

Branding 101:

Learn to brand, before you sell



What is your brand's identity?

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- Choose your color palette
- Define your typography
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Welcome!

Hi!

I'm Ana, and I'm thrilled to welcome you to my guide on "[Branding 101: Learn to brand before you sell.](#)" Originally from Venezuela, I've spent the last decade living in the US, where I've honed my skills as a creative professional marketer. With a master's degree in international marketing and over seven years of industry experience, I decided to open my own consulting business, **Work Your Brand**, dedicated to empowering entrepreneurs to shape their brand and increase their reach and growth through a targeted digital marketing strategy.

With **Work Your Brand**, I've embarked on a mission to help business owners like you discover the power of a strong brand. In this guide, you'll learn about the branding foundations, starting with identifying your brand's purpose and values. Then, you'll learn how to create a mission and vision statement that explains what your brand wants to achieve. We'll also talk about showing your brand's personality in your bio and making a consistent look for your brand with colors, fonts, and logos. Each part of this guide gives you practical ideas and examples to guide you every step of the way.

My goal is simple: to provide you with a roadmap to develop a strong and authentic brand that resonates with your target audience and sets you apart from the competition. By the end of this guide, you'll have the knowledge and confidence to create a brand that truly reflects your unique identity and attracts loyal customers.

Here's to your success!

Identify your purpose

Identifying your purpose is all about understanding the reason your business exists and the impact you aim to make. Ask yourself, why did I start my business? Who did I want to help? [Here are some tips:](#)

- **Reflect on Your Passion:** Think about what you're passionate about and why you started your business in the first place. Consider the problems or challenges you want to address and the positive change you want to bring about.
- **Identify Customer Needs:** Consider the needs and pain points of your target audience. What problems are they facing, and how can your products or services help solve those problems? Understanding your customers' needs is essential for defining your purpose.
- **Define Your Unique Value Proposition:** What sets your business apart from others in the market? Identify the unique value you offer to your customers or community. This could be in the form of innovative products, exceptional customer service, or a commitment to social responsibility.
- **Consider Your Impact:** Think about the broader impact your business has on society, the environment, or specific communities. How do you want to contribute positively to the world around you? Your purpose should align with your values and the positive impact you want to make.
- **Seek Feedback:** Talk to your customers, employees, and stakeholders to gain insights into how they perceive your business and the value it provides. Their feedback can help you refine and clarify your purpose.



Brand Values

Creating brand values involves defining the core principles and beliefs that guide your company's actions and decision-making processes. Here's a step-by-step process to help you create brand values:

- **Reflect on Personal Values:** Start by reflecting on your own personal values and beliefs. What principles are most important to you in life and business? Consider aspects such as honesty, integrity, respect, transparency, innovation, and social responsibility.
- **Include your Business's Purpose:** In the last section we worked in the purpose, make sure to take into consideration when elaborating your values.
- **Consider your Target Audience:** Think about the values and preferences of your target audience. What matters most to them, and what values do they prioritize in the brands they support? Understanding your audience's values can help you shape your brand values to resonate with them.
- **Look at Competitors and Industry Standards:** Research your competitors and industry standards to see what values are common within your sector. While you should differentiate your brand, it's also important to understand the norms and expectations of your industry.
- **Brainstorm with your Team:** If you have a team or co-founders, involve them in the process of defining your brand values. Hold brainstorming sessions to generate ideas and discuss the values that are most meaningful and relevant to your business.

BRAND VALUES EXAMPLE

INTEGRITY

We uphold the highest ethical standards in all our interactions and transactions, fostering trust and credibility with our customers, partners, and stakeholders.

INNOVATION

We embrace creativity and continuous improvement, driving innovation in our products, services, and processes to stay ahead of the curve and meet evolving customer needs.

CUSTOMER-CENTRIC

We prioritize the needs and preferences of our customers, delivering exceptional experiences and personalized solutions that exceed their expectations and build long-term relationships.

Mission Statement

WHAT IS A MISSION STATEMENT?

