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e-guide

BECAUSE YOUR BRAND  
IS THE MOST  
POWERFUL  
ASSET YOU HAVE

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# WELCOME

**Dear Business Owner,**

We're excited that you're here.

We have enlisted the expertise of 8 of the best in the business, and picked their brains to bring you their tried and tested brand strategy advice.

We are confident that you will walk away with an understanding of what brand strategy is (and isn't), how strong brands add real value and the impact a strong brand can have in the minds of your customers.

But the brand strategy goodness doesn't stop there!

We have put together a checklist designed to get you asking the right questions and moving in the right direction.

As always, our resources are no-nonsense, jargon-free zones.  
Read on and be your most powerful asset.

Kind regards,



**The Signarama Team**

# INTRODUCTION

It seems you have arrived. You have a logo, a clever company name, website, and maybe even a Facebook or LinkedIn business page. But where is the plan, the strategy?

Many new business owners believe logo + company name = branding

Not so.

## What Does A Powerful Brand Achieve?

Creating a powerful brand means establishing your reputation - the things your customers say about you when you are not around. This automatically accomplishes a series of goals:

- Delivers your message clearly
- Confirms your credibility
- Connects to your target prospects on an emotional level
- Motivates buyers
- Enhances loyalty

## Brand Strategy And The Customer

Think about your brand as an experience, not an object (product) or a thought, not an action (service). Your brand is your character and your brand strategy is the step that communicates that character to others.

### Shall we get started?





Name: **Monique McNamara**

Title: **Senior Brand Strategist / Communication's Advisor**

Organisation: **UP&UP Creative**

## Profile:

Monique is the founder of UP&UP. She works with an expert, handpicked project team curating specialised co-labs to innovate and activate brands.

Monique's mission is to help organisations and businesses be more sustainable, adaptable and engaged, so as to achieve thriving cultures that grow loved brands. She has over 15 years experience in developing strategy and managing world changing organisations' brand, design, social marketing, projects and communications campaigns.

### What are the most common branding mistakes you see businesses make?

Selling and not being of service. If you're not being a solution and taking a human-centered approach that is meaningful and benefits business and people, the new economy will not want you. Always strive to be the solution provider.

### Put into your own words what a branding strategy is and why a business needs one?

Branding is an eco-system of interrelated intentions, actions and messages built on a strong foundation of values. Core values of a project and brand drive all decisions, and I help the company get clear on what they are, so it's easier to make good decisions going forward. Whether it is to sell widgets or save land, you need to know why and how you intend to achieve that. A strategy helps this happen and more importantly gets your team or stakeholders on board to make it happen!

### What is your personal favourite example of branding you have seen?

How I look at brand is the company brand (what it does, how it does business and why it exists) and the brand identity (how it is visually and verbally communicated). In true multi-passionate style I don't have a 'favourite' because no brand is alike. But the brands that stand to me out are:

1. Ikea, because of how they live their values through their products and services and keep true to this, from the products to the language i.e. co-workers.
2. I have been privileged enough to work with WWF Australia to launch their first consumer facing co-brand campaign promoting Forest Stewardship Council. I like WWF, as they are an iconic environmental advocacy brand that works with industry and business to change markets to meet environmental realities. They have been successful in their approach and stayed true to their core brand objectives.
3. Toms shoes is an exemplary purpose driven social-entrepreneur business with a 'one for

one' model. Together with their customers, they have built into the core of their business creating great products that look great and minimise poverty. Donating one pair of shoes for every pair bought.

Others to watch are Thank You who now have their product in Woolworths and Etiko, an Australian pioneer in the fashion / fair-trade goods brand and won most ethical brand in 2013.

Essentially brands that stand for something, provide value and create a compelling story will endure. It's my job to help find the gold in these organisations and build them into credible brands that people believe in. The contributions they make are outstanding and how they deliver this is awesome!

### What are the most important branding initiatives you would recommend to a client?

Know your 'why'. Why are you doing this, selling this and what solution does it provide? Because if you don't know 'why', why does your product/business exist? →



Evaluations always bring up the exciting opportunities to re-invent or innovate to make the foundations of a business stronger. The brand process does get to the heart. This is what makes the process so exciting and daunting.

### What do you say to Australian business owners who may think that branding is only related to getting a new logo?

I tell them that this is a pretty common misunderstanding. We create a common understanding so we are on the same page to begin with. The depth a client wants to set up the foundations of their business or company, is their choice. My job is to give them the options and work with their choice. I love taking the big picture journey with clients and co-creating the new brand foundations. Other times after an initial 'inspire session', when we deep dive into the DNA of the organisation and gather insights on where they want to go. The organisation may have done some great work and we come in with fresh eyes to bring it all together, offering fresh thinking as well as steering and managing the new brand to launch!

