



**7 easy  
ways to boost  
your brand  
right now.**

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Working on your brand's identity can be overwhelming and challenging. In many cases, businesses will operate for years without having done any branding work whatsoever. All of their marketing and content is produced through intuition or through the use of superficial internet material. Without any real understanding of the topic, the business identity and the target market's needs.

**Even simple upgrades and tweaks like the ones we are going to suggest below can give your business and brand a significant boost; strengthening your presence, generating engagement and connection with your audience and, ultimately, increasing sales.**



## A LITTLE PROLOGUE

This document will allow you to assess your business and brand from new angles and improve some aspects of your brand identity immediately. HOWEVER, when it comes to branding, DIY solutions can never replace the deep, thorough strategic work done by specialists.

But hey, one has to start somewhere! And you can start right here.

In a way, the advice we are providing here is a simplification of a very complex and layered process. If you are in the initial stages of assessing your identity and evaluating an upgrade, this is a great way to get started. More importantly, doing this work might begin to demonstrate the relevance of having a more solid identity and why it makes sense to invest in branding.

We strongly suggest to avoid skipping over any of the tips, even those that might sound obvious or that you think you've already covered. Believe us, 90% of businesses get many of these things wrong, or haven't really thought them through. So, read this guide with an open mind and consider each suggestion carefully. We promise that it will help you move forward, regardless of where you are. If you get stuck somewhere or hit into some rough terrain, you can always HOLLER and we'll be more than happy to shine a guiding light for you.

Without further ado, here are some of our most treasured tips to strengthen your brand RIGHT NOW!

(drumroll)

# 1. Identify your ideal customer/client.



Of course you know who your ideal client is! Don't you? We would emphatically argue that they might not actually be who you think they are. How do we know this? Because we've seen it happen time and time again with our own clients. Actually, many businesses completely miss out on the opportunity to do business with their ideal client. Why? Because they haven't taken the time to define it. Knowing who your ideal customer is can be an absolute game-changer and can help crystalize your business plan, brand and marketing strategy. Once you find them, many things will fall into place on their own.

## **Finding your ideal customer**

Your ideal customer lies at the intersection between those who buy from you the most and those who you enjoy doing business with the most (who are also interested in what you have to offer, of course).

In order to find that very specific segment, start by making a list of the different target market groups for each of the two categories we just mentioned. Let's look at them in detail:

**A. The customer who buys from you the most:** those people that you serve most often. The ones who tend to be easier to convert and who keep coming back for more of what you've got. The reason why these people give you so much work is because you are clearly offering something they want, and this can't be overlooked. But it often happens that, for x or y reason, these customers are not your favorites. They might be more demanding, more careless or impolite, not likeminded, etc. In any case, they have to be appreciated for what they provide: sales.

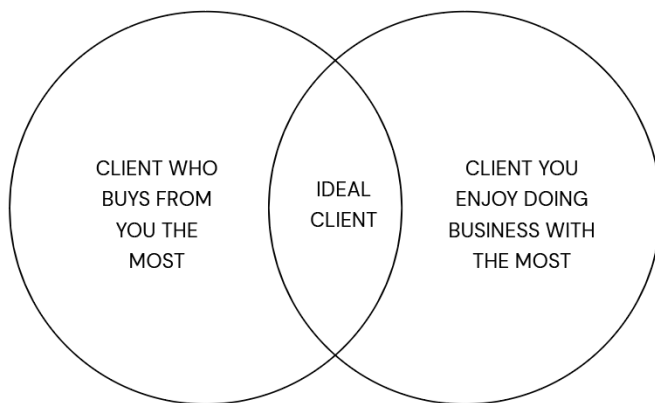
**B. Customers you enjoy doing business with:** this group is made up of those target segments that you enjoy serving the most. They usually has some of these qualities:

- They really love your product/service.
- They are similar to you/ like-minded.
- They recommend you.
- They are kind and grateful.
- They trust you enough not to question everything you say.
- They are willing to pay more than the average customer, or at least pay your price happily.

