

## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

American Heart Association/American Stroke Association

## PROJECT GOAL

To inspire, engage and create conversations with international stroke specialists to advance stroke science.

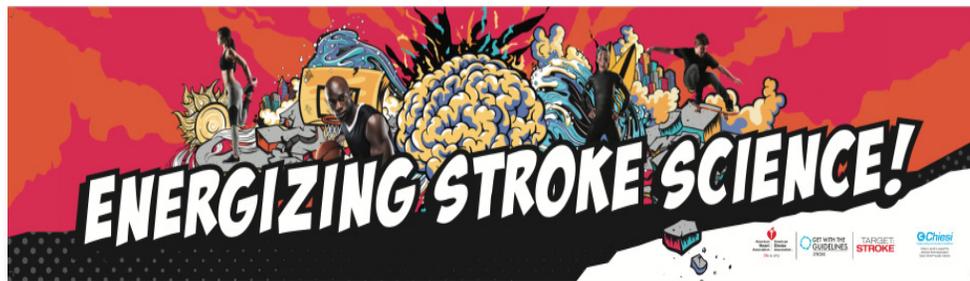
## BIG QUESTION

How do you make the marketing for an event unique, compelling and memorable so the attendee feels fresh despite an otherwise predictable educational program?

## PROJECT SCENARIO

For its annual International Stroke Conference (ISC), the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA) strives to take a piece of the host city's "story" and apply it to the event's overall concept. Since the 2016 ISC would be held in Los Angeles, California, AHA/ASA's creative direction to On The Marc Media mandated an "active lifestyle" theme.

AHA/ASA's creative brief directed "all creative inspiration to come from the world of skateboarding, which was born and became part of the 'culture of cool' that it is today because it flourished within The City of Angels". This was later broadened to include visuals showing not only skateboarding but also running, basketball and surfing. Creative elements "should be

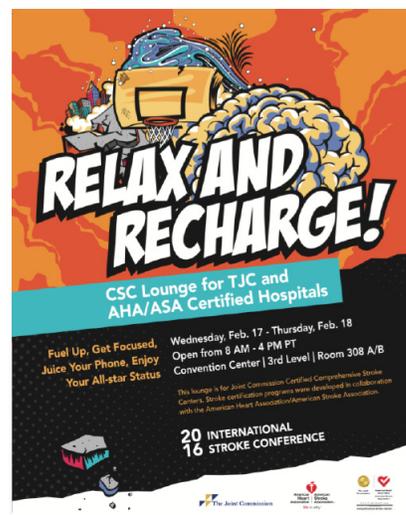


inspiring and create conversations without alienating our audience." AHA/ASA wanted a major departure from the same-old-same-old health care event marketing that so often featured "white lab coats, doctors with clipboards and vector-styled stethoscopes."

## CREATIVE JOURNEY

On The Marc Media embarked on an intensive research and brainstorming process to understand and leverage skateboarding culture and language to meet our objectives:

- Create an unforgettable vibe and experience for ISC 2016.
- Challenge ISC participants to go big and break barriers.
- Move stroke science from underground niche to mainstream movement.
- Ink the incredible story of stroke research, care and recovery.
- Leverage L.A. skateboarding history and culture to spotlight stroke-science stars.
- Create a powerful visual journey that reveals the stroke community's compelling ability to push itself, persevere despite past fails, and go all-out to scale new heights.



## KEY MESSAGES

On The Marc Media iterated dozens of messages that captured elements of active-lifestyle and skateboarding passion, culture and perspective. Two of the many possibilities we generated resonated with the client, around which we developed supporting copy and graphics.

“ISC attracts extreme talent.”

Top stroke research and practice experts from around the globe gather to show and share their best moves toward more effective prevention and treatment.

“ISC pushes the limits of stroke science.”

...Enabling fast, agile decision-making flow

...Advancing rad execution and improvisation

...Inspiring mind-blowing new tricks

## WHAT WE PRODUCED

Requested ISC 2016 deliverables included:

- Branded and designed all materials for booth
- Event signage
- HTML invitations
- Producing testimonial videos
- Step-and-repeat design
- Program guides
- Awards certificates



## RESULT

Much to our relief — and AHA/ASA’s enthusiastic satisfaction — attendees of ISC 2016 responded positively to the overall meme, our messaging, and our graphics. As our client hoped, attendees appreciated the departure from the safe-but-boring traditional health care look and feel they encountered frequently at non-AHA/ASA events.

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Team Effort:** While skateboarding itself is an individual sport, creating materials around this nontraditional theme for a diverse audience of high-level international health care professionals required a team effort. We structured our process to allow time for individual team members to research and brainstorm on their own, then return as a group to share, revise, and spark new possibilities.

**Brand Enhancement:** The AHA/ASA is an established brand within the health care community, and the organization takes pains to protect its reputation as a steady and reliable advocate and information provider. Its ISC 2016 skateboarding theme nonetheless revealed an understanding of its audience’s desire for mixing solid tried-and-true programming with a fun and fresh conference environment, and conveyed a willingness to balance its established and traditional brand with a change of pace targeted to an audience that was open to a light-hearted theme running through an academic conference.

**Risk vs. Reward:** Not only did the client’s unusual theme run the risk of falling flat, the project also challenged our own views about what this audience would embrace. We learned that an audience’s hunger for thematic change can open up new possibilities that would not initially have seemed obvious or even prudent. And we appreciated that AHA/ASA staff trusted us to be both skilled and inspired in helping them achieve the effect they sought.