



Polishing the Diamond

values, image and brand
as a source of strength for charities

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Prologue

Image matters

◇ **Peter Galbraith** is responsible for placing his local authority's clients with multiple disabilities in specialist residential care. He handles around 100 cases every year. On his desk is a choice between two suppliers, both charities, for a 20 year old woman with severe learning difficulties and autism. One supplier is charging £100 a week more than the other. Perhaps surprisingly Peter is inclined to use the more expensive supplier. He has read a number of articles about their music therapy programme, and the charity has a strong reputation for the quality of its care and its innovative approach (though he cannot put his finger on how he knows that).

◇ **Jean Farrell** supports a whole range of charities both with time and money. She is very concerned because one of the charities she supports has been accused of mis-using its funds. She's listening to the Today programme as their Chief Executive explains what they have done and why. Jean is not impressed. She thought the answers were weak and evasive. A few days later the summer appeal arrives. There is no explanation or further mention of the issue that had been in the news – but ubiquitous thanks for her support. Jean feels she is being taken for granted and cancels her direct debit.

◇ **Ian Glen** is a journalist with a large regional newspaper. He covers lots of charity stories. He receives over 100 emails a day from charities and about 50 faxed press releases. He is particularly interested in a story about an environmental issue that is relevant to his readers. He puts a call into the environmental group that is promoting the issue and they promise to get back to him. But they do not. So the next day he rings a press officer from another environmental group who is always reliable and helpful and gets the information off her. He runs the story but doesn't mention the original group and puts in a quote from the press officer he has talked to.

◇ **Margaret McNee** is a junior health minister. Her days are always long and crammed full with meetings, briefings and the contents of her red box. Most medical charities have taken an hour of time to beat their drum on some issue close to their heart. Most never get a 2nd chance – they come without solutions, without understanding the constraints on the health service, or have impossible price tags to their ideas. The organisations whose ideas she pursues are few. She needs to be able to see that they have done their homework, that they can help her look good and that they have got MPs on her side (judging by her correspondence from backbenchers). It helps to know that they can use the media to embarrass her (though she'd be loathed to admit it).

Section 1

Introduction

This report is about image and reputation. It is about brand and identity. It is about the nebulous bundle of perceptions that floats in most people's heads about virtually every person and every organisation they come into contact with. That bundle of perceptions, whether justified or unjustified, whether conscious or unconscious, help each of us make decisions every day of our lives.

There are two core arguments in this report. The first is that a not for profit organisation's image or brand matters. It is not an issue to be left to fundraisers or even to communicators – because having an image that leaves the right impression can make a charity, pressure group or community organisation much more effective. The second argument is that powerful charity brands are not the construct of advertising agencies, but based on what lies at the heart and soul of your organisation: its values. This report, in part, is about the process of taking those values and making them shine out to the world. An effective and focused image for an organisation is about polishing the diamond.

Creating the image that your vision and your beneficiaries deserve can often be done for very few direct costs – just the time and energy of staff, volunteers and trustees. With 180,000 charities and probably 10,000 with paid staff, the world is getting more and more competitive for charities. Competition is intense for fundraising, for media coverage, for local authority contracts, for Government grants and for volunteers. Every aspect of what an organisation does must communicate the right image to those audiences that matter. It is no longer enough to do good work. The quality of that work must be reflected in an image that does it justice.

The right image will act as a kind of organisational fitness, as the four vignettes at the start of this section showed. The right image can help an organisation succeed in a whole host of settings, where those with the wrong image fail (irrespective of what 'the real situation' is).

Perception is reality and each of us, being only human act on the world as we see it.

Branding is now universal in the commercial world. Each time we watch television we can see ads designed to build our impression of a product. Each time we go to the supermarket we make buying decisions based on our impression of products. We are all familiar with brands and despite the recent media hype against brands they are part of our everyday lives.

However the term brand is off putting for some. Charities are not like the products on supermarket shelves (or at least they shouldn't be) and for many in the charitable sector the term brand is offensive and trivialising, even distasteful. For those who feel this way, this report will be tough going – but please persevere. Each time you read the word 'brand' mentally replace it with the word 'image' or 'reputation'

If you have ever felt that your organisation doesn't get the media coverage, the fundraising income, the political clout, the reputation for service delivery, the respect from your peers that you deserve then read on. This report should take less than an hour to read. But it contains ideas and information to help organisations of every size make a difference to the effectiveness of their work. It will help you to create the right impression for your charity and the work that you do.

The report is based on interviews and research with charities and agencies that work closely with them. However it has relevance on the issues of image for the whole spectrum of not for profit organisations: churches, trade unions, community groups, trade associations, housing associations and not just charities.

The report is divided into six sections:

Section 1 Introduction.

Section 2 looks at the specific issues relating to brand in the voluntary sector and how it differs from the commercial sector as well as the need for and importance of a strong image.

Section 3 examines the different types of branding strategy and in particular between the visual/verbal aspects of branding and the vision/beliefs aspects of a brand.

Section 4 sets out the components of an image: name, logo, straplines, key messages, mission and vision and values. It identifies the different issues with maximising the impact of each area of a brand.

Section 5 describes five key lessons in developing a branding strategy that works which come out of the research for this report.

Section 6 concludes with a call for a revolution in the way that not for profit organisations approach branding.

BOX 1

DEFINITION AND LANGUAGE OF BRANDING

There have been entire academic papers written to try and define branding. It is not appropriate to repeat those here. However in the research for this report it is clear that people mean a whole variety of different things by brand. Some charities who told me they were rebranding meant they were changing their name or logo or corporate identity. Other organisations talked about a ‘branding exercise’ by which they meant a re-evaluation of the mission and vision and the ways that they are reflected in all the different facets of the organisation’s communications.

For the purposes of this report, when we talk about brand, we use the term synonymously with the term ‘image’. Another way to view brand is like the personality of an individual (or perhaps more accurately persona). So in our definition there are many elements that make up an organisation’s brand, but each of the elements is not the brand in itself.

Another debate we have heard is that an organisation doesn’t yet have a brand: because it is so poorly developed. Our belief is that every organisation has a brand, but some are very poorly defined or communicated.

Definitions aside, there are some very important lessons to be learnt about the use of the term ‘brand’. For many people in many organisations (mainly outside the fundraising and communications teams) the language and terminology of branding itself is a complete anathema. As one Chief Executive put it (to his Director of Communications who was leading the branding work) *‘I find this whole approach distasteful and counter to the ethic of being a charity’*.

Almost everybody in a charity would agree that an organisation’s image amongst the key stakeholders is of vital importance. Service providers agree that the reputation of a service is key. Personnel departments know that better candidates apply for jobs with organisations who are better thought of. Few within charities disagree that image, reputation and external impressions are often the difference between success and mediocrity. So while the ideology of the importance of image is rarely disputed, in many organisations it may be better to use the actual term ‘branding’ very judiciously.

Section 2

Branding in the voluntary sector

Charities have amongst the strongest brands of any organisation; commercial, public or voluntary. The image projected by groups such as the RSPCA or Greenpeace is both powerful and universally known. Yet the importance of, and need for charities to have a coherent brand is still disputed by many charity practitioners. This report takes for granted the need for charities to have a strong and distinct image (or brand) in the form of an organisational personality. It argues that a brand should be rooted in, and derived from the voluntary organisation itself and not distinct and separate from it.

Learning from the commercial sector

Back in the early nineties commentators argued that charities should adopt the techniques and practices of the commercial sector in order to create a powerful brand. Overall the techniques in the commercial sector, particularly retail goods, can be defined as follows:

A heavy emphasis on visual identity: use of particular colours, logos and typography. Use of consistent imagery in TV advertising and the meticulous attention to detail maintaining the corporate style of any brand.

Many brands are maintained by heavy use of image advertising. TV, press, and posters are all used to continually pump out the visual identity and message and reinforce it in the public perception. Stereotypically this advertising focuses on image rather than specifics for the product and services.

In the commercial world, brands are created from scratch. The brand is the product of the marketeer. Changing advertising agencies can result in a changed brand. Because marketeers create brands, the maintenance of the brand is focused on appearance and style.

Because brands are created, brand management and corporate identity are inextricably intertwined. Brand personality is virtually synonymous with the brand identity and packaging.

One of the pre-requisites for a successful approach to branding in the commercial sector is a large marketing budget to drive the message home in a variety of media.

Is the commercial sector model appropriate?

There are three main reasons why the voluntary sector needs a more coherent and individual model of branding than adopting the commercial sector one verbatim (though it is undoubtedly useful as a starting point).

1. Charities are the product of a desire to change the world: to cure cancers, tackle overseas poverty, stop animal cruelty and so on. This means their personalities are potentially far deeper than those of most commercial brands. To use commercial techniques for such inherently powerful brands is both expensive and unnecessary.
2. For a commercial brand to be successful it typically needs millions of pounds of marketing budget. Even then thousands of products fail each year. Charities quite simply cannot afford this approach. This is why for so many charities direct marketing and public relations are used so extensively. Even the largest of charities have advertising budgets only in the hundreds of thousands of pounds, rather than the tens of millions typically associated with the large commercial brands.

3. The nature of charities is such that a comprehensive corporate identity relaunch is very difficult. The expense and the internal resistance of a relaunch can be awesome for a charity. Old leaflets and materials need to be destroyed, shop fascias need to be revamped, staff need to be retrained and more importantly thousands of volunteers need to be brought on board. This whole process is extremely time consuming. It took the RNIB nearly 5 years to plan and instigate a corporate relaunch in the early nineties.

So, while charities must be prepared to work on developing their brand, they should not be prepared to copy the commercial sector too closely.

BOX 2

BRANDS AS PERSONALITIES:

DAVID BECKHAM OR THORA HIRD

One of the simplest ways of all is to think of an organisation's image or brand like a person's personality. Many things go to make up the image we have of a person in our mind: their clothes, their job, their habits, their reliability, their traits and so on. How well we know an individual has a varying impact on our responses to any attempts they make to change their image. When one of our family changes the way they dress it may have virtually no impact on our image of them: but for people meeting them for the first time in a job, the impact will be much deeper.

Our image of people creates expectations of them as well. We go to see a film because Stephen Spielberg directed it or Juliette Binoche stars in it, even if we know nothing else about it. We expect Michael Owen to score goals for England and we expect Stephen Redgrave to win Olympic gold. Advertisers (particularly sports advertisers) use the power of personality to sell products and top athletes are paid millions for the use of their 'brand'.

