Brand Audit & Analysis FAQs

We have completed the information-gathering phase of the project, which included a mix of in-depth conversations, surveys, materials audits, and secondary research activities. The Phase I FAQs reflect the discovery process, as presented during the February 5 YWConnect discussion.

Once the information was gathered, CHIEF began to use the findings to develop strategic recommendations that address YWCA’s primary goal: increasing brand clarity and visibility. They assessed both programmatic and message alignment—as well as visual identity (logo, color, tagline, visual style, etc.)—from the perspective of their effectiveness in representing the organization and increasing overall audience engagement.

It is important to note that these recommendations are not final at this point. CHIEF introduced the recommendations in April in order to illicit feedback from local association leaders and will continue to listen to our feedback so that they can gain a clear understanding of all perspectives across the organization. They will ensure that these perspectives are properly addressed through the brand recommendations.

Once this process has been completed, CHIEF will work closely with the YWCA to formalize a detailed action plan that positions the brand in a more a structured and dynamic way. This plan will highlight the concepts that will strengthen the brand across the organization, and the plan will also draw a clear picture of the tools and tactics necessary to bring this revitalized brand to life and make it a success.

PHASE I: Related to the February 5 YWConnect discussion:

Who was interviewed as part of the Brand Audit discovery process?

CHIEF conducted a series of strategic intake sessions with a cross section of YWCA stakeholders to gain insight into the existing YWCA brand and its aspirations, as well as how it ties into the overarching YWCA centralized brand. Key stakeholder interviews were conducted either over the phone or in person with:

- YWCA USA Senior Leadership
- YWCA USA Staff
- Executive Committee of the YWCA USA Board of
- Leadership & Legacy Campaign Leaders
- CEO Advisory Council
What was the goal of the interview portion of the discovery process?

The goal of this stage was to uncover consistent themes and gain understanding of the organization and its objectives. Additionally, CHIEF looked to identify common themes expressed by key stakeholders regarding the YWCA’s position.

Who was invited to participate in the internal constituents survey?

We invited a number of internal stakeholders to participate in an electronic survey and provide insight into the current state of the YWCA brand as well as their aspirations for the future of the brand. Included in the survey were:

- Local YWCA association CEOs and Executive Directors
- Local YWCA association board chairs
- YWCA USA staff
- YWCA USA board members
- YWCA USA donors
- Members of the YWCA World Service Council

Who was invited to participate in the external constituents survey?

The recipients of the external survey included leaders of Voluntary Associations, NGO’s, and Federal and International Government Associations who are familiar with or have access to YWCA’s target communities. Specific individuals queried include, but were not limited to people working within:

- Women’s empowerment
- Women’s health
- Domestic violence and sexual assault
- Food access
- Social justice
- Racial justice
- Faith based organizations
- Community organizers

What other activities were part of the discovery process?

CHIEF conducted a formal brand audit for YWCA’s existing brand and brand elements based on their research and what they observed during the Intake process. To accomplish this, they took a deeper look at YWCA’s marketing materials and online presence to determine how the design, content and branded elements are currently represented. This information was used to analyze and assess the current YWCA brand elements to include but not be limited to:

- Analysis to determine external influences on the brand such as social change, new technology, political environment
- Voice and tone
Internal brand analysis
- Positioning
  - Brand values
  - Unique selling proposition
  - Brand promise
  - Voice
  - Culture
  - Service positioning

External brand analysis
- Organizational identity
  - Logos
  - Branded elements
- Collateral Brochures
  - Print materials
  - Fact sheets
  - Conference materials
- Web
  - Website
  - Banners/Ads
  - Search Engine Optimization
  - Social media
  - Blog
- Sponsorship materials
- Member materials
- News/PR
- Content marketing
- Testimonials
- Advertising
- Video

---

PHASE II: Related to the April 1 YWConnect discussion:

How can I provide feedback to the concepts presented in the webinar?

Please contact Marla Caulk, YWCA USA COO at ywconnect@ywca.org.

Are the recommendations presented during the April YWConnect final?

The recommendations shared during our April YWConnect represent initial concepts from CHIEF as a result of the brand audit. We encourage local association leadership to provide feedback regarding these recommendations that will help inform the next iteration which will be presented during our upcoming May 11 YWConnect discussion. Final recommendations will then be rolled out during the Annual Conference in Washington, DC in June.

There is often brand confusion with the YMCA -- how can we differentiate ourselves from them?

The reinvigorated YWCA brand will demonstrate the organization’s active commitment to eliminating racism and empowering women. Through visual design, messaging consistency, and impact storytelling, we will connect the value of our programs to this brand promise. We will also exemplify the courage, urgency and commitment of this
brand in all YWCA marketing efforts, therefore further differentiating the organization and capturing a spirit that is far different than audience perceptions of the YMCA brand.

Additionally, we recognize that one of the strengths of the YMCA brand is the consistency with which it is used across their network. Currently, the YWCA brand usage does not have that same consistency throughout our YWCA network.

In order to significantly strengthen our messaging and branding, differentiate ourselves and decrease brand confusion, it will be imperative that all local YWCA associations adhere to the branding and messaging guidelines as an important membership requirement.

**What information can you share about the rollout?**

A brand analysis is only as powerful as the tools used to bring that brand to life. CHIEF is working to identify those marketing recommendations that will best complement YWCA’s brand and allow for greater scalability across various marketing channels and audiences.

At the annual conference, CHIEF will present brand strategy and marketing recommendations that introduces specific tactics for: how we speak about ourselves, how we implement visual styles with powerful signal strength, and how we express those visual styles through a series of targeted materials. We will provide tools and resources to assist local associations in implementation of the new strategy.

We understand that local YWCAs have resources invested in the current brand so will introduce a measured approach and timeline that will guide local associations as they work to achieve full brand compliance.

**What about using YW instead of YWCA? What about using Young Women’s Christian Association?**

Based on research, discovery conversations, and broader understanding of the YWCA brand, there is great equity in the YWCA as a symbol of the organization. For this reason, CHIEF recommends standardizing all public references to the organization as YWCA.

With that said, however, CHIEF is also exploring campaign expressions that can highlight the W as a powerful brand symbol of the organization. These developments are underway and will be presented as part of the final brand strategy and marketing recommendations.

As Dara acknowledged during the YWConnect call, she has received several letters from local association leaders requesting that the YWCA USA change the organization’s legal name from “Young Women’s Christian Association” to the letters “YWCA”. She has been in discussions with the YWCA USA board, legal counsel and CHIEF regarding this matter and the request is being considered along with the brand work currently underway. It is important to note that an action of this nature will require approval by the YWCA USA board, a vote from local association leadership, a change in our certificate of incorporation and a change to our bylaws. We will certainly reach out to local association leadership with any plans and next steps in this regard.
The color used in the presentation appears red – is CHIEF suggesting changing from persimmon to red?

The color introduced in the brand presentation is a brighter, more vibrant variation of the YWCA persimmon—one which was in fact seen in a few of the marketing materials reviewed in the Phase I brand audit. Oftentimes screen sharing or other teleconferencing tools can misinterpret the color of the display, so we encourage everyone to download the presentation to view the exact color.

The more vibrant color is intended to illustrate a YWCA brand that is more action-oriented, as consistent with other tactics in our brand strategy. It’s important to note, however, that nothing is final at this phase of the engagement.