

Brand Assessment for Nonprofits

20 questions to see where you stand

About the Author



Obiekwe “Obi” Okolo is BitterSweet’s creative director. With hands-on experience across design, marketing, art, and architecture, Obi brings a multidisciplinary perspective to every client engagement.

Listen Up

Everyone likes a good listener. A healthy, deep relationship is built on curiosity. We are drawn to people who ask good questions and take the time to hear the response.

The same goes for brands. People tend to prefer brands that understand who they are, how they feel, and what they need.

It's easy to think that branding is just about creating the right logo, picking the right color palette, or choosing the perfect typeface. But if those decisions aren't grounded in something real and curiosity-born, they'll miss the mark. They ring hollow.

As a brand leader, if your capacity or willingness to listen fails, so will everything else. But if you take the time to ask the right questions of ourselves and our communities, you'll set yourself up for a meaningful, lasting connection with your audience.

How to Use This Assessment

This assessment is designed to help you quickly identify the strengths and weaknesses within your brand. It includes 4 sections, each with 5 questions, beginning with listening, moving through integrity and narrative, and ending with some tactical brand fitness indicators.

We invite you to respond to each question on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning "strongly disagree" and 5 meaning "strongly agree." Some reflection is good, but don't overanalyze things. A gut reaction will get you where you need to go.

After you respond to each question, tally your score to see where your organization, project, or campaign's brand stands and where you might want to focus next.



Listening

Who you pay attention to and what you pay attention to will shape the decisions you make about your brand. Ideally, you'll have a strong understanding of why people care about what you do, what makes your work valuable, and how it fits into the broader cultural context.

Rating Scale
1: Strongly Disagree
2: Disagree
3: Unsure
4: Agree
5: Strongly Agree

#	Question	Rating
1	We know how our organization is actually perceived by the people we serve, not just how we intend it to be perceived.	
2	Our leadership actively seeks out perspectives that challenge our existing assumptions about our organization.	
3	We regularly revisit our understanding of how the needs of the communities we serve are changing.	
4	We have a clear definition of what makes our organization unique.	
5	We understand the broader shifts in our sector (and the world) that influence how our organization needs to evolve.	
	Total Listening Score	

Brand Integrity

A strong brand should reflect what you know about your community and your organization's role in it. It should evolve over time as your work evolves. A static brand is a failing brand.

Rating Scale
1: Strongly Disagree
2: Disagree
3: Unsure
4: Agree
5: Strongly Agree

#	Question	Rating
1	We can clearly explain why we made the visual and verbal choices that define our brand.	
2	Our visual and verbal identity reflects our stated mission and vision.	
3	We know our audience feels well represented by our brand.	
4	Our team is proud to represent our brand publicly.	
5	When our mission or strategy changes, our brand does too.	
	Total Brand Integrity Score	

Narrative

Stories are the only tool for communicating your values and impact. The way you tell stories should enhance your audience's connection with your brand and increase their trust in your organization.

Rating Scale
1: Strongly Disagree
2: Disagree
3: Unsure
4: Agree
5: Strongly Agree

#	Question	Rating
1	Our stories consistently connect to our larger brand narrative: who we are and what we're trying to do.	
2	We avoid storytelling tropes, like the "founder hero" or the "grateful beneficiary."	
3	Our storytelling reflects a range of voices and perspectives, not just leadership's point of view.	
4	Our storytelling balances hard truths and hopeful narratives.	
5	We collect feedback on how our stories land with our audience.	
	Total Narrative Score	

Brand Fitness

Brands aren't confined to websites and one-pagers. Your brand should be durable and adaptable enough to communicate your message in any context.

Rating Scale
1: Strongly Disagree
2: Disagree
3: Unsure
4: Agree
5: Strongly Agree

#	Question	Rating
1	We have brand guidelines that our team actually uses.	
2	We could bring on a new hire, contractor, or partner and trust them to use our brand consistently.	
3	We've stress-tested our brand across every format we actually use: social, print, video, in-person events, etc.	
4	Our brand doesn't rely on trends that could feel dated in a year or two.	
5	We regularly revisit our brand strategy to make sure it supports new programs, audiences, or goals.	
	Total Brand Fitness Score	

Results

Add up your scores from each section here.

Listening	Brand Integrity	Narrative	Brand Fitness	Total Score

20-39

Just Getting Started

You've made some important decisions, but you're still early in understanding your audience and building your brand.

Consider:
Schedule a few structured conversations with internal and external stakeholders to discuss their needs and your organization's reputation.

40-59

Finding Your Footing

Some aspects of your brand are strong, but others could use more attention. Identifying and addressing the biggest gaps will have a noticeable effect.

Consider:
Revisit your lowest-scoring section and identify one concrete change you can make this quarter.

60-79

Solid Foundation

Your brand strongly represents who you are. Focusing on process and precision will help you refine it even further.

Consider:
Conduct a comprehensive brand audit to find opportunities for improvement.

80-100

Setting the Bar

Your brand is one of the best in your industry. Your responsibility now is to stay vigilant; keep listening and evolve your identity from a position of strength.

Consider:
Don't rest on your laurels; use your strong foundation to shake things up. Try a new storytelling format or launch a new event.

Not sure what's next?

Think it through with BitterSweet

This assessment is a helpful data point, but it's not the full story. Wherever you landed, we'd love to help you figure out what's next for your brand.

Related Reading:

- Tell better stories with The Character Triangle
- Design your next experience with The Event Brand Checklist

Talk With Our Team:

- Contact our Creative Director, Obiekwe "Obi" Okolo, to request a free 30-minute brand consultation

Learn more about our work at bittersweetcreative.com

