

BRANDING: What's in a Name?

REVIEW:

In the past, the Ministries Foundation has been in the business of raising and granting money, which, by definition, is what a foundation does. However, the new organization will be much more than that. As was discussed at the Executive Meeting today, the foundation will not grant money per se. The fundraising arm will support the broader organization whose objective is to "deepen and expand the movement that engages and transforms the lives of 250,000+ women and families in the Twin Cities area in education, health, and spirituality." In other words, I believe the name must encompass more than the foundation arm and therefore the word "foundation" should probably not be used in the title.

There is also the question of including the acronym CSJ. Clearly, we want to honor the founders. So perhaps this should be a consideration but initially not considered a mandate - if that's an option.

The truth is that "Wisdom Ways", "Sarah's Oasis", and Learning In Style" are all good mildly descriptive names with good logos. Bold Moves 2030 is bringing all these ministries together under one roof albeit with separate directors, with one overarching mission statement. The whole should be greater than the sum of its parts. This has not been the situation in the past but must be so in the future if the new organization is to have enough clout to raise significant sums.

NAME REQUIREMENTS:

1. It should be *memorable* - easily recalled and easily understood.
2. The design or artwork used should be clear, easy to print and read from a distance *and* easy to embroider or screen print :-)
3. Descriptive/positive but not necessarily in a blatant way. ("Uber" implies they are the best in their game but doesn't describe a ride sharing service" just as Sarah's Oasis loosely describes a place for women to be safe without calling it a safe house.)
4. In our case, we are not building a business from the ground up starting with determining a name. Rather we are charged with coming up with a name that will fit the organization that is already in existence but is being reimagined.
5. The name we choose should be an extension of our mission i.e., the good that we intend to do in the world. If we choose the right name, people will come to identify it with the good that we do and want to support it. (Which is why it must be clear, memorable, easily identified, printable and readable across marketing/social media/communication platforms.

For these reasons, I unfortunately don't believe the lengthy names you suggested are going to lend themselves to helping us meet our objective.

EXAMPLES:

- I. **Non-profit institutions** that have great name recognition. Some have names that are not descriptive, others do:
 - a. **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital** - The public knows what they do - their name is synonymous with Children's Cancer. Having been founded in 1960, they've had a lot of time and spent a lot of money to tell people who they are and build that name recognition.

Yet, they are generally referred to as "St. Jude's". The name is easily shortened as is St. Kate's. Also, their simple drawing of a child in profile is a powerful logo.

- b. **YMCA** - A good example of an acronym based on a descriptive name that took years to take hold but is very recognized today. When is the last time you heard "Young Men's Christian Association"?
- c. **Chrysalis House**– This is a great example of a non-profit that chose a brand name that very loosely descriptive of what they do only in that they are caring for people in a "transitional state". Coming up with something like this would be more difficult but could be very rewarding. And I might add that it is usually referred to by the single word "Chrysalis".
- d. **Catholic Charities** - This is clearly descriptive - to a point. The history and efforts to stay in front of people has permitted them to tell their story over time. It should be noted that their performance numbers reported as of Jan 2020 show Catholic Charities with the worst drop in donations of the top 100 nationally but located in MN. Let's not follow too closely in their footsteps. I suspect they may be suffering from the same issue we have – donors aging out and no new ones following.
- e. **The Amherst Wilder Foundation** - The general public doesn't recognize the "Amherst" part. Like St. Kate's, it's only used sparingly. Had this organization been formed today with today's need for names that can be easily reproduced for various marketing efforts, they like would just be called "Wilder Foundation".
NOTE: this organization does appear to do many of the same things we do. If someone is interested in that kind of charity, how do we differentiate ourselves. I pulled this statement from one of their donor's off their website which I thought perfectly defined what they do. We need someone to be able to write something equally as clear and compelling:
"We are happy to support the work that Wilder does as donors. We're passionate about education, public policy, and racial equity and we appreciate how Wilder supports whole families in early childhood education, delivers school-based and culturally specific mental health services, and engages a wider diversity of voices in public policy"
- f. **St. Kate's** - Not many people talk about "The College of St Catherine" - not even the sisters! The full name is on their main webpage and that's it. The website is stkate.edu and they use "St. Kate's" to refer to themselves throughout their website. Clearly, they saw the need to update and appeal to a wider audience. We need to too.
- g. **Children's Cancer Research Fund** is a good example of a very descriptive name that marketed what they did right in the name...no question about what they do. The fact that St. Jude's was founded in 1960 as opposed to CCRF being founded in 1981 meant that they already had competition. Note that I really didn't want to spell out CCRF again so used the acronym. That will happen if we have a long name. Maybe not a bad thing, but the acronym will have to be used consistently in place of the name and that's cumbersome

II. For-profit institutions that spent a lot of time researching their names:

- a) **Amazon** - It was far from the first choice if you read about it, but the Amazon River is the biggest there is and that's what Jeff Bezos was going for. It surreptitiously describes a company that can be the biggest in its field. The first name they had was "Cadabra" until Jeff realized people thought he was saying "Cadaver".
- b) **Uber** - connotes "the best". It's easy to remember and they were the first to use it. It's never confused with another company.

