

BY BRIDGET REGAN

BRAND BOOK

THE DIY GUIDE FOR CREATING
AN ENDURING, EFFECTIVE BRAND

WWW.REGAN.AGENCY

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your Brand Book! I can't tell you how excited I am to help you develop a brand strategy, create meaningful relationships with your audiences, and grow your business like a Chia Pet. But before we dive in, let's go over a few of the basics, shall we?



WHO ARE YOU?

You work in marketing, or are a business owner, or you're in-house at a brand. Or maybe you're a solo graphic designer that wants to deepen your knowledge of brand strategy so you can become an art director or a one-stop-shop. Whoever you are, hello!

Brand Book will empower you to create a strong brand strategy, write rich, compelling copy, or give clear, actionable creative feedback with confidence. Together we'll create a brand that draws customers in and creates lasting relationships.

I want you to know right off the bat that you've made a great choice. Choosing Brand Book was an investment in the future of your business or the businesses you work with.

I hope you complete this workbook knowing that every word you write is making an impression that will stick.

That year over year, revenue will increase in proportion to the depth and delight that your brand experience provides.

That a strong brand strategy is how David (the newcomer brand) competes with Goliath (the already-established market.)

You care enough about your business to invest time into completing this workbook, and soon you'll be reaping the benefits.

Congrats, friend. Wise choice.



WHO AM I?

I'm Bridget (that's me over there). I've been a passionate brand strategist and creative for over 18 years, and I've worked with brands of all sizes, ranging from international hotel collections, to online DTC brands, to stealth mode tech startups.

I've experienced the excitement of branding a fresh new business, and the unique challenge of rebranding a 20 year old business.

But through the years, I've felt the greatest reward when I'm teaching my clients about the value of branding and why it's so critically important for a business's enduring success.

And that's exactly why I created Brand Book - to give you the tools, know-how and confidence to lead your team through the process of creating a rich, vibrant brand that your customers will love, and that your employees will feel lucky to work for.

WHY BRAND BOOK?

There are hundreds of other books out there about how to create a brand strategy, how to write copy, or how to design a logo. I know this and you know this. You've done your research, because you care about how your business is perceived and its relationship to your audience.

But the problem with other resources is that they're all making two critical mistakes:

- ◆ They completely omit brand strategy. They offer pages upon pages about logo design and color palette, but you won't find much about creating a brand that matters, or the brand language and voice (brands need to be HEARD, not just seen!).
- ◆ They only look at a single piece of the puzzle: Often the copy alone, or the visual identity alone. They don't take a holistic approach to branding.

When it comes to teaching business owners how to mold the kind of relationship with every single customer that keeps them coming back after the first sale, I found that other books were lacking dramatically.

In short: They all focused on creating a one-time customer. Not a lifetime customer.

So Brand Book is my contribution to the wealth of brand knowledge already out there. In this workbook, you'll learn:

- ◆ An incredibly easy process for developing your brand strategy & positioning. Think these through now, and you can use 'em for years.
- ◆ How to convert this strategy into rock-solid copy for your website, print materials, emails, social media – you name it. And I'm not talking about fluffy filler copy. It's real, homegrown, workhorse copy that can snag a sale while firing up a friendship.
- ◆ How to speak the language of visual identity so you can provide clear, effective feedback to designers and internal stakeholders - even if you're not a designer yourself.

Maybe the best thing about Brand Book is that it's not a book at all - it's a tool for getting the work done. You likely don't have time to waste reading hundreds of pages of in-depth case studies on the trials and triumphs of other brands of the world. With Brand Book, you don't have to wade through twenty chapters before you can close the book and go off on your own to actually do the work. Brand Book is the work.

Oh, and there's one more big, important reason why you need to put some effort into your branding:

“YOUR BRAND STRATEGY IS YOUR BUSINESS STRATEGY.”

Guys. Branding is not a “nice to have” or a “maybe tomorrow” or a “let’s just make a logo and call it a day” kind of thing. A strategic brand foundation guides *every* decision you make for your business, even the ones that at first glance seem unrelated to branding. Don’t believe me? Check out just a few examples:

Billing Model: A service-based company whose unique value proposition is around creating the most high-touch, luxurious, hand-holding experience for its customers will likely use a very different billing model than a company whose UVP is around offering the most easy-to-use, DIY experience for its customers. This could mean the difference between offering monthly retainers vs. one-off package rates, for example.

Org Structure: A startup who learns through its brand strategy surveys that its customers primarily value *super-fast* responses to their online inquiries might utilize chat bot customer service support. But another startup who learns that its customers value detailed, *personalized* responses to their online inquiries might instead choose to build a well-trained customer service department in-house.

