

BRAND AUTHORITY



How To **Be Everywhere, Stand Out**
From Your Competition And **Build An**
Incredible Brand

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Introduction



To succeed online or in business generally for that matter, you need a brand. It's not enough to simply start spamming the web with content; you need to ensure that you have thought about who you want to be, how you are going to gradually raise awareness of your company, how you are going to introduce a gradually increasing number of potential customers to your products and services and how you are going to cement the loyalty of those who come across you.

Here we will look at how you should go about doing this by creating a strong brand and then growing it to the point where you will be recognizable by your logo alone. We'll go through *why* you need a brand if you're running an online business, we'll look at the basics of what a brand is and we'll look at all the tools and techniques you'll need to create a brand that works for you in a highly effective manner.

Why You Need a Brand to Succeed Online?

If *is* somewhat possible to succeed online without a brand but doing this is going to be *a lot* harder and you will seriously be limiting your potential for growth and for profit.

Let's assume for a moment that your business model is predominantly online – let's say that you are selling digital products or affiliate products through a brand. Now in this case, your key objective is going to be to grow the amount of traffic visiting your site and to then establish trust with that audience such that they will be interested in buying what you have to sell.

This will be nigh impossible to accomplish however if you haven't first built a brand and layered it into your site and your content.

This is how it works:

- Someone finds one of your articles through social media or a Google search, enjoys it and then moves on to other things – no one becomes an 'overnight fan'
- During another search or through another post they then find themselves coming across *another* post or two of yours
- They read this, enjoy it and remember that they enjoyed the last thing you wrote about too
- They then come across you a couple more times and are impressed each time
- They now consider you a reliable/entertaining resource.
- The next time they're looking for content in your niche, they will search for their question and your URL
- Perhaps they'll take some time to look around the other content on your site

- They may even then bookmark your site or subscribe to your RSS feed
- Likewise they may subscribe to you on social media and/or add their e-mail to your list
- They will then consider buying your e-books/recommended products when they see you recommend them
- If they enjoy the product, they will be much more likely to buy from you again in future.

After this lengthy process, you've now turned a first time visitor into a paying customer.

But note how much more difficult this would be without a strong and consistent branding. Without a catchy site name and logo, how would they know that they were reading your website again the second time they found it?

Likewise, without a clear sense of identity and a clear mission statement, why would they consider subscribing?

And if your social media channel is just your personal name with no branding, are they really going to want to follow you?

The same goes for other business models too. Let's say you're manufacturing a product. Having a brand will allow you to market the product and generate buzz for it more effectively but more importantly it will enable you to build on your success. Once you've built a strong brand and people have enjoyed products from you, they will then know to seek out *more* products from you in future because they'll expect that they'll be similarly high quality.

Why were people so excited about the Apple Watch recently? It wasn't because it was a smartwatch – there are already hundreds of those on the market.

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No, people were excited about the Apple Watch because it was another Apple product and Apple now has a reputation for making game-changing technology with fantastic quality construction and elegant interfaces. In other words, it was the *brand* that sold the Apple Watch more so than the product.



Having a strong brand also makes it much easier for you to market your products and services, creating new opportunities to make people think about your business. At the same time, your brand will also help you to inspire more emotion from your users and customers. With a brand, you'll feel that people will get behind what you're doing and become fans of your products and services. Without a brand, you won't be able to get that kind of loyalty or interest surrounding what you do.

What is a Brand?



So great, we've come to the conclusion that we definitely need a brand. Brands are definitely good things. So the next question is: what exactly is a brand?

On the face of it and according to Wikipedia, a brand is a 'name, term, design or other feature that distinguishes one seller's product from those of others'.

Of course though it's actually much more than that, a brand can also be what distinguishes *products* from one another. It's also certainly more than just the logo and name – your brand is also encompassed by your mission statement, by your general quality and by the similarities between your products or services.

The idea of a brand is to represent yourself with a name, a logo and a set of design sensibilities and for your customers and clients to then know that

those things stand for a certain standard of quality and an approach to business.

Of course the word 'brand' itself comes from the way that farmers would once burn their symbols into livestock so that they were identifiably theirs. Your brand should make everything you create and do 'identifiably yours' so that you can build a consistent reputation.

What Aspects Make a Brand?

We can also get a better idea for what a brand is by looking at the multiple different aspects that combine to create said brand.

In this book we're mainly focusing on how to create a brand online, so we'll look predominantly at some of the aspects that make a brand on the web in particular.

Aspects of a brand then include:

- Your logo
- Your color scheme (which will likely be dictated by your logo)
- Your website and web design (again, dictated by your logo most likely, as well as your industry/niche)
- Your advertising (which will feature your logo)
- A jingle (potentially, though not necessarily)
- A 'tagline' (optional)
- A mascot (definitely optional)

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- Your products (which should have a consistent design language that makes them look similar)
- Your services (which should have a predictability that makes them reliable and consistent)
- Your content (if you are using content marketing)
- Your social media accounts
- Your 'mission statement' (the end goal of your business)
- Your values
- Your pervasive style
- Your attitude

As you can see then, a brand is actually many things and certainly not just a matter of creating a fancy logo. Your mission statement and values are particularly important to consider and will inform everything else you do. Ultimately, it will be your values that result in products that are a certain standard and this is what will make your customers *want* to deal with your business again.

Throughout the rest of this book, we'll be looking at how you can tackle each of these points to develop your brand and from there we'll then focusing on building it up and growing your visibility.

How to Come Up With a Mission Statement



Many texts on building a brand will start by focusing on creating a logo. That's *not* what we're going to be beginning with however as actually the logo you end up creating will be heavily informed by your mission statement and your values (as well as your industry).

As we've touched on briefly already, it is your values and goals that will *truly* unify all your activities, products and services. These values should be at the core of everything you do as a business because that is what's going to ensure that you stand out from the crowd and that's what's going to create the consistency that your customers and clients can rely on.

Apple's Values Statement and Why They're Successful

To go back to Apple again (why not, they are *fantastic* at branding after all), it's clear from looking at their products that they have some very specific values and goals. They are trying to bring products to market that make technology personal, accessible, fashionable and cool. At the same time, they clearly believe very strongly in making things that are high quality, that work well every time and that *feel* like they're made of good materials.

On top of all this, Apple has a track record of inventing the products we 'didn't know we needed'. They don't make a diverse variety of different products but the new products they *do* introduce often create entirely new product category.

