

# BADASS YOUR BRAND

The Impatient  
Entrepreneur's  
Guide to  
Turning  
Expertise  
into Profit

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# **BADASS YOUR BRAND**

**A Sneak Peak of the 1st Chapter  
*Book Launching March 16th, 2017***



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# INTRODUCTION

I'm freaking out. Am I going to have to call it quits and get a REAL job? My business partner, Steve, and I are sitting at the kitchen table in our little railroad apartment in Brooklyn. It's been three months since we've closed a single client. Correction: Since I've closed a single client.

After three years of hunting for customers for our branding company, Worstofall Design, I hit a breaking point. I was burned out on 5:45 a.m. wake-ups for networking meetings and marathons of coffee dates that were offering no results—with no end in sight. For the first time in my life, I was considering giving up.

We'd had many stressful times before, of course, but this was the first time I was actually *crying* over it. We had \$40,000 of credit-card debt, and were getting in deeper every month. And now, even if the best-case scenario panned out and some of our pending proposals closed, it wouldn't make much of a dent. I was learning how expensive it is not to have any money—interest fees, late fees, and the like were piling up.

Steve, who also happens to be my husband, suggested we let our two employees go. *Let the employees go?! NEVER!* That was

the furthest thing from my mind. We were building something, and letting them go meant admitting defeat. I couldn't accept that I was going to be one of those failed-business statistics at exactly the three-year mark.

Our story isn't one of overcoming immense hardship. Steve and I both grew up with resources and good educations. We knew that even if we failed at this business we would never be hungry or on the street. Our story also isn't about sudden, unfathomable success. We aren't millionaires, and our company didn't blow up like Facebook.

It's about our burning desire to create something from nothing. It's about defining success for ourselves, and our motivation to find success by doing things our way. And it's about the freedom to create and execute our ideas, and then share those ideas with the world. It's about the thing I believe most entrepreneurs today are looking for.

That little meltdown happened on a Friday in March 2014. The following Monday, we let our two employees go, falling (or pushing ourselves) over the proverbial cliff.

But over the nine months that followed, we grew wings. We ended up having our best and most profitable year, with no signs of it letting up. I also stopped networking completely and started taking weekends off. By June 2015, we had made \$500,000 in revenue by selling only our services, without paying for advertising, and working for clients a mere three days a week.

I want to share exactly how we did it, and how we have done the same for many successful clients.

It all comes down to two words: **BADASS BRAND**.

We knew we were drowning on that fateful night in the winter of 2014. Steve suggested we do the one thing that would obviously help us quickly: downsize. I resisted because I thought downsizing meant failure. But when he clarified what he meant, it was one of the most brilliant things I had ever heard him say. He insisted that this wasn't a move backward, but a move forward. We weren't failures. We're good at what we do! We have happy clients who love our work.

But we were clearly failing at something, and that's what we needed to identify and fix. And he said it was time we took our own medicine. He was right.

### **THE SHOEMAKER'S SON...WEARS LOUBOUTINS**

I hear the phrase "the shoemaker's son has no shoes" far too often. It refers to small business owners who are so busy working with clients that they neglect their own business. The worst is when they don't do for their own business the very service they provide to others.

It's the social media company with a paltry social media presence. A web designer with an outdated website. A content writer without a blog.

And I realized at this critical moment that it frustrated me so much because I was doing *the very same thing*.

### **TAKE YOUR OWN MEDICINE**

The most valuable asset we had at the time—and the one most entrepreneurs have—is a deep understanding of our own area of expertise. With no money, we had to leverage what we had, and

we realized it was pretty valuable! Our clients—albeit few and far between—were paying us \$30,000 for our services, so we must have been doing something right.

So we put ourselves through our own process, and we got staggering results. This led to a complete 180 wherein we transformed our business from struggling to Badass. This book shows you exactly how we took our company from being \$40,000 in debt to making \$500,000 in 12 months—and how you can successfully apply the very same process to your business.

### **FROM A “ME-TOO” BRAND TO BADASS**

We narrowed our target audience, our offerings, and our message. We focused on a market we knew and liked best: one- to three-person service businesses. We dusted off one of our small afterthought services and made it our company’s focal point. We changed all our messaging and copy to reflect our newfound niche.

As soon as we made the switch, our lives changed in some critical ways:

- Old prospects that previously weren’t going to close turned into excited clients.
- We whittled down prospect calls to 15 minutes. No more coffee meetings, follow-ups, proposals, or free strategy sessions. No more proposals = no more free work!
- Instead of free proposals, we got paid to pitch.
- No more annoying, random client emails and requests sucking up our time.
- No more design by committee!
- Suddenly we were getting prospects out of the blue. People heard about our process and wanted it NOW. Once we were



full of clients, we started raising prices.

- I stopped working on weekends and I stopped networking.
- We made \$500,000 in 12 months without paying for advertising

One reason we were able to attract so much work is that we implemented these tactics and philosophies for all of our clients too, and they got similar results. The methods apply to any solopreneur or small service business where the goal is to attract hungry, excited clients who are willing to pay a premium to hire you.

### **WHO THE HELL AM I?**

I'll let you in on a little secret: I hate the branding industry. I think it's convoluted and difficult to understand. It's full of misinformation and generalizations that trick small business owners into going down the wrong path. People refer to "branding" as one idea that can be applied to any business, but it can't. This misinformation confuses small business owners and results in a lot of wasted time and money.

I didn't study branding, communications, or design. I've never worked for an agency or apprenticed with a brand strategist. In fact, I didn't even know what the hell branding was when we started our company.

And yet here I am about to school you on how to build your own Badass Brand. Why would you listen to me? Because of my real-world experience successfully crafting Badass Brands for myself and for hundreds of successful clients just like you. I haven't been tainted by the so-called rules of the branding industrial complex.

