

How to Transform Your Brand

One organization's makeover holds keys you can use for your own transformation.

By Diane Brunet-García

How much energy have you put into creating a positive identity—or brand—for your organization? Such a brand will immediately convey what your organization is about and what it has to offer. Taking steps to solicit input from your board, members, donors, volunteers, and other critical stakeholders will help you design a brand that best represents your organization.

The Challenge

The World Affairs Council of Jacksonville recently asked our PR group (Brunet-García Multicultural Advertising & Public Relations) to develop a new brand and positioning statement (tag line) for their organization. The Council is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting a deeper understanding of the world. They host forums on foreign affairs, foster discussion about international issues, and sponsor educational programs.

While the Council has a large membership base, awareness about the organization wasn't widespread throughout the community. Additionally, Council leaders acknowledged that their members were mostly older and retired and that their brand needed to appeal to younger professionals.

Keys to a Successful Solution

Using the Council as an example, here are steps to ensure that your organization's identity reflects its goals:

Get the Lowdown. The first step in any successful marketing campaign is to gather background information. For the World Affairs Council, we developed a questionnaire and interviewed a cross-section of the organization's paid staff, board, and members. When we analyzed input from these stakeholder groups, trends in thought began to emerge.

Tip: To get a true picture of your organization, ask about weaknesses, failures, and opportunities as well as strengths.

Keep the Message Short and, Well, Short. We categorized the groups of thought we discovered in the interview process into five "key image attributes" that defined the organization. These were: open forum on world affairs; accessible, quality resource on international topics; education leader for adults, teachers, and students; top-tier organization with expert leadership;

To get a true picture of your organization, ask about weaknesses, failures, and opportunities as well as strengths.

and convergence of education and entertainment. Then, we derived positioning and communication messages from the answers gathered in the interview process.

Tip: Limit your organization's image attributes to no more than five or six. This will help you define and articulate your core identity. It will also keep you from diluting your brand and creating confusion among your target audiences.

Create a Brand that's Worth a Thousand Words. Once we determined image attributes and key messages, our creative team went to work. We presented three brand design options to the Council's board, along with several tag lines.

Tip: Limit design options presented to your board or other decision makers to two or three. Limited choices will help you focus discussion and prevent fragmented opinions among the decision makers. Other options can always be introduced at a later time if a consensus can't be reached.

Test and Re-test. We tested the options in focus groups and with an online survey distributed to a large sample of current and potential members.

Tip: Surveying a sample of your target audiences helps ensure your new identity will reach the proper audience with the proper message.

Ta-da! We compiled the survey results and submitted a final brand recommendation to the board. The outcome is a new identity that reflects the World Affairs Council's

The fresher, friendlier identity is designed to appeal to a younger generation.

goal to increase interest in and awareness of the organization, particularly among young professionals.

Tip: To ensure buy-in from the board and other decision makers, include them in each stage of the process.

The Council replaced its green logo with a crisp blue logo that incorporates a dialogue globe-bubble as a symbol of world discourse. The logo implies that the Council is involved in fostering the kind of discussion on international issues and opportunities that promote understanding of the world and its people. The Council's old tagline, "It's Your World. Know It!" was changed to the softer "Bringing the World Closer." The fresher, friendlier identity is designed to appeal to a younger generation of potential members while staying true to the key image attributes espoused by the organization's existing membership. ■

Diane Brunet-García is president of Brunet-García Multicultural Advertising & PR (www.brunetgarcia.com). Check out additional results of the Council's brand makeover on its newly designed Web site, www.worldaffairsCounciljax.org.

A Branding Sample

For more ideas on transforming your brand, see these *Nonprofit World* articles at www.snpo.org/members:

- **Are You Following the 4 Cs of Branding?** (Vol. 25, No. 3)
- **The Most Important Question You Should Be Asking Right Now** (Vol. 27, No. 2)
- **The Nonprofit Branding Exercise** (Vol. 26, No. 1)
- **Brands: They Need to Work Just as Hard as You Do** (Vol. 20, No. 1)
- **Defining Your Leader Brand** (Vol. 25, No. 2)

The Big Reveal: How One Brand Makeover Worked

BEFORE



It's Your World. Know It!

AFTER



Bringing the World Closer

World Affairs Council Jacksonville