The value of this analogy for charities is that it helps us understand how people respond to a brand. A change of clothes and hairstyle may give Madonna a new image, but we all know that beneath the image she is more or less the same. We can change a corporate name (from Windscale to Sellafield for example) but few believe that the environmental impact will be so easily altered. A change of logo and a bit of advertising may signal to the public that a charity is changing. But those who work for it, or volunteer for it, or support it will need consistent messages over a prolonged period not just to be convinced that the organisation is changing, but probably to even notice.

A strong image matters for not for profit organisations

This report attempts to provide some advice and insights into the issues at the heart of branding in the voluntary sector. It makes one key judgement that acts as the foundation for the whole report; a strong coherent image is one of the key levers in organisational success, irrespective of size, services or structure.

The irony of branding in the not for profit sector generally, and charities specifically, is that the constraints and parameters on an organisation are very different from the commercial sector. Many charities are household names, and became household names, without any notion of the importance of branding or image management. This means that the image of most major charities, certainly up until 10 years ago, was created more by accident than design. Their image had evolved over time and was not the creation of any strategy, let alone a carefully constructed marketing and advertising campaign - whereas corporate brands like First Direct are entirely created.

The implications of this evolution of a not for profit image is that the visual aspects (see Section 3) of an image such as logo, colours, house-style and strap line are often poorly developed. At the same time the values aspects of an organisation are often very strong. Most voluntary and community groups are started because of the passionate beliefs of a few individuals. While this passion is often diluted, distorted and redirected, it remains the hot embers of an organisation's soul years and often decades after it was founded. Part of the task of a branding strategy is to scrape away the dirt from years of neglect and repolish the original values, and update them. Branding is about polishing the diamond.

So the starting point for many charities in creating a powerful image is that their current image which is all too often woolly and unclear or out of date with what the organisation actually is and does. (The starting point is also very different from the commercial world which is usually the literal and metaphorical blank sheet of paper).

The challenge for many charities is like the story of the Westerner, in search of enlightenment who goes to visit an Eastern mystic. The mystic starts by offering him a glass of tea from an enormous urn, and he asks the

Westerner what he thinks the first task is on the road to enlightenment. As the Westerner answers, the mystic pours the tea. However he keeps on filling the cup even when it is full and soon it is overflowing. The baffled and embarrassed Westerner points this out to the mystic *'the cup is full, you must stop pouring'*. The mystic smiles and keeps pouring and replies *'and this is the first lesson on the road to enlightenment. Once the cup is full nothing more will go in. Only when the cup is empty, can it be filled'*.

For charities, the first task in branding is often, not filling the cup with a stronger image, but persuading their audiences to shed what is already there. A classic example of this dilemma is the one that Barnardo's face with the continued and widespread public belief that they run orphanages. Their current advertising campaign is geared around persuading the public to shed their orphanages' image (see Box 3 for more details).

A further difficulty for charities in branding is that they cannot change the arena they work in with any ease. A disability charity cannot decide that it would have a much better scope of activities and move into cancer as well, or drop areas that it finds difficult to fundraise in. Yet this is exactly the kind of option that a company might take.

BOX 3 BARNARDO'S USE OF ADVERTISING TO CHANGE THEIR IMAGE

Barnardo's closed their last orphanage in the 1960s. Yet between 70%-80% of the UK still have some link in their minds between Barnardo's and orphanages. The work of Barnardo's is extremely diverse with projects covering areas ranging from teenage prostitution to parenting. In reality their work is about poverty and social welfare for people who happen to be children. However the core thread that runs through much of their work is the idea that what happens to children as they grow up determines what happens to them as adults.

The challenge for the marketing team at Barnardo's has been how to encapsulate that idea in its marketing, while dispelling the notion that the organisation runs orphanages. The result has been a powerful series of whole page adverts run in national newspapers. These ads have been both shocking and informative. The best known (and most complained about) has a picture of a baby injecting itself with heroin with the headline - 'John Donaldson. Aged 23'. These ads have caught the attention of the public and MPs (in one survey over 10% of MPs mentioned them spontaneously as an example of a campaign they remembered).

The task now for Barnardo's is to build on the beachhead that has been established in changing the public's entrenched perceptions and make sure that every aspect of the organisation conveys the same message about Barnardo's and the work that it does.

Is it really worth it?

It would be easy to decide after reading all this information about how difficult and different branding is for charities that it isn't really worth the hassle. Surely any Chief Executive's time is better spent restructuring all those Trustee sub-committees than working on an organisation's image.

Perhaps the best way to imagine a strong and focussed image is like a kind of organisational physical fitness. Just as it's easier to run a mile if you're fit, it's easier to raise £1 million if you have the right image. Both tasks can be done by the 'unfit' but it is simply that much harder.

Here are some areas where we believe a powerful and coherent image can make a difference to the effectiveness of a charity:

The right image makes it easier to fundraise. This can either mean that an organisation is well known or that the fundraising products have a strong image in their own right. So when a mailing appeal comes through from the RSPCA or NSPCC it is more likely to be opened and more likely to be responded to. This is true at the local level as well. A school or community group is more likely to pick a local charity which has a clear purpose and well-known name than one which needs explaining to everybody who is asked to make a donation.

The right image makes it easier to get media coverage and campaign. This is because the authority of a message is in large part based on the authority of the source. We take a very different view of the message that we are driving too fast if it is our partners who are telling us or the police. Similarly we take a message about the quality of our environment, or cancer treatment on the NHS, or discrimination against disabled people, much more seriously if the source is perceived as independent, authoritative, professional and very thorough in its research. A strong image makes it more likely that a newspaper will cover the story. A strong image makes it more likely that a politician will make the time for a meeting.

The right image makes it easier to deliver services cost-effectively. Any organisation that delivers services will have experienced the difficulties of funding that service. Having an image which reflects the professional expertise necessary to deliver the service, the capacity to

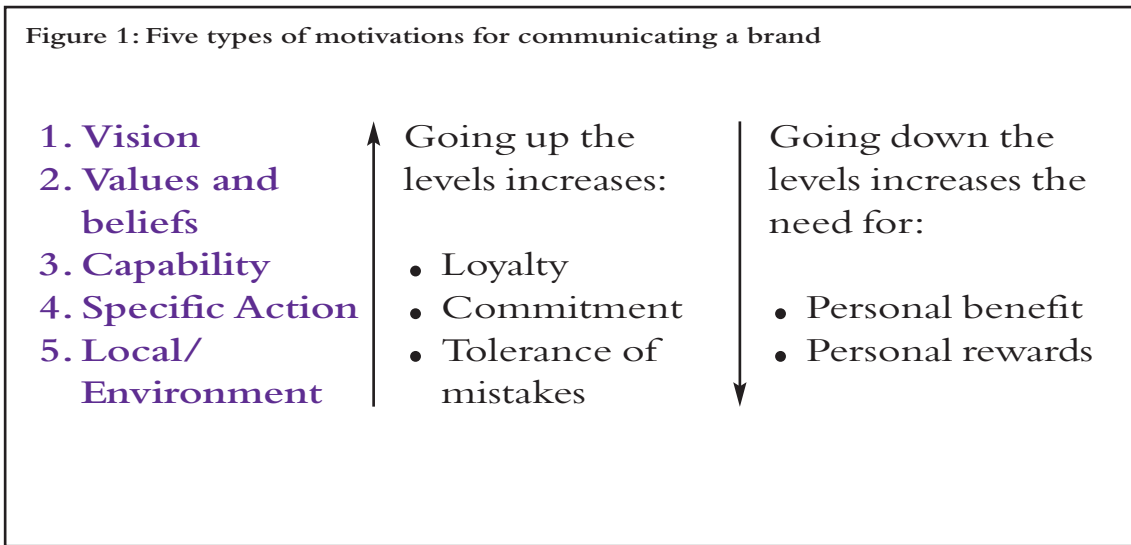
deliver the service, and the track record in quality and outcomes will make the task of attracting clients and securing funding much easier. One of the ironies of the whole field of branding is that perception is reality. If a funder or a client perceives that an organisation has the right credentials then it will act as if they do (irrespective of whether this is the reality). Image matters in service delivery (as with fundraising and communications as well) because people act on their perceptions. It may be aggravating, annoying or infuriating that people do not really understand the organisation, and ranting and raving will make little difference – but having an image that does your organisation justice will.

Charity brands are based on beliefs and values

The simple reason for this is that all not-for-profit organisations are rooted in a set of beliefs. They exist because they have a view about how they would like the world to be and how it currently is. These beliefs can be very small scale and local - *"the kids on this estate deserve better play facilities"* - or all very embracing and global - *"the children around the world are entitled to a basic education, basic health care"*. It is to use these beliefs that create an organisation and drive it forward. My argument is that it is these beliefs that should form the basis of a charity's brand or personality.

Using different types of motivations to communicate a brand

Branding can motivate and involve people at five different levels (based in psycho-linguistic programming). Figure 1 shows the core concepts of the hierarchy and the way in which a brand is communicated at five different motivational levels



These levels, starting at the lowest point on the hierarchy, are as follows:

Local/ Environment

People give to a charity by putting money into a collecting tin on a Saturday morning because it allows them to shop in peace. People have their image of Oxfam formulated by the Oxfam shops. People take part in the national lottery because they may win millions of pounds. The environmental motivation is the simplest of forces: people do things because their peers are doing it, or their immediate environment will change, or they may directly benefit. The environmental (or local level) is the hardest motivation to use to build a brand yet it probably motivates more people to support charities than anything else. People's interests are entirely self-centred at this level.

Specific Action or Specific Behaviour

The start of any long-term relationship is built on the power of the initial contact. The charity squeezes its entire message, its emotion, its brand into one small offer.

"£12 can make a blind person see"

"£15 will feed 10 children for a month"

"£1 plants a tree"

are all opening shots in the desire by charities to motivate people, and so build a relationship and a brand. Motivating people at the specific action level is an attempt to communicate a brand of a charity and is the organisational equivalent of a blind date: a tempting offer without further commitment. Even so, the charity must communicate itself appropriately; its initial communication cannot position it as a young, radical, campaigning organisation when in reality it is a conservative, traditional charity.

Capability

Most central charity communications are done at the capability level.

“We have 1,000 scientists”
“We are feeding 10,000 children a day in Rwanda”
“We planted 250,000 trees last year”

are all examples of charities demonstrating their capability to carry out a programme. Demonstrating the capability to carry out the work in question is a vital element for a charity communicating the strength of its brand. Most direct marketing fundraising is communicated in this way. It is none the less a practical demonstration of what the charity believes in. 1,000 scientists shows a belief in research, feeding children in Rwanda shows a belief in emergency relief, planting trees shows a belief in reforesting Britain.

