

CUTTING THROUGH THE CLUTTER: HOW TO CLEARLY COMMUNICATE YOUR BRAND AND SET YOURSELF APART

High Hopes Therapeutic Riding, Inc.

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Objectives

- Create a market position that clearly communicates your “brand” to donors, participants, volunteers and the community
- To establish an ownable competitive position that will inform and create consistency across all marketing
- To pull your organization out from the pack of competing non-profits

Steps for Creating a Strategic Position Statement

Research

- Initial Discussion with key staff
- One-on-one interviews with clients, community members & supporters
- Conduct a competitive Analysis
- Review of Industry trends

Strategy Session

- Interactive discussion with 4-6 key stakeholders
- Conduct a SWOT analysis
- Identify positive and negative mindsets
- Identify Brand DNA

Analysis

- Analyze positive and negative mindsets
- Identify recurring themes
- Specify key components of positioning

Let's do a SWOT exercise!

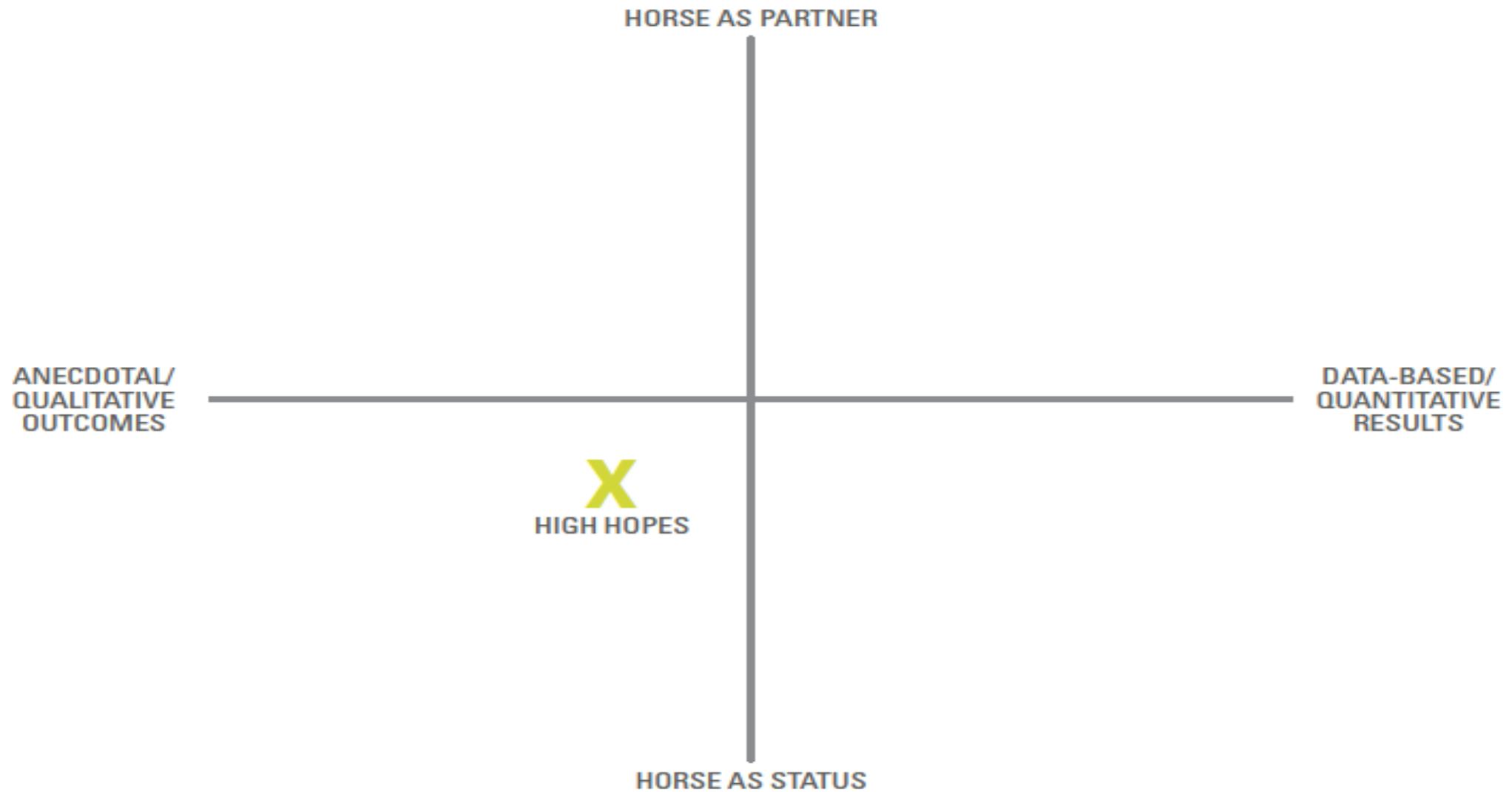
- Strengths
- Weakness
- Opportunities
- Threats

What we learned



THE MARKET DOESN'T KNOW WHO WE ARE
OR
UNDERSTAND WHAT WE DO

TODAY



LET'S CLEAR UP THE CONFUSION SO WE CAN
COMMUNICATE OUR BRAND POWERFULLY AND
PERSUASIVELY

It begins with our positioning

First - Find Your Brand DNA

Fact - What are the undeniable facts that define your organization?

