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# Magnetic

**Nishchal Par**

Founder / Principal Designer  
DFC Designs.

**HOW SMALL BUSINESSES  
CAN ATTRACT MORE CUSTOMERS.**



## CLIENT'S SPEAK

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“One thing I liked about Nishchal is the empathy for a client’s project/product and commitment to get it right the first time. I would recommend him to people who need to create a unique design to reflect the spirit of the project along with an empathetic understanding of the end user.”

**R Senthilnathan, Managing Director - RIBO Industries & Founder - Purva Foods (Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu)**

“I approached Nishchal because I liked his thought process and the concepts. He is creative with a good sense of what will work and what may not. He helped me by converging our thoughts and channelizing them into his design interpretations. One thing I liked about him is that he is very responsive and collaborative. It is fun to work with him.”

**Baqar Naqvi, Business Director - Wazir Advisors (Gurugram, Haryana)**

“We wanted to revamp our corporate brand identity and Nishchal helped me by understanding our business, analysing our competition and helping us arrive at a brand positioning. One thing I liked about him is he went deep. I found the experience introspective. I would recommend him to people who need insights driven branding and brand building.”

**Niloy Debnath, Managing Director - First Rain Exhibits (Mumbai, Maharashtra)**

“One thing I liked about Nishchal was he was open to improvement. I found the experience highly professional. I would recommend Nishchal to people who need high quality and professional work.”

**Praveen Kumar Atmakur, Director - Dharani Projects (Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh)**

“I approached Nishchal because I was looking for creating a marketing deck solution right from website to brochures and case studies, where he could understand our business, think from the marketing perspective and brainstorm with us to achieve the right output. One thing I liked about Nishchal was his participation in the process to come to achieve the objective. I found the experience satisfying as he is quite flexible and is more focused on the output.”

**Paresh Bafna, CEO - Perennial Systems**  
(Pune, Maharashtra)

“One thing I liked about Nishchal is clarity of thought. I found the experience extremely satisfying and exactly to our requirements. Absolutely loved the design. I loved the complete process flow and found it really professional yet friendly. I would recommend Nishchal to people who need to create a unique identity with very classy designs and anybody who wants to create a design which creates a lasting impression.”

**Siddhesh Dandekar, Partner, 3Q Wealth**  
(Pune, Maharashtra)

“I approached Nishchal because we were looking for instore communication/graphic for our sale activity. Nishchal helped me by his prompt service and fabulous design. One thing I liked about Nishchal was his indepth knowledge, creativity and timely delivery of his work. I found the experience very satisfying.”

**Anirudh Rathore, Owner - Democracy Homes**  
(Gurugram, Haryana)

# ***Magnetic***

*How small businesses can  
attract more customers!*

**Nishchal Par**



**THOUGHT  
MAGNETIC**

**Disclaimer:**

The brand names, logos and trademarks used in this book remain the property of their respective owners and are used as examples for the purpose of education only.

***Dedicated to:***

*My mother,  
for blessing me with her sense of curiosity.*

*My father,  
for instilling in me his high work ethic.*

*My wife (and my best friend),  
for her unconditional love, support and patience.  
You truly are my soul mate.*



## PREFACE

*"I've got a great gimmick. Let's tell the truth."*

*~ Bill Bernbach ~*

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If you read a lot of self help books you'll realize that there are books that are horizontal and then there are books that are vertical. The horizontal books are ones which cover many areas across a broad topic whereas vertical books are deep and generally dense with facts and figures.

*Magnetic* is a horizontal book. It covers multiple areas that need to be understood to make your business attract customers. It is not filled with facts and figures, but with ideas and principles that have been learnt from experience as well as from master practitioners.

The underlying principle of this book is pretty basic – *'to attract you need to be attractive'*. This may not comfort you if you are a business owner, because the content of this book may not seem strategic to you. However, let me assure you that the application of the ideas I have shared here are.

### **Magic pill?**

That said, I must add that this book is *not* a magic pill. The ideas in this book will work, that I have no doubt, but don't expect an overnight transformation with the ideas I have shared here. Sorry if this disappoints you but that is the truth.

The reality, as you are already aware, is that business is way too complex to work on just one idea. It needs many many ideas to work, and work simultaneously.

The best of entrepreneurs practice the Principle of the Slight Edge, so they read everything not because they need to know more, rather they are looking for that one good idea which would give them an edge in their business. I hope you'll find more than one good idea here to give you the edge you need in your business.

## **A promise.**

I read somewhere that out of the many people who buy books, only few actually read beyond the first ten pages. In fact, many don't even bother taking the cling film off the book. Given the pain of writing a book, it is quite tempting to use this fact to your advantage. Why bother putting in the effort to write something that many won't read anyways? But every time I have put myself before others, every time I have thought I could get away on the cheap, every time I've thought others to be idiots. I have failed. Miserably.

So let me promise you one thing I have only shared ideas and techniques that you can apply to get results. And I have done my best to share these ideas as simply as possible. But remember, like a treadmill, whatever I have shared here will only work for you, when you do.

Good luck!

Nishchal Par





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# INTRODUCTION

*"You don't get a second chance to make a first impression."*

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Before we begin I felt it important to raise some questions and answer them. This will help you decide whether this book is right for you, or not.

## Why I wrote this book

How many times have you been impressed by smartly groomed men and women? By doctors in white coats. By men in clean and crisp uniforms. What is it about these people that impresses us?

The answer's not so simple, although one thing is clear. We judge people by the way they look. We, by default, judge a book by its cover. It's not deliberate – it's just that we can't help it, it's in our very nature.

Amongst all our senses, our eyes and ears are the only ones, which help us gauge a scenario, a situation, or a person *from a distance*. And my belief is that the eyes are the primary validators for any decision making process we undergo. It is hard to react to something that cannot be seen at all.

*Why many small businesses don't attract enough customers...*

Our eyes maybe the primary validator for a lot of things. But what

*According to the UK Design Council, of the S&P 500 companies those that invest in 'good' (subjective) design saw a 299% increase in financial and company performance versus a 75% increase in those companies that didn't invest in 'good' design.*

*A further study found that for \$1 spent on 'good' design is \$20 earned.*

*In another study conducted by Northumbria University, where they gauged the importance of design on website the following are findings they reported:*

- *First impressions are 94% design-related. This means it is the prime reason for mistrusting or rejecting a site.*
- *75% users make judgments on a company's credibility based on its website design.*
- *88% of users are not likely to return when they have had a bad user experience.*

it tells our brain is not always true. Let's take 'shampoo' as an example. If you look at the ingredients, nearly all shampoos are the same. Yet, customers choose shampoos based on the packaging, smell, color, texture. Things that have absolutely nothing to do with the intrinsic value or ingredients. No wonder multinationals spend millions on advertising and designing effective packaging.

Now you may not be selling shampoos and you might think that appealing to the senses is not applicable in your business. But I disagree. Here's why. Many entrepreneurs see sales as an isolated event, rather than as a process wherein a prospect has come in contact with their business way before they've actually met the sales

person. Your advertisement, logo, visiting card, brochure, website etc are all selling to your prospect way before a sales person actually does. I want you to use this very idea to your advantage. To create such a magnetic appeal that your prospects are attracted to your business like bees to honey.

Shapes, colors, images deeply impact customer decision making. Therefore it is your duty to ensure that you do everything to impact your prospective customers in a positive way. How to do that is something you'll learn in this book.

## **Who should read this book?**

This book is specifically written for small and medium sized business owners. For one reason - almost all my clients are small and medium sized companies (SMEs), so I have gained some understanding and affinity for them, enough to help other SMEs.

The other reason I wrote this book for small businesses is because they need some guidance before they spend their hard earned money on design and branding without any clear thought or plan. Such an approach leads to waste of money, something that can be minimized with the help of this book. I say minimized, as there is always some risk in business no matter how small.

## **Warning!**

I must warn you that this book is not for followers, but for leaders. If you don't want your business to grow or be ahead of your

competition this book will not appeal to you.

## **Why should you listen to me?**

I spent the first six years of my career working in corporate sales and then in advertising, before jumping in to the world of design.

Since 2011, I've been helping my clients look unique, professional and global. And I do this by creating a personality for my client's product, service or company through brand identity design.

Let me confess I have NO formal education in design. I'm completely self-taught. Therefore you should rest assured that there will be no technical mumbo-jumbo in this book.

And I must also add that not having a 'formal' design education has made me more empathetic towards my clients (thanks to my sales and advertising experience). This not only helps me read between the lines, but I often dive into areas most designers are scared to jump into - 'business challenges'.

What I'm about to share with you in this book is a result of the years I have spent working directly and personally with small business owners like you.

### *Examples used in the book*

You will notice that to explain a point better I have shared examples of well known brands. This may seem ironical considering this book is for small businesses. However, for the sake of under-

standing a point, a known brand works better than an unknown logo. So I hope that clarifies my reason.

If you found this book useful and would like to share any suggestions or comments, do get in touch with me. You can reach me directly at [nishchal@deepfriedcolors.com](mailto:nishchal@deepfriedcolors.com) or follow me on twitter [@nishchalpar](https://twitter.com/nishchalpar)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nishchal Par', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Regards, Nishchal Par  
Founder / Principal Designer  
DFC Designs Co.  
[www.deepfriedcolors.com](http://www.deepfriedcolors.com)

**PS:** As a matter of convenience I have used the masculine term ‘he, his, him’ in places where required, this is to avoid saying ‘him/her’ everywhere. If you are woman reading this book, please don’t get offended.



## THE BASICS

*“Get the fundamentals down and the level  
of everything you do will rise.”*

*~ Michael Jordan ~*



# Chapter 1:

## The Magnetic Mindset

---

Before jumping in to a new subject it is important to start with the right mindset. Only the right mindset will give you the focus and patience you need to absorb new information. Your mindset will determine how successful you will be with what I have to share with you.

These ‘mindsets’ are the ‘whys’ for the ‘whats’ and ‘hows’ I will be sharing with you. When you know the reason why you are doing something, how you do it gets easier.

So here’s the first mindset that I want you to adopt.

### **Magnetic Mindset #1:**

**Sales is a process, not an isolated event.**

Many entrepreneurs mistake sales as an isolated event. But they forget to factor the process that leads to the actual selling. Every touchpoint of your company, product or service – be it your logo, your brochure, your website, even your employee’s uniform – has an impact on a potential customer’s decision to buy.

From now on, look at all the touchpoints in your business as elements that contribute to your customer’s buying decision. There is a reason why Steve Jobs obsessed over little things like icons

on the iPhone; not because he loved design. He did. But it was because he knew that Apple is an *experience* not just a product.

## **Magnetic Mindset #2:**

Attraction is a heart and a mind game.

I firmly believe that a customer buys emotionally and justifies it logically. Therefore your touchpoints especially those that use words to communicate (like your brochure, website or advertisement), must strike a delicate balance between logic and emotions. You will learn more about this in later chapters.

## **Magnetic Mindset #3:**

Change is a constant, embrace it and evolve with it.

Your business is an organism that needs to grow to survive. You already know that. But in the chaos of changes in your business the very first thing you will ignore are your touchpoints.

The very touchpoints that are part of the sales process. The very touchpoints that form the face of your business.

I'm not saying that re-designing your logo or your website is important when sales are sinking. But many a times these are the very elements that need to be changed. I don't want you to see this as an isolated solution but as part of your company's overall growth and evolution.

Now let's take a look at what makes a brand magnetic.

## Chapter 2:

# What makes a Brand Magnetic!

---

During the early days, farmers, in order to identify their cattle, would put a mark on them. The common method of doing that was using a hot iron with a symbol or initials on the end, and burning the mark on the cattle's skin.

In fact the term 'brand' came from the German word 'brandt' which meant 'burn'.

Today with more and more products entering the market, the importance of branding has grown and with that even the meaning of the word 'brand' has evolved. Because of its complexity, many experts have defined 'brand' in different ways. And they all make sense. However, to keep it simple, here's my definition of a brand:

*A brand is any symbol or a name that has recognition and evokes trust.*

If you look at this definition it is not hard to understand why a brand is magnetic. It automatically triggers the emotions in the mind of a potential customer and gives him enough justifications to buy the product.



*Do these logos have recognition / trust?*

## **Consistency, the secret weapon of brands!**

One of the core reasons why any product or service becomes a strong brand is because the product or service is simply awesome.

However, there is something more important that usually gets missed by small businesses. Consistency.

Now, consistency in product or service is an operational standard and is a given. However I'm talking about consistency in touchpoints.

Let's take Nike as an example of consistency.

Remove the logo from a Nike shoe. Remove logo and name from their ad and showroom signage. Do the same with their website.

Here's what you will realize. It all still looks and feels like Nike. Why is that? Because there is a consistency right from the product design to the look of the store, the images of athletes and colors on the website, the layout. That consistency is what makes Nike, Nike.

This very idea is the crux of this entire book. And so it is very important for you to understand that there is more to a brand than just a logo. It is that common thread that runs across all touchpoints, that somehow belongs to the brand without trying too hard.

It is the set of colors, fonts, shapes, images, sound, smell - all of these elements working together to form a unique identity. Your brand's identity.

## Chapter 3:

# What is Brand Identity?

---

A brand identity is the sum total of all the touch-points of your business. Right from your logo, your stationery, your packaging, your brochure, your website, your employee uniform - anything that comes in contact with prospects and customers forms your brand identity.

Here's the thing. Every business has an identity. But whether that identity is impactful and consistent, depends on how seriously you take this idea.

Let's look at the brand identity of *Prime Minister Narendra Modi* for example:

- His clothes
- His hairstyle
- His spectacles
- His profiles

All these elements are consciously kept consistent with the Prime Ministers image.

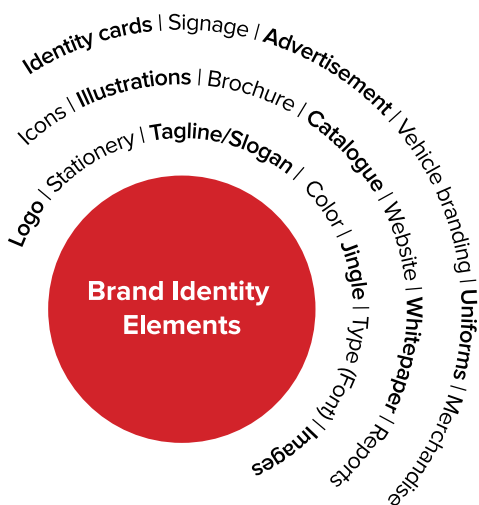
Here's another example: *McDonald's*

- Golden Arch Logo / Symbol

- Signage
- Ronald McDonald
- Uniforms of employees
- Red colored packaging for fries etc etc

Once again, every design, color, packaging is selected for a reason. Every touchpoint is working towards creating a unique identity of McDonald's.

