



The Creative Entrepreneur's Guide to

BRANDING



 | RISING TIDE

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WHO WE ARE

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We believe in elevating the voices of our community, and we'd love to elevate yours!
Submit content for an opportunity to be featured in next month's Rising Tide Society
TuesdaysTogether PDF guide. therisingtidesociety.submittable.com/submit.

Everyone seems to have a slightly different definition of branding. Is it your logo? Your visual identity? Your brand voice? Or even just your brand's personality? This guide is full of content from branding experts sharing how you can utilize various elements of branding to uplevel your business, connect with your target audience, and book more of your ideal clients. Read on for a few key tips.

KEY TIPS

1

IT'S NOT JUST A LOGO. Common misconception on branding #1... branding is not just your logo. Well stated by Kay Fabella in her article on page 9, "Branding is the complete image of your business, which conveys an overall feeling and message to your audience." Sure, a logo is part of that, and your logo should represent that complete image well, but it's just a single cog in the whole wheel of branding. But... if you think it's time for a rebrand of your visual identity, Alexa B. Taylor shares how to know for sure on page 12!

2

DON'T FOLLOW THE CROWD. When it comes to branding, standing out is key. With all elements of your brand: logo, design, imagery, voice, copy, and more, use what makes you unique. Incorporate what you and only you can offer to your clients into your branding and meet them where they're at. You'll find you have more success in booking the right type of people for you.

3

BRAND AWARENESS IS KEY. Growing your brand you've worked so hard to create relies on a few key factors. And building brand awareness is key, regardless of industry. From wowing your clients, to pulling back the curtains, to building partnerships and collaborations, to starting a referral or affiliate program, there are countless ways you can build brand awareness, even if you're just starting out. Marva Goss shares all the insight on page 7 to help you take your brand awareness to the next level.

BRANDING STRATEGIES TO IGNITE YOUR MARKETING

Worried about how to stand out in a saturated market? Does the thought of selling to potential clients make you start to sweat? Branding expert, Ashlyn Carter of [Ashlyn Writes](#), shares all that and more (and why "branding" isn't just logos and imagery) in her FREE CreativeLive class in partnership with [HoneyBook](#). Find out more about about her mantra of niching down and get access to branding strategies to ignite your marketing [here!](#)

Plus, elevate your brand experience using a high-touch platform like Ashlyn does on [HoneyBook](#). As a Rising Tide member you get 50% off your first year of HoneyBook, so [start your free trial today](#) to uplevel your brand.



HOW A MINIMAL LOGO CAN TRANSFORM YOUR BRAND

Kyrsten Sherwood



Photo by Alexander Andrews

Let's talk logos for a hot minute.

In 2015, a brand designer was born. Actually, she was born a lot earlier than that, but '15 was the year that she decided that she would help people by designing "the face of their brands."

AKA, their logos.

This designer believed that watercolor logos and florals and geometrics and different art styles were all needed to make unique logos and brands that would help her clients stand out from the crowd of others in their own saturated markets.

But what she would come to realize in a year or so was just how many of the same exact logo and brand she would produce, over and over and over again.

Which made her beg the question: *Am I actually helping people to differentiate themselves from their competitors, or am I simply creating a sameness throughout these creative fields?*

And here that designer is today, to talk to you about why having an incredibly simple, no frills logo can actually transform your business more than you might expect.

Also HI!! I'm Kyrsten of Copper Kettle Co. This designer is me :)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE A “BRAND?”

A brand is a marketing tool used to differentiate yourself from other competitors in your field. An effective brand is used by an audience to quickly and easily identify a particular business.

A brand is used to create customer loyalty, a sense of trust and purpose, and a deeper meaning to a business' product or service.

A brand consists of your business':

- **VOICE** - what kinds of words do you consistently use when communicating with your audience and potential clients?

- **PASSIONS** - what core values do you carry into your brand? Do you promote diversity, empowerment, religion, family values, etc?
- **CONNECTION** - how do you create a deeper connection with your audience? How do you connect with people on a 1:1 level? How do you inspire people?
- **AESTHETIC** - what colors do you consistently use across your brand (not just in your color palette and logo)? Do you trend towards bright and vibrant colors, or autumnal and organic? Do you have floral patterns or classic stripes?

And more.

SO, HOW DO WE FIT THIS ALL INTO A LOGO?

The easy answer is: We don't. We can't. We shouldn't.

So often, we see creatives wanting their logos to embody alllllll of these different aspects. They want their logos to tell their brand's entire story.

