

A Guide to Corporate Branding for Small Businesses **November 2005**

The corporate brand is among the most value elements of a company. The corporate brand is not only the first impression made to potential clients but it is also a key motivational tool for your employees.

Many entrepreneurs feel that they are too small and don't have the resources to develop a corporate brand. This notion is purely Wrong!

They key steps in developing a corporate brand are:

- 1) Determining how you want to position your company
- 2) Building the brand
- 3) Implementing the brand
- 4) Brand Consistency

Step 1: Determine Positioning

Once you have decided what your company will do it is time to determine how you want to portray the firm and its products / services to the public. In determining your positioning there are several factors that you should take into consideration:

Some of the Factors include:

- Your Industry
- What are you selling?
 - Products, Services, Both
- Who are you selling to?
 - Companies, Individuals, Both
 - Male, Female, Both
 - Age Groups
- How do you want your company to be viewed?
 - Traditional
 - Steadied
 - Progressive
 - High Tech
- How do your prices relate to the competition?

Step 2: Building the Brand

Once you have begun to think about factors in development of the brand small business should engage a firm that specializes in brand and identity development. It is important to pick a brand firm that specializes in businesses your size, they will be most equipped to provide you with the services you need at a price you can afford. These firms will help you sort out the answers in determining the brand (see above) and will take these factors and design the brand imagery around them.

Brand / Identity Deliverables include:

- Logo Development
- Stationery Design
- Color & Font Selection
- Website Design
- Industry specific media
- Style / Usage Guide

Step 3: Implementing the Brand

Once you have developed the brand and associated marks it is critical to implement them everywhere possible. Consistent repetition is a key factor in spreading your brand across markets and developing a reputation for your firm.

Some examples of core places to include your brand mark include:

- Business Cards
- Letterhead
- Envelopes
- Post Cards
- Invoices
- Checks
- Email Signature
- Signage
- Website
- Product Packaging
- Promotional Materials
- Sales Materials

Step 4: Brand Consistency

Your corporate brand will portray many positive themes about your firm, though not using it consistently or changing it frequently may have long lasting negative impacts on your business. A company who does not standardize the use of the logo, colors or fonts can come off as unorganized and chaotic, while a firm who sticks to their standards will portray an image of professionalism and longevity much more desirable to a client. Furthermore, an ever changing brand may confuse clients and portray an image of instability within your company.

The implementation of a corporate brand is a critical component of the image a firm portrays and the success that can be achieved. As you can see of the majority of work involved in developing the brand is sweat equity rather than financial resources. With a lot of dedication to the firm's image and a small investment any business can develop a brand.

About A Net Site Business Solutions

A Net Site Business Solutions is a consulting firm focusing on small to mid-sized businesses. The firm's marketing division focuses on brand development, internet strategy, site design and online marketing. The firm's technology division provides IT planning, infrastructure implementation and outsourced technology support. Founded in 1996 and 100% employee owned, the firm is recognized as a leader in brand and technology solutions for small to mid-sized firms. For more information please visit www.anetsite.com.