

# Branding!

Everything You Need to Know to Build a Digital Brand

Clicked  
Studios

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# Start here.

Let's get right to the point. A brand can be your most valuable asset in the world of business. It is the way people perceive your company and in today's media saturated world, perception often ends up substituting reality.

If you take your brand seriously you have an opportunity to mold people's perception of your company and drastically affect your earnings, the kinds of customers you attract, and even the potential opportunities and partnerships that might come your way.

With so much riding on your brand, it is a logical conclusion that spending time and resources on this strategic element is one of the smartest decisions you can make. Whether you're leading a fast growing start-up or navigating rough waters at a company losing ground against its competition, there is a way to make your brand strong so it can achieve its objectives, whatever they may be.

By continuing your journey through this guide, you'll learn about topics like **the proven benefits of branding**, **the process of building a brand**, **how much to invest** and **the ROI you can expect to see from branding**, and **how to choose the right branding partner** to help you achieve your goals.





# What is branding?

We can't understand branding if don't first clearly define it.

To most newcomers branding is thought of the logo or a tagline a company uses. Branding goes much deeper than that though.

Branding is the perception of your company. How your company looks, talks, conducts itself, and delivers on its promise are all things that go into creating this perception.

The interesting thing about perception is that it exists only in the minds of the people you wish to do business, so that means it can be molded since it purely subjective.

Just like you can personally make decisions about how you conduct yourself and influence how people receive you, the same can be done for your company to give it the best shot at being considered authentic, trustworthy, memorable, and valuable.



# Why is branding a good investment?

It's true that branding costs time and money, but it is unlike most expenses incurred that quickly see their return diminish. Building a strong brand for your company gives you a long-term asset that delivers you value in many clear and distinct ways.

1. Grow brand equity
2. Build brand authority
3. Make a brand promise
4. Cultivate customer loyalty
5. Attract ideal customers and repel the rest
6. Become the only choice in customer's eyes and stand apart from the competition
7. Make A-players come to you
8. Earn the respect necessary to charge premium prices





## The Branding Quiz

Knowing the right time to build your brand or completely re-brand your company is an important decision.

You can quiz yourself below and if you find that you are answering yes to two or more items below then it might be a good time to consider polishing up your company's image.

- ☐ Our brand name does not reflect our company vision and goals anymore.
- ☐ We are afraid to show people our website.
- ☐ You hesitate handing someone your business card knowing what they might think.
- ☐ Customers and prospects don't really seem to know what we do.
- ☐ We can't explain to customers how our company is different from the competition.
- ☐ We feel like our brand lost its focus.
- ☐ Our company grew fast and now it is too complex to understand.
- ☐ We've changed business strategy and now our brand is out of sync.
- ☐ Business has changed and outgrown current brand.
- ☐ Our company is operating in new locations and our brand isn't speaking to the culture effectively.
- ☐ We've fixed problems and need to distance ourselves from a negative public image to move forward.
- ☐ Customers don't understand why our prices are higher and we need a better way to justify and communicate value to them.
- ☐ We want to be seen as an industry authority and connect with new audiences.



# The Process of Building a Brand

There are five distinct phases that go into building an authentic, engaging, and memorable brand. Following this methodical process is the surest and fastest path to create this long-term asset for your company.

## Research

The goal is to know yourself and your competition inside and out. As Sun Tzu said in *The Art of War*, "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles."

### Key Focus Areas

- Market Landscape Analysis
- Audience Segmentation
- Internal Brand Research
- Customer Research
- Persona Development
- Brand Audit

## Strategy

Use data from the research phase to define key psychological elements like purpose, vision, mission, and values to give your brand direction and separate it from the competition.

### Key Focus Areas

- Brand Strategy and Positioning
- Brand Architecture
- Brand Messaging
- Naming and Tagline

### Deliverable

- Brand Brief with core messaging, key differences, and unique market position.

## Identity

The visual representation of your brand's personality directed by your prior research and strategic planning.

### Key Focus Areas

- Logo
- Identity Suite
- Color Palette
- Typography
- Iconography
- Image Style

### Deliverable

- Logo Design
- Style Boards

## Representation

The physical and digital presence of your brand at every point it interacts with your audience. It is the words and imagery you use to inspire your audience.

### Deliverables

- Website
- Copywriting
- Photography
- Collateral
- Packaging
- Signage

## Reinforcement

An ongoing process using a framework of rules that makes sure your brand purpose is understood consistently between your customers and employees minds.

### Key Focus Areas

- Brand Guidelines
- Brand Rollouts
- Brand Training
- Brand Metrics
- Brand Management
- Brand Activation

# Typical Costs and Timelines

The simple truth is that it depends. Different companies have different needs based on their size, complexity of offerings, and goals. Use the categories below to figure out where your company might fit and what type of budget and timeline may be appropriate.

