

A little book about branding

how to make people love your startup



Erhvervshus
HOVEDSTADEN

Dear startup

This is a very quick guide on how to build a brand.

We've collected what we believe are the most important branding perspectives for startups and a couple of our greatest tools - in a book you can put in your pocket and share with your team.

Feel free to contact us anytime for independent advice and a second opinion on how you can change the world with your business and get global success.

Let's stay in touch!

Your growth-team at Erhvervshus Hovedstaden

What is a brand / branding?

You often see branding as a combination of a name, a logo, a design, a slogan and packaging of a product or service.

But branding is also your company's values, meanings, actions and employees and their way of involving your crowd and making engagement for your users / customers.

All together this is your brand and it makes the difference between being just a company with good products and fair prices or a company that your crowd fall in love with.

Why branding?

Because companies are selling similar products, with similar quality, at similar prices and with similar brand messages, the necessity to create a unique identity and brand is therefore essential.

You can't be a competitive player on global markets, if you don't have the ability to give your users something special, something they can't get at your competitors. And it doesn't have to be a very different product, it can also be a feeling or a community they can be a part of.

Example: Ideanote is not just a tool to create new ideas. It's a community for creative people. It inspires you to be more.

ideanote.dk

How to build a powerful brand

In essence, a brand is the sum of impressions customers have of a product and branding is a journey of creating and sustaining powerful positive experiences in the minds of customers.

Basically branding hasn't changed, but the way that we do it has. The marketing landscape is rapidly changing, the online channels and universe are evolving, but the goal is still the same: to build great relationships with your target groups around the world.

The branding journey includes defining a unique brand identity, communicating a relevant brand promise, building brand loyalty and achieving brand dominance. Together that becomes the brand experience and why people fall in love with your startup.

The branding journey in four steps



Brand identity (DNA)

No two companies are ever the same and it is important for every startup to set themselves apart from everybody else out there. The amazing thing about DNA is that it is always unique, which allows us all to be different.

The DNA fundamentally represents the essence of the brand, identifies its unique personality and soul of the business. DNA has become a major source for startups when building and developing a brand especially when a company is trying to give meaning to what they sell and create an emotional connection with their customers. It will help you create brand content that will bring a coherent message throughout all of your brands' touch points.

How to create a brand identity

Some of the main factors to create a brand identity are:

- Define who you are
 - what are your values, meanings and beliefs?
- Define your product
 - which value does it give the user / customer?
- Define your target group
 - who are your crowd, community and customers?
- Define your customer journey
 - what is your relationship with your users / customers?

BRAND IDENTITY

Define who you are?

It's important that you know what your startup stands for - and that the whole team is aligned and stands up for the company's values, meanings and beliefs. When you are aligned your startups' culture can come to life and be your strongest competitive parameters.

A company's culture is built around three areas – **assumptions, values and artefacts**. It's your perceptions, thoughts and feelings (assumptions) that defines your philosophy, strategies and goals (values) and sets the framework around your stories, traditions and language (artefacts).

You can't copy that from others - you need to be you, to be a brand!

Define your product

At the center of your brand you need to have a great product. If you have the right product customers will immediately get excited and experience your product on a level that sticks to their memories. That's a recipe for word-of-mouth marketing, which is worth gold when it comes to branding.

Your product probably has a lot of great functionalities and maybe you are able to sell it at a competitive price. But what is the value for the customers? What do they get besides good quality, functionalities and fair prices?

A huge trend these years is to offer people a better version of themselves:



Define your product

Examples of Danish startups who are selling a dream or a better version of their customers:

- **Podimo.dk** makes me an interesting storyteller
- **Reshopper** makes me a mom who cares about sustainability
- **Vivino** makes me an expert in wine
- **Nemlig.com** gives me more time to my job, family and friends
- **MyMonii** gives children a better understanding of finance

Great brands avoid selling products. Great brands know that people make purchase decisions based on how products make them feel or the identities products help them experience or express so they seek to create emotional connections with people and use product features as mere support for that emotional appeal.

Denise Yohn author of **"Startup brands need a minimum viable brand"**

> deniseleeyohn.com/bites-brand-your-business-briefs/

Define your target group

When it comes to solutions and products with global scaling potential, we often hear about huge markets and millions of people in the potential target group - like 'There are XXX million people with this need all over the world / that's our target group'.

We need to be more specific when we're going into new markets, if we want to win. Otherwise we can't create the nuances in our communication that are necessary to reach people's hearts and minds. We need to know how we can make a positive change in their lives and what the actual value is when buying our product (besides quality and price).

If we don't know who our crowd / users / customers are we can't make qualified choices of communication and channels.

A curious mind armed with skill, experience, and knowledge can give birth to a brand revolution. A curious mind does not say to consumers, “What do you want?” A curious mind asks the questions that open up the consumer to talk about her latent dissatisfactions, hopes, wishes, and dreams.

Martin Silverstein, “**Harvard Business Review 2016**”

Define your customer journey

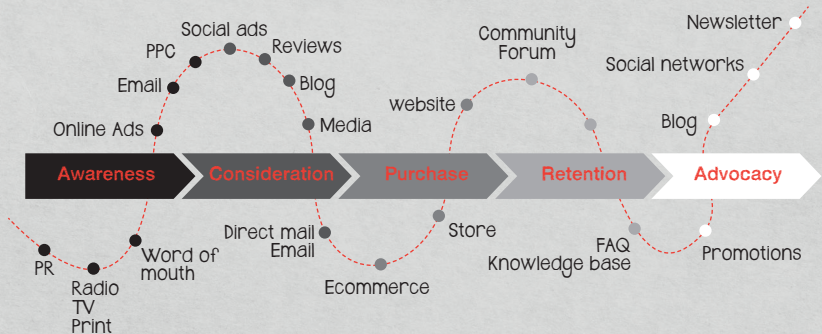
Because of new digital business models, the customer journey for many startups look very different from the old 'TV-ads / come to my store / see my products / buy' way.

