



# What is branding?

Branding is how you tell people who you are; you should think of it as your product or service's personality. It's the way you present yourself and talk to your customers. Getting it right is essential in differentiating yourself from the competition and in ensuring the success of your business.

## Brand strategy

The consistency of your brand, how you show it and what you say is vital. However, you need to work out what it is that you're going to say!

### Know yourself

Think of your brand as a person, how would you describe yourself? What are your values? What are your unique qualities? What are your strengths? What's your style?

### Know your competitors

In a competitive market place it is vital that you can differentiate yourself from your competition, so you need to know who they are, what they do and how they do it. With this understanding you are much better placed to give customers reasons to choose you over them as you'll be able to highlight your unique features.

### Know your customers

Who is going to buy your service and product? Do some research and find out if what you think they want is what they really want. This will help refine the details of what your product or service consists of. When you know your customer and what they want you can ensure that your brand communicates to them effectively, gets them to commit and builds loyalty.

## Company name

What's in a name? When naming your company it is important to bear the following in mind:

### Purpose

What do you need the name to communicate? Does it need to describe what you do, describe a service, a USP, evoke a mood, or perhaps a combination of these?

### Wordplay

Are you going to use existing words, combine words to form a new word, create something totally new, use abbreviations or numbers?

### Availability

You need to ensure that you're not infringing on the copyright of an existing name and that a matching URL is available for your name.

### Length

Keeping the name short and sweet will help it to be more memorable.

### Ease of use

Make sure that the name is easy to spell and say; you don't want to put people off from calling or recommending you because they don't know how to pronounce your name. It is also frustrating



Trying to sell a Skoda in the same way as you would a Jaguar wouldn't work. Both cars will get you from A to B but their markets, values and USPs are miles apart and their respective branding reflects this.

A great product or service is obviously the starting point but it's not enough on its own; your potential customers need to be told about it, and this is part of what your branding will do.

If you want to know more, just ask!

01273 674234 / mail@itonicdesign.com / www.itonicdesign.com

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having to spell out your name every time someone asks for your email!

## Logo

A logo creates a perception in the customer's mind of what you stand for, who you are, what you do, how you do it. It will create a perception of value and quality; you wouldn't use Lidl's logo if you were competing against Fortnum and Mason. A logo should reflect your brand strategy, that is why it is vital that you know 'who' your brand is before the logo can be designed. A change of logo can help to reposition your brand.



BP changed their brand strategy to distance themselves from the negative aspects of the oil industry. They focused attention on their positive environmental efforts instead, and their new logo was chosen to reinforce this.

## Brand guidelines

Brand guidelines govern how your brand is to be applied across your marketing material to ensure a consistent look. Consistency in your brand increases recognition, will differentiate you from your competition and will build trust (which will lead to increased sales.) Brand guidelines typically cover the following:

### Logo specification and application

Specification of the colours to be used, how black and white versions work, exclusion areas, how the logo should be used on different background treatments or colours.

### Colour swatches

Colour is very effective for communicating mood and style and so it is a good idea to have guides as to what colours can be used alongside the primary colours of the logo.

### Typography and tone of voice

Specifying the fonts to be used across the range of media, and how they should be used (headline styles, body copy styles etc). The tone of voice that you use in your copy conveys the personality of your brand so you need to keep it consistent.

### Imagery

Photography and illustration can dramatically enhance and communicate your brand so it is vital that the choice of images to be used are in keeping with your message.

### Examples of work

It is useful to show how the brand guidelines work in practice. Include examples of a range of materials to act as a guide.

## Strapline

A strapline is an advertising slogan that is used with a brand name alongside the logo. A strapline will usually be used for marketing a specific corporate image or making a connection between a product and its benefits. Straplines are designed to be memorable, therefore enhancing the brand. Some memorable examples are:

*"It's good to talk"* BT  
*"Broadcast Yourself"* YouTube  
*"Buy it. Sell it. Love it."* eBay  
*"Making life taste better"* Sainsburys  
*"Bang and the dirt is gone!"* Cillit Bang  
*"The welcoming scent of home"* Glade  
*"You Can Do It When You B&Q It"* B&Q

## Branding questions

When approaching a design agency to work on your branding, the following questions are a good start. The answers will give a clear picture of what you need the brand image to achieve.

- 1 What is the name of the company?
- 2 What does the company do?
- 3 What are the unique features of the company?
- 4 What is the background of the company (if relevant)?
- 5 Who is the primary customer?
- 6 What's their age / profile / job role etc?
- 7 Who are the secondary customer?
- 8 What's their age / profile / job role etc?
- 9 What is the primary message you want to communicate to your customers?
- 10 What are the secondary messages you want to communicate to your customers?
- 11 How do you currently market your company?
- 12 Do you have any existing collateral / logos / straplines / branding etc?
- 13 Please outline the design requirements you have. For example do you require a new logo, an update of an existing logo, do you need brochures, stationery, a website etc?
- 14 What is the timescale you have in mind?  
Is there a specific deadline that you're working towards?
- 15 Is there any other information useful to know at this stage?

*Please see our separate fact sheet for a more comprehensive list of branding questions to consider.*