

RESIDENCY BRANDING: Know Who You Are, Be Who You Are

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Our Goal: to help you define your residency brand

What is a brand?

[A brand](#) is a “unique design, sign, symbol, words, or a combination of these, employed in creating an image that identifies a product and differentiates it from its competitors. Over time, this image becomes associated with a level of credibility, quality, and satisfaction in the consumer's mind. Thus brands help harried consumers in a crowded and complex marketplace, by standing for certain benefits and value.”

Why should brands matter to you?

Your program is a brand – it carries “a level of credibility, quality and satisfaction in the consumer's mind.”

Who are your consumers?

- **Students** (in the Match)
- **Residents** in your program
- Prospective **faculty**
- Your **Chair** (who determines which faculty or initiatives will receive departmental resources)
- Your **DIO/hospital administration** (determines which programs receive institutional resources)

Principles to developing your brand: Put the [IDEA](#) to work

1. **Integrity**: your internal identity and external image are both aligned to your mission
2. **Democracy**: trust your members to be able to communicate their own understanding of the organization's core identity
3. **Ethics**: your brand, and how you deploy it, reflect your core values
4. **Affinity**: be a good team player and promote collective over individual interests

What are the key features of a strong brand?

1. **VISION & MISSION** Statements
2. Creating a **CLEAR MESSAGE**
3. **LOGO** Design
4. **MARKETING** Strategy

1. Statements of VISION & MISSION

Vision statements identify where you want to be

- *Shoot for the moon*: they should describe your organization's ideal future state
- *Be inspiring and uplifting*: It's why your employees show up for work every day
- *Succinct and easy to communicate*: Use as few words as possible

Mission statements define where you are, and how you'll achieve your vision

- *Outcome-oriented*: They define **what** you're doing, **who** it's for, and **how** you do it
- *Inclusive*: Key goals should be identified, but not written in a way that limits or stifles their applicability
- *Concise*: Not as brief as the vision statement, but still one sentence

Both should be known, understood, and believed by every member of your organization

Both should be a primary point of reference for all major residency program decisions

Additional References:

1. University of Kansas Work Group for Community Health and Development [Community Tool Box](#)
2. Psychology Today: [Vision and Mission – What's the difference, and why does it matter?](#)
3. Diffen.com: [Mission Statement vs Vision Statement](#)
4. HBR article "[How to Create an Effective Non-Profit Mission Statement](#)"

2. Creating a CLEAR MESSAGE:

[Excerpted from HBR article "How Doctors Can Craft a More Persuasive Message"](#)

"Persuasion researchers have long known the most effective messengers have three key attributes:

Expertise:

People frequently disengage their critical thinking and counter-arguing powers in the presence of expert advice; communicators with legitimate claim to relevant expertise should make that expertise clear early on.

Trustworthiness:

In ambiguous, uncertain, or controversial situations where multiple answers vie for believability, it can be tempting for a messenger to conceal any small doubts or uncertainties about their message. However, [evidence suggests](#) that signaling small uncertainties or doubts *immediately before* the delivery of the strongest argument actually has trust-raising qualities. Sequencing is the key lesson here.

Similarity:

We're more likely to believe people who are like us. So another way that a messenger can increase the persuasiveness of their message is to show how they share similarities with their audience."

Additional References:

1. HBR article "[Make Your Message \(Almost\) as Vital as Air](#)"
2. Entrepreneur article "[The Secret to a Strong Branding Message? Focus.](#)"

3. LOGO DESIGN

Just as your brand represents all that your company does, **your logo represents your brand.** The goal is to create a logo that makes people think of what your program truly represents.

Important considerations when [designing a logo](#):

- Look at the logos of other businesses in your industry
- Focus on your message
- Make it clean and functional
- Your business name will affect your logo design
- Use your logo to illustrate your business's key benefit
- Don't use clip art
- Avoid trendy looks

Potential Pitfalls:

- Check the brand standards and design regulations of your institution

Additional References:

1. Creative Bloq article "[60 Expert Logo Design Tips](#)"
2. Entrepreneur article "[How to Create a Logo](#)"

4. MARKETING Strategy

It may seem as if marketing doesn't apply to residencies, but effective marketing can help facilitate:

- Increased **applicant interest** in your program
- **Control over messaging** (such as those SDN posts...)
- **Improved morale** of your residents
- Better **alumni engagement, satisfaction, and fundraising**

The best marketing for your program is the quality of the program itself and the people in it.

Remember: [It's everyone's job to...](#)

- Tell your story in a way that consumers (e.g., students, your DIO) can understand
- Create memorable, exciting programs that donors (e.g., alumni) can love and support
- Take part in the conversation that's forming around the things you impact
- Know, understand, and respect the product you are creating

Additional Recommendation:

From Coursera: [Content Strategy for Professionals in Organizations \(Northwestern University\)](#)