“ Branding is an eco-system of interrelated intentions, actions and messages built on a strong foundation of values. ”



### When should businesses update their brand?

It a good time to update a brand when:

1. It's no longer representing the core values or offerings of the organisation
2. You have competition edging in on your brand
3. You're under utilising your strengths or have become aware of recent customer insights to strengthen your advantage. My advice is, if you have them, use them!
4. Based on experience (no explanation needed). The markets changing and you need to keep up.

As a rough guide, generally it is good to reassess if your brand identity is matching your strategic direction about every 3 years, although with the market getting faster online, I would also suggest acting as soon as you see a reason to, which might mean...now.

### What do you see as the upcoming trend in branding?

1. Personal branding and thought leadership in organisations and out as part of a bigger brand strategy.
2. Content, content and more content.

### What brand challenges might a business suffer from and how would you recommend they overcome them?

1. Challenge:  
No brand management.

#### Solution:

Seek an outside overview of your brand and constantly seek different perspectives. This way you can capture opportunities and increase innovation to keep you fresh.

#### 2. Challenge:

Keeping up with content, content, content.

Solution: Outsource or delegate to key members of your team to create a rounded brand 'voice'.

### Do you have a favourite brand and why?

I generally go for those who take the meaning of 'prospering' to include business and community prospering, through business activities or assist those who are looking to transition to this model. Bcorp (Benefit Corporation) is a new guideline and one for Corporate Australia to watch, learn and potentially implement to keep ahead of the game. Generally, they are committed to making a contribution through and with businesses to progress society. It's called doing their bit and I think that's worth backing.





Name: **Stella Gianotto**

Title: **Founder and Creative Director**

Organisation: **Stella Design**

## Profile:

Stella Gianotto has lived and breathed the design industry developing brands for almost 20 years. Considered a branding guru, she's worked with small business' and high profile brands. Responsible for the Creative Direction at Stella Design, she has a strong focus on creating, establishing and building successful brands that build viable and expanding businesses. Stella's strength lies in being able to establish a rapport (and open communication with clients), understanding how to give brands 'a voice' that is global, providing awareness and creating recognition.

### What are the most common branding mistakes you see businesses make?

One of the most common mistakes we see is that people want to develop a brand without really knowing why or what the brand will stand for. Often in these cases, the brand that is developed is designed for the present and not given the future any consideration at all. What ends up happening is that a 'mongrelisation' (my own terminology) of a brand occurs with a not so hot looking logo underpinning all the marketing communications. How do you identify one of these? Easily, the design is cluttered. You use your full company name in the brand instead of a keyword or icon, no consistency in anything they do – a myriad of problems!!

### Put into your own words what a branding strategy is and why a business needs one?

Simply put a brand strategy is the overarching umbrella that underpins a brand's (or company / business) communications. It tells the story of the brand. Everything that you say / do / stand for is captured within the

brand strategy. This is vital because a good brand strategy will set the direction for ANY marketing (which is the activity of function of communicating a brand), in line with the strategic goals or objectives of the business. It's important not to confuse brand strategy with marketing.

### What is your personal favourite example of branding you have seen?

Nike is a perfect example of branding done well, consistently and constantly without seeing any dilution of the brand ever, not even on a global scale. Why is it such a successful brand? Apart from reading the story of how the brand was born (which is unique in itself, especially when you use a waffle iron to create the pattern of the sole of your running shoes!), Nike have remained authentic, kept it real and made it simple to remember. 'JUST DO IT' is probably one of the most iconic taglines that ever existed.

But they don't stop there, they have created sub-brands (Nike Football, Nike Women, the Nike Foundation), sub cultures and expanded their community far and wide and still remained authentic and memorable.

### What are the most important branding initiatives you would recommend to a client?

There are two very definitive steps to take, the first being to 'Get clear on why and what?' - this is fundamental to a brand. The next step is then to work out 'How it should look, feel, sound etc' - this is where a brand strategist or brand designer can help you. Once you have both of these fundamentals established then any marketing initiatives a brand should do, are easy to figure out.

### What do you say to Australian business owners who may think that branding is only related to getting a new logo?

I would tell Australian business owners that a logo will only get you so far in your market place. Whilst a logo is a cheaper alternative, branding is an investment.

Realising how valuable branding is comes only when you lose market share to your competitors, or when the business / industry landscape you are in changes without warning. →



Only if there is an economic consideration, loss or shift in any business do business owners seriously look at the value of branding. It's important to understand the role that branding plays in the marketplace before it's too late. I've always maintained that "Branding is where advertising stops and marketing doesn't go" (my personal quote).

The question to ask yourself is: how much did that cheap logo really cost you?