It's no exaggeration to say that it is *this* ultimately that has made Apple successful. *Because* of those values and those goals, every product that Apple has made has created a huge storm and the experience that customers have had with those products has been hugely positive. As a result, the brand has gone from strength to strength and when people see that little white apple logo, they know that it represents all those things: quality, innovation, reliability, fashion and more. Some Apple fans are actually verging on being obsessive in their appreciation of Apple and will actively seek to get as many of their products as possible simply because they feel that *they too* share these values.

Finding Your Values

Of course you are not Steve Jobs and your company is not Apple. It's unlikely you're going to gain quite the recognition or quite the clout that Apple has. And you probably don't have the range of products, or the budget of Apple – you're going to have to set your sights a little lower most likely.

Still though, simply by having a commitment to doing *what you do* better than anyone else, you can still make a splash and impress everyone you do business with. If you run a website for instance, then focus on making sure that the content you publish is *always* funny, or *always* more in-depth and thoroughly researched than the competition. Set yourself apart by delivering something that people can't get elsewhere.

Likewise, think about your long-term goals. Why did you get into this business in the first place? Which aspects of it make you truly excited? Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?

This is where a lot of people might be scratching their heads and thinking 'I just want to get rich'. That's a legitimate response but you're probably going to have to go a little deeper if you really want to resonate with your audience. Why did you get into this business in the first place as opposed to another? What is it that you do *well* that makes you think that you can stand out from the crowd and succeed?

If you're *still* scratching your head and thinking that you chose this business model because it was easier or because it was 'there', or that you're simply going through the motions and not really bringing anything new to the table... then you need to sit down and reassess your whole business model. This is important not only so that you can create a strong brand but also so you can *succeed* generally. Find that 'extra something' you can offer and then come back to this process.

Writing Your Mission Statement – Your Promise

Now you have a good idea of what your goal is and of what sets you apart, you can consider writing down your mission statement in order to formalize that in a bite-sized chunk.

The objective of a mission statement is to answer the simple question: 'what do you do?'. At the same time though, you should think of this as a promise to your customers/clients and as a way to share your values.

When answering the question 'what do you do', remember that the answer is not 'make hats'. Here the trick is to focus on your 'value proposition' which means honing in on what it is that you do to create value. Instead of 'making hats' then, your mission statement would be something along the lines of:

'Keeping heads warm in a stylish manner that builds confidence'

Much more inspiring!

Mission statements are generally very short with the average being somewhere between 20 and 25. The very shortest is probably from TED which is simply: 'Spreading ideas'.

Some other examples of mission statements include:

Oxfam: To create lasting solutions to poverty, hunger and social injustice.

Google: To organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.

Microsoft: To help people and businesses throughout the world realize their full potential.

Coca-Cola: To refresh the world, to inspire moments of optimism and happiness, to create value and make a difference

Note that your mission statement is not likely to be something that you use outwardly to promote your brand but versions of it will go on your website and may be used to help motivate and inspire your staff. It will certainly help to write something down before moving forward.

Coming Up With a Company Or Website Name



Before you go any further, you will also need a name for your company/website. If you already have a name that you're happy with, then you can skip past this chapter. Otherwise, this can be a stumbling block for many people so it's worth taking some time to think about.

When choosing a company name you need to make sure that what you come up with is going to be unique and that it's going to be memorable. At the same time it should also describe something about your business *and/or* about your goals and your attitude.

It's also useful – especially if you are creating a blog as your business – to choose a name that is going to be at least somewhat descriptive of what it is you do.

If you think about some of the biggest brands in the world then you might find that this isn't really the case. 'Apple' is hardly the name you would instantly associate with computers, 'Virgin' is certainly not a name that says much about what that company does and 'Nike' is just a completely random jumble of letters.

In these cases, the company name is more about creating a 'feel' that speaks to the attitude of the business. 'Apple' suggests different and 'fresh'. 'Virgin' suggests youthful, playful and not afraid to ruffle feathers. 'Nike' is strong and simple, just like the logo. Look for words that are evocative and descriptive and make sure you pick something that reflects well on your business.

While you can pick a company name that evokes the kind of attitude you want to be known for, it does often help to choose something descriptive simply because you won't have the marketing clout of those big companies. If your website is a tool for people to measure their fitness and you call yourself 'FitnessStatTracker' then you won't need to explain what your company is about and it will be easier for people to search for you. Of course you could make this more stylish by shortening it to 'Fit, Stat, Track' or 'FitStatTrack'.

You might also choose to use a description right in your company name: for instance 'Jumping Jack Apple Juice' or 'Futuro Web Design'. This way you still get the abstract appeal of a non-descriptor but you also tell people what your site or business is about.

Another option is to pick one name for your website and another name for your company. That way you might have a website called 'Getting Rich is Fun', run by a company called 'Catfish Content'. This can help you to branch out in future and has a number of advantages but it also comes with some drawbacks. A good example of a company with multiple brands would be Microsoft which is a brand in itself, as is Windows and Xbox. In Microsoft's case this has been quite useful as the Xbox brand has managed to avoid some of the flack that often gets leveled at Redmond.

Some More Considerations for Your Company or Website Name

There are a few more things to bear in mind for your company name.

One is memorability: how easily will people be able to remember your company name or website? This is particularly true if you want to get direct traffic by people typing your URL into their browser. If your name isn't memorable, try something else.

At the same time, you should ask yourself how easy it's going to be to promote that particular company name. These days, if you were to try and market yourself as 'Virgin' or 'Apple' you would have a heck of a time getting to the top of Google.

Think about it: if you tried to perform SEO (search engine optimization) for a website called 'Apple' today without any of the companies clout, you'd have to beat every single diet blog, every single store selling apples and more. This is another good reason why something like 'Catfish Content' is smarter than just 'Catfish'. Good luck becoming the first thing people think of when they hear the word 'Catfish'.

Of course you also need to make sure there isn't another company out there trading under the name you're thinking of.

You may wish to use your own name to trade under – which makes a lot of sense for a personal brand. We'll look more at the strengths and weaknesses of going this direction later. Bear in mind though that you can still create a personal brand without that having to be the name of your business or website.

Finally, think about your initials. This is important a) to avoid an embarrassing acronym (it's also worth checking what your name means in other languages!) and b) because letters at the start and end of the alphabet will be easier to find in lists. That latter point shouldn't be a *big* determining factor when you choose your name but it *is* something to keep in mind.

