PROJECT OBJECTIVES

• **Create** a consistent brand image and message
• **Tell** a compelling story
• **Shift** common misperceptions

• **Build** awareness and visibility
• **Advance** the reputation
• **Increase** differentiation
• **Attract** exceptional students
OUR PROCESS

Discover: May–June
- Facilitate a kickoff meeting to initiate the project
- Review the background, collateral, and research provided
- Conduct interviews with leaders, faculty, staff, students, and alumni
- Perform a competitor audit
- Review other communications and marketing materials

Define: June–August
- Conduct a collaborative workshop with the core team to review insights and brainstorm ideas for messaging, voice, and personality
- Develop a preliminary strategy for messaging and communications flow
- Share the preliminary strategy with the core team
- Refine the strategy and submit it for final approval

Create: August–October
- Develop and share two creative concepts that bring the strategy to life
- Identify a single creative direction for further exploration and refinement
- Submit the creative direction for final approval
- Develop brand guidelines
Research initiatives that solve local and national problems
A broad variety of comprehensive, high-quality, and relevant academic programs
Team-based teaching and learning in the classroom
An excellent honors program
Undergraduate research experiences that aren't available at other colleges
Nationally competitive faculty who achieve the right balance between teaching and research
An emphasis on STEM
Experiential learning opportunities, like study abroad, internships, and research
Advanced classroom technology
A collaborative learning environment
A rigorous, well-rounded academic experience
Being at the forefront of developing new knowledge

To help define the University of South Alabama story, we undertook a series of discovery activities to help us understand the current situation and how the brand should evolve in the future.

Stakeholder Interviews and Group Discussions
125+ PEOPLE

Communications Audit

Peer Review

Collaborative Workshop
IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGY
All of South’s peers are saying the same thing. South has the opportunity to own a unique place in the landscape.

To battle common misperceptions, we must emphasize South’s high-quality academics and research and its vibrant student life.

To attract key audiences, we need to tout the advantages of South’s urban, coastal location.

At South, relationships matter. There’s a shared spirit and a supportive culture.

South’s purpose is to advance the Gulf Coast region.
STRATEGY

OVERVIEW
The brand strategy sets the foundation for the way South communicates to its various audiences. It clarifies who South is and what South does at its core, in a way that’s clear, compelling and authentic.

It also provides a guidepost for creative expression. Both creative concepts are from the same strategy, demonstrating the flexibility of the brand.
BRAND STRATEGY
STRATEGY COMPONENTS

1. AUDIENCES (WHO we speak to)
   - Determine who we need to influence today and in the future through a phased approach

2. MESSAGING (WHAT we say)
   - Define the core attribute and core benefit that articulate who South is and how it stands out
   - Create supporting messages and hierarchy

3. PERSONALITY (HOW we look, feel, and sound)
   - Begin to shape tone and voice for communications
**AUDIENCES**

*Prioritization*

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**Primary Audiences**

- **THE BEST-FIT SOUTH STUDENT**
  - Prospective undergraduates and graduates
  - Influencers (parents, family, counselors)

- **THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY**
  - Leadership and administration (also for the Health System)
  - Board of trustees
  - Faculty and staff
  - Current students
  - Current parents
  - Alumni, donors, and friends

- **THE POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND NEIGHBORS**
  - Referring physicians
  - Patients
  - Businesses, employers, and industry partners
  - Gulf Coast community

**Secondary Audiences**

- **THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY**
  - Leadership and administration (also for the Health System)
  - Board of trustees
  - Faculty and staff
  - Current students
  - Current parents
  - Alumni, donors, and friends

- **THE POTENTIAL PARTRNERS AND NEIGHBORS**
  - Referring physicians
  - Patients
  - Businesses, employers, and industry partners
  - Gulf Coast community

- **THE INFLUENTIAL LEADERS**
  - Local and state government
  - Media
  - Peer schools
  - National admissions organizations and counselors
  - Ranking organizations

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**Attract, recruit, and retain the right students, to continually strengthen the university**

**Build alignment and excitement around the authentic brand story to create ambassadors**

**Enhance the university’s reputation by showing its value and building strong relationships**

**Build awareness by focusing on broader reputation-building and greater visibility locally and nationally**
MESSAGING

Creates a hierarchy to articulate what we say and why it matters consistently and compellingly.
What we offer (the give)

Why it matters (the get)

Core Message

Attributes

Benefits

Supporting Points

Secondary Messages
The University of South Alabama is:

A dynamic and ambitious community of individuals who support and challenge one another

To become:

Actively engaged contributors who advance the Gulf Coast region
The University of South Alabama is:

- A dynamic and ambitious community of individuals who support and challenge one another
- An environment that fosters diverse experiences and meaningful relationships
- A hub for regional progress

Impactful and relevant academics
To become: Actively engaged contributors who advance the Gulf Coast region

Have the capability and confidence to lead

Carve out a distinct, personal path

Enhance the quality of life for all citizens
Nationally competitive faculty who balance teaching and research

Practical, engaging learning experiences that span the globe

Programs that reflect industry needs

Research opportunities that are unique to South, especially at the undergraduate level

Impactful and relevant academics
A size that allows faculty and staff to know and support their students

Opportunities to shape South’s traditions and environment

Spirited athletics and an emphasis on student involvement

An urban, coastal setting in the vibrant city of Mobile

An environment that fosters diverse experiences and meaningful relationships
MESSAGING

An academic health system delivering leading-edge medical research and high-quality patient care

Resources that attract major national and international commercial businesses to Mobile

Educational access for students of diverse backgrounds and mindsets

Creation of new knowledge, jobs, and companies

A hub for regional progress
Have the capability and confidence to lead

- Gain mentors who are academic leaders in their fields
- Collaborate with peers and learn from their unique perspectives
- Equipped with critical-thinking and creative problem-solving skills
- Immediately apply concepts in real-life situations
Carve out a distinct, personal path

- Form deep connections with a network of Jags
- Make a lasting, tangible impact inside and beyond the classroom
- Discover and strengthen passions
- Explore and enjoy extraordinary opportunities in and around Mobile
MESSAGING

Enhance the quality of life for all citizens

- Create healthier communities
- Develop a significant regional innovation ecosystem
- Excel because of an education that’s within reach
- Enhance the economy as part of a skilled workforce
PERSONALITY

GENUINE
sincere in our words and actions

FRIENDLY
warm and welcoming, in a uniquely Southern way

INCLUSIVE
embracing the members of our community and a spirit of togetherness

PROGRESSIVE
constantly challenging ourselves to create and try new things

PROUD
exuding confidence and passion

DARING
taking calculated risks and unafraid to be different
CREATIVE EXPLORATION
How USA is communicating today
ALL OVER THE MAP
LESS WHAT,
MORE WHY
“USA is one of the fastest growing universities in the south. Our state of the art facilities complement our prestigious academic programs and exciting student life!”

“In addition, our coastal location by the Gulf of Mexico provides unlimited opportunities for year round activities in warm sunshine. Make your way to South Alabama.”
MAKING HEADLINES
WORK HARDER

MAKING HEADLINES
WORK HARDER
DOING MORE WITH LESS
DOING MORE WITH LESS
A WIDER PALETTE
LIMITING TYPEFACES
CAPTURING MOMENTS, NOT POSES
CAPTURING MOMENTS, NOT POSES
NEXT STEPS