Product or Service Offerings: A retail company whose mission statement is “To help more people across the world enjoy the benefits of yoga” has *much* broader opportunity for future product lines than a similar company whose mission statement is “To sell the best yoga pants the world has ever seen.”

So you see: Your brand strategy *is* your business strategy. And your business is your brand. It’s impossible to separate the two.

Alright. Now that we’ve cleared that up: Go grab a pen, your business partners, and a couple beers. It’s time to take your brand into your own hands.

A close-up photograph of a pencil being sharpened, with a large, curled orange wood shaving and many small black graphite shavings scattered on a light-colored surface.

PART 1

BRAND STRATEGY

In this section, we'll create the framework for your brand. We'll develop a brand architecture, figure out who your customer is, learn what your customer struggles with, and determine what & how we want to communicate to them.

If you're thinking about skipping ahead, don't. I'll know. I always know.

CHAPTER 1: SO, UM... WHAT'S A BRAND?

Hey, that's a great question. Let's cover the basics first.

Your brand is how your business presents itself to the world. It's the where, what, how, when, and to-whom you're communicating.

Fun fact: I love metaphors. And look! Here's one now:

Imagine that you walk into a new friend's house for the first time. Their decor reflects their personal style: modern, casual, bachelor pad, shabby chic, whatever. It's not just one piece of furniture that tells you their style - it's a collection of multiple elements: a modern chair, a modern table, modern lamps. All these pieces together give you an idea of who your friend is. And if you were to go furniture shopping with this friend, you can be pretty darn certain of the style of sofa they'd gravitate towards. You trust in your assumption, because they've proven it to you through numerous experiential cues.

However, let's say you walk into their home for the first time and you see this: a modern chair, a shabby chic dresser, an overturned box as a table - and all seem randomly and haphazardly chosen. Not only will you have

a tough time figuring out who they are exactly (and where the heck to take them furniture shopping), but you might also assume that they don't really have their style figured out, either. This assumption may be true, and maybe not, but it's all about your perception.

This latter scenario is not necessarily a bad thing when it comes to friends or home decor - but it's a very bad thing when it comes to business. Who wants to buy from a business - or more precisely - who trusts a business that doesn't even have itself figured out?



Greater Trust



Higher Value Sales



Returning Customers



Higher Recurring Revenue

Oh, the things branding can do.

Just like your friend's home decor, your brand is made up of a collection of parts, which we'll get to in a minute, but it's important

to understand first how these parts add up to a bigger picture.

It's called brand equity. That's the technical way of saying that when you use consistent branding across all your forms of communication, you're able to charge more for your products or services than the same exact un-branded products or services. Think: Kleenex versus generic tissues. Same product, higher price point. #Winning.

And it's not just about customers choosing your branded product one time. Oh, no. See, **brands breed followers**. That means the next time this same customer feels a stuffy nose coming on, your brand will be top of mind. That is, as long as the product held up. (Literally, I suppose, when it comes to tissues...)

AND BRANDS BENEFIT YOUR CUSTOMERS, TOO.

A consistent brand language allows you to have a normal conversation with your customer. Imagine never having to do the hard sell again. Relief, right? After all, no one likes to talk, or be talked to, like this:

BRAND BOOK WILL SAVE THE HUMAN RACE...FOR LESS THAN THE COST OF YOUR MORNING CAFFEINE HABIT! BUY NOW!

When you're speaking from a branding standpoint (and not only a selling standpoint), the conversation is more like giving advice to a friend. The difference: Customers trust you because you're relating as a human...not as a revenue-hungry robot.

ONCE A BRAND... ALWAYS A BRAND?

There's a difference between how your brand acts today and how it will act two years from now. By then, the market will have changed, your customer's needs will have changed, and yes – your brand should change too. Just like your customer, brands don't exist in a vacuum. They're subject to societal, financial, and practical shifts, all of which call for a shift in strategy too.

This is why branding needs to be dynamic. Remember, your brand is your relationship to your customers – it needs to flow and change so that your customer always feels comfortable with it. The holy grail of branding is when our target customer thinks, "This brand gets me better than I get myself."

“ A BRAND NEEDS TO BEND OTHERWISE IT WILL BREAK ”

CHAPTER 2: ANATOMY OF A BRAND

It's hopefully clear by now that branding is crazy-important to the success of your business. So let's take a look at what makes up a brand:



1) Voice: A brand's voice is the language & words that it intentionally, strategically uses. The voice is the person your brand embodies.



2) Tone: The personality of the voice: Is it serious? Playful? Wise? Professional?



