Case Study: **Environmental Branding**

COMPANY DESCRIPTOR

This successful nonprofit has a 100-year history of building stronger families for those facing financial, health, relationship, and other critical challenges. Its counseling and life-skill services assist individual adults, parents, veterans, and youth.

THE NEED

The organization's new executive director knew that like other social service organizations, the intake process is the first line of contact affecting client experience. Confident of its services' positive impact once initiated, she was intrigued by the objective evaluation Experienced Messaging™ could provide for how messages of hope, compassion, and a commitment to client self-sufficiency were experienced by new clients, both over the phone and in person.

To distinguish the quality of services once rendered, a random survey of 25 existing clients was conducted, scaling their overall impression of the organization from what inquiring contacts experienced. The results included an impressive 92% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they had a positive view of both the organization and its staff. Once receiving services, clients also felt respected, safe, involved in their growth process, and experienced transformation in their individual and family lives. The evaluation process then turned to what *potential* clients experience when contacting the organization for the first time. Anonymous Experience Assessors were assigned to seek services by phone and as walk-in inquiries, all the way through to scheduling an appointment. Newman & Newman also conducted an in-person environment evaluation of the facility to see if it conveyed the organization's intended messages.

Results confirmed leadership's suspicions of experiential inconsistencies. Scheduling obstacles and lack of empathy experienced by some Anonymous Experience Assessors were in stark contrast to the quality of the organization's professional services. Though the facility's cleanliness and maintenance were good, messages communicated by its environment did not support the organization's intentions. For example, the waiting area was described as impersonal and generic, with no visual ties to the brand's identity, overall mission or services.

Recommendations for improved Experienced Messaging™ included modifications of intake communications and the facility's environment for reinforcement of the transformative expectations established by the organization's messaging and substantiated by its outstanding professional services.

RESULTS

- A reassigning of employee responsibilities was conducted to better match staff skills with goals of the intake process experience.
- Substantial yet cost effective revisions were made to the organization's waiting room, incorporating brand graphics, flat-screen display of valuable services, mission and programs information, improved lighting and donation of upgraded furniture for a more modern and crisp aesthetic, along with large framed photographs of families reflecting the hopeful impact of its services.
- Signage with the organization's logo was installed throughout the complex to assist with wayfinding and improved name association with services received.
- The intake department was moved from its original space adjacent to the lobby to a more private and secure location.