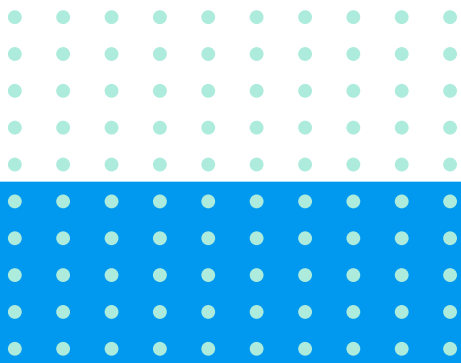


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Brand Development Strategy that wins customers & drives growth



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Contents

Intro: What is a brand development strategy?	3
Minimum Viable Brand Checklist	4
Isn't "brand" just a fluffy marketing word? Why should I care?	5
How do we get started?	7
A good example of living your brand	8
Winning hearts and minds	9
Structuring your brand strategy	9
Seven reasons to pursue a brand development strategy	11
Elevating your brand positioning strategy to excellence	12
About Incisive Edge	12

What is a brand development strategy?

A brand development strategy is a **long-term plan devised by companies to ensure the brand is desirable and identifiable by customers.**

It's what people buy into and how you win the hearts and minds of your audience.

A brand development strategy should ideally include the brand's promise, its identity, and its mission. It is the role of the marketer to align the brand strategy with the business' overall vision and mission.

But there is one thing alone that determines a business' success. Engagement. If you can't get your potential customers to engage with you, it doesn't matter how awesome your product is, or how kick-ass your support team are, your potential customers won't hang around long enough to find out.

So, a couple of top tips to begin with:

- Don't get caught up on the logo design. Your brand is how your audience will learn to identify your organisation and connect with you and how you establish loyal customers over time. Your brand is not an expensive logo.
- Don't try to copy Apple/Google/Amazon's brand strategies and expect similar results for your brand. It won't work. It is highly unlikely that you will have the budget and further, to be successful, your brand development strategy needs to be authentic to your business and highlight your points of difference and what it is that you really care about.





Minimum Viable Brand Checklist:

Even as a scaling business, your MVB (Minimum Viable Brand) checklist includes the baseline deliverables you'll require to present yourself to the outside world.

These can all be simple and to a greater extent are obvious. However, they are necessary to get your brand onto the right footing.

You'll need these checklist items to create your website and any email outreach, social posts or campaign materials, together with pushing out on the other channels you're using to connect with potential customers, partners, investors and future employees etc.

Visual

Logo

Font

Primary style colour

Secondary style colour

Text style colour

CTA style colour

Messaging

Brand positioning statement

Value proposition

Brand story

Tone of voice guidelines

Aspirational

Company vision

Company mission

Company values

Isn't "brand" just a fluffy marketing word? Why should I care?

In a world where we hear talk about "incremental gains"; adding the "one percents" and the power of organisational culture, brand is the external world's view of your business' commitment to those difference makers.

Clearly, brand won't appear as a lead source in your CRM, or be directly attributable to closed won business, but it is no exaggeration to say that it has the ability to influence every single deal your business does.

Beyond that, great brand strategy influences far more than the bottom line. It will touch every element of your engagement with the outside world, from staffing, to partnerships, to a customer's perception of how it feels to do business with you.

Your brand (and particularly your values) are important for keeping your employees engaged. You want them to feel proud about where they work, and what they do. Your employees are your brand ambassadors. You want them to shout from the rooftops about all the awesome stuff you're doing, and you want their networks to see and hear it.

Brand allows potential customers to easily identify your company, to engage with you, and for you to create a feeling of familiarity which nurtures them until they are ready to buy.

The focus of your brand should be "establishing connection" regardless of the touch point or channel. Your brand should be a powerful tool in helping you stand out from the competition and create a momentary, but lasting impression on your prospect or customer.



Your brand is more than a sharp looking or witty logo. As in the checklist on page 3, there are multiple elements beyond design. Your brand needs to convey your company values, your mission and what you stand for so you can build your tribe. It exists within every single activity your organisation undertakes.

Too many businesses think having a great product is enough. It might be sufficient to grow to a select base, and even keep a few sticky customers, but the reality is we live in a world where people need to be convinced by some style, before they ever see your substance.

Your business won't succeed without a great brand development, coupled with a revenue-driving marketing strategy to engage potential customers.

Without these, most people won't get as far as seeing your ground-breaking products.



How do we get started?

Remember, we are thinking bigger than just a design refresh.

The good news for marketers is that any business leader with their finger on the pulse will have seen the astronomic rise of businesses such as Monzo and GoCardless on the back of strong brand identity. With those great examples, it is easier to draw parallels to some of the historically smaller elements of brand, which might not have been obvious to those outside the marketing function in years gone by.

Great branding takes into consideration market fit, product type, organisational values and more. You should be able to call upon examples of your company's voice and how it demonstrates that in its outward facing activities.

To give your strategy (any strategy) every chance of success, it needs to be built on solid foundations. However, this is usually the part that's ignored or not given the attention it deserves.

The good news is, while no strategy is guaranteed for success, there are certain steps you can take to increase the likelihood that you will have an impact on prospects or customers with a great brand.

Ultimately, the way to build a brand is by capturing the themes which make your business who you are. The people who make your business run are often a great place to start when it comes to brand building. Look within your company and engage employees to paint a picture of – and create, the brand you want to build.



Construct questions directed at building the elements of brand within our checklist, and put it to your trusted employees. You can do this as a written feedback form, or as part of an internal meeting/ workshop. Whichever you think will create the most engagement and valuable input.

Is there consistency across the words used? Can similar language be grouped together so you can distil this down into a few descriptive words? Review the distilled version and feedback to your team. Does this final shortlist convey your brand's personality?

