

STAND OUT BRAND

Actionable strategies to build
a powerful brand

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Devapriya Khanna

Devapriya Khanna is a leading brand strategist and marketing consultant. She is the Founder and CEO of 2 businesses, 212° Brand Lab (a brand consultancy firm) and Connexus (an accelerator for female founders of conscious businesses). She is an early-stage investor and a mentor for women in business.

Before pivoting to entrepreneurial life, Devapriya has spent over 18 years in the corporate world, building power brands and leading global teams that have won consumer confidence & delivered outstanding business results.

As a seasoned entrepreneur, she now works with organizations and leaders to build brands, businesses, and communities. She supports ambitious women in business to skyrocket their income, influence, and impact. She also advises global businesses seeking expansion into India.

A staunch advocate of visibility, networking, and community, Devapriya is an international speaker, a Forbes contributor, and an official member of the Forbes Business Council 2021. She was awarded the Exceptional Woman of Excellence 2019 by the Women Economic Forum.



WHAT IS BRAND?

What comes to your mind when you hear the word 'BRAND'?

A logo? A business card? An icon? A combination of that maybe?

Earlier during my corporate career and even when I started working with entrepreneurs to help craft their brand, I would start by asking my audience this one question: “What is a brand” — the answers I would get would be similar: logo, image, name.

The narrative is slowly changing. When I ask this question now, I hear words like ‘experience’ and ‘perception’.

Yes, the truth is that “Brand” is not to be confused with your logo, tagline, or your company website. These are just the visual identity elements of your business. Branding is more than this.

Jeff Bezos says

“A brand is what people say about you when you’re not in the room”.

A brand is a collection of experiences and perceptions in the mind of your customer.

It is our relationship with a brand that makes us like it or reject it.

Everything that someone thinks and feels about your business; what they say about your business to their friends and family - ultimately that is what a brand is.

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

“Brands are built by consumers, not companies.”





WHY IS BRANDING SO IMPORTANT?

WHY BRANDING

“A brand is more than a name or a logo - it is a promise and a contract with every customer with whom you are dealing” -Richard Branson

My favorite piece of advice to any entrepreneur is to build a brand, not just a business.

Effective branding helps companies differentiate themselves from their competitors and build a loyal customer base.

It is important to understand that we must always have a value-based marketing approach. We must always strive to solve the customer’s problem & not just sell. This is why branding is so important in today’s market scenario.

It is important to realize that with the right branding strategy your business can show tremendous growth. You may or may not have a brand strategy in place already. But it is important to shift & adapt as per the changing market scenarios.

When your brand knows who it is, knows where it’s going, and knows why it’s here, customers can feel that authenticity and will stick around because of it.

And not only customers, but it will also unite your internal stakeholders and will help you make meaningful decisions that are “on brand”.

Branding can be broken down into three stages:

1. Brand Strategy
2. Brand Identity
3. Brand Marketing



All 3 stages are equally important in the branding process. The starting point is, of course, the brand strategy and is fundamental to the long-term success of a brand — that is why I emphasize this phase.

Brand strategy always starts with defining the internal brand first.

A robust brand strategy focuses on building the brand from inside — from its core. What Is A Brand's Core?

A core is a brand's essence: who they are, what they care about, and what they're trying to accomplish. Specifically, it's the:

Purpose: Why does the brand/business exist? What's the greater good behind your work?

Vision: What future does your brand want to help create? Where is your brand heading? Here we want to Influence long-term business decisions to ensure that your brand is navigated in the right direction.

Mission: How do they create that future?

Values: The compass that points to the true North of your business success. Your values stand at the very core of your brand. They are your guiding principles.

Successful brands are built on the foundation of the seven most essential elements. Let's understand each of these elements to grasp the importance of these elements in the implementation of successful branding.





BUILD YOUR **STAND OUT** BRAND IN EASY STEPS

1. BE **CLEAR**

Brand Clarity is key to standing out in 2021. What does it mean?

You need to be 100% clear about the following areas:

1. Your purpose or your why (why are you in business, why are you in this business)
2. What is your niche?
3. Who is your target audience? How well do you know them?
4. What is your message

Your brand may be sailing to reach the shore, but you may not be in control of its journey. Brand clarity helps you understand where your brand is heading, and whether that's the right direction for your business.

It's important to understand the different stages of Brand Clarity.

Stages of Brand Clarity

The **WHY** Stage:

This is the foundation of the four stages. Without this stage, you cannot delve deeper. The rest of the stages especially the How Stage which involves the implementation of your brand plan, is futile without the Why Stage.

