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Understanding the multiverse of Branding

A comprehensive guide to branding

Source:unsplash.com

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01

Introduction

The process of branding is like making a fine Swiss Watch. Although, it looks very simple and straightforward, there is a lot that goes into crafting its perfection.

In today's digital age, consumers are flooded with options. It is crucial for a brand designer to conceptualize the company's image and build a distinctive brand which reflects its values and reaches its target customers effectively.

Here is the inside story of everything you need to know on branding, to inspire and navigate any brand building activity that you undertake.

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02

> "Brand is the intangible sum of a product's attributes."
>
> - David Ogilvy

What is a Brand?

A brand is much more than the company's product, logo or it's tagline.

In simple words, it is how your product, service or your organization is identified and perceived by your audience. These perceptions are the result of company's effort to develop a connection with their customers on a personal level by establishing lasting experiences physically, visually and emotionally.

Further, Branding is the strategy that refers to the process of creating a brand. From defining its values and archetypes to developing brand voice and communication strategy, visual identity, and more, branding is the key ingredient of brand awareness and recognition.

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"What it is: A customer's gut feeling about a product, service or a company.
What it isn't: Branding is not a logo, product, promise or an impression"

-Marty Neumeier
(Author of The Brand Gap)

Every interaction with our customers reflects on who we are and what we represent as a company

Yet, the question remains as to what goes in the creation of an ideal brand? Every successful brand took its first step to victory by acquiring a solid understanding of its customers.

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Understanding Target Demographic

Target Demographic refers to the specific group of consumers who are most likely to want your product or service. and therefore, the potential brand audience. Target audience may be dictated by age, gender, income, location, interests or a many other factors.

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Why is it critical to understand your Target Demographic:

- To craft specific messages to connect with your audience
- Makes it easier to track your brand awareness
- Assists in decision-making to build a powerful brand voice and construct effective strategies
- Helps in identifying under-served markets
- Results to deliver superior performance in comparison to your competitors

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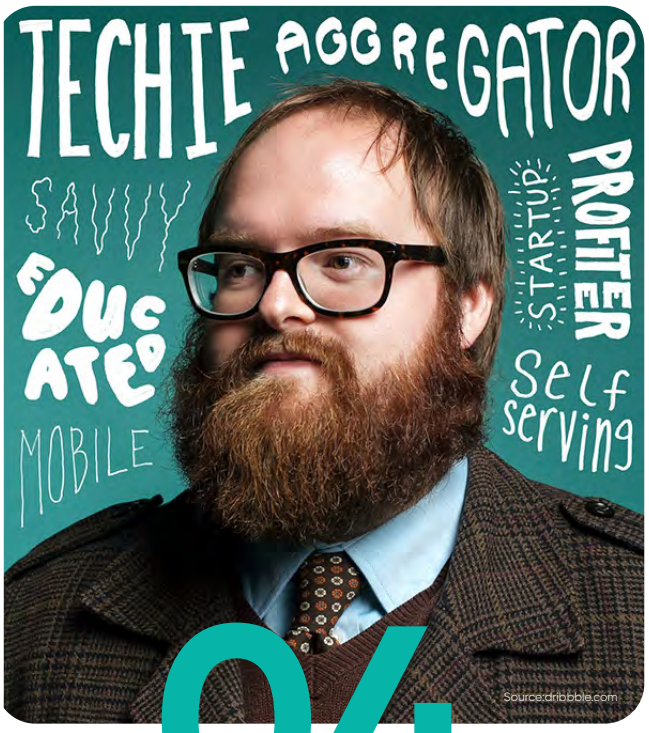

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Building a Customer Persona

It is often difficult to draw answer from dry analytics. if you're at a crossroads about how to meet customer preferences.

However, it's far easier to imagine a specific person in your head and visualize what they want and how they may react. Instead of going through each separate user test and analytics report, the persona has all of the relevant information in one clear location. At the same time, these target personas make the data easier to process, by simply giving a face to all those numbers.

Consequently, a customer persona is built.

