

BRANDING

Using Your Logo to Increase Awareness



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What exactly is branding? To many people, it's a confusing concept, and depending upon who you talk with in your organization, you could wind up with a couple different definitions. Ultimately, *branding is the process of developing a relationship with your target audience.* Your target audience includes people who represent a specific group or market most likely to buy your product and/or service, or most interested in the information you provide. For example, a healthcare organization's target audience could include doctors, nurses, other hospital personnel, patients, and families members/significant others. Regardless of who comprises your target audience, everyone you and/or your organization come into contact with has the potential to assist you in achieving your results. Remember, you never know "who knows whom," and what connections a person may have that will help you grow.

Cultivating a relationship with your target audience is a 3-phase process.

Phase 1: Increase Awareness

Introducing yourself and/or your organization to your target audience, and reinforcing their understanding of who you are and what you do through continuous communication.

Phase 2: Facilitate Recognition

Moving your target audience to a state of recognition, and fostering familiarity. When they see your logo or hear your name and/or your organization's name, they readily identify it with you and your organization's products and/or services.

Phase 3: Compel Action

Moving your target audience from familiarity to a state of trust so they will be confident in making a purchase or using a service.

This article focuses on Phase 1: Increasing Awareness through the creation and use of your logo, and provides insights about the three goals that you and/or your organization should focus on in the logo development and utilization process. Ideally, a logo facilitates a favorable first impression of you and/or your organization. It provides a visual representation of what you and/or your organization stand for, and is the key identity piece that drives loyalty, establishes a brand identity, and provides a professional look.

3 Goals of the Logo Development & Utilization Process

1) Define your identity

Determining and developing the messages that should be communicated to your target audience about yourself and/or your organization.

2) Communicate your identity

Determining the most appropriate and effective way that your message and/or your organization's message should be graphically communicated to your target audience.

3) Make a connection

Understanding the importance of continuous use of your identity, and incorporating your identity into various communication mechanisms to increase awareness about your organization.

To define your identity, think about the key messages and concepts you want associated with yourself and/or your organization. The key is to make sure that the identity you want to communicate with your target audience matches the perceived identity that they have about you. Because of this, it's important to develop clear messages about your identity and/or your organization's identity. This will prevent any discrepancies among your target audience about who you are.

Defining your identity and/or your organization's identity is important because it drives the rest of the logo development process. After all, if you aren't clear about what should be communicated about yourself and/or your organization, how will you be able to decide on which symbols, colors, and taglines capture the correct essence of your message?

By taking the time to think about yourself and/or your organization across seven key areas, you will be able to determine the type of messages that shape your identity. By doing so, you can ensure that your identity and/or your organization's identity is translated into a graphical representation (your logo) that will facilitate effective communication. Consider the following key areas and how they relate to you and/or your organization: *Operational Style; Organizational Culture; Values; Geographic Focus; Positioning; Age; and Products & Services.*

Key questions to consider:

- ✓ What do these seven areas mean to you and/or your organization?
- ✓ What key messages from these seven areas need to be communicated to your target audience to capture the essence of your organization?
- ✓ What key messages take precedence over others in communicating with your target audience?

AREA	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES (These are not inclusive.)
Operational Style	Manner that shapes the functional nature of the organization.	- Corporate - Casual - Professional
Organizational Culture	Shared beliefs and practices that define the workplace.	-Attention to detail -Meeting customer expectations -Responsiveness to marketplace
Values	Accepted ideals that drive operations.	-Trust - Diversity - Quality - Commitment to community - Integrity - Focus on work/life balance
Geographic Focus	Regions and/or territories that comprise the geographic make-up of the target audience.	- International - Domestic/Continental U.S. - U.S. Regions (i.e. Southeast, West Coast, Midwest) - County/City
Positioning	Approach to market placement; distinguishing oneself from competitors in the marketplace.	- Cutting-edge innovations - Around the clock service (24/7/365) - Sound reputation
Age	Length of time in business.	- Industry newcomer - Been around for several years - Long-time industry fixture
Products & Services	Elements that fill a void in the marketplace and drive revenue streams.	- How does your product and/or service address an unmet customer need? - What makes your product and/or service better than similar ones currently in the marketplace?

Once you've accomplished this first goal, develop a one to two-sentence statement that captures your identity and/or your organization's identity. This will help serve as a guide when deciding on what symbols, colors, and taglines communicate your message in the most accurate fashion. Remember our healthcare organization from before? Their statement could read as follows: *Our organization provides professional services to the diverse population of Franklin County, Ohio, and is committed to developing a relationship based on trust, quality, and integrity with our customers. We will meet their expectations through our responsiveness and focus on incorporating innovative techniques into our operations.*

Tips on How to Create a Functional Logo

Maintain the integrity.

Your logo should be able to maintain its integrity when rescaled or reproduced - it should look as good on a business card as it does on a large-scale banner. It should also maintain its integrity if it needs to be converted to a black and white version.

Keep the colors to a minimum.

