

The background of the entire image is a dark grey, semi-transparent architectural blueprint. It features various technical drawings, including floor plans, sections, and elevations. Faint text from the blueprints is visible, such as 'FACIO', 'Soffit', 'Plaster', 'SECTION', 'Scale', 'Brick', 'Bedding', 'Furnace', and '9'-5 1/4".

# BRAND STRATEGY

# PRO

# INTRODUCTION

You know all the branding quotes...



**JEFF BEZOS**

“Your brand is what people say about you when you’re not in the room”

**MARTY NEUMEIER**

“Branding is the process of connecting good strategy with good creativity”



**GARY VAYNERCHUCK**

“Part of why you love your parents is because they loved you first. Brands need to do that”



You’ve also read all the “**A Brand Is Not A Logo**” articles telling you what a brand is not and leaving you with more questions than answers.

**BREAKING NEWS:  
A BRAND IS NOT  
A LOGO**



## LET'S CUT THE FLUFF...

When it comes to branding, you're not short on **unactionable sound bites** and **vague snippets** of what a brand is or what a brand is not.

But the more you venture down the **Branding Rabbit-Hole**, the more **the art of Brand Strategy** comes into focus.

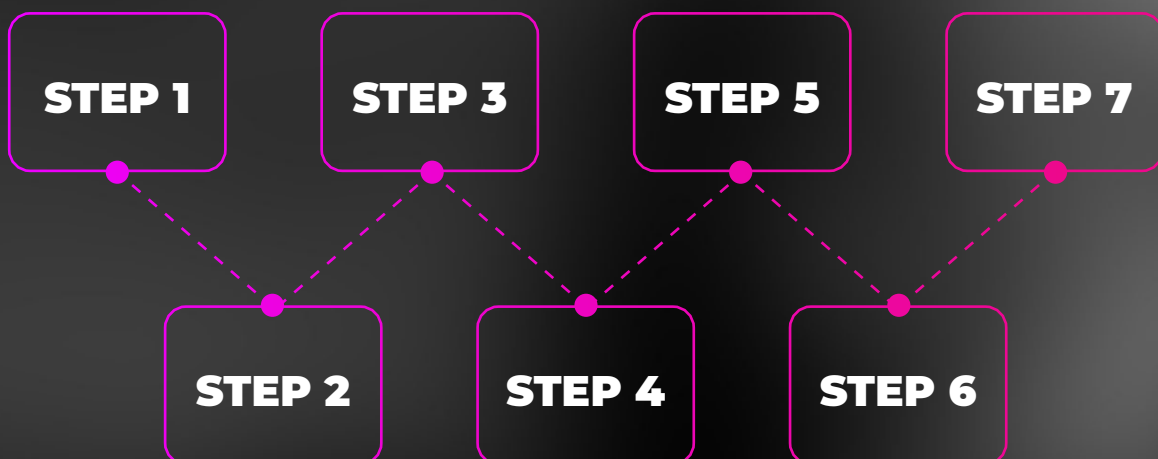
Finding fluffy and vague information online about branding is easy.

Finding a **proven step-by-step process** to **develop a brand strategy** is not.

With this blueprint, I'll show you the proven **7-steps you need to follow**, to build an effective brand strategy **step-by-step**.



## THE 7-STEP BLUEPRINT



# STEP 1

## Lay The Internal Foundation



Before your brand can help others, it needs to have **solid commitments**, an idea of **where it's going**, how it's going to get there and what **impact it's going to have**.

Do not underestimate the importance of this step.

It's undersold as a collection of statements but the words on the page are what matter the least.

### **[1.1] Define The Brand Role Beyond Money**

**Aside from the transaction for the cost of your product or services, your brand plays a role in the life of your customer.**

It **adds value and impacts their lives** in some way and therefore serves a purpose **beyond the revenue it generates**.

Identify that role and the impact it makes in the lives of your audience and use **this role and purpose for motivation**.

**This role becomes a key ingredient in your positioning strategy.**

## STEP 1: Lay The Internal Foundation

### [1.2] Define Where Your Brand Is Going

In the future, your successful brand will live in a different world.

