THE MIGHTY GPS™

# Mapping Your Organization's Marketing Maturity

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# What is The Mighty GPS?

**Much like an actual GPS, The Mighty GPS is a positioning system that says, "You are here. And there's where you want to go. Here's how to get there."**

The Mighty GPS is a tool to measure—i.e., to put a score to—the maturity of an organization's communications and marketing efforts. It starts with a 10-minute self-assessment. By frankly and honestly answering all 40 (or so) questions, any team can discover the current state of their marketing maturity.

The Mighty GPS assesses your marketing maturity so that you can plot a course toward increased effectiveness and a return on your marketing investment.

# What is Marketing Maturity?

**Marketing maturity is the journey to your organization's "best self."**

**When you are at the highest level of marketing maturity:**

- Every dollar you spend on marketing produces more than a dollar in return.

- Your supporters admire and trust your brand. Your competitors envy it.

- You get the most out of technology. It's a tool for success, not frustration. Your software and tools and website hum along smoothly and seamlessly for both internal and external audiences.

- Your entire staff knows precisely what you do, whom you serve, and how to communicate your value to the world.

But marketing and communications are a never-ending journey. These disciplines—so critical to your organization's purpose and goals—are always changing, which means you must change too.

**Knowing your marketing maturity allows you to plan and budget for what's next.**

mightycitizen.com/gps

# How The Mighty GPS Works

## In short, you answer some questions and we tell you what your answers tell us.

More specifically, we've spent years brainstorming, crafting, testing, re-testing, and refining this tool. The survey questions are spread across six categories. When combined, these categories account for every element of organizational communication and marketing. See our methodology.

## The key categories that comprise The Mighty GPS are:

- ✓ Research & Analytics
- ✓ Branding & Strategy
- ✓ Marketing & SEO
- ✓ UX Design & Content
- ✓ Technology
- ✓ Team Dynamics

Each category has a max score, assigned by an ever-evolving algorithm. With all six category scores combined, a final "score" and "stage" are returned in the form of a custom report that's delivered immediately. In other words, The Mighty GPS can quickly tell any organization two key things: (1) where they currently stand on their marketing maturity journey (2) how they can move to the next stage.

With these two insights—especially in the form of simple, concrete numbers and stages—anyone can make the case for investing in greater, savvier, more sophisticated communication projects. The Mighty GPS won't tell you which projects should take priority; only one-on-one interaction can determine that.

CRAWLING    WALKING    RUNNING    SOARING

Research & Analytics

Branding & Strategy

Marketing & SEO

UX Design & Content

Technology

Team Dynamics

**The Mighty GPS will illustrate, in stark and specific ways, where your marketing is strong and where unmined opportunities await you.**

Your scores in each category will be graphed so you can see your greatest areas of opportunity at a glance:

