



The FAWCO Foundation's Basic Fundraising Tool Kit

Your Club's Brand



When your club hosts an event or activity, members make a decision to attend based on their perception of what the experience will be like for them. A *brand* is the “promise” that their expectations will be met by that experience. It is the set of values that the members and the community at large believe your club will deliver with every event, activity, product or benefit.

Strong brands are not the result of a two or three people sitting in a room “deciding” what the brand will be; the users make that decision. The accumulation of perceptions builds the brand. Having a strong brand is how the product (in this case, your club) reinforces the positive perceptions and reduces or eliminates the negative perceptions.

When one thinks of a brand they see a logo. Nike? We immediately visualize the “swoosh”. That logo is the result of a campaign that values athleticism, strength, and excellence-success. Nike built their brand by consistently associating its products with elite athletes working hard to do their best no matter what-“just do it” was the mantra and now the swoosh says it all.

Why is having a brand important? Everyday, other organizations are competing with your club to find ways to make them noticed. They may be local the schools, the churches, other local expat organizations or they may be “virtual” expat websites offering vital information to new arrivals or websites providing social activities. Finding sponsors, donors and advertisers has become much more difficult since the world “got flatter” and realized that our clubs are not the only place to promote their products and services to the expat community.

How do clubs find their “inner swoosh”? And what do they do with it? Being able to establish a clearly defined brand will enable your club to present a crisp message about who they are and what makes them unique from the others. Clarity of your values will enhance the degree to which your club is noticed or recalled when prospective sponsors make spending decisions.

If you think your club would benefit from a branding facelift, it need not be a daunting task. Using **Focus Groups** is one of the best methods for finding out what the real perceptions are about your club. A lively exchange of opinions in carefully planned meetings allows you to compile important data about the perceptions of your club. You will see commonality emerge on many issues. Your club will be able to take action on those issues that promote its values and eliminate those issues that distract from your focus. (*See document on Focus Groups for ideas on how to run the sessions and collect and summarize the data.*)

Be sure to review your **Mission Statement**-Does it accurately reflect the values of your club? Are their parts of it that are outdated or wrong? Are there parts of it that detract from your focus? It might be time to revise the mission statement.

Vital to elevating your brand profile is to insure that all of your club's “media” effectively presents your values. All of the media materials should carry the same value message.

They should all have a similar overall look and theme. Each one should serve a specific purpose and should deliver accurate, focused information for the reader. Items to consider:

Your logo and your slogan

FAWCO clubs have some very clever logos; little or no tweaking is necessarily required. (Modernizing fonts? Revitalizing the color?) Consider a “slogan” or tagline to accompany your logo. This is an opportunity to state in a few clever words, your values. For example:

- FAWCO “Serving Overseas Americans and the International Community Since 1931”
- The FAWCO Foundation “Your projects, your passions, your Foundation”

Your website

Your website, especially your home page, is the “portrait” of your brand. It should state very clearly “Who You Are” and What You Do” and “Why it Matters”. Every subsequent page should reinforce your values with regard to your events, activities, products or benefits. The visual appearance sets the tone for the rest of the site. And don’t forget your logo and slogan!

Your Facebook/Twitter pages

This is new territory for most clubs! While your website is a wide angle picture of your club, these sites can be best used for a more focused snapshot of your organization’s day-to-day activities. For example, reinforce your brand by asking activity attendees to post their photos *during* the activity. However your club decides to use social media, make sure someone is charged with monitoring your pages to make sure that they stay current.

Club Pamphlets and Brochures

Experience has shown that a printed pamphlet or brochure can be very helpful when introducing your club to potential donors. It can leave a lasting impression and the donor may be more likely to recall your presentation than something sent via email. It should reflect your brand throughout when describing your events, activities, products and benefits. Be sure that it is always up to date!

Time for a Re-Launch!

Your club has put in great effort to listening to your members and the community about their perceptions and expectations. How do you get your “rebranding” to work for you?

- If your club has a monthly coffee or meeting, why not take a portion of it and introduce the “New You”? Invite your sponsors and your prospective sponsors and other interested members of the community to come to the presentation. This will let them meet your members and make a connection. (Make sure they leave with your new pamphlet!)
- Send out a special email to your club’s mailing list to announce your updated website or when you create your Facebook or Twitter pages.
- If you have members who work or own their own businesses organize an evening presentation. These members may offer to network for your club with their companies or business contacts. This event is also a good venue to invite potential sponsors.