Think of brand identity as a 'signature'. You just know that a painting was made by Picasso because that's his signature. Brand identity is basically creating a signature for your product, service or company across every touchpoint. A unique and strong brand identity is the key to becoming *Magnetic*.





## THE APPROACH

*"If you can't describe what you are doing as a process,  
you don't know what you are doing."*

*~ W. Edwards Deming ~*

## Chapter 4:

# Creating an Effective Brief

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I had seen an amazing [TED Talk](#) by [Simon Sinek](#) called [How great leaders inspire action](#). It was by far one of the best speeches I've ever heard. Sinek says that great brands become great because they have a strong 'why' for their existence. Their reason for existence is at the very core of everything they do, and that's what makes them magnetic.

Like every entrepreneur who gets into business, you too will have a reason for getting into yours. Perhaps you wanted to solve a big problem, or maybe you knew it in your heart you could build a better solution than the ones currently available in the market. It could be anything.

The purpose of starting with why is to connect with the very thing that got you started. Does this sound too philosophical to you? Well, it is. But every magnetic company has a deep rooted philosophy in its foundation. And so should you.

Starting with why is a philosophy that applies to your business in general. However, since the focus of this book is about creating a magnetic brand identity, we will use this concept to build a foundation upon which your brand identity will be erected.

Many companies blindly copy Apple's design, be it their product their packaging, their ads or their website. But what they never



seem to be able to capture is the real story behind the design. The very soul of the brand.

When you can verbalize your core, then the brand identity will take care of itself.

## **Design Brief**

The goal of this chapter is to create a 'brief'. A document which lays out every important thing that needs to be factored in while creating a magnetic brand identity.

In order to help you write a brief I have created exercises.

Go to the [Appendix section](#) and complete exercises given in [Appendix A, B and C](#).

Once you are done with the exercises go to the next chapter.

## Chapter 5:

# Selecting a Designer

---

How much should you pay for your brand identity? Before you jump to a number out of thin air, ask yourself *“How much is all this worth to me?”*

This is a very important question. Ultimately you are doing this to attract more customers to your business. So you must factor your customers into the equation.

### Setting your brand identity design budget

I have shared two simple formulas to use for you to arrive at your budget. Remember this is an investment you will not be making again any time soon so don't cut corners unnecessarily. Also, you can decide the percentage values that you want in the formula I have shared. The purpose of these formulas is to give you a way of approaching your budget. That's all!

You may look at your existing designers pricing and use it as a benchmark. But my suggestion is you must look at this with fresh eyes.

#### ***Brand Identity design budget formula #1***

*Customer Lifetime Value*  $\times$       % = Budget

Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) is the total amount of money

an average customer spends over the total duration he buys from you. In short, it is the total worth of your customer over his life as your customer.

For the sake of explanation, let's peg the percentage at 30%.

So if your customer's average spend is Rs. 50,000 on your products or services per year, and he remains your customer for 5 years:

Your CLV = Rs. 50,000 x 5 years = Rs. 2,50,000

Therefore your budget according to this formula would be Rs. 2,50,000 x 30% = Rs. 75,000

### *Brand Identity design budget formula #2*

*Average Sales per month x \_\_\_% = Budget*

Here, let's peg the percentage at 50%. So if your average sale is Rs. 1,50,000 per month, then budget according to this formula would be Rs. 1,50,000 x 50% = Rs. 75,000

## **Remember!**

This is your budget. You decide what % value you want to use. However, keep in mind if you throw peanuts you will get monkeys.

Go to [Appendix D](#) and use the template to work on your budget.

## **Negotiation**

Based on your comfort level keep a 15% buffer, in case you have to negotiate.

If you feel it is worth paying the designer higher than what you quoted earlier to him, you can offer more and not feel the pinch.

Using the earlier example, your budget range based on 15% variance would be:

Starting offer = Rs. 63,750 (Rs. 75,000 - Rs. 11,250)

Maximum offer = Rs. 86,250 (Rs. 75,000 + Rs. 11,250)

(NOTE: Factor the additional service tax in your budget.)

Again, you don't have to do use either of these formulas, but use them to gauge your level of comfort for your budget.

## **Assessing your options for design**

Now that you have arrived at a budget, let's look at the options you have for creating your brand identity.

Below are the options available. The decision to go with any one of these options shouldn't just be budget, because the output will vary. I have shared my point of view about each of the current options available to companies. Go through them and take a call. There is no right or wrong. The only thing that matters is the result.

### ***Option 1:***

*Do-It-Yourself (D-I-Y)*

D-I-Y can be great way to go about designing your identity if you feel passionately about it. Many clients I meet created their own logo when they started their business.

There are two problems I foresee with this option.

One is putting too much of your precious time into something that someone else can do better than you.

And two, being too attached to your own business and thus not having the objectivity that is needed to design your identity.

### *Option 2:*

#### *In-house Designer*

Another way to create your brand identity is to get your in-house designer (if you have one) to work on it.

This is better than the first approach, as you have someone else working on your brand identity.

However, if the current set of designs are poor, and your designer is responsible for those designs. Do not expect a miracle. You will get poor results.

Also proximity and accessibility you have to the project can lead to two deterrents - constant iterations and varied opinions. This will lead to a brand identity that is trying to please everyone and ends up looking bland and unprofessional.

Distraction could pose a problem as well. Designing a logo and

the consequent brand identity is a time consuming task. And a designer who has to deliver on your customer requirements will find it very difficult to focus on an internal project especially when client needs are urgent.

I would suggest you go with this option if you have a good designer/team and where only you have the final say.

### *Option 3:*

#### *Design Crowd sourcing*

With the advent of the internet today there are many online sites that offer a low cost solution to people looking for anything related to designs.

Sites like 99designs, DesignCrowd etc. are well known. They have a platform where you can post your requirement and budget and designers from various countries will share their designs for you to choose from.

There are also options to buy stock logos. These are logos created in advance that you can select for your company.

This is not a bad route to take, but my advice is to only go for these option if you are on a very tight budget and you don't mind somebody working on your project with whom you cannot speak directly.

### *Option 4:*

#### *Advertising Agency*

This is one of the quick fixes that many small businesses implement, getting their advertising agency to design their identity. And it is not entirely a bad idea.

Having worked in an advertising agency myself, I will not doubt the talent of art directors there, as some of them are brilliant. But the idea of time and focus is highly skewed in an advertising agency.

An advertising agency has a lot of work to be completed in very short deadlines, with changes happening often and papers flying everywhere. In such an environment the single minded focus that identity design demands will always be, in some way, compromised.

Also, over time I have understood, that just because you can create a good advertisement layout, does not necessarily mean that you are good at creating a logo and the extended identity. The approach and the mindset are very different.

### *Option 5:*

#### *Design Agency*

Perhaps the best way to get your identity designed is to seek professionals who focus on creating brand identities for clients.

Now there are big design studios that have a huge team where multiple projects could be happening at the same time, and then there are two man studios.

Big design studios do not always guarantee great designs and nei-

ther do small studios design poorly.

So look around, look at past work and make an informed decision. We'll learn more about the choosing a designer in a bit.

### *Option 6:*

#### *Freelance designers*

A freelance designer is a great option if you need a designer and don't want to commit to a big agency.

Freelancers come in all shapes and sizes and at different price points. They vary from being young to old, experienced to inexperienced.

One major problem you will face with freelance designers (unless they are doing this full time) is that they are not very dependable. In most cases, freelancers are working on your project on the side, holding a day job, so your project will never be top priority. I want you to be fully aware of this, and clarify how much time you will get from the designer at the outset itself.

### *Option 7:*

#### *Mobile Apps*

In case you only want a logo for your business, there are plenty of free mobile apps available for you to choose from.

The biggest problem with this route is that it is DIY (do-it-yourself) using existing templates and shapes. So it all comes down



to how well and easily you can use these elements and apply your creativity. Also, these apps only focus on logo and not the complete identity.

(If you would like to work with me write to [nishchal@deepfriedcolors.com](mailto:nishchal@deepfriedcolors.com) or call 9545863344)

## Selecting the right designer

There are two common ways you will go about selecting a designer:

1. via Phone call
2. via Face-to-face meeting

I have not considered the internet as the third approach here as I see it more as a means of communication than a means of decision making, at least in this context.

### *Approach 1:*

#### *Speak on the phone*

If you are comfortable, you can decide on a designer by talking on the phone. This is not really a bad way to select someone. But before you pick up the phone and start talking shop ensure that you have seen their work and asked for some testimonials over email. More on that in a bit.

### *Approach 2:*

#### *Face to face meeting*

Meeting face to face brings a level of comfort that speaking on the phone won't give and exchanging emails can never match.

If you are the kind that prefers to meet someone before deciding to work with them, then it is important for you know that you will be restricted to local talent.

Of course, if you will pay for the travel, or if the design agency or designer is eager to work with you so much that they will spend their own money to meet you, then you can access talent from anywhere across the globe.

Let me warn you, this approach doesn't guarantee that you will make the right decision. It's the same way you never know if a candidate will turn out to be a good employee until they start working with you.

## **Nine factors to consider for identifying the ideal designer for your brand identity project!**

### **1. Be clear:**

Before you talk or meet a designer, ensure that you've written your brief, as laid out in the previous chapter. This will help you be clear about your goal and requirement, and therefore you will ask better questions.

### **2. See past work:**

Ask for a portfolio of their design work before anything else.

### **3. Look for disparity:**

Now depending on your sensibilities you may or may not be able to gauge the skill level or quality of work, but look for disparity. If you see some designs that are good and then there are designs that are really bad. Beware! This generally implies that there is no consistency or someone else has helped the designer.

### **4. Gauge sensibilities:**

After you look at the work, ask the designers to share their three favourite designs. And if possible, ask for the reason for each shortlist. The reason you do this after you see all the work is because now the designer has to shortlist. If you had only asked for three favourite works, you would not have the opportunity to see the disparity in his work. Also, a shortlist of design shows what they consider to be good or important. This reveals their sensibilities.

### **5. Understand the process:**

Asking a designer about their process will instantly tell you whether you should or should not work with the designer. Any good designer worth his salt will have a process, no matter how simple. You will learn more about the design process in later chapters, but for now - if you do not hear a clear 1-2-3 steps laid out for you, and instead hear some mumbling, or it is all confusing and making no sense to you - don't think of yourself as stupid, the designer doesn't know what he is doing. Save yourself the trouble and reject him. Then and there.

## **6. Test knowledge:**

Whenever you ask a question you perhaps don't understand, see how the designer is willing to explain it to you. When complex concepts are explained in simple layman terms, be assured that the designer has a strong grasp of fundamentals and is technically sound. It's also a good sign when you hear someone say they don't know something. It reveals honesty. You don't want someone who says he knows everything but actually knows nothing.

## **7. Look for generosity:**

It may seem a bit odd to talk about generosity. But the best people to work with are those who give a lot more value than being paid for. One way to gauge generosity is again to ask a question and then ask more follow-up questions. Someone who is not generous, so to speak, will be insecure about how much they say as they feel that their worth will go down by revealing more information. I would recommend you stay away from such designers.

The best people to work with are those who share their knowledge freely and openly, they are not insecure about what you think of them and know enough to keep sharing their ideas. In fact the more questions you ask them, the more they will trust you which will eventually lead to better output for you.

## **8. Seek a specialist:**

It is better to work with someone who works 'deep' rather

than someone who works ‘broad’. I understand that a lot of designers are good at many platforms like logo designing as well as product designing. But look for someone who has done more work in brand identity rather than someone who has a mixed bag of talent.

## **9. Ask for recommendations:**

Always ask for past client recommendations or testimonials. A lot of people don't take this seriously but knowing what past clients have said about the designer should matter to you. If past clients are not particularly pleased with the designer you are considering, then please do not go ahead with him, no matter how talented the designer seems to be.

Another thing you must look into are testimonials. Remember if testimonials are filled with vague sentences filled with words like ‘good job’, ‘very satisfied’ etc., seek more clarity, if possible, by speaking with past clients. And look at other options.

Use the scorecard given in [Appendix E](#) for selecting a designer.

## **Defining the scope of work**

The scope of work is the boundary of the project. It determines what the designer will do for you. If you've followed steps laid out in the previous chapter, you will have all the answers ready for you to handle the scope of the project.

Often after a conversation with my clients, it happens that they

realize their requirements are more than what they had earlier thought. This usually happens because you may not necessarily know the complete requirement clearly from the beginning, which is normal. Having a conversation with a good designer will throw light on some areas you have ignored.

For example: you speak to a designer and want him to work only on your logo. But after a conversation you realize you also need to get your stationery, brochure and website designed as well.

A scope of work will usually cover the exact elements the designer will deliver (and what will not be delivered). It will also include the number of renditions he will make etc. It is important to state all of this in black and white and in an agreement. So that both you and the designer are clear and there is no miscommunication in the future.

Use the checklist given in [Appendix F](#) to get a basic grasp of your scope of work.

## Chapter 6:

# Managing A Brand Identity Project

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Over the years I have worked with many clients and often on varying timelines. There is of course certain amount of time that a designer will need to work on your project. However, there is one question that never gets a clear answer.

*What is the ideal timeline for a design project?*

Well, based on my experience, the ideal timeline is the time you actually have in hand. I know, this not the answer you were looking for. But that's the answer I have for you.

Here's the thing, I have worked with clients where a project was completed in three weeks flat start to finish. I have also worked with clients where the project has continued for more than a year.

In fact there was hardly any difference in the scope of work between the two projects.

So why so much difference in time?

The difference was the time that each of these clients had in hand. With the first client, there was an international exhibition to be attended, where the new identity was to be revealed, hence the tight timeline.

