

# Branding

## Guide for successful CEOs

How to Become a Brand Design Expert by Arek Dvornechuck

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## ABOUT ME

# Arek Dvornechuck



At Ebaqdesign my mission is to help people create and grow by design. We've helped dozens of entrepreneurs build brands and successful businesses and now I want to help you!



THE  
BASICS



BRAND  
STRATEGY



BRAND  
IDENTITY



BRAND  
TOUCHPOINTS

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

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



LOGO  
DESIGN



SOCIAL  
MEDIA



STYLE  
GUIDES

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

## QUOTE



**Brand is the promise, the big idea, the expectations that reside in each customer's mind about a product, service or company. Branding is about making an emotional connection.**

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**ALINA WHEELER**

**"DESIGNING BRAND IDENTITY"**

# Brand, branding and brand identity

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.

**Y**ou keep coming back because you feel that the values of the company are aligned with yours, or the product or service speaks to you at a deeper level than competing products do.

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

But as consumers, we often don't realize what it takes to make a strong and memorable brand,

That brings us to branding: the active process of shaping the perceptions that consumers have about your brand.

All the actions that you take to build awareness and reputation around your company and its product or services lives in the realm of branding.

There are many components that go into the making of a brand—some of which happen organically and can't be artificially molded.

## THE BASICS

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

The more distinct, specific and cohesive these elements are, the higher the likelihood that they will shape a differentiated brand that is recognized and admired.

*Think of your brand as a living, breathing thing: a person, in a sense.*

Most people want to be perceived in a certain way by others, and mold their actions and behaviors accordingly - This is branding.

For instance, if you saw yourself as a competitive and athletic person in high school, and wanted others to recognize these qualities in you, you may have worn the

latest Nikes and joined the basketball team.

Or if you valued creativity and the arts, perhaps you were the proud owner of a pair of oversized glasses and a member of the drama club.

All of these external aspects, like clothing or club/team membership, are the equivalent of elements of a company's brand identity.

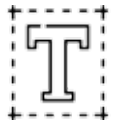
Brand identity is the most tangible and actionable part of what makes a brand. The right elements can help you create a strong identity that clearly communicates your values to the world.

Brand identity elements vary depending on the type of company, but some of the most typical elements include the following: name, typography, tagline, colors, and tone of voice.

## THE BASICS



**Name:** Your company's name will exist for the duration of its lifetime. Ask yourself: [does the name mean something](#)? Is it distinguishable? Is it memorable? Think: Apple, Amazon & Uber.



**Typography** The font you use throughout your branding materials, from logo to website. A consistent typeface is key to instilling familiarity: think of The New York Times' use of Georgia.



**Tagline:** A name alone is often too brief to express all that a company stands for. A good tagline can support and expand on that sentiment. For example: "Just do it" inspires the action.



**Colors:** [Your color choices are key](#) to instilling a distinct feel for your brand. A sleek, sophisticated black says something completely different than a friendly, approachable yellow.



**Voice:** It's important to design how it looks, but it's equally important to give brand a voice. How are you addressing your customers? Is the tone serious and formal or warm and friendly?

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**Brand** is a relationship between customers and the business.  
**Brand identity** is what we can see, it's the design of a brand.  
**Branding** is a process of building awareness and extent loyalty.

# Developing your brand strategy

It's tempting to dive right into the juicy stuff like creating a logo, website, and other visual brand elements. But before that, it's essential to look inwards.

**U**nderstanding what your company is and what it stands for is a necessary to-do before tackling any of the specific brand elements.

The results of this inquiry will [create your brand strategy](#). Investing time upfront to define and articulate your brand strategy is key to success.

Internally, brand strategy provides the core concepts around which everything else about your brand, your look and feel, behaviors, actions, communications - all

of this should rally. The strategy provides a compass to evaluate future branding decisions and to ensure that all internal efforts and operations are aligned according to a clear strategic direction.

Externally, an effective brand strategy helps you project a strong and clear image of the company to your audience, by acting as a glue that pulls every branding piece together into a cohesive whole.

How do you go about developing one? easy as 1, 2, 3, 4.



### 1. Create a killer mission statement

Simon Sinek's [Start with the why TED talk](#) went viral for good reason. It reveals a simple, but often overlooked truth: that people are wired to care about why you do something instead of what you do or how you do it.

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

Once you focus in on the why it will lead you to a solid mission statement where you clearly state what your company wants to accomplish in the world.

If your company evolves, your mission statement should evolve, too.

Airbnb's originating mission statement was about offering an affordable alternative to hotels.

Today, it's about connecting communities worldwide and helping people "belong anywhere."