## Early Stage Small Businesses and Start-Ups



For small companies that have found some traction and are looking to truly connect with their target audiences so they can find more of the right customers, accelerate growth, and truly differentiate themselves from the competition.

The typical Clicked Studios clients that falls into this category is a 1 – 3 person service company with a B2B focus and early stage ecommerce companies.

### Revenue

- \$0 - \$500,000/year

### Budget

- \$5,000 - \$20,000 spanning 1 – 3 months

### Typical Deliverables

- Brand Discovery
- Brand Identity
- Copywriting
- Responsive Website
- Print Collateral
- Photography
- Videography

## Mature Small Businesses and Medium Size Businesses

For small companies and medium size businesses that have been around for a few years and have experienced some growth, but may be having trouble connecting with audiences. Market conditions may have changed and their brand is out of sync.. They may have expanded into new markets or created new products and services and find they are at a point where they need to better articulate their value.

The typical Clicked Studios clients that falls into this category are a B2B or B2C company with a strong local or regional presence and ecommerce companies looking to scale beyond their current level.

### Revenue

- \$500,000 - \$5 Million/year

### Budget

- \$20,000 - \$60,000 spanning 3 – 6 Months

### Typical Deliverables

- Brand Discovery
- Brand Audit
- Brand Identity
- Copywriting
- Responsive Website
- Print Collateral
- Photography
- Videography
- Brand Management
- Brand Alignment



# The ROI of Branding

While branding may seem like something hard to quantify, studies conducted by several world class organizations clearly show that investing in branding is one of the smartest, long-term investments one can make in a company.

**70% of global consumers trust a branded website vs. a non-branded website.**

2015 Study conducted by Nielsen, Global Measurement and Data Analytics Company  
<https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/reports/2015/global-trust-in-advertising-2015.html>

**Top 40 Brands yield 73% higher returns compared to MSCI World Index.**

McKinsey and Company, Datastream, Interbrand  
<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/the-brand-is-back-staying-relevant-in-an-accelerating-age>

**280% higher selling prices seen in branded products vs. non-branded products.**

2009 Branding and Narrative Study Conducted by Rob Walker and Joshua Glenn  
<http://significantobjects.com/>

**64% of consumers are willing to pay more for brands that make things simple.**

Study compiled by the Simplicity Index  
<http://simplicityindex.com/>

**“People’s willingness to buy, recommend, work for, and invest in a company is driven 60% by their perceptions of the company and only 40% by their perceptions of their products.”**

Forbes, The Reputation Institute  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelynsmith/2012/06/07/the-worlds-most-reputable-companies/#527db0bb4b7d>

**Brands account for more than 30% of the value seen in the S&P 500.**

The Economist  
<https://www.economist.com/business/2014/08/30/what-are-brands-for>



## Selecting the Right Branding Partner

Building your brand is one of the most important decisions you'll make for your company. Choosing who you'll work with to accomplish your branding goals is just as important and isn't always easy to figure out. The following list contains important points you can use to judge a branding firm's ability to help you plan and build your digital presence.

- ☐ Do you share the same values and culture?
- ☐ Is senior level talent and expertise available?
- ☐ Does the firm have a detailed strategic process in place?
- ☐ Is the strategic process founded on rigorous objective research?
- ☐ Have a track record of success that they can show with past client case studies?
- ☐ Do they practice the same branding principles in their own brand?
- ☐ Have they shown artistic and creative ability in past client work?
- ☐ Are they able to infuse advanced technology like responsive design and marketing automation with their design work?
- ☐ Are they flexible and fast-paced to keep your life simple so you can focus on moving your company forward?



# The path forward.

Building a brand is ultimately about inner discovery. It's about finding what you are passionate about, what you stand against, and discovering opportunities you may have not even realized existed.

Do it right and you'll have an authentic representation of yourself and your company's higher vision. You'll effortlessly connect with the hearts and minds of other likeminded people who will jump at the chance to buy from you, interact with you, and tell others about you.

It's incredibly important to take the time to carefully choose the right company to help you with this process. Not just anyone can do it. Find an experienced, trustworthy guide using the tips and checklists in this guide and you'll most certainly avoid many time sinks, pitfalls, and dead ends you'll inevitably run into on the twisting and winding path towards success.







# About Clicked Studios

Based in St. Louis, MO, Clicked Studios is a different kind of design and development firm with its strategy-first approach to creative execution. With expertise in brand strategy, web design, development, copywriting, and digital marketing, Clicked Studios helps small businesses become engaging brands that forge lasting customer relationships.

Contact us today to learn more about our unique approach to transforming companies into compelling digital brands.



# Resources

Visit the [Clicked Studios Blog](#) for research backed, evidence based articles on the art and science of branding, design, digital marketing, and business automation.

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