- What does that world around your brand look like?
- How is your brand contributing to that world?
- What impact is it having?

A brand that knows where it's going is more likely to get there. This direction acts as a **compass for your brand to influence key decisions.**

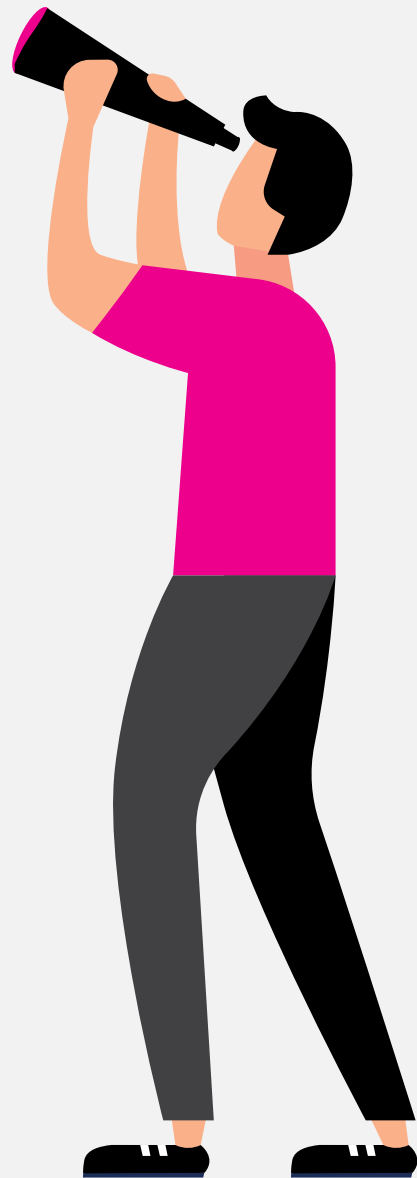
### [1.3] Define The Commitments Your Brand Will Keep

If your brand reaches its goals, it will have done so by **religiously keeping certain commitments** again and again.

**What commitments are important for your brand to keep** as it goes about its day-to-day operations?

These commitments, if defined correctly, will be appreciated by your customers and **your consistency will develop loyalty.**

If you can successfully identify what these commitments are and keep them religiously, **they will act as a guide for future strategic decisions.**



## STEP 1: Lay The Internal Foundation

### [1.4] Define How Your Brand Will Behave

How your brand behaves in the marketplace **influences both buying decisions and customer loyalty.**

Whether in branding or in life, what shapes the way you behave are the **values you hold dear.**

The values that determine your brand behaviour should **stem from the business leaders** based on what *they* hold dear, and should be **instilled throughout all brand activity and customer engagement.**

Consistency in staying true to these values **develops help to develop human affection towards your brand and promotes brand advocacy.**



**“HOW YOUR  
BRAND BEHAVES  
INFLUENCES  
BOTH BUYING  
DECISIONS AND  
CUSTOMER  
LOYALTY”**

## STEP 2

### Map The Brand Battlefield



**In order for your brand to make an impact in the market, it needs to approach the battlefield strategically.**

The **market environment is the battlefield** where both your future customers and your competitors play.

#### **[2.1] Know Who You're Helping**

**You've likely heard of the terms "Audience Research" and "Customer Avatar's".**

Both these terms **understate the intimacy and detail required** in order to fully understand who you're trying to help.

When your customers need what you have, **this is where they go for help.** To have the best chance of being the brand to help them, you need an intimate understanding of **who you are trying to help** and **who is also trying to help them.**

Demographics won't give you much to work on and Psychographics don't paint the full picture either.

In order to really understand your audience, you need to **replicate their emotional state when they need your help most.**

## STEP 2: Map The Brand Battlefield

**Identify the problems your audience faces** in and around the problem you solve and how these problems **impact their emotions**.

**Branding is about resonating** and there is no better way of resonating than to show an intimate understanding of your customers problems and how those problems impact their lives.



### [2.2] Know Who Is Already Helping Them

**Competitor Research is a well-worn marketing term that most brand builders come across.**

Experience the brand as a prospective customer to find good and bad experiences.