### When should businesses consider updating their brand?

There are few occasions when a business should consider updating their brand, such as when change in your industry is imminent, forced or planned. Change could also be considered as a relocation, merger or acquisition, expansion of product or service. A business should NEVER change or update their brand 'because I feel like a change'.

### What do you see as the upcoming trend in branding?

There are always trends that cycle through where branding is concerned, however I prefer to pay attention to the different delivery mechanisms in marketing that will affect a brand more than a 'trend'. I pay attention to mediums like social media (for example), how to embrace it and looking at ways to leverage the business.

What brand challenges might a business suffer from and how would you recommend overcoming them?

There are many to mention however a few fundamental challenges stem from a lack of or no branding, a lack of consistency or application of a brand, basic understanding of what branding actually is or can do for your business.

The way to overcome any of these challenges is simply to become educated or seek out some professional advice, even if your business cannot afford the branding service, strong advice will get you further ahead.

### Do you have a favourite brand, why?

I love Disney, it's the 'happiest place on earth', voted yet again one of the 'Best Global Brands 2013' by Interbrand. I love how the brand is still unique and strong across many mediums. They have stayed true to many of the brand's core values and continue to reinvent themselves generation after generation.

Their characters are iconic. The brand itself has become a master at constantly building rapport and maintaining relationships. Their brand loyalty is impenetrable because they have built an emotional connection, underpinned by an integrity that has their community loving them.

Disney's brand is pure magic, in every sense of the word.

“ Branding is where advertising stops and marketing doesn't go. ”







Name: **Karen Gunton**  
Title: **Creative Designer**  
Organisation: **Build a Little Biz**

### Profile:

Karen Gunton is a teacher who loves teaching strategies to micro biz owners. Her goal is to make things just 'click' for her clients and she is always working on new workshops & new workbooks that are helpful, actionable, and inspiring. A creative designer, Karen loves creating and sharing visual content and is always looking for new ways to help business owners amplify their brand, stand out, and wow fans using visual marketing. Karen encourages clients to find their spark, follow their gut, question the rules, and kick ass with their little biz dreams.

### What are the most common branding mistakes you see businesses make?

The biggest mistake that I see is that in our efforts to be professional we strip all of the personality out of our brands and we worry about sharing too much of ourselves. We hold back from telling our stories and we try too hard to make our biz look like what everyone else is doing. We are worried about turning people off and the result is a bland brand. One that doesn't really send any message at all. One that doesn't really stand out. One that doesn't let me know that I am in the right place. One that doesn't tell me what their business is known for. Bland brands make me so sad. It is such a missed opportunity (especially when I get to know the people behind the brand and see how freaking awesome they are!).

### Put into your own words what a branding strategy is and why a business needs one?

A brand is the message you send to the world about your biz - its communication. So your branding strategy is basically your guide for communicating: what do you wish to say, who do you wish to say it to, where are

you going to say it and how will you be consistent as you do so.

Your brand strategy makes up the framework of the rest of your business and marketing activities. Everything you do for your biz needs to fit in with your brand.

### What is your personal favourite example of branding you have seen?

Oh I have so many! I actually have a folder on my browser called "kick ass brands" and I add bookmarks whenever I come across a business that I think is really standing out with their brand, who has a clear and distinct brand voice or brand look, or who I think is doing an amazing job of amplifying their message in the marketplace.

While I think we can learn a lot from what "big" brands are doing (they have the big branding & marketing budgets after all!) I really love to follow what micro-businesses are doing. I think micro biz owners have a real opportunity to make their brand personal and to engage with their audiences in a really authentic way. One of my favorite micro biz owners at the moment is Denise Duffield-Thomas. She has built an entire brand around her "lucky bitch" message that I

just love. Her down to earth, "let me tell it like it is, girlfriend!" approach comes through loud and clear in her voice and she has just rebranded the look of her biz to match her vibrant, fun, and positive style. Plus she has been doing some fun things with visual marketing on her social media platforms.

### What are the most important branding initiatives you would recommend to a client?

Clarity. Get clear about what your brand message is, what it is you want to SAY to people about your brand, what it is you want to be known for.

Communication. Share that message consistently with both the look and voice of your brand, across all interactions that you have with people, everywhere. All the time. In as many ways as you can!

Amplification. It is not enough to just pop your brand up in the places you do business, you need to shout it out loud and clear. You need to amplify it. As a small business with a small marketing budget you almost need to be over the top about it and push yourself out of your comfort zone otherwise it is really hard to stand out & get noticed! →



## What do you say to Australian business owners who may think that branding is only related to getting a new logo?

A brand is so much more than a logo, website banner, business card or your packaging. It exists in every element of your business and in every interaction people have with your business. It is expressed by both the look and the voice of your business. I always say that your customers are the heart of your business. They keep the life pumping in your biz, without them your biz would not survive. They also add the love to your biz – they love what you do and you love being of service to them!

