

myweeklymarketing.

Janice Hostager: 0:04

I'm Janice Hostager. After three decades in the marketing business and many years of being an entrepreneur, I've learned a thing or two about marketing. Join me as we talk about marketing, small business and life in between. Welcome to My Weekly Marketing.

Janice Hostager: 0:28

Well, hey, hey. I want to welcome you to another episode of My Weekly Marketing. I am Janice Hostager and I am your girl for learning how to launch and grow your small business, and I'm so glad that you're here. There are a lot of moving pieces to marketing strategy, and you can count on me to be a straight shooter and give you the answers you want and the advice you need. Okay, so today we're going to talk about branding.

Janice Hostager: 0:53

Brand identity refers to the visual and emotional elements that make a brand unique and recognizable. Did you hear that I said visual and emotional? That's because a brand is so much deeper than a brand's logo, the color palette, the typography and its overall design. In fact, visual branding is the tip of the branding iceberg. If you listened to my last episode with Nadin Thompson about SEO, she talked about how sometimes people start with SEO before building a good website, and she compares it to putting frosting and a cherry on the cake before building the solid cake. That's what visual branding is like too. Logos and visual branding are the frosting of the cake, the part everyone sees, but in order to have something to frost, a quality cake or the brand itself needs to be creative first.

Janice Hostager: 1:44

Okay, for those of you who don't know me, I used to have a design agency. One of my most popular services was visual branding for new businesses. But before I ever put pen to paper or stylus to computer, as it were, I had a whole bunch of questions to ask clients about their brand. So a brand includes a few things. Number one recognition and differentiation. A strong brand stands out in a crowded market. A brand can literally make or break a business. A brand that doesn't stand out or get noticed is almost doomed. Having consistent visual elements and messaging throughout their products and promotions make it easier for customers to recognize and remember the brand that builds. Number two trust and credibility. When a brand consistently presents itself in a clear and appealing way, it builds trust and credibility among customers. If you see a brand who has a website that looks one way in marketing, like ads or social media that looks different, you don't know who they really are or who they represent, and you

might think that they're new and inexperienced. Probably not a good look, right. So it's important to be consistent so your customer will really trust who you are.

Janice Hostager: 3:01

Okay, number three emotional connection. I mentioned this earlier, but brand identity helps create an emotional connection with the audience by conveying the brand's values, personality and their mission. People know when they connect with a brand. You can feel it. I can tell you, when I go to harleydavidson.com I have zero emotional connection with the brand, and that's okay. I'm not their customer by any means. However, I love me some Starbucks. So right there, I'm drawn to everything from their colors, even the music they play in their coffee shops, and the smell of their coffee and their comfy chairs when I walk in the stores. That's my place and it's communicated through their branding. That's also because they have.

Janice Hostager: 3:46

Number four consistency across their channels. A well-defined brand identity ensures consistency across all the touch points, from marketing materials to customer service, to their website and to their products. They're consistent. This consistency reinforces the brand's message and really drives home the overall customer experience. And number five a brand also includes strategic direction. That's hard to say.

Janice Hostager: 4:13

A clear brand identity guides strategic decisions and helps align marketing with the brand's core values and their vision. Everything working together is because of cohesive brand strategy. This includes components like its mission, values and the personality. In a nutshell, a brand identity is how a brand presents itself to the world and how it wants to be perceived. Okay, so how do you develop the brand? To help you do this, I want to let you know I have a free branding bundle workbook that will walk you through all the questions you need to answer and develop to determine what your brand really is all about. You can find it at janicehostager.com/brand. Okay so there are essentially two types of brands personal and corporate. Personal brands focus on the unique values or skills or personality of a person. Think Martha Stewart, Marie Forleo or Brendon Burchard. Personal brands are often used to establish authority, build a professional network and create opportunities in fields like consulting, speaking or in the media. A corporate brand is well corporate, like Starbucks, Target, Nike, Wells Fargo, etc. Corporate brands aim to create a distinctive marketing presence. They want to just drive consumer loyalty and differentiate themselves from competitors through their business offerings and the corporate culture.

