

# Executive Summary

## New Brand Embodies the Future of APPA

by E. Lander Medlin

**B**randing is a process requiring intentional organizational focus on the members' perception of our identity and image, and the clarity of our message. As the world continues to change dramatically, it is essential for APPA to continue to assess our organization's value proposition and cleanly differentiate ourselves from other peer or competitor organizations.

After a year of comprehensive exploration, contemplation, and creative innovation we now have a solid brand identity that is true to APPA's core mission and values. We are now implementing this new identity at every organizational level, from our headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia to our regions and chapters around the world.

However, it's important to tell the story of how we got to this exciting point. In creating the foundational elements of our brand, we took great care to ensure that we capture our new focus and the renewed energy that will guide our future, while holding onto the many elements of our proud and long history.

In February 2006, the APPA Board of Directors identified 7 Key Strategies (see page 4) to solidify APPA's place as the association of choice for educational facilities professionals. The first of these seven strategies is the development of a clear brand identity. The goals of the branding initiative are:

- To further position APPA as the association of choice for educational facilities professionals.

- To differentiate APPA from other peer organizations through distinct visual identity and clear, tactical messaging.
- To communicate APPA's purpose and value propositions, which are:
  - To enhance the professional development of APPA members.
  - To reinforce and advocate for the strategic role of facilities in education.

Our challenge is to formulate an image and key messages that effectively articulate our vision, purpose,

transformation and elevation, and we do this on several levels:

- We focus on the elevation of facilities professionals into higher performing managers and leaders.
- Our members transform their institutions into more inviting and supportive learning environments.
- We elevate the value of our entire profession and have an impact on the recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff.

Ultimately, our name, tagline, and logo—the most tangible outward



and value and securely position APPA as an organization that serves members in ways that support them and add value to their work.

To meet these goals and address this challenge, APPA hired a branding firm (ZilYen) to work with a branding team, which included 23 representatives from across the APPA membership and staff. ZilYen facilitated sessions exploring APPA's identity—beyond our program activities, events, and resources—to uncover the real inspiration behind our purpose and mission and to identify the unique role APPA plays in the lives of our members. This process revealed that a brand is not what we *do* but who we *are*. We discovered that our true nature and identity as an organization is about

expression of our brand—must also be manifested in our new brand personality.

The process ultimately reinforced the strength of the “APPA” brand value and identity ultimately. The new name (simply APPA) and strong tagline—“Leadership in Educational Facilities”—(1) preserves our brand equity, (2) minimizes additional short- and long-term costs across the entire organizational chain, (3) has membership and regional support, (4) avoids the more evocative or abstract (“corporate-style”) names, and (5) reinforces leadership, institutionally and individually. In short, it says who we are, it suggests what we do and say, and it shows that our organization is at the forefront of our field.

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In order to solidify and integrate the brand into everything we do, we have selected five brand values needed to reshape the organization over time with the intentional purpose of transforming and elevating facilities professionals into influential leaders in education. The implementation of these values ensure we are “living” the brand everyday. The five brand values are as follows:

1. **Vision**—We maintain a long-term perspective in our efforts to achieve continuous improvement and performance excellence.
2. **Transformation**—By providing ongoing leadership development and continuously setting the standard for credibility, we transform the entire educational facilities profession.
3. **Stewardship**—As stewards, we sustain and maintain passionate commitment to the future of our professionals and their facilities, wisely investing in intellectual capital, and producing results

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that enhance the credibility of the entire profession.

4. **Collaboration**—Spirited collaboration is achieved through networking, information sharing, celebrating achievements, and creating meaningful connections among all members.
5. **Leadership**—We implement the standards, processes, and credentials that contribute to creating true leaders in educational facilities.

The new logo—which the Board approved and unveiled at APPA 2007

in July—highlights the change in name and tagline and reinforces our commitment to the association’s renewed focus and symbolize the vibrant energy of the new brand. The change in logo also signals our shift in intention overtly, calls direct attention to our renewed focus and direction, and effectively articulates our vision and mission, purpose, and values.

We have already begun the business of branding the organization and creating the new look and feel of our communications. We are excited about the possibilities that will grow out of this new understanding of our purpose and its branding symbols. This level of understanding and clarity of purpose will give new meaning to APPA’s professional development programs, and will ensure the successful positioning of the organization well into the future. ¶

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