A quick way to get closer to your company's why is to fill in the blanks in this sentence:

"Our company exists to \_\_\_\_\_. In five years, we aim to \_\_\_\_\_."

Check an [example of strategy](#) that includes mission statement I've developed for one of my clients.

## 2. Activate your core values

**S**trong core keeps your body strong and balanced. If you define and a strong set of values it will keep your brand on track and your company growing.

Once you have your company's mission statement, you're ready to develop a concise set of values and beliefs and use them to guide internal operations and external behaviors.

These may be about how work gets done at your company, how you treat your customers or how you treat the world and environment.

For example, Buffer, a social media management platform, adheres to [10 company values](#), which include

defaulting to transparency, showing gratitude and focusing on self-improvement.

To create your own company values, take a sheet of paper and jot down a list of the things your organization will firmly commit to even when the going gets rough.

Write down everything that comes to mind regardless of how out there it may seem and then narrow the list down to 5 or 10 values.

They should guide every decision in your company, from big ones such as what to sell and who to sell to, down to the more nuanced elements of your brand.

### 3. Promote your personality

**N**ow it's time to add some pizzazz. In the first chapter, we explored the idea of viewing your brand as a person. So far, this person has a raison d'être (mission statement) and a strong set of beliefs (core values).

If your company was a person who would it be? How would he or she act, talk and dress? How would she spend her time?

Think of someone in your own life, or a celebrity, who represents your company. Is your company more of a Beyoncé or a Michael Cera? A Kardashian or an Obama?

This exercise helps to humanize your brand, which will guide you to the right branding decisions and, ultimately, a brand image that will speak to your consumers.

## 4. Flaunt your originality

**C**hances are strong that there are other companies trying to appeal to your target audience with a similar product or service.

To set your company apart you have to get really comfortable with what makes your business different—your unique value proposition.

What are the specific characteristics that will set your company apart as your customers consider you amongst a sea of tempting alternatives?  
Write down the aspects of your business that are truly

unique. You can focus on a specific core value that few of your competitors seem to exhibit, a commitment to a waste-free business, for instance, and that you believe will make a difference to your clients.

Or you can identify an insight that you have about your customers that no one but you and your employees understand.

Whatever it is, write it down and keep it in mind to ensure that your uniqueness comes through as you build your brand identity.

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**Brand strategy** is a long-term plan for the development of a successful brand in order to achieve specific goals.

# Elements of brand identity

These four building blocks—typography, color, shape, and voice—will come together to create a cohesive and meaningful picture of your brand.

**W**hen you see a high school student wearing a letterman's jacket and athletic shoes while dribbling a basketball it's easy to make a quick assessment about who he is and what he does.

*We are influenced by the elements of design.*

When we encounter a brand in any capacity—online, through marketing and advertising we make associations about what that brand is all about.

We subconsciously evaluate the individual elements that comprise the brand's identity (just like the athlete's clothing) and turning that into a judgement.

If you're not a design aficionado you may be unaware of what these elements are and how they work together.

That's why this chapter is all about reviewing the key elements that make up a brand's identity and showing you how to use them effectively!

## 1. Typography

### Serif

**Serif:** Serif fonts have a little feet on the end of each letter. This classic typography is great if you want your brand to appear trustworthy, traditional and maybe a little old school. Popular serif fonts include Times New Roman, Garamond, and Georgia.


### Sans


**Sans serif:** If “serif” is with a foot, “sans serif” is without the foot. Sans serif fonts are letters that have smooth edges and lack the “feet” of their serif counterparts. They give a more sleek, modern feel to brands. Popular sans serif fonts include Helvetica, Futura and Franklin Gothic.


### Script


**Script:** Script typography emulates cursive handwriting and can be a great way to add a luxurious or feminine feel to your brand. Popular script fonts include Allura and Pacifico.


## 2. Color Palette


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


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


 Yellow: 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.

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

 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.

 Purple: 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. From pastel rose to neon magenta, pink gives brands a modern, youthful and luxurious look.

 Black: If you want to be viewed as modern or sophisticated, there's nothing as classic and effective as black. Learn more about [psychology of color](#).



### 3. Form and shape



Round shapes—like circles, ovals, and ellipses—are all about positive feelings. Logos that incorporate round shapes suggest feelings of community, unity and love. The rounded edges can also be viewed as feminine.



Sharp shapes—like squares, rectangles, and triangles—are representative of strength and efficiency. The no-nonsense lines create a feeling of stability and trustworthiness. But you need to be careful: if these shapes aren't balanced with something fun, like dynamic colors, they can feel cold and flat.



