

The Startup Branding Blueprint: Establishing a Memorable Brand Identity from Scratch

Hook/Subtitle: Launching a startup? Avoid the pitfalls of inconsistent branding! Learn the clear action steps to establish a brand that sticks in your customers' minds.

(Day 0) Introduction Email

Hey there!

And welcome to The Startup Branding Blueprint.

I'm excited to guide you through the necessary stages of developing a brand identity from scratch. Neglecting to define and establish a brand identity for your startup can lead to a lack of direction and understanding of your company's market position. It can also lead to inconsistent customer experiences, a forgettable brand, and ultimately, lost business opportunities.

But fortunately, following this course will allow you to avoid all these issues. By establishing a brand identity for your startup, you'll be able to create business value, make a memorable impression on consumers, and set your business apart from competitors.

So, let's dive in.

"The way a company brands itself is everything – it will ultimately decide whether your business survives." – Sir Richard Branson

Over the next 5 days, here's what you can expect:

- **Day 1:** Step 1 - Defining Your Brand Identity
- **Day 2:** Step 2 - Creating Visual Elements
- **Day 3:** Step 3 - Crafting Brand Messaging

- **Day 4:** Step 4 - Building Brand Touchpoints
- **Day 5:** Step 5 - Launching and Maintaining Your Brand

So, keep an eye on your inbox! Tomorrow morning at 9 a.m., you'll receive Lesson 1.
Stay tuned...!

{your name}

(Day 1) The Startup Branding Blueprint: Establishing a Memorable Brand Identity from Scratch [5 key building blocks to create an unforgettable brand that'll keep the \$\$\$ rolling in for years]

Hey there!

Welcome to Day 1 of The Startup Branding Blueprint.

Today, we're going to look at the most important initial step in building a brand for your startup: Defining Your Brand Identity

This involves the following steps:

- Identifying your brand's core values, mission, and vision.
- Defining your target audience and understanding their needs and preferences

"A brand's strength is built upon its determination to promote its own distinctive values and mission."

- Jean-Noel Kapferer, author of *Strategic Brand Management* (2008).

The five key building blocks in building a brand for your startup are these:

1. Understanding Who You Are (and What Your Values Are)
2. Defining Your Mission
3. Defining Your Vision

4. Understanding Your Audience or Customers
5. Defining Your Unique Selling Proposition

The Importance of Figuring Out Who You Are

It all begins with working out who you are and what your values are. You need to make a memorable impression and give the person you're talking to or the people who are visiting your website an idea of who you are, what you stand for, and your future goals.

This initial task involves reflection, self-awareness, and goal setting.

It sounds like a simple step, but if done right, it will have a galvanising impact on how you see yourself as a startup.

And it will become the foundation of your new business identity.

Step 1: Begin by thinking of 3 words that you or people who know you would choose to describe you. Write them down.

Step 2: Define your core values.

- Think about brands or entrepreneurs you admire.
- What qualities do they share that speak to you?
- Think of the events in your life that were most meaningful to you and full of purpose.
- Listing such meaningful events should help you identify what matters to you most – your core values.
- What stories inspire you the most?
- Why do they speak to you?
- List the qualities that resonate with you.
- Imagine your ideal work environment.
- List the qualities that this workplace would have; these will likely reflect your values.
- Think of accomplishments that you're most proud of.
- What did you do? What was the impact of what you did?
- What values or principles do you notice in these?

Examples of brand values:

- Integrity
- Determination

- Perseverance
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Honesty
- Creativity
- Community
- Social responsibility

Defining Your Mission

Your mission is what you do. It tells the world what you want to achieve with your startup.

It serves as the guiding light of your business, showing you the way, and helping you and your team to stay on track.

You can write it out as a brief statement, explaining the following:

- Who you are as a business
- Why you exist as a business
- How and where you do business
- Who your main customers are

Why Is a Mission Statement Important?

Having a mission statement for your startup is important for these reasons:

- **Clarity and Focus:** with a mission statement, you have a clear direction about your startup's purpose and goals. It will help you and everyone else in your team understand what you're working towards.
- **Goal Setting:** your mission statement establishes a firm foundation for setting specific, measurable goals. This will help you align what you do as a startup with your overarching purpose, meaning that all the efforts of you and your team are part of the larger mission.
- **Expectation Setting:** a well-crafted mission statement helps you set expectations for what you'll do and *how* you'll do things with your startup. It also helps all your stakeholders – employees, customers, investors, etc. – understand what your startup's values are.

- Decision Making: it's easy to drift off course or make choices that go against what your startup is supposed to be about. But when you have to make big decisions, you can refer to your mission statement to make sure that you're still on track and that your choices match up with your core purpose and values.

How to Write a Mission Statement

Your mission statement should be clear and concise. It usually consists of 1-2 sentences, and it doesn't change unless you decide to change your business direction.

