

39 SHARES



BLOG

Igniting the business of creative on the web.

SMALL BUSINESS ([HTTPS://FRESHSPARKS.COM/CATEGORY/SMALL-BUSINESS/](https://freshsparks.com/category/small-business/))

11 Simple Steps for a Successful Brand Building Process



Sonia Gregory (<https://freshsparks.com/about/>)

UPDATED MAY 1, 2018

10 MIN READ

Follow @FreshSparks (<https://twitter.com/FreshSparks>)



912 575 190 28 1.7K SHARES

Make no mistake about it: a recognizable and loved brand is one of the most valuable assets a company owns.

According to a [Nielsen survey](http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2015/understanding-the-power-of-a-brand-name.html) (<http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2015/understanding-the-power-of-a-brand-name.html>), 59% of consumers prefer to buy new products from brands familiar to them.

As a small business, you may be competing against big brands with devoted customers and unlimited marketing budgets. That's why you have to find ways to differentiate—with a solid brand building process of your own.

How do you build a brand?

Look:

Branding is much more than just a cool logo or well-placed advertisement.

You need to do more.

**BONUS GUIDE**

Use our step-by-step workbook with tips, templates and guidance on building a brand for your business! Find your target audience, research competitors...and much more.

DOWNLOAD NOW

39
SHARES

19

20

(https://
in
/share?u

(https://
/share?u

Let me provide you with a quick definition before diving into the nitty-gritty of brand building.

What is a brand?

Simply put, your brand is defined by a customer's overall perception of your business.

A successful brand has to be *consistent in communication and experience*, across many applications:

- Environment (storefront or office)
- Print, signage, packaging
- Website & online advertising
- Content marketing & social media
- Sales & customer service

Now, brand building being simple? The truth is: it doesn't happen overnight...*or even in a few months*.

Building a brand is definitely a process. However, the ongoing effort will result in establishing long-term relationships with your customers.

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

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

CLICK TO TWEET 

(https://twitter.com

/share?text=Your+brand+is+defined+by+a+customer%27s+overall+perception+of+your+business.+%23branding+%23smallbiz&url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks)

I simplified the path for a brand building process below, to help your company or **personal brand** (<http://upcity.com/blog/why-every-agency-owner-needs-to-develop-a-personal-online-brand/>) gain a more loyal following.

Are you wondering where to start?

Use these steps as guidelines for how to build a brand!

How to Build a Brand

1. Determine your brand's target audience.

The foundation for building your brand is to determine the **target audience** (<https://www.thebalancesmb.com/focus-and-identify-your-target-audience-2294844>) that you'll be focusing on.

You can't be everything to everyone, right?

When brand building, keep in mind 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. Figure out detailed behaviors and lifestyle of your consumers.

I'll explain with a few brief examples:

- single moms who work from home
- tech-savvy early adopters
- college students studying abroad
- executive recruiting professionals

Audience Persona Demographics



Age: *25-32*
 Gender: *Female*
 Location: *Urban*
 Income Level: *\$35,000 – \$47,000*
 Level of Education: *College Graduate*



Source: CoSchedule (<https://coschedule.com/blog/blog-post-templates/>)

Solidify a picture of your consumers, then learn how to create a brand identity that **they can understand and relate to**.

You may come to realize that the competitive advantage when branding your business is to narrow your audience focus. This can help ensure that your brand message comes across crystal clear.

Identifying the target audience for your services or products is an exercise that will affect and benefit all areas of your brand building process, particularly marketing efforts. You want the right person consuming your content, clicking on your ads, opting into your email list, etc.

Determining the right target audience will support your overall digital brand strategy for marketing. So it is definitely an important first step!

SEE ALSO: [How to Create a Digital Brand Strategy for Optimal Growth \(https://freshsparks.com/digital-brand-strategy/\)](https://freshsparks.com/digital-brand-strategy/)

When brand building, keep in mind who exactly you are trying to reach.
 Tailor your mission and message to meet their specific needs.

