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Branding

Guide to building a brand

How to become a branding expert, by Arek Dvornechuck



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Introduction

Hello, My name is Arek Dvornechuck and at Ebaqdesign my mission is to help people create iconic brands.



Good business people know the value design can have on their brands. The creation of a fitting brand identity is an investment that can pay off year after year.

This guide is for everyone who wants to grow their business through great design.

I've helped dozens of entrepreneurs build brands and successful businesses and now I want to help you!

I've created a simple guide to understanding what brand identity is really all about.

Read each page closely and put the suggestions into practice and at by the end of this guide you'll become a branding expert.

Arek Dvornechuck

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THE BASICS



Brand, branding and brand identity

People use these terms: brand, branding and brand identity as interchangeable synonyms every day, but they don't mean the same.

What's your favorite brand? Don't think too much! Grab the first name that comes to mind - This company has earned your loyalty & your money.

You keep coming back because you feel that the values of the company are aligned with yours.

People fall in love with brands and believe in their superiority.

As individuals, we have a sense of what a **brand** is: a set of distinctive perceptions, ideas and feelings that people

have about a product or service. But as consumers, we often don't realize what it takes to build a strong and memorable brand.

That brings us to **branding**: all the actions that you take to build awareness and reputation around your company.

There are many things that go into the making of a brand, but design plays an essential role.

THE BASICS

Now you may wonder, how can I maximize my chances of success? This is where **brand identity** comes into play: the tangible expressions of your brand.

Brand identity takes disparate elements and unifies them into a whole system.

The more distinct, specific and cohesive these elements are, the stronger brand you can create.

And this is what my guide is all about—My goal is to help you create a strong brand identity, so that you can clearly communicate your values to the world.

Brand identity elements will vary depending on the company, but the basic must-have elements would include:

- Logo
- Shape
- Color
- Typography
- Voice

THE BASICS



Logo: Your logo is the cornerstone of your brand identity. It is the most immediate visual representation of your company—think of Apple’s logo with a bite out of it.



Shape: The shape you use can say different things. For example circles can signify wholeness—think of MasterCard, while squares stand for stability—think of Microsoft. And lines can add to dynamism — Think of Adidas for example.



Color: Your color choices are key to evoking emotions and differentiating your brand. Think of McDonald’s golden arches & how they stand out. Did you know that Tiffany trademarked its color, so that no other jewelry brand can use it?



Typography: A consistent typeface is key to instilling familiarity. Think of The New York Times’ use of Georgia that gives it classic look or maybe you want your brand to appear more sleek and modern like Google for example.



Voice: It’s important to design how brands look, but it’s equally important to give the brand a voice. Are you friendly or more formal? Do you inspire others to take action like Nike does?

BRAND STRATEGY



Developing Brand Strategy

It's tempting to dive right into the juicy stuff like creating a logo, but before that it's essential to look inwards.

Understanding what your company is and what it stands for is imperative before you start tackling any of the specific design elements.

Investing time upfront to define and articulate your brand strategy is key to success.

Internally, it provides the core concept around which everything else revolves.

So that all your branding efforts are aligned according to a clear strategic direction. Externally, an effective strategy manifest itself in strong brand image.

Your strategy can be very comprehensive but the basics would include: your target audience, mission statement and brand personality.

BRAND STRATEGY

1. Target Audience

Knowing your brand's target audience is vital to building a brand.

It's important to know your audience, because we need to know how to connect with them.

So you want to know who they are in terms of demographics and psychographics as well.

Learn more about how to create [customer profiles](#) on my blog.

2. Mission statement

Mission statement is a written declaration of your core purpose or belief. People are wired to care about why you do things instead of what you do or how you do it.

People want to see themselves—their values, goals and aspirations—in the brands they choose.

A solid mission statement is where you clearly state what your company wants to accomplish in the world.

The mission will serve you as filter to make decisions within the organization that are “on brand”.

Learn more about how to create your [mission statement](#) on my blog.

3. Brand Personality

Like people, brands have personalities—if your company was a person who would it be?

How would he or she act, talk and dress? For example: luxury brands, such as Rolex, aim for sophistication.

There are five main types of brand personalities:

1. **Excitement:** carefree, spirited, and youthful
2. **Sincerity:** kindness, thoughtfulness, family values
3. **Ruggedness:** rough, tough, outdoorsy, and athletic
4. **Competence:** successful, accomplished, leadership
5. **Sophistication:** elegant, prestigious, pretentious

Learn more about how to define your [brand personality](#) on my blog.

