



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Powerful ideas for a healthier world

Inspiring Donors for Harvard's School of Public Health

An Aspirational Brand helps break fundraising records



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BRAND NARRATIVE AND CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES: Brand research and development, brand manual, capital campaign framework

Challenge

When Harvard University embarked upon the most ambitious capital campaign in the history of higher education, its School of Public Health aimed to raise [\\$450 million](#). To achieve that ambitious goal, the school would have to reach a whole new audience of potential donors who knew little about the school or the complex field of public health. Dean Julio Frenk asked the Hattaway team to help the 100-year-old institution create a new narrative about public health and Harvard's unique position in the field. He needed a brand for the school that would authentically represent its values and speak to all of its stakeholders, while inspiring and engaging new donors.

“The way in which we communicate plays an incredibly significant role in our success in raising money.”

— Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Harvard School of Public Health

Insight

The first step in creating an authentic, meaningful brand is to hear from people who know your organization best. Guided by the art and science of Aspirational Communication, the Hattaway team spoke with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and supporters about their aspirations and values. Our team used creative and linguistic exercises designed to generate words, images, and stories that shed light on what the school means to them, while producing ideas for new messaging and communications strategies that would resonate with potential donors and other stakeholders.

The vast majority of the people associated with the school were drawn to the field of public health because it equipped them to achieve a shared aspiration: improving the health of whole populations of people. Many saw the field of public health as a personal calling, not just a career. They felt empowered to succeed in that calling because of the school's legacy of leadership, excellence in research and education, and globally respected name.

Guided by this insight, we crafted a tagline and brand framework to guide the school's communications and capital campaign:

Brand Formula

Powerful Ideas for a Healthier World



These words represent the unique combination of ideas that motivate the school's audiences and set it apart in its field: Harvard educates leaders whose credentials are recognized around the world; the school's research produces ideas and information that inform and improve the practice of public health; and the results make a transformational difference in people's lives.

A one-sentence Unique Value Proposition articulated the school's positioning and purpose to donors who weren't familiar with the field:

Value Proposition

The Harvard School of Public Health brings together dedicated experts from every discipline to educate new generations of global health leaders and produce powerful ideas that can transform the lives of people everywhere.

"It's not fancy stuff. It's pure and it's authentic," said Samuel Harp, who served as Chief Marketing and Communications Officer. "Being really clear in those beliefs and motivations has played an important role in inspiring the (donors) who have gotten on board to support the mission."

The Aspirational Brand framework and Unique Value Proposition formed the foundation of a complete system for strategic, consistent, and effective communication across the entire school—with a Narrative Framework, Winning Words, Strategic Stories, and Proof Points that all worked together.

A Brand Manual equipped not only the communications and development teams, but every department, with research-based guidance and content to communicate with maximum motivating power.

Brand Narrative

Harvard School of Public Health bring together **dedicated experts** from **every discipline** to **educate new generations of global health leaders** and produce **powerful ideas** that can **transform the lives of people everywhere**.

Our students, faculty and staff come from around the world to **advance knowledge** and **create practical and cost-effective solutions** to complex public health problems based on **rigorous research**.