### Your Score for Each Category

Scores by Discipline
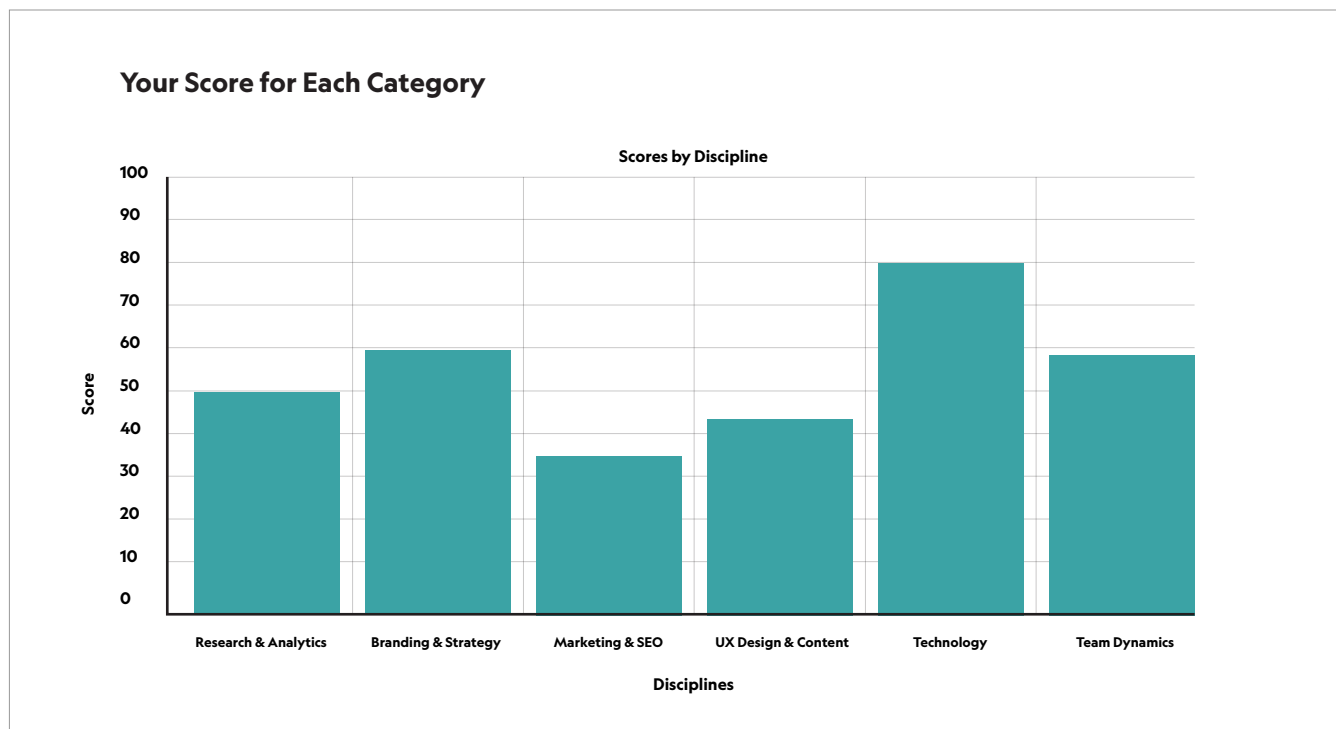


For each category, you'll receive a score and a stage, along with next steps to increase your maturity:

### Research & Analytics: 51%

**STAGE: WALKING**

Your organization has done the basics and needs to dive a bit deeper into audience understanding. You likely have strong fundamentals on which to build exceptional new results.

**Probable next steps include:**

- Undergo some audience research [Article]
- Set up destination goals in Google Analytics [Article]
- Use surveys to improve your communications [How-To Guide]
- Understand audience personas [Podcast]
- Create user journeys for your audiences [Article]
- See how we helped one organziation conduct key research [Case Study]

# The Six Categories of Marketing Maturity

**The questions that constitute The Mighty GPS cover the six categories of organizational communications.**

## 1. Research & Analytics

It all starts with research, always. Research kills opinions. It provides clear, unbiased data on which to base decisions.

Before any organization can successfully communicate a message to the world—or launch a product or run a successful campaign or attract more students or get more sign-ups, or so on—it must first establish what it knows. The organization must remove as much bias as possible, then confirm that its ideas are right or wrong (or somewhere in between).

Research takes many forms. But for mission-focused organizations, four research tactics reign supreme: surveys, one-on-one interviews, market analysis, and focus groups. Each has its advantages and, when conducted wisely, can inspire new ideas (and derail bad ones). We see it all the time.

Analytics, meanwhile, offer an organization the chance to look into the past, to turn numbers into insights. But many organizations either don't have Google Analytics set up properly or at all, and as such, they have no (or incomplete) data to guide their future projects.

**In this section of The Mighty GPS, we ask you to evaluate statements such as:**

✔ Our organization conducts audience surveys to inform marketing decisions.

