

**Putting your brand
into words.**



BRANDSawvy™
YOUR BUSINESS MADE VISIBLE

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The B word

If you're starting or growing a business there's one word you're going to hear a lot: brand. This is a word bandied about in the business world, but rarely used to its full potential. And quite often it's hard to isolate and define exactly what your brand is. That's where this workshop will help.

Your brand is a reflection of what you stand for, so it has to align perfectly with the values and purpose of your business or organisation. In this document we'll help you hone and identify your brand, unique to your business.

To arrive at a brand that perfectly reflects the essence of your company, you need to write three essential statements:

Your vision statement, which defines your long-term aspirations. It explains why you're doing what you're doing and the ultimate good you want to achieve through your success. Think of your vision as the picture of where you ultimately want your work to lead you.

Your mission statement, which defines the purpose of your company and the effect you intend to have on the world around you. It states what you do for others and the approach you follow in order to achieve the aspirations you've set yourself, your organisation, or your business. Think of your mission as the route you'll follow to achieve your vision.

Your brand promise, which summarises the positive difference you deliver to all who deal with your organisation. Internally, your business promise guides the development of all elements of your brand. Externally, your business promise is something translated into and presented as a motto or tagline.

For example: The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, an organisation working to cure a genetic disease that affects approximately 30,000 children and adults in the UK. The foundation's brand statements are as follows:

Vision: To identify the resources and people needed to cure cystic fibrosis.

Mission: To assure the development of the means to cure and control cystic fibrosis and to improve the quality of life for those with the disease.

Brand promise/tagline: Adding tomorrows every day.

To put it simply, your vision is your ultimate dream; your mission is how you'll achieve your aspirations; your brand promise is the positive difference you'll deliver along the way.

One good reason

If you can think of one good reason why customers should choose your offering above all others, you're already halfway there. Your brand is the tangible expression of your vision. It's the banner that waves what you're passionate about and what you aspire to achieve.

Whether you've written it down or not, you probably have a vision of the good that you, your business, or your organisation hopes to achieve in your world. Likewise, you probably have a set of principles and values that guide how you operate and what you are and aren't willing to do to achieve success.

Before you get into the nitty gritty of your brand identity statement, first you have to put your vision, mission, values, character and promise into words. These elements are fundamental to what your business is and what it stands for, and will form the building blocks of your brand.

Complete the following exercises and before you know it, you'll be ready to unlock the full potential of your brand.

Exercise 1: Create your vision

Your vision statement should define your long-term aspirations. It should explain why you're doing what you're doing and the ultimate good you want to achieve through your success. Think of your vision as the picture of where you ultimately want your work to lead you.

Use these questions and framework as you assemble your vision statement.

Stating your vision
<p>Why do you and those in your organisation get up and go to work every day? You could earn a living at a number of places, so what is it about your organisation that keeps you loyal and motivated?</p>
<p>Ultimately, what good are you aiming to do in your world? What lasting differences do you want to make?</p>
<p>What ultimate benefits do your products or services deliver?</p>
<p>Use your answers to compile a short vision statement that summarises what you feel is the highest purpose of your business.</p>

Exercise 2: Establish your mission

Your mission statement should define the purpose of your company and the effect you intend to have on the world around you. It should state what you do for others and the approach you follow in order to achieve the aspirations you've set yourself, your organisation, or your business. Think of your mission as the route you'll follow to achieve your vision.

There's no one format to follow in writing your business mission. All that really matters is that your mission statement covers the following points:

- The products or services you provide
- Who you serve
- How you are unique
- What benefits or greater good you promise.

As you begin to strengthen your mission statement or write one for the first time, the worksheet on the following page will help. It presents questions to help focus your thinking before providing a framework into which you can enter the components of your statement.

As you polish your statement into its final form, use language and a format that reflects the nature and tone of your business. Some statements are formal, and some are relaxed; some are short, and some are long. No matter how your mission statement looks or sounds, be sure to:

- **Avoid jargon.** Instead, use language that anyone inside or outside your company can easily understand
- **Avoid generalisation in favour of specific descriptions.** Rather than say "We serve elderly Britons", say "We serve elderly, recently widowed Britons who are living independently in their own homes"
- **Show passion.** Write your mission statement in a way that inspires others to want to come on board and be part of the good work you're doing.