The top articles on the term will direct you to analyse their **content, their SEO structure, their social media channels etc.**

**Observe their:**

**MESSAGING**

**LANGUAGE**

**PERSONALITY**

**CUSTOMER JOURNEY**

**CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

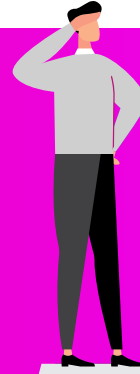
Most of these articles however, fail to **frame the analysis in the most effective way.**

In order to analyse your competition effectively, you need to look at them from inside the market and inside **your customers' shoes.**



## STEP 3

### Find A Different Position Or Be Ignored



**Positioning your brand is not something you do. It's something your customer does based on their experience with your brand.**

When they experience your brand through your visual identity, message, story and personality, **they subconsciously place you in an area of their mind.**

If you mirror what your competitors are doing and how they're doing it, your brand will disappear into the noise.

**The ONLY way to stand out is to first, identify, then craft a message around what your brand does differently.**

Influencing how your audience positions your brand **is the cornerstone of any successful brand strategy.**

**"THE ONLY WAY TO STAND OUT IS TO IDENTIFY, THEN OFFER WHAT YOUR BRAND DOES DIFFERENTLY."**

## STEP 3: Find A Different Position

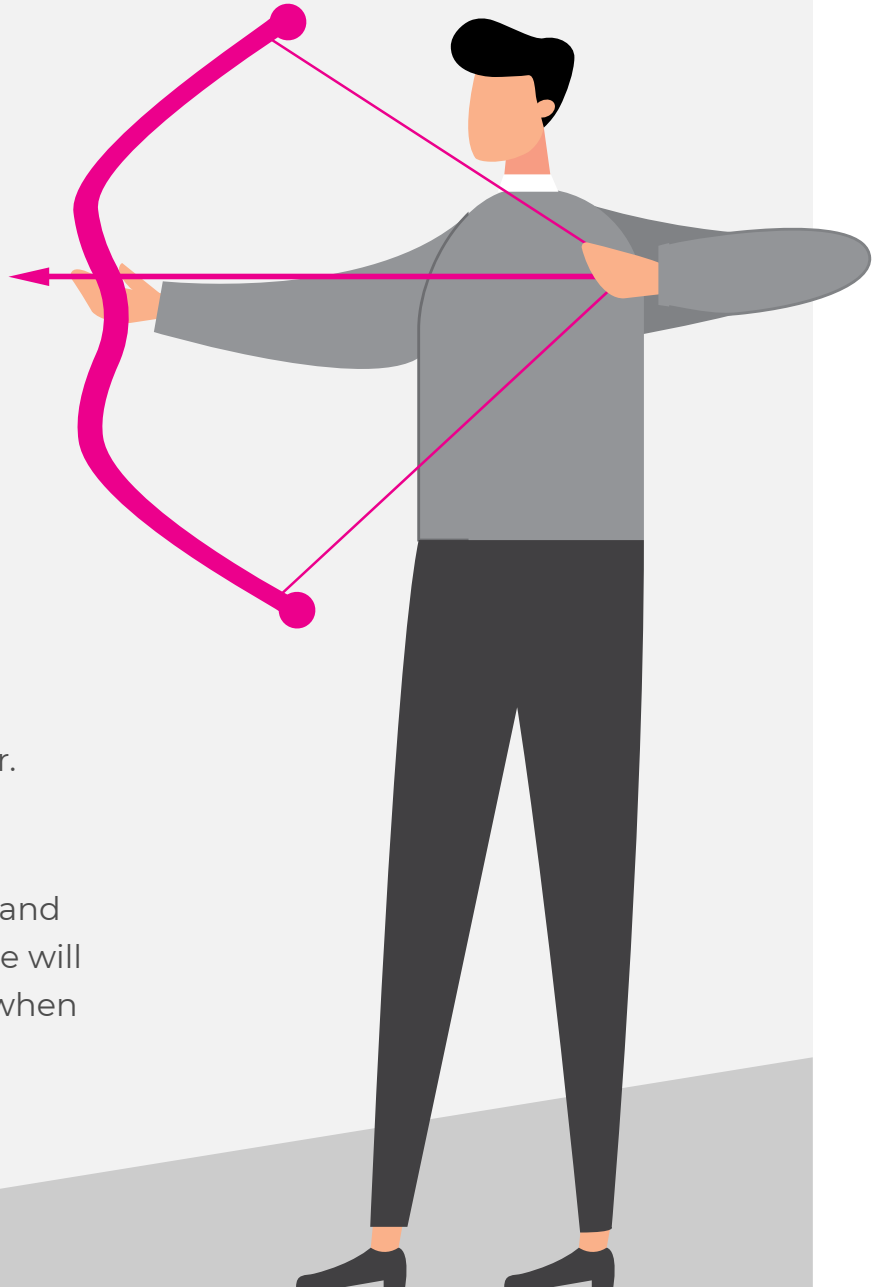
### [3.1]

