



redefining an employer brand

MassDOT HR is seeking to establish a clear set of employer values that define its actions, unite its employees, and define its brand. We aim to create a cohesive, united, and inspired culture at MassDOT, where all employees have a clear understanding of what we represent, our purpose, and how they contribute.

Our mission is what we do – the purpose of this project is to figure out who we are.

branding strategy plan

1

ASSESS

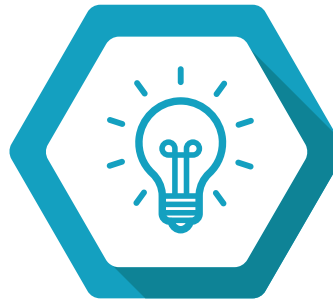
Conduct primary interviews with relevant stakeholders to understand the current situation.



3

IDEATE

Use research outcomes to develop several strategies targeting problem areas. Filter and refine as necessary.



5

EVALUATE

Develop metrics for success. After some time, evaluate, assess, and refine strategy approach as necessary.



2

ANALYZE

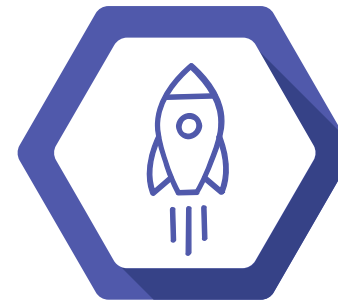
Examine collected data to discover groupings, trends, and pain points. Articulate brand values.



4

INCORPORATE

Unveil articulated values and begin deploying selected strategies in the workplace to unify brand.

