



# RENEW & REFRESH: UPDATING YOUR COUNTY'S IMAGE

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Lancaster County

# IS REBRANDING NECESSARY?

01

HAVE YOUR  
MISSION, VISION  
OR VALUES  
CHANGED?

02

YOUR MISSION,  
VISION & VALUES  
GOVERN THE  
DIRECTION OF  
YOUR DECISIONS.

03

IF THEY HAVE  
CHANGED OR RE-  
ALIGNED IT'S  
APPROPRIATE TO  
UPDATE YOUR  
BRANDING.

## Setting a Vision

Your Vision acts as the North Star for every action your organization undertakes, so it's critical you have a firm understanding of your vision before moving forward.

A simple strategic planning session can help your County Board determine what the overall vision should be.

When you're rebranding, organizational vision will affect everything from your website redesign to your hiring and onboarding process.

# THE VISION

# DETERMINING YOUR MISSION

If vision is your what, mission is your how. Maybe you're still going in the same direction, but the way you're getting there is different. Ultimately, your mission is your organization's roadmap.

When your mission changes, your messaging needs to change as well -- making it just as crucial as vision during a rebrand.

Ideally your mission should be evident in the services and programs you provide as a County. It should be clear to any constituent what your mission is by how you portray image and also in the customer service levels you provide.

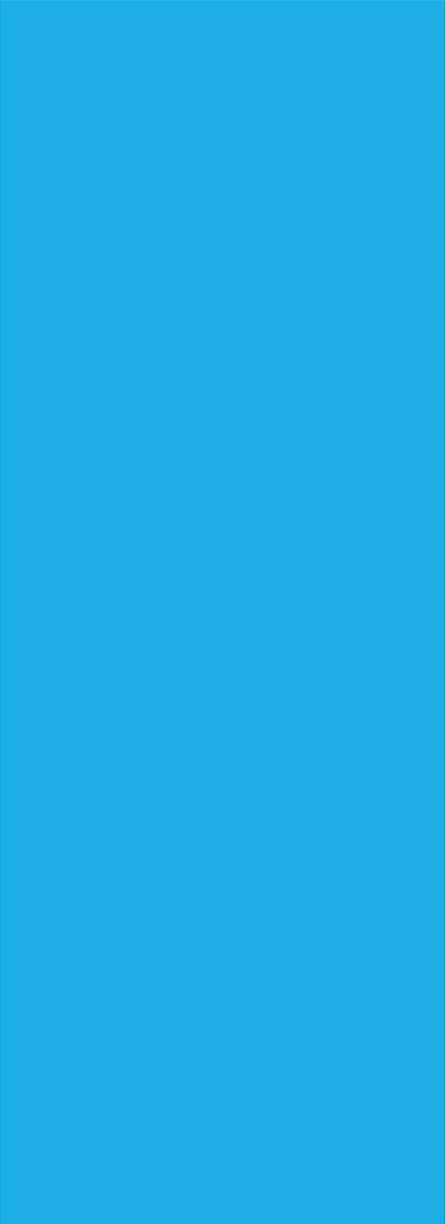
# WHAT ARE YOUR VALUES?

Your values act as the *why* behind your brand. They're why you're working towards your vision, and why you're dedicated to your mission.

As organizations and brands expand and change, some of their founding values might become unsustainable. If you can't support your old values or you've come to prioritize new ones, you'll need to update them to reflect what your organization actually values today.

This is another excellent thing to tackle during a simple strategic planning session. It is key to setting the tone of a County when the County Board is aligned in their collective values.

