

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY INTRO

BRAND IDENTITY & CONTENT



Brand Identity

Branding is a crucial step, in the process of establishing your business.

Acquiring a brand identity is like acquiring a **name**, a **face**, a **personality**. And also a set of interests, clothes, etc.

Your brand identity will be mainly expressed via

- The **name** of your business/company
- The **logo & slogan**
- The **colors**
- The **typography** you will use

And this is just the start....

Your brand is your promise to your customer.

Your brand identity will affect the way you communicate with your audience & potential clients.

It will affect the content you will develop and in general the marketing plan you will implement in order to start promoting your business.

The more cohesive and consistent your brand identity will be, the easier will be to reach your target audience, convey your message, and actually convert people to clients.

Invest plenty of time in defining your brand identity. The work you will do during these first steps, will be a significant investment for the future of your business' communication.

First of all know who you are.

Establish your market positioning by thoroughly researching & understanding the following three factors:

Marketplace/
Competition

Audience

Your business

Know your competition.

Every brand has competition. Even if your product or service is quite innovative, there is someone out there with a similar offering.

Therefore before doing anything, get to know your competitors and their offerings.

Define how you compete with them, **identify how your product or service differentiates**. It will also help you **identify your unique selling points, which you should definitely promote to your potential customers**.

And while designing your logo, developing your brand identity and drafting your marketing material, try to differentiate from any of your competitors.

Who are you targeting? Who are your reaching for?

Your target audience is the group of people you are making your products and services for.

You have to be sure that these people really need your offerings; that **they have needs that you are covering with your offering; that your product/service offers them real value**. If not, then you have little or even none potential to achieving any selling at all.

The demographics & characteristics of your real target audience should be considered while building your identity, developing your marketing material and during your media planning process.

Audience

Identify who you are & what you are trying to achieve.

You should **be clear about who you are.**

Which are the goals and values of your business?

What is unique about your product/service?

What's your competitive advantage?

Start visualizing your company as a person. How would he or she be like?

Trendy and modern, or classic and professional?

Figuring out the above should be a necessary element in the process of defining the branding your business.

Now you should start “writing” and “drawing”.

Creating your brand is one of the most creative phases of your business planning. So, it is crucial to invest plenty of time in the particular process.

Always remember that **your branding will be your image, the foundation of your communication and the main trigger of the perception the public will have about you.**

Be careful and thoughtful. Try to differentiate while being true to the essence of your business.

What will make your brand identity great.

A strong brand identity needs to work for everyone, both your internal team and the people who will interact with it (e.g., customers).

As you embark on the design process, make sure your brand identity is:

Distinct: It stands out among competitors and catches people's attention.

Memorable: It makes a visual impact.

