

AMPLIFYDMC

Communications Toolkit

Annual Summer Conference, 2025



**MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION
OF WORKFORCE BOARDS**



How's Everyone Feeling Today?



Goals for Today

Provide an overview of the project process

Highlight insights from our conversations

Review the structure of the toolkit

Earlier this year, we began a **Communications Toolkit** project

The goal of the **MAWB Communications Toolkit** is to equip Minnesota's workforce boards with clear, consistent, and customizable messaging tools that:

- **Articulate the unique value** of local workforce boards to job seekers, employers, policymakers, and partners.
- **Support outreach and storytelling** by providing templates, message banks, and best practices for different audiences and platforms
- **Strengthen visibility and advocacy**, ensuring boards are recognized as essential connectors, community problem-solvers, and strategic workforce leaders.

Ultimately, the toolkit aims to reduce confusion, elevate impact, and create a more unified voice across Minnesota's workforce development ecosystem—while still allowing for **local adaptation and flexibility**.

Audiences are the people we are designing for

- A. Toolkit audiences:** these are the people who will be receiving and implementing the toolkit. These are primarily people with communication roles within workforce boards.

- B. Messaging audiences:** these are the people who will receive the messaging embedded in the toolkit. These key audiences identified in the interviews are jobseekers, youth (more broadly), employer partners, and legislators.



Throughout the process, we have followed a human-centered design approach...

Phase 1: Framing

Identify our goals, process, stakeholders, timelines, and ultimate outcomes for this project

Phase 2: Discovery

Gather insights from workforce board members, DEED, Labor, Nonprofits, and other stakeholders across Minnesota

Phase 3: Ideation

Review insights from the interviews, identify a common voice, and ideate the key components of the toolkit

Phase 4: Validation

Test, refine, and finalize messaging and tools.

Phase 5: Implementation

Roll out toolkit materials

June 1



Aug 30

We have conducted the interviews. Today, we are focused on Validation.

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June 1



Sept 12

In the discovery phase, we enjoyed conversations with people from across the sector and in Minnesota

1. **Angie Dahle** – Career Solutions, St. Cloud
2. **Carol Anderson** – Governor’s Workforce Development Board / Morrison County
3. **Carrie Bendix** – Workforce Development, Southwest Minnesota
4. **Elena Foshay** – Workforce Development, City of Duluth
5. **Eric Aamo** – Hennepin County Workforce Board
6. **Erin Larsen** – Apprenticeships, DEED
7. **Jeanna Fortney** – CareerForce, DEED
8. **Jinny Rietman** – Workforce Development, Inc. Southeast Minnesota
9. **Karissa Kucera** – Workforce Development, Duluth
10. **Katie McClelland** – Director, Governor's Workforce Development Board
11. **Rita Beatty** – Communications, DEED
12. **Scott Schulte** – MAWB President, County Commissioner, Employer
13. **Sue Wallace** – City of Minneapolis, Employment and Training
14. **Tammy Stark** – Career Solutions, St. Cloud
15. **Cate Duin** – MAWB Executive Director
16. **Deb Bahr-Helgen** – City of Minneapolis Employment and Training

Workforce boards deliver compelling emotional value

People need not only to know, but also to *feel*. When workforce board services work well, people feel **relief**, **confidence**, and **hope**.

"Services should feel inviting, familiar, and comfortable, like walking into a community hub rather than an institution."

"We are here to help them with their goals. Our staff care, and people can feel that it. That matters."

A helpful experience is more important than institutional clarity

The workforce ecosystem is incredibly complex. Fortunately, users are more focused on clarity of service and ease of access beyond the type of institution that provides it

“Job seekers shouldn’t have to worry about what layer they’re interacting with.”

“People want to know where to get help, more than if it’s MAWB or DEED or CareerForce. They might not know what those mean, other than they are places that will assist them.”

Workforce boards are still "the best kept secret"

Respondents consistently shared that awareness is still a key barrier to deeper impact and coverage. Most jobseekers and even employers don't know about workforce services until they are in crisis.

"We are kind of like salesmen of refrigerators. People don't look for us until they need us."

"We don't have this list of three things we tangibly do. That's one of the things we struggle with—how to make our value clear without oversimplifying."

Regional variations are real and meaningful

This variation isn't a challenge to overcome—it's a strength to embrace. Effective communication must allow for local customization within a shared statewide narrative, ensuring each board can speak to its unique community needs while still aligning with MAWB's collective goals.

"Every region has different goals, developed through strategy processes that include local employers."

"We are nimble. We develop whatever training program or workforce development solution that meets needs."

Workforce boards are strategically critical at the systems level

Local boards help balance local labor markets, bring in investments, convene key stakeholders, and manage economic change. They are not only service providers, but conveners and sharers of best practices that are needed for the wellbeing of the state. This is not communicated enough.

