

This is a typical example of a brand analysis I'd do after interviews with company stakeholders and research about the space. This particular analysis is from a startup called Doing (doing.io), which aims to aggregate experiences and events from all over the web into one unified platform, and integrate with merchants and organizations to help them promote their activity calendars. PLEASE DO NOT SHARE any of the below; this is only being shared as an example of my work.

The purpose of this document is to begin the work of synthesizing and solidifying all the great work you have done up to this point in defining your brand. This document sets forth some recommendations for broader themes, personality, high level strategy, and other stuff too! The feedback I collect on this document will be the bones for your style guide.

Working mission/vision statements

This is less a suggestion for new mission/vision statements than it is an analysis of the things I heard from you all, and a discussion of the various benchmarks companies use for measuring their work. I don't suggest we spend a great deal of time on them in the longer term, but for the purposes of this brand analysis, it was useful for me to think about what they are or might be.

The murky lines between mission and vision statements and the different corporate metrics that are tied to them can get really confusing and start to make you wonder what words even mean anyway, man. To be honest, I don't even know what the difference between mission and vision is supposed to be, and neither does the internet-- if you try to research this question you will get many different answers, and sources that directly contradict other sources. So I generally suggest having one statement to rule them all, one thing that encompasses hopes and dreams and also strategy, pragmatism, and possibility. For many companies, these things are one and the same; their vision for the world easily informs their high-level strategy.

However, with companies that have really huge dreams, like Doing does, it can be really valuable to separate dream from strategy: even if ultimately we don't really care what's a mission and what's a vision, it's good to know what's an ideal and what's an action we're taking. The internet and I can't agree on one meaning for mission vs. vision, but I think one difference between them: one is supposed to be a huge unattainable goal that we strive for; how we think the world should be. The other is more strategic: we are x doing y with the ultimate goal of z. One is deliberately unrealistic to keep our dream front and center, and the other is meant to give us a benchmark against which to test all our decisions.

You already have a couple of guiding statements:

- "Helping people experience the world around them"
- "Experience everything"

As you can see, one of those is pragmatic and the other is unattainable, so, way to go! But, both are pretty short on details. For my purposes, I needed something a bit meatier to begin building out this document. This one is quick and dirty (as evidenced by the weird soup of prepositions), so it's not ready for prime time. Still, it's a pretty good one-sentence (as ugly as that sentence is) distillation of what I've gathered from listening to everyone at Doing.

Doing helps people engage with the world around them by connecting them with experiences that will deepen their bonds with their neighbors, their communities, and themselves.

This is the statement that's more strategic. This is the one we use to measure our decisions against: *is this thing that I'm doing going to help connect people with experiences? Does this help a person deepen their bonds with their neighbors, their community, or themselves? Is this a thing that would help someone engage with the world around them?* Etc. For the lofty, far-reaching statement, I don't see how you could get much loftier than "**Experience everything**", so I'm keeping that one in my head just as it is, though I do think if you go the "we need a mission AND a vision" route, this should be a little more specific (but only a little).

Brand personality

If Doing had a personality, some words to describe it would be: enthusiastic, optimistic, inclusive, generous, curious, energetic, tuned-in, knowledgeable, nonjudgmental, eclectic

Doing is well encapsulated by the comparisons you made to community bulletin boards and stapling posters to lampposts. I think that's a great way to look at it, because it reflects the eclectic nature of the things that will be posted/aggregated on Doing. It's an approach that rewards curiosity: the more willing someone is to take a small chance, the more likely they'll find something new that they enjoy.

The way it works is also democratic: a small book club or church rummage sale gets as much real estate as an arena-filling major concert. And that's such an advantage, because it means people can find what's most important to them *when it can be most useful to them*. If your favorite band is in town, you're going to want to know the second tickets go on sale. But if you really need some cheap used books, a band in town isn't going to be as interesting to you as that church rummage sale.

So you've got that list of adjectives up there, and the idea of a community bulletin board. As we flesh out this personality, we'll understand more about how those work together best.