A 5-color logo may look sharp, but the printing cost may be higher, and may not be able to work in a medium that only allows one or two colors. Try to limit your logo to three colors or less.

Be distinctive.

Stay away from incorporating clip art into your logo - this limits uniqueness. By creating custom artwork, you can ensure that your logo will be distinctive and set you apart from your competition.

Create two versions.

If you decide to use a tagline, create two versions of your logo - one with the tagline and one without. You may find that there are some situations where your non-tagline version will be more applicable.

Apply for protection.

Be sure to trademark your logo from use by other organizations. Having this protection prevents other organizations from duplicating your identity. You want your organization to stand out in the marketplace, not drown in a sea of confusion made up of similar "looks."

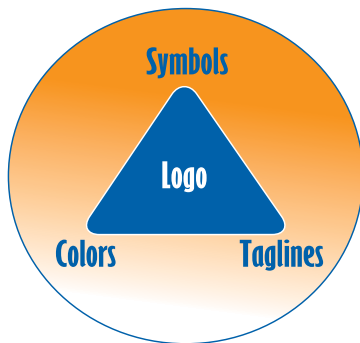
Develop guidelines.

Develop organizational guidelines that spell out how your logo should be used and reproduced, when to use what color(s), how to decide if the logo with or without the tagline should be used, and any other issues that may arise in presenting the look of your organization to the public.

To address this second goal, you and/or your organization need to take the key messages that define your identity, and make decisions about how the use of symbols, colors, and taglines will graphically communicate that identity to your target audience. Those decisions will determine the "look" of your identity - your logo.

Think back to the last time you had your picture taken, did you like the way you looked after it was developed? Why or why not? Most of us act the same way...if we like the way we look, we use or display the picture proudly and with confidence. If we hate the way we look, we may put it in a drawer, rip it up or throw it away. Why? Because we didn't feel that the picture accurately depicted how we look. Remember this analogy when deciding about the design elements of your logo. Use symbols, colors, and taglines that accurately convey the essence of your organization. Ideally, you and/or your organization want to know when the logo is used for internal and external purposes, that it's doing its job - communicating an accurate depiction of you.

Your logo can incorporate three different design elements: symbols, colors, and taglines. Each of them can communicate your identity in a different fashion, and you and/or your organization will need to determine which element(s) best conveys your identity.



How many times have we watched a commercial that made us laugh, but then had a hard time making a connection between the commercial and the company that was supposedly "promoted" in the commercial? Often times, us viewers, experience a disconnect. When deciding upon the design elements that will be used in your logo, be

ware of creating a disconnect with your logo. Make sure that your identity remains cohesive by ensuring that your design elements are in alignment with the message(s) that you want to communicate.

Key questions to consider:

- ✓ What's the best way to communicate your identity? Using one design element, two, or all three?
- ✓ Which design element connects to the different messages that define your identity? (i.e. Can a key message be better communicated through the use of a symbol rather than a color?)
- ✓ When determining what design elements will be used, do they work cohesively to communicate your identity?

Symbols

Because each piece of your logo should function as a communication mechanism for your identity and/or your organization's identity, consider style, shape, dimension, and placement when incorporating a symbol into your logo for maximum effectiveness.

Once you have decided upon a concept, consider working with a graphic design company to create an actual depiction of what you want your symbol to look like. They will be able to work with a "static" object and make it come alive. For example, a courier service may decide to incorporate a "van" within its logo to promote a connection between their automated fleet of vehicles and faster delivery times. Take this concept one step further. A graphic designer could enhance the "van concept" to promote even faster delivery. Perhaps the "van" could be lunging forward, have flames shooting out the back, or be enhanced in some other way to promote their commitment to super-fast delivery.

Here's an example of using a symbol as an effective communication mechanism.

By using the "fingers walking" symbol, the Yellow Pages logo has become instantly recognizable to us. Without seeing anything else, we know to "let our fingers do the walking."

Color

Different colors evoke different feelings, and you and/or your organization will need to determine the color(s) that not only work cohesively with your symbol, but also further communicates your identity. For example, red has been shown to act as a stimulus, while blue tends to promote feelings of calmness, which could explain why many organizations decide to incorporate some shade of blue into their logo.

When thinking about your color(s), step out of the vacuum. Remember that your logo and/or your organization's logo will be used in various mediums. An organization that develops its logo with various shades of green may find that they are restricted in what different background colors go with "their greens." When thinking about color, always keep in mind how the logo will be used. This could affect your decision-making process when deciding about colors.

Once you determine what color(s) will be used in your logo, go one step further. Will your identity be effectively communicated through the use of a solid color, or will shading or some other special effect be more appropriate?

Tagline

Typically, a tagline is either a very brief phrase or a few key words; regardless of the style that you choose, make sure that the chosen words are substantive. Refrain from using a tagline just for the sake of using one. Consider how your identity can be further communicated by developing and using a tagline within your logo.

Here are some examples of organizations that have used taglines effectively to communicate an additional message.

