

MARKETING GUIDE

Your New Name

10 Guidelines for a Powerful Launch

INTRODUCTION

After a period of thoughtful brand strategy, creative brainstorming, and intense deliberation, your organization has chosen a powerful new name. Congratulations! Now it's time to share it with the world.

To launch a new organizational name successfully, you'll need to premiere it in a way that sparks interest in your organization, engages your donors, and inspires renewed commitment to your mission.

Planned strategically, a name launch can create a big splash and get stakeholders excited about your bold new direction. By setting deadlines, preparing materials, and speaking to your constituencies directly, you can allay their concerns and generate excitement and interest.

1 Decide on Your Goals

Ideally, you established your goals during the name-creation process; if so, keep them handy during the rollout process. If not, ask yourself some key questions: Do you want the name to make your target audiences aware of what you do? Raise your organization's overall profile? Attract volunteers? When you keep goals such as these in mind, you can stay on track throughout the process.

2 Pick a Date

Both nonprofit and for-profit communications experts agree that a “flipped switch” approach is most effective for name rollouts. “Flipping the switch” means that you change your organization's name on a set date throughout your organization—so you'll need to pick one date on which your website, letterhead, email signatures, voicemail messages, and print materials will all start using the new name.

Your staff, volunteers, partners, and other stakeholders should use the new name exclusively from that day forward. If your organization or its representatives use your new name inconsistently, you run the risk of looking unfocused or disorganized.

OLE HEALTH

As Clinic Ole began to articulate and solidify their brand, it was clear that the name had to evolve, without sacrificing its firm connection to the organization's meaningful history. Clinic Ole Community Health transformed into OLE Health. “OLE” is celebratory and energetic, yet also smart, professional, and progressive.

3 Tell VIPs First

When you announce that you plan to change your name, tell your most important stakeholders first and then work your way out. Your VIPs might include major donors, sponsors, and volunteers. When you communicate with them, explain why you're changing your name, some of the goals the new one will accomplish, and what it signifies. Limit this communication to one page.

4 Carry It Through

It's time to replace all of your old materials—print and digital—that bear the old name. Doing this will take significant time and resources, so be prepared. Plan to begin developing replacements at least three months before you launch your new name. When launch time comes, stop using any communications materials that refer to your organization by its previous name. Business cards and letterhead in particular will help make your new name official.



When inMotion changed their name to Her Justice, they posted their FAQ list on their website.

5 Answer Questions

Frequently Asked Questions are “frequently asked” for a reason: your audiences will want to know why you made such a meaningful change and what it signifies for your organization. You can distribute the FAQ sheet along with your announcements about the new name and also post it on your blog or social media accounts. We recommend including questions like these:

- Why did we change our name?
- Who decided to change the name?
- Has anything else about the organization changed?
- Does the name change mean we're in trouble as an organization?
- Why did we work with a branding firm? (If applicable)

6 Train Your Team

Tell your staff, board, volunteers, and other people who work with your clientele and the public everything you would tell an external audience. Help them see how they can steward the organization through the name transition. Distribute the FAQ sheet so that internal stakeholders can familiarize themselves with it. Have staff practice with one another to prepare for these types of conversations. You can also use Mission Minded's [Minute Message Model™](#) to help connect your new name to your organization's overall brand goals.

7 Host a Launch Event

Mission Minded strongly recommends that you host a press conference, luncheon, or some other large gathering to celebrate your name change. Not only will the event allow your stakeholders to see you face-to-face, but it will also remind them why they care about your work. If your budget allows, hiring a publicist to promote the event can help attract positive press and new supporters.



San Francisco Green Schoolyard Alliance evolved from being a local organization focused solely on school grounds to a national one that rethinks the way urban schools use their outdoor learning spaces. A provocative new name marked its transition into its second phase.

8 Sing It Loud

After you announce your upcoming name change to your key stakeholders, announce it to your broader audience through email, social media, news media, and direct mail. Use all the channels at your disposal to make sure the news gets conveyed and none of your existing or potential supporters get left behind or confused.

9 Respond to Feedback

On all the media platforms you're using, keep an eye out for feedback about your new name and explicitly include your stakeholders by responding to it. Thank your boosters for their praise and reply thoughtfully and honestly to criticism. These simple interactions help carry your brand through the name change, reminding your audiences that your name has changed, but your organization hasn't.

10 Keep Making the Connection

After your name change, include the phrase “formerly known as” (or something similar) on all of your printed materials, in your email footer, and on your website for 6–9 months. Doing this helps ensure that those who missed the initial announcement remain part of your community.



Mission Minded helped WAGES evolve into Prospera, a vibrant community of immigrant-led, worker-owned cooperative businesses that foster human development, social transformation, and economic security.

Learn More

Mission Minded is a branding firm that works exclusively with nonprofit organizations.

We believe that a brand that sets you apart is essential to a nonprofit's success. Every day we guide nonprofits to uncover the big, bold idea that will attract more people to their work. Because in today's world, a worthy mission is not enough. You've got to communicate what makes you unique at every opportunity.

Our clients successfully raise more money and attract the support they need to achieve their goals. To find out how Mission Minded can help your organization, call us today at 415-990-9360.