On that note, I think your brand is the soul of your business. It is the part that adds the character and the personality and is the part that allows your biz to form connections with people. It helps you get to the emotions of what you do & why you do it.

## When should businesses consider updating their brand?

I think we need to add branding to our regular yearly business plans. Your brand is not a do once, pop up, and move on kind of thing. Your business evolves, your target audience evolves, your offerings evolve, YOU evolve. So regularly (yearly or half-yearly when you are working on your plans) have a date with your brand. Do you need to update your message to target the right customers? Do you need to amp your efforts up a bit? Do you need to spice things up so you aren't bland, or freshen things up to make a bit of a splash?

## What brand challenges might a business suffer from and how would you recommend overcoming them?

I personally think one of the biggest challenges is gaining clarity

## What do you see as the upcoming trend in branding?

I believe the big emerging trend which will continue to grow and become even more essential is the creation of branded visual content as a marketing tool for micro-businesses. The popularity of Pinterest, Instagram and YouTube continues to rise, and sites like Facebook and Google (and even Twitter) continue to put an emphasis on visual content. People are visual and social media is recognising that more now than ever. Businesses should do the same by adding visual marketing to their existing marketing strategies and creating their own branded visual content to use in these platforms as a way to engage with their audience, send powerful messages, and create brand recognition.

Visual marketing is something I am very passionate about so I am always watching this trend for emerging ideas and strategies that we can all apply to our businesses. I think it is a great way to amplify our brand message plus it's another powerful tool we can add to our toolbox!

around and expressing your brand voice. I am a very visual person so the brand "look" has always been the easiest part for me to work on. Many of us still think of the "logo" and the "look" as being the main ingredients to a brand but your brand has a "voice" too and this is just as important to the overall vibe of your brand.

I find that blogging really helps to develop a brand voice. I see a blog as being like the front counter of your shop. It's the place where you can just chat with customers and the more you write, the more you share stories with your audience. The more you share your expertise or passion or ideas or help, the easier it gets and the more your voice starts to be distinct.

I personally have found that blog writing has helped me to find my voice and then apply it in different areas - to share it in social media, or to include it in my email newsletters, even when I am talking to customer face to face.

## Do you have a favourite brand, why?

I do have a number of favourite brands. I probably spend more time thinking about brands, the messages they send and the way they send them than the average consumer. I am always looking for inspiration and am also really interested in what the brands I love say about me and the brands I wish to create. Three that come to mind are Ellen DeGeneres. I love Ellen for her ability to be absolutely, 100% herself. To be authentic, genuine, generous and so freaking fun! I also love Lu Lu Lemon for the way they aim to inspire you with every purchase you make (I have a big collection of shopping bags full of inspirational quotes and manifestos). And I love Pandora for giving me a way to wear the stuff that really matters to me - to literally wear my heart on my sleeve!



“ I think your brand is the soul of your business. It is the part that adds the character and the personality, and is the part that allows your biz to form connections with people. It helps you get to the emotions of what you do and why you do it. ”





Name: **James Atkins**

Title: **Director**

Organisation: **Vantage Marketing**

### Profile:

Vantage Marketing works with medium to large organisations throughout Australia to ensure that their business and their brand are both heading in the same direction. James facilitates planning and strategy workshops, undertakes reviews, develops insights and ideas as well as mentoring and coaching business leaders. He held many senior executive roles in highly competitive markets including financial service, retail and energy. A seasoned business leader and marketing strategist, James successfully developed and introduced new products, channels and programs in many industry sectors.

An experienced Company Director, he is currently Chair of the Board of Hocking Stuart (Victoria's leading real estate business), Deputy Chair of SIDS & Kids Victoria, Non-executive Director of Greening Australia and an Associate Fellow of the Australian Marketing Institute. James also facilitates Mindshop Excellence programs - a work experience program for year 10 students.

### What are the most common branding mistakes you see businesses make?

Thinking that branding is all about logos and design! And major disconnects between what your logo and marketing says about you and the actual customer experience!

### Put into your own words what a branding strategy is and why a business needs one?

Whilst it is important to have a strong logo, look and feel the first step is to refine your target audience. Be clear on what your proposition delivers and, critically, uncover or develop how you are different - your competitive advantage. This is the base of branding. From there you look at execution - yes, how it communicates your proposition from a logo perspective. But more importantly, what is the customer experience at each and every one of your touch points.

The sum of this experience is the brand.

### What is your personal favourite example of branding you have seen?

Boost Juice. They have a brand that is clearly expressed at each and every touch point. There is also a powerful virtuous circle in play between their brand, their staff and their customers. Vitality is what they stand for and you experience it in who they target, what they sell and, most importantly, how they sell it - the total customer experience. When you then look at the logo and livery it simply reinforces the experience.