Campbell's
Coca-Cola
American Express

"Mmm...Mmm...Mmm Good."
"Things go better with Coke."
"Don't leave home without it."

#3 Make A Connection

BRANDING
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THE OUTCOMES MANAGEMENT GROUP, LTD.
An International Consulting Company
"Celebrating 10 Years of Successful Outcomes"

Our Identity

OMG is a management consulting organization with a corporate presence that has a results-orientation to achieving success with our clients.

Our Communication Method

Colors: We chose blue to promote a corporate presence, and the spectrum of blues represents OMG's multiple service areas.

Symbols: Our infinity symbol represents OMG's commitment to: 1) being an organization that will exist in future generations; and 2) incorporating our results-orientation internally within our organization and externally within our five service areas.

Our infinity symbol flows through the OMG letters to connect our commitments to our organization; we see them as being one in the same, not separate entities.

Tag Line: "An International Management Consulting Organization" communicates our focus on being an international-based organization.

"Celebrating 10 Years of Successful Outcomes" communicates our successful history of achieving results for our clients and as an organization.

Our Connection Strategy

We incorporate our logo and organizational colors into everything that we do. We carry our look through our business cards, marketing materials, website, proposals, client materials, etc. We are proud of what our logo communicates, and remain committed to increasing awareness about our organization.

Now that your logo and/or your organization's logo has been developed, it's time to focus on making a connection with your target audience. When designing your business cards, stationary, marketing materials, website, etc., keep in mind that these are communication tools. Every time you use one of these tools, you're sending another communication message about your identity and/or your organization's identity. An individual or organization who receives these tools, should instantly know that they associated with you and/or your organization. Even though this may be their first introduction to you, they should be able to make a connection between the communication tool and you.

Review the *Connection Checklist* on page 22 to ensure that your communication tools make a connection with your target audience.

In our summer issue, *Results* will feature, "Branding 102: Using Brand Equity to Drive Success."

Connection Checklist



Tool	Key Tips	Key Questions
Business Card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Position your logo so the association with you and/or your organization is easy to make.<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure that your logo doesn't get overshadowed by your contact information; keep the two pieces separate for a clean look.<input type="checkbox"/> Always carry your business cards with you; when someone asks for one, give them two.<input type="checkbox"/> Consider using the back side of your card to promote products, services, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Is your logo in a prominent place?<input type="checkbox"/> Does your logo stand apart from the contact information?<input type="checkbox"/> Have you used your colors throughout the design of the card?
Stationary (i.e. letterhead, envelopes, note cards, post cards, labels, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Position your logo so the association with you and/or your organization is easy to make.<input type="checkbox"/> Consider how best to use your logo and colors based upon the type of stationary.<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on cohesiveness - each piece of stationary that you use should communicate your identity consistently.<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure that if there are multiple pages, your logo and colors are on each page, as applicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Regardless of the type of stationary, can someone make the connection to you?<input type="checkbox"/> Have you used your logo on each piece?<input type="checkbox"/> Does each piece of stationary have a consistent look with the others?<input type="checkbox"/> Have you used your colors throughout each piece?
Marketing Materials (i.e. brochures, flyers, emails, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Position your logo so the association with you and/or your organization is easy to make.<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure that your logo and colors are on each page of a multi-page document, as applicable.<input type="checkbox"/> Determine the appropriate logo placement on a multi-page document (i.e. top vs. bottom, etc.)<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on cohesiveness - if multiple marketing materials are used in an informational packet, they should consistently promote your identity.<input type="checkbox"/> Present information that is an extension of your logo; make sure that it connects with the message communicated via your logo.<input type="checkbox"/> Use headers and footers to continue communicating your identity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Regardless of the type of marketing materials, can someone make the connection to you?<input type="checkbox"/> Have you used your logo on each piece?<input type="checkbox"/> What's the best placement for your logo?<input type="checkbox"/> Can someone make a connection between the information presented in the marketing materials and your logo?
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Position your logo on each page; someone should never forget what website they are viewing.<input type="checkbox"/> Use your colors throughout the design of the website.<input type="checkbox"/> Use the headers and footers to continue communicating your identity.<input type="checkbox"/> Consider putting some or all of your marketing materials on your website for easy downloading.<input type="checkbox"/> Enable people to sign up to receive more information about you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Does each page of the website make a connection to your identity?<input type="checkbox"/> Have you considered the different options to make additional information available to a viewer?<input type="checkbox"/> Is your contact information easily accessible?

Always be on the look out for other places where you can use your logo to reinforce your organization's identity (i.e. favors, banners, trade shows, vehicles, etc.) This continuous placement will help build your image, increase your visibility, and ideally, facilitate more business.

Creating a look for your company is a fun process. Just remember to keep your target audience and the nature of your business in mind. Over time, you will successfully increase awareness, and your logo will become a recognizable symbol that effectively communicates the essence of your organization.

Additional information can be found in articles posted on Entrepreneur.com and in the Mid-Missouri Business Journal.