With the second client, there was no future commitment. There

was no real urgency. Hence, there were constant iterations and hemming and hawing.

## **How should you set a deadline?**

The best way to get something done is to commit before you are ready. Therefore set an artificial deadline.

For example: Announce the launch of your company's new identity to all your customers and your employees. Invite everyone to a party you are organizing two months from today. I know this sounds ridiculous. But trust me it works.

In fact, book a venue and send invites to people. This will really get you going.

Four things will happen:

1. By announcing to the world, you are now committed, and therefore you will have to see this through, as you have to save your face. How's that for a sense of urgency?
2. You will not tolerate incompetence therefore you will select better designers for your project. And using the guidelines I have shared, this will not be a problem.
3. You will make faster decisions as time is of essence. This will speed up the process further.
4. With a deadline the designer has a goal in mind and will work towards it. Creativity thrives in constraints and often projects



with no deadlines or loose deadlines keep getting postponed and don't get finished. But deadlines refine the thinking.

Please ensure that you keep at least a week to 10 days buffer if time permits, there are always last minute changes that need time. Also, if you cannot get a week, try to keep at least one to two days of buffer time.

If you don't want to create an artificial urgency, but still want to be aware of the time required. Use the following as a guide.

Based on the requirement, I would suggest a complete makeover that includes logo design, stationery, brochure and website should be allotted at least two months. This may seem a lot, but based on my experience, I have realized that it takes time, because creation takes time, at the same time you must factor in feedback and changes that you will give the designer. Remember no matter how many processes are set, design selection is highly subjective, therefore changes are an inevitable part of the process.

I will admit there have been times that I have created a logo design in half an hour, but these things seldom happen, and must not be taken as standards. Designing is a process and must be given some breathing space.

## **Project Management**

Ideally this is something the designer or the design team should be able to handle well. Project management in this case is to ensure that everything that is needed for the project is ready and

delivered on time.

For example, if your brand identity project includes a brochure as well as website design, the content for them can be worked on simultaneously while the design is getting done on the side.

## **Payment and Payment Terms**

Finally before we start on the project, you have to take care of the payment.

Payments are always a constant source of problem for designers and design studios. Money never comes on time.

Here I would like to point out that paying on time is being respectful to your designer. The same way getting your designs on time is being respectful towards you. It is a mutually beneficial process.

When you pay on time and don't make it difficult your design agency or designer will love you as a client. And let assure you that they will work a lot harder on your project than on others, because they want to make you happy, because you will be their favourite. And when you become that client, you will enjoy the fruits of good design for a long time to come. I have clients who are with me for the last five years. I love them. And I always go an extra mile for them.

Remember, design comes from creativity and creativity comes from emotion. Liking a client triggers a happy emotion which in turn triggers creativity leading to better designs.

So pay and pay on time.

## **Payment terms**

Payment terms vary from company to company, person to person. However, most designers will ask for a 50% advance or a 75% advance.

Now taking an advance is a good thing for two reasons:

1. You show you are serious and are committed
2. The designer is committed

In case you are not sure if you want to pay 50% you may want to pay in smaller amounts of money say 30% advance and 30% when a milestone is achieved and 40% balance when the project is completed.

After you pay the advance, the balance must be paid at the time of handover or within a few days, depending on the terms you have agreed to.

Note, that all the things I have spoken about will be a part of the design proposal that the designer must give you. This ensures that you have a written document which lays out everything that is expected from both the parties.

If there is an agreement that you need to sign, please read it carefully before you do.

Now that we selected the right designer and finalized the commercials, let's take a sneak peek in to the design process.

# Chapter 7:

## The Brand Identity Design Process

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I want to share a simple design process for you. This will not only make you aware of what's happening behind the scenes but it will give you opportunities to intervene and course correct wherever necessary. I'll talk about 'course correction' later in this chapter.

### **Why you need to understand the design process**

Understanding the design process is like looking at a display kitchen in a restaurant. This gives you a chance to see exactly what will happen with your requirement once it enters the designer's kitchen.

So here's a typical design execution process:

1. Briefing
2. Ideating
3. Sketching
4. Digitizing
5. Presentation
6. Handover

Now let's look at each of these steps in some detail:

## **1. Briefing:**

This is the starting point of any design project. As you have already followed the steps laid out in the previous few chapters you are already ready with a brief.

However, the brief that you work on is typically called the 'client brief' or the 'external brief', whereas the 'design brief' or the 'internal brief' is where the designer takes your requirement transforms in to a language he understands.

A good brief will help the designer/s engage with the project strongly and will help him align with your vision. So much so that it becomes his own vision and that's where magic happens.

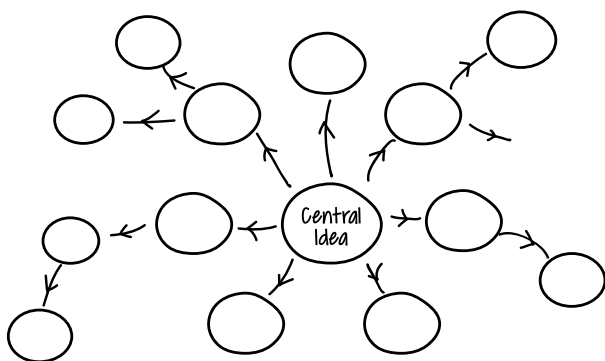
## **2. Ideation:**

If the brief is clear, then the designer will ideate on the different paths to take to create a visual identity.

There are many ways to approach the ideation process. One of the most common ways designers approach this stage is to use mind mapping.

In mind mapping, you typically start with the main problem in the centre, distilled as a single word and then you keep branching out in different direction.

Here's a sample of what a mind map looks like.



### 3. Sketching:

Once some ideas stand out in the ideation stage, the designer will shortlist some of the routes and then start sketching them out.

Poor and inexperienced designers tend to skip this step and hop on to the computer. They do this because sketching, an idea requires the designer to think through the concept. If an idea is bad it will be seen in the sketch itself. A computer on the other hand can deceive a designer into thinking that the idea is good. It also overwhelms the designer with the options and variations leading to superficial designs.

The reason this is important for you is for two specific reasons:

- A designer who sketches out his ideas first, gains more clarity and knows what he is doing. Take comfort in your

decision of hiring him.

- The other reason this is important is that many designers share their sketches with the client so that if there is any input or feedback then it happens in this stage itself. I do not necessarily recommend this approach, as a sketch is typically rough. It is an idea fleshed out quickly and shared with you with no context to it. The raw form and the scribbles can make you reject a good idea. Also, the untidiness may make you feel that the designs are not that great. The tricky part is to see the concept and essence of the logo rather than the sketch. Because the next step will only refine the idea further.

#### **4. Digitizing:**

In this step the sketch is now refined in to a digitized version. The designer will take the sketch, if need be scan it and create the same design on the computer.

The benefit of first doing the sketch and then digitizing it is that this helps the designer see the concept with fresh eyes. And he will be refining the concept now rather than trying to create a new one. This process if followed by the previous step will move quickly and smoothly.

#### **5. Presentation:**

Let's take the example of a logo here. Typically I would say getting three different designs is a good sign. More than three designs shows that the designer doesn't hold a high standard



and is sharing every idea, good or bad. Less than three ideas means the designer is lazy (unless, you haven't given enough time to the designer to work on more designs).

A good designer will always share the designs in black and white first, this is done so that you gauge the concept and don't get carried away by the color. Only once a black and white concept is selected should the designer share the design in color.

A presentation can happen in person or over email. If you are engaged with the designer on a continuous basis then it may not be necessary to meet and present the designs in person, unless the designer feels the need to.

### *Warning!*

Avoid the tendency to meet the designer at his office and sit with him and make changes on the design with you breathing down his neck.

Let me assure you, you will not get good results this way. If you can clearly direct the designer of what is working and not working for you, a good designer will typically produce the designs you will like.

However, despite repeated inputs, if the designer is just not getting it, nor is he willing to give an explanation to your ask, or even make an attempt - then I'm afraid you have hired the wrong designer.

## 6. Handover

Finally this is the stage where the designs are finalized and the files are handed over. I have shared more details about this in [Appendix G](#).

## Evaluating designs

If you've worked on the brief that I have laid out for you, you'll have your instinct and vision at the core of your brand's identity.

Therefore it is important that the design evaluation must happen with your instinct first, and feedback from people close to you (whose opinion you take seriously) second.

Now I understand different people have different styles of decision making. You either prefer listening to everybody's view or you simply follow your own rationale. Either ways, it is important to keep some pointers in mind. (You'll learn more about design evaluation in section 3.)

For example, the key purpose of a logo is 'identification' and that it must be simple, unique and enduring. This is not easy to gauge and is not easy to design as well. But it is important for you to know.

Also, it is important to note that these evaluation measures are not easy to use, because it requires some experience. In section 3 I have shared some pointers to help you there.

## Course Correction

The premise of course correction is that it is harder to make changes to a building after it is built than it is at the blueprint stage.

Although graphic design is not as complex as constructing a high-rise, but it is still a time consuming process. So when things are changed towards the end of the design process the time required to make changes increases, and so does frustration.

Use course correction as a way to bring the design close to your vision. However, if there is a better way, do not hesitate to go with that.

Looking at the design process shared in the previous chapter, you can course correct at multiple points in time. Let's take a look at them.

### **The four interventions of course correction:**

1. **The briefing stage:** When you are sharing your brief with the designer and the designer is unclear or going in a different direction, it is important that you align him right then. Unless the designer suggests something better, alignment with your vision is critical.
2. **The sketching stage:** If the designer feels comfortable in sharing the sketches with you, ask for the sketches and share your feedback. But remember that a sketch is a quick representation of an idea, not the actual design. The one good

thing about doing this is that you can nip a totally incorrect route right at the bud. But it takes a good eye to do that.

3. **The black and white / wireframe presentation stage:** This is when the logo design is presented in black and white form. Here you can see the refined version of the logo and therefore make a decision on the concept. Like I mentioned earlier, this is important as a black white logo helps you focus on the concept and the form and not distract you with colors.
4. **The color /refined concept presentation stage:** If you have intervened and given your feedback in the earlier stages this would be the easiest in terms of making changes as it is not structural. Remind yourself that you are reacting to a logo design in isolation, on a computer screen. But when the logo is printed it may turn out to look totally different. Bottomline, take your designers inputs into consideration.

## **Tips on giving feedback:**

1. If you like the concept, but not the way it is depicted, say so.
2. You may want to see some more designs to make up your mind. Say so. But always give the current set of designs a fair chance, otherwise the project will be frustrating for the designer and may lead to poor design output in the next rounds.
3. Resist the urge to creatively direct the designer. Like telling him why the font should be bigger or the shape should be better. If the designer is a good designer, he will give his rea-

sons and will try to capture the essence of your feedback in his design. In fact, many a times my clients have given me inputs that have turned out to be great suggestions that have led to a much better output.

4. As a client if you need to creatively direct the designer all the time, you may have hired the wrong guy. The right designer just needs to be pointed at the goal and he will take it from there. The wrong designer will pull you along and make you work. Your role is not to design or creatively make suggestions, it is to approve and align the designer.

## **Finalizing the design**

After you have gone through the concepts and have lived with your new logo and identity for a while and slept over it (very important that you take your time and not decide in haste) - you will know that you have found your identity.

Give a go ahead for it, preferably on email, and tell the designer to start working on the handover.

## **Handover – checklist**

During this stage, the designer will hand over all the files that you'll need now and in the future in different formats. Please note that the handover should be complete and should ensure that all the different types of files are with you.

The reason this is necessary is because you must be able to use the

logo or other elements in the future, whether you work with the same designer or not.

In Appendix G, I have shared the essential handover kit checklist, formats and folders in which you must get your files.

Just a suggestion, if the files are transferred to you by a file transfer site, please download it immediately, as these sites delete the storage after a week or ten days.

## Standardizing

This is the most important step to be factored in. Most designers will give you a brand manual for you to refer to while using the logo and other elements. I have shared a sample of a brand guideline for your reference in [Appendix H](#).

Like an operating manual that ensures that work gets done in the right way across every level and department in a company, a brand manual ensures that everybody knows how to use your brand identity in the right way so that there is consistency in your interaction with the world outside.

Also, a brand manual comes in handy when you are giving instructions to another designer. A brand manual ensures that your logo and other brand elements are seen the way they should be and not how any person wants to use it.



# THE TOOLS

*“First we build the tools, then they build us.”*

*~ Marshall McLuhan ~*

# Chapter 8:

## How to design your logo

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Let's start with one of the most basic elements of branding. Your logo. Not many business owners understand that the very core of your brand's identity starts with a logo. Therefore it is important to get a logo that is well designed and lasting.

### What is the purpose of a logo?

The purpose of your logo is to help your company, product or service to be 'identified'. It is a mark of identification, that's all. You can link many values to it. But it serves only one purpose, identification.

Let's look at the process of logo design:

1. Ideation
2. Referencing
3. Sketching
4. Selection
5. Digitization - black and white
6. Coloring



## 7. Refinement

## 8. Handover

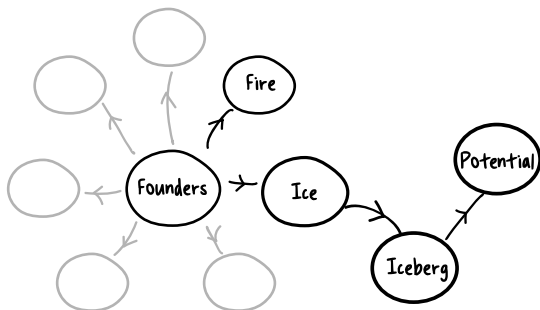
As I have already explained the process in detail in the previous section, I won't repeat it again here. Instead let me show you the process visually with an example of my client First Rain.

This was their old logo:



### 1. Ideation

Many ideas were thought of, but finally the personalities of the founders gave a clear creative direction.

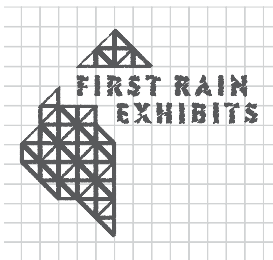


### 2. Referencing

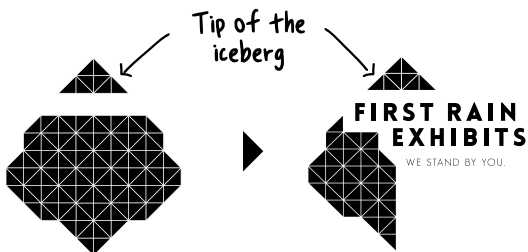
As First Rain builds worldclass experiential structure and spaces. The geodesic dome was the best choice to depict structure.