### What are the most important branding initiatives you would recommend to a client?

Be really clear on your competitive advantage and proposition before you start talking to a logo designer! If you get that clear then all that comes after will be easier. Critically think it through from the customer angle first, not a design one.

### What do you say to Australian business owners who may think that branding is only related to getting a new logo?

Think again!  
Yes the logo is important in visually encapsulating who you are and what you stand for (and hopefully is memorable and distinct). But you are only looking at one piece of the puzzle. The brand is delivered through the total customer experience and what you and others say, think and feel about the brand.

### When should businesses consider updating their brand?

Rarely! New marketing managers love to come in and change everything when in reality most things only need to be tweaked, refined or allowed to evolve. Maybe the logo part of your brand needs to evolve but you will get bored of it and your advertising before your customers do. Natural evolution is key. Have a look at some of the →



major brands and their logos and you will see that they have allowed evolution almost imperceptible to the eye. If, of course, you are having a major shift in who you target, your positioning or what you sell you need to make sure the brand positioning and execution support it. But beware of trashing key assets, such as logos and names, too easily. It may just need to be modified – better to build off equity you have than try and build from scratch again.

### What brand challenges might a business suffer from and how would you recommend overcoming them?

Brands at the end of the day are about trust. Nothing's changed in that regard, but claims made by a brand are skewered quicker and more effectively due to social media. In one way social media is a good accountability discipline. I quite often ask clients how they would feel if issue X appeared on the front page of the daily newspaper – you should ask the same question if something about you went viral on Facebook. An opportunity and a risk. You need to be as close as possible to what is being said about you, your competitors and what the emerging trends are for your category. Staying on top of this will enable you to respond but, more importantly, take advantage of opportunities in real time.

### What do you see as the upcoming trend in branding?

Brands are becoming more personal and real time – they aren't static so how you evolve in line with your proposition and your customer needs is key.

In a world where we are bombarded with commercial images every second of the day I believe those that have clarity around who they are and why they exist will cut through the clutter.

Successful brands will deliver this through simplicity and clarity, underpinned by a genuine and authentic personality.

### Do you have a favourite brand, why?

I really respect what Burberry did in reviving a dying brand whilst staying core to their essence. Also Boost Juice in how they built their brand and proposition from bottom up – a fully immersive brand experience.

“ The brand is delivered through the total customer experience and what you and others say, think and feel about the brand. ”







Name: **Marcos Enrique Diaz**

Title: **Creative Director**

Organisation: **BME Melbourne | Dignable Goods**

### Profile:

At 16, Marcos co-founded and was Creative Director of successful street wear label, Ruler Melbourne. He has worked with JanSport Australia, Brimbank and Moreland City Councils and one of Melbourne's most reputable live music venues, Lounge.

Now 20, Marcos is Creative Director of clothing label BME Melbourne, and manages in-house design service, Dignable Goods.

#### What are the most common branding mistakes you see businesses make?

I find it annoying when businesses copy existing designs but lack to portray the heart behind it effectively. There is a fine line between going with or adding to a trend and outright copying an existing design.

#### Put into your own words what a branding strategy is and why a business needs one?

A branding strategy IS the game plan. It's what magnetises your audience; it's the compass in your journey. It is so important to have a brand strategy in place before starting and expanding a business. I think too many businesses think that they can get away without having one for various reasons. But it's so important for businesses that are looking to make an impact and a profit.

#### What is your personal favourite example of branding you have seen?

Obey Propaganda is a great example. A clothing label run

by Shepard Fairey, Obey use guerrilla marketing to attract their clientele. But they also impact a subculture and now a lot of brands are following.

They collaborate with artists from across the world and take over walls with art. From an artist to brand to now cultivating a movement, Shepard Fairey has made a massive buzz around the world. Attracting pop icons like President Obama—designing posters for his first round of elections.

#### What are the most important branding initiatives you would recommend to a client?

Be open-minded, never get comfortable and work collaboratively.

#### What do you say to Australian business owners who may think that branding is only related to getting a new logo?

Say for example, you know someone that wears the same clothes and doesn't shower and you have the option to change it. Do you **a)**. Encourage them to shower and put their old clothes on? Or **b)**. Encourage them to invest in new clothes AND shower.

The option I hope you chose is number 2.

A business looking at branding needs strategy - to work on it from the inside out.

It is strategy that helps design and is reflected throughout all branding elements such as logos.

#### When should businesses consider updating their brand?

As a rule of thumb, I'd say every 3-5 years but this depends on the brand and the industry.

It's not something that should be entered into without a clear strategy. Know why you are updating and how it may affect existing and potential customers and your position in your industry.

#### What do you see as the upcoming trend in branding?

It's hard to pinpoint it but I think it would have to be simplicity - busy designs are just not appealing.

