

## Dental Lifeline Network



- Positioning/Brand Strategy Development
- New Name and Tagline
- Key Messages
- Brand Launch Plan
- Creative Concepts

### **The Challenge**

The National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped (NFDH), a charitable affiliate of the American Dental Association, is an organization committed to comprehensive dental treatment and long-term preventive services to needy disabled, elderly or medically at-risk individuals. The organization has provided some \$181 million in dental care to patients in all 50 states since it was founded more than 35 years ago. Its Donated Dental Services (DDS) program coordinates the services of thousands of volunteer dentists and laboratories nationwide to provide the most sophisticated dental care possible, free to needy individuals.

In recent years, the NFDH has faced name and brand challenges. The word 'handicapped' in the organization's name was outdated and had a negative connotation to many. In addition, the organization operates under different names in different states, and the word 'foundation' in its name is confusing since the organization is not a funding organization.

In 2009, the organization determined that a changing economy and growing demand for its services required it to build a cohesive national brand that would reinforce its impact and value and attract the resources needed to fulfill its mission and help more people in need.

### **The Solution**

In an effort to re-position NFDH, we closely evaluated the organization's current image and position in the market, the needs of the marketplace, as well as competitor positioning and offerings. We gained input from staff members, board members, volunteer dentists, laboratories and manufactures as well as others in the broader dental community and researched the dental charity marketplace.

Through our research efforts, we identified the following brand challenges:

- Low awareness of NFDH outside of the dental industry. Part of the reason for this lack of recognition was that NFDH operated by different names in different states and the local version of the organization did not play up the connection to the national brand.
- Confused positioning. People didn't know if NFDH was a nonprofit, government organization or for-profit company.
- No centralized message strategy. There was clear confusion about exactly what the organization does and how it does it. The local/national collaboration model was confusing and under-leveraged.
- The name was holding back the organization. In addition to negative connotations with the word "handicapped," the organization had grown to serve more than this population.
- Local/national collaboration was underleveraged. One of the strengths of the organization was that it leverages an innovative and enterprising service delivery model that combines the efforts of thousands in the dental community to meet a growing need.

NFDH's major distinction from other dental charities is that it provides a more comprehensive range of essential, final safety-net dental health services for individuals whose dental disease has impacted their physical, emotional and social well-being. At the same time, our research demonstrated that NFDH had the opportunity to:

- Help volunteer dentists feel part of something bigger
- Amplify NFDH's unique national/local model
- Position its volunteers and partners as heroes
- Position its care as life enhancing and dignity restoring

## The Re-Branding Deliverables

- **A Formal Competitive Positioning**
  - Our research and analysis led us to develop a new positioning platform that would amplify the national scale of NFDH services as well as the transformational impact on the broader audiences served. We re-positioned the organization as a ***leading national humanitarian dental network dedicated to advancing access to life-enhancing and life-saving dental care for people who are disabled, elderly or medically at-risk.***
  - Our new positioning would reflect what it means to perform comprehensive dentistry on vulnerable populations in such a way that the organization was able to amplify the POWER of dentistry to be about more than simply dentistry. Moreover, it was about life itself.
- **A New Name**
  - The new organization name, **Dental Lifeline Network**, captures the spirit and heart of the organization and speaks to the impact that the organization has on the individuals it serves.
- **A New Tagline**
  - The new tagline, **More than Dentistry. Life.** reflects how the organization transforms lives through dentistry by restoring HEALTH, DIGNITY and LIFE for individuals whose dental disease threatens their physical, emotional and social well-being and who have no other way to get help.
- **Key Message Development**
  - A key message document outlined the who, what, and why of the newly branded organization and detailed audience-specific messaging
  - A series of message training sessions were conducted with staff and board so that all parties responsible for stewarding the brand were utilizing the same key messages.
- **Creative Concepts**
  - Sector Brands developed a fresh and emotionally-engaging creative concept platform to better reflect the Dental Lifeline Network name and brand strategy and to provide a foundation to support the on-going development of marketing promotion materials.
- **Brand Launch Toolkits**
  - Sector Brands developed a toolkit for the organization's dental coordinators to enhance their ability to become brand ambassadors for the organization. The toolkit included a brand schematic, key messages, a template for new voice mails, and instructions on how to introduce the new name and brand.

**The Results**

While only in the beginning stages of launching the new brand, the new organization was enthusiastically received when it announced its new brand at the American Dental Association annual conference in the fall of 2010. In addition to receiving prominent coverage in the ADA's feature publication, the organization is now in a very strong position to attract, retain and grow funders, volunteers and partners.

To witness the brand in action visit: [www.dentallifelinenetwork.org](http://www.dentallifelinenetwork.org)