

American Cancer Society Brand Platform Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is a value proposition?

A. A value proposition is a tangible and compelling explanation of how a company or individual will benefit from using or engaging our services.

For the American Cancer Society, our value proposition helps us tell our story in a clear and concise way that demonstrates real value to those we serve.

Q. Why do we need a value proposition?

A. The American Cancer Society brand is an essential building block to achieving our mission. However, with more than 100 different programs and initiatives, effectively communicating about the Society's mission and all the different ways we fight cancer continues to be an ongoing challenge. The historic and widely-held view is that the American Cancer Society primarily fights cancer by funding research. While the Society is the largest private source of cancer research funds, our mission and reach are significantly broader and deeper.

The more donors and constituents know about us, the more willing they are to recommend us, donate to us, or engage with us in some way. Therefore, to protect and grow our brand *and* to better deliver on our mission, we must increase people's knowledge and become more personally relevant to them. Having a clear and compelling value proposition will allow us to do just that.

Q. What is our value proposition?

A. Together with our millions of supporters, The American Cancer Society **saves lives** by:

- Helping you stay well: We help you take steps to prevent cancer or detect it early.
- Helping you get well: We're in your corner to guide you through every step of a cancer experience.
- Finding cures: We fund groundbreaking research into cancer's causes and cures.
- Fighting back: We work with lawmakers to pass laws that defeat cancer and rally communities to join the fight.

Market research has demonstrated that this value proposition language resonates well with consumers and greatly expands their perceptions and understanding of the Society.

Q. How and where should the value proposition be used?

A. To effectively express all that we do as an organization, we need to take advantage of every opportunity to fully communicate our message; therefore the value proposition language should be incorporated into everything we do – from brochures and collateral materials to speeches, event promotion materials, and cancer.org. It is the building block of how we tell people who we are.

Of course, the value proposition will take on different forms depending on audience and communications vehicle, but the core message always remains the same: **The American Cancer Society saves lives by helping people stay well, by helping people get well, by finding cures, and by fighting back.**

Q. Does this new language replace our mission statement?

A. The American Cancer Society’s mission of eliminating cancer as a major health problem has not and will not change. Our mission statement is an important internal tool to help our volunteers and staff understand what we’re trying to accomplish. However, the way we talk about how we deliver on our mission *externally* to the general public needs to change to be more clear, compelling, and personally relevant. The value proposition is a way to more effectively communicate how we’re achieving our mission by saving lives every day.

Q. Do we still use “research, education, advocacy, and service” as a way to talk about our mission and where the money goes?

A. Although research, education, advocacy, and service are a part of our mission statement and useful for describing what we do, they don’t tell people enough about how we benefit them personally. Consumers might not understand what exactly we mean by “education” or “advocacy,” and that can hinder our ability to connect with them on a personal level or to provide tangible examples of how their donations make a difference. By using the value proposition language on a consistent basis instead of using research, education, advocacy, and service, we will communicate not only what we do, but also the value we provide to our constituents.

Q. What is a brand platform?

A. A brand is not a logo. It is an idea – a feeling. When people hear the words “the American Cancer Society,” what do they think? What do they feel?

Brands are valuable assets with significant monetary value that must be protected and preserved for an organization to survive. They must evolve to keep up with contemporary business needs and marketplace demands, and throughout our nearly 100-year history, the American Cancer Society brand has done just that.

That said, it has been almost 10 years since our last major brand initiative, and in order to grow and protect our brand and remain relevant among our constituents, we must continue to actively and strategically promote our organization and the all the ways we save lives from cancer.

Q. How can we claim to be the “official sponsor of birthdays?”

A. To help people understand all that we do and to creatively package the Society’s new value proposition, we focused on the American Cancer Society’s primary value – *saving lives*.

The Society has a long history of being a visionary change agent – we have decreased the number of people dying from lung cancer by raising tobacco taxes, helped people quit smoking, and created smoke-free communities. We have increased the number of people alive today by pioneering and promoting breast, cervical, and colon cancer screenings. We have increased the number of people who have avoided cancer by promoting healthy behaviors like sunscreen use, improved diet, and increased exercise.

In short, we have saved lives and created something special. Because of our work, more people can celebrate birthdays with their friends and loved ones – because fewer people will get cancer and fewer people will die from the disease. The American Cancer Society, more than nearly any other organization, can lay claim to making more birthdays possible. To us, that translates into the creative license of our new tagline: The Official Sponsor of Birthdays™.

