

X Medical Center (XMC) Branding Analysis Report

I. Preface. This report was prepared as the first step in articulating XMC's brand identity. The report consists of three parts:

- A) **The Situation in Healthcare.** A summary of national and local influences.
- B) **The Competitive Landscape.** A summary of the competitive influences.
- C) **The Institution.** A summary of the internal situation, especially from the perspective of communications and marketing.

Background and observations came from four sources:

- **Private interviews** with 33 of XMC's board members, senior executives, marketing/communications staff members, physicians and consultants. All conversations lasted at least one hour, some two or three hours. Excerpts from the interviews appear in this report as italicized quotes without attribution.
- **Source documents**, including collateral materials, reports and plans created by XMC, its partners and consultants, other healthcare analysts, the competition, and government agencies. Excerpts from these documents appear in this report as italicized quotes *with* attribution.
- **Media**, including the Internet and the local and national press. We surveyed the media to see how it reflects what stakeholders know about XMC, its competition and healthcare itself. Excerpts from our findings appear in this report as italicized quotes, usually with attribution.
- **XMC Board meetings and retreats.** We attended three: Strategic Planning Retreat (Date); Foundation Board Meeting (Date); Board Meeting (Date)

II. Powerpoint summary presented to XMC's leadership.

III. The Current Situation in Healthcare

- A) **Executive Summary of the Situation in Healthcare.** This section is an exploration of the context within which XMC currently finds itself. A clear picture of this environment will help shape a brand identity that has both relevance and staying power.

XMC's brand identity has three main goals: (Proprietary information removed)
We begin with a snapshot of the situation, followed by our own observations on the evidence. After that comes an expanded summary, and then substantiation for each point.

In brief, the situation in healthcare today is characterized by:...(Proprietary information removed)
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In such a situation, XMC's brand identity must: (Proprietary information removed)

B) Observations about the current situation in healthcare. Taken separately, any of the factors described above would be challenging enough, but taken together, they have the potential for what some observers are calling a “perfect storm.”

- (Proprietary information removed)
- Among the key issues, (Proprietary information removed) has the highest visibility and relevance to XMC.
- In (the local community),... (Proprietary information removed).
- (Proprietary information removed)
- At XMC, physicians and patients are reporting an experience that is largely... (Proprietary information removed)
- Given these circumstances, the potential exists for XMC to face a situation in which it is perceived as... (Proprietary information removed)
- The general public has not begun to notice the following circumstances....(Proprietary information removed)

C) Relevant observations about the financial and systemic stability in the healthcare system....(Proprietary information removed.)

D) Relevant observations about the stability of the healthcare workforce....

- (Proprietary information removed.)
- Changes in caregiver/patient relationships: (Proprietary information removed.)
- (Proprietary information removed.)
- (Proprietary information removed.)

E) Relevant observations about the changing demographics of the healthcare consumer... (Proprietary information removed).

F) Relevant observations about the concerns of healthcare consumers... (Proprietary information removed)

To address the concerns of healthcare consumers, XMC's brand identity must ... (Proprietary information removed).

G) Issues specific to XMC's regional catchment area (Proprietary information removed.)

XMC's brand identity must strengthen the perception throughout (its regional catchment area) that XMC is...(Proprietary information removed).

H) Issues specific to XMC's local market area (Proprietary information removed)

I) Other Stories to Watch.

Most of the issues described above will still be around in five years. What follows is a list of other stories that could easily gain momentum in the coming months. Far from exhaustive, this list of early warning signs could prove useful in scenario planning and in developing story ideas to pitch to the media.

XMC's brand identity must strengthen the sense among (local residents) that XMC is...(Proprietary information removed.)

J) Substantiation (10 pages of proprietary information removed.)

IV. XMC's Competitive Landscape

A) Executive Summary of XMC's Competitive Landscape. Competition can make a medical center stronger. It implies choice, which consumers appreciate. It heightens awareness, reminding people of the role hospitals play in their lives. Competition also sharpens the leadership's collective thinking; it creates a sense of urgency, brings points of differentiation to the forefront and inspires creativity.

What follows is an exploration of the competitive landscape in which XMC currently operates. We begin with a snapshot of the landscape and what it means for branding, followed by our observations. After this comes a one-page summary of the competition, backed up by a longer examination of each institution, including a SWOT analysis and a sampling of press coverage from each. Throughout, we illustrate with opinions expressed by XMC leaders during interviews for this study.

In brief, XMC's competitive landscape looks like this:... (Proprietary information removed.)

Given this competitive landscape, XMC's brand identity must...(Proprietary information removed.)

