

Why branding is so important

By [Kirsti Buick](#), issued by [Academy of Digital Arts](#)

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With strategies to fine-tune, employees to hire and that ever-growing stack of bills to pay, branding your new business may be pretty low on your list of priorities.



But should it be?

“By not paying attention to creating a brand and creating an awareness around that brand, you’re unknowingly depriving your business of the highest potential it can reach,” New York-based president of Cosmique Global and member of the Forbes Coaches council, [Anjali Chugh](#), says.

“You’re nurturing a business that could gain a stronger foothold in the market, if only it had the backing of a registered and popular brand.”

[Scoot Godson](#), founder of New York creative agency StrawberryFrog, believes brands are more important now than at any time in the past 100 years.

“Brands are psychology and science brought together as a promise mark as opposed to a trademark,” he says.

“Products have life cycles. Brands outlive products. Brands convey a uniform quality, credibility and experience. Brands are valuable. Many companies put the value of their brand on their balance sheet.”

To put things into simpler, less jargon-heavy terms, consider this: what’s the first thing that comes to mind when you think of McDonald’s? More often than not, it’s those world-famous golden arches. And what pops into your head if someone says, “Just do it”? Nike’s ubiquitous, simple tick.

First thing’s first: what exactly is branding?

According founder and president of [LogoYes.com](#) [John Williams](#), your brand is your promise to your customer. It’s who you are.

“It tells them what they can expect from your products and services, and it differentiates your offering from your competitors’. Your brand is derived from who you are, who you want to be and who people perceive you to be.”

It sounds simple enough, but it's often a tough thing to define. If you're having trouble getting to the nitty gritty, author of Consumer Behaviour for Dummies, Laura Lake, [suggests](#) using this simple guideline as a starting point:

If your brand could speak, it would say:

"I am

I exist because

If you relate to who I am and why I exist you might like me, you can buy me, and you can tell others about me."

Right, easy enough. But what's so great about branding?

It helps you connect to your customers – emotionally

When customers think of your business, it's unlikely they're going to be recalling your mission statement, no matter how snappy it is.

Rather, it's the emotions your branding has been designed to evoke. The happy-golucky McDonald's branding was created to make customers feel carefree, to evoke fun and enjoyment. With Nike, it's confidence and determination.

CEO of communications agency Citizen Relations, [Jim Joseph](#) offers the perfect example: laundry detergent.

What influences your decision when you buy one? "Virtually every product on the market offers the same core benefits," he says. "It's hard to tell one product apart from another on a rational basis."

So how do you pick one? "I'm sure you are picking out features, but it's really the brands you are choosing," Joseph adds. "You choose one brand over another because you trust it, you're familiar with it, you've relied on it for years or it's been highly recommended by someone you trust."

"These are all emotional benefits. It's the emotional benefits that have turned those products into brands. You have relationships with brands, not with products."

It boosts recognition

People tend to do business with companies they are familiar with, according to US marketing firm [Strategy](#).

If your branding is easily recognisable and used consistently, it can help people feel more at ease purchasing your products or services. Clear branding also sets you apart from your competitors.

It makes referrals more likely

People love talking about things they like. If folks have a positive experience with you and your brand, they're far more likely to refer you to their friends – a simple Facebook review or tag on Twitter will do wonders for customer loyalty.

It gives employees focus – and pride

A clear brand strategy give employees direction. By knowing what customers expect from the company, they'll know exactly what the company expects of them. When an employee agrees with what a brand stands for, they'll be more satisfied with their job and proud of the work they do, according to branding blogger, [Hubert Dwight](#).

"They'll feel proud to tell their friends where they work, will feel more confident having your name on their CV, and have a

greater sense of belonging (which in turn will make them less likely to be tempted away by your competitors!),” he adds.

It adds value

As [Godson](#) touches on, your branding can actually become an asset – some companies put the value of their brand on their balance sheet.

If you weren't convinced before, this might sway you:

According to [Wurkhouse](#), the Coca-Cola brand name alone was worth a staggering \$67 million (R802 million) – more than 54% of the company's stock market value.

Thought so!

Need to get cracking creating your own, spectacular branding? Friends of Design can help – check out these [full-time](#), [part-time](#), [online](#) and [corporate](#) courses for all the design skills you'll need to get the ball rolling.

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