



**Design
Good**

Your Unstoppable Brand

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DESIGNGOOD.COM

Businesses are born. Brands are built.

THIS IS IT.

You're launching a new business or taking your existing business to the next level or in a new direction.

You're all in. You've got big plans. But the success of those plans doesn't just depend on what you sell.

In this age of distraction, the future of your business hinges on how well you tell your story and whether the people you want to be working with connect with you.

No matter how much work you put into your product or service, if no one understands what you do or why it's special, your business won't reach its full potential.

IN OTHER WORDS, IT ALL COMES DOWN TO BRANDING.

When you create a memorable, professional brand, you slash the time it takes for your business to grow and fulfill your vision. You attract more opportunities. The people you were born to work with find you easily and hire you enthusiastically.

A powerful brand communicates a lot about a business:

- *It makes you feel established, credible and professional.*
- *It lets your audience know instantly why you're different.*
- *It helps them self-identify as the right fit for you.*
- *And it gives them the confidence they need to hire you or buy from you.*



THE STAKES ARE HIGH BUT THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE ENDLESS

Did you know that half of new businesses aren't around five years later?

Great branding helps you leapfrog over a lot of growing pains and accelerate your success.

*WHERE YOUR BUSINESS IS A YEAR FROM
NOW DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU DO TODAY TO
BUILD OR CLARIFY YOUR BRAND AND SHARE
IT WITH THE WORLD.*

This is especially true for micro-businesses — those with 0-4 employees. More than 9 out of 10 U.S. businesses are micro-businesses, and more are launching all the time. Since micro-businesses serve very specific niche audiences, it's especially important that they're super-clear on what they offer and whom they serve.

All of this is why we do what we do. Nothing makes us happier than using what we know to help passionate people tell their stories and build the success they deserve.

And it's why we're sharing this free resource with you. We know that this branding stuff can seem overwhelming — especially when you'd rather focus on the heart of your business. So we wanted to give you some straight talk on where to start, what's really important and how to make the big choices about building your brand.

Creating a High-Vibe Business & Life

All of the tips you'll find here are grounded in our **High-Vibe Business Method**, which is based on our years of experience taking companies of all kinds through our proven branding process. Our advice is also based on what we know as a small business owners ourselves — and what we've learned from both successes and failures. Our founder and creative director, Kristin Moses, has built three businesses, so we have lots of insights to share from her many years as an entrepreneur.

This is the same advice we'd give you in a heart-to-heart talk over coffee. And we hope it's just the start of the conversation. Keep an eye on your inbox for a steady supply of branding tips and insights from our newsletter.



Kristin Moses

DesignGood Founder + Creative Director

BRAND FOUNDATIONS

You're probably eager to get a logo or a website, but first you have to get super-clear on what your business is all about. Take a little time to work through the questions below. They're similar to the ones we take DesignGood clients through during our **Brand Discovery Method**. We don't create a thing for them until we get the answers. That's because the answers to these questions set the stage for every aspect of your brand.

WHAT'S YOUR 'WHY'?

Why do you want to start this business? Or, if you're already in business, what keeps you going? Write down your "why" and remind yourself of it often. Keeping your "why" front and center will help you reach your goals. And it will help you make important decisions about your business and brand

Write about your "why" here:

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO
BE KNOWN FOR?

Complete this sentence: My business is the go-to source for:

Your business is more memorable when you're known for something really specific. Offering too many products or services sends a diluted message to your future or current audience. You also will exhaust yourself when you try to be all things to all clients. It's okay to try different things out and revise your offerings. But at the end of the day, people want to work with an expert. So always focus on where you can add the most value for your clients and customers and be realistic about what you can actually do. Once you become known for something, whether that's a product or a service, you can always add on to it.

Write about your expertise and experience here:

WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT?