But how can we possibly cram all of the feelings, the messages, the intimate connections, the values, the passions, the colors and patterns, and #allthethings into one simple graphic?

Let me repeat it just a little louder for those in the back:

We can't. And we shouldn't.

Because if you can, then how deep is your brand's story, truly?

IS MY LOGO REALLY THE FACE OF MY BRAND?

That's the million dollar question, isn't it?

Are you ready for the answer? Are you bracing yourself?

I hope so, because I'm gonna say no—your logo is NOT the face of your brand.

Should it be something that people will recognize as you? Sure! Yes! You'll have your logo on most of your promotional collateral and your audience will absolutely be able to recognize it in a crowd.

Should you put all of your eggs into your logo basket? Again, no. Please don't!

And if you're thinking, "Well how else am I going to differentiate myself from my competitors?", then let me give you some examples of businesses you might recognize with incredibly minimal, simple logos who are totally nailing their branding:

- West Elm
- Anthropologie
- Rising Tide
- Jasmine Star

If you look at each of their websites (and more so, their Instagrams!), you'll notice the logos at the top.

What I hope you'll notice is how simple their logos are, yet, (if you're familiar with the businesses) how they each have very distinctive, very unique voices, messages, and "feels" about them. Their photos and brands tell different stories. And they each make a significant impact on people:

- West Elm is able to charge over \$2,000 for a couch, even though there are alternatives like IKEA where you can get one for \$200.
- Anthropologie is for free spirits, wanderlusters, and those who want to be transported back to another time. Plus, they have, like, the most trendy home decor ever.
- Rising Tide has over 70,000 members in its Facebook group and has a mission to empower creatives in their entrepreneurial journeys.
- And J* is way more than this, but literally any time that I think of L.A., I think of Jasmine.

So what is it about these brands that allows them to create such impactful messages?

Why is it that some brands have this insanely magnetic power? Is it because of their logo? No, sweet friends. :) It's their mission, voice, and connection with their audience.

It's how they make their people feel.

I HAVE A CHALLENGE FOR YOU...

I challenge you to strip down your logo. What would happen if your logo was only made up of a font like Playfair, Lora, Oswald, or Montserrat from Google Fonts?

Look at your brand without your logo. What feelings do you evoke? What messages do you notice? How does stripping your logo affect your brand's identity?

Just remember the goal of your brand: To create an impact. To make connections. To dig deeper into relationships. Please don't make the mistake of using your logo as a crutch.

Remember that your brand is a story, it's your Why and it's the way that YOU help to transform people's lives.



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3 SIMPLE BRANDING TIPS TO MAKE YOUR CLIENT EXPERIENCE TRULY PERSONAL

Oli Bridge



Photo by Gaëlle Marcel

Having a great name, logo, and brand is of course essential to every creative business. However, branding isn't just about your visual identity and values - it's about how those values fit neatly into your client's experience. From the very first moment they hear about you, right through to your first face-to-face meeting, your brand should be consistent and ever present.

When it comes to getting this right, too often we fret the big stuff, the things that everybody will see when they think of your brand. But what about the small stuff - all those personal moments in between, where your client is interacting with your brand in their own time and place? Those are the moments you can really take to the next level with a little thought and effort.

Here are three simple ways you can elevate your client's journey with your brand in simple, but powerful ways:

1. USING A SELFIE-GIF IN YOUR EMAIL SIGNATURE

When it comes to building relationships with clients there's no replacement for face-to-face meetings, or video calls. But you can still bring a sparkle to those other little touch-points along the way? Each one is a chance to build trust and get your personal brand across. Something we think every creative should be doing is using GIFs in email signatures. Try using a warm and smiley GIF of yourself in your signature and see the delighted responses you get back from leads and clients. The best tool out there for this is called Email Signature Rescue - give it a look, it'll save you heaps of time.

Bonus tip: If you have Live Chat on your site, try using a GIF of yourself in your first welcome



Taylor from Bonjoro

Hi there! Welcome to Bonjoro 🐻 !

What brings you by?



Write a reply...

GIF

message. Again, just seeing your face and a friendly smile sparks trust right from the get-go.

2. MAILING HANDWRITTEN LETTERS

Handwriting letters is having something of a revival. The simple reason is that in a world now dominated by marketing automations, doing something that is obviously one-to-one and personal generates much more cut-through and shows customers that you care about them. Just taking the time to do something like this, rather than sending a standard email, is a quick path to generating trust and advocacy that will likely bring repeat business and referrals. If you don't have time to write everything with pen, two great tools to help scale this approach are Felt App (in the USA) and Inkpact (in the UK). We've used both, and the service and support for both is great.