Getting a Website

Once you have the name for your website and/or business, the next thing you need to do is to get web hosting and a URL which will give people a way to find you.

This might also influence your decision when picking a name for yourself – as if yourname.com is taken, you might want to try looking elsewhere.

At the same time as getting a domain name, you'll also want to get yourself a hosting account. Essentially, a hosting account stores your files online while the domain name redirects browsers to them when someone types in that particular address.

You will often be able to choose a domain name *when* you buy your hosting. While there are plenty of good hosting options out there (feel free to do your research), one of the best by far is BlueHost which has all the features that you could need starting out. Head over to [BlueHost.com](https://www.bluehost.com) and search for available domains while picking your company name.

Creating Your Logo



Now you know who you are, you will be able to start showing that to the world with a stylish logo that encapsulates that and which you can then use in all of your products and across all of your marketing. Note that this does still apply to personal brands – just take a look at any of the big name bloggers and they will still have some form of logo.

What Makes a Good Logo?

A logo is essentially an image – often incorporating your company name – which will act like a 'calling card' so that people can easily identify your creations and so that you can easily remind them of who you are.

Popular examples of logos include the Nike tick, Virgin, Apple and Windows. Here are a bunch more to give you an idea of what a logo looks like. See how many you can name:



Your objective then is to create something like this which people will be able to use to instantly identify you.

The process of coming up with a logo though is a little harder than you might think. The main reason for this is simply that your logo will play such an important role in defining your business going forward and in creating marketing opportunities for you. If you get this wrong, then you could well be 'stuck' with a logo that doesn't represent you well for a long time (rebranding isn't easy). Just as naming your child can seem like an impossible task, so too can creating your logo.

To help you get started, there are a few criteria that a good logo should fulfill. Make sure that your logo meets these and you'll be along the right lines.

A good logo should:

- Be unique and different – this is important to ensure you're identifiable by your logo but it's also important to ensure you're not infringing any trademarks (we'll get to that)
- Avoid clichés (like ticks, globes and lightbulbs which have been badly overdone and now appear highly derivative)
- Be appropriate for your industry/niche/subject matter
- Be versatile enough to be used in a variety of different places – avoid thin lines which won't show up on some backgrounds
- Be simple enough to recreate – if people start doodling your logo in their notebooks you're getting free publicity

Now you have your specifications, you can start the actual planning stage...

Ideation – Coming Up With a Concept for Your Logo

Before you open up any software, you first need to get an idea of what your logo is going to look like and where you're going with it. We know what we're aiming to achieve with a logo now and we know what makes a good logo. Next we just need some ideas to start building off.

The first place to start often is with a 'mood board'. A mood board is essentially like a collage except you're going to focus on placing lots of different images on it, with the main objective being to create a collection of

images relating to your business and your brand that will serve as inspiration.

You can do this either with software or by printing out the images and sticking them down. This way, you can then collect:

- Images of other logos you like the looks of
- Images relevant to your niche/industry
- Images that relate to your mission state/values
- Things you simply like the looks of

Collect as many of these as possible and that way you will find that common themes start to emerge and that you start to get a good feeling for the artistic direction you need to take. You can then start combining elements, color palettes and more to come up with something new.

Playing off your company name is also another option. In most cases you will include the name of your company *in* the logo and then edit the font or turn specific letters into images.

A great example of this is the logo of Moon Studios – the games developers who recently produced 'Ori and the Blind Forest'. Their logo turns the two 'O's into a moon in orbit like so:



Can you tell what's wrong with this logo for our purposes though? The font is far too *thin*. This means that if you wanted to use your logo as a

watermark on a video you were making for instance, that you would need to include some black background to make it legible. Simply bulking out the text would easily solve that issue though.

Some logos will also incorporate a symbol or even a character 'mascot'. An example of this is Xbox which has the large X and Puma which has the puma... You can choose to incorporate something like this as well if you like but make sure that it remains easy to reproduce, versatile and unique.

If you're still struggling to come up with ideas, then take a 'brainstorming' approach and simply draw down as many different ideas as you can. Even if you think the idea is stupid, draw it down anyway. Eventually you will start to see elements that you like and you can then recombine these to create something imaginative and original.

Finally, don't aim to create *one* idea. Instead, come up with a few different options for your brand and then try testing it by showing it to people and getting feedback. This is important as often we are too close to our own business and our own creations to view ourselves objectively. Your logo is not *for* you – it is for your audience. So show the images around and let your customers, your friends or even passers-by in the street and get them to vote on the best one.

Creating Your Logo

You have two options when it comes to creating your logo:

- 1) Design it yourself (difficult if you don't have any design skills).
- 2) Outsource (cost money).

Let's talk about each method.

Designing a Logo Yourself

In order to design a logo yourself, you'll need a program like Photoshop Illustrator available at <http://www.adobe.com/products/illustrator.html>.

I can't run through every single step of the process but if you like to learn the basics, you'll find lots of tutorials on YouTube.

What you want to do is to actually *make* the logo so that it's in a form that will be useable online.

This means turning it into an image file that will look high quality and that will allow you to edit it to use online in various different capacities.

Note that when you create your logo, you need to make it using vector software. When you create a JPG, Bitmap or PNG in Illustrator, this is what's known as a 'raster file' meaning that it consists of lots of individual pixels in a file.

A vector file is different because it essentially works as a 'map' and a set of instructions which define the direction of different lines, the angle and the weight. In other words, it's almost like the 'code' that tells the software how to draw the image.

This has multiple advantages. For starters, it means that you can resize the image to *any* dimension and not lose any quality. This is important because you might one day find that you need to use your logo on top of a billboard.

To use your logo professionally, you need to keep the precise ratios, angles and strokes the exact same across every iteration no matter how big or small the image file is. The same goes for colors by the way – so once you've creating your image you should also make a note of the *precise* color codes used throughout. Virgin's branding isn't 'red' – it's a very specific *shade* of red that allows us to create that unconscious connection.

Likewise, vector files are important because they allow you to edit the image without making a mess of things. With a vector image you'll be able to select any line and then make it wider, change the angle, change the color... With raster files meanwhile you would need to first erase portions of the image and then try to draw them back into place.

Outsourcing Your Logo Design

Now let's take a look at outsourcing your logo. This is the best option but obviously requires some investment.



