



# BRANDING: MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY FACE.

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BRANDING IS THE ART OF CREATING AN EXPERIENCE THROUGH DESIGN & MESSAGING, AND ALL THE DETAILS IN BETWEEN

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**Branding can be a loaded topic** and sadly it's slowly becoming a lost art among new small businesses today.

Somewhere along the way, the concept of branding and visual identity have become two separate entities - or at the least, two entities that don't quite tie together.

The fact of the matter is that they are one complete thought. Taking a holistic approach to show and tell your brand-story is what will ultimately set you apart.

I've framed this piece in a way that will help you break it down from theory to practical, discovery to creative, and why going through this process results in bringing forth the overall integrity and legacy needed to define a good brand.

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*"Things move at such a fast pace these days that in the time it takes to get a service or product to market, the paradigm has shifted, again. The work-around is in how you present your (brand) story."*

**- Deneen Alexandra**

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# A DEFINED BRAND MAKES A GENUINE IMPRESSION.

If you look back over time at some of the most *memorable moments* of a well-defined brand, you can't help but be inspired on some level. Whether you're a consumer of the product or not, it left an impression.

There are many examples but let's take Apple's "Think Different" Campaign as one. While that was advertising (advertising transcended, some may say), it would not have come to pass if the brand itself wasn't so clearly defined.

There was absolutely no gray area in Steve Jobs' incredibly strong vision and intention, despite the fact that no one else could see it at the time. Had he watered it down, or relied on a "safe" marketing campaign to express that vision and intention for him, we wouldn't have Apple as we know it today.

Apple's branding was, and continues to be, the foundation of every unique nugget that comes through it. From the advertising and marketing side, to the product design and retail spaces, to the innovation that brings us the products we never even knew we needed.

**IN SHORT, IT'S AN EXPERIENCE.**

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# SO WHAT IS BRANDING?

***Branding is an experience at every point of contact for your marketplace.***

It's an authentic representation of what you're offering and what you stand for, communicated on an intuitive and visual level.

Getting there is a "process of exploration™".

It's a journey of self-discovery into your business, yourself, and how the two come together to best support and serve your target audience.

It has the ability to inspire trust and knowingness if done right - or the opposite, if not. There really is no in-between.

## **CULTURE & COMMUNITY:**

Branding is also the culture you create for your employees, your customers and how the two weave together to create community.

This all trickles down from the seemingly small details that ultimately become etched into your brand in the most impactful ways, whether you intended it to or not.

## **A CONTINUED CONVERSATION:**

Branding is a continued conversation. When a brand is well thought out and properly positioned at inception, it allows for it to seamlessly evolve over time. If not, it can greatly impinge on the future success of the business. This evolution can be both enviable and imperative at different times.

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# TAKING DISCOVERY INTO THE CREATIVE.

On the subconscious level, the aforementioned discovery conveys your values, character, mission, and the promise to your marketplace of how you intend to deliver it all.

On the visual level, it is a look and feel that is consistent and well thought-out.

When explored in just the right balance, the two come together to create a powerful brand on which to build upon. This is where design and messaging come in to support and unify your brand.

These aesthetics and messaging do the talking for you when you're not there to do it for yourself.

This “conversation” comes through your shelf command, your signage, collateral, marketing materials, website, etc., (big or small) and can ultimately sway the consumer's decision to purchase your product or service over another, rather they're consciously aware of it or not.

***THE CREATIVE SIDE OF THIS PROCESS  
STARTS WITH YOUR LOGO.***

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# SO, WHAT'S IN A LOGO?

***A logo derives meaning from the quality of the thing it symbolizes, not the other way around."***

***- Paul Rand***

Your logo is the foundation of your brand. It's the perfect opportunity to move the aforementioned discovery into creative and begin to build out your look and feel.

This process is one of streamlining and simplifying the discovery down to a clear, distinctive, and memorable icon (typography logos included) that can evolve and move with you over time.

It's important to know that while a logo needs to be aesthetically appealing, on message, and positioned to grow and evolve with you effortlessly, it does not bear the sole responsibility of your brand.

Where your logo takes on real meaning is through the association of all the aforementioned aspects of your brand and business as a whole.

If the company is sub-par, the logo will eventually be perceived as the same.

A logo carries energy - you and your brand, are the conductor of that energy.

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# DESIGN.

Through the logo is where you explore color theory, typography, icons, taglines, branding elements, psychology, etc. These elements will then carry through to your supporting pieces, such as your identity rollout, online presence, marketing, collateral pieces, merch, etc.

It's important to approach each supporting piece in a new and fresh way. Use these branding elements as a style guide rather than a cut and paste exercise.

Doing so will result in the best design and layout solution for the specs and messaging demands at hand.

## **FONTS, COPY & COLOR:**

Note: Color carries pituitary responses and trends. Fonts also carry trends and can become dated quickly.

Certain fonts can also appear unprofessional and pedestrian, or have the potential of appearing mainstream after a while.

How your fonts and overall copy is set (typesetting) is imperative as well. It can single handedly differentiate a professional from a novice.

**WHERE TO START?  
HIRE A RIDE OR DIE DESIGNER.**

**NEXT>>**

# WORKING WITH A DESIGNER.

It is important to truly understand the choices you're making around the details of it all and what they say about your brand.

To achieve this understanding, choose a designer that is also a brander - not all branders are designers, and not all designers are branders.

We all have different processes as well. Do your homework and find the one that best aligns with you.

Do not ask a designer to work on spec. (aka, FREE). It's a collaboration that (if done right) can take a lot of twists and turns. Both of you should be invested in that ride.

Beyond the fact that this is their livelihood (that could be a whole conversation within itself but we'll save it for another time; this one is about you), if you don't have equal investment in this process, the end-result will fall short by a very long mile.

If you can not afford to, or simply don't want to bring in a professional designer, then consider finding a designer who offers visual brand consultation services.

This will at least help guide you through the design choices you're making for your brand.

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# INTUITION AND A LITTLE MAGIC.

The most important thing you can bring to this process of branding your company is your heart, passion, and intuition.

Branding is not marketing. Marketing is a push tactic and takes an exterior approach. Branding is the expression of your essential foundation and comes from an introspective approach. It's your foundation and your best chance for genuine evolution.

Branding must precede marketing for marketing to truly be successful.

Brand development and evolution come from that quiet place inside that's your reason for doing this business in the first place. This is the place you want to brand from.

There will be plenty of time to go for the fun effects and tactics when you get into the marketing and advertising phase.

Just know that, branding is what has your back after marketing has left the party - and marketing always leaves the party, usually when it's time clean up.

**AND LASTLY, ALLOW SPACE AND TIME FOR  
THE MAGIC TO COME THROUGH. WHEN  
YOU DO, IT ALWAYS DOES.**

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