

A background image showing a close-up of a person's hand typing on a white keyboard. A white mouse is visible in the upper left corner. The scene is set on a light-colored desk.

KICKSTARTER GUIDE TO CREATING YOUR BRAND'S IDENTITY

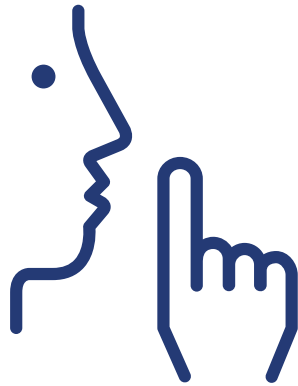
Whether you're starting new or refreshing your look this guide takes what looks like a complicated process and simplifies the key elements.

High five!

You've decided to start your own business, how exhilarating and terrifying all at the same time.

This guide is going to take you through some of the key elements of creating your brand's visual identity. Taking a process that may look a little overwhelming and complicated and start to simplify it and make sense of it.

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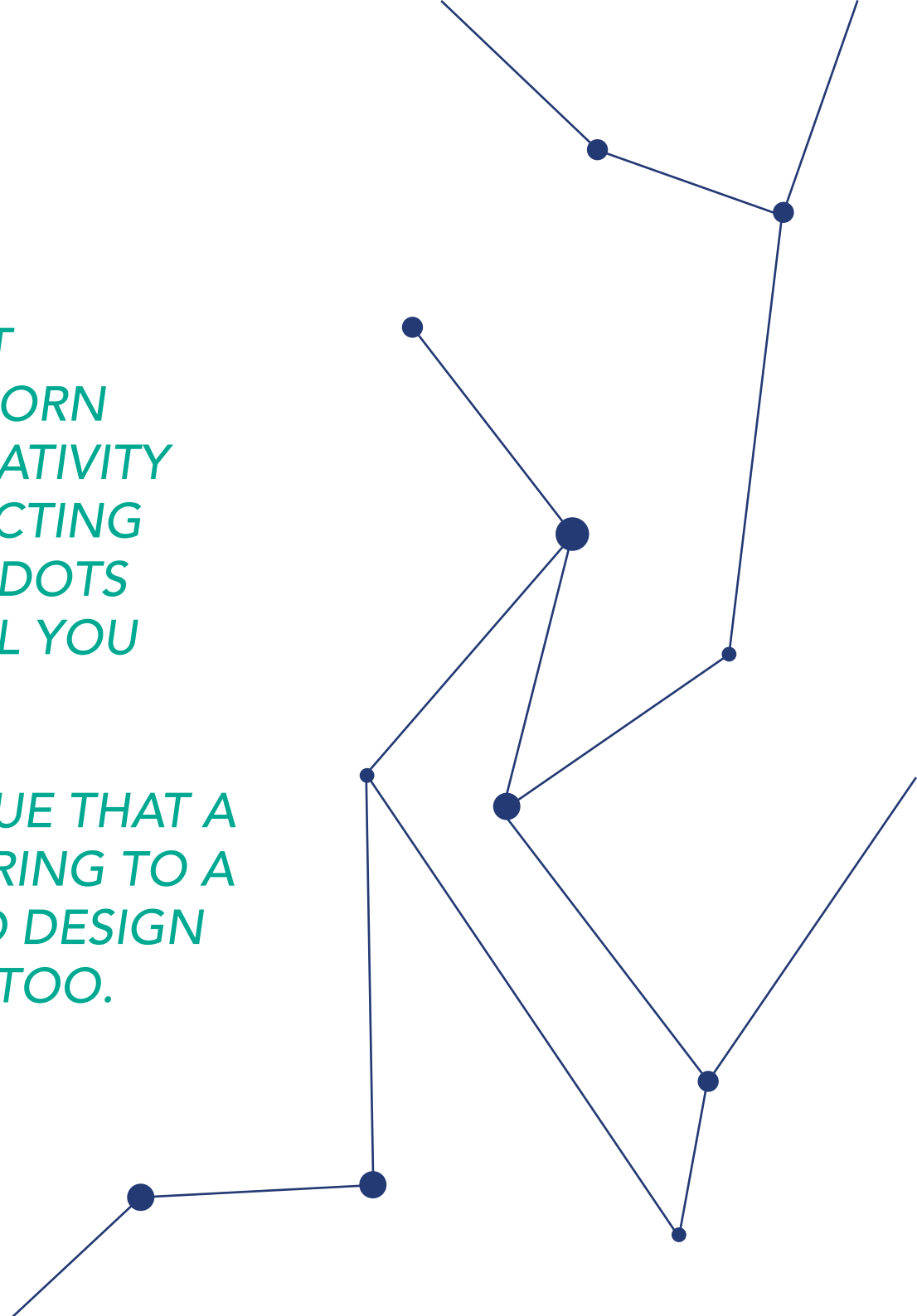
SHHH!

