Introduction

Brand inventory
A brand inventory is just one piece of a brand audit, which allows a brand to examine its sources of brand equity. A brand inventory provides a thorough profile of the current marketing and branding efforts of a company’s goods or services. Conducting a brand inventory consists of profiling all of these elements and compiling it into one comprehensive document (Keller, 2008). This brand inventory is for the non-profit organization, charity: water.

charity: water
Charity: water is a non-profit organization founded in 2006 by Scott Harrison, a club promoter based in New York City. This organization’s mission is to help people in developing nations receive clean drinking water. In addition, charity: water provides education on sanitation and hygiene in the villages that receive wells. Charity: water operates on a 100% giving model, meaning that 100% of donations go towards water projects. This model allows donors to be confident that their donations are going directly to the cause. The organization’s operating costs are funded by in-kind donations from companies and private contributors.
**Names**

**charity: water**

The name charity: water represents the entire brand. It clearly communicates exactly what this organization is – a charity that focuses on water. Their name is used on all marketing materials, including their web presence and merchandise. The name sets the tone for the brand, which also takes a straightforward position and clearly communicates to their audience about the cause and how they can be a part of providing clean water to millions of people.

**mycharity: water**

The name mycharity: water represents a section on the charitywater.org website that allows individuals to start fundraising campaigns. The campaigns need to raise a minimum of $5,000 to build one clean water well.

**charity: waterlog**

The name charity: waterlog represents the charity: water blog. A blog is similar to an online journal written for others to read. The charity: waterlog is updated at least weekly with information about events, stories about wells, and information on fundraising campaigns.

**Logos**

**charity: water**

The charity: water logo could be critiqued for not being creative, however the logo aligns with one of the key attributes of the brand: transparency. The charity: water logo uses only text. The word “charity” is followed by a colon, which is used to signify that a descriptor or explanation will follow, which is the word “water”. The logo is usually either white text on a black or dark grey background or black text on a white background. These simple colors - black and white - also symbolize transparency in U.S. culture.

**mycharity: water**

The mycharity: water logo is based on the charity: water logo, with the addition of the word my in blue italics. The blue is used to symbolize water, and the italics are used to add emphasis the personalized aspect of this section and function of the charity: water website. It is primarily used on the Internet for the purposes of individuals raising money for charity: water.
Symbols

The Jerry Can

The Jerry Can is the most recognized symbol used by charity: water. Jerry Cans are used by women and children in most developing nations to collect water and carry it home to their families. These containers hold 5 gallons of water and weigh 40 pounds when full. Women and children spend much of their time walking to collect water that is dirty and disease-ridden, but it is the only water available to them. Because they have to walk for water, they are unable to go to school or work. When charity: water goes into a community and builds a well, it allows these families to drink clean water that is not located a great distance from their home. Women can work, and children can go to school. Charity: water uses the Jerry Can to symbolize the way of life in these developing nations and to emphasize that water is scarce. The Jerry Can is used in many of their marketing materials, including online ads and social media. These containers are also physically used at events or promotions to raise awareness and collect donation.

100% Water Drop

Charity: water uses the 100% water drop to represent their donation model – 100% of public donations are used to fund water projects in developing nations. This symbol is primarily used on their website or in materials that discuss the charity: water donation model. The purpose of this symbol is to give a visual representation of the model and remind donors that all their money goes to the people who need it, and not to the costs associated with operating the non-profit.