A mission statement is a short and clear statement that explains why the company exists, what it wants to achieve, and how it plans to help people or make the world a better place. It's like the heart of the organization, guiding everyone in the company towards common goals and values. Remember that the mission statement needs to **be aligned with your purpose and company values**. Below, you will find some tips to create one:

- **Be Concise and Specific:** A mission statement should be clear, concise, and specific. Avoid vague language and focus on articulating your purpose and values in a compelling way.
- **Focus on Impact:** Highlight the impact your business aims to make on its customers, employees, stakeholders, and society as a whole.
- **Inspire and Motivate:** A mission statement should inspire and motivate both internal stakeholders (employees, partners) and external stakeholders (customers, investors).

Example of a mission statement: "Our mission is to empower individuals to live healthier lives by providing access to nutritious and delicious food options, promoting sustainability, and fostering community engagement."

Vision Statement

WHAT IS A VISION STATEMENT?

A vision statement is a clear and simple description of where an organization wants to go in the future. It paints a picture of the company's ultimate goals and dreams, providing direction and inspiration for growth. Think of it as a guiding star that helps everyone in the organization—employees, stakeholders, and partners—work together toward a shared future.

How to Write a Vision Statement:

- **Envision your Future:** Imagine what success looks like for your business in the long term. What goals do you aspire to achieve?
- **Think Big and Bold:** A vision statement should be ambitious and aspirational. Don't be afraid to dream big and articulate a bold vision for the future of your business.
- **Be Forward-Thinking:** Consider emerging trends, technologies, and market shifts that may impact your industry and shape your future direction.
- **Communicate your Values:** Your vision statement should reflect your brand's values and priorities, serving as a guiding light for your strategic decision-making.
- **Make It Memorable:** Craft a vision statement that is memorable, impactful, and evocative. It should resonate with both internal and external stakeholders and inspire them to rally behind your cause.

Example of a vision statement: "Our vision is to create a world where every individual has access to affordable, high-quality education, regardless of their background or circumstances. Through innovation, collaboration, and dedication, we aim to transform lives and empower future generations to reach their full potential."

Write your bio: Who are you?

A **bio**, short for biography, is a brief summary that provides an overview of who you are, including professional background, skills, accomplishments, and personal interests. This information is used on websites, social media profiles, or professional platforms to introduce you to others. A bio helps people understand who you are, what you do, and what you stand for.

Writing a compelling bio or "About Me" page involves presenting yourself in a way that is authentic, engaging, and informative.

Step-by-step guide to craft your bio:

- **Start with a Strong Opening**
 - **Introduce Yourself:** Begin with your name and a brief introduction. Mention your profession and any key details that define who you are.
 - **Hook:** Use an interesting fact or a compelling statement to grab attention.
- **Tell Your Story**
 - **Background:** Share a bit about your background. Where are you from? What are your qualifications or key experiences?
 - **Journey:** Talk about your personal and professional journey. What led you here? Highlight significant milestones.
- **Highlight Your Expertise**
 - **Skills and Experience:** Detail your skills, areas of expertise, and any notable accomplishments.
 - **Impact:** Explain the impact of your work. How have you helped others or made a difference in your field?
- **Share Your Values and Mission**
 - **Values:** Include your brand values. Tell your audience what you stand for.
 - **Mission:** Include your mission statement. Let your audience know what and how you will help them through your services/product.
- **Include Personal Touches**
 - **Interests and Hobbies:** Share some personal interests or hobbies to make your bio more relatable and human.

- **Fun Facts:** Add a couple of fun facts to give readers a fuller picture of who you are.
- **Call to Action**
 - **Engagement:** Encourage readers to connect with you. Include links to your landing page or a way to contact you.

How to write an effective Instagram bio?

- **First line:** your name + what you do
 - Example: Valeria Smith | Mental Health Coach
- **Second line:** how can you help them
 - I help you navigate life's challenges & build resilience
- **Third line:** show your how: value or results
 - Develop the tools you need to manage anxiety & stress
- **Fourth line:** clear call to action
 - Get started on your journey to healing! Click the link below to learn more.

Your Instagram bio should be aligned to your landing page. Also, keep in mind that your profile isn't static; it changes depending on the stage you're in. You can modify or update it as you need.