BRAND IDENTITY



Designing Brand Identity

There are five basic elements: logo, color, shape, type and voice that come together to create a cohesive image of your brand.

When we encounter new brands, we judge them by how they look and feel.

But if you're not a designer you may be unaware of how these elements work together.

First, let's talk about logo design and the different types of logos.

We can put them into five basic categories:

1. Abstract marks
2. Word mark
3. Pictorial marks
4. Emblems
5. Letter marks

BRAND IDENTITY

1. Logo



Wordmark — or a logotype is just a brand name that has been stylized to convey a brand attribute or positioning. For example: Google.



Lettermark — is a unique design using one or more letterforms that act as a mnemonic device for a company's name. - Think of McDonald's "M".



Emblem — is a mark in which the company name is inextricably connected to a pictorial element, for example: Harley Davidson.



Pictorial mark — is an immediately recognizable literal image that has been simplified and stylized, for example Apple.



Abstract mark — is a symbol that conveys a big idea, and often embodies strategic ambiguity, for example: Nike swoosh.

Learn more about the different [types of logos](#) on my blog.

BRAND IDENTITY

A professional logo must be: simple, memorable, and appropriate

Simple—means that your logo should not contain too many graphic elements. Simplicity is the key.

Memorable—if your logo is simple, and distinctive enough, so that it can be easily remembered.

Appropriate—a great logo should be relevant to the business industry and the target audience.

Check my [logo design process](#) described in detail on my blog.

2. Shape



Round shapes—like circles, ovals, and ellipses—are all about positive feelings. Circles suggest feelings of community, unity and love. Think of MasterCard and their use of circles.





Sharp shapes—like squares and rectangles—are representative of strength and efficiency. They create a feeling of stability and trustworthiness. Think of Microsoft their use of squares.





Straight lines—also have their own implications: vertical lines suggest masculinity and strength while horizontal lines suggest tranquility and mellow vibes. Diagonal lines can add to dynamism. For example: Think of Adidas and their use of lines.


3. Color


 Red is the color of passion and excitement. It's the perfect choice if your brand identity is loud, youthful and exciting like Coca-Cola.


 Orange: Orange is another high-energy color and is great if you want to appear friendly and playful. It's bright and juicy.


 Yellow, the color of sunshine, is all about happiness. The cheerful vibe makes it a good choice if you want to feel fun, accessible and affordable—think of McDonald's.

 Green is known for its exceptional versatility—nearly every brand can use it. If your brand is tied to the environment, green is a solid choice e.g. Whole Foods.

 Blue: Pretty much everyone likes blue. It can help your branding appear stable and trustworthy. Just look at banks—most of them go with the blue (Chase Bank).

 Purple is the color of royalty, with a hint of femininity, so if you're going for a luxurious feel in your branding, this is a safe bet.

 Pink: Nothing says girly quite like pink. But it's more versatile than that. Pink gives brands a modern and differentiated look - think of T-mobile.

 Black: If you want to be viewed as modern or sophisticated, there's nothing as classic and effective as black. — Think of Nike.

4. Typography

Serif

Serif fonts—have a little feet at the end of each letter. This classic typography is great if you want your brand to appear trustworthy, and traditional.

Sans

Sans serif—if “serif” means feet then “sans serif” is without the feet. They’re just letters that have smooth edges. They give a more sleek and modern feel to your brand identity.

Script

Script—and we have script fonts that emulate cursive handwriting. It can be a great way to add an authentic feel to your brand identity.

Learn more about [typography](#) on my blog.

5. Voice

It's important how you look but also how you talk.
Think of Starbucks and their functional and expressive tone of voice.

Functional means helpful so it organizes things in a clear way. And expressive tone makes you smile and by always making every word count.

Are you corporate or casual?
Straight to the point or more conversational?
How do you want to sound to your audience?

Check out my blog to learn more about not only how to say it but also [what to say](#).

BRAND TOUCHPOINTS



Creating Brand Touchpoints

Most branding projects will require the design of a website, stationery, social media graphic and maybe packaging.

Every single piece of collateral must work together to deliver a strong and clear brand image.

Each touchpoint is an opportunity to increase awareness and build customer loyalty.

Now it's time to take the brand elements (color, typography, shape and voice) we explored earlier in this guide and use them consistently.

So that regardless of how your customers interact with your brand, they have a seamless experience.

