



How to Build Your Own Brand From Scratch in 7 Steps

Building a brand from the ground up that stands out is no easy task. What should it look like? How should it make people feel? Will it resonate with my target audience?

These are questions that inevitably come up when you start thinking about how to connect the dots between what you're selling and who you're trying to reach.

Whether you've got nothing but a business idea or want to pivot your existing branding design, here's what you need to know about building a strong brand identity for your business.

What is a brand?

A brand isn't just a recognizable name and brand logo that distinguishes you in a crowded market.

Your brand is how people perceive you wherever they interact with your business—both the impressions you can control and the ones you can't.

When you think about it, people have personal brands, too. We each have a name, a face, a style, a way of communicating, and with these traits, we make different impressions on different people.

Likewise, businesses have names, products, logos, colors, fonts, voices, and reputations that makeup what they are and affect how they're perceived.

You can't effectively approach how to create a brand without being consistent and maintaining that consistency as you extend your brand to every part of your business. The best way to build a brand starts with establishing *what* that consistency is going to look like and the feeling you want it to evoke.

How to build a brand

Building a new brand essentially boils down to seven steps:

1. Research your target audience and your competitors.
2. Pick your focus and personality.
3. Choose your business name.
4. Write your slogan.
5. Choose the look of your brand (colors and font).
6. Design your brand logo.
7. Apply your branding across your business.

While you might revisit some steps as you pivot or create your brand, it's important that you consider each aspect as you shape your brand identity.

Let's start by laying the groundwork to inform you how to build your business brand.

1) Research your target audience and your competitors

Before you start making any decisions about how to create a business brand, you need to understand the current market, i.e., who your potential customers and current competitors are.

There are many ways to do this step of how to make a brand:

- Google your product or service category and analyze the direct and indirect competitors that come up.
- Check subreddits that relate to your customers and eavesdrop on their conversations and product recommendations.
- Talk to people who are part of your target market and ask them what brands they buy from in your space.
- Look at the relevant social media accounts or pages your target audience follows and is receptive to.
- Go shopping online or offline and get a feel for how your customers would browse and buy products.

As you go about your research, make a note of:

1. **Who your “lowest hanging fruit” customers/prospects are**—the ones you could most easily sell to.
2. **Who your top-of-mind competitors are**—the brands that are established and known in the market.
3. **How your customers speak and what they talk about**—the interests they have and the language they express them in.

It's important to have a handle on this before moving forward, as it will inform what your brand should focus on and how it can position itself apart from competitors.

2. Pick your focus and personality

You can't establish your brand to be everything to everyone, especially at the start.

It's important to find your focus and let that inform all the other parts of your brand as you build it.

Here are some questions and branding exercises to get you thinking about the focus and tone of your brand.

What's your positioning statement?

A positioning statement is one or two lines that stake your claim in the market. This isn't necessarily something you put on your website or business card—it's just to help you answer the right questions about your brand and aids in creating your brand's tagline.

Your positioning statement should go something like...

We offer [PRODUCT/SERVICE] for [TARGET MARKET] to [VALUE PROPOSITION]. Unlike [THE ALTERNATIVE], we [KEY DIFFERENTIATOR].

For example: We offer water bottles for hikers to stay hydrated, while reducing their carbon footprint. Unlike other water bottle brands, we plant a tree for every bottle you buy.

Your unique value proposition is the one thing you're competing on. Find it, go in on it, and make it a part of your brand's messaging.

Alternatively, if the company you want to start has a cause at its core (e.g., if you're starting a social enterprise), you can also write this out as a mission statement that makes a clear promise to your customers or to the world.

What words would you associate with your brand?

One way to look at how to build your brand is to imagine your brand as a person. What would he or she be like? What kind of personality would your customers be attracted to?

This will help inform your voice on social media and the tone of all your creative, both visual and written.

A fun and useful exercise for how to create a new brand is pitching three to five adjectives that describe the type of brand that might resonate with your audience. I compiled this list of traits to help you get started.

If your brand was a person, choose 3-5 words that would describe him or her.

Simple	Artistic	Strong
Beautiful	Bold	Childish
Funny	Serious	Goofy
Responsible	Professional	Angry
Dry	Corporate	Hipster
Wealthy	Sophisticated	Bohemian
Extravagant	Silly	Modest
Fun	Patriotic	Fashionable
Affordable	Rebellious	Activist
Charitable	Caring	Handy
Outdoorsy	Young	Effective
Reliable	Witty	Peaceful
Smart	Confident	Weird
Fast	Chill	Blunt
Manly	Experienced	Vigilant
Trendy	Flamboyant	Secure
Quirky	Honest	Rugged
Active	Bookworm	Sexy
Eloquent	Resourceful	Over-the-top
Expert	Efficient	Party Animal
Energetic	Creative	Discrete
Daring	Zen	Exclusive

What metaphors or concepts describe your brand?

Thinking about your brand identity as a metaphor, or personifying it, can help you identify the individual qualities you want it to have.

This can be a vehicle, an animal, a celebrity, a sports team, anything—as long as it has a prominent reputation in your mind that summons the sort of vibe you want your brand to give off.