### Define Your Differentiation Strategy

The key to an effective positioning strategy is to know what you want your audience to remember you for.

Once you identify what your key differentiator is, you then need to build your entire **brand-messaging framework** around that differentiator.

If you use the right combination of emotion and personality, your audience will fondly recall your brand when their time of need arises.



**“ONCE YOU IDENTIFY WHAT YOUR KEY DIFFERENTIATOR IS, YOU NEED TO BUILD YOUR ENTIRE BRAND-MESSAGING FRAMEWORK AROUND IT”**

## STEP 4

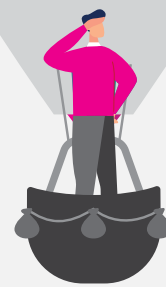
### Humanise Your Brand

**The days of monotone one-way broadcast communication are gone. Today if your brand “speaks” like a company, it will fail in its core task, which is to resonate.**

We pick and choose the people we keep in our lives based on whether or not we connect with them.

These connections are made through **shared characteristics**, which make up our personalities. If we connect with someone, we make a choice (often a subconscious one) **to keep them in our lives.**

In the exact same way, **consumers pick and choose the brands** they want to do business with, based on **whether or not they have a connection with them.**



**“WE PICK AND CHOOSE WHO WE KEEP IN OUR LIVES BASED ON CONNECTIONS WHETHER IT’S A PERSON OR A BRAND”**

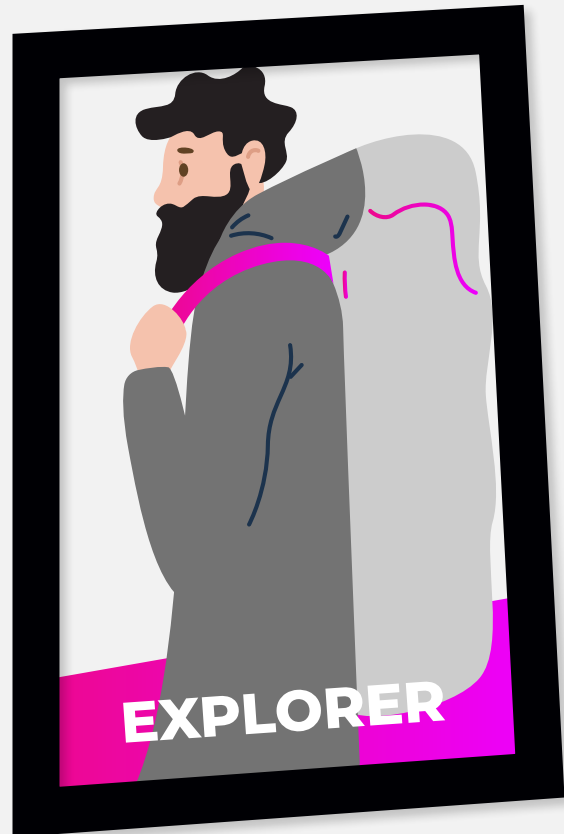
## STEP 4: Humanise Your Brand

### [4.1] Define Your Archetype

Your target customer will be well represented by a specific personality type (which we can define using archetypes) based on their characteristics and desires.

Your customer's archetype allows you to **develop the brand archetype best suited to appeal to them.**

This brand archetype **identifies the characteristics your brand should display** throughout your entire customer experience from your messaging to your visual identity.