What is unique about what you're doing or offering? What can you do that is above and beyond for your audience? (For example, for us at DesignGood, it's being true hand-holders as we guide clients through the branding experience.) Don't worry if you're providing the same service or product as other businesses. YOU can be the differentiator. If that's the case, branding becomes even more important. You need a strong, compelling brand and voice to show the world why you stand out among similar businesses.

Write about what makes you distinctive here:

WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

Where can you reach them? How do you speak with them in a way that really connects? Consider what you want people to think about when they think about your business. What feeling do you want them to have? What do you want them to associate with you? It's important to get a clear understanding of your audience now, because you'll need to be proactive about reaching out to them for the life of your business.

Write down some of the insights about your audience here:

WHERE DO YOU WANT YOUR BUSINESS TO BE IN FIVE YEARS?

What is the ultimate goal? How much do you want to make? How much do you want to work? How many people do you see working for you? Who or what would help you reach these benchmarks? We always like to design with the end in mind. You should do the same with your business.

Write about your vision for the future here:

What Your Brand Needs To Launch

BRANDING IS A BIG JOB, SO LET'S BREAK THINGS DOWN A LITTLE MORE.



**A LOT GOES INTO A GREAT BRAND.
SO WHERE DO YOU START?
THESE ARE THE THREE KEY AREAS.**

1 VISUAL BRANDING

Your visual brand introduces your customers to who you are and makes you stand out. It trains consumers to recognize you. Think about great brands like Apple, Warby Parker and Nike. You know exactly what colors are in their logo and what fonts or symbols they use, right?

Your visual brand includes your logo and tagline. It also encompasses your total visual identity — the colors, fonts, patterns, icons, photography and other elements that you'll use across all of your marketing collateral. Everything that makes you look and feel like you.

Creating your visual brand gets you super-clear on who you are as a company — and saves you from potential mistakes down the road. It also sets the tone for your future marketing projects.

It also communicates to your audience that you have taken the time, and made the effort, to invest in your brand. That builds their confidence that you're competent, professional and a great company to do business with. It validates who you are and what you do.

Your visual brand has to serve your needs as a company, now and into the future. It should be able to grow and progress with you over the years. That's why we suggest taking the time and the effort to do it right early on. Your visual brand is not something you want to change often after you put it out into the world. Consumers love consistency.

2 WEBSITE (ONLINE PRESENCE)

Your next priority should be setting up your online home. Every customer or client you'll ever have will see your website. It's your calling card to the world. Prospects will decide quickly (often in as little as 15 seconds) whether you're a legitimate, credible business they want to consider.

You can only put in so many hours. A well-designed website — one that makes it easy for prospective customers to buy from you or take other actions you want them to take — keeps your business growing even while you sleep.

If you're like many of our clients, your website is your business.

TODAY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE AN OFFICE OR A STOREFRONT. BUT THAT MAKES IT SUPER-IMPORTANT THAT YOU HAVE AN IMPRESSIVE WEBSITE THAT ALSO WORKS VERY WELL.

The days when you could gain an edge just by having any kind of website are long gone. Customers are more design-savvy now, and they're used to effortless and even enjoyable online experiences. Your website should have a cohesive look and feel. And it has to be responsive. It has to look as good on a mobile device as it does on a desktop computer.

If you're hiring out your website design, make sure you're getting mobile, tablet and desktop versions that all work effortlessly for site visitors.

SUCCESSFUL BRANDS ARE CONSISTENT BRANDS. THAT MEANS THE LOOK, FEEL AND TONE YOU ESTABLISH FOR YOUR WEBSITE SHOULD CARRY THROUGH TO YOUR OTHER MARKETING COLLATERAL.

With all the emphasis on social media marketing now, you might be wondering if you still need a website at all. You own your website. It can grow and evolve with you — it's a platform that's not going away.

And the bottom line is that even if someone discovers you through social media, they need to be directed back to your website to buy your product, hire you or find out more. An Instagram following alone does not make you money. You must have a way for people to buy what you're selling!

3

YOUR VOICE

Your brand is just as much what you say about yourself as it is how you look. Your brand is the words you use. It's how you tell your story, how you talk about your business and how you present your products and services.