Straight lines also have their own implications: vertical lines suggest masculinity and strength while horizontal lines suggest tranquility and mellow vibes. Diagonal lines are often used to give to its dynamism.

## 4. Tone of Voice

**T**he last building block of your brand is your voice. Even though your design says a lot about your brand, what you actually say is important, too.

Establishing an authentic and consistent brand voice—and standing behind it—will help you break through the clutter and create a personal connection with your audience.

Figure out what you want to communicate to your audience and, more importantly, how you want to say it.

Are you the kind of brand that throws an irreverent punch every once in awhile or do you avoid potentially offensive humor? Are you corporate or casual? Straight to the point or more conversational?

It's important that your voice is aligned with the brand identity you outlined in the previous email's practices.

Your description of the personality of your brand should offer helpful insights into your brand's voice.

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**Typography** choice can give your identity unique character.  
**Colors** can trigger emotions and evoke a brand association.  
**Shape** is recognized first, which makes an imprint on memory.

# Designing your company logo

As the cornerstone of your brand, your logo fulfills the most important visual role. It's the face of your company.

**Y**our logo is a way to communicate who you are to your customers and the strongest association they'll have with your brand.

Besides being the most immediate visual representation of your brand, logos serve 3 key functions:

1. To communicate key information about your brand, like the industry or specific clientele you serve.
2. To differentiate you from the competition.
3. To build brand recognition in the market.

It's important to come up with a logo design that not only feels true to who you are as a brand, but also makes a lasting impact on your audience. This is where the design building blocks we previously touched on come into play.

To create a memorable logo, use the following elements to support the meaning of your logo: color, typography, and shape.

## LOGO DESIGN



**Wordmark:** Typography-based logos that highlight a brand's name. This works well with companies that have distinct and succinct names, where all you need is strong typography to support it. Famous Wordmark logos include Google and Coca-Cola.



**Lettermark:** Typography-based logos that consist of a few letters (typically an acronym or the company's initials). The resulting logo is simple, effective, and especially helpful for streamlining long company names. Famous Lettermark logos include IBM and AT&T.



**Emblem:** Logos that contain typography within a symbol, like a badge, seal or crest. They tend to create a classic and strong presence, and are typically more intricate than other logo types. While many emblem logos have a traditional feel, like Harley Davidson.



**Pictorial mark:** Graphic-based logos that showcase a recognizable graphic that can generally be separated from the text. (Famous ones can be identified solely by mark.) It's crucial to carefully consider the image selected, as it will become synonymous with the brand.



**Abstract mark:** Graphic-based logos similar to a pictorial mark that showcase a unique, abstract geometric form to represent a brand. Abstract mark is a symbol that conveys a big idea, and often embodies strategic ambiguity. Learn more about [types of logos](#) on my blog.

### What to look for in a logo

**L**ogos do not have to mean anything. Their main purpose is to be informative: to convey to whom or what something, someone or somewhere belongs.

The point is to understand what makes a good logo so that you can judge your ideas.

A professional logo must be:

- Simple
- Memorable
- Timeless
- Versatile
- Appropriate

**Simple:** Your logo should not contain too many graphic elements or create clutter and confusion in peoples' minds. Simplicity is the key.

**Memorable:** If your logo is simple, and distinctive enough – it can be easily remembered. Your logo should be able to just burn into peoples' minds in an eye-blink.

**Versatile:** A great logo should be able to scale to different sizes without losing the desired clarity or quality.

**Appropriate:** A great logo should be relevant to the business industry and the target audience.

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

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**Logo** is the gateway to the brand, it is the most visible and frequent reminder of what the brand stands for.

# Rockin' your brand touchpoints

Every single piece of collateral—from your website to your business card must work together to deliver a strong and clear brand message.

**Y**our logo is an essential representation of your brand, but shaping your brand identity doesn't stop there. All collateral items are your brand touchpoints.

Now it's time to take the brand elements (color, typography, shape and voice) we explored earlier in this guide and use them consistently in each of your brand touchpoints so regardless of how your customers interact with you, they're receiving the same messaging.

Brand touchpoints are ways in which your brand actual-

ly interacts with people. Most businesses develop several of the following elements when crafting their brand identity.

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

For example: If you're an online retailer, the site experience you give your customers will be number one consideration.



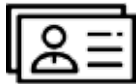
## BRAND TOUCHPOINTS



**Website:** Your website is where the brand elements, consistent typography, corporate colors, and unique voice, come through in full force. Have logo in the header, communicate in clear language, and organize the content of the website from the perspective of the user's needs.