Note: A client usually refers to a person who purchases a professional service, while a customer usually is the one who purchases goods (or more casual services). We use both terms interchangeably because we work with businesses who deal with both of them.

## Find the intersection

Now that you've identified the two groups, make two lists that include the different target segments that fit into each of them for your business. You can divide them into groups in the way that makes most sense to you: age, gender, personality types, occupation, etc.



Let's take the example of a gourmet catering service. Their lists might look like this:

Customer who buys from us the most	Customers we enjoy doing business with
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PR firms</li> <li>• Marketing department of mid-sized companies</li> <li>• Wedding planners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who have worked in the food industry (understand it)</li> <li>• Families</li> </ul>

Once you've got those lists ready, try to find if there are overlapping segments. Are there any subgroups, demographics or profiles that fit within both categories? In the example, the catering company mentioned that they liked working with people who understand the food industry and families. But it is companies, PR firms and wedding planners who give them most work. So their ideal target market could be firms and companies related to the food industry and wedding planners (because they allow them to work with families).

That's it! Knowing this is one of the bases and secrets to improving your identity, because it allows you to build a brand that's designed to connect to your ideal customer. It gives you a clear direction on how to make your brand look, speak and behave. But it can also help you make more aligned business and marketing plans.

If you can't find any overlapping points between both lists, don't panic! There are two things you can do (if you want to be happier at your job, that is):

1. Create your ideal customer profile by combining traits from both groups and making a new segment.
2. Experiment with tweaking your offering so that it adapts more to what your ideal customer needs.

**IMPORTANT:** this doesn't mean that you will now neglect the rest of your client segments; it just means that you will have more clarity about who it is that you are most interested in pursuing and will make decisions accordingly.

With this ready, you can direct the efforts of tweaking your brand identity to resemble your ideal client and to speak like them (and to them). You will have an identity that attracts and connects to the right people and, at the same time, is more defined, clear and consistent.

This exercise might also shed some lights on things you need to pay attention to. Maybe you've been absentmindedly focusing on the wrong target market, which has been making you feel dissatisfied. Maybe your brand approach hasn't been the right one, maybe there's room for creating new products and offering to expand the type of customers you attract. Use this exercise to review all of these things and discover fresh angles about your business.

## 2. Create a voice that speaks to your ideal customer.



Your brand voice is a set of guidelines that describe the style and form in which your communications should be written in order to align to your brand's identity and connect to your audience with more strength. Now that you know who your ideal customer is, it'll be much easier to create a voice that speaks directly to them.

Note: this tactic for creating your brand voice is a simplification of a much more hefty and complex process that we apply when we create full brand identities for our clients.



## Let's Get Started!

1. List (up to) 10 adjectives that describe your business qualities as if it were a person.

Example: feminine, playful, direct, intellectual, fun, etc.

2. Make a list of (up to) 10 adjectives that describe your ideal customer. If your business is meant to be an aspirational or heroic type of brand, list the adjectives that describe an aspirational stereotype. If your business is meant to be down-to-earth, relatable or low key, describe your customer as he already is.

3. Find the overlapping qualities of both lists and divide them in categories by similarity or relatability as shown below.

Here's an example for the catering business:

Our business' traits	Our ideal customer's qualities (food-related biz owners, wedding planners)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Efficient</li><li>• Friendly</li><li>• Transparent</li><li>• Enthusiastic</li><li>• Honest</li><li>• Down-to-earth</li><li>• Reliable</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focused</li><li>• Structured</li><li>• Reliable</li><li>• Organized</li><li>• Easy-going</li><li>• Attentive</li></ul>

We've color-coded our groups, each of them forms a set of distinctive traits that both categories share.

