



# B2B BRANDING QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE





Going through the B2B branding or rebranding process is an exciting time, but it's easy to get overwhelmed by the process or all the terminology involved. Based on our experience assisting B2B firms with the branding process, we've put together a B2B Branding Quick Reference Guide. In this guide, we've defined common branding terms, shared what to do (and not do) during branding, and the essential steps to building a brand. Keep this guide handy as a reference during your rebranding or branding project.

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Many people believe branding is simply the creation of a logo and tagline. While a new logo and tagline may be several of the deliverables of a B2B branding process, they aren't the sum of the process. When it comes to creating a new brand or refreshing an existing brand, there are a variety of factors to take into consideration other than logo design and a catchy tagline.

# A Glossary of Key Branding Terms

Unless you are a seasoned marketing professional, all the terms people throw around when discussing branding can be confusing. Knowing all the terms is especially important for a B2B or B2C firm who is thinking about a marketing overhaul, creating a new digital strategy, or considering a re-brand.

## Ambassador

A brand ambassador is anyone who works for your company and interacts as a representative of the company. An ambassador can be a Sales Person, Executive, or even a Customer Service Representative.

## Awareness

How many people are familiar with a company and its products or services. Awareness should be gauged on a scale of Poor to Great, which measures how well people know what products/services a company offers and what a company is all about.

## Brand

The term originally referred to livestock owners who would mark their herd with a distinctive symbol for clear identification. The term now refers to how a target market distinguishes one company and its values from a similar company.

## Branding

As a verb, it's the process of discovering and communicating the overall image of your firm. As a noun, it's the image you project in the market to your target audience.

## Collateral

An all-encompassing term referring to any and all marketing materials used for a company. This includes brochures, presentation templates, email signatures, email templates, business cards, data sheets, case studies, etc.

## Culture

Every B2B firm and B2C company has a unique set of beliefs, customs, way of thinking, and standards of behavior/work. For many companies, having a clear understanding of the culture is essential to communicating the brand.

## Customer Service

Every member of your organization is responsible for an excellent experience for clients. It can make or break your firm's brand.

## Guidelines

Refers to a short list of rules and requirements for representing the company visually, in text, and in person. The more specific the overall rules, the more cohesive an organization will appear to potential and existing customers.

## Identity

All of the unique attributes that define your company are considered the Brand Identity. Business Name, Logo, Tagline, business card, products and services, dress code, etc., are all things that combine to create the identity of a brand.

## Image

How a brand is perceived by its target audience. The way a brand appears to potential customers or clients is essential to the success of a company.

## Intangible

Brand assets incapable of being touched. These all work together to create the essence of the brand. Intangibles include trademarks, expertise, designs, etc.

## Logo

A unique design or custom symbol that acts as the identifier of a brand. It is a visual representation of a firm's brand.

## Marketing

Marketing covers all the activities related to creating awareness, interest, and leads in a company's products or services. Typically, Marketing acts at the brand police for an organization.

## Message/Messaging

Often referred to as "Brand Message" or "Brand Messaging," it is the main value proposition of a company's services or products. The brand message communicates what the brand is and what separates it from competitors.

## Mission Statement

An explanation of the overall goal and major values of a company. This statement often guides the B2B branding process.

## Personality

Any identifying factors about a company specifically related to how it interacts with the public. Many B2B firms create a "brand personality" to define the attitude of the brand, how it portrays the company, and relevant beliefs.

## Re-brand

A process of taking a look at the overall identity of a company and making changes or revisions to the identity. Often an intensive procedure that includes input from major stakeholders and impacts all levels of an organization.

## Recognition

The level to which your target audience can identify your B2C or B2B brand and services or products based on your name or logo. Best Buy, Target, Apple, Google, and Microsoft are all examples of companies with strong brand recognition.

## Tagline

The condensed slogan that typically accompanies the company logo and captures the essence of the brand.

## Tangible

Assets that can be touched or felt, like buildings, property, products, and packaging.

## Target Market

The desired potential customer audience. The best way to determine who is in your target market involves creating a "customer profile" of a fake person who represents your ideal client.

## Value Proposition

What your client gets when they pay for your product or service. It usually includes the major advantage of choosing you over a competitor.

## Vision

The future of how your company will look and operate. Vision dictates the goal setting and B2B branding efforts of your marketing and sales strategy.



# 10 Do's and Don'ts of Branding

Common issues come up during the B2B branding process, but they can be avoided or quickly managed by understanding how they detract from the process. By keeping these Do's and Don'ts in mind during your B2B branding project, you can streamline the process and get a great result.

## Do Consider Your Audience

The best place to start is by considering and analyzing your ideal client. Who are they? What are their needs and challenges? Clearly define your audience and their pain points. Knowing whom you are marketing to enables you to appeal to them in your strategy.

## Do Focus on Your Strengths

This sounds like a no-brainer, but we find that sometimes companies can't clearly articulate their strengths. It's absolutely essential to determine what your firm's strengths are and how they add value for clients. Create a list of all the strengths of your business. Get input from your sales team, customer service team, and management. Once you have a comprehensive list, cut it down to a maximum of 5 strengths and ensure they are all relevant to your clients.