Exercise 2: Worksheet

Use these questions and framework as you assemble your mission statement.

Stating your mission
In a sentence, how do you describe what your company does?
In a phrase, what products or services do you offer?
What benefits or positive outcome do you promise to those you serve?
When thinking about your offerings compared to competitive offerings, what words would those who know your business well use to explain how you are different or better?
[Name of your business] provides [description of the product or service your business offers] for [describe the group of people you serve] who seek [define the positive benefits you deliver] and who prefer our solution over available alternatives because we [describe your point of difference].

Exercise 3: Identify your values

Start by clarifying your values – your beliefs about your responsibility to your employees, clients, business associates, and community.

Your statement of values can take the form of a simple list that declares the principles that steer your company.

For example: Whole Foods core values are:

- Selling the highest quality natural and organic products possible
- Satisfying and delighting our customers
- Supporting team members happiness and excellence
- Creating wealth through profit and growth
- Caring about our community and our environment.

Exercise 3: Worksheet

Make a list of your business's values, and then shortlist it to six core values.

Long list	Short list

Exercise 4: Promise to deliver

Your business promise is the pledge upon which you build your brand and stake your reputation. It's what you assure those who come into contact with your business – whether as employees, suppliers, investors, associates, or customers – that they can count on you to deliver. It's the expectation that you live up to every time people experience your brand, whether through advertising, promotions, buying experiences, service encounters, or any other contact.

Your promise is the essence of your brand. Don't make the common mistake of thinking that your logo is your brand identity. Your logo is a visual representation of your brand and an important element of your brand identity, but it's just one component. When people think of your brand, they might visualise your logo, but your promise is what motivates them in your direction.

While-you-wait service is a promise. The best on-time arrival record is a promise.

"You'll never wait in line" is a promise. Each one puts a company's reputation on the line by assuring that the brand will live up to the high expectations it sets itself. The promise becomes an internal rallying call for excellence and a magnet for new business.

Your promise is essential to your brand strategy. If you're not already sure of the promise you make to all who deal with your business, consider these questions:

- Q1 Why do customers choose your business? What do they seek from you that they can't get elsewhere?
- Q2 How do you think your most satisfied customers describe your products or services? What words do they use when they pay compliments or when they fill out satisfaction surveys?
- Q3 How do you think your most satisfied customers describe the feeling they get when they work with your business? Would they use words like "efficient", "fun", "friendly", "competent", "creative", "convenient", "reliable", "exciting", "amazing", or others?

Answer these questions on your own, ask managers and staff to answer them, and then go to a few key customers and ask for their input. Explain what you're up to. Tell them that, as part of your branding strategy, you're clarifying the way your business promise is interpreted in the market, and you'd appreciate their responses to the above questions.

When you're done with your analysis, take the steps on the following pages.

Exercise 4: Worksheet

Complete the following:

Defining your promise			
<p>List all the reasons customers choose your business and the attributes they count on that only your company can deliver.</p>	<p>List all the attributes you're confident that you can deliver consistently and upon which you're willing to stake your reputation.</p>	<p>List all the attributes that are compelling to customers and to your internal team – the ones you can rally behind and take pride in offering.</p>	<p>List all the attributes – from all of the above – that are most assured, most compelling, most believable, and most consistent with the character of your company.</p>

Exercise 4: Worksheet continued

No one likes someone who breaks promises. As you put your promise into words, make sure it's one you can deliver upon consistently every single time people come into contact with your brand. Staying true to your word and consistently upholding your promise is essential to building business trust and loyalty.

Beginning with your point of difference, use the following template to write the business promise you'll incorporate into your branding strategy.

Your brand promise

[Name of your business, product, or service] **is the** [your distinction and the generic term for your type of offering] **to provide** [your unique features or benefits] **to** [your customer profile] **who choose our offering in order to feel** [your customers' emotional outcome].

