

Five Steps to Creating Brand Ambassadors

1. Identify.

A good brand ambassador is someone who is passionate about your institution, someone who believes in its mission and works to support it every day. Whom on your staff fits this description? Who goes above and beyond, meets and exceeds your expectations? These people will not only be able to convey accurate, consistent brand messages, but they'll also do so with enthusiasm and sincerity.

2. Educate.

Once you've selected the best candidates for the job, you must educate and train them. What are your institution's key brand messages? In what ways have you effectively communicated them? Provide ambassadors with talking points, key words, statistics (if applicable) and stories to support your messages. If your institution has a brand document or list of guidelines [see our tip sheet: "Defining Your Brand: 10 key components" at www.studioedesign.com/tips-news], share it with your new ambassadors. The more information they have, the better they'll be at expressing your institution's unique brand and its pressing needs.

3. Involve.

Engage your newly trained ambassadors by involving them in the ongoing marketing process. If you're a non-profit organization, for example, create a marketing committee if you don't already have one. When making brand-related decisions and plans, seek input from your ambassadors. They're on the front lines, interacting with your audience on a daily basis, and will bring vital information to the table. If they're involved in the process and know that their opinions are truly valued, they'll be more likely to get the message out there—and provide necessary feedback.

4. Equip.

Make it easy for your brand ambassadors to communicate your messages: give them the proper tools. These tools can vary, depending on your budget and your creativity, but some examples include: brochures, T-shirts, buttons, table tents, posters, bookmarks or gift envelopes.

5. Support.

Once your ambassadors are out in the trenches, provide them with ongoing support. Communicate often, keep them updated and in the loop, and organize regular meetings. Allow their feedback to guide future initiatives. Transparency and trust are necessary to keep your ambassadors involved, engaged and enthusiastic.