

# BRANDING 101:

## HOW TO BRAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

## INTRODUCTION

Branding is one of those words that gets thrown around a lot in business. It consists of recognition, awareness, identity, values, positioning, strategy, equity, trust - the list goes on. But what does it all mean, and why should you care? Quite simply, getting your branding right is key to telling your story and standing out from your competitors.

If you've been avoiding creating or developing a brand because you think it's too intimidating to tackle or too expensive, there's no need to worry. There are a variety of affordable and creative ways that we'll share with you to convey your club's brand without breaking the bank. All you need to do is invest time and you'll soon see the benefits!

In this e-book, we'll be discussing the following topics:

### WHAT IS BRANDING?

- Discover **why branding is necessary** for your club;
- Understand why a brand identity is important;
- Learn how to **create awareness and recognition** amongst your customers to stand out from the crowd;
- Understand why research is essential to brand creation.

### CREATING YOUR BRAND

- Get to grips with defining your **target audience** and understand who they are;
- Learn how to define your **USP**;
- See a **case study** of a club who is confident in their identity and has an incredible brand and online presence to match.
- Discover how to **define your brand voice**;
- Learn why **visual assets** are important.

## WHAT IS BRANDING?

Before we get into the nitty-gritty of how to create, develop and maintain your brand, it's necessary to understand what branding is.

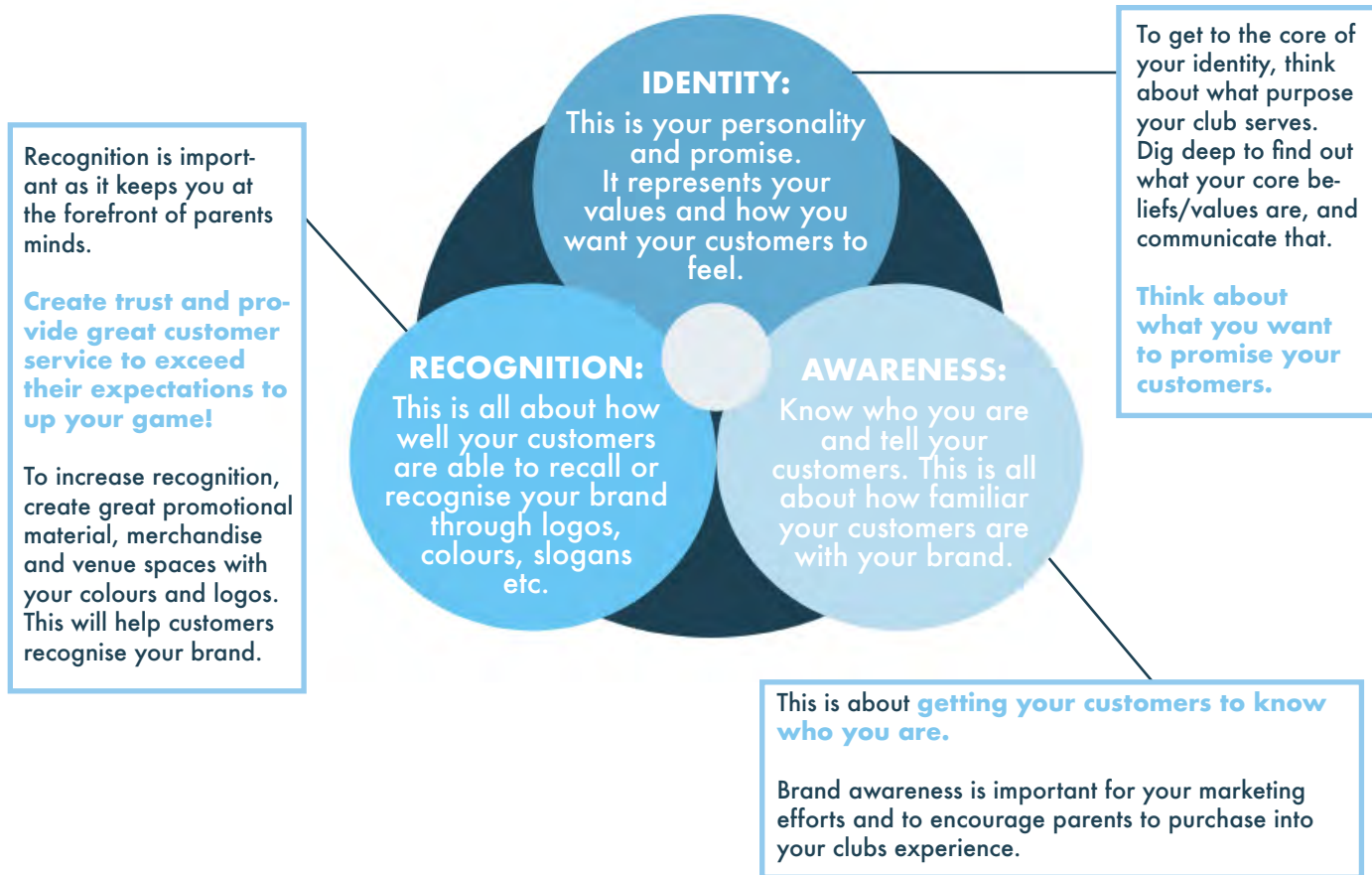
Branding is more than the logo and colours of your club - although that does form part of the wider branding strategy - it goes deeper than this.