Janice Hostager: 5:41

Right when I had my design business, it was a corporate brand. It was called Papermark Marketing and Graphics. I thought when I named it it was the right thing to do, because it wasn't all me. I had a team that I worked with. Honestly, looking back, I was hiding behind my brand a little bit too. I didn't have the confidence at that point to put my name on a business and move forward with it. Years later, when it came time to launch my marketing strategy business, I went with a personal brand. The reason I did that was because I learned that people connect with a person more deeply than a corporate brand. Did I really want a personal brand? Not really. I was not the 20 year old-old I once was, and putting my face on a brand didn't excite me after I turned 50. But I went with a personal brand because I knew I had a wealth of knowledge from my unique background. I had expertise in thought leadership and a unique take on marketing. From my marketing and life experiences I knew that it's easier to build a trust with a person than a corporate brand, and I also knew that I was unique in what I offered and I could build a known and trusted business.

Janice Hostager: 6:50

Many people build a personal brand after a corporate brand. I'm thinking of Sara Blakely, who built Spanx, Elon Musk, Richard Branson, Jeff Bezos and Oprah. They all had successful businesses and careers before they launched their personal brand. You can even see how much more people gravitate to a personal account on Instagram. OWN, which is Oprah Winfrey's network, has 1.4 million followers on Instagram. Oprah herself has 22.6 million followers. The same is true with Magnolia of the Fixer Upper group. Magnolia has 5.7 million followers, but Joanna Gaines has 13.8 million followers. So again and again, people connect with other people. That's part of why the about page on websites is usually the second most visited page. Okay, enough about the whys.

Janice Hostager: 7:47

Let's dive into the step-by-step process of building a brand. These apply to personal brand or corporate brand. I divide them into four steps, or my four P's of branding. Number one, your purpose. Number two, your promise. Number three, your personality. And number four, your platforms. So when I have these written down, they are concentric circles. The center ring is your purpose, the next is your promise, then your personality and finally, the platforms. So let me go into each of these a little deeper. They're also in my free download too, by the way.

Janice Hostager: 8:23

Okay, your purpose. This is where you start. This is where you need to ask yourself the big questions what's your mission? What is your goal in starting your company? What's

the legacy you want to leave? Think about the role you have in the bigger world. It might be that you want to help parents capture the memories of their children through the power of photography, or help small businesses thrive through technology, or whatever it is that your big purpose is. So, for this part, I pull out the mission and vision statement that I created when I started my company. And if you didn't create one, no big deal, this is actually the perfect time to do it. Or maybe your focus has pivoted a little bit since you started your company. That would make this a great time to rework it.

Janice Hostager: 9:11

Okay, the next ring out from the core of your purpose is your promise. So the promise is the direct or implied promise that you make to your customer. It might be as simple as a good cup of coffee every time you come into my coffee shop, or I will make sure your lawn is the best looking lawn on the block. Keep in mind the stronger your promise, the more you have to gain, as long as you can deliver on that promise, and it should set you apart. In 1973, when FedEx, which was then Federal Express, first started, people could not get a package across the country overnight. So their promise and their tagline was when it absolutely positively has to be there overnight. And they delivered literally delivered. They became a market disruptor, and the rest is history. At this stage, that'd be the promise stage. It's also helpful to look at the marketplace and see how you're different, find that gap that's missing in the market and what customers want, and deliver on it.

Janice Hostager: 10:14

Okay, the next ring out is your personality your personality. For a personal brand may reflect your own personality. Gary Vee is not for everyone. He's a tough, cursing marketer, but that's what people who are looking for him are looking for. Right, he's got his own audience. For a corporate brand, it's about how you want your company to be perceived by your partners, the employees and especially the customers, of course. That's why understanding your ideal customer is so important.

Janice Hostager: 10:44

I also have a free download for determining your ideal customer too, and I'll put that link to that in the show notes. Your corporate personality should be a mix of what you want your company to reflect, plus what your customer is looking for. Your objective here is to also make your customer care. That includes your brand voice and your tone. In my branding download. I list 20 different attributes to help you distinguish and define your own brand personality Anything from casual to formal, organic to high-tech.

