

## American Society of Safety Engineers - Brand Evolution

### Why a brand initiative?

Last March the ASSE Board of Directors approved an initiative to review our brand. We wanted to understand the strengths and perceptions of the Society, our name, logo and messaging (how we talk about ourselves to the world). The goals were to align our brand to our future success to grow our voice in the profession, educational offerings, standards development and member communities while strengthening member relationships and increasing relevance among business leaders, young professionals and our global audience.

### What did this initiative entail and what are the recommendations?

ASSE engaged brand experts, 88 Brand Partners, an agency in Chicago specializing in brand work for associations and corporations that provide services like the American Veterinary Medicine Association and Mayo Clinic. The work was done in three phases.

*Phase 1: Uncover the Challenge.* We dug into where the ASSE brand has been and understanding the perceptions of it today. This phase included a review of past ASSE communications, past research, competition and organizational structure. 88 Brand also conducted stakeholder interviews and workshops with a variety of stakeholders and members that uncovered a set of challenges ASSE faces. Those challenges include a lack of brand consistency and global relevance, difficulty attracting and retaining young professionals, a desire to increase awareness and recognition beyond members to industry and business leaders, and most importantly a focus on deepening relationships with members.

*Phase 2: Define the Brand Strategy.* In this phase we focused on answering three questions: 1) Who are we? 2) What do we do? 3) Why does it matter? We also set out to identify the supporting reasons anyone should believe the answers to those questions. It was important to ensure that these questions were answered as accurately as possible, so we tested various statements through research. Based on the findings, we were able to dissect each option and deeply vet each word.

#### *Who are we?*

ASSE is a global association for occupational safety and health professionals.

#### *What do we do?*

We provide education, standards development, advocacy and a professional community to support the advancement of our members and the profession as a whole.

#### *Why does it matter?*

Our members are dedicated to creating safe work environments by preventing workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses. Sound safety practices are both socially responsible and good business, leading to increased productivity, a better reputation and higher employee satisfaction.

#### *Reasons to believe* (Additional messaging was also developed to support each of the 5 reasons below)

- General: For more than 100 years, ASSE has been at the forefront of helping occupational safety and health professionals protect people and property.
- Community: ASSE is where occupational safety and health professionals find a vibrant community—one that helps them grow professionally through education and networking, and advocates for the profession.
- Education: ASSE is the preferred source for education among safety professionals, providing

valuable training, networking, knowledge, skills and continuing education.

- Standards: ASSE is a leader in the evolution of voluntary occupational safety and health standards that reflect recognized best practices, both in the United States and internationally.
- Value of the Profession: ASSE strives to uphold and elevate the value of the safety and health profession through innovation, thought leadership, and objective, unbiased, science-based approaches to safety and health practices.

*Phase 3: Create the Brand Identity.* The elements of a brand identity that most often come to mind include an organization's name and our logo. This phase of work was guided by extensive research as well:

#### **Workshop**

Including board members, volunteers and staff participants to shape creative stimuli used in quantitative testing.

#### **Quantitative Survey (Members & Non-Members)**

September 23–29, 2016

Sent to 46,459 individuals

- 29,790 Members (*all that allow/have valid email out of 37,000 including emeritus*)
- 16,669 Non-Members (*mix of lapsed members and customers from last 3 years*)

1,777 Responded (*1,586 Members / 158 Non-Members / 33 Status Not Known*)

#### **Qualitative Online Discussions (Members)**

December 5–6 & 8–9, 2016

Recruited from 28,861 current members

- *Excludes emeritus, Balanced representation by demographics*

26 Current Members Participated

#### **Quantitative Survey (Non-Members)**

December 27, 2016–January 4, 2017

Sent to 47,625 individuals in the ISHN subscriber database, who have heard of ASSE but are not currently members, and have involvement with OSHs decision. 283 Non-Members participated.