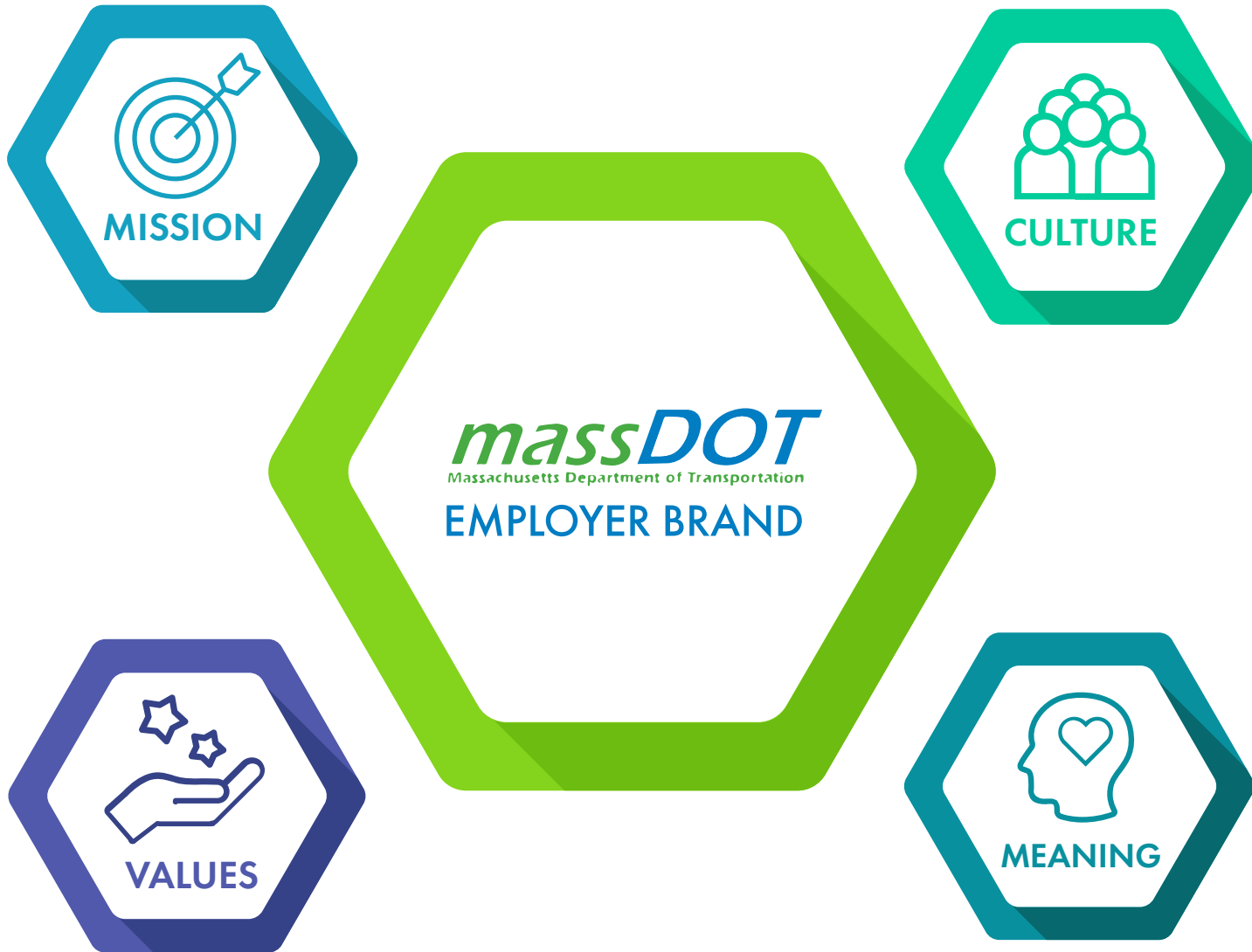


assess - interview questions

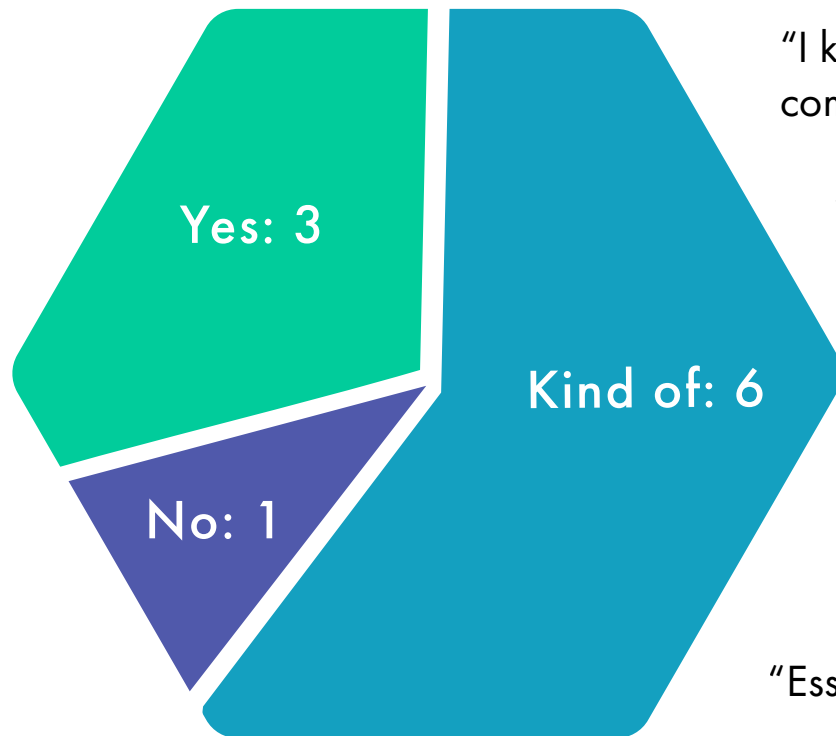
- 1** Are you familiar with our mission statement? Yes, No, or Kind Of?
- 2** Our mission statement reads, "Our mission is to deliver excellent customer service to people traveling in the Commonwealth by providing transportation infrastructure which is safe, reliable, robust and resilient. We work to provide a transportation system which can strengthen the state's economy and improve the quality of life for all."

Is this mission statement clear to you? Does it reflect the way you work, your peers work, or how you've experienced management to work?
- 3** How do you feel about the culture at MassDOT?
- 4** What should we do better than anybody else?
- 5** Walk me through a meaningful moment you experienced while working here. What happened? Why was that moment meaningful?
- 6** If you could choose 3 adjectives to describe our organization, what would they be? Why?
- 7** Are there values you expect MassDOT to embody? What are those values?

analyze - major themes



When asked if they were familiar with the mission statement...



"I know the slogan but not the mission statement... I might have come across it on a flyer or on an official report."

"I read it when the website was being migrated, but I don't remember it..."

"I kind of know it – I've seen it on the website."

"Kind of... I would assume it's to deliver excellent service regarding transportation."

"Essentially, it's to serve the Commonwealth...?"

After hearing it, when asked if the mission statement was clear...



Clear to me: 10

"It makes sense, hits all the key words."

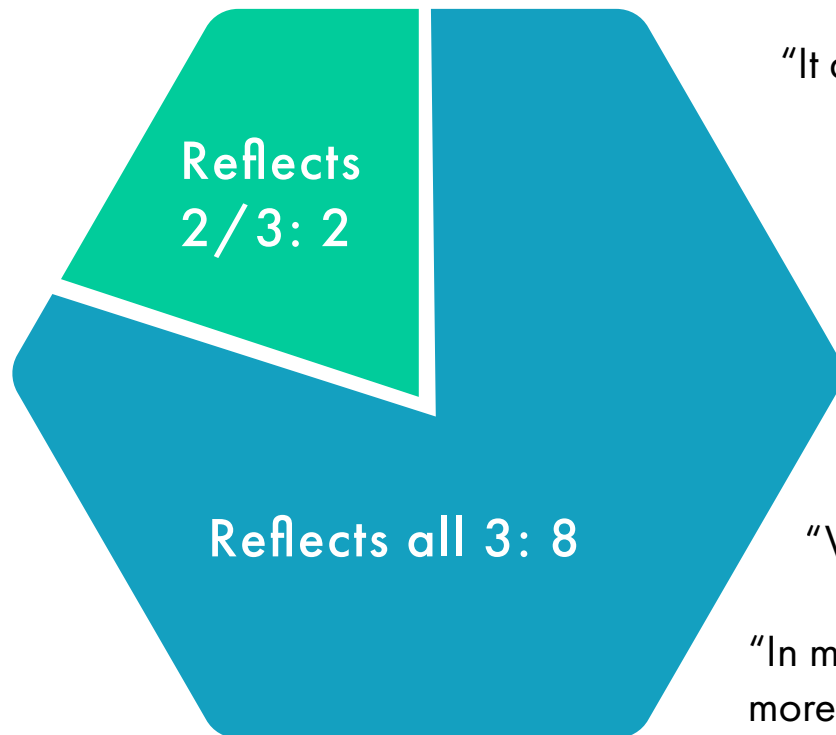
"Often [the mission statement] is an opportunity to refocus people - to say, 'Let's think about what we're trying to accomplish here.'"

"When people don't focus on the mission, it's a little bit of 'I don't know it' or 'I forgot what we're going for.'"

"I think sometimes people get too focused on a problem at hand that they lose sight of the bigger picture."

"Don't forget the greater purpose of what we're doing."

When asked if the mission reflected how they worked, how their peers worked, and how they thought management worked...



"It definitely reflects the way our peers work."

"Without the people who report to the chief's office, projects wouldn't get out the door, and then we wouldn't achieve our mission."

"Most managers that I have the opportunity to work with understand and do contribute."

"We have meaningful roles that accommodate our mission statement."

"In my role specifically, I think about ways to make our assets more resilient or robust."

theme 2 - culture





"We have a lot of employees who are dedicated to their job and doing the best they can, and they don't take it for granted."

"A lot of hard work and effort goes into the program."

"We have lots of dedicated employees that want to make sure projects are advertised...and make sure that our roads are being used during the winter season."

"A lot of us have remained in leadership roles 30 years later."

"The people here are committed to their jobs and hardworking."



“Based on our small office, it’s very passion driven.”

“The culture is a positive one – people care about what they do and the efforts that they put into daily tasks or projects.”

“I’ve watched the staff volunteer to do extra work on their own time because they care.”

“Lots of people who have been here for years and years aren’t just taking naps at their desk, they’re getting work done and staying late.”

“[The mission statement] reflects the way our peers work...We can even overhear their passion on phone calls.”



"We work as a team to get things done - no pointing fingers."

"It gives you that friendly work environment, that it's ok to talk to someone and ask about a question. If you ever had to approach them, they're approachable."

"It's a great culture – welcoming, people work together, they're helpful to each other."

"There's lots of teamwork and interacting with coworkers. People know a lot about each other..."