Arrows

Charity: water uses arrows on their website, both to direct viewers to different pieces of information and to call viewers to action, pointing them to information on the website on how to get involved. While this symbol is not as obvious as the Jerry Can, it should be mentioned, as a variety of types of arrows are repeated throughout their website. These arrows can easily go unnoticed, but add value by helping to keep viewers on the website longer and encouraging viewers to give or get involved with charity: water.
Characters/ Figures

Scott Harrison

Scott Harrison is the founder of charity: water, and serves as the president of this non-profit. Harrison is the most notable and public figure representing charity: water. His compelling story of how and why he started this non-profit has driven many to action and set the tone for the charity: water brand. Harrison’s first experience working in a non-profit was as a photojournalist for Mercy Ships. His experience telling the stories of others was carried over into charity: water, with an emphasis on telling the stories of the people they serve in developing nations. In addition to serving as the president of charity: water, Harrison is also the brand’s primary public speaker, traveling to conferences and gatherings to raise awareness of the water crisis in most of the world and enlist the support of donors.

Images

Jerry Can with water image

The Jerry Can with water written through it is one of the primary images used by charity: water. This image has been used in ads on the Internet as well as bus ads and print ads donated to charity: water. This image combines the symbolism of the Jerry Can and connects it to the cause, by inserting the word “water”, in the charity: water colors, through the center of the can. The ad containing this image is available as a download on the charity: water website.

Dirty water baby bottle image

The image of the baby bottle with dirty water in it was created by an intern at charity: water to help their audience visualize what it would be like to give dirty water to a child. This image has been used in advertising campaigns, both online and on bus ads. This image a powerful way to connect the need for clean water with a way to provide it through charity: water.
The image of a child smiling while tasting clean water is used by charity: water on their website and in their videos as well as part of their Facebook profile image. This image captures the joy of receiving clean water and helps the viewer realize the affect their donation can have on a life.

The image of these women trying to clean dirty water by filtering it through their clothes is used on charity: water’s website as well as in many of their videos. This image bring to life the dire need for clean water in developing nations. It also shows part of a Jerry Can, which reiterates that symbol in the viewer’s mind.

The image of diseases in dirty water, by Esther Havens, illustrates the wide variety of illness caused by unsafe drinking water. It is used on the charity: water website as well as in their videos to educate their audience on the dangers of dirty water. This image emphasizes the importance of access to and consuming clean, disease-free drinking water.
Packaging

Gift Card*

Charity: water gift cards are sold on the store section of their website. While called gift cards, these gifts are actually donations that can be made in someone’s name. The packaging is representative of the charity: water brand, with a simple design, featuring their logo in white on a black background.
Cost: $40 and up

The Water Advocate Gift Package*

Consistent with the gift card, the Water Advocate Gift Package, also features a black background and is sold on the store section of the charity: water website. The contents have a similar design with mainly black merchandise with the white charity: water logo.
Cost: $80

Bracelet*

The bracelet sold in the little black box is also consistent with the other products sold on the store section of their website. The bracelet packaging also consists of a black box, and the bracelet displays the charity: water logo on a black background.
Cost: $20

Slogan

Mission Statement

The mission statement is used primarily on the charity: water website to concisely explain the organization’s cause.

Charity: water primarily uses statistics in their advertisements, so no other slogans are noted for this brand.
Web Presence

In Kevin Keller’s description of a brand inventory, a brand’s web presence is not mentioned (2008). In today’s marketplace, businesses must have a website where consumers can learn about their products, compare prices and learn about the company itself (Schifferes, 2006). For a non-profit, a website is just as important, as is a presence in social media. In early 2010 when a devastating earthquake hit Haiti, people began posting on Twitter, a micro-blogging social media platform, to text the word “Haiti” to donate $10 to the American Red Cross. Within 48 hours, $3 million was raised. While these results are not typical, it illustrates how social media has become a powerful force for non-profits to raise awareness, solicit donations, and discover people who are loyal to their cause. Using social media costs nothing but time. Technology to further aid non-profits online is still developing (Manjoo, 2010). For these reasons, it is important to include web presence in a brand inventory for any brand.

The following is a catalog of the charity: water web presence.

