

## SMALL BUSINESS

### Branding: Assess & Improve Your Brand

The process steps are:

1. Research: conduct interviews
2. Tagline: clarify your message
3. Touchpoints: brand associations and internalize the brand
4. Brand Stories: train ambassadors and create advocates
5. Brand Action Plan: implement the steps

#### **STEP 1: RESEARCH**

##### **Client Interview Sample Questionnaires**

Choose a long or short questionnaire depending on how much time you want to spend per interview and what you want to learn about your company.

##### **Interview tips**

Select 5-10 clients and set up phone interviews

You could conduct the interview yourself, or you could delegate this to someone else. Just be sure that the interview is done in depth.

What I mean by that, is that for example, if I asked: what do you like about ABC's services? And the answer was "the are good" I would be ready to ask: "what do you mean by that", "good in what way", "give me an example of someone else that is not so good"

By asking secondary questions, you will discover the most valuable information. It would be easier for your clients to give these details to a third party than to tell you directly what they think. So if at all possible, have someone else take care of this for you. But don't stall the process if you don't have someone to help you. Pick up the phone and make those calls yourself if you have to. Getting this information right is key to the success of your branding process.

When you conduct the interviews you'll discover a lot of valuable information including pitfalls about your competitors. For instance someone will say: "you are the only ones that really deliver on time, everyone else is always late". From this nugget of information you can easily build a branding message that you know will be valuable for potential customers.

Also keep in mind that in many occasions, interviewees will provide answers that cover a few questions. Take you time and let them know that this has occurred so that you can keep them engaged while you skip to next appropriate question.

Not all your interviewees will be chatty and direct. Once in a while you will run into someone that is more introverted or not as comfortable providing feedback. This person will give you



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short quick answers that won't benefit this process. If you identify that this has happened, quickly find a couple of closing questions, thank the participant for their time and more on. It is best to spend your time with participants that are valuable to your process.

#### **STEP 2: TAGLINE**

The answers from this interview process will help you to clarify your message and create your tag line and brand promise (which is step 2 of the branding process). Find the tagline worksheet under the Brand Action Plan.

#### **LONG QUESTIONNAIRE EXAMPLE**

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##### **Services Analysis**

- How did you initially learn about ABC?  
How long ago did you start working with ABC?
- What is your current relationship with ABC?
- Please describe what services have you used or you are familiar with.
- What are the benefits of using ABC's services?

*Evaluate ABC's products/services:*

- What are the strong points?
- What additional features/attributes would you consider valuable?
- What most impresses you about ABC and their services?
- Please provide one suggestion for how ABC can better serve you?

##### **Competing Alternatives**

- Why did you initially choose ABC and their services?
- What solution were you looking for? What issue were you trying to solve?
- Did you also consider other companies/products? If yes, which ones?
- When making your decision to go with ABC, what were the most important considerations (e.g., price, relationship, service, speed, accuracy, ease of use, flexibility, durability, features)?
- What other companies/products do you feel are comparable to ABC?
- Compared to other companies/products, how expensive is ABC?
- What are ABC's strengths compared to its competitors?
- What are ABC's weaknesses compared to its competitors?
- What do other companies/products do better than ABC?



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#### Communications

- What is the most effective way for ABC to communicate with you or your organization? (Sales calls, in-person, over the phone, email, mail, fax, website, etc.)
- How do you typically become aware of new products/services that may be of value in your industry/profession?
- Do you attend trade shows/events/conferences/seminars? Which ones?
- Do you read industry publications? Which ones?
- Do you read supplier newsletters, product updates, mailings, etc.? What format works best? Specific examples of recent ones that have caught your eye?
- Do you compare suppliers based on their websites? Which sites do you prefer?
- Other effective mediums?
- When considering the purchase of a new product/service, who do you consult with? Please describe the decision-making process in your organization.
- Do you have any additional suggestions for how ABC can effectively market to your market?
- Do you use ABC for 100% of your services
- Did you know that xyz is available?
- Would you find this service valuable? Why? or Why not?
- Will you offer an endorsement

#### SHORT QUESTIONNAIRE EXAMPLE

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- How long have you known ABC?
- What is your current relationship with ABC?
- How did you find out about ABC?
- What were you looking to resolve when you found ABC?
- Who else were you considering? How did you decide?
- What are ABC's strengths?
- What do you appreciate the most about ABC?
- What would you improve?
- How would you describe ABC to someone else?
- Who is ABC's competition?
- How does ABC compare to their competitors?
- Describe ABC in one sentence
- Describe ABC in two words
- Describe ABC in one word



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Find this form as a Word File in Lesson 1 under materials.