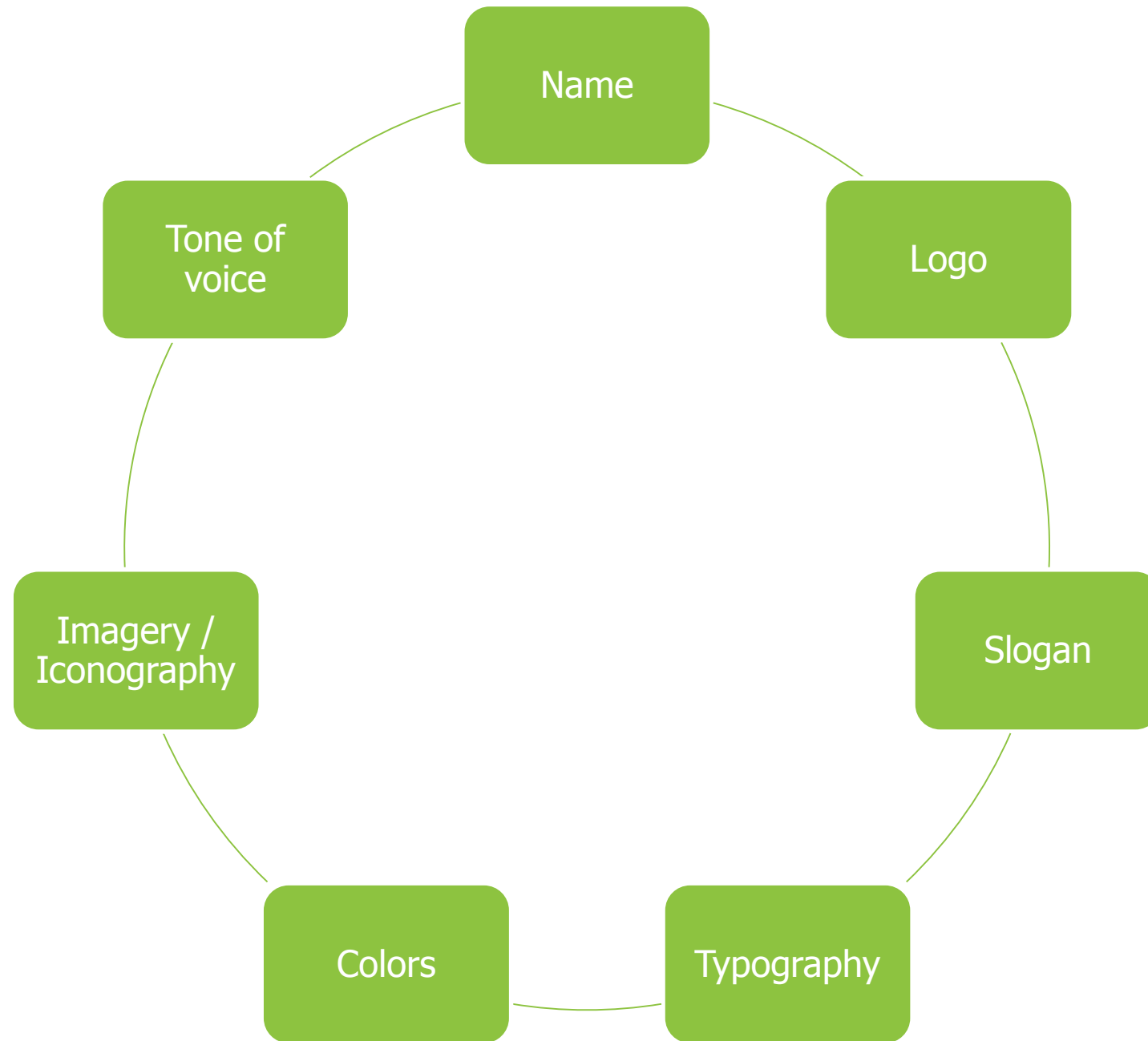
Scalable and flexible: It can grow and evolve with the brand.

Cohesive: Each piece complements the brand identity.

Easy to apply: It's intuitive and clear for designers to use.

These are the main components of your brand identity.

Before proceeding with developing any content & marketing material make sure you have concluded on all these elements.



How you introduce yourself.

The name of your business could probably be something you have decided earlier on, in the process of researching and drafting your business plan.

But in the current phase, while you are establishing your brand identity and you are finalizing all the relevant details, it is the perfect moment to make sure that your name reflects you.

The name **should be catchy, it should “look” great, it should be meaningful & memorable, and it should be easily communicated through design.** And should be available, in order to “trademark” it and get the domain, to develop a website.

Think of your name as a keystone and make sure that it will be the foundation for a great logo.

Brand Identity
Name



Your logo is the compass of your brand identity.

The logo is definitely the most memorable piece of a brand's collateral.

Customers see a logo and immediately recollect the company's products, services, practices, etc.

Think of the impact of certain logos, eg Apple, NIKE, McDonalds, Michelin. These companies have spent a lot of time and money crafting their brand image and stories, with their logos going hand-in-hand. Some logos are even just the names (e.g. Skype, Microsoft).

Creating the perfect logo is one of the biggest creative challenges, being a mix of instinct, skill and creativity.

You will have to do a lot of creative brainstorming and a lot of designing and testing to conclude with a logo that will reflect your business while being nice & catchy.

Brand Identity
Logo



Your tagline.

The slogan is a short phrase that accompanies your logo.

Its use is to provide an additional spin to your brand. It's a tagline that makes your message to your audience even clearer.

It can be literal or metaphorical, it can be a "challenge", a question or the statement of your mission.

It can be anything you like, as long as it expresses your identity and conveys effectively your "essence" to your potential clients.

Brand Identity
Slogan

Your fonts are another expression of your brand identity.

Typography is a significant part of the visual brand identity, having in mind that the other two are logo and color.

