



HOW TO BUILD AN AUTHENTIC BRAND ALIGNED WITH YOUR PERSONAL AND BUSINESS VALUES AND VISION

BY LESLEY KAPLAN

What is branding?

When you think of branding, do you picture a company with a sleek logo and catchy slogan? Do you believe branding is only for businesses? If you're a solopreneur or a small business owner, you might wonder if branding even applies to you. A logo or slogan, while important in branding, is only the surface of what branding truly is. Branding is for everyone - you, me, and the average person, regardless of whether you're in business or not.

Building a unique brand

A good brand takes time to build. It's not a one-size-fits-all. Your personal and/or business brand is unique to you. It's the unique way your expertise and character are perceived by others. It shapes opportunities, relationships, how others trust and relate to you, and how they connect with your message. It's what we call your USP - your Unique Selling Proposition.

Branding is You!

Branding is how you and I present ourselves to the world. You are your brand! Whether you're a teacher, artist, or job seeker, your brand is the reputation you build through your actions, values, and the way you communicate. It's the way you and I show up. It's what we wear. It's how we respond to others and what they think or say about us when they hear our name - and what they likely won't tell us.

It's the way you differentiate yourself in the market. It's what makes people choose to work with you over someone else. If you're in business, branding is the process involved in creating a unique name and image for yourself, your service or your product. How your customers perceive you.

I'd like to share a few tips and thoughts on building and maintaining a truly impactful brand - one that is memorable, inviting, and stays top of mind.

KEYS TO A STRONG AND MEMORABLE BRAND

Consistency is a key to creating and maintaining a strong brand. You need to present yourself or “show up” the same professional way - both online and offline.

To strengthen your brand, your colleagues and clients expect consistent actions and experiences every time they interact with you, see you or hear from you. As I like to say, every time you “touch” them.

Know your unique value

Do you know what makes you unique? What’s your story? What’s your WHY? These are the reasons your colleagues and customers choose you over someone else. Are you effectively communicating this in your marketing and positioning?

Engage and build relationships

Engage your audience by building relationships through meaningful interactions. Share authentic experiences that connect with them.



Respond to comments, ask questions, share personal insights, and show that you value their thoughts. People connect with brands that feel authentic, reliable and approachable.

Deliver quality & excellence

Deliver quality and reflect excellence. Under-promise and over-deliver by setting realistic expectations and then exceeding them with exceptional service, quality and value.

This builds trust, strengthens your reputation, and creates loyal customers who are more likely to recommend you to others.





Clarity & uniqueness

Is your brand easy to understand, or does it leave people confused about what you offer?

Clarity is key - your audience should immediately grasp your message and value. At the same time, consider how difficult it is to copy. A strong brand is not just recognizable but also unique, making it hard for competitors to replicate. Focus on what sets you apart, from your voice and visuals to the experience you provide.



Emotion & connection

What emotional response does your brand evoke? What words do others use to describe you?

Does your brand inspire trust, excitement, confidence, or a sense of belonging?

People connect with brands on an emotional level, often making decisions based on how a brand makes them feel rather than just its products or services.

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SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS TOOLBOX & GUIDE: HOW TO "BUILD & BRAND YOUR BIZ"

POWER TALKS WITH WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

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Adapt & stay relevant

Evolve and adapt yourself and your brand to your surroundings. Stay relevant by continuously learning, refining your message, and embracing change.

Solve a specific problem

Is your brand truly customer-centric? What steps do you take to prioritize your customers' needs and experiences?

Your brand should emphasize the benefits you provide - how you solve their problems and add value - rather than just listing your features.

Make it about "them" and not about "you".

Get honest feedback

Ask yourself how you are packaging and positioning yourself. If you want honest feedback, ask a trusted friend, family member, or client. Make sure you are branding yourself and your business effectively - people are drawn to brands they like and trust.

**Take ownership of your brand.
And most importantly, remember, there is only one YOU!**

Lesley Kaplan is a Business Strategy and Branding Coach, Organizational Consultant & Trainer.

For more than three decades she has trained and coached hundreds of business owners & nonprofits worldwide to be more productive, profitable and to create more impact.

The Author of "SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS TOOLBOX & GUIDE: HOW TO BUILD & BRAND YOUR BIZ" and "POWERTALKS WITH WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS", Lesley is the Founder of the Israel Networking Hub and the Monday Motivation Spotlight Podcast.