Beautiful Branding

Branding just isn't about colors and logos… branding is much deeper… it is everything your company stands for and everything that it looks and feels like to your customer. The branding process makes you 100% clear on the mission of our company: Who is your audience? What problem do you solve for them? Why is any of this important to YOU? The journey of branding discovers who you are as a person and a business owner, understanding that hefty goals and benefits must be securely in place to get you through the long days and fears ahead. After all, starting a business is not "easy". Branding is also an understanding of your audience. Who are they, how do you get to them, and what in the world are you going to say to them when you meet?

Branding takes all these factors and translates them across every medium your company uses. Your words, style, vibe, text, visuals, *everything*!

- **VISUALS: While not the most foundational aspect of your company, it can be argued to be one of the most important. People love pictures. The more visual your medium, the more people will engage and hang around to see more. Especially if visitors aren't yet acquainted with your brand, visuals are the messengers that translate your mission into an understandable form. Therefore, it is important that your visuals properly represent your brand and what your company stands for. This message must speak directly to your ideal customer. Be attractive enough to get their attention, be professional in appearance, and consistent throughout every platform you use.**
  - **Why? Start with the question of "why do I do what I do? Why does it matter? Both to me and to anyone else". If you don't have a firm understanding of why you are doing what you are doing, you won't know who to serve, where they are, how to serve them, or what you're trying to gain. You won't feel fulfilled and your customers won't feel satisfied. In order to be successful, you need a STRONG why.**
  - **What is your personal why? Money, freedom, time, and happiness are all strong motivators, but be very specific here, say what you want and why you want it: I would like to own my company so I am not limited by a set pay or**

position. I will continue to grow my business until I can earn $10k a month and finally buy my dream log cabin in the mountains. I will sit on the porch in the cool weather, looking at the mountains while drinking my hot coffee, and be filled with pride for sticking with my dream job.

- **The visuals associated with your company, *every* visual, should match who you are, your feel or vibe, and convey the messages you are hoping to convey.**

- **Mission Statement: Now that you know why you are doing what you're doing, it is time to clarify a mission statement. Why does your company exist? What does it do? What problem does it solve? For example, the EG mission is "we teach you how to start an online business". This is the reason we exist in the world. Expanded further, we want to teach people how to build an online business, create a life they are excited about, and balance them both. Our goal is to use step-by-step instruction so that "an ordinary person can become an extraordinary entrepreneur".**
  - **Your mission provides the foundation for everything your company does ,so you should have this cemented in your head and memorized in your soul. Have you ever heard of an elevator pitch? It's the ability to tell someone who you are, what you do, and convince them of your service/product while they are in the elevator with you. It has to be that fast and that convincing.**
- **How you will carry out your mission: You now know your personal why and your company's mission, now you need to be really clear on *how* you'll complete these things. WHO?**
  - **Know exactly who you are serving- your demographic, their external circumstances, what drives them, what do they worry about, what gets them stuck, what do they want or need, how can you offer them a solution, and how will their life change after you've given them your product or service?**
  - **Your customers are your peeps! The lifeblood of your company. Really getting to know and connecting with your audience, will help you in the long run, but it will also help make your product/service stronger. Knowing them means you understand them (what appeals to them and why) and how to best communicate with them.**
  - **Who would buy your service or product anyway? Break it down. Families, single adults, older, younger, outdoor types, educators…. It is important that you define one group, one person, even, that would be interested in what you have to offer. You also have to consider your original "why" in this exercise. For example, one of my strong traits is to have an impact in my lifetime. I earnestly want to change lives for the better. So while selling courses might be more financially suited to a 30-year-old, educated, finally solid, female… my why tells me I need to include other sets of people. I have worked with people**

previously homeless, one-income stay-at-home moms, and dialysis patients as a result of my why.

