

What Do We Mean by Branding?

Branding means different things to different people, even among experts. When you say you need branding, it's important to think through what problem you are trying to solve before choosing how you'll solve it.

Brand Identity

This means you have a problem with **WHAT** you are presenting and maybe **HOW** you are presenting it. Some signs you have a Brand Identity problem:

- The organization's name doesn't fit what you are doing today
- You've outgrown the logo, or it has become outdated
- Negativity or confusion has developed around your name or logo
- Marketing materials need a refreshed look
- Your website isn't effective

These are all indicators that your Brand Identity needs attention. Brand Identity is the visual part of your brand. By doing a visual identity update you can redesign your brand and marketing materials to support what you need today.

To solve these problems, you need a graphic designer — and possibly a web developer — who understands how to align your image with your current goals.

Brand Strategy

The strategic side of your brand is about **WHY** your organization exists and for **WHOM** it exists. Signs that you might need to work on strategy first:

- You struggle with messaging
- It feels like your communications are "all over the place"
- You are trying to reach many different people but don't know how to connect with them
- You wish you knew what people wanted to hear
- There are gaps between what you say and what people experience — from staff to constituents
- Your donor or member retention rate is low; events and programs are not full
- Despite efforts, progress is slow toward strategic goals

To solve these challenges and create opportunities, you need research and re-alignment of audiences, messaging and the experience people have. You may also need Brand Identity, but graphic design alone cannot solve strategic problems. For this you need a brand strategist with a process to help you research and develop new positioning of your brand.



Brand Awareness

Awareness is about becoming known. To achieve success, you need to already have decided **WHO** you need to reach and **HOW** you are presenting yourself. Now you need to focus on **WHERE** and **WHEN** with some additional work on **WHAT** you'll do.

This work is most effective for organizations who have made decisions about Brand Strategy and Identity. If by branding, you are talking about where you need to be seen in order to get known, you are describing marketing effort. Some indicators that this is where you need to start:

- You've defined who needs to know about your work (and the answer is not "everyone")
- There's internal agreement on your core message
- What your most important audiences care about is clear
- A budget has been created to support your goals
- You can easily describe your mission in plain language

At Iris Creative we are experts in all these approaches to brand. We help define the problems and create solutions. Not sure which way is right for you? Take our Brand Readiness Assessment and then book an intro call to talk about the results.

Are You Ready for a Rebrand?

[Click here to take our Brand Readiness Assessment](#)