Q. How do we know this campaign will change people’s perceptions of the Society in a positive way?

A. The idea of the Society as the official sponsor of birthdays, as well as creative concepts for the advertising campaign, has been through extensive market research including 23 focus groups in five different cities across the United States.

When tested with consumers, the idea of the American Cancer Society as the official sponsor of birthdays resonated in a deeply personal and moving way that was highly effective in communicating the Society’s value proposition while humanizing the Society’s image. Respondents also reported feeling that the official sponsor of birthdays concept effectively evolved the Society’s brand image to a more modern, innovative, personal, and caring resource than most people had thought of it before. Most importantly, consumers presented with the birthday concept were moved to take some kind of action, such as donating, participating in an event, calling, volunteering, getting screened, and living healthier lives.

Q. What is the tone and message of this new brand platform?

A. With an optimistic, hopeful, and unifying tone, the campaign introduces a world the American Cancer Society envisions where there are more birthdays (and birthday celebrations) because fewer people get cancer and more who get it survive. It’s a world both familiar and extraordinary.

The message is clear and personally relevant: Together with our millions of supporters, the American Cancer Society saves lives and creates more birthdays by helping you stay well, helping you get well, by finding cures, and by fighting back.

Q. When does the new advertising campaign launch and how long will it run?

A. This multi-year advertising campaign will launch on April 21, 2009, and run initially through the end of August. A second wave of advertising will be planned shortly thereafter. National TV ads will appear in early morning (*Today, Good Morning America*), daytime (*The View, The Price is Right*), syndication (*Oprah, Ellen*), and primetime (*Dancing with the Stars, CSI*).

Print ads will run in national women’s publications such as *Prevention, Better Homes and Gardens, O Magazine, and Cooking Light*.

Online ads will appear on wide variety of portals (AOL MSN), health sites (Web MD), women’s site (iVillage, oprah.com) and social sites (Facebook, MySpace).

Q. What happens to Hope. Progress. Answers.®?

A. After almost 10 years, the Hope. Progress. Answers. tagline will be retired and replaced with The Official Sponsor of Birthdays™ tagline, which reflects our new brand platform and brings to life the unifying idea that we are saving lives. It is important to note that this change is transitional in nature and materials should *not* be discarded as a result of this modification. Existing materials that include the Hope. Progress. Answers. tagline can and should be used until depleted.

Q. Should we still use sentiments like “We will prevail” and/or “No matter who you are, we can help”?

A. New campaign themes that were born out of the value proposition language will help us deliver the most impactful and personally relevant messages. These new themes will be included in our refreshed brand guidelines.

Q. Why is the American Cancer Society spending so much money on advertising during these tough economic times?

A. Now more than ever, the Society must position itself for success in the future.

In the face of enormous competition from other cancer organizations and nonprofits and in an unprecedented economic climate where donors and volunteers have limited time and money to spend, the Society must find a way to better communicate our impact in communities nationwide in a more personal, understandable, and relevant way.

Paid advertising has been an important part of keeping the Society brand strong for the past 10 years. Our advertising spend has not increased in 10 years and we are not spending any more on this effort than we have on previous advertising campaigns. The Society spends less than 2 percent of total revenues on paid advertising – far less than the investments made by for-profit organizations. This campaign is fully in line with our mission to reach out to all Americans facing or fighting cancer with our lifesaving message.

Q. What about those who have lost their battle to cancer and will not be celebrating their birthday this year?

A. The American Cancer Society is very proud of the progress we've made in the fight against cancer. More than 11 million Americans with a history of cancer and countless more who prevented the disease will celebrate birthdays this year. But we are also very aware that too many people lost to cancer will not get to celebrate a birthday this year. That's why we are launching this campaign – because we are passionately committed to making sure that everyone has the chance to celebrate as many birthdays with their loved ones as possible. We are fighting for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community.

Q. What about cultures who don't celebrate birthdays (Jehovah Witness, etc)?

A. This campaign is not just about celebrating birthdays, rather its about celebrating and remembering life's major milestones with your loved ones – which is a concept that all cultures can relate to, even those who don't recognize birthdays.

When tested with a diverse group of women, the campaign message was deemed positive, uplifting, personal, and highly effective in communicating the Society's value proposition in a personal, caring way.

Q. How does this new brand platform address the issue of quality-of-life and end-of-life messaging?

A. We believe, as indicated by market research findings, that the birthdays concept is expansive enough to encompass all the different ranges of the cancer experience – including quality-of-life issues.