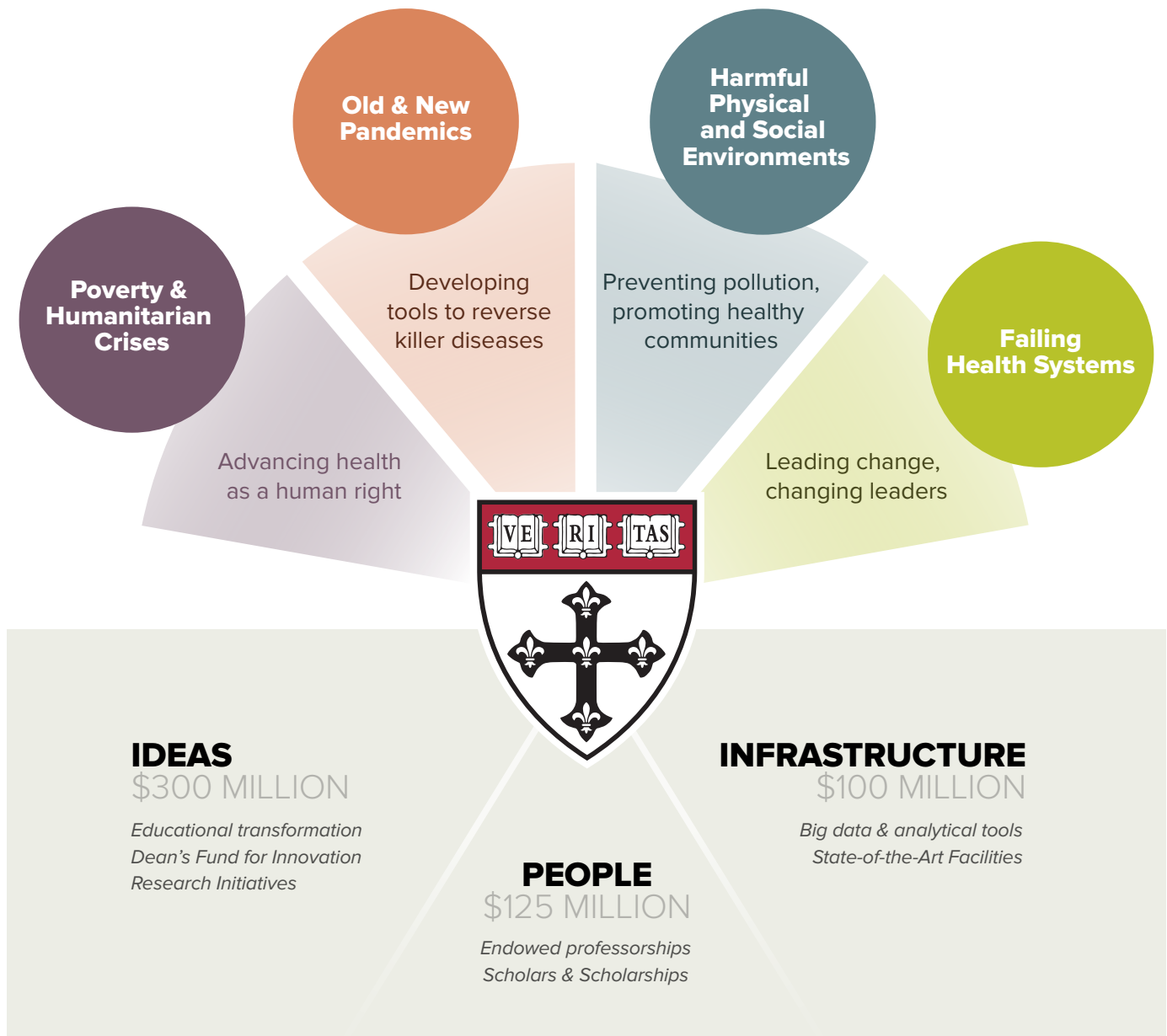
As a community of leading **researchers** and **educators**, we work together to take innovative ideas from the **laboratory to people's lives**—not only making scientific breakthroughs, but also working to change individual behaviors, public policies and health care practices.

Our work has greater global impact because of Harvard's unique opportunities for **learning and leadership**. HSPH offers access to an unparalleled **community of preeminent scholars and influential leaders** throughout the university and around the world, as well as an internationally **recognized and respected name**.

We're **proud of the contributions** made by our community of public health leaders over the **past 100 years and today**—breakthrough ideas that **empower people** everywhere to lead healthier lives.

After developing the new brand, Hattaway helped the Harvard team articulate a compelling case for the capital campaign, by positioning it as an opportunity for donors to help tackle four major threats to public health. People invest in what you aim to achieve, so framing capital campaigns in terms of ambitious goals helps to inspire donors, as shown in this visual framework:

Campaign Framework



The Harvard team branded and organized the capital campaign website in line with its new Aspirational Brand system and capital campaign framework.

The campaign launched with a [gala](#) on the school's 100th birthday, which brought the new brand to life by featuring public health leaders who graduated from Harvard and went on to lead transformative change.



The campaign website reflected the Aspirational Brand and allowed users to delve into giving-opportunities organized according to the goal-oriented campaign framework.

Impact

Together, the new brand narrative, goal-oriented campaign frame, and expertly executed capital campaign “inspired a number of donors to really make the leap—in some cases investing significant fractions of their net worth and really getting behind the school's mission,” according to Mr. Harp.

Within a year of launching the new brand along with its capital campaign, the school received the [largest gift](#) in the history of Harvard—and doubled its original goal by raising [\\$933 million](#).



Questions to consider:

- What challenges do you face in motivating new audiences to support your cause?
- Do your communications connect your cause to the aspirations of your audience?
- If contemplating a capital campaign, have you articulated an inspiring vision and goals?