BETWEEN YOU

AND ME...

THE DESIGN INDUSTRY'S BIGGEST SECRET IS THAT CREATIVES ARE BORN CREATIVE, BUT THE TRUTH IS CREATIVITY IS A PROCESS. IT'S ABOUT COLLECTING INSPIRATION, CONNECTING THE DOTS AND REFINING YOUR IDEAS UNTIL YOU FIND THE MAGIC.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE THAT A WELL-TRAINED DESIGNER CAN BRING TO A PROJECT BUT KNOW THAT GOOD DESIGN IS NOT OUT OF REACH FOR YOU TOO.





THE

BEGINNING

Finding your WHY

When the world feels like chaos where do you start?
At the beginning. And for your business' brand that place is to know your 'why'.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO DO WHAT YOU'RE DOING?

Most businesses can articulate what they do and how they do it, but those that stand out know and can articulate the why. It is the purpose that inspires you, and can help you to make decisions that consistently align to your business' values and beliefs.

Simon Sinek elaborates on [how great leaders inspire action](#) through knowing the WHY.

Know your why. Articulate your business' purpose.

What it is

Simple 1-2 sentences

Easily shared with your audiences

What it is not

What you do

How you do it

*MORE SCIENCE THAN A
GAME OF GUESS WHO*



Defining your audience

Building a really good picture of your target audience helps to keep your communications targeted. It'll give you the understanding to be able to communicate in a way that is meaningful and captures their attention.

WHO ARE THEY?

Consider their:

- demographics like age, location, household income, household make-up etc,
- interests, hopes, fears, likes, dislikes, and
- behaviours—how do they spend their time?
- biggest challenges, deepest desires,
- buying habits, favourite brands, and
- personality traits.

Try mapping out a day in their life, and define who they are not.

*JUST BECAUSE YOU LIKE
READING SPY NOVELS
DOESN'T MEAN YOUR
TARGET MARKET DOES.*

Identify your audience. Build a clear customer profile to guide your communications.

What it is

Targeted

Demographic and behavioural

What it is not

Everyone

Absolute, it can evolve over time as the market evolves.



HE'S MAKING A LIST

AND CHECKING

IT TWICE

Choosing your name

It's more important than whether you're naughty or nice. Your name identifies your business. What it is, how it's spelled, and what it means, can have a huge impact on how your audience perceives your business.

The key is to brainstorm and workshop your business name ideas, and test it with people from your target market. Check your understanding of the name matches your audiences understanding. How you perceive a business name may be different to how your audience perceives it.

Brainstorm lots of variations, take it from different angles and then workshop them through the lens of the target market and your business' why.

Once you've got a big list, consider the top twenty and branch out, think of synonyms or other words to convey the same or similar meaning.

QUESTIONS TO KICK-START YOUR BRAINSTORMING:

- What do you want to communicate in your business name?
- What makes you stand out from other businesses?
- What are your competitors called? Are there any gaps?
- What comes to mind when you're thinking about your products? What problems do they solve?
- What words depict the most important element of your product or service? Use verbs, adjectives and nouns.
- What combinations of words could be relevant?
- What words relate to your why?

