

Branding: Week 2

Building your brand strategy.

What is it:

Brand strategy is a long-term plan for the development of a brand in order to achieve specific goals. A well-defined and executed brand strategy affects all aspects of a business and is directly connected to your customer needs, emotions and the competition environment.

Common problems/mistakes:

- Many start-ups do not have a strategy.
- Many businesses do not have a clear brand story.
- Some businesses confuse their brand strategy with their business strategy which is focused on achieving business goals, not building a brand to support business goals.
- Many businesses lose focus and do not stick to the plan.

Why is it important?

- Distinguishes you from your competitors.
- Outlines how you do what you do.
- Helps you to communicate your message clearly.
- Provides consistency for your customers.
- Provides your staff with focus.

How to do it well?

Step 1: Audit and assess your core identity – your vision, mission and values.

Step 2: Market research and competitor analysis – identify how big your market is and who the major players are.

Step 3: Customer persona – not just demographics – gain a sense of what makes the people you're trying to connect with tick.

Step 4: Perception audit – do an internal and external audit to identify similarities and discrepancies in perception. These insights will help you understand the gap between where you are (or have been) and where you want to be.

Step 5: Brand proposition – an outline of what differentiates you in the marketplace, or how you are different from your competitors.

Step 6: Value proposition – a succinct explanation of both the functional and emotional benefits of your product or service.

Step 7: Tag line – An extension of your brand position, an interpretation of the value proposition.

Step 8: Messaging guidelines – one to three significant brand stories (talking points) that reinforce your value proposition.

Step 9: Brand guidelines – includes visual guidelines and verbal guidelines (we will go deeper into this in the next module).

Step 10: Content Strategy – includes everything from personas to distribution channels, to ultimately the editorial and creative direction of your content.

Tips for success:

- Be clear and stay focused on your goals.
- Make sure everything aligns and is consistent.
- Keep it simple and do not over complicate it.
- Take your time with it and give it the time it needs.

Template/Checklist:

Download your brand strategy template/checklist [here](#).

Task:

Complete your brand strategy using the template provided.