## Do Create a Strong Mission Statement

Settling on the strengths and values of your business will help you to write and refine your mission statement. Your mission statement must be concise, specific, and written down. Consider the mission statement to be the mantra of your firm. Successful professionals and leaders often ask themselves, "Is this decision or action inline with our mission statement?"

## Do Be Consistent

Narrowing down your strengths, client needs, and mission statement are integral in developing a B2B brand. As you continue to craft your brand marketing strategy, your key to success is consistency. For example, if you are focusing on "efficiency," make sure you carry that message throughout all your brand-related pieces. The very nature and layout of all your marketing and sales material should portray the feeling of "efficiency."

## Do Differentiate Yourself

Your firm, employees, services, and model are unique. The most effective brands take extra efforts to differentiate themselves. In a world of options, potential clients need to clearly understand what differentiates you from your competitors. Make it clear what makes your firm and your services unique and valuable.



## Don't Rush the Process

Branding or refreshing a brand can be a streamlined process, but it still requires informed input and creativity. Firms going through a B2B branding process risk creating a lackluster, vague brand when they rush the process. Working with an experienced branding expert or consultant is a great way to ensure you are spending enough time, but not too much, on the various portions of the branding process.

## Don't Try to Please Everyone

Effectively managed businesses employ a diverse group of individuals. While this is great for innovation and ideation, it's not always conducive to collective agreement. When it comes to branding, a lot of people in your company will have an opinion. However, at the end of the day, only a few of those opinions really matter. Identify the main stakeholders in the branding process and ensure they have final decision ability.

## Don't Say You Offer Something You Don't

This is another common sense statement that doesn't always seem obvious. Typically, when someone is trying to say they offer something they don't, it's not always to be deceptive. In many cases, they like how it sounds and think it's what the client wants to hear. These people often think they have the best product or service on the market and they can later convince a client of its worth. This tactic is dishonest and usually fails, causing mistrust in your brand.

## Don't Copy the Competition

Even if your competition has great ideas and strategies, never copy them. Your firm is unique and different. Copying a competitor makes it look like you don't bring anything new or different to the market and does nothing to make you stand-out.

## Don't Minimize the Importance of Branding

A product or service is rarely so great that it sells itself. Even industry giants like GE, Apple, Microsoft, and Sony value and promote their own brands. Your branding and service or product often become inextricably linked, so creating and upholding a strong brand ensures the image of your products or services is strong as well.





# 5 Steps to Build Your B2B Brand

The B2B branding process can be boiled down to five major steps. While there are a slew of tasks and to-dos that make up each step, these are the major milestones of branding a business.

## Outline Your Vision and Core Values

The first step in a B2B branding project is outlining your firm's vision, core values, and mission statement. These are the foundation of a brand and must be definitively outlined before creating logos, taglines, websites, copy, or any type of tangible collateral. The typical process for outlining vision, values, and a mission statement is a creative meeting of the C-level team or decision makers. Since these individuals are guiding the success of the company, they are the best group for determining the fundamental values of the organization.

A mission statement should communicate the vision and values of the organization and how the company adds value. For example, Amazon.com's mission statement is "to be Earth's most customer-centric company, where customers can find and discover anything they might want to buy online, and endeavors to offer its customers the lowest possible prices." This mission statement shares the company's vision and communicates the value to its customers.

## Define Your Target Market and Ideal Client

Next, determine who your target market is and what they "look" like. The simplest way to do this is to create a profile of an ideal client. The profile includes information about sex, occupation, age range, education level, geographical location, income, work environment, and job title. The profile creates a detailed snapshot of whom your company is trying to reach. Be sure to define their pain points and challenges as well, since that will help with your value proposition.

## Determine Your Value Proposition

What compels clients to buy your products or services? Determine what unique offering or attribute your company provides that differentiates you from competitors and addresses a pain point or points for your clients. The value proposition focuses on the benefit of your product and service. A great value proposition answers the question, "Why should I be your client?" Stay away from listing features here since a client won't care about features if your product or service doesn't fulfill a need.

## Create Your B2B Brand Narrative

At this point in the B2B branding project, it's time to create your brand narrative. This is essentially how you tell your "company's story." This is not the same as the company history. Storytelling, also referred to as messaging, is how you are going to communicate with your potential clients and educate them about why they need your product or service. By crafting an interesting and engaging brand narrative, you are educating your target market without them thinking they are being sold on a product or service. Your B2B brand narrative runs throughout your marketing strategy and is essential to keeping a consistent brand.

## Promote Your Brand Internally

The final step in launching your new B2B brand includes getting company wide buy-in. It's counter-productive to launch a new brand if your internal staff doesn't understand it or even know about it. Sadly, many companies don't alert their employees about a new brand or a re-brand until it has launched and been communicated to the market. Every member of your organization is a brand ambassador in one way or another, so make sure you share the elements of the brand with them prior to launch. Share the information with excitement to create internal buzz and show employees they have a stake in the company's success.

**A strong B2B Brand is what separates a service provider from a solutions provider. Anyone can provide a service to a client, but a well-crafted brand creates relationships by offering solutions. A business serious about long-term client relationships should take the time to develop and maintain a strong brand.**

Building a B2B Brand involves more than logo creation and a new email template. The branding process is an opportunity to define how your target market sees your company and views your products or services. Does your company need help with branding? [Contact Bop Design](https://www.bopdesign.com) today!