At DesignGood, we believe that story/messaging and design are inseparable. We actually write before we even start to design.

CUSTOMERS WANT TO FEEL A CONNECTION WITH THE BRANDS THEY DO BUSINESS WITH. CLEAR, AUTHENTIC STORYTELLING AND MESSAGING BUILD THAT CONNECTION.

Telling a story through your website doesn't mean flooding your visitors with lots of text. It all comes down to making sure people come away from your site understanding the main thing you want them to know about you or your business. People are busy. They need digestible bits of information that quickly tell them who you are and how they can do business with you. If you're hiring a branding team for your website, look for one that knows how to combine words and visuals (like infographics) to tell your story and drive visitors to action.

By the way, you do have to ask site visitors directly (but nicely, and in a way that's true to your brand voice) to take the actions you want them to take. Your website should have friendly, direct instructions throughout on how to do things like sign up for your newsletter, contact you or buy your products. Think strategically and think about how to help your customers get what they need from your site.

If you're thinking "All of this sounds great. But I HATE writing about myself," know that you're not alone. It's not easy! Being so enmeshed in the details of your business can make it hard to tell your own story. So it's helpful to work with a branding team that can give you a hand with copywriting. (At DesignGood, we write about 90 percent of our clients' copy — with lots of input from them to develop their unique brand voice.)

Attracting Your Audience & Maintaining a Strong Brand

SO WHAT'S NEXT AFTER YOU SPEND THE TIME TO DEVELOP VISUAL BRANDING, WEBSITE AND MESSAGING?

You can't expect to put up a website and then just have people show up. You have to find ways to attract them to what you've built. That means setting up a plan to execute tasks like these on an ongoing basis.

Once you have your website established, you'll want to keep creating valuable, interesting content — such as blog posts or newsletter articles — that helps your target customers.

KEY STEPS TO AUDIENCE BUILDING

This accomplishes a couple of things. First, it builds your reputation as an expert. Second, it gives people a reason to keep interacting with you. When you share great content regularly, you stay at the top of customers' or prospects' minds. They remember that you're out there if they need you.

Is this sparking some ideas for content you could create? Jot them down here.

What valuable information and insights can you give your audience that would keep them engaged?

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Is this sparking some ideas for content you could create? Jot them down here.

What valuable information and insights can you give your audience? What would keep them coming back?

Your useful content is only the start, though. You also have to attract your audience to this content. You can't expect them to keep checking your website to see if you've posted anything new.

Instead, it's a lot more effective to build your email list so that you can send this valuable info directly to them. Have a few email templates in your arsenal so you can send out different types of communication, such as blog posts, announcements and specials/sales. When you have these templates and you know how to use them, you're more likely to send regular emails.

Sharing your email address with a business is a pretty big deal, so give people an incentive. That incentive could be that they'll get your awesome newsletter articles right in their inbox. Or it could be a special discount, an ebook or a lead magnet. A lead magnet is a term for free tool or guide your audience can download and use immediately in exchange for sharing their email.

What could you offer site visitors in return for sharing their email with you?

Of course, you'll also want to also share your valuable content on social media. Until you know exactly where your audience lives on social media, and what content they find interesting, it's important to test what gives you the greatest exposure and engagement.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGES FAST, AND SO DO THE BEST PRACTICES FOR SUCCEEDING THERE. BUT THERE ARE SOME CONSTANTS:

- *Your social media content should have the same look and voice as your website. Remember, your brand should be consistent all the places that people encounter it.*
- *You don't have to be on every single network. Focus on the social channels your customers use. For example, Pinterest and Instagram are great fits for companies that sell products.*
- *Post content your desired customers can use or that they'd enjoy. If you don't think it is valuable, neither will they. Create and post content you would like to read, see and share.*

To manage all these moving parts, you need an editorial and social media calendar. You want a clear map at least six months out of what content you'll create (topics), when you'll send emails and when you'll post or promote on social media. Your calendar can even include social media advertising and promotions like Facebook Ads or Instagram shopping tools.