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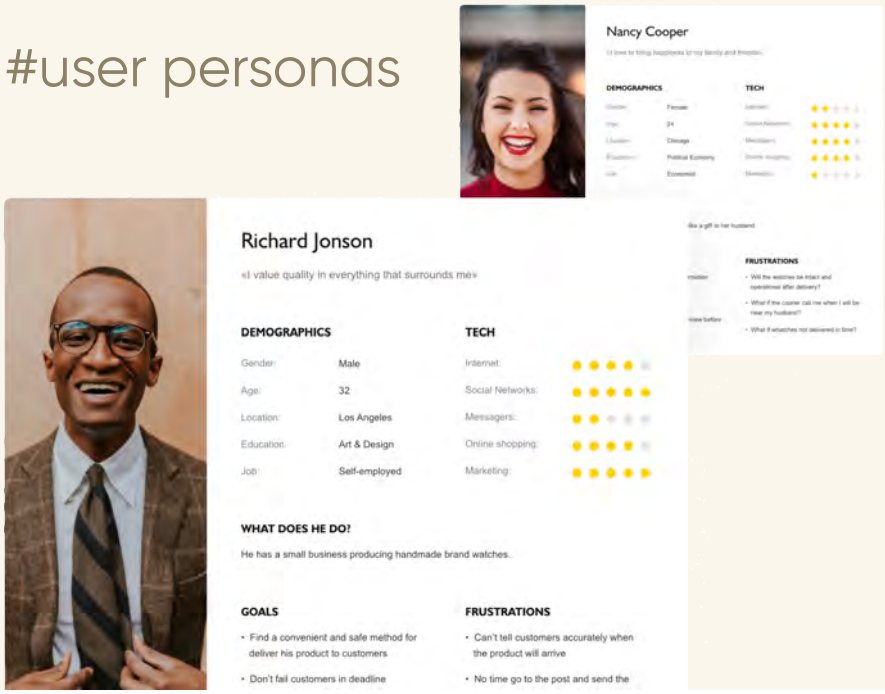
#user personas



Source:dribbble.com

A Customer persona is a fictional person who fits the characteristics of your target audience is harnessed.

How to use a customer persona?

The idea is to use and interact with this model customer as if they were a real person. By giving this customer persona a detailed and descriptive profile, you will understand their goals, pain points and buying patterns.

What does a good persona include?

Name: To make the character as real as possible, assign a name of an existing or potential customer with a small description like “Divya, the housewife"

Photo: Visualize the character by attaching a photo along with the name. Design an authentic profile with new and ideally an unfamiliar face.

Personal quote/motto: Just like a photo, this helps flesh out the persona to make them seem more real.

Bio: Give a little backstory to make the person relatable. What was their childhood like? Why did they choose their current job? How do they spend their free time? These tiny details could influence strategic choices down the road.

Demographics: Age, sex, income, location—whatever attributes are relevant to your industry. Job title is particularly important, considering its business and financial implications.

Personality Traits: People with low attention spans want faster site designs. Cautious people are most likely to comparison shop. Personality traits are one of the most useful features of personas, so choose these with care.

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Motivations: Like personality traits, this helps you get inside the customer's head and understand how they think. For example, would a customer be more likely to buy a product that improves their career or their personal life? It depends on which motivates them more.

Goals and frustrations: The scope of these is in direct relation to your needs. A lifestyle company would keep to general life and career goals, while a tech company could hone in on more specific goals like tasks they hope to accomplish with their software.

Preferred brands and influencers: You can tell a lot about a person based on which brands they like and what kind of people influence their decisions. You can also look at those brands' marketing strategies to see if their tactics might apply to you as well.

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05

Building a Brand Universe!!

Recently, brands have shifted the way they communicate with their audience.

To wipe out all the chaos standing in the way of serving their purpose, every successful brand has created a closed eco-system, its own universe for everyone associated with it.

Every Brand Universe is created by connecting 4 fundamental pillars of a brand:

1. Brand Personality
2. Verbal Tonality
3. Visual Identity
4. Visual Guidelines

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Brand Personality

Brand personality refers to envisioning your brand as a real person and attaching human characteristics to it. Creating a brand personality gives every brand the freedom to carefully choose traits that align with its core values and are easily relatable to its target audience. In addition to being a great promotional technique, it adds significant value to a brand.

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How brand personality works?

Brand personality provides a certain level of control to brands in molding customer's feelings about the brand, its products and services. Relatable brand personalities emit a feeling of authenticity and helps companies to develop meaningful relationships with its customers. It not only triggers an emotional connection among consumers, but it also encourages positive actions which benefit the firm.

