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## How to Build Your Brand Identity

*What is your company message and are you recognized for it?*

Over the last few months, I have written two articles about branding. The first article was titled, "[How to Define Your Brand Identity](#)." The second was "[How to Choose Corporate Colors to Effectively Communicate Your Brand](#)." These articles show you how to deal with your visual identity but your identity is much more than just visual. Everyday, we dress ourselves and we decide what colors and accessories to put on. Your fashion sense becomes your visual identity, but do people know who you really are? They can assume certain qualities about you but they will not truly know you. Consequently, how do you get people to recognize you for your true qualities? The answer can be rather simple. Just like in life, it's your communications and your actions that will determine what people think of you. Building your brand is no different.

When trying to build your brand, you must know what your message is. What do you want a viewer to take away when they see your product or service? Everything on your website and any communication you have has meaning. Think about the key ideas that you want people to associate with your brand. What does your brand stand for? Your message is your brand. It helps the public to understand what you stand for. It's your culture and that culture is represented thru each employee's inward and outward actions and interactions with your customers/clients.



Brands can behave like organisms and as organisms, they can mutate if you let them. This can be a good thing or a bad thing depending on the evolution and direction you are following. Below are the many ways in which your brand could be influenced:

### Products or Services

Are your products/services innovative and different? Do they have style and are they of a high quality? Perhaps your products are diverse and you have many different product lines. Your first exposure to a brand usually starts here.



What is Your Company Personality?

## **Personality**

In matters of branding, a personality helps to humanize an otherwise inanimate object or service and helps build a link that attracts the buyer to the brand. It gives the consumer something to relate to that can be more memorable than the perceived positioning of the brand. All marketers develop and define their buyer personas. I believe a corporate persona is just as important. Will you be light hearted or serious? Having a unique personality can help you stand out from the competition. Social media is a great way to define your personality. A rule of thumb is: if you cater and tailor your personality to your audience's personality, you will likely have success.

## **Customer Service**

How do you handle problems when things go wrong? There is an old saying, "the customer is always right." If you follow this rational, you will make your customers happy. Customer service is not always about things going wrong. It is also a source for information. You must insure that your processes and your customer service department are well informed. Having a list of FAQ's on your site is always a good idea. Performing follow up inquiries over the phone or via emails is also a good idea. Customers appreciate you making sure that they are happy. Your customer service is probably the number one reason for word of mouth recommendations.

## **Message**

Everything in this article is your message but the tagline is the first introduction for the consumer. Take the time to speak with many different people to understand how they perceive your strengths and weaknesses. Then, use this information to create a tagline or slogan. Think about your unique qualities because the more you separate yourself from the competition, the better off you will be. Make your slogan memorable and make sure it expresses the true beliefs of the company.

## **Social Media**

Companies need to make friends with their consumers and be self-aware. If you constantly shoving products or services down their throats, your message will be lost. People who constantly talk about themselves are often not liked and are seen as one-dimensional. Try not to be perceived as a taker but rather a giver. For example, you can do this by providing useful information that will help your consumers lives improve and then sprinkle in your products and services. There are clever ways to do this without being obnoxious. Blogs, ebooks, white papers and sharing content from other companies provide great benefits to all. Keep them coming back, even if there is no promotion. You will be appreciated and followed for your efforts. An additional plus is that you will gain great SEO (search engine optimization) improvements. Read my article "[Online Marketing 101](#)" for inbound marketing strategies.

## **Consistency**

Brand building requires consistency of messages across all platforms — website, blog, press releases, email, and social media. Create a clear, concise and attainable brand promise for your consumers. Avoid the temptation to water down or cut corners. A copywriter's style guide is a great way to get everyone on the same page and can be used as a training tool. This guide provides common industry terms, spellings and common messages you want to use. This is often overlooked but is incredibly important to obtain consistency.

## **About Us**

What is your story? The about us page on your website is a great way for a viewer to get to know your company. Tell an interesting story that provides a good introduction. People love to learn about the American dream and how a business came about or how it's grown. Do not forget to provide examples of how you are the authority in your field of expertise.

## **Added Values**

I cannot tell you how many companies forget to market the added values they provide. These are all bonus / customer service type of things a company may do. For example you're a B2B manufacturer that provides market research to your customers or you offer free inventory management systems, extended warranty, free recycling services or simply free shipping. It could be a myriad of things. Do not forget to market these added values. It could be the deciding factor for a sale and will separate you from your competition.

## **Alliances**

Associate your self with excellence and choose strong brands of authority. Put these strategic alliances on your site so viewers can gain respect by your associations.

## **Sponsoring**

Sponsorship of events is an attractive way to target your audience. In a short time frame, it is one of the most effective ways of communicating to your customers. Utilizing this type of marketing activity, allows you to not only obtain credibility but also build on your brand awareness and to a wider audience.

In the end, your brand is whatever your customers know about you. Employ a listening strategy for your consumers and yourself. Ask yourself if your brand looks and 'feels' the same way in your printed marketing as well as in your online presence? Are you communicating your message in a consistent manner throughout the buying cycle? Ask your customers what they want and need. I am an advocate for checklists. Using these highlighted points in your list will help you develop a marketing strategy that builds brand equity. These are ways to refine your brand and are vehicles for your voice to be heard. Harness them to show how you are better than your competition. Gaining loyalty is difficult but once you have it, it could last a lifetime and transfer over to the next generation.

## **Related Articles:**

[\*How to Define Your Brand Identity\*](#)

[\*How to Choose Corporate Colors to Effectively Communicate Your Brand\*](#)

[\*Online Marketing 101\*](#)

[\*Developing Your Brand Strategy\*](#)

[\*Branding Your Brand\*](#)