

Five steps to nonprofit brand brilliance

The journey nonprofits must
make in order to thrive



**Freerange
Future**

Creating for cause & culture



Who is this document for?

Nonprofit organisations that want to grow.

Nonprofit organisations that recognise the importance of brand but don't know where to start.

Nonprofit organisations who've invested in brand but not seen the results they hoped for.



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Introduction

These are challenging times for nonprofits. The sector is in flux as technological and demographic changes disrupt business as usual.

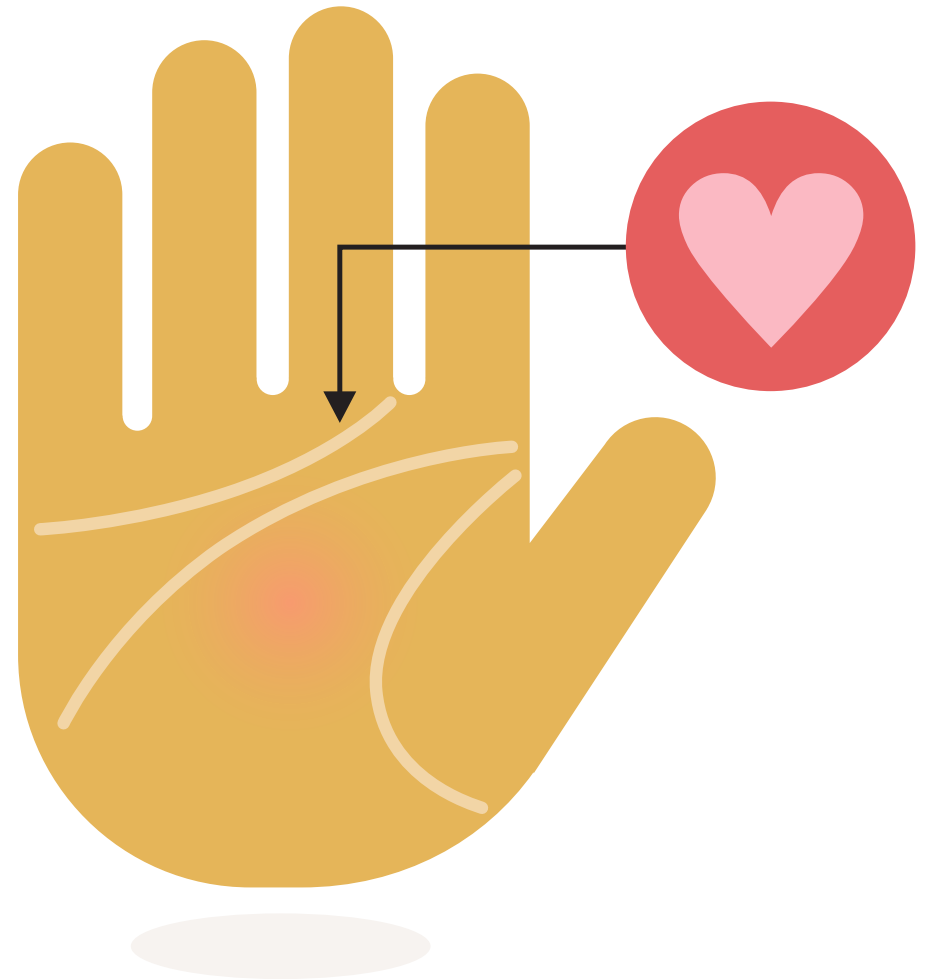
You can't assume that people will seek you out just because your nonprofit is doing good things. You can't keep running the same campaigns every year. And you can't have just one generic conversation with your entire community.

The successful nonprofits are those that build strong brands. They are forging connections with their community that are far more powerful than any for-profit brands could ever hope for.

At the same time, some nonprofits are investing in brand, creating great looking logos and seeing no benefit.

Why are some succeeding and others failing? In this eBook, we'll explain why you should devote your resources to brand building and how to go about creating a brilliant nonprofit brand.

Nonprofit brands need more than just heart.



