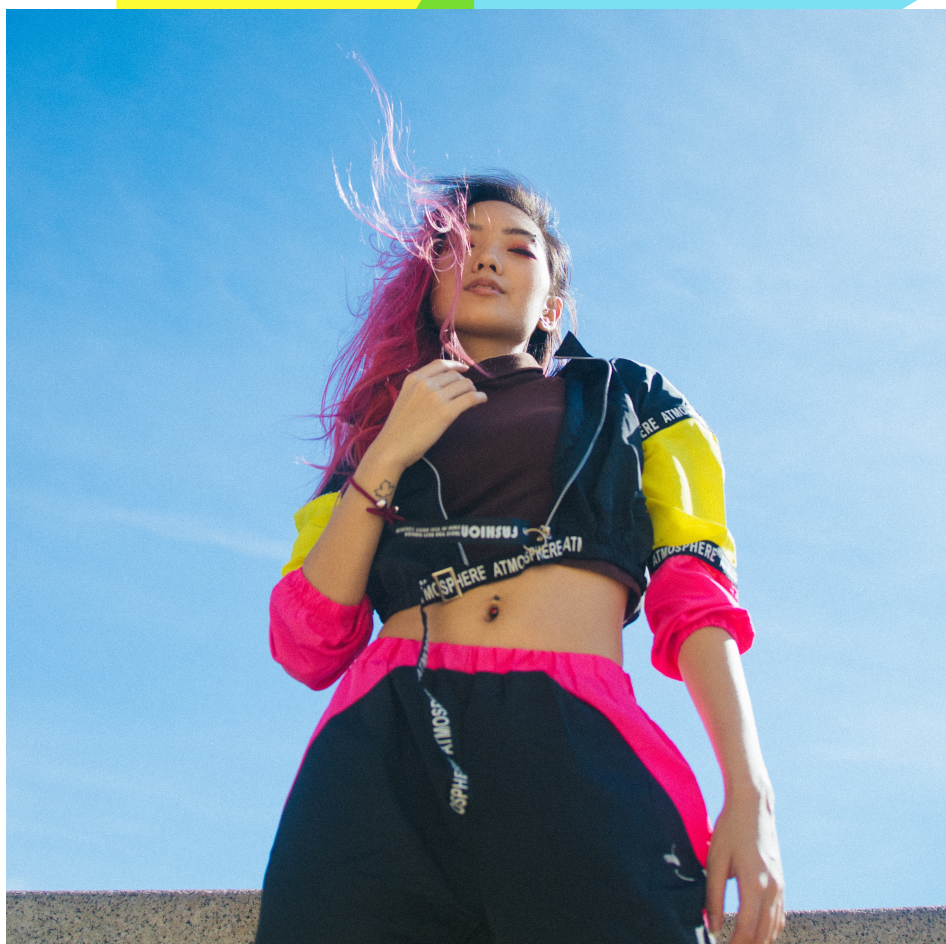


CREATING A BRAND FOR YOUR BUSINESS



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CREATING A BRAND FOR YOUR BUSINESS

A Comprehensive Guide



Anyone can create a business but building a brand is something that 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, questions may arise.

What feelings should a brand evoke? How should a brand 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.

Whether you're still in the idea stage of starting your business or have been in business for years, you should be attempting to build your brand.

This guide will walk you through each step of the process.

CHAPTER 1: **WHAT IS A BRAND?**



A brand isn't just your business name or logo. Think of your brand as your business's personality. It's how people perceive your business whenever they think about or 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. **But it's the *customer's perception* that ultimately becomes your brand.**

If you think about it, people have brands too. Your name and your face, how you wear your hair, and the clothes you wear are a part of your brand. Then add in your character and the way you communicate. All of these pieces come together to make an impression on the people you interact with.

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.

Going through the process of building a brand for your business will compel you to think about the future of your business. And going through that process will help create a vision for your business beyond the name and slogan.

Thinking that you'll establish your brand later is a critical error that a lot of businesses make because they don't understand the value in doing it. You may think it makes sense to just get the ball rolling and get some money coming in.

Unfortunately, this can cause problems that you won't see in the beginning. The problems will come later and they will likely end up costing you more time and money.

So much good comes from putting in that work in the beginning. Everything from your business

name to your marketing strategy becomes a cohesive experience for you and your customer.