4. Find one word that represents each group best. It can be one of the words you already have, or a completely new one that encompasses those qualities. In this case we chose "EFFICIENT" for the red group, "WARM" for the green and "RELIABLE" for the purple. We think that these three traits would describe a person really well. This is our brand's personality!

5. Now turn those three traits into voice qualities. Voice qualities are words that can be used to develop a style of writing and speaking. Imagine that you are working with an

actor that has to portray the character you just created, how would he turn those three keywords into behaviors or actionable traits?

**Efficient - Clear**

**Warm - Friendly**

**Reliable - Helpful**

6. Write a little paragraph for each of those traits that describes them further, you can use some of the words from your groups in the descriptions. Think about the “character” you’ve created and write in first person plural.

- **Clear:** we use simple, short sentences. We avoid complicated words and industry lingo. We always have a clear objective of what we want to say or achieve when we start writing. We explain things as clearly and simply as possible.
- **Friendly:** we are informal and relaxed. We always greet others enthusiastically. We are positive and inspiring. We enjoy life and try to inspire others to enjoy it too. We are polite and empathic. We put our clients’ needs first and always listen to what they have to say.
- **Helpful:** we are reliable and thorough. We are problem-solvers. We always answer inquiries and questions. We don’t mind giving extended answers or repeating ourselves. We try to find solutions and not create problems. We provide added value. We share as many tips and helpful information as we possibly can. We are generous with our time and knowledge.

7. Take your voice for a test-drive. Write different sample texts and experiment with different combinations of your three traits. The three traits might interact differently with each other depending on the situation and media. In the catering company example, the friendly aspect of the voice might come out the most on social media, but when addressing a customer complaint, clarity and helpfulness will be the prevailing traits; which doesn’t mean you won’t be friendly, but it’s less relevant in this second case.

8. Tweak your voice by imagining your customer’s response to it. Would they like for someone to speak to them that way? Are their personalities compatible and similar to that tone of voice? Do they admire and like people who express themselves like that? The answer to these questions has to be “YES!” The main objective is for you to develop a

voice that is appealing to your audience and helps you deliver some of your key messages and product benefits optimally.

9. Ask for feedback! Ideally from people who belong to your target market. Tweak once more according to their reactions.

Voila! Your (basic) voice guidelines have been created. Check them constantly and make sure that everything you write is always aligned with these ideas. Remember that your brand voice should be applied to everything you develop for your business: social media, emails, website texts, packaging texts and even customer service in some cases.

Now you can have some fun with it! Practice, practice, practice until you feel that you've totally nailed it!

### **3. Talk to your clients.**



You'd be surprised (or perhaps you won't) at the amount of business owners that have delivered a service or product for years without having spent any time getting to really know and understand their customers and prospects. In many cases, all they know about them is based on assumptions, things they've read online or from talking to one or two friends who they consider to serve as a representative profile. They don't realize that only through actual conversations they'll be able to understand their drives, frustrations, wishes and many other essential insights that can help them build stronger brands and give them invaluable ideas about how to improve their service and offering.

Your brand identity and marketing will be significantly more compelling and less likely to fail when you do this, as your decisions will be well informed and aligned with your client's needs and desires instead of being based on superficial, and even stereotypical, notions of who your customer is.

## **4. Define a clear and unique brand value proposition.**

Do you have a clear and simple brand value proposition? Statistically speaking, the likelihood is that you don't.

The BVP is the heart of your business and your brand; so much so that we call it the Sexy Beast. It should sum up the most compelling reasons why clients should buy from you instead of your competitors. Without it, your identity and communications will lack clarity, strength and direction. To find your true BVP you need to do a thorough research into your playing field; but, for the time being, you can craft a temporary one using the more simple methodology that we will present here. That will at least give you something to work with for the time being.



There are MANY definitions out there of what the BVP is and how to create it. Simply said, the brand value proposition expresses how you truly add value to your customer's life. But what we've come to see over time, is that this always tends to boil down to a combination of expertise/quality and uniqueness.