You can get a message across with clean, simple and clever design. →

Do you have a favourite brand, why?

Carhartt. They still make their quality products in Detroit, Michigan and have done since 1889. They are still relevant and still making millions.

Talk about longevity!

“ A branding strategy IS the game plan. It's what magnetises your audience; it's the compass in your journey. ”

What brand challenges might a business suffer from and how would you recommend overcoming them?

Staying relevant would be the main thing.

A smart business is one that markets to the future generation as well as the current generation. Keep an eye on look at people creating trends and leading the way and work with them.







Name: **Wayne Lim**  
Title: **Senior Graphic Designer**  
Organisation: **Fractal Theory**

## Profile:

Wayne Lim is the Creative Director at Fractal Theory. Specialising in branding and corporate identity, Wayne had the privilege of rebranding some of Australia's most iconic brands. Having worked for Albi Imports, T2 and Kogan, Wayne believes that the business' identity should encapsulate the DNA and heart of the business.

Combining his knowledge in marketing and his creative flair, Wayne has had over five years experience and prides himself on creating an image for businesses that goes beyond a simple logo.

### What are the most common branding mistakes you see businesses make?

The most common mistake businesses make is not having a brand at all.

The brand name, visual elements - logo and colour palette and tagline create a first and potentially a forever lasting image of your business maybe even before it is known what your business involves.

A well-branded image immediately evokes emotion and affirms the credibility of the business so by not harnessing the opportunity to communicate instantly, it can easily mean a lost business opportunity.

### Put into your own words what a branding strategy is and why a business needs one?

A brand strategy is essentially a business model that outlines goals and a plan of how best to achieve them.

This defines the brand. It is important to have these clearly

outlined to maintain focus, as it will act as a guide to ensure that the integrity of the brand is uncompromised and its philosophy is resolute.

### What is your personal favourite example of branding you have seen?

Apple Inc. The company has re-branded itself many times since its inception but has always stayed true to its philosophy: *To understand the needs and serve the customer better than anyone else.*

Each of their products are immediately recognizable and embodies this philosophy. Their advertising is complementary and also draws upon emotional appeal linking the audience with their product.

It's clear that the Apple brand is at the forefront of the business as their philosophy transcends throughout all facets of customer interaction, allowing the customer to experience first hand a service that matches the standard of the product as was promised.

### What are the most important branding initiatives you would recommend to a client?

First thing's first and that's to ask what is it you do and why it is you do it.

The brand encompasses these values so before it can even exist, the "what" and "why" need to be known.

### What do you say to Australian business owners who may think that branding is only related to getting a new logo?

A logo may well be the initial impression a potential customer has of your business but what is the use of it if the other dimensions of your business are not communicating the same ideals?

A brand is not made up of just a mark nor is it entirely aesthetic, but an accompaniment of multiple facets speaking the same ideals.





The logo makes a promise to a customer that should be complemented by everything that bears the company's name and just as importantly by the service that is delivered.

### When should businesses consider updating their brand?

There are an abundance of reasons why a business should consider rebranding. But generally, a business needs to consider if they are still relevant to the industry they belong to and if they are still speaking to the same customers they always have.

With social demands and technological advances growing at a rapid rate, a business may need to reassess objectives and question if they are still achievable whilst filling the demands of their customers and the community alike.

### What do you see as the upcoming trend in branding?

Businesses now, more than ever, will place greater emphasis on how they impact environmentally and socially. It's not enough for them to serve themselves and customers through their primary business but how and how much they give back to the community.

Being environmentally aware and having processes implemented to remain as sustainable as possible is now an expectation of any business but by providing the community with public services and aid, there is a more immediate, tangible and measureable outcome.

### What brand challenges might a business suffer from and how would you recommend overcoming them?

Often a business will lack an identity, where those from within the brand can't quite pinpoint objectives, key values and/or the image they want to portray. This will often be represented externally and the mixed-messaging will cause confusion.

This can be overcome by having a concise branding strategy clearly defining the business giving it direction and sense of purpose.



“A brand is not made up of just a mark nor, is it entirely aesthetic, but an accompaniment of multiple facets speaking the same ideals.”





Name: **Natalie Giddings**  
Title: **Senior Marketing Strategist**  
Organisation: **Pollen Marketing**

## Profile:

Natalie heads up Pollen Marketing. It is a marketing agency that provides practical online & offline marketing direction and services with a deep expertise in online marketing including web, email marketing, paid and non-paid search marketing and social media.

Natalie works mostly with B2B professional services industry including IT, engineering, finance, education specialists and national franchisors.

### What are the most common branding mistakes you see businesses make?

There are two.

#### Number One:

I'm not a designer. I have people much cleverer than myself create the branding for our clients. But I see businesses try and design their own items all the time.

