

Your brand story starts here

Brand Building Basics

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Building a brand is a process that looks at your whole business – where you're coming from, where you want to go, and the driving message behind what you do. Like people, brands have personalities and your brand needs to connect, resonate and be memorable.

At Veycom, we've helped scores of businesses build successful brands, whether they're starting from scratch or evolving an existing one.

This guide looks at the basic process of building a brand, tried and tested to take your business from zero to hero. Pay close attention and put the steps into practice.

We hope you find it useful.

The Basics:

Brand, Branding & Brand Identity



People use the terms “Brand”, “Branding” and “Brand Identity” as if they mean the same thing - but they don’t.

What is a brand?

A brand is a set of distinctive feelings, ideas and perceptions that people have about a specific product or service.

Think for a second about what your favourite brand is... It’s likely their values align closely with your own. This company has earned your loyalty - and your money.

As consumers, we often don’t recognise the work behind a strong and memorable brand. All the things businesses do to build awareness and enhance their reputation is known as branding.

The tools that help them to maximise their chances of success – the tangible expressions of that brand – are collectively known as brand identity. These vary depending on the business, but usually cover: logo, shape, colour, typography and tone of voice. The more distinctive and cohesive these elements are, the stronger your brand will be and the more clearly your values will be communicated to the world.

The Basics:

Brand, Branding & Brand Identity



Logo

This is the basis of your brand identity, and from where all other elements will flow. Get this right, and it will be an immediate visual identifier of your company.

Shape

The shapes you use in your brand identity can convey different meanings. For example, squares represent stability, circles may signify unity or fullness, and lines can make a brand more dynamic.

Colour

Like shapes, colours can also evoke emotions and convey meaning. Some brands have even gone so far as to trademark their particular shade of a colour, to ensure no one else can use it.

Virgin dedicated an entire brand document to their Virgin Red, the “lifeblood of their look” in an their aptly named ‘Little Red Book’. How do we know this? Check out the case study here.

Typography

Using a consistent typeface will help people become familiar with your brand, and the design you choose can influence whether your brand is viewed as classic and traditional, or sleek and modern.

Tone of voice

It is easy to focus on the visual part of brand identity, but giving your brand a voice is equally important. Do you want to come across as friendly and approachable, or more formal. Do you want to instruct, or to inspire? Consistency of voice will help lend your brand credibility and authority.

Developing Brand Strategy

Before you start to think about colours and logo options, you need to know what your company is and what it stands for. This will be the core concept around which all your specific design elements are created.

Investing time upfront in defining and articulating your brand strategy will ensure all your branding efforts follow the same clear, strategic direction, resulting in a strong brand image.

Brand strategies can be very simple, or complex, but usually include as a minimum a definition of your target audience, a mission statement and a description of your brand personality.

Target audience

You won't be able to connect with your target audience unless you know who they are. So, who exactly is it that should buy from you? What do they want, and what are their problems that you can help solve?

Mission statement

A mission statement is where you state what your company wants to accomplish in the world. A written declaration of your core purpose or belief, it should explain the 'why' behind what you do and how you do it. As well as helping people within your business to make decisions that are 'on brand', a clearly-defined mission statement will appeal to customers who share your values, goals and aspirations.

Developing Brand Strategy

Brand personality

If your company was a person, how would they come across? There are five main types of brand personalities:

Excitement: carefree, spirited and youthful

Sincerity: kindness, thoughtfulness, family values

Ruggedness: rough, tough, outdoorsy and athletic

Competence: successful, accomplished, leadership

Sophistication: elegant, prestigious, pretentious.

Designing Brand Identity

Creating a strong brand starts with really good design. Skilled designers know that people encountering new brands take just seconds to judge them on how they look and feel.

The perfect logo

A professional logo should be simple, memorable, and relevant to its business industry and target audience.

Let's talk about the different types of logos, which can be defined into 5 top-level categories.

1. Wordmarks

A wordmark – otherwise known as a logotype – is a brand name that has been stylised to convey certain meaning or emotion. Think Google.

2. Lettermarks

A lettermark uses one or more letter forms to make a unique design that makes you think of a company's name. An example would be McDonald's Golden Arches, 'M'.

3. Pictorial marks

A simplified and stylised, yet immediately recognisable image that acts as a prompt for the company name. Apple is a brilliant example of this.

4. Abstract marks

A symbol intended to convey a larger concept, but often ambiguous and open to interpretation, such as the Nike 'swoosh'.

5. Emblems

A mark which inextricably links a company name with a pictorial element. Think Harley-Davidson.

Designing Brand Identity

The right shape

Different shapes help create or reinforce emotions in an audience.

SHARP shapes like squares and rectangles convey stability and trustworthiness, as they represent strength and efficiency.

ROUND shapes like circles, ovals and ellipses represent positive feelings of community, unity and love.