Here is a list of websites where you can get your logo designed:

<http://99designs.com> - you can start a logo design contest and “crowd source” the design.

<http://fiverr.com> - a great place to get logos created for just \$5. Be prepared for long waits though, designers typically have a large queue of orders because the pricing is cheap.

<http://elance.com> - an all-rounder outsourcing/freelance website to post jobs.

<http://upwork.com> - another freelance website worth trying.

When outsourcing to designers, make sure you are clear and specific on your instructions. Designers will usually ask a number of questions to understand your business so that they can create a logo that reflects it.

Protecting Your Trademark

For a brand to be effective, it's very important that no one else be trading using the same name. This is why you need to ensure you protect your brand by getting it patented once you've chosen a company name and a logo.

You can do this by visiting the US Patent and Trademark Office at www.uspto.gov. Here, you'll be able to check that your trademark isn't already patented and then patent it yourself for a fee (not more than a few hundred dollars). This will last for ten years, at the end of which you will need to renew your trademark.

When you create a website or write an article, this is going to be *instantly* protected by copyright and that copyright protection will last until after your death. This is not the same with a trademark – which needs to be actively sought out and renewed. If you're going to be investing a lot into promoting your brand though, then this is definitely an investment worth making.

Using Your Logo and 'Being Everywhere'



Hopefully after doing all this you will have a logo that you're happy with. The next question though is: how do you use it?

More Materials to Create

To start with, you might want to try creating some more materials that you can use alongside your logo and that will likely come out of the logo too.

For instance, if you are going to be using any type of video marketing or if you will be vlogging on YouTube, then you may want to create a video opener. This is a short animation, often with music, that will play right at the start of your videos to once again tie them altogether. Often the animation will feature the logo in some way or another and very often it will simply be

an animation *of* the logo either moving around or being constructing in some form.

Likewise, you may want to look into creating some headed letter paper which you can use when communicating with clients and/or some business cards with your logo on. Already you're seeing how useful and versatile a good logo it can be – and this way, every interaction you have with someone will become a chance to reinforce your brand and to help build recognition.

Website Design

One particularly *big* aspect of your branding that you will also need to create is your website. Your website will serve as a portal and shop window for your business, as well as an advert and representative of your business and much more. If your website doesn't inspire confidence and isn't memorable then you will miss out on countless marketing opportunities and huge growth potential.

What's more, if you are an internet marketer or blogger, it may be that your website *is* pretty much the entire of your business model. If you're making money from adverts on your website or through sales of digital/affiliate products, then it's crucial that your website leave a lasting impression so that customers come back to it.

In this case, simply having your logo at the top of your site is not enough. Logos and banners will typically go at the top of a website because a) that fits in with the 'F Zone' (which is the region we are most likely to look when we visit a new site) and b) experience teaches us that we should look at the top for titles and branding.

But the fact of the matter is that most people just aren't that interested in logos and banners. Most of the time we visit a website because we're interested in the content of a specific article. So as soon as we land on the site, we will scroll down to the text and we will skip past everything else. If

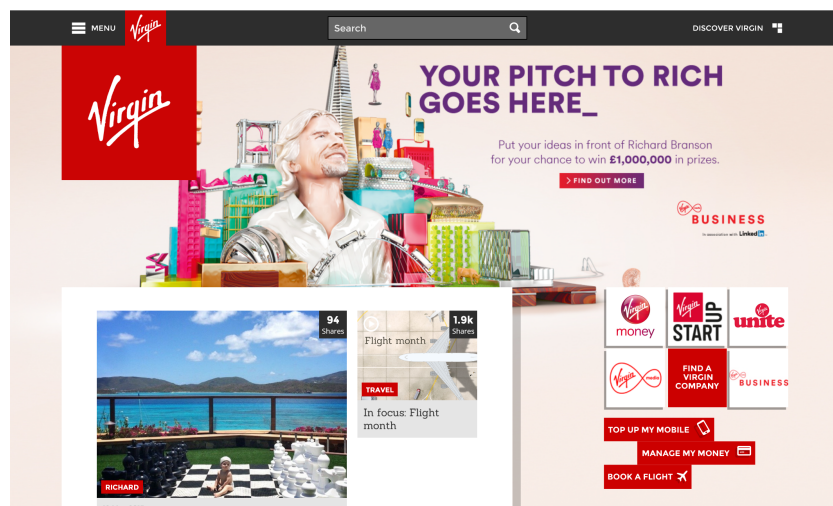
you want people to recognize your site next time they visit then you need to differentiate your site in more ways than through the logo alone.

How do you do this then?

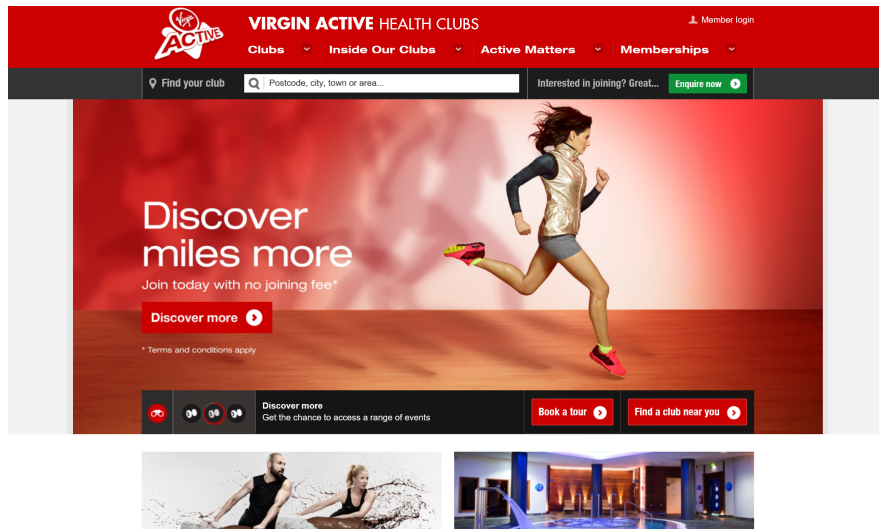
One answer is to use the same color scheme and design sensibilities you do in your logo *throughout* your entire site.

Take Virgin for instance. Virgin is a huge brand, recognizable by its red and white logo. Virgin's brand is actually *particularly* important too because it is the unifying feature throughout multiple different branches of business.