"I love to see that people are willing to help out when asked."



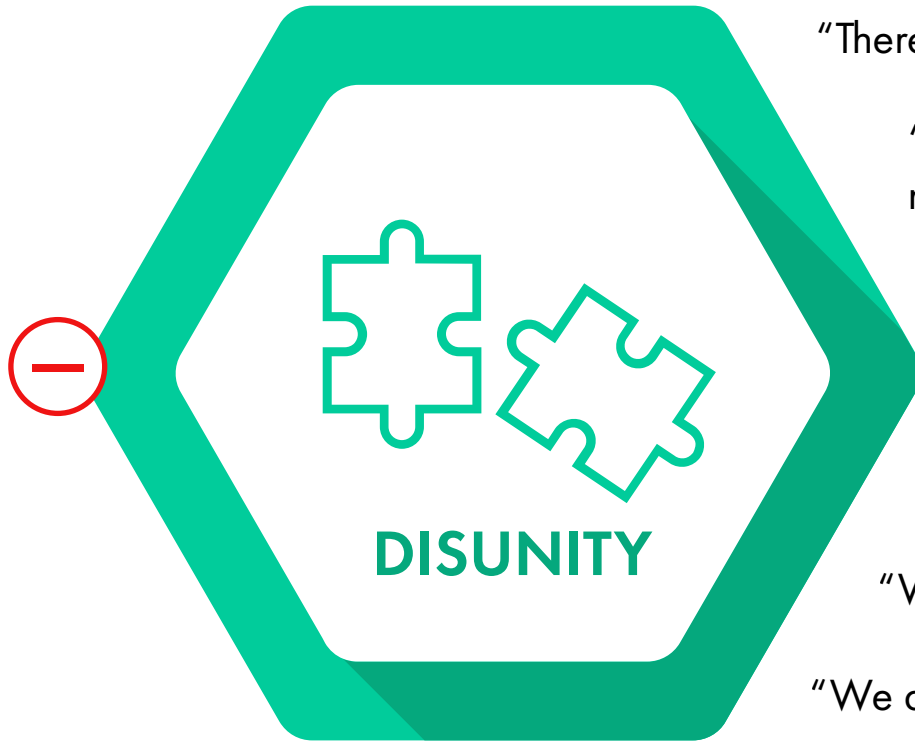
“Our management and leadership have listened to suggestions... embraced them and empowered staff to either change a process or improve something or take it in a new direction.”

“We have key managers and others who understand that MassDOT can be so much more than it historically has been...”

“The leadership is the best that we’ve seen in a long time – everyone respects the leadership we have and seems to want to step up and do more.”

“There’s a lot of support from the management they’re closest with.”

“It’s just great leadership – the administrator knows, people first.”



"There's very few people who communicate across divisions."

"There are still growing pains happening because there's not a lot of connection."

"It's hard to comment on the entire culture at MassDOT instead of just my division."

"I think that people outside don't really know who we are – we're somewhat obscure and confusing."

"We're complex – a lot of divisions that do different kinds of things."

"We don't get a lot of opportunity to collaborate with other divisions."



"We're good at hiring people out of college, but people leave. Some of the policies we're implementing today scare people away."

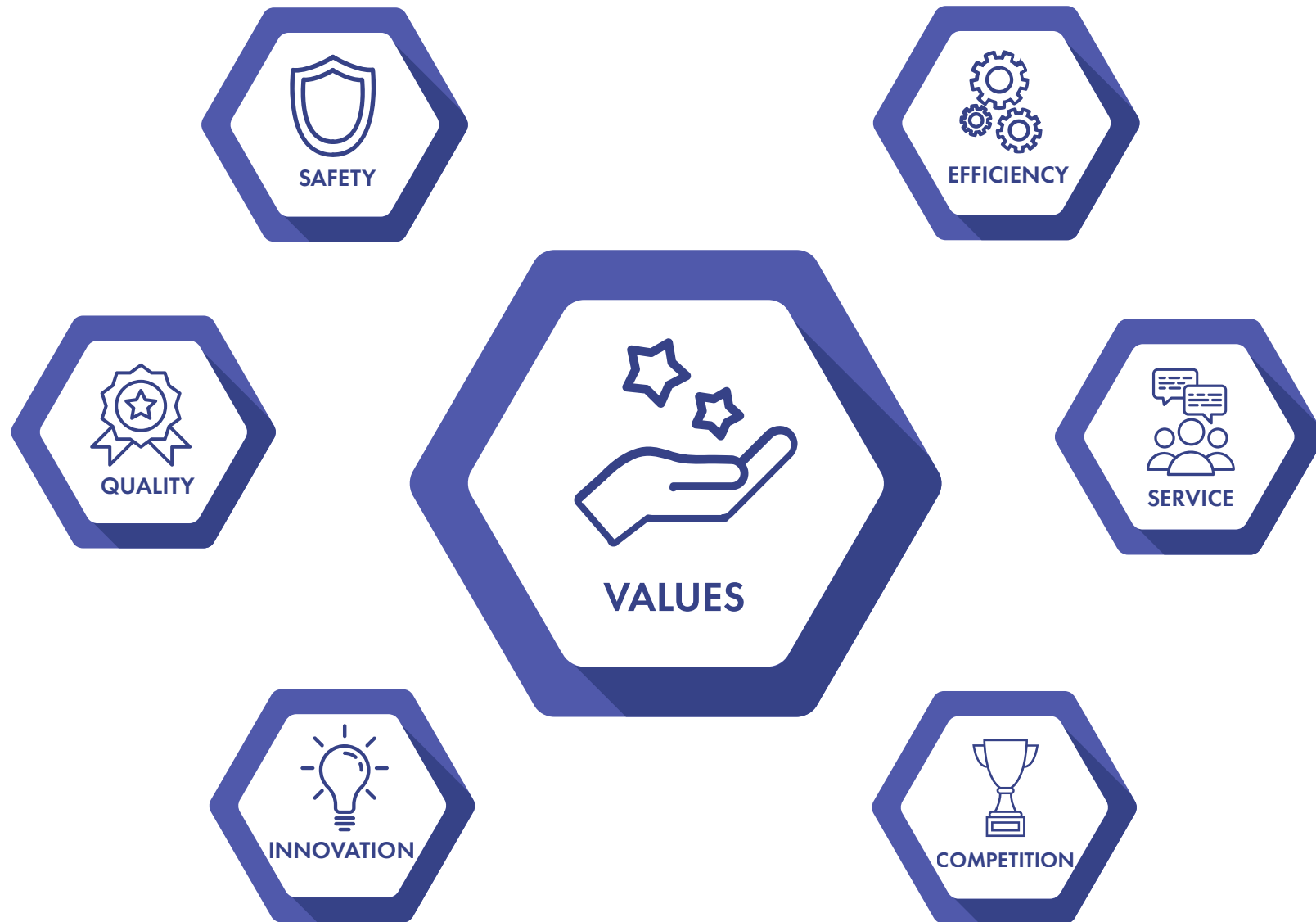
"There should be more guidance for career development so that employees don't switch to other organizations."

