

THE
WHAT,
WHY,
AND
HOW
OF BRAND.

“You are a brand whether you like it or not....you’re going to leave some impression in a person’s mind [and] it’s your choice whether you want to actively manage that impression or whether you want them to come to their own conclusions of what they think about you.”

INGRID SRINATH,

SECRETARY GENERAL OF CIVICUS: WORLD ALLIANCE FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

TO KNOW YOUR BRAND IS TO KNOW YOUR REASON FOR BEING.

Let's get this misconception out of the way first: your organization already has a brand.

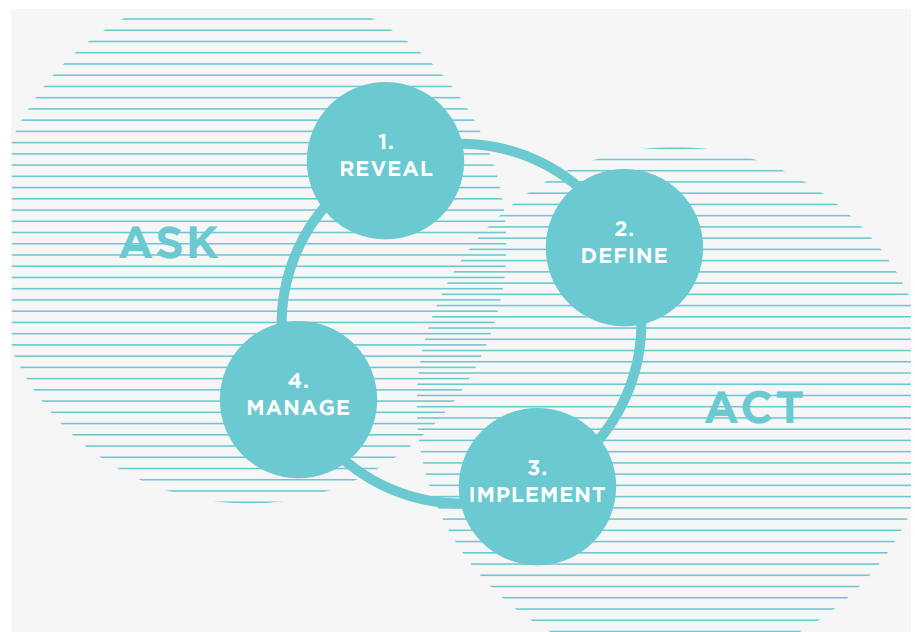
The question is, is your brand the one you created on purpose, with purpose? Or just something that kinda sorta happened along the way?

If it's the latter, and it often is, you probably already feel it in your bones. Like a too-tight jacket, your brand doesn't quite fit the mission—or not the mission as you know it today.

Here's another myth to bust: A brand is not a logo alone. It is not simply a book of rules to gather dust on a shelf, to be forgotten, or worse, to constrain creativity. A brand, at its

best, is the embodiment of everything for which you stand. It provides your organization, your employees, your clients, your fans and your friends with a clear understanding of who you are and where you're going. And whether they want to go along for the ride.

We're excited to help you reveal your organization's brand—a brand that fits; a brand the invites; a brand that doesn't just mean business, it means *your* business.



Building a brand means never standing still.

WHAT BRAND IS

THE WHAT, WHY, AND HOW OF BRAND

A brand, at the end of the day, is everything. It's the embodiment of what an organization does, how it operates, who it hires, and how it makes audiences feel with every experience it delivers.

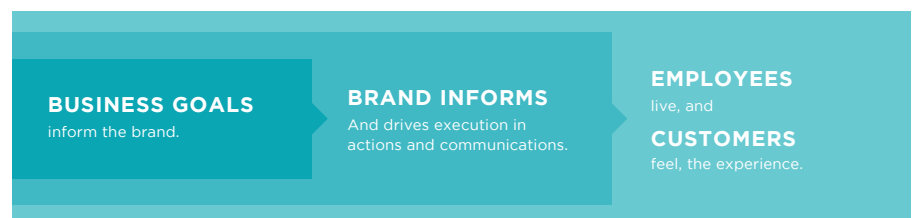
The strength of the brand is directly connected to the strength of the relationships people have with it.

Actually, it's all about relationships. We relate to organizations just like we relate to people. Try this out: Think of someone you know and your relationship with them. Are they consistent in their actions? Clear about what they believe in? Do you trust them to do what they say, over and over? Do you seek out their company, even when presented with other options?

If your answer was a resounding YES to all, then you likely have a strong and trusting relationship on your hands. It's the same for a brand. Strong brand relationships make it easy for people to choose you; to buy from, to work for, to hire, to partner with, and to donate to you.

