



The Girl Boss's Guide to Killer Branding

A cohesive brand that your ideal clients swoon over doesn't just happen, it's created. Turn your business into a powerhouse, and clients into raving referral machines, with this step-by-step guide!

Shoulder pads and leg warmers may come and go, but great branding is forever.

If you think branding is all about your logo and the colors on your website, you're missing the mark. Killer branding goes beyond the visuals, and digs deep, to evoke emotion, trust, and loyalty from even the most tough to please clients.

Yes, the design elements matter. A lot! But, so does your customer service, your brand's voice, your consistency, and your services/products!

Seems easy enough, but creating branding that really tugs on the heartstrings of the people you're dying to work with can be HARD.

I you know anything about me, you know two things to be true:

I believe bright lipstick can change your life AND I've always, always, got your back!

So, your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to spend some time thinking about who you want to attract, and how you can make them say "ohmygosh where have you been all my life?!", so that you can begin to design a stand-out brand identity that will take your business to a whole new level.

Ready? Let's do this!

Step One: Here's Lookin' at You, Kid

Your branding should be designed around the people you want to attract, so figuring out who that is is key! Skip this step, and all your branding efforts will be in vain, which would be a complete tragedy. You have better things to do than waste time. There are episodes of Scandal to watch, Justin Bieber albums to listen to when no one is around, wine to drink, and chocolate covered peppermint bark to eat.

- *Make a list about specific traits your ideal clients have in common. Things like gender, age, income range, interests, hobbies, education level, marital status, etc.*
- *How did they hear about you?*
- *What made them decide to search for your services or product?*
- *What would hold them back from working with you?*
- *What products or services will they want to purchase from you?*
- *What problem can you solve for them?*
- *Now, think about their style. Would they be into busy and intricate, or simple and elegant? Are they busy bees, that want to get right to the point, or would they appreciate a little well placed fluff and some witty banter? Do they swear like a sailor, or cling to their etiquette books, careful to always be poised and proper?*
- *Finally, think about how you can relate to them. What do you have in common? The best branding is personal, so finding tidbits to share with the people you want to attract is key! If you're both moms, find ways to incorporate your kiddos, if you have a serious shoe fetish, and your ideal client has a closet to rival Carrie Bradshaw, use it!*

Being able to guess what is important to your potential clients will help you create your brand around just that, and it will help you overcome objections before your prospects even get a “yeah, but...” out of their mouths.

Now that you know who you want to speak to, we can engineer your brand in a way that will make them fall in love and never look back!

Step Two: The Vision for Your Visuals

On to those typical branding elements that everyone loves to scour Pinterest for entirely too much time for: logo, colors, and fonts.

Remember, keep your ideal clients in mind, and keep things cohesive!

LOGO

What will your main logo be? Where will you use it? Will you use any variations elsewhere? If so, write down what you will use where, and be specific!

COLORS

Background color name:

Color Code:

Main Color Name:

Color Code:

Accent Color Name:

Color Code:

Places Used:

Accent Color Name:

Color Code:

Places Used:

FONTS

What do you want your fonts to FEEL like? Fun and flirty? All business? A mixture of both? Think about what you want your overall vibe to feel like, and choose accordingly.

Main Font Name:

Heading Font Name (what you'll use to make things stand out):

Accent Font Name:

STYLE ELEMENTS

What will you use to really make your branding pop? Will you be all “throw some glitter make it rain”? Maybe you’ll use beautiful hand lettering elements to give your brand a classy vibe. List any extras that will add a little pizzaz to your visual vibe!

PATTERNS

What types of patterns will recur throughout your branding? Will you use stripes? Polka dots? Will your design elements be circular, or square, or something else entirely? Where will you use these patterns?

These design elements should be used in every stinkin’ thing you create for your business! Your website, your social media platforms, any marketing materials you create, newsletters, contracts, email signatures, business cards, thank you notes, and everywhere in between!

Remember, it’s all about being cohesive! If your website is all frilly and girly, and your Instagram account is filled with shots of your Call of Duty stats, plus pictures of you in full on camo hunting ducks, people will be mega confused. When you confuse ‘em, you lose ‘em! Be sure you keep your vision for your brand in mind, all the time!

Please keep in mind you don’t NEED to have all these elements in your design. Perhaps you’re going for simple, so patterns won’t make sense. Or, maybe you’ll use five different colors. What will your ideal clients love to see? Do that!

Images are a huge part of the visual appeal of your brand, and knowing what type of images to use will ensure you're always choosing things that make sense for the look and feel you're going for!