Now if you take a look at two of their websites (the main 'Virgin' website and the 'Virgin Active' website) you will notice that they have something in common – liberal use of the 'Virgin red'.



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As well as quite a lot of white text. This way, no matter which part of the page you are on, you will be reminded that this is a virgin website and the brand will be constantly reinforced.

The same goes for your own site then: try to include call backs to your logo through your choice of color palette, through your background and even through the typeface you use. At the same time, just ensure that your website is recognizable and interesting (without being distracting) no matter which page you're on or how far you've scrolled down. If your site could very easily be any other site in your niche, then you need to think about strengthening its brand identity.

Creating a Personal Brand

Looking at the screenshot of the Virgin website you might also have noticed something else that is very distinctively 'Virgin' – a mugshot of Richard Branson.



As well as his Virgin Brand, Richard Branson has also been somewhat successful in creating a 'personal brand'. By putting his face and personality at the forefront of much of his marketing and even some of his products, Richard has created an association between himself and his business.

This is something that lends itself particularly well to online business. If you run a website or blog, then you might well use your name as a byline after writing blog posts or you might even appear in videos. Some people will even use their own name as their website name and might use themselves to promote their products. Take a look at Pat Flynn for instance – the owner of Smart Passive Income – whose banner reads 'The Smart Passive Income Blog with Pat Flynn'. Likewise, Tim Ferriss (who owns the Four Hour Workweek Blog) has effectively built his business around his own name.

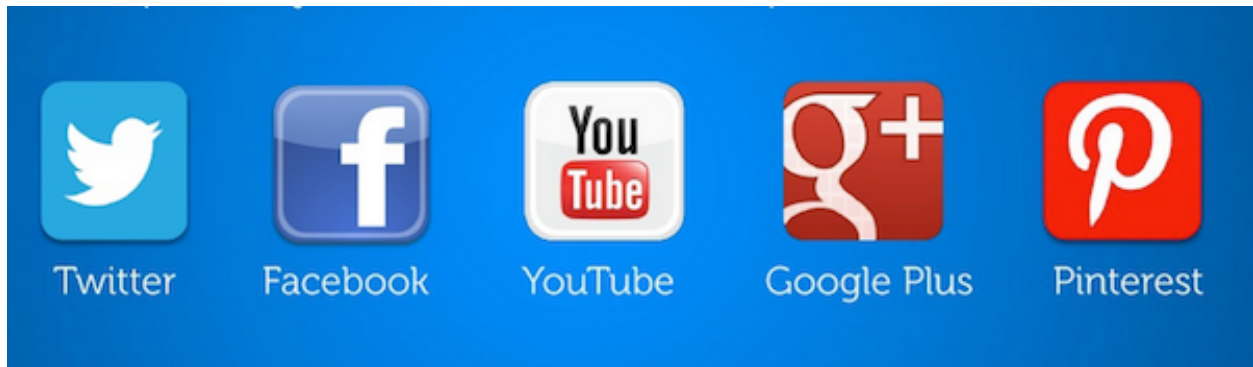


If you are selling a fitness product or writing a fitness blog and you happen to be in great shape, then you can use this to your advantage in order to promote your product and to show that it works even.

Attaching yourself to your brand or creating an entirely personal brand is often a good strategy as it helps to build trust (more on that later) and puts a face behind your name. At the same time, people are 'programmed' to be very good at recognizing faces and names and as such you can instantly make yourself more memorable by letting people meet the personality behind the website/company.

Some people won't feel comfortable putting themselves forward in such a way and exposing themselves however and as such may prefer to shy away from the spotlight. Either strategy is fine, just remember that creating a personal brand is a viable option if you want to make your company even more memorable.

Being Everywhere



The next thing to do with your brand online is to make sure that you are *everywhere*. This essentially means that you should be on every social media platform, that you should have links all around the web and that generally you should ensure that your potential customers are encountering your brand at every opportunity.

To help your customers find you, you want to create as many in-roads as possible and that means that you should have a Twitter account, Facebook page, Google+ page, YouTube channel, Instagram account, Vine account, Pinterest account, LinkedIn account and more. You can even consider creating an app (even just a simple one) which will give you visibility in the Google Play, Apple App and Windows stores. This also gives your visitors/customers another way to reach you and helps to further strengthen your brand identity (it also still impresses people).

And across *all* of these disparate platforms you need to ensure that your user name is the same and that you are featuring your branding prominently. This means that your cover image should likely be your logo, while your profile image should be the same across every account and tied closely to the theme of your business (alternatively, you might make the profile image your logo and the cover image something to-do with your brand). Either way, you are working to create as consistent an experience as possible across the net so that people know what to expect when they deal with you and so that you become immediately recognizable and familiar.

Building Trust



Now you have your logo and brand and you should have a consistent design throughout your website, your social media channels and even your business card. You are reinforcing your brand at every possible opportunity and you are giving people plenty of ways to find your business and to remember you exist.

Next, you need to ensure that the associations they are forming with your business are positive so that people actually want to deal with you again.

One of the main objectives of a brand is to create a 'seal of quality'. This way, whenever someone buys something from you they should feel confident that it will be the same quality as the products they've bought from you in the past. Likewise, they should feel similarly about any services that they use.

In regards to products and services then, this is why it's so important to ensure that you work hard to ensure you are delivering quality time after

time. You're going to be stamping your logo onto everything you do so *remember* this when you put things out there. Think of everything you create as an ambassador for everything *else* you create. If you aren't proud of something you've created then you need to either stop selling it, or try adding to it to bring it up to standard.

Content Marketing and Becoming an Authority

This is *particularly* true for bloggers and internet marketers. Here, you should think of your 'product' as being your content – the content of your blog as well as the content of any YouTube channel you may have, podcast etc.

You may also have another product that you are actually selling, but your articles and blog posts are still products too and they are still what your visitors are going to use to judge your knowledge, expertise and honesty.

This is why it's so important to make sure that you are posting in a way that strengthens your brand and that helps to build consistency and reliability. This is what content marketing is all about and it is what will allow you and your brand to establish the *trust* of your readers so that you can then start selling to them.

So say you were creating a fitness blog to sell an eBook; how would you do this with content marketing?

One good strategy would be to post twice a week and to make every single post unique and fascinating. Look at the competition and see what they're doing wrong and then make sure you do it better – that might mean that the subjects you tackle are more unique than the majority. Or perhaps it just means that you're going to do more research and go more in-depth? Either way, you need to ensure that every time someone comes away from your article they are impressed and they feel that they got something they wouldn't have gotten elsewhere.