When a person—or an organization—is true to itself and demonstrably wears its values and beliefs on its sleeve, you are more likely to trust that brand and believe in its authenticity. To have an authentic brand is more than just knowing what you are; it's knowing what you are not.

This doesn't rule out growth and innovation. On the contrary, sacrificing what you *are not* in order to fully be what you *are* allows for thoughtful and purposeful growth. And there's nothing more attractive in a relationship than intentional success.



An authentic brand is built from the inside out.

WHY BRAND IS

If you're looking for the most straightforward bottom line to embrace brand, this is it: The stronger relationships are with your brand, the stronger the results will be for your organization.

A great brand delivers value. But value isn't just dollars or donors. It's the intangible but oh-so-critical measure of how someone else feels about your brand that creates value capable of producing awareness, preference, and loyalty. These are all characteristics you seek in your organization's fans, and they are rooted as much, and often more, in the emotional connection to your brand.

Strong brand also creates differentiation. There are more than 1.5 million nonprofits in the United States today. They are all competing for the same dollars, the same

THE WHAT, WHY, AND HOW OF BRAND

attention, the same trust and devotion as you. In a sea of choice, one of the most powerful tools for standing out is your brand—being clear about who you are, what you stand for, and telling your story in a way that hits people in the gut.

Because when you do stand by your brand, your brand stands by you. A strong brand secures long-term results that might have once been uphill slogs. You get greater effectiveness and efficiencies (the work of individuals now aligns to a unified strategy and purpose); stronger recruitment (you become an employer that attracts motivated and exciting talent); and better, faster and more sustainable marketing (the shorthand of your brand opens doors and creates new opportunities).

In the end, the business case for why *brand* is really, why on earth not?



A brand-driven organization connects with people who care about the same things.

HOW BRAND IS

You’ve probably heard and even spoken the words “our promise” before.

A brand promise is more than pinky-swears and Meyers-Briggs tests. It is one of the tangible components of a brand platform, the one that everyone delivers on every day. Together, all the elements of your brand platform encompass the entire organization, showcase your brand visually, and ultimately guide the experience anyone will have with your brand.

The how of strengthening a brand is so much more than a thick binder of logo usage guidelines and color standards. Often, these tools are developed for external communications but are created in the absence of anyone who actually

touches the work on a daily basis. Effective brand development is about revealing and defining the unique DNA of a brand by digging into the perceptions of stakeholders and the marketplace, building consensus with leadership, and creating champions who understand the brand from the ground up and will use it to drive organizational growth. When you uncover the essence of a brand and build it from the core, you can transform the strategy into tangible tools to drive operations, culture, design, and communications.

Brand Architecture	Organization name	Outside view of
	Product/division relationships	your organization
Brand Platform	Mission	Why you exist
	Values	Culture drivers
	Promise	Daily action driver
	Personality	Look and voice
Message Platform	Positioning/Messages	What you say
Visual Brand	Logo	Visual beacon
	Visual Design	Look and feel

The Brand Platform: your most powerful business tool.

KITE IS

Ever sit across the table from someone and wish they understood what it was like on your side of the business?

“You can say the right thing about a product, and nobody will listen. You’ve got to say it in such a way that people feel it in their gut. Because if they don’t feel it, nothing will happen.”

ADRIAN SARGEANT & JOHN B. FORD
STANFORD SOCIAL INNOVATION REVIEW

Ever wish you were sitting on the other side so you could see your organization with fresh eyes?

Well, that’s Kite.

We match 20 years of external agency acumen with 20 more years of internal nonprofit know-how to become 360-degree partners to our clients. Based in Seattle and Washington, D.C., we are a full-service strategy and design studio building brands that people believe in, rally around and invest in.

We bring a strategic perspective on how to authentically reveal and define your brand, along with a grounded approach that comes from years of experience. We know the business of branding inside and out, and we know exactly how to keep things moving when they get hairy. Our internal

THE WHAT, WHY, AND HOW OF BRAND

perspective creates the buy-in and ownership a brand needs to thrive; our external view ensures that brand has the authenticity to stand out in the crowd and serve as a powerful ambassador for your mission.

We are a tight-knit team of experts, and from strategy to copywriting, from graphic design to interactive development, you’ll find us to be agile, smart, flexible and refreshingly down-to-earth.

Being a brand-driven organization lets you take leaps forward, increasing your visibility, voice, and value in ways that would not be possible without it. And we’re with you every step of the way.

That is *our* brand promise.

Learn more about Kite, check out our work and say hello at kitebrandstudio.com

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