

# Co-Creation Hub II: Branding & Marketing

## Let's Talk about Branding and Marketing Reloaded

- a) What is Branding?
- b) What is Marketing?
- c) Which Comes First—Marketing Or Branding?
- d) The One Area Branding And Marketing Overlap
- e) The Importance Of Understanding Branding vs. Marketing

### a. What is Branding?

In a nutshell, branding is who you are—and marketing is how you build awareness. Branding is your strategy, while marketing encompasses your tactical goals. In order to determine who your brand is, you need to ask yourself several questions. Questions that go beyond industry generalizations, and services or products offered and also questions to determine who you are as a company, and more importantly, who you are as a brand. The questions below are an excellent place to begin:

- What are your core principles and values?
- What is your mission statement?
- What inspired you to build your business?
- Why do you want to offer your products or services to your target audience?
- What makes you unique?
- What is your internal company culture?
- What is your professional sense of style?
- What are your communication characteristics?
- What do you want to come to mind when someone hears your business name?
- How do you want people to feel when they think of your business?
- How do you want customers to describe you as a company?

Answering the questions above will help you to understand the difference between branding and marketing. Invest your time in providing elaborate answers, and bounce them off your colleagues and professional mentors. What you will notice, is that all of the questions are related to your internal operations and your internal culture. Therefore, what you build on the inside, is what will emanate externally.

Your branding will cultivate what your consumers can expect of you, and what they will experience when they utilize your products or services. By clearly defining who you are, your branding can then be utilized to precede and underlie your marketing efforts—both today and for years to come.

### b. What is Marketing?

When speaking of marketing vs. branding, marketing refers to the tools you utilize to deliver the message of your brand. Marketing will continually change and evolve, just as the products and services you offer will continue to change and evolve. Marketing will be directly and specifically geared towards sectors of your target audience, all while supporting the core values of your brand.

Marketing is vast and wide. It can be heartfelt, funny, or serious. It can be any mix of text, keywords, photos, charts, graphs, and videos. Marketing will be performed by a variety of online and offline methods—some of the most common being:

- SEO
- Content Marketing
- Social Media Marketing
- Pay Per Click Marketing
- Mobile Marketing
- Television
- Radio
- Print Campaigns

However, there are many other methods of both online and offline marketing for you to consider working with your marketing campaign. While marketing methods will come and go, and the methods you utilize may change drastically from year-to-year, or from season-to-season—your brand will always remain constant.

### c. Which Comes First—Marketing or Branding?

Branding is at the core of your marketing strategy, so branding must come first. Even if you are a startup, it is essential to clearly define who you are as a brand—before you begin to devise your specific marketing methods, tools, strategies, and tactics.

Your brand is what will keep your clients coming back for more, it is the foundation upon which you will build consumer loyalty. Think of restaurants and retailers in your local area (independently owned, or major corporations), it is the brand that keeps customers coming back generation after generation. As an example, consider where you order and pick up prescriptions for yourself and your family. Whether the pharmacy or drugstore you shop in is locally owned, or part of a larger chain—they have built your trust and your loyalty, and you have most likely been a customer with them for many years. While you can purchase the exact same prescriptions at any other pharmacy in town, it is their branding that keeps you coming back time and time again. While marketing methods will evolve, and respond to current industry and cultural trends—branding remains the same. Even if you make adjustments to your brand, they will typically be in response to your growth or expanded services offered—but is rarely an overhaul of your core principals, mission, or values.

Your branding includes attributes such as a high commitment to quality, community, convenience, communication—or an ongoing commitment to a specific need your target audience needs to be fulfilled.

Also, keep in mind that branding is something you and your team must do on a daily basis, and with every transaction processed, with every phone call received, and email responded to. However, your marketing is most often partially or fully outsourced to marketing professionals. **When speaking of branding vs. marketing, branding is who you are—while marketing is how you attract consumer attention.** Also, think of branding as the way you keep current clients and marketing as how you attract new clients.

### d. The One Area Branding and Marketing Overlap

While branding and marketing are distinctly different, there is one area where they overlap. When selecting imagery to be utilized on an ongoing basis, branding and marketing become one in the same. As the saying goes “*A picture speaks a thousand words.*” With that in mind, when you choose your **company colors, graphics, and logo**—remember that they must first represent your brand—but that they will also play a substantial role in your ongoing marketing campaign.