For example, if you want to establish your brand targeting entrepreneurs, you might choose to use the raccoon as a starting point: They're scrappy survivors who will do anything to thrive.

If your brand identity was an animal, what animal would it be and why is it like that animal to you?

“A rose by any other name would still smell as sweet. But Nike by another name would be seen on fewer feet.” Shakespeare (sort of)

3. Choose your business name

What's in a name? Depending on the kind of business you want to start, you can make the case that your name matters very little or it matters a lot.

As we've said before, a brand is so much more than a name. The personality, actions, and reputation of your brand identity are really what give the name meaning in the market.

But as a small business owner, your company's name is probably one of the first big commitments you have to make. It'll impact your brand logo, your domain, your marketing, and your trademark registration if you decide to go that route (it's harder to trademark generic brand names that literally describe what you sell).

Ideally, you want a name that's hard to imitate and even harder to confuse with existing players in the market. If you have any plans to expand the product lines you offer down the road, consider keeping your business name broad so that it's easier to pivot, rather than choosing a brand name based on your product category.

You should brainstorm some names, or try one (or a combination) of the following approaches:

- **Make up a word**, like Pepsi.
- **Reframe an unrelated word**, like Apple for computers.
- **Use a suggestive word or metaphor**, like Buffer.
- **Describe it literally (caution: easy to imitate)**, like The Shoe Company.
- **Alter a word by removing letters, adding letters, or using Latin endings**, like Tumblr (Tumbler) or Activia.
- **Create an acronym from a longer name**, like HBO (Home Box Office).
- **Combine two words**: Pinterest (pin + interest) or Snapple (snappy + apple)

This is a good business name generator that you can use to help - <https://looka.com/business-name-generator/> Since your brand name will also affect the domain/URL of your website, be sure to shop around to see what's available before deciding on a domain name. Then hop over to our [domain name](#) registration tool. One last thought is It's also a good idea to run your name by a focus group of close people, if for no other reason than to make sure it doesn't have an unintended meaning or is too similar to something else that you might've missed.

4. Write a slogan

A catchy slogan is a nice-to-have asset—something brief and descriptive you can use as a tagline in your social media bios, website header, custom business cards, and anywhere else where you've got very few words to make a big impact.

Keep in mind that you can always change your slogan as you find new angles for marketing—Pepsi has gone through over 30 slogans in the past few decades.

A good slogan is short, catchy, and makes a strong impression to boost brand awareness. Here are some ways to approach writing a slogan of your own:

- **Stake your claim.** Death Wish Coffee: “The World’s Strongest Coffee”
- **Make it a Metaphor.** Redbull: “Redbull gives you wings.”
- **Adopt your customers’ attitude.** Nike: “Just do it.”
- **Leverage labels.** Cards Against Humanity: “A party game for horrible people.”
- **Write a rhyme.** Folgers Coffee: “The best part of waking up is Folgers in your cup.”
- **Describe it literally.** Aritzia: “Women’s fashion boutique.”

[Try this Slogan Maker](#) to brainstorm some ideas, or play off of your positioning statement to generate potential one-liners to describe your business.

5. Choose the look of your brand (colors and font)

Once you've got a name down, you'll need to think about your brand design—how you'll visually represent your brand—namely your colors and typography. This will come in handy when you start to use a [website builder](#) to make your own website.

Choosing your colors

Colors don't just define the look of your brand, they also convey the feeling you want to communicate and help you make it consistent across everything you do. You'll want to choose colors that differentiate you from direct competitors to avoid confusing consumers.

Color psychology isn't an exact science, but it does help to inform the choices you make, especially when it comes to the color you pick for your brand logo.

This infographic offers a nice overview of the emotions and associations that different colors generally evoke.

COLOR EMOTION GUIDE



Source: [The Logo Company](http://www.thelogo.com)

It's important to consider how legible white and black text will be over your color palette and how colored text might look over white and black backgrounds. Try using a tool like <http://colormind.io/> to brainstorm colors that work together. Grab the hex codes to keep handy, and sift through different shades to find the ones you like.

Choosing your fonts

At this point, it's also good to look at fonts you might want to use on your website.

The best way to build a brand when it comes to fonts is by keeping it simple. Pick two fonts at most to avoid confusing visitors: one for headings and one for body text (this doesn't include the font you might use in your brand logo).

You can use <https://fontjoy.com/> to browse from a wide selection of fonts that go well together.

6. Design your brand logo

A brand logo design is probably one of the first things that come to mind when you think about building a new brand. And for good reason: it's the face of your company after all and could potentially be everywhere that your brand exists.

Ideally, you'll want to create your brand with a logo that's unique, identifiable, and scalable to work at all sizes (something often overlooked).

Consider all the places where your brand's logo needs to exist: from your website, your Facebook page's profile picture, and YouTube channel banner, to even the little "favicons" you see in your current browser tab.

If you have a text logo as your Instagram avatar, for example, it'll be almost impossible to read. To make your life easier, create a square version of your brand logo with an icon element that remains recognizable even at smaller sizes.