3) Face: This is a brand's visual identity. It includes the logo, typography, and the overall style, color palette and aesthetic.



4) Experience: The brand experience, which is generally a combination of all of the above, is how a customer feels after interacting with the brand.

For example, does this brand consistently over-deliver? Do customers often feel delighted after interacting with this brand? Or does a customer walk away from the interaction feeling letdown, disappointed, or frustrated?

A brand with only one or two of these elements is missing out on opportunities to make lasting impressions with its customers, and a brand without any of these is really nothing more than a generic box of tissues.



Lucky for you, Brand Book is your ticket to a rich brand voice & tone, an informed visual identity that your customers will feel connected to, a powerful brand experience at every touchpoint, and a rock-solid brand strategy that powers everything else.

So let's get into it already, shall we?

CHAPTER 3: YOUR CUSTOMER & WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR THEM

You probably already have some general idea of who your target customer is, but when it comes to branding, we need to get detailed, and we need to get specific. It's definitely important to know basics like household income, education level, and where your customer shops, but when it comes to how to talk to your customer, we need to dig deeper. After all, a brand relates to its audience at an emotional level. So as you're narrowing down your ideal customer, think of them as a person: What's their personality like? What kind of lifestyle do they live? How would they behave in a certain situation? What kind of car do they drive? Where do they shop?

Whether you have a current customer base or not, let's start by thinking about the following questions:

Question 1) What is my customer's biggest problem?

This is your customer's pain point in relation to the product or service you provide.

Example:

Let's pretend there's a cozy little coffee shop out there (mmm, caffeine...) called Java Joe's. The owner, Joe, might make an educated guess that one of his target customers' biggest pain points is that they don't have time to make coffee at home in the morning.

Your turn.

Write down as many customer pain points as you can think of. If you already have an existing customer base, go to them with a survey or do some listening on social media. The closer we can get to the real, raw problems, the better.



Tip: Try to get these pain points as concise as possible. Remember, any enemy of your customer is your enemy too, and something you can use to bond with your customer over.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Question 2) How is my customer currently solving this problem?

Example:

Our friend Joe might say that his target customer is currently solving this problem by grabbing fast, low-quality coffee from a gas station on the way to work.



Tip: The best problem-solving that your brand does, doesn't come from your brand at all. It comes from your customers. It takes a bit of listening, but when you're able to repeat your customer's problem back to her - in her own words - she's yours for life. It's a trick that relationship counselors use all the time for healing marriages and partnerships: When you're in a fight with a significant other, instead of thinking about how to best express yourself, they suggest that you try to listen deeply to what your partner is saying, and then repeat it back to them. Your partner feels comforted that you get them, you'll deepen your understanding of the issue, and you'll also create some rock-solid trust. Bam.

Your turn.

How do you believe your target customer has been/is alleviating or mitigating this problem of theirs? Let's say they haven't found your spectacular product or service yet, and they're just miserable. What's their makeshift solution (until they know about you, that is)?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

Question 3) How does my business solve this problem?

This is where you come in, waving your banners and singing your praise. What do you offer the customer that alleviates - or even better, eliminates - this pain point?

Example:

Java Joe's provides delicious, house-brewed coffee in a fast & efficient manner.

Your turn.

Okay, let's hear it. You've been waiting oh-so-patiently to tell this poor, sad, soul how you can help his situation. List away:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

Question 4) And why is the way my company solves it better than the way my customer's been solving it on his own? This one may seem obvious, but let's get it down in writing anyway. You never know where a headline might come from!

Example:

With Java Joe's, you get the fast caffeine fix that you need to chase away the morning grumpies, and the delicious taste of a homemade brew.

Your turn:

Tell us the reasons why your solution is better than the customer's solution.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____



CHAPTER 4: LET'S DEFINE SOME MORE BENEFITS, SHALL WE?

You've already determined how your business can solve the problem customers know they have. But what about all the other benefits of your business? The benefits that solve problems that your customer doesn't even realize he has yet?

It's great to list as many benefits as you can think of - but make sure you do a gut check every once in awhile. You'll know when you've listed a benefit that's a real stretch because your gut will be saying, "Um, is that *really* a positive for the customer?" or "But, can't *any* business make that claim?"

Example:

Java Joe's makes it easy for you to have coffee in-hand in no time.



Tip: Notice that this speaks to the benefit that your customer gets from buying your product or service - not the features of your product or service. The difference: A feature stands alone, without a positive or negative association. A benefit is how a feature improves your customers' lives. For example:

Auto-saving your work = a feature of Google Drive.

Preventing stress, rage, and deep sadness = a benefit of the auto-saving feature of Google Drive.