#### Number Two:

Jargon. It's a trap.

### Put into your own words what a branding strategy is and why a business needs one?

Branding Strategy is what impression you want to make on a potential customer and exactly how you plan to do that.

It has to filter through to every customer interaction and touch point. From the entryway of your business to how you train the people who answer your phones.

Aldi want to be 'seen' as cheap. They don't unpack products out of the cardboard boxes and leave everything seemingly dumped everywhere.

But it's not just to save money on shelving. It reinforces in another subtle way *'this must be the cheapest option for me'*.

### What is your personal favourite example of branding you have seen?

I'm a big fan of humor in branding. iiNet and Finn.

Finn warmed hearts and allowed a relatively unheard of Internet provider to make major headway in the Australian market. Even referring to themselves as Australia's Number Two DSL provider affectionately iiNet tries to ensure that same fun / quirky brand persona filters down to the staff. This affects major decisions such as whether or not they outsource their customer call centre function or not. They didn't want to lose that control over their culture.

### What are the most important branding initiatives you would recommend to a client?

Move beyond logo design, business card and brochure. I'm mostly in business-to-business space. And so authority and expertise yield the best results.

But it has to be demonstrated. Creating useful guides and other thought leadership elements such as hosting events are crucial.

### What do you say to Australian business owners who may think that branding is only related to getting a new logo?

Consumers are incredibly clever and proficient buyers. They will use any clues you leave to help them make a decision. Making a purchase decision actually causes pain and they want relief. Whilst your logo is one-way people will recognise you, there's other important things people are looking for. These may include convenience, warranties, guidance and or follow up service.

### When should businesses consider updating their brand?

The products and services you provide will not doubt change or update every couple of years. If not the channels you marketing them on will. An assessment could be done at year two or three. →



Maybe you've grown your offering or actually become specialists in just one of your offerings. Make sure your branding reflects that.

In some cases it is a matter of a simple refresh, rather than a complete overhaul.

### **What brand challenges might a business suffer from and how would you recommend overcoming them?**

Being a generalist can hurt. Specialising in a niche is often great for branding.

So Macquarie has been one of my favorites.

They endeavor to only play in markets they know they are the best whilst not shy of culling products that weren't profitable.

Specialisation breeds innovation and subject matter experts.

Macquarie's goal was to encourage an entrepreneurial environment for its team. The firm launched major innovations time after time. That is such a powerful message to portray.



**“Brands who break or rethink the traditional way a product or service is delivered to a market get big brand wins because they carve out a new niche for themselves. They automatically stand out.”**

### **What do you see as the upcoming trend in branding?**

Ultra simplicity and consistency. There is so much promotional clutter offline and online that to stand out you have to distil your brand and pare back all of the components enough to ensure key elements like what you stand are plain to see.

### **Do you have a favourite brand, why?**

A brand I'm watching very closely right now is Uber, a kind of crowd sourced, private chauffeur service.

Brands who break or rethink the traditional way a product or service is delivered to a market get big brand wins because they carve out a new niche for themselves.

They automatically stand out.





Name: **Paula Huntly**  
Title: **Director**  
Organisation: **Signarama**

### Profile:

Having previously worked as a manager for a leading international market research firm, Paula is now the director at Signarama Smithfield and has been with the company for the last three years.

She leads a team of signage and branding specialists who operate a full service signage centre, that includes but is not limited to the Smithfield area.

### What are the most common branding mistakes you see businesses make?

The most noticeable for me would be poor *call to action* in the design - no web address, what nature of the business and phone number.

This may seem obvious, but it is something I see all too often.

### Put into your own words what a branding strategy is and why a business needs one?

The company has narrowed down their niche target market and has plans and actions based on that focus with applicable pricing, colours, fonts and designs and tag lines - keeping everything uniform and universal.

### What is your personal favourite example of branding you have seen?

There is a plumber in our area, which has a vehicle wrap with a man sitting on the toilet image in place of where the driver sits. It is eye catching, shows sense of play and gets attention. When I think of a plumber now, his

company is first at mind and that is the whole point.

When you want people to think of your company as the first in their thought process, you have to do something quirky, interesting and out of the ordinary.

You must be remembered - for the right reasons.

### What are the most important branding initiatives you would recommend to a client?

*Call to action*, get attention and be recognised. Make it smart clean and professional. Keep it simple but powerful.

### What do you say to Australian business owners who may think that branding is only related to getting a new logo?

Branding drives more business. Be at the forefront of the thought process and get foot in door for the quote process.

If you are 5th or 10th on the call list, chances are you won't even get your foot in the door. You need to be in contention to get business in order to even try to compete.

### When should businesses consider updating their brand?

Traditionally about every 5-7 years. But don't become complacent and tardy. Keep it fresh.