Now make a shortlist of preferred business names:

- Is the business name already in use? Check for trademarks in your market.
- Is it easily understandable? Does your target audience perceive the name in the same way you do?

WATCH-OUTS

- Names that imitate existing brands are generally viewed as lesser value. Don't underestimate your audience.
- Puns and obscure names can be viewed as lesser quality.
- Accurate spelling and ease of pronunciation should be considered. Think about a potential customer who may have heard a friend recommend your company. They go to google your company name but can't find you because they are searching spelling that doesn't match your brand.
- If planning to enter markets that speak another language check your business name means what you think it means in your target audiences' language and culture. E.g. The number four is considered unlucky by the Chinese because it's homophonous to the word death, so best to avoid the number four in a business name aimed at Chinese audiences.

Choose a business name.

What it is

Clear

Understandable

What it is not

Gimmicky

Insensitive





IT'S TIME TO GET

RED CARPET

READY

How you look - Logo

It takes time, effort and a bit of planning to look your best. How your business looks is a representation of your business. If it looks to be high quality your customers will feel a degree of trust that the products and services being provided will also be of a high quality. Designing a logo, selecting your business colours and choosing the typography that you use can all have a large impact on how your business is perceived.

LOGO

This is the mark that distinguishes your business from others.

A logo can contain typography and a graphic element, it can be typographic only or it could be graphic only. A lot of businesses choose to have their business name included in their logo to assist in building the awareness and recollection of the businesses name.

TIPS FOR SELECTING A LOGO:

- Does it represent the tone of your business?
- Does it communicate your business' 'why'?
- Is it able to be reproduced at small sizes, and large sizes?
- Can it be used for both digital and print applications?

WHAT TO ASK FOR

If paying for a logo to be developed you should have a copy of it as a vector file .eps format, many designers will also provide a guideline on how it should be used across different applications. This keeps the application of the logo consistent across all applications regardless of who is designing the pieces for you.

If you haven't discovered [Pinterest](#) yet, now's the time to create an account. You can benchmark logos and create boards that theme your inspiration. Here's some [logo inspiration](#) for you.

There are many design sites that provide cheap logos. The downside of some of these sites is that it can lack the emotional personalisation to your brand that engaging a reputable graphic designer can have. They will work with you to create a design that reflects your business' 'why', its tone, and engages with the audience. You're also then guaranteed to have a design that is unique to your business as opposed to a cookie cutter logo.

*Pro Tip: Logo's evolve as business' evolve so don't let this hold you back at the beginning!

Design a logo.

What it is

Understandable

Reproducible

What it is not

Too intricate

Similar to another brand



BRAND MARK ONLY



COMBINATION MARK



How you look - Colour

Colour creates emotion. The colour palette you choose can set the mood for your brand identity, encapsulating its personality. Selecting a colour palette that reflects your brand while standing out in the marketplace is important.

BENCHMARK YOUR COMPETITORS

If everyone in your market is using a blue palette choosing another colour will help you stand out.

UNDERSTAND COLOUR

Understand your colour wheel and how colours interact. Warm colours – generally red, orange and yellows. Cool colours – generally green, blue, violets.

CREATE A MOODBOARD

Match your colour to your brands mood. Creating a mood board to describe your business can help guide you in your colour selections.

DEVELOP A COLOUR PALETTE

Research colour palettes, and test how the colours interact when they appear near each other. [Pinterest](#) is a great source of colour inspiration. You can also use [Adobe Color CC](#) to explore colour combinations.

TEST

Colours appear differently on screen versus in print, and they appear differently on different types of paper. It's best to test your selected colour palette before finalising. If ordering merchandise or brochures, request a print proof. It's a small cost to guarantee that your brand is being represented consistently, portraying it in the best way possible.

COLOUR VALUES

Colour has different codes for print and digital. When choosing your colour palette make sure you note the CMYK, RGB and HEX values. Add it to your brand identity guidelines.



ANALAGOUS

Colours that are positioned adjacent to each other on the colour wheel.