Though it may seem tedious and time consuming, do the work required to build your brand. It will be a huge boon in the long run.

How to Build a Brand

Building a brand doesn't happen overnight - it takes time. But putting in the time to create a brand identity will propel your business forward like nothing else.

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. The primary points of your message should be easy for your customer to identify. If they have to work too hard to figure out what you're about, you might lose them to the competition.

Be clear about what your brand message is. If you have to work too hard to explain it to the average person - your parents for example - you probably aren't there yet.

Consistency: Everything should be consistent with your brand. From the font on your website and the lighting/style of your photos to the voice of your blog, website, and emails. Consistency is key. There's nothing worse than a website with 14 different fonts and irrelevant pictures.

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. Stay the course.

Sailors have learned over hundreds of years that there are specific routes they can take where the winds will benefit their direction of travel. These *tradewinds* are noted for their constancy of speed and direction.

The sailors know they can count on the tradewinds to make their travels faster and safer. Be like the tradewinds with your brand strategy.

Now let's go step-by-step through the process of building your brand. Keep in mind that as you go through this process, you may revisit some of these steps to fine tune exactly what you want your brand to convey.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE AND COMPETITION



Before you get started making any decisions about your brand, learn who your target customers will be, your competition, and the current market.

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.

Doing quality research now may seem boring and unnecessary, but it's a critical step in the success of your brand and your business. This may seem overwhelming but don't worry, you don't need a marketing degree to do quality market research.

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.**

When you define your target market, you learn how your customers spend their time and where they hang out online. Once you learn this, you can make better decisions about how to target those customers.

The first thing you may want to think about is demographics. Demographics are statistical data relating to the market who will be interested in your product.

Consider these demographics in relation to your product:

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

Next, you might consider their lifestyles/attitudes. People who work will have different priorities and constraints than people who are retired.

Ask these questions about **your target audience**:

- 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. Who are your competitors? What are they offering? What else comes up in the search results? Explore websites and get a feel for who your competitors are marketing to.
- Talk to consumers who are in your target market and ask them what brands they buy.
- Check out subreddits that relate to your potential customers.

- Shop your competitors' products. Try to put yourself in the mind of your customers and discover what they might like or don't like.
- Look at social media profiles and posts that your target audience is interested in.
- Check out the books, magazines, and events that your target market is interested in.

While doing this research, make note of which types of customers you could most easily sell to. Also look at your top competitors - the brands that are well-established and known.

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

Knowing this information before you move forward will help you to know what you should focus on and how you can set yourself apart from other businesses in your market.

CHAPTER 3: YOUR BRAND FOCUS AND PERSONALITY



Why did you decide to start a business?

Everyone is trying to make money so that's probably at the top of your list, but try to go a little deeper. 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 what a typical positioning statement looks like:

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

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

Here's an example:

Our business offers fishing lures for bass fishermen to catch more fish.

Unlike other fishing lure brands, we donate a portion of every sale to lake fishing conservation.

What Words Do You Associate With Your Brand?

Imagine your brand as a person. What are they like? Kind? Cheerful? Fun loving?

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.

Whether you're posting on social media or writing an email, you want your tone to match your brand and the feelings you're trying to convey.

If your brand were a person, what are 3-5 words you would choose to describe him/her?

Kind	Thoughtful	Exclusive	Rebellious
Happy	Meditative	Hipster	Flamboyant
Fun	Sophisticated	Bohemian	Honest
Sincere	Effective	Young	Artistic
Provocative	Modest	Strong	Bold
Cheerful	Peaceful	Extravagant	Serious
Adventurous	Rugged	Active	Reliable
Calm	Charitable	Studios	Vigilant
Serene	Trendy	Professional	Exclusive
Stoic	Quirky	Silly	Simple
Wordly	Energetic	Patriotic	Masculine
Creative	Efficient	Caring	Feminine

What Personifies Your Brand?

Now try personifying your brand. 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

Another important component of creating your brand is finding its voice. 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.

Is it professional or casual? Funny or serious? Whatever you choose, it should match the overall tone you are creating.

The voice should stay consistent whether it's your website copy, blogs, social media posts or emails. The most important thing is that it resonates with your target audience.

A business selling skateboards doesn't have the same brand voice as a boutique selling mens suits. Again, this is where your target market research is going to be critical to your success.

