

Is your logo doing its job?

by [Ann Marie Amico](#)

In this economy, competition for loyal supporters is fierce. Non-profits must examine how well they tell their stories. Does the public easily and consistently remember your organization and mission? Are they inspired and energized to support your work?

The work at non-profits never lets up. Staff members often wear several hats. A review of branding and marketing strategies is often the last thing on the to-do list. But it's an important part of assessing your effectiveness. The review process involves far too many factors for one short newsletter article. We'll focus on just one small part of the process: Is your logo doing its job?

Day-to-day exposure to your organization's logo can cause it to become wallpaper - almost invisible to the staff responsible for promoting your organization. And then something causes you to look at it with a fresh eye. You might be getting ready to attend a conference or to approach an important potential supporter and you suddenly wonder if this symbol is really serving your organization.

Here are five things to consider if this question has ever rolled around in your head:

1. **Does your logo accurately reflect your mission and vision?** Is there a logical connection between what your organization does and the symbol that represents it? Do you find yourself answering questions from the public about what it means?
2. **Does your logo adequately reflect the quality of the work you do?** When non-profits are getting started, it's not uncommon for a volunteer, staff person or family member to offer to design a logo. A start-up budget might make that generous offer too good to pass up. But an established organization competing in today's marketplace needs a polished, professional identity.
3. **Is your logo distinctive and memorable or is it easily confused with that of another organization or business?** If you find yourself repeatedly clarifying who you are and what you do when people see your business card or marketing materials, pay attention. That's good information as you evaluate your current logo, name or tagline.
4. **How long has the logo been in use? Has it been reviewed and/or refreshed in the recent past?** In some organizations, logos morph as each new director or marketing person joins the organization. Your mark should be used

consistently and not changed so often that it ends up competing with its past iterations and confusing the public.

5. **Are you and your staff proud to use your organization's logo on your promotional materials, stationery and website? Does it act as a distinctive flag that your staff and supporters enthusiastically promote? Are you comfortable with when you compare it to the logos of other nonprofit organizations?**

These five questions can begin a valuable discussion with your staff, supporters and the public. In addition to your logo, these questions can be applied to your organization's name and tag line. Once you feel like you have solid answers, you may decide to maintain your present image. Congratulations! It's a great feeling to know you are solidly on track.

If, after reviewing these questions, you feel like you need to make some changes, a systematic review of the impact of change is in order.

- You need to determine the value of what you are currently using.
- Can you bring new life to it with a little tweaking?
- If you decide that it needs to be replaced, are there elements of the old logo that should be preserved or incorporated in a new mark?
- In how many ways and places will this new mark need to be updated?
- Does your budget support this initiative?
- If the project needs to be broken down into phases, how would that be accomplished?
- If you decide to change your identity, how can you use the process to increase awareness of your organization in the community?

Your logo is only one part of your organization's brand, but it's an important part. A mark that you can use proudly to represent your organization and its mission is an important rallying tool for both staff and supporters.

Bottom Line: Taking some time to evaluate your organization's current logo can have the added benefit of clarifying your message, energizing your staff and re-engaging your supporters.

[Ann Marie Amico](#) is brand consultant who works with communities, non-profits and professional services firms. In addition to serving many clients in the nonprofit sector, she has served on the boards of several area nonprofit organizations.