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



**Business card:** While physical business cards are slowly being replaced by LinkedIn profiles and digital cards, a well-designed card offers the chance to reinforce a positive opinion of yourself in the eyes of others.



**Emails:** These days, inboxes are more crowded than ever, so get strategic about the intention behind each email you send. Want to make a personal connection? Keep it short and sweet. Hoping to inform or educate? Make it readable and scannable and add in some useful visuals.



**Social Media:** Social platforms are a great opportunity to reinforce your brand and connect with your audience on a more personal level. But be sure to remain authentic and consistent with your brand voice.

### Brand touchpoints: the golden rules

#### **Be authentic**

When developing your brand collateral don't try to be something you're not. Refer back to your brand strategy to ensure that you're positioning and differentiating your company according to your unique value proposition.

#### **Be different**

Generic doesn't work when developing brand collateral. You want your branding to set you apart from the competition, so don't be afraid to be bold and creative as you tell your story. On the other hand, don't confuse your audience so they have no idea what kind of product you're selling.

#### **Be durable**

Developing your 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 brand designs with longevity that will feel just as relevant 10 years from now as they do today.

#### **Be evolutionary**

There will inevitably come a point when your branding starts to feel a little stale and you'll want to switch things up a bit. Make sure that, despite changes, you stay true to your values and offer a feel of continuity in your brand touchpoints.

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**Brand touchpoints** are the places in which customers interface with your product or service.

# Taking your brand social

Social media present brands with unprecedented opportunities to connect with—and learn from—their customers.

**T**raditional brand touchpoints—logos, websites or physical manifestations of your brand in the form of products and spaces—are chiefly a one-way street: a company presenting their product or service to their target audience.

Social media, on the other hand, is a two-way street. These days, brands have the capacity to pay for advertisements on social media platforms, but there is so much you can do with organic engagement.

Whether it's Twitter, Facebook or Instagram, your audience has the opportunity to engage in real time.

The interaction has been democratized and the “power” gap between companies and customers is now minimal; they're together on the same social platforms as equals. This presents brands with unprecedented opportunities to connect with—and learn from—their customers.

The feedback loop between your company and your audience is now shorter and more public than ever.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

But beyond immediately reacting to your actions, your consumers can also play an active role in shaping your brand identity. By generating social content about your company—through posts, tweets or instagram tags—your consumers are, in a sense, doing your marketing for you.

Not all marketing is good marketing, however. Negative experiences propagated on social media, such as tales of poor customer service that go viral, show the true power, and potential risks, of social media.

### *So, how can you reap the benefits of social media?*

There are many social platforms out there, and new ones crop up constantly. But before you create brand accounts on all of them, take a moment to consider which ones would add real value to your company.

Why be picky when you could go all in? Simply put, maintaining and generating solid content for each different platform is a lot of work. The decision depends on your brand's existing reputation and reach.

If you're a much more recognized brand, you can, and should, participate in a wide range of social platforms. If you're a small brand just getting started it may make sense to focus on a couple of key strategic platforms, rather than spreading yourself too thin.

If we're talking about a household name brand like Nike, a consumer would expect to find them everywhere, so they better be everywhere.

If your business is a new athleisure startup, focusing on highly social and visual platforms like Instagram and Pinterest might make the most sense.

## SOCIAL MEDIA



**Facebook** is the platform with the biggest number of users—recently hit 2 billion! Facebook is a safe bet for most companies, especially those with a consumer product. However, because of the diversity of its user base, your efforts should be as targeted as possible.



**Instagram** is a 100% visual platform, this is a great choice for retail and media companies. If you're running a clothing, fashion or lifestyle brand, Instagram should be your #1. Instagram also boasts a younger audience than other main social platforms.



**Pinterest** is an interesting social platform, with a mission that's less "connection" and more "discovery." Users use Pinterest as a search engine for inspiration and ideas. Topics like food and recipes, clothing, lifestyle, decorating and DIY are particularly popular.



**LinkedIn** is for you if you're in the B2B world, It's probably your best bet to generate awareness about your business and connect to professionals who can help you drive success for your company. You can take advantage of LinkedIn's reach by curating company-related updates.



**Youtube** is a no-brainer if you're producing a lot of video content, which tends to be the case for media and entertainment brands. You can still use Youtube as a secondary social media outlet if you host events that can be then published to amplify your community-building efforts.

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**Social media** is word of mouth on steroids and anyone interested in building a brand should leverage this opportunity.

# Developing Style Guides

A style guide takes the DNA of your brand identity, and translates it into tangible guidelines so everyone knows how the brand should be communicated.