COMPLEMENTARY

Two colours that appear opposite each other on the colour wheel.



TRIADIC

Colours at 120° intervals on the colour wheel.

Choose a colour palette.

What it is

Appealing to your audience
Matches your brand's tone

What it is not

Identical to your competitors
Your favourite colour



How you look - Type

TYPOGRAPHY

The typography you use when communicating in your business can contribute to communicating the tone of your brand.

HOW TO CHOOSE A TYPEFACE FOR YOUR BRAND

- Limit to one or two typefaces that you use consistently.
- Ensure that there is a hierarchy of size, weight and spacing. The most important information that you want to be seen first needs to be the most prominent.
- Pairing fonts can be a tricky business. Check out [Canva's Ultimate guide to font pairing](#) for some inspiration.
- Most importantly is it legible. If your audience can't read it easily, it may as well not be there.

There are many free typefaces available to access via [Google fonts](#) for use in web design. [Adobe Typekit](#) is also a subscription service allowing use of fonts.



Sans serif typefaces with large x-heights and open counter spaces are better for readability in digital applications.

Sentence case uses a combination of UPPER and lower case.

Choose typography.

What it is

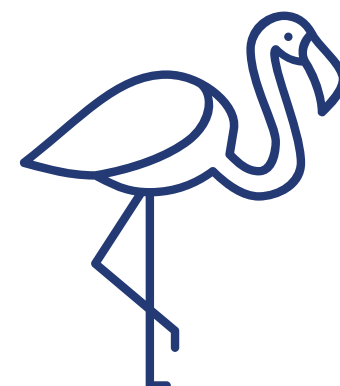
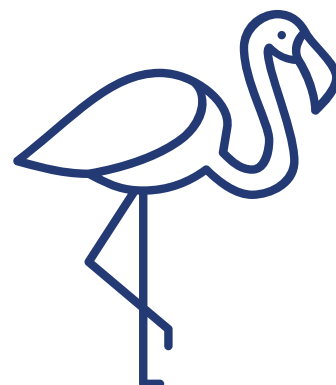
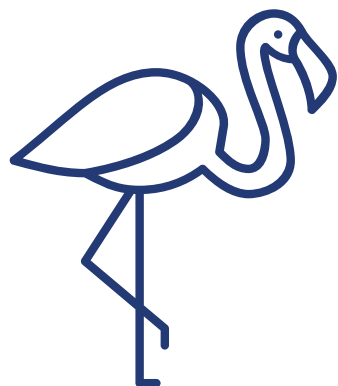
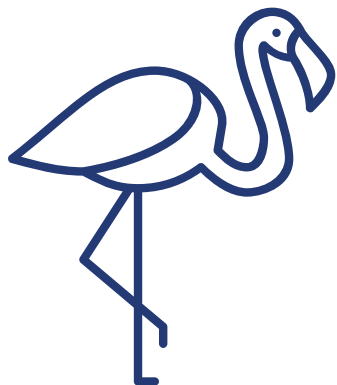
Legible

Matches your brand's tone

What it is not

Too many fonts





KEEPING IT

CONSISTENT

Consistently applying your business' visual identity everywhere that your brand appears will help to build recognition and awareness of your business, increasing recall of your audiences.

Use and share your brand guideline with any supplier working on developing materials for your brand so that it is consistent, this means that no matter where your audience is seeing you they have the best chance of recognising you.

Items where you can apply your businesses brand identity include:

- Business cards
- Website
- Social Media
- Advertising
- Brochures
- Signage
- Stationary
- Letterhead
- Quotes/invoices
- Email
- Merchandise
- Uniforms
- Packaging

Keep it consistent

BUILDING

YOUR

BRAND'S

VISUAL

IDENTITY

Checklist

*Know your why.
Articulate your business' purpose.*

*Identify your audience. Build a
clear customer profile to guide your
communications.*

Choose a business name.

Design a logo.

Choose a colour palette.

Choose typography.

Keep it consistent.

Designing Simple is dedicated to finding freedom in simplicity.

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