

***Knowing Thyself:
Branding your
Program to get the
Trainees You are
Looking For!***

MPPDA/APPD Spring Meeting 2019
New Orleans, LA

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Defining Your Core Values

Core Values define what your program stands for and what it means for its stakeholders. Core values run so deep and are so fundamental that they will seldom change, if ever. These often represent a competitive advantage.

Reflect on 3 values that are important to your residency.

Some questions to consider as you determine some of these core values:

- Which words describe the personality and philosophy of your program?
- What does it mean to be at our program?
- What unique features of your residency would be difficult for others to duplicate?
- What attributes are you most proud of in your residents, colleagues and leadership?
- What drives you to innovate?
- What would happen to the persons you serve if your residency was to disappear?

Core Values:
1.
2.
3.

Now ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do these values stand the test of time? Will they be true 50 years from now? 100 years from now?
2. If circumstances changed and penalized us for this core value, would we still keep it?

Understanding Your Brand and Message

A brand is the perception that *Residents (and Applicants)* have which differentiates one *Program* from another. Your brand should be an outward expression of your core values.

Describe your ideal resident in 5 words or phrases:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What are the best attributes of your graduates in the past 5 years?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Now, using your Core Values, start to create your message. Your message should be straightforward, believable and memorable. (Here's a starting phrase to help):

We at _____ are THE
(med-peds / pediatrics) residency program to train at because we are:

Disseminating Your Brand

What are some ways that you can start to use your brand before you even meet an applicant?

What are some ways that you will use your brand during interview season?

What are some ways that you can assure that your brand continues to live on in the minds of the applicant long after Match?

Refining Your Brand Experience

Branding Experience is the impression consumers develop based on the sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral experiences they have using “your product or service.” Below is an example of how to use your message to prioritize and enhance the brand experience.

What are your Core Values?		Supportive. Commitment to the underserved. Excellence in clinical care.
Impressions of a Consumer		Interventions to Address Challenges
Sensory	Outpatient clinic is chaotic when applicants coming through.	Work-flow issues are discussed to create a less chaotic impression and allow highlighting of the diverse/underserved population residents see.
Affective	Post-call residents are giving the tour guide. They are tired and often grumpy that they have to do this.	Chief residents are asked to lead the tour. Chief residents discuss with program leadership ahead of time important topics that highlight the message/brand of the program
Intellectual	The scholarship residents have done is not well known by applicants.	A section on your website highlights meetings that residents have attended over past 3 years. A board of posters presented and abstracts from national meeting is placed in the room where applicants sit between interviews in the morning.
Behavioral Impressions	All attendings are required to interview applicants. Some attendings don't want to be doing it and feel stressed .	A core of attendings are asked to interview who are given a small amount of FTE to allow "protected time." Faculty meet ahead of time to discuss the residency program and brand.



<https://www.eyecandyinfographic.com/blog/create-great-brand-message>

Below is an empty grid for you to write down your message and reflect on challenges to the different impressions which form your brand. The last column allows an opportunity to reflect on how these challenges relate to your message.

What are your Core Values?		
Impressions of a Consumer:	Challenges to Impression	Interventions to Address Challenges
Sensory		
Affective		
Intellectual		
Behavioral		

Managing Your Brand

Keeping everyone on the same page about core values and purpose is critical to managing your brand.

How do you currently create a shared mental model among residents, fellows, faculty, and staff about your program's brand?
Think about recruitment kick-off, rank meeting, etc.

What are some new approaches you might try? Think about convincing the heart and convincing the mind. Different stakeholders will respond to different approaches.

Targeting the Right Consumers (Applicants)

	On Brand? (Y/N)	Possible Changes
Pre-Interview Selection Which elements of ERAS are you prioritizing? (Step scores, publications, activities, personal statement, LOR?)		
Interview Process What questions do you ask? What are the components of your interview day?		
Ranking Who reviews files? Do you have a scoring rubric? Who can give input on candidates?		

Appendix 1

Core Purpose: What is it?

Core purpose is the reason that we exists. You might call it the “soul” of the organization. Core purpose guides us toward differentiation. A residency might achieve a goal, but it will never complete it’s purpose. It is more like a guiding star on the horizon... forever pursued but never reached.

Create a descriptive statement of your program below:

Now ask why this is important to you 5 times.

Why?
Why?
Why?
Why?
Why?

What is your Core Purpose?

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