



HOW TO BUILD YOUR BRAND

A step-by-step guide to
building a brand



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Business Guide
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Introduction

One of the challenges small businesses face is competition and, creating a strong and recognisable brand will help you differentiate your offering and set you apart from others whilst also becoming a valuable asset to your company.

Developing a strong brand should be a priority for all businesses because successful branding yields benefits such as increased customer loyalty, an improved image, and a relatable identity. It can also add value to your company

Our step-by-step guide will help you through the brand building process.

You may also wish to read our related Business Guides on [Understanding Brand Positioning](#) and [Building Brand Awareness](#)

To further help you, Acumenology has produced a series of Business Guides on a range of relevant topics. You can find these at: www.acumenology.co.uk/business-guides

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What is a brand?

A brand is a 'personality' that identifies a product, service or company.

It is a perception that lives in the minds of everyone who experiences it from employees, the media to most importantly, your customer.

As Jeff Bezos the founder of Amazon said, "Your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room."

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Why is branding important?

Branding is important because it makes a memorable impression on consumers and allows your customers and partners to know what to expect from your company.

It distinguishes you from your competitors and sets out what it is you offer that makes you the better choice.

Your brand is built to be a true representation of who you are as a business and, how you wish to be perceived.

If you are starting a new business do not think of creating a brand as a cost, but as an investment that will yield measurable returns to your company.

Here are some reasons you will benefit from investing in developing a strong brand.

Gets Recognition

The most important reason why creating a brand is important is because it is how a company gets recognised and becomes known to its customers.

The logo and tag line are two of the most important elements of branding as the logo is the face of the company whilst the tag line describes what it is you do.

This is why both elements should be powerful, memorable and make a strong first impression.

Increases Business Value

A strong recognisable brand can be a valuable asset to the company and can increase the value of the business.

If the brand is perceived positively, this will drive a company valuation higher. [How to value a company.](#)



Generates customers

A strong brand leads to a positive impression of the company and its offering and thus increase the likelihood of potential customers doing business with you.

Improve employee satisfaction

Having a strong brand and core values that reflect in the way an organisation is run increases employee satisfaction and gives them a great sense of pride and belonging. Think Google and Apple.

Creates trust

A well-developed brand with a cohesive strategy across all medium used will help the company build trust with potential customers and partners.

People are more likely to do business with an organisation that portrays itself as professional.

Being properly branded gives the impression that they can trust your company, the products and services you offer and the way you handle the business.

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How to build a brand

The definition of brand building is to generate awareness about your business using marketing strategies and campaigns with the goal of creating a unique and lasting image in the marketplace.

Building a brand does not happen overnight. It is a process whereby your ongoing effort will result in establishing long-term relationships with your customers.

Use the steps set out below as a guide on how to build a brand.

You may have done some of this work already. Nevertheless, it is still worthwhile going through the process to ensure you have ticked all the boxes.



Step 1 – Set out the purpose of your brand

A brand should have a purpose behind it.

Setting out the purpose of your brand will help you examine and develop your company and its offering.

There are four key questions you need to answer.

- Q1.** Why do you exist?
- Q2.** What problem are you solving?
- Q3.** What differentiates you from your competition?
- Q4.** Why should people buy your product?

This information will be used to build the foundation of your branding, through a tagline, slogans, voice, messaging, stories, visuals and more.

Leadership expert Simon Sinek developed a model called [The Golden Circle](#).

The Golden Circle model has three parts.

- What** the products or services you offer to your customers
- How** the things that differentiate you from the competition
- Why** the reason you are passionate and why you exist

The Golden Circle says that “people don’t buy what you do, people buy why you do it”
Take a look and see if this inspires you when setting out the purpose of your brand. [Click Here](#) to see Simon Sinek explain his Golden Circle at a Ted Talk event.



Step 2 – Research competitors

You can get very useful insights by researching your competitors.

Never imitate what they do, but learn from them and see how you can differentiate and strengthen your offering to make it more attractive to your potential customers.

There are a lot of competitor analysis examples and templates available online.
Remember to customise yours to suit your product and market.

Step 3 – Define your target market

A key element in building your brand will be to determine your target market.

Doing so will enable you to tailor your mission and messaging to meet their needs and expectations.