Values and beliefs

“We can halve the incidences of breast cancer over the next 10 years”
“Thousands of children die every year as a result of third world debts to western banks”
“Woodlands are a vital part of our heritage and our enjoyment of the natural world”

Beliefs are at the heart of why charities exist and they are one of the most accessible parts of a charity’s brand. Yet too many charities leave their beliefs as implicit statements, rather than communicating them explicitly. They attempt to motivate extensively at the capability level, while failing to build loyalty by also explicitly communicating beliefs.

Vision

“Help us create a world free from cancer”
“No child should die for lack of basic health care, education or nutrition”
“Together we can create a greener Britain”

Vision is the synthesis of a set of organisation beliefs, woven into a statement of how the world should be. Most common exponents of vision are politicians. Charities such as Greenpeace and

Christian Aid also have a powerful vision of the world. That powerful vision is one of the reasons for a strong and loyal following for each of those organisations. Most charities have a vision and many articulate it incompletely or unconvincingly. It is, though, an integral part of communicating a brand.

The hierarchy of motivations has a number of features, which are vital ingredients for brand building.

1. An organisation must use the widest range of the hierarchy’s motivations. People build a brand image through a myriad of experiences or influences in a breadth of ways. The organisations which have a strong vision, but no capability to carry it out are not credible. People who respond at the environmental level need to be motivated in other ways as well.
2. The higher the motivations which people respond to the more loyal and committed they usually are. Once people share in your vision of the world, failings in the ability to carry out that vision are more easily forgiven - just look at the way in which political parties survive!
3. The lower the levels of motivation (environment and specific action) that people are responding to, the more driven people are by the personal benefits for them. For example, almost all fundraising for schools is at the environment level (people do it because their own children will benefit. Put another way, how many people fundraise for schools other than those their children are at?). At the lower levels of motivation people are more likely to pick brands or charities when they see their self interest as being better met. This interest in the local is one of the key sources of competitive advantage that small local charities can have.

BOX 4**BRANDING EXERCISES**

If branding is a way of making the organisation 'fitter' to communicate its work and mission, then these are some useful exercises to help understand how fit an organisation is.

Words associated with a charity

We all use adjectives to describe the people around us. How often are people labelled as 'charming', 'dour' or 'bubbly' as a way of describing them. Organisations are no different from people. A whole host of words (caring, honest, innovative, etc) are used to describe charities. A useful exercise is to ask all the different stakeholders (staff, volunteers, trustees, donors, clients, etc.) in an organisation to pick the ten words that they most associated with the charity. Are the words chosen the same between different groups? Do the words match with the key attributes that the organisation has chosen?

Imagine a breed of dog, or a car, or a celebrity

One of the most illuminating and fun ways to explore a brand is for the same stakeholders to compare the organisation with well-known entities with recognisable characteristics. One favourite is breeds of dogs since dogs cover the whole spectrum of sizes, shapes and temperaments. Another favourite comparator is cars. One Chief Executive used this technique to illuminate pre-merger discussions between two charities. This result in one organisation being seen as a rather old Bentley and the other being seen as a Vauxhall Corsa – interesting ingredients for a merger discussion without doubt! The value in these comparative techniques is that it helps people articulate their perceptions, which otherwise might be very difficult to put into words. The only dilemma is when there isn't universal agreement on the nature of the entity under discussion. One charity found itself with half the stakeholders wanting to be more like Cliff Richard and the other half thought they were already like Cliff and were desperate to become something different.

Different departments/different voices?

It is no secret that different parts of the same organisation can use completely different language to talk about its work and activities. One useful way to gauge the extent of the disparity is to gather together different written materials from across the organisation to see how they vary in their visual style, their verbal messages and the values they portray. The value of this exercise is to try and understand how different parts of the organisations have drifted apart in the way they interpret the core mission of the organisation (see Figure 2). In some cases these differences in image may be staring any outsider in the face – go to any regional office of a large charity and see how many leaflets or posters are still available. In other cases the differences are more subtle: what kind of language (or even just what adjectives) do different teams use to describe their clients, their works and their successes.

Introduce yourself

We've all been in social situations where we've had to introduce ourselves or the organisations we work for. These first impressions are often lasting ones, so getting the right message across is vital. A staff or volunteer conference is a great opportunity to get people in groups to role-play exactly this scenario: the three most important messages about the organisation when introducing it. It could be the style of the work, the numbers in the client group, the current campaigns or whatever. Each group can be left to decide for itself what are the most important messages and how they are put across. Once the role-plays have been performed, it is vital to capture the best approaches and agree what the three most important messages are.

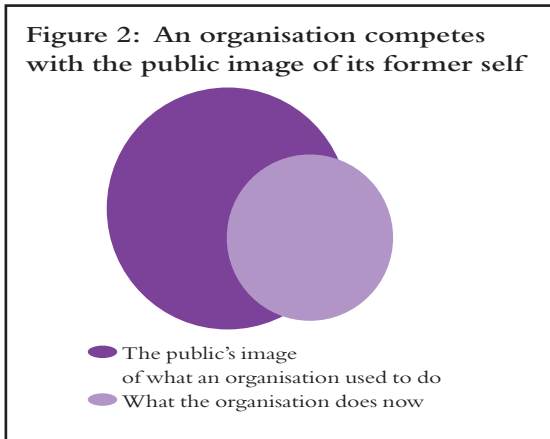
Identifying the need for a stronger brand

The starting point of creating an image strategy for any organisation large or small is to identify there is a problem. There are three common reasons that an organisation finally decides that it is time to address its image:

The public image lags far behind, or is different from, the actual reality of what an organisation now does. This may be the result of changes in emphasis by the organisation over time or changes in attitude to client groups (see Figure 2).

The image of the organisation has never been clearly agreed or communicated as it has grown and developed its services or range of activities. Left unaddressed either of these two types of image problem can evolve into the next issue (see Figure 3).

Different, competing or incoherent images of the organisations are being created. It may be that the organisation is portrayed differently in fundraising, campaigning, services or to staff. This is shown in Figure 4 as the different images of the organisation drift apart.



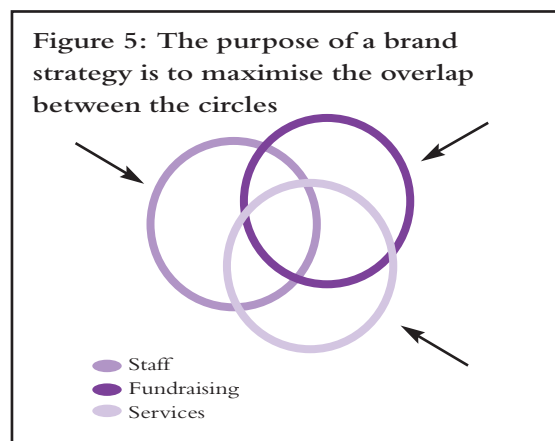
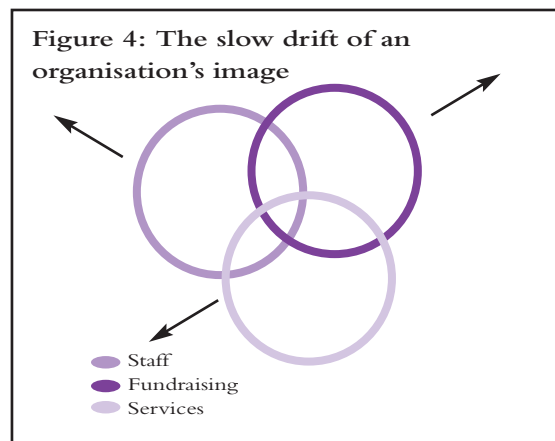
Recognising and identifying the problem

So how does anybody decide whether a more powerful strategy is needed? It is all too rare for this question to be asked by trustees or Chief Executives. Usually it is the arrival of a new director, with a fresh perspective, which triggers a review of the organisation's brand and sees the adoption of a new strategy.

Some of the symptoms and signs which indicate it is time to review an organisation's image (and in some cases its core strategy) include:

- People in different parts of the organisation making differing statements about what makes the organisation special.
- People using varying words or phrases to describe the organisation or its clients.
- Market research indicates that the public's or volunteers' image of an organisation is very different from that of the trustees or staff of that organisation.
- The printed materials residing in reception look like they've been created by 5 different designs working to 3 different house-styles.
- The strap line used in information materials is missing from fundraising materials, and an entirely different strapline is used by the service providers.

Whatever the reason behind the need for a review of image and the creation of a coherent strategy, it is necessary not simply to have a strategy but to have a strategy that addresses the tasks that need to be done.



Section 3

Developing a brand strategy

*'You need to have a better brand strategy'
'But we just created a new brand?'
'You've just created a new corporate identity
which is fine – but your overall brand is unclear'*

This extract of dialogue from a recent presentation illustrates one of the difficulties of developing a branding strategy. As already said, people mean different things when they use the term branding. While this report takes the view that a holistic approach to branding and image is most likely to generate lasting results, there are two broad variables around which a brand strategy can vary. These are shown in Figure 6 and consist of the visual and verbal elements on the horizontal axis and the values and beliefs elements on the vertical axis. The visual and verbal axis focuses on the more tangible aspects of branding: logo, corporate identity, house-style, and descriptors. The vertical axis focuses on the more intangible aspects of branding: values, key messages, vision and mission and beliefs.

The benefit of dividing branding into these two broad approaches is that it allows organisations to look at their own situations and work out which kind of strategy is right for their particular needs. It is also important to point out that the two approaches work in different ways.

The visual/verbal aspect of branding is:

- More tangible and easy to identify when it is not being stuck to.
- Quicker and easier to create and implement.
- Quicker to see results.
- More likely to be disliked.
- Less likely to result in a fundamental change in the organisation's image.
- More powerful building on a dynamic vision already being well-implemented.

