

# 5 TOP TIPS!

## Small business brands need to be...

**B**old

Being bold is NOT about being arrogant, intrusive, in your face or 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 vs brands that stand for something of value & attract customers effortlessly. The difference can come down to simple self-belief, confidence and clarity. Be purposeful!

**R**eal

88% of consumers say that authenticity is a key factor when deciding what brands they like and support (Stackla, 2021). So keep it real! 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 too short for fakes. Be true to your brand at all times.

**A**udience-led

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. Who are they? What do they want/need from you? How will you meet that need? Don't guess or assume. Instead, sense-check, ask and research. Don't waste a ton of time, money & effort getting it wrong and having to back-track.

**N**imble

Time is money. To hit your brand running, don't get bogged down in unnecessary detail. When it comes to branding, the quality of the upfront thinking can make all the difference, and that thinking needs to be focused and future proof. You never know what's around the corner or if your business will suddenly need to diversify or pivot. Your brand strategy should hold good for at least 5 years without needing a refresh, as long as it allows your business the flex it needs.

**D**ifferent

Ahhh.... saving the best 'til last! You want a brand, not a bland, right? 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. Why choose your brand over others?