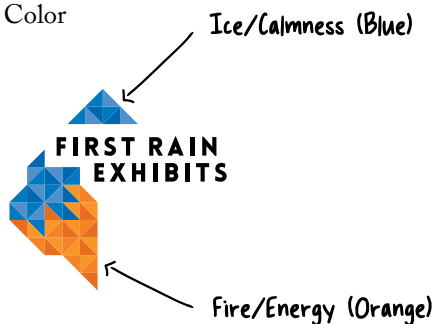
### 3. Sketching



### 4. Digitization



## 5. Color



## How to evaluate a logo design

Let's look at the various aspects you must consider while evaluating your logo design.

### 1. Form of a logo

Form is the overall shape and content of a logo. Basically there are three forms of a logo; there are many ways to categorize a logo for but for the sake of evaluation we will focus only on three basic forms.

- *Symbol*

Here the logo is represented primarily by a symbol. Although a name will be part of it, the reason for using only the symbol is because the symbol on its own is very recognizable. Think 'Beats' by Dr. Dre, think 'Android', think 'Twitter'.



These are highly recognizable brands, and tons of money has gone into advertising and PR activities making them a strong brand. Of course I will not discount the fact that the products are great. But strong and strategic marketing has helped built these brands in to what they are today. So be clear that in order to have your symbol work for you, you'll need to spend a lot of money.

- *Word mark*

This type of logo consists of letters only. Think 'Tata', think 'Google', think 'Coca-Cola'.



You should opt for such a logo if you feel that it is important that your customer needs to quickly comprehend your name. You would find many fashion brands use only wordmark as a logo for example Vero Moda, Zara, H&M etc.

- *Combination*

As the name suggests, this uses both the name and symbol together. Which means that unlike the first type of logo, this one always shows the name and the symbol together. Some examples would be Amazon, Burger King, Domino's Pizza, Cisco etc.



Look at types of logo from the perspective of a trademark. Only symbols are difficult to trademark as many symbols look the same. Therefore a smartly done word-mark or a combination mark is a better approach.

## 2. Shape

Here the most important thing to look into is whether the shape of your logo is easily recognizable. Shapes like circles, triangles, squares, rectangles, stars etc are highly relatable by humans.

Most Recognizable Forms



Even shapes of animals, trees, letters or an inanimate object like mountains etc are good shapes to be used for a logo. The reason shape is very important is because humans look for a recognizable pattern. If the shape of your logo is too complex to grasp, in an attempt to make it look different, it is a big mistake. Don't accept such a logo. In fact insist on the design being in a form which is recognizable to the human eye.

Below are examples of logos that follow recognizable shapes:



Circle



Triangle



Square



Animal

### 3. Color

Color selection is quite tricky it has a lot of personal and cultural implications to it. A color considered holy in one country can be considered unholy in some other country. Therefore, it is vitally important that you do not get too technical here because you read somewhere that orange represents ambition and blue calmness. They definitely have an impact. But consider the competition as well. Because if the competition is red, you better not use red, go for any other color except red.



#### 4. Font

Font is a word that is commonly known and used widely. It is basically the style of letters. (A trivia - a family of fonts is known as Typeface. So Times Roman bold size 13 is a font. But all the different sizes and thickness of Times Roman would be known as typeface.) This mattered more when letters were created for the sake of printing, as the size of the letters had to be pre-decided back then.

*Now why is font important?*

Primarily the right font can make the logo look great and a bad font can ruin a good logo. So just as general guideline, use fonts that are professional and easily readable. Trying to use a font which is flowery may look appealing but will fall flat when it comes to readability. Also, the selection of your font must also factor in the type of your business. If you are a law firm please do not use a font which is childish. It reflects incorrectly on you.

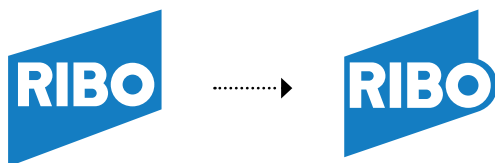


**Remember:** That any font by itself is not good or bad. It is the context and image that you want to convey that determines whether the font is right or wrong for it.

## 5. Uniqueness

Always insist that there has to be something that makes the design unique. And unique in the form of the design itself, not just the color. Remember, the reason why you are getting your own identity designed is because you want your brand to be unique. If you are simply copying somebody else as some of my past clients have insisted I do, you will end up with a logo that looks great but has no uniqueness.

If you look at the example below of Ribo (a client of mine) you will notice that just by refining the shape further we've given the logo an edgy look rather than the edgy look. Something that has made the logo unique.





# Chapter 9:

## How to design a business stationery

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Your business card is probably the first thing that gets exchanged when meetings happen in person. So design it wisely.

### **Business card**

The purpose of a business card is to tell the person you're meeting, who you are. Strangely you can print just about anything on your card and it will be considered real.

In the early days, business cards had some weight. If someone important gave you his card, it meant something, because there was no other easy way to check credibility. With some ingenuity you can do different things to use your card act as an ice breaker or a conversation starter.

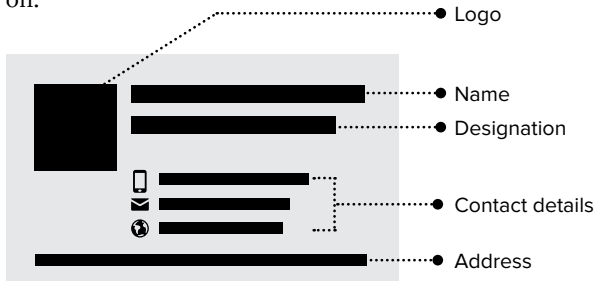
The purpose of a business card is simply to establish your name, what you do, where you work and how to get in touch with you. That's it.

### **Tips on designing a business card:**

#### *1. Follow a clear visual hierarchy*

Always follow a visual hierarchy when you design your visiting card. The most important element should be the most

prominent; the next in line should be less prominent and so on.



Business card visual heirarchy

## 2. *Make the text readable*

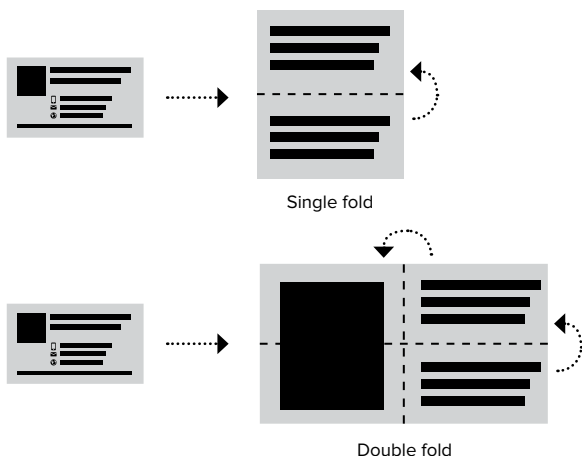
I have made this mistake many times where the font size of the card is very small. Yes the person in front will squint his eyes and will somehow manage to read your card. But make it easy and use a font size that is bigger.

Keep your font size between 7 to 9pts depending on the type of font. Before you give your card for a final print, get a test print with varying font sizes if necessary and then give a final go ahead. Many times, there is a big difference what a design-looks like on screen and in actual print.

## 3. *Use your card innovatively*

There is no hard and fast rule of what you can and cannot do with your card. In fact why does even have to be a single card? Why can't it be a small booklet? Yes, you need to factor cost. But look at your business card as an opportunity to showcase

your brand. Usually the size of business card is 3.5 inches by 2 inches - this is not a universal rule, it is just that such a size fits well in to your wallet or pocket. You could make your card unusually big. There is no limit to this, just use your imagination.



## Letterhead

A letterhead is an important element of your stationery. It is an official piece of communication and needs to be given some weight. That said, design wise I would keep a letterhead as simple as possible. Unless you have the budget to have the back of your letterhead printed with a design pattern, a letterhead for me should be as minimalistic as possible.

The reason I'm emphasizing on minimalism is because a letterhead is not a blank page, it is a pre-printed page where official

information will be written or typed on and therefore it needs enough blank space for content.

## Tips on designing a letterhead:

### 1. *Must have a lot of breathing space*

I have already spoken about this, never make your letterhead too crowded with brand identity elements that make it difficult to put in content.



### 2. *Use a watermark*

Watermark has become a standard in letterhead as it makes your letterhead unique. Make sure your watermark does not obstruct the content in anyway. Test print with content to see if readability is an issue.

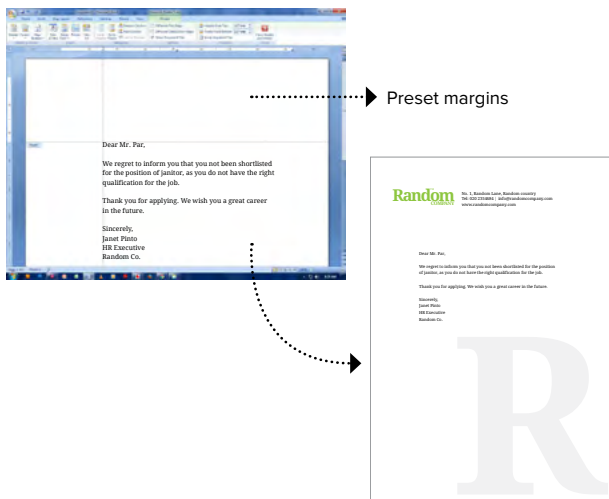


### 3. *Use good quality of paper*

Use the best quality of paper for your letterhead, as it reflects on your company. A good bond paper with the right thickness will add to your company's image.

### 4. *Preset margins*

Make sure that once a design is approved the designer is asked to share a word doc template with the margins that are set, such that when letterhead is printed, none of the content is printed on logo or the address. This also helps saving time by not letting you adjust the margins again and again from your end. Once the template is set then anybody can use the template and the content will get printed without interfering with the branding.



## Envelopes

Envelopes come in different shapes and sizes and the only purpose they serve is to contain documents or some other content. It is a given that your stationery elements must look like they belong to the same family. The only design tip I have here is to make sure there is a lot of blank space.

Another important thing that many companies don't do is add a return address, in case the envelope is undelivered. If budget is not a big constraint print the inside of the envelope as well. It somehow looks extremely impressive and professional and will give you the air of a large company.



## Chapter 10:

# How to design a brochure

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### What is the purpose of a brochure?

To sell - your product, service or company. That's it. Nothing more and nothing less.

So if the purpose is to sell, why do most companies place every piece of information about their product or company in it? Because they don't understand the purpose of a brochure.

### What you need to ask before you make a brochure

If the purpose of a brochure is to sell, then I would strongly urge you to look at a brochure as a salesperson in print form. The minute you see your brochure as a 'salesperson' you have to ask only one simple question.

*What will the brochure have to say in order to make a sale?*

When you ask this question, your mind will be free of irrelevant questions, such as - How many pages should we print? Should we print it in digital or four color? The reason these questions are irrelevant is because they don't directly matter to the purpose of the brochure.

In fact, would you tell a salesperson to talk less to a prospect? No, right? So why would you write less in your brochure?

I do understand the concern that many people don't read much, but you have to share some amount of information irrespective. There is a simple technique I will teach you later in this chapter that will tackle this very problem of the quantity of information.

Let's now dive into the process of designing a brochure that sells.

The brochure design process:

1. Define the reader
2. Set your objective
3. Create an outline
4. Collate information
5. Refine the content
6. Finalize design

Let's look in to each of the steps in more detail.

### **1. Define the reader**

Most people are lazy when it comes to defining their target audience (the reader), don't be one of them. Defining the person who will read your brochure will not only make your brochure relevant but it will ensure that it will be read even if it is poorly written.

Let me share an example: For one of clients, a world class manufacturer, we had initially defined the reader to be the



Purchase Manager of a company, someone whose primary concern was price. However, we soon realized that even though the purchase is made by a Purchase Manager, our target reader was really the Plant Manager. His concern on the other hand had more to do with machine breakdowns and losing his job for halt in production, rather than price. Suddenly all the information we had created, targeted at the Purchase Manager seemed totally irrelevant and we started again, this time focusing on the Plant Manager, making the brochure more relevant.

## **2. Set your objective**

Defining the reader is about understanding what the buyer wants. Setting the objective, on the other hand, is about what you want. Setting an objective is asking yourself – what is the next action step I want the reader to take? For instance, after reading the brochure I expect the reader to make an online booking, fix an appointment, or download a free eguide etc. The objective must always be specific and not broad. Look at your sales process as a series of steps, and see which step your brochure comes in and what needs to happen immediately afterwards in the process, this will make the objective clear.

## **3. Create an outline**

Once you are clear about who your reader is and what you want them to do, you can then create an outline of the information you want them to go through to help them in their buying decision. Think of your outline as your brochure's index. Most brochures I have seen start with an 'about us', this

is not a compulsion. Do what will engage the reader and encourage him to take the necessary step.

For example, for many of my clients, I recommend client testimonials to be on the first page. This helps in quickly establishing my client's product/service as tested by others. This provides social proof to the reader and helps build trust.

#### **4. Collate information**

This step is simply about collating all the possible information you will need as per the outline that you have created. I would suggest that you do not filter out any information here, get everything together, including images you feel must be used as per the outline.

#### **5. Refine the content**

Once you have collated all the information, let a copy writer refine the content, or you can do it yourself if you like. If you are doing it yourself, ensure that you take a little break before you start; this will refresh your mind. A day is great, but if that's not possible take at least an hour. Now go from start to finish and see what must stay and what must go out. One suggestion is to read the content out loud and slowly. This will help you understand if your content is repetitive or irrelevant.

One very important question you must ask during this step – 'Does this sentence/information deserve its place in this brochure?' If the answer is no, just remove it.

## How to evaluate a brochure design

The best place to start while evaluating a brochure is to ask yourself the same question that I shared in the beginning of the chapter.