"MassDOT should be the best at providing the best transportation options to its own employees."

"We should make employees feel like 'the organization cares about me'."

"[MassDOT]...doesn't value the employees as resources."

theme 3 - values





"I expect MassDOT to continue to make sure the roads are safe for all."

"I think we thrive to excellence, to provide safe transportation, to make sure people are safe using our roads."

"We are caring – because we want people to get where they need to get to safely."

"We keep up the good work on making people travel safely."

"Our work is meaningful because we are making the roads safer for individuals."



"We should get people to where they're going better than anyone else."

"We should be the best at making travel as easy and seamless as possible for the constituents on all levels."

"We're becoming more inclusive – because we're now fixing the roads so that they suit bikers."

"Public service, safety, and efficiency - that's the core of everything that we do."

"We do more for non- motorized transportation."



“What I see is the delivery – MassDOT always thrives to deliver the project as it’s set out to be.”

“I trust that the DOT is going to do its best to deliver to make tools available for the public to use.”

“The employees have pride in their work and the outcome and the changes being made.”

“We should provide transportation better than anyone else.”

“Day to day at MassDOT, our service delivery level is high, but there’s so much more room for improvement.”



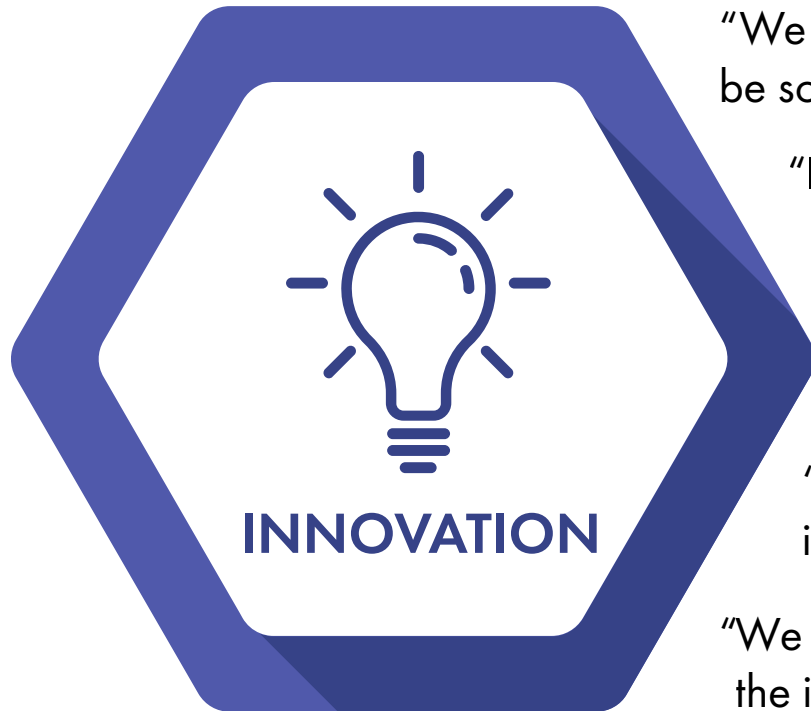
“The more we can treat people like customers and partners...the more communities can get behind our projects.”

“Challenges will be worked out better if we all have the thought in our mind of customer service.”

“We’re here to serve the public and making sure everyone’s aware of that at the end of the day. ”

“If the people we’re serving aren’t happy, take a minute to revisit them and make sure they understand the process.”

“We should go the extra mile...above and beyond what we’re asked to because the public expects it.”



“We have a few key managers [who] understand that MassDOT can be so much more than it historically has been.”

“In recent years we’ve become more of a center for innovation.”

“We’re dynamic...in more recent years we’ve been looking to upgrade a number of things. You name it, it’s been looked at and addressed.”

“[MassDOT] should leverage its resources to become a ‘leader in transportation now. People say it...but we’re not really there.”

“We should embrace the value of leadership/innovation within the industry.”



“We’re constantly competing with other state DOTs.”

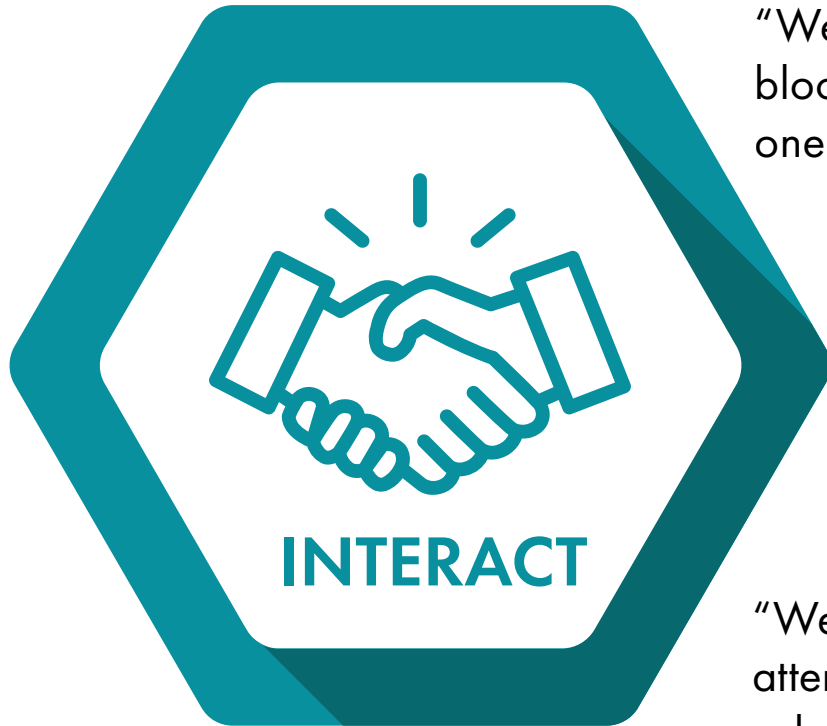
“I think we’re at the forefront of important initiatives on a national level.”

