

Branding and Communications

Northwestern is a complex institution, with strengths across the board. To some, we are known for our expertise in nanotechnology; to others we are known for our women's lacrosse team. Others are aware of countless alumni in entertainment or of our prestigious management school. We take pride in all of these strengths, and all of these external acknowledgments. We now have an opportunity, in launching our next strategic plan, to further refine our image and increase Northwestern's visibility.

Charge: Considering themes emerging from the strategic planning process, define the Northwestern brand and those distinctive qualities that differentiate us from other institutions, and determine how best to communicate that brand to the University's key audiences.

Workgroup Questions:

- Utilizing existing market research, surveys, and other data, how do the following groups view Northwestern and how do they engage with us?
 - Students (prospective and current)
 - Parents (prospective and current)
 - Alumni
 - Faculty (prospective and current)
 - Staff (prospective and current)
 - Donors
 - Employers (prospective and current)
 - Private college counselors and high school guidance counselors
 - Evanston and Chicago-area community
- What is our identity locally, regionally, nationally, and globally?
- Who is our peer group/competition for each of the different groups outlined above?
- How do we want different groups to view and engage with Northwestern?
 - What is our value proposition(s)?
 - Considering themes emerging from the strategic planning process, what high demand, high value opportunity(ies) is Northwestern better positioned to offer than our peers?
- If particular groups do not view and engage with Northwestern the way we would like them to, what is the strategy to bridge the gap?
 - What overall message should Northwestern convey and what are the tailored messages needed for the various internal and external groups?
 - What are the proof points that portray our value proposition(s)?
 - What role should individual schools/centers play and what role should the university play in communicating these messages?
- If Northwestern were to adopt a comprehensive branding and communications strategy, what resources and organizational structure would be needed to implement that strategy?
- How will we assess improvements in our brand?