Your turn.

Write down as many benefit statements as you can think of. You'll probably be using words like easy, fast, value, saving, etc.

- 1 _____

- 2 _____

- 3 _____

- 4 _____

NOW PICK THE GOOD ONES. THE REALLY GOOD ONES.

Time to put that gut check into action. Look at your list of benefits from the last section, and find the good ones. The REALLY good ones. The game-changers. Do this by asking yourself: Can my competitors say the same thing about themselves? Could they ever? (If the answer is yes, it's probably not a winner.)

Find 2-3 benefits that stand out above the rest as making you unique in your market. List them here:

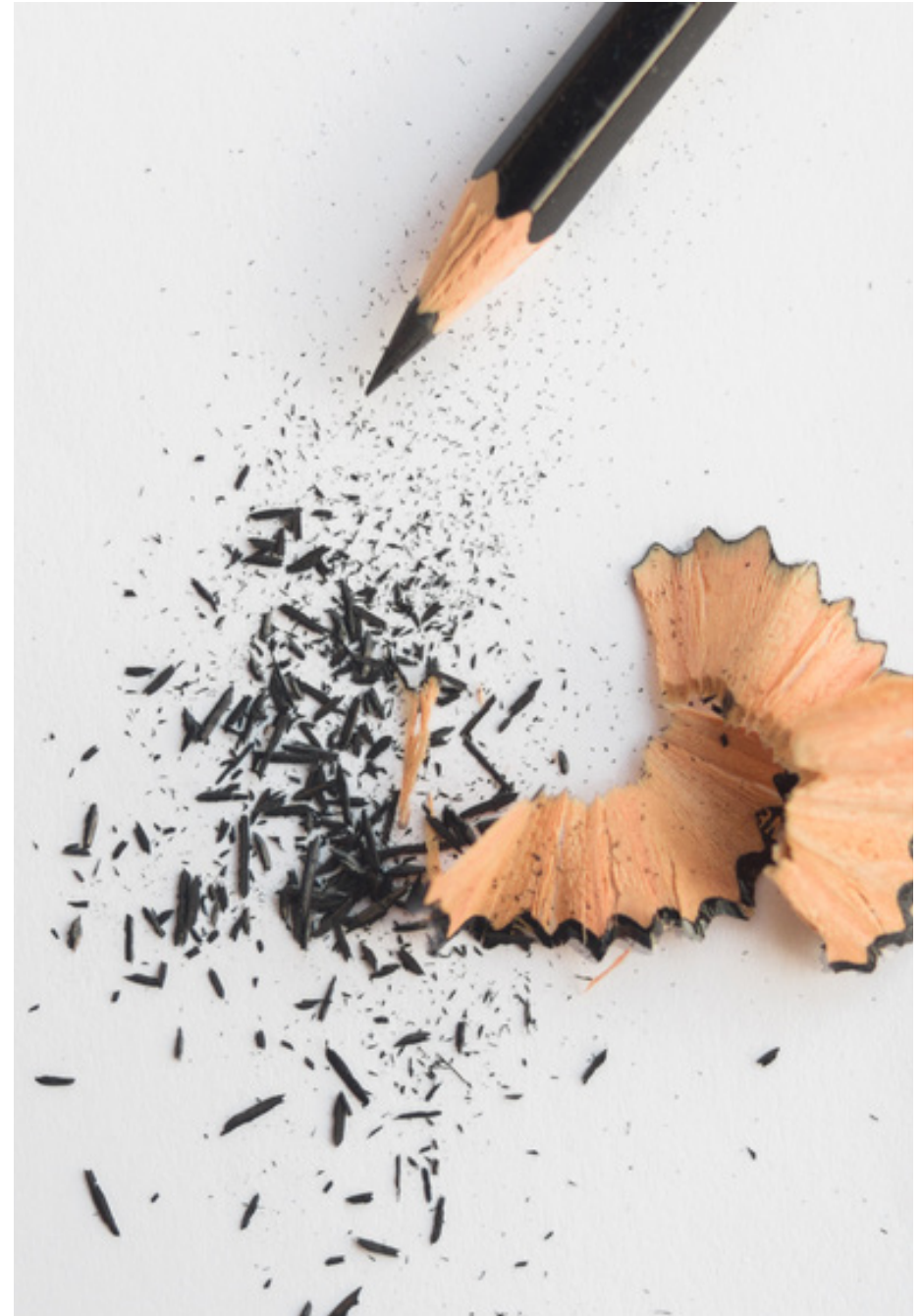
Game-Changer Benefit Statements

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Once you've got those nailed down, you essentially have your unique value proposition already created.
(I told you this was easy, right?)