Branding is your customer service, your website, your logo, your social media, your customer experience, your advertising and everything in between.

Good branding will push you into thinking about **your audience, what makes you unique and why you stand out** amongst the 100s of other businesses like yours.

If you do it right, branding will create an **identity, awareness and recognition** among the parents you're trying to reach.





When it comes to branding, it's essential to have a good understanding of your market - particularly within a competitive environment - **so research is key.**

There are many different areas of your club that you have to develop like its position within your industry, prices and people. These are incorporated in the '**7P's of marketing**', a combination of seven elements that are required to be understood to maximise your marketing potential.



## 7P'S OF MARKETING

**PRODUCT**

These are the classes that you deliver.

- Are they suitable for your market?
- Could you offer more services?
- Can you do anything to make your classes more superior?

**PRICE**

This is how much your customers pay for your classes. Trust your business and its worth.

- What are your customers prepared to pay?
- Are you competitive?
- Are you making a profit?
- Price vs. quality analysis - Continually re-evaluate to make sure they're market appropriate.

**PEOPLE**

This is you and the people behind your business; your staff. Remember they're a reflection of your club and brand.

- Have you invested in the right training?
- Are they representing your club in the right way?
- Do you have the right people working for you?

**PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

This is everything your customers see when interacting with your club.

- Is your branding the way you want?
- How do you present yourselves?
- Does your brand inspire confidence?

**PROMOTION**

This is how your customer is persuaded to book your classes.

- Do you have an introductory offer?
- Do you run competitions?
- Do you encourage word of mouth?
- Do you share leaflets, flyers in the surrounding areas?

**PLACE**

This is where your classes take place.

- Consider if you're in the best location, and if not, how you can change it.
- Remember first impressions matter-
  - Is the location clean and safe?
  - Is your brand noticeable in a public venue?
  - Is it clear where parents have to go?

**PROCESS**

This is how you deliver the same standard of service to your customers.

- Are you easy to do business with and do you continually think of ways to increase efficiency?
- Is your classes easy to book?
- Do you make your classes better by asking for feedback?
- Are you consistent in your communication with parents?

## CREATING YOUR BRAND

We understand that when growing a kids activity business - often with limited resources - your immediate focus may be on developing a well-structured programme, sorting class locations, ensuring paperwork is up to date and reaching out to parents. Your day never really ends, and branding often takes a backseat (partly because of time and fear of costs).

But thanks to the plentiful number of resources, tools, and platforms available today, a brand build might not be as burdensome (or costly) as you think.