“We’ve developed guidelines and standards that other states copy, and present them nationally at conferences.”

“We’re doing [our mission statement] - we are the leaders in transportation.”

“We’re ranked high on a national basis compared to other states.”





“We interacted with...residents who were complaining about trees blocking their sight lines so they couldn’t see cars coming... That’s one of the things you don’t know until you’re physically there.”

“When you put the vest on, people know you’re from MassDOT... People...want to talk about their issues with you.”

“When you present a project and you see people say ‘yes, we really need that,’ and they provide their input, that’s really meaningful to me.”

“We have good agents who really take the time and make several attempts to contact the property owner and go back when they’re asked to come back.”



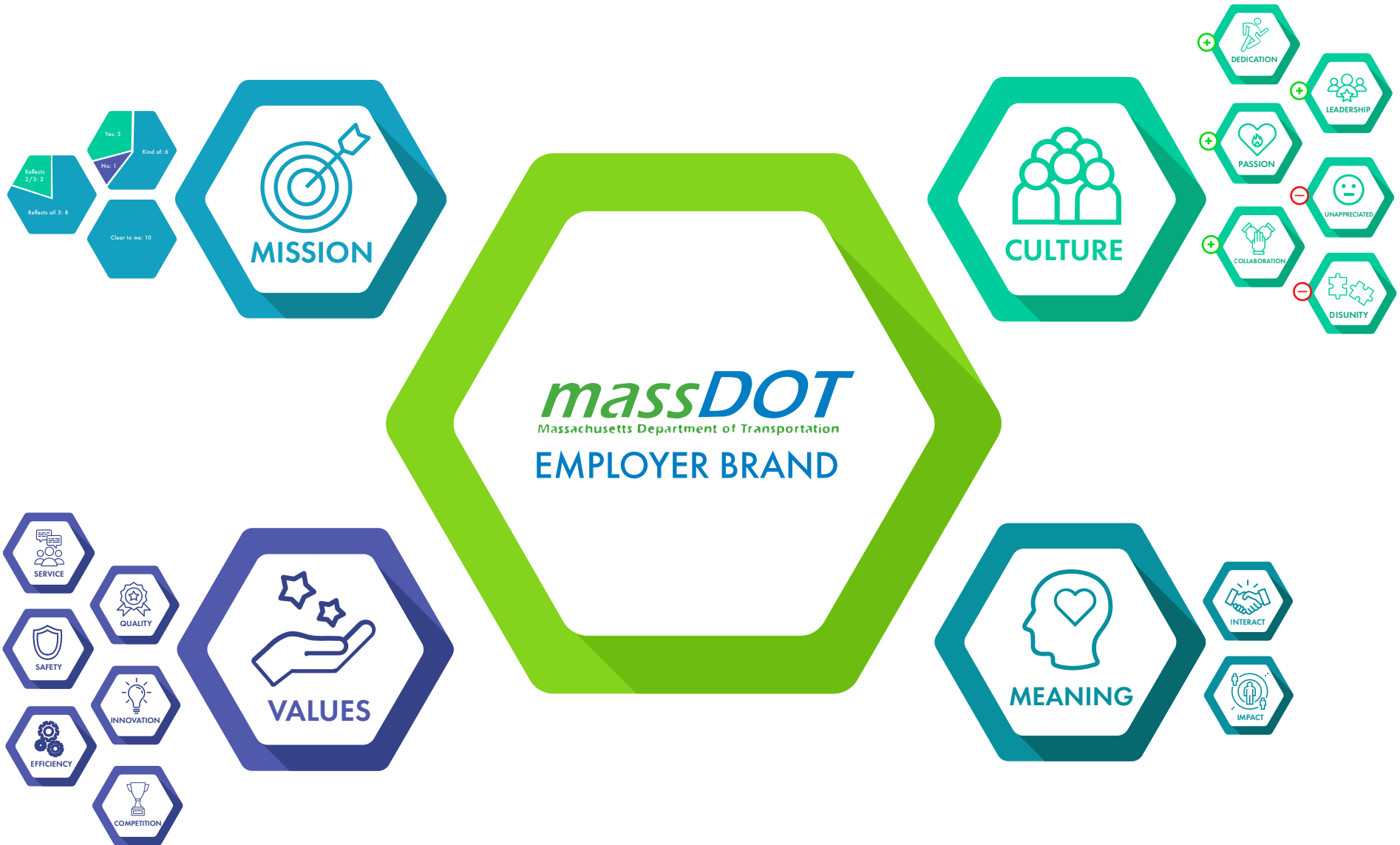
"I didn't think at the time the work I was doing was important or meaningful to anybody, but they were very grateful..."

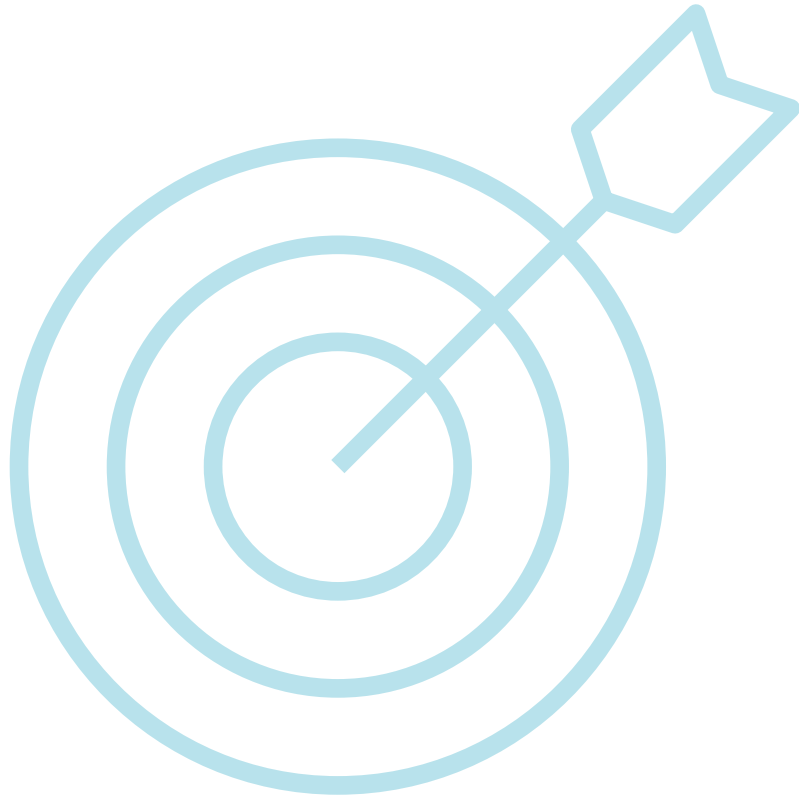
"Construction is meaningful when it's done in a way that's meaningful to the community."

