

The 10 Have-Tos

Your One-Stop Check Up for a Powerful Nonprofit Tagline

(Download your free copy at http://www.gettingattention.org/nonprofit_tagline_report.html)

Place a check next to the criteria your tagline already satisfies.

1. _____ **Must convey your nonprofit's or program's impact or value:**
 - *Increasing physical activity through community design/* Active Living by Design
 - *Protecting Your Retirement. Securing Your Benefits/* RetireSafe
 - *Informing Grantmakers, Improving Our Community/* Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers

Make sure you use your tagline for all it's worth. If your tagline lacks this positioning value, it's a bust. Descriptors don't make the grade.

2. _____ **Must be broadly and easily accessible and memorable**, avoiding jargon and acronyms:
 - *Starve Fear. Feed Hope./* National Eating Disorders Organization
 - *A Passion to Help. The Ability to Deliver./* Americares
3. _____ **Must be specific to your organization, not easily used by another nonprofit.** This is a particularly tough one, but differentiation is the name of the game. Otherwise, it's just a "me too":
 - *People Who Change the World Need the Tools to Do It!/* NTEN
 - *Equal Play/* Women's Sports Foundation
 - *Smart Policy. Sound Science. Stronger Communities./* Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs

Three organizations submitted the exact same tagline (*People Helping People*) to the survey, which means each one is losing out on tagline power.

4. _____ **Must be eight words or less**, which is all you have of your audiences' attention. Simplicity plus brevity=clarity:
 - *We Help Neighborhoods Play/* Silken's ActiveKids Movement
 - *Where volunteering begins./* VolunteerMatch

NOTE: There are exceptions to this rule, when more than eight words are required to get the gist across:

- *Helping donors create thoughtful, effective philanthropy throughout the world/* Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (a complex service and concept, justifying nine words)
- *More than a store. We build healthy families and communities one job at a time./* Goodwill/Easter Seals Minnesota (15 words, a lot but the organization is trying to correct misperception about its work and impact)

5. _____ **Must be highly visible and integrated into all print, online, multimedia and most verbal communications.**

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6. _____ **Should make an emotional connection:**
 - o *Helping Preserve the Places You Cherish/* LandChoices
 - o *When You Can't Do It Alone/* Jewish Family & Children's Service

7. _____ **Should capture the spirit or promise of your organization:**
 - o *Finding the Ways that Work/* Environmental Defense Fund (committed to taking on environmental issues with persistence and innovation)
 - o *Grounded in tradition...open to the Spirit/* Memphis Theological Seminary

8. _____ **Should clearly complement and/or clarify your organization's name without duplicating it:**
 - o *It's a Moving Experience/* Museum of Transportation (MO)
 - o *Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet/* Sierra Club

The Sierra Club's name is somewhat obtuse as the reference to California's Sierra Nevada mountain range doesn't communicate anything about what the organization does, or the geographic breadth of its work and programs.

You can't presume your audience brings any particular context to digesting the tagline.

9. _____ **Should take the tone that will connect with your audiences, while being true to your organizational "self."** Effective taglines may be humorous or earnest, tangible or conceptual.
 - o **Humorous:** *To Life* (from *Fiddler on the Roof*)/ Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County (Caution: This tagline succeeds due to the cultural common ground shared by the Federation and its base. That's a prerequisite for integrating humor into your nonprofit's tagline or other key messaging.)
 - o **Earnest/Straight Ahead:** *Investing in Peace and Security Worldwide/* Ploughshares Fund
 - o **Tangible:** *We Stop Polluters/* Potomac Riverkeepers
 - o **Abstract:** *Ideas into Action, Action into Service/* American University

10. _____ **Should be authentic.** Make sure your organization can stand behind your tagline, 100%. When you do, you build credibility. When you don't, you lose any you may have.

How Does Your Tagline Add Up?

Add one point for each box checked:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 8-10 points: | Tagline Expert |
| 5-7 points: | Tagline Intermediate |
| 4 or less points: | Tagline Novice. Get back to the drawing board. The "musts" are a must. |