



22 Creating and communicating a brand identity

What is a brand?

A brand is far more than a snazzy name and a nice bit of artwork. Many people think that a brand is simply the company's logo or corporate identity. It is much more than that.

A brand is the memorable message that is created when a company successfully promotes externally the emotional connection it wants its customers to have with its business.

Why do you need a brand?

It's not just national businesses that need a brand image. Whatever sized business, club or personality you are, you need to have a clear identity and be memorable in your marketplace. The better your brand image, the more likely you are to sustain business growth and customer support.

Your challenge

Many businesses have outgrown their image or have one that sends the wrong messages out. If you are a new business you may not have given it any thought at all. Your brand identity and strap-line needs to be a true reflection of your essence and it must communicate instantly with your ideal target audience. It needs to reflect the business you are in and be easy to understand.

This is something you will use throughout your marketing and delivery materials. The more people see it, the more they will remember and associate it with you.

What makes a brand successful?

Clarity is important. A clear brand message combined with a clear point of difference is the key to success. Your brand image works hand in hand with your unique selling proposition. A successful brand cleverly positions its message and its image to fit with a perceived gap in the marketplace. A gap that people want filled. It then proceeds to maintain that brand value by providing a high level of consistency in both the promotion of and delivery of that value.

BRAND CREATION – SPECIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

To get this right you will need to focus outwards towards your existing and potential customers; they are the people you want to respond to your brand.

Step 1 – Research

- ▶ Look at other brands in your marketplace – what do you like?
- ▶ Consider what your current brand communicates to your customers.
- ▶ Ask your customers what they think.
- ▶ Ask people who don't use your business currently what they think.
- ▶ Listen, as perception is reality.
- ▶ Ask the same customer groups if they were buying a service like yours what their expectations would be.

Step 2 – Define desired brand values

- ▶ Create a list of the values people want from a business like yours.
- ▶ Brainstorm with your team the values you offer that your customers appreciate.
- ▶ Choose three or four main values that you would like to incorporate into your brand.

Step 3 – See the visual impact you want to create

- ▶ Write down words that describe the image you would like to portray to the marketplace.
- ▶ Find samples of the visual representations of those messages.
- ▶ Notice the impact of colour – choose colours that hit the right emotional buttons.
- ▶ Find a designer who listens to exactly what you want to achieve with your brand. Provide a full brief.

Step 4 – Fine tune with feedback

- ▶ Once some sample images have been created, get feedback from a selection of customers and members of the team.
- ▶ Ask yourself – if I was a customer for this service/product what would this new image communicate to me?

Example

Printinco used to be known as 'Back up Business Services' hidden away in a small office premises in Wallingford, Oxfordshire. It had inherited an old-fashioned image and a name that did not state clearly what the business was all about.

After conducting some local research to find out what people most wanted from a High Street Print Copy and Design company – the Printinco Brand was created to communicate the following:

- It's obviously print – no confusion.
- It looks good.
- It's modern – with white space and colour.
- It's clean and fresh – this is what your print will look like.
- The quality, professional work a customer would expect.
- A team to serve your needs.

People will remember your brand when they associate visually with a positive feeling that speaks value

How to use your new brand image

Once you have created your brand you will need to make sure that people see it and become familiar with it. Brands become memorable the more they are seen in the marketplace, so you will need to consider a brand awareness campaign. Your brand will be represented on everything you use to communicate with the public. Some useful ways to get your brand out there in the public domain and create awareness are as follows:

- Sponsoring floral displays on roundabouts.
- Bus and transport advertising.
- Banners and signs.
- Bus stop advertising in busy locations.
- Local TV advertising.
- Cinema advertising.
- Sponsoring perimeter boards at local sporting venues.

To make an impact your brand needs to be continually in front of people. You will need to be careful with your advertising budget and choose activities that offer continuity as well as a presence in front of the right people.

Think brand and be memorable to your marketplace