

Branding

Every business wants to be a customer's first choice. Building and managing a brand can play a significant part in making that happen.

The concept of a brand extends far beyond just your company logo to your business' core values and to every interaction you have with customers and suppliers. In effect, your brand creates and maintains your reputation and so reflects your customers' experience of your organisation.

Your brand is what you are really selling to your customers, not just a product or service for which there may already be many existing providers. A strong brand can make any business stand out from the crowd, particularly in competitive markets.

To build a successful brand you should:

- Focus on what your business achieves for its customers. Your brand is no good to you if it isn't delivering what customers want.
- Take ownership of your brand. Pay attention to customers' needs, but you should still control what you want your brand to mean to them.
- Be honest. If you don't believe in your brand, no one else will.
- Keep your brand simple by focusing on a small number of key brand values.
- Be consistent. Every aspect of your business should make customers feel the same way about you.
- Be thorough. Look at all your systems to make sure they help to support your brand.
- Involve employees. Make sure they understand your brand and believe in it.
- Communicate your brand. Make sure every advertisement, brochure and letter helps reinforce the same message. If you have a logo, use it everywhere, but make sure the quality is consistent.
- Meet and exceed what your brand promises. Failing, just once, will damage your brand.
- Manage your brand. Continually look for opportunities to make improvements. And don't be afraid to make changes to reflect shifts in the way you do business or new trends in your market.