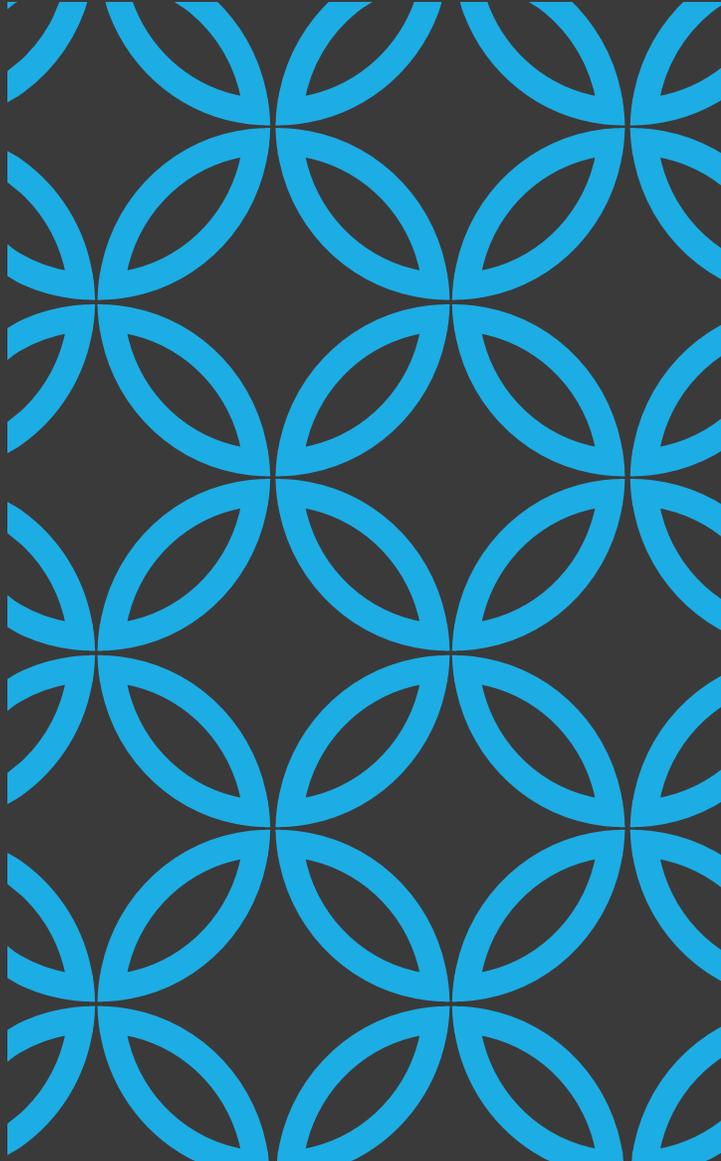




# WHAT'S A BRAND VOICE?

As your vision, mission, and values change while rebranding, the way you convey these aspects of your organization will also have to change. The vocabulary, tone, and voice you use for your brand has to match your message. So, if what you're saying is changing, how you're saying it will need to change too.

This is your brand voice.



# WHERE TO START?

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Be clear on your reasons for changing your brand?

Is it dated?

Do people have negative or positive associations with your brand and logo?

Does it really reflect your mission, vision and values?

Talk with stakeholders to find out what they believe are the most important things you provide and determine how to display that through your branding.

# WHERE WE STARTED

Lancaster County started our re-branding journey in 2017 after a basic strategic planning session where the County Board created their Mission, Vision and Values.

It became apparent that new branding was needed due to the many varied logos and branding techniques that departments were using – no departments were using the same logo and many had created their own. This creates confusion on the part of constituents.



# SHOULD WE USE A PROFESSIONAL FIRM?

This greatly depends on what your resources are in-house. Do you have someone that is proficient at graphic design on a high level – not just someone who can do nice things with clipart.

Lancaster County utilized a professional firm because we tied our rebrand into a brand new website creation and roll-out.

Those don't have to happen at the same time but looking at your website is key in thinking about branding – does it convey everything you would want constituents to know and does it provide them easy ways to interact and conduct business?

Most constituents are utilizing the website first before even in-person visits so how can you make sure that the branding is consistent and conveys your mission, vision and values.

# OUR PROCESS

Lancaster County worked with our website and design company which we selected through an RFP process and landed on CivicPlus. We started our work with them focusing on the logo.



Our inconsistent use of logos was a primary concern. We wanted something that demonstrated the following:

Our commitment to being part of the City of Lincoln and all it has to offer, as 90% of Lancaster County is the City of Lincoln.

