



## 7 Branding Tips for Small Businesses

When people think of a “brand” they often think of the Nike Swoosh or the Classic Coca Cola bottle (pictured here, courtesy of The Coca Cola Company). But it takes time and money to build a brand to that level. Small businesses just getting started do not generally have the means to advertise as a way of building their brand? When the small business first starts out there is usually little to no funds in their “advertising budget.” What’s that, right? But you don’t have to have a large budget or even any additional money allocated for advertising and brand building over and above what you already need to be spending for essential supplies. In fact, you can start establishing your brand identity during your business building phase using only the money necessary to get your business up off the ground.



What follows are seven rather simple steps to begin establishing your image and building your brand using nothing more than the money you would otherwise spend to get your business going! And even if you have already been in business for a while, you can still use these steps to incorporate a new brand into your business scheme without costing much more than you are already spending for supplies.

Before I begin though, you need to keep in mind that consistency is of the utmost importance when trying to establish your identity and build your brand. One of the most common mistakes made by those that have smaller budgets for starting their businesses, is to change things over and over again or to have their business cards look different than their fax coversheets which is different from their stationary, and so on. You get the picture. By doing so, you are never establishing a solid identity and your identity is your brand. That is why it is so important to take time to develop and create an image you want to portray before bringing your business into the mainstream. Pick the theme, logo and colors you like and stick with them.

### 1. CREATE A LOGO

A good first step in establishing your brand is to create a logo. Although this is not necessary early in your business, the sooner you can create a logo, the easier it is to incorporate that logo into your brand. You may choose to create a logo yourself, or hire a graphic designer to create one for you. Having a logo professionally designed is optional, but it is better to have no logo at all than to have a logo that makes you look like an amateur. **Mayne Design will work with you to make sure your logo is exactly what you want to represent your brand.**

## **2. BUSINESS CARDS**

Whether you choose to create a logo now or later, you need to have business cards as soon as you get your business started. A serious mistake made by many people just getting their business started is to print their own business cards. This says, "I'm new and inexperienced" and is certainly not the image you want to portray when creating your brand; especially when there are graphic design companies, **such as Mayne Design**, that can produce a professional looking business cards for very little money. Remember, both your identity and the image you portray are your brand.

## **3. FONT STYLE AND COLOR**

When you are building your brand, it is imperative that choose the right font style. You want to choose a font that easy to read, not too fancy, fits well with your logo and most importantly, is easy to reproduce. You want to choose a font that is available to you in your word documents on your own computer. Remember, consistency is key to branding! Choose a font that you know you like and don't settle for a font that is just OK when you look at it. Also, don't get too fancy and stay away from fonts that have a lot of curvature to them or are very small and/or very "thin."

**Mayne Design can help you to find the perfect font for your logo. We have hundreds from which to choose- we'll find the right one for you!**

## **4. STATIONARY AND LABELS**

Can you say Consistency? Repetition works! When people see the same thing over and over, it sticks and that is how your brand is born! Whatever design and fonts you choose for your business cards, the same design and fonts and colors should be used on your letterhead, fax cover sheets, labels and even your bank checks. **Mayne Design provides design services for all of these products, and much more!**

## **5. CHOOSE YOUR THEME**

You should practice creating your identity through sampling different styles, colors and tastes before spending a lot of money on your business supplies. This is something you can do with or without having already created a logo. The brand you want to build will help you establish company credibility and stimulate customer trust. You need to make emotional connections with the audience and your brand is your first way to attempt to do so. Extremely important in building your brand, whether you're an attorney starting your own firm or a handyman starting your own construction company is to choose a theme that says "This is who I really am." You want to choose a theme that is welcoming and compliments the image you are trying to portray. **Mayne Design will work with you to establish a theme that truly reflects your company's personality.**

## 6. SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social networking is another way to build your brand and the best part about it is that it's FREE. As far as social networks goes, I find that [Facebook](#), although better than [MySpace](#), is a lot less business friendly than [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Both of these networks are widely accepted by the business world, are easy to set up a profile on and are less often used just to "chat with friends." I find that LinkedIn has remained the most profession all of these more common and mainstream social networks. To help build your brand, you should open up a profile and start connecting with colleagues you know from previous work experiences including law school. Get your resume up there and your bio and start to ask previous employers, managers, and fellow professional colleagues to give you a written recommendation.

When you create your profile use the same easy to recreate font where you can on these sites as well. If you have options to change font colors use the same colors you use on your business cards and other stationary. **If you are unsure how to get started in Social Networking, Mayne Design will walk you through it, and make sure the networking sites are working for you!**

## 7. BUILD A WEBSITE

Again, consistency is key. Make sure your website follows the brand you are trying to portray with the colors, fonts, and most importantly, the look and feel of your brand. You want people to look at your website and instantly recognize the site as the same look from your printed materials. The more your customers see a consistent message from your marketing materials, the quicker they will recognize your company's brand, which in turn will help build trust. A professional relationship will soon follow. After all, the bottom line in building your business is building relationships.

Original Article Written by Renee C. Quinn, January 2010

**Mayne Design would love to meet with you to discuss your current brand and marketing strategy. We offer a FREE initial consultation to access your current marketing techniques. We will provide you with a professional assessment and graphic design estimates upon request. Let us help to create your company's brand – we provide Graphic Design with You in Mind.**

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