Mind + mine the gap! This is individual assignment #1 of three. It is due before class on Tuesday, April 19. Please submit a PDF of your one-pager to BEST.stanford@gmail.com.

To nurture and sustain a brand effectively, you must be constantly in touch with what your stakeholders (consumers, users, members) think about your brand and what you (your organization) thinks of your brand. It helps to have some language to pull these constructs apart. **Brand image** is defined as the set of *actual* associations the consumer has with a brand; **Brand identity** is defined as the set of *aspirational* associations the organization would like to have of its brand. Perform a preliminary image-identity gap analysis by capturing the brand associations from these two perspectives (internal + external).

Much of the legwork you will need to do for the image-identity gap analysis will be extremely helpful to you for the other individual assignments on experience mapping and voice guideline development. As such, we recommend you putting aside 5-7 hours of time to do your field research upfront. Please refer to the sample research notes from your t.team for reference.

**Step 1**: Choose a brand or an organization you want to study for your individual assignments if you haven’t already. You may do this analysis for your group brand, but it might also be useful to use this opportunity to do analysis on a competitor. We also recommend you finding a partner to do field work with - of course, complete your assignments separately.

**Step 2**: Dive in. Get out there. Go talk to a minimum of 5 ‘internal’ individuals and 5 ‘external’ individuals. Aim for a minimum of a 5 minute conversation with each. You will learn a lot from them and their perceptions and experiences with a brand. At some point, ask them: “What five words come to mind when you think of [name of brand]? Probe deeper and ask why if you see or hear inconsistencies i.e. “You first said ‘convenience’, but then you grimaced when you said ‘timing’. Why?”

**Step 3**: Visualize and summarize your learnings on one-page. Limit yourself to a maximum of 500 words. Briefly address the topic, your process, and your findings. Come up with one recommendation for management that would help diminish the gap. [ See backside of this handout for an example of output ]

**Note on grading**: You only need to do 2 out of 3 of the individual assignments which in total account for 30% of your grade. If you choose to do all three assignments, the third assignment will be for extra credit. You will be evaluated on (1) Creativity, (2) Persistence, (3) Thoughtfulness, (4) Thoroughness.
The Stanford Blood Center was established in 1978 to support teaching and research in transfusion medicine while supplying the local community of hospitals with blood products.

**STANFORD BLOOD CENTER**

**8 DONORS AND 5 MEDICAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS WERE ASKED**

**WHAT FIVE WORDS COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF THE STANFORD BLOOD CENTER?**

**PROCESS**

Stanford Blood Center caught our attention for two reasons: (1) The immense value it brings to the medical community, and (2) the constant challenge it faces in drumming up supply to meet the demand for blood products.

We set aside four hours on 4/8 to visit two donation centers (780 Welch + bus at White Plaza), in attempts to go through the blood donation process ourselves, and to engage in conversation with both internal and external stakeholders at these locations pre and post donation. Although we engaged in conversation with many more, we surveyed 13 stakeholders in total (see below for detailed list).

We then took the 65 words collected and clustered similar words, which resulted in 12 categories and 3 larger themes that we roughly identified as words describing (1) immediate images that come to mind, (2) what SBC represents, and (3) the blood donation process itself.

**PATTERNS + SURPRISES**

The staff is focused on the producing a technical product competently. Patient-safety comes first, followed by customer service. More than one donor expressed that their perception of SBC’s competence made them feel at ease with the process. The staff at SBC also aims to be friendly and courteous, while serving the greater good. This is a sentiment that donors share.

Surprisingly for us, a number of students (potential and actual donors) expressed due respect for SBC as a leader in the community. They support SBC for not only its collection activity but also its research. This, as part of the larger vision and purpose, is under-emphasized by the staff.

First time donors expressed the most visceral and negative impressions, but were driven to donate by anticipation of the reward of doing something good and having the opportunity be able to say “I donated blood today.” Although rejected previously, students keep coming back to try again.

Also, the longer a donor had been giving with SBC the more likely they were to express similar perceptions of the SBC brand. Cathy, who had donated blood every two weeks for more than a decade, acted almost as if she were a staff member. Binna and Joe, two undergraduates who had started donating since high school, exhibited the same passion for donating blood and for SBC’s mission.

**ONE RECOMMENDATION TO DIMINISH GAP**

How might SBC enable confident regular donors and anxious first-time donors to support each other and the bigger cause? For example, what if first-timers could sit at the donor recovery table with regulars who just finished donating that day? What if long-time donors who are on a two week schedule at the campus site could show up at the blood mobile once a quarter to provide moral support just by being present and doing what they do best (i.e. they make the experience look so easy)?

**WORDS USED TO DESCRIBE SBC (CLUSTERED INTO 13 CATEGORIES)**

**1 > IMAGES THAT COME TO MIND**

- Bus
- Needle
- Blood

**2 > WHAT SBC REPRESENTS**

- Leader
- Important
- Giving

**3 > THE EXPERIENCE ITSELF**

- Feel-good
- Discomfort
- Inconvenient
- Friendly
- Easy
- Competent

**EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS**

- Potential first-time student donors (3)
- First-time donor (1)
- Second-time student donor (1)
- Regular long-time student donors (2)
- Regular community donor (1)

**INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS**

- Campus donation center nurse manager
- Blood bus nurse manager
- Blood bus medic
- Medical students (2)

**WORDS IN EACH CATEGORY**

**Bus**
- Leader: revolutionary, outreach, role model, successful
- Important: imperative, morality, shortage
- Giving: donate, donation, sharing, altruistic, compassion

**Needle**
- Feel-good: fulfillment, relief
- Discomfort: squeamish, trouble, nervousness, confusing
- Inconvenient: out of the way, timing-problem
- Friendly: nice, polite
- Easy: relaxed, simple, convenient, reachable, doable
- Competent: confident, effective, service, patient-safety, excel

**Blood**
- Leader: revolutionary, outreach, role model, successful
- Important: imperative, morality, shortage
- Giving: donate, donation, sharing, altruistic, compassion

**MKT353 : BEST : SPR 2011**

**EMILY MA**