

## WHAT IS A BRAND - AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Many people think a brand is just a logo. But it's much, much more than that.

In short, our brand is what people think, feel and say about NOVA. It's also what distinguishes NOVA from any other educational institution people could choose. Put simply, our brand is our promise to our audiences and it's what sets us apart.

### We are all brand ambassadors.

For those reasons, a brand is much more than a set of rules or creative guidelines. Our brand is something we have to influence, shape and nurture consistently over time. As members of the NOVA community, we are all brand ambassadors. It's important that we each embody, communicate and reinforce our brand promise so that more people understand and appreciate the amazing quality of a NOVA education.

That's what these brand guidelines are all about — giving you the information and tools you need to be a NOVA brand ambassador.

## COMPONENTS OF A BRAND

### What makes a strong brand?

A brand consists of a number of elements, all designed to work together to tell one, comprehensive story. The more permanent, foundational aspect of a brand is called **a brand platform**, which is the essential story at the root of all brand marketing. In addition, there are various brand messaging vehicles that carry the brand message to specific audiences at specific times.

### A BRAND PLATFORM IS COMPRISED OF:

- **Brand Essence** - The heart and soul of a brand, the single idea people most deeply associate with the NOVA name. A brand essence is the fundamental nature of our brand promise distilled into a memorable, resonant word or a short phrase.
- **Brand Pillars** - The core set of benefits that we offer our audiences. No single pillar defines our brand, but the unique blend of our pillars sets us apart. The pillars inform the substance of our brand message.
- **Brand Personality Traits** - The attributes that flavor the tone, voice and feel of our brand marketing. If the pillars inform *what* we say, the personality traits influence *how* we say it.
- **Visual Identity** - The defining visual marks and styles people associate with NOVA, including our logos, typography, colors and textures.
- **Stump Speech** - A short, persuasive speech that summarizes the brand promise in a memorable way. Brand ambassadors can use the versatile stump speech to "pitch" NOVA's brand to a variety of audiences in different contexts.

The above elements of the brand platform are designed to be foundational components that stand the test of time and rarely, if ever, change. Conversely, there are other communication and marketing vehicles that take their cues from the brand platform but are designed to be more temporary and can change or shift over time.

### THESE CORE BRAND MESSAGING VEHICLES INCLUDE:

- **Campaigns and taglines** - Creative, short-term advertising and messaging programs that position the brand essence to specific audiences for specific purposes. Campaigns and taglines shouldn't be confused with the brand itself. Whereas brands are timeless, campaigns are "of the moment" and will change from time to time, even though they should all be rooted in the brand.
- **Messaging points** - Specific claims, facts, anecdotes and talking points that "prove" the pillars and appeal to specific audiences. While the pillars themselves are meant to be permanent, messaging points are continually revised, as new information, new insights, new data and new stories emerge that reinforce the pillars.