*What will the brochure have to say in order to make a sale?*

By asking this question, many more questions crop up. Let's look into each key factors of evaluation and the related questions that need to be answered.

### 1. Focus

*What exactly are we trying to sell through the brochure?*

Well this may sound like a silly question to ask, but bear with me. During trade shows or after sales calls a brochure is given as further reading material to a prospect. But we all know that very few people actually read the brochure after they leave the trade show or after the sales person has left a prospect's office.

But say you meet a prospect to whom you pitched your product. He goes back carrying your brochure with him and actually reads it on his flight back home. Will he remember the pitch you gave him in person? I doubt that. But what if your pitch is focused on a few major things? And so is your brochure. Then the chances of the prospect taking an action are tremendous. Because the ideas that convinced him are reinforced.

Therefore clarify what message the brochure is giving the reader. And ask yourself whether you would say the same

thing in person.

Another question to ask is:

*Is the information in the brochure leading the reader (prospect) towards an action?*

Many times brochures don't take you anywhere. They don't guide the reader to a specific outcome. They just have a hotch-potch of information placed together. Such brochures do a poor job of selling and create a poor impression on the minds of the prospect. Leading to no action.

Ensure that your brochure is clear in its message and it leads you to a call to action smoothly.

In fact use the format of any good presentation:

- Tell them what you are about to say - You can do this in 2 ways. One is to write an introduction where key points are highlighted. Second is the index page, where the content is laid out with page numbers.
- Tell them - This of course is the main body of the brochure. Please make sure that everything that you have highlighted and mentioned in the index page is actually there. Otherwise the reader will feel cheated.
- Tell them what you've told them - Conclude the brochure by quickly highlighting key pieces of information and tell them the specific action they need to take.

*What action should the reader take after reading the brochure?*

As mentioned in the previous step, the reader needs to be guided on what exactly to do in order to work with your company. So break it down for them. Don't assume anything on behalf of the reader.

Think of your reader as one of those employees in your company who needs to be told exactly every little thing and in the right order to get a small job done. Why? Because your prospect has more options than he can possibly handle. Even if he is excited to work with you, if what needs to be done next isn't clear to him, you've lost a potential customer.

Let me give you an example: At the end of the brochure you lay out every option you have for the prospect to get in touch with you – in any way he chooses.

*Thank you for taking the time to read our brochure. I hope we have given you enough reasons to consider us. To work with us here's what you can do.*

*Write to xyz@yourcompany.com OR*

*Call us at 020 – 4555 5555 and we will get in touch with you within 24 hours, or sooner.*

*You can download our FREE guide on \_\_\_\_\_  
from [www.yourcompany.com/freeguide](http://www.yourcompany.com/freeguide)*

## 2. The 'So what?' Test

*Have we given enough reasons to the prospect to take action?*

It is important to read your brochure slowly and constantly ask yourself something that your reader will keep asking himself - 'so what?'

This question is important as it pushes you to make your answers convincing for the reader. Everything that goes in to the brochure must have solid reasons to be there, otherwise what's the point of putting it there?

Remember, your brochure is your salesperson in print. If you don't expect your salesperson to say something irrelevant or make claims that are not true, hold the same standards for your brochure as well.

### **3. Frequently Asked Questions**

*Have we raised and resolved objections that a prospect may have?*

One of the best ways to address a concern is to raise it yourself and resolve it rather than avoid it. You can do this with FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions). When you do this, you not only rise in your prospects estimation of you, but rise in his trust. This is true especially if the issues you have raised are real and relevant to your prospect.

*The five steps for creating a FAQs section.*

**Step 1:** Make a list of all the questions that you've heard from almost all your customers and prospects. Consult with your sales team here.

**Step 2:** Even cover questions that you know a prospect will ask you but you don't necessarily provide.

**Step 3:** Pick one to two of your key benefits and write it in a question answer format.

**Step 4:** Answer all the questions truthfully and avoid jargon as much as possible.

**Step 5:** Select the top 10 – 15 questions and use them in this section.

#### 4. Congruency

*Does the brochure look like it's part of the company?*

It is important that your brochure looks like it is part of your company. Meaning if you hold your brochure next to your website, would it look like it is part of the same family? The colors, the fonts, the design elements etc. – are they consistent?

If a prospect moves from looking at your brochure to seeing your website or seeing your stall he must be able to recognize your company instantly. Otherwise you will look unprofessional.

### Some tips to make your brochure effective:

1. Write for readers as well as skimmers

There are two types of readers. Those who skim through the information you give them. These are people who love visuals. And the others, who will read every single letter in the brochure. The more details you give them the better.

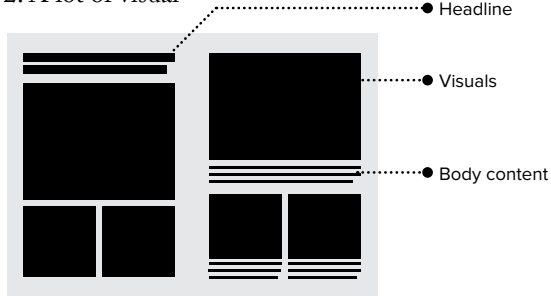
Most times brochure information is dependent on the person making it. If you are a type of person who likes more visuals you will reduce the content and vice versa. But the best thing to do is to marry both worlds.

Let's look at two formats that we commonly see:

#### 1. A lot of text



#### 2. A lot of visual





I recommend a more balanced approach:



## 2. Use high quality images of your products

Here's what I tell all my clients. Do not use images from Google. And do not take photos from your phone by keeping the product on your office table.

- **Product images:** Use a professional photographer to shoot your product. You don't have to use the most expensive photographer, but trust me a good photographer can give your product a look that your mobile phone will never be able to give.
- **Stock images:** buy stock images rather than using cheap Google images. Even when you do buy stock images, make sure that you buy good quality images. One tip regarding selection of images is that use images that mean what you are trying to convey rather than being too literal.

For example, if you are saying call us, you don't have to use an image of a phone. Rather use an image of someone talking in to another person.

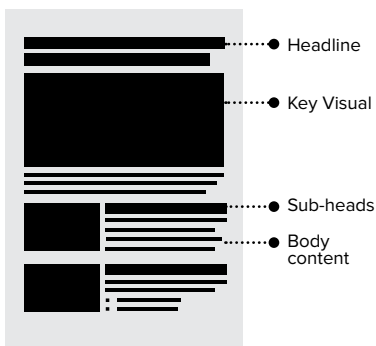
- **Photoshoot:** If budget permits get a professional photographer to do your shoot. Please look at past work before you select someone. Get the photographer approved by someone who understands the medium like your designer, as he will be well equipped to gauge quality of work.

### 3. Use more white space where there is more information

Whenever there is more text, make sure it is against a white background. Studies have shown that as compared to any other color, a white background makes it easier to read, especially when there is a lot of text.

### 4. Maintain a clear visual hierarchy

Visual hierarchy is how our eyes make sense of information. As the name suggests, there needs to be a hierarchy in how the visuals needs to be presented. Here visual also includes text as well.



## 5. Give it a personal touch

Most entrepreneurs think that writing in third person and referring to themselves as Mr. So-and-So really impresses the prospect. This is a fatal mistake. The more real you are, the more trustworthy you will be perceived to be.

Remember it is all perception, it is all about the first impression in the beginning. The prospect doesn't know you or your company, so the only thing he has to go by is what he reads and his gut reaction to the information & design.

### **Two tips on making your content personal:**

- **Write as if you are talking to a close friend.**  
Write as if you are talking to someone whom you respect and someone who is taking his precious time out to listen to you. How will you talk to this person? Will you refer to yourself as Mr. So-and-So? Not really.
- **Use the word 'you' a lot.**  
This helps in keeping the reader engaged in the information. It makes him feel like you are talking to him directly. Don't take this lightly.

Remember, your brochure is a salesperson in print. Whatever you put in it must help push the sales process. Everything else is irrelevant.

# Chapter 11:

## How to design a website

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### What is the purpose of a website?

I want you to look at your website as a ‘window’. A window through which a customer peeps in and looks in to your company. So don’t say “we need a good looking website.” Instead ask, “how do we create a website that will serve its purpose?”

The purpose of your website, like your brochure, is to sell. However, there are various values that you must look into before you design your website. All the three values given below can co-exist and usually do. However, they vary depending on the type of business.

#### 1. Information

Most company websites are high on this value. After all, prospects come to your website to gain better understanding of your company, your products or services. Any and every website has information value.

For example: [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com), [linkedin.com](http://linkedin.com), [accenture.com](http://accenture.com)

#### 2. Entertainment

Unlike information which is omnipresent in every website.

Entertainment is more specific usage of information or content. Today entertainment is dominated by video and not just words and images.

*Examples of sites that entertain: youtube.com, pinterest.com, facebook.com*

### 3. Promotions

These are purely for promotional reasons and do not necessarily have a long life. They are created for promoting a movie, car, book etc. Generally these are part of a marketing campaign.

*For example: bahubali.com, themagneticbook.com*

You must have a clear idea of the value you are pursuing through your website. Because that will impact the content and the design of the website.

## The website design process:

1. Define the reader
2. Set your objective
3. Create an information structure and flow
4. Create wireframes
5. Collate information

6. First cut design
7. Refine the content
8. Refine / finalize design

The first two steps in the process have already been covered in the previous chapter, so I will not talk about it here again. So let's start with the third step...

## **1. Create an information structure and flow**

This is pretty similar to the brochure structure. However, a brochure is rigid and linear in its form whereas a website offers a lot of flexibility. And because of its flexibility and lower restrictions, you, as a business owner, have to set some priorities. If you do not set your priority of what is most important and what is least, you will end up creating a website that is totally confusing and one that will never make a sale.

### **Beware of perfectionitis!**

I've had clients who have never been able to finalize their website and who constantly want a perfect website. You must keep in mind that a website has to be revisited time and again and needs to be updated, and upgraded regularly, like most things in life. Whatever seemed to be important six months ago may not be important anymore. So don't get stuck, get going and look at your website as a living organism that evolves over time.

### **How to create an information flow**

If you have worked on your brochure following the steps I laid out, then this should be easy.

- **Brain dump:** First jot down every piece of information that needs to be covered in your website.

For example: Contact information, dealer locations, products, prices, history of the company, client testimonials, client list, case studies, whitepapers, guarantee etc.

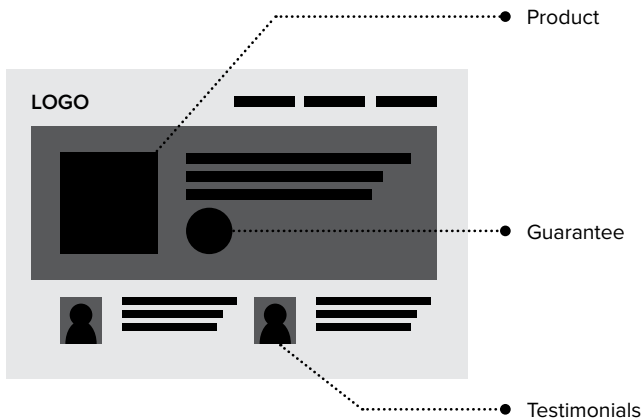
- **Prioritize:** Looking at the objective (step 2) ask yourself what is the most important thing in this list. Then the second, the third etc. This is not a test of accuracy, but you will generally know your top priorities. (Please note: doing this exercise doesn't mean your priorities won't change in the future, they might. So keep your mind open to that.)

Shortlist of priorities from the previous list: Guarantee, Client testimonials, Products, Client list, Contact information, Case studies

- **Focus:** Now I want you to focus only on the top three elements from the list. These three things will be your website's key highlights. Meaning when a user lands on your website, these three things must be clearly visible on your website.

For example: 1. Product, 2. Guarantee, 3. Client Testimonials

This is what your website will look like if you follow this process.



## 2. Create wireframes

Wireframes should be seen as blueprints. They visually show you what the website structure will look like. The visual above is a good example of a wireframe.

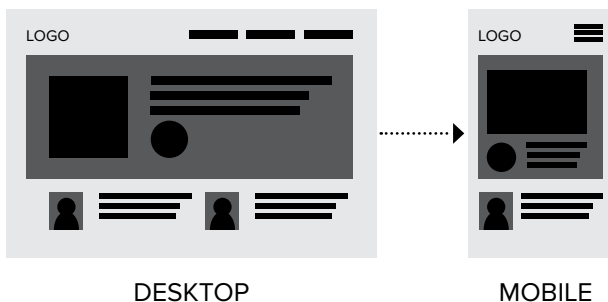
Now there are very basic wireframes (like the one shown above) and then are wireframes that are highly detailed. These types of wireframes are just short of an actual website.

You will find it difficult to see your website when you see a wireframe. But look at it as a necessary step whose only purpose is to show the structure visually. A good designer can turn a bland wireframe into something totally unique and interesting. But at this stage just look at your wireframe without trying to understand how good the design will be. If necessary do ask for a refined wireframe to get a better under-



standing of your website.

To take it further, you must also see your wireframe in mobile form as well, as your website should be responsive to a mobile phone (as shown below)



### 3. Collate information

This is pretty self explanatory. Just collect all the relevant information as per the requirement. This will include - information, images and videos. This doesn't have to happen after the wireframe and can happen while the wireframe is created.

### 4. First cut design

Once wireframes are in place and approved, the next step would be to graphically design the website. Again, I have already shared the design process so I won't get in to it much. But below are some pointers you should keep in mind, I'm only repeating the points here. You can see the explanation of each pointer in the previous chapter - how to design a

brochure.

- Use high quality images of your products
- Use more white space where there is more information
- Maintain a clear visual hierarchy
- Give it a personal touch

## **5. Avoid too many rounds**

I would recommend that you don't quickly jump to conclusions and ask for changes. Take time, sleep over it and then give complete feedback. My suggestion is to take a day or two at least to give your feedback. This will not only ensure that you cover each area of concern but the turnaround time will be faster for the next round of design as you have covered every element .

## **6. Refine content**

When you create the first cut design, it is possible that you will notice a few things that need to be changed, some things to be removed and some new things to be added. Don't worry this is a part of the process. At this point also look in to checking grammatical and spelling errors.

