



Episode 11

How to Create a Brand That's Powerful and Influential

Well, hey hey, welcome to another episode of my weekly Marketing. My name is Janice Hostager and I am so thrilled that you're here today. Get ready today because we're talking about how to build your brand and build brand awareness for your business. It's going to be a good one. And if you think your branding is done by your graphic designer, hold tight and listen up, because this will rock your world.

00:54

So today we're going to talk about how to create a big brand for your small business. Why you need to brand your business and what happens if you don't, the components of a strong influential brand and number four, what makes a brand strong or wimpy. You'll also hear a very brief but intense guest appearance by my dog Daisy because someone came to the door while I was recording this, but it lasts just a second or two.

01:18

So when I first started my business, it was a graphic design business, branding was not something I thought too much about. I was focused honestly on getting business and branding seemed well kind of unimportant. I was excited and started out by building my own website which was no easy to ask back in the early days of the internet. Let me tell you, and I got my social media pages all ready to go. I was nervous to launch because I thought, I actually thought that it would be so busy when my website went live that I was afraid I was going to be able to keep up. Yeah, I had a lot to learn. I had a logo of course because I was a designer after all, but I didn't think much about what lies beneath that logo until I started getting feedback from clients.

02:05

I started hearing the words people use to describe me. Actually, there were pretty good words. Thankfully, words like integrity and upscale, but they were not terms found anywhere on my website or my marketing materials. These were other people's words. This taught me my first and most important lesson about brands. Your Brand exists whether or not you realize it. It lives in your customers expectations, their experiences, and their impressions of your business.

02:34

That is why you need to intentionally brand your business. So what are you doing to create that in your customer's mind? Your brand is not defined by your success, but your business is

defined by your brand. Let me say that again for the people in the back. Your brand is not defined by your business, but your business is defined by your brand. In other words, it's super important to have a strong brand, but you can't buy the brand, hire a designer to create it or have your intern build it on Instagram. It lives in the minds of customers. And takes time to build, sometimes even years or decades. But yours isn't going to take that long. Don't worry why? Because you're here today listening.

03:19

A strong brand, projects a clear and distinctive identity and sets your business apart from your competitors. Customers are loyal to brands and they hold power. But you don't want any of your customers to create your brand for you incorrectly.

03:37

Everyone you do business with makes a judgment about you good or bad. If you're in business as a solopreneur it is likely based on your own personality and your quality of work. Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon defines your brand as what other people say when you're not in a room. It's how you make people feel. It's what your company stands for your values, quality of your product and the customer experience. Without a clearly defined brand. Everybody, including customers and staff will define your brand for you and differently than you would for yourself. Have you ever visited a business without a well defined brand? It was probably not a memorable experience.

04:16

So here are the components of a strong influential brand. Now, if you're driving or walking the dog right now you can find all this information including a free branding download in the show notes at myweeklymarketing.com/11.

04:32

But to explain a brand I'm going to ask you to think about concentric circles. You know, circles that start small at the center and grow outwards, sort of like ripples in a pond.

04:42

So first up, when developing a new brand or doing a rebrand, you start at the center of the diagram, and work your way out. Begin with the core purpose, then move out to your promise and then your personality and finally to your platforms. All of these work together to create a cohesive brand. So let's start with the core, the middle which is your brand purpose. It is your core business value. So these are reflected in your vision and your mission statements. They're the heart of your brand, and it's why you do what you do.

05:16

It's your why. You should also know who your target customer is at this point since your purpose should be aligned to their needs and resonate with them. 71% of consumers like to buy products from companies aligned to their values. So how you represent your brand's purpose can impact sales in that way. Let's say you started your business and you didn't sit down to write

a vision and mission statement. I didn't either. Plus people don't. I think we're just focused on bringing in the cash at first. But the good news is that it's not too late and you probably have a rough idea of your vision and mission anyway. You want to share these ideas on the about page of your website and let them show in all that you do. But more about that later.