source:iconicfox.com.au

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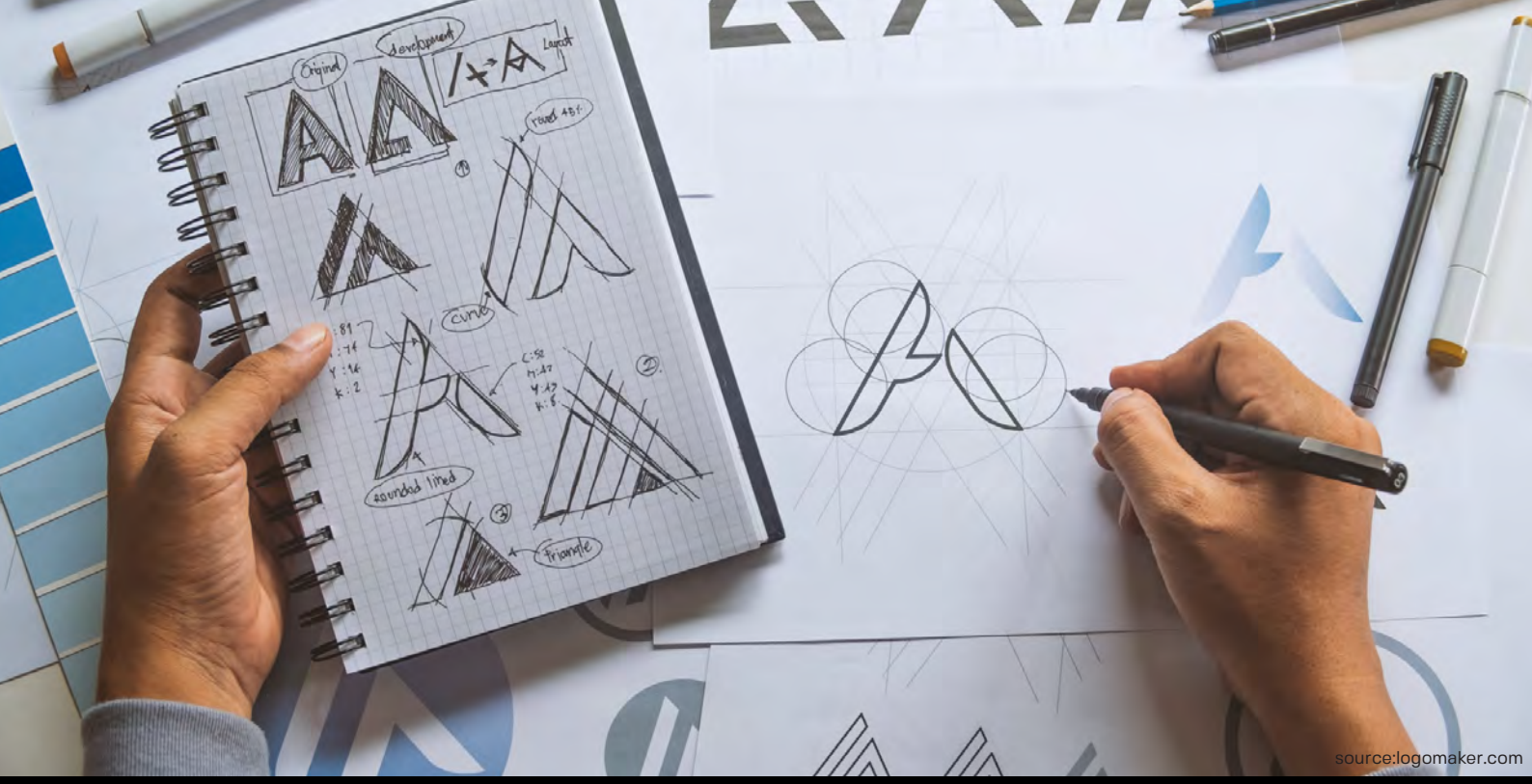

source:logomaker.com

07

Creating the Perfect Visual Identity

A Brand's Visual identity is what makes a company's products or services unique and recognizable in a crowd.

A brand's visual identity is a set of characteristics that defines the look and feel of the brand across multiple channels. Although these visual features are subject to change as the business evolves, it sets the guidelines that promote consistency in a brand's use of visual elements.

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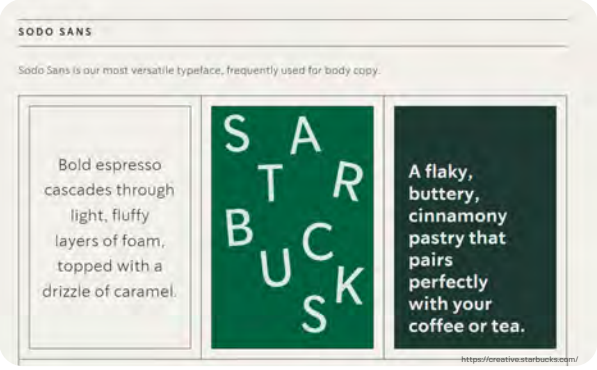
Four key elements of Visual Identity providing visual consistency across all platforms include:

1. Logo

Create a memorable symbol that represents the brand's identity

3. Typography

Establish the style of typography which suits the brand's personality

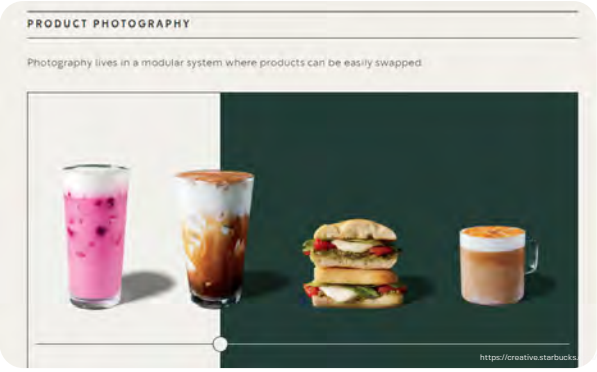


2. Color Palette

Use colors which fit the message the brand wishes to convey and drives favorable emotions in its customers

4. Photography

Utilize a suit of images which fit with the rest of your brand identity.



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08

> "Voice doesn't change, but your tone should, depending on the feeling you are trying to convey"
>
> - Ann Handley

Setting up the Verbal Tonality

Express your brand personality in your own vocabulary.

The tone of your brand's voice describes how it communicates with the audience and thus influences how people perceive your messaging. In other words, it describes how we want to communicate to our audience, rather than what.

While your verbal tonality sets you apart in a crowd, it forms the bridge between the expression of your brand and the perception of your audience.

As a reflection of brand values, story and your culture, set a unique tonality for effective communication and to differentiate yourself from your competitors.

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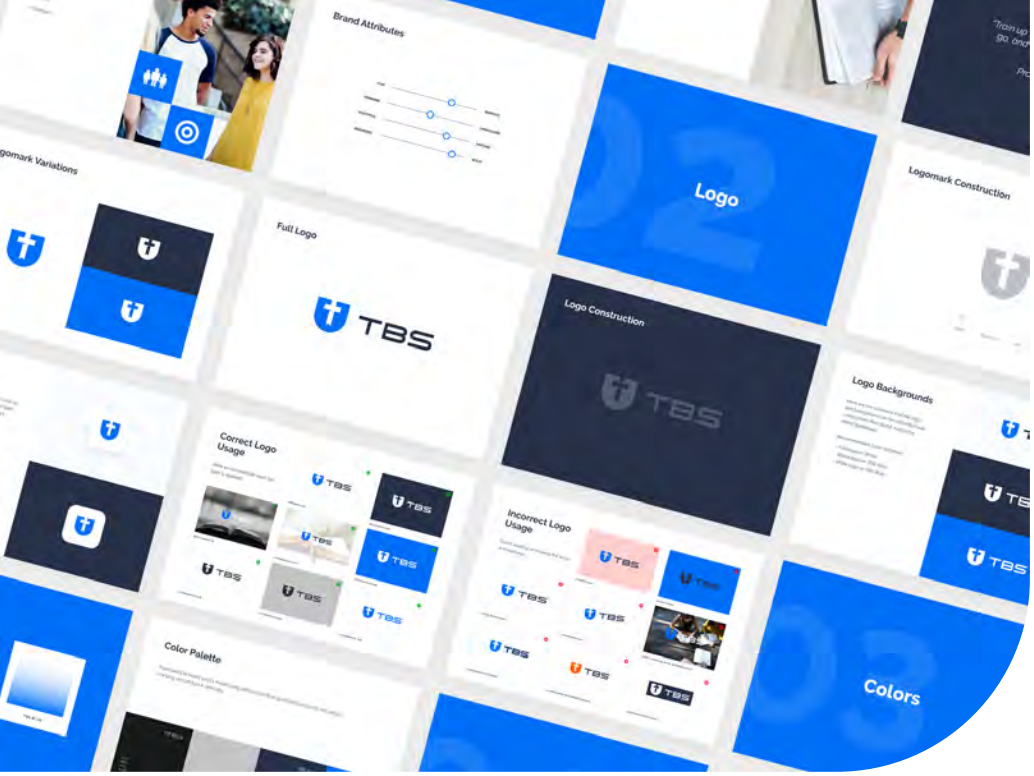

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Establishing Brand Guidelines

Once you put all the elements of your brand's identity together, you can lay down a set of guidelines to develop uniformity in your brand universe.