CLICK TO TWEET

(<https://twitter.com>

[/share?text=When+brand+building%2C+keep+in+mind+who+exactly+you+are+trying+to+reach.+Tailor+your+mission+and+message+to+meet+their+specific+needs.+url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks](https://twitter.com/share?text=When+brand+building%2C+keep+in+mind+who+exactly+you+are+trying+to+reach.+Tailor+your+mission+and+message+to+meet+their+specific+needs.+url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks))

2. Establish a brand mission statement.

Have you thought about your mission? In essence, you'll have to craft a clear expression of what your company is most passionate about.

Before you can build a brand that your target audience trusts, you need to know what value your business provides.

The mission statement basically defines a purpose for existing. It will inform every other aspect of your brand building strategies.

Everything from your logo to your tagline, voice, message, and personality should reflect that mission.

What's your mission? Craft a clear expression of what your company is most passionate about.

CLICK TO TWEET

(<https://twitter.com>

[/share?text=What%27s+your+mission%3F+Craft+a+clear+expression+of+what+your+business+is+passionate+about.+%23branding+%23smallbiz&url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks](https://twitter.com/share?text=What%27s+your+mission%3F+Craft+a+clear+expression+of+what+your+business+is+passionate+about.+%23branding+%23smallbiz&url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks))

Brand Building Examples: Nike

We all know the Nike tagline: *Just Do It*. But do you know their mission statement?

Nike's mission (<http://about.nike.com/>) is: "*To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world*".

You can see the Nike mission everywhere. They focus on all types of athletes using Nike products to be their best self.

39
SHARES

19

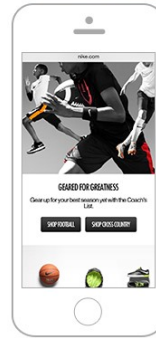
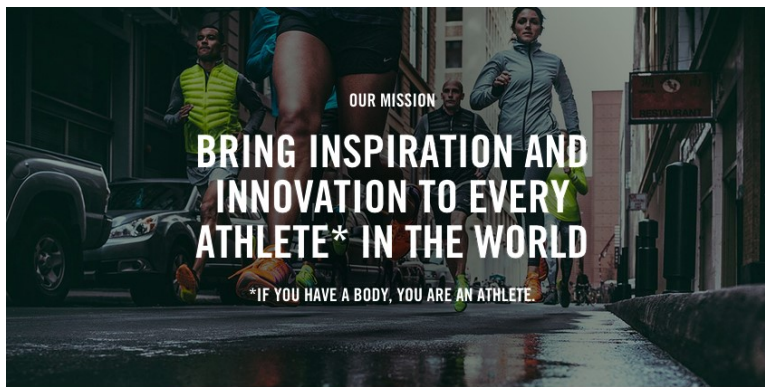
f

20

(https://

https://

share?u



Nike goes even further with their brand mission, by adding a footnote to the statement: *"If you have a body, you are an athlete"*. Think about how wide their target audience becomes with a disclaimer like that!

The company has built up such a reputation and brand following, that they are able to increase their target to accommodate every "body".

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

With time, your brand loyalty may grow enough to expand your reach.

Take a step back for minute...gut check on whether you really committed to Step 1 of determining who your exact consumer is. It's one of the most important branding process steps of them all.

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

CLICK TO TWEET

(https://twitter.com

/share?text=Start+small+with+your+branding+and+remember+to+focus+on+your+target+niche+audience+first.+%23branding+%23smallbiz&

url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks)

3. Research brands within your industry niche.

You should never imitate exactly what the big brands are doing in your industry.

But, you should be aware of what they do well (or where they fail).

The goal is to differentiate from the competition. Convince a customer to purchase from you over them!

We're always thinking about how to make a brand stand out. Don't skip this step in the brand building process.

Research your main competitors or benchmark brands. Study how they have effectively, and ineffectively gone about building a brand name.

For a brand name to be effective, it needs to be easy for consumers to recognize and remember.

Creating a brand competitor research spreadsheet

Start by creating a brand competitor spreadsheet for comparison. You can use Google sheets, Excel, or even just a notebook.

39
SHARES

19

20

(https://
s/cws/

(https://
/share?u

Then, answer these fundamental questions.