- **Select a customer group that matches your why and mission statement and that you'll enjoy working with. Narrow this target audience down until you understand what your ideal customer is like:**
  - **beliefs (what causes, charities, religious, and personal convictions do they have)**
  - **fears & pain points (what keeps them up at night?)**
  - **goals & values (what is most important to them)**
  - **where do they get information (preferred source of info: books, movies, news, blogs, YouTube, social media)**
  - **demographics (age, gender, marital status, number of children, where they live, how much money they make, occupation, how much education they have)**
  - **desires & problems (what problem are they struggling to fix?)**
  - **what objections do they have to buying (not enough time or money? They don't trust the product or worry about a warranty)**
- **Create an avatar for your person. Heck, I even named mine (Anna, in case you're wondering 😊)**

- **How do you carry out your mission: HOW? Once you are clear on the who, it is time to move on to the how. How will it help your ideal customer? This isn't a general statement such as "I teach them to build an online business"; it has to be deeper than that, much deeper. What fear are you alleviating? What goal are you helping them reach? What problem are you solving? How will your product deliver this promise better than any of your competition? For example, I teach people how to build an online business. But why do they want to learn this? I could say to the mom crying about leaving her children, "I will teach you to make money from home so you can stay home with your babies". More powerful, right? And it motivates me, because I want to help impact her life. I need to be clear on how I will have an impact. I could say, "hey, if you have a health issue that prevents you from working, or if you want to have the freedom to travel the world while working, or you want to bless your parents by caring for them at the end of your life, or you are older and are having trouble finding a job, or you got laid off in a recession…. I can help you. I can teach you to start your own successful online business. I will make it easy for you to understand and implement. I will be here every step of the way. My courses will take you from beginning to expert, and you can have personal hand-holding throughout the process with my coaching (something my competition does not offer)".**

Another example: I sell product photography. I will take pictures of your products and do the copy work for you. Sure, I can add up the amount of time this takes me, the expensive equipment I must have, the staff, and give you a price, OR I can think about what I am really giving you, which is TIME. I do this service so you don't have to. What is this service really worth to my client? Time with his kids while they are still little, time with his wife so his marriage is strong, one less thing he has to do so he can sleep at night. See? The way you think about this turns around the way you think of pricing your products, and significantly impacts how you brand yourself, design your website, and look at the work you do.

If my website were based only around "working from home," then I would talk about dollars earned, stats on jobs, and how to get clientele. However, once I realized that I am actually selling freedom to people so they can live a life that is true to them and their goals, then the whole focus of my branding shifted. Now, my website speaks to their pain points mentioned above (staying home with their kids, their undying passion to travel, their heart breaking at the thought of a nursing home for their lovely mother, or the fear of a health problem forcing them into the unknown of providing for their family).

Remember…. you are not selling a product or service. You are selling a solution to an emotional problem that we all experience. You are selling peace of mind, confidence, prestige…. an emotion!

- **A brand is only as strong as its values: What values are most important to you? Honesty? Freedom? Love? Family? Of course, your brand doesn't have to encompass every value you hold, but it shouldn't run against any of them. My company is all about freedom, but family is important to me and all my content including my YouTube videos are clean (not a single bad word or inappropriate reference) because I want it to be family friendly and for the mom to be able to listen in the car, when her children may also be present. Most times if you stay true to yourself, your brand will reflect who you really are. Yet, it is still a good idea to think through these values and have them in writing, since you may not be the only one involved in your company. Choose values that you have in common with your ideal customer and make sure you are consistent in demonstrating them.**
- **What do you want your brand to FEEL like? How do you want the people to FEEL when coming in contact with your brand?: The feel of your brand is the emotion it brings out in a person when experienced. Does your brand feel:**
  - **Open or closed?**

- **Free or controlled?**
- **Girly or masculine?**
- **Clean or cluttered?**
- **Simple or complex?**
- **Modern, vintage, or classic?**
- **Light or dark?**
- **Carefree or heavy?**

Of course, choose something you love, but also keep in mind your customers, values, and just a general feeling of "I love this!" that keeps people around. If people like what they sample from you (your website, social media account, etc), then they are much more likely to buy the whole package. When designing my websit,e I wanted to reflect my values: honesty, family, fun, and freedom. Many of my visuals are of me looking directly into the camera and smiling (trust), with photos of my family also included and text about family focus (family), the wording and vibe and playful games (I have pac-man on my site!!) demonstrates my playful personality and how I endeavor to make learning fun, and my whole purpose of working from home is the freedom it affords me and I speak of that freedom throughout everything I do.