### [4.2] Develop Your Language & Tone Of Voice

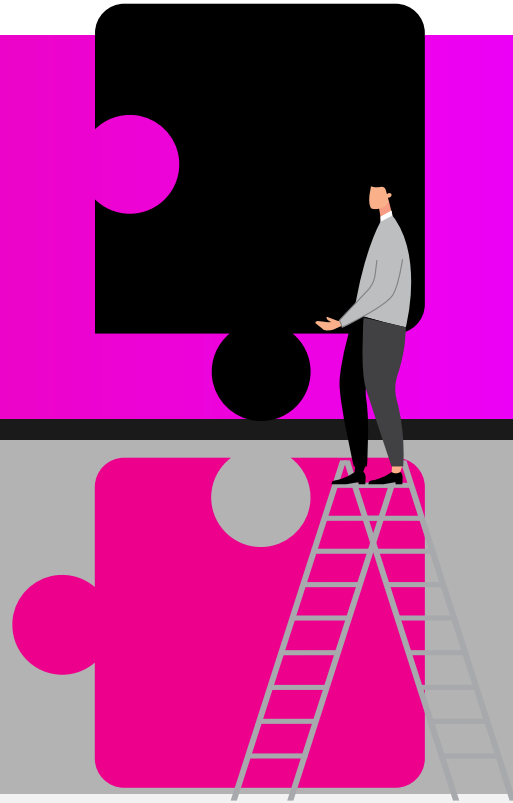
**An extension of your brand personality is your language and tone of voice, which is another opportunity to display the characteristics your customers are attracted to.**

Whether it's corporate and professional language or a casual and friendly tone, a communication style your audience is attracted to is key to your message landing.



## STEP 5

### Develop A Core Message Framework



**Before I share with you what a strategic brand core message framework is, I first need to clarify what it's not.**

“Core Message” is touted as the message you need to develop to communicate with your audience, which is represented as a paragraph of text.

It's important to have a **simple distilled message**. But if that's all you have to guide your communication you'll run into trouble quickly.

A core message framework outlines the critical elements needed to help **solidify your position** and acts as a **guide to cement that position**.

#### **[5.1] Craft Your Core Message Framework**

**On average you need a minimum of 8 touch-points for your audience to take note of you.**

Each touch-point is an opportunity to make it clear to your audience exactly what you should mean to them and where to position you.

This is where the framework comes into its own and acts as a guide to ensure your brand is **delivering strategic messaging at all times**.

## STEP 5: Develop A Core Message Framework

Write a detailed paragraph of text for each of the following.

<b>AUDIENCE</b>	Who they are
<b>PAIN-POINTS</b>	What they struggle with
<b>EXISTING OPTIONS</b>	Problems with existing options
<b>DIFFERENCE</b>	Difference your brand provides
<b>ACTUAL BENEFIT</b>	How they benefit from your help
<b>EMOTIONAL BENEFIT</b>	How the benefit makes them feel

### [5.2] Use Your Framework As A Tool

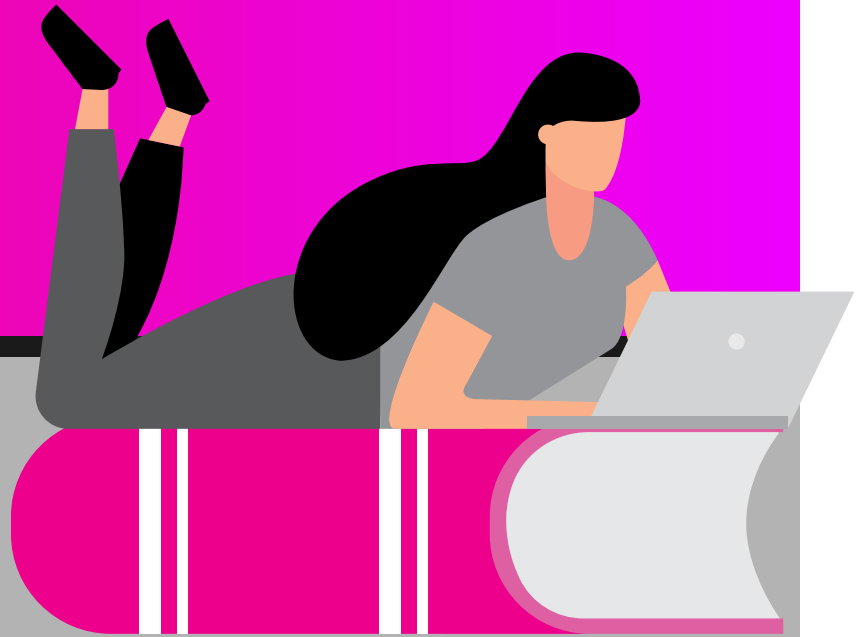
These paragraphs now represent the framework of communication your audience needs to hear from you before they can position your brand in the right place in their mind.

