

Mount Sinai Queens

September 4, 2014

---

## situation

Over the past 15 years and especially the last two or three, Mount Sinai Queens has become a radically new institution, with new doctors practicing the newest medicine with a new attitude to health care based upon the desire to make the world a better place--especially that part of it called Queens, New York.

Yet this transformation has occurred largely out of the public eye, with the result that the perception of Mount Sinai Queens is still heavily influenced by the negative legacy of Astoria General.

As the health care environment becomes more complex, more challenging, and more competitive, Mount Sinai Queens can no longer allow its brand perception to be defined by its past; there is simply too much at stake. All the institution's assets must be marshaled to the cause of making Mount Sinai Queens the number one choice for health care in Western Queens, (and soon all of Queens).

With a strong positive brand, Mount Sinai Queens will more easily be able to reach its many goals and, fundamentally, bring a higher quality of life to the Queens community.

## promise

Since a brand is first and foremost a **promise**, it is vital that it be true, achievable and compelling to those inside and outside the institution. Hence:

*“Mount Sinai Queens brings a new level of compassionate care and collaborative medical excellence to the Queens community that will surprise and inspire people who still think of us as Astoria General.*

*It is quality care, delivered on par with that “across the river”, particularly in our newly developing Centers of Excellence. And, when necessary, it is care that provides seamless access to the tertiary and quaternary care or level of service offered on the Manhattan campus.*

*In addition, through education and outreach, Mount Sinai Queens seeks to provide every member of the community a pathway to overall good health and well-being.*

*Finally, as part of the Mount Sinai Health System, we have the unique association with, and access to, the doctors at The Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, a leading academic medical center committed to pioneering research and discovery.”*

## strategy

To make a promise means you intend to keep the promise. The brand strategy lays out how you will do that.

(It is understood that this document addresses brand strategy as it relates to marketing and communications. It does not address other relevant strategic efforts that also affect the brand such as employee engagement, public relations, staff development, etc. However it can be used to inform the brand strategies for those initiatives).

It is important to recognize that Mount Sinai Queens does not have a brand. It has a history to which the marketplace has attached mostly negative associations. So this will be a **brand building** strategy; it assumes no existing well of good feeling for the institution and that the only people who really understand the brand today are the staff inside the walls. In short, it requires that we begin at the beginning.

You should be heartened by this situation, since the reality of Mount Sinai Queens is so radically different from the general perception. Therefore almost anything you say will pass the most important test of communications: Tell me something I don't know.

## strategy—con't.

Since we are starting from the beginning, the first priority is to:

### **Generate Awareness--NOW**

Because of the financial strain all hospitals are currently operating under, marketing department budgets leave no room for experimentation or unfocused messaging. Whatever we do must work and it must work quickly so that the majority of a budget can be used to sustain the messaging at appropriate levels for the longest possible time. And the faster we generate awareness of the key message, the more effective all of Mount Sinai Queens' marketing objectives will become.

There is only one way to generate awareness quickly: TV.

Mount Sinai Queens must transform itself from a print advertiser doing "reminder advertising" to a television advertiser doing "awareness advertising".

(Based on the challenges Mount Sinai Queens is facing, we normally would suggest placing roughly half our media budget into television, as it will drive the effectiveness of every other Mount Sinai Queens effort. However, since Mount Sinai Queens has multiple goals and objectives, we understand this may not be possible).

### **Develop a Tagline**

A tagline is the brand promise boiled down to its essence. Mount Sinai Queens has in the past had a very effective tagline: "the comfort of community, the confidence of Mount Sinai". In its day it was true and worked beautifully. The institution has become comfortable living without a tagline. However, we think it is valuable to try and capture the brand essence in a short, memorable phrase and we believe the hospital deserves one to underscore its new reality.

## strategy—con't.

### **Focus on The New**

Few things in life are ever radically new. iPhones, Google glasses, delivery drones, yes. A community hospital?

Yet, after speaking with many doctors and the executive staff, we are struck by the sense of newness that pervades the hospital, even to the point where one doctor described it as being “radically new.”

We believe this is the crucial insight for the brand campaign.

In so far as the prevailing perception sees the institution as old, rundown, and hopelessly behind the times, no progress can possibly be made toward any of the larger goals.

Furthermore, Mount Sinai Queens must contend with an advertising environment thick with hospital and healthcare messaging so uniform in style and tone that even the smallest deviation from the norm becomes memorable.

For these reasons, a concerted campaign, focused on the “radical newness” of Mount Sinai Queens, will challenge and surprise a marketplace that has taken the hospital for granted for too long and differentiate Mount Sinai Queens from the vast commonality of the healthcare category.

To repeat: with such a disconnect between perception and reality, almost anything we say will be unexpected and therefore potentially memorable. To focus explicitly on the word “new”, which is itself one of the most powerful words in the lexicon, exponentially increases our chances of generating awareness more quickly.

In other circumstances, it might be difficult to generate belief in conjunction with awareness. Fortunately, we will have a two year-long proof-point for all to see, rising in support of the brand’s claims—the new building!!