There are **4 important areas** to focus on when creating a brand:

1. Understanding your audience;
2. Defining your USP;
3. Defining your tone of voice;
4. Developing your visual assets



## UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

You're already an expert in your chosen field and know your activity inside out. But now you need to build on that foundation and visualise your target customer. While you may be coaching children, **it's parents who will ultimately buy into you and your club.**

The first step to building your brand is **knowing your audience**. This step is crucial as it allows you to consider who your brand speaks to, who your product serves and what is valuable to your target audience.

Begin this process by studying your current customers, analysing your website/social media channels and conducting research into your competitors.



**1** Focus on **studying your current customers** - their age, spending behaviour and method of purchasing. Doing this helps sharpen your marketing strategy and gives a clearer understanding of your customer (and what's important to them!).

**2** **Analyse your website and social media** analytics to understand who's interacting with your channels. You should also look at what type of content customers engage with, and look at their journey from start to finish.

**3** Conduct **competitor analysis** to see what other clubs are doing and how they're achieving successes. This allows you to implement the parts that are working well for other businesses and avoid the bad. Don't just look at their website and prices - check their social media engagement, content, reviews and even ask your customers about their experiences with them and what their opinions are.



Parents will use their networks to ask for recommendations when looking for a kids activity club. By researching and knowing your target audience well, you will be able to effectively demonstrate and deliver what matters to them. This will help get your name to the top of their go-to list!

**Tip:** Get to know your customers through a buyer persona.



## WHAT IS A BUYER PERSONA?

Buyer personas are fictional and generalised assumptions about your ideal customers. Many businesses will have more than one persona as there are different types of customers who purchase into your club. Creating a customer persona will improve your understanding of your customers - their buying behaviours, needs, pain points and desires.

To begin creating your customer persona, start by doing some general market research and closely analyse your customer database. This will help you identify how your customers found you, and may reveal other interesting information.

Doing this will help you understand how to attract the most valuable customers.

Once you have your persona(s) created, use them to decide where you will advertise your club and how to create content that meets the needs of your customers.

## DEFINE YOUR USP

Now you know who your customers are, and what they want, your next step should be developing your Unique Selling Point (USP). This is an essential element to creating your brand.

Your USP demonstrates the values, qualities or benefits your company offers. It challenges you to think about what you do well, and why customers should choose you over your competitors.

Your USP could be related to the type of activity you provide, your club's visual appearance, your promotional techniques and any other aspects that make you stand out. This should be a memorable aspect that customers think of and associate with your brand. It should also be backed up by the research carried out on your market and your competitors.

Once you have developed your USP, it should be reinforced through your marketing strategies (advertising and communications).



## CASE STUDY: SIMON SAYS DANCE

SSD is a dance studio based in Edinburgh who has spent time building, developing and maintaining their brand. As with all well-branded clubs, SSD are **visually eye-catching**, they **express a clear purpose** and will **invoke inspiration in the customer**.

"With there being little to no opportunities available for kids in this very much new and emerging style of dance at that time, I decided to launch Commercial dance within the activity-provider industry in Edinburgh."

Simon from Simon Says Dance

From the outset, Simon knew the purpose his dance school would serve and has kept that vision running through his brand.

SSD have spent time researching their audience to understand their needs and have built their customer booking journey around this. They have the right information in the right places with visually attractive promotional material. Not only is the customer journey a dream, but their bold colouring, well-maintained social media presence and logo makes it easy for customers to recognise them.



**This is Simon  
of Simon Says Dance**

*"Just wanted to say a massive thank you to you all for keeping in touch the way you have and for your positivity! My daughter has loved Savanna's online Acro sessions so far and does them so diligently (it's really cute!) It's keeping her going so a big thank you from us!"*

**Parent**  
at Simon Say Dance

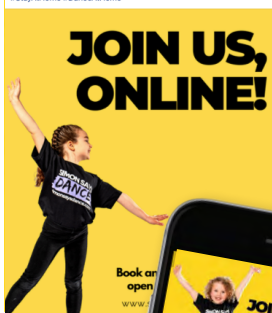
**Social media.** Consistent and clear to convey messages. Customers are reassured by professionalism.