Why brand is so important for nonprofits

Brand is much more than just a logo. An authentic brand consistently communicates the values and mission of an organisation. More than any other sector, nonprofits must form a deep connection with their community. Shared values are at the core of this connection, so a brilliant brand is vital.

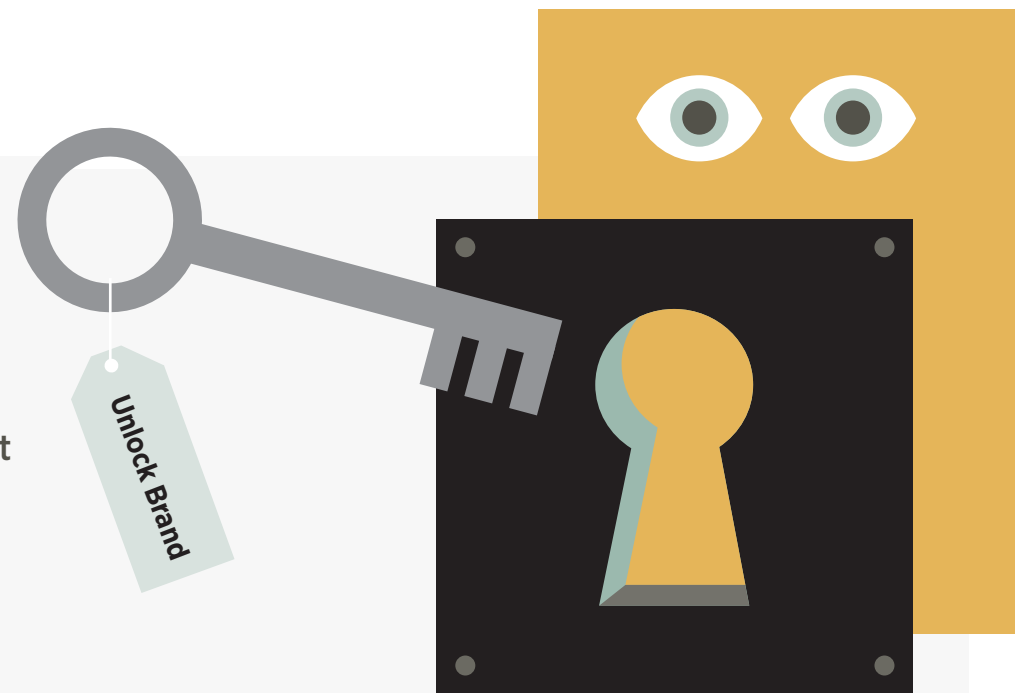
An authentic brand can enable growth, transformation and revitalisation. It can increase engagement, change perceptions and strengthen relationships.

The ultimate opportunity for nonprofits is to become representative of the cause they champion and to build a community external to their organisation that drives change. Brand is the ultimate facilitator of this process.

A brilliant brand is a key asset for a nonprofit and is integrated at all levels of the organisation.

MORE BENEFITS OF BRAND

- Rise above the crowd
- Consistency reinforces credibility and reliability
- Attract and retain quality staff and volunteers
- The community has a better relationship and stronger recognition with familiar and consistent communications
- Be more competitive when times are tough
- Engage with people in a more personalised way
- Leverage the power of good over greed



Why nonprofits struggle with brand

There are many reasons why nonprofits are indifferent to brand or why they struggle to build a brilliant brand.

Misunderstanding what brand is.

Brand is not your logo, fonts and colours. Brand is the what, why and how of your organisation, embedded in everything that you do. Without this understanding, there is no appetite for the brand journey.

Failing to fully incorporate values into the brand.

A brand that doesn't represent your authentic values, mission and unique value proposition will not resonate within your organisation or your community.

Allocation of budget and staff time to brand building is not a high priority.

Brand is an asset and should be esteemed as such. Investing in brand can lead to significant improvements in every aspect of your nonprofit.

Assuming that people will engage with you because they believe in the cause. There are many things competing for peoples' attention and money these days. You must be authentic and compelling to get a slice of either.

No focus on empowering people within the organisation.

If your board, management and staff are not all aligned, your brand will not be successful. Everyone must understand the importance of brand and be given the tools to use it.

