



**This 30 year-old
organization wanted**

to re-position themselves in the market
in a unique & authentic way

Client Story by:

soulful brand





In 2013, The Haven engaged in a brand strategy and messaging exploration based upon Soulful Brand's core philosophy of resonance:



*To resonate with your best-fitting customers,
first resonate within your organization.*

This is their story...



The Haven is a centre for transformative learning located on Gabriola Island, Canada. They offer programs in a group setting, focusing on self-responsible relational living.

In 1985, the two founders of this not-for-profit educational organization developed an approach to “the art and science of living well together” derived from an intense investigation of their own relationship, as well as their experiences with clients.

True to their roots, The Haven is guided today by the belief that through relating, we come to know ourselves and others. They are compelled by the possibility of a world where every person is whole and responsible for themselves and their environment.

Messaging

This high-level messaging was developed by Soulful Brand after an in-depth inquiry into The Haven's authentic identity and internal alignment behind a brand positioning strategy.



Rachel Davey [Executive Director, The Haven]
on their situation and needs in 2013...

NEEDS

“Despite the fact that thousands of people reported the life-changing impact of our programs, when we wanted to reach out to the broader world it was difficult to describe what we do. We didn’t agree on how to express who we are or how we’re unique.”

“We wanted to be a single organization that could speak with one voice, but we all had different ideas about what was core to our work and how to talk about it. We also wanted to leave enough room for people to express the essence of who we are and what we do, in a way that felt true for each person.”

“At the same time, there was this concern that if we put ourselves out there more, we would become inauthentic or pushy. We were stuck in a low-risk outreach strategy that sounded like, ‘people will find us when they’re ready’ and ‘word of mouth is best.’ The time came, however when we knew something had to change.”



A Voice Vacancy

The Haven co-founders (Jock & Ben, shown above) had stepped down from their role in 2004, passing ownership of the foundation and institute to new leadership.

Given that the founders had previously been the carriers of the organization’s message, a ‘voice vacancy’ created growing confusion in The Haven’s ongoing marketing efforts.



Rachel Davey [Executive Director, The Haven]
on results of working with Soulful Brand...

RESULTS

“ I was proud of our community and the range of people who were willing to come together and align around an idea. I didn’t know if we’d be able to pull it off, but we did—partly because of the hard work and dedication of our core working group.”

“We now have a revitalized sense of who we are and the unique role we play in the world. We know how to talk about our work in a relatable and authentic way.”

“We have a set of messages to lead with in our marketing communications—even the people who aren’t part of our faculty can now speak about our work with confidence.”



Long-Term Outcomes

Two years after the Soulful Brand engagement, **more people are attending** their core program offering than in any of the prior ten years.

Their unified sense of how they talk about their organization has **reduced time spent** on creating marketing materials and orienting new hires.

The Haven foundation board even pulled directly from the brand positioning work for an internal vision statement. Usually they update and change it, but due to the depth of the brand work, it’s been the same for the past few years.



Rachel Davey [Executive Director, The Haven]
on experience of working with Soulful Brand for 14 months...

PROCESS

“Soulful Brand took us through a process that was like an archeological dig, unearthing our core as a community. While we looked forward to the deliverables, we knew that having the discussion take place was the most important piece.”

“Our core working group participated in multiple teleconferences with Soulful Brand that all retained a kind of depth—it was surprisingly personal and relational, given that we were not face-to-face (or even all in the same country). Most of our stakeholders are dispersed geographically, so it was a huge benefit to be brought together virtually.”

“To further include others in the exploration, we held our own feedback meetings and Soulful Brand held 1-to-1 interviews with key stakeholders. They also oversaw a survey for the wider community while helping us make sense of all the input. Along the way, our community expressed great appreciation for simply being asked to participate in the process.”



Co-Creative & Organic

Soulful Brand established an organic team alignment process up front with Rachel and took opportunities to make adjustments along the way, such as adding an online survey to get input from the entire staff at The Haven.

Leveraging virtual collaboration tools, like Skype, Survey Monkey and Google Drive, allowed for a co-creative process across country borders.



Rachel Davey [Executive Director, The Haven]
on importance of establishing a brand positioning strategy...

ADVICE

“ This is not the kind of thing you can just force through—this is your identity and messaging. You have to have buy-in.”

“I’ve had experiences of doing websites before branding and it’s crazy-making. How do you know where to start with a website if you don’t know what to say? If you haven’t identified the core elements of the brand, then how can you put that into a set of messages?”

“Take the time and invest the resources you need to do this properly rather than skating over the surface of it. It may involve some messiness, some conflict, some disagreement... and it should if you’re doing it right.”



Surfacing Differences

According to Rachel, the work with Soulful Brand “surfaced quite a lot of differences that wouldn’t have been surfaced otherwise.”

She believes the project was “one of the most valuable” she has engaged in during her time at The Haven.

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Let's get acquainted...

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