Try to avoid being general and try to be as specific as is possible and see if you can target a niche.

Of course, this may not always be possible but bear in mind that the competitive advantage when branding your business is to **narrow your target audience focus**.

This can help ensure that your brand message comes across crystal clear to the intended recipient.

Creating a buyer persona will help you understand your audience and thus develop and deliver targeted messaging.

Listed below are some elements to find out about your ideal customer.

Age	Marital / family status
Gender	Occupation
Location	Ethnic background
Income	Personality, attitudes, values
Education	Interests & hobbies

Ask the following questions of your target customer:

- Q.** How does your offering fit into their lifestyle?
- Q.** How and when will they use your product/service?
- Q.** What features are the most appealing?
- Q.** What media does your customer regularly use?

Step 4 – Set out a brand mission statement

Before you start to build a brand your customers trust, you need to know and communicate the value your business provides.

The mission statement should define your purpose for existing.

Everything from your logo to your tagline, voice, message, and personality should reflect that mission.

The mission statement is a summary that explains:

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

A good mission statement should provide a clearly stated purpose of your business, and the best mission statements should go hand-in-hand with your corporate philosophy and culture.

Some examples of mission statements are as follows:



Pret a Manger

"To create handmade natural food avoiding obscure chemicals and preservatives".

Amazon

"To be Earth's most customer-centric company where people can find and discover anything they want to buy online."

Apple

"Apple designs Macs, the best personal computers in the world, along with OS X, iLife, iWork and professional software. Apple leads the digital music revolution with its iPods and iTunes online store. Apple has reinvented the mobile phone with its revolutionary iPhone and App Store and is defining the future of mobile media and computing devices with iPad."

Google

"Google's mission is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful."

IKEA

"At IKEA our vision is to create a better everyday life for the many people. Our business idea supports this vision by offering a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them."

Step 5 – Set out the qualities and benefits of your offering.

Focus on the key qualities and benefits that make your company branding unique.

What are you offering, that no one else is offering?

Or

Are you offering something that is better/cheaper?

Focus on the qualities and benefits that give your customers a reason to choose your brand over another.

Example:

Apple: One of their key qualities is a **clean design**, and a key benefit is **ease of use**.

From unique packaging to their announcement events, Apple always reminds customers that its products can be used right out of the box.



Step 6 – Create a logo and tagline

Create a logo and tagline for your company that conveys the message you want.

The logo will become your identity, calling card, and the visual recognition of your promise.

So be willing to invest the time and money by creating something exceptional.

Step 7 – Build a brand story and message

If you believe in Simon [Sinek's Golden Circle theory](#) that "People don't buy what you do, people buy why you do it", it is important to develop a brand story/message as it gives you the opportunity to communicate on a human level and make a direct emotional connection with your customers.

This part of the brand development process goes beyond your logo and tagline to define the key aspects of:

- Who you are
- What you offer
- Why people should care

When doing so make sure you address not what your product can do...but why it is important to your customer.

A good example of this is [Toms Shoes](#) or [John Lewis](#) (never knowingly undersold)



Step 8 – Formulate a brand voice

Your brand voice is how you communicate with your customers, and how they respond to you.

Your voice and will depend on your mission statement, audience, and industry you are in and, should make sense and resonate with your target audience.

Some examples of adjectives that can describe your brand voice

- Professional
- Friendly
- Service-oriented
- Authoritative
- Technical
- Conversational
- Informative
- Understanding etc.



Step 9 – Integrate your brand everywhere

Your brand should be visible and reflected in everything that your customer can see, read, and hear.

Everything from business cards to advertisements, to packaging, to your office/retail environment including website and, not forgetting your social platforms.



Step 10 – Ongoing brand building

Brand building never stops. Now that you have developed your brand ensure you do the following:

Stay true to your brand

Consistency is essential. Use your chosen brand voice and imaging for every piece of content you create.

Be your brands biggest advocate

Spread the word amongst customers, employees and partners.

05 Conclusion

Your brand is the way the world perceives your company. Brand building is one of the most significant things you can do for your new or existing business.

It pays dividends over the life of your company, enabling to attract better customers with lower marketing costs, all while commanding higher prices.

It also leads to smoother sales, increased customer loyalty, the list of benefits goes on.

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