

# Essential steps to branding: a guided checklist

This guided checklist will offer you direction and assistance in developing and improving your brand and branding methods.

"A brand is the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer's decision to choose one product or service over another."  
~ Seth Godin

## CULTURE

1

Vision, mission, values and identity:  
Write your brand's vision statement. Write your business mission statement. Write your brand's values.

Before you get to work on anything else you should establish your brand's vision statement, mission statement, values and identity. You can usually determine and develop these integral pillars from your business plan. Strong pillars will aid in directing your business toward its goals.

2

Direction, focus and motivation:  
Tell your staff about your brand's identity and gain their buy-in.

Once you've established your brand's identity you can begin to roll it out amongst your staff. It's so important that your staff have a direction and focus to work towards, which should ignite motivation. Give them a purpose that will drive them. This aids in building a healthy work culture and positive staff morale.

3

Brand story:  
Put context to your identity.

Why did you start your brand? What does it mean to you? Describe your journey up until this point. This is your brand's story and will assist your customers in establishing their loyalty.

## LOOK & FEEL

4

Logo:  
Design a logo that encapsulates your brand's identity.

A strong, distinguishable logo can help position and offer recognition to prospective customers in your market. A logo that is easy on the eye and bold can aid in recognition. Your logo needs to be reflective of your brand's colours and styling elements.

5

Colour palette:  
Choose a colour palette that represent your brand's identity.

Distinctive colours that represent your logo and style are recommended for a colour palette. Your colour palette should be set and not waiver as it will aid in brand recognition. Your colour palette will be used in all your marketing collateral.

6

Styling elements:  
Choose your styling elements.

Styling elements are patterns, shapes and images that are usually derived from your logo. You should use them consistently in your branded collateral. The styling elements can be an extension of your logo's elements or they can be different. Just like the colour palette, styling elements should be set and not waiver as they can aid in brand recognition.

## VOICE & MESSAGE

7

Value proposition:  
Write your key messages.

What value are you offering to your customers? Why should they buy from you? Your brand's value proposition is essentially your key messages as they summarise what you can offer and do for your customers. It's extremely important in differentiating your brand from your competitors and affirming your customers decision to buy from you. Determine your target markets before you develop your key messages, this will give you a fair idea of what your market's needs, problems, demographic etc. are.

8

Tone of voice:  
Choose the tone of voice you want all your branded collateral to have.

Tone of voice is essentially the character of your brand. It's about how you say things and the way you say it. When you're determining the tone of your writing you should think about what impression you want to leave on your customers.

9

Positioning:  
Decide on the position you would like to hold in the market.

Where would you like your brand to sit amongst your competitors and customers? Your tone of voice and messaging will naturally aid in positioning your brand in the market if you pay proper attention to establishing them. It will also aid your customers to identify your brand and formulate an opinion about your brand.

## USER EXPERIENCE

10

Customer service:  
Are your customer's wants, needs and opinion at the front of your mind?

Customer service is one of, if not the most important aspect to your brand and its longevity in the market. What kind of service do you want to offer your customer? This will result in a take home message that will likely form your customer's opinion about your brand.

11

Customer take home:  
Will your customers say fabulous things about you to the next person?

What your customers take home and share with their friends will largely make up your brand's reputation, credibility and authority in market and essentially shape your customers loyalty to you.