**SIMON SAYS**  
**DANCE**  
simonsaysdance.com

**Logo.** Personal touch by bringing his name into it and clever use of the identifiable game "Simon says", makes a more memorable name!

Simon Says Dance is feeling excited.  
8 April at 17:11 · G

Our NEW ONLINE TERM is now bookable for new students (and current students wanting to book new styles!) - we have Acro, Ballet, Commercial, Musical Theatre, Jazz and House on offer, running 20th April - 28th May 2020. Enjoy from the comfort of your own home! Free trial available to both new students and anyone wanting to try a new style. See more info and book at: [www.simonsaysdance.com](http://www.simonsaysdance.com) #StayAtHome #DanceAtHome



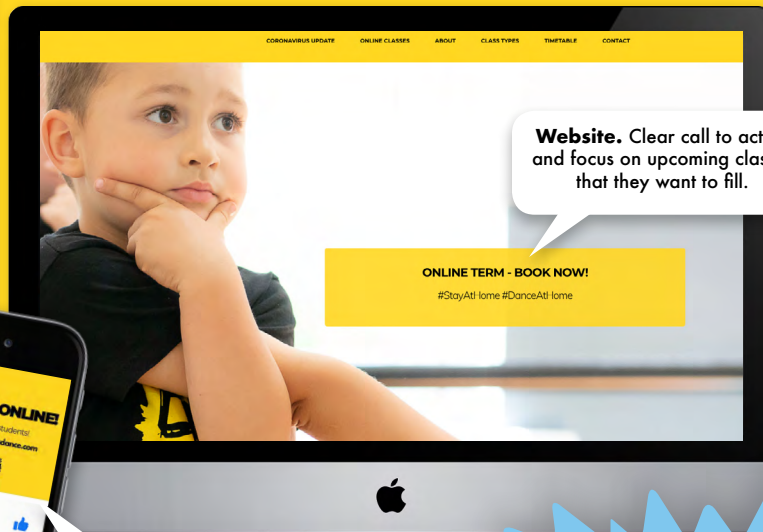
Simon Says Dance  
Dance studio

Like Comment

Write a comment...

**Facebook page.** Strong cover photo addressing online classes and "book now" button to encourage parents to take that action.

**Website.** Clear call to action and focus on upcoming classes that they want to fill.



Simon Says Dance aims to **stand out, look confident and be professional.** Their approach to branding ticks all of those boxes and makes it the place that children want to go to!

## DEFINING YOUR TONE OF VOICE

Once you've identified who you're targeting and know your USP, your brand can begin to come to life. This next phase involves carefully creating your brand's personality through a tone of voice to engage potential customers. Your brand will have both a voice and a tone, so it's important to distinguish between the two:

### BRAND VOICE

Your brand's personality which remains consistent.

### BRAND TONE

Emotion applied to your voice which changes depending on what you're communicating and where.

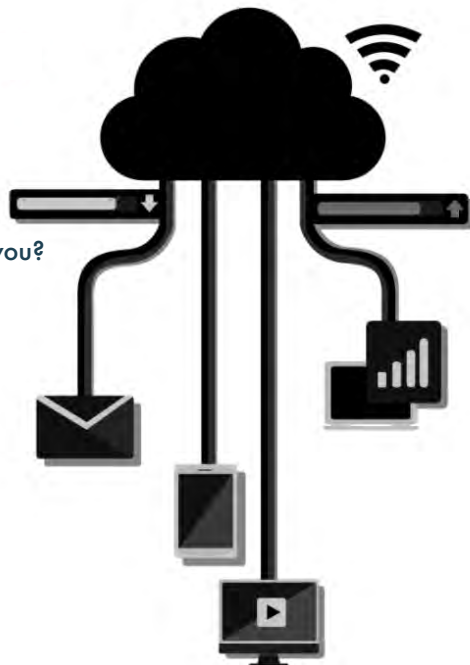
**Tip:** If you're struggling to think about your brand's voice, think about how it would sound if it could send a text. Would it be upbeat? Short and snappy? Friendly or serious? This will help create a personality for your brand that speaks directly to your customers.