Brand with purpose, connect with passion

Develop your Brand Brief

Now that we've established your brand's foundation with your values, mission, and vision, it's time to translate that into a powerful tool: **your brand brief**.

Your brand brief is the foundation upon which your entire brand identity will be built. It's a crucial document that acts as a communication bridge between you and anyone involved in shaping your brand - designers, marketers, or even future team members.

Here's a detailed step-by-step process of the key elements your brand brief should include:

- **Company Information:** Briefly introduce your business name and a concise elevator pitch of what you do. Include your mission statement, your product/service offerings, and your slogan. This captures the core purpose of your business and why you exist.
 - **Elevator pitch example:** Valeria Smith Mental Health Coaching empowers individuals struggling with anxiety and overwhelm to develop lasting resilience and build a calmer, happier life.
 - **Slogan example:** Caring Support for Your Mental Wellbeing
 - **TIP:** I would recommend to also include your brand story. How did you come up with your business? What made you open this business? How did you get here?
- **Target Audience:**
 - **Demographics:** Describe your ideal client in terms of age, gender, location, income level, etc.
 - **Psychographics:** Dig deeper into their interests, values, lifestyle choices, and **challenges**. What **motivates** them? What are their **pain points**?
 - **Online Behavior:** Where does your audience spend their time online? What social media platforms do they frequent? How do they typically search for information related to your services?

- **Example:** "Our ideal client is a busy professional, aged 28-42, living in New York. They value personal growth, prioritize their well-being, but often feel overwhelmed and stressed due to work demands. They are active on social media, particularly Instagram, and often search for solutions to manage anxiety and improve their mental health."
- **Brand Personality:** Imagine your brand as a person. What personality traits would they embody? How do you want to make people feel with your brand? What does my brand look like?
 - **Common options:** Trustworthy, compassionate, empowering, approachable, authentic.
 - **Example:** "Valeria Smith Mental Health Coaching is a supportive friend, a reliable guide, and a cheerleader for your mental well-being journey. We are approachable and down-to-earth."
- **Brand Voice:** Establish the tone and style you'll use in all your communication – website copy, social media posts, email marketing, etc.
 - **Options:** Conversational, professional, authoritative, empathetic, friendly.
 - **Example:** "Our brand voice is warm, supportive, and encouraging. We use clear and concise language with a touch of empathy to connect with our audience on a personal level."
- **Messaging:** Define the key messages you want your brand to communicate to your audience. These messages should be clear, concise, and benefit-driven. Consider what makes your services unique and how they can solve your ideal client's problems.
 - **Example:** "You don't have to navigate anxiety and overwhelm alone. Valeria Smith Mental Health Coaching provides personalized tools and strategies to help you build lasting resilience and reclaim your inner calm."
- **Differentiation & Competition:** It is important that you are clear on how you are different from your competitors. What do you offer that they don't? Below, you can find some questions to write your Unique selling proposition (USP).
 - Who are my main competitors? (Competitors)
 - What are their strengths and weaknesses? (Competitor Analysis)
 - What makes my business unique and how can I differentiate myself in the market? (Differentiation)

**HERE, YOU WILL
FIND A
QUESTIONNAIRE
TO WORK ON YOUR
BRAND BRIEF**

Choose your color palette

Before we dig in into our next section, I want to tell you that your brand brief is the document that you would share with a graphic designer to work on the look and feel of your brand. That information helps the designer to understand the concept of your brand and what you want to communicate, which is why is really important to take the time to do it correctly.

With that being said, let's start talking colors! In the following sections, we will start working on the visual aspects of your brand. I always recommend to have an idea of how you want your brand to look in terms of colors and shapes, and, if possible, work with a graphic designer or a visual communicator to help you bring that vision to life. If that is not a possibility right now, don't you worry! I will give you tools to work on it by yourself. So pay attention.

The color palette you choose should convey a specific message, emotion, or feeling to your audience. The colors will help keep your audience engaged with your content and represent your personal brand effectively.

When selecting colors, always consider your audience rather than your personal preferences. This is crucial because we aim to captivate your audience, motivate them to follow you, interact with you, and ultimately make purchases.

