



## Designing a successful brand

Your brand can be your business' most important asset. A strong brand can make any business stand out from the crowd. Every time a customer comes into contact with your business, your brand image will create an impression on them.

To create a successful brand, you can work with designers on everything from the look and feel of your website to the design of your stationery. Your brand should project a consistent and distinctive image of your business.

This guide explains why design is a useful a set of tools and processes for your business to exploit when undertaking a brand development project. This guide also outlines ways to help you create a successful brand, how to ensure brand consistency and the value of online branding.

It is aimed at your business if you are looking to launch a new brand, refresh or rebrand an existing business, product or service.

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## The relationship between branding and design

It is important to understand design, its relationship with branding and what it can do for your business.

While branding and brand building are complex, strategic activities, there is almost always a vital creative design component too - for example, the Nike 'swoosh', which is a simple, yet effective, logo that conveys energy and movement, and is appropriate to a company that makes performance sportswear.

Graphic design is one type of design that can create a brand image for your business. If you sell products, you can also design the look and feel of the retail environment in which you choose to market them, whether on a website, in a franchise in a department store or in a shop of your own. You could employ a retail designer or a website designer to help you determine the look and functionality of your retail environment, and to ensure that it communicates your business' brand essence.

If your business delivers a service in your own offices, you could work with an office designer to create a space that expresses your brand and gives visitors a clear idea of what your business stands for.

Your corporate identity is made up of the visible elements of your business, including:

- logo
- business and brand names
- any specific colours you use in your logo, branding, premises, etc
- letterhead
- advertising
- packaging
- website
- retail environment or office

See a flowchart that illustrates the relationship between brand and design -  
Opens in a new window.

Well-managed design of new products and services can:

- improve customer satisfaction
- strengthen brand image
- help promote your business to new customers

For more information, see the page in this guide on online branding.

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## Choosing a logo and brand name

Your logo and brand name are part of your corporate identity, which includes the visual elements people associate with your business, such as your letterhead, business cards, packaging and advertising.

A common belief is that a brand is simply a logo. The logo is just one part of a brand - although it's often the element that's most widely seen and remembered.

A logo should embody the key ingredients of the brand in a distinctive, recognisable way. For more information, see our page on branding - the key ingredients in our guide on branding: the basics.

Creating a logo can help your business by:

- enhancing the experience you deliver
- improving the feeling of brand spirit across the business
- representing a reassurance
- acting as a guarantee of quality

To create a logo, you will probably need to commission a graphic designer. They will make sure the logo is designed so that it can be printed or reproduced according to the media you use, it conveys the right message about the business and fits with your business image and branding. You can read about finding a designer in our guide on choose and work with a designer.

Your brand name is important in setting the tone and personality of your brand and should reflect your overall brand strategy. However, choosing the right one can be difficult. It's important to check that names aren't already in use and protected by law. You can find out whether your brand name has been filed as a trade mark on the Intellectual Property Office website - Opens in a new window.

A brand name may be:

- **descriptive** - the name states what the brand is or what the product or service does
- **evocative** - it suggests associations to the brand without describing the offer precisely
- **abstract** - it makes no reference to the nature of the business

To manage a naming and logo design project you might commission a graphic designer who is used to creating visual languages that communicate values as well as information.

A whole range of design elements can convey a brand and help make it successful - for example:

- colour
- shape

- name
  - touch/materials
  - sound
  - illustration
  - typography
  - environment - see the page in this guide on user-centred design and experience design
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## How do I create a successful brand?

