After nearly a year of research, consultation and consideration, after hearing feedback from approximately 300 members on tone, approach and messaging, the Society for Vascular Surgery is about to begin implementing a branding campaign.

The SVS Executive Board approved referral communication planning and production in July. The Springboard consulting firm will test communications with referral sources and tweak as necessary. The campaign is expected to roll out in the spring, ahead of the 2020 Vascular Annual Meeting.

The first phase will target referral sources. Springboard, the SVS consulting firm on branding, will position vascular surgeons as central partners – the “go-to” specialists – for primary care physicians and other health care providers.

Members who completed the branding survey in June stressed strongly that they prefer that “surgeon” and “surgery” be front and center in any campaign. “Other providers also do vascular interventions, so we will make sure that our communications support a claim that only surgeons can make,” said Joseph Mills, MD. He chairs the SVS Public and Professional Outreach Committee, which is developing the branding initiative.

Survey respondents particularly liked messaging that points out the comprehensive care a vascular surgeon provides. “Members see ‘comprehensive’ as a distinguishing characteristic and a good branding point,” said Dr. Mills. They also strongly preferred the theme that ‘surgery is only part of our story.’ “Those points were overwhelmingly the favorites.”

A number of implementation steps are under consideration. These may include:

- A robust referral source presence on the SVS website that references vascular surgeons’ comprehensive capabilities, differentiators and the benefits they provide the referring source’s own team, and further development of a “find a vascular surgeon” tool, among other possibilities.
- Reaching referral sources in a variety of ways that could include through their professional societies, via society meetings and presentations, advertising and media outreach.
- Providing SVS members with the tools they need to engage referral sources on the local level.

Subsequent phases will focus on consumers, hospital administrators and medical students, with implementation plans developed for each audience.