To get started on your brand's voice, ask yourself these questions and use the answers to help **focus and build your business character and identity:**

- Why did you start this business?
- What beliefs and values are important to you?
- What do you do better than the competition?
- What makes you special?
- If you could describe your brand in three words, what would they be?
- What are the three words you would want customers to use to describe you?

The voice of your brand should reflect how you want your brand to be perceived. Your brand's voice is displayed on social media, blogs, email campaigns, your website and everything in between, so ensuring it's relatively consistent is crucial.

However, you may find your brand's tone changes between different channels of communication. For example, you may use a formal tone on emails sent to parents whereas you may be more informal on your Facebook page.

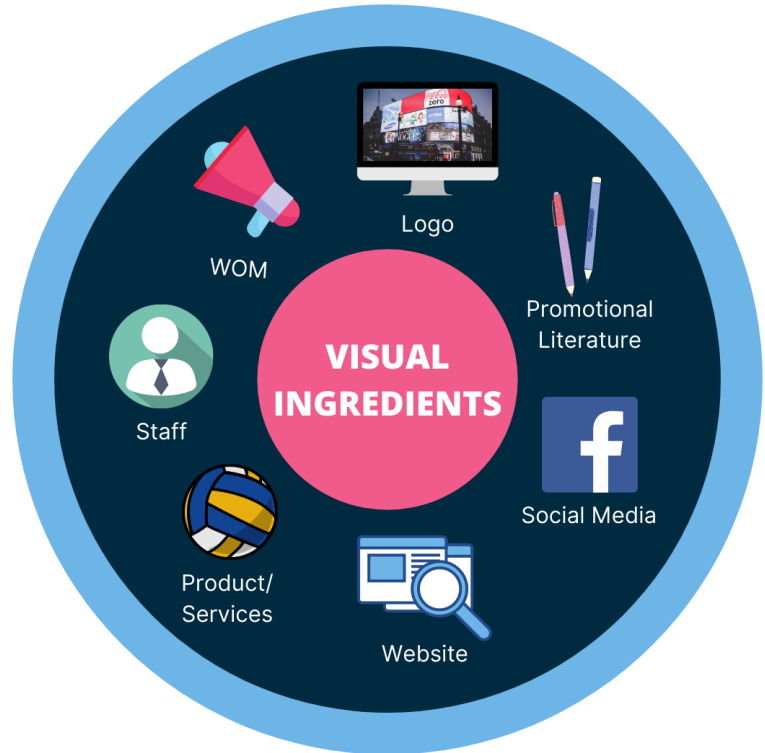


## VISUAL ASSETS

Creating the visual identity of your business - including the logo - is what brings your brand to life. It's the visual representation of your identity, your tone of voice, and is often the first encounter a parent will have with your club.

Earlier we talked about the importance of consistency, and your visual assets can help with this. Your logo, colours, typeface and other visual components are crucial in creating your brand.

Your visuals should be on display for your customers to see via your website, social media, staff and advertising literature. **Your logo and colour palette** are crucial as they can help with customer awareness and recognition.





## LOGO

A logo is a visual cue and is a memorable piece of your brands collateral. Having a logo provides the chance for your customer to recognise your club through various marketing efforts.

Depending on how high end you go (for example, working with a marketing agency), this can be an expensive process. Fortunately, there are many budget-conscious options when looking to design a logo. Look at sites that list freelance designers (and their lovely portfolios) who are rated for you to decide which best meets your needs.

## COLOURS

A good colour scheme can go a long way and is a pivotal part of your wider branding strategy. If your customers can recall your brand based on colours, then you have implemented a good strategy.

**Think:** If we asked you "What comes to mind when we say red and white?", your answer may be Coca-Cola. This is why colour is important. It allows customers to instantly recognise your brand's collateral.

Include your colours and logo around your venue, on promotional material and on any staff uniforms. Depending on the type of club you run, you could also incorporate this into your club's merchandise.



