

SHSMD26 CONNECTIONS

Health Care Marketing, Strategy & Communications

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HR–Marketing Brand Alignment Toolkit

- **MAP • CHECK • ALIGN**

A practical conversation guide for small and rural health care organizations



Why use this toolkit?

- There is one organizational brand. HR and Marketing influence different parts of it, but candidates, employees, patients and the community experience those parts as one organization. Use this toolkit together to identify where HR and Marketing intersect, test whether the employer-brand promise matches employee reality, and agree on simple ways to work together more effectively.

MAP

- Where do HR and Marketing intersect?
- Identify the touchpoints both functions influence and where better collaboration could make the greatest difference.

CHECK

- Is the promise authentic?
- Examine whether what you tell prospective employees is consistent with what employees actually experience.

ALIGN

- How do we work together?
- Establish shared goals, roles, practices and guardrails without unnecessary process.

Where should you start?

- Wherever the need is greatest. You may need to ALIGN around a shared goal before mapping touchpoints, MAP where responsibilities intersect before addressing gaps, or CHECK the employer-brand promise first to identify where better collaboration is needed. Use the tools individually or together in the order that works for your organization.

How to use it

- Complete the tools with your HR counterpart.
- Do not try to make everything jointly owned. Clarity about who leads is part of effective collaboration.
- Use MAP to identify the 2–3 touchpoints where better collaboration could make the biggest difference.
- Use CHECK to identify authentic strengths worth amplifying as well as gaps between the employer promise and employee experience.
- Use ALIGN to decide how you will work together around the opportunities you identified.
- Finish by choosing one manageable action you can take in the next 30 days.

The tools are conversation starters, not a compliance exercise or another approval process.

1. MAP: Shared Brand Touchpoints Map

Purpose: Identify the touchpoints where HR and Marketing each influence the employee or candidate experience, understand how responsibilities intersect today, and identify opportunities for better collaboration.

Instructions: For each relevant touchpoint, note who leads today, how/when the other team is involved, and what better collaboration could look like. Then identify 2-3 touchpoints where stronger HR–Marketing collaboration could have the greatest impact on recruitment, retention, employee experience, or brand consistency.

Brand touchpoint	Who leads today?	How/when is the other team involved?	Opportunity
Employer brand / positioning			
Career website			
Job postings / online job boards			
Recruitment campaigns			
Job fairs / recruiting events			
School / college presentations			
Candidate communications			
Interview process			

1. MAP: Shared Brand Touchpoints Map (cont.)

Brand touchpoint	Who leads today?	How/when is the other team involved?	Opportunity
Onboarding / new-hire experience			
Employee communications			
Intranet/employee screens			
Employee stories			
Employee recognition			
Social media			
Community events / outreach			
Other: _____			

Touchpoints will vary by organization. Add, remove, or combine items to reflect how your organization actually works.

Opportunity examples: bring Marketing into workforce planning earlier; carry the employer-brand promise into onboarding; create a regular employee-story pipeline; make job postings sound like the organization while preserving HR accuracy; better reflect the actual employee experience on the career site.

2. CHECK | Brand Consistency Check

Purpose: Examine whether the employer-brand promise being communicated to candidates accurately reflects the employee experience.



Work through four steps together: DEFINE → TEST → FIND → ACT.

1. DEFINE—What are we promising?

What are the three words, ideas, or promises we most often use to describe working here?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

These may relate to culture, teamwork, purpose, flexibility, professional growth, community, work-life balance, or other aspects of the employer brand.

2. TEST—Does employee reality support the promise?

If we asked frontline employees to describe what it is like to work here, how closely would their answers match what we tell prospective employees?

Our recruitment/employer messaging accurately reflects...	Yes	Somewhat	No / Unsure
Culture and teamwork			
Workload and day-to-day realities			
Leadership and support			
Growth/development opportunities			
Benefits and flexibility			
Community / rural lifestyle proposition			

The ratings aren't a score. They're a conversation starter, especially where HR and Marketing see the employee experience differently.

3. FIND—Where are the meaningful gaps and strengths?

Where might a candidate hear one message during recruitment and experience something different after hiring?

Where is the largest gap between what we promise and what employees experience?

Which part of our employer-brand promise is strongest because employees consistently experience it?

4. ACT—What needs attention?

What employer-brand promise(s) should we strengthen, better substantiate, refine, or reconsider?

- ☐ **Strengthen**—authentic strength we are not communicating effectively
- ☐ **Substantiate**—add stories/evidence
- ☐ **Refine**—make the promise more realistic or specific
- ☐ **Reconsider**—employee experience does not currently support the promise

3. ALIGN | HR–Marketing Partnership Playbook

Purpose: Turn what you identified through MAP and CHECK into a practical approach for working together more effectively. This is intentionally lightweight. The goal is to attain enough clarity about goals, roles, involvement and guardrails to collaborate well without creating more bureaucracy.



1. SHARED GOAL — What are we trying to accomplish together?

Together, HR and Marketing are trying to accomplish or protect:

Examples: credible employer brand • effective recruitment • employee experience consistent with the promise • retention/engagement • consistent storytelling • community trust



2. INVOLVE—When do we need each other?

Check the moments when involving the other function early enough to influence the work would improve the outcome:

- ☐ Employer brand / positioning
- ☐ Career-site updates
- ☐ Culture / engagement initiatives
- ☐ Onboarding / new-hire experience
- ☐ Recruitment campaigns
- ☐ Employee stories
- ☐ Employee communications
- ☐ Other



3. CLARIFY—Who leads, and what does the other function contribute?

HR leads / Marketing contributes	Marketing leads / HR contributes	We truly decide together



4. GUARDRAILS—What keeps us consistent without slowing us down?

Agree on the guardrails that will help both teams protect accuracy, authenticity and brand consistency without creating unnecessary process:

- ☐ Marketing protects brand voice, design, storytelling and audience clarity
- ☐ HR protects accuracy, policy, benefits, compensation and job expectations.
- ☐ Both ask: “Does this accurately represent what it is like to work here?”
- ☐ We involve the other team early enough to influence the work—not simply to approve it at the end.
- ☐ We do not make an employer-brand promise the organization cannot credibly deliver.



5. RHYTHM—What's the simplest way to stay connected?

The minimum useful way for us to stay connected around workforce and brand priorities is:

Examples: existing workforce/leadership meeting • quarterly HR–Marketing conversation • campaign kickoff • shared planning document



6. ACT—What will we do differently?

Looking back at the opportunities identified in MAP and CHECK, what is one thing we will do differently in the next 30 days?
