



## The Real Value of Branding for Non-Profits: Brand Clarity

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When asked about the value of branding for non-profits one is usually confronted with several misconceptions, “Why worry about branding? We don’t want to be a big company. We don’t want to make money, we want to help people.” Or, “Branding is about image. We are more worried about doing the right thing.” Or, “We already have a logo we like.”

But branding is more than a logo and it’s more than image. Branding is the process by which you create an emotional connection with your audience; it’s the way you get and keep their attention. It’s the way that you get people to think of you first when they have a need or a concern that you address. The mark you use or the image you promote is only a representation of that relationship.

So, what is the value of branding for a non-profit? It is brand clarity.

Brand clarity is being able to say, “We are this, not that. We do this, not that. The value of our service (or product) is this, not that.” Skipping the branding process leaves your story half-told and the most important aspects of your reputation undiscovered.

Here is a clarity check. Answer these three questions:

1. What does your organization accomplish?
2. What would be the real loss if your organization ceased to exist today?
3. Why does anyone care?

That is your brand. Well, at least as it exists now. But to have clarity requires some soul-searching analysis of who you are (or who you want to be.)

The following seven areas, once defined, create a clear representation of your organization and allow you to make solid decisions about how to improve your brand and grow your organization.



1. **Category** - the service or product category in which you can be a leader. What is your thing? What do you do that few can do quite like you?
2. **Message** - the vision, opportunity, insight, commitment and experience of your organization. We refer to this as your VOICE. Your true VOICE is what people listen to and is what motivates them to action.
3. **Persona** - the primary way your organization is perceived by the client or customer. Are you the trusted advisor or the encourager? Are you the salesman or the dealmaker? The business sage or the financial consultant? What unique personality can best represent your trusted relationship with the client or customer?
4. **Presentation genre** - the type of venue and the style of presentation in which your client/customer can best make a decision to work with you or buy your product. Is it a one-on-one consultation or a motivational rally? Is it a regional gathering of leaders or is it an online store? Where does the magic happen?
5. **Target audience** - a profile of the people who need to hear your message and through which channels they can be reached and respond.
6. **Measure of success** - how the client or customers' needs are met and how the results are qualified and quantified.
7. **Brand Value** - your organizational worth defined in three ways:
  - a. *Urgency* - the profile and number of people affected and how quickly response is needed.
  - b. *Reach* - how many people are served, how many people are involved in serving, and how many people support the cause.
  - c. *Impact* - cost per act of effective service (often referred to as *dollar handles*).

Know who you are and you will know what to do. That is brand clarity. Your non-profit needs it and your audience wants to know about it.