This 'style' and commitment then becomes your calling card and it is what will make people seek you out for information. It's *also* then what will make those same people more likely to want to buy from you when you say that you are giving away even more amazing secrets in an eBook or when you say that you highly recommend product X.

Consistency is key here and so too is a commitment to your values and to your USP (unique selling point). Make sure that each article and blog post stands alone as a testament to *why* you should be considered an expert and *why* your audience should trust you.

Note as well that you can also reinforce the association with your brand in your content. Try to mention your company/website name from time to time and to speak about yourself and this way people will be reminded about your brand as you are delivering value.

Creating Relationships

Another way you build trust is by trying to engage with your audience/customers and to build a relationship. This is one of the reason that those bloggers who have a personal brand do so well – they allow the visitors to put a face to the content they're reading and this makes them seem much more transparent and honest. As a rule, we don't put our face on things unless we *believe* in them.

Likewise, speaking about yourself can again help to create this trust as can showing some 'behind the scenes' of how you put your business together. The more upfront you are with your visitors and customers, the more they will think of you as an honest resource they can trust.

You can also create a relationship with your website visitors by interacting with them. This might mean asking questions in your blog posts and responding in your comments section, or it might mean surveying your audience via social media or an e-mail shoutout. This is why both these marketing tools are so powerful and effective.

Under Promise and Over Deliver

You also build your relationship through your service and the way you interact with customers. One thing that can go a long way to making you seem more trustworthy and to increasing the way the general public see your brand is by taking an 'under promise and over deliver' approach.

Basically what this means is that you are offering a certain amount of value and then delivering more. One obvious way you can do this is by improving on your delivery times. Tell your customers they will get their product in 3-4 working days and then make sure it gets there in 2. They'll then be so impressed, they'll be much more inclined to want to work with you again.

Giving away free gifts is also a good way to do this. If you've ever bought a phone case on eBay you may have received a free capacitive stylus – this is the same principle in action.

Finally, Pat Flynn talks about potentially recording personal messages for people who order e-mail courses and eBooks. This is such a nice personal touch and it goes so far in showing you went the extra mile, that it's bound to build a lot of good will and brand loyalty.

Increasing Brand Loyalty

Building trust and strengthening your brand will immediately increase your brand loyalty but there are other things you can do as well to try and turn your first time customers into repeat customers and your one-time visitors into repeat visitors.

One obvious example is to use some kind of reward or loyalty scheme. This way, when someone buys from you you will be able to offer them a discount or an extra incentive for buying again. Likewise, you can also achieve increased brand loyalty by upselling and giving your customers

ways to increase their order. This might even go as far as creating your own 'ecosystem' or your own 'walled garden'.

This is something that Microsoft, Google, Amazon and Apple all do to varying extents. When you buy a product like an iPhone for instance, you will then likely by apps for that device which will *only* run on iOS devices. This in turn means that those customers have an incentive to remain *with* Apple – otherwise all the money they spent on apps will be wasted. Likewise, if you buy a Windows Phone, then you might have extra reason to get a Microsoft Band – as the Microsoft Band has added functionality for Windows Phone users.

You can also give away promotional gifts as a way to enhance brand loyalty. This might mean giving your customers t-shirts with your logo on it for instance or mugs with the same branding. Either way, this has the effect of enabling you to 'over deliver' once again and at the same time means that your customers and visitors will be able to feel like a 'part of something'. Essentially, as soon as someone puts on a T-shirt with your company name on it, they will feel more as though they are true fans of your business and they will increase their brand loyalty (of course this is also free marketing!).

Finally, make sure you create a mailing list. With a mailing list you can use e-mail marketing which will allow you to reach out to your previous visitors and customers. In doing so you can remind them of your brand, bringing you to mind once again and you can encourage them to come back to your business by offering deals and discounts. E-mail marketing is highly effective because it is not reliant on social media accounts or on your fans remembering to check in with your website – you can reach them directly and right in their inboxes!

Marketing Your Brand



Building trust is all good and well but it won't help much if no one is buying your products in the first place or visiting your website.

This is where marketing your brand comes in and where you need to start thinking about how you are going to introduce people to the website, logo and products you've spent so long putting together.

Content Marketing for Exposure

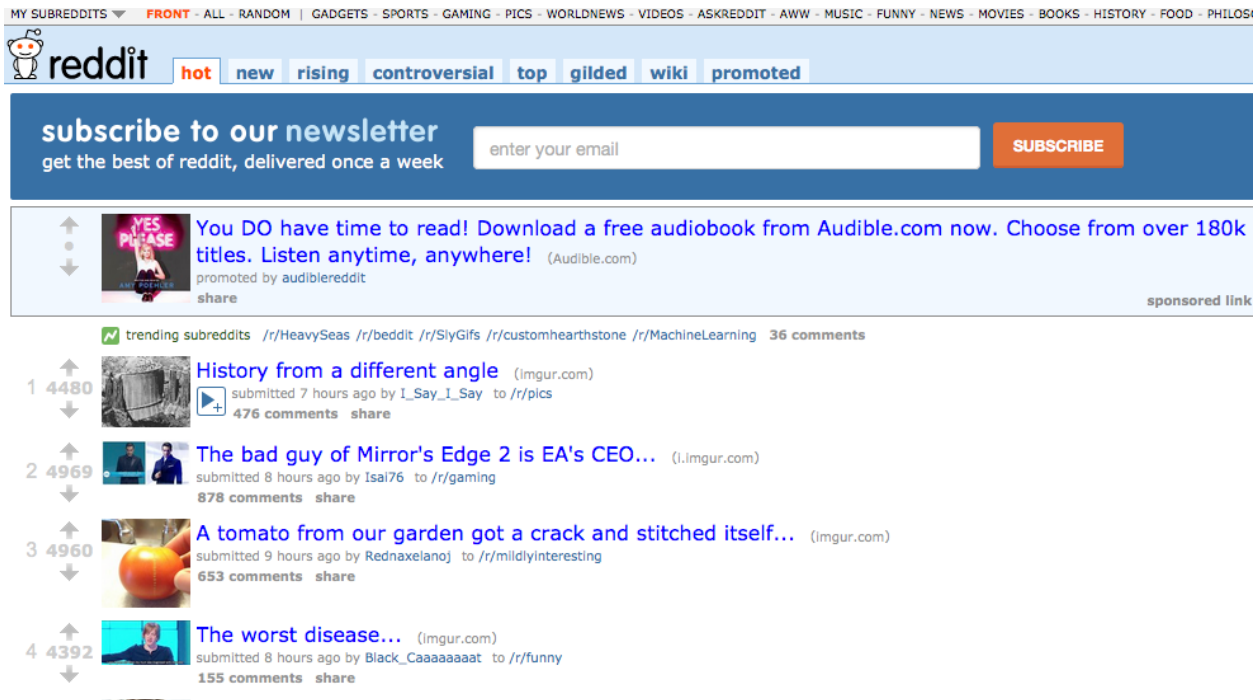
We've already talked about how you can use content marketing to build trust but what's also important is using content marketing to gain exposure and traffic. Here, you are essentially using your content as an incentive to get people to visit your website and this can be a highly effective method.