Brand guidelines, also called a brand style guide, is essentially an instruction manual and rule book on how to communicate your brand's identity. It can dictate the content of a logo, blog, website, advertisement, and similar marketing collateral.

These guidelines ensure brand consistency. By setting standards and rules they create cohesive communication with their stakeholders.

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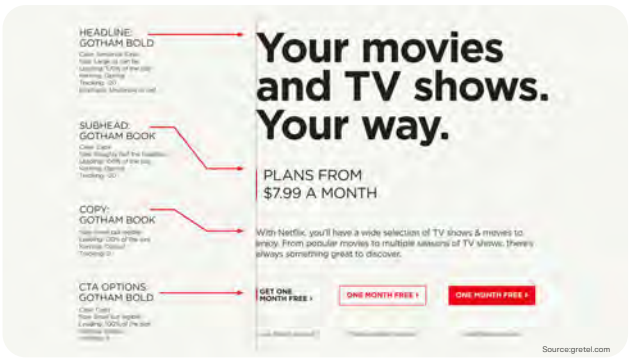

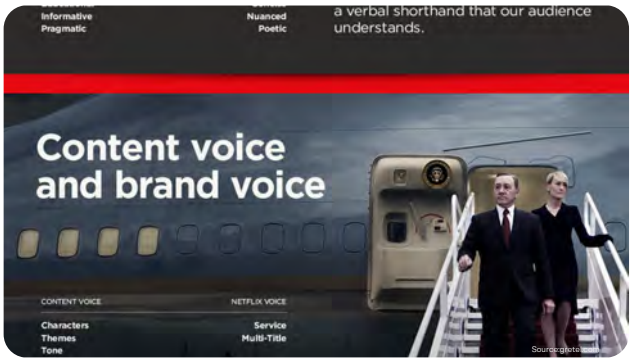

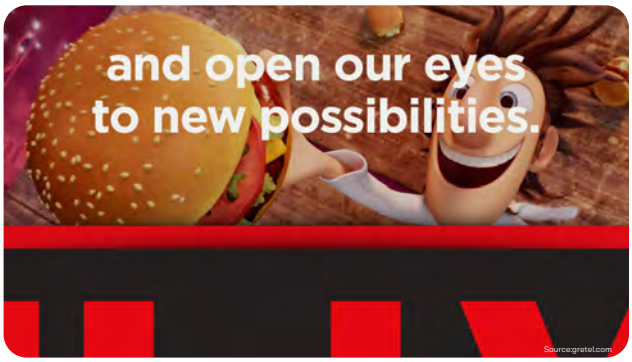

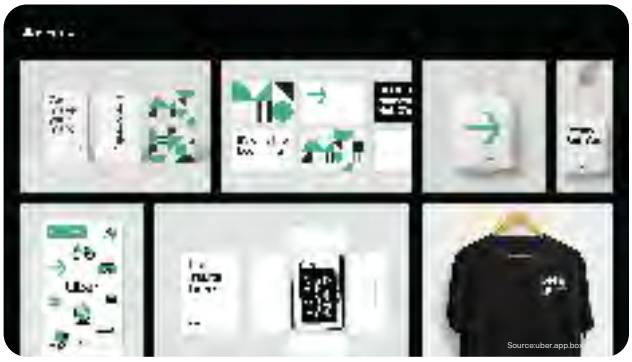

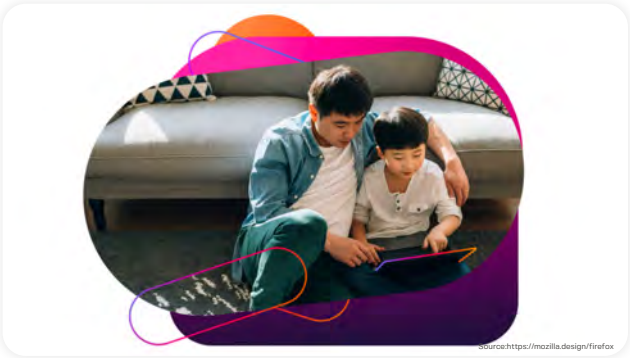

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Conclusion

In short, a product is what is what you sell, a brand is the image of the product sold interpreted by its customers, and branding is the strategy used to create this image.

Customers associate themselves with specific brands not only for the intrinsic values it offers but also because brands have been successful to surprise them with newer and more novel experiences.

In entirety, a brand really is about fact and emotion. This emotional measure increases as the world becomes more visual, more digital and more connected.

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