"It put my job into a larger context and gave me more perspective on how I was helping people when I could see them face to face."

"A gentleman was excited about the project...it would clean up the area, put in a new bridge, and put a new light where his restaurant was...circumstances like that, where we would improve the area, are meaningful."

takeaways





MISSION

MassDOT's mission statement is not well known by many employees.

However, when asked, most employees find it clear and that it reflects the work that they, their peers, and management are doing on a day-to-day basis.



CULTURE

At its core, several aspects of the employee culture at MassDOT are overwhelmingly positive, focusing on dedication, passion, and collaboration, while empowered by strong leadership.

Negative aspects include lack of unity across divisions and feeling unappreciated by the organization.



MassDOT employees want the transportation services they help to provide to be safe, efficient, and of high quality.

At the organizational level, they are motivated by their commitment to public service, look forward to leading with innovation in the industry, and take pride in their competitiveness with other agencies.



At the end of the day, those who work at MassDOT derive the most meaning from a few things: the opportunity to interact with the constituents of Massachusetts that they serve, and understanding the impact that their work has, on both individuals and the wider community.

“We, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, are an organization comprised of dedicated, passionate, collaborative employees and strong leadership, and derive meaning from our impact on the communities of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We are committed to serve the public by providing safe, efficient, and quality transportation services, and to bettering ourselves by championing innovation and remaining competitive with our peer agencies.”

How do we effectively communicate our culture and values, both uniting us internally and presenting us externally as a valuable organization and employer of choice?



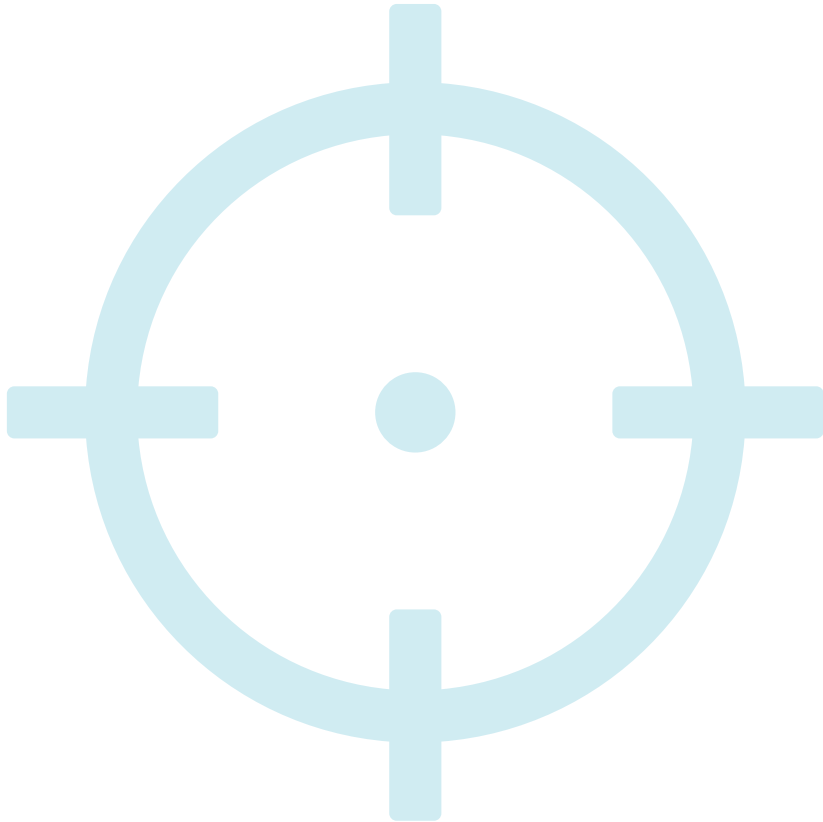
Part of articulating a brand is unifying and standardizing all branding touch points, encompassing both internal and external communications.

MassDOT's current brand style guide is several years outdated, with inaccessible, unwelcoming fonts and other elements that render it unusable. Therefore, it is largely ignored by both Communications and HR.



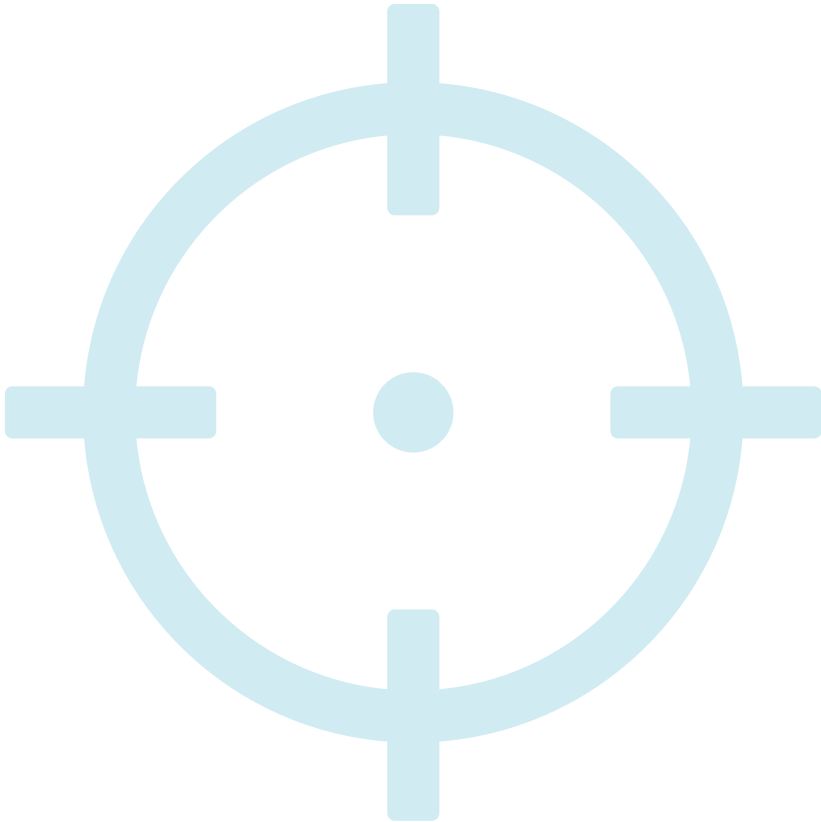
The style guide must be overhauled and updated for modern use, and enforced it in all communications, allowing us to make our brand feel cohesive both inside and out.