THIS TASK DOES NOT HAVE TO FEEL OVERWHELMING. YOU CAN USE SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS GOOGLE CALENDAR OR A PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOL LIKE ASANA.

A GREAT CALENDAR SYSTEM HELPS YOU:

- *Communicate with just the right frequency. You're not annoying your audience but also not letting them forget about you.*
- *Create the right mix of content.*
- *Ensure messages get shared on all your key channels. For example, a promotion mentioned in your email newsletter can also go on social media.*
- *Plan content to maximize your business's key times (the holidays, back-to-school, etc.).*

Jot down some important times of year for your business here. For example, when are customers most likely to decide to buy from you or hire you?

MORE TOOLS TO CONSIDER

What else do you need to maintain a brand that maximizes your success? The answer depends on your needs and goals. And it's an answer that can change over time as your business grows and evolves.

OUTREACH TOOLS

DIGITAL BROCHURES AND PRESS KITS.

Beyond your email list and social media, you'll also want to do some grassroots promotion and outreach for your brand. This means getting your business in front of the media outlets or individuals that influence the people you want to work with. Start by identifying the key influencers for your target customers. Think about how to build authentic connections with them on social media. We also typically suggest that our clients create a digital brochure or press kit that they can attach when they are contacting influencers, publications, or partners via email. This is your chance to be creative and bold! Journalists and bloggers are looking for great content to write about, and podcasts are looking for subject matter experts to share guidance with their audiences. Where can you speak, what workshops can you teach at, and what events can you be a part of?

Make a list here of ideas for connecting with people who you might share the same audience as you.

PITCH/CONVERSATION DECKS.

These sales tools go into greater depth on your business, your offerings and what it's like to work with you. You can send a deck or presentation to anyone who has requested more information about your business. This is a great way to provide more information and aid in ensuring a sale, especially after a potential customer has expressed interest.

DIGITAL GIVEAWAYS/LEAD MAGNETS.

As we mentioned before, these are valuable resources in building your email list. They are free tool that you offer website visitors in exchange for providing their email addresses. We can design your lead magnet or digital giveaway and help with writing as needed. We will assist in setting up the automation using tools like MailChimp.

How will you connect with your audience on an ongoing basis?

That's a lot! Who can help?

WE'VE SHOWN YOU HOW A MEMORABLE, CUSTOMIZED BRAND DRIVES THE SUCCESS OF YOUR COMPANY.

But we know we also just hit you with a pretty big to-do list for building your brand. That's one of the reasons we recommend that you don't try to DIY all of this. Hire professionals to work on your brand, craft your story and help identify your audience, while you focus on what you do best. A great studio or agency will work with you and consider your ideas. It can be a fun, collaborative effort.

GET HELP BUILDING YOUR BRAND AND BUSINESS

The best way to find expert help is getting a referral from a friend. (At DesignGood, about 80 percent of our business is referrals.)

Coming up empty on recommendations? Study up on some of the brands that you like and find out who did their work. You can also research branding teams that specialize in your industry, focus on businesses your size or that cater to a specific need you have.

We also recommended that experience be one of your top criteria when you're scouting out prospects. Yes, experienced professionals cost more, but it really is true: You get what you pay for. You won't regret the money you spend to get experienced help.

Even if you are creative (which most entrepreneurs are), assistance from experts who have done this branding thing many times over is vital. You get to tap into a skill set outside of your own. And since you've probably been eating, breathing and sleeping your business, there's a lot of value in getting a fresh, outside perspective.

INTERVIEW BEFORE YOU HIRE

The best way to tell if a branding team is a good fit for you is to schedule a consultation call. You'll want to ask questions like these...

