

MARKETING GUIDE

Considering a Branding Project?

6 Questions to Ask



MISSION MINDED

AMPLIFY THE GOOD

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! If you're reading this, you're interested in taking your organization's brand to new heights.

Over 20 years ago Mission Minded pioneered the idea that to succeed, nonprofits had to invest not just in promoting their mission, but in establishing the right brand strategy to stand out and invite in.

That was new thinking for organizations historically focused on general publicity and fundraising. **Your mission alone was not then and is not now enough to ensure the engagement and support you need.** Today, most nonprofit leaders understand that having a bold brand strategy is required, and that done well the right brand can:

- Clarify your unique identity and purpose to cut through the noise.
- Align your stakeholders around an idea that fires them up.
- Ignite your audiences with messages that move them to action.
- Help you craft bold visual assets, websites, and videos that aren't just stunning—but are strategic in elevating your organization

But crafting the right brand strategy is a big project that should not be undertaken without careful consideration to ensure your organization is truly ready—both to develop the brand strategy itself, and to invest in its implementation. Done right, brand building takes time, financial resources, and the time of your board, staff and other stakeholders.

So to prepare you to get the most from your branding effort we're sharing what it takes to make your branding initiative a success. Whether or not Mission Minded is right for you, you'll benefit from careful consideration of these six questions.



Click on the above image to play the video. You may need to update your Flash Player, or you can also view the video here: <https://vimeo.com/375704456>

1 What is a brand?

Brand is just another word for “reputation”—the facts and emotions that come to mind for your audiences, both old and new, when they think about you. So you already have a brand. Imagine a prospective donor seeing your logo. What’s the first idea they’re likely to associate with you? That’s your brand.

But is the brand you have now the brand you need to succeed today and tomorrow?

Your brand isn’t your name, tagline, or logo. Your brand is the big, bold idea that clearly articulates why you exist and inspires people to support you.

Many organizations skip the step of clearly deciding internally how they need to be perceived externally. They assume the mission says it all and move straight to communication tools like messages, logos, websites, campaigns, and videos. But for those tools to actually be effective they have to map back to a sound brand strategy that clearly establishes who your organization is, how you’re different from others, and why that matters.

So if everyone at your organization can’t tell you what your brand is in a sentence or less, you haven’t yet done the foundational work required to align around a brand that fires up your supporters.



I rest well at night knowing that I have Mission Minded in my corner.

CHRISTINE MAULHARDT
as Director of Communications
Blue Shield of California Foundation

2 What’s at stake?

Rebranding can and should change how others perceive your organization and even how your team perceives it.

Strengthening your brand comes down to **asking, answering, and acting on a series of pivotal questions:**

- What is the current brand (reputation) of our organization?
- Where is that brand strong and where is it weak?
- Who are our most important audiences and what values do we share with them?
- How are we authentically unique from other (similar) organizations in a way that matters to our audiences?
- How can our brand be summarized and conveyed succinctly?
- What words, phrases, and visuals must we use to bring our brand to life?
- How should we act, look, and sound to bring our brand into focus?
- What marketing, fundraising, and recruitment tools must we create to fire up our supporters so they’ll stop at nothing to help us achieve extraordinary results??

3 Is my organization ready to strengthen our brand?

You need these **seven things** in place to make the most of a rebranding effort. If you have them all, great. If not, put them in place before you begin, so you'll get the maximum benefit possible from the investment.

STRONG DECISION MAKERS

Successful branding requires strong leadership. If you work with Mission Minded, you will frequently be asked to make important decisions. Often these cannot be left to a committee's vote. **If you're the president, CEO, or executive director, you will consider, debate, listen, and ultimately be a decision maker. Are you ready?**

A SOUND BUSINESS RATIONALE

Why are you rebranding? **It shouldn't just be to look or sound better, or because you've seen other nonprofits do it** There must be a strong business reason to rebrand, such as the need to attract more donors, be a more sought-after partner, attract more ticket-buyers and participants, or align your staff and volunteers around your mission or strategic plan more powerfully.

