ual: london college of fashion



Illustration by Danya Vassanth

Understanding branding and value for your business

LCF Graduate Futures

What is branding?

Your brand is how people perceive your company. Branding is a set of actions you can take to cultivate your brand. When you design a logo, write copy for your website, create a social media campaign or partner up with an influencer, you are developing your branding. Any action you take to shape your brand is branding.

Why do you need branding?

Your branding strategy guides how people perceive and experience your brand. It ensures that your brand stays consistent across all channels.

- **Build brand recognition:** Your brand should be recognisable to your audiences. Developing assets that translate your identity, from logo to website to tone of voice, is essential.
- **Stand out from the competition:** There are a lot of competitors in the creative industry market. You need branding to show how special, different and unique your brand is and why customers should buy into it.
- **Engage with customers:** A branding strategy will help you connect with the right audience, engaging them on a deeper level. It will transform a buyer into a brand advocate.

What makes a strong brand?

A strong brand has focus and purpose. It creates positive, lasting impressions through action. Think about Apple, Coca-Cola and Nike. They became cultural icons by presenting fulfilling, meaningful and consistent messages. Knowing what you stand for, your ‘why’, is as important as your product. Knowing your brand purpose is the smartest foundation to become distinctive and unique.

- How do you want the brand to be perceived?
- What will consumers see in your brand that motivates them to buy?
- How do you want them to feel when buying your product?

> A brand is the sum of the tangible and intangible benefits provided by a product or service and encompasses the entire customer experience.
>
> Chartered Institute of Marketing

Value Proposition

You should always be clear about your value proposition. Showing your brand's purpose, beyond the desire to make a profit, will help drive your commercial value. A value proposition is a promise of the value your brand will deliver. It is the primary reason a client should buy from you. You can write it down as a statement that includes:

- **Offer:** How does your product solve customer problems or improve their situation?
- **Benefits:** How is it different or better than the competition?
- **Why me:** Why is your brand the best choice for your audience?

Businesses need to be original, genuine and authentic in today's digital world. Consumers are looking for experiences that engage them in a personal way. They choose to buy or not buy based on how 'real' they perceive a brand to be.

Build your branding assets

By developing a combination of tangible and intangible elements, you will bring your brand identity to life.

Tangible elements

This is anything that you can see, touch, feel or have a sensory experience with.

- **Visual identity:** For example your logo, colours, typography, graphics/motifs, photography or packaging.
- **Verbal identity:** For example your name, tagline and tone of voice.

Intangible elements

This is your brand's essence expressed by values, purpose and storytelling. You can follow the five-phase process proposed by Aline Wheeler to define these.

Conduct Research
Research the market, your target consumer and competitors to find gaps and opportunities. Talk to potential customers to gather as much feedback as you can about your idea.

Clarify DNA
Write your mission statement (mission, vision, values). Choose the brand name and define your key message. The mission statement is a short statement that describes the company's philosophies and goals. It presents what it does (mission) and where it aspires to be (vision) by applying a set of operating principles (values).



Work by Yi Yuan Wang

Design Identity
Develop your visual and verbal approaches. Make moodboards that include images, fonts, symbols, colours, texture swatches, words, quotes and anything else that represents what you want the brand to communicate.

Create Touchpoints
Seek trademark protection if needed. Start testing the design identity in prototypes.

Manage Assets
Develop standards and guidelines that your brand content must adhere to.

Review elements

Go back to your potential customers, test your branding, products or services before the official launch. You may need to adapt your offer, to make the brand more competitive and relevant.

Useful Links

- Simon Sinek's Golden Circle TED Talk:
- Stella McCartney on her brand purpose
- Patagonia: the Sustainability Champions
- Emily Weiss on how Glossier was born as the first socially driven beauty brand



Student working on laptop, Camberwell College of Arts, Ana Blumenkron