B) Observations

- XMC's competition—at least for market share and personnel—breaks down into these broad categories: ...(Proprietary information removed.)
- Each of these categories has its trademark value proposition for consumers. These are: ...(Proprietary information removed.):
- Among these categories, XMC is...(Proprietary information removed.).
- Overall, XMC competes for: ...(Proprietary information removed.)
- (Proprietary information removed.)
- Within and among the three categories of provider, XMC competes for audiences that include... (Proprietary information removed.), and on multiple levels within these audiences. For example: ...(Proprietary information removed.)
 - The main competition for primary care patients is ...(Proprietary information removed.), whereas the main competition for tertiary care is ...(Proprietary information removed.).
 - The main competition for young physicians is ...(Proprietary information removed.), whereas the competition for experienced physician/researchers is ...(Proprietary information removed.).
 - The main competition for nurses is ...(Proprietary information removed.).
 - Competition for the hearts and minds of (local residents) might very well come from...(Proprietary information removed.), given their message of ...(Proprietary information removed.), yet the main competition for philanthropy, which also depends on hearts and minds, is clearly ...(Proprietary information removed.).
- Thus, the competitive landscape is a jumble of conflicting and overlapping interests.
- In such an environment, no one should be surprised that, when asked to name XMC's primary competition, interviewees gave remarkably varied answers: ...(Proprietary quotations removed.)
- In general, however, leaders at XMC tend to see ...(Proprietary information removed.) as the Medical Center's main competition—if not always for patients, then certainly for attention and respect.
- Leaders at XMC see...(Proprietary information removed.)... as its main point of differentiation from the competition. XMC insiders overwhelmingly believe that quality should be XMC's core message.
- Using this as a starting point, the three leading competitors (in the local market) would be distinguished as follows: ...(Proprietary information removed.).
- Unfortunately, the distinctions of quality care are not as clear as they once were, and they could blur even further as time passes. Now that younger physicians are increasingly seeking the security of full employment, ...(Proprietary information removed.). As a result, in time, ...(Proprietary information removed.). In other words, the competition is attempting to close the gap on quality.
- A brand should have a long shelf life. If the competition manages to catch up in quality, an identity based on quality alone will become less of a perceived asset for XMC. As one interviewee put it, ..."Proprietary quotation removed."

- Moreover, hospitals everywhere have been touting the quality of their care for as long as there have been hospitals. The message may have lost its power—perhaps not to XMC insiders, but to everyone else.
- Of all XMC’s competitors, ...(Proprietary information removed.) is the most clearly differentiated and...(Proprietary information removed.)
- An identity tied to ...(Proprietary information removed.) would be ill suited to XMC as long as ...(Proprietary information removed.). Perhaps this is why interviewees were split on their opinion of ...(Proprietary information removed.). We think.....(Proprietary information removed.).
- Board members often express anxiety that ...(Proprietary information removed.) Staff members express frustration that ...(Proprietary information removed.).
- Some interviewees see XMC’s lack of ...(Proprietary information removed.) as an insurmountable barrier to media coverage; they assume that XMC “*will never be able to compete*” with ...(Proprietary information removed.). Some patients assume the best care is always found at ...(Proprietary information removed.).
- From a branding standpoint, one other healthcare institution must share the stage with XMC’s competitors: ...(Proprietary information removed.). Numerous interviewees mentioned (this institution) in this context.
- In general, competition exists with (this institution) by virtue of: ...(Proprietary information removed.) This is not to suggest that ...(Proprietary information removed.). Rather, ...(Proprietary information removed.)
- From a branding perspective, XMC’s leaders do not think that ...(Proprietary information removed.) serves this medical center well. They almost unanimously expressed concern on this point.
- Elsewhere, XMC would be wise to keep an eye on institutions currently seen as posing little or no threat, notably...(Proprietary information removed.). (This institution) survives primarily by selecting highly specific niches in which to excel. This strategy contracts, and therefore strengthens, their brand recognition. Every coffee shop sells coffee; Starbucks focuses just on coffee and goes global. By narrowing what they do, (Proprietary information removed.) grows stronger.
- There is also competition from (Proprietary information removed.). No single entity of this type stands out; rather, it is the collective presence of this large and growing cottage industry that deserves recognition. XMC’s (Proprietary information removed.) is a valuable point of differentiation that is now taken almost completely for granted by the leadership.
- The absence of any for-profit hospital in (XMC’s market area) frees XMC from that source of competition in the foreseeable future.
- (Proprietary information removed.) is seen as a “*natural boundary*” to competition. With the occasional exception of (Proprietary information removed.), ...are not perceived at all as competitors with XMC. On the other hand, interviewees reported that physicians, nurses and patients ...(Proprietary information removed.)..