Respect and inclusion for the rural parts of the County and the growing towns and villages that are a vital part of our county community.

A logo that would be easily recognizable and something that each of our departments could use on all types of media from online, print and even printed on vehicles.

A clear image that everyone would come to know and trust as being from Lancaster County.

# WHERE WE LANDED WITH A LOGO

## Why this works?

- It is clear and recognizable.
- Has a clear geographic reference point to one of our main characteristics which is the City of Lincoln.
- Provides a reference to the rural and agricultural roots of Lancaster County.
- Ties the logo to the County's history with the inclusion of our established date.
- Looks nice in color, black and white and in greyscale.
- Rebranding also provides you a good opportunity to reassess and update the color palette you use.



# YOUR CREATION TIPS

**Stay simple.** Jamming as much symbolism as possible into a logo generally doesn't work out too well. Show your confidence with a simple logo.

**Make an impact.** Maybe you went the opposite route in your original logo design and were too afraid to be bold, so you stuck with something safe. Your logo isn't worth much if people can't remember it, so when you're redesigning your logo, don't settle for something that won't stand out.

**Be adaptable.** One thing you might have learned with your current logo is its limitations. Now that you know what shapes or styles might not be as versatile for the channels your organization uses, keep those in mind during redesign.

**Look to the long term.** As fun as rebrands might seem, you don't want to do this every year, so really look at your vision, mission, values, and purpose and consider whether this new logo can support them in the long run.

**Maintain through-lines.** Like your name, your logo is one of your brand's most memorable components. When you're rebranding, avoid losing too much brand recognition by trying to maintain the parts of your old logo that worked. If you can maintain a sense of continuity, you'll be able to carry over some of the brand recognition your old logo initially had.

# IT'S NOT JUST A LOGO!

It is critical that when you are creating a logo that you gain buy-in from your Departments and Elected Officials in terms of use. We found it beneficial to create a logo team that had representation from key offices so they had a stake in the creation.

Another key component is creating Branding Guidelines. We worked directly with CivicPlus in the creation of our branding guidelines and they lay out exactly how the logo is to be used in print, online and in any other formats that departments may need it in. These are extremely thorough and provide an excellent framework of what the logo use expectations are.

Making sure that the logo is used consistently is incredibly important because it helps constituents in identifying you and also begins to be seen as a trusted symbol.

# WHAT ARE BRANDING GUIDELINES?

Here are a few elements to consider when writing your logo and branding guidelines:

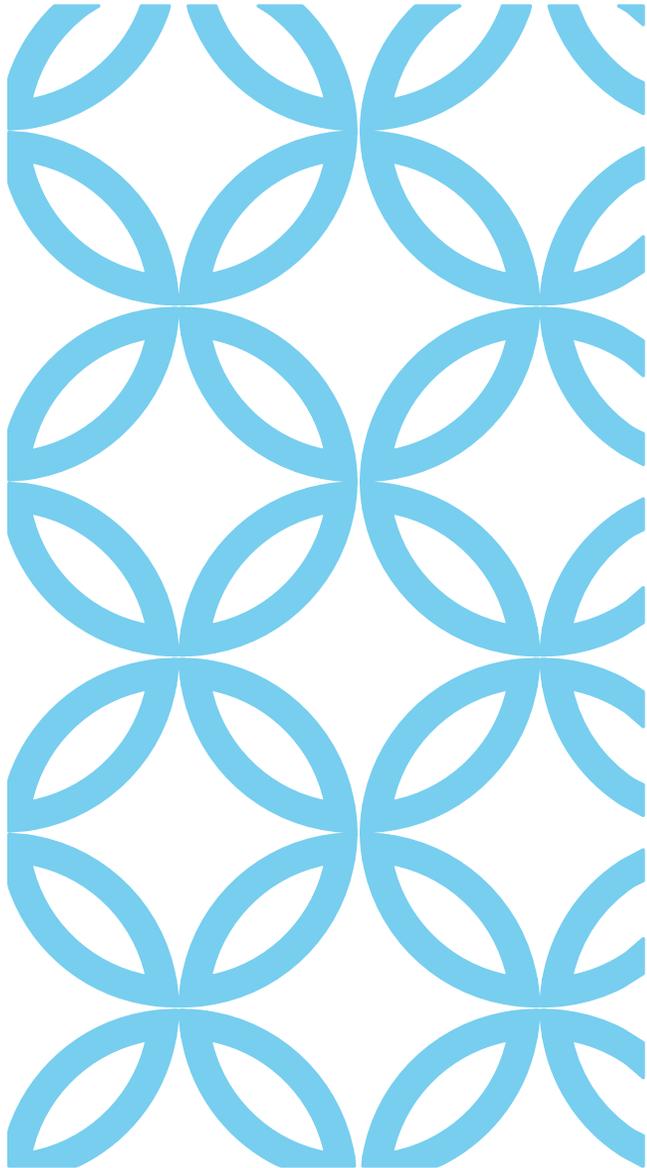
**Logo elements.** What visual elements make up your logo? When and how are each of them used?