The vision/beliefs aspect of branding is:

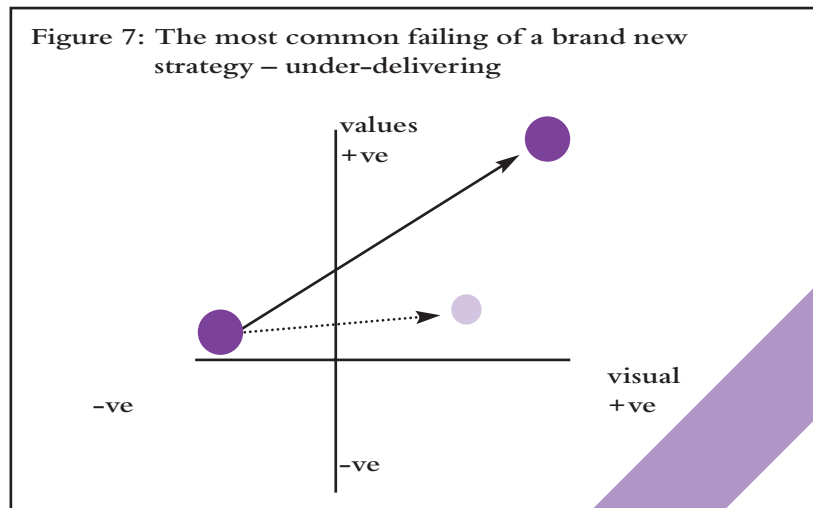
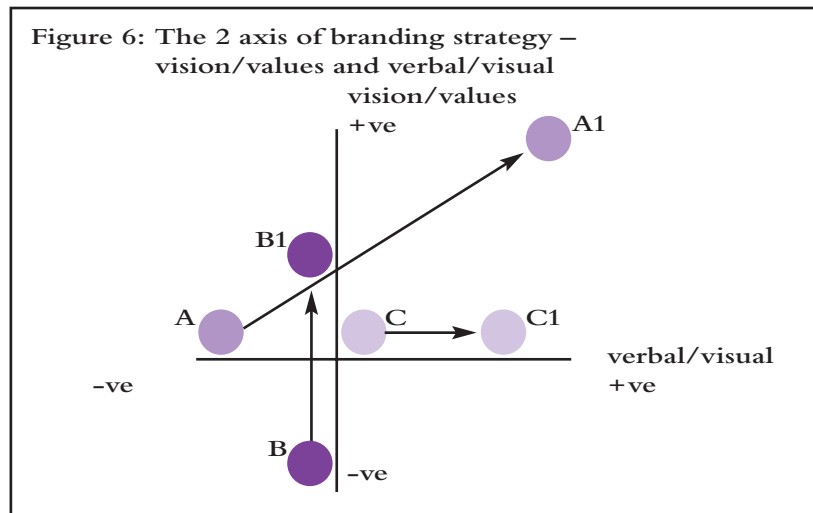
- Based on the emotional heart of the organisation.
- Most powerful working with a clear corporate strategy.
- Slow to show results.
- Harder to implement and police.
- Most likely to result in a fundamental change in the organisation's image.
- More powerful work with clear coherent visual and verbal aspects of branding.

Figure 6 shows these aspects of branding and shows some imaginary organisations and where they were before their branding strategy and where they aimed to be after. Charity A is implementing a strategy which combines both visual and visionary aspects. Charity B is only concentrating on the aspects of its image focused around its mission and vision. Charity C is concentrating on the aspects of its branding focused around its corporate identity and house-style.

By having a negative scale the diagram also implies that there are some images that are negative rather than just not good enough. It is easy to think of commercial organisations where the public image is actively unhelpful (Railtrack, BskyB, McDonalds etc). While this is less common for charities, it nevertheless still happens. Scope changed their name from the Spastics Society precisely because the term 'spastics' had such negative connotations. Guide Dogs for the Blind and RNLI are still perceived as very rich by some people because of the size of their reserves (though much decreased now in the case of Guide Dogs).

While Figure 6 shows a number of hypothetical repositionings following the adoption of a new brand strategy, Figure 7 shows the most common failing of a brand strategy.

Many brand strategies have the aim of repositioning an organisation but ultimately achieve far less on the vision and values axis than on the verbal and visual axis. To achieve the maximum success a brand strategy must fire on all cylinders: which is why the next section looks at all the elements that go to make a brand.



Section 4

The elements of a brand

An image of an organisation is created in people's minds in a myriad of different ways. More difficult still for the people responsible for managing an organisation's image is that two people can have an identical service from an organisation but come away with entirely different perceptions. In his excellent (but short and easy to read) book *'Moments of Truth'*, Jan Carlsson, (the man who turned around Scandanavian Airlines in the Eighties) talks about his idea that every experience a customer has contributes to their image of the organisation. More importantly he argues that a customer will often have a number of specific experiences, the 'moments of truth', which are critical in creating a perception in their mind.

The wider implications of this argument are that brands cannot be one-dimensional, based on name and packaging for example, but are multi-dimensional, based on a breadth of influences. This section looks at the more tangible visual and verbal elements of a brand and the next section looks at best practice to create some of the more intangible elements of a brand.

Name

There are few aspects of charities and not for profit organisations more sacred than names. Any newcomer to the charity world must find the approach to names bewildering. To begin with, many portions of many charities names are outdated or redundant or just a plain mouthful. Charities names are littered with unhelpful words like 'Foundation', 'League', 'Trust', 'Society', 'Institute' 'Royal', 'National' and 'Fund'. These words rarely add much if anything positive to an organisation's image, and more usually put together into a string of words whose use in normal speech is impossible. For example:

Royal Society for the Prevention
of Cruelty to Animals
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty
to Children
Royal National Institute for the Blind
Royal National Institute for Deaf People
People's Dispensary for Sick Animals
Imperial Cancer Research Fund

So it is no surprise that these organisations are known by abbreviations instead. For some organisations this works fine because they are household names like RSPCA or NSPCC. For other organisations, it just about works, like the RNIB whereas for RNID the ambiguity and ease of confusion with its better known near-namesake makes the use of initials alone difficult. For the PDSA the difficulty of their abbreviation is that they are not as well known as RSPCA, but their full name raises as many questions as its answers (what is a 'People's Dispensary?') The final difficulty with an unwieldy name was illustrated by Imperial Cancer Research Fund as there was no universal shortening. It was ICRF to some, Imperial Cancer to others, the Fund to insiders and to most people it was simply a cancer research charity.

Another issue with name is that many charity names are simply confusing. RSPCA vs NSPCC, RNID vs RNIB and CVS vs CSV are three examples of organisation with easily confused names. Much of the confusion in the public's mind about cancer charities stems from the similarity of names in this area: Cancer Research Campaign, Imperial Cancer Research Fund, World Cancer Research Fund, Association of International Cancer Research and Breast Cancer Awareness.

Compare this to the overseas development field where Oxfam, Cafod, Christian Aid, Save the Children, Red Cross, Unicef and ActionAid all have distinctive and differentiating names.

There are some simple tests which any charity can apply to its name to understand whether it needs to look carefully at changing its name:

1. Do people use the full name in ordinary speech or does it naturally get shortened?
2. If the name does get shortened is it always to the same thing or are there a range of shortened name options?
3. What would a journalist use in a press or TV report? Would they use the full name, the shortened name or a generic phrase ('Cancer charity calls for.....')?
4. Does the common use of the name give any indication of the work of the organisation? (for example, the Woodland Trust gives an indication it works with Woodland and cannot be shortened, whereas CPRE gives no indication at all).

That is not to say that changing an organisation's name is easy. One issue is that the new name needs to meet some of the criteria set out above. For example, when the Spastics Society changed their name to Scope they addressed the first two issues and probably the third, but the name became much less self-explanatory (deliberately in their case, since the term 'spastic'

had become a term of abuse). So the first dilemma in any review of name change is being clear that there is a suitable new name which overcomes the difficulties of the old name, and does not simply abandon name recognition built up over decades.

A more fundamental issue in changing the/your name was expressed by a Chief Executive 'My trustees wouldn't bat an eyelid if I completely changed our organisation's strategy, but a name change would be seen as undermining the very roots of our organisation.' It is perhaps this sentiment that explains the extraordinary number of charities with names that are completely outdated.

A name is only one part of the brand and changing an organisation's name is the most visible aspect of a new identity. However changing a name alone should never be seen as a rebranding any more than a cake can be baked using only one ingredient.

BOX 5

ACRONYMS HAVE A PLACE ON THE INTERNET

Having been so rude about the acronyms so beloved of charities the advent of the Internet has proven to be an unexpected benefit. The data on page 18 from 'Virtual Promise 2001' shows the percent hit rate across 14 search engines for the two sets of phrases shown (so typing in 'cats protection league' found the Cats Protection League website in 100% of search engines, but typing in 'cat protection charity' found their website in only 57% of engines). The take-out from this is that unique names or acronyms do better than names which are generic words or phrases. The other conclusion is that looking under a generic charity type is much less likely to be successful so that name is even more important as a search engine tool.

Virtual promise data 2001			
Organisation search phrase	hit rate	Phrase for generic search	hit rate
Cats Protection League	100%	cat protection charity	57%
NSPCC	100%	children charity	0%
RSPCA	100%	animal protection charity	0%
ActionAid	92%	world poverty charity	14%
British Red Cross Society	92%	emergency help	14%
Imperial Cancer Research Fund	92%	cancer charity	50%
Institute of Cancer Research	92%	cancer charity	0%
Oxfam	92%	world poverty charity	21%
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	92%	bird protection charity	57%
Save the Children Fund	92%	children charity	93%
Barnardo's	85%	children charity	21%
Help the Aged	85%	age charity	0%
NCH Action For Children	85%	children charity	0%
People's Dispensary for Sick Animals	85%	animal protection charity	0%
Royal National Institute for Deaf People	85%	deaf charity	57%
Tearfund	85%	christian charity	0%
Age Concern England	77%	age charity	29%
Royal National Institute for the Blind	69%	blind charity	57%
Sense	0%	deafblind charity	36%

Logo and Corporate Colour

The logo and the agreed colours of a brand are one of the most visible aspects of an organisation's identity. In the wider world, logos and colours can be synonymous with a brand. The Coca-cola logo and red are probably the best-known brand identity in the world, and its symbol can be seen everywhere.

Changes in logo and colour can attract a good deal of media attention. British Airways received an enormous amount of negative publicity when they changed the tailfin of their planes to a variety of multi-cultural designs. BP have been criticised for the vast sums they spent on their recent change in livery.

However this should not put not for profit organisations off changing their logo and house colours if appropriate. The great advantage of changing a logo and corporate colour is that it can act like a shot of caffeine in the organisation's bloodstream and bring a fresh feel and energy to organisational communications. Many logos get tired or look outdated as design styles change. As a rule, a change in logo should be seriously considered at least once a decade. Another reason for looking at logo and corporate colour is the Internet. Many logos that work well on paper do not work well on the Internet and the same is

true of corporate colours as well. Perhaps the most powerful reason to change a logo and corporate colour is not in isolation but as part of a wider visual identity change so that changes to house-style are made at the same time.

House-style

House-style is the use of the corporate colour and logo in a wider design context. If used successfully a good house-style should make every communication have the same look and feel. It should allow a reader or viewer to know that they are looking at a publication or a communication from a given charity without needing to see the organisational logo or name.