Website

The charity: water website is located at www.charitywater.org. The website features their logo and a Jerry Can at the top of the page, along with a slideshow of images updated periodically to promote upcoming events, fund raisers, and images with statistics on the water crisis. The website’s navigation at the top can take a viewer to any part of this extensive site. Links to the charity’s blog, Facebook, Twitter, and mycharitywater.org are all prominent features on the site.

Blog

The charity: water blog, called the charity: water log is linked from almost all pages on the website. The blog, located at www.charitywater.org/blog, is updated at least weekly and features stories about water projects around the world, fund raising events, fund raising campaigns through mycharitywater.org, happenings around the charity: water office, and stories about partnerships with other businesses and non-profits. The posts are all categorized by stories, updates and meet the staff. The blog’s purpose it to keep the audience involved and checking back regularly to see what charity: water is up to. It is a good way to keep donors thinking about the brand.
The charity: water Facebook page is located at www.facebook.com/charitywater. Charity: water posts almost daily on the social media site, where users can “like” the charity: water page as well as comment on the posts, photos and view charity: water videos. Over 78,000 people “like” this page, which means that charity: water’s posts will show up in the users’ news feed, helping the brand stay top-of-mind. Their Facebook page features several tabs that include information on the non-profit, photos, videos, and other Facebook applications.

Also on the charity: water Facebook page is a tab for Ustream, an application that allows users to stream live video over Facebook. Ustream also captures the video so people who miss the live event can go back and watch what happened. Charity: water has used Ustream in the past to broadcast live well drilling in remote parts of the world, allowing viewers to see the process and the reaction when the drillers hit water and install a well.

The charity: water Twitter page is located at www.twitter.com/charitywater. Charity: water uses Twitter, a micro-blogging social media platform, to send out short updates, post a photo of the day, send links to blog posts, and retweet posts from others to all of their followers. Currently, charity: water has over 1.3 million followers on Twitter.
Merchandise

For most brands, their products and merchandise are what they are selling - the cornerstone of their brand. For non-profit organizations, merchandise is another opportunity to raise money for their cause, raise awareness among the public, and reinforce the image and message of the brand. For that reason, it is important to inventory the merchandise non-profit brands sell, noting the percentage of the merchandise that benefits the non-profit and how the merchandise incorporates the brand. The following is the merchandise available on the charity: water website.

Wrist bands

Description – Five wrist bands in black with the charity: water logo in white.
Percentage of proceeds – 100%, for water project
Price – $25

Blue Planet Run book

Description – A coffee table book on water that features photographs by top photojournalists as well as a profile on charity: water.
Percentage of proceeds – unknown, for operating costs
Price – $60

Water Bottle

Description – BPA-free, unbreakable stainless steel water bottle donated by Thermos. The exterior of the bottle features water facts as well as the charity: water logo. Keeps contents cold for up to 20 hours. Features a hygienic push-button lid with straw.
Percentage of proceeds – 100%, for water projects
Price – $40
charity: water t-shirt, black

Description – A black t-shirt with either the word “charity” or “water” on the front of the shirt. Available in women’s sizes small to extra large, and men’s sizes small to extra-extra large.
Percentage of proceeds – unknown, for operating costs
Price – $25

charity: water t-shirt for Saks Fifth Avenue

Description – A designer t-shirt created by Saks Fifth Avenue as part of a promotion to raise funds for charity: water. Features the charity: water logo. Available in men’s and women’s sizes small to extra large.
Percentage of proceeds – unknown, for operating costs
Price – $25

charity: water hoodie

Description – A heather grey hoodie made by Alternative Apparel/Alternative Earth. All hoodies have the word “water” on the upper left side with a kangaroo pocket in front. Available in unisex sizes extra small to extra large.
Percentage of proceeds – unknown, for operating costs
Price – $40
Responsibility

Non-profit organizations have a responsibility to their donors to do what they say they are going to do. While businesses under a traditional business model also bear a responsibility to their consumers, non-profit organizations bear a greater weight in that they do not provide any product or service back to their donors. For that reason, it is important to inventory the efforts the non-profit brand has taken to garner trust from their donors and prove that they are a responsible organization that will not misuse donations.

