

CREATING A BRAND FOR YOUR BUSINESS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Anyone can create a business but building a brand goes far beyond filing paperwork and coming up with a name.

When you start trying to connect the dots between what you're selling and who your potential customers are many questions may come up. What should it feel like? How should it look? How do I make it resonate with my target market?

Branding is a powerful marketing tool and establishing a brand early on can mean the difference between wild success and mediocrity.

CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS A BRAND?

A brand isn't just your business name or logo, and it won't build itself on its own. Think of your brand as your business's personality. It's how people perceive your business whenever they have an interaction with it.

It's not what you tell people about your business; it's what they tell each other.

The brand isn't just one aspect of your business. It's a multi-faceted and complex set of factors like your values, communication style, products, logos, colors, and so much more. All of these things together create your brand.

Why Do I Need a Brand?

Your brand is what separates you from other businesses sharing your market. The market can be crowded and anything you can do to stand out is going to improve your success.

Consequently, building a quality brand identity builds trust with the consumer and also can allow you to charge more for your products.

How to Build a Brand

There are three main topics to consider when building your brand and they are commonly known as the three C's of branding.

- **Clarity:** It's your job to define your brand - not your customer's. Be clear about what your brand message is.
- **Consistency:** Everything should be consistent with your brand. Consistency builds trust and gives the customer something they can count on.
- **Constancy:** Building a great brand takes time. Don't shift directions every time you don't have show-stopping results.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE AND COMPETITION

It's impossible to build a solid brand identity without first identifying your target audience.

If you skip this step, your entire strategy will suffer. Knowing your target audience is not only necessary for building your brand, but also for any marketing strategies you hope to implement.

Defining Your Target Audience

Defining your customer involves more than saying *I'm selling to people who are looking for my product*. **It's about finding out who that is, what they want, and where they're at in their life.**

The first thing you may want to think about is demographics.

- Age
- Income
- Marital status
- Gender
- Location (where they live)
- Do they have kids?

Next, you might consider their lifestyles/attitudes.

- Are they retired or employed?
- What do they do for fun?
- What are their shopping habits?
- What other things do they buy?
- Where do they shop?
- Where do they go on vacation?

Size Up the Competition

Finding out who your competitors are and understanding why they are successful can be useful in building your brand's identity. **Here are some great ways to research your market:**

- Google your product or service category and see what comes up
- Talk to consumers
- Check out subreddits
- Shop your competitors' products
- Look at social media profiles and posts
- Check out the books, magazines, and events

Pay attention to how your competitions speaks and what they talk about. This will help you establish your brand voice later on.

CHAPTER 3: YOUR BRAND FOCUS AND PERSONALITY

Finding your focus in the beginning helps to form the other elements of your brand as you build it. What made you decide to start a business?

What made you choose your particular business? What benefits does your business provide to the customer?

What's Your Positioning Statement?

A positioning statement is not a slogan or tagline. **It's a brief 1-2 lines that stakes your claim in the market.** This is a way for you to be able to answer questions about your brand that will help you create your slogan.

Here's a template for creating a positioning statement:

Our business offers [Product/Service] for [Target Audience] to [Value Proposition].

Unlike [Our Competition], we [Do This Really Great Thing].

What Words Do You Associate With Your Brand?

Think about your target audience and what kinds of words they would be attracted to. **Doing this word association exercise will help you create the tone of your business.** Having a tone is important because it's how you will speak to your customers.

What Personifies Your Brand?

If your brand were a person, what are 3-5 words you would choose to describe him/her? This can help you identify the qualities you want it to have. It can be an animal or a sports team or vehicle - anything that makes you think of the vibe you want your brand to have.

Creating a Voice for Your Brand

Once you know the words that best describe your brand and are starting to see its personality emerge, you need to figure out how it talks to the audience. **The voice should stay consistent whether it's your website copy, blogs, social media posts or emails.**

CHAPTER 4: PICKING A BUSINESS NAME

Choosing your business name is one of the biggest decisions you'll make and one of the biggest commitments. It will impact your logo, your domain name, and your marketing.