If this sounds too ethereal take a look at a broadsheet newspaper and see how they use a combination of typeface, pictures, page layout, text pull-outs and space to make each page instantly feel like it is from the Guardian or Times or Telegraph. This consistent use of house-style builds a more coherent image in the eye of the reader and gives consistency whether a communication is about fundraising or finance, services or shops. House-style can give coherence to an organisation's communications even when the subject matter is extremely disparate.

BOX 6

RNID'S HOUSE-STYLE IN ACTION

RNID's house-style was designed as a response to the lack of coherence in organisational design style at a time in 1997 when the number and volume of RNID's communications began to sky rocket with its increasing effectiveness. The issues for RNID were that communications went out through membership, information, fundraising, campaigns, RNID Textdirect and a number of regional services. The programme to improve house-style took two main prongs. Firstly to bring as many communications as possible under the control of the publications team and secondly to design a coherent house-style.

The house-style developed the use of brands at the top and bottom of each publication which had the RNID logo at the top and Royal National Institute for Deaf People at bottom reversed out of the corporate blue. This use of branding was also translated into the corporate website.

It wasn't simply the design templates that were changed. Traditionally RNID had used photos to illustrate its work. However many of these were black and white and used dull pastel colours. The overall effect was to make anybody receiving an information leaflet feel that this must be a dull, depressing issue.

To change this image, special full colour illustrations were commissioned of quasi-cartoon characters for the information leaflets. These bright bubbly illustrations gave the leaflets a much more positive feel and were tailored to the subject matter of each publication.

RNID has now developed a new logo and added the strapline *'for deaf and hard of hearing people'*. This has allowed the design style to be developed again and to ensure consistency across all the visual aspects of RNID's corporate identity.

Strapline

A strapline or a tagline is one of the most under-used and abused in a charity's toolkit for changing its image. A strapline is a short phrase or sentence which sums up the organisation, or in the case of advertising the offer (akin to a celebrity's catchphrase). Two of the best known commercial straplines are Tesco's *'every little helps'* and Sainsbury's *'Making life taste better'*.

Organisations use straplines for a number of reasons. Straplines sum up what an organisation wants its customers to remember – particularly what they perceive makes them different (e.g. John Lewis's *'never knowingly undersold'*). Straplines can embody and flesh out the organisation's brand and present it in an inspirational way (*'the Future's bright the Future's Orange'* is a good example).

One of the most valuable features of a strapline is that it can have a profound impact on the image of an organisation, and more importantly can be changed without the confusion and difficulties of a name change. Notice how Sainsbury's has changed from the

rather mundane *'good food costs less at Sainsbury's'* to the more emotionally powerful *'making life taste better'* over the last decade.

Charities use straplines in the way that most people use yesterday's leftovers – as a dog's breakfast. Straplines do not just help the public to understand who a charity is and what it does – they force a charity to decide who it is and what it does, or what makes it different. The process of agreeing a strapline is the end-point of crystallising the mission, vision and values of an organisation. A strapline is like the tip of an iceberg – they are the most visible part of a much larger structure. There are three main ways in which a charity fail to make the most of the opportunities that straplines present:

Fault 1 Not having a strapline at all

Even many large charities do not have a strapline:

- Oxfam
- Age Concern
- Help the Aged
- British Red Cross
- RSPCA
- Salvation Army
- Save the Children

Not having a strapline is a missed opportunity. While many charities in the list above are household names, research through the nfpSynergy/Future Foundation shows that while the public are aware of many charities they are desperately ignorant about what they actually do. For example, over 60% of the public cannot name a charity that works in overseas aid, over 70% of the public cannot name a charity that works in disability and nearly 50% of the public cannot name a charity that works in child welfare in the UK. Over 40% of the public cannot name a charity that works with the elderly. Yet over 90% of the population have heard of all the charities in the list above.

Fault 2 Having a strapline which fails to differentiate

Many charities have a strapline which is totally descriptive. This is usually to compensate for the fact that their name alone is not much of an explanation of who they are and what they do. John Grooms' strapline is *'John Grooms is a national charity creating opportunities and maximising independence and quality of life for people with disabilities'* or the strapline of Leonard Cheshire *'creating opportunities for disabled people'*.

There is nothing wrong with being descriptive. However it's important to still incorporate into that strapline the aspects of the organisation that make it stand-out, or communicate its values or vision. Imperial Cancer's old strapline *'turning science into hope'* is a good descriptive strapline which is also inspirational: however it could be for any medical research charity across the spectrum.

Fault 3 Which is our strapline? Are we using one?

Some charities do not have just one strapline but a number which different parts of the organisation use at will. British Heart Foundation's annual report for 2000 doesn't have a strapline. The website has the strapline *'playing a leading role in fighting heart disease over the last 40 years'* and their direct mail uses a different line (last time I got a mail pack). BHF are not unique in this flexible approach to straplines, but are probably one of the best known who appear not to be consistently reinforcing the image they wish to portray. In creating and using a strapline there are a number of principals, which should be taken into account:

- Create a strapline based on the mission, vision and values of the organisation and the corporate objectives.
- Make it short and succinct. More than ten words is a mouthful (see Box 7).
- Make it memorable. There is no point in creating a strapline which fails to stick in people's minds because it's too long, too complicated or too boring.
- Use 'doing' words and adjectives. Straplines should give a sense of the organisation dynamism and not just convey a static position i.e. 'Britain's largest charity.....'
- When there is a strapline use it everywhere, in all departments, on all communications and police its use to ensure this happens.

One of the best examples of a strapline is the one recently adopted by the WWF – *taking action for a living planet*. It is used everywhere, it conveys the scope of their work and gives a sense of action and energy on the part of the organisation.

BOX 7

**NUMBERPLATES AS PART OF THE BRAND –
US STYLE**

One of the first things any visitor to the United States notices are the slogans that adorn car number plates. Almost every state has a slogan, and some have more than one. These slogans (or straplines in our parlance) act as a form of branding for the state allowing them to display some aspect of their individual identities.

The approaches to the slogan vary from the downright ideological (New Hampshire – Live free or die) to the downright domestic (Idaho – famous potatoes). Some States prefer to live in the past (Connecticut – constitution state) while others prefer to define themselves geographically (Ohio – crossroads of America). The marketers have been influential in some states (Vermont – Green Mountain state and Florida – Sunshine state) and less so in others (Pennsylvania – Keystone State).

Like them or loathe them these slogans act as an effective mechanism for conveying messages about an individual state – they communicate its brand. They demonstrate how a few words (less than ten in all cases) can add powerfully to an organisation’s brand. Put another way if a visitor had to pick a holiday destination by number plate alone they’d be far more likely to end up in Florida than Idaho!

Another approach to straplines is to use them as a descriptor. Descriptors are the parts of an organisation’s image which convey what the organisation actually does. They can complement a strapline (or be used as one) by being a straight description of what the organisation actually does or the area in which it works. Put another way a descriptor should be the organisational equivalent of ‘it does exactly what it says on the tin’. For example, WWF’s descriptor is ‘*global environmental network*’ which as the brand guide says ‘helps to describe what WWF is and does ‘we’re global, we protect the environment and we work as a network’. RNID use the four words ‘*Campaigns Services Research Partnerships*’ to do the same job.

Descriptors many not be needed by every organisation in the creation of their brand. In some cases their use may be as much to clarify for internal audiences so the overall strategy can be made clearer.

Beliefs, mission, vision and values

Beliefs, mission, vision, values: they are the kind of words that fill too many in the voluntary sector with dread because they feel that they reek of the worst kind of charity navel-gazing. This reticence is misguided. Defining why an organisation exists, what it is trying to achieve, what it

believes and the way in which it will work is one of the most important tasks any charity has. In a world competitive for funds and where services can rarely meet the scale of needs, then defining the role that an organisation will play is critical. The definitions in this report for each of these buzzwords are in fact relatively straightforward:

Beliefs: Statements of right and wrong about the external world in which an organisation operates or the way that services or activities should be carried out.

Mission: The way or ways that the organisation will achieve its vision, or its particular part in achieving that vision.

Vision: A sentence that sums up what the organisation is trying to create, even if it cannot achieve that task single-handed.

Values: The principals that underlie the organisation’s way of working or achieving its goal. Values are usually intangible and often expressed as adjectives.

Each of these areas has an important role in the development of a more powerful image. However this report is not the place to go into detail on the creation of a mission or vision. The section on further reading has some ideas for other books to read on the importance of the development of a mission and vision. However the role of beliefs and values is less well-documented elsewhere and more central to the development of a stronger image.

All charities have beliefs, but most keep theirs locked in a safe, where they lose their lustre. Charities should wear their beliefs on their sleeves. They should polish their diamond. So how does a charity with no apparent or explicit beliefs set about creating ones that can not only form a basis for a powerful brand but also drive the organisation's communications forward?

Start by playing with your colleagues the 'What do they believe?' game. Create a sheet of paper with four equal sectors and individually write the beliefs of the four sectors as suggested. Two of the sectors should be famous politicians, one with a clear set of beliefs and the other less (Try choosing from Margaret Thatcher, John Major, George Bush, Ronald Reagan and Tony Blair). The purpose of articulating the beliefs of politicians such as John Major's and Margaret Thatcher's beliefs is to show how Thatcher is much easier to attribute beliefs to than Major. Her brand as a Prime Minister was much stronger than his. Who thinks that Major will stay in the public consciousness as long as her? Are your charity beliefs more like those of Major or Thatcher? The final two boxes should contain space to write down the beliefs of one organisation you admire and the last box should be the beliefs of your own organisation.

Once you have established a set of beliefs as a team of managers, trustees or volunteers, they will probably need refining, developing and synthesising. Go through a second round of setting out your beliefs, but this time prompted by the following questions:

- What kind of world do you believe in?
- Which statements of right and wrong can your charity adhere to?
- Which statements of how you work make you different?
- Which statements of how money will be used make your charity different?
- How will the world be better if you succeed as an organisation?

At the end of the process you should have half a dozen statements of beliefs. To be useful these should:

- Be simple to communicate,
- Define you and your cause,
- Differentiate you from your competitors,
- Motivate your existing and potential audiences and staff.

BOX 8**‘FULL STOP’ AS A REBRANDING PROGRAMME
THE RESULT OF A NEW VISION**

NSPCC’s Full Stop Campaign has received large amounts of publicity, for better and worse, mostly focusing on whether it will hit the appeal target, and the wider messages about child abuse. However one of the more successful aspects of the Campaign has been the way that it has made the NSPCC talk about its work.

