Your brand is defined by a customer’s overall perception of your business.

The ongoing effort of brand building will result in establishing long-term relationships with your customers.

This leads to a steady increase in sales, more projects, word-of-mouth referrals, and advocacy for your products or services.

Use the tips and templates in this workbook to help you on your journey of building a successful brand.

Are you ready to start? Here we go!
When determining your target audience, focus on who exactly you are trying to reach. You’ll tailor your mission and message to meet their exact needs.

The key is to get specific, by figuring out detailed behaviors and lifestyle of your consumers.

A competitive advantage when branding your business may be to narrow down your audience to a niche. This can help your brand message comes across crystal clear.

First things first...

Do you have a current customer/client base?

If yes:

Why do your customers buy from you?

Which customers purchase the most?

What product or service is your best seller?

TIP

It’s possible that you have more than one type of consumer in your target audience. This is common, and you can perform the same exercise to determine each one. Repeat the process of asking the questions about each persona.

Just don’t fall into the trap of saying: “I’ll target anyone who will buy my products or services!”
STEP 1  Define your brand’s target audience.

Determine the following factors about your customer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>INCOME LEVEL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION LEVEL</td>
<td>MARITAL OR FAMILY STATUS</td>
<td>OCCUPATION</td>
<td>ETHNIC BACKGROUND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONALITY, ATTITUDES, VALUES</td>
<td>INTERESTS/HOBIES</td>
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How does your product or service fit into your target customer’s lifestyle?

How and when will your target customer use the product or service?

What features are most appealing to your target customer?

What media does your customer turn to for info?  (Example: newspaper, blogs or online, events)
Before you can build a brand that your audience trusts, you need to know what value your business provides.

**Start small with your branding**, and remember to focus on your target niche audience first.

Craft a clear and concise expression of what your company is most passionate about. The mission statement should **define a purpose for existing**.

Use this space to brainstorm words and ideas for your brand mission statement:

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**Examples**

**NIKE**

“To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world.”

**WARBY PARKER**

“To offer designer eyewear at a revolutionary price, while leading the way for socially-conscious businesses.”

**AMERICAN RED CROSS**

“To prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.”

**STARBUCKS**

“To inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time.”

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Write your formalized brand mission statement here:
A main goal when branding your business is to **differentiate from the competition**. It can convince a customer to purchase from you over them.

Create a visual table to view similarities and differences of the competition, side-by-side. You can use a spreadsheet (Google Sheets, Excel), a notepad, or the template on the next page.

These are a few questions you want to answer and plug into your table:

Is the competitor consistent with their message and visual identity across channels?

What is the quality of the competitor’s products or services?

Does the competitor have customer reviews you can read, or social mentions about them?

In what ways does the competitor market their business, both online and offline?

Aside from this branding-related research, you can also **deep dive into other areas of competitive research** such as social media engagement, content publishing, SEO, lead generation.
### S T E P 3
Research brands within your industry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competitor</th>
<th>Message &amp; Visuals</th>
<th>Quality of Products or Services</th>
<th>Review &amp; Mentions</th>
<th>Marketing Efforts</th>
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</thead>
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</table>
What are you offering, that no one else is offering?

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

It’s important to note that this is not just a laundry list of the features your product or services offer to the customer or client. Think about **how you provide value** that improves consumers’ lives (outcomes or results that are **experienced by them**).

You CAN use your set of features to then identify qualities and benefits derived from each feature.

Use this matrix to map out features with the qualities and benefits which result from them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEATURE</th>
<th>QUALITY</th>
<th>BENEFIT 01</th>
<th>BENEFIT 02</th>
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**EXAMPLES**

- Authentic and transparent customer service.
- A better way to support productivity.
- Reducing costs with a more affordable option.
- Saving time on daily tasks.
When you think about building a brand, visuals probably come to mind first. This step may be the one where you probably need help with execution.

Be willing to invest the time and money by having something exceptional created to reinforce the visual identity of your brand.

Your logo will appear on everything that relates to your business. It will become your identity, calling card, and the visual recognition of your promise.

Share the following insights with your designer (along with all the other ideas from this workbook).

**What colors do you want to align with your brand? Any colors to avoid?**

**What emotion and symbolism should your logo portray?**

**Which five words should describe your logo?**

01 02 03 04 05

**Are there any existing brand logos that you like, and why?**
Your voice is dependent on your company mission, audience, and industry.

It’s **how you communicate with your customers**, and how they respond to you.

Ultimately, you want to choose a brand voice that makes sense and resonates with your target audience.

If you are using the correct voice, you have the strongest chance of **CONNECTING with consumers**.

Fill in these blanks and then notice the tone you have used. Is it funny? Scholarly? Sarcastic? Use this tone to determine how to **tell stories using your brand’s voice** consistently. *(exercise borrowed from The Muse)*

**I want my brand to make people feel** ____________.

___________ makes me feel this same way.

I want people to ____________ when they come into contact with my brand.

