

# Nonprofit Naming Checklist

Deciding whether to change the name of your organization should take into account many factors. While not exhaustive, this list should get you thinking about some marketing, legal, funding and logistical issues to consider. And remember to market-test any names you are considering (even informally to staff and clients) and hire an attorney to do the proper searches to ensure that prospective names are available and protectable.

## Marketing

- Does the name support your mission and branding attributes?
- Does the name distinguish your organization from your competition?
- Does the name inspire confidence?
- Does the name have a positive connotation?
- What other intellectual property (publication names, product names, etc. will be effected by the name change?
- What other divisions or affiliates will be affected by the name?
- Does the name have a positive emotional component?
- Does the name suggest something physical?
- Does the name have a metaphorical meaning?
- Does the name appeal to your audiences?
- Will the name allow your organization to expand services?
- How easy is the name to spell?
- How easy is the name to say?
- Does the name translate well into other languages?
- Will the name help your search engine marketing efforts?
- Is an appropriate domain name available?
- Is the name available in social media contexts?

## Funding

- Will the new name effect current funding sources?
- Will a new name help to attract new funding sources?
- How will having a new name effect charity rating services or watchdog organizations?

## Logistics

- How long will it take to change the name of your organization?
- Who needs to be involved in the process?
- Who needs to approve the new name?
- What will it cost to change the name?



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- What is involved in getting board and staff acclimated to new name? What training is needed?
- What will you have to update with the new name?
  - Marketing materials (stationery, business cards, brochures, etc.)
  - Online marketing (website, email templates, and other online marketing)
  - Directory listings (phone books, charity lists, etc.)
  - Signs (interior, exterior)
  - Vehicles and Uniforms (shirts, name tags, etc.)
  - Internal systems (billing systems, phone system, etc.)
  - Customers and vendors and partners (and their systems)

### Legal

- With what government or other agencies will you have to register?
- Can you be incorporated under one name and use another name for business?
- How will a name change effect filing taxes or other reporting or accountability issues?
- Is the new name legally protectable / unique enough from other organizations to avoid infringement?

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