

BRANDING BOOTCAMP

LEARN THE SECRETS OF CREATING A KILLER BRAND!



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Introduction

Branding is one of those topics that everyone has heard of, but few seem to fully understand. Some people think it's all about a logo, or judicious use of colors. Some think a product's name is the key to branding. But branding is a complex subject that requires a lot of thought and planning.

In this guide, we're going to take a look at some of the many facets of branding—including USP, name, visual branding, and other elements that can make or break your company's success.

Believe it or not, if you get a single element of branding wrong, it could severely impact your overall success. Many companies have failed or succeeded based almost solely on their branding.

Branding is especially important when you are competing in a heavily flooded market. For example, in the fast food realm, branding is arguably more important than the actual food, because without good branding, very few people will ever even try your food.

You see, branding isn't just about the visual. It's also about the other elements that one can't necessarily see at first glance. That's what we're going to take a look at in this guide so you can understand all the different elements, not just one or two.

Let's begin.

Vision & Voice

Your company's vision and voice is one of the most important aspects of the branding process, because it becomes the very foundation of your brand strategy. You must know your vision and voice before you can develop any type of cohesive branding.

Vision

What, specifically, does your company represent? Are you trying to change the world? Are you trying to solve a specific problem? Are you trying to educate or enlighten? Your company's purpose must be reflective of its vision.

Let's say you sell internet marketing educational products. Your overall mission is probably to educate individuals on various methods they can use to increase their traffic and/or income. This provides you with the opportunity to brand yourself as an educational company, but you must delve further into your company's vision before you can begin the process of branding.

For example, do you plan to sell your products at a high price point to appeal to wealthier clients? Would you prefer to sell a greater volume of products to help a larger number of people at a lower price? Questions like these help you decide on your company's vision, and your branding will be far different if you're marketing to the first group than if you were marketing to the second.

For example, if you intend to market to wealthier customers, you might choose a name and overall branding that reflects that. You might use words such as “elite” in your branding, and use colors and imagery that reflect status and wealth.

If you intend to market to the masses, you might still want to include hints of wealth and status in your branding. After all, you are marketing “how to make money” type products in this example. But you’d want to have a wider appeal to let people know they don’t have to spend a fortune to buy your products.

Voice

Your voice is related to your vision, because it will be the image you convey to the public regarding your vision. It’s the mannerisms your employees will use when relating to the public—through social media, videos, promotional material, customer service, etc.

Will you be funny and lighthearted? Will you be professional and serious? You need to convey your company’s vision through your voice.

If your vision is to help people recovering from abuse, you obviously would want to have a serious tone to most of your posts, but also one that conveys hope for the future.

If your vision is to promote fun, exciting products, you might have a bit more lighthearted and joking kind of voice.

If you’d like to get an idea of how this works, you can take a look at the Facebook and Twitter feeds of various companies in the same field to see how they convey their company’s mission through their voice.

Let's take fast food as an example.

You may notice that a company like Chipotle (who refers to itself not as "fast food" but as "fast casual") is a little lighthearted at times, but also focuses on social issues. This is because Chipotle prides itself on serving food that is mostly GMO-free, healthier than other restaurant chains, and socially conscious.

Other restaurant chains tend to be more playful and silly. Burger King, for example, has a reputation for being silly and fun on their social media accounts, and they have a ton of followers and a lot of engagement as a result. People love the fun approach, and it fits with their overall brand.

Your voice must be consistent with your vision and your overall brand. Any disconnect and you will lose engagement and lose customers.

USP

Another important element of branding is finding your company's Unique Selling Proposition, or USP. Some people call this the Unique Selling Point. Either way, your company (and individual products) must have something that sets you apart from the competition—something they don't or can't offer—to differentiate you from your competitors.

Chipotle, for example, sets itself apart from the plethora of “fast food” restaurants by referring to itself as “fast casual”, and by using ingredients that are more wholesome than its competitors. It focuses mostly on non-GMO ingredients, and uses locally grown produce whenever possible. For a while, the restaurant chain even took its pork carnitas off the menu over issues with the way the pigs were being treated by its suppliers.

In a sea of restaurants that focus more on offering cheap food quickly, the company managed to carve out a niche for itself by becoming a healthier, more socially conscious option.

Your company can do the same by figuring out exactly how you can set yourself apart from your competition. This may take a good deal of thought, especially if you're in a large niche with a massive number of competitors. For example, if you're a blogger, you may find yourself competing against thousands, or even millions of similar blogs.

What makes you different? Why should someone choose your company or products over your competitors'?

That is what you must figure out!

You may already have a USP, but if not, you should sit down and figure out something that makes you different. Let's take a look at some examples.

- Chipotle differentiated itself by using fresh, wholesome ingredients
- FedEx made a name for itself by reliably delivering packages overnight
- Dominos focused on delivering its pizza more quickly than its competitors
- Walmart found that keeping its prices lower than other stores skyrocketed its success
- To compete with Walmart, Target focused on more upscale merchandise and cleaner stores
- Avis focused on customer service with the slogan "We're number two. We try harder."