### e. The Importance Of Understanding Branding vs. Marketing.

If the difference between marketing and branding are now clear, but you are still unsure of the importance of understanding the two—it all comes down to conversions. While you could create your marketing strategies with nothing other than keyword trends, and the most effective marketing methods within your industry—your conversions will be lower if your consumers are not connected to you as a brand.

Your branding is what generates a timeless connection. Even if your current marketing efforts are designed to engage, it is the ongoing branding that keeps customers coming back. Competition is fierce, and the fact of the matter is that there are companies who offer comparable products and services—or even the exact same products and services that you offer. It is your branding that will keep your customers returning for more. It is your branding that builds loyalty and trust. It is your branding that makes you unique.

Without branding, you may achieve success, but with branding, your success will be far more substantial. All strong structures have a solid starting point and foundation, and understanding the difference between marketing and branding will allow you to build your foundation of branding—and your extensions via marketing.

## Build Your Business Branding and Marketing Blueprint

### Step 1. Discover the purpose behind your brand.

Every successful brand has a powerful purpose behind it. And so should you. It’s what you wake up every day loving to do for other people (and the world) through your product or service.

There are four questions you should ask yourself when defining a brand purpose:

- Why do you exist?
- What differentiates you?
- What problem do you solve?
- Why should people care?

You’ll use these ideas to inform the foundation of your branding, through a tagline, slogans, value propositions, voice, messaging, stories, and more. Studies show that [50% of consumers](#) worldwide say they now buy based on a company’s brand values and impact. **So dig deep and find those nuggets of truth which can distinguish your brand from others.**

Leadership expert Simon Sinek developed an impactful model called The [Golden Circle](#) (he’s also the author of [Start With Why](#)—this book is excellent to read or listen to on [Audible!](#)) The Golden Circle concept can help in identifying the purpose behind anything [in business or life](#), really.

The 3 Parts to The Golden Circle:

- **What** – the products or services you offer to your customers
- **How** – the things that differentiate you from the competition
- **Why** – the reason you are passionate and why you exist



In fact, in the video, Sinek explains **how to truly differentiate** a brand when most of them fail.

## Step 2. Research competitor brands within your industry.

You should never imitate exactly what the big brands are doing in your industry. But, you should be aware of what they do well (or where they fail). **The goal is to differentiate from the competition. Convince a customer to purchase from you over them!**

We're always thinking about how to make a brand stand out from what's out there already. Don't skip this step in the brand building process. Research your main competitors or benchmark brands. For instance, study how well they have gone about building a brand name. For a brand name to be effective, it needs to be easy for consumers to recognize and remember.

### Creating a brand competitor research spreadsheet

Competitor research is a key element of your own brand development. Start by creating a brand competitor spreadsheet for comparison. You can use Google Sheets, Excel, or even just a notebook.

COMPETITOR	MESSAGE & VISUALS	QUALITY OF PRODUCTS OR SERVICES	REVIEW & MENTIONS	MARKETING & EFFORTS
O1				
O2				
O3				

Then, answer these fundamental questions.

- Is the competitor consistent with messaging and visual identity across channels?
- What is the quality of the competitor's products or services?
- Does the competitor have customer reviews or social mentions you can read about them?
- In what ways does the competitor market their business, both online and offline?

Choose a few competitors, two to four (2-4) is a good number for your comparison chart. You might want to take a look at other local businesses, or even aim to benchmark against name brands. Competitor research (or market research), is one of the key components in discovering and defining your brand positioning.

## Step 3. Determine your brand's target audience.

The foundation for building your brand is to determine the target audience that you'll be focusing on.

*You can't be everything to everyone, right?*


When brand building, keep in mind who exactly you are trying to reach. You'll tailor your mission and message to meet their exact needs. **The key is to get specific.** Figure out detailed behaviors and lifestyle of your consumers. Here we explain with a few brief examples.

- Instead of "all Moms", you could narrow down the niche to hone in on "single Moms who work full-time from home".
- "Techy people" is too broad. But "tech-savvy early adopters who manage a large team" can narrow the focus in.

- If you are targeting “college kids”, there is definitely room to get more specific. An example could be: “college students studying abroad in Europe during the summer”.
- “Anyone who needs a job” is certainly not a niche target market. However, “retirees looking to return to the workforce in an executive position” can be!