SO! I googled "CSJ logo" and there are almost 300 logo's that use CSJ! Of course, those include the ones that belong to the sister's and the various provinces etc. You should do it – rather enlightening...

CHALLENGE:

While the CSJ organization has a wonderful history and are known for founding and running St. Kate's and St Joseph's hospital, some of their individual ministries are well known and others not so much. Even those that have better name recognition than the others such as Wisdom Ways and St Mary's Clinics, they are still not highly recognized. The fact that the various ministries have maintained separate and distinct organizations has made it difficult to build a brand that the current foundation could raise money towards. Now the new organization must come together under one umbrella as stated in the letter of intent. We must be forth a strong, overarching brand that effectively encompasses all the work the ministries do.

Our donors originated from the ranks of those the sisters taught. As schools closed that base began to dry up and no serious effort was made to replace them. We have our work cut out for us.

If our message is to help women be able to support themselves and their families by providing the tools that they need to do that, then our name should reflect that. We don't have decades to win over donors from completely new camps. We need to keep all the good from the old and reinvent ourselves just like St. Kate's did, to be relevant to non-Catholics as well as Catholics. I believe that also means we have to set ourselves apart from Catholic Charities and The Wilder Foundation.

BOTTOM LINE:

Unfortunately, I don't have that perfect name in mind, although I'd love to have the inspiration to come up with it and will certainly do some brainstorming. The point I'm trying to make is that naming the new organization is not something that should be done quickly without considering the points I have mentioned here. There are companies that do nothing but branding/naming organizations. I'm the last one to suggest hiring an outside consultant until we are sure we have exhausted internal sources and suggestions.

We cannot afford to "miss" on this one. I'm concerned that while "Bold Moves 2030" might be a good internal name for a project or program, the logo is completely unusable for marketing purposes, and I fear that the name itself is not meaningful outside the community.

Author: Gabrielle (Gabby) Rohde, Ministries Foundation Board of Director

Hi Anita

Sure, go right ahead and forward to the steering committee. I corrected a few errors so I've attached an updated version.

Here is some more of my stream of consciousness writing :-)

I've been brainstorming names. I had to spend an unexpected couple days at Mayo and last night here in the ER so had time to muse and give some thought to the MF. (All is good but really grateful for access to Mayo with Keith's issues.)

Not sure if this is the right track, but I was trying to come up with names and logo ideas that speak to helping women become strong and independent by providing shelter, education, protection, and spirituality. They in turn can help themselves as well as their children and whoever else needs them. So, I tried to come up with single words that would describe the work:

UPLIFT
RAISEUP
ELEVATE
ASPIRE
ASCEND

Unfortunately all of these words have been over used and there are a ton of logos already!

Then I thought about your idea of using the word "Lace" which after all - is where it started and the mission is still the same and I think that's very relevant and appealing.

Just to get the everyone's brain rolling - what about something like a piece of lace for the basis of the logo

with the words "Lace to Living" or "Making Lace", "After Lace" or "First Lace", "Starting with Lace"... or other words that indicate that Lace was the start of independence for the original beneficiaries of the sisters work. The only drawback is that we would need a VERY simple, stylized drawing of lace so that it would reproduce well in a small printed logo. Something like this would have to be simplified but you get the idea. It brings the mission of the sisters full circle and is a wonderful story that bears repeating.

Other thoughts - words that indicate the work of:

- To prevent from falling or sinking: support
- To Hold up; to life on high: to elevate
- To raise up; lift up; secure;

The sister's work has always applied to all who need their help, whether within or without the confines of the Church or any religion for that matter. And that ethos is what makes the work necessary and relevant and in the end, exactly what Jesus taught. (Some in the church hierarchy just forget that). I think the committee needs to consciously decide whether or not their name should use a word like "ministries" which I don't mind but maybe it should be in our mission statement instead of our name?

Once we have a name I think the logo should be very stylized.

One idea is to start with a simple female profile that has as universal a visage as possible. I was trying to picture a head shot silhouette with a separate hand reaching up and one reaching over to help.

If you think about it, we help women help support their family. We are not attempting to be a crisis nursery or an orphanage per se. But if we focus our mission on helping women help themselves and in turn helping others, (which is the history of the sisters), then we have a story that can be more easily communicated. I still love "Going Where the Need is Greatest" as long as we narrow it a bit and I for one am voting with continuing their founders mission of raising up women so they can help themselves and others.

It might be worthwhile to get Alyssa involved. I think she could help with this or at least help execute other's ideas with her skills.

Moving forward - always!

Gabi