MARKETING GUIDE

Considering a Branding Project? 6 Questions to Ask

mission minded amplify the good

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! If you're reading this, then you're likely to be considering how to better articulate your organization's brand. Branding energizes your organization and clarifies your identity, purpose, and message to the world. Creating the right brand strategy can also be challenging, time-consuming, and a significant financial investment. We've outlined what's involved and what it will take for your branding initiative to succeed. Read on, and then let's talk about whether Mission Minded is the right fit to lead your organization's re-branding effort.

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

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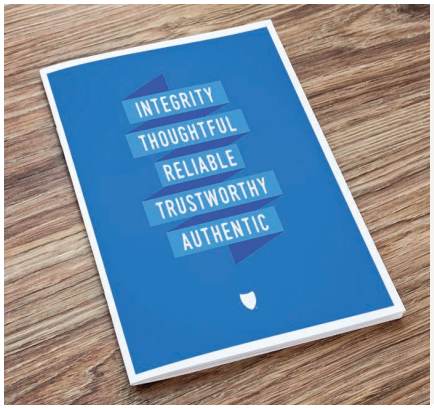
1 What Does Branding Even Mean?

Your organization already has a brand: it's the reputation you've created through your past efforts. But is the brand you have the brand you want?

What reputation should you cultivate to attract increased support for your mission? While the process of brand-building can be complex, **in its simplest form brand is just another word for "reputation."** By articulating how your organization wishes to be perceived—what reputation you want to have—and then doing everything possible to send the right brand signals, you'll build the brand that will help you achieve your mission.

Your brand is not your name, logo, or tagline. Read that again: your brand is not your name, logo, or tagline. These three things all signal what your organization stands for. But your brand is the combination of facts and emotions that come to the minds' of your audiences when they think about you. Imagine a prospective donor seeing your logo. What's the first idea they're likely to associate with you? *That's* your brand.



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

Christine Maulhardt
Director of Communications
Blue Shield of California Foundation

2 What's at Stake?

Branding changes how others perceive your organization and how you perceive yourself.

Think of strengthening your brand as the process of asking, answering, and acting on a series of 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?
- How can our brand be 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 and fundraising tools must we create to promote our brand?

3 Is My Organization Ready to Strengthen Our Brand?

Here are six assets you need to make the most of a rebranding effort. If you have them all, great. If not, put them in place before you begin so that your branding project will run smoothly, and you'll get the maximum benefit possible from the investment.

Strong Leadership

Successful branding projects require strong leadership. Take time early in the effort to decide who will make important decisions and who will simply be consulted. 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 or executive director, you will consider, debate, listen, and be the decision maker. Are you ready?

Sound 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 program participants, or align your staff and volunteers around your mission or strategic plan.

Enthusiastic Buy-In

Your board and senior leadership should agree about the need to rebrand and the business rationale for making the investment. While the board may delegate the work to the staff, ultimately they need to be enthusiastically behind the project. And you'll set the tone. If you're the executive director, you'll have to be the most enthusiastic of all. It's your job to make the final decisions and rally board and staff around the new brand. Mission Minded's process is inclusive, so when the results are in, everyone—from the receptionist to the board president—will understand and be excited about your brand and their roles in promoting it.

Realistic Budget

Developing a new brand strategy and the creative new tools to promote your brand will take a significant investment of financial resources. But you'll get what you pay for. So plan carefully and budget realistically so you can do it well the first time.

Enough Time

While it's great fun to participate in this exciting work, it does take 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, you're co-creating. 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.

Patience

Changing public perceptions takes time. Each interaction someone has with your brand contributes to the overall impression they have about your organization and its value. A thoughtful branding process, including the development of key messages and visual cues like a new logo and website, will help you simultaneously achieve your day-to-day goals and build the brand you'll need for tomorrow.

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 path for leading you to success.

Develop Your Brand Strategy

After learning everything we can about you by reading your strategic, fundraising, and marketing plans, and how you've been portraying your work, we'll study the attitudes and perceptions of those who know you best.

