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In a meeting with Forest Service personnel this week, one Forest employee told me that she does not understand what our group does. I believe this may be an issue faced by many groups seeking to develop or strengthen partnerships with the Forest Service. This tool is something that I thought might be useful in this regard.

Guide for Brand Refinement/Brand Management

Brand: A brand is a psychological construct held in the minds of all those aware of the branded organization. Brand management is the work of managing these psychological associations. In the nonprofit world, the “what and why” of the organization. It is the sum total of perceptions about what a nonprofit stands for, what it does, and how much impact it is thought to achieve.

Elements of Brand:

- Visual elements (logo, colors, type, imagery)
- Messaging elements (name, tagline, vision, mission and values statements, key messages, elevator pitch)
- Experiences (with staff, at events, with materials)

Building/Refining/Managing Brand:

I. Assess Brand

Find out from board, staff, public lands users, donors, volunteers, everyone who has some perception of the organization what they believe the organization stands for. Is there misalignment between internal identity and external image? Is refinement or management necessary?

II. Distill to Message

Message should be simple, clear, authentic, distinguishing, cleanly communicates intended impact.

To help build strong brand, suggested elements of message might include:

Results/Impact

Unique work

Local focus

Impressive supporters and partners

Growth in annual budget

Strong leadership (that ED publishes articles, speaks at events. . .)

Longevity/age of organization

III. Internal Adoption

Create brand guide, “style guide”, visuals, messaging, and usage guidelines.
Train staff and board.

IV. Communicate Refined Message

Externally and internally, on website, in publications, in one on one interactions, at meetings, etc. . .