

Branding Strategy

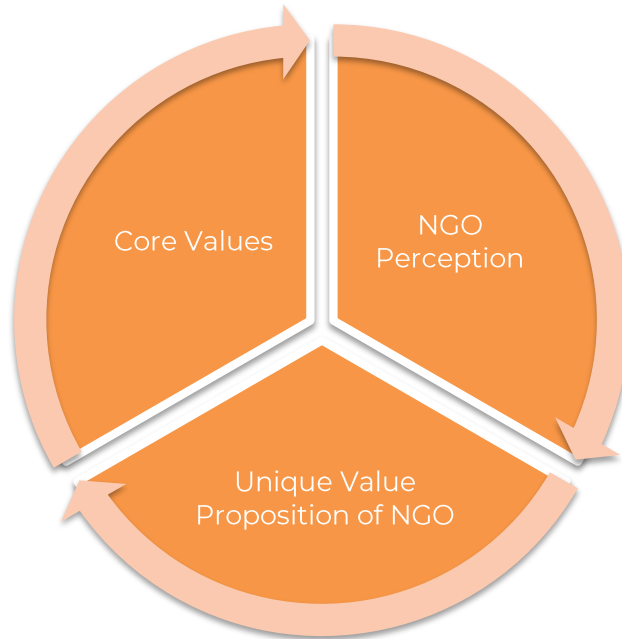
Communications



toolbox INDIA Foundation

Branding Strategy

Before starting this section, have your communications team reflect on the following:



Today, branding is as essential in the social impact sector as it is in the commercial sector. Commercially speaking, an NGO "sells" its idea of a better future. To this end, it needs to persuade several stakeholders like funders, volunteers, communities, etc., to attract funding, fulfil organizational gaps, implement their programs in the ground, and so on.

A compelling message, a coherent visual identity, and a solid reputation might get them just what they need. All these, however, do not appear by chance; instead, they are the result of a thoughtful branding strategy. Due to its importance, in this module, you will learn what branding is, its benefits, and how to create a successful branding strategy step by step.

What does branding mean?

Branding is how the organization lives its values and is presented to and perceived by the public. It includes the logo, the visual identity, a tagline, but also its values, its reputation, and its identity. A mature brand instills quality and trust. It must be flexible enough to adapt to organizational and environmental changes without jeopardizing its core values. It is central to an organization's

communications; as appropriately done, it strengthens what an organization says and does. The contrary can negatively affect an organization's reputation.¹

Why is branding important?

Builds trust

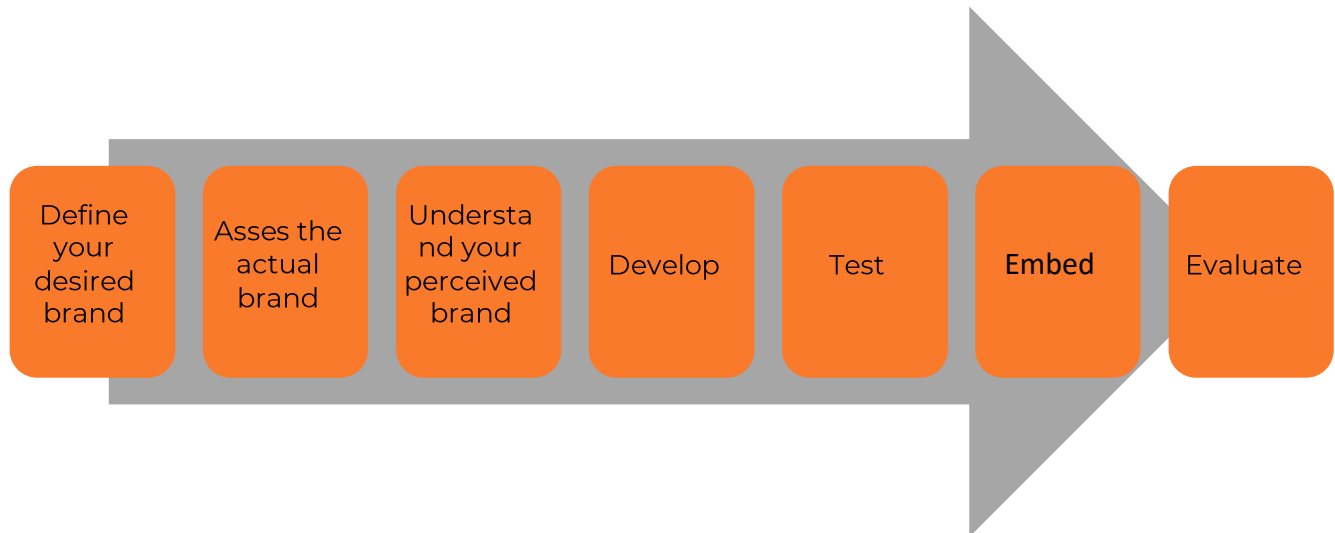
Gives you credibility

Differentiates you from others who work in the same or similar field

Bridges the gap between how others perceive you and how you live your values

¹ Based on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe understanding of branding

How can my organization develop a branding strategy?



Based on: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2018) Strategic Communications framework

1. Define your desired brand

- Brainstorm with your senior staff and Board of directors on how you want society to identify your organization.
- Think about why your NGO is different from others working in the same sector.
- Review your mission, vision, and goal. Define your core values, purpose, and position in society.
- Analyze the different components of your brand one by one; Visual, physical, and behavioral.

2. Assess the actual brand

- Evaluate how well you are doing, focus on your visual identity, current values, mission, corporate strategy, physical components, behavioral components, staff consultation, etc.
- Conduct a gap analysis which comprehends understanding the gap between the desired and the actual brand.

3. Understand your perceived brand

- To understand your perceived brand, you could either conduct public opinion research, environmental scans, or benchmarking information.

- Look to understand the public's perception of all your brand components. You could find this information also by conducting a gap analysis.

4. Develop

- Focus on developing a brand identity, i.e., logo, language, brand guidelines, templates, audio, signage, and positioning statement, addressing the gaps between the actual and desired position.

5. Test

- Try your new branding with your staff and then with external audiences to confirm that it is clear, consistent, and understood. See how they react to the implemented changes, and if you managed to fulfill the gaps.

6. Embed

- Mainstream the brand in the communications strategy, program implementation, and staff engagement. It should be present in any interaction with the general public but also inside the organization.

7. Evaluate

- There are several ways to evaluate your brand. Use the most appropriate one according to your organization's resources. Conduct surveys and environmental scans and do it regularly to address emerging gaps.