✔ Our organization uses research-based user personas when making marketing decisions.

## 2. Branding & Strategy

Sadly, most mission-focused organizations consider investing in their "brand" a nice-to-do afterthought. Branding seems to strike them as either overrated or low priority.

This perception is understandable, as not-for-profit organizations worry about what their boards, donors, and constituents will think if they suddenly unveil a modern, highly usable, and interactive brand. ("You spent our money on this?")

Meanwhile, certain nonprofits (such as charity:water) and government agencies (such as the state of Maryland) that do push the boundaries of branding and

**In this section of The Mighty GPS, we ask you to evaluate statements such as:**

✔ Our organization uses a messaging platform as a guide to create content.

✔ Our organization uses brand guidelines to set visual standards for our brand.

strategy see great success. The ROI on branding can be enormous, but the new branding—and the strategy that underlies and informs it—has to be top-notch.

The Mighty GPS aims to understand where in the "branding and strategy journey" an organization exists right now, today. Have they established guidelines to be used by everyone touching the brand? Is their brand recognized and admired? Or have they gone down a bad road and found themselves mired and turned around?

## 3. Marketing & SEO

Let's get clear on our terms. People often interchangeably use "marketing" and "communications" (including us!), but there is a subtle difference.

"Communications" refers to everything an organization aims to communicate, whether it's trying to sell something or not. Meanwhile, "marketing" is all of those activities that attempt to make a sale, solicit a donation, get an applicant, etc. As such, all marketing is communications, but not all communications are marketing.

For mission-focused organizations, "marketing" often seems like a dirty word. In the same way, they shy away from concepts like "branding," they see "marketing" as an indulgence, something a tad bit icky that only corporations should do.

We couldn't disagree more. "Marketing" may be even more important to mission-focused organizations because they often don't have a product to sell. Instead, they're selling a mission or an idea or a vision of the future. That's tougher to do than selling a pair of shoes, and therefore requires bigger, better, savvier, more fiercely implemented marketing strategies.

Then there's SEO, or search engine optimization. SEO helps your website get found by people searching for the services you offer.

If an organization—any organization—wants to grow its audience, it must invest in search engine optimization. With billions of bytes of new content going online every day, the competition for eyeballs and users grows exponentially more complex. But with a well-resourced SEO strategy in place, organizations will earn thousands of new users they wouldn't otherwise have.

**In this section of The Mighty GPS, we ask you to evaluate statements such as:**

✔ Our organization has specific, measurable goals for our communication efforts.

✔ Our organization creates content aimed at specific audiences.

## 4. UX Design & Content

UX—or "user experience"—design is a mighty complicated discipline. It goes in a thousand different directions. It evolves rapidly. Defining it can be tricky, but in short, good UX design obsesses on the people who will actually use a product, website, or tool. Seems obvious, but it isn't. Because to have quality UX design, you have to be open-minded, research-focused, and nimble. But make no mistake, it matters, almost as much as anything a mission-focused organization does. Simply put: If your UX design is sub-par, you are losing money and constituents.

Here's an example: You decide you want to donate to a particular nonprofit. You go to their website, hunt for the right "Donate" button, and are then moved onto a donation site that looks totally different than the nonprofit's site. It's long. Some of the fields are labeled oddly and you aren't sure what to type. You click "Submit" after battling through the clunky form, only to have the page time out and lose everything you'd entered so far.

That's bad UX design, obviously. It's common and it leaves your supporters with a bad taste in their mouths.

Just as common is a failure to treat content with the respect it deserves. For not-for-profit organizations, content is sometimes the whole point of the organization's existence. They exist to collect and formulate the best thinking in their industry and then deliver it to the right people in the right ways. Yet content is often considered "the blog" or "our email newsletter." And while those are part of your content, they're a small part. Content is anything your organization creates, full stop. Given that, why don't more organizations approach it with the resources, a strategic mindset, or an infrastructure to support it?