At this point, we already have a clear understanding of who is your audience, so let's use the **color psychology** to choose the colors that most align to your brand identity and message.

PRIMARY COLORS

- **Red:** Represents passion, energy, excitement, and can also evoke danger or urgency.
- **Yellow:** Represents optimism, happiness, creativity, and can also be associated with caution or intellect.
- **Blue:** Represents trust, calmness, peace, security, and can also feel cold or sterile. Different shades of blue can create distinct vibes. Light blue evokes calmness, while a deeper navy blue suggests authority and trust.

SECONDARY COLORS

- **Orange:** Represents enthusiasm, warmth, confidence, and can also be associated with energy or playfulness. A muted orange or terracotta could add a touch of energy and vibrancy.

CHOOSING YOUR COLORS

Start with a Base Color:

- Choose one color that represents the core of your brand. This will be your dominant color and used most frequently.
- Consider the psychology of color and brand values when selecting your base color

Select Accent Colors:

- Choose 2-3 secondary colors to complement your base color and add visual interest.
- These colors should harmonize with your base color and contribute to the overall brand message.

Once you have a few potential color palettes, test them out in mockups of your website, logo, and marketing materials. Ensure the colors are legible against different backgrounds.

Example: Mental Health Coach

- **Base Color:** Light Blue (represents calmness, trust)
- **Accent Color 1:** Green (represents growth, resilience)
- **Accent Color 2:** Yellow (represents optimism, a touch of energy)



- **Green:** Represents growth, harmony, balance, and nature. Lighter greens evoke feelings of new beginnings, while deeper greens suggest stability and growth.
- **Purple:** Represents luxury, wisdom, creativity, and can also be associated with mystery or royalty. A lighter lavender shade can feel calming and approachable, while a deeper purple can convey luxury and sophistication.

Also, we have **black**, being the absence of light. and **white**, being the presence of light. These shades could also be implemented into a brand's color palette, since they are helpful when creating balance and simplicity within the brand's identity.

COLORS TOOLS

If you are not working with a graphic designer, there are online tools and resources available to help you choose a harmonious color palette. Below you can find a few options:

- **Adobe Color**
- **Coolors**
- **Design Seeds:** provides color palettes inspired by nature and everyday objects. This is one is more for inspiration.

Define your typography

Typography is a crucial element of your brand identity, shaping how your audience perceives your message. Here's a guide to help you select the ideal fonts:

FONT CATEGORIES

There are two main font categories:

- **Serif fonts:** These have small decorative strokes at the end of the characters. They are often seen as more traditional and formal.
 - Times New Roman
 - Garamond
- **Sans-serif fonts:** These lack the decorative strokes and have a cleaner, more modern look (e.g., Arial, Helvetica).
 - Arial
 - Helvetica

CHOOSE A FONT FAMILY

A font family includes a range of styles (regular, bold, italic) for a single typeface. This allows for variation while maintaining brand consistency.

- **Start with a Base Font:**
 - Select a primary font for headlines, and important text.
 - Consider readability and ensure it works well at different sizes.
- **Select an Accent Font:**
 - Choose a secondary font for smaller text or for adding visual contrast.
 - Ensure the two fonts complement each other and don't clash. I recommend working with only 2 fonts.

Design your logo

Your logo is a visual representation of your brand, which is why it's an essential part of your branding process. As a first step, I always recommend to develop the concept, whether you are working with a graphic designer or not. What do you want your logo to say? How can it seamlessly integrate with the other brand elements you've established (colors, fonts)? Answering these questions clarifies your vision, making it easier for a graphic designer to translate your brand essence into a logo that resonates with your target audience.