- *Do you have expertise with projects like mine?*
- *Have you worked with businesses like mine in the past?*
- *What is your process like?*
- *Tell me about the results your clients experience after they work with you.*
- *Tell me about some of your most successful projects and what made them succeed.*
- *Do they offer packaged services that meet your needs?*
- *How experienced are they with projects like yours?*
- *What expertise do they have on staff (writing, designing, programming, etc.)? When you work with a team that can handle different parts of your project, you'll have a more consistent brand than if you hire each job out separately. Your brand is stronger when it has a unified look and feel.*
- *If you need your website written as well as designed, do they have a copywriter on staff?*

- *What staff members will you be working with? Who will be your direct contact? Whom do you have access to?*
- *How do they handle scheduling and set turnaround times and deadlines?*
- *How will team members stay in touch with you during the project? How will you get updates on the status and scheduling of your project?*
- *How will they ensure that your project comes in on time and on budget? Experienced branding experts should be able to tell you about their processes.*

Besides all the information you gather, you also have to pay attention to your gut instinct. You'll be interacting with a lot with the people who help you brand your business —make sure they're people you'll like spending time with.

WAYS YOUR BRAND CAN GET OFF TRACK

We want to share some common missteps we see businesses making so that you can avoid them.

LAUNCHING WITH THE “BARE MINIMUM” WITH THE PLAN TO DO PROFESSIONAL BRANDING LATER.

The problem with this strategy is that your old, unpolished brand has already been out there in the world, affecting what people think of you. If a prospective customer visits your site once and isn't impressed, it's not likely he or she will return later to see if you've improved it.

ASKING A BRANDING TEAM JUST TO “FIX” THE WEBSITE YOU HAVE.

If your current website isn't getting results for you, we're willing to bet that it's not just a superficial problem. The site was probably designed without a deep understanding of who you are as a business and how to shape your message to reach your target customers. A “quick fix” to spiff up your site wouldn't solve its real issues. We always advise not spending money on a bandage. Wait until you have the budget to create a site that will be most beneficial to your business.

HIRING A DESIGNER WHO'S JUST STARTING OUT AND SUPER-AFFORDABLE (FOR A REASON).

Maybe your nephew or your neighbor's kid just got out of design school, so you're figuring they could just take care of what you need. You could go this route, but it would be a far different experience than working with experienced branding pros — with far different results. Your brand is so much more than design. Branding professionals — the good ones, at least — consider many things when creating your brand: your goals, your audience, your competition, what drives you, what success looks like for your business. Trust us that it's way better to do your brand right the first time than to plan on changing it later.

WORKING WITH A COMPANY THAT ONLY DOES WEB DEVELOPMENT.

There is also a huge difference between hiring a programmer (or development company) vs. a branding team to create your website. We have seen this so many times. Businesses that go this route are left with a templated website that says nothing about who they are. There's no brand, no compelling story, no constancy and design that's underwhelming, to say the least. Inevitably, they have to come to a firm like ours down the road to redo their site. Don't get us wrong: We love developers, and we clearly have a few of them on our team. But great branding takes just that: a team! Look for a team with a mix of talents, including design, storytelling, organization, project management and programming.

Get in touch!

ONE LAST PEP TALK

WE LOVE PEOPLE LIKE YOU:

People who are ready to go big with their businesses. People who are determined to bring something great into the world.

WE UNDERSTAND THE DRIVE THAT KEEPS YOU GOING, AND WE KNOW HOW MUCH YOUR VISION OF SUCCESS MEANS TO YOU.

It's not an easy path. You're going to be ignored and turned down sometimes. Not everyone is going to get what's so cool about what you're doing. Some days are straight up going to suck. But all that said, we believe you're on the most rewarding

path in the world. And creating a beautiful, lasting brand is the most powerful investment you can make in your business. We believe with all our hearts that if you connect with the people you want to serve and you build a brand that speaks to their needs, then they will find you.

We're excited for you! And we'd love to help you build the compelling brand your business deserves. Just *get in touch* with us and we'll set up a time to talk.

SCHEDULE
A CALL WITH
KRISTIN