### STEP 3: TOUCHPOINTS

Brand Touchpoints	Current Brand Experience	Improved Brand Experience
Business Cards		
Letterhead		
Envelope		
Packaging		
Telephone		
Office Interior		
Email		
Voicemail		
Website		
Web Banners		
Billboards		
Vehicles		
Services		
Products		
Employees		
Speeches		
Presentations		
Networking		
Word of Mouth		
Trade Shows		
Direct Mail		
Public Relations		
Blogs		
Social Media		
Sales Promotion		
Advertising		
HR		
Uniforms		
Newsletter		
Business Forms		
Signage		
Exhibits		
Proposals		
Publications		



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### STEP 4: BRAND STORIES



Find this form as a Word File in Lesson 1 under materials.

Think of 3 stories from clients or customers that describe the uniqueness of your business. Condense the story so that it is easy to remember and re-tell without losing its value.

#### Brand Story #1

Strengths, values, uniqueness that this story represents \_\_\_\_\_

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#### Brand Story #2

Strengths, values, uniqueness that this story represents \_\_\_\_\_

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#### Brand Story #3

Strengths, values, uniqueness that this story represents \_\_\_\_\_

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### STEP 5: BRAND ACTION PLAN



Find this form as a Word File in Lesson 1 under materials.

#### Interviews Worksheet

Choose Interviewees	Notify by Email or Phone	Date and Time for the Interview
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

#### Tagline Worksheet

How do customers describe our business to other people	What are the strengths of our business	Describe the business in one sentence, 2 words and 1 word
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

#### Tagline Conclusions

Our brand experience can be defined as follows:

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### Internalizing the Brand Worksheet



Find this form as a Word File in Lesson 1 under materials.

Areas of Business	Current Experience	How Will We Deliver Our New Brand Experience
1. Reception		
2. Operations		
3. Sales/Marketing		
4. HR		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		



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### Brand Alignment + Integration

What are the components of your brand and where does your brand show up—Your brand is what people see and experience.

	Logo	Slogan	Message	Culture
<b>Initial Branding—Core</b>				
• Door				
• Floor Mat				
• Wall				
• Signage (External)				
• Business Cards				
• Letterhead (Print + Electronic)				
• Envelopes				
• Shipping Labels				
• Email Signature				
• Invoices (Print or Electronic)				
• Fax Sheets				
• Power Point Presentations				
• Answering Phone, Recorded Greetings				
• Other Client Communications				
<b>1st Level—Initial Implementation</b>				
• Website				
Marketing and Sales Print Materials:				
• Company Brochure (Unique Process)				
• Product or Services Brochure				
• Product Catalogue				
Advertising & Promotion:				
• Ads, Flyers, Coupons, Invitations, Direct Mail				
Trade Shows & Conferences:				
• Display				
• Handouts (Mini Brochure, Samples)				
• Announcements				
• Newsletter, Articles				
<b>2nd Level—Internal</b>				
• Inter-office Correspondence				
• Meeting Themes & Agendas				
• Hiring and Training Materials				
• Equipment Instructions				
• Patient/Customer Intake Forms				
• Patient/Client Folders				
• Message/Memo/Note Pads				
• Signage Internal				
• Intra-net				
• Other Internal Media				

Items that need to be created and/or improved

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Find this form as a Word File in Lesson 1 under materials.

### Magnetic Brand Experience: The Ultimate Brand Experience for Your Business

Brand Touchpoints	Describe Your Magnetic Brand Experience
<p>Write down the touchpoints in the order in which clients or customers experience your business.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.</li><li>2.</li><li>3.</li><li>4.</li><li>5.</li><li>6.</li><li>7.</li><li>8.</li><li>9.</li><li>10.</li><li>11.</li><li>12.</li><li>13.</li><li>14.</li></ol>	



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### Long-term Brand Action Plan



Find this form as a Word File in Lesson 1 under materials.

#### Perceived Quality

Our brand quality perception will be built through:

#### Loyalty

Our brand loyalty will be built through:

#### Awareness

Our brand awareness will be built through:



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### Brand Book Checklist

Brand Experience (How to live the Brand)

Brand Promise

Brand Values

Message

Company Logo

Approved Variations of Logo

Corporate Colors

Fonts

(Samples of the most used layouts)

Ad Sample

Newsletter Sample

Brochure Sample

Websites



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We would like to invite you to join the small business conversation in FaceBook to share your challenges and successes with other entrepreneurs:

<https://www.facebook.com/SmallBusinessRocks>

Branding for Small Business: Assess & Improve Your Brand is one of 7 courses in the Small Business Series by Success Skills.

- Marketing for Small Business: Create and Implement Strategies
- Branding for Small Business: Assess and Improve Your Brand
- Hiring for Small Business: Recruiting and Managing Employees
- Training and Developing Teams for Small Business
- Presentations, Proposals and Sales for Small Business
- Company Culture for Small Business
- Productivity Mastery and Time Management