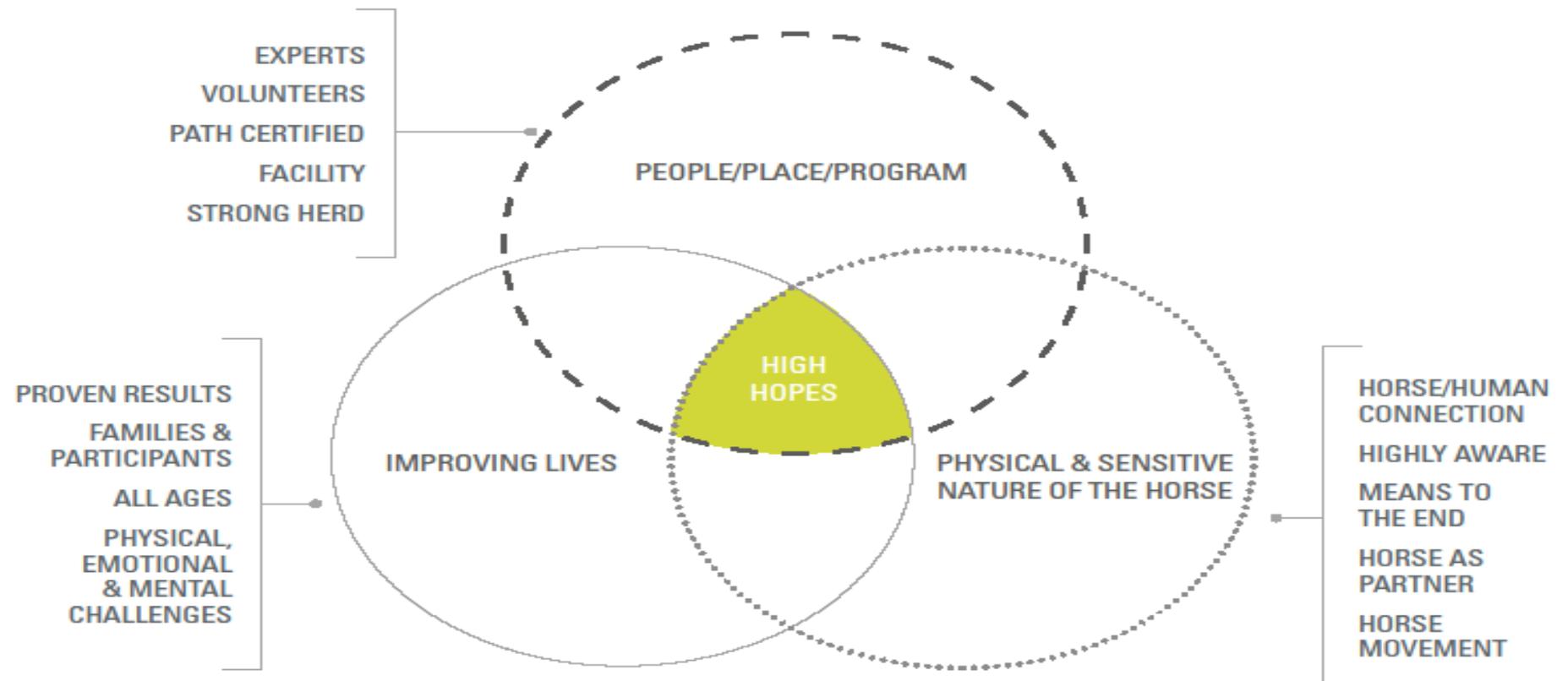
- What service do we offer?
- How do we provide those services
- Who provides those services
- What are the benefits of our services?
- What are our core principles, goals and values?
- Who is our target audience?

Function - What is the function of those facts as they relate to customer desires?

Feeling – How will those desires once fulfilled, make the customer feel?

Driver – In what human emotion/need are those feelings rooted?

The Reality of Our Brand DNA



Next – Determine your Strategic Position

Your positioning identifies the place you will take in the market and in the mind of the consumer

A powerful positioning has four hallmarks

❖ Authentic

The positioning tells the truth about the brand; it doesn't make a promise the brand can't keep

❖ Specific

The positioning encapsulates the brand's unique DNA; it is not a generic statement that could be claimed by competitors

❖ Differentiating

The positioning states out a space that separates your brand from the competition; it is "I am" rather than "me too"

❖ Resonate

The positioning can be rendered in messages that will resonate with the target market

Leading riders to results

Parsing the Position

Leading - High Hopes leads in a myriad of ways. As a leading therapeutic riding center in Connecticut and premier PATH-accredited training facility in the country, we lead participants and horses to achieve results together. The high caliber of our staff, teachers, volunteers and donors enables us to successfully guide parents and loved ones through the therapeutic riding experience.