- **Choose a style that appeals to you and your audience.**
- **Pick a feeling you want your site to invoke and make your decisions around based around that.**
- **What should your site look like or sound like? What words describe you: energetic? Peaceful? Creative?**
- **Get involved with Pinterest, both for getting ideas but also for your business. As a mini search itself, it is a valuable place for your company to be. Look up the words that describe you and see what images come up. Create a board and just start pinning images that appeal to you, your customer, and the feelings you're seeking. Look over the board and see what they all have in common. Or choose one special picture that seems to encompass everything you want for your brand.**

- **Consistency: Now that you have the vibe and imagery down for your brand, it is time to choose your specific elements. Pick with intention. Always use integrity. No matter your design, unless people trust you, they won't purchase a single thing. By creating a consistent brand, you will create the appearance of integrity. Since first impressions are all a person has at first, fonts, colors, logos, and images are all they know. This is the very reason it is so important. Show up over and over in the same way with your**

appearance, voice, values, and message. This is the only way to build trust and a meaningful relationship.

- **Colors: Colors play a large part in the feelings your brand conveys. There is a whole science behind what colors make you feel what way. For example, red is said to make you aggressive, and blue is calming. Typically, you will want to limit your colors to two choices plus one neutral color (black, tan, grey, white). The shade of your color should also be consistent, so make sure that your shade of color looks good on different materials or mediums. My first shade of pink was too light when I started to branch out into putting my logos on products; it just didn't show up well enough, and I can attest to the difficulty it was to go back and change everything. Once you find the perfect shade, get a physical sample and a hex code (the universally accepted color code for that exact shade, so that you get the one you are referring to, not an opinion of a sample shade).**
- **Fonts: These also need to be consistent and should not include more than two types. Generally, you want a clean, simple text font and also an artistic, unique, fun title font. More than two fonts and three colors make your website look like a jumbled mess.**
- **Logo: Your logo should match the vibe of your company and feel like it complements each other. Your logo will normally be on a solid background like white, but you also need one on a transparent background that can be used on any color and product.**
    - **Branding specialists, graphic designers, or freelancers can help you with your design. Websites like fiverr.com or upwork.com, or 99designs.Compare very affordable. If you want to design one yourself for free, check out canva.com.**
- **Patterns and Textures: Choose 3-5 swatches of different patterns and textures. These can be used as borders or backgrounds and as ground for your products.**
- **Shapes & Icons: What shapes will be of primary focus to your brand? Much like colors, shapes also elicit a feeling. Circles are fun, long rectangles are modern, sand quares feel clean and simple. Along the same lines, what icons will be on your site? Will the menu bar have lines or an arrow? Will the checkout page have a cart icon or a dollar symbol?**
- **Brand Across the Board: Now that your branding is set up, whenever you post an image, a video, an article, or any piece of content… You want it to be recognizable as your brand. Your font will remain the same even if you simply place an inspirational quote on a stock photo image. Even the stock photo image you choose should reflect the feeling and style of the rest of your brand. If there were a page of images, your audience should say to themselves, "That looks like…. (your company)" before they ever even click. If you always post your pictures in tall rectangles, don't all a sudden throw out a circle image in a totally different color scheme. See how that can throw your audience off?**

- **Congratulations, you now have your branding! Create a branding board or style guide of all your choices. Ask others if they like it, how it makes them feel, and try and gauge if you were accurate in conveying the emotions you wanted to. Keep your guide in front of you for easy access to hex codes or font names, and to serve as a visual reminder to be consistent as you create future content.**

Keep rockin' it!!!!