06:00

The next circle or ripple in the pond is your promise. What you know or not every time you make a sale you have an applied promise to the buyer. It is, I'll give you the outcome you want in exchange for the price of the product. Whether they're paying to learn a new skill, purchasing a smoothie or just have their hair styled, they expect you to meet their expectations. And hopefully you'll exceed them. Making sure the promised outcome is achieved will submit your promise in the mind of your customer and help mold a positive brand experience for them.

06:34

So the next circle or the next step is your personality. Your Brand evokes emotion we don't buy on logic as much as we like to think we do. We justify a purchase with logic but there's a ton of research about how we buy an emotion. So when a customer makes an emotional connection with your brand, that strength strengthens the connection they have with you and will help you sell your products. Your brand personality is likely you and your own personality if you're a solopreneur or if you are the company founder.

07:06

Your brand personality determines who your customers are. And just a word if you're afraid of putting yourself out there listen up. People do business with you because they like you. There's no other brand that's exactly like you. There may be others that do similar jobs like photography or coaching or design or whatever your business is, but people want to connect with you. So try and overcome those fears of putting yourself out there and putting yourself on social media. There is nobody that's too young, too old, too thin, too, whatever. We are all connecting with people and searching for people who we connect with personally.

07:47

So your brand personality is also how you position your company in the competitive landscape. If you're part of a bigger, more established business, it's not a personal brand. Consider McDonald's and Panera Bread. They both sell coffee and food but they're different brand personalities attract two very different audiences.

08:07

Next, your brand has energy. Your Brand puts off a vibe. It might be laid back like a Home Depot, or could be adventurous like cheap. As the founder your brand's energy is often reflective of your own personality. Once again, be aware of your energy and harness it then communicate it is part of your brand. Not sure what your energy is like, that's one of those tough ones to assess yourself. Ask your friends who know you well or ask your family. They can tell you what your personality is all about and how it's unique.

08:39

The next ring of our brand is your platforms. Number four, your platforms are the touch points of your brand. It's your logo or website but also your voicemail message, your staff, the tone of your voice you use in your marketing. This is the touch point for your mission and vision. Everything from your wise statement from your core circle number one that we talked about earlier in the episode to your promise from circle number two to your personality from circle number three.

09:07

This is the place where they all come together and meet the customer. These are the things that people can see, hear, touch or even smell. I'm thinking of a store like Bath and Bodyworks here. It's social media, your website, your logo, voicemail email signature store location, your packaging, the tone of your voice and your emails, your voicemails and your marketing. It's all the ways you reach out and touch your prospective customers. So how do you know if you have a really good, powerful, influential brand or if you have a wimpy brand? Creating a strong brand is very doable, but not necessarily easy, especially when you're doing it on your own business. What's the saying a jar can't read its own label.

09:49

So here's some ways to distinguish a strong brand from a wimpy brand. Now, I don't want to offend anyone here, I just want to contrast where you want to be with or you might be. Trust me, branding requires ongoing effort. Very few people score 100% here, almost nobody actually, myself included. These should help you determine if you have a problem with any part of your brand and how to fix it. My goal here is that you'll find at least one area where your brand can be improved and that you would implement those changes this week.

10:23

So the first component of a strong brand is brand identity. It's a strong brand that projects a clear and distinctive identity that sets it apart from competitors. Think about corporations that do the branding really well like Disney Starbucks or Apple. Look at how they're different from their competitors. You'll notice that they have a distinctive identity that sets them apart. You may think that Disney creates movies but those movies are adding to their brand with the stories they build and the connections they create at an early age. Pretty clever, huh? Now a wimpy brand blends in with the crowd and fails to stand out. The wimpy brand tries to look like other people or looks a lot like the popular templates on Canva, maybe? You know what I'm talking about right?

11:08

Number two, fans. A strong brand cultivates a loyal fan base with customers who feel emotionally connected. They would trust the brand and advocate for it. You know the people who always like everything you post on social media. Those are your fans and those are your people, the better you can get to know them by the way, the stronger you can make your brand. A wimpy brand struggles to create a loyal customer base with customers who have little attachment or affinity toward the brand at all. Think of a commodity business here. Think about a local farmers market for instance, very few people selling produce have a distinct brand and

most compete on price. That means for them they need to stay at the lowest price. And unfortunately for them, it's a race to the bottom.

