



Redfront Cheat Sheet Developing a Brand

1) WHAT IS A BRAND?

- A brand is not just a logo, house style, tone of voice, what you do or the way you answer the phone. It's all of these and more.
- A brand is the perception of you or your organisation in the mind of the audience (the audience is made up of everyone who thinks about you, whether or not they have anything to do with you, i.e. much more than just your target market).
- A brand represents your audience's identity as much as it does your own. This is an important concept. People often buy into things because of what those things say about them and their lifestyle.
- You can't create a brand. You can only shape it. In other words, brands exist by default. All that you can do is take as much control as possible.

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2) HOW DO I SHAPE A BRAND?

- Understand other brands. Choose some companies that are completely outside of your sector, preferably in very competitive markets, such as coffee shops and mobile phone companies. Then look at everything they do. What is their essence? How do they communicate this? What can you learn from it?
- For your branding project start with what you do and who you do it (or want to do it) for. Our first cheat sheet on marketing talks about this.
- Define your specific offering. It might help to think about others who are doing similar things to you. How are you different? How are you better?
- Think about how you want to be perceived. Can you compare yourself to other brands that are completely outside your sector? In your world are you The Sun or The Guardian? Mac or PC? Starbucks or Caffe Nero?
- Think about the "four vectors" (Wally Olins). Brands are shaped through product (what you create), environment (where people experience it), behaviour (your attitude) and communications (how you tell people about yourself). These vary in importance from brand to brand.
- Make a "brand book". Create a small, portable scrap book that you can fill with everything that helps you visualise and understand your brand. Make notes about the kind of people you want to engage with, summarise what you're offering them, stick in photos, draw things and be creative. The more multimedia and lateral you can be, the better.
- Take this information and feed it into what you do. Maybe you're going to brief a graphic designer, write an article, call people on the phone, start a blog, write copy for a season brochure, design your own logo or just choose other people to work with. Whatever you do it should embody the brand you want to develop.



3) HOW DO I DEVELOP A GOOD BRAND?

- A good brand should be consistent and coherent, not just from place to place but over time, too. Resist the urge to keep tinkering with your brand. Put the effort into getting it right in the first place.
- It should be recognisable across everything it is applied to. This doesn't mean that everything has to be the same, but the different elements you use to identify your brand should fit together into an understandable whole.
- In many sectors the best brands are the ones that own a single, simple concept in the mind of the audience and that is the same for everyone, the most quoted example being Volvo = Safe. But for creative and cultural organisations and individuals it is more complicated. You might want to mean different things to different people. In this case you might need to develop a number of brands that work together. Whatever you do, keep it as simple as possible.



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