Main Website Images

What types of images will you use on your site? Will you use your own, or rely on stock photos? Do you plan on featuring images of people, places, things, or a combination of a few? What vibes will the imagery produce? Will the elements be luxurious, rustic, simplistic, adventurous? If you plan to use people, what will those people look like (age range, gender, style, etc.)? **Keep this consistent! If you use shots of real people everywhere, but then have cartoons all over your pricing page, it probably won't make sense! Sure, there are exceptions to every rule, but be sure those reasons are crystal clear, if you're making a choice to go off brand intentionally!*

Blog Post Images

It is SO important to use images in your blog posts! I always die a little inside when I come across a fabulous post, with no images to connect my eyeballs to my heart! Think about the images you want to include in your blog posts. Will you use infographics? Create charts? Use stock images? Include your own shots? **Don't forget to think in terms of social media! When you upload your post's link to Facebook, what image do you want to show up in the preview? If someone pins the post, what will make that pin stand out?*

Personal Photos

When people think of YOU, what will come to mind? What will your main headshot image be? This is likely the one you'll want to use for social media profile pictures, so people instantly recognize you! Be sure your picture works for your branding! If you look at my social media accounts, you'll notice I use the same profile picture for everything. I do this so people recognize me, because I'm essentially the biggest part of my brand! In the picture, I'm wearing bright lipstick, because I believe, in many cases, the perfect bright shade that matches your complexion is the key to happiness. Now, think about how you want to portray yourself in any other images you have floating around. Will you routinely don your pj's, or will you always be sporting designer duds and a fresh blowout? **Remember, keep it real. Don't try to be someone you're not, people will notice, and no one likes a phony!*

We're going to back it up for a second and chat a little bit about stock images. I rely heavily on them when I'm writing blog posts, and consider them to be a HUGE time saver!

My favorite are ones that are free, and require no attribution, because, let's be real, free things are awesome, and not having to source things makes life easier.

[Check out this blog post to learn what my favorite places are to look for stock photos!](#)

While you're there, take a peek at the comment section, a few people shouted out their own websites to check out!

Before we move one to step three, let's take a second to talk size. Because size totally matters.

What? It does! A super huge image can bog down your site, messing with your load times! What the heck did you think I was talking about?!

I like to size my images at no more than 900px, on the longest size. Anything bigger than that is unnecessary, and can get into super slow loading territory. No one has time to sit and wait for your images to load.

An image that is 900 pixels by 600 pixels will be the same size regardless of what the PPI is set to, but images with a higher PPI will cause longer load times.

The larger the file, the longer the load time will be, so try to keep your file size (the image quality) to under 200K.

If you don't have software that allows you to easily resize images, Tiny PNG is a site you should bookmark! You can upload your large files there and they'll compress the files for you without stretching or cropping!

Step Three: Get Social

Now that you've got your visuals figured out, it's time to create a social media plan that helps you stay relevant, interesting, and visually appealing in the eyes of the people you want to work with.

Not sure where to start when it comes to choosing what social media platforms to focus on? [Check out this post, where I break down all the platforms, and who they're best designed for!](#)

Once you know what platforms you want to focus on, make a plan for each. What types of things will you post? Where will you actively sell? Will you use one to show your personal side? How will you connect with your ideal clients through each platform? What incentive will people have to follow you? What kind of content will you post (images, quotes, questions, blog links, videos, etc)? **Hint, for most platforms, a little variety is best!*

I'll leave you to creating your plans, but I want to touch a little more on Instagram, because that platform is so visual!

I love using Instagram as a way to give followers a peek into my world, instead of into my business, which is what I focus on on my other platforms. Because my world encompasses so much more than my work! I have a beautiful daughter (and a baby on the way!), a guy I adore, a handsome german shepherd, plus a love for all things Martha Stewart-ish and a strong need for Starbucks.

You can find some basic pointers (and a couple freebies!) for Instagram [here](#), but I wanted to talk to you about my favorite way to edit photos, to create a cohesive look on your profile!

I solely use Afterlight, an app on my iPhone (I believe it's available for other devices!) to edit my images. Why? Because it's super user friendly, and allows me to create a quick editing flow that I follow for every single image I upload. Recently, I started getting extra intentional with the look of my feed, so I make sure my images are all on the bright side, crisp, and have an extra white border around them.

Remember, keep your brand in mind whenever you post something to social media, be it an image, a link, or a question! Always let your brand's voice shine through!

