# Building your Brand

A step by step guide to developing and maintaining your brand

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SUPERCHARGED FRACTIONAL MARKETERS

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How businesses build a brand that earns trust and wins customers, and why fractional marketing is the shortcut to getting it right.



## Section 1: What brand building is really about

Your brand is the picture someone holds in their head about your business. It is the mental shortcut that makes a customer think of you first when they need what you sell. Brand building is simply the deliberate work of shaping that picture on purpose rather than leaving it to chance.

That work starts inside the business, and it starts at the top. Ask your leadership team, your managers and your front-line staff what the business stands for, and you will usually get a surprisingly wide range of answers. If the people who work for you cannot say it clearly, your customers have no hope of getting it right. Done well, this pays off where it matters most: consistent, positive brands win more customers, keep them longer and earn more from them, while neglected ones slowly do the opposite.

> **The better known your brand is, the better it performs in the marketplace, there's a direct link between brand identity, marketing activity, and the bottom line.**

## Every business already has a brand

Here is the part most owners underestimate. Every business already has a brand, whether or not anyone has ever shaped it. Every interaction, every transaction and every touchpoint adds to it, and over time all of that builds into brand equity: real value in your customers' minds that sets you apart from your competitors.

Brand equity can be positive and negative at the same time. Amazon is known as the everything store, prized for range, convenience and speed, and it spent years being criticised for its tax practices and its treatment of warehouse staff before it started addressing both more visibly. Both stories were true at once, and the job of brand building is to grow the good while dealing honestly with the bad.

You can also buy brand equity outright. Coca-Cola took a minority stake in the energy-drink brand BodyArmor and later bought it outright, a considered bet on the equity BodyArmor had already built with athletes and health-conscious buyers. If buying a brand is not on the cards, the work is to earn your own, and that is what the rest of this guide is about.

## Section 2: Getting your brand right

Building a strong brand rests on three central pillars.


### 1. Brand values

The starting point for everything else. Values have to show up in how the business actually operates, not just what it claims. Say one thing and do another, and employees and customers both notice.

### 2. Brand audit

An honest look at where the brand stands today: its position against competitors, how aware people are of it, and how they actually talk about it. Best handled by an outsider, since insiders tend to see the brand as they experience it, not as it really is.

### 3. Customer insight

Your own view is only half the picture. In a real sense, your brand is whatever your customers believe it to be. Talk to them, don't just survey them, and you'll learn what they actually want it to stand for.

**Building customer insight**

1. Start with a data audit. What do you already know about your customers?
2. Define what you're trying to learn: what they want your brand and product to deliver.
3. Pick a method, surveys, interviews or focus groups, and ask open, qualitative questions.

# Section 3: Making your brand real

Marketing, sales and service are the body language of your brand. They are how your values show up in the real world, and they are where a brand either becomes real or stays a set of words nobody believes.

Choosing where to say it matters as much as what you say. The rule is to use a few channels well rather than many badly, chosen by who actually uses them and what they return, not by which ones feel fashionable. News24 Tom and Sunday Times Jennifer might not read the same outlets, but you need to know whether they use the same platforms before you spread yourself across all of them. X, formerly Twitter, works well for real-time engagement where customers expect fast, public responses. Facebook, through Meta Ads Manager, can reach people who already know you and others who look like them. Each has a place, but only if your audience is genuinely there.

The most powerful channel is your own people. How your sales and service teams treat customers is where your values land most directly, the facial expression and the handshake behind everything you claim. Discovery Bank is a strong local example: its Vitality Money model rewards customers for managing money well, turning a banking relationship into an ongoing one rather than a series of transactions. Brand equity builds across many small encounters like that, which is why consistency across every channel matters so much.

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## The four Ps, briefly:

Classic marketing splits into four levers, and each one quietly sends a brand signal. **Product** has to match what customers actually want. **Price** signals what you believe you are worth and who you want as a customer. **Place**, where and how you sell, shapes perception before a word is spoken. **Promotion** is where you flag what makes you different from everyone else. The thread running through all four is value: set your offer and your price around what customers genuinely value, and the brand starts to feel coherent.