There are several design tips you can follow to help you create a successful brand, including:

- **Keep it simple** - building a brand doesn't have to be complicated. It can start with a clean, simple typeface that's followed consistently through all corporate materials. Design can help make a concept easy to understand.
  - **Make your offering distinctive** - this could be as simple as your choice of colour in design or packaging - one which no other competitors are using - and creates an impression in consumers' minds.
  - **Be consistent** - every aspect of your brand should make customers feel the same way about you. You can read more about consistency on the page in this guide on ensuring brand consistency
  - **Listen to and understand your customers** - your brand is no good to you if it isn't delivering what customers want. See our page on your brand and your customers in our guide on branding: the basics. You can also see the page in this guide about user-centred design and experience design.
  - **Communicate your brand** - make sure every advertisement, brochure and letter helps reinforce the same message. If you have a logo, use it whenever possible.
  - **Manage your brand** - continually look for opportunities to make improvements. You can read more about brand management on the page on brand management techniques in our guide on branding: the basics.
  - **Involve your employees** - make sure they understand the brand and believe in it. You can read more about involving employees on the page on your brand and your staff in our guide on branding: the basics.
  - **Create an aspirational brand** - pay attention to customers' needs, but control what you want your brand to mean to them, creating something customers can aspire to. For example, visible aspects of mobile phones are typically carefully designed to project a lifestyle image.
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## Ensuring brand consistency

Consistency is an important part of branding and brand management.

You should build the same attributes and characteristics into all areas of your business' operations, all stemming from your 'big idea' - see our page on branding - the key ingredients in our guide on branding: the basics.

When creating your brand, it's important to consider how it can be applied consistently across different media, from online and print, to billboards and packaging.

After working through a branding project, your designer should leave you with **brand guidelines** to ensure consistency.

These will detail how the different design elements should be applied in different situations, contexts and scales.

The brand guidelines will include information on how the following should be used whenever the brand appears:

- typography - the layout and style of lettering, including typefaces and fonts
- graphics - images, design, etc
- colours
- materials
- templates

More detailed brand guidelines may include areas such as cultural or behavioural directions for staff training.

You can use these brand guidelines to manage the brand after the designer's work on the project is completed, to ensure you maintain brand consistency and - most importantly - your original big idea.

Consistency in the application of brand attributes can help a business move into a new market sector without changing its core brand identity. For example, application of the Tesco brand, such as ease of access and low price, has allowed the business to move into new market sectors including financial services and mobile phones.

You can see examples of design and branding on the Design Council website - [Opens in a new window.](#)

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## User-centred design and experience design

To have the best chance of creating a successful product, service and brand, you need to get a true understanding of the needs of your customer. **User-centred design** is based on this concept.

User-centred design techniques involve engaging directly with consumers in the early stages of the design process and involving them throughout. That way you can be sure of creating a product or service that people value and find easy to use.

For more information, see our guide on user-centred design.

Today, successful companies are putting the customer at the centre of their business. **Experience design** looks at the moments of interaction between people and brands. The moment a person connects with a brand and the memories these moments create, combine to shape perceptions and influence them buying a product from that brand in the future. Experience design is concerned with the development of those brand moments that we want, not the intrusive brand marketing that we don't want.

You can read examples of successful brand experiences on the Design Council website - [Opens in a new window.](#)

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## Deciding the brand that's best for you

There are a variety of things that can help with your brand depending on the development stage of your brand.

### Creating a new brand

At the start of a new business, you have a unique chance to launch a brand that challenges the conventions of the sector - a 'challenger brand'. Small businesses

will often need to start developing their brand from scratch, including designing a logo. Read more about choosing a logo on the page in this guide on choosing a logo and brand name.

### **Reassessing your brand**

Keeping your communications fresh is essential but you do not necessarily have to start from the very beginning. When reassessing your brand, you must decide whether to go for small changes or a major overhaul.

### **Reinvigorating your brand**

Generally, reinvigorating your brand is better if you are already in a strong position with a solid customer base. Using designers to help with this process every few years should be an ongoing investment rather than a costly extra.

For more information, see the page in this guide on online branding.

### **Rebranding**

Rebranding might be better if your customer base is declining, the market has changed substantially or you have no point of difference from your competitors. It can be a good idea to hire a designer to look at the current state of your company and explore possibilities for developing it. For further guidance, see our guide on how to choose and work with a designer.