**Color variations.** What does the colored version of your logo look like? What about black and white? When are each of these used?

**Clear space.** Also called padding, this is the space around your logo that prevents overlap or obscuring. Aim for at least 10% of width at all times.

**Unacceptable uses.** What can never be done to your logo? What color variations, rotations, scaling, etc. do you want to avoid?

You'll want to have your guidelines on hand if you're doing a website redesign or creating a rebrand campaign. Utilizing the services of a professional company can come in handy if you aren't experienced in design.



“A brand is NOT a logo, it’s the feeling and direction that supports the logo, but more importantly, the aspirations of an organization. Have strong brand guidelines, marketing strategy and tools to implement the logo.”

Slate Communications

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- Covering up a Crisis – So you had a PR nightmare, an elected official gone rouge or something that has marred the image of your County. This isn't the time to rebrand. Any constituent will see that you are trying to cover up what's happened. That's a time to double-down on your already established brand and remind people of the good work you do.

- Newly Elected – Elected positions in a County can turnover during any election cycle and the new people may want to rebrand in an “out with the old, in with the new” situation. It's your job to explain to them when it is appropriate to rebrand (new mission, vision, values; new location; new services, etc.) – Not just new people. We have to capitalize on the trust we have built within communities. Rebranding shouldn't be taken lightly.

## TOP REASONS NOT TO REBRAND

# THE DO NOT LIST

- Don't fall victim to trends. It's important to know who you are and what you provide to the community and playing to the trust you have already built. Getting trendy with logos, designs and website trends is usually a bad plan.

- If you plan to seek feedback from constituents or community groups make sure to not ignore what they have shared or leave them out of the loop. Share with them how your plans are coming along as you create them.