Each of these companies is widely known for being different from its competitors. They made a name for themselves by not only doing something to stand out from the crowd, but also focusing on that in their marketing and branding.

You must do the same!

Name

Your company's name should be reflective of your overall vision, but too many companies make the mistake of choosing a name they think is cool, cute, funny, or just strokes the ego of the owner/founder rather than reflecting the company's mission.

I understand it's tempting to name your company something that is meaningful to you personally, and it certainly can work. Just look at McDonald's. The founders used their name for the company, and after they sold it to Ray Kroc, it exploded.

Wendy's has also done remarkably well, despite being named after the daughter of the founder.

But that's not the norm.

Think about some of the companies that have really hit it big in recent years. Companies like Chipotle, Five Guys Burgers & Fries, and Shake Shack have exploded their growth quickly based partially on names that really focus on what they do. Sure, they could have named themselves specifically after the founders. Chipotle could have been named Ells after founder Steve Ells, but would it have made the same impact? Possibly not.

If you name your company (or product) something that suits the company (or product), your job is made easier. Sure, you can brand your company Smith Marketing, but naming your company something

with more punch—more impact—will make the job of branding and marketing your company much easier.

For example, you could choose something like:

- Marketing Boom! – Explosive Growth with Marketing Boom!
- Marketing Ninjas – Quick. Sharp. Deadly to Your Competition!
- The Three Marketeers – Three Guys. Three Approaches. Big Results.

You want the name to be something that is memorable, conveys your company's vision, and lends itself to great slogans and marketing campaigns. This will make your job much easier.

Slogans or Taglines

Slogans or taglines can have a huge impact

Just take a look at the following slogans/taglines. Do you recognize these? I bet most people can name most of the companies that used these in their marketing!

- Finger Lickin' Good
- I'm Lovin' It
- The Real Thing
- 30 Minutes or Less or It's Free
- Like a Good Neighbor, _____ is there.
- _____ is on your side.
- Just Do It
- Betcha Can't Eat Just One
- Where's the Beef?

Do you think you know all of these? Here are the answers.

- Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC)
- McDonald's
- Coca-Cola
- Dominos Pizza
- State Farm
- Nationwide
- Nike
- Lay's Potato Chips
- Wendy's

These are all examples of slogans that are immediately recognizable by most people, sometimes even worldwide. They captured attention and relayed important information about the company, and even many years after some of the slogans stopped being used, they are still remembered by the masses.

Coming up with a great slogan isn't always easy, but it is one of the most effective ways to really brand yourself to your audience and make your company memorable.

Visual Branding

Your visual branding is, besides your name and slogan, the thing most people will remember about your company. If you have a logo, company colors, and other visual branding that really makes an impact, you'll find it much easier to get the results you're looking for.

If you want an idea of how visual branding can make a huge impact, just download one of those logo apps that show you a generic form of a company's logo (no words, just the general shape and colors) and see how many you can get right. It's usually easier than you think, because most of us get used to logos and are trained to immediately recognize those brands we use often or see advertised often.

Your visual branding must be consistent with the overall theme of your company's branding. For example, if your company is all about clean living and respecting the environment, you'd probably want to stick with natural colors like green and blue. If you're opening a company that focuses on making a huge impact with marketing, you would probably want to choose bold colors like red or orange.

This is one reason it's a good idea to hire a professional to create your logo. You want someone who is not only a good graphics designer, but one who understands how color works and plays on the emotions, and how various shapes and symbols get certain reactions. A good graphics designer isn't necessarily a good logo designer.

Here's one example of how consistent branding can make a big impact:

>> <http://monkeywebapps.com/>

Each app created by the company is branded by the “monkey” theme, and contains the same basic visual elements, such as the smiling monkey and big, bold titles.

Any product this company releases will immediately be recognizable as theirs because of the consistent visual branding.

Here’s a good article about logo recognition:

<http://abcnews.go.com/Business/quiz-recognize-15-iconic-logos/story?id=20423733>

And here is an interesting article about color and marketing:

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/233843>

Conclusion

If you think branding is only for big corporations, think again! Every company and every product needs to concentrate on branding in order to achieve maximum success.

Branding isn't just about a logo or a tagline—though those are certainly two important elements of branding. It's about everything from the company's name and vision to the way it differentiates itself from its competitors. It's a complete package of elements that work in tandem to brand the company in the public's eyes.

As you develop your branding, keep in mind the key elements of branding:

- Vision & Voice
- USP
- Name
- Visual Branding

Each of these elements must work in tandem to create the company's overall brand, and to develop recognition in the eyes of potential customers.

Best of luck with your branding efforts!

Resources

Here are links to some of the resources found in this guide:

Logo Recognition:

<http://abcnews.go.com/Business/quiz-recognize-15-iconic-logos/story?id=20423733>

Color & Marketing:

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/233843>