

Ep 124: 4 Ways to Set Your Brand Up for Success

The tools you need to bring your brand to life



- A brand needs to be more than the logo, but there is a limit to the number of tools you need.
 - You must have the fundamental strategic things we talk about including and starting with brand positioning and story.
 - When it comes to visualizing your toolkit, you need to have some supporting elements to carry the brand. And it can be light. The elements include things like supplementary colors, photography direction/treatments, patterns, textures, iconography. you do NOT need to develop all of this immediately, but you do need to have 2-3 of these in addition to your logo, font and primary color. (more than on font is also needed)
 - The importance of these elements are to add depth and variability to the brand in a controlled manner. And if you do not add these elements to the toolkit, you will have folks taking liberties with your brand that mean it will not be consistent. Once this starts, it is really hard to get it back under control.
- The verbal components of a brand are just as important as the visual ones, but admittedly harder to tackle.
 - What we are talking about here is brand character (personality), TOV and messaging. And unfortunately, these things get left out fairly often. At best, sometimes clients have a tagline. Many don't even have that.
 - When you can "see" something, it makes it easier to evaluate. Here, you are trying to define your brand in terms of people characteristics- in other words "how" you talk about your brand, whether that be the people that work there, or the messaging and executions you put out in to the world.
 - We often see brands and have clients that get through the visualization to the point that is needed but not this portion. You need both. Again, this does not have to be super intensive- meaning you don't have to go to a full messaging strategy right off the bat. But you should have at least 3-5 personality traits that represent your brand (funny, outgoing, authentic) and 3-4 TOV principles that build the parameters for verbal communication. (Character is the foundational element that mirrors the positioning and story. TOV and messaging are the tools in the toolkit)
- The vehicles that work best for your brand should inform which tools you create, but also be flexible to change.
 - Brands that we come in to help often already exist in the world. This can be a challenge, but it can also be helpful when we can work backwards a bit and use the communication vehicles that are working to define which brand elements we need now and which can wait.
 - What do we mean by this? If your social media has taken off in a big way, then your TOV and your additional visual elements should be developed to capture this success. What posts do the best? That probably indicates the tone that is connecting with your consumers. Which posts really "pop" (or not) visually? This likely indicates what additional visual elements you need.
 - Of course, as your brand matures, the vehicles that work will likely shift. Or you will decide to tackle new vehicles which might mean you need more elements. But taking what you do well and using it to ensure you have the right brand elements is a smart move.
 - Test and learn! Don't be afraid to create, put it out there, and then see what reactions you get. This takes the pressure off tremendously and can get to fast results.
- As the brand matures, the brand components need to expand and grow, but should not be reinvented each time.
 - A brand is a living, breathing thing, just like people. So that means it will change and hopefully mature over time. And yes, there can be moments in time when you may need to rebrand in a truly revolutionary way.
 - If you are keeping up with your brand as it grows, you will be tweaking it along the way to create a richer, broader experience for your audience. (i.e. new product introduction, new consumer target, entering an adjacent pillar of the business, innovation in general)
 - We very rarely recommend throwing the baby out with the bath water and starting completely over. This happens if you have let your brand stagnate to the point that it has become completely irrelevant. But if you do what we are talking about in this episode and are vigilant, 9/10 times there is not a need for a complete reinvention. (Also, reinvention does not come without its challenges. While exciting, it also takes A LOT of investment to get both internal and external audiences to connect with the brand on a deep level.)