

I am waiting

A service of the Children's Bureau - A member of the T/TA Network

NRCYD

**National Resource Center
for Youth Development**

from the **Youth Leadership Toolkit** by NRCYD

Branding + Logos

What will pop into people's minds when they think of your group? Don't leave it to chance!

what is **BRANDING**?

When you think of Pepsi, what colors come to mind? What image pops into your head at the mention of Livestrong? What's your reaction when you hear a product is made by Nike? All these companies have something in common: strong branding. Branding means that they have all shaped messages to inspire certain positive feelings about their companies.

As a successful Youth Group or Organization, you can shape your own message by using the same branding tools as large organizations. Your identity starts with your goals and your mission

statement, but your **BRANDING** can set the tone for how the community will react to your group.

Branding has many parts: logo (Nike's swoosh), colors (Target's red. Pepsi's red-white-blue), brochures and t-shirts, business cards, etc. Branding also includes marketing strategy and public relations (in person, on your website, or through other presentations).

why does it matter to **OUR GROUP**?

Your branding will attract the attention of future members and of key adult stakeholders. Your branding will attract the attention from not only fellow youth as potential members, but from adults in your community as well.

You'll also want to draw interest from donors, sponsors, legislators, and policy

makers. Branding helps explain your organization or activity to others.

The popular statement "perception is reality" provides an indication about the importance of what people think about your group. Good branding will allow you to take some control over the way others view your group.

KEYS to creating a brand

Be simple.

You want to make it easy for your audience to remember your group. Get to the point in your name and message. A good test: can you describe your group or its project and what it does in 30 seconds?

Be unique.

What is your 'only' element? Are you the only group to help this cause? Or do you offer a unique program which addresses an issue in a new way? Whatever it may be, find what makes you stand out and special. Think about the unique perspective that your group offers. Think about what you want your group to do or to become.

Be relevant.

It's important to make sure that what you are selling — whether it's a product or your entire organization — offers something people are looking for. Ask yourself these questions:

- Who is your target audience?
- Who will your product or group benefit?
- What need is your group or product meeting in your community?
- How is your group in a position to do something to meet the need?
- What other resources already exist that you can build on?

Be truthful.

People will ask about outcomes for your organization or programs. Let people know that you are getting things done, but be honest. Talk about the benefits of your work and make sure you can prove it. It is helpful to keep a running list of accomplishments and a portfolio on hand

when discussing your group with new people. These can be gathered from your group's strategic plan.

Be consistent.

A common mistake is to change the logo too frequently. A good logo should last at least 10 years. Colors, logos, mission statements, and tag lines should stay fairly consistent — it takes time for each of these to build up in your audiences' mind.

Make sure that everything you create for your group stays "on message." All of your BRANDING should be clear about your group's image and to be true to your group's purpose.

Keep your mission statement in mind with everything you develop. It may be helpful to post it on a wall while developing your brand and refer to it several times throughout the process.



STEP 1:

determine your brand's PERSONALITY

What do you want people to think about when they think of your organization or program? Take some time to brainstorm a list of key words

that would best describe your brand's personality. As you develop your logo and outreach materials, keep these words in mind.

STEP 2:

create a LOGO

Do your research. Look at the logos of other youth groups and organizations. Do they use solid, conservative images, or flashy graphics and type? Think about images that reflect your group's mission.

Focus on the message. What do you want your logo to say about your organization or program? Serious or lighthearted? The best logos make an immediate statement with a very simple picture or illustration, not words (think about Nike's swoosh or Target's target).

Make it clean and functional. Your logo should work as well on a business card as on the side of a truck. A good logo should be easy to reproduce, memorable, and distinctive.

Stay away from using complex illustrations or photographs, which may not reproduce well if enlarged (like a poster) or reduced (like a business card). And be sure to create a logo that will work in black and white OR color, so that it can be faxed,

photocopied, or used in black-and-white marketing materials (like ads in the newspaper).

Beware of using too many colors. Your five-color logo may be gorgeous, but once it comes time to produce it on stationery, the price won't be so attractive. Nor will it work in mediums that only allow one or two colors. Try not to exceed three colors unless you decide it's absolutely necessary.

Don't use clip art. However tempting it may be, clip art can be copied too easily. Not only will original art make a more impressive statement about your company, but it'll set your group apart from others. Be sure to utilize your best resource: Youth! Not all logos have to be computer based. Have a contest at a youth conference, or solicit submissions through a newsletter. For example, youth created several of the logos for the National Youth in Transition Database. Check out these examples at nrcyd.ou.edu.

STEP 3:

select a TAGLINE

Can you convey the idea of your organization or project in just a few words or a very short sentence? Browse the web to research taglines for other groups, then challenge your group to come up with your own!



Foster Care Alumni of America has developed a couple of effective taglines, including:
"Connect today... transform tomorrow"
"Nothing about us without us."

a quick study:



Can you name this logo? Notice that Apple breaks the rule of using lots of colors on its logo, but they made sure they had a logo that could also be reproduced in black and white or a single color.



The Nike brand is one of the most well-known in the world. The "swoosh" of the logo is so well known that it is often used by itself (without the name of the company).



These are some of the best-known logos for non-profit organizations. Why do you think they stand out?



