

My 5 Top Tips for **BRANDING YOUR SME.**



1. Be **BOLD.**

Being bold is NOT about being arrogant, intrusive or in your face.

Nor is it about painting everything neon and shouting "look at me!" across every social media channel.

When I talk about brands being bold, I'm talking about focus, ambition and drive.

In the highly cluttered world we live in, brands that are hesitant or wishy-washy fall by the wayside, whilst **brands that clearly stand for something of value attract customers effortlessly.**

The difference can come down to simple self-belief, confidence and clarity.

Try writing down:

- **Exactly where you want your business to be & what you want it to achieve (vision / purpose)**
- **Broadly how to get there & achieve it (mission)**
- **What specific value your offer brings.**

Keep it short, simple & strong. Your big picture view should excite you and make others want to be a part of it. If you don't know where to start, or are struggling to articulate your thinking, I can help!

2. Be

REAL.

If you want to build a business that lasts, then authenticity is where it's at.

Delivering real, meaningful value involves first finding out exactly what your target audience wants (and then giving it to them).

Don't over promise and risk under-delivering.

Do what you say you will and, if you get it wrong, hold your hands up, apologise and make it right.

Don't copy, don't lie and don't deploy 'smoke and mirrors' tactics. Life is just too short for fakes.

Be true to your brand at all times.

Try writing down:

- **The specifics of how you're going to deliver on your offer**
- **The core values that you stand for and are ready to defend and enforce**

Keep it credible and specific to you. Avoid buzzwords, like "excellence", and, instead, use language that feels "doable". Want to sense check your thinking? I'm here.

3. Be

AUDIENCE - CENTRED.

When small business owners are told “you are your brand”, that’s only partly true. Your brand is way bigger than you.

It lives in the hearts and minds of everyone who engages with you – customers, partners, employees, investors, etc.

Your brand value depends upon the perceptions of all your different audiences. Who are they? What do they want or need from you? How will you meet that need?

Don't guess or assume.

Instead, sense-check, ask and research. Otherwise, you could be wasting a ton of time, money & effort.

Try writing down:

- **Everyone that you engage with + their needs / pain points. Don't get caught up in specifics (age, financial status etc.) unless they're directly relevant - otherwise you risk excluding people.**
- **Prioritise your "who" and work out "how" you'll meet their needs.**

Validate your thinking - do a survey, interviews, etc. Find out what works/doesn't. Remember that people talk more freely to an independent consultant (did I mention that I can help with stakeholder consultation?)

4. Be

NIMBLE.

Time is money.

To really hit your brand running, don't let yourself get bogged down in unnecessary detail.

When it comes to brand building, it's the quality of the initial thinking that makes the difference - so **make your thinking future proof and focused.**

Think ahead - you never know what's around the corner or if your business will want to diversify or need to pivot - but don't over-think it.

Start-up strategy should be reviewed every few months.. Scale-up strategy should hold good for 3-5 years without needing a refresh, but your business will need to flex and adapt in the meantime.

Try writing down:

- **All the basic elements for your brand strategy (vision, mission, values, style, USP etc.) on just one page**
- **Sense check a few prospective business decisions against it (potential products, services, premises etc.) - do they align?**
- **Specific details for your short-term delivery goals (quick hits, 6-month goals, 12-month goals)**

Keep the long term high level. Save the detail for the short term. Sense check, sense check, sense check!

5. Be

DIFFERENT.

Ahhh.... saving the best 'til last!

You want a brand, not a bland, right?

So, if **you're not doing something different, stop doing it now.**

Standing out from the crowd doesn't have to be about WHAT you're offering, it may be more about HOW you're offering it – your style, your method of delivery, your pricing approach etc.

No one owns the concept of originality & you can define your own different – but your USP (unique selling proposition) has to be clearly articulated before it can be really appreciated.

Write down

- **3 ways that you're similar to your competitors**
- **3 ways that you're different from them**
- **In 10 words or less, exactly WHY your ideal client should buy your offer.**

Don't just look at how your competitors look, listen to what they're saying and analyse what they're offering. Only claim to be the 'first', 'best' or 'only' of something if it's *both* true *and* has value. But *always* avoid being "one of..." a crowd of anything!

Be

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DIFFERENT.**

It's a lot to think about - but it's essential that you pay your brand the strategic attention that it's due because strong, sustainable brands are only built on solid, well considered foundations.

Your brand strategy is the blueprint for your business.

So, look beyond marketing to consider how you can apply your strategy to your whole business. e.g. Do your policies & processes match your brand values? Does your approach to team development really help you attract and retain the people who fit with your company culture? Does your office environment reflect your brand personality and approach?

I specialise in helping SMEs to use strategic branding to scale-up their businesses, building deeper, broader connections with their audiences and driving sustainable competitive advantage.

If you'd like to know more about how I can help, message me on branding@rachelvigers.com