Janice Hostager: 11:20

trendy or traditional or somewhere in between. Sometimes people suggest archetypes to use here, and I actually don't love those because I think it limits your options. But either way, developing a brand personality is very important. And then the last circle around all of those other things, that's your platforms. These are the brand touch points we talked about earlier. Essentially, this is where your branding rubber meets the road, if you will. Once you've done the work in the other areas, this part gets so much easier.

Janice Hostager: 11:49

So once you determine your brand's purpose, promise and personality, it's time to use that look, sound and feel everywhere and on everything that has potential interaction with your customer. For example, if you decide your personality is fun, loving and energetic, then bright colors might be what you should consider on your website. Or, if it's high tech, maybe you should have a contemporary office or a store with lots of white space and fun contemporary furniture. Your platform should reflect your purpose, your promise and your personality. Any disconnect will confuse the customer, and a confused customer is far less likely to buy. Your messaging is also included in this category. Are you casual, then your email should reflect that. Use emojis and contractions. If you're formal, then everything you put out should have a more formal feel, totally appropriate for a medical facility or a bank, for example.

Janice Hostager: 12:48

Your brand personality also emerges in these platforms, from how you behave toward your customers, to the music you play when you put customers on hold, to the tone of your social media posts. I know when I do business with Trader Joe's they're going to chat with me and ask me how my day is going. Their store is casual and organic and that's part of their laid back, friendly and organic brand. It's a very different feel than when I go into Whole Foods, which is more formal, priced for higher earning demographic and is a lot more upscale feeling, although here in Austin we have their flagship store and it's worth a visit when you're in town. Very cool, anyway. That feeling, along with all the touch points, absolutely leaves an impression on the visitor.

Janice Hostager: 13:33

Okay, so where to begin with all of this? First of all, start with my branding download at janicehostager.com/brand. Number one research and strategy. Do some market research to understand your ideal customer. What do they like and what are they looking for? Then look at your competitors. Where's the gap in the marketplace? What do people get frustrated with from your competitors? A great way to see what that is is to check reviews that customers have left for your competitors. You can see what's

missing in their interaction with them and what they were unhappy with. That's also where the T is. Okay.

Janice Hostager: 14:09

Then next, develop a brand strategy based on what your customers want and need. Again, my free download will help with that. And then you want to move on to design and development. After you've figured out your purpose, your promise, your personality, then it's time to create the icing right and cherry, and that's design and development. So at this point, I suggest working with a designer or branding expert.

Janice Hostager: 14:37

Important note not all designers are branding experts. If they don't ask about your mission and vision or a lot of questions about what we talked about today in terms of branding, they may make a pretty logo, but they won't be on brand. It's better to pay a little more upfront for a good designer than to have to do a rebranding down the road, which is not only more expensive think about everything you'd have to reprint but also can confuse your customer. A good logo is not likely one you'll find on Canva, since it really won't be all that unique, or one you pay \$99 for online. There are a lot of excellent designers out there who can save you money in the long run and create a beautiful and functional brand for you.

Janice Hostager: 15:22

Next, in addition to your logo, have your designer create a style guide that you can share with others. Often they only include the visual branding guidelines. For example, they'll put the font in or the color numbers and ask them to put your mission, vision and your brand voice inside the guidelines too. Then you can share it with anyone who works with you or for you, on your team or has an outsourced vendor. Often this is included in the price of a logo, but if not, try and negotiate that into a package. Okay.

Janice Hostager: 15:55

So, in review, start with your brand's purpose, your promise, your personality and, finally, your brand's platforms, and that's it. Again. My branding guide should help you out with a lot of this. Thank you so much for joining me today. For more information about anything we talked about and links to the downloads I referenced, visit myweeklymarketing.com/72. You are the best for joining me. I wish I could sit down and have a conversation with you, but I really do invite your feedback. Send me a DM on Instagram at @Janice Hostager Marketing and, of course, I really appreciate a rating of

the podcast if you get a chance. It means the world to me. See you next time. Bye for now.