

HOW TO FINE TUNE YOUR BRAND'S VOICE

If a company is a person, the brand is the personality. Branding is the series of expressions that sends messages to the world about who you are, what you do, and why.

Brands are so important because they not only project an image to customers, they keep the company focused.

Branding is a lot more than a name, tagline, logo, and colors. It's the core of your identity, a visual and verbal handshake that introduces your business to new people, reminds them who you are once they become customers, and keeps your franchise team anchored and inspired. When symbols are that important and define your business in such a big way, getting them just right is essential.

Branding should always be clear, clean, and concise, but sometimes simplicity is the hardest thing to achieve. As you set out to define and refine your brand ideals and messaging, these tips will help you find the best way to tell your story.

Start by answering this question: What's the point of your franchise?

Every business was created to serve a need for a specific audience. If you believed in an idea enough to create a company, you know something makes you different and worthy of notice. Are you faster, friendlier, fresher, cheaper, or more wholesome?

What do you hope people get out of your product or service? Branding is the "who" of your business, and that personality and mission is the first place to get inspiration for your colors, logo, and core messaging.

Keep it under six.

Great branding sends a powerful message with absolute brevity. When you love a business, it's easy to talk about it for ages, but good branding can tell your story in six words or less. That's right: Six. Everything your business does can and should fit into six words. Once you define that message, those six words become an anchor that keeps future development in line. For example, a donut shop shouldn't offer yoga classes, but a donut shop could sell coffee mugs. The six words keep a brand consistent and coherent.

Give it time so you can do it right.

When you're excited about building a franchise, branding may not be your primary focus. You're thinking about scalability, recruitment, growth, and the numbers. Sometimes branding gets pushed aside in the rush to launch a franchise, but it should be a top priority. Why? As a franchise grows, branding will attract not only customers, but also franchisees. Branding shows the world a united image that connects the dots between locations. If you invest in a strong brand before you go into a major launch, the franchise will look 10 times more professional. If you don't deal with branding, the business will look bush league and you won't be taken as seriously.

Enlist outside help to refine your image and message.

One of the best ways to ensure you build a brand that will stand the test of time is to get professional opinions before investing in collateral. We all have our areas of expertise, and sometimes it's worth working with an expert to get great results the first time. Every dollar counts when you're building a big business, but this is one area where the investment will have major value immediately and for years to come.

Don't water the brand down by trying to please everyone.

When hammering out the specific notes of your brand's voice, it's important to stay true to the initial passion that drove you to launch a franchise in the first place. Everyone from your spouse to walk-in clients will have an opinion about a better color or logo element, but once your branding is set, you need to stick to it. Rebrands are expensive and confusing for customers, and they can make a company look disjointed.

Beware the dangers of over-tweaking.

Smaller businesses might be able to change their branding on a whim, but growing franchises should tread lightly when it comes to altering graphics, colors, fonts, logos, or language. When you're growing a franchise, consistency is everything. It's critical to present a unified image across the board to start building brand recognition. Too many changes to core branding makes a company look schizophrenic, as if you don't quite know



brand

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who you are. It also generates major expenses. Once you define the colors, logo, and core messaging, don't deviate too far. The only reason companies rebrand from the ground up is because they're trying to move on from a crisis, or because the old concept became tired and dated. Since franchising is about building something consistent, don't tweak the core brand too much once you've committed.

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towards a brand with global reach with the addition of more franchise sales and new regional developers.

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