Branding is an investment not an expense. Make it a priority to factor it into your advertising and marketing costs.

### What do you see as the upcoming trend in branding?

A focus on images - branding that is not so busy with words.

More simple, short and sharp designs. →



**What brand challenges might a business suffer from and how would you recommend they overcome them?**

Make sure whomever is overseeing the project is involved at all stages of the process. Only the relevant people should be involved, not 30 decision makers. This just complicates the process.

Start with a plan and strategy. Nut out all the elements such as target market, advertising roll out plan, applicable colours and designs for all types of signage and prints. For example, certain fonts are not suitable for vehicle advertising due to them being "mobile" billboards.

**Do you have a favourite brand and why?**

Red Bull. They are innovative and always have their consumers in mind when they are marketing and sponsoring.

I love everything from their vehicles, to their sales people handing out freebies. Red Bull's marketing and branding is very well thought out and spot on - testament to great strategy, planning and focus.

Think about all types of branding from lanyards, embroidery, screen-printing, web pages, van graphics etc. It is important to think about the final product(s) and the production of these designs.

**“ Branding drives more business. Be at the forefront of the thought process and get your foot in door for the quote process. ”**





# BRAND STRATEGY CHECKLIST

## **1. Do you have company wide understanding?**

As a business owner, it is up to you, or designated marketing guru, to ensure that your employees understand the company's branding strategies. Employees are the first line of representation for a business. If they are confused about what you are offering, do not expect consumers to understand.

## **2. What does your name say about you?**

Your company name can create limits. Make sure it is not perceived in going too narrow of a direction. This can instantly turn away consumers that feel the name excludes them, without investigating further. For example, if your company name uses the word "elite", there is a chance someone is going to perceive your business as being expensive and out of reach of middle income consumers.

## **3. Define and redefine your target market**

You can't be everything for everybody. Determine whom you want your products or services to appeal to and then develop a brand strategy to reach that audience. Make sure your target market is not too small as not to generate positive consumer reaction.

## **4. Know your type [of target]**

This process refers to specifically defining a pattern or habit within your target market based on interest. For example, if your target market is related to food consumers, decide if you are targeting gourmet food lovers or targeting fast food consumers.

## **5. Brand for now and the future**

Examine what products or services currently make up your branding strategy. Evaluate if there needs to be some restructuring and forecast new products or services that will benefit the strategy.

## **6. Brainstorm your way to well targeted media mix**

Consumers need to remember who you are. If your marketing materials only include print documents (e.g., brochures, flyers, etc.), think about expanding into other forms of advertising and marketing. This includes different forms of social media, internet advertising, newsletters, email auto responders, billboards, phone kiosks, and television. There are many ways to expand your reach and make yourself memorable.

## **7. Are you emotionally connected?**

Consumers love having a 'relationship' with a brand. They enjoy being connected in a way that makes them say, 'This brand and business cares about how I feel about it, how it affects me, and evolves to meet the desires of the consumer.'

## **8. Colour scheme coordination**

Before thinking this is a minor area that needs to be addressed, first think about all of the brands that have struck a personal and visual negative chord. Colours have psychological properties. They are communication tools that influence mood and reaction. There are colours that are relaxing and those that are irritating. Your colour scheme coordination needs to take into account its affect on consumers in relation to business stationery, internal marketing materials, logo, signage, website, etc.

**Don't limit yourself to this checklist. Use it and discover ways to expand on it, doing so will keep you on a brand strategy path full of up-to-date detail, connection, and understanding.**



# Demystifying Brand Strategy

A powerful brand understands and anticipates the wants and needs of its customers. A brand as an experience, not just an object (product); it is a thought, not just an action (service). Brand is the character and brand strategy is the steps that communicates that character to others. Why invest in strategy? Because your brand is the most powerful asset you have.

## DO YOU NEED BRANDING ADVICE YOU CAN TRUST?

For over 20 years, Signarama consultants have been working closely with companies to create customised branding and signage strategies that expertly translate their company image into signage that makes a lasting impression, and we can do the same for you. With 100 locations across Australia, there is a consultant near you that can give you personal, tailored service and advice that is specific to your business needs. Your very own signage consultant has access to the latest technologies, products and materials that others simply do not have. Add this to their exceptional branding and design expertise and there are no limits in creating the perfect signage strategy for your company. We understand your brand and our national network can ensure that it remains consistent. Whether you have a big branding project or a small branding project, fully developed artwork or none at all, your Signarama consultant can provide you with a level of service and skill that will exceed your expectations. With decades of experience behind us, you can rest assured that the signage advice provided to you is trustworthy. Signarama will work with you to create signage that really drives your message home and gives your company the edge that it has been waiting for.

**For branding advice that you can trust and to learn new ways to grow your business, contact Signarama**

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