## **7. Refine / finalize design**

If everything seems ok. Go with it. Do not over think it. Remember what I told you - your website is a living organism

and will need to evolve time and time again. So move on knowing you will need to relook and redesign it someday. That's just the way it is.

## **How to evaluate your website**

The best way to evaluate your website is to ask your existing customers to visit it and give their feedback. Nothing else will tell you if your website is doing its job or not unless it's used by actual users.

Yes there are tools like analytics, heat maps etc that will help you better your website but remember only actual users (your customers and prospects) will be telling you the truth.

### **Warning!**

Don't be lazy and just ask your spouse or a few friends to experience your website. Yes, before you launch your website, close friends can help spot some things that will save you embarrassment later but take their feedback with a pinch of salt. Unless they are of the same profile as your target market, their feedback could be harmful, and may put you in a never ending loop of changes.

## Chapter 12:

# How to design an advertisement

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### *What is the purpose of an advertisement?*

The purpose of any advertisement is ultimately to get customers. However, if you study advertisements you will notice that depending on the size of the business, the strength of the brand, the money for a campaign etc., the type of advertisement will change.

## Types of advertisements

Before we look at designing your advertisement it is extremely important for you to be aware that there are various types of advertisements. This will help you understand what to do and what not to do when creating your advertisement.

### 1. The Offer

Here you will be making an offer to entice an immediate/impulsive action. You would do this when you are offering a discount, or a buy-one-get-one, or limited edition or seats etc. Typically, you are triggering an impulsive reaction from your target audience. This works really well for products that are bought on impulse. But remember, this may not necessarily work for products where some amount of deliberation is required. Also, such advertisements are seasonal or are done

at intervals. Remember if you overuse this type of advertisement, it can be harmful to your brand as your customers won't buy from you unless you give them an offer that they are now accustomed to.

## **2. The Buy Now**

This is the most common type of advertisement that we see. This is simply an advertisement where the target audience is given a very good reason to buy the product or service, although many businesses never really give a good reason to buy. (We will look at the things to do and not to do with your advertisement later in this chapter.)

## **3. The Brand Builder**

Most well-known brands of the world indulge in this type of advertisement. These are ads that don't tell you to buy, but remind you that this brand exists and what it means to people who consume it. Brands like Coca-cola, Nike, Pepsi etc will engage in this type of advertisement. If you don't have deep pockets I would recommend that you do not engage with this type of advertisement as it requires repetition, and repetition at a massive scale to establish the name.

## **4. The Lead Generator**

Here the goal of the ad is simply to generate leads - that's it. The goal is not to get a customer. The idea is that the leads that are generated will be converted to customers over time. For small businesses this is a great place to spend your money.

However, the conversion of leads to customers is never immediate and takes time. So patience is key.

*So how do you generate leads with an advertisement?*

The best way to do this is to offer the readers something free or which requires minimum commitment from their end. And you do this by offering information such as a free guide, report, or book. You could also do this by inviting them to an event such as workshop, panel discussion, dinner or lunch etc. But this offer is such that it will attract only those who are qualified to be your prospects.

For example: If you own a pet food company, and say you are targeting dog owners. Rather than directly advertising your products, you will advertise a free report on how to take care of your dogs in the summer and the best type of food to give them. Only those who own dogs will be interested in your offer. And they will respond to your advertisement via email or call (however you want them to respond). Once they respond, you give them the report you promised but now you also have a list of leads to whom you can pitch your products.

This approach is very effective but takes planning and patience which is why many companies refrain from it. But this is perhaps one of the best ways to get the most out of your marketing budget.

## **The advertisement design process:**

1. Clarify the type of advertisement
2. Identify your target audience
3. Define the key message
4. Create support information
5. Design the advertisement
6. Test the advertisement

## **1. Clarify the type of advertisement**

Look at the types of advertisements I have laid out earlier. I want you to look at each one of them and ask yourself what it is that you want to do. Here's a checklist for you to look at before you start the advertisement process:

Is there a need to bump sales on an urgent basis? If yes, then go with the offer advertisement route.

You cannot make any offer but want to sell your product or service on its merit? Then go with the buy now advertisement route.

You want to hammer your brand in the mind of your target audience? Go with the brand advertisement route.

You have a lead nurturing and conversion process and only want leads? Then the lead generation advertisement route is

best for you.

## **2. Identify your target audience**

Very few small businesses take the effort to even broadly define whom they are targeting with their advertisement. When you clearly define a target group you make the advertisement for the reader. Remember, your advertisement is talking to only one person. The better you define who you are talking to, the sharper and the more effective your message will be. Ideally you should not just know the age, gender and other demographics, but you must also understand the key challenges of your customer. Especially emotional ones.

## **3. Define the key message**

This is simply an extension of the previous step. If you are clear about what you are offering, clearly aware of whom you are talking to, and aware of their emotional challenges then the message is simply the bridge between their emotional need and your product. Your messaging must always be from the customer's perspective, not yours.

## **4. Create support information**

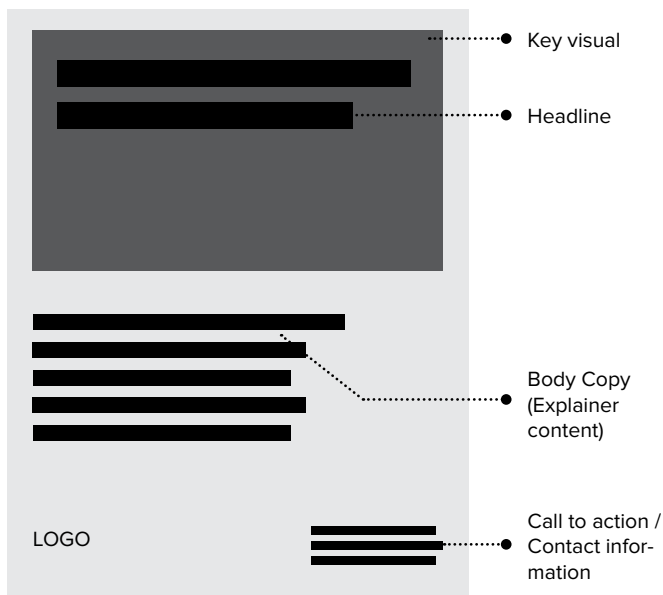
Basically, this simply states that what you claim in the ad, must be supported with some relevant info. So, for example, if your key message focuses on how environmentally friendly your business is, then support that claim with certifications and testimonials. This makes your claim more believable.

## **5. Design the advertisement**



Here's a secret many people ignore. If you get the first four steps in place, you can simply hand write the advertisement and print it in a magazine and it will still work. Yes, design makes a big difference but the core effectiveness of the advertisement lies in the first four steps I have shared.

As far as designing an advertisement is concerned. It is important to follow a simple format of visual hierarchy and making sure that key elements are in place.



## 6. Test the advertisement

Unfortunately, not many small companies test their adver-

tisement. Testing is painful, but if you test an advertisement it helps you in understanding what is working and what isn't.

The best way to test an advertisement is doing the A/B split test. Here, you simply change one variable and test the ad. For example, you change the headline in one ad and keep the headline the same in the other and see which one is getting a better response. You can do this with the visual as well. If you do this on a consistent basis, you will soon start seeing which headline, visual, format etc gives the best result. This however, is something you must always do.

## **How to evaluate your advertisement**

The best way to evaluate your advertisement is by the result you get. There is no other way of evaluating it. But there are some things you must keep in mind.

### **1. You are only talking to one person**

Yes, your advertisement may reach thousands of people, but they are reading it individually, so make sure you are talking to one person.

### **2. Make it easy to understand**

Don't have too many visuals, make sure that the eye goes to one visual or more but as a matter of flow not to confuse. Also, if a headline is strong, don't try to add a visual that takes away from the headline. The text and visuals must complement each other and not work against each other.

### **3. Maintain visual hierarchy**

It is very important for you to guide the readers eye through the advertisement. The headline is the most important so don't compromise on its prominence.

### **4. Don't make them guess**

Spell out what you want the reader to do next. Don't make them guess. Don't make the number to call very small just because the designer thinks there is no space. Make space for the necessary.

### **5. Never be boring**

Remember you can be serious but you don't have to be boring. I must add here that copy (the text) is the most important element in any ad. Without words visuals fall flat. So if you have to, hire a good copywriter. A good copywriter will surprise you with what they can do with words.

#### *Warning!*

Remember that print output depends a lot on the paper used. So your advertisement will look very different on a glossy magazine like Business Today compared to The Times of India newspaper. Make sure you test print your advertisement before you release it.

## Chapter 13:

# How to design your social media profiles

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There are only few things to keep in mind as rules while creating visuals for your social media pages. I'm saying 'rules' as social media sites keep coming up with new versions that drop the old formats and add something new, by the time you read this book, some of the social media tools you use today, would be outdated.

But I would suggest you keep three rules in mind while getting your social media profile designed. Now please understand there are nuances to this, which you will pick up if you get better at marketing on social media platforms so I'm giving some broad strokes here.

### **Rule #1:**

#### Know the audience of your social media platform

Be clear which social media platform will give you the maximum advantage. LinkedIn is great for B2B businesses but may not necessarily work for B2C business. The audience of LinkedIn is expecting conversations related to career and business, but the same person on Facebook expects entertainment. So choose your platform/s carefully, you don't have to be on each and every social media network.

**Rule #2:****Test your visuals on different devices**

It so happens that if the cover image you have uploaded has text on it, it may get cut when viewed on a smartphone. Therefore ensure that text and vital visuals are placed such that they don't get completely cut when the device changes.

**Rule #3:****Never deviate from your brand's visual language**

This is a very important rule. Consistency is the most important thing that you must must must maintain. Remember, every touch point must look and feel the same. This doesn't necessarily mean that everywhere you repeat the same visuals. Instead while creating your brand's identity your designer must define the visual tonality, the mood of the images your brand will use. If you look at Coca-Cola you will always find the visuals to be a slice of life, of people enjoying themselves. And it is always consistent.

Just keep these few rules in mind and you will fare well. You will now and then notice some people breaking the rules. These people are either extremely smart or extremely ignorant. The smart ones do it because they know what they are doing and there is a reason for their decision. The ignorant ones do it out of laziness or just following everybody else. The smart ones have a lot of experience and expertise, so they take risks they know they can handle. However, for you I would advise you to be safe, and follow these rules.

## Chapter 14:

# How to design your your tradeshow kiosk

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If you participate in tradeshow then I assume you are involved with the design of the kiosk to some extent. When I see kiosk designs at tradeshow it amazes me how little thought has gone into designing one. Now mind you I'm talking about a kiosk design here which generally is a square space, I'm not talking about an exhibition stand that is completely fabricated.

### **So what's the purpose of a kiosk?**

Here's what I believe, it is to simply demarcate your area from the other participants in the show. It is like a shop in a mandi. Think of a vegetable market and look at how each stall is placed right next to each other. Sorry if this analogy offends you but the truth is a tradeshow stall is no different than a vegetable stall.

Remember every buyer coming to the tradeshow has come with a purpose. They first go to the kiosks they have pre-decided and then they window shop and look for anything that catches their eye.

When designing your kiosk, your goal should be to capture the attention of this window shopper, make them stop and interact with your sales team at the kiosk.

This of course, is easier said than done. But here are three things you can do to make your kiosk interesting and inviting.

## **1. Look at your kiosk wall as a hoarding/banner not as a press advertisement**

I find it funny and strange that many companies put everything that they put in their brochure up on the kiosk wall. They want to use every cubic centimeter of the kiosk real estate. They never stop to ask - is this much information necessary?

My suggestion is look at your kiosk wall as a hoarding or a big banner. Here's why: as you're trying to attract the attention of a walking window shopper, you cannot overload them with information, you should help them capture key information immediately.

A good hoarding shouldn't have more than seven words on it. Why? Because the people reading it are people who are on their bikes or driving their cars, they can't stop and read. Therefore only the most distilled messages make it to hoardings. In case of a kiosk the window shopper can slow down, but he won't stop and approach your kiosk unless the information you have put catches his eye. And nothing will catch his eye if there too many things on the wall.

Say less, but say the important.

## **2. Factor the table, chairs, people, screen (if any) while designing the kiosk walls**

I remember creating a kiosk for a client. And I designed the walls such that the bottom 3.5 ft of the kiosk walls were blank. This was not ok with the client. He insisted I remove his comparatively smaller logo from the top and place it in the bottom section that I had kept blank intentionally. I explained to him that there will be a table or chair that will block the branding and you will miss out on showcasing your logo. But he was adamant. I don't have to tell you that his logo was completely covered by the table in front. So always remember, factor the height of the table and chairs that will be placed in the kiosk and leave the bottom half of the kiosk empty, so that no branding gets cut.

### **3. Be consistent with your brand identity**

I have said this before and I will say it again, your designs must look like they belong to the same family. Many times a different designer will design the kiosk and a different designer will design the brochure. If the brand guidelines are not clear they will end up creating something that will not reinforce your brand identity and in fact work against it. Put your foot down. Keep all the designs in front of you before you finalize - the kiosk, the brochure, the product catalogue etc - and ensure that they all look like they are part of your brand's family.



## Chapter 15:

# How to design a hoarding

---

We see a lot of hoardings around us and its strange how many companies view hoardings as a bigger version of a print advertisement. This is a big mistake (pun intended).

If you study big brands, you will notice that they design their hoardings in such a way that there isn't too much to see except a strong visual and a headline. I will share the mechanics of designing a hoarding in a minute.

Before we move to the actual designing of hoardings, it is important to keep some principles in mind.

### 1. Clarify your purpose

It is important for you to be clear why you are renting a hoarding space. Remember hoardings are made for reaching out to the masses. Unless it is strategically located, your hoarding will be read (big assumption) by anyone and everyone – even those people who will never buy your product or service.

Before you think of renting out a hoarding, understand that a hoarding works really well as part of an integrated advertising campaign.

So for example, say you are a travel and tour operator and you

have a fantastic offer for a European cruise vacation. So you place a hoarding on a busy road and hope that somebody will take your offer. This is a bad strategy.

But let's say your advertising agency has come up with an integrated advertising campaign for your offer. You now have print ads in the newspaper, radio ads, mall activations, and to reinforce this campaign and amplify your campaign you setup hoardings across town. Now this is an effective strategy (assuming the campaign message is strong).