"The narrative is that we serve individuals. While this is true, the value of our systems-level work is often missed.

"It's very important that Legislators don't miss the view of our role in the system. We are critical not only this year and next, but also 30-50 years out".

Voice archetypes



Voice archetypes are a tool to shape **memorable, consistent, and emotionally resonant** communications.

- Archetypes are story patterns that feel instantly familiar
- They are *personality* or *role* that our campaign embodies in its storytelling
- They guide tone, voice, visuals, and emotional appeal
- Archetypes help people see *themselves* in our messaging

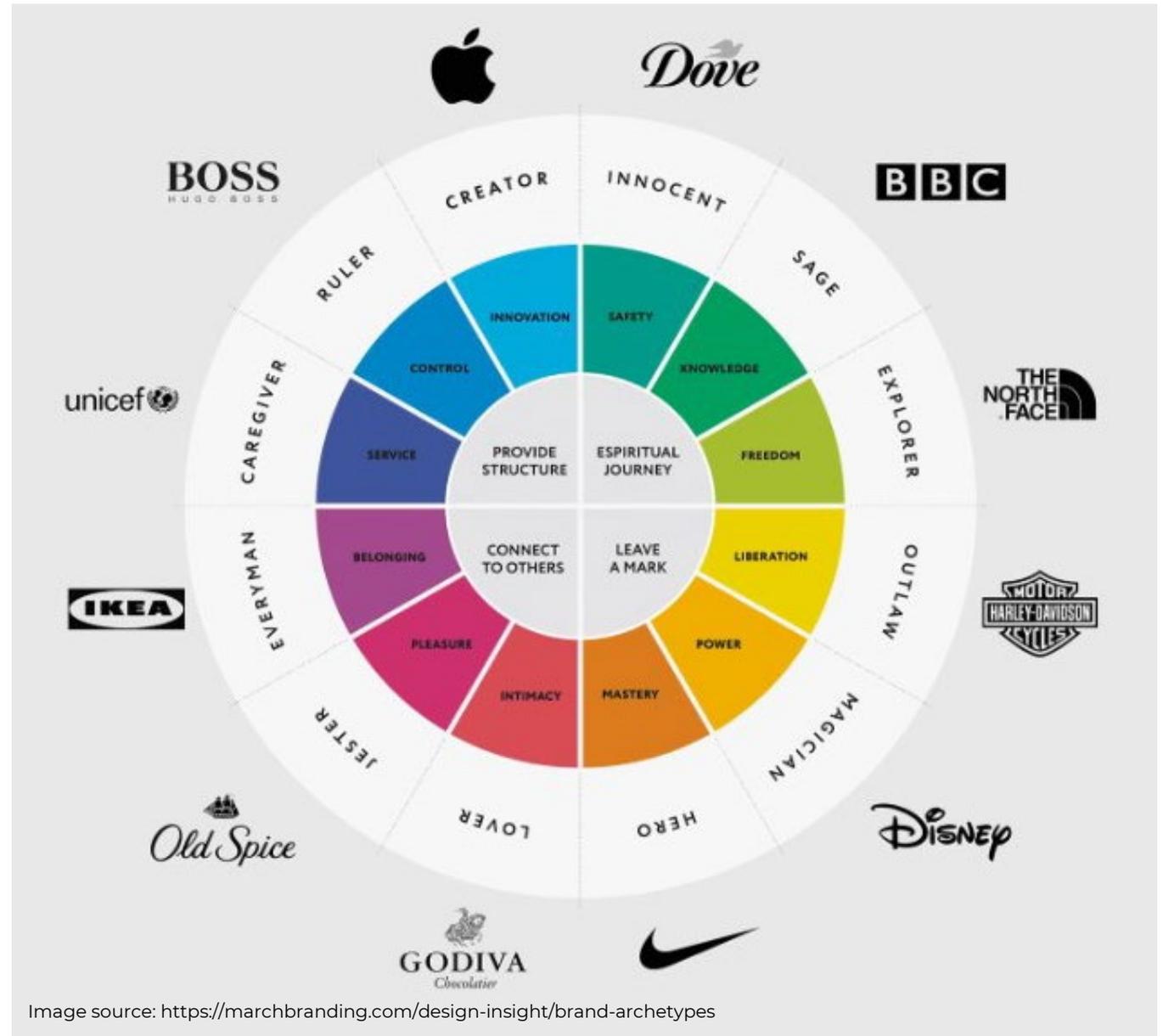


Image source: <https://marchbranding.com/design-insight/brand-archetypes>



Primary voice
The Sage

The Sage: Knowledgeable, Familiar, Authority. An expert guide who shares wisdom and provides clarity.

"Workforce boards are trusted guides, offering insight, clarity, and informed support to help you make smart decisions about your future. We bring deep knowledge of the job market and local opportunities so that you don't have to guess your way forward. Come with your questions; our expert staff will help you understand your options and chart a path that's right for you."

