

**STUONIMVS
VICTORY**

BRANDING
& DESIGN

OPALGA+

MULTI-ORG FRAMEWORK NAMING

MAY 15, 2024

Naming can be difficult.

It can be a complex process, or inspiration can strike like a bolt of lightning. Regardless of the inspiration mode, a good name resonates. It can be unexpected, inspiring or obvious, but in the end it fits on a rational level and carries a positive charge on an emotional level.

Following is an exploration of directions to rename OPALGA+. We've explored options that fit within rational, strategic frameworks, while also seeking to capture a directional change that builds on OPALGA+'s success and mode of operation, to improve the future, not simply change it.

Each potential name has undergone initial vetting, looking at whether the name is currently in “nearby” use (similar fields) and what availability there is for the direct domain. There is always the potential for an alternative domain that make sense.

Keeping an open mind about change, and reflecting on the organization's larger goals will help maintain objectivity.

To a large extent, we're solving a puzzle now, to meet larger needs in the future.

Current Name

Oak Park Area : on one hand helpful to center the org regionally, but simultaneously problematic as it comes with perceptive baggage in terms of demographics and inclusion

Association : while not inherently wrong or in any way offensive, it doesn't seem to capture what the organization is all about now

opalga+

Lesbian / Gay : provided clarity on membership at one point, however, limited or outdated at this point in time, and possibly more so in the future

Plus : can be seen problematically as a catch-all diminishing the various groups it represents, though there is some amount of cultural equity in this element

Current Perspectives

Looking back on the input from this Board, some consistent input surfaced that supports this general breadth of needs to address via a new name.

My biggest issue with the name is the LG part. I do not think it is inclusive of all identities.

Needs to be a name that lasts into the future, not needing to change for either geographical area or populations that it encompasses.

I am on the Board and I am confused about how to pronounce the name correctly...

I worry it does not clearly identify who we are or why we exist as an organization... [It] is stuffy and lacks the vibrancy of a social organization.

...it's not perfect but it is well known in town and that stands for something.

Does the Oak Park (and surrounding area) community understand what it means, do those that fall in the "+" feel represented by the name?

I don't live in Oak Park. It is the logical center of the group but it was the first thing that made me worry about how open it was to non-Oak Park.

"lesbian and gay" no longer represents the entire LGBTQ+ community.

We are hoping people feel included in the "+" and that is just not good enough.

Driving Factors

The needs we are solving for can be broken down to a handful of specific categories. Each carry their own complexity, and while a single name won't necessarily address all of these, these name dimensions are part of how a given name can be evaluated, with priority given to the need seen as most acute.

Geography

Trajectory of Labels

Self Identification

Inclusivity

Education & Involvement

Geography

Being a social organization there is a consideration of who we serve, or a reality on the distance people will travel in order to associate with each other. How can we fill in for losing the "Oak Park Area" nomenclature? Are there common labels to this area that we can pick up on, or is there a term to adopt?

It's great that there's a way for LGBTQ+ folks who may feel more isolated outside of the city to meet up and engage in positive activities for the community.

Continue offering new events and not the same historic ones. Offer restaurant outings outside of Oak Park and at more diverse restaurants and some less expensive.

I think that OPALGA+ provides a great community within the Oak Park Area.

Trajectory of Labels

Do we believe the world is more likely to add identifiers, or to reduce identified / included groups? How can we address this potential expansion that is currently part of the name problem we are solving? Does a label do more to include by definition, or does it provide a parameter that excludes?

More women, trans, non-binary, younger adults, and poc. More advocacy.

Needs to evolve from a "gay" organization to be a more inclusive group.

I have found it hard to connect with members - I think because of age gaps and also because I haven't seen other members share my orientation. I've had to explain it to a few people, which isn't something I expected in a large group.

Self Identification

This is probably the most difficult to solve for: How do we hang out a banner to the world to signal who we are here for, without using dated terms? And, does this really need to be part of our name, or are there other ways to present this information?

Said yet another way: How do we get people to say "Yes, that organization is for me. Those are my people."?

... the group seemed very homogeneous... Sometimes this can be compensated for by outreach, explicit inclusivity, representation, rebranding (more than just adding a "+" to the name)... I don't mean to come across as bashing the group at all. I greatly appreciate this resource.

(Regarding future direction) More awareness in the community. When people in the area think LGBTQIA+, they think OPALGA+.

Be louder! More face on the street/web.

Inclusivity

By broadening who the organization is serving, we can "include" ourselves out of a clear identity. So, the question is: where and when can we signal our openness, our welcoming attitude or our warm organizational disposition? Is this something stated, or something projected?

I want to get involved but from photos the organization seems to steer much older and I'd love to see more members in 30s-40s.

Activities can be intimidating for someone who's new or might not attend regularly.

I think a name change is important to make the organization feel more inclusive. This could open up the door for new opportunities to be involved with groups of people not traditionally attending OPALGA+ events.

Value of Education & Involvement

In naming the Scholarship, what can we do to build even more value to what we are doing? Are there expectations to be set? Can the name be an encouragement to apply for the scholarship in the first place? Can this organization/name capture the other elements of local involvement, such as supporting the Chicago Food Depository? Should, the scholarship, and all the associated effort in organizing it, reflect back directly or indirectly on the larger organization? Or does that diminish the altruism of such a significant gift?

I appreciate the good work that's done by the organization (scholarships & Chicago Food Depository), as well as how welcoming everyone is to newcomers.

I would like the OPALGA scholarships to include the possibility of older adults returning to school.

I don't know a ton about the organization or what they're involved in