We consistently deliver the unique attributes and benefits our customers count on, and we promise our customers [the promise customers can absolutely count on from your company].

Exercise 5: Know your character

Your brand character is like the personality of your brand. Some brands are serious or even sombre, and some are whimsical, fun, or playful. Some brands are youthful, and some are very grown up.

As a first step in defining your brand character, ask yourself this question: How would your brand be described if it were a person? Sophisticated? Fashionable? Flamboyant? Reserved? Important? Playful? Or one of countless other descriptions? Keep your answer in mind as you go through the rest of this exercise.

As you define your brand character, realise that the character you convey must be an accurate reflection of your business vision, mission, values, and promise.

If you have difficulty defining your character, ask yourself these questions:

Q1 If you were to compare your business to a car, what car would it be, and why?

Q2 If you were to compare your business to an actor, who would it be, and why?

Follow the steps on the next page to write a brand character statement that guides the development of all expressions of your brand.

Exercise 5: Worksheet

Follow these steps to write your brand character statement.

Your brand character statement
<p>Step 1: Review your vision statement to refocus on the highest aspirations of your business.</p>
<p>Step 2: Review the top values you support.</p>
<p>Step 3: Review the promise you make in your market place.</p>
<p>Step 4: Based on your vision, values and promise, write a one-sentence brand character statement. Use the following format:</p> <p>Our brand is [insert a description of the character of your brand], a trait we reflect through brand expressions that are [insert a description of the mood and tone that all your marketing will project].</p>

Exercise 6: Define your brand

Your brand identity statement, also called your brand definition, shrinks all your thoughts about your business mission, values, and promise into a concise statement that defines what you do, how you differ from all other similar solutions, and what you pledge to deliver to those who deal with your business.

Your completed brand identity statement serves as the steering wheel for your branding strategy. It influences every turn you make in presenting your brand – from giving it a name and logo to producing ads and marketing materials to creating the experience that customers will encounter when they come into contact with your brand from any direction.

As you write your brand identity statement, be sure that it reflects the following information:

- The three things you want people to know about your business:
 - What you offer
 - Who you serve
 - How you're best at what you do
- Your point of difference (how you serve your target market differently and better than all other options)
- Your business promise that will be upheld through all brand experiences
- Your brand character or personality that will be communicated through the mood and tone projected in all brand expressions.

Exercise 6: Worksheet

Your brand identity is the face of your brand. It includes your name, logo, tagline or slogan, advertising, marketing materials, signage, and every other way that you express your brand in your business and in your marketplace.

Your brand identity statement defines your brand identity. It describes the people your brand must relate to, the attributes it must highlight, and the promise and character it must convey. To write a brand identity statement that guides your branding strategy, use the following format:

Your brand identity statement
[You company name] promises [your target market] that they can count on us for [your unique attribute or benefit] delivered with [information about the character, tone, and mood you convey].

Before accepting your brand identity statement as the one that will guide your branding strategy, see if you can answer “yes” to these three questions:

- Q1 Does the statement illuminate your difference? Does it make it clear how you differ from other solutions in your business arena?
- Q2 Is the statement customer-centric? Does it clarify what you provide and promise to others rather than what you aspire to yourself?
- Q3 Can you project the statement with a unified voice across all markets and media? And can you fulfil its promise through every contact with your business and as part of the overall customer experience with your brand?

Exercise 7: Inventing or confirming your name

If you already have a brand name, use this exercise to check if it truly reflects the attributes of your brand. If you don't have a brand name, list the attributes that you want to reflect and we'll develop the name for you.

Consider the following:

- Q1 What terms out of your brand identity statement do you most want your name to convey, reflect, or support?
- Q2 What aspects of your brand promise would you like your name to advance?
- Q3 What words define the character you want your name to convey?

Your brand name
List the attributes you personally want to reflect in your brand name.

We can help you.

If you can think of one good reason why customers should choose your offering over all others, then you have a reason to get us to brand it or rebrand it.

At BRANDSavvy, we'll secure your success through the power of effective branding – helping you stay visible in your markets, and in the minds of your customers, with tried and tested brand-building methodologies.

Contact us today and prepare for branding success.

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