STRAIGHT LINES also hold their own meaning: vertical lines suggest strength, horizontal lines tranquillity, and diagonal lines can add dynamism.

Choosing a colour palette

Colour choice should be more than personal preference - but you do have to love it!

RED: the colour of passion and excitement. The perfect choice for young, exciting brands that want to be heard.

ORANGE: bright and juicy, this colour is a great choice for companies that are full of energy, friendly and playful.

YELLOW: this cheerful colour is all about happiness. Use it to make your brand feel fun, accessible and affordable.

GREEN: A solid, all-rounder that can be used for most brands. Particularly good if your brand relates to the environment.

BLUE: Liked by most people, blue is the colour of stability. Use it to make your brand appear solid and trustworthy.

PINK: a sometimes-underappreciated, versatile colour, this colour will give your brand a modern look that will make it stand out from the competition.

PURPLE: the colour of royalty, nothing conveys luxury quite like using purple in your brand.

BLACK: classic and effective. Use it to make your brand look modern and/or sophisticated.

Designing Brand Identity

Appropriate typography

Your choice of font will follow you everywhere. It's important this reflects your tone.

Serif

Classic SERIF fonts have little 'feet' at the end of each letter. Use them to make your brand appear traditional and trustworthy.

Sans Serif

Sans means "without" in French, so as the name suggests, SANS SERIF fonts have no 'feet'. Their smooth edges will give your brand a sleek, modern feel.

Script

SCRIPT fonts that mimic cursive handwriting can help your brand convey authenticity.

Using the right tone

How your brand 'speaks' is as important as how it looks. Establish a tone of voice for your brand that can be carried through all your content.

How do you want to sound to your audience? Are you straight-to-the-point or more conversational? Corporate or casual?

Remember that consistency is key to a strong brand – whatever you choose will be the style you maintain across all your communications with customers and other stakeholders.

Creating Brand Touchpoints

Brand touchpoints are the points at which your brand interacts with people, and may include a website, stationery, social media and product packaging.

Each touchpoint is an opportunity to increase awareness of your brand and build customer loyalty, so ensure your brand identity is consistent across them, and that each piece of collateral works with the others to deliver a strong, distinct brand image.

1. Website

Your WEBSITE is your business's best selling tool, and where your brand identity, typography, colours and voice are on display to its fullest. So, design with the user in mind, communicate clearly, organise your content and showcase the best of what you do.

2. Stationery

Corporate STATIONERY in its traditional printed form may not be as popular as it once was, but well-designed digital stationery still impresses.

3. Social media

SOCIAL MEDIA platforms are a great way to connect with your customers on a more personal level, but don't let that mean a loss of control over your brand; all the content you share should be consistent with your brand identity.

4. Packaging

Product PACKAGING. Do not underestimate this. Your packaging can be the deciding factor whether your product is picked, and will also affect the consumer's experience when opening it.

Creating Brand Touchpoints

Brand touchpoint rules

BE AUTHENTIC: Stay 'on-brand'. Don't try to be something you're not

BE BOLD: Be creative and different. You need to stand out from the competition

CONSIDER LONGEVITY: Just as branding takes time and effort, so does making a real and lasting impression on your audience, so factor in lifespan when choosing designs

EVOLVE: Inevitably there will come a point where your branding feels a little dusty. When it's time for a brand refresh, remain true to your core values and ensure you maintain a feeling of continuity for your loyal brand advocates.

Brand Guidelines: Developing Style Guides

The key to maintaining a strong and consistent brand identity once it leaves the designer's desk and enters your workplace, is to have a solid set of brand guidelines for people to follow.

This includes both your employees and those outside of your company who may also need to use your brand identity, such as partner organisations.

Brand guidelines provide the rules and standards which people must use when creating branded collateral and producing corporate content.

Brand guidelines checklist

The more detail you can include in your brand guidelines, the more consistent your brand will be. As a minimum, make sure to include the following:

Mission statement

Target audience

Brand personality

Positioning statement

Logos: rules for use, approved versions and lockups

Primary and secondary colour palette with RGB/CMYK values and PANTONE colour name and number

Typography: fonts and rules for use, including spacing and alignment

Tone of voice: give example of sample messages that demonstrate how you want your brand to sound

Imagery: examples of how pictures and illustrations may be used to support your brand image

Mock-ups of digital and print collateral to highlight good uses of your brand.



Brand Guidelines:

Developing Style Guides



This list is not exhaustive – businesses that host events will need to include information on signage and other event-based collateral, and those that sell physical products should also include packaging guidelines.

A good designer or design agency will be able to help you identify what elements specific to your business you might want to include.

***Don't forget** your brand guidelines should be a living document. They are your toolkit for maintaining and growing your brand position against your competition, so be sure to update them as your brand evolves.*

**Need help with your
branding?
Let's talk...**



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