3. SENDING PERSONAL WELCOME AND THANK-YOU VIDEOS

You only get about 5 seconds to make a first impression, so why leave it to a plain old email? Sending personal videos to clients is super easy, but super powerful. We've sent over 10,000 videos to our customers using Bonjoro, and along the way we found three core reasons it works so well. First, it shows new customers that you are prepared to take the time for them. Second, it gives you a chance to say their name - this helps you gain their attention amidst all the competition and prove that your service will be truly personal to them. Third, it's a simple opportunity for new clients to see your face and hear your voice. In short, it's surefire way to kick-start a personal and trusting relationship with your clients, which in turn helps you land more business. A win-win by all accounts!

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4 SIMPLE WAYS TO INCREASE YOUR BRAND AWARENESS RIGHT NOW

Marva Goss

As small business owners, increasing brand awareness as quickly and easily as possible is a priority. If no one knows who you are or the impact of your product or service, it'll be difficult to gain traction and build the business of your dreams. It's daunting when it feels your industry is saturated and everyone is posting the same thing on the 'gram. These four tips can help you move out of obscurity and into the limelight in your business, all while helping you increase your bottom line. Grab your [workbook](#) here to jot down your ideas and map out your master plan as you go!

1. WOW YOUR CLIENTS

Word of mouth marketing is the absolute best marketing there is, and the one audiences trust most. What changes can you make to keep clients raving about your business long after the service has been provided? How can you increase the chances they'll purchase again or tell someone else about their experience with you? While this takes a little thought and effort, a great client experience pays dividends.

Here are some ideas to help get you started:



Photo by Tanialee Gonzalez

- Send client gifts: These don't have to be very expensive or fancy. It just takes a little thought to make it extra special. A client gift can be something as simple as a book that would help grow their business or office supplies that match their brand colors.
- Create a seamless on-boarding and off-boarding process: Make working with you and communicating about your project as simple as possible. Tools like Trello or Asana can take the headache out of tracking emails and keeping up with deadlines.
- Provide a client welcome guide: Are clients aware of your upcoming vacation or office hours? Do they know the best way to contact you between sessions? A client welcome guide answers your most frequently asked questions about communication, timelines, and expectations.

2. PULL BACK THE CURTAINS

Share what's going on in your business. Not just what's happening right now, but share your brand story with us. Are you rebranding?

Thinking about pivoting? Share what led to the change and why you felt it was time. Let your audience know how the changes will impact them and what to expect next.

Here are some other ways you can pull back the curtains a tad in your own business:

- Share your story: There are a handful of business owners I follow all because someone in my circle heard their story first, and shared it with me. Stories are easily remembered and make us want to know more about you.
- Highs and lows: Within your comfort zone, of course. Share the aspects of your business that you feel very proud of, and some of the mistakes you wish you could take back.
- Share your business processes: This can range from business productivity to tools you use for automation, etc. If you feed me helpful tips, I'll tell the world about you! We're most loyal to the places we get the most value.

3. PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

The key here is to be strategic. This simple tip can quickly increase your relevance and credibility in your niche. You want mutually beneficial partnerships where you have an ideal client. For example, if you're a wedding planner, collaborate with a florist or wedding photographer. Look for someone that has a complimentary service to yours but doesn't qualify as your competition. More importantly, you want to collaborate with someone that aligns with your brand mission, vision, and goals.

4. START A REFERRAL OR AFFILIATE PROGRAM

Offering a discount or portion of the sale may sound like it'll hurt your bottom line, but the opposite is true. Having other people champion your products and services increases your brand awareness and your credibility with their audience. This is a great way to market your business and expand your reach.

Are you already using any of these methods to increase your brand awareness? To get access to a free Increase Your Brand Awareness workbook and start brainstorming how to take action, click [here!](#)



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CREATE A COHESIVE BRAND THAT TELLS A STORY & CONNECTS WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

Kay Fabella



Photo by Karly Santiago

Everyone seems to have their own idea of what it means -- but what exactly is branding?

Branding is the complete image of your business, which conveys an overall feeling and message to your audience.

As someone who spends their time helping entrepreneurs find their brand story and messaging before they pivot... I've seen firsthand how many business owners toss branding into the "I'll get to that later" pile.

But whether you know it or not, you already have a brand.

Before your customer ever buys from you, they're first seeing your brand in some shape or form. Every newsletter you've sent, every photo shared on Instagram, every tweet -- these interactions probably seem small and unrelated. But they all collectively form your relationship with your audience; and all relationships are facilitated, maintained and articulated by your brand.

