

BRANDING HANDBOOK

FOR FARMERS

YOUR **NEED-TO-KNOW** GUIDE FOR LOGOS,
COLOURS, CREATING AND SHARING
YOUR BRAND STORY, & MORE

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Local Line

BRANDING

WHAT IS A BRAND?

A brand is the soul of a business. It is the collection of strategies, fonts, images, tone of voice and verbal cues that represent a business's personality. A brand represents the values and promise of a business and creates recognition with customers and general market. A brand is made up of:

- **Business Name** – This is your starting point. The name of your business will set the tone for all other aspects of your brand. Be sure your name comes from your heart and evokes your purpose.
- **Logo** – A logo is the largest (and probably most important) aspect of your brand. It is the first thing customers will see when they interact with your business. It allows for recognition. A logo can be a symbol, or just text in a great font, or any combination. It wise to give a lot of attention to your name and logo to ensure it will still fit as your grow your business.
- **Colors** – This may seem like a trivial task – however, your brand's color palette is a very important. Different tones represent different moods and values. For example, red represents boldness and assertiveness, while

yellow represents happiness and playfulness. Your color palette should be applied to your logo as well as other content you create (e.g. website, online store, promotional material, social media posts, signage).

- **Fonts** – Similar to a color palette, a brand requires a few selected fonts. You might want to have one font for headings and another for your content. Your fonts don't have to be the same as your logo, but they should complement your logo font.
- **Brand Language** – For many different marketing platforms such as social media or your website, it is important to have a consistent description of your business: a sentence or two that you can use as a "bio" on different platforms to introduce your business.
- **Brand Voice** – Your tone and language should feel like your own personality, for example optimistic, friendly, casual and helpful, reassuring... take time to describe your business as a personality and that will help you create content with a consistent tone of voice.

WHY DO I NEED BRANDING?

Your business will generate a reputation whether you take the time to define your brand or not. Branding is the approach to maintain control of your reputation. It provides customers with context and helps them create a bond with your business. Good branding works. Here's why:

Trust

A brand is a promise. People trust businesses that are likeable and consistently deliver on a promise that they find appealing.

Appeal

Food is very visual – people want to eat food that looks good. Therefore, the better the product looks (in packaging and on its own), the more likely it is to be purchased. A consistent photo style helps to connect your products and your brand personality

Recognition

This is a huge benefit. When you have a consistent and clear brand, people will start to become familiar with it. An effective logo and colour scheme will help create familiarity and act like a short form for your business which in turn, will help you maintain and grow your customer base.

A good logo and colour scheme will help create familiarity and in turn, help you keep and grow a customer base.



HOW DO I BUILD MY BRANDING?

Determine who you want to sell to

The first step to building a successful and profitable brand, you must determine your target audience. Different audiences are attracted to different types of companies and products. The more you know about your target audiences needs and attitudes the more likely you will in be creating an appealing brand.

Determine your business value proposition

Not only must your brand speak to your target audience – but it must also declare what you do and why you do it. Why do you get up every day? In order to create a strong brand that consumers trust, you must determine what value and service you provide. It is also important to define how your business is unique. Your uniqueness could be almost anything that matters to your target audience: your mix of products, your location, your personality, etc.

Create a brand logo

Once you have a clear idea of your target audience and your purpose or value proposition, you have the basis to create a logo. Creating a logo may be the most important part of building your brand because it should not change very often. It requires some design thinking. Consider imagery that best represents what you want to say.

If creating your own logo, use a design tool to explore different ideas. Canva is a great place to get started! It's a free online design program that is easy to use! Alternatively, you may want to consider using a graphic designer or asking designer friends to see if they can help you.

Find your brand voice

A brand is not just about the visual logo or colors you choose – it is also about the text and language you use along with those elements. Every business has a specific tone and personality that comes through in their content. For example, do you speak in the first or third person?

Keep it going

After you've put all this work into creating your brand, it is essential to use it consistently at every opportunity. This includes your website, online store, social media accounts, and any other material associated with your business. The only way to build your brand and increase brand recognition is to consistently apply your brand!

HOW TO TELL YOUR BRAND STORY

WHY IS STORYTELLING EFFECTIVE?

Storytelling makes you relatable. People communicate through stories. From our early days, people used stories to package information and share knowledge, teach skills, and build relationships. This is the same today.

Stories evoke emotion and create deeper connections between the listener and the teller. By using storytelling as a marketing tool, your customers get better insight into who you are and why you do what you do. Being more personable to your customers results in customer confidence and generating a bond with your business.

