

Building Your Brand Identity

*How to construct a successful business by crafting a
brand that is true to you and attracts your ideal market.*

midwest made

DESIGN STUDIO

Brand Strategy Essentials

Before making any decisions on the visuals of your brand, you need to get some basics addressed first. These questions will help you realize your Brand Strategy, and in turn, you will revisit your strategy for almost every aspect of your business to stay consistent and true to the origin of why you started.

About Your Brand

- What is your mission statement?
Define what your business is, who you want to serve, and how you serve them. Try to condense it into one sentence.
- What is your vision?
Define what greater cause your business is contributing to. Have one focal point.
- What are your values?
Brainstorm and choose the top five values you want your brand to encompass.

Beat the Competition

Now research your competition. Find how you can differentiate yourself from them.

- Who is your competition?*
- What is your Unique Selling Proposition?*
- Why would someone choose you over your competitors?*
- How can you leverage your unique strengths to market your business?*

Notes

Know Your Ideal Audience

Now that you have a solid foundation for what defines your brand, it's time to explore who you want to serve. This is your dream client or customer. You might be convinced they don't exist, but you'll be surprised. The best way to think of this audience is to condense it into one person, called a persona.

About Your Audience

- Gather some target market research.
You can search online for what a typical customer looks like in your market, read books, or simply just ask someone who personifies your ideal customer/client.

- Who is my ideal persona?
Define as much as you can about this person. What does he/she look like, hobbies, pets, kids, career, salary, etc.

- What values does your brand share with your persona?
The values don't have to be the same, but find any similarities and hone in on that. This is how your brand relates to them.

- Where does your persona hang out?
Finding where they hang out online (what social platforms, threads, etc) and where they hang out in real life (coffee shops, elementary schools?) will help you decide what marketing materials your brand will need.

Notes

Create a Brand Moodboard

It's time for some visuals! The moodboard is the best way to transition all of the words you've written thus far into a visual direction. You will use this as inspiration as well as a filter for conceptualizing your brand identity design. Along with the brand strategy, you will want to visit this board repeatedly.

Moodboard Elements

Moodboards, if you're not familiar with them, are similar to collages. They should consist of different visuals that embody your brand based on what you've written thus far. Try finding the following inspiration:

- Fonts/Typography/Lettering*
- Photography Style/Vibe*
- Logos*
- People that resemble your persona.*
- Architecture or interior design that embodies your vision or persona.*
- Anything else that inspires you!*

Use these visuals as inspiration, meaning use them as a jumping off point. Please do not copy other people's work - it's illegal!

Notes

Design Your Logo System

Congrats! You've done all the prep work to finally get started with design!

The key to creating a brand that is irresistible to your target audience is to visually communicate your objectives. Revisit your brand strategy, audience, and moodboard as often as you need to best illustrate them in your designs.

Elements of a Great Logo

The first mistake people make when it comes to designing a logo is cluttering it with unnecessary design elements. Embrace simplicity. It's harder than it looks!

- Keep it Simple*
- Make it Recognizable*
- Make it Scalable*
- Make it Work in Black and White*
- Make it Timeless*
- Limit 1-3 Colors Max*

I recommend setting a timer for 20 minutes to sketch as many different ideas for your logo as you can. Try to fill out a whole page with ideas and don't worry about the details. This taps you into your creative subconscious. You'll be amazed at what you come up with!

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Wrap it Up: Brand Guidelines

As I like to say, your logo is the face of your business. Now, it's time to give it a body and personality. You do this by creating supplemental design collateral. Then, gather all of the designs you'll be using for your brand and keep them in a brand guideline for future referencing by you and your team.

Further Developing Your Brand

Now that you have your awesome logo, it's time to place it in various templates you'll be using. Think of when your brand is exposed to your persona: email, proposals, receipts, packaging, business card, letter, online and print ads, the list goes on.

- Make a list of template ideas.

Brainstorm what templates you can benefit from so you're not scrambling to put something together last minute when you need it.

- Save images of the templates for your brand guidelines.

This brand book PDF should not only house your logo and color palette, but also your brand strategy, values, persona, moodboard, photography style, and application examples. This will help you stay consistent throughout the brand experience and will help new team members learn how to create content that is "on-brand."

Notes

YOU DID IT!

Congrats on Your Brand!

A few notes to wrap up this journey:

1. Keep your brand guidelines updated.

It's a "living document," which means it's meant to evolve over time as your business does. This will help you and your team stay up to date and continue to produce marketing collateral efficiently and consistently.

2. Stay consistent.

Resist the urge to change things up just because you feel like it or you're tired of how something looks. If you can find a valid reason to change the design, like it's not attracting your ideal client or your business has pivoted, then go ahead and refine starting from Stop 1 again.

3. Clarity comes from imperfect action.

If you're like me, then you've found yourself doubting every single answer you wrote on this roadmap. Well, I'm here to tell you that what's more important than perfect is momentum. You just have to take action and clarity will come through trial and error. You can't learn if you can't try, right?