

Guest Blog by Liz Banse of [Resource Media](#)

When was the last time you went to the doctor for a check-up? Hopefully, it was in the past year. But, what about your organization? Have you given it a check-up recently? Specifically, have you checked on the health of your organization's brand?

Aw, we're fine, you say. I know how to articulate my organization's mission statement without even referring to the cheat sheet by my phone. But, do you know what other people are saying about you? And does that match how you describe who you are, what you do, and what makes you so unique?

At Resource Media, we like to say that your brand is what people say about you once you leave the room. If there is any sort of gap between how you describe yourself and how others describe you when you aren't around, you have a brand disconnect. And a brand disconnect means you are not fulfilling your brand promise to your supporters.

That's when you want to get back into alignment. A branding refresh is all about redefining and getting clear on what sets you apart from others in your field. It's about finding the right words to communicate the value of the work that you do to the people who need to hear it most – whether they be donors, elected officials or community leaders, other organizational partners or anyone else you need on your side to realize your goals.

How does a typical branding process flow? Start with a discovery process where you interview people within the organization as well as those who interface with it from the outside (supporters, funders, policy makers, partner organizations, and others). Ideally, these interviews are conducted by a neutral third party with communications expertise so that you're receiving candid views instead of people telling you what you want to hear. These in-depth interviews will give you the first clues as to the health of the brand.

Next, have someone outside of your organization review your organization's materials – online and offline and write up what they perceive as your brand. Does their write up match what you had intended to convey?

You may also at this point want to do a broader online survey of organizational supporters.

Pull all the research generated together and hold a "workshop" at which you hopefully will generate some "a-ha" moments. The outcome of the workshop should be refreshed language about your organization's core identity and some tactics for how to better communicate it.

Then, don't forget to make sure everyone on staff (and possibly the board) is trained and any stock materials are overhauled. The result: Staff, volunteers, and those outside the organization will speak in one voice on how and what you do and, most importantly, why the work you do is important and unique.