STEP 4:

opt for **COLOR**

Selecting one strong color to represent your organization is a great (and inexpensive!) way to build your brand. A single color, when used consistently, can help your group stand out at an event and make all of your materials look coordinated.

When selecting a color, you may want to research whether or not you can

purchase t-shirts, folders, and other promotional items (like frisbees or pens) in your selected color. Costs will rise drastically if you have to order custom-printed or odd-colored items.

When choosing a color, keep in mind your members: will everyone want to wear lavender? Will all ages want to wear neon green?



FosterClub, the national network for young people in foster care, has branded it's organization in gold. Young leaders represent the organization by wearing gold polos (top), and FosterClub's logo (above) and website (below) make bold statements in gold.



The collection above shows how, by grouping easily-found, inexpensive items all of the same color, you can create a recognizable brand using color. Build an even stronger brand by using stickers, iron-on decals, or even permanent markers to add your group's logo to the items.



should we hire a **DESIGNER?**

While brainstorming logo ideas by yourself is a crucial step in creating your brand, trying to create a useful logo completely on your own can be difficult. A professional design firm might charge anywhere from \$4,000 to \$15,000 for a logo design, but there are also less expensive options.

So how can you get some professional assistance without the professional price tag? Here are some ideas:

- A member of your group may have art and design skills and can sketch out some logo samples. You can take these sketches to a local professional designer who can advise you and provide final artwork. Talk to the professional about your need to economically use the logo in print, on signs, on business cards, on t-shirts, etc. Talk to your designer about the fees they charge. Independent designers can be hired for \$15 to \$150 per hour.
- Another option is to contact your local college and seek help from a student in the graphic design program. You could even suggest to the instructor that your logo design become a class project, which could yield multiple designs for you to select from.
- Approach a design firm about providing free services (also referred to as “pro-bono” services). Many

design and marketing agencies donate their services to non-profits that serve causes they are interested in supporting. Your group’s supportive adults can help you talk to designers and develop a letter of request to achieve your goal.

Your logo is the foundation of all your promotional materials, so this is one area where spending a little more now can really pay off later.



Elevate is the Youth Leadership Board of Iowa. Design of their logo was provided by professional designer.

should we **ADVERTISE?**

Enthusiastic about your goals and programs, with a great logo and tagline to brag about, your group members may be picturing big billboard and newspaper advertising, great radio and TV ads to spread the word. But mass media advertising is usually off-limits for most non-profit groups like yours because of the very expensive costs.

There is a way to get your money and time’s worth: target marketing. This type of advertising aims to pin point only your key stakeholders instead of spending money and time to distribute your message to a lot of people who aren’t interested. Target marketing reaches a small number of people who are most likely to respond or who you think most need to hear your message.

For example, if you have \$100 to spend on printing for advertising to potential donors, which would be more effective?

Send 200 copies of a flier to people picked out of a phone book for your city, or

Send 20 info packets to people who have contacted your group about helping foster youth.

At first look, it might seem like you could produce better results by reaching out to more people. But marketing pros will agree that you are more likely to yield better results if you target a group of people who are already interested in your issue.

inexpensive ways to **BUILD YOUR BRAND**

STICKERS.

Investing in printing your logo on stickers can go a long way in promoting your brand. Stick 'em on folders (for presentations), paper and envelopes (for letterhead), or simply pass them out for a inexpensive give-away at conferences and other youth events.

T-SHIRTS.

The members of your group can provide the best branding. Help your group stand out and be identifiable by creating matching t-shirts to wear at presentations and events.

E-MAIL & MESSAGE TAGLINES.

How many messages do you send out each day? Now multiply that by the number of people in your group. That's the number of opportunities you have to make an impression each and every day. Consider asking members to add your group's tagline to all e-mails.

SOCIAL NETWORKING.

Develop your online strategy... build a group site on FosterClub.com, Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter and let people know about your organization, program, or activity. Every time you create a new post you'll be building your brand.

TESTIMONIALS.

The best way to promote your brand is by word-of-mouth. Make sure that the members of your group understand your brand's personality and know your tagline by memory. Collect testimonials (great reviews about the work you do) and post them to your website.

FosterClub partnered with the Pew Charitable Trusts for the youth-powered "I Am Waiting" campaign, which relied on heavy branding for it's effectiveness.



a few **FAVES**...

We've collected some of our favorite resources to help you build your brand:

Design inspiration. Take a look at the tutorials at Before and After Magazine, along with images of great design.
www.bamagazine.com

Printing. Vista Print offers good deals on low-quantity business cards (you can even get a free set if you don't mind their logo being on it). They also have a logo-building engine... try it out!
www.vistaprint.com

Photos and illustrations. iStock features a great selection of inexpensive royalty-free photos and art (which means once you purchase it, you can use it as much as you want). www.istock.com

Websites. FosterClub provides youth boards with a free website that includes social networking features (build your own avatar!).
www.fosterclub.org or 503-717-1552.

Logo merchandise. At Cafepress, you can order a single item with your logo or graphic on it. Lots of selection, t-shirts to mugs. www.cafepress.com

Blog. Start communicating today by setting up your own Wordpress account.
www.wordpress.com

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