



Strengthening Rotary's Brand Update

December 2012

Where did the initiative get its start?

The Rotary International Board of Directors and our Foundation Trustees recognized the need to strengthen Rotary's brand more than a year ago. Input from the Strategic Planning and Communications Committees among others, plus conversations with club leaders and grassroots Rotarians from nations and cultures around the world, plus Rotary's own research, all support that need.

Why is Rotary undertaking an initiative to strengthen its brand?

Rotary's public image survey conducted in 2006 and again in 2010, shows that 62 percent of people worldwide know our name, but few know much about us. As a result, Rotary is not earning full credit for its work, making it harder to gain quality new members, enhance contributions and reach our full potential.

As a nonprofit, why concern ourselves with branding?

The non-profit sector has changed. More charities compete for volunteers, for contributions and, if they are membership organizations, for members. According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics the number of 501(c)(3) public charities grew 57 percent between 1999 and 2009.* GuideStar estimates there are more than two million charities worldwide today.

In addition, newer nonprofits developed new models of giving—both in terms of time and of money. You no longer need to be part of a member organization to have a significant impact. Adding to the change is the fact that more for-profit corporations are getting into philanthropy to enhance their connection with key audiences—and their profitability.

* Sources: IRS Business Master File 01/2010 (with modifications by the National Center for Charitable Statistics at the Urban Institute to exclude foreign and governmental organizations). URL: <http://nccsdataweb.urban.org/PubApps/profile1.php?state=US>

Who is leading this initiative?

It is clear to Rotary's senior leaders that a project of this size and scope must be jointly and equally owned by both the Rotary International Board and the Rotary Foundation. So our Boards formed a Committee of Directors and Trustees to Strengthen Rotary's Brand. This committee has full ownership of all facets of branding.

Past President Bill Boyd has been appointed as chair. Directors José Antiório, Ann-Brit Åsebol, Anne L. Matthews and Trustees Mike McGovern and Kaz Ozawa fill out the committee's senior leadership. To ensure alignment with the Communications Committee, Jennifer Jones was appointed as well.

This group is supported by other Rotary committee members, international representatives and key staff subject matter experts.

What exactly is a brand?

Brand is an enduring concept that answers the most fundamental questions at the heart of an organization: Who are we? What do we do? And why should anyone care?

Our brand work centers on aligning the experience and the promise delivered everywhere a person comes into contact with us, our people, and the good works Rotarians do. With world-class brands like Coca-Cola, BMW, and Apple, you know exactly the promise and what to expect. For each of these brands there is a simple formula for success: *Clarity = Strength*.

Now it's Rotary's turn to focus.

The aim is not to reinvent Rotary. We're awesome already. The aim is to get back to Rotary's roots—to what makes Rotary great—to clarify and focus our messages. Most importantly the aim is to inspire you, your club and our entire organization.

What progress have we made and what are the next steps?

The initiative truly got underway last September with the selection of international branding agency Siegel+Gale. Siegel+Gale specializes in branding and has a long track record of success with multinational companies and global nonprofits.

Some clients include: 3M, Acura, Hewlett Packard, Qatar Telecom, SAP, AARP, Guggenheim, Project Hope and the YMCA. Siegel+Gale is headquartered in New York City and has locations in London, Hamburg, Dubai, Shanghai, Beijing as well as Australia, South Africa and Argentina.

Since their selection, Rotary has been working closely with Siegel+Gale on an extensive program of global research. Findings were recently presented to a combined meeting of our Boards at International Assembly in January.

Overall the initiative to Strengthen Rotary's Brand includes six phases that will take upwards of two years to complete. Following research, the process will develop and validate a brand strategy, create and test messaging and identity. Finally we will put into action a global implementation plan designed to respect our diverse cultures and energize every Rotarian all around the world.

What are the key findings of Siegel+Gale's research?

Siegel+Gale's research was the most extensive in Rotary's history. Quantitative research obtained responses from 10,000 Rotarians in 167 countries. Qualitatively more than 150 one-on-one interviews were conducted. Rotary Clubs and Zone Institutes were visited around the world.

Without getting into detail there are really three key findings.

1) Rotary has the strengths necessary to succeed. Our multidisciplinary perspective, passion and perseverance allow us to: See differently. Think differently. Act responsibly. And impact Globally.

2) Audiences want what Rotary offers. We just need to help them understand. Donor research showed 19 shared global motivators. Things like "transparency," "attracting people of the highest ethical standards," and "feeling part of something meaningful."

Understanding however is a hurdle. With every organization there is a gap between what internal and external audiences know. Rotary's gap is two to three times larger than average. Obviously, this is not a good position and underscores the importance of clarity and focus as critical components of our future success.

3) The world is moving in our favor. A review of the macro trends among nonprofits shows the world is moving in our favor. On the one hand you have traditional nonprofits like Unicef, Red Cross/Red Crescent and Lions Clubs. On the other you have for-profit corporations who have found philanthropy is good for business. In between, there are standout nonprofits who blend social mission with business practice.

What makes Rotary special is what we have always been. Rotary is a combination of business, professional and community leaders...coupled with the ideal of service. These components differentiate us and make us strong.

Are we going to change our logo?

Brand goes much deeper than a logo. To put it into perspective, our visual identity is a form of communication. The initiative will look at *all* of the ways that Rotary communicates—our messages, our look, our printed materials, our websites and more.

Once the process helps our Boards to define Rotary's core, the plan calls for us to test all forms of communication...to see how well they deliver our messages. We will look at our logo in this light.

Further, our current identity system is limited so that Rotary seems to create a new logo for every new program and initiative. One of the outcomes of the initiative is to create a robust identity toolkit designed to accommodate Rotary's breadth... and help us retain the equity in our master brand.

The benefit is that, once fully implemented, our communications will work harder than ever to strengthen our brand and keep our organization relevant and vital to all our key audiences for the long term.

How much will this cost?

The initiative will cost about US\$1 (one U.S. dollar) per Rotary member.

Compared with major corporate branding initiatives that typically cost several times more, Rotary is being both cost conscious and effective. What's more, the costs will amortize over many, many years.

In 2011, in support of the Rotary Strategic Plan, our Board allocated US\$ 9.9 million to be spent over the next three years for initiatives related to telling the story of Rotary's achievements. The initiative to Strengthen Rotary's Brand represents less than 15 percent of the total—about US\$ 1 per member. The remaining 85 percent of these expenditures include:

- US\$ 6 million in support our Public Relations Grants programs—money that goes right to our districts to tell our story.
- US\$ 2 million for public relations behind Rotary's effort to END POLIO NOW.
- And the balance for a comprehensive communications plan which includes social media.

Strengthening Rotary's Brand is an investment in our future with significant payback in terms of a successful and sustainable path forward to strengthen Rotary's impact in local communities and around the world.

What can I do to help starting today?

The Committee to Strengthen Rotary's Brand asks you to join them in embracing this important initiative. Be a Rotary Champion. Share what you are doing with your fellow Rotarians. Talk to non-Rotarians about why you became a Rotarian and what it has meant to you. Tell them how it feels to give back to your community. We've seen that one Rotarian can change a community and when you connect more than a million of us, we can change the world.

For additional information: Contact the Strengthening Rotary's Brand project manager, Paul Hydzik, at paul.hydzik@rotary.org or 847-866-3719. Members of the Committee to Strengthen Rotary's Brand may also be available to help you.

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