

BEE BETTER DAILY

The Small Business Branding Playbook

*A step-by-step guide to naming, styling and
presenting a small business*

beebetterdaily.com



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The Small Business Branding Playbook

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INTRODUCTION

A brand is not a logo. It is what people expect from you before they buy, and whether they find the same thing every time they come back. This playbook walks through the decisions that build that expectation, in the order that saves the most time and money. It is written for owners who do not have a design team or a marketing budget, and who want to look professional anyway. Work through one chapter per sitting, do the action steps, and fill in the worksheets as you go. By the end you will have a complete, written brand you can hand to any designer, printer or freelancer.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Get the most from it

Read one chapter at a time, and stop to do the action steps before moving on. Each chapter begins with what you will learn and ends with key takeaways and a short list of actions. Worksheets are meant to be written on: print the pages, or type your answers into a separate document.

You do not have to read in order. If you already know the basics, jump to the chapter that matches your next decision. Examples are illustrative and use made-up numbers and businesses, so adapt them to your own situation.

Treat the book as a working document. Highlight, annotate and come back to it when you are about to make the next decision.

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CHAPTER

01

Brand means consistency

IN THIS CHAPTER

- What a brand really is, and what it is not
- Why consistency matters more than creativity
- How to audit your current brand in thirty minutes

Every small business already has a brand. It is the sum of how your website reads, how fast you answer messages, what your invoices look like, how your product arrives and what customers say about you when you are not in the room. The only choice you have is whether your brand is designed or whether it happens by accident.

Many owners think branding is a logo and a color scheme. Those are the visible parts, and they matter, but they are the surface. A brand has layers, and the layers have to agree with each other.

The layers of a brand

- Position: who you serve and why you are the right choice for them
- Personality: the voice and manner that people associate with you
- Identity: the name, logo, colors, fonts and images that make you recognizable
- Experience: what actually happens when someone deals with you
- Reputation: what people say about you to others

When these layers agree, customers feel confidence without knowing why. When they disagree, customers feel unease. A premium logo on a slow, careless business makes the logo look dishonest. A great product wrapped in a messy, mismatched presentation makes the product look cheaper than it is.

Why consistency wins

People decide quickly and from limited information. They notice the first thing, then look for a second thing that confirms it. Seeing the same colors, tone and quality in several places tells the brain that you are established and reliable. Seeing different logos, inconsistent prices and a shifting tone tells it the opposite.

Consistency also saves you work. Once you decide how your headings, colors and tone work, you stop reinventing them for every flyer, post and email. Decisions made once are decisions you never have to make again.

EXAMPLE: A MISMATCHED BAKERY

A neighborhood bakery has a charming hand-lettered sign, but its website uses a generic template in dark blue, its Instagram posts use five different fonts, and its price list is a photocopy in a default office font. Each piece is acceptable alone. Together they send no clear signal, and a new customer cannot tell if the bakery is a premium artisan shop or a bargain stand. Choosing one color family, two fonts and one tone, and applying them everywhere, fixes this without a new logo.

A thirty-minute brand audit

Before you change anything, collect what already exists. Open a folder and gather screenshots or photos of every place your business appears: website pages, social profiles, email signature, invoice, business card, packaging, signage, flyers and ads. Put them side by side on one screen or one table.

- 1 Look for repeats: which colors, fonts and phrases appear more than once?
- 2 Look for conflicts: which items look like they belong to a different business?
- 3 Look for gaps: where do customers meet you with no branding at all?
- 4 Rate each item from 1 to 5 for how well it reflects the business you want to be.
- 5 Circle the three weakest items. These are your first fixes.

A brand is a promise, and every touchpoint either keeps it or breaks it.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A brand is the whole experience, not only the logo
- Consistency builds trust and saves decisions
- An audit shows where you stand before you spend anything

ACTION STEPS

- [] Collect every place your business appears into one folder
- [] Rate each item from 1 to 5
- [] Pick your three weakest touchpoints to fix first