Three words that describe my brand are ____________, ____________, ____________

I want to mimic the brand voice of ________________.

I dislike brands that sound ________________.

Interacting with my customers/clients makes me feel ________________.
When brand building, tell customers succinctly who you are. Use the business voice you have chosen.

Your message should be intricately associated with your brand, and conveyed in a few sentences.

This part of the brand development process goes beyond your business logo or tagline to define key aspects of who you are, what you offer, and why people should care.

A brand message is an opportunity to communicate on a human level, making a direct emotional connection with your consumers.

Here’s where you take everything you have done in the previous six steps and synthesize it all together.

Draft your own brand message and elevator pitch in the space below:

**SPOTLIGHT**

TOMS Shoes has built a huge social following and overwhelming positive brand perception.

They clearly define their message on all their website:

“Improving lives. With every product you purchase, TOMS will help a person in need. One for One.”

The language used is understood immediately while striking an emotional chord.
Let your brand personality shine.

Your clients and customers are looking for an experience tailored to their needs, backed by genuine personal interaction.

Without over-thinking, use the chart below and place a dot closest to where you think your brand personality fits on either side of the axis for each line.

- Friendly / Personable
- High energy or spontaneous
- Modern, high tech, stylish
- Cutting-edge
- Fun
- Inclusive to all
- Corporate
- Planning, careful thinking
- Traditional / Classic
- Established
- Serious
- Exclusive

**Results mostly on the left side?**
Your business is more contemporary, and likely fast-moving embracing the latest technologies. Show personality in your branding with energy and approachability. Be fun and trendy, but with a style that relates to your audience for the long term.

**Results mostly on the right side?**
Your business relies on process and planning, possibly for higher end clients. Exhibit personality by communicating in a professional and authoritative manner. Share knowledge with a corporate voice, without being too unapproachable.

**A mix of results?**
Not every business or personal brand will fall neatly to one side or the other. And that’s okay! Sometimes, contrasting attributes can compliment each other in unexpected ways. Embrace this, and create the personality that best fits your vision and style.
Your brand should be visible and reflected in everything that your customer can see, read, and hear. Check this list to ensure that visuals and messaging are consistent everywhere.

### Office / Retail Environment
If a client walks into your office, or a customer walks into your store—your brand should be apparent in the following areas:

- □ Signage & displays
- □ Product & packaging
- □ Interior design
- □ Business cards
- □ Promotional material
- □ Personal interactions

### Social Platforms
Use your brand style guide to create consistency color and logo use, fonts, images, icons and patterns on the visual graphics for the following social channels:

- □ Facebook
- □ Google+
- □ Twitter
- □ LinkedIn
- □ Instagram
- □ Pinterest
- □ YouTube

### Website
Your website is one of the biggest assets in a branding toolbox—it’s the hub for all online marketing efforts. Core elements to include:

- □ Strong, prominent call-to-action
- □ Installation of Google analytics
- □ Optimized content for search engines
- □ Easy to find contact information
- □ Mobile-friendly design and functionality
- □ A simple navigation and user experience

### Resources
To brush up on your branding and marketing efforts...check out this additional content:

- □ 5 Most Common Website Design Mistakes to Avoid Right Now ➡️
- □ How to Set Realistic Social Media Goals for Business Growth ➡️
- □ 7 Effective Social Media Best Practices for Business ➡️
- □ How to Build a Successful Blog with the Right Goals ➡️
- □ 40 Blogging Tips and Tricks for Beginners to Grow a Blog ➡️
So you’ve laid out the foundation and established core elements of your business or personal brand building. What now?

Brand building never stops.

Here are the next long-term steps to support your ongoing efforts:

**STEP 10** Stay true to your brand.

**Consistency is key.** Unless you decide to change your brand into something that is more effective based on measured consumer response.

- Use your chosen brand voice and for every piece of content you create—both copy and graphics.
- Document all the brand guidelines you have created here, and distribute internally for reference.
- Don’t constantly change your branding. The inconsistency will confuse your customers.

**STEP 11** Be your brand’s biggest advocate.

**It’s up to you to spread the word.** No one knows your brand better than you.

Once you build a brand that works for your small business, you, your employee and your customers are the best advocates to market your brand.

- Ensure that new hires are a culture fit—aligning with the mission, vision, and values of your brand.
- Encourage employees to establish a personal brand that aligns with your company branding.
- Give your loyal customers a voice. Encourage them to post reviews, or share your content.
Brand building is one of the most significant things you can do for your new or existing business.

A solid brand building process can transform your business from a small player into a successful competitor.

You’ll discover that your customers will develop a deeper level of trust for your brand, and be more likely to purchase what you are selling.

Former Nike and Starbucks executive Scott Bedbury once said: ‘A brand is a story always being told’.

Go build an effective brand, and tell your story!

How are your brand building efforts coming along?

We’d love to hear: EMAIL US | TWEET | FACEBOOK

Ready to take the next step with your identity design, website development, or digital marketing?
Let’s chat! Contact FreshSparks today at 310-922-9730.