#### Key Research Learning – Our Name

- Using the ASSE acronym as the name had very low preference.
- Research participants shared a concern about the word “engineers” in the name, noting that the term is not reflective of the broad array of disciplines represented within ASSE’s membership.
- Of the proposed names that include “professional,” the American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) and the International Society of Safety Professionals (ISSP) performed the best.
- Global members felt the name “American” was an asset, citing the high bar set for safety in the U.S.
- We also researched other organizations that have gone through name changes in response to shifts in their industry and membership base. One example is the Society of Human Resource Management. Founded in 1948 as the American Society for Personnel Administration, this group recognized in 1989 that its name did not reflect the role of modern human resource managers. By changing its name, the group broadened its scope of influence on business and politics both in the U.S. and globally.
- ASSE itself has undergone a name change. The Society was founded in 1911 as the United Association of Casualty Inspectors and later became the American Society of Safety Engineers.

#### Key Research Learning – Our Logo

- Research participants had mixed perceptions of the current logo. Overall the direction from that research led us to leverage the legacy and equity in the current brand while addressing concerns raised by members.



#### Positive Perceptions

- Familiar/well known
- Stands out
- Conveys a meaning of safety
- Cross/plus sign
- Green color
- Shield shape

#### Negative Perceptions

- Bland/outdated
- Arrangement of the ASSE letters
- Religious concerns about the cross (specifically in certain geographies)
- Yellow in combination with the green

### Brand identity Recommendation



## AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

**Working together for a safer, stronger future.**

#### What is the logic behind this recommendation?

- The research revealed that the shield has a lot of strength and is a tie to the origination's heritage and legacy, so that's a bold element that you see maintained here.
- The lines intersecting in the center of the shield do not have a literal interpretation, but are meant to be a visual metaphor for an inclusive organization - representing ideas and communities coming together.
- The lines intersecting in the center of the shield are meant to be a visual metaphor for an inclusive organization - representing diversity, ideas and communities coming together.
- Research participants expressed concerns about the yellow color in the existing logo. A team of design experts at the brand agency evaluated and introduced the lime green color to replace the gold to move the Society toward a more vibrant, modern perception as opposed to an outdated, bland perception.
- Removing the letters from the shield itself reflects the research finding that members do not support naming the Society with an acronym. With the recommended logo, the organizational name is intentionally included in its entirety with more weight and emphasis on the words "safety professionals."

- The last thing you'll see here is a new tagline. We tested a variety of taglines- factual, aspirational and many others. The tagline that far exceeded the others is "working together for a safer, stronger future." The research further revealed members' desire that communications be emotionally driven when appropriate. This preference really shows the passion and heart behind safety, which sometimes can be perceived as overly rigid. The research revealed that both members and non-members really connected with the emotion in this tagline.

### **Where are we today?**

On January 31, 2017, ASSE's Board of Directors moved to adopt the new name and brand identity elements. This recommendation will move forward to the House of Delegates meeting at SAFETY 2017 on June 19, as a motion to change the Society's name and logo.

For the name change, should the House pass that motion, a membership vote is needed as well. ASSE has plans in place to take that vote.

### **What we need from you**

1. We would like your feedback.

This decision should not be taken lightly and we want you and your constituents to have the information you need to make an informed decision.

- A microsite will be available by the end of March. It will provide details regarding the research-based branding process, the findings and the reasoning behind our recommendations.
- Members will have the ability to share their thoughts and feedback to the proposed recommendations.
- Our process was vetted and included member and non-member input.

2. We would like your support.

In the upcoming weeks/months, each of you will have the opportunity to talk with your colleagues about this process and pending vote.

- Help us spread the word. Encourage feedback and dialogue. And help keep the conversation positive and constructive.

### **How to get involved**

Contact your chapter delegate to share your thoughts. Visit your chapter website for delegate contact information (<http://www.asse.org/membership/findachapter/>) or contact ASSE staff to request it ([chapterservices@asse.org](mailto:chapterservices@asse.org)).

Contact ASSE headquarters to share your thoughts at [brandfeedback@asse.org](mailto:brandfeedback@asse.org).