Secondary voices

- **The Caregiver**
- **The Creator**

The Caregiver: Compassionate, supportive, reassuring. A trustworthy source of support.

"Workforce boards provide stability, comfort, and practical help, especially during times of stress or uncertainty. We are here when you need us (and even before you do). You don't have to figure things out alone. Come in as you are, our staff will help you navigate your next steps and find the resources you need that fit your journey."

The Creator: Imaginative, energized, visionary. A builder who creates new pathways and turns possibilities into reality.

"Workforce boards are imaginative builders and partners in possibility, helping you design a future that fits your strengths, dreams, and goals. We don't believe in one-size-fits-all. Instead, we co-create practical, personalized solutions with you. Whether you're starting fresh or reimagining your path, our team is here to help you build something new, meaningful, and truly yours."

Toolkit components



I. Introduction & Purpose

- Welcome message from MAWB leadership
- Purpose of the toolkit
- Who it's for: workforce board staff, communications leads, directors
- How to use it: adaptable, not prescriptive
- Voice archetype overview: *Caregiver / Sage / Creator*

II. Foundational Messaging

- **What is a workforce board?** Plain-language explainer, relationship to other types workforce organizations
- **What we offer?** Overview of core services for each of the key audiences. User-centered language.
- **Why we matter?** Unique role as navigators, conveners, and safety net. Emotional + practical value (comfort, confidence, clarity, access). Equity and reach (no-cost, barrier-free access).

III. Messaging by key audiences

- Jobseekers
- Employers
- Legislators & policy-makers
- DEED & other ecosystem partners

IV. Storytelling & Impact Tools

- Elements of a good story
- Storytelling templates
- Sample stories

V. Communication calendar & campaign templates

- Template of yearly communications calendar
- Sample language for key moments and events (e.g. job fairs)
- Guidelines for common platforms / examples (e.g., social media)
- Image guidelines

VI. Contact and support

- How to get help using the toolkit
- Contacts for peer sharing or feedback

**We have a
[draft] toolkit!**

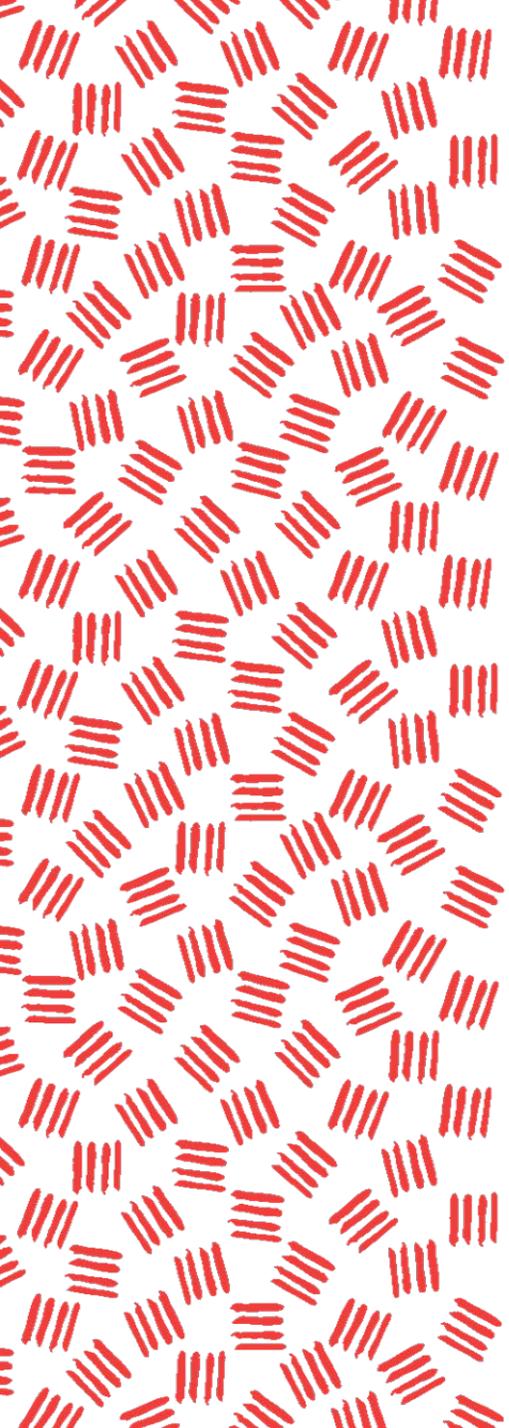


Timeline & next steps



Getting to implementation

1. **MAWB Summer Conference** Presentation – August 14
2. **All feedback provided to AmplifyDMC** – August 23
3. **Final copy sent to MAWB leadership** – August 29
4. **Final toolkit design by AmplifyDMC** – September 5
5. **Toolkit release** – September 12



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Thank you!



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