Similarly speaking, the quality and tone of all communications should be written consistently – professional, warm, and informative.



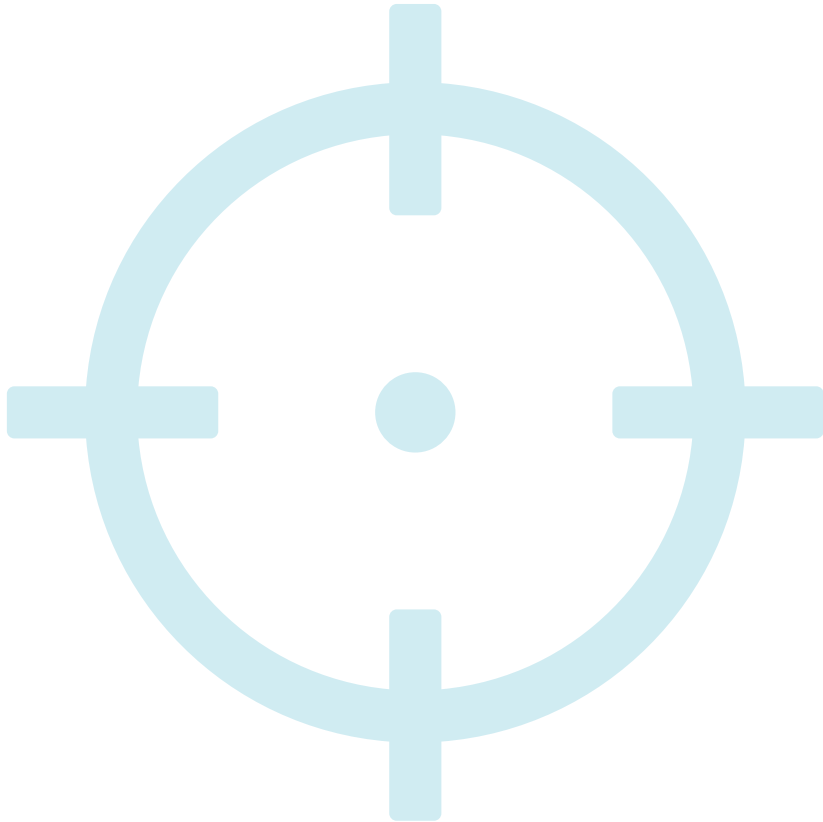
How are we achieving our mission statement?

Our current mission statement is strong and relevant. However, there is an opportunity here to refocus employees to center more explicitly on our mission, and think about the why of what they're doing.

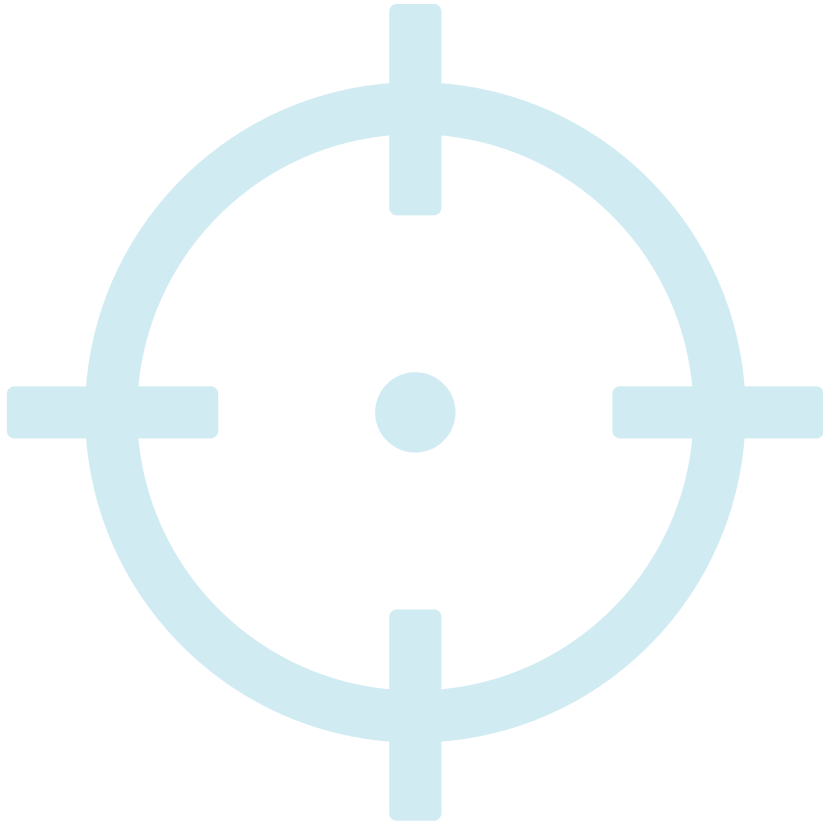


An internal campaign could be overseen by managers and supervisors to get employees to center their work more fully and explicitly on the mission statement - on the bigger picture, rather than their own small piece of it.

This could serve as a way to unite our employees across divisions over our shared mission and purpose.



Potential mission-oriented activities could look like leading a discussion about current and past team projects and analyzing how they fit in with the mission, or using the mission as a primary part of brainstorming future goals and decision making.



Another way to remind employees of our mission is to print signage that is prominently displayed in all offices, so employees walking in and out can be constantly reminded of what they should be working towards.