Below is how charity: water demonstrates they are a responsible non-profit organization.

The 100% Model

The 100% model description and symbol are used on the charity: water website and in videos to simply explain how they are able to contribute 100% of public donations to water projects around the world.

Adding it up

The adding it up description on the charity: water website educates donors on the return on their investment - every $1 invested yields an average $12 in returns.

Your village gets a well

The diagram to the left, used on the charity: water website, explains the ideal cycle that occurs when a village gets a well. By walking the viewer through this cycle, with icons and simple explanations, the viewer gains a greater understanding of the transformative power of a clean water source and why each donation matters.

Countries where charity: water has wells

This map denotes countries in blue where charity: water has completed water projects, providing clean drinking water for over a million of people. This map is located on the charity: water website.
3,196 Projects

The projects diagram to the left illustrates the number of projects and where they are located, by clinic/hospital, school, or community. The date next to the total lets the viewer know that this diagram is updated regularly on the charity: water website.

3,196 Projects. All Of 11.01.2010

In four years, charity: water has raised more than $20 million and funded 3,196 water projects. View them here by country, local partner and project type.

Proving It: Google Maps

The proving it section on the charity: water website, allows viewers to see on a Google map, where charity: water has completed or is in the process of working on a water project. The top image displays a link to enter the GPS coordinates or to select a country that charity: water has worked in. The bottom image is an example of the map that appears when a country is selected. This map is for Liberia. The black wells represent completed water projects and the yellow Jerry cans represent that charity: water operates in that country.

Proving it: Google Maps.

charity: water proves every project built using photos, video and GPS coordinates in Google Maps. See completed water projects and the communities they serve.

Striving for more

The striving for more section on the charity: water website demonstrates that charity: water wants to keep providing more and more information about where donors’ money goes, so they can feel confident about giving.

Where the money goes. (coming soon...)

If you’d like a more in-depth look at where the money goes after donations are made to charity: water, we’re working hard to break it down by quarter, country and partner. Coming in the next few weeks.
Characteristics of the brand

Transparency
When Scott Harrison founded charity: water in 2006, one of the key things he wanted for the non-profit was to do things differently - to reinvent charity. He wanted to do that by ensuring that 100% of public donations went to fund water project, and making sure the public knew that. That’s why transparency is a key characteristic of the charity: water brand. They go to great lengths to communicate where funds are going, and they do that in several ways. First, charity: water attaches dollar amounts to tangible results. That means they educate donors that a well costs $5,000 to dig, and $20 can provide one person with clean water for 20 years. When they let the public know how much things cost, it makes them appear trustworthy and makes projects that can be daunting seem achievable. Second, charity: water provides a map of where the water projects go using Google maps and GPS technology. Third, they tell the stories of the people they help, allowing the donors and other to see the faces of the people that charity: water serves. And last, they give the public access. Anyone can go to the charity: water website and download their annual report each year, which details the number of projects they completed, the amount of money they’ve raised for water projects, how they fund their operating costs, and much more. In addition, charity: water provides an audit report each year, conducted by a third party auditor. This report is also available for download on their website and details all donations and expenditures for the year.

Story telling
Scott Harrison learned the value of story telling as a photojournalist for Mercy Ships. That is a trait that he carried into charity: water, capturing images and video along with the stories of the people they provide clean water for, the people that work for charity: water, and the people that raise funds for charity: water. Their ability to tell these stories is a powerful tool they use to educate people on how clean water transforms parts of the world. They also use stories to inspire people to be a part of what charity: water is doing, and demonstrate that it does not have to be hard to give $20 or start a fund raising campaign.

Design

Visual
Good visual design is another key characteristic of charity: water, and part of what Harrison envisioned when he set out to reinvent charity. Most non-profits are run on small budgets, and design often is not a priority, but for charity: water it is vital to the way they communicate with their audience and brand their non-profit.

