

WEBSITE REFRESH OR REBRAND?

A 10-Minute Gut Check for Nonprofits

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www.redstartcreative.com



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Deciding between a website refresh and a rebrand is not always straightforward. Making the wrong call can cost time, budget, and momentum. This short gut check is meant for nonprofit Executive Directors, Marketing Directors, and Communications leaders who want to make a thoughtful decision without overcomplicating it.

Use this as a conversation starter with your team or leadership. It is not a test and there is no perfect score.

Step 1: Mission and Strategy Check

Answer yes or no:

- Has our mission, audience, or primary focus changed in the last three to five years?
- Are we offering programs or services that are not clearly reflected on our website?
- Do partners, funders, or community members misunderstand what we actually do?

If most answers are no, you likely do not need a rebrand. If several answers are yes, it may be time to explore one.

Step 2: Internal Alignment Check

Think about what happens inside your organization:

- Do staff describe the organization in similar ways?
- Is there shared clarity about priorities and goals?
- Are communications decisions generally straightforward, or do they get stuck in debate?

Strong alignment usually points to a website refresh. Ongoing misalignment often signals a deeper brand issue.

Step 3: Website Performance Check

Look at how your website is working today:

- Is it accessible and moving toward current compliance standards?
- Is it easy for staff to update and maintain?
- Can visitors quickly understand who you are, who you serve, and how to take the next step?

If the main challenges are structure, usability, or accessibility, a refresh is often enough.

Step 4: Trust and Recognition Check

Consider your external relationships:

- Is your organization trusted and recognized by donors, partners, and the community?
- Would a name or identity change create confusion?
- Is existing recognition something you need to protect?

If trust and recognition are strong, changing the brand may create more problems than it solves.

The most important question before making any decision, ask: Are we trying to solve a clarity problem or an identity problem? Clarity problems are often addressed with better structure, messaging, and accessibility. Identity problems require deeper, strategic brand work.

A final thought: If this gut check did not lead to a clear answer, that's normal. The goal is not to rush into a redesign or rebrand. The goal is to choose the path that best supports your mission, your team, and the people you serve. If you want help thinking through this, we're always here to help.

Reach out to christine@redstartcreative.com.