### **Brand stretch and sub brands**

Applying a single brand identity to other products or services is called **brand stretch**. Read how Virgin, EasyGroup and Tesco apply a single brand identity to sub-brands on the Design Council website - [Opens in a new window](#). However, sometimes it can be more effective to develop a completely new and distinct brand to meet new markets.

For more information, see our guide on branding: the basics.

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## **Online branding**

Websites are increasingly important for many businesses to reach new customers and keep existing ones so it's important to have a brand that works online. Potential customers make emotional buying decisions based on website design and imagery.

Larger companies will have specific brand guidelines that their web designers will need to incorporate, which dictate style, colours and fonts, and how and where the logo can be positioned.

Small businesses will often need to start developing their brand from scratch, including designing a logo. A web designer can often help you with this. You can read about commissioning a designer in our guide on how to choose and work with a designer.

For example in 2000, National Savings rebranded as NS&I. The website and online sales were limited, so in 2005, it relaunched the site using clear, simple and accessible design. Within two months, NS&I's online sales were up from £3 million to £47 million. You can read an NS&I case study on the Design Council website - [Opens in a new window](#).

It is often recommended to employ a specialist web design business to help you do your customer research, plan the scope of your website and improve the

performance of your branding. You could also use a web designer to help you design and create a website suited to your customers.

A web design agency can also help your business by:

- moving your brand onto the web, ensuring the values and identity of your business are clear and well presented
- writing or rewriting the content on your website to attract and engage visitors and display your brand
- working on your business identity and brand

You can read a step-by-step guide to getting a great website on the Design Council website - [Opens in a new window.](#)

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## **Here's how I designed a successful brand for my business (Flash video)**

### **Vincent McKeivitt**

Tossed - [Opens in a new window](#)

### **Vincent's top tips:**

- "Be consistent - consumers seek comfort in the brands they know and love, as they know what they are getting."
  - "Be honest - Don't try and pull the wool over your customers' eyes. If you say you do something, do it!"
  - "Create a dialogue - with the internet and social media, brand dialogues work both ways now."
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Tossed is a chain of salad bars founded by entrepreneur Vincent McKeivitt. After opening the first store in Paddington in 2005, Tossed appointed design agency Honey Creative to design a brand for the business.

Here, founder and Managing Director Vincent McKeivitt talks about how the branding of his business has helped it to grow.

This video case study uses language and imagery which some viewers may find offensive.

- [Read transcript](#) - Opens in a new window
  - [Listen to audio only](#) (mp3, 4.6MB)
  - [Help](#)
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### **Related guides on [businesslink.gov.uk](http://businesslink.gov.uk)**

[Branding: the basics](#)

[Choose and work with a designer](#)

[What different design disciplines could do for your business](#)

[User-centred design](#)

[Sustainable design](#)

[Use our interactive tool to investigate what will be the best advertising media for your business](#)

[Design for technology businesses](#)

[Use innovation to grow your business](#)

[Use trade marks in your business](#)

[Look up trade marks](#)

[Use our interactive tool to investigate what kind of website is best for your business](#)

[Best practice in web design](#)

### **Related web sites you might find useful**

**Download the power of branding guide from the Design Council website (PDF, 1.16MB)**

[http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/Documents/Documents/Publications/Power\\_of\\_branding.pdf](http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/Documents/Documents/Publications/Power_of_branding.pdf)

**Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys information on the ITMA website**

<http://www.itma.org.uk/>

**Successful brand experience examples on the Design Council website**

<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/brandexperience>

**Single brand identity guidance on the Design Council website**

<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources-and-events/Business-and-public-sector/Guides/The-power-of-branding/Brand-management-techniques/>

**NS&I case study on the Design Council website**

<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/nsandi>

**Successful website design explained on the Design Council website**

<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/gettingawebsite>

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