You want to pick a name that is unique and hard to confuse with other businesses in the market. Consider keeping your name broad. If you make it too specific, it'll be harder to expand down the line.

CHAPTER 5: TAGLINES AND SLOGANS

At first thought, you may think they're the same thing. But, they aren't.

A tagline represents your brand while a slogan represents a certain product line or ad campaign.

Create a Tagline

There are as many theories about *what makes* a great tagline as there are taglines. But what makes a tagline really stand out? Does it need to be catchy? Maybe it needs to rhyme?

Before you get started, think about the heart of your brand. What is your company all about?

Have a clearly defined purpose and values for your business. This can really help when you start writing your tagline.

Here are some easy steps to writing a likable, memorable tagline.

- Step 1: Write one paragraph about what your business does and who you are.
- Step 2: Condense that paragraph down into 1-2 lines.
- Step 3: Condense it down even more.
- Step 4: Test your taglines with employees, friends, or customers.

CHAPTER 6: CHOOSE THE LOOK OF YOUR BRAND

The visual elements of your brand will carry significant weight in how your brand is perceived. It will be helpful to have this nailed down as you begin to design your website and your marketing materials. It's all part of creating a cohesive, consistent, brand.

Choosing Colors

Color psychology isn't an exact science, but it may be helpful information to know as you are choosing colors for your website and/or logo. Remember to think about how text looks over the colors you choose. You want it to be very easy to read.

Fonts

While you're looking at colors, you may want to start exploring different font options. To avoid your website looking "disheveled", try to only pick two fonts. Use one for headings and one for text.

CHAPTER 7: DESIGNING A LOGO

Optimally, you want to pick a logo that's unique and *scalable*. You want to be able to change the size without changing the shape and have it look just as good when it's small as it does when it's big.

When choosing your logo, consider these suggestions:

- An abstract shape
- An image from nature
- Pick a mascot
- Create an emblem
- Use an acronym or lettermark
- Try a visual metaphor

CHAPTER 8: APPLYING YOUR BRAND

When applying your brand, think about telling a story; the story of your brand. This story represents who you are as a business and where your space is in the market. It will be the backdrop for every interaction your customers have with your business.

It may be helpful to create a mission statement for your business. A mission statement is an explanation of why your business exists and what its overall goals are.

The “why” of your mission statement is the most crucial part. That’s what most consumers want to know. This is what separates you from the competition.

CHAPTER 9: DEBUNKING SOME COMMON MYTHS ABOUT BRANDING

Don’t buy into these common myths about building a brand for your business.

Myth #1: Branding Is Only Important When Starting Your Business

Branding is critical at every stage of your business. In order to get the attention of your audience, your brand has to be relatable. And stay relatable over time.

Myth #2: I Can’t Afford Branding - It’s Just Too Expensive

Branding is not an expense of your business; it’s an investment in it. Your brand is potentially the biggest asset of your business. Just because these aspects are intangible doesn’t mean you shouldn’t invest in these areas.

Myth #3: My Business Just Isn’t Sophisticated Enough to Need Branding

Once you clarify your values and mission, it’s easier to make future decisions because your branding guidelines have been set.

CHAPTER 10: TOOLS FOR HEARING WHAT YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING

Once you've spent the time and resources to build your brand, your next step will be to determine what the customer thinks. What perceptions have they drawn from the brand you've created? If you don't ever do the work to figure this out, you can't use the information you garner in any sort of productive way.

Search for relevant keywords and phrases to find conversations tied to your business.

What are the keywords and phrases customers would use if they were searching for your business or the product/service you offer? You need to know the answer to this question in order to locate the conversations.

Some tools that can help you do this include:

- Google Trends
- Buzzsumo
- Google Alerts
- SocialMention
- Mention
- Hootsuite

It's just as important to know where people are talking about your brand as what they're saying and who's doing the talking. Check out these great tools for seeing where the conversations are taking place.

CHAPTER 11: BUILDING YOUR BRAND IS IMPORTANT

There are a lot of pieces to fit in the puzzle of building your brand. Every little detail is part of the story. Also, it's a work in progress. Don't let brand building become a reason you get stalled in starting your business. Just keep working through it.