MassDOT has a thriving, positive employee culture that should be celebrated and encouraged.

The *MassDOT Spotlight Campaign* is a good start, but further measures could be taken to acknowledge employees more consistently and explicitly. These measures could also help to overcome disunity and feeling unappreciated.



One idea is an 'Employee of the Week' or 'Employee of the Month' series, either by division or across the whole organization.

Employees could be nominated by their peers or supervisors for an achievement or for a particular example of *MassDOT* excellence, like an action that upholds our values or exhibits the best qualities of our positive culture.



Another idea that would showcase leaders within the organization could be a campaign called **#MassDOTInspires** – an opportunity for employees to share how mentors and leaders within MassDOT have changed some aspect of their lives and work, from learning a new skill, to being inspired by their life stories, to being supported on a change or a new direction in a project.



To successfully communicate both its values and meaning, MassDOT has to overcome the negative perceptions that come with being a government agency - stereotypes like being old, slow, and out of touch.

Similarly, to present as an employer of choice, MassDOT must not seem like a boring, stagnant place to work, especially in order to attract younger potential employees.



An external social media marketing campaign that celebrates our achievements would advertise our strong value system, many of which directly contradict the negative stereotypes of government work.

Concrete examples of our value system at work would also be evidence of the meaning behind them - a strong, positive impact on communities.



Highlighting value areas could take a few different paths, value to value.

For safety and efficiency, how has MassDOT improved these aspects in our assets over time? Could there be statistics or interesting data visualizations that would help communicate these changes?



For quality, could there be interviews with engineers and other employees that show the behind-the-scenes labor it takes to ensure quality in their work?

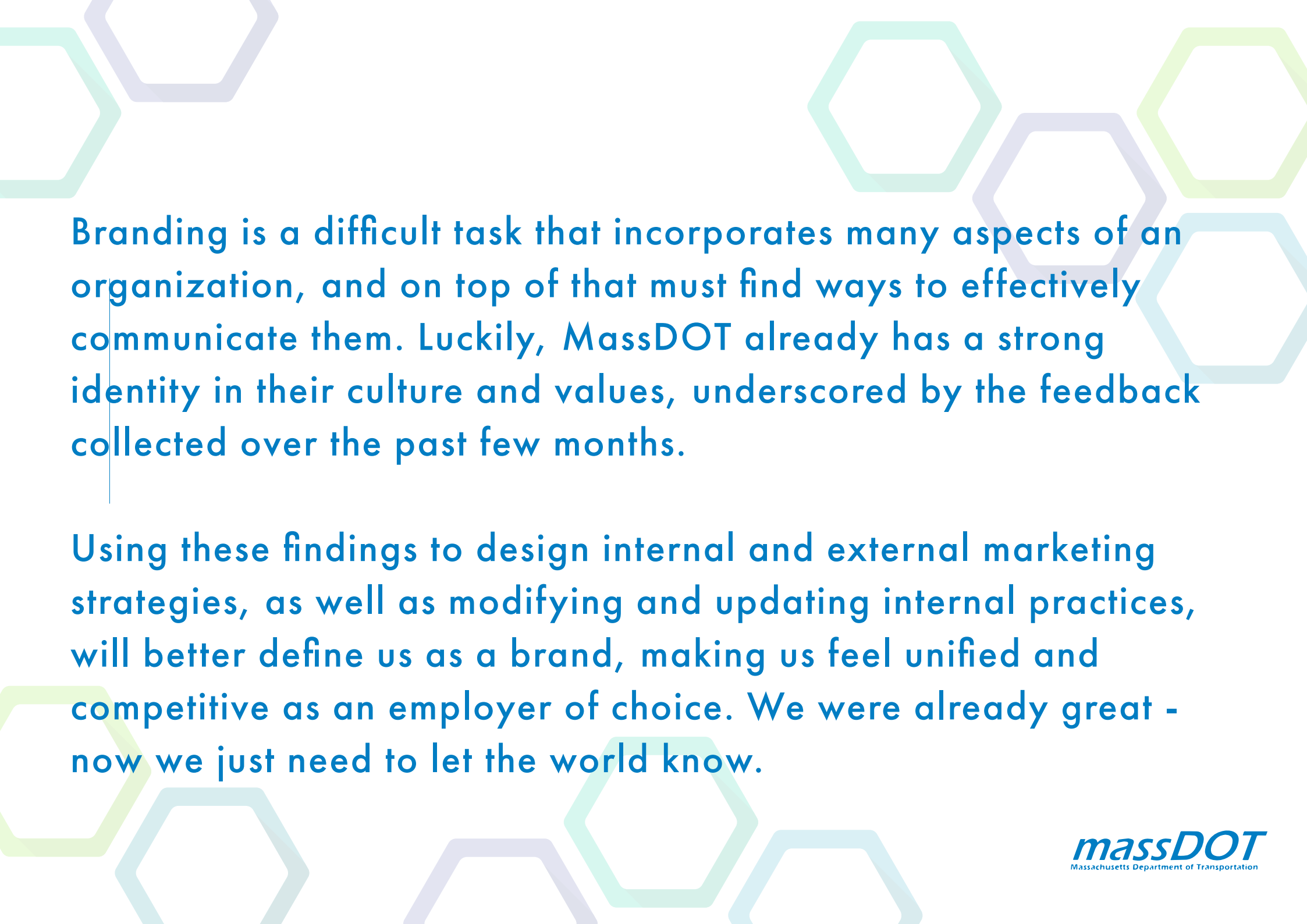
For service and community impact, are there case studies, success stories, and testimonials that we could gather and share, both on a larger, community scale and on a personal level?



For innovation, could we share the efforts MassDOT takes to stay fresh, like MassDOT Studio, research on new technologies, and high-level collaborations with academia?

For competition, could we be proud of MassDOT's position as a leading state agency, and advertise our success in rolling out new guidelines that are used nationwide, or our presentations at national conferences?





Branding is a difficult task that incorporates many aspects of an organization, and on top of that must find ways to effectively communicate them. Luckily, MassDOT already has a strong identity in their culture and values, underscored by the feedback collected over the past few months.

Using these findings to design internal and external marketing strategies, as well as modifying and updating internal practices, will better define us as a brand, making us feel unified and competitive as an employer of choice. We were already great - now we just need to let the world know.