The roots of this change were the new mission and vision that the NSPCC adopted in 1998. The NSPCC Vision is a society where all children are loved, valued and able to fulfil their potential. The NSPCC’s Mission is to end cruelty to children. Out of this new mission and vision came a new 5-year strategy. As part of the process for creating the strategy, market research had been carried out with focus groups. This showed that while the public trusted and respected the NSPCC, they did not see it as particularly warm or empathic. The strategy also threw up the new services that would be needed in order to achieve the mission and vision. These new services would require significant additional resources. So the genesis of the Full Stop campaign lay in the need to raise funds to pay for more services, to campaign to end child cruelty as set out in the mission and to change the perception of the NSPCC.

The core aim of Full Stop is to stop child abuse within a generation. With this as the central hub of everything that the NSPCC does, all departments, teams and activities have to communicate their individual work within the overall context.

So for example in the past, the fundraisers talked about how £2 a month would save a child’s life. However this kind of language alienated the child protection teams whose work was rarely quite so simple – let alone acting in isolation from social services and the police. Now the fundraisers talk about how £2 a month will help NSPCC move towards their goal of ending child abuse within a generation.

Fundraisers would argue about whether the new fundraising message is as strong as the old one. However what is lost in fundraising power is more than made up for in the much greater overall power that NSPCC’s communications now have – because they portray the same messages consistently and coherently.

Values are the organisational equivalent of the words that pepper adverts in lonely hearts columns: warm, sensitive, caring, great sense of humour, desperate and so on. Box 9 shows the words used in a piece of market research to find out, which words the public, associated with which charities.

BOX 9 VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH CHARITIES

The top ten that the public would like in their ideal charity are highlighted

Accountable	Conservative	Friendly	Passionate
Ambitious	Determined	Focused	Practical
Approachable	Dedicated	Generous	Professional
Authoritative	Direct	Greedy	Reputable
Bold	Dynamic	Helpful	Responsive
Boring	Effective	Heroic	Rich
Caring	Engaging	Inclusive	Supportive
Cautious	Established	Independent	Sympathetic
Challenging	Exciting	Informative	Traditional
Complacent	Exclusive	Innovative	Trustworthy
Compassionate	Fair	Inspiring	Visionary
		Outspoken	Welcoming

BOX 10

**AN EXAMPLE OF CREATING A MORE FOCUSED
IMAGE FOR A FICTITIOUS CHARITY, THE
ROYAL CHILDREN'S CANCER SOCIETY (RCCS)**

Stage 1 – Creating vision, mission, beliefs and values

Our vision:

- No child will die in vain of cancer.

Our mission – we will:

- Provide care services to families.
- Campaign for better health care for children with cancer and fund research.
- Provide information.

Our beliefs:

- Parents and relatives need support and information about cancer.
- Research is the long term solution.
- Care and campaigning are the short term solutions.
- The UK's childhood death rates from cancer should be the lowest in Europe.

Our values – in all that we do we aim to be:

- Reassuring.
- Authoritative.
- Direct.

Our key messages:

- Over 1000 children in the UK die every year from cancer.
- The UK has the lowest survival rate for children with cancer of ANY country in the European Community.
- RCCS is the largest charity in the UK dedicated to fighting childhood cancer through research, patient support and campaigning.

Key messages

It is a situation we've all faced. We bump into a relative / friend / acquaintance who we haven't seen for years. "Who are you working for now?" comes the inevitable question. Annie Other shakes her head disparagingly when you tell her of the charity you now work for. She comes out with the standard stereotypical views and put downs about your client group, "there's nothing you can do about upbringing, they're going to die anyway, they are beyond help / won't appreciate the help" or whatever else the put down for your client group is.

But this is where your organisation's brand training programme swings into action. You put on your brand champion superhero outfit and launch into action with a series of devastating verbal rebuttals to Annie Other's combination of ignorance and arrogance. By the end of your conversation she is enlightened and has written out a cheque (gift-aided for £100). You can hear your CEO publicly praising you.

Well it is good to dream but most people are far from well-prepared when confronted with real-life challengers. The trouble is that in the end it isn't a shiny logo, a brilliant house-style or corporate colours that communicate the values behind an organisation and what it does. It is people's cumulative experience of an organisation, usually framed in a few key positive or negative experiences that create their image. Key messages are one of the most important image-building tools in the branding tool box.

In the early Nineties the Labour Party's mantra on crime was 'tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime' crafted by Tony Blair as shadow Home Secretary. This 'key message' was cleverly crafted in a number of ways. Firstly it tackled head-on the notion that Labour was soft on crime. Secondly it made it clear that the Labour Party saw tackling crime as being about more than just punishment (where the Conservatives were perceived to be weak). Perhaps most important of all as a lesson for image-builders is that this 'key message' was repeated so often and so frequently that it became part of the public conscious.

Too many key messages are never rammed home with sufficient force to their intended audiences and too many are changed once the organisation begins to get bored with them. The irony is that it is probably only when the key messages become thoroughly nauseous to the people who have to say them, that they will just about be percolating through to the audiences for whom they are intended.

As part of the training behind any brand strategy people should be helped to see how the key messages can be weaved into every talk, every direct mail appeal, every radio interview and every leaflet – BUT it needs to be done without becoming mechanical or sounding like they are being repeated parrot fashion.

Section 5 The building blocks of success

The previous sections have focussed on all the elements of a brand and the creation of a brand strategy. This section examines some of the building blocks that mean the difference between a highly effective brand strategy and a mediocre one.

Lesson 1 Brand and strategy are inextricably linked

Perhaps the single most important message about successful branding is that it is not something which is painted on, but a hologram of who you are and what you believe in. A powerful brand in a values-based organisation like a charity should reflect and amplify the values, vision and mission on which the organisation is based.

The emotional core of an organisation shouldn't just lie at the heart of its image, but also be the starting point for the corporate strategy. If the corporate strategy is doing its job, it will have an impact (to put it mildly) on services, on beneficiaries, on fundraising, on volunteers and on staff. The case study of Diabetes UK (see Box 11) demonstrates this very well. Branding should always be an integral part of strategy and corporate planning, because wherever an organisation is going should have a profound impact on its image.

BOX 11**DIABETES UK – THE LINK BETWEEN CORPORATE STRATEGY AND BRAND**

Paul Streets arrived as the new CEO of the then British Diabetic Association in 1998. One of the first things he instigated was a review of the organisation's activities, its services and its goals. The outcome of this strategy review process was the organisation's first comprehensive five-year plan in July 2000. The five-year plan set out a number of fundamental changes in direction for the organisation:

- to be much more influential on Government policy in relation to diabetes.
- to have a more focused research agenda bringing more immediate benefits to people with diabetes.
- to grow in size through increased voluntary income .
- to reach far more people with diabetes.

While there had been a proposal to look at the name of the BDA already in existence when Streets arrived, it appeared initially to be a distraction from the corporate strategy review. However as the review programme progressed it became clear that the strategy would have a major impact on the image of the organisation in its own right.

One of the potential barriers to the success of the new corporate strategy was that the name British Diabetic Association, particularly in its shortened form: BDA. Many people who knew the organisation as BDA didn't realise that the D stood for diabetes. Medical professionals in particular did not realise the link with Diabetes and also knew of other BDAs such as the British Dental Association.

The launch of the new strategy gave a perfect opportunity to demonstrate that the new organisation was changing, by changing the name at the same time. The proposed new name – Diabetes UK was given a very mixed reception. 70% of the staff were in favour, but amongst the 400 local groups opinion was much more divided. There was a suggestion that the new organisation might be nicknamed DUK (pronounced duck). After much consultation the decision was taken to change the name as part of the corporate strategy.

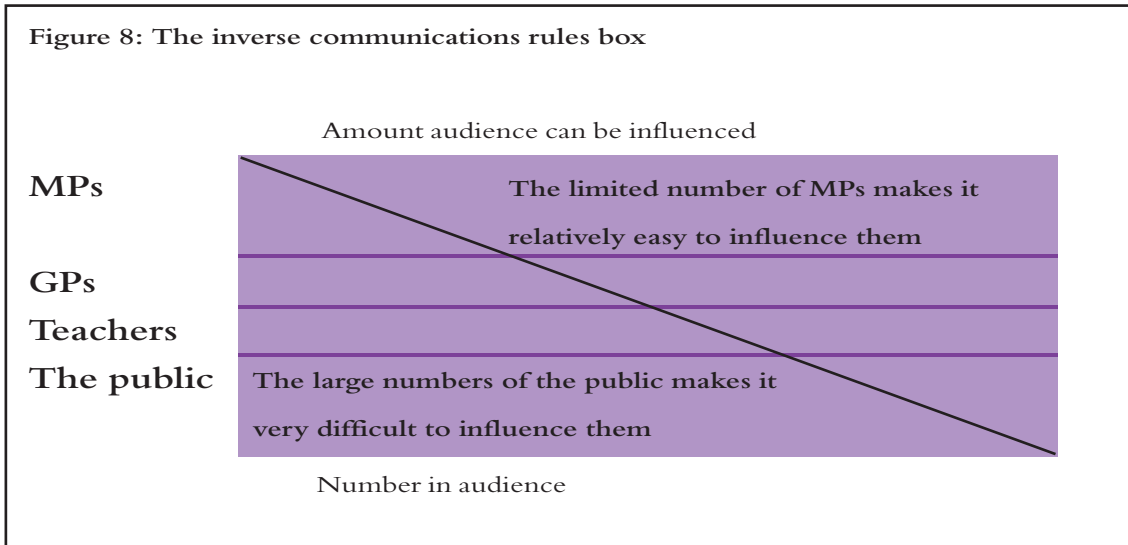
The launch of the new strategy and new name in July 2000 has been highly successful. In particular the hummingbird logo has been very popular and seen as symbolising the dynamic energy of the new organisation. Two mothers of children with diabetes have even had the hummingbird tattooed on their shoulder on the grounds that their children will live with diabetes for the rest of their lives so why shouldn't they.

Local groups have adopted the name and logo much faster than the target of 50% within 2 years and in the financial year 2000/2001 local groups raised more money than ever before. The strategy to influence Government has also been successful with the development of the 'missing million' campaign highlighting the number of people with undiagnosed late-onset diabetes. The corporate strategy is changing the image of Diabetes UK and the new image is making the corporate strategy have greater impact.

Lesson 2**Know your audiences and set realistic objectives for each of them**

All audiences are important, but some audiences are more important than others. Too many charities have a target audience, which is the public. The general public is a hugely important audience, but the resource needed to change the image of an organisation in the eyes of the public is beyond all but the largest charities.

It is much more potent to have a limited number of target audiences who are clearly defined and hopefully easily reached. GPs, MPs, journalists and teachers are just a few of the target audiences who are the key target audiences for many charities. These groups have a range of ways in which they can be reached directly and often a number of specialist media which they read. Even if a target audience is not so readily definable as a professional group, it is always better to target key demographic groups than the public as a whole (see Box 13 for the fictional RCCS case study).