**Let us explain: the way in which you will contribute to your customer's life is by making it better somehow. Adding value is always about how you can satisfy their needs optimally and uniquely. That's why a brand's key message will always be built around the ideas of expertise/quality and uniqueness. No matter what you do or sell, you are offering it because it is excellent (within its category); or because it solves a problem in a way that no other (or very few) can.**

Quality is easy to understand, but uniqueness might be a little trickier. Some of our clients say that they don't offer anything particularly unique. Our experience has demonstrated that almost any product/service out there has SOMETHING that makes it unique: whether it is their background story, their unique ingredients/components, or even the price-quality ratio—there is always something distinctive about a business. Sometimes the uniqueness will be quality/expertise itself, but sometimes many of your competitors will also differentiate on the same trait. In those cases it is important to find something else that makes your offering distinct, without leaving the quality/expertise aspect out of the equation.

Try to craft a message that expresses both those things (quality/expertise and uniqueness) in a succinct and clear way and —BOOM— your sexy beast (a.k.a BVP or key message) is born.

A great BVP's goal is to attract your ideal customer and, if it's done correctly, it will!

Here's an example of a BVP we created for one of our clients:

Our unique method is designed to introduce the new language in a way that subconsciously develops the child's ear, comprehension and reading skills. This approach leads to a more natural wiring of the brain to the new language in a way that is effective but feels effortless (and fun!)

## 5. Work on your elevator pitch.



Ah! The infamous elevator pitch. One of the oldest concepts in the branding book. Some might say that it is an outdated idea, but we believe that in the era of tech-induced multitasking and market saturation, the EP is more relevant than ever. It's a powerful tool

for entrepreneurs, companies and individuals who want to deliver an idea in a clear, succinct manner; especially in situations where the audience's receptivity is limited. But we would take it one step further: you shouldn't have one single EP, but many! Creating bespoke statements aimed at different interest groups can be a powerful tactic to accomplish a wide array of objectives: investment deals, prospect conversion, brand awareness and efficient networking, among others

More often than not, people have little time and patience to be listening to what you have to say about yourself and your business. They will truly only care because there is something in it for them, or because there WILL be something in it for them. A third (and less likely) option is that there is something in it for someone they already know or someone they'll meet in the future who they want to help, and then they'll connect you to them. That's why EPs can be so valuable.

In order to ensure that those who care become truly interested and/or remember you when the time is right, you have to deliver a sharp, memorable and clear EP. Worry not! We've developed a simple method to easily create powerful statements.

## The Inverted Pyramid Method

1. Get the core messages in first: who you are, what you do, what your product or service is, and how, from a big picture perspective, you improve people's lives. These statements give the listener, in a clear and succinct way, the most important information: WHO you are, WHAT you do, HOW it helps.

### Examples:

- I am an architect, my company specializes in heritage architecture. We restore old buildings and build new ones in classical style.

- I am a business coach. I help people understand how their deepest limiting beliefs are at the root of their problems. Then we identify them and solve them together.

- I sell a natural deodorant that is made without any chemicals, but is still more effective than most commercial products out there.

2. Write two or three more statements that support this idea by stating HOW you go about doing it and/or WHY you are qualified.

Each sentence of your EP has to take the listener to a new level of understanding so that, by the end of it, he gets a pretty good idea of what it is that you do and why it's valuable.

The EP can be tweaked according to the audience. You can adapt it to specific objectives or to the listener's level of proficiency on the topic.

- A "friends & family EP" states in simple and clear terms what you do, for whom and why it's important.
- An "investor's EP" explains how your business is (or is going to be) profitable, why it's valuable and a good investment opportunity.
- A "prospects EP" is aimed at getting the listeners really interested in your product.