Not convinced? Here's some science: In an article written by the Harvard Review, the author discusses the release of Oxytocin, a neurochemical, during storytelling. Oxytocin is a signal to the brain that is released when we are trusted or shown kindness, and "it motivates cooperation with others". This is why you feel down after a sad movie or inspired after a motivational speech. This is why storytelling works in business too!

Becoming a good storyteller is a skill that if practiced can improve over time. When telling your brand story, don't let it be an afterthought. Remember, you will never have full control of your story. It is half what you actually say, and half of how your listeners perceive your story, so think through your story and try it on some friends.

STEP 1: Figure out **who** you are talking to

Before writing anything, map out where you want the story to go. Don't focus on what you want to say, but rather what your audience needs to know.

The best way to do this is to create customer personas. These are the customer types you are trying to reach with your marketing, and the "person" you are talking to when you are telling your story. Make your customer personas as realistic as you can and maybe even give them names! This way, you are telling your story to a "real person."

STEP 2: Pick the **right** subject

After you have created your persona(s), you need to determine what you are trying to communicate.

Find commonalities and trends within your audience – their concerns, hopes, desires, and challenges. You want your story to address their problems and how you can help them.

Here is an **example** to make this more clear.

Andrew is an organic vegetable farmer who started farming 15 years ago after leaving his fast-paced job in the oil industry. He wanted to make a difference and reduce his carbon footprint.

He wanted to make food that gave back to the earth and give him and his community alternative options to traditional grocery store vegetables.

His audience personas:

Sustainable Student Steve persona: (because one of his significant sales outlets is on-campus weekly farmers' markets). Steve wants to reduce his carbon footprint, give back to his local economy, and be healthy. Steve is concerned about his meat intake, and the lack of food transparency in large retailers.

Concerned Parent Cathy persona: Cathy wants to give her kids nutritious food and lead a healthy lifestyle herself. Cathy is concerned her kids will not grow up to be healthy.

These two personas are very different; however, Andrew's story must apply to both of them. The appropriate subject for Andrew's story would be the transition to organic farming and increasing accessibility to good produce.

STEP 3: The next step is to decide the best way to communicate your story. This may differ based on your product, your customer personas, and your preferred marketing platforms. You can communicate your content in many different ways:

- Articles
- Case studies and/or reviews
- E-books
- Videos
- Infographics
- Graphics and photographs

The next step in the process is determining the best way to communicate your story. We think the best methods are through a short summary or an **About Us** page; through photographs on your social media platform and website; and through a video. Again, this may differ based on your product, your customer personas, and your preferred marketing platforms. This is an essential step, as many factors are dependent on how you are telling your story, such as text length, language and tone, and writing structure.

STEP 4: Write a draft (or **many**)

Once you have determined who audience, what you're writing about, and how you're presenting it, it's time to write! When writing a story, consider applying a typical story structure:

When writing a story, consider applying a typical story structure:

1. *Exposition* - This is the introduction. Provides the background for the story to follow and sets the scene.
2. *Rising Action* - The rising action is the point of the story where the conflict begins to brew.

The reader begins to feel the tension between characters and their environment. In other words, this is the introduction to the challenge.

3. *Climax* - This is the turning point of the challenge.

4. *Falling Action* - This is where the resolution begins, including all the actions that took place for the solution to be found.

5. *Conclusion* - The conclusion is "the now." What are you doing today and how you plan to continue this in the near and distant future.

Try mapping out your story using this structure. It might feel awkward at first but will get easier with practice. After you've written your first draft, write another one. Why? Because the first draft is just that - a draft. Writing is a process; therefore, you need to assess, re-evaluate, and try again. There are so many ways to write something. If you have multiple team members, ask them to write their version of the brand story as well. Telling a story that isn't about you can pull out different "important" points than the teller would. Collaboration is a great way to build a great brand. The first versus the third person.

STEP 5: Get **edits**

When you repeatedly read the same piece of text, you often begin to skim the content. Share it with someone! It is always great to get constructive feedback from a fresh set of eyes.

STEP 6: Share it **everywhere!**

The final step to creating a brand story is to share it. Your brand story is the backbone of your marketing, therefore be sure to share it effectively. Be sure to keep the tone, mission statement, and themes in all of your marketing activities. This will resonate with your customer base.

Remember, **your story isn't static**, just as your business isn't static. Your customer personas may change, your product may change, and you may change! Just because you wrote your brand story once, does not mean your storytelling is over.





Streamline your farm's sales process.

Local Line helps food suppliers doing direct marketing sell their products online, access new markets, and keep organized.

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