Remember, your hoarding is a 'reinforcer' it will reinforce an existing campaign. It will not necessarily elicit an action.

If you have the budgets to rent a hoarding, don't just jump right in. Remember that it is better to reach out to your prospects directly - through newspaper inserts or print ads that can carry more information than to use hoardings that are great reinforcers.

## **2. The three second rule**

Here's the thing, not every hoarding is placed and available for you at a traffic signal. So let's assume that your hoarding is on a highway and cars are zooming past your hoarding. How much time do you think a car driver or passenger has to read your hoarding?

I remember when I was starting out in advertising, a creative director told me that the best place to start creating an advertising campaign is to first create a hoarding. Why? Simply be-

cause a hoarding cuts right through the chase and gets to the core of a campaign. You can't explain your headline or complex visuals by writing paragraphs and paragraphs. Simplicity is demanded. Before the first line is read, the car has passed your hoarding.. You have to be insanely lucky for someone to stop their car to read your hoarding.

Here's a good rule, if your reader is given only three seconds to read your hoarding, what will you put in that hoarding?

I'll tell you exactly what you should do in a bit. However, the one thing you will obviously not do is add a lot of text.

### **The hoarding design process:**

1. Clarify the type of advertisement
2. Craft a headline
3. Design a strong visual
4. Adapt design to different ratios

#### **1. Clarify the type of advertisement**

I won't get in to this as I have already spoken about it in the chapter on newspaper / magazine advertisement. However, whether you are doing an integrated advertising campaign, or putting up a single hoarding you need to be clear about the type of advertisement you are doing.

## 2. Craft a headline

This is crucial. Remember we learnt that the purpose of a hoarding is to reinforce. You are echoing a campaign that is already running on other media platforms. And you have three seconds to talk about your campaign on a hoarding.

Here's what great advertising legends suggest. Stick to 7 words max. Let's take two examples and apply the three second rule.



It is obvious that the second hoarding fails the three second rule miserably. We will come back to these examples in the

other steps. For now, it is important to note that there are just four words in the headline in the first example. And there the name Snickers appears twice on the hoarding. A very strong re-inforcement hoarding.

### **3. Design a strong visual**

If the three second rule still applies, how many visual elements can you add? My answer - one.

This is a little difficult to understand, but here's the thing the eye must be able to grasp the entire hoarding together as a whole. The more number of parts the hoarding is broken into the more the eye needs to travel and therefore the more time is needed to take in the message.

Take the LIC hoarding for instance. The eyes move from the left which has a headline and a visual to the right side which has text. On the other hand, the Snicker hoarding has one composite visual. Meaning the packaging, the cut chocolate, the headline - all work together with each other. None of the elements are vying for attention they are working together. This is what a good designer can do.

Remember, selecting or designing a visual for the hoarding cannot be just for visual relief. What visual will be used, should be part of the ideation and sketching process. It's only when you don't think about the visual that you have hoardings that fail the three second test.

Also, whatever you create, conduct the three second test and

be ruthless. If something is not required remove it immediately.

And adding Facebook, Twitter and other social media icons on the bottom of the hoarding may seem like the in- thing to do. But it is useless. Being on social media is given. The number of elements on the hoarding should be bare minimum. So forget social media, focus on a composite and strong visual.

#### **4. Adapt design to different ratios**

Adapting a hoarding design to different ratios becomes is extremely important. Hoardings are commonly rectangles (horizontal or vertical) or squares.

Remember, you must be careful in selecting your hoarding locations. Whatever is the shape of the hoarding space, the design has to be adapted to it and not the other way around.

When you create a hoarding you don't create it keeping some ratio in mind, because like I mentioned the hoarding ratio will depend on the location.

Often poor adaptation can ruin the hoarding. But if you have followed the steps of clarifying your purpose, crafting a short and powerful headline and designing a strong visual, then adaptation will not be a big challenge.

Going back to the Snicker example, how hard would it be to adapt the same design if the hoarding was horizontal rectangle or a vertical one like ones we see on buildings? Not very.

## Chapter 16:

# How to design a presentation

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Presentations as the word suggests need to be presented. This in turn means that there is a person along with the information on the screen; which means that what is shown on the screen is supposed to complement the presentation. All you need to do is add visual support to verbal/audio information.

Unfortunately not many people look at presentations this way. They usually put everything up on the screen and then read from the screen. I have never understood why you would do that. I would link it to lack of knowledge, or preparation, or both.

Please remember, the reason why a person stands next to the screen and talks is to add a human touch to the presentation. To elaborate on the ideas on the screen, to explain a complex idea, to answer questions.

When you take the human element out of the presentation, then what remains is a brochure in a slide by slide form.

Below are eight rules that will guide you in designing an impactful presentation:

### **Rule #1:**

Clarify your purpose

I guess I have repeated this many times in the book. But again it is important to be clear about the result you expect from your presentation. Every presentation is trying to sell something. And as obvious as it may seem, keep asking yourself while creating your presentation ‘What is the purpose here?’ This will refine your thinking.

## **Rule #2:**

**Prioritise the audience before the message**

Of course it goes without saying that it is not about you but about the audience. When you are clear about the expectation of your audience, the audience themselves will act as a rudder when you go off course while creating your presentation.

When you are clear about your purpose and the audience’s expectation then your message in the presentation forms the bridge between the two.

## **Rule #3:**

**Always have a story**

When I say ‘story’ I don’t literally mean a story unless of course, you really have one. What I mean is that there must be a beginning, a middle and an end. There must be a flow. The audience ideally should be taken somewhere. I understand this won’t happen when you are presenting only numbers and facts. But whenever possible always create a flow and take the audience on a journey.



Let me share a common presentation format:

1. Tell them what you are going to tell them (content flow),
2. Tell them (actual presentation),
3. Tell them what you just told them (summarize).

### **Rule #4:**

One slide, one idea.

I find it funny when people worry that there are too many slides and the audience will grow impatient. Here's the thing, unlike a book where the number of pages are visible, the number of slides in the presentation doesn't matter, as long as the presentation is presented. Yes, when it is emailed, then the presentation should be viewed as a brochure not as a presentation. Then by all means compress the information in to fewer slides.

So coming back to the rule. Remember, show one idea on one slide. This doesn't mean that there needs to be only one visual or one word. It means that this slide talks about one piece of the many ideas that are being presented. More than one idea will confuse the audience.

### **Rule #5:**

What needs to be read in detail deserves a separate document

I think I would attribute it to general laziness but like I said a presentation is created to be presented. But if the audience will need to read or review the information you have presented in detail, you need to create another version which is detailed. Depending on the requirement, this can either be emailed or printed and handed to the audience.

### **Rule #6:**

#### **Stick to default fonts on PowerPoint**

This is not a rule, but if you are using PowerPoint, don't try to use fancy fonts downloaded from the internet. Even when you export a PowerPoint to a PDF format, the font is not embedded in the PDF format. So if you send this PDF to a client, and your client's computer doesn't have the font you have used, their computer will pick some random font and use it instead of the one you have used. Your entire presentation will look out of place because of this one mistake. And all that effort will be completely ruined if the font you have used is not available in the other person's computer.

### **Rule #7:**

#### **Use hi-resolution images**

Don't download cheap and pixilated visuals from Google. Use high resolution images, and if your budget permits buy stock images. Remember this reflects on your company. So be careful about the images you use.

**Rule #8:****Have a template based on your brand identity**

Get a template created for your presentation. This doesn't always have to have your logo on each slide. But it will have the design elements of your brand identity. A template will also ensure that other people in your company follow a standard look of a presentation which in turn, will reinforce your brand identity.



# APPENDIX

## Appendix A: Start with why

### *The Mirror Technique*

One of the best ways to understand yourself is to see what you love and relate to on the outside.

Here are 3 questions you must ask yourself (these questions are part of our questionnaire format that our client has to fill up):

#### *1. Which 3 brands/companies/people do you personally admire?*

- Brand 1: .....
- Brand 2: .....
- Brand 3: .....

#### *2. What is so unique about each of them, that appeals to you so much?*

- Brand 1: .....  
.....  
.....
- Brand 2: .....  
.....  
.....

- Brand 3: .....  
.....  
.....

3. *What specifically impresses you about each of these brands (logo, colors, service, smell, etc – anything about the business)?*

- Brand 1: .....  
.....  
.....

- Brand 2: .....  
.....  
.....

- Brand 3: .....  
.....  
.....

4. *What aspect of the future really excites you?*

.....  
.....  
.....

5. *What get's you going everyday in business?*

.....

.....

.....

## Appendix B: Brand Diagnosis

*Out of 10 how much would you score your current logo in terms of visual appeal?*

---

*Out of 10 how much would your customers rate your logo in terms of appeal?*

---

*Out of 10 how much would your employees rate your logo in terms of appeal?*

---

*Does your brand identity convey in alignment with your business or mission?*

---

*What gender do you think your brand is?*

---

*Is the overall shape of your logo easily recognizable?*

---

*How unique do you feel is your logo compared to the competition?*

---

*Is there a standard guideline that is followed in the usage of your logo?*

---

*If you put all the elements which are your customer touchpoints and bears your logo or brand identity design element. Do they look like they belong to the same family?*

---



## Appendix C: Putting it all together

### Basic information

- Company name: .....
- Industry: .....
- Turnover of your company: .....
- No. of employees: .....
- Website: .....

What are the brands that you admire?

.....

.....

What words come to mind when you see these brands?

.....

.....

What visual elements of these brands impress you?

.....

.....

What gender do you think your brand is?

.....

Why do you need to redesign your logo / identity?

.....

Is this a new brand or company? Or are you looking to redesign your existing logo and identity?

.....

.....

One word that you want your brand to stand for

.....

In a single sentence what does your brand stand for?

.....

.....

What animal would best describe your business?

.....

What colors according best represent your brand? And why?

.....

What are the different elements need to be re-designed?

.....

.....

What are the new elements that will be needed?

.....

.....

What are the realistic deadline for this re-branding activity?

Buffer deadline: .....

Final deadline: .....

*(NOTE: Buffer deadline helps when you need your designs to be ready for print for an event etc. Ideally 1 week is a good buffer. )*

## Appendix D: Budgeting

### 1. Graphic design budget formula #1

*Customer Lifetime Value x \_\_\_\_\_% = Graphic Design Budget*

**Customer Lifetime Value =**

Average Spend per day/week/month/year X

Average No. of days / week / month / year the customer remains a customer

CLV = Rs. \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ = Rs. \_\_\_\_\_

**Graphic Design Budget (GDB) = CLV x \_\_\_\_\_%**

= Rs. \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Graphic design budget formula #2

*Average Sales x \_\_\_\_\_% = Graphic Design Budget*

Average sales = Total sales / total days or weeks or months or years

**Graphic Design Budget (GDB) = AS x \_\_\_\_\_%**

= Rs. \_\_\_\_\_

**Budget range: (- 15% and + 15%)**

Minimum = GDB x 85% | Maximum = GDB x 115%

[\*<< Go back to Chapter 5\*](#)

## Appendix E: Selecting the ideal designer

### SCORECARD

Please use the checklist below to assess a designer for your project. Rate 1 for poor, 2 for average and 3 for good:

1. *Quality of past work:* \_\_\_\_\_
2. *Consistency in quality:* \_\_\_\_\_
3. *Design sensibilities:* \_\_\_\_\_
4. *Clarity of design process:* \_\_\_\_\_
5. *Design knowledge:* \_\_\_\_\_
6. *Openness in sharing knowledge:* \_\_\_\_\_
7. *Specialization:* \_\_\_\_\_
8. *Recommendations from others:* \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- If the total is 15 or less, please reject the designer without a second thought.
  - If the total score is between 16 to 20, you have an average designer.
  - If the total is between 20 to 24, you have a good find.

<< *Go back to Chapter 5*

## Appendix F: Scope of work

A checklist of all brand identity elements all elements:

- ☐ Logo
- ☐ Business card
- ☐ Letterhead
- ☐ Envelope
- ☐ Brochures
- ☐ Product Catalogue
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Mobile application
- ☐ Emailer
- ☐ Packaging
- ☐ Uniform
- ☐ Ebook / whitepaper
- ☐ Standee
- ☐ Vehicle branding
- ☐ Kiosk
- ☐ Signage

## Appendix G: Handover – checklist

Below are the different elements and formats that you must have for the handover:

### LOGO

1. **Logo with safe area:** There must be a logo format shared that clear shows the safe area
2. **Vector file formats:** AI, CDR, EPS, PDF  
(Please note if the designer is using Adobe illustrator software then CDR (Corel Draw) format will not be possible and if the designer uses Corel Draw then AI format will not be possible.)
3. **Image formats:** JPG and PNG  
(Please note PNG file must be a transparent file, meaning there should be no white or black background behind and around the logo)
4. **Logo in different forms:** Logo Mark, Icon for app  
(If the logo has a symbol which can be used separately, then that should be shared as well, also the logo as a mobile app icon)

### FONT

1. **Print fonts:** These are all the fonts that the brand can use for print purpose. For eg: Helvetica, Proxima, Caslon etc.
2. **Web fonts:** These are all the fonts that the brand can use for

[\*<< Go back to Chapter 7\*](#)

print purpose. For eg: Open Sans, Droid, Serif etc

3. **Default screen fonts:** These are fonts that don't look good as a print and don't work as web fonts, but work well and look good on programs like MS Word, Powerpoint etc. These must be default fonts of the system, and not fonts which need to be installed separately. For eg: Arial, Calibri, Garamond etc

## STATIONERY

1. **Artwork:** These are print ready files. Must be shared in different formats like - AI, CDR, EPS and PDF
2. **Open formats:** You must always take a stationery file in open format so that the text can be changed wherever necessary. In a closed format, the text cannot be changed as it is converted to curve format, which in simple terms means it has become a graphical vector element not a text format.

## BROCHURE

1. **Artwork:** These are print ready files. Must be shared in different formats like - AI, CDR, EPS and PDF
2. **Pagination:** When there are a lot of pages, it is important for the brochure to be paginated. This means the pages are arranged the way they will be printed and are arranged different from the regular flow of page you see on the screen.
3. **Dummy:** Always get a dummy brochure printed (which is a basic digital print of the brochure and put together). This

[\*<< Go back to Chapter 7\*](#)



will help you in seeing how the brochure looks and if there are changes found, they can be rectified at this stage itself rather than after all the brochures are printed.