Since the brand identity is a cohesive language, the selection of the fonts that will be used is a significant step.

Your typography should be affected by the logo; however you should select a group of fonts for use for your copies in your marketing material; different for your titles, subtitles, main text etc.

Its better to decide upon them right from the beginning so that you can immediately use them when designing your banners, leaflets, posters etc.

Your color palette is (also) another expression of your identity.

Another significant part of your visual identity is your color palette. According to your brand identity and your logo, choose the colors you are going to use in all your marketing material.

The colors should be consistent with your logo, and should be easily used in combinations.

The use of colors contribute to the creation of certain feelings, so make sure that the “atmosphere” created serves your communication needs.

Brand Identity
Colors

Images – Icons – Photos – Illustrations...

The selection of images, icons and illustrations you use should reflect the tone your brand and follow your color palette.

Avoid picking random images and icons just because they look good. Instead, try to be methodical and careful in your selection to guarantee that your visual identity is just as strong as your written one.

You may decide that cartoons or graphics suit your brand, or you may prefer to use high-quality photos. The selection is yours.

Just don't use everything; and make the proper choice right from the beginning, deciding exactly the type of visuals that you will use. They should be aesthetically aligned with your whole brand identity and they should contribute to make you differentiate.

The way you speak is who you are.

The way a business uses language in both written and spoken forms of communication expresses its philosophy, values and character; its identity.

The tone of voice is not about the content of what you say, but rather the way that you say it, and the impression it makes on everyone who reads or hears about your business.

Depending on your type of business, your audience etc. you may decide to be more casual and less formal, or vice versa.

Your tone of voice is important as it reflects your brand personality, helping you connect with your audience, making you different from the rest. It should be applied to any piece of content and any form of communication with your audience.

Brand Identity
Tone of
voice

Now that you have a consistent brand identity, apply it to all your content.

Having established your brand identity is completing one of the most crucial steps in the communication of your business.

Now you should use all this groundwork you have done in order to develop your content and start connecting with your audience/potential customers.

However, you have to be very conscious when actually creating your content & communication material; bear in mind that the average consumer is only paying it a very small amount of attention.

You have to be specific, getting right to the point and include eye-catching images. You have to really concentrate on the quality of the material you're sending out, ensuring that is a content that is meaningful for your potential customers.

Value Proposition

"Your value proposition is the core of your competitive advantage, and it is the most important thing people will take with them when considering your brand."

In the modern cyberspace there is too much noise, making it very difficult for someone to make his/her voice heard. In such a "competitive" environment and **in order to make yourself heard, you need to have the strongest, clearest voice.**

At its core, that voice is your value proposition: the thing that makes your business unique and better qualified, compared to competition. Therefore, it's essential to present it right, into your website, social media and ad campaigns.

A value proposition is your promise of value to be delivered. It's the main reason a prospect should prefer you, and not your competitor.

Source: How to build a Brand. A comprehensive guide from Hubspot & Rebrandly.



Describing a strong value proposition.

Answering the following will help you to outline your value proposition.

- Exactly what you are doing
- How you are doing what you are doing, highlighting your “innovations”
- The specific market needs that you are targeting
- What makes you different

Having answered these questions, will help you putting your value proposition into words, and then incorporating it in any content & marketing material that you are developing.

Don't forget that you are reaching for people that are not aware of you, they are not interested in you and you want to catch their attention, aiming at converting them to buyers of your service.

Your content is your brand... and vice versa.

Never underestimate the impact of anything you write & publish. Every single word, every single line is an expression of your brand, and may affect your prospects. If your content is boring then your brand (business) will be considered boring.

So when developing your content strategy, make sure that you have checked the following points:

- Is it interesting for your target audience/potential customers?
- Is it addressing an issue that is very significant for them?
- Do they trust the way you are presenting your content?
- Does this content has a purpose?

Make sure that you take into consideration these parameters when developing your content strategy and content. This way you ensure that you are reaching for your audience, offering a solid and sound content.

CUSTOMER JOURNEY & MARKETING TACTICS



What is the Customer's Journey?

It is the journey or buying process that customers go through to become aware of, evaluate, and purchase a new product or service, consisting of three stages:

1. Awareness 2. Consideration 3. Decision

According to each stage, you should develop a truly effective content marketing strategy. Keep in mind that stages may vary depending on factors like industry, business model, product, pricing and audience.