ENTHUSIASTIC LEADERSHIP BUY-IN

Your senior leadership, board, and the head of your organization need to be on the same page about rebranding and ready to commit both the dollars and time for this work. They can hand off tasks to your staff, but their full and enthusiastic support is crucial for success. Without it, even the best efforts from your team might not take off and your rebrand can land with a thud. As the executive director, you've got the most important role—you need to lead the charge and champion your new brand, make important decisions, and get everyone—from your board to the staff—excited about the new direction.

A REALISTIC BUDGET

Developing a new brand strategy and creative new tools to promote your brand will take a significant financial investment. **And you'll get what you pay for, meaning that taking shortcuts now to save money will ultimately cost your organization in lost support from a tepid brand strategy that doesn't boldly elevate your organization.** So plan carefully and budget realistically to do it well the first time.

ENOUGH STAFF TIME FOR THIS WORK

While it's fun to participate in this exciting work, it does take some staff and volunteers away from their normal duties. In addition to the financial investment, it's critical to factor staff time into the cost of a branding project. **You're not outsourcing to us, you're co-creating with us.** You and your colleagues will be asked to participate in meetings and conversations with Mission Minded, gather background information, coordinate research study participants, and give us feedback.

A BOLD STRATEGIC PLAN

An **inspiring strategic plan** lays the foundation for effective brand work, providing a clear roadmap to align your brand with your goals. **If you don't have a plan focused on more than operational goals, now's the time to create one.** And we can help. Organizations are strongest when their brand and strategic plan are inextricably linked. [Learn more about the benefits of linking your strategic plan and brand strategy here.](#)

4 What's involved in a branding initiative?

Whether your organization needs to reposition a misunderstood or outdated brand, refresh a relatively strong brand, or create a new brand, Mission Minded has developed a clear methodology for leading you to success.

ROBUST RESEARCH

We'll start by conducting targeted research tailored to your needs and budget, aiming to uncover fresh insights about your current reputation and the changes needed to advance powerfully. **Our objective is to identify barriers to your success and how they can be overcome.**

Research can be expensive, but it doesn't have to be. Mission Minded is experienced in working with nonprofit organizations to achieve maximum impact on modest budgets, so we'll tailor the research phase to get you the most valuable information with the lowest expenditure possible.

UNCOVERING YOUR BRAND STRATEGY

Based on our findings, Mission Minded will gather a cross-section of people in your organization and partner in a lively exchange to uncover the right elements for your BrandEquation™—

- **Your Values:** The pillars that define the essence of your brand.
- **Your Brand Positioning:** The unique space that makes you stand out from similar organizations
- **Your Brand Personality:** The traits that define your brand's character.
- **Your Brand Experience:** This is how you want each of your audiences to feel when they interact with your brand.

Time and time again we hear from our clients that this session is one of the most valuable (and fun) steps in our methodology. It brings internal stakeholders together, and the result is always the same—a group of participants who feel enthusiastic and aligned about being powerful brand ambassadors.



It was so much fun to work with you but, even more than that, you are clearly experts at what you do. From our website to our BrandEquation, the product, results and process are remarkable. I applaud your partnership and expertise from your entire team. It's literally because of you, that we now go to the extra mile for every smile.

MEGAN WILSON

as Interim Executive Director at Delta Dental of Colorado and Program Director at Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation

EMPLOY THE MINUTE MESSAGE MODEL™

We want everyone in your organization to clearly understand how to be better communicators and representatives of your brand, so we deliver both new key messages and training on how to use them. **This empowers your whole team to consistently, confidently, and effectively tell your organization's story.**

Like the development of your BrandEquation, we'll work collaboratively and iteratively with you to finalize your new messages through our framework called the Minute Message Model™.

Message recommendations typically include a fresh, easy way to convey:

- **The Belief**—What your organization believes that makes you unique
- **The Problem**—A clear description of what problems your organization is in business to solve.
- **The Impact**—What happens as a result of your work? (Hint: it's not facts, figures, or statistics)
- **The Details**—How you get results

BRINGING YOUR BRAND TO LIFE IN EVERY WHICH WAY

You have a powerful brand strategy and messages in place—and now it's time to bring it to life through your other brand signals. These might include:

- A bold new name
- A stunning logo or visual identity
- A fresh tagline
- A powerful website
- A marquee video or set of short videos shining a light on your new brand
- A fundraising case for support brochure and microsite that inspire donors to act
- A printed and/or online annual report to stir donations
- Environmental graphics for your office and other locations as physical manifestations of your brand

Check out our [case studies](#) for some great examples of these brand signals.