**In this section of The Mighty GPS, we ask you to evaluate statements such as:**

✔ Our organization maintains a content plan/editorial calendar.

✔ Our website(s) support our organization's strategic goals.

## 5. Technology

Where to begin? In short, your technology should make your efforts bigger and better. If they don't do both, they're failing you and you need to make a change.

**Let's get more specific:**

- If you're an association, your association management system, learning management system, and website had better be feature-rich and seamlessly integrated. Otherwise, their limitations become your strategy's limitations.

- If you're a nonprofit, your donation management software should feed everything, instantly, into your contact database. If it doesn't, you won't have the data you need to act wisely in the future.

- If you're a university or college, your technology couldn't be more important. A drought of applicants is coming, and your best chance to combat it is to deploy technology that your ideal students use.

- Finally, there's no good reason that a government agency doesn't have an immaculately refined constituent experience online.

The word "technology" contains multitudes, of course. There are website management systems, social media tools, marketing automation platforms, email service providers, etc. Not to mention security and privacy concerns. We want to understand how well your technology is serving you. We want to identify the opportunities that remain uncovered.

**In this section of The Mighty GPS, we ask you to evaluate statements such as:**

✓ It's easy to publish content to our website using our CMS (content management system).

✓ Our organization obeys data privacy best practices.

## 6. Team Dynamics

It's not enough to acknowledge that you have talented people doing the day-to-day work. That's important, of course, and without great people, you can't produce great results. No amount of technological sophistication can replace, especially when you're selling a mission or vision, the human touch.

So this section of The Mighty GPS isn't asking you to evaluate the skills or attitudes of your internal team. Instead, we want to understand the range of skills they possess and the protocols you've put in place to make the most of those skills. Here, we analyze how well your team is empowered with budget and resources to see strategic projects through to completion.

**In this section of The Mighty GPS, we ask you to evaluate statements such as:**

✓ Departments across our organization are aligned on strategy, messaging, tactics, etc.

✓ Our organization's leaders believe that communication is a critical part of our organization's success.

# The Scoring & Stages of The Mighty GPS

## When you complete The Mighty GPS, two things will happen:

1. You'll instantly see your six category scores and your overall score, which are on a scale of 0 to 100. The higher the score, the more mature your marketing is.

2. We'll email you a link to a detailed report built just for you that (a) places you in one of four maturity "stages" and (b) gives you the next steps to move to the next stage.

## The Four Stages of Marketing Maturity, Explained

The four stages are named: Crawling, Walking, Running, and Soaring. We wanted them to be simple and obvious instead of punny and clever (also advice we regularly give to our clients when we're helping them craft their communications).

**This is important: don't despair if you end up in the Crawling or Walking stages**. In some ways, you may find it an exhilarating confirmation of what you already know and believe about your organization. It also means you have plenty of opportunities to make huge, impactful changes, and you can choose to move first in any number of directions.

Similarly, if you're in the top stage, Soaring, that's not permission to sit back, kick your feet up, and let inertia carry you toward endless success. (But you knew that.) Instead, landing in this stage means it's time to really start experimenting— or "refueling." Soaring is a fun stage because you have the freedom to tweak the dials this way and that and see what happens (without worrying about the bottom falling out).

At Mighty Citizen, we work with organizations at every stage of marketing maturity. There's no hill too steep or iteration too nuanced for us not to jump in and get to work. We think that once you use The Mighty GPS, you'll feel the same way.

# Stage 1: Crawling

If you're in the Crawling stage, you aren't doing much to market your organization, or you don't think what you are doing is working. You may have a few basics in place. Maybe you send an email newsletter once a month, maybe you host an event each year, maybe your website accepts transactions—but that's about it. You have plenty of room for improvement, and at this stage, **any improvement you make could be remarkably powerful.** The fruit is low-hanging, just waiting to be plucked.