The most obvious way to use content marketing is to create posts that offer value in your industry or niche and then to share links to those posts on social media, forums and social bookmarking sites.



One of the best ways you can do this right now is by using Reddit. Reddit is a website that allows communities to create pages dedicated to any subject known as 'subReddits'. SubReddits are filled with lively discussion on pretty much every topic and niche you can imagine and if you post here with an eye-catching headline you can potentially get your content seen by thousands of people (depending on whether it gets 'upvoted' or 'downvoted').

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Be very careful here though, as Reddit users are very savvy and very cynical. If your posts don't provide any real value and if they seem to be nothing more than self-promotion, then you will get downvoted and it will actually *hurt* your brand. Don't post here unless you are genuinely offering interesting insight.

Another great place to share your content is on Google+ which also has a 'communities' system in place currently. This is again a way you can potentially get hundreds or thousands of views from a single post.

Guest Posting

Another way to use content marketing to get your brand seen by new people is with guest posting. Guest posts are posts that appear on blogs but which are written by someone other than the owner of that blog.

So in other words, you are going to find a blog in your niche that is doing particularly well and then ask them to publish a post or article you've written. You're giving the content away for free (which benefits them by filling their blog with more value) but in exchange you're asking that there be a link embedded in the post back to your site.

This can do wonders for helping you to build brand recognition and gain traffic to your website. For starters, having a link on a prominent blog is *very* good for SEO (search engine optimization) as long as you don't 'overdo' this strategy. At the same time though, your link and your company/business name is now going to be seen by hundreds or thousands of people who visit that blog and is effectively going to be given testimony by the author of that blog. If they trust the blogger, then some of this trust will be passed on to you and you will benefit from association. See how this works?

Advertising

Another way to get your brand out there is through plain and simple advertising. There are plenty of options here when you're online but one of the best is to use PPC marketing. PPC stands for 'Pay Per Click' and is essentially a form of advertising where you only get charged if someone actually clicks on your ads. This means that ineffectual ads are not charged and that means you can get your ad *seen* completely for free – thus building brand awareness at no cost to you.

The biggest two platforms for PPC are Google's AdWords platform and Facebook ads. These allow you to advertise right on the SERPs (search engine results pages) or on Facebook respectively and also let you target your audience either by advertising on particular search terms or by filtering through age, hobbies, gender etc.

In either case, you should try to sell a particular product through your advert and you should be as upfront and honest as this as possible. A good advert on Facebook or AdWords will simply say 'Click here to buy \$30 fitness eBook!'.

This way, a large proportion of the people who click on that ad will be willing to part with their money meaning you'll get a good ROI (especially as you only pay a few cents for each ad). But for those who *don't* click,

you're still going to be showing your logo which means you'll still be increasing awareness and visibility.

Out of the two, Facebook advertising potentially makes more sense here because it lets you use your images which means you can incorporate your actual logo. Another alternative is to try Google AdSense which is a similar product that allows your adverts to appear on the websites of participating publishers. You choose which website to appear on by niche and can then choose from either text or banner ads.

SEO

SEO is 'Search Engine Optimization' or in other words, the process of getting a website to rank highly on Google when someone searches for a related term. SEO goes hand in hand with content marketing because you can use keywords in your content in order to help target certain search terms. In other words, by including just a few mentions of the phrase 'buy hats' in your article on fashion, you can help people who are interesting in 'buying hats' to find your website via another article.

Likewise, you can target specific questions – a web designer for instance might write an article on how to set up a WordPress website, use SEO to help people looking for that term to find that post, and then hope that people reading the content will be impressed enough to consider hiring them to handle it on their behalf. (Don't overdo the insertion of keywords – optimal keyword 'density' is generally thought to be about 1-2%)

SEO should *also* be used though simply to ensure that your business and website appears at the top of Google when someone searches for it. Going back to our 'Catfish Content' business, we want to ensure that when someone types in 'Catfish Content', our site will come up first. This way, someone who is somewhat interested in our business will be able to easily research us to find out more and possibly to get in touch and hire our services.

You can achieve this a) by using your company name throughout your site (and as your URL) and b) by making sure you submit yourself to business directories and set up a Google+ My Business page. All this will also help to give you further credibility as a serious brand.

Press Releases

The screenshot shows the PRWeb website homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the PRWeb logo, links for HOME, NEWS CENTER, and BLOG, a location selector for the United States, a Login link, and a green 'Create Free Account' button. Below this is a red navigation bar with links for Why PRWeb, How It Works, Who Uses It, Pricing, and Learning, along with a search bar labeled 'find releases:'. The main banner features a graphic of stylized people connected by lines, with the headline 'Generate Buzz Online... Forever.' and the subtext 'Your news lives on the Web forever, earning you new business time and time again.' An orange button says 'Create a free account and get started >'. Below the banner are three sections: 'What's New' with a 'What is a press release?' graphic and a 'Find out here!' button; 'About PRWeb' with a 'Get Big Publicity with a PRWeb Press Release' article snippet; and 'Overheard on Twitter' showing tweets from Melanie Rembrandt and Duluth Pack.

When you launch your new business or website, you should issue a press release to inform any websites or other outlets that might be interested in covering the story. This is a great way to get free publicity and to get some good momentum when you first announce your new business or website. Note however that press releases will only work if your story is genuinely newsworthy. If it's not, then try to paint it in a light that makes it interesting and something people would want to read about.

