

# BUILDING YOUR BRAND

## Practice Guide

Companion Guide to the book  
THE Ministry of BRANDING

MIKE MARTIN

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**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 guide to help you on your journey of building a successful brand.

*Let's get started.*



## STEP 1

# DEFINE YOUR BRAND'S TARGET AUDIENCE

When determining your target audience, focus on who you are specifically 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?

### 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:

AGE	LOCATION	GENDER	INCOME LEVEL
EDUCATION LEVEL	MARITAL OR FAMILY STATUS	OCCUPATION	ETHNIC BACKGROUND
PERSONALITY, ATTITUDES, VALUES		INTERESTS/HOBBIES	

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?

## STEP 2

# DEFINE YOUR BRAND MISSION STATEMENT

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:

## 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.”*



## STEP 3

# RESEARCH BRANDS WITHIN YOUR INDUSTRY

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?

### TIP

Start by choosing a few competitors, two to four (2-4) is a good number for your comparison chart. You might want to take a look at other local businesses, or even aim to benchmark against name brands.

#### COMPETITOR 01

#### COMPETITOR 02

#### COMPETITOR 03

#### COMPETITOR 04



COMPETITOR	MESSAGE & VISUALS	QUALITY OF PRODUCTS OR SERVICES	REVIEW & MENTIONS	MARKETING
01				
02				
03				
04				

STEP 4

# OUTLINE QUALITIES & BENEFITS OF YOUR BRAND

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:

## EXAMPLES

- Authentic and transparent customer service.
- A better way to support productivity.
- Reducing costs with a more affordable option.
- Saving time on daily tasks.



FEATURE	QUALITY	BENEFIT 01	BENEFIT 02

FEATURE	QUALITY	BENEFIT 01	BENEFIT 02



## STEP 5

# (CREATE A BRAND LOGO AND TAGLINE

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).

### TIP

Hire a professional designer or creative agency with branding and identity design experience.

A designer will ensure that you get a unique and timeless mark for your business. They can also develop brand guidelines for consistency in future application of the logo.



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

What emotion and symbolism should your logo portray?

## STEP 6

# FORMULATE YOUR BRAND

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 \_\_\_\_\_

## EXAMPLES

There are endless adjectives and possibilities that can build a brand voice behind your messaging:

- Professional
- Friendly
- Service-oriented
- Authoritative
- Technical
- Promotional
- Conversational
- Informative

...and the list goes on.



## STEP 7

# BUILD A BRAND MESSAGE & ELEVATOR PITCH

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:

### SPO TLIGHT

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.

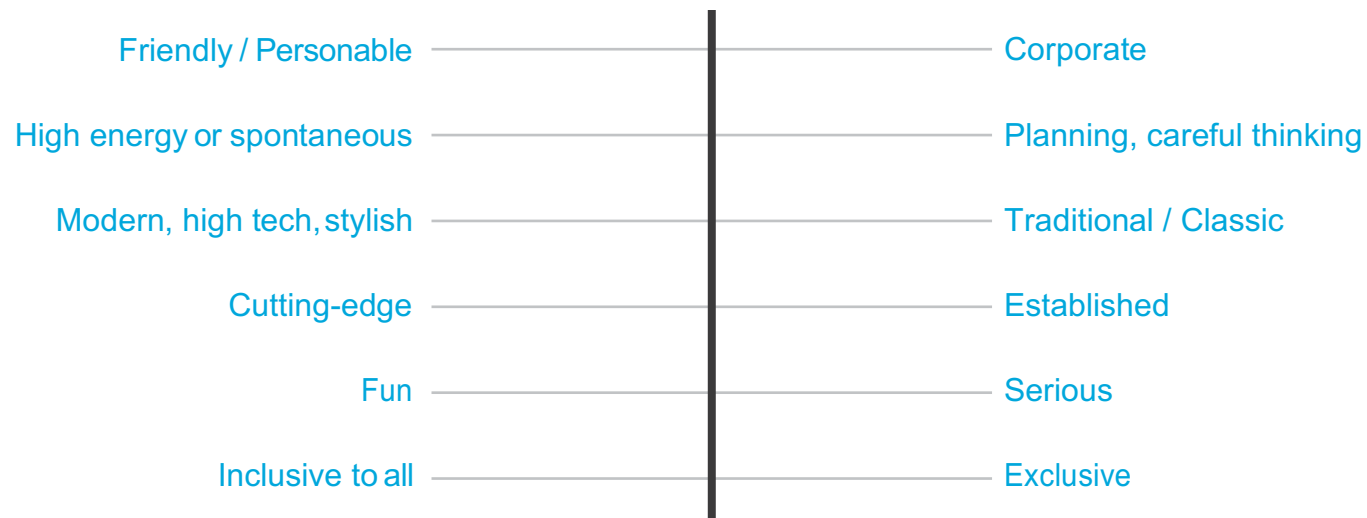


STEP 8

# 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.



***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?***

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## STEP 9

# INTEGRATE YOUR BRAND EVERYWHERE

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.

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### 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**

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### 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+**

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### 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**
-

STEPS 10 & 11

# ONGOING BRAND BUILDING


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.

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!**

What to learn more about branding and gain more tips?

Subscribe to my website: [www.theministryofbranding.com](http://www.theministryofbranding.com)