- How do internal stakeholders (staff, board, faculty, volunteers) perceive your organization and its value?
- Who are your most important constituents and how do you believe they perceive you?
- How do you believe your organization should be perceived in order to be more effective?
- What barriers, if any, exist to your being seen as you'd like?
- How has your organization been portraying itself (intentionally and unintentionally)?

Once we understand what insiders think of you, we'll move outward to survey the perceptions of your target audiences—those without whom you cannot succeed.

We'll use a variety of research methods based on your needs and budget to uncover new insights about the reputation you have now, and the one you need to charge forward powerfully. We'll conduct one-on-one interviews, and potentially focus groups and web-based surveys as well.

> *"It was so much fun to work with you but, even more than that, you are clearly experts at what you do. From our web site 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**
> Interim Executive Director at Delta Dental of Colorado and Program Director at Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation

We'll be studying the barriers to your greater 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 small budgets, so we'll tailor the research phase to get you the most valuable information with the fewest expenditures possible.

Based on everything Mission Minded has learned, we'll gather a cross-section of people in your organization and talk about your BrandEquation™. Our highly interactive (and fun!) BrandEquation session includes enlightening examples and engaging exercises that will draw out the additional insights from your team that will become the foundation for your brand strategy—and success.

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Time and time again we hear from our clients that this session is one of the most valuable steps in our process. 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.

The goal of this meeting isn't groupthink, mind-melding, or wordsmithing. It's to imagine the possibilities for your reputation and what it could become. Following the session, we'll prepare the draft BrandEquation for your review. We will discuss and fine-tune it with you as needed to ensure it's just right.

Employ the Minute Message Model™

We're committed to ensuring that everyone in your organization understands 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.

"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
Director of Communications
Education Commission of the States

Bring Your Brand to Life

Building a brand takes more than a branding strategy and new key messages. To launch your new brand, we'll create the tools you'll need. They might include:

- A new name
- A new logo or visual identity
- A fresh tagline
- An updated digital strategy, social media plan, and irresistible website
- A fundraising case for support brochure and microsite
- A printed and/or online annual report
- A marquee video or set of short videos
- Environmental graphics for your office and other locations

Our award-winning graphic design and writing are always based on sound strategy, so you'll have a cohesive campaign that will serve you now and for years to come.

Let's Activate 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.

If you've also changed your name, logo, or tagline, we'll help you develop a rollout plan for your new brand and design the tools to unveil it.

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

Below are ranges for the costs you can expect and the typical length of time it takes to conduct the work. *

Brand Strategy and Key Message Development
- $62,000–$75,000
- 6–8 months, includes BrandActivation planning session

Brand Launch
- $15,000–$20,000; 1–2 months

Name and Tagline Development
- $20,000–$25,000; 2–3 months

Tagline
- $10,000–$15,000; 4–6 weeks

Visual Identity and Logo Design
- $40,000–$50,000; 4 months

Website Strategy, Design, and Development
- $72,000 and up depending on scope; 9–11 months

Capital or Fundraising Campaign
- Case for Support Development for Campaign: $40,000–$45,000
  - Campaign Brochure Design and Content: $30,000–$45,000
  - Campaign Presentation Deck: $20,000–$25,000
  - Campaign Microsite Design: $15,000–$25,000
  - Campaign Video: $65,000–$100,000
- Timeline: 9–11 months depending on scope

Annual Report
- $35,000–$55,000; 5–6 months, including writing, design, and print management

Brand Video Production
- $65,000–$100,000; Timeline: 5–7 months

Communications Plan
- $25,000–$30,000; Timeline: 1–2 months

Other Print and Digital Services

From newsletters to social media icons to PowerPoint presentations, we can prepare the tools you need to engage new audiences. Photography and printing are additional and researched and priced based on your needs.

*Please note that these fees reflect estimated pricing as of August 2022 and that this may have changed.

Phases can run concurrently, and any formal proposal prepared for you will be highly customized, so please contact us to begin a conversation on your specific project.

"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
Chief Communications Officer
Energy Outreach Colorado

6 How Do We Get Started?

If you've recognized that you'd benefit from a stronger brand or that you need clearer messages to attract more support, we'll be happy to develop a customized proposal for your organization based on your needs, budget, and timeline. Give us a call at 415-990-9360 or email amplify@mission-minded.com.

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

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