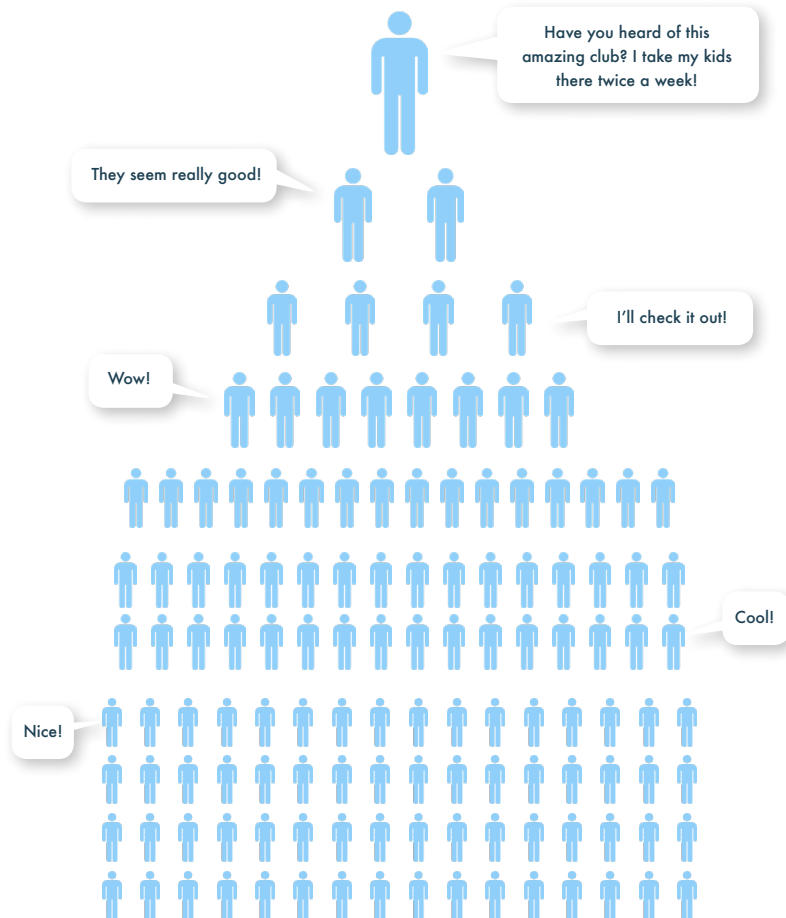


## WORD OF MOUTH

Even if your brand is strong and established, it still needs a little push to gain the attention of new people. It's important to understand that more expensive methods like paid advertising may not always be the right solution for your club. In fact, organic methods to spread awareness may actually be more effective! People trust and respect the opinions of others, so word of mouth is important when trying to increase your brand awareness. When looking for the right club to send their kids to, parents tend to liaise with other parents or look online for specific recommendations and reviews. It's essential that you remember this powerful aspect of marketing when encouraging word of mouth and spreading brand awareness through your campaigns, particularly on social media.

**TIP:** Social media users LOVE to tag their friends and share posts that are relatable. So why not create a campaign that will encourage your users to like, share and tag their friends within their network?

You have the power of engagement right at your fingertips! Take advantage of this and get parents to be advocates for your club. Get them talking about you!



Having worked hard to establish your brand, the key to growing is to **continue to innovate**. Remember that there are many small businesses competing in your space - with similar strategies - to the point where they all look the same. You may start off with a great idea that blows away the competition, but unless you continue to innovate, you may find yourself blending into a crowded market.

As you grow and invest in other parts of your business, you should also continue to invest in branding strategies. You don't have to break the bank, but if your budget allows, you may want to invite experts to help you continue to refine your look, voice and reputation.





# ClassForKids

At ClassForKids, we want to encourage you to think outside the box and carefully plan your club's future. For more ideas and inspiration on ways you can future-proof your business, visit our

## [RESOURCES HUB](#)

You'll find content designed to help you carefully consider the next stages for your club and get business-ready for relaunching.



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