ACTIVATING AND LAUNCHING YOUR BRAND

Great brands know that the more consistently and powerfully they reinforce their value, the more likely it is that supporters will find them and remain loyal. We'll help you determine how the new brand should influence how you look, how you sound, and how you act, so that you'll be sure your entire organization is in brand alignment.



From the project management to the vast web experience to the graphic design, your team is top notch and so enjoyable to work with.

AMY SKINNER

as Director of Communications
Education Commission of the States

5 What Does It Cost and How Long Will It Take?

The fees and timelines you see here were last refreshed in the summer of 2024 and may have evolved since then. Rest assured, any proposal that we create for you will be tailored to your specific needs and goals.

Amplify Your Impact

Brand Strategy and Key Message Development

- \$56,000–\$74,000 (6–8 months)

Name and Tagline Development

- \$18,000–\$20,000 (2–3 months)

Tagline Development

- \$10,000–\$14,000 (4–6 weeks)

Visual Identity and Logo Design

- \$34,000–\$48,000 (4 months)

Website Strategy, Design, and Development

- \$65,000 and up depending on your specific needs
- 9–11 months

Brand Launch Plan

- \$15,000–\$20,000 (1–2 months)

Brand Video

- \$45,000 and up depending on your specific needs (5–7 months)

Inspire Your Community for a Bold Future

Strategic Plan

- \$75,000–\$120,000 depending on scope (7–12 months)

Multiply Your Donations

Capital/Fundraising Campaign

- Campaign Strategy and Case for Support: \$38,000–\$44,000
- Campaign Brochure Development (Print or Digital): \$28,000–\$42,000
- Campaign Presentation Deck: \$18,000–\$24,000
- Campaign Microsite Design: \$15,000–\$25,000
- Fundraising Video: \$45,000 and up depending on your specific needs
- 6–12 months depending on scope

Building Awareness About Your Organization

Creative Communications

From **annual reports** and **custom newsletters** to **communications plans** and engaging **presentation decks**, we're ready to roll up our sleeves and create bold tools to help you stand out. Let us know what you're thinking, and we'll work together to make it happen!



The visual design is amazing, and the team is very pleased. I honestly didn't know how we would get to this place of excitement but you have brought us all around and we're here.

DENISE STEPTO

as Chief Communications Officer
Energy Outreach Colorado

6 How Do We Get Started?

If you're ready to elevate your brand, let's chat! You can call us at **415-990-9360** or email us at **amplify@mission-minded.com**.

If our deeply strategic approach is out of reach with your budget—we have a budget-friendly option for you—**office hours with an expert!** This option opens the door for you to consult with our experts, who are all eager to help you elevate your impact.

So let's get started—we can't wait to help you **amplify the good!**

OFFICE HOURS—HOW IT WORKS:

- You'll watch any of our free expert webinars on the topics that are relevant to your challenge. You can find the videos on this page: <https://mission-minded.com/resource-hub/webinars/>
- You'll apply what you learned, perhaps collaborating with your colleagues, and then bring your draft work to our office hours with an expert.
- A Mission Minded strategist will learn about your goals and audiences, and then provide you with strategic and creative input, inspiration, and feedback during your session. You'll bring your questions, ideas, and first drafts, and we'll help you make them even better. Want to build on what you learned and get a second round of expert feedback? Just book another session.

Fees

- *Learning from our Webinars: Free!*
- *30-minute session with an Expert: \$1,600*
- *1-hour session with an Expert: \$2,400*



It's wonderful work. It's powerful and engaging and will really equip us to be great ambassadors for this campaign.

DR. ELIZABETH KISS

as Warden (CEO) of The Rhodes Trust

Learn More

Mission Minded is a strategy and creative firm that helps good causes have greater impact.

We believe the organizations that make our world better need to be unapologetically bold about what makes them unique. So we partner with nonprofits, foundations, and schools to raise more money and attract more people to their work with the urgency their mission demands.

Together, we can make sure that your organization is understood and appreciated by the people you need most.

To find out how Mission Minded can help your organization, call us today at **415-990-9360** or visit **Mission-Minded.com**.