The "why" is at the center of your branding strategy. You need to ask yourself questions such as

‘Why do you do what you do’? ‘

Why does your brand exist in the first place?

Why your brand success is important for you?



The WHAT Stage:

After defining your why, you will identify the products, services & initiatives that will help you achieve your business goals. The WHAT Stage helps you define exactly this.

You need to ask yourself questions like:

What makes you stand out from your competitors?

What are the things about your brand that you want to put out to the world?

What are your brand goals?

The WHO Stage:

The WHO Stage is important in knowing who your target audience are.

Knowing who you're attracting (whether that be customers or employees) allows your brand to dive into the details about what those people want to experience.





2. BE RELEVANT

“Relevance is More Important than Differentiation: Business strategists, Marketers, and brand managers have been fixated on differentiation. Customers, however, are drawn to relevance — the things that “connect with them emotionally”. Elliot Schreiber, Ph.D.

Brand relevance is a company’s ability to connect with people’s emotions and become personally relevant to them. It is not about how customers think, but how they feel! Why are you relevant to your target audience?

What burning problem do they have and how can you solve it for them?

The most dependable predictor of a brand's long-term success is relevancy.

There are four basic elements of brands that are relevant.

4 elements of Brand Relevance

Customer-Centricity:

To create a brand that is always relevant, you must first develop a customer-obsessed approach. This necessitates the brand strategist's undivided attention to a deeper understanding of the customer. This entails not only knowing what the customers want but also having a broad insight into their life.

Innovation:

Many businesses are preoccupied with what their competitors are doing and what their customers want. They understand that their businesses will not be able to grow and survive without innovation. These brands elicit emotional responses, win trust, and frequently serve a bigger purpose.

Practical approach:

The most crucial component of this problem is pragmatism. It's the one that most marketers find the most challenging, yet it's crucial because it allows the other three to happen. When a company is rooted in practicality, it



endeavors to solve the day-to-day requirements of its customers, deliver consistent experiences while doing so, and focuses on making life convenient and easy for its customers.

Constant Inspiration:

Brands and businesses need to constantly challenge the current status quo, engage with customers in novel and innovative ways, and provide fresh solutions to unmet requirements.





3. BE PASSIONATE

“Passion for what one does, it seems, not only creates great work. Communicating that passion through advertising also seems to have a positive impact on consumers.”

Your passion for your brand shows in your actions. Measuring the volume of social content or emotion isn't the only way to gauge brand love. It's also about the intensity of one's feelings and desires. Customer experience analytics gives you a lot of information on the traits, experiences, and other aspects that influence the brand.

How to Identify factors affecting Brand Passion?

Emotion drives the majority of client purchases. The less a buyer considers price as a deciding factor, the more enthusiastic they are about the brand. This is called Brand Love.

Analyze customer feedback to identify product features and service issues that have an impact. Discover why customers adore your brand and capitalize on your advantages. Determine why clients are dissatisfied and come up with rapid solutions to enhance customer satisfaction. Build solid customer relationships and lay the groundwork for future brand expansion.

Customer experience analytics gives information about how customers interact with your brand and how your activities improve that experience. Find out if your message is reaching your target audience and, more crucially, if it is motivating them to take action.

Create consumer segments that are intense and enthusiastic and learn what experiences they want to have more of. Determine the impact of new and interesting customer experiences on brand passion and intensity.

Also always find new and better ways to communicate your message regularly.



4. BE DISTINCT

“A brand asset becomes ‘distinctive’ when it elicits recognition of a specific brand and doesn’t elicit the same level of recognition of a rival brand”.

The desire to be recognized by your target audience remains critical in today’s environment when a “brand” has evolved into a multi-layered and complicated entity.

People can recognize your brand in a variety of ways, including symbols, logos, colors, taglines, sound, character, celebrity, forms, and tone of voice. These are called brand assets. Which when combined, become a part of your overall brand.

Brand assets should be original and distinct and should cause your target audience to think of your brand first, rather than your competitors. Unique and discoverable brand assets build trust and top-of-mind recall.

Stand out from the crowd by attracting the attention of your target audience.

Every communication channel and customer touchpoint should have distinct brand assets, with the finest ones matched to each channel’s main role. Typography, Logos, Taglines all help you to make your brand unique & distinct.

These are incredibly significant, not only in terms of brand recognition but also as part of your company’s intangible assets.