As you can see, targeting a niche requires committing to something very focused to start. You’ll come to realize that the competitive advantage when branding your business is to **narrow your target audience focus**. This can help ensure that your brand message comes across crystal clear to the intended recipient. Solidify a picture of your consumers, then learn how to create a brand identity that **they can understand and relate to**.

### Audience Persona Demographics



**Age:** 25-32

**Gender:** Female

**Location:** Urban

**Income Level:** 35,000-47,000

**Level of Education:** Collage Graduate

#### *Your Brand Buyer Persona*

Brand creation relies on truly understanding the [buyer persona](#). Here are a few of the things to document when describing your ideal customer:

- Age
- Gender
- Location
- Income
- Education Level

To get even more definition for your brand’s buyer persona, dive into these details:

- Motivations
- Goals
- Pain points
- Fears
- Desires
- Influencers
- Brand affinities

## Step 4. Establish brand mission and vision statements.

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Have you thought about your brand mission and vision? In essence, you’ll have to craft a clear expression of what your company is most passionate about. **This is your why; the reason you get up every day.**

Before you can build a brand that your target audience trusts, you need to know what value your business provides. Your

brand vision is a future, someday, aspirational statement that your brand drives towards achieving. Envision a projection of where your brand aspires to go, what it aspires to be, and what impact it will have on the environment you are in—think 5 years out.

The mission statement is a now, everyday, statement of commitment that is a roadmap for accomplishing your vision. It will inform how you execute your brand building strategies.

Everything from your logo to your tagline, voice, message, and personality should reflect your mission and vision. You can use the information gathered from The Golden Circle exercise (see Step 1) to create a clear and impactful brand vision and mission statements.

## Step 5. Outline the key qualities & benefits your brand offers.

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There will always be brands with bigger budgets and more resources to command their industry. **Your products, services, and benefits belong solely to you.** Starting a brand that is memorable means you dig deep to figure out what you offer, and no one else is offering. Focus on the qualities and benefits that make your company branding unique. Assuming you know exactly who your target audience is (see Step 3), give them a reason to choose your brand over another. It’s important to note that this is not just a laundry [list of the features](#) your product or services offer to the customer or client. Think about how you provide value that improves consumers’ lives (outcomes or results that are experienced).

Here are a few examples:

- More authentic and transparent customer service
- A better way to support productivity
- Reducing costs with a more affordable option
- Saving time on daily tasks

## Step 6. Form your unique brand voice.

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Your voice is dependent on your company’s mission, audience, and industry. It’s how you communicate with your customers, and how they respond to you. A brand voice could be:

- Professional
- Friendly
- Service-oriented
- Authoritative
- Technical
- Promotional
- Conversational
- Informative

There are endless adjectives and possibilities that can build a brand voice behind your messaging. Ultimately, you want to choose a brand voice that makes sense and resonates with your target customers. (Again, going back to Step 3!)

## Step 7. Let your brand personality shine.

Customers aren't looking for another cookie-cutter company that offers the same thing as everyone else. They are looking for an experience tailored to their needs, backed by genuine personal interaction.



Wondering how to brand your business in a unique way? Make your personality stand out in every aspect of your brand building process. **Be consistent with this brand personality across all points of contact.** It can be as simple as:

- A conversational voice in communication (using “I,” and “you”)
- Sharing behind-the-scenes content
- Telling stories about real experiences
- Describing your products/services in a quirky manner

## Step 8. Build a brand story and messaging.

When building a brand, tell customers succinctly who you are. Use the business voice you have chosen for your brand. Your messaging should be intricately associated with your brand and conveyed consistently. This part of the brand development process goes beyond your logo and tagline to define the key aspects of:

- Who you are
- What you offer
- Why people should care

A brand story is an opportunity to communicate on a human level, making a direct emotional connection with your consumers. What this means, is that the language you use should be understood immediately while striking an emotional chord. *Make it simple and clear.* Most importantly: when creating a brand story, address not what your product can do... but why it is important to your customer.

## Step 9. Create a brand logo & tagline.

When you think about how to build a brand, visuals probably come to mind first. We haven't even talked about these until this deep into the brand building process! This step may be the one where you need help with creative execution. The most exciting (and arguably the most important piece) of the brand building process, is to create a brand logo and tagline for your company. This logo will appear on everything that relates to your business. It will become your identity, calling card, and the visual recognition of your promise. So be willing to invest the time and money by creating something exceptional to reinforce the visual identity for your business.