As a side note, I'd stay away from describing Doing with phrases like "the experience economy" or "marketplace of experiences" in IRL marketing (internal and with folks in the biz is fine, of course). Both of those phrases imply financial transactions, and one of Doing's best selling points is that you get to see free events or just experiences with no specific time (eg 'feed the ducks at

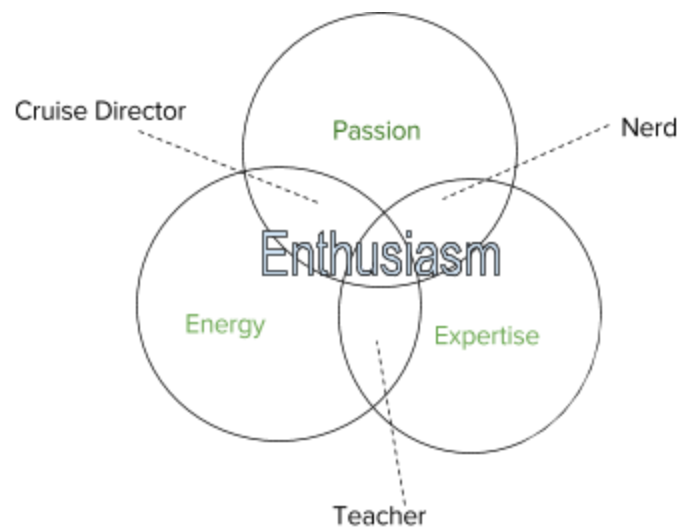
this park'). Referring to Doing with finance words is selling it short, even if it someday becomes a ticketing platform.

Editorial Voice

When you're looking for an editorial voice, it's often useful to think about it in terms of a person or point of view. You're looking for a metaphor that you can stretch to its breaking point in order to suss out what feels right for the way the brand communicates. I've thought about this a lot, and my suggestion finally landed with:

Enthusiastic local. Let's pick it apart a little.

Enthusiastic. This one's pretty straightforward. Enthusiasm means passion, energy, and expertise. Enthusiastic people will actively seek new experiences and will work to incorporate their interests into their lives. Enthusiastic people are the type to drag their friends out of the house after a breakup, or make time to be at a gallery opening even if they're going alone. They're extroverted and enjoy making others happy.



Local. I'm interpreting the word "local" here somewhat broadly: a local is a native of the space they inhabit. So, for example, it's easy to imagine how a local of Portland would talk about their beloved Portland, but how about someone who spends all their time in the children's birthday party scene? That person would have OPINIONS about bouncy house rentals, ponies, terrifying clowns, princess impersonators, cupcake bakers, etc., which means that's exactly who you'd want to ask. Or on the flip side,

someone who's well-versed in the Doing app itself, and passionate about it. What if that person could design the onboarding experience for vendors, venues, organizations, etc.?

An Enthusiastic Local knows the ins and outs of their space. They've tried countless experiences and even if they haven't tried the one you're asking about, they know someone who has. They value curiosity, because their love of their space fuels their desire to find out more about it. When they learn some new fact or take advantage of a new opportunity, that knowledge becomes a benefit to not just them, but all those they share space with.

Sharing is crucial to what they do; the expertise they've gained excites them, but they feel the most excitement when they see how their adventurous spirit can help others. They also know

that learning is a huge part of what makes exploring fun, so they enjoy pointing people in the direction of discovery rather than leading them to it. They're supportive of whatever people want to do, because they truly care, and because they want their community to be diverse in every way. They know that diversity is strength and stability.

The Enthusiastic Local editorial voice also works well when you consider the businesses who will be using Doing. An enthusiastic local believes in local business, and when they find a place or experience they feel benefits the community, they become a cheerleader and networker on its behalf. So, to e.g. the owner of a new restaurant, an enthusiastic local is what they strive to create when they think about their customers. Businesses want to impress Enthusiastic Locals, because they know it drives a lot of their traffic--they realize that someone who loves what they do will advocate for them in the community.

An Enthusiastic Local cares about keeping their community safe, enjoyable, and useful. If they feel an entity or group is a bad influence, they'll do something about it. They're engaged with the politics of their space, and they have opinions about what could make it better.

It's also helpful, I think, to draw some soft boundaries and look at what might be some pitfalls of inhabiting this voice, and where it could go wrong. So, Doing is not:

- Passionate to the point of being inaccessible (e.g. using too much insider lingo)
- Passionate to the point of being overbearing or obsessive
- Your friend. The voice is certainly welcoming and warm, but it's within the confines of a deliberate detach. It's important because this voice will address so many audiences at once, and it will need to seem like all of them have equal weight. So, friendly, but not your friend.
- Judgmental. If you want to collect every possible experience, the filter will have to be set very low. You'll need to be actively supportive to almost any group that uses Doing (I'd definitely recommend being strictly intolerant of hate speech, discriminatory businesses, violent groups, etc.).
- One of those people who are so peppy and sunshiny about stuff that you just want to punch them in the face.
- Exclusionary in our language or imagery. It shouldn't accidentally subtly imply that it's only for upper middle class young white people.

There are a lot more of these, but I think this is a good place to start.