Step Four: Give 'Em the Feels, Connecting the Eyeballs to the Heart

Now that you know who you want to appeal to, and what you want your brand's design to look like, we have to figure out how you want your brand to FEEL!

Setting the tone for your brand isn't as hard as you might think, especially when you know who you're talking to, and are staying true to your personality!

Think about the voice you want your brand to have. Will you be serious? Funny? Playful? Sarcastic? Conversational?

You may notice after reading my blog posts and watching me on social media, that I have a casual, conversational vibe going on. I want people who check out my content to feel at home, like they're sitting on my couch, glass of wine in hand.

Take a few minutes to think of what you want your brand's voice to sound like (it should be the same everywhere!). Also, think of what that means you shouldn't do. What would turn your ideal clients off? When people think about your blog posts, and social media accounts, what do you want them to feel about you?

Be sure this is in line with your visuals!

At the center of it all, should be your mission.

Use the prompts on the next page to create your own unique mission statement, and always keep your values in mind when creating content for your business. It doesn't help just to say "my mission is to help brides find a wedding dress they like". Snooze-fest. Be specific, and have fun with it!

Creating a Mission Statement: 101

If you haven't created a mission statement before, you're about to kick yourself for not doing it sooner, because contrary to popular belief, it is SO simple!

We're talking, way easier than getting a 9 year old diva to clean her room. More simple than choosing between recording Married at First Sight or Real Housewives when stupid Comcast will only let you record two things, and you're already recording a can't miss Hallmark Christmas movie.

Follow these instructions and you'll have a clear mission in no time:

- Who are your ideal clients? Be specific! You already went over this in step one, so it shouldn't be tricky!
- What do you provide your clients? Why do they need or want your services/products? What void do you fill, or problem do you fix? Why is your service/product important to them?
- Why is your business important to you? Where does your passion lie? What about your products/services excites you? Why is this something that matters to you?
- How do you differ from your competition? What sets you apart from the other 1093450384609 people in your industry? In what ways do you go above and beyond for everyone you work with? What values are important to you, that your clients would respect?

Now, list your top three non-negotiables when it comes to how you want everyone you work with to feel about your brand. What would you love them to say behind your back?

Step Five: Your New Brand Identity + Your Products and Services

Now that we've gone on this super fun branding journey together, it's important for you to take a look at your current products and services, in order to ensure they're on point with your new identity.

Perhaps your prices are painfully low, but you're trying to attract higher quality customers who see value in what you do (plus, you now have awesome branding, so you're movin' on up!). Higher end clients might be turned off by your super low pricing, because it feels cheap, which is so not what they're going for.

Maybe you've realized the value in providing amazing service, so your packages need a little facelift, so they can include more and feel more valuable.

Even if your products and services make sense with your new branding, consider the way you're presenting them! Could re-writing some copy help people see the need for working with you? Would it be helpful to add some visual elements to your pricing pages?

Could you provide excellent service by creating a "what to expect" type space somewhere on your page, to set expectations for people thinking about working with you?

What can you do to infuse your branding into your client experience? Do you need to come up with a few ways to bring on the wow factor?

Now that you're clear on who you want to attract, what your mission is, and how you can relate to your ideal clients, how can you convey those things through your website, social media platforms, and interaction with potential, past, and current clients?

Voila! You're done! You've now created a detailed, strategic vision for your brand that will appeal to your ideal clients, without making you feel like a fraud.

Feels good, doesn't it?! Your work is far from over, because now it's up to you to begin making these changes throughout your business! Once you've updated your materials to reflect your new identity, be sure to keep it in mind from now, until you decide to rebrand!

Pst! [Make your life easier by downloading this branding checklist!](#)

Yes, rebrand, I said it. Another phrase that feels overwhelming to many business owners, but is really something positive, and fun!

Sometimes, you'll come to a place where your current brand just feels off. If you're doing this whole business thing right, you'll grow, your brand will evolve, and your products and services will change, even if very slightly.

So, when that happens, be open to it!

Nothing is worse than a business owners so stuck in her ways, she hinders growth, and limits her own success. Don't be that girl!

Have questions? Want to show off your super fly new branding? Head [here](#) to drop me a line, or shoot me a link!

If you're interested in learning more about how we can work together as Business BFF's to turn your passion into profit and create the business you dream of, head [here](#) to explore my one-on-one packages!

Remember, branding is what people say behind your back, so always do everything you can to ensure you're the talk of the town, in the best possible, most epic, way!

XO. Kim