Meaning, your brand is already alive.

And the last thing I want is for your business is to lose out on customers because your brand is inconsistent.

So let's dive into **the 5 keys to building a cohesive brand that creates buyers and believers for your business.**

1. IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE.

Whether you're rebranding or starting a business, think about how your brand is being perceived right now. Ask yourself whether the message you're delivering is clearly understood and reaching your ideal customers.

Start by conducting an analysis of your target audience. Who are the people who typically have the problem you solve? What challenges are they facing? What solutions do they want? If you find yourself struggling with the answers, talk to them to find out what they're actually saying.

I tell my clients that best brands are built on empathy. Once you've taken time to understand your audience, you'll find it infinitely easier to build a brand that resonates with them.

2. DEFINE YOUR BRAND STORY.

A logo may make a great first impression. But your brand is the story that customers will tell themselves and each other when you're not in the room. And that's the story they'll spread on your behalf.

Nike is a great example. From the "Just Do It" tagline, to their assertion that "if you have a body, you ARE an athlete," the Nike brand is rooted in inspiration, innovation, and inclusion. It invites people to take part. And this brand story has been consistent since the beginning.

The first step is sharing an origin story that will set you apart from your competitors. Why did you create this business? What path led you to what you do today? What kind of impact do you hope to make?

Then break it down into sections. Be sure to cover your brand's history, how it has evolved, your goals for the future, key products or services, what you stand for, and your values and beliefs.

Your brand story will inform and influence everything from social media posts to media features to your website copy.

3. LOOK LIKE YOU WALK YOUR TALK.

Your website is the first place people will visit to determine if they like and trust you enough to invest in you.

And it only takes 3 seconds for someone to decide whether they'll stay or leave your site.

So invest in that photo shoot. Hire a web designer or buy an easy-to-use theme. Create a logo you can start using.

Determine where you need help and then delegate. Choose the best creative professional for your budget and needs. After all, there are plenty of talented Tiders to choose from!

4. USE CONSISTENT COLORS AND DESIGN ELEMENTS.

Remember your brand doesn't just live on your website. It's everywhere your customers can find you.

Establish a visual brand that aligns with your overall story. Browse Pinterest to find a color palette you can start using. Hire a designer for your buttons and banners. Find 3-4 fonts that are easy to read, and stick to them.

A cohesive brand isn't just visually appealing. It helps you build a business that's trustworthy and

memorable for potential customers.

By using your brand elements (like your colors, logo, images, etc.) with intention, you highlight your professionalism. And you give your audience a glimpse at what they'll experience working with you.

5. HAVE A CLEAR, RECOGNIZABLE VOICE.

You can't tell your brand story without words. So get absolutely clear on your voice. And make sure it's consistent with the overall story and image you want to portray.

If your brand was a person, how would you describe its personality to someone in 3 words? Peppy head cheerleader? Direct and no-nonsense? Witty and profane? This will depend on your market and target audience.

Once you've decided on your brand voice, create a guide for your content (written and visual). Establish do's, don'ts, and clear parameters. As your brand evolves or your audience changes, take a look at this brand voice guide and update it accordingly.

Whether you decide to tweak your brand yourself or hire a professional, remember...

CONSISTENCY AND COHESIVENESS IS KEY TO BRANDING SUCCESS.

Your business needs to stand for something to set it apart from the pack. Your brand needs a story for your customers to believe in and buy into what you're selling.

What's more, understanding your brand means that you control how people experience your business... which can help you attract more of the right kind of customer.

So take a step back and examine your brand. Does it tell the story you want it to? Clearly and consistently?



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5 SIGNS IT'S TIME TO REBRAND

Alexa B. Taylor

Photo by Norbert Levastis

A good brand is consistent — allowing customers and clients to recognize your products and services, as well as making your business stand out from the competition. But what exactly warrants a rebrand? If you think it's time for a change in your business, here are five signs that may (or may not) confirm that inclination, as well as one reason to stick with what you've got!

1. YOU DON'T HAVE A COMPLETE BRAND IDENTITY OR YOU NEVER SET CLEAR STANDARDS

When your business first launched, that DIY logo (or simply typing out your name in a fancy font) probably worked well enough. Now with a growing audience, it may be time to up-level and give your brand a visual edge against the competition. With experience and clarity behind services and products, you want to make sure you have visual assets to tie those offerings back to your business. By setting clear standards, your audience should be able to tell with a quick glance what is coming from you and your business. The benefits of a cohesive brand identity could be another blog post, but there is no substitution for establishing a tone of professionalism, building brand recognition with your customers, and setting yourself apart.