For example, depending of the product to buy, a customer may spend less or more time in the middle of the funnel (consideration). A 50€ pair of sneakers, for instance, requires a lot less handholding when it comes to making purchase decisions than a 10.000€ car.

Customer Journey Funnel



At this point, a customer is trying to solve problems, get an answer, or meet a need.

They're looking for top-level educational content to help direct them to a solution, like blog posts, ads and social content. Their value as a lead is low because there's no guarantee that they'll buy from you.

But those who find your content helpful and interesting may journey on to the middle of the funnel.

The question that your customers ask at this stage is: "What do I need?" – Your content should answer this question.

Channels: Website, Social media (organic & paid), Google ads (Search & Display), Events

When someone moves into the middle of your funnel, it means you've captured their attention. They know they have a problem that has to be solved, and now they're trying to discover the best solution.

While the top of the funnel is designed to educate a prospect customer, **this is the stage where you want to show why your solutions/products are the best fit.** The middle of the funnel is typically a point of extended engagement where you're nurturing a potential customer, building a relationship, and establishing trust between the audience and your brand.

The question that your customers ask at this stage is: "Why do I need it from you?"
– Your content should answer this question.

Channels: Website, Email, Google ads (Search), Social media, Case studies (success stories, recommendations)

The bottom of the funnel is where someone is making the actual purchase decision. They're ready to buy, but that still doesn't guarantee that they're going to buy from your company. That's the last choice they have to make: Where do they get the solution/product they're seeking?

In most cases, leads at the bottom of your funnel just need that final nudge and that compelling call-to-action (CTA) to get them to make a purchase decision. **The right offer and content at this stage can have a dramatic impact on lifting your conversions/sales.**

The question that your customers ask at this stage is: "Why should I buy now?"
– Your content should answer this question.

Channels: Website, Chatbot, Eshop, Social media marketplace, Newsletter (offers)

Being aware of the Customer Journey, you should proceed with selecting the different media types & content formats to use and develop.

In the following slides you will find two main ways that media types & content formats are «presented”, to select the ones that better suit your marketing strategy.

Traditional vs Digital marketing

Digital technology allowed the development of platforms & formats for interactive communication between brands & customers.

Inbound vs Outbound marketing

Related with the way (media formats & content) a potential customer is approached.

Traditional VS Digital

TRADITIONAL	DIGITAL
<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Print Media (newspaper and magazine ads, newsletters, brochures and other printed materials)• Broadcast media (TV, Radio)• Direct mail• Telemarketing• Events	<p>Includes marketing efforts anchored on electronic devices such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Websites• Social media• Content marketing• Email marketing• Banner ads• Google ads• Video marketing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proven techniques with high success rate• Long-standing initiatives that the public already understands• Unverified Metrics for measuring success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost-effective methods• Global reach (if applicable)• Allows direct response / feedback• Measured results

What is Inbound & Outbound Marketing?

Outbound marketing

A traditional method of marketing seeking to obstruct potential customers. Outbound marketing includes activities such as trade shows, seminar series and cold calling. It is costly and the results depend on the budget you are willing to pay.

Inbound marketing

A marketing approach to bring customers to your business who are actively in the market. It's about getting found when they're looking, rather than forcing your message on people who may or may not be interested. Inbound marketing includes activities such as blogging, social media posting, email marketing, SEO (*Search Engine Optimization*) etc. Inbound marketing tactics like these are designed to help prospects discover your business in the early stages of the Customer's Journey and to educate them on the benefits of your solution, all while building trust throughout the process.

Which one to choose?

In order to choose between the two approaches, you should consider your business, and what you trying to achieve. Do you want to build brand awareness? Drive traffic? At what stage of the customer journey you are focusing? etc.

Inbound marketing is the best long-term strategy. Outbound marketing, on the other hand, can help you get customers in the door quickly, but it comes with diminishing returns.

The best strategy is to combine a little of both, while taking an inbound approach to both – meaning you are measuring results accurately and you're aiming for long-term brand-building alongside short-term growth.

Inbound vs Outbound Content types & Formats



Source: <https://moz.com/blog/goodbye-seomoz-hello-moz>

THANK YOU!