**Common Challenges**

- Little or limited marketing budget
- Little or no buy-in from leadership
- Staff doesn't have the knowledge or resources to launch new initiatives
- No concrete goals
- Often more reactive than proactive

Don't let this overwhelm you. Remember, a journey is made one step at a time.

You need to identify the best practices that align with your greatest opportunities and set to work implementing them. Often, this means first making a case internally—i.e., "Here's why we should invest money and human capital into marketing and communications." Each organization is unique, of course, and how difficult this sale is varies. But without buy-in and investment

**WHAT'S NEXT?**
**The Crawling stage is all about the fundamentals. That includes:**

✓ Surveying your audiences

✓ Establishing brand guidelines

✓ Creating a plan and a budget

✓ Setting measurable goals

FIND YOUR MARKETING MATURITY SCORE AND STAGE

# Stage 2: Walking

**The Walking stage means you have strong fundamentals on which to build exceptional new results.** Using a new house as an analogy, being in the Walking stage means you've passed inspection and have hot water. Now it's time to select the flooring, backsplash tiles, and wall art.

Organizations that are Walking are often the most difficult to convince to try something new. You're doing alright. Your numbers are more or less fine. No major competitors are stealing away your users/donors/students/etc. What's the rush, what's the worry?

But, as you know, the worry is inertia. As cliche as it sounds, if you're not getting ahead, especially with modern marketing strategies, you're falling behind. Your "numbers" might be fine now, but "fine" isn't permanent and it isn't inspiring.

## Common Challenges

- Lack of urgency stifles investment
- Decisions are driven by experience and anecdotes, not by research and data
- Old or clunky technologies
- Website user experience is passable but sub-par
- Can be more reactive than proactive

In the Walking stage, there's plenty of room for growth. You need to identify the obvious gaps in your communications strategy—i.e., channels, technologies, and/or research that you're lacking—and fill them. Often, we find that this means using Google Analytics and a savvy SEO strategy for the first time—although it can also mean a new website design, developing a video strategy, or building internal analysis of your audiences.

**FIND YOUR MARKETING MATURITY SCORE AND STAGE**

**WHAT'S NEXT?**
**In the Walking stage, it's all about establishing full competence. Next steps include:**

✓ Optimizing your Google Analytics for better data at your fingertips

✓ Honing your messaging

✓ Prioritizing your website's UX

✓ Implementing more advanced technology

# Stage 3: Running

**In the Running stage, you're ahead of the competition. And there's still plenty of room to grow.** You're doing some of the more sophisticated things well—you use data to drive your decision-making, your website is firing on all cylinders, and your technology is in a good spot.

But, within each of those efforts lies a lot of untapped potential. For example, you run a Google Analytics report each month to share with your coworkers, but maybe you don't yet have Google Tag Manager installed to craft better metrics. Or, your website might meet some (but not all) accessibility standards.

Running organizations have seen the value of high-quality marketing, and can clearly connect those efforts to larger organizational goals. And yet, financial, time, or knowledge limitations are preventing you from taking flight.

## Common Challenges

- Internal knowledge has hit its limits, including an inability to stay on top of the very latest thinking and tools available

- What's worked so far isn't challenged or changed because ... It's worked so far

- SEO, Google Analytics, and other, broader research efforts are often superficial

- Technologies are good but contain plenty of unused features

- Current projects and strategies are built on thinking that is more than 2-3 years old

The first step to move from Running to Soaring is to look deeply into your marketing and communications ecosystem. Where do opportunities exist to go deeper, increase efficiency, and optimize what's already in place?

It'll be clear where the opportunity awaits. Usually, it comes in the form of a massive rethinking of one part of your marketing and communications—e.g., a newly defined audience to target, a new communication platform to explore, a new piece of technology to implement, etc. If what you're doing is, more or less, working, why not be bold? You have the freedom to do exactly that.