Read below to start your **step-by-step process**:

- **Brainstorm Ideas:** Think about visuals that represent your brand values.
 - Consider using metaphors or symbols related to your niche industry.
 - Sketch out some initial logo concepts to explore different directions.
- **Consider Design Style:**
 - **Modern & Minimalist:** Clean lines, geometric shapes, and a limited color palette can create a sophisticated and professional look.
 - **Friendly & Approachable:** Curved lines, softer shapes, and a brighter color scheme can evoke a sense of warmth and approachability.
 - **Handwritten or Lettering:** This style can feel personal and unique, but ensure legibility.
- **Include your Typography:** Consider using the fonts you've chosen for your brand typography in the logo design. You could incorporate your business' initials in a creative way or use the font to create a wordmark logo (just the business name).
- **Color Palette:** Use the colors from your brand palette to ensure consistency.

- **Simplicity is Key:** A strong logo should be easily recognizable and work well at various sizes (website, business cards, social media).
 - Avoid overly complex designs or too many elements.

AI LOGO CREATION TOOLS

Here are some AI logo creation tools you can explore for designing your logo

- **Tailor Brands**
 - This user-friendly platform utilizes AI to generate logo concepts based on your industry, brand name, and style preferences.
 - It offers a freemium model, allowing you to generate logo concepts for free, but you'll need to pay to download the final logo files.
- **LogoMakr**
 - This online logo maker uses AI to suggest logo templates and icons based on your keyword searches.
 - It offers a free plan with limited customization options, and paid plans with more features and higher resolution logo files.
- **The Logo Company**
 - This AI-powered platform offers a unique approach. You provide keywords and design preferences, and their AI generates several logo concepts.
 - You can then choose a favorite and have it refined by a professional designer for an additional fee.

AI logo creation tools offer a convenient and accessible way to generate logo ideas for your business. As previously mentioned, they might have limitations in terms of extensive customization and achieving a truly unique design. To ensure a logo that perfectly reflects your brand's identity and resonates with your target audience, consider using an AI tool for initial brainstorming, and then refine the chosen concept with a professional graphic designer. If you're interested in collaborating with a graphic designer, feel free to send me an email at ana@work-yourbrand.com. I have personal recommendations for amazing designers I've worked with in the past, and I'd be happy to connect you with them.

Create Your Brand Guidelines

Your brand guidelines are the roadmap that ensures a consistent and powerful presentation of your brand across all platforms, including collaborations with sponsors and external events. Here's a breakdown of the key elements to include:

- **Logo & Usage:**

- Logo Variations: Include your logo in its primary format (e.g., full color) and any secondary variations (e.g., black and white, single color).
- Clear Space: Define the minimum amount of clear space surrounding your logo to ensure its visibility on various backgrounds.
- Do's & Don'ts: Specify how your logo can and cannot be used. This might include restrictions on altering proportions, changing colors, or adding additional elements.

- **Color Palette:**

- Primary & Secondary Colors: Define your core brand colors with color codes (HEX, RGB, CMYK) for print and digital applications.
- Approved Color Palette: Provide a wider range of approved complementary colors that can be used for accents or specific campaigns, ensuring they stay within your brand's overall color scheme.
- Color Usage Examples: Consider including examples of how your color palette is used in different contexts (e.g., website design, marketing materials, social media graphics).

- **Typography:**

- Font Families: Choose and define two or three core fonts that reflect your brand personality (e.g., one for headlines, one for body text). Include font families, weights (regular, bold, italic) and when to use each variation.
- Font Hierarchy: Establish a clear hierarchy for your fonts. This specifies which font goes where (e.g., headlines, subheadings, body text) to ensure a consistent and visually appealing layout.