A distinct brand commands attention. Ultimately, *“attention turns to preference, preference turns to loyalty, and loyalty turns to a stronger bottom line”.*



5. BE CREDIBLE

“Credibility is the heart of every business”:

Marketing professionals frequently point to brand trust as one psychological component that can activate a consumer's purchase desire. However, it can have a positive or bad effect, just like any other form of trigger. It refers to your brand's reputation and its capacity (or inability) to turn that reputation into sales in this scenario.

A credible brand can help position your business positively in the minds and hearts of your key internal and external stakeholders,

Consumers are more likely to choose organizations that are thought to be specialists in their respective fields. You must endeavor to put yourself in the shoes of your customers. Consider how you would perceive various companies and how that would influence your purchasing decisions.

Longevity demonstrates the broad appeal and the high quality of the business's service or product, as evidenced by the fact that it has been used by a specific demographic for a specific amount of time. This is what branding credibility is all about: how others perceive your business or corporation.

How to establish brand credibility in 3 easy ways?

Establish your brand identity with clarity

Offer good quality products and services consistently

Share customer testimonials and success stories



6. BE CONSISTENT

The value of consistency in your business is a directly related parameter. It must be in sync with all aspects of your company's operations, from advertising to marketing.

Brand consistency refers to the delivery of company messaging through time that is consistent with the brand's identity, values, and strategy. Consistency means that your target audience is exposed to essential messages, visual branding, and other brand features regularly using the same voice and visual elements, which can help them remember your brand.

Any firm that wishes to establish brand awareness and foster confidence among its target audience must maintain brand consistency. Without it, your target audience will lack faith in your ability to deliver on your promises.

Brand consistency is the practice of always delivering messages aligned with the core brand values in the same tone, similarly, presenting the brand logo, and repeating the same colours throughout your visual brand elements. Over time, these elements become ingrained in the minds of consumers, and they're more likely to remember your brand. Brand consistency also ensures that your brand is easily recognizable across marketing channels and touchpoints.

It's not just about the visual elements of a brand, though. There are three critical areas where brands must be consistent to drive customer loyalty:

Customer Experience — Providing a consistent customer experience fosters trust and confidence in your brand.

Living your values — Reinforcing your words with actions.

Usage of Brand Identity Elements — These are the visual brand components that make your brand recognizable and help you stand out from the competition.



7. BE VISIBLE

“Brand visibility is the extent to which consumers can recognize or remember a particular brand when other conditions are similar “

Brand Visibility can be defined as the frequency at which people see your brand in search results, on social media, email marketing and other online marketing channels. Brand visibility is about engaging in active online marketing to help draw the attention of your customers to your brand. Visibility builds trust and a trusted brand is a brand that is loved.

The extent to which customers can recognise or recall a particular brand while other brands are present is known as brand visibility.

Search engines, social media, and other channels help you in gaining brand visibility. A good brand recognition scorecard should reveal which forms of advertisements attract clients and which websites they use to find the items or services you offer.

It is critical to increasing brand visibility right from the start. It enables you to stand out in a congested market and acquire the trust of customers. Brand awareness and brand visibility is achieved over time and with persistent efforts and investment.

Apple is a textbook example of a strong brand. They are the first example Simon Sinek brings up in his Golden Circle framework, asking first why then how and what.

Apple builds beautiful, innovative computers that are different than anything else you’ve experienced and markets them to resonate with their consumers.

Apple’s message highlights the same qualities in their consumers that they do in their products: if you are an Apple person, you are also innovative, imaginative and creative.

Apple leaves price out of their branding and instead focuses on the value their products offer and the connection formed with their consumers. Apple



is always evolving, creating an ongoing stream of new products and innovations.

Pro Tip: The Brand Persona

Rather than asking, “What is a brand?” a better question might be, “Who is a brand?” Think of your brand as a person. What is that person like? What can you expect when you interact with that person? The appearance, personality, habits, and behavior add up to determine the persona. Ask yourself — what is the persona of your brand? Every brand has a distinct persona and yours should have one too.





CONCLUSION

Tim Halloran, in a 2014 article in the Harvard Business Review rightly declared that “We don’t just consume or interact with brands. We engage in relationships with them”. The relationship formed between a business and a consumer can tide over several crises, simply because a brand that is loved has as its cheerleaders, loyal customers that have engaged with the brand at an emotional level are over time, become staunch advocates. The important, yet highly actionable tactics mentioned here, if implemented consistently and accurately, will help to build a business or an organization is driven by a brand that customers have fallen in love with.

For actionable advice on how to build your Stand Out brand, schedule a Discovery Call with me:

CALL NOW



SCAN ME