Brand touchpoints are simply ways in which your brand interacts with people. Most businesses develop at least several brand touchpoints, so let's talk the basic ones.

Not every company will require every single touchpoint—your needs will depend on many factors, including your product or service and your customer base.

BRAND TOUCHPOINTS



Website: This is where the brand identity, consistent typography, corporate colors, and unique voice, come through in full force. Remember to communicate in clear language, and organize content from the perspective of the user.



Stationery: While physical business cards and other printed materials are slowly being replaced by their digital form, A well-designed stationery system offers the chance to reinforce a positive opinion of your brand in the eyes of others.



Social Media: Social platforms are a great opportunity to connect with your audience on a more personal level. So make sure your social media graphics as well as the content you share is on brand and consistent with your brand voice.



Packaging: Whether you need a bottle for a beverage or shipping packaging for clothes, don't underestimate the value of good packaging. This is an opportunity for your company logo, colors and typography to really shine.

BRAND TOUCHPOINTS

Brand Touchpoints Rules

Be authentic—it means that when developing your brand collateral don't try to be something you're not but refer back to your strategy to ensure you support it.

Be different—it means that generic doesn't work when developing brand collateral. You want to stand out from the competition, so don't be afraid to be bold and creative.

Be durable— means that branding takes a lot of time and effort, and once you've nailed it, you must factor in even more time and effort to hook your audience and make a real impression. Choose designs with longevity.

Be evolutionary—means that you will inevitably come a point when your branding starts to feel a little stale and you'll want to switch things up. Make sure that, despite changes, you stay true to your core values and offer a feel of continuity or an update.

BRAND GUIDELINES



Developing Brand Guidelines

Launching a new brand identity program is all dependent on a set of solid guidelines.

A Brand Guidelines takes different brand elements (everything we've discussed so far) and translates them into tangible rules and standards.

This document will help you to ensure that your brand looks and feels consistent across the board.

At the heart of your guidelines is what we like to call the “special sauce” of your brand: the stuff that makes you uniquely you (**your strategy**):

Your target audience, mission statement, positioning statement and brand personality should be there.

These elements should be outlined at the beginning of your document so that people within your organization can make decision that are “on brand”.

Next, you want to make sure anyone who uses your logo does so correctly, so include all approved versions and **lockups of your logo**.

BRAND GUIDELINES

Also you would want to specify on primary and secondary **color palette** and provide people with RGB and CMYK values and PANTONE color name and number.

Next you want to talk about **typography** and how each font should be used and any pertinent info on spacing and alignment.

You will also want to include an **image library** to give your team an idea of how you want them to use pictures or illustrations to support your brand image.

And lastly also talk about the **tone of voice** and sample messages so that marketing and communication teams know how you want your brand to sound to the target audience.

And once you've locked down the basics of your brand identity, it's time to show how these elements work together on specific **brand touchpoints**.

Here, you want to include mockups of digital as well as print collateral - and it will vary from brand to brand.

BRAND GUIDELINES

If you sell physical products you will want to include **packaging guidelines**. If you host a ton of in-person events, you'd want to include information on signage and so on.

The more details you can include in your guidelines, the more consistency you'll achieve.

And as your brand evolves, so will your guide. So keep updating it with any changes, upgrades or new information.

And these days brands tend to go for digital form of Brand Guidelines by having a dedicated website.

YOU'VE MADE IT!

Congrats on your new brand!

Congrats on becoming a branding expert! Now, you have everything you need to build a strong brand.

You've reached the end of my Branding Guide and now equipped with this knowledge, you got everything to go out there and design an iconic brand that your customers will love.

Wishing you lots of luck on your branding journey!

Alex Dvornichuk



NEED AN EXPERT?

Want to work together?

I've helped dozens of entrepreneurs design strong brands and successful businesses and now I want to help you!



I'm a branding expert who runs the popular design blog, [Ebaqdesign](#), which doubles as my award-winning design & branding firm based in Brooklyn, New York.

My clients have included Nationwide, British Gas, Pepsi, Caterpillar, Volvo and I've worked at the renowned design studio **Chermayeff & Gesimar & Haviv**, been featured in HubSpot, Entrepreneur & DesignWeek and been awarded "Best of" for graphic design on Behance.

Need help with branding? Just shoot me [an email](#).

START A PROJECT

Have a question? [Talk to Arek](#)

For tips on branding & design, follow me on social media:



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Strategy Guide



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