were on the left:

- *Your school is contemporary, fast-moving and energetic. You like to make ideas happen quickly, and you don't mind taking risks. Your communication style is friendly and approachable.*

If most of your dots were toward the right:

- *Your school is traditional, relies on solid planning and established ways of getting things done. You might be trying to appeal to upscale clientele, and your communication style is corporate and professional.*

A clear vision of your brand personality will help in deciphering your typography, choice of colors, wording, and actions taken.

## Step 8: Articulate your story

This goes beyond your logo and tagline.

The goal is to craft a compelling brand story that will help your audience connect with you.

You may want to leverage your community & history in your school branding since you're part of a broader community.

# How to articulate your story

Make it simple and clear.

Touch on:

- Who you are
- What you offer
- Why people should care

A brand story is an opportunity to communicate on a human level, making a direct emotional connection with your consumers.



# Step 9: Create/refresh your logo & visual identity

Symbols are a succinct and efficient way of communicating information about your organization. A logo in particular has the power to impact public perception.

It's your calling card, representing who you are to your customers.

A strong logo should grab attention, make an impression and separate you from the competition.

# Step 10: Integrate your brand into everything you do

Roll out your new brand across your website, social media channels and any other collateral.

And then be consistent and stay true to it.



# This all applies to your school's brand too

You should be thinking about:

- How strong is your school's brand?
- What are you doing to improve it?

Consider getting a group together to focus on your branding efforts and go through the processes we've outlined here.

# WORKING WITH A PARTNER TO BUILD YOUR BRAND

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# What a partner can do for your

An agency partner will offer outside expertise to help you develop an impactful brand that will last for years.

They can:

- Conduct the necessary research to inform your brand strategy
- Help you better tell your story and connect with your audience on a deeper, more emotional level
- Develop and inspire effective and engaging promotional strategies

# The value of a partner

- Sees things you don't and looks at your brand without bias
- Brings the voice of the consumer to the table
- Have the experience to know intuitively what may or may not work
- Can save you from a lot of headaches and internal turmoil
- Will leverage best practices and established processes

# PK's planning process





# Discover

## BRAND INSIGHTS

Understand category/ company insights and business priorities through onboarding meetings, tour of facilities, synthesizing existing market research, conducting up to 12 customer/ stakeholder interviews, conduct information gathering session, and identifying brand positives and negatives.

## CONSUMER INSIGHTS

Leverage available research to assess customer and consumer relationship with the brand, paint a portrait of our target audience, including their psychographics, demographics, interests and media habits to build personas. Consider focus groups to augment current research/learnings.

## CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

Use existing research to understand marketplace dynamics and key trends in and outside the category. Supplement with competitive analysis and social listening in future to identify white space opportunities and influencers.





# Direction

## CONSUMER IDENTITY

Develop journey map for each donor persona including emotional triggers and purchase drivers. Identify engagement opportunities.

## BRAND POSITIONING

Leverage recent brand positioning work to finalize a differentiating and meaningful brand platform, with words and visuals, that serves as a launch point for all future work. This includes the brand's core values, voice and personality. It will take the form of a brand essence wheel and brand promise.

## COMM. PLANNING

Align messaging and calls to action with where donors are in the decision making process, capture engagement opportunities (assets and vehicles) from journey mapping work. This would take the form of a message matrix. A creative brief will then be developed to guide all communications developed in the Imagine phase and beyond.

# Considerations

- Determine how much you're willing to invest upfront
- Ask colleagues for recommendations on potential partners
- Reach out to those with a similar organization in a different area whose brand you admire
- Create a Request for Proposal—be clear about what services you seek and those you don't need
- Learn how to be a good client to get the best from your alliance

# Evaluating a partner

- Check out their past work, see if they have experience getting measurable results
- Generally it's good to make sure they have relevant experience in your category
- Ask for references once you've narrowed it down
- Make sure you understand their process/pricing structure
- Look for someone that makes you feel a little nervous

# WRAP UP

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How do you feel about the strength of your brand right now?

# It's not easy to build a strong brand, but well worth it

It can cement your place in the community, give employees a common rallying cry and help you compete with other institutions.

You need a strong brand to stand out from the pack and connect with consumers so that they choose you.

A solid brand can support an organization through pitfalls and missteps.

# Don't lose sight of your audience along the way

When you establish your brand and parents understand that they and their kids are part of it, they then want to share.

Part of building your brand also involves engaging the community, seeking brand champions amongst that audience and building connections.

Doing this can help you build a loyal community of supporters.

# Remember

Your brand is only as strong as what others think of it – project a clear image of who you are and what you stand for.

Center your efforts on your audience and be consistent with your mission, your voice, your logo and motto, etc.

When you honor your audience throughout your brand building, you will reap loyal customers who trust and appreciate you.



When your audience knows exactly what your school stands for, and feels that this mission aligns with their own goals and values, you're well on your way to building trust and loyalty.

# DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS?

## Contact info

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Lisa Nickerson:

Nickerson@kennedykrieger.org

Erika Mayerle:

emayerle@prestonkelly.com

# APPENDIX

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# What brands speak to you and why?