CHAPTER 4: PICKING A BUSINESS NAME



Your brand is so much more than the name you choose for your business. The personality and reputation of your brand are what give the name meaning in the market.

Yet, 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.

There are lots of business name generators online to help you pick a name for your business. **Or you can consider the following:**

- Use a made up word
- Use a word that is related to your product or service
- Use a suggestive word or metaphor
- Use the literal meaning
- Alter a word; add or remove letters

- Use the latin word
- Use an Acronym
- Combine two or more words into one

It's a good idea to check the availability of website domain names before you decide so you can have a domain that matches your business. Also consider running it by your friends and family to make sure it flows well and that it doesn't have any slang meanings.

CHAPTER 5: TAGLINES AND SLOGANS



At first, you may think taglines and slogans are the same thing. They aren't.

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

For example, Coca Cola has the tagline *Taste the Feeling* but Coke Zero has the slogan *The Impossible Made Possible*. They've created an overall tagline for their company while also creating a slogan for their sugar and calorie free version.

So, you may have an overall tagline that represents your brand but be prepared to have several possible slogans as your brand evolves and grows and also as your audience changes.

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? **Of all the things marketing professionals think make a good**

tagline, only these three things influence likability:

- Message clarity
- Creative phrasing
- A defined benefit

Writing a great tagline can be a creative challenge which can be fun for some and overwhelming for others. Set some time aside just to work on this project. This isn't something that should be done in the 10 minutes before you meet with your web designer.

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. This is a brain dump activity so don't hold back. Don't worry about how it sounds or if it makes sense. Just write it down.

Step 2: Condense that paragraph down into 1-2 lines. Summarize but don't agonize. You can re-do this step multiple times until you're happy with what you've come up with. Get down to the core of what you're trying to say. Keep this in mind:

- **Likability is imperative.** It's very hard to fix an unlikable tagline so be sure the likability is built in from the beginning.
- **A compelling tagline needs an emotional hook.** This should be directly related to the brand's benefit. It doesn't have to specifically state the benefit; it could evoke an emotional response related to the benefit.
- **Less isn't always more.** Don't be afraid of a little longer tagline. It's much more important that the message is clearly conveyed in an emotionally compelling way than it is for it to be short.

Step 3: Condense it down even more. Tighten and polish your final three contenders. This could be a really hard step. Try using an online thesaurus like Word Hippo to find words you may not have thought of that are more compelling.

Step 4: Test your taglines with employees, friends, or customers. Listen to what they have to say and be sure no one sees an unintended meaning in what you've written. Once you have a frontrunner that everyone loves you're ready to move forward.

CHAPTER 6: **CHOOSE THE LOOK OF** **YOUR BRAND**



How you visually represent your brand is another important step when creating your brand. Remember those 3-5 words you chose to describe your brand? Those descriptive words may be helpful as you think about how you want people to “see” 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

Colors convey feelings.

So how can you use colors to convey your brand’s personality? First, take a look at this chart to see what feelings each color evokes.

Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue
Excitement Strength Energy Love Courage	Confidence Success Bravery Sociability Joy	Happiness Creativity Cheer Warmth	Nature Healing Freshness Quality	Trust Peace Loyalty Competence

Pink	Purple	Brown	Black	White
Compassion Sincerity Sophistication Sweet	Royalty Luxury Spirituality Ambition Wisdom	Dependable Rugged Trustworthy Simple	Formality Drama Sophistication Security	Clean Simplicity Innocence Honesty

How do the descriptive words you chose to describe your brand match up with these 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 also 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. Look at some of your favorite websites or media to see what kinds of fonts you like and also what types go together well.

Your brand personality will probably also be helpful to factor in when choosing fonts. Some fonts are relaxed and funky while others are more professional. Just be sure to pick something that is readable.

CHAPTER 7: DESIGNING A LOGO



When thinking about creating your brand, a logo is probably one of the first things that comes to your mind. After all, it is the symbol of your brand and will potentially be on everything from your website to business cards.

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. It needs to be recognizable no matter what size it is.

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

Whatever you choose as the logo to represent your business, be sure to experiment with it to see how it looks in certain settings. Much like choosing your business name, run it past a focus group to make sure it doesn't look like something you didn't intend.

CHAPTER 8: APPLYING YOUR BRAND



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

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. **Consider the following when developing your mission statement:**

- What you do
- How you do it
- Why you do it

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.