Notice how the Walmart logo has both the “sparks” icon and the wordmark, which can be used separately.



Invest in a logo that can appear anywhere around the web and in physical print. Source: History of the Walmart brand development and logo design, [Turbologo](#).

The following are some of the different logo types you can choose to help you communicate with designers and find a style that makes sense and will help establish your brand. Keep the colors and fonts you chose in mind to make sure they work together with your logo to convey your brand.

Abstract: Google Chrome



An abstract brand logo has some meaning, but really, it's just a shape and colors that you can't easily tie back to anything in the real world.

The benefit of an abstract logo is that it has no innate meaning—you can make this up yourself and bring it to life in your customers' minds.

Mascot: Wendy's



Mascot logos are often represented by the face of a character. They may humanize your business by creating a specific and relatable brand identity or personality, but be aware that they are an antiquated style now and only recommended in certain contexts (e.g., you're deliberately going for a retro look).

Emblem: Starbucks



Emblem logos are often circular and combine text with an emblem for a bold and regal brand design. If the design is too complicated, however, they can lose their impact when you shrink them down. But done right, they can play a big influence on brand building and make for a memorable style of logo.

Lettermark: IBM



Lettermark logos turn the initials of your full business name into a brand logo. If you have a business name idea with 3 or more words, this might be a style you'd want to consider, especially if the initialism is catchy.

Icon: Twitter



An icon logo is your brand represented as a visual metaphor. Unlike an abstract logo, an icon logo suggests something about the product (Twitter's bird is suggestive of the frequent short "tweets" on the platform).

As an unestablished brand still trying to build brand awareness, you should stay away from using an icon logo by itself. However, if you're not sure about the kind of brand logo you want, pairing an icon logo with a wordmark is usually a safe bet.

Wordmark: Facebook



Wordmark logos turn your brand name, colors, and font into a visual identity. The problem with wordmarks is that they're often hard to create in a scalable square design and easily lose their legibility when shrunk.

However, you can fix this problem by simply getting an accompanying icon logo or turning the first letter of the wordmark into a separate-but-connected logo, like what Facebook does with its F.

Combination: McDonald's



Because of the limitations that exist for each logo type, many logos are a combination of styles.

As a new small business experimenting with the best way to build a brand and logo, you don't need to choose an icon over a wordmark when you feel they're both essential to represent your brand as a combination logo let's you get the best of both. This makes it easier to satisfy the condition of creating a scalable logo while still putting your brand name front and center. McDonald's, for example, can use its iconic golden arches wherever its full wordmark doesn't fit.

7. Apply your branding across your business

Applying your branding across your business gives it a cohesive brand story. A brand story represents who your business is and what it stands for. It sets the stage for every interaction customers have with your brand, in-store and online.

In research on what wins buyer and customer trust, we found that buyers shopping on an online store for the first time often look for a business's mission and purpose to see if they share any values with the business (e.g., sustainability). They will turn to its About Us and Reviews page to learn more about who they're buying from and, for more socially conscious customers, how the business is run. If your business has a brand story, share it, because it can help the shopper feel reassured yours is a legitimate business.

When building a new brand, your positioning statement can get you started, but you'll want to ask yourself a few questions for your brand story:

1. What motivated me to start my business?
2. Why does the company exist?
3. How do we contribute to the world?
4. What is the story behind my business the customer should know?

Not every business is mission-driven, but if you create your brand with a mission or values, share your brand story and tell customers why the business was started. Look at the businesses TOMS and Coca-Cola, the first a mission-driven brand, the second not so much.

Coca-Cola, a globally recognized soft drink business, isn't grounded in a strong social good or environmental mission, but it appeals to its target market through branding that focuses on bringing together friends to experience fun, happiness, and connection. A customer of a Coca-Cola product can walk away feeling as if they are more socially connected with friends or loved ones if they enjoy the product with those friends.

For business owners building a new brand, there's a lot to learn from Coca-Cola. It offers up excellent examples of brand marketing through timeless designs, fonts, images, and colors that are instantly recognizable.

Whether or not the best way to build a brand for you is by focusing on a mission, the important thing is giving the customer a story that they tell themselves about your brand.

Evolve your brand as you grow

Building a brand doesn't stop with creating a logo or slogan, or even with your brand awareness launch. Your brand needs to exist and remain consistent wherever your customers interact with you, from the theme you choose for your website, and the marketing materials you produce, all the way to how you package and ship your products.

You'll continue to shape and evolve your brand design and identity as you expose more customers to it and learn more about who your customers are and how to speak to them.

It's important to appreciate that you will never have 100% control over how people perceive your brand identity.

You can tug customers in the right direction, make a great first impression, and manage your reputation, but you can't control the individual perceptions that exist in each person's mind (say, if they had a bad customer service experience).

All you can do is put your best foot forward at every turn and try to resonate with your core audience. But hopefully, at this point, you have the tools, knowledge, and resources to start. So Let's get started!

If you have not created your [14-Day Free Trial of Bizapp247](#) yet, then this is a good place to begin your journey!