Don't re-post these paragraphs again and again. Use the framework as a tool to communicate the components you want your audience to know.



## STEP 6

### Develop A Storytelling Framework



**FACT:** We as humans **remember stories 22 times more** than simple fact sharing because the information is processed in an older part of the brain.

**MISCONCEPTION:** Your brand story is about **where your founders have come from**, why they created the brand and where it's going.

The reason we enjoy stories is because **we see ourselves in the characters**. We relate with their **struggles, emotions, challenges and victories**. This is why we are so emotionally invested in a story.

Your brand story is not about you. It's about your customer, their struggles, emotions, challenges and the victory they'll achieve through your brand.

#### [6.1] Craft Your Story Framework

**The most loved stories in the world from Star Wars to Toy Story all follow variations of a storytelling framework called "The Hero's Journey".**

Using an adaptation of this framework for brand storytelling, we use **"The Audience's Journey"**.

## STEP 6: Develop A Storytelling Framework

Write a detailed paragraph of text for each of the following.

<b>EXISTING WORLD</b>	How they live their lives
<b>OBSTACLE</b>	The problem they have
<b>CALL TO ACTION</b>	The final straw before taking action
<b>THE GUIDE</b>	Who will help them (Your Brand)
<b>THE CHALLENGE</b>	What stand in their way of success
<b>TRANSFORMATION</b>	How they'll change through success
<b>NEW WORLD</b>	How life looks without the problem

### [6.2] Use Your Story Framework As A Tool

**Just like your core message framework, these paragraphs act as a guide for future communication with each component representing a chapter in the story.**

Both your core message framework and storytelling framework represent an effective communication tool to deliver what your audience needs to understand about your brand.

When your message is crafted from your strategic position and delivered with emotion through story, your audience takes notice.

Consciously or subconsciously, they'll store your brand in a place in their mind that will allow for easy brand recall.



# STEP 7

## Design Your Identity From Strategy



**At this late stage in the brand development process we can see just how different a brand is from a logo.**

Though once a strategic foundation is in place, **the importance of the logo** and the broader brand identity a brought into focus.

Your visual identity is simply **another tool to deliver your message.**

Due to how visual we are, it's a **very effective tool in displaying the right characteristics** to set the tone for your message framework.

### **[7.1] Craft An Identity To Deliver Your Message**

Reference each of the following elements throughout your brand identity design.

The strategic elements must influence each element of the visual identity design.

**Audience Profile**

**Competitor Analysis**

**Differentiation Strategy**

**Brand Personality + Voice**

**Core Message Framework**

**Brand Story Framework**

**Logo / Wordmark**

**Colour Palette**

**Typography**

**Image Style**

**Graphics + Patterns**

**User Experience**

## Conclusion



**Each brand element from strategy to design from positioning to messaging is a strategic tool in the game of branding.**

Each tool is another opportunity to place your brand in a position in the mind of your audience.

If you are successful they will recall your brand for the reasons you identify throughout your strategic development and therefore influence their buying decision.

The modern consumer is more aware of branding than ever before.

They expect their brands to be crystal clear in their messaging and how they fit into their lives.

Brands without a strategic structure directing the message in 2020 and beyond will be seen for what they are.

A collection of graphics on-screen with little relevance deserving no attention.

**Which type of brand are you going to build?**