2. YOUR CURRENT BRAND WAS BUILT ON TRENDS AND LOOKING AT THE COMPETITION

Instead of figuring out what makes your business stand out and establishing a strategy behind your brand, you went the easy route — looking at what everyone else did. The problem with using Pinterest to “get inspiration” or ideas is all those things have already been done for someone else. It’s important, so I’ll repeat it — your brand is all about defining your business’ identity. What makes you great? What can you offer customers that no one else in your industry can? How is the experience of working with you unlike anything else on the market? Hint: you’re not going to find the answer on Pinterest or someone else’s website.

3. YOUR BUSINESS JUST WENT THROUGH SOME DRASTIC CHANGES.

Over time, businesses grow and develop. You may have recently changed your business’ name, or what once was a one-man/woman show might now be an entire team. Also, significantly changing your offerings or your business strategy can warrant an “external” change. Your brand identity should consistently reflect who you are as a company, where you’re going, and how you can best serve your customers.

4. YOUR CURRENT BRAND DOESN'T APPEAL TO YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

And possibly, your audience has recently changed! As your business evolves, it is easier to get a better idea of who you target customers and clients are. What type of people buy your products? What characteristics do your most favorite clients have? Ultimately, what type of person is drawn to your business and who do you want to attract? Answering these questions can take some time, but it's crucial your business is communicating with the right audience — and your brand identity should do the same. Branding is all about perception and you want to make sure your target audience has an accurate vision of who you are.

5. YOU'VE OUTGROWN YOUR CURRENT BRANDING

With a couple years of experience under your belt, you may be on to bigger and better things. Perhaps you have raised your prices and your business is now considered luxury or high-end — your brand identity should speak to that change. Again, your brand identity should be an accurate reflection of who you are as a company and it can also suggest where you are going.

AND ONE REASON YOU SHOULDN'T REBRAND — YOU'RE BORED.

When you first established a brand identity for your business, the confetti was flying and champagne bottles were popping! You couldn't wait to incorporate that new look into anything and everything with your business name on it. But now that the dust has settled, you don't get that same feeling — you're bored with your brand.

Rather than a complete overhaul, try and take a new approach to what you have. Believe it or not, brand identities aren't totally set in stone. Just like people do, our businesses grow and evolve over time and it's ok to shake things up just enough to keep it interesting. Can you incorporate a new color into your palette? Should you switch up the layout of your blog post or social media graphics? Would some brand-new photos shed a different light on what you already have in place? A fresh take on your existing brand identity can only help to make your brand stronger.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** What or who is one brand or person you feel has a very strong brand? Why?
- 2** Describe your own brand in 3 words.
- 3** Have you worked with a brand designer to create a logo and visual brand? What was that process like?
- 4** What is one way you've created a strong brand?
- 5** What is one action item you'll take in the next month to build your brand presence?

RISING TIDE | HONEYBOOK BLOG POST



ROSE LINDO
Branding Tips for
Creatives: What
Impression Are You
Making?



MEGAN HAMPSON
How to Choose a Color
Palette for Your Branding



LAUREN CARNIS
3 Things That Branding
Does Not Fix

WHO WE ARE

The [HoneyBook | Rising Tide](#) team believes an empowered creative economy will change the world. By elevating the voices of creatives, sharing their stories, and building a thriving online and offline community, we support creatives in their pursuit of a sustainable livelihood.

Empowerment begins with saving creatives time and money. [HoneyBook](#) helps creative entrepreneurs manage their businesses more efficiently so they can do more of what they love. With [HoneyBook](#), creatives can send brochures, proposals and invoices; create the ideal customer experience; and track payments – all in one place. Equally as important are sharing knowledge and providing support. That's why [Rising Tide](#) is a community and living library of educational resources, including blog content from thought leaders, monthly guides, online summits, and over 400 monthly meet-ups across the world to help creatives succeed in business.

We're also passionate about supporting the communities around us. To date, we've given over \$100,000 to nonprofits including Pencils of Promise, The School Sessions, U.S. Dream Academy, The Birthday Party Project, Thirst Relief and more. We've also partnered with Pencils of Promise to build a school in 2018 funded entirely by community donations through our 2017 RISE Summit.

We believe that magic happens when creatives gather, support one another and are empowered to pursue their passions. We believe in community over competition. We believe in empowering the creative economy to rise together.