## Your internal brand

A brand is hollow if it does not reach the whole business, and that starts with culture. As the leader, you and your team should be able to explain what the business stands for at any moment, and then model it. You also have to listen, and because face-to-face feedback is skewed by who signs the payslips, honest anonymous feedback is gold.

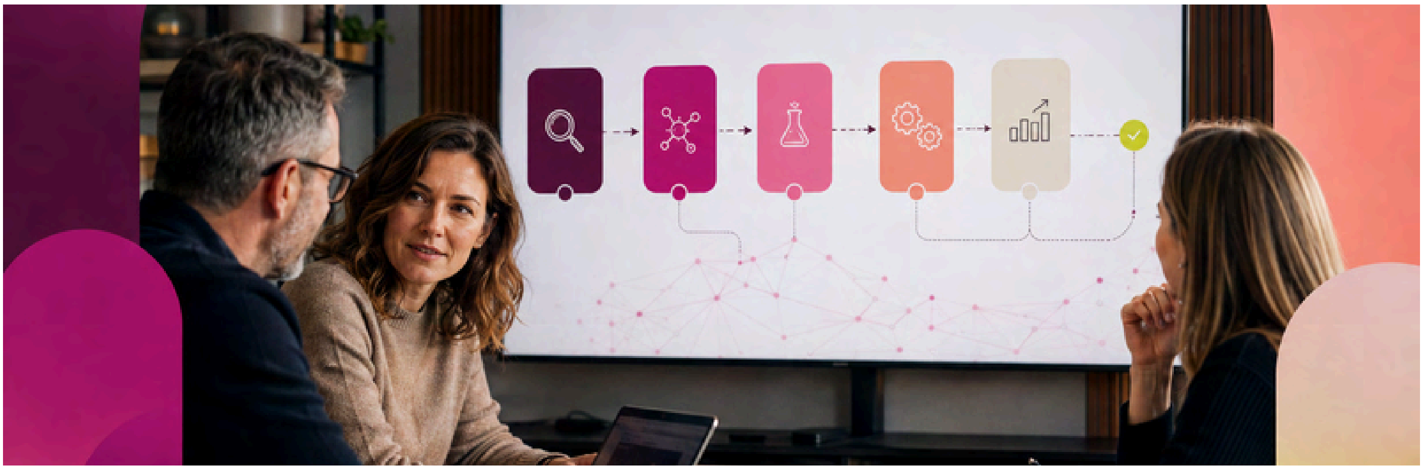
**88% of workers say company culture is important when choosing where to work, and 61% would leave their current job for a company with a better one.** (Built In, 2024)

Get the internal brand right and the external one gets far easier. People who understand where the business is going, and want to go there, carry that conviction into every customer conversation without being told to.

## Section 4: The mistakes that undo brand work

A few errors come up again and again when businesses try to build or refresh a brand. They treat a brand problem as a fix for a deeper business problem, and end up with a shinier version of the same issue. They throw away hard-won equity by changing everything at once, when their existing logo and colours already carry years of association.

They underestimate the size of the job, forgetting that a new look takes a week but a real shift in values and culture takes months. And they either fail to bring their own people along, or hand the whole decision over to them without holding a clear vision of their own. A brand with no substance behind it is just an empty promise.



## Where fractional marketing comes in

Building a brand touches values, culture, channels, research and the day-to-day behaviour of your whole team. It is a genuinely senior job, and it is a lot to carry while also running the business, which is why so many good brands stall halfway.

This is where fractional marketing earns its place. The Marketing Centre gives growing businesses access to senior marketing expertise, fractional marketing directors, managers and digital experts, on a part-time basis. They help you define what your brand stands for, audit where it stands today, and make it real across every customer touchpoint, for a fraction of the cost of a full-time hire.

A successful brand is hard to pin down, but the businesses that get there share one thing: consistency, held on purpose, across everything they do. Get that right and you will not have to explain what your business stands for. Your brand will do it for you.

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