Need help branding your business? Hire a professional designer or branding agency with logo and identity design experience, to help make your brand stand out. Their expertise will ensure that you get a unique and timeless mark for your business. A designer can also [develop brand guidelines](#), to ensure consistency for any future application of the logo and associated brand color palette or fonts.

A strong brand style guide will include the following things:

- Logo size and placement
- Color palette
- Typography and fonts
- Iconography
- Photography/image style
- Web elements

## Step 10. Integrate your brand into every aspect of your business.

*The brand building process never stops.* Your brand should be visible and reflected in everything that your customer can see, read, and hear.

If a client walks into your office, or a customer walks into your store—your brand image should be on display both in the environment and with personal interactions. Anything tangible—from business cards to advertisements, to packaging and product—needs the stamp of your logo. On any digital platform, ensure that your brand looks the same everywhere. Use your brand style guide to create consistency with visuals such as color and logo use, fonts, photography, etc. Your website is the most important tool for marketing your brand. When you design your website: incorporate your voice, message, and personality into the content. Profile pages for social media networks should be branded visually, and with your chosen voice for engagement. And don't forget about video! YouTube, Facebook Video and Facebook Live, Snapchat and Instagram Stories are all platforms that need to have content executed with your unique brand voice and personality. For those venturing into podcast audio, adhere to a theme that supports your brand message, value, and voice.

## Step 11. Stay true to your brand building.

Unless you decide to change your brand into something that is more effective based on measured consumer response, consistency is key. Refer back to your Brand Strategy whenever you need to make a decision about identity or marketing. Once you establish a brand voice, use it for every piece of content you create. (See above, Step 6 in the brand building process.)

Document all the brand guidelines you create and distribute internally for reference. What is brand building worth, if it's not consistent? Don't constantly change your branding. The inconsistency will confuse your customers, and make long-term brand building more difficult.

## Bonus: Be your brand's biggest advocate.

When you build a brand that works for your small business, you (and your employees) are the best advocates to market your brand. No one knows your brand better than you, so it's up to you to spread the word.

When hiring employees, ensure that they are a culture fit—aligning with the mission, vision, and values of your brand. Encourage employees to [establish a personal brand](#) that aligns with your company brand building process, further strengthening reach. Give your loyal customers a voice. Encourage them to post reviews, or share your content.

## Time to Test

CHECKLIST	YES	NO
Did you identify the principle and purpose of your company's business and marketing plan?		
Do you have a Purpose Statement?		
Did you identify and prioritise the vision of your company's business and marketing plan?		
Do you have a Vision Statement?		
Did you create a brand competitor research spreadsheet?		
Did you determine your brand's target audience and Brand Persona?		
Did you work on Brand Persona - Your Brands Archetype?		
Did you identify the ways (7Ps) that you can market your product and ensure product alignment with your business plan?		
Did you build a brand story and messaging?		
Did you create a brand logo & tagline?		

## Know More - Additional Resources

### Books

- Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action - <https://amzn.to/2LYQID5>
- Find Your Why: A Practical Guide For Discovering Purpose - <https://amzn.to/33V2sOM>
- Brand Identity Breakthrough: How to Craft Your Company's Unique Story - <https://amzn.to/2qUxV18>
- Designing Brand Identity: An Essential Guide For The Whole Branding Team - <https://amzn.to/2PpJDxD>
- Building a StoryBrand: Clarify Your Message So Customers Will Listen - <https://amzn.to/2ZofMiv>
- The Hero and the Outlaw: Building Extraordinary Brands Through the Power of Archetype - <https://amzn.to/2Rui2fW>

### Video

- Simon Sinek: Mükemmel liderler bir harekete nasıl ilham verirler, TEDx Talks, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpoHIF3Sfl4>

### Tools

- Free Design Tool – Canva
- Stock Photography – Shutterstock
- Ecommerce Websites – Shopify

### Guides

- 7 Effective Social Media Best Practices for Business - <https://freshsparks.com/social-media-best-practices-for-business/>
- Establish a Personal Brand - <http://www.quick sprout.com/the-complete-guide-to-building-your-personal-brand/>