Part of any brand strategy should be the goals and the timetable. It is all too easy for a charity Chief Executive to impose (and an overzealous Communications Director to agree to) completely unrealistic shifts in image over a very short timescale. A sustained shift in spontaneous awareness of 10% of the general public in three years is virtually impossible – and has yet to be achieved by any charity in our Charity Awareness Monitor since it began in 1998. A shift in the awareness of MPs of 10% can be achieved in less a year. The relationship between the size of audience and the amount by which they can be influenced is set out in Figure 8 (the inverse communication rule). The importance of audience in corporate and brand strategy is set out in the case study on Friends of the Earth (see Box 12).

BOX 12

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH: AUDIENCE MATTERS

Friends of the Earth is ambitious. It wants to create a society which is environmentally sustainable. To do this it both needs to stop environmental destruction and also persuade individuals and companies to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle. The size of the ambition meant that many of the campaigns that Friends of the Earth ran had very broad audiences – like the ‘public’. However the budgets in an organisation the size of FoE’s aren’t large enough to reach and influence the public as a whole (there are 40 million adults in the UK).

As part of the development of the new communications strategy and the new brand, departments were obliged to work more closely together to plan how they would use the media, fundraising, parliamentary and public information teams to get their message across. Too many different campaign subjects diluted the message for any given campaign – particularly if different parts of the organisation talked about different issues at the same time.

The new planning process as a consequence has helped focus people’s minds on maximising impact with key target audiences. One of the techniques that has helped achieved this is heightened awareness periods (or HAPs) once or twice a year. HAPs use all of FoE’s communications channels (publications, the website, local group actions, media, lobbying, banner advertising and so on) over a concentrated period of time to talk about the same issue. The effect of this is to deliver the maximum impact for the resources available and in doing so strengthen FoE’s image as an effective professional environmental organisation committed to creating a sustainable society.

Lesson 3 Measure performance wherever possible and affordable

It is relatively easy to measure the impact of a fundraising strategy. Look at the amount of money raised and the amount spent. However branding is not so straightforward to measure. This is partly because different organisations will have different outcomes and it is partly because so much of a brand strategy can be relatively intangible. However that doesn't mean that the appropriate response is that of a Marketing Director of a large charity who was asked two weeks before the brand relaunch if he had done any market research and replied by asking if it would be a good idea!

It is nothing short of astonishing to ask an organisation to invest tens or hundreds of thousands of pounds and hundreds of employee's time in an activity whose impact is not being measured.

There is a host of ways of measuring your image:

- Staff and volunteers. The impact of any brand strategy should be felt most acutely by staff and volunteers. A simple questionnaire can be constructed covering a breadth of issues both while the brand strategy is being created and once it has been implemented. The topics might include which words they associated with the organisation, whether they had had brand training, whether they felt more or less involved in the organisation and their attitude to the organisation in general. The cost of analysis shouldn't be more than £1-£2,000 – or free if analysed by a statistically-literate volunteer.
 - Supporters and donors. A similar questionnaire to the one for staff and volunteers can also be used for supporters and donors. Additional questions could cover what other organisations they support, if anything irritates them about the organisation, do they get communications from the organisation, too frequently or too rarely. The costs of a mailing to supporters could be part-covered by sending out a questionnaire with a newsletter or with thank-you letters.
- However it may be worth the expense of sending a dedicated questionnaire on its own (solus in the jargon) to a smaller group of supporters. Alternatively pick up the phone and call 100 supporters and ask them a pre-agreed set of questions.
- Members of parliament. MPs are traditionally not an easy or cheap group to find out what they think. The nfpSynergy/Future Foundation's Charity Parliamentary Monitor surveys MPs twice a year for their awareness of charities and their campaigns and how effectively they think individual named charities are. This shows for example that Macmillan Cancer Relief is by far and away the most highly ranked cancer charity (20% of MPs said spontaneously they were impressed with it in the last poll). It is much better known than the former Cancer Research Campaign and Imperial Cancer Research Fund or Marie Curie Cancer Care.
 - The General Public. The public is probably the group most regularly monitored by charities. Awareness is usually measured in three ways. Spontaneous awareness is the number of people who mention a particular charity when asked to name a charity. Prompted awareness is the number of people who say they have heard of a charity, when asked. Semi-prompted is the number of people who mention a charity in the course of answering other questions (e.g. who have you given to in the last 3 months). A number of research companies such as NOP, MORI and Gallup carry out regular omnibus surveys (i.e. questions about a range of subjects) to which it is relatively easy to add questions looking at the awareness of a particular organisation. In addition charities often ask questions specifically about their particular cause (e.g. people's knowledge of homelessness). Research companies usually charge for each individual question asked. The nfpSynergy/Future Foundation Charity Awareness Monitor charges a set fee for quarterly monitoring of awareness, as well as a range of questions about people's attitudes to charities and their recall of charity communications. Figure 9 shows the awareness figures of a number of Britain's leading charities.

Figure 9: Awareness figures for a number of Britain’s leading charities (in percentages)

Charity	Spontaneous	Spontaneous & Semi-prompted	Prompted
RSPCA	19%	80%	99%
Help the Aged	8%	34%	95%
RNLI	7%	12%	85%
Macmillan Cancer Relief	4%	28%	81%
Marie Curie Cancer Care	4%	19%	N/a
PDSA	4%	19%	67%
WWF-UK	4%	14%	72%
Royal British Legion	1%	3%	N/a
ActionAid	1%	3%	N/a

All figures based on telephone interviews with a representative sample of the UK population (1050 adults). The figures are the average in the period 1998 to 2002. Spontaneous awareness is the number of times that a charity is mentioned in response to the question ‘Can you name a charity?’ Semi-prompted is the number of times that a charity is mentioned in other questions (e.g. ‘Can you name an animal welfare charity?’) Prompted awareness is the number of people who say they have heard of the charity when asked directly.

Lesson 4 Integrate the structure for branding with the strategy

Unlike Christmas, a new more powerful and focused image doesn’t just happen. It needs to be planned and implemented. So somebody in the organisation needs to be a brand champion. This is usually the Chief Executive or the director of marketing or communications. Branding works best when it envelops every part of the organisation. So whoever is the brand champion needs to have the power (and the time) to force recalcitrant parts of the organisation into line, when all else has failed.

As well as a brand champion, a brand project team is needed. This is the group that will drive the new image forward, monitor progress and agree implementation plans. The exact make-up of the team will depend on the nature of the organisation. In larger organisations the brand champion will usually lead the group with representatives from fundraising, services, communications, publications and whichever other teams or departments are mass communicators. In smaller organisations this group is more likely to be dominated by trustees and senior executives.

Many organisations now employ a project manager for the development and maintenance of the brand. Some organisations go so far as to call this role a brand manager. There are a number of implications of creating a dedicated brand position. Firstly there needs to be enough for a dedicated person to do, and the role needs to have the power to fulfil the varying demands of their job. Talking to people who carry out the brand project manager role, the difficulties are encapsulated by the phrase – responsibility without power. Brand managers need to be able to pull in support to police recalcitrant departments, or persuade doubting individuals to support the new strategy. They need to be able to persuade people to think about the impact of the entirety of their communications, while focusing on specific areas where house-style is being sidelined. One of the ironies of the role of brand manager is that it is relatively easy to ensure that the visual and verbal aspects of a brand are coherent and enforced, but it is much harder to ensure that every communication matches the vision and values aspect of a brand.

The Chief Executive's support for the implementation is critical to its success. Sadly in most of the organisations talked to for this study, the role of the Chief Executive was ambivalent. While Paul Streets, the CEO at Diabetes UK, is leading the drive to change the image of the organisation, more typical is the response of the Communications Director who said 'I have persuaded every member of the executive team about the importance of the brand bar one – my chief executive. He goes along with it, but in the end I

know his heart isn't in it. He feels its somewhat distasteful for a charity to think about branding'.

In most commercial organisations it is the Chief Executive who is the overall brand champion – or put another way they are the guardian of the organisation's reputation and image with shareholders, with staff, with customers and with Government. The importance of this reputation is underlined by the way in which millions of pounds can be wiped off the stock-market value if the image is tarnished or damaged.

BOX 13

AN EXAMPLE OF IMPLEMENTING A BRAND STRATEGY AT THE FICTITIOUS CHARITY ROYAL CHILDREN'S CANCER SOCIETY (RCCS)

The audience for the brand is as follows:

- Parents and grandparents are the fundraising audience
- Most parents are 25 - 40 ABC1 and C2
- Most grandparents are aged 55 - 75 and retired
- The government is also an audience with a view to changing certain laws

Packaging the beliefs

- We will offer an information service about cancer and the issues surrounding it
- We will create a telephone line and PO box number for easy response and requests
- We will create a parents self-help and fundraising scheme
- We will develop a new corporate identity to emphasise this approach
- We will create a legacy scheme for the grandparents of children with cancer
- We will create a case book of children's stories with both happy and sad outcomes
- We will start a campaign against smoking in public
- We will create a newsletter for all supporters and enquirers in order to make sure that no parent is deprived of even the most basic information concerning childhood cancer

Communicating the beliefs

Recruiting supporters

- We will use inserts to get donations
- We will use press ads and public relations in *Parents* magazine to gain awareness with the target audience
- Where appropriate and sensitive we will use lists and names and addresses supplied by hospitals and doctors
- We will treat all enquirers as potential fundraisers

Communicating with supporters

- We will use mail for our routine communications both for information and appeals for funds
- We will use the telephone for speed and intimacy so that parents can ring us and vice versa
- We will create videos for busy and fraught parents for whom reading may be unrealistic or even impossible
- We will hold day workshops to allow parents to share their experiences and get mutual support

This report has argued that at the heart of a not for profit organisation's image is its vision and values – and a brand should be built on these, not apart from it. To me it defies belief that the vision and values of an organisation, and the process of presenting those values to the world, is not an integral part of a Chief Executive's role. It may well be that the manifestation of image and reputation as a piece of marketing jargon – branding – is what puts people off. It shouldn't. Chief Executives of charities, whatever the size, should see branding as a core part of their job.

The final point to be made on the issue of structures and strategies is that branding shouldn't gloss on existing activities like a coat of new paint. A strategy to change image works best when it is part and parcel of the overall corporate and departmental strategies (see the Friends of the Earth case study in Box 12). Every departmental plan should be able to answer a number of key questions:

- Who are our key audiences?
- What is their impression of us and the services/activities we deliver?
- How can we get it closer to our overall corporate image?

This discipline may prove difficult in the early stages but will help to build a planning process in which the external world's perceptions are seen as critically important to organisational success.