On average, your EPs should only be four or five sentences long and always go from the most relevant and broad information, to least relevant/more specific. Many times, you'll have to deliver it in circumstances where it's hard to retain people's attention for long, even when they are interested; it could be at a party, a noisy conference or one of those overwhelming business lunches, where there's too much going on.

Your inverted pyramid EP will ensure that, even if they become distracted after phrase one, they'll walk away with the most relevant information about your company/yourself.

## **6. Simplify your logotype.**

Your logotype is the core element of your visual identity, and one of the first images people are going to associate your brand with. It should fit in perfectly with your brand's identity, appeal to your target market and stand out in world overloaded with visual



stimuli. A great way for accomplishing this is by simplifying it. Believe it or not, uncluttered and minimalist designs add dynamism and boldness to your brand, helping it stand out and conveying professionalism and credibility. This is a good example for the saying “less is more”.

We get it! Redesigning your logo is a big deal; it has to be done when the timing and resources are right. Make sure to choose a designer that’s truly fit for the job! Someone experienced, talented, who can think strategically, grasp and convey the ins and outs of your business, brand and personal preferences.

If you don’t feel ready for such a decision just yet, but feel like your logotype needs some urgent care, you can apply this suggestions to improve what you have. For this type of work you can engage a mid-range designer with less experience (and lower prices). Provide them with the following pointers and he should know what to do!

1. **Clean your design.** Too many design elements will make your logo look old-fashioned and cluttered. Get rid of shadows, color gradients and/or unnecessary lines and shapes. A little trick that can help you do this is mentally deleting components of the logo and thinking if it would still be recognizable without that element. If the answer is “yes”, that’s a good indicator that you can take that out!
2. **Refine and limit your logotype colors.** Is your logo made with a rainbow of colors? Reducing the number of colors will help make it more elegant and visually striking. Although there’s no rule to how many colors a good logo has to have, less is usually better; so if you see the opportunity to take some tones out, go for it!

Something you can try is to make your logo in a neutral color (beige, black, grey, white) and add lively colors in some other design elements of your identity like patterns, icons or backgrounds.

Look at how these great brands simplified their logos:





## 7. Be consistent!

As with people, a business and brand's credibility depend on their consistency. If your communications, visual identity and tone are always different, you will convey instability, lack of focus and disorder. This will become most evident through your tone of voice and visual identity. If the way you address your clients is warm and friendly one day and formal the next, they will feel confused about who you are. If your colors, fonts and logo are always changing, they will wonder what's going on and have more trouble remembering your brand (or will remember it for the wrong reasons.) In any case, inconsistency sends a very clear message of caution.

**The #1 tip to avoid inconsistency?** Easy! A brand document.

Branding agencies will usually provide really complete and clear brand documents when they create brand identities for their clients. But for the time being, do one yourself! The more specific and clear you can be about your brand's strategy, identity and design aspects, the easier it will be for you and your team to follow guidelines and remain consistent whenever you create content or marketing material for your business.

Here are the most essential elements you should add to your brand document:

1. Your BVP
2. Brand voice traits
3. Examples of how your brand expresses itself.

4. Examples of how your brand doesn't express itself
5. Logo design
6. Brand colors (add the specific HEX, RGB and/or CMYK codes for each)
7. Typographies (how to use them and how not to use them).

This document will become a guide for whenever you or someone else needs to create content and/or designs for your brand. Adhering to your guidelines will ensure consistency, which is a MUST for enhanced recognition and connection to your target audience.

## **That's all!**

These tips are like a set of band aids that can help you mend some of the brand issues you might be experiencing. Better yet, if there weren't any specific "problems" with your brand, applying them might make you realize how beneficial branding can be for growing your business.

Remember that these pointers can never replace the thorough work of deep, strategic brand identity creation; which can seriously take your business to a whole new level and playing field.

So, whenever you are ready to take the plunge, give us a call. Even if we don't end up working together, we are absolutely passionate about this topic and will be very happy to give you some guidance and information.

Till the next time!

**Happy branding :)**