C) Summary of XMC’s Competition in three categories of institution

- The first category of XMC's competition includes the following institutions...(Proprietary information removed.).
- The second category of XMC's competition includes the following institutions...(Proprietary information removed.).
- The third category of XMC's competition includes the following institutions.....(Proprietary information removed.).
- In addition to other hospitals and medical centers, XMC faces competition—not necessarily for patients but for visibility, credibility and respect—from what are perhaps less obvious, and often less concrete, but no less significant sources. These categories include...(Proprietary information removed.)

D) The Competition's Branding. The following table compares XMC's competition by brand identity and key messages. (Proprietary table of data removed).

E) Mission Statements of Leading Medical Centers. The mission of a medical center articulates its unifying forces, the reasons it exists. Below we have brought together the mission statements of a number of institutions that might be viewed as XMC's equal in various ways. Given the conversations underway at XMC about its own mission statement, this comparison may provide food for thought. (Mission statements removed.)

F) Profiles of competing institutions. Seven other institutions compete with XMC for market share, visibility and support. (The following information was provided for each of these seven institutions but is omitted here:)

- Contact Information
- Brief History
- Thumbnail Sketch
- Current Financial Picture
- Summary Data (Number of physicians, acute-care beds, etc.)
- Target patient population
- Visibility
- Brand Identity in a Word
- Advertising Tagline ...(Reactions from XMC interviewees removed)
- Primary messages
- Mission Statement
- Self Image
- Website characteristics
- Observations about current ad campaign
- Points of pride and XMC interviewees' reactions to them.
- Summary of Strategic Plan
- How XMC thinks (this institution) perceives XMC
- *How XMC perceives* (this institution) (XMC Interviewees' quotes removed)

- SWOT Analysis
- Selected press coverage for this institution

V. XMC's Institutional Situation

A) This section of the report is an exploration of the *internal* situation at XMC as it relates to branding and communications. We begin with a snapshot of the institution, followed by observations and a SWOT analysis. After that comes a summary of XMC's current marketing/communications program and recent press coverage. This material is most meaningful when studied in relation to the Situational and Competitive sections of this report.

In brief, XMC's internal situation looks like this: (Proprietary information removed)

Given this internal situation, XMC's brand identity must accomplish the following: (Proprietary information removed.)

B) Summary, Observations and Questions About:

- XMC's current relationship to its own history (Proprietary information removed.)
- XMC Name recognition (Proprietary information removed.)
- XMC's current advertising (Proprietary information removed.)
- XMC marketing, communications and public affairs staff (Names removed here.)
- Interviewees' perceptions of XMC's mission (Proprietary information removed.)
- Interviewees' perceptions of XMC leaders (Proprietary information removed.)
- Interviewees' perceptions of the media's relationship to XMC. (Proprietary information removed.)
- Interviewees' perceptions of press coverage of XMC's labor relations (Proprietary information removed.)

C) **XMC Communications SWOT Analysis** (Proprietary information removed.)

D) **XMC's Self-Perception** (Upside, Downside and Unknowns) (Proprietary information removed.)

E) **Physicians' Perceptions of XMC** (Upside, Downside and Unknowns) (Proprietary information removed.)

F) **Patients' Perceptions of XMC** (Upside, Downside and Unknowns) (Proprietary information removed.)

G) **Summary of XMC's Audiences** (Proprietary information removed.)

- H) **Summary of XMC's Markets.** By geography (Local versus regional. Also by neighborhood.), by service line, and by demographics and affinity groups. (Proprietary information removed.)
- I) **Summary of XMC's Current Marketing Strategy.** This is presented in relation to three "rings" on a bull's eye: Outer Ring (Regional Market), Middle Ring (Local Market), and Inner Ring (Internal Communications).

The following proprietary information was provided for the Outer and Middle Rings but is omitted here: The goal of communications in this market, the message, communications strategy, primary focus of recent marketing, activities, call center processes referrals, and results

(The following proprietary information was provided for the Inner Ring but is omitted here:) The goal and strategy for XMC's internal communications, and observations about the leadership's satisfaction with this strategy.

- J) **Summary of XMC's Marketing/ Communications Program** (Omitted here.)
- K) **Summary of XMC Periodicals and other Regular Communication Vehicles** (Omitted here.)
- L) **XMC Marketing/Communications Staff** (List of staff omitted.)
- M) **Official XMC Media Relations Annual Report** (Proprietary report omitted.)
- N) **Examples of Media Coverage** (Proprietary information omitted. This included summaries of, and observations about, recent media coverage of XMC personalities, patient stories, obituaries, and its strategic progress, labor relations, social events, medical/surgical advances, and other highlights by service line.)