CHAPTER 5: UVP (UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION)

Your business's UVP is another one of the bricks that builds the foundation of your brand. It does exactly what it sounds like: It states 1) what makes you unique, and 2) why this is valuable to your customers.

It's usually formatted in a long-ish statement. But it's super easy to write. See, your UVP can simply be your gold star benefit statements strung together in a way that makes sense.

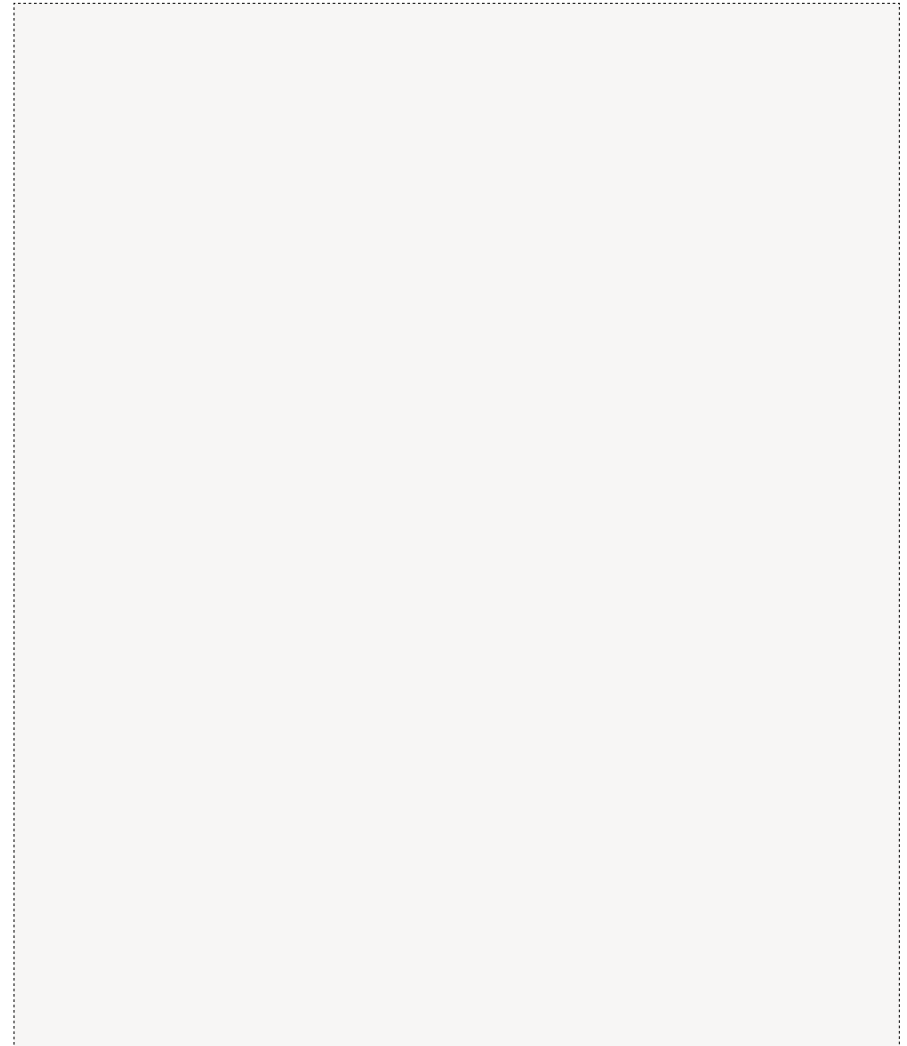
Example:

Java Joe's is a friendly, neighborhood coffee shop that specializes in getting you a cup of home-brewed coffee in five minutes or less so you can be well-caffeinated and on your way.

Your turn.

Write a UVP. Remember, that's your big brand benefit + what this does for your customers.

And I mean, since we have the space, why not take a sec to draw some doodles since you're feeling oh-so-creative:



CHAPTER 6: NOW YOU'VE JUST GOTTA PROVE IT

Wouldn't it be awesome if we could all just say we're the best and everyone would automatically believe us and buy all our products and love us forever? Unfortunately, only our moms would fall for that one.

In the real world, people need reasons to believe our claims. Enter: RTBs.

REASONS TO BELIEVE (RTBS)

Also known as support points, your RTBs are what back up the claims that you're making in your UVP.

I know, it's lots of letters. Stay with me. You'll be okay.

Your RTBs are also usually your features.

Example:

Java Joe's makes it easy to grab a fresh cup o' joe (< benefit statement) because:

RTBs:

- ◆ It has a drive-through window.
- ◆ The employees remember your order.
- ◆ There's one on every corner.