11:52

Number three is consistency. A strong brand is consistent with their messaging branding elements such as their logo and business card and voice across all the touchpoints of email, social media and blogging. A Wimpy brand is inconsistent with messaging visual elements and customer experiences that vary and may be confusing and create a deluded brand perception. In marketing, a confused mind doesn't buy. So having consistency is really important in your brand.

12:24

Number four is market position. A strong brand carves out a distinct position in the market in a way that resonates with their ideal customer. Starbucks, for example, is positioned as a premium brand in the coffee industry, where customers can go in and relax and enjoy their coffee in a comfortable and welcoming environment. How do they do that with a cozy ambiance, comfortable seating and free Wi Fi and also good coffee by the way.

12:51

A Wimpy brand lacks a clear market position, struggles to differentiate itself and fails to capture the attention of its ideal customer. I was in a new coffee shop last week that opened in a neighborhood and I probably won't go back again. Their coffee was mediocre. The shop itself felt kind of like a garage and the staff was not warm and inviting. In fact they were a little bit rude. There's nothing to pull me back there. That would be the definition of a wimpy brand.

13:22

Number five is emotional connection. A strong brand creates a strong emotional bond with its customers and evokes positive emotions that go beyond the simple like transaction right. Friends when you are able to hug your clients you're on the right track. A Wimpy brand however, creates superficial connections and is easily swayed by competitors. The gas station I was in last week failed the emotional connection test, just sayin'.

13:50

Number six brand, perception. A strong brand has a positive reputable image and is seen as trustworthy. Think of a business that treated you with respect and stood by their product or service. That's the one he'll go back to right? A wimpy brand lacks credibility and struggles to gain the respect of customers. Nobody likes to do business with a company that they don't know, like or trust.

14:14

Number seven, storytelling. Strong brands craft compelling stories that convey the brand's value, purpose and vision.

A Wimpy brand falls short and storytelling lacks engagement with customers and fails to leave a good lasting impression.

14:31

Number eight, word of mouth. Strong brands have passionate advocates who promote indoors and share the brand with others. A wimpy brand, they lack a strong network and have to rely mainly on traditional marketing efforts such as paid ads.

14:46

Number nine, performance. A strong brand demonstrates strong performance, a higher market share and lots of growth due to factors like customer loyalty, differentiation and a great reputation. A Wimpy brand however, faces challenges in generating consistent revenue and growth. It's often overshadowed by competitors with a stronger brand message.

15:09

And number, memorable. A strong brand is memorable. You remember doing business with them or a way that they made you feel or something special about the product or service. Think about a restaurant you went to when you're on vacation. That was amazing. What about that restaurant made you remember it? A Wimpy brand however is forgettable. It blends in with all the other businesses out there and sadly, it may not survive.

15:34

Remember, building a strong brand takes time, strategic planning and consistent effort. My personal brand has been through many iterations over the years and it still has some work to do. You will not always get it right. But as renowned business coach John Maxwell says, "Sometimes you win, and sometimes you learn". By focusing on key branding elements, a wimpy brand can be transformed into a force to be reckoned with captivating its audience and thriving in the market.

16:04

So whether you fall in the strong brand category or the wimpy brand category, you're out there giving it your best shot. Find an area today where you want to work and do the thing. To help you out, I've created a free branding workbook that you can download at my weeklymarketing.com forward slash 11.

16:23

And that's it. Thanks for joining me today. As always, I appreciate your listening. I know there are many podcasts out there and I appreciate that you chose to listen to this one today. If you've liked what you're heard, I would be so honored if you could leave a review on your favorite podcast platform. Again, for the free download, go to my [weekly marketing.com](http://weeklymarketing.com) forward slash 11. And for anything we talked about today, you'll find it on that page. Until next time I'll be cheering you on. Bye for now.