## WEBSITE

1. **PSD (Adobe Photoshop) files:** All the PSD files must be handed over by the designer so that they can be programmed by the web developer. As PSD files have many elements in it and be confusing, it must be conveyed to the designer that the layers within the PSD file must be organized and grouped together such that the developer can use it easily.
2. **Design guideline:** It is important that the designer shares a design guideline to the web developer. This guideline shows the font styles, font sizes, and color codes so that the developer does not change the design.

## STOCK IMAGES

1. **Subscription and storage:** Ensure that stock image subscription taken are utilized, and if not required in the future, the subscription must not be renewed. Most stock image sites offer the Lightbox option, where all the images you have purchased are stored. Therefore you don't need to download them.
2. **Image quality:** Ensure however, that when images are downloaded they are the 300 DPI (Dots per Inch) for print and atleast 150 DPI for screen usage.

## BRAND STANDARDS MANUAL

**Formats:** Must be available in both print and soft copy (PDF). This ensures that many people can access the manual whenever needed.

## Appendix H: Brand Standards Manual

The brand manual serves as the guideline that has to be followed by the users of the brand, be it your employee, yourself or your vendors.

As the scope of a brand manual depends on the scope of the brand identity created and the challenges you have tried to address, I have shared a list of elements that should be part of the brand manual. The elements listed here are not exhaustive but limited to what would work for a small business.

Use this list as an outline for your brand guideline.

The list has been borrowed from the book *Designing Brand Identity* by Alina Wheeler, but have been tweaked for the sake of the small business owner.

- |                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Foreword                   | • Tagline                        |
| 2. Message from CEO           | • Name in text                   |
| 3. Our mission and values     | • Incorrect usage of elements    |
| 4. Our brand                  |                                  |
| 5. What we stand for          |                                  |
| 6. The role of brand identity | 9. Nomenclature                  |
| 7. How to use the guidelines  | • Communicative vs. legal names  |
| 8. Brand identity elements    | • Product and service trademarks |
| • Brandmark / Symbol          |                                  |
| • Logotype                    |                                  |
| • Signature                   | 10. Color                        |

- Brand color system
- Default color system
- Incorrect use of color

## 11. Signatures (Logo unit)

- Corporate signature
- Signature variations
- Incorrect signature usage
- Subsidiary signatures
- Product signature
- Signature with tagline
- Incorrect tagline treatment
- Clear space around signature
- Signature sizes

## 12. Typography

- Typeface family
- Supporting typefaces
- Typefaces for word processing (MS Word)

## 13. Papers

- Corporate letterhead
- Typing template
- Personalized letterhead
- Business cards
- Notepads
- News releases
- Mailing labels
- Window envelope
- Large mailing envelope
- Announcements
- Invitations
- CD labels

## 14. Digital media

- Website
- Intranet
- Extranet
- Blogs
- Style guides
- Interface
- Content
- Color

- Typefaces
- Imagery
- Sound
- Direct mail
- Newsletters
- Posters
- Postcards

## 15. Forms

- Form elements
- Vertical and horizontal
- Form grid
- Purchase order
- Invoice
- Shipping

## 16. Marketing materials

- Voice and tone
- Imagery
- Signature placement
- Folder
- Covers
- Recommended grids
- Brochure system, size variations
- Mastheads
- Product sheets

## 17. Advertising

- Advertising signatures
- Tagline usage
- Signature placement on ads
- Typography

## 18. Presentations and proposals

- Vertical covers
- Horizontal covers
- PowerPoint templates
- PowerPoint imagery

## 19. Exhibits

- Trade show booth
- Banners
- Point of purchase
- Name tags

**20. Signage**

- External signage
- Internal signage
- Color
- Typography
- Materials and finishes
- Lighting considerations
- Company flag

**21. Vehicle identification**

- Vans
- Cars
- Buses
- Planes
- Trucks

**22. Packaging**

- Legal considerations
- Package sizes
- Package grids
- Product signatures
- Labeling system
- Boxes

- Bags

- Cartons

**23. Uniforms****24. Merchandise**

- Shirts
- Caps
- Ties
- Portfolios
- Pens
- Umbrellas
- Mugs
- Pins
- Scarves
- Mouse pads

**25. Image library**

- Photography
- Illustration

**26. Reproduction files**

- Brandmark only

- Signature variations
- Full-color
- One-color
- Black
- White
- PC
- Mac

## **27. Miscellaneous**

- Whom to contact with questions
- Frequently asked questions
- Design inquiries



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## What exactly are the benefits of creating a professional brand identity?

There are many benefits of creating a professional brand identity. Here are some key benefits.

### ***Benefit #1:***

*A professional brand identity helps you stand out from your competition*

One of the ways you can separate your business from the competition is to have a unique brand that projects your unique value to your clients.

For example, let's say there are two restaurants in your area. Both have the same type of cuisine, the same quality of food. Both are priced the same. However, restaurant A has a distinct unpleasant smell when you enter. The table wobbles when you rest your hand while sitting on the chair. The waiter wearing some random clothes hands you a poorly designed menu with cheap lamination peeling out from one corner. The lights are too dim for you read. Your food is served on yellow melamine plates.

In contrast restaurant B however is clean, smells fresh, with waiters wearing clean uniforms, the menu is professionally designed and well maintained, the music and lighting suits the type of cuisine and mood of the restaurant.

Question: Which restaurant will you choose?

Obviously A.

Now in case you are wondering how smell, cleanliness makes up an identity. Let me tell you it does. Remember these are touch-points. And every touch-point must be seen as part of the brand's identity.

***Benefit #2:***

*A professional brand identity will make  
your company look bigger*

When someone sees your business card, brochure or web site, what you want them to think is that you are a company that deserves their business. Prospects want to work with a professional company, a company that has the resources to help them succeed. If you hand them a poorly designed and printed business card, they see you as small and unworthy of their business or the price you ask for. On the flipside, when you look like a big and established company, customers expect to pay more.

***Benefit #3:***

*A professional brand identity creates an identity that is bigger  
than your past*

When you started your business, it is possible you worked all alone or with another partner. You personally created your company's logo. Your logo reflected your personal ideas. Over time your business grew as more and more people joined the company, but your logo still reflects the individual, it reflects you.

It is at this very point you need to create a professional brand identity, an identity that is bigger than where you started from.

An identity that reflects the present and future, not the past. An identity that represents the company as a whole.

***Benefit #4:***

*A professional brand identity conveys stability in your business*

You may be the best, most experienced player in your field, but a poorly designed brand identity says that your company won't last. A professional brand identity on the other creates an aura of stability.

***Benefit #5:***

*A professional brand identity makes it easy for the customer to buy*

A professional brand identity presents any company, any size, anywhere, with an immediately recognizable and distinctive professional image that positions it for success. Customers give professional looking brands a chance.

***Benefit #6:***

*A professional brand identity makes it easy for the sales force to sell*

Design is not only about how something looks, but also how it works. It is equally important for your sales brochure to impact sales as well as look appealing. A great brochure always makes a great sales pitch, and does it in style. We will learn more about how to design an effective brochure in section 3.

## **I run a small business why do I need a brand identity?**

A brand identity is not an expense, but an investment in your business. Would you consider being in business without business essentials like your own computer, business name or bank account? A brand identity is a basic business essential. It's the central requirement for marketing and promoting your business.

Many prospective customers won't even give you a chance to make them a customer, because they've rejected you from far. Your poor and cheap brand identity didn't give them enough confidence to come close.

## **Why should I pay a professional when my brother-in-law / web developer / friend can design my brand identity?**

There are some very significant areas of your business that should be left to professionals. First of all, while your cousin may have been "great in art class," this does not mean that he has the knowledge and expertise required to create a great logo, business card, or a web site. There is a lot of difference between knowing a design software and knowing how to design. A professional understands and creates a brand identity that is scalable, meaningful, and symbolic.

Another problem of depending on your friend or cousin is that your requirement will never be a priority for them. And it is awkward to push for something that is being done as a favour.

Would you trust a friend who is ‘good with mathematics’ to do your taxes? If you wouldn’t trust an amateur with an important business function, then why would you trust an amateur with your brand identity, the key to your marketing success?

## **Isn’t it expensive to custom design a brand identity?**

It’s true that having your marketing materials designed is an expensive proposition. But it may be even more expensive if you do not have a high-quality, custom brand identity professionally designed.

A strong brand identity quickly pays for itself. If you manage to get only one to two new customers for your business (assuming your ticket value is high) you will get a complete RoI on the money you spent on creating a professional brand identity.

Also, you must consider the fact that the lifespan of your logo and identity is long. Once you have had a good logo and a set of marketing materials designed, you can use them for years to come with no extra payment needed to be made.

## **I run my business in a personalized, one-on-one way, won’t a brand identity make it impersonal?**

For small businesses the core of design starts with you - the entrepreneur. That’s why a brand identity won’t necessarily de-personalize your brand. Infact in today’s world personalization is celebrated and accepted more as people like to talk to people - not

faceless corporations.

Some well known brands are built with personalization. For example, Vitthal Kamath's Veg Restaurant (the owner of The Orchid Hotels).

Remember, a new brand identity just changes the face of your business to the public, making it look cleaner and more organized and professional.

## **Branding, Marketing, Graphic Design, Advertising – It's all the same thing, right?**

Well, actually no.

Here's the thing, Marketing is the overarching umbrella under which branding and advertising come in. Graphic design is what gives form to branding and advertising.

Marketing is done to attract the right customers to your business. And you do this by communicating the right message to the right market via the right media.

Branding is a part of marketing. It's like putting your logo and brand identity elements on things that help you gain attention. For example, putting your logo on a cricket team jersey is branding.

Advertising is fundamentally salesmanship in print (or web). Advertising again is a part of marketing.

Finally, graphic design is basically the discipline that creates brand identity and advertisement. It is what brings an abstract idea to life through shapes, colors, images etc.

## **I have a logo, so my brand is complete – right?**

Again the answer is no.

A logo is a starting point, but not an end in itself. A logo is nothing but a mark of identification. That's it. However, it cannot be used everywhere, because repeating a logo everywhere is ridiculous.

Therefore, in order to ensure that a prospect or customer identifies you without necessarily seeing your logo you need other brand identity elements like unique shapes, fonts, and colors. Things that build your identity.

## **When should I design a new brand identity for my business?**

Let's quickly go through the five scenarios when you should consider create a new brand identity.

### ***Scenario #1:***

*New company, new product/service*

This is pretty obvious. You have a new company, product or service, and you ofcourse need a new identity.

**Scenario #2:***Need for a change*

In case your company name changes due to an acquisition, a merger, JV or trademark conflict, it's the right time to work on your new brand identity. Also, sometimes to shed a bad image, a new image has to be adopted. Let's look at two examples below:

## Andersen Consulting &gt; Accenture

In the late 1990's Andersen Consulting (a sister concern of Arthur Andersen) wanted to save face due to the Enron scam that had disgraced Arthur Andersen. Andersen Consulting therefore changed its name and was now called Accenture (supposedly derived from 'Accent on the Future').



## UTI Bank &gt; Axis Bank

Closer home, UTI bank after being disgraced with the UTI scam, changed their identity to Axis Bank.

**Scenarion #3:***Need to appeal to an international market*



Many of my clients approach me when they realize that their current identity is working against them, especially when they are targeting the international market. They are well known in India but unknown internationally and need a global personality for their brand. Below is an example of a client who changed their identity to make their business appeal to international buyers.



#### *Scenario #4:*

##### *Re-energizing an old brand*

Many times businesses need to re-energize their brand, make their brand look modern and contemporary. Make their company's image look like it's moving with the times. If your business is old, say 20 years or more, you might need to re-energize your brand.

Mind you re-energizing doesn't mean you have to completely change your logo. If your customers are loyal to you they will not be too happy to see a completely new logo. They may start doubting your brand now. So be careful how you approach this. Below is an example of how Intel re-energized their brand. They kept the essence of the brand intact with its shape and color still giving the brand a more modern image.



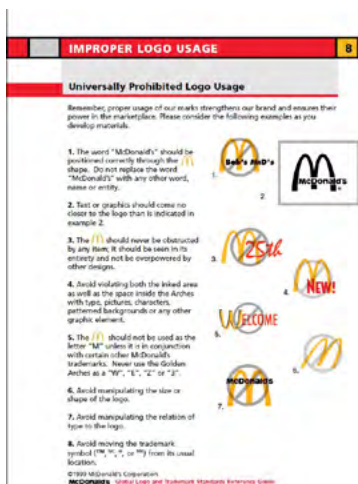
## Scenario #5:

### *Inconsistent branding*

This is as pretty common problem with small companies. There is no consistent branding. Every person handling your logo uses it as per his convenience and wish. The problem is that this creates a poor image of your brand making your company look disorganized and unprofessional.

This is a major problem for businesses that use a franchise model. If there is no standardization of brand usage, you will be surprised how poorly your brand can be represented by your franchisees.

What you need is a brand manual, which is the equivalent of an operations manual. A manual that lays out the dos and don'ts. The standards to follow.



Here's just a page of McDonald's brand manual. Here it shows how not to use McDonald's logo. Remember if you don't make it clear in writing and with clear examples, your branding will be ruined by people who don't care about your company as much as you do.

# ABOUT DFC DESIGNS

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DFC Designs helps small and medium sized business stand out in the market by creating unique brand identities. From logos, to brochures, from packaging to websites, DFC designs every customer touchpoint.

Over the years DFC Designs has worked with clients from a variety of industries like manufacturing, banking, real estate, consulting, education, FMCG, IT and ecommerce.

To see some of our work visit [www.deepfriedcolors.com](http://www.deepfriedcolors.com)

To work with DFC Designs, write to [projects@deepfriedcolors.com](mailto:projects@deepfriedcolors.com)

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Nishchal Par is the Founder and Principal Designer of DFC Designs. Prior to starting DFC Designs in 2011, he worked with Taj Hotels in Corporate Sales and with McCann Erickson in Project Management. Thanks to his varied experience, Nishchal brings a balanced approach to the table. He sees design as a tool to work for the business' objective. And not as an end in itself.

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