Often, buyers who visit your website for the first time will look at your “About” page to learn more about your company values. You want to have a good brand story to tell these people (and everyone, really).

You can use your positioning statement from chapter 3, as well as your mission statement, to get started, but also consider the following questions:

- What motivated me to start my business?
- How do we contribute to the betterment of the world?
- What's the story behind my business and the way I run it?
- What does my business stand for and how does that impact how I do business?

Remember, your brand story isn't something that's only going to be told on your website. It's an overall theme and feeling that will be conveyed in every email, every blog post, every social media ad, and everything your business does. It's important to spend some time developing what the true essence of your brand is going to be.

CHAPTER 9: **DEBUNKING SOME COMMON** **MYTHS ABOUT BRANDING**



Don't buy into these common myths about creating 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.

You have to continue to communicate your values and solutions to your audience. **Otherwise, the customer will develop their own perception of your business.**

Myth #2: I Can't Afford Branding

Branding is not an expense of your business; it's an investment in it. Your brand is potentially the biggest asset of your business. Brand equity includes things like consumer awareness and loyalty.

Just because these aspects are intangible doesn't mean you shouldn't invest in these areas. Branding strategists, web and graphic designers, copywriters, social media experts, and the like are well worth the return you'll receive.

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

Some people believe branding will actually complicate their *simple* business concept but this couldn't be further from the truth.

Once you clarify your values and mission, it's easier to make future decisions because your branding guidelines have been set. It's like using the bumpers at the bowling ally - you can keep your ball on track and knock down more pins.

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?

Consider this: There are dozens of ways for customers to be spreading their conceptions about your brand. Yelp reviews, Facebook comments, Tweets, review blogs, etc. You need to have your finger on the pulse of what's being said about your business online.

You need to be able to listen to the true voice of your current and potential customers. Luckily, there is an entirely free and easy way to do that: Social media.

If you've made even just one sale, there are potential conversations happening about your business online. If you'd like the opportunity to hear those conversations, help shape them, and potentially defend your brand, learn these tools to monitor and engage in the conversation.

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.

Google Trends

Google Trends is a great tool for identifying which keywords are being used most frequently online.

Once you have this information, you can focus on the conversations surrounding the keywords that are most popular. Try plugging in different keywords related to your specific industry, business name, or the products/services you offer to see what is being searched for most often.

Having this information can help tailor your content strategy, promotions, and email sequences to focus more on what people are searching for.

Buzzsumo

You can use Buzzsumo to look for influencers who could promote your content and to see what the competition is currently ranking for.

Google Alerts

Google Alerts is a social media listening tool for entrepreneurs who may not have the time to monitor their brand on social media or the resources to hire a full time social media guru. It will notify you by email if any of the keywords or phrases you specify are mentioned.

You can also set the frequency of the updates so you can follow as closely as you'd like.

SocialMention

SocialMention is a gem of a social media listening tool. It allows you to search for keywords with parameters like frequency, sentiment, influencers, sources, and reach. It provides tons of insight into the overall health of your brand and provides data you can export to Excel for further analysis.

You can get the feeling for what customers feel about your brand and easily filter for negative comments so you can address them right away.

Mention

Mention is similar to Google Alerts in that it lets you set some parameters for the alerts you want to create. It pulls data from millions of sources so you can monitor your entire presence at a glance.

Hootsuite

Hootsuite provides feeds from different social media sources on a single screen so you can monitor all of your social media accounts in one place. When you set up a search in Hootsuite, you can easily see every hashtag, keyword, or tweet and who's sharing it.

CHAPTER 11: **BUILDING YOUR BRAND** **IS IMPORTANT**



There are a lot of pieces when it comes to building your brand. Every little detail is part of the story. Remember, 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.

Here's a list of some companies that have done a great job with their brand experience. Use them for inspiration as you get going.

- [Pure Vida Bracelets](#)
- [Airbnb](#)
- [Warby Parker](#)
- [Dannijo](#)
- [Burt's Bees](#)

Have fun! If you get stuck, turn to Google and you will literally find thousands of resources to help you at any point along the way. There is so much good information available out there to help you - take advantage of it.

Try your best at every turn to resonate with your target audience. That's really what this is all about. Now that you have some basic tools and knowledge, get started building your brand!