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The Beginner's Guide to Branding Your Small Business

Think of the world's most iconic brands: Nike, Apple, Amazon, Tesla, Google, Coca-Cola. These brands' logos alone symbolize quality, trust, and innovation. Everything from their fonts to their color schemes screams professionality and reliability.

Your small business's brand has the same potential—and it all starts with the details.

Your brand is made up of several elements, including the following:

- Name
- Logo
- Colors
- Fonts
- Design
- Voice
- Messaging
- Tagline
- Values
- And more

A brand encompasses everything that creates a perception in the minds of your customers—from its visual aspects (logos and design) to its personality (voice and messaging) and values (mission and vision).

Successful brands go way beyond a high-quality logo and a clever name. A unified brand fuses everything from products to customers to positioning into the combined package that *is* your company.

Whether you knew it or not, you started branding your company from Day 1. Ever since you began to visualize the solution, the product, and the business, you created your brand. However, the best business owners don't let the world define their brands—they make intentional decisions to shape their brands to the world.

Branding isn't just for the big fish, either. It doesn't only influence whether someone is pro-Nike or Adidas, or if they're a Mac or Microsoft user—it also determines whether customers will buy your tacos or your competitors' tacos, or whether a customer will walk into your store rather than another store without ever hearing of it before.

First, let's explore exactly why branding matters. Then, we'll share several step-by-step tactics to shape your brand in the minds of your customers.

Why Branding Matters

Define Your Brand's Core Identity

Bring Your Brand Identity to Visual Life

Let Your Customers Hear You

Start Building Your Brand Now

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Why Branding Matters

Customers interact with thousands of companies across a variety of channels every day. From their morning commutes to their email inboxes to their lunch spots, they're bombarded with branding and messaging practically 24/7.

With so many brands and interactions, most customers don't have time to shape their perceptions of each business proactively. Their opinions and judgments are formed passively through each mention, glimpse, ad, email, interaction, and purchase. That's why it's critical to create a unified brand that stays consistent across borders, channels, and even languages.

Here are a few eye-opening statistics that'll give you a sense of branding's power:

- Consistent brand presentation across all channels has been shown to increase revenue by up to 23%.
- It takes 5–7 brand impressions before a customer will remember your brand.
- 82% of investors see brand as an important factor in the companies they invest in.
- Color can improve brand recognition by as much as 80%. Research suggests that 85% of purchases can be attributed to color.
- 50% of job candidates say they wouldn't work for a company with a bad brand reputation—even for a raise.
- 89% of customers are loyal to brands that share their values.

Effective branding moves the needle—it's as simple as that. You're in complete control of your business's brand. Every design decision, marketing strategy, press release, and color choice shapes your brand's identity in your customers' minds.

Before you can transform your brand, you need to know your brand's core identity—or what you'd like it to be.

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Your brand should be a priority right from the get-go. Branding has the potential to play a more influential role than price or even innovation. Building a top-notch brand won't happen overnight. It's going to require a significant amount of time and research, and it might demand some of your budget—but this investment is well worth it in the end.

However, remember that your brand is never set in stone. The brand you establish today may shift over time, and you may need to make strategic changes to your logo, colors, typography, or even your voice to shape customers' perceptions in the way you desire.

Protect your brand. Establish guidelines to ensure it's portrayed appropriately across your platforms and other 3rd-party entities. Trademark your name, logo, taglines, slogans, and other brand-specific company assets.

Branding has always been important, but it'll become increasingly critical as attention spans shrink and digital milliseconds become more valuable. Make brand a priority from Day 1 to proactively shape your customers' perceptions of your business.

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Jesse Sumrak is a Social Media Manager for SendGrid, a leading digital communication platform. He's created and managed content for startups, growth-stage companies, and publicly-traded businesses. Jesse has spent almost a decade writing about small business and entrepreneurship topics, having built and sold his own post-apocalyptic fitness bootstrapped startup. When he's not dabbling in digital marketing, you'll find him ultrarunning in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Jesse studied Public Relations at Brigham Young University.

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