Riders - Our riders are both children and adults with mental, physical or emotional challenges. From a child with Down syndrome to a veteran struggling with PTSD to an elderly parent experiencing the first stages of dementia, they all benefit from our mounted and unmounted programs.

Results - Our riders experience measurable emotional, physical and/or mental achievements. The results vary from building physical strength to managing moods to increasing self-esteem. Every achievement is a crucial step in cultivating the physical, mental and emotional balance that contributes to an enriching life.

Strategic Priorities

Clarify what you do

- Therapeutic riding
- The horse as partner
- A PATH-accredited facility
- Mounted and unmounted programs
- OT and PT work with staff to support participants
- Physical, emotional and mental disabilities

Strategic Priorities

Project who
you really are

- Not an elite equestrian organization
- Supportive environment
- Accept all types of volunteers
- Everybody chips in
- Welcoming, non-judgmental

Strategic Priorities

Explain why people
should support you

- Donations fund over two-thirds of operating costs
- Feel secure about donating to a well-run organization
- Donations are essential to continue the quality and breadth of programs
- It takes funding to innovate

Strategic Priorities

Promote the benefits of what we do

- Services for a wide range of disabilities and age groups
- Results are quantifiable
- Studies support the benefits of equine-assisted activities and therapy
- Emotional, cognitive and physical benefits
- Partner with schools

Mindsets and Messaging

Messaging to address four main categories of negative mindsets will inform the market of who we really are, how we benefit our participants, why they should donate and volunteer, and how welcoming we are

What is "Your Center"

Mindset

I don't know what therapeutic riding is

I don't know what you do

I don't know where "Your Center" is

You only work with kids

Key Messages

Therapeutic riding is an equine-assisted activity for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social wellbeing of individuals with special needs

We work with children and adults with cognitive, physical and/or emotional disabilities

We're in Timbucktu, CT

We deliver measurable results for participants

Our horses are our partners in therapy

We are a PATH accredited therapeutic riding facility

DNA Vocabulary

Trusted, sensory, connection, physical strength, motor/sensory/input, emotional strength

Will I Be Welcomed at “YourCenter”

Mindset

You're exclusive, upscale and elitist

Those are horse people

You're a stable for rich horse owners

I'm not part of that world/I won't fit in

That has nothing to do with my life/needs

Key Messages

We all share responsibilities, from barn assistance to office support

You don't have to be a horse owner to volunteer

Carpenters, stay-at-home moms, competitive equestrians, CEO's – everyone has skills we need

We are not an equestrian center

DNA Vocabulary

Friendly, welcoming, inclusive, caring, trusted, part of something, hands-on

How will “Your Center” Benefit my Loved One?

Mindset

My child could never get on a horse

That won't help my emotional/physical or mental disability

Key Messages

We provide mounted and unmounted therapy

We have a teaching methodology for getting your rider on a horse

Riders in our program have achieved improvements in physical strength

Riders within the autism spectrum have experienced increased/improved social skills

DNA Vocabulary

Skills for everyday life, physical strength, relationship building, self-esteem, accepted, balanced, confidence, equalizer

Why should I donate and/or volunteer

Mindset

Your events are expensive

You don't need our money

I already give to other organizations

I don't have time to volunteer

Key Messages

We need more than 680 volunteers a year

It takes over 31,000 volunteer hours a year to sustain our programs and facilities

Donations directly fund nearly 78% of our lessons

Participant fees cover just 22% of our total operational expenses

Fundraising and administrative costs make up only 24% of our expenses

DNA Vocabulary

Accomplished, teaching the teachers, proactive, dependable, have purpose, not judged

Messaging Dos and Don'ts

Do

Always connect horses with humans, participants, volunteers, teachers, etc.

Refer to horses as partners in the work we do

Provide specific information about therapeutic riding and equine-related activities whenever possible

Define how we improve lives with specific examples

Support your claims with measurable results

Position emotional, behavioral and cognitive benefits as important life skills

Explain the physical benefits of therapeutic riding

Promote the range of ages and disabilities we serve

Articulate specific results for each disability

Quantify the number of volunteer hours and donations required to provide services

Don't

Don't showcase or dramatize the horse

Don't focus on "touchy, feely" outcomes

Don't present emotional, behavioral or cognitive gains as "touchy, feely"

Don't generalize the benefits experienced by riders and their families

Don't refer to your organization as a equestrian facility

Don't only highlight child/adolescent riders

For More information:

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High Hopes worked with [Outthink](#), a national, full-service marketing firm to conduct a competitive positioning strategy session. If you would like more information about branding and competitive marketing. Please contact:

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