5 Examples of Effective Mission Statements

1. IKEA: *Offer a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them.*
2. Full Cast Audio: *Competing with big brands by creating great recordings of wonderful books with a full cast of actors, pioneering a new way to experience authors' intent.*
3. WordStream by LOCALiQ: *Being the go-to resource for digital marketers and local business owners, providing the tools, strategies, data, and creative ideas they need to learn, grow, and succeed.*
4. Candice Coppola – Small business coach: *Encouraging creative entrepreneurs to live and work on purpose.*
5. Laura Lee Creative – photographer and business consultant: *To give people the tools and business systems they need so they can stop sacrificing their life for the sake of being a business owner.*

Defining Your Vision

“Vision is a destination – a fixed point to which we focus all effort.”

– Simon Sinek, British-American Author

Your mission statement says *what* you do, but your vision statement explains your “why.”

It explains your motivation and what your startup would achieve if there were no barriers.

It's a description of where you could be in the future and the impact your business will have on the world.

5 Examples of Inspiring Vision Statements

1. IKEA: *To create a better everyday life for the many people.*
2. Anything With Plants – horticultural services company: *Anything With Plants is the leading horticultural services company providing differentiated customer value and excellent results to our stakeholders.*
3. Simma's Bakery – bakery: *Nation's premier bakery and pastry shop.*
4. Kaldi's Coffee – specialty coffee shop: *To be recognized and respected as one of the leading specialty coffee companies in the nation by providing an exceptional coffee experience to our customers and guests.*
5. Aaron Chang – photographer: *Through art, we will contribute, in a positive way, to the betterment of our culture and inspire our ocean minded community to appreciate the gift of life.*

Understanding Your Audience or Customers

“Get closer than ever to your customers. So close, in fact, that you tell them what they need well before they realize it themselves.”

— Steve Jobs, Co-Founder and former CEO of Apple

Your audience or customers are at the heart of your startup endeavour.

Offering your customers an excellent customer experience should be the key part of your unique selling proposition. (We'll look at your unique selling proposition later).

In today's highly competitive business environment, customers are confronted with a multitude of choices, and they tend to make decisions very quickly.

It's therefore crucially important to identify who your customers are and to understand their needs and challenges.

Most of all, you have to offer them solutions.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Who do you want to serve and where are they located?
- Are your services aimed at a specific industry?
- Do your customers have specific interests?
- What's important to your customers?
- How can they benefit from the services you offer?
- How do your customers shop?
- How do your customers use or interact with your product or service?
- How well does your product or service fit in with your customers' day-to-day experiences?
- How well does your product or service contribute to your customers' lifestyle or quality of life?
- What kinds of interactions will your customers or audience have with you – online or in person?

Defining Your Unique Selling Proposition

“The USP is the nucleus around which you build your success, fame, and wealth. So you'd better be able to state it. If you can't state it, your prospects won't see it. Whenever a client needs the type of product or service you sell, your USP should bring you or your company immediately to mind. Clearly conveying the USP through your marketing and business performance will make business success inevitable. But you must boil down your USP to its bare essence.”

— Jay Abraham, author of *Getting Everything You Can Out of All You've Got* (2000)

A key part of defining who you are and what your brand identity is clearly defining your Unique Selling Proposition (USP).

What Is Your Unique Selling Proposition?

Your USP explains in 1-2 short sentences the following:

- What makes your business better than those of your competitors.
- Why should customers buy your products or use your service?
- What do your customers care about most?
- What challenges do they face?
- What problems do they want to be solved?
- What do they need to improve their lives and the way they go about business?

How to Identify Your Unique Selling Proposition

Identifying your USP can be seen as a continuation of the exercise in which you sought to define your values.

Many of the answers to questions that you ask as part of your reflection on your USP will, in fact, overlap with the answers you noted as your values.

Answer the following questions about your USP:

- What are the main qualities or attributes of the services or products that you offer?
- What motivates and inspires you?
- What did you identify as your values?

- Can you divide your customers into different segments based on their different needs and preferences?
- Will they use or interact with your product or service in different ways or at different stages?

Four Ways That Allow You to Define Your Unique Selling Proposition

1. Focus on your customers and their needs, challenges, and preferences.
2. Root your USP in your personal and business values, making sure your customer needs and preferences align with your mission and vision.
3. Identify and highlight your strengths.
4. Position yourself in contrast to your competitors – how well do they compare with what you offer?

How to Communicate Your USP

- Your USP should be the voice of your brand.
- Your communication must be consistent across platforms, media channels, and in your in-person meetings.
- Your USP should engage, move, and inspire your customer, offering them a rewarding experience.

By following the clear action steps explained above, you'll be able to avoid the pitfalls of inconsistent branding. Instead, you'll establish a brand that sticks in your customers' minds.

Stay tuned for tomorrow's email where we'll explore the creation of the visual elements of your brand identity.

Best,

{your name}