Lesson 5 Delivering the brand - everything communicates

A recurrent theme that comes out in this report is the multitude of ways in which people form their impression of organisations – whether they be companies, government or not for profits. However for most of us our experiences are not all equal. We form our view early on in an encounter and then filter subsequent experiences based on

whether they match our worldview. Jan Carlzon the former Chief Executive of Scandinavian Airlines called these seminal experiences "*moments of truth*". Part of his strategy in creating a reinvigorated Scandinavian Airlines was to make sure that all customer experiences were handled as carefully as possible, so that people's experiences would be positive not negative.

Charities are no different in this respect. Think of any individual and their interactions with a charity and how easily it can go wrong. Addresses can be spelt wrong on a database and duplicate mailings received. Telephone calls can take too long to answer or never be returned. Volunteers can feel that they're not appreciated. Newspaper adverts for jobs can have very high salaries. Local groups can be cliquey or unwelcoming. The list of ways that people can have good or bad experiences is never-ending.

In creating and managing a brand it is imperative to remember that everything communicates. This mantra doesn't just apply to people outside the organisation but staff and volunteers as well. Few things are a bigger turn-off for staff than seeing a discrepancy between what the organisation says it believes in and what it does. If people are the most important asset, is the Chief Executive out meeting them – or hobnobbing with politicians?

Because staff and volunteers have such an important role creating the image of an organisation, it is vital they are included in the planning process for the development of a new brand (see the VSO case study Box 14). It is easy to forget parts of the organisation that communicate. Include the finance and administration teams in any image exercise, because cheques that are left uncashed or invoices that aren't paid can all be a 'moment of truth' for a donor or supplier.

BOX 14**VSO: THE INSIDE STORY**

VSO is an international development charity that works through volunteers. As the organisation has grown and changed since the 1960s, its message about what it now does and what makes it unique has become more diluted. The arrival of a new Communications Director, Matthew Bell in 1998 led to a review of the brand and the image of VSO. One of the key ingredients of success for this programme was creating and maintaining a high degree of ownership among staff. The branding programme was billed as being about putting the values of VSO into practice in a consistent and coherent way.

One of the ways that ownership was created was to make VSO staff the people who created the new brand. This meant that a lot of time was spent in consultation and discussion. An in-house video was created which showed how fundraising and programme staff might describe VSO's work and how the core ideas could be the same even if the actual language might be different. Although a consultancy was employed they advised on process, not on defining the final brand. The staff did the creative work themselves.

The need for ongoing implementation has resulted in a group of brand champions in different departments and countries across the organisation who discuss how they can make the brand work harder and the weak spots in current communications. For example, one issue identified by staff was that the organisation was not always as cost-effective as it might be. The brand champions then made recommendations for the organisation on how it could deliver more effectively on this brand value.

Ongoing monitoring and research has shown that use of the key descriptive words and phrases about VSO has greatly increased, staff feel a greater clarity of purpose and the quality of all the organisations' communications have risen dramatically.

The most appropriate response to the fact that 'everything communicates' is not to despair but to make sure that you are actively managing all the different communication channels, which create those images. Box 13 shows an implementation strategy for the fictitious RCCS and what some of that might be in practice. The essential components of the delivery of a strategy are:

- Identifying the different services, routes or activities that create the image of the organisation in people's minds
- Identifying the products or services that can be created so as to package the inherent beliefs and values of the organisation
- Identifying the communication vehicles (newsletters, meetings, etc) that can be used to proactively develop the image to key audiences

The delivery of the new image is the final part of the process of creating and implementing a new brand. After that the cycle begins again with market research, and re-evaluating what is working and what isn't.

Section 6

The Branding revolution

Creating a more powerful image should be at the heart of every not for profit strategic toolkit. Sadly it is not. This report has aimed to help people to get a better feel for what the development of branding and image looks like for their organisation. Too often branding has been part of the mystique of marketing, whose secrets are only open to a chosen few.

Our belief is that every charity should be actively managing their image. This isn't because of any desire to make charities marketing or fundraising-led but because the right image can make an organisation more effective in delivering its goals.

A powerful analogy is with physical fitness. Physical fitness helps people do their everyday activities with greater ease and more effectively. Fit people will have less illness, will live longer and recover more quickly when problems strike. Organisations with the right image will be better placed to attract the best staff, win contracts, generate income and overcome setbacks or difficulties that the outside world throws at them.

Nor is the development of the right image the preserve of only a few rich charities. Every charity, every community group, every voluntary organisation can decide clearer ideas about its key audiences, its key messages, its values and its mission. And doing this can be done for free or next to nothing – though unquestionably it will take up people's time.

The current response to branding in many organisations is to say that it isn't for us. We are not that kind of charity. Unfortunately, like it or not, every organisation has an image. It simply doesn't do the organisation justice. It may undersell the quality of the services and the impact on beneficiaries. The option isn't whether or not to brand, but whether the current brand is as good as it can be. Unless the answer is yes, branding and image should be on the strategic agenda of every organisation.

A little bedtime reading

1. **A sense of mission (1990)**, Andrew Campbell, Marion Devine and David Young, The Economist Books.
A powerful look at the value of mission in companies with clear relevance for not for profit organisations.
2. **Managing without profit (1995)**, Mike Hudson, Penguin Books.
One of the best books on managing not for profit organisations with a number of useful chapters on strategy and mission (though the index for the 1st edition doesn't even mention brand!)
3. **Brand Spirit (1999)**, Hamish Pringle and Marjorie Thompson, Wiley. *A didactic examination of the power of cause-related marketing in helping create brands. Perhaps of most relevance to corporate fundraisers.*
4. **From Brand Vision to Brand Evaluation (2001)**, Leslie De Chernatony, Butterworth Heinemann.
A systematic overview of all aspects of brands and brand management from the king of branding textbooks.
5. **Moments of Truth (1987)**, Jan Carlzon, Harper Perennial.
Short, cogent and compelling. If you only read one book from this list, make it this one.
6. **Living the Brand (2001)**, Nicholas Ind, Kogan Page.
VSO, Unicef and a number of other charities have used Nicholas Ind for their brand reviews. This book is a passionate exposition of one of his key beliefs – the importance of involving staff in branding.
7. **22 Immutable laws of Branding (1998)**, Al Ries and Laura Ries, Harper Collins Business.
I read this book so that you don't have to!
8. **Eating the Big Fish (1999)**, Adam Morgan, Wiley. *How should brands which aren't the market leader behave – this book sets out the strategy for challenger brands.*
9. **The Future of Brands (2000)**, edited by Rita Clifton and Esther Maughan, Macmillan Business.
Don't be deceived by the coffee table appearance of this book, or the eclectic mix of interviewees, there are some very useful insights.
10. **Citizen Brands - Putting Society at the Heart of your Business (2001)**, Michael Willmott, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
Co-founder of the Future Foundation looks at corporate social responsibility and the growing pressure on business to take the idea seriously.
11. There are also a range of journals with occasional interesting papers including Harvard Business Review, the Journal of Brand Management and the Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector marketing (any of the papers by Philippa Hankinson are worth reading)

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About the Author and nfpSynergy

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Classic branding foul-ups

Here are some of the classic mistakes that not for profits make in branding:

1. Remember where your heart is. Branding is not about plastering an artificial gloss on a fundamentally different organisation, it is about making sure that the outside world sees the passion and beliefs that lie at the heart of an organisation.
2. Do not leave your image to fundraisers. Branding is about much more than just fundraising. It is about the entire organisation. Every (yes every) department has a role in creating your image. If fundraisers dominate the brand strategy, wake up the Chief Executive and tell them not to fall asleep at the wheel.
3. Do not ignore market research. The story of one charity Marketing Director who asked one of his staff if market research was a good idea (two weeks before relaunch) is a tragedy. Market research is crucial – and it can be done with key groups like staff and volunteers for next to nothing if budgets are tight.
4. The world isn't your oyster. It is all too easy to feel that the public are the appropriate audience for a charity brand. For most organisations it is much more powerful to focus on a limited number of target audiences.
5. Advertising is no panacea. Awareness advertising is only part of the way that images are created in people's minds – and it is very expensive. Do not yearn about awareness advertising until the whole spectrum of image tools is being utilised. A brand created only by awareness advertising will be very lopsided.
6. Do not feel obligated with pro bono work. One major charity got a designer to create a new logo for free. While the charity was deciding how to proceed the designer died. The charity was then left in limbo and out of a sense of obligation and inertia used the logo – but it was never quite right – and a few years later they changed it again.
7. Do not bin leaflets for a marginally wrong colour. People's image of an organisation is made up of a myriad of sources. It may matter to Coca-cola that the colour is right (because colour and design are a much larger part of the brand) but for most charities colour is one of dozens of ways that people's perceptions is formed.
8. Do not stop after the relaunch. It is so easy to feel that the relaunch of a logo or new corporate identity is the end of the process, when in reality its usually not even the beginning of the end but the end of the beginning. Lasting changes in image take years, rather than months or weeks. Motivate your existing and potential audiences and staff.

nfpSynergy is a new think-tank dedicated to the voluntary and community sector and not for profit issues. The purpose of nfpSynergy is to provide ideas, insights and information to help not for profit organisations thrive in a changing world. Our services and activities include:

Charity Awareness Monitor (CAM)

The Awareness Monitor tracks quarterly the attitudes and awareness of the general public to charities, pressure groups and voluntary organisations.

Charity Parliamentary Monitor (CPM)

CPM tracks bi-annually the attitudes and awareness of MPs (and from May 2002 the Lords) to charities and pressure groups and their campaigns.

Charity Media Monitor (CMM)

CMM tracks bi-annually the attitudes and awareness of journalists who work closely with charities using both a questionnaire and qualitative interviews.

Charity GP Monitor

The GP Monitor is an annual survey which finds out how much contact GPs have with medical and disability charities and their experience of dealing with them.

Charity Brand Attributes

This programme is designed to help charities find out in more detail how the public views them by researching which words or phrases the public associate with them.

Corporate Involvement Monitor (CIM)

The CFM helps charities understand what companies are looking for in a corporate relationship, and how they view specific charities and causes.

nfpVision.net.

We have an online subscription knowledge store for charities containing 3000 charts, and over 20,000 facts. The data covers both information specifically about the voluntary and community sector as well as wider social, demographic and economic trends.

Policy and research work

nfpSynergy carries out a range of research and policy projects where we distribute the results without charge. Some projects are externally-funded but many are not. Projects currently include the use of the Internet by charities, research on payroll giving and gift aid, the Future of Homelessness and of course this report.

If you would like to know about any of the work we do please contact:

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