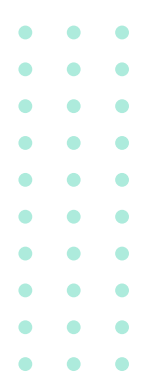
The logical next step is to look across your market and see how those common themes position you in comparison to the other businesses targeting your prospects. Choose from the terminology your business has identified as relevant to your brand and see what is the most true, to your market fit.



A good example of living your brand

Taking the example of Monzo one step further, it is immediately evident that they chose to position themselves as the new disruptor in the banking space. Not only taking on the persona you might expect from a technology disruptor, but also coining the term "challenger bank"; one which is now well recognised in the industry, as a result of their superb branding.

In Monzo's language, aesthetic and service, they deliberately zagged hard away from the industry norms, and appealed to the values of accessibility and disruption with all customer interactions, from website and app design, down to physical marketing with the card and card delivery mechanism.



As the bank has grown and they've been able to add resources, their authenticity to their brand has led to one of the most influential B2B social media teams out there today. If you're not already following them on LinkedIn, take a look. Challengers are a great example of living your brand and delivering the brand message in and across every interaction with the customer, beyond the simple expectation.



Winning hearts and minds

Brand is about building an emotional connection with your audience and employees. If you get this right, you win the hearts and minds of those within and outside your organisation.

In this section, we'll touch on the criteria you can use to establish your own brand strategy.

Whilst this is intended to give you a helpful starting point, it certainly isn't an exhaustive list of everything you'll need for a complete brand. Rather, it is a starting point for companies that recognise the need for brand as part of their growth strategy.




Structuring your brand strategy

A B2B brand strategy is an action plan for setting your brand apart from other companies in your industry and gaining a competitive advantage. It focuses on building the unique messaging associated with your brand voice, identifying the principles and belief systems that encapsulate your brand values, and making incremental improvements to the customer experience, so that your unique brand identity shines out to your target audience and inspires brand loyalty.

The next step we recommend is to map out your organisation's mission and brand values using key stakeholders in the business. Critically, your organisation's mission and values are squarely focused on you as the business, and less focused on carving out your niche in the marketplace.

Identify the core values of your brand and develop statements for your brand mission and brand vision.

This stage is critical in establishing your unique brand identity and its physical expression. Areas such as your corporate brand logo, tag line, and other identifying markers come into play here. All of these elements will assist your sales and



marketing teams in creating content that reflects your brand identity and brand values.

With your vision internally, and externally documented, it is time to begin putting together some written and agreed-upon deliverables which allow your business to be consistent in its communication. As we have already touched upon, it is critical that the deliverables you create around your brand are authentic to your business, not simply the values of a market leader.

A successful B2B branding strategy should have written deliverables for all of the below:

- Brand positioning statement which articulates your position in the market
- Value proposition that shows people why to buy from you vs others
- Brand tone of voice which is authentic and appropriate
- Brand story that resonates with the needs of your target market

As you construct this list of deliverables, consider measures for the penetration of your brand strategy. The more quantitative and codifiable these measures are, the better.

Top Tip

Use customer feedback capture to measure and assess the words which your customers associate with your business. These key words should be closely linked to the brand vision for your business, and ideally contain the same terminology.

Next, use that terminology, and documented vision/values to inform all elements of your brand. It is extremely important that your visual branding can be held up, side by side with your messaging, mission, values etc. and belong .

Beyond your marketing department, the way that your recruitment, payments, sales and other customer interactions take place must also fall in line with the brand values you have agreed upon. The buy-in to your brand must come from the top-down, and be lived by the leadership team rather than squarely owned by marketing.

Seven reasons to pursue a brand development strategy

A consistent and desirable brand will allow you to:

1. Gain your customers' attention
2. Stand out in a competitive market
3. Build loyalty
4. Increase prices. The cheapest price isn't a factor when people have bought into your brand, values and your company's mission.
5. Increase market share
6. Retain focused employees
7. Increase credibility

It's common that leadership teams and founders understand the above benefits of a great brand, but feel they lack the time to fully pursue it. Although the activities described in this guide can be time consuming and require careful attention to the market your business has entered, the net result will be greater revenue, and more time for your staff. This is achieved through a consistent external image, and a resource that empowers staff to act quickly and with purpose when representing the company brand.

The list of benefits makes for compelling reading. How much are these 7 points worth in your annual budget to see the benefits achieved?

Taking the time to create an authentic and compelling brand before engaging in the more tactical elements of marketing will act as a force multiplier in your other campaigns.

Top Tip

Ensure your leaders from all departments have strong input to your branding exercises and are bought into the outcome. Don't publish anything without giving them the opportunity to have visibility and to feedback, so that when it is time to release your brand strategy, the whole organisation is encouraged to "live" the values.

Elevating your brand positioning strategy to excellence

If you're not sure where to start or want to move more quickly than your internal resource allows; or if you would like to step up your current brand positioning, we are here to help.

Our team of real-world experts have led marketing teams across the B2B landscape and delivered projects for every type of business.

We will listen to your specific situation and form a strategy that works for you, whilst ensuring your brand development project delivers the output needed, on time and to budget.

[BOOK A 30 MINUTE IM CONSULTATION.](#)



About Incisive Edge

Incisive Edge is a strategy-first B2B marketing agency. Our expertise lies in customer acquisition. We have more than ten years of experience delivering high quality strategic marketing projects for our customers across the entire B2B landscape.

Our specialisms are centred around core marketing concepts including brand strategy, Go to Market, inbound strategies, SEO, and pipeline generation.

We're the digital marketing agency for growth-obsessed B2B companies.