- Is the competitor consistent with messaging 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?

Choose 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.

One of the biggest brand building goals is to differentiate from the competition. Convince a customer to purchase from you over them!

CLICK TO TWEET 

(https://twitter.com

/share?text=One+of+the+biggest+brand+building+goals+is+to+differentiate+from+the+competition.+Convince+a+customer+to+purchase+from+you+over+them%21+&url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks)

4. Outline the key qualities & benefits your brand offers.

There will always be brands with bigger budgets and more resources to command their industry.

Your products, services, and benefits belong solely to you.

You have to delve down deep and figure out what you offer, that no one else is offering.

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

Assuming you know exactly who your target audience is (see Step 1), give them a reason to choose your brand over another.

It's important to note that this is not just a laundry list of **the features** (<https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/02/21/features-vs-benefits>) 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*).

Here are a few examples:

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

Brand Building Example: Apple

Apple (<https://www.apple.com/>) is obviously not just another computer company. One of their key qualities is **clean design**, and a key benefit is **ease of use**.

From unique packaging to their announcement events, Apple always reminds customers that its products can be used right out of the box.

Do you remember Apple's slogan back in 1997-2002? It was "*Think Different*". This notion continues to exist, today.

39 SHARES

19

20

https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/02/21/features-vs-benefits

https://freshsparks.com/successful-brand-building-process/



5. Create a brand logo & tagline.

When you think about how to build a brand, visuals probably come to mind first. This step may be the one where you need help with execution.

The most exciting (and arguably the most important piece) of the brand building process, is to create a brand logo and tagline for your company.

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

So be willing to invest the time and money by creating something exceptional to reinforce the visual identity for your business.

Need help branding? Hire a professional designer or creative agency with logo and identity design experience, to help make your brand stand out.

Their expertise will ensure that you get a unique and timeless mark for your business.

A designer can also **develop brand guidelines** (<https://designschool.canva.com/blog/your-brand-needs-a-visual-style-guide/>), to ensure consistency for any future application of the logo and associated color palette.

A strong brand style guide will include the following things:

- Logo size and placement
- Color palette
- Typography and fonts
- Iconography
- Photography/image style
- Web elements

Hire a professional designer or creative agency with branding and identity

39
SHARES

19

20

11

1

design experience, to help you build your brand.

CLICK TO TWEET 

(<https://twitter.com>

/share?text=Hire+professional+designer+or+creative+agency+with+branding+and+identity+design+experience+to+help+you+build+your+brand.+%23branding+%23sr
url=<http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks>)

We're almost halfway through the steps of brand building. If you've made it this far, give yourself a high five.

⇨ [Download our step-by-step workbook full of tips and templates to learn how to build your brand.](#)

6. Form your brand voice.

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.

A **brand voice** (<https://www.themuse.com/advice/4-steps-to-finding-your-brands-voice>) could be:

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

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

Ultimately, you want to choose a brand voice that makes sense and resonates with your target customers. (*Again, going back to Step 1!*)

You'll see that if you find and use the correct brand voice, you have the strongest chance of **connecting with consumers**.

This is particularly important when publishing blog articles or social media posts. Maintaining a consistent voice will help your brand image become recognized on multiple channels in the same way. A community of followers, readers or subscribers will come to expect a certain brand voice and brand personality (*see Step 8*) when they consume your content.

SEE ALSO: [40 Blogging Tips and Tricks to Help Your Brand Grow a Blog](https://freshsparks.com/blogging-tips-and-tricks-for-beginners/) (<https://freshsparks.com/blogging-tips-and-tricks-for-beginners/>)

Brand Building Examples: Virgin America

Virgin America (<https://www.alaskaair.com/>) is known for its friendly and reliable customer service, and their voice constantly builds that brand.

On Twitter, notice their personable style—using location-based humor in this instance. They also reinforce the value that they bring to their customers—guaranteeing power outlets on every flight.