Messaging/branding themes

Your marketing and copywriting needs will of course evolve over time. As you build out new features, expand your offering, hit customer milestones, or just are generally in the news, the substance of what you talk about will change. But there are always some company narratives that stay true in the long term and shape the direction of the group. Recording them now is important,

especially as you grow: there will often be times when you'll need to look back and think of the reasons you started doing this. These are the overarching themes that I suggest you use when you are talking about Doing as a brand/company.

Connection. We're all about connecting. We connect our users with activities, experiences, events, and more. In turn, this means they're more connected with themselves and other people. Similarly, businesses can find ways to connect with their best customers, or discover well-qualified new customers.

- Sample sentences: *Doing makes a web of possibilities with you at the center. Whatever you're looking for--stuff to do with friends, stuff to do alone, ways to meet new people, or new ways to explore your surroundings, Doing will help you find something that's a perfect fit.*

Self-actualization. What you spend your time doing says a lot about you, your values, and your level of engagement with the world. The things we do in our free time are aspects of our personality, or the personality we aspire to. Our activities validate our opinions of ourselves, or give us fuel to be critical of ourselves. For example if you say you're a coffee snob, what might you spend your free time doing? And what if you didn't actually do that stuff, would you still be a coffee snob? Doing helps people find the experiences that really fit them and will make them feel better about their ability to follow through on their interests.

- Sample sentences: *How do you talk about you? What lets you know that the things you believe about yourself are true? What you do defines your values and shapes your life. So who are you? Whatever you're into, Doing knows where it's at.*

Discovery. Discovery encompasses many things: possibilities, curiosity, and learning, to name a few. More than that though, learning new stuff is what makes us feel alive. The urge to discover stuff has brought human beings into the deepest oceans, highest mountains, and into the vastness of space. We're inherently inquisitive beings, with unmatched power to shape our own worlds and the worlds of other beings. The urge to discover is a very human thing, and Doing helps people use that energy to maximize the return on it.

- Sample sentences: *We humans like to discover new things. We've gone into space and underwater; people have died, and we've spent precious resources just to explore, just because we looked at our universe and said What if? Doing helps you discover the space around you. It might not be as lofty as floating among the stars, but discovery scratches that same itch in all of us.*

Our Audience

Our audience is very diverse and has very diverse needs. For example, we have to look at our product through the eyes of prospective employees, and members of the press. But we also have two user communities.

- **Individual users.** This is of course the most obvious group to focus on. Our users are likely at first to be tech-savvy millennials with a good deal of privilege and disposable income. It would be a mistake, though, to skew content toward them. Our audience can sniff out bullshit quickly, and is probably jaded by other apps that they've used to help them live a more self-actualized life. So they'll probably be skeptical at first, because very few of them will have wished this app existed (though those people who have thought that way will be very excited about us); they probably wouldn't have felt a void in their life where this app needed to be. They'll respond best to messages that allude to self actualization (the "experience economy"), but in a way that doesn't make them feel shitty about the things they've failed to experience in their lives.
- **Businesses.** Businesses who are the first to work with us will likely be small local businesses. They're the ones who are agile enough to try a new way of bringing in customers, visitors, etc. pretty quickly. They'll probably be the type who understand technology a little bit, or at least understand its use cases. They're also likely to be open to trying new things--they probably haven't had great results from the Facebook page they made, or the Twitter account they started. Messaging that works best for them is messaging that conveys an understanding of their needs-- how busy they are, how emotionally invested they are in their business, and their financial needs, just to name some. Similar messaging will work well for people who run non-profit events or administer public land (like parks and stuff).

Quick and dirty SWOT

Here's a little chart to sum up what I(think I've learned about the atmosphere you're currently in.

	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	Strengths: Passionate team who are adept at both big-picture thinking and shipping. Great balance of desire to think problems through, and the need to keep moving. Huge and lofty goal means everyone gets to think about the big picture a lot, which helps them to work more intelligently.	Weaknesses: Take this with a grain of salt because this is the one I have the least information about. However, I can see that the vision is huge and keeps shifting. Of course that is normal and good in a startup, but if things fluctuate a lot, or don't get pared down from the vision to specific goals and outputs, I could see people getting overwhelmed/paralyzed by too little structure.
External	Opportunities: There isn't a product that does this. Entities like Facebook Events, Eventbrite, and Foursquare all serve similar functions, but they're missing a lot	Threats: The current products that people use for similar functions are very very entrenched. Doing will have to build a userbase from nothing on both sides of the app, so to speak. To compound both of

	<p>of detail. We have a chance to put something into the market that will help people decide how to spend their time, whereas those apps are all focused on helping you out once you already know what you want to do.</p>	<p>those problems, Doing won't be worth using for a lot of people until there is a large enough user base to make the platform worth their while.</p>
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