

7 Steps Brands Should Take to Achieve Their Overall Business Goals

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Best Practices

Today's business environment is highly competitive, and having a superior product or service is not enough to separate your business from your competitors. You may have a solid business strategy and plan, an excellent product or service, talented and dedicated employees and a rockstar sales and marketing team—you may be doing all these things right—but if you don't stand out, you lose. Standing out is about providing consistent and genuine messaging that expresses your business's values, beliefs, and purpose which in other words is your brand. A brand is no longer just a logo, a slogan, a color combination, or even an advertisement. These are only outward expressions and a small part of what people recognize as a brand. Today a brand is the deciding factor when clients choose a particular business' product or service over another. We have outlined 7 Steps to help brands determine their distinct advantage, clarify how to represent themselves to its prospects and clients and align



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these in practical ways to achieve specific, measurable goals.

Align Business Strategy With Brand Strategy

For a brand to achieve its overall business goals, it must use strategic planning to align all its communication and marketing efforts. Strategic planning involves a commitment by your entire team to an integrated set of goals and actions across your organization. Your sales, marketing, communication and brand strategies should sync together and support one another. Integrated strategies promote alignment, clarify objectives and priorities while focusing all your efforts towards the same goals. When your business strategy is aligned with your purpose and brand, you are on course to achieve your business goals.

- What is your business strategy? What is your brand strategy?
- How do these two strategies support each other?
- What are your aligned goals?

Conduct a SWOT Analysis

To understand what makes a brand stand out, it's important to know where you stand in your market. SWOT analysis assesses where your business currently stands compared to competitors in both its internal and external environments by looking at your business' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. After conducting a SWOT analysis, you will see where the opportunities are in growing your brand to grow your business.

Define Your Purpose and Brand Promise

A brand's purpose includes the core values and beliefs that are the unchanging principles, ideas and philosophies that guide your business decisions—it's the reason you do what you do and the difference that makes to your clients. Purpose integrates what a brand values and believes in with why it's in business and describes them in terms of the heart as well as the mind. Purpose is the beneficial something extra that a business delivers that adds significant value to whatever it sells. Identifying your purpose takes some soul searching to pin down, but it's worth the effort. Doing business with a clear purpose makes everything work better and ultimately serves to strengthen your brand. Your brand promise is what you promise to deliver to your clients and it must be consistent and authentic to your brand's purpose. When an organization's words and actions match who it is and what it believes, it is being

authentic. And when this happens, clients learn to trust your brand. They will become repeat clients and an ideal source of referrals.

- What do you do really well?
- What do you love?
- What does the world need?
- What will the world pay for it?

Identify Your Ideal Lead

Not everyone is your client. Your ideal lead is a prospect who fits your defined ideal client profile and is interested in what you have to offer. This person sees value from using your product or service and can appreciate the difference of what you offer compared to your competitors. Understanding who your ideal lead is and building a strategy to attract them will help improve efficiency and productivity in your business. A good place to begin identifying your ideal leads is by looking at your existing clients.

- Who are your ideal leads/clients?
- Where are they?
- What's important to them?
- What problems keep them awake at night?

Uncover Your Distinct Advantage

Your distinct advantage is not just what makes your product or service different, it's what makes your business different—and what your business stands for and why it's in business. It is the unique combinations of gifts, experiences, culture, stories, skills, and inclinations that make up who you are and what you do in ways that your competition doesn't, can't, and won't. When you know your distinct advantage you have the competitive advantage over your competitors. It's how you stand out.

- What do your clients want?
- What do you provide?
- What do competitors offer?
- What do you offer that your competitors don't, but your clients want?

Campaign Implementation

Start building a campaign to bring your marketing strategy to life. Define team roles—internal and external—and resources needed to

successfully implement your marketing plan. This should include a detailed timeline of initiatives and tasks as well as a dashboard for tracking success. After the campaign has launched all initiatives will need to be managed and monitored to ensure progress.

Stay On Course

Running a business and building a brand is a lot like a pilot preparing to take off. You have a specific destination. You create a "flight" plan, assemble the resources you need and begin your journey. But as your business grows and your brand evolves, it's possible that the picture you envisioned as your destination has become less clear, overshadowed by the day-to-day details of business. You are off course. And without course corrections you might not reach your desired destination. Staying on course requires regular and consistent monitoring of your business' progress towards your goals and adjust your strategy to align with current conditions. This includes monthly analytics and reporting and quarterly strategy meetings with key decision makers.

These 7 steps are designed to help you build your brand to grow your business. By defining your distinct advantage and the difference you make in the world and communicating this to your ideal leads, you will be set for business success.

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