All of these RTBs support the proposed benefit of making it easy to get a fresh cup of coffee. (Joe would likely have additional RTBs that support the benefit of it being cost-effective to stop at his shop.)

Your turn.

Write down as many RTBs as you can think of:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____



Tip: Your sales page should be formatted in this same way: First tell your customer the ways you'll make their life better (describe the benefits), and then tell them exactly how you'll accomplish that (tell 'em the features.)

CHAPTER 7: BRAND POSITIONING

Your brand positioning is who you want to come to market as. Think back to your collegiate days of frat parties and keggers (wait, was that just me?): Picking out your outfit was a heavy task. The flannel was too casual, but the button-down looked like you were trying too hard. Flip-flops or loafers? Glasses or contacts? Every decision was answering the question: Who do I want to be tonight?



Tip: If you're having trouble choosing a single position, go back to your benefits. Which resonates most with your customers? Which solves their BIGGEST pain point? If you're not sure, use resources like Facebook or SurveyMonkey and ask them.

You might be thinking, “But I want to be everything!” as you’re deciding who to show up as in the marketplace. But that’s not the way branding works. It’s possible (and extremely powerful) to mean something very specific to someone, but it’s quite impossible to mean everything to everyone. So pick your strength, and stick to it. Your laser focus will pay off when it comes to writing your copy. Promise.

Example:

Java Joe’s comes to the market as the friendliest solution for getting a great cup of coffee.

Your turn.

Who do you want to come to market as? The fastest solution to that problem? The easiest? The least expensive?

Notes: _____

CHAPTER 8: TONE & VOICE

Now that you know who you want to show up to the party as, it's time to decide on your voice (who is speaking?) and your tone (how are they speaking?)

First think about your audience. Who are you writing for? Are they (stereotype alert!) young, funky college kids? Serious attorneys? Fun lovin' Moms? Strategic politicians? Give your audience members a face.

Then you can decide who you want to approach them as - this is your voice. Let's say your audience is stay-at-home Moms. Do you want to talk to them as a professional? Do you want to speak to them as their best friend? As another Mom? As their kid?

Lastly, choose your tone. If your audience is stay-at-home Moms, and you're speaking to them as their best friend, do you want to sound like a best friend that's reprimanding them? A best friend that's giving warm, friendly advice?

Also make sure that your words aren't going over anyone's heads. In other words, use the voice of your customer, not the voice of an expert. If you're a widget manufacturer, you don't want to talk to your target customer as though he knows every technical thing about widgets.

You want to write in a way that the reader will understand.

Your turn.

What voice makes sense for your brand? Imagine that your brand is a person, and describe him/her/them.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

What tone makes sense for that person to be speaking in? Note that this can change, depending on the goals of each communication.

Notes _____



PART 2

ROCK-SOLID COPY

Uh oh. This is the part you've been dreading - the part where you take everything you've done so far and you actually put it out there. Like, out there where people can SEE IT!

Okay, now that that's out of your system...

This section is where we'll take the building blocks from Part 1, add a bit of creativity, and actually talk to your customer. And good news - a lot of this work is already done! One thing that's extremely important to remember before we move forward: When it comes to customer-facing copy, keep in mind that every. single. element of language, whether it's a headline, a call-to-action button, or a form, has 2 jobs:

- 1) First, to serve its functional purpose.
- 2) Second, to reinforce the brand.

“Functional purposes” include things like getting clicks (call-to-action buttons), piquing interest (headlines), acquiring information (forms), getting opened (email subject lines), and the list goes on.

It’s easy to tell if a copy element is achieving its functional purpose. (If a button isn’t getting clicked, what you’re doing ain’t workin’ so well.) And luckily, it’s just as easy to tell if an element is achieving its brand-reinforcing purposes... now that you have your Brand Book!

In the next section, we’ll draw strongly from the personality that you created on the last few pages to write copy that flows easily. We’ll also dig into a few of the more intimidating (but they’re not, really) elements of a brand, like its name and tagline.

Onward.

CHAPTER 9: NAME THAT BRAND

Think I'd let you get away without rethinking your brand name? Not a chance. Whether your business has a name already or not, it's time to take the work you've done and see if the name you have holds up, or to create a name that does.

Step 1) Take a look at those benefits you listed in Chapter 5, and your UVP in Chapter 6. Which 1 or 2 benefits are the most powerful? Where does your true uniqueness lie? Or which is simply your favorite?

Step 2) Do a brain dump. List every single word that comes to mind when you think of your company and that benefit.



