



Branding Overview

By Carol D'Agostino

Branding is the creation of an identity for an organization, business or product. Brand components include: a name; a graphic element or logo; positioning or position statement; collateral marketing materials (can be printed or electronic) and, in many cases, a tagline. The purpose of a brand is to create a unique personality or identity for the target market so that an organization can more easily communicate its message and be heard. "Branding" is not simply the development of a graphic element or logo although a logo is part of the process. Branding is the comprehensive development of the personality or identity of an entity.

Here's a great definition of branding provided by GuideStar, a leader in connecting non-profits with donors, foundations, businesses, and governing agencies in a nationwide community of giving.

Branding is the process of creating a clear, consistent message about your organization, so that when people see your logo or hear your name, they'll think of your mission and programs in terms you have defined. i.e., the way you want them to.

Key branding concepts

Positioning or position statement is often an internal concept which when developed becomes an integral part of all marketing materials. An effective position statement clearly defines how your organization is different from any other. It is how you want your audience to perceive you. If it is not an honest portrayal of whom you are than it will not be effective.

A **tagline** is a short string of memorable words that defines who you are or what you do, for whom you do it and in some cases an expression of the emotion or concept that you want connected to your identity.

A strong tagline greatly helps organizations communicate their messages more clearly, helping their target markets cut through the maze of marketing clutter so that their message is heard.

Who uses branding?

Although many people associate branding with corporations and businesses, branding is used throughout the non-profit sector. In these times of shrinking revenue streams, United Way reductions in allocations, increased competition for grant money and increased marketing clutter, strong branding is more important now than ever before in the non-profit sector.

Organizations are competing for members, volunteers, donors and grants. Without a strong brand an organization's messages will not be heard. That is to say **effective branding is crucial to an organization's (any organization's) ability to raise funds, build support and gain visibility.**

Due to budget constraints, many organizations focus on everyday operations and do the best that they can to get their name and message out so that people understand who they are, what they do and why they are important. Due

to lack of experience in marketing or time some organizations develop weak branding that severely hampers their ability to grow and be effective that it why "rebranding" usually happens.

Benefits of branding

Here are some generally recognized benefits to branding:

- Branding helps audiences cut through the clutter by providing a clear, concise identity for an organization.
- Audiences like brands since they create easy identification, which lends itself to the development of loyalty.
- Marketing and communications are easier and more effective because messaging is consistent and supported by the implicit message of the brand.

Interesting Links

www.guidestar.org/news/features/npobranding.jsp

www.nancyschwartz.com/strong_nonprofit_brand.html

www.nancyschwartz.com/nonprofit_tagline.html

www.nancyschwartz.com/nonprofit_taglines.html

www.ontargetresearch.com/newsletterNov04.htm

www.allaboutbranding.com 



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For more information or a free consultation contact:
Carol D'Agostino at (410) 604-2319 or carol@purplecatpr.com