Digital platforms and online marketing makes it possible to create many touch points with your users - in a personalized and often automatic way, thanks to algorithms.

Examples:

- If a user doesn't open your app in weeks - send an email: 'Can we help you?' or with inspiration to action.
- By giving users hashtags you motivate them to share their experiences with your product on social platforms.
- Give more to the heavy-users of your product and invite them to talk about your startup in their communities.

The journey



Brand promise

When you have defined who you are, what kind of value your product give your users and the customer journey, it's important that you stick to who you are because we can't fall in love with a company we don't know what stands for.

Communicate your identity and the value of your products loud and clear, both inside and outside your startup. Your employees are a huge part of your brand and it is your responsibility to make sure they interact in compliance with your values, meanings and beliefs. And of course your crowd, community and customers are also an important part of your brand - it's their stories about your startup that defines you in the market.

BRAND PROMISE

How to interact in crowds / communities

Building your own community

Many startups choose to manage a community on social medias or by events. The most important thing is, that the people in your community have access to each other and you / your startup. Together you can build stories on how to make a difference in the world, develop new products or services, confirm why being a part of this community is something special etc.

Be a part of others communities

You can also choose to be a part of others communities. Maybe because it's too expensive to run your own platforms or because it simply makes more sense. You don't need ownership for building relationships with your audience, it's more important that you see the value of being part of something bigger with others and you see the dialogue as a stepping stone to growth.

Brand loyalty

Now it's time to go out and show the world who you are and let people get touched by your DNA and great products. Here are a couple of great tools to do so:

- Storytelling: tell stories that people can identify with
- Ambassadors: tell your stories through people who have a great impact on your users

Storytelling

Storytelling is a powerful tool to build and develop an identity through brand content particularly when it reinforces the company DNA. Storytelling can drive growth in a company or brand, attract new talent and boost employee morale.

We see that when startups are pitching their company they are fact-telling. They are giving facts and information, but are often forgetting that they really have to add storytelling. You have to tell a story and woo people in and the narrative is important. You have to give your brand a voice, and the best thing to do if you really want to engage people, is to share stories.

Storytelling

There are great stories everywhere, but to communicate them there is a couple of things you need to have in mind:

- The audience has to feel your stories (anger, happiness, moody, joy, sadness etc.)
- Tell your stories with engagement, make them exiting to listen to
- Have one clear point that is communicated aligned with your DNA
- Let your users be a part of your stories or easy for them to identify themselves with
- Make it easy for people to tell your stories to others (hashtags, sharing buttons etc.)

BRAND LOYALTY

Ambassadors

Because human beings see themselves as part of social communities, it means a lot who's using your product; is it people I identify myself with or dream being part of?

Some companies use world famous stars as figureheads for their marketing activities. But today many startups also use local frontrunners who are easy to follow for their users because of their profiles on social platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook etc. They are maybe not famous worldwide, but have a huge impact on people in smaller areas like a community or a city.

Example: Club 10

Every year 'Danish Red Cross' is working together with 10 special people from the cultural and business community, which will have one year to launch creative and profitable projects that can generate money for 'Danish Red Cross' relief efforts.

Read more:

rodekors.dk/klub10/om-klub10

Brand dominance

Creating an international brand requires resources, adaptation and trial and error. Never be afraid of making mistakes. There is no recipe and the key is to find the right balance between global messaging and localised strategies.

As a startup with global scaling potential you need a really good understanding of other cultures because it's always about people, and cultural sensitivity is therefore a must. You need to hire and involve the most curious and smart people who are multidimensional and multidisciplined.

At the same time, you have to express the brand value proposition, and although it gets executed differently with the specific market in mind, the message is always the same. So to be a successful global brand requires adaptation to local tastes, attitudes and values, having an overall going global mindset.

BRAND DOMINANCE

– going glocal

To build a global brand you need elements that stay the same in all your markets - but also local elements that are changing depending on the specific market you operate in:

Global

- elements that stays the same
- Brand Experience
- Mission
- Vision
- Brand Identity (DNA)
- Brand Promise

Local

- changing elements
- Brand Promise
- Brand Loyalty
- Communication
- Positioning
- Distribution

To be a great global
company, you have to be
a great local company,
because you have to touch
people where they live

Tadashi Yanai, chairman, president and chief executive of Fast Retailing,
parent company of **Uniqlo**

Inspiration

See the list of the world's most valuable brands:

interbrand.com/best-global-brands/

Notes

Notes

Contact us

Our advice is free and independent for startups with big ambitions and huge potential to scale their business on the global markets.

Feel free to contact us and let us help you scale your startup.



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This is a very quick guide ...

... to how startups can make a brand and get people to fall in love with them.

We've collected what we believe are the most important branding perspectives for startups and a couple of our greatest tools to move forward - in a book you can put in your pocket and share with your team.

Get the online version here:

ehhs.dk/a-little-book-about-branding

#alittlebookaboutbranding