Tip: Use two or three columns, and randomly organize your brain dump into the columns. Try combining one word from each column, see what you like visually, and see what words flow together the best.

Brain dump away:

--	--	--

Then list the 5 names you think are strongest:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Okay. Great. Now, let's take these five favorites and put them...out there. A great way to get insights on your name is to find your customer (again, a Facebook group or SurveyMonkey is awesome for this) and do a quick little survey.

It's worth noting that these days, it is TOUGH to come up with a brand name that's not already being used by someone, somewhere. Be sure to do a trademark check online using the USPTO's trademark electronic search system to see what you might be up against, and always consult a trademark lawyer if you have any questions. It's also worth checking GoDaddy, Facebook, Instagram etc. to see if the name is available as a domain or social handle.

CHAPTER 10: TAGLINE

Your tagline might be the single most important aspect of your brand language. Depending on how you use it, your tagline is often the first thing people think of when they come into contact with your brand.

So let's talk about how to make it awesome.

Your tagline is your UVP in its shortest, purest form. A tagline should be quick, memorable, and clear.

It's important not to trade clarity for catchiness when it comes to the tagline.

Example:

Java Joe's UVP: Java Joe's is a friendly, neighborhood coffeeshop that specializes in getting you a cup of home-brewed coffee in five minutes or less so you can be well-cafeinated and on your way.

Java Joe's tagline: We brew happy mornings.

In this example, we've taken the UVP statement and distilled it down into a short phrase that cuts right to the chase. First we picked the main benefit to our customer (a caffeinated morning is a happy morning), then we added in a little creativity ("brew" and "happy" are both a nod to that friendly neighborhood coffeeshop vibe we want to emit) and voila – tagline magic.

Your turn.

Notes: _____

Top 3:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Again - you guessed it - take your three favorites and run them past your customers. You'll be surprised how some will resonate so strongly and others will get eliminated right away. Star (or circle or highlight or get tattooed on your body) the one that your audience likes best, and that you feel best expresses your uniqueness, your value, and your benefits.

CHAPTER 11: HEADLINES

If you made it through the tagline, it's all downhill from here! Congrats on your work so far. Have a cookie.

Let's talk headlines.

These are really, really important. I can't stress how important it is to put time and thought into your headlines. Think of them as the ladder rungs a reader uses to climb down the page of your website. Or even as the lids on each box of body copy: If your headlines aren't enticing, the reader will never open the box to see what's inside.

HEADLINE TIPS

◆ **Your headlines should come from your customers, not you.** Sounds like a riddle, but it's not. Just do some listening research - look at your Facebook page, or the pages of competitors. Read your Yelp reviews. Discover your customers' actual pain points - not just what you think they are. Use the words they use to describe their problem, or their ideal solution.

◆ Make sure your headlines either **answer the question the reader is asking**, or (as mentioned above) **entice the reader to actually read the copy below** the headline, because they're sure the answer is in there. In other words, if you don't express your entire point in the headline, you better make very well sure that you're enticing enough in it to get the customer to read the copy below it.

◆ **Use numbers where applicable.** Especially when it comes to titles of blog posts or the big headline (sometimes called the "big idea") at the top of a sales or landing page, numbers can work magic. For example, "10 Ways to Write Rad Headlines" will likely work better for you than "How to Write Rad Headlines." Today, people are scanners when it comes to reading. They don't really have the attention span to devote to digesting long pages of copy. A headline that states right off the bat that the content is a list, gives the reader more assurance that they're not about to embark on the Encyclopedia version of the article. Instead, they assume they'll find 10 quick tips that they can scan over easily.

◆ **Notice what works on you, and use it yourself.** Saying "works on you" kind of sounds like headlines have magical powers, but in a way, they do. They either interest you, or they don't. So the next time you're standing in the checkout line at the grocery store or in front of the huge magazine rack at the bookstore, see which headlines on the covers jump out at you first. Notice which ones entice you to flip to that page and read more. Take a quick pic of headlines like this, and save them for some rainy day writing inspiration.

Your turn.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

11 _____

12 _____

13 _____

14 _____

I could go on and on about writing headlines for days... but I promised you a fast & easy workbook, right? So if you have specific questions about writing headlines for your industry, shoot my team an email through our website, www.regan.agency, and we'd be happy to help.

CHAPTER 12: BODY COPY

This is where you take the voice & personality you created above and put it into action - specifically, in body copy for a homepage or a sales page.

BODY COPY TIPS

- 1) **Use short sentences.** Remember: Using more than one comma usually means you can break it up into two shorter statements.
- 2) **Make it conversational.** Which of the following is more interesting to you?
 - A. The brown cow jumped over the fence.
 - B. You know that cow? The brown one? He just jumped over that fence!

