

From *The Role of Brand in the Nonprofit Sector*



<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/hauser/role-of-brand/>

This is the conclusion of a newly released study by the Hauser Center on Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard University. Based on an 18-month research project involving 73 interviews with practitioners and scholars in 41 organizations, the study analyses current attitudes and branding practices in the nonprofit sector. It proposes a valuable framework to think about the specific role that brands play for nonprofit organizations.

<http://hausercenter.harvard.edu/1101/what%e2%80%99s-in-a-brand/>

Until recently, branding was a dirty word in many nonprofit organizations. Not anymore.

Branding used to conjure up images of profit-driven marketing executives sitting in high-rise offices of the likes of Coca-Cola and MacDonal'd's. The few nonprofits that adopted branding early on were suspected by others to compromise their ethical values and to loose track of their social mission.

That was yesterday. Today, an increasing number of nonprofit organizations are embracing the concept of branding. These organizations believe that a brand is not only a tool to enhance their fundraising and visibility but also a way to drive their mission and impact more broadly.

http://www.hks.harvard.edu/hauser/role-of-brand/documents/role_of_brand_project_overview.pdf

http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_role_of_brand_in_the_nonprofit_sector

The emerging paradigm sees brand as having a broader and more strategic role in an organization's core performance, as well as having an internal role in expressing an organization's purposes, methods, and values.

A strong brand is increasingly seen as critical in helping to build operational capacity, galvanize support, and maintain focus on the social mission.

Brand is more than a visual identity: the name, logo, and graphic design used by an organization. A brand is a psychological construct held in the minds of all those aware of the branded product, person, organization, or movement.

In the nonprofit world, executives talk more about their "global identity" and the "what and why" of their organizations. But the point in both cases is to take branding far beyond the logo.

Identity and image is a clear brand positioning and increased cohesion among diverse internal constituencies. When an organization's employees and volunteers all embrace a common brand identity, it creates organizational cohesion, concentrates focus, and reinforces shared values.



The four principles of Nonprofit Brand IDEA are brand integrity, democracy, ethics, and affinity.

Brand integrity means that the organization's internal identity is aligned with its external image and that both are aligned with the mission.

Brand Integrity means that the brand is aligned with, and bonded to, the mission of the organization and that the brand identity is aligned with the brand image. The word integrity here is used in the sense of structural integrity, not moral integrity. Internally, a brand with high structural integrity connects the mission to the identity of the organization, giving members, staff, volunteers, trustees, and others a common sense of why the organization does what it does, and why it matters in the world. Externally, a brand with high structural integrity captures the mission in its public image, and deploys that image in service of its mission at every step of a clearly articulated strategy. (http://www.hks.harvard.edu/hauser/role-of-brand/documents/role_of_brand_project_overview.pdf)

Brand democracy means that the organization trusts its members, staff, participants, and volunteers to communicate their own understanding of the organization's core identity.

Brand ethics means that the brand itself and the way it is deployed reflect the core values of the organization. Just as brand integrity aligns the brand with mission, brand ethics aligns both the organization's internal identity and its external image with its values and culture.

Brand affinity means that the brand is a good team player, working well alongside other brands, sharing space and credit generously, and promoting collective over individual interests.