**WHAT'S NEXT?**
**The Running stage is focused on optimization. Next steps include:**

- ✓ Diving deeper into audience research

- ✓ Auditing your content and UX

- ✓ Testing, testing, and more testing

- ✓ Assessing your data security and privacy practices

**FIND YOUR MARKETING MATURITY SCORE AND STAGE**

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# Stage 4: Soaring

**This is where it gets really good.** For starters, in the Soaring stage, you can have peace of mind knowing that you're mostly crushing your marketing objectives. You're hitting your strategic goals, growing your fanbase, and doing what marketing aims to do: win the day.

So, the question becomes: How many precedents do you want to set? As a Soaring organization, you're poised to own the messaging around your mission and shape a larger conversation.

## Common Challenges

- Budget: Big ideas often, but not always, demand big money

- Content governance isn't in place, which means that as you create more content, you run the risk of it going off-brand and not meeting your standards

- Sharing the nuances of your communication projects with leadership (and other departments) isn't easy to do because … well, they're nuanced!

- You want to scale your size and quality up 10x across your organization but aren't sure how to make such an enormous leap

When you're Soaring, your focus turns to experimentation and influence. You'll be scouring your organization for opportunities to reach new levels of success—and sharing what you've learned with your peers inside and outside your organization.

Additionally, now's the time to revisit some of your fundamental thinking about why your organization exists. After all, your high-level execution of a marketing strategy has produced undeniable results, and as such, it's an ideal time to consider a wild expansion of your vision. "If we can accomplish all this, why not accomplish a whole lot more?" You need to parse the finer points, split more hairs, and challenge yourself to do something industry-defining and non-ignorable.

**FIND YOUR MARKETING MATURITY SCORE AND STAGE**

**WHAT'S NEXT?**
**The Soaring stage is all about experimenting and influencing. Some next steps include:**

✓ Testing, testing, and more testing

✓ Implementing content governance

✓ Iterating on new technologies and their features

✓ Coaching your team

# The Stages of Marketing Maturity

Marketing maturity is a spectrum. Regardless of your organization's size, budget, or resources, you exist somewhere on this spectrum. Our "map" below may give you a good sense of which stage you're currently living in on your marketing maturity journey. The next steps highlight how you can begin to move forward onto the next stage.

| | ⦿ Crawling | ⦿ Walking | ⦿ Running | ⦿ Soaring |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **FOCUS AREA** | Learning the Fundamentals | Establishing Full Competence | Optimizing Infrastructure | Experimenting and Influencing |
| **COMMON CHALLENGES** | → Little or limited marketing budget<br>→ Little or no leadership buy-in<br>→ Staff doesn't have resources to launch new initiatives<br>→ No concrete goals<br>→ Often reactive vs. proactive | → Lack of urgency stifles investment<br>→ Decisions driven by experience and anecdote, not by research and data<br>→ Old or clunky technologies<br>→ Website user experience is passable but sub-par<br>→ Can be reactive vs. proactive | → Internal knowledge has hit its limits<br>→ No real impetus to change or adapt what's worked so far<br>→ Superficial research efforts<br>→ Technologies contain unused features<br>→ Strategies built on thinking that is more than 2-3 years old | → Big ideas demand big upfront money<br>→ Content governance isn't in place<br>→ Hard to share project nuances with leadership<br>→ Scalability across entire organization |
| **WHAT'S NEXT?** | → Surveying your audiences<br>→ Establishing brand guidelines<br>→ Creating a plan and a budget<br>→ Setting measurable goals | → Optimizing your Google Analytics<br>→ Honing your messaging<br>→ Prioritizing your website's UX<br>→ Implementing more advanced technology | → Diving deeper into audience research<br>→ Auditing your content and UX<br>→ Testing, testing, and more testing<br>→ Assessing your data security and privacy practices | → Testing, testing, and more testing<br>→ Implementing content governance<br>→ Iterating on new technologies and their features<br>→ Coaching your team<br>→ Seeking new ideas from outside partners |

# What is Your Organization's Marketing Maturity?

**Instinctively, you probably know the answer.**

You know your organization, have witnessed its strengths and weaknesses, and maybe you've watched other organizations like yours do things you're jealous of. But having a gut feeling for your marketing maturity isn't enough, of course; you have to dig into the details.

