

## **Taglines and ROPs - Setting Your Program Apart from the Rest**

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We are bombarded with information from every direction – TV, radio, internet, billboards, magazines – people must pick and choose what they notice. So, how can you get your ROP noticed?

As all ROP directors and teachers know, it has always been a difficult task to try and differentiate the program from others simply because the name *Regional Occupational Program* (ROP) doesn't really say much. That's why many ROPs up and down the state have incorporated taglines and slogans, as well as logos, to help them stand out from the crowd.

But does a tagline and/or slogan really help promote your program?

First, it's important to know the various ways in which you can differentiate your ROP – how to develop a brand that becomes your own.

What is a **brand**?

A brand is a collection of ideas and images representing a program or product. The word “brand” refers to the descriptive attributes and symbols such as name, logo, slogan, tagline, fonts, symbols and sound that convey the spirit of the program or product. A brand is an embodiment of all the information connected to the program or product. It serves to create associations and expectations

So how does a **tagline** or **slogan** help develop your brand? And is there a difference between the two?

A **tagline** is what is associated with your program. It explains your brand and is such a natural outgrowth of the brand positioning that the two are inextricably linked. It doesn't change unless you want to completely redefine your mission. For example, the taglines “Choosy moms choose Jif” and “Shouldn't your baby be a Gerber baby?” have stuck with Jif and Gerber for many decades.

A **slogan** is a bit different. A slogan is associated with a single campaign and may change regularly whereas a tag line remains static for many years. For example, AT&T's slogan over the past few years has gone from “Reach out and touch someone” to “Fewest dropped calls” to “Works in more places like...” to “More bars in more places” depending on what the goal of the campaign was. For ROP, in the Southern region, the slogan "Success Starts Here" has been used for more than 8 years. The question still remains.....is it working?

You want your tagline or slogan to stay with your audience(s). For ROP, your audiences are students, parents, administrators, and business partners.

Taglines influence decisions, persuade and add credibility to your program. A good tagline will enable the audience members to easily recall your program, as the tagline will act as a quick reference. The more the tagline resonates with the big idea of the program, the more memorable it will be.

How do you make your tagline memorable?

**Brevity is King.** Keep it under 10 words. Any longer, and you're using your Mission Statement. It needs to be easy to remember. "Coke is It!!!"

**Be exciting:** Excitement draws your audience into your program. Acura does this with their tagline, "The road will never be the same."

**Recall the brand name:** If possible, your brand name should be included in the tagline. "Don't get mad. Get GLAD."

**Be metaphorical, playful or humorous:** Make your audience smile. "Hey! How about a nice Hawaiian Punch?" or "Melts in your mouth, not in your hands."

**Be inspirational or uplifting:** Convey positive feelings about your program. "With a name like Smucker's, it has to be good." Disneyland also does a good job with this as they are known as "The happiest place on Earth."

**Use rhyme or rhythm:** Rhymes and rhythm are easy to remember. We can all sing the Bounty song, "The quilted, quicker picker-upper."

**Use vivid or fresh language:** Have your audience visualize the product. NyQuil has been putting the ill to sleep for years with their tagline, "The nighttime sniffing sneezing coughing aching stuffy head fever so you can rest medicine."

**Key benefit:** Sell the benefits of the program, not just the features. Polaroid, "The fun develops instantly."

**Uniqueness:** Differentiate the program. The tagline should depict a characteristic of the program that sets it apart from its competitors. BMW, "The ultimate driving machine."

**Question:** Provoke thought from your audience. Capital One, "What's in your wallet?" Alpo, "Doesn't your dog deserve Alpo?" Verizon, "Can you hear me now?"

**Challenge:** Dare the audience. Cheez-It, "Get your own box." Lay's "Betcha can't eat just one."

So, how can you create a tagline that really stands out for your ROP program?

To start, ask yourself the following questions.

1. What are the benefits of my ROP program that my target audience(s) is looking for? Rank them in order of importance to begin developing your tagline.
2. What outcome do I want to create? What do you want your audience to do? Yellow Pages put their audience in motion with "Let your fingers do the walking."
3. What do I want people to remember about ROP? People tend to remember the simplest slogans. Communicate your message quickly, using active verbs.
4. Who is my target audience? Ensure that your tagline conveys the message in language suitable for your audience. Sometimes, that might mean using a different one for a different audience. Parents/business partners might react differently to a tagline than your 16 year old student audience, so surveying your audiences is another great way to get information on what will work best.
5. How can my ROP stand out? Create a tagline that is "ownable" and not useable by your competitors.

Once you have a tagline developed, be sure to use it in all collateral materials- on business cards, brochures, Web sites, e-mail signatures, in ads, PowerPoints and in any and all presentations about your ROP. This will help ensure that your ROP tagline is consistent to help your audiences understand and remember how great your program really is.

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