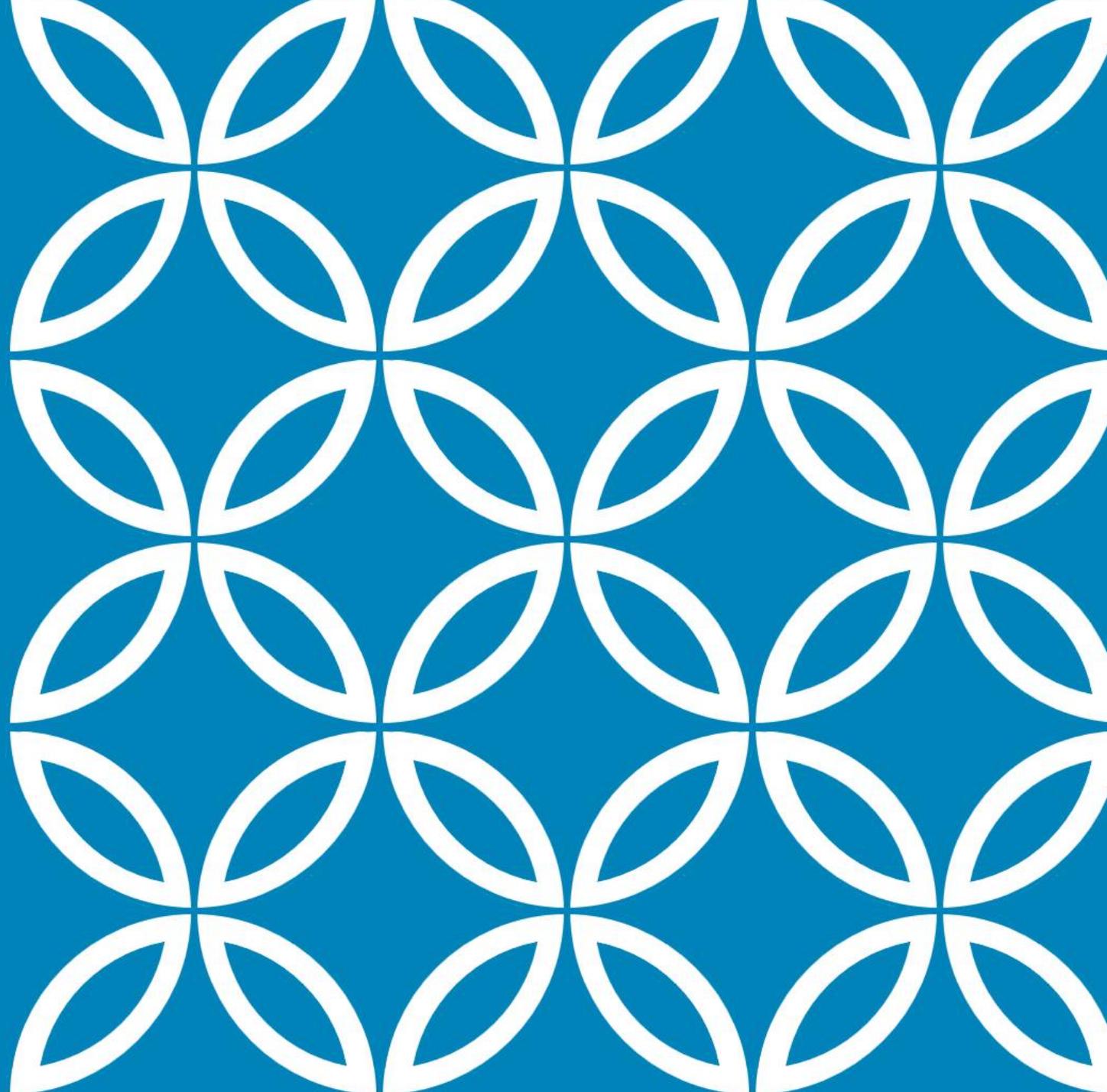
- Don't just rely on your logo. A brand is not just a logo it is a feeling and direction that supports the logo. Your brand is a comprehensive look at your organization – what you do, how you do it and how you tell your story.

- Don't have a really extended timeline. Keep the project moving and keep your stakeholders engaged as you go so energy stays high until the final product reveal!

# WHAT ABOUT THE WEB?

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- Rebranding is an ideal time to rollout a new website too, just be sure to plan carefully and give yourself enough time and the appropriate amount of feedback from departments on what is really needed in an updated website.
- Hire someone if you can. While this isn't possible for everyone, website design isn't what we as counties do so it makes sense that it's not our area of expertise. Find someone even if just a volunteer to help teach you about the latest in website trends, security measures and features like fix-it trackers, payment modules and the best in consumer interactions.
- Make sure your branding guidelines encompass your website, even if you aren't rolling out a new one.



- County branding is unique because of the services we provide, many of which are required by statute. However, where we can we need to find the passion in what we provide and be sure our constituents know that we care and are striving to provide the best experience possible.
- Think out-of-the-box where you can. This can be tricky since we want to also capture trust based on the longstanding services we provide but find ways you can incorporate new and innovative methods of communicating to constituents through your branding.
- Remain consistent. Keep the services, communication and methods you use to engage people consistent so they know that you are an organization they can continue to trust.
- Keep the Mission, Vision and Values top of mind and make sure what you are doing aligns with them.

## FINAL BRANDING TIPS

# GOT QUESTIONS?

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Time for Q & A

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