That's where The Mighty GPS can be of service. We've spent 20+ years working with mission-driven organizations, and in that time we've seen it all (or so we think). The Mighty GPS gathers our shared experiences and insights into hundreds of organizations of all types and sizes and condenses them into something concrete and digestible. We want The Mighty GPS to offer you a clear, easy-to-tackle map toward more supporters, more engagement, more popularity, more money, more students and members and donors and fans. So we'll continue to refine it, add to it, test its seaworthiness. And over time, as we collect scores from hundreds of organizations, we'll be able to offer you benchmarking related to your industry and budget. The Mighty GPS will continue to evolve and become even more useful.

**GO GET YOUR SCORE: MIGHTYCITIZEN.COM/GPS**

# How to Use The Mighty GPS

If you've read this far, we hope it's obvious how we think you should be using The Mighty GPS. We designed it, developed it, and continue to enhance it with one simple goal in mind: Make it easily usable by anyone who wants to increase their marketing effectiveness to achieve, and even surpass, their organizational goals.

**In short, we think your Mighty GPS score and report should be used to:**

## 1. Spark Conversations

At your next marketing/communications team meeting, have members of your team take the report individually. Talk about your scores and the report. Do you agree with parts, disagree with other parts? Do you think your score is accurate? Where are you in alignment? Where are you not? Are there major gaps in your communications effort that, if money and time weren't an issue, you'd love to tackle? Ask questions. Debate it.

## 2. Build Your Case Internally

The Mighty GPS can't possibly make the case for you, but we hope it serves as a digestible and compelling piece of evidence in your case—a case for spending money to make money, for focusing on the overlooked fundamentals, for acknowledging that smart and well-funded marketing teams can do incredible things (while tiny, underfunded teams can't possibly do everything they're asked to do).

## 3. Prioritize

Regardless of your current position on The Mighty GPS "map," you know you can do some things better, drop some things that aren't working, and make your work as a professional communicator more interesting. We hope you look at your custom next steps and say, "Yes, we should do that next. The investment is moderate but the impact could be huge." Your Mighty GPS results should help you plan ahead, not only regarding "what's next" but perhaps "who's next" as well.

## 4. Check Back

The Mighty GPS should be an ongoing resource for your organization as you make changes today, a year from now, or five years from now. You can revisit The Mighty GPS multiple times to see how your marketing maturity has evolved and share these results with the people who hold the purse strings.

## 5. Get Our Expert Advice

We know how mission-driven organizations—whether university, nonprofit, association, or public agency—can best meet their goals. We know how to rebrand for success, design a website for impact, craft campaign plans that are invincible, and sell missions instead of sneakers. That's all we do, every day.

If you have challenges related to your organization's ability to sell itself to the world, send us a quick message. Let's have an authentic phone call where we gain some consensus as to what ails you. If we can work together, fantastic. If we can recommend some resources we know will help, we will.

We specialize in organizations that exist for positive change and not pure profit because we want to be a small part of your success. **Because when you succeed, the world does too.**

# About Mighty Citizen

**The Mighty GPS is designed and managed by Mighty Citizen, a branding, marketing, and digital agency for mission-driven organizations.**

We develop research, strategy, messaging, websites, campaigns, and digital marketing to increase impact and improve the world.

As a result, the questions that constitute The Mighty GPS are built on 20+ years of experience helping mission-driven organizations create positive change. We use The Mighty GPS in our engagements to help clients understand how their current marketing efforts support or limit their success. We show them where they are, where they want to go, and how to get there.

**Get in Touch**

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