Fish sticks will fly at Pike Place before we ever offer a flight without power outlets. **#FleetWide**
(<https://twitter.com/hashtag/FleetWide?src=hash>)
— Virgin America (@VirginAmerica) August 4, 2015 (<https://twitter.com/VirginAmerica/status/628706988294316032>)

Choose a brand voice that makes sense and resonates with your target customers.

CLICK TO TWEET 

(<https://twitter.com>

/share?text=Choose+a+branding+voice+that+makes+sense+and+resonates+with+your+target+customers.+%23branding+%23smallbiz&
url=<http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks>)

39
SHARES

19

20

5/5

5/5

7. Build a brand message and elevator pitch.

When building a brand, 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 1-2 sentences.

This part of the brand development process goes beyond your logo and tagline to define the 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.

What this means, is that the language you use should be understood immediately while striking an emotional chord.

Make it simple and clear.

Most importantly: when creating a brand message, address not what your product can do...but why it is important to your customer.

TOMS Shoes (<http://www.toms.com/>) has built a huge social following and overwhelming positive brand perception.

They clearly define their message front and center on their website: *"Improving lives. With every product you purchase, TOMS will help a person in need. One for One."*

39
SHARES


19

20

(https://
in
/ews/

(https://
/share?u

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

CLICK TO TWEET 

39
SHARES

19

20

(https://
news/

(https://
share?u

(<https://twitter.com>

/share?text=A+brand+message+is+an+opportunity+to+communicate+on+a+human+level+with+your+consumer.+%23branding+%23smallbiz&url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks)

8. Let your brand personality shine.

Customers aren't looking for another cookie-cutter company who offers the same thing as everyone else.

They are looking for an experience tailored to their needs, backed by genuine personal interaction.

Source: Straight Marketing (<https://www.straightmarketing.co.uk/2016/02/what-is-your-brand-personality/>)

Wondering how to brand your business in a unique way? Make your personality stand out in every aspect of your brand building process.

Be consistent with this brand personality (<https://louder.online/building-brand-personality/>) across all points of contact.

It can be as simple as:

- a conversational voice in communication (using "I", and "you")
- sharing behind-the-scenes content
- telling stories about real experiences

- describing your products/services in a quirky manner

Make your personality stand out in every aspect of your brand image building.

CLICK TO TWEET 

39
SHARES

19

20

19

19

(<https://twitter.com>

[/share?text=Make+your+personality+stand+out+in+every+aspect+of+your+brand+building.+%23branding+%23smallbiz&url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks](https://twitter.com/share?text=Make+your+personality+stand+out+in+every+aspect+of+your+brand+building.+%23branding+%23smallbiz&url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks))

9. Integrate your brand into every aspect of your business.

The brand building process never stops.

Your brand should be visible and reflected in everything that your customer can see, read, and hear.

Let me explain.

If a client walks into your office, or a customer walks into your store—your brand image should be on display both in the environment and with personal interactions.

Anything tangible—from business cards to advertisements, to packaging and product—needs the stamp of your logo.

On any digital platform, ensure that your brand looks the same everywhere. Use your brand style guide to create consistency with visuals such as color and logo use, fonts, photography etc.

When you design your website: incorporate your voice, message, and personality into the content.

Profile pages for social media networks should be branded visually, and with your chosen voice for engagement.

SEE ALSO: 7 Effective Social Media Best Practices for Business (<https://freshsparks.com/social-media-best-practices-for-business/>)

And don't forget about video! YouTube, Facebook Video and Facebook Live, Snapchat and **Instagram Stories** (<https://www.singlegrain.com/video-marketing/instagram-stories-how-brands-can-benefit-from-this-new-feature/>) are all platforms that need to have content executed with your unique brand voice and personality.

For those venturing into podcast audio, adhere to a theme that supports your brand message, value and voice.

Warby Parker (<https://www.warbyparker.com/>) has managed to quickly develop a brand that is unique and best in class. Their innovative product home try-on experience, retail environment, and digital content marketing efforts are perfectly tailored to the lifestyle of its target audience.

39
SHARES

19

20

(https://
si/ews/

(https://
/share?u

Your brand should be visible and reflected in everything that your customer sees (and doesn't see).