How To Manage Your Brand And Reputation



Of course with a highly recognizable brand also comes some new risks. Specifically – if everything you do is building your reputation, then every time you drop the ball this can also *harm* your reputation. This is how you can end up tainting your brand and having a bad reputation for your brand is pretty much toxic to your profits.

Think about Skoda for instance. At one point, this car manufacturing company had *such* a bad reputation that their cars became the butts of jokes. They were thought of as unappealing, unreliable and uncool. Thus, even someone who would otherwise have been happy with specific cars they were selling, would be unlikely to want to do business with them simply because of the stigma they carried.

So what do you do if your brand has been hurt by bad reviews, by the competition or by your own mistakes?

Reputation Management

One option is reputation management, much of which is achieved through SEO. This means effectively using search engine optimization to improve the information that becomes available when someone searches for your business.

If your last few products or your recent services haven't been up to your usual standard, then this might result in some bad reviews appearing prominently in the search engine results. This in turn means that the first things people find about you will potentially be negative when they look for your brand online.

Getting your own website to be the first result when searching for your business then is obviously one way you can begin to combat this. At the same time, you can work to increase the visibility of the positive reviews that are out there to help them rise above the negative ones.

Reputation management also means other things. For example, you need to ensure that you are generating those positive reviews which you can do simply by asking your customers and visitors to. Another option is to offer incentives for good reviews – such as discounts. A good strategy on social media is to say that you will write X post or provide X product but only if you receive a certain number of likes or reviews.

It's also important to make sure you're seen to respond to negative reviews in a polite and effective manner. Express your concern that your customer was not happy with the product or service they received (even if you don't really feel that way!) and then offer to make amends in some way or other. This is reassuring for other potential customers, it demonstrates that you care and if you can solve the problem for the customer then they may even alter their review and make it more positive.

What To Do If You're Planning On Rebranding

If things have really gone south, then sometimes the only remaining option will be to completely rebrand yourself and to start the process again from scratch. This will mean creating a new logo, changing the design of your website and potentially even beginning an entirely new marketing campaign.

A rebrand can also be a useful as a way to gain publicity. If your brand is relatively recognizable, then changing your name will be interesting to the general public and if you issue a press release you might get coverage this way.

Note though that rebrands will often confuse customers and can sometimes go wrong. Make sure that you do your research before setting out and are sensitive in the way you rebrand yourself. Note as well that you will also lose a lot of your previous hard work when you remarket yourself under a different name or logo – a lot of your prospective audience won't yet associate your new logo with your business and thus you'll need to work to build that recognition again.

There's also a slight stigma surrounding any rebranding as the question will always be: why did they feel the need to change their image so drastically? Make sure that you communicate clearly *why* you are rebranding and paint it in a positive light. I.e. you're moving with the times, not you're trying to shake those rumors that you beat your employees.

The outsourcing website oDesk recently rebranded itself as Upwork which has been relatively successful so far:

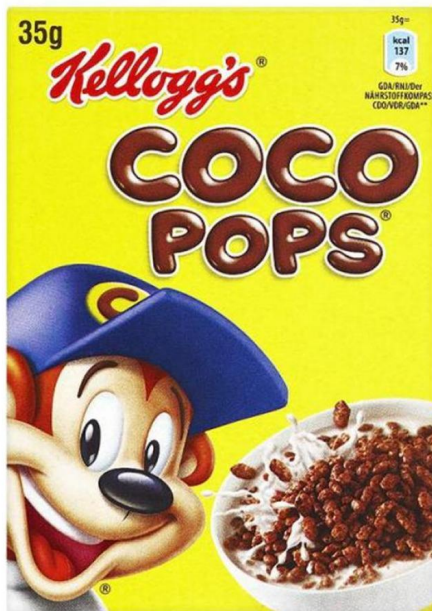
oDesk®

Changing How the World Works.

upwork™

formerly oDesk

Coco Pops meanwhile changed their branding to Choco Krispies at one point which was less successful:



BRAND AUTHORITY

In fact, they actually ended up changing the name *back* though on the positive side they did get a lot of publicity over that.

Conclusion and Recap

So that's it, the essentials of creating, building and managing your brand! You should now understand the importance of having a strong brand, know how to choose a company name and create a logo and have a plan in place for promoting your business/website and building trust.

There's a lot to take on board there, so just to recap let's go over some of the key points. Follow these in order and you should be well on your way to strengthening your brand and creating authority in your niche or industry.

Identify Your Goals and Mission Statement

You should have an idea of the business model you're going to be using and of the niche you're going to be in. Next then you need to identify what makes you different and what your overarching goals are. This will then serve as your mission statement which will provide your value proposition and USP and help you to create your brand.

Choose a Name

The next step is to choose a company name and buy a domain name. Make sure the name is descriptive, original and memorable and think about how this will affect your SEO down the line.

Create a Logo

Next you should create your logo. This will need to be created as a vector image to allow for editing. Create a moodboard to get ideas and try combining elements that speak to your products, niche and company name. Consider protecting your brand with a patent.

Create Your Other Materials

Your goal now is to reinforce your branding at every possible opportunity. This means creating business cards, a web design and much more all utilizing the same logo and the same colors to reinforce your brand further. Consider using your own name, face and personality as part of your marketing plan.

Be Consistent

Make sure you post to your blog regularly with high quality content. This is how you can use content marketing to establish yourself as a trust worthy resource.

At the same time, if you sell or recommend products or services, make sure that they are always high quality as well. This is what will create the association between your brand and the idea of quality and reliability – which is your main aim.

Create Brand Loyalty

Engage with your readers/customers, create a loyalty scheme and collect e-mails. This way you can turn your one-time customers into repeat buyers and those repeat buyers into hardened fans.

Market Yourself

With content marketing, SEO, social media, press releases and advertising – make sure that people see your brand regularly so that they are more likely to remember it and more likely to look for you in future.

Manage Your Brand

Make sure that you keep an eye on reviews, respond to any negative comments and consider rebranding if necessary. If you release new products, think about how you will brand those too and how they'll tie into your overall branding strategy.

And there you have it! So just keep providing value under an easily identifiable logo and company and you'll find that you build a reputation for

yourself that drives more traffic to your site and more business to your company.

IMPORTANT: To help you further take action, print out a copy of the *Checklist* and *Mindmap* I provided. You'll also find a Resource Cheat Sheet with valuable sites, posts and articles that I recommend you go through.