



## Branding Buzz

There is a lot of talk about branding lately, which can be confusing because branding has different connotations for different people. Some see it primarily as a logo, others as a product or famous name. At Make Waves we believe that a brand is what you stand for. For us, message, reputation and brand development go hand in hand. In a very real sense, your reputation is your brand, and your reputation is built through carefully crafted messages that are delivered consistently over time to a defined audience.

This point about a defined audience is extremely important. In our experience, many nonprofit groups fail to fully define their key audience, talking instead about reaching “the general public.” But the general public is a gigantic group, the vast majority of which will never become donors, clients, employees or customers of a particular nonprofit. It is far more strategic, never mind sensible, to focus on reaching only those people who might actually become supporters. Once you’ve done that, the right direction for your messages becomes quite clear.

There is a very good book by John J. Burnett called *Nonprofit Marketing Best Practices*, which Bonnie uses as a text in a graduate course she teaches on nonprofit marketing. Here is what Burnett says about what he calls market segmentation (aka audience definition), “Combined with product [and service] differentiation, it is the essence of a contemporary marketing strategy.”

You wouldn’t put your organization’s name on any service or product that came along, so why put its resources into communicating with just any prospect? Clear thinking about your target audience is the first step in making waves with your marketing efforts.