Tip: A note on exclamation points: Please, please, please only use an exclamation point if you'd naturally use that kind of inflection when saying the sentence out loud. Please. You'll find you need them much less often.



- 3) **Write visually, too.** Pay attention to how the copy looks on the page, not just how it reads. Fact: More and more customers are checking out your website on a mobile device. What looks like a short paragraph on a computer, looks like the Declaration of Independence on a smartphone. Challenge yourself to keep every paragraph at 2-3 short sentences. If it's longer, break it up into separate ideas.

And yes, one line paragraphs are okay.

- 4) **Have a specific call-to-action in mind.** Yep, even for a blog post. Everything you write, you're writing for a purpose: to inform, to engage, or to sell. If your reader has invested the time to read what you wrote, reward him by giving him a change to utilize that information. If the copy's purpose was to inform, give him a link to learn more. If the purpose of the copy was to sell, give him a link to buy.

BODY COPY HOW-TO

There are lots of different schools of thought on how to write body copy, but this is your Brand Book, so we're gonna keep things simple & straight to the point.

Write in this order: Describe your customer's pain points first, then your solution, then the benefits, and lastly the features.

At this point, you already know what all these things are. What's most important is that you don't just list 'em out on the page. Maybe you start there, but go through several times to make your copy conversational, and with the tone and voice that you know your audience will respond to.

A huge goal of any sales page in particular is to give your customer an idea of who you are (your voice), get them to like you and connect with you (your tone), and get them to trust you and want to know more (your features, and testimonials.)

And I've mentioned this before, but I can't say it enough. It's especially important to **lead with the benefits before the features** when it comes to sales pages. Your reader needs to first see what's in it for him and why he should even bother reading the page, and then be given the proof that you can do what you say you can do.

So many businesses I've worked with loved their product so much that they'd dive right into long bulleted lists of features before they've even told their reader why they should care. (But that won't be you, right?)

Once you've hit these points in your copy, throw in **testimonials** along the way where appropriate. Making a big claim in your benefits? Back it up with a testimonial. Showing the customer pricing options at the bottom of the page? Follow it with a testimonial for a little extra confidence before they buy.

Your turn.

Try your hand at 2-3 paragraphs of body copy. Remember: Pain points > solution > benefits > features. Each paragraph can even be a single sentence to start.

Notes: _____

CHAPTER 13:

FUN BRANDING FREEBIES

We've covered a lot of the big stuff in terms of writing brand-rich copy, but it's entirely possible to infuse your brand into little places throughout your brand experience too. For example, here are just a few places to add fun brand language into your brand's digital ecosystem that will score you major brownie points with your customers:

- ◆ Call-to-action buttons
- ◆ Thank-you pages
- ◆ Image captions
- ◆ Social media
- ◆ Your domain name
- ◆ Form field descriptors
- ◆ Footer

Or maybe you devote an entire website page to deepening your brand experience: What makes sense for you? Should you pull in your Instagram feed to show ways that people are using your product (brand positioning: fun, modern, young). Should you devote an entire category on your blog to tips for getting the most out of your product? (brand positioning: educational, life-hack, informative.)

Learn what your customers love about your product or service, and find ways to delight them through that.



A close-up photograph of three pencils resting on a wooden surface. A yellow pencil is in the foreground, angled towards the left. Behind it are two red pencils, one of which has 'CARAN 9406' and 'SWISS MADE' visible. The background is a warm-toned wooden table with a visible grain.

PART 3

VISUAL IDENTITY

You're finally here! Took you long enough. (I kid.)

It's time to roll up your sleeves and add a new skill into your toolbox: Visual brand identity. We're talking logos, brand color palettes, mood boards and typography. But don't worry - you're not going to have to actually create these things yourself (though, it's awesome if you want to!) These days, great design has become increasingly accessible & affordable through online marketplaces like Fiverr and 99designs, so your task is really to learn how to speak the language of design to ensure that you can give graphic designers informed direction and clear, concise feedback.

And of course, your most important responsibility: To ensure that whatever designs you receive are on-brand for your business, and defensible in the market.

CHAPTER 14:

TYPOGRAPHY

Typography, or the selection of fonts used by your brand, plays a huge role in your brand experience. Type carries with it strong personality and can affect the way your reader interprets your message. For example, take the two following typefaces:

Java Joe's

JAVA JOE'S

The first one feels sophisticated and elegant, while the second one could be the title of a horror movie. This is a simplified example, but you can see just how important it is for your brand's typography to convey the right message to your audience.

The nuances in typography are many, but