Functional
In addition to good visual design, charity: water uses functional design in the field to build efficient wells, to create sand filters to clean water, to protect fresh water springs, and to catch rainwater. Charity: water uses functional design to provide the best solution for each situation, which results in clean drinking water.
Education

Educating Donors
Charity: water does not subscribe to any one slogan or tagline for their brand, because most of their advertising is about education. They show statistics, paired with an image that tells a compelling story. Many people are unaware of the water crisis in developing parts of the world, and charity: water tries to educate people by giving them facts, and asking for their help.

Educating villages
In addition to providing clean water, charity: water extends its efforts to provide hygiene and sanitation education to the villages and areas where they work. Due to lack of education many people do not understand how diseases or spread and how they can be prevented. Sanitation education teaches them how making small changes, like washing dishes, can lead to better health.

Pricing/ Donations

Individual donations
Donors can choose to give in different ways, and have a variety of options through charity: water. They can give a one-time donations in the recommended amount of $20, or any other amount they choose to donate. Donors also have the option of setting up monthly payments to charity: water through PayPal.

Campaigns through mycharity: water
Individuals or groups of people can start fund raising campaigns through mycharity: water. Campaigns can last up to three months, and must set a minimum goal to raise $5,000, which will build one well. Currently, campaigns through mycharity: water have raised almost $5 million.

Corporate Sponsorship
Charity: water has also partnered with several corporate sponsors to raise money in creative ways. These partnerships have ranged from sponsoring events, creating unique charity: water merchandise to sell, holding auctions, hosting exhibits, etc.

Merchandise
Charity: water also hosts an online store where people can purchase items including bracelets, water bottles, t-shirts, hoodies, etc. The proceeds from merchandise sales either go to support water projects or operating costs of the non-profit, as specified in each item’s description.

Communication

The Press
Charity: water has been featured on national and local news programs and channels, including ABC, CNN, CBS, and Fox News, as well as in national and local printed press.
Blog - charity: waterlog
The charity: water blog, is a key component of their regular communication with their audience. The blog, updated at least once a week, provides a regular update on newly finished water projects, updates from the field, happenings around the charity: water office, updated on campaigns running through mycharity: water, and more. Their regular blog posts allow the viewers to see that charity: water is actively pursuing their goal of providing clean water for developing countries.

Social Media
Charity: water also uses social media to stay in front of their audience on a regular basis. With over 1 million followers on Twitter and over 78,000 “likes” on Facebook, social media has given charity: water a platform to communicate with their audience on a daily basis. Social media also provides the audience with a platform to talk back to charity: water, which starts conversations and gets individuals more involved as they learn more about this organization and the cause.

Competition
Direct – other water-related charities
Charity: water has taken a different approach to other water-related charities, and partnered with several of them to work together to provide clean water. Charity: water partners are denoted below with an *.

Water.org
Water.org has a similar goal as charity: water, in that they strive to provide clean, safe drinking water for everyone. They work with locals to decide the best approach to obtaining clean water for the area. Water.org uses their logo and blue hues to brand their non-profit on marketing materials, like YouTube videos and in social media, as well as on their merchandise. Water.org relies heavily on celebrity endorsement to raise awareness for their brand as well as word of mouth. Learn more about this organization at www.water.org.

Water for People*
Water for People is a non-profit organization, with a mission to help every person in the world have access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene. They work with other partners and organization, like charity: water, to accomplish this goal. Their primary branding consists of a colorful logo and the tagline, “the current of change”. Marketing efforts are mainly tied to the Internet through social media and their newsletter. Water for People also has their own social networking site, called TAP Portal, where they engage individuals and groups in the conversation about water. Learn more about Water for People at www.waterforpeople.org.

Global Water
Global Water is a non-profit organization that focuses on providing safe water, sanitation facilities, and hygiene-related facilities for rural areas in developing countries. Global Water is an older brand that is need of an update, as well as marketing. They do not have a presence in social media, and they need up update their website. Learn more about Global Water at www.globalwater.org.
Indirect – top three U.S. charities in 2010
The following are considered the top U.S. charities for this year (Roberts, 2010). While none of these organizations focus on providing clean water, charity: water competes with them for donations from donors who may not subscribe to one particular cause over another.

YMCA of USA
The YMCA of USA is a notable charity, founded in 1844 and brought to the U.S. in 1851. The YMCA’s mission is to promote community through nurturing the potential of kids, promoting healthy living and fostering a sense of social responsibility. The “Y” as it is often referred to, is an easily recognized brand, with a distinction Y logo, and locations in most cities and towns across the U.S. Because of their focus on community, most marketing efforts are handled on a local level, although the brand guidelines are managed at the national level. The YMCA has a presence in social media, with a national level Facebook page and local chapter Twitter profiles. Their website is also robust, informative, well-branded and easy to navigate. Learn more about YMCA of USA at www.ymca.net.

Catholic Charities, USA
Catholic Charities, USA is a non-profit organization connected with the Catholic church. This organization’s goal is to advocate for people in need and social justice through a variety of charitable programs. Catholic Charities, USA is branded with a logo in the shape of a church, utilizing blue and green colors. This theme is carried throughout their materials. This non-profit relies heavily on Catholic communication, like newsletters and publications, to market the brand to their audience. This organization does not have a presence in social media, although they have an extensive website. Learn more about Catholic Charities, USA at www.catholiccharitiesusa.org.

United Way
The United Way is a non-profit founded in 1887 in Denver, Colorado. Its mission is to improve lives and advance the common good by activating communities. United Way has consistent branding, which utilizes their blue and orange logo with a hand holding person, with a rainbow over the person. In addition, the United Way has a lot of support from corporate sponsors, including the national football league, and celebrity endorsements, allowing them to produce professional ad campaigns and videos, including their most recent campaign, Live United. United Way has one of the most comprehensive branding and marketing approaches of charitable organizations in the U.S., with extensive national and local use of social media on both Facebook and Twitter. In addition, their website is easy to navigate, engaging and informative. Learn more about United Way at www.liveunited.org.
After examining and collecting all of the items and attributes that comprise the charity: water brand, as well as assessing their direct and indirect competition, it is my opinion that this brand does an excellent job communicating their cause and soliciting donations in a consistent, meaningful way. However, I do believe that there are opportunities for them to improve upon their brand, and utilize their sponsorships and partners to reach a larger audience.

First, many of their corporate-sponsored events are location-specific, meaning a donor has to be at the location in order to participate. With their advanced use of technology and social media, charity: water has the opportunity to get more people involved with the event by providing online participation either through streamed video or other means. An online event component would allow more people to be a part and expand the event outside of one physical location.

Another way charity: water could reach a larger audience is through their celebrity endorsements. Celebrities like Hugh Jackman, Will Smith, and Alyssa Milano have all endorsed charity: water and worked with the organization to fund water projects. However, these endorsements often do not receive the amount of publicity they could garner from news agencies and television shows. Charity: water needs to work with these organizations and celebrities to highlight these campaigns on talk shows, like the Today Show, The View, and late night television shows, and highlight the campaigns on highly visited celebrity and talk websites, like People.com and Eonline.com. When celebrities endorse a charity, it automatically garners support from their fans. More publicity surrounding these partnerships could increase awareness and lead to more donations for charity: water.

Overall, charity: water has done a remarkable job launching and branding this charity while helping over a million people gain access to clean drinking water in just four years. They have managed their brand equity well, and are on the right track to have a brand that will experience long-term success.
Notes: all information about charity: water used in this brand inventory was from the charity: water website, www.charitywater.org, as was current as of November 26, 2010.