**Y**ou've laid down the foundations of your brand strategy and started executing your brand touchpoints, from your logo to social media. Now, it's time to ensure that you can keep building on your brand in a cohesive way.

*Style guides help you present a consistent look.*

A brand style guide is your brand bible. It takes the DNA of your brand identity, everything from your mission to

your values, and translates it into tangible guidelines so everyone on your team—from your graphic designer to your customer support specialist—knows how the brand should be communicated to the world. As the company grows, it helps to ensure that your branding is consistent across the board.

So, how exactly do you create this supremely important document? It's easy like 1, 2, 3, 4.



## STYLE GUIDES

### 1. Infuse it with the special sauce

At the heart of your brand style guide is what we like to call the “special sauce” of your brand: the stuff that makes you uniquely you:

- Your mission
- Your vision
- Your target audience
- Your brand personality
- Your core values

You already developed these elements as part of putting together the brand strategy, and now it's time to put them to paper and share with your team.

These elements should be outlined first and foremost in your brand style guide, and should lead the development of the rest of the guide.

### 2. Lay out the design elements

**Logo:** You want to make sure anyone who uses your logo does so correctly. Include all approved versions and colors of your logo.

**Colors:** Specify on primary/secondary colors: digital color (RGB and HEX codes), print color (CMYK) and PANTONE name and number.

**Typography:** Include your approved font list, where each font should be used and any pertinent info on spacing and alignment.

**Images:** Include a selection of images you feel are on-brand; this will give your designer and team an idea of how you see your brand and how you want it portrayed.

### 3. Nail your voice

**S**tyle isn't just how you look; it's also how you talk. Your voice is a key part of how you're perceived in the market, so it's important that everyone on your team, especially those closest to the consumer, like the marketing or communications teams, truly understand and embody your brand voice.

In the guide, include examples of writing that nails exactly how you want your brand to sound. You should also let your team know what words to use, words to avoid at all costs and any do's and don'ts when it comes to your how you use the written word to connect with your customers.

### 4. Make it uniquely you

Once you've locked down the basics of your brand guide, it's time to dig into the details and go deeper on any brand guidelines unique to your brand.

Remember your brand touchpoints. 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 marketing cards. The more details, the more consistency you'll achieve.

As your brand evolves, so will your guide. Keep updating the guide with any changes, upgrades or new information so your team always knows what's going on.

See collection of [100 best brands and their guidelines](#).

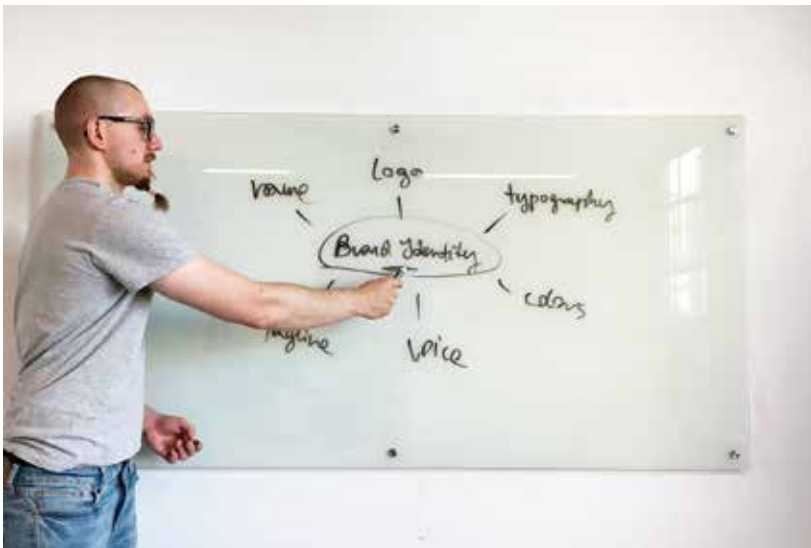
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**Style guides** articulate goals and value of consistency. They explain identity system with real examples of applications.

YOU'VE MADE IT!

# Congrats on your brand new brand!

Congrats on becoming a brand design expert! You now have everything you need to get out there and build a successful brand.



You've reached the end of my Branding Guide and now you have everything you need to get out there and build a successful brand.

*Are you ready to put it all into action?*

Wishing you lots of luck on your branding journey!

*Alex Dvornichuk*

NEED AN EXPERT?

# Wanna work together?

At Ebaqdesign our mission is to help people create and grow by design. We've helped dozens of entrepreneurs build brands and successful businesses and now I want to help you!



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**CONTACT**

## WHAT I DO

“

**I help businesses grow by helping them understand who their customers are and talk to their customers in a genuine and relatable way.**

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**AREK DVORNECHUCK**

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