



Brand Fundamentals™ principals Greg Elizondo (l) and Peter Harris (r) conducting a workshop at the Hannah Grimes Center in Keene, NH.

Brand Brief Worksheet

Developing a **brand brief** is an essential first step toward achieving your nonprofit organization's marketing goals. With this worksheet, you can create one for your organization.

"During the Branding Fundamentals workshop I not only gained a firm grasp on what branding is and why it is important, I left with a plan where to go next. Peter and Greg are a great team. I would highly recommend their workshops and services." —*Michael J. Greenough, IT & Internet Marketing, Pete's Tire Barns*



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This edition was specially prepared for



Instructions: Fill in the blanks based on the particulars of your organization.

Once upon a time there was (define a problem) ... _____

Every day (define the pain people with the problem feel) ... _____

One day (define your organization's mission) ... _____

Because of that (define how your organization changes people's lives)... _____

Because of that (cite benefits to life with problem solved) ... _____

Until finally (describe greater good realized by your organization's presence)... _____

Exercise 3: Problem/Pain/Solution

Nonprofits start with a simple premise: one party has a problem and another has a solution. Mission statements notwithstanding, some nonprofits get caught in a mire of complications. In these cases it pays to remember the original pain—be it physical, emotional, social, or economic—and the original solution.

Instructions: What *problem* existed before your organization came into being? What is the *pain* associated with that problem? How does your organization *solve* the problem and alleviate the pain?

The problem _____

The pain _____

The solution _____

Exercise 4: Research

Brands are built on information—and that means research. Research comes in two varieties: primary, which you initiate (as in, conducting a survey); and secondary, which you purchase or acquire free of charge (as in, online or at the library).

Instructions: Pick one stakeholder group from Exercise 1 (for example, beneficiaries or donors) and answer these questions about them. You may need to consult with sources inside or outside your organization. Then, repeat the process with other stakeholder groups.

Who are your stakeholders? _____

How do they think/feel/act before interacting with your organization? _____

How do they think/feel/act after interacting with your organization? _____

Where do they congregate (in person and/or online) _____

What other organization(s) provides similar services? _____

What other organizations compete for the same dollars? _____

What other organization(s) can you learn from, especially in terms of what to do or what not to do? _____

What social and technology trends present opportunities or obstacles to your organization? _____

Exercise 5: Brand Attributes

It can be surprisingly difficult to distinguish between features and benefits. Features tend to be earthbound (Food for People, Not for Profit³), whereas benefits often have emotional resonance (The greatest casualty is being forgotten⁴). Though your list may be very different from this one, here are some examples:

Features:

- What is it made of?
- Is it a commodity or an innovation?
- Is it top of the line or a bargain?
- Is it hand made or high tech?
- Is it organic or does it taste great?

Benefits:

- What does it do (practically)?
- Does it build status or self-esteem?
- Does it make life easier, richer, better?
- Does it relieve stress or anxiety?
- Does it promote health and wellbeing?

Instructions: List features and benefits offered by, or associated with, your organization.

Features

Benefits

Exercise 6: Positioning Statement

Marketing pioneers Al Ries and Jack Trout argue that the most important “real estate” is not out in the world, but in the minds of individuals. They argue it is better to be thought of first for one thing, than to be thought of last for many things.

If you want to be everything to everybody, you will probably wind up being nothing to anybody.

Instructions: Referring to your answers to previous questions, fill in the blanks.

For (target stakeholders) _____

who (statement of the need or opportunity), _____

3 Community Food & Justice Coalition
4 Wounded Warrior Project

What next?

Congratulations! You now have a brand brief for your organization. Hopefully, carrying out the process has been helpful in itself, but the best is yet to come. Here are some practical ways to use your brief:

- Share it with marketing and creative professionals when developing print and electronic materials (see Exercise 7).
- Use it as the basis for an identity program.
- Share it with new and existing board members and staff to:
 - promote mission awareness;
 - facilitate understanding;
 - reach common ground.
- Use it to guide strategic and tactical decisions.
- Use it to inform fundraising efforts.
- Share it with allied organizations to clarify similarities and differences, and to promote mutual interests.

Your brand should work for your organization—clarifying your mission, strengthening your communications, even saving time and money. Here's wishing you every success!