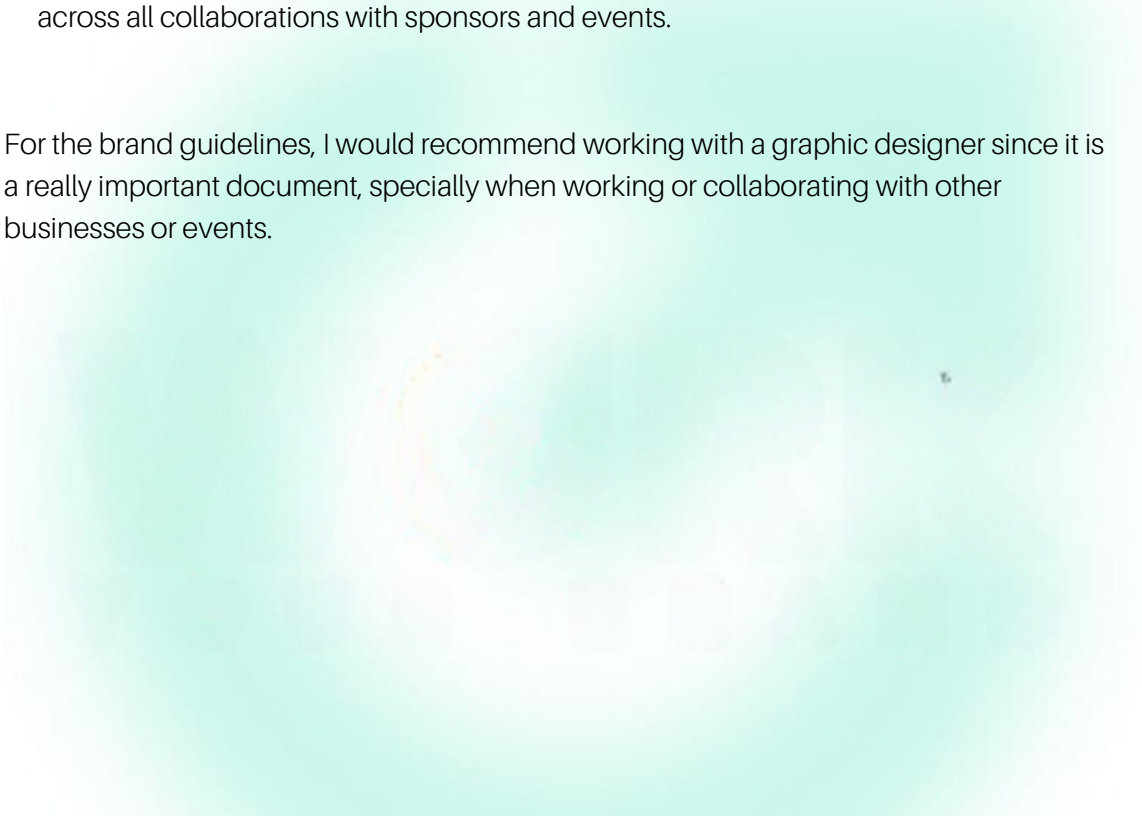
- **Imagery & Photography:**

- Image Style Guide: Define the style of imagery that aligns with your brand. This could be photography (candid, posed), illustrations (flat design, hand-drawn), or graphics (icons, shapes).
- Mood board: Consider including a mood board showcasing images that capture the desired aesthetic for your brand.
- Image Sourcing: Specify if you have a preferred stock photo agency or specific sources for imagery to maintain consistency.

- **Messaging & Voice:**

- Brand Voice: Clearly define your brand voice (e.g., friendly, professional, authoritative). This will guide the tone and style used in all brand communication
- Messaging Pillars: Outline the key messages you want to consistently convey across all collaborations with sponsors and events.

For the brand guidelines, I would recommend working with a graphic designer since it is a really important document, specially when working or collaborating with other businesses or events.



Be creative. Innovate. Thrive

You made it!

Congratulations on completing the guide—you've reached an important milestone in your journey! Your dedication and commitment to learning have transformed you into a brand master. You are ready to put all this knowledge into action and elevate your brand to new heights!

I want to express my sincere **THANK YOU** for choosing me as your guide. I really appreciate your trust in my expertise, and I'm honored to have had the opportunity to assist you in growing your business.

If you ever find yourself in need of additional support, remember that I offer consulting services and social media and landing page audits. With my consulting service, we'll work together on an ongoing basis to align your business goals with a tailored digital marketing strategy. Through weekly meetings, we'll track progress by measuring metrics and ensure we're on the path to success. Alternatively, my auditing service provides a comprehensive evaluation of your social media profiles or landing page in a one-hour meeting, followed by actionable insights and recommendations for optimization.

For more details on these services, please visit my professional website linked [here](#). Remember, you're not alone on this journey—I'm here to support you every step of the way.

Once again, thank you for your trust. I can't wait to see the incredible things you'll achieve!