CLICK TO TWEET 

(https://twitter.com

/share?text=Your+brand+should+be+visible+and+reflected+in+everything+that+your+customer+sees+%28and+doesn%E2%80%99t+see%29.+%23branding+%23smallbiz&url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks)

10. Stay true to your brand building.

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

Once you've chosen a brand voice, use it for every piece of content you create. (See above, Step 6 in the brand building process.)

Document all the brand guidelines you create and distribute internally for reference.

Don't constantly change your branding. The inconsistency will confuse your customers, and make long-term brand building more difficult.

Brand Building Example: Starbucks

Starbucks (<http://www.starbucks.com/>) is the world's leading specialty coffee retailer, and their brand has always promised to bring people together.

The Starbucks mission?

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

39
SHARES

19

20


(https://
s/fews/

(https://
/share?u

That's why at every store you'll find free Wi-Fi, large tables, and soothing music to make chatting with others easy. They always write your name on your coffee for an extra personal touch.

Even despite a **logo change in 2011** (<http://www.csmonitor.com/Business/new-economy/2011/0106/Starbucks-logo-change-No-name.-More-mermaid.-Will-it-sell-more-coffee>) (removing the company name!), the Starbucks brand perception remains strong. When you see that simplified green mermaid logo, what do you feel? I guarantee it's something.

Once you've chosen a voice, use it for every piece of content you create.

CLICK TO TWEET 

(<https://twitter.com>

/share?text=Once+you+choose+a+brand+voice%2C+use+it+for+every+piece+of+content+you+create.+%23branding+%23smallbiz&url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks)

11. Be your brand's biggest advocate.

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

No one knows your brand better than you, so it's up to you to spread the word.

When hiring employees, ensure that they are a culture fit—aligning with the mission, vision, and values of your brand.

Encourage employees to **establish a personal brand** (<http://www.quickspout.com/the-complete-guide-to-building-your-personal-brand/>) that aligns with your company branding, further strengthening reach.

Give your loyal customers a voice. Encourage them to post reviews, or share your content.

No one knows your brand better than you, so it's up to you to spread the word.

CLICK TO TWEET

(<https://twitter.com/share?text=No+one+knows+your+brand+better+than+you%2C+so+it%E2%80%99s+up+to+you+to+spread+the+word.+%23branding+%23smallbiz&url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks>)

39
SHARES

19



20

([https://](https://www.facebook.com/shares/)

www.facebook.com/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

/shares/

Conclusion

Brand building can be 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.

Develop a consistent message and visual identity to reinforce your mission.

Integrate your brand into every aspect of customer experience: from your storefront to your website, to your personal interactions!

Think you are well informed about how to build a brand? Let's recap the steps of brand building:

How to Build a Brand

1. Determine your brand's target audience.
2. Establish a brand mission statement.
3. Research brands within your industry niche.
4. Outline the key qualities and benefits your brand offers.
5. Create a brand logo and tagline.
6. Form your brand voice.
7. Build a brand message and elevator pitch.
8. Let your brand personality shine.
9. Integrate your brand into every aspect of your business.
10. Stay true to your brand building.
11. Be your brand's biggest advocate.

I'll leave you with one of my favorite quotes about building brands:

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

CLICK TO TWEET 

(<https://twitter.com>

/share?text=Former+%40Nike+%26+%40Starbucks+executive+%40ScottBedbury+said%3A+%27A+brand+is+a+story+always+being+told%27.+%23branding+%23smallbiz&url=http://bit.ly/2CjtVLv&via=FreshSparks)

Go build an effective brand, and tell *your* story.

Which brands do you think succeed the most in their brand building process?

Share your comments or questions below!

BONUS GUIDE

Use our step-by-step workbook with tips, templates and guidance on creating a brand for your business!
Find your target audience, research competitors...and much more.

DOWNLOAD NOW

Need branding help? **FreshSparks** is a creative studio specializing in brand strategy, website design, and digital marketing. We can help you with creating a brand successfully. **Get a free consultation** (<https://freshsparks.com/contact/>) for your next project.

If you liked this post, please share!