Not fully integrating brand into campaigning, programs and advocacy. A brilliant brand is communicated throughout a nonprofit and this consistency leads to greater engagement and resonance with all activities.

Not empowering your community to share your brand.

The ultimate goal of a nonprofit brand is to transcend and come to represent your cause. To achieve this, your community must be empowered to become brand ambassadors and spread the message to their own networks.

The reality is that brand building is a process that takes time and resources. It requires buy-in from your entire organisation. But the benefits of a brilliant nonprofit brand are enormous.



The journey towards a brilliant nonprofit brand

Brand building is a journey. A brilliant nonprofit brand is integrated deeply throughout your organisation. People live your brand every day, whether they are inside the organisation or a member of your community.

The journey to a brilliant brand involves five stages that follow one another until your brand will transcend your organisation.

Authentic Brand

Firstly your brand must embody your true meaning. If not, you'll progress no further on your brand journey.

Brand Alignment

For your authentic brand to succeed in the world, you have to bring your entire organisation with you.

360° Brand

With your team aligned, your brand can be communicated consistently and effectively.

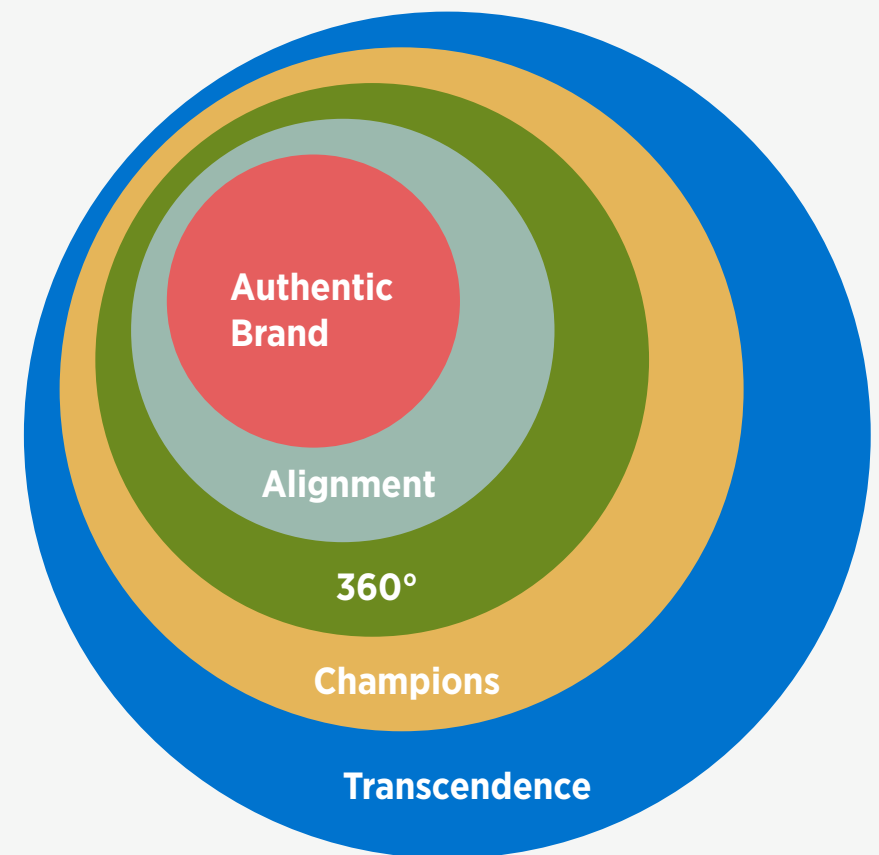
Brand Champions

Nurture and empower champions outside your organisation to join you on the journey and spread your brand far and wide.

Transcendent Brand

At the end of the brand journey, new paths open up to you, opportunities previously beyond your reach.

The topography of a brilliant brand



Authentic brand

The first step in creating a brilliant nonprofit brand requires clearly defining the purpose and focus of your organisation. An exploration of your vision, mission, values and the unique proposition that sets you apart is vital as your brand must embody these to be authentic.

This must be an inclusive process. Your staff and community will ultimately live and breathe your brand, so their insight and buy-in is vital.

Building an authentic brand is no small achievement. While some nonprofits (and their designers) may think that this is the end of the brand building process, it is in fact only a foundation on which considerably more must be built.

1. DEFINE

Vision, Mission & Cause

Your notion of a better world and how you will achieve it.

Values

The defining characteristics that guide your choices and actions.

Positioning

The unique qualities of your organisation and relationship to your cause.

Actions

The goals you must achieve in order to realise your mission.

Community

The people you must reach and inspire to action in order to achieve your goals.

Marketplace

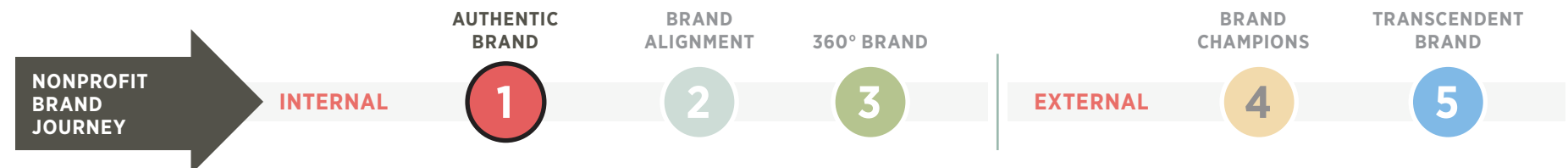
Other nonprofits with a related cause, your community, location, etc.

2. EXPRESS

Personality The tone, style and attitude of the brand

Visual identity The look and feel of the brand

Messaging Expressed meaning through concise messages



Brand alignment

With an authentic brand in place, you face the significant work of incorporating the brand into the DNA of your organisation.

Your systems must support your brand

A brand led organisation considers brand as a key element of all strategy.

Brand considerations should be embedded in all processes and systems.

Tools should be provided to help staff use your brand.

Brand should be a focus in hiring and training your team.

All of your programs, events, campaigns, etc should communicate your brand meaning.

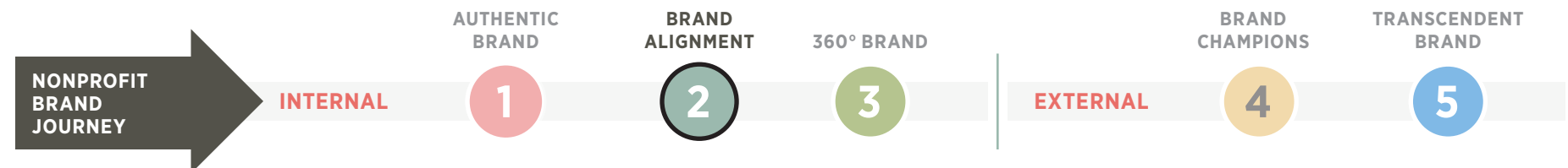
Your people are your brand

Everyone in your organisation; board, management and staff must be empowered to understand the value of brand and to use your brand authentically.

Management must lead by example. Be on brand and encourage others.

Your people connect with your community and every conversation they have should be on-brand.

Staff should be encouraged to own your brand and be proud of it.



360° Brand

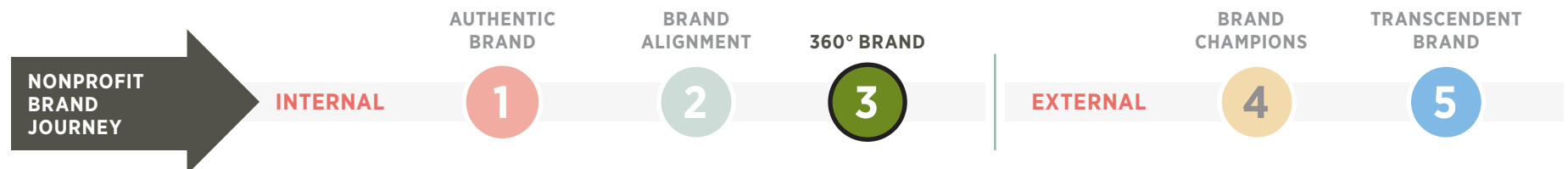
Once your organisation is aligned behind a visual and verbal identity that effectively represents you and you have an empowered team supported by guidelines and tools for their consistent use and oversight, you have a platform on which to build a 360° brand.

A 360° brand communicates consistently across your entire organisation. It talks and it listens.

A 360° brand is sophisticated and flexible enough to tailor communications to different audiences, offering the right message to the right people at the right time through the right channel. To achieve this it is vital to understand exactly who your community are and to segment them into groups with similar ideals, goals and demographics. With your community segmented you can have conversations that have a much deeper impact than trying to speak to everyone the same way.

A 360° brand listens to its community and is happy to receive and act on feedback. It provides people with the information and tools that empower them to be active in the community.

A 360° brand measures everything. Only through measurement of the cost and impact of your brand communications, can you validate the strategy and tactics employed, prove that you're getting ROI and improve over time.



Brand Champions

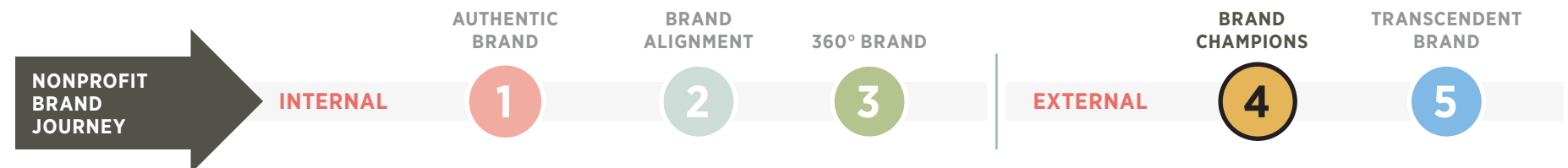
With a 360° brand in place, your nonprofit has the opportunity to build a community of champions and empower them to achieve change at a scale beyond your own direct means. The community are much more than your audience – they are your allies.

These champions don't just show up one day. 360° brands first attract participants. A sophisticated and personalised approach to engaging with these participants nurtures them to become supporters.

This personalised approach to connecting with people can only be achieved by 360° brands because you need to be having different conversations with different people, all of which must be targeted to their interests and motivations while consistently representing your brand.

Continued nurturing and forging of deeper connections between your supporters and your brand will lead to the development of champions. Again this is a personalised approach, with targeted story-telling and brand experiences that are relevant to each individual having a profound effect on them.

Champions can be amplifiers of your cause. Empower them to own the cause, give them tools to activate their own networks and co-create meaning around the cause. With a community of champions in place, your nonprofit brand can transcend.



Transcendent Brand

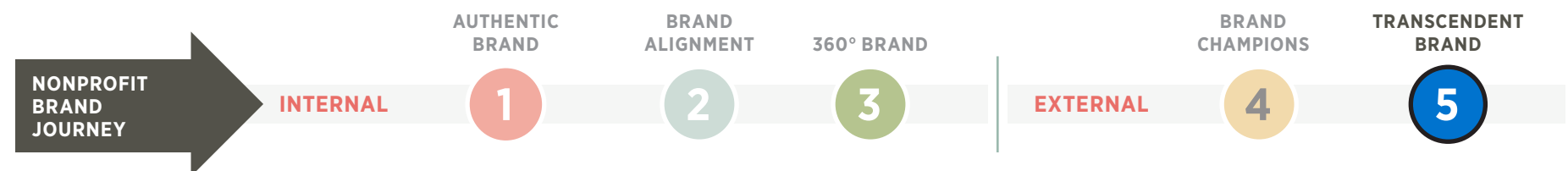
When your organisation is aligned behind an authentic 360° brand and you have a community of brand champions supporting you, everything is in place for your nonprofit brand to transcend.

You will have the strength to wield significant influence with policy makers, change perceptions within the community and steer the debate around your cause.

Through your network of brand champions, you will be able to mobilise large groups of supporters for fundraising, events and campaigns.

You'll be in a strong position to forge mutually beneficial partnerships with complementary nonprofits, corporates and government agencies.

Ultimately you will be able to shape a culture around your cause, with the opportunity to leverage innovation, entrepreneurship and education in ways previously impossible to action.



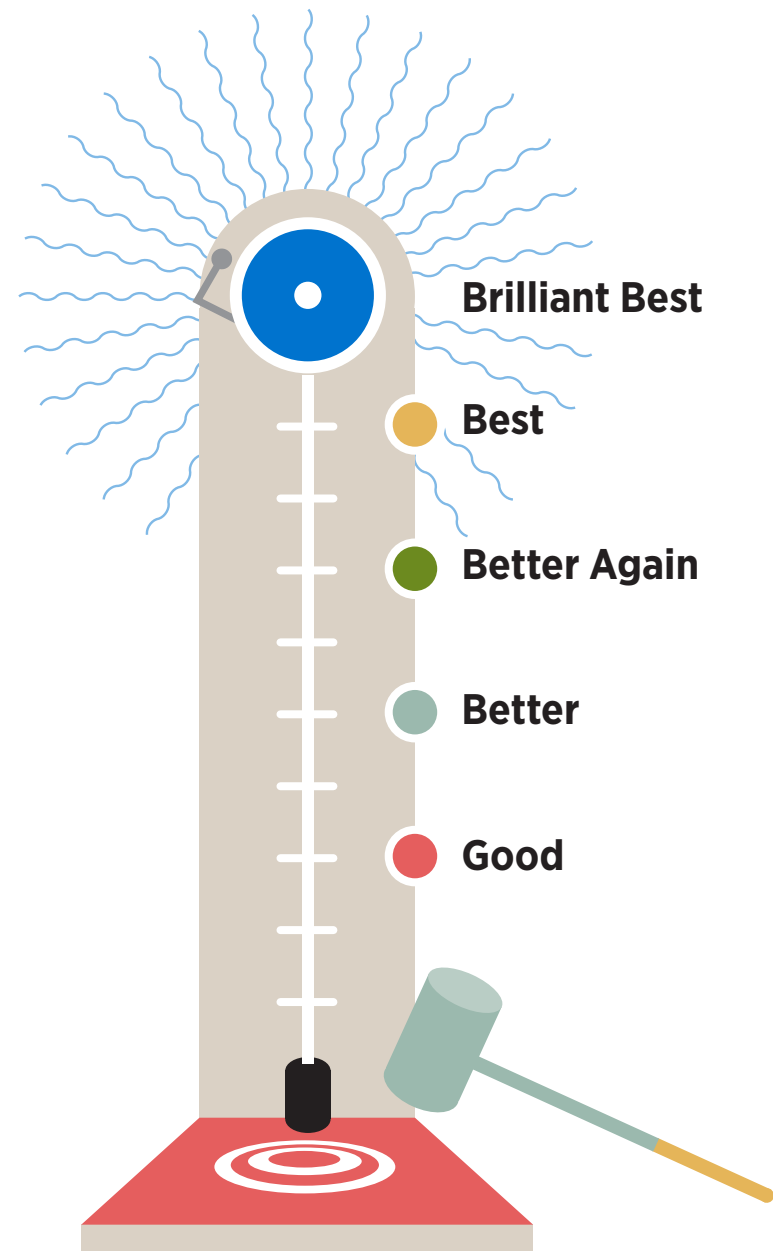
Your brand can be brilliant

Wherever you are on the brand journey today, you can take the next step towards brilliance.

If you're just starting out, remember that an authentic brand is true to your values. For your brand to prosper, your organisation needs to be aligned and empowered. You need to communicate effectively and consistently at all times to all stakeholders.

And for your nonprofit to truly excel, your brand must become synonymous with your cause. You can then become the rallying point for those committed to the cause and build a community of champions to extend your work even further. This network effect offers you tremendous leverage with which you can open new doors and steer the conversation.

If you're stuck, don't know how to start or you've gone the wrong way, don't give up. Believe in yourselves. Brand building is no harder than the challenge of doing good, a challenge you face every day.



About Freerange Future

Creating for cause & culture.

Our expertise in the disciplines of branding, marketing and digital enable our clients to achieve their membership, fundraising, campaigning, community and audience building goals.

Speak to us about taking the next steps.

freerangefuture.com

office@freerangefuture.com