These cookie-cutter applications of brand pyramids or spider diagrams might be necessary for large corporate brands, but they don't apply well to small businesses that need tactical steps to build a brand that attracts clients.

The problem with most alleged branding info is that it's generic and nonspecific. Statements like "Lead with the WHY," for example. What the hell does that mean, in practice, for your business? A lot of people go into business for themselves because they want to support themselves while helping others. But that goal in and of itself isn't going to turn acquaintances into clients.

We define Badass Brands as those that command a premium price and attract ideal clients. They are able to do this because they are noticeable, memorable, and shareable.

However, finding that for yourself can be difficult. So we've developed a process and a series of formulas that walk you through how to find the intersection of all the aspects that make you different. They are all derived from things that you actually think and do. This is not about making something up.

Instead, it's about identifying your expertise at something clear, specific, and unique to you. All aspects of the formulas require you to narrow down, pick the best pieces, toss the rest, and focus. Some show you how to turn what you already do into an actual product.

When you turn your expertise and ideas into something tangible that other people can understand, it can finally start making you money. (Yes, I promise you have a lot of potential opportunities right now, and I'm going to help you find them.)

## **WHY THE TIME IS NOW FOR A BADASS BRAND**

We all know there is a lot of economic uncertainty and fear these days. Technology is advancing at exponential rates, threatening the stability that many of us were raised to covet. Understanding how to capitalize on your knowledge is the new way to get that stability back. Unlike stocks, real estate, or corporate jobs, nothing can take away your information and experience. And you can always increase the value of this incredible asset—for free.

Badass Branding is about reclaiming control over your financial destiny by giving you a simple way to make money with little to no overhead. Freedom is the new benchmark for wealth. And there is nothing more freeing than knowing your most valuable income-producing asset is your expertise.

Badass Branding creates the structure to turn expertise into profit. You can start selling immediately, with relatively little effort. I love service businesses because I'm impatient. I lose motivation if I can't see a quick path to profitability. These start-up companies that spend months or years developing their product and looking for funding scare me. That's just not my style—and if you're reading this book, I'm guessing it's not yours either.

The beauty of learning these skills is that once you do it successfully and understand the formula, you'll be able to replicate it for your other skills forever after.

Many of the things I teach in this book will likely scare you because they may ask you to step outside your comfort zone. They are easier said than done. But the act of being scared and doing it anyway is what will separate you from every other struggling entrepreneur. Only the bold can have a Badass Brand that attracts clients and commands a premium price.

I've had clients question these tactics. They've told me that their

industry is different, so these methods cannot and do not apply to them. And sometimes they don't. But more often, the golden opportunity is the very fact that nobody else in your industry is doing this. When it's not common and you do it first, you are building a Badass Brand.

Do you want to putter along like most other self-employed people, always looking for your next client? Networking constantly to stay top of mind? Always trying to sell instead of having confidence that the right opportunities will close themselves...and you'll make more money because of it? Some people can't hack it, but if you saw this book and related to its sassy messaging, I know you can.

### **WHO THIS BOOK IS FOR**

When you are always putting out fires—or when your to-do list is always a little too long—you never have the time to build the processes and value in your business that allow you to charge more. And you will always be stuck there unless you take the steps necessary to get out of that rut.

- If you love what you do and you want to share it with others...
- If you know how valuable you are, and how much your expertise can change other people's lives and businesses...
- If you still want to improve, because even though you are good, you want to become even greater...
- If you want to get hired by fans who love and respect your opinion and advice...
- If you want clients to hire you for what you do best...

- If you want to get paid more than your competitors, and still win the business...
- then you need a Badass Brand.

### **“SUCCESS” AND THE STORIES IN THIS BOOK**

Success means different things to different people, but one thing is certain: You’ll never achieve success if you don’t know what it means to you. For example, we could have listened to the many business coaches that suggested we hire teams, teach them our process, and scale up our model. But for us, success is freedom, and we don’t want employees. So instead, we are constantly looking for ways to increase the value of our services without a staff. As we are able to increase our prices, we can decrease the number of projects we work on, which frees up more time which gives us more freedom in our lives. Finding the right balance is our goal.

Your definition of success might be all about the benjamins, and that’s cool! Put a number on it (we’ll go into this in more depth in Chapter 5). But outside of money, it’s good to write a more comprehensive definition of success from the start so you know when you’ve achieved it. Defining success as “making as much money as I can” is quite limiting, and pretty vague. If you leave it open-ended, you will never really get there. And you’ll spend your life constantly striving for more, missing your achievements along the way.

The success stories in this book are here to bring the ideas to life. Some are about our clients, and some are made up to illustrate the points. But in every case, the outcomes are directly related to what success means to the individual—and, just as important, to

their effort and commitment. Execution is everything. You have to believe more in yourself and your abilities than in whatever Tom, Dick, or Harry has to say in the short term.

That's what Badasses do.

## **SHAKE YOUR BADASS**

I learn by doing. I love business books, but I'm usually implementing the new ideas I've read about before I've even finished the chapter. Because that approach has worked for me, I encourage you to do the same.

At the end of each chapter, answer the short series of questions. Research proves that you're ten times more likely to do something if you write it down, so let's take the first step together! Answer the following questions to get started:

- What is your *favorite* thing to do and sell?
- What is the most *profitable* thing you do and sell?
- Are they the same thing? Can you imagine building a business around just selling that?
- Who are your favorite past clients? Explain why they are your favorite. Imagine if all your clients were like these clients.

# **IF YOU ENJOYED THAT HEAD OVER TO AMAZON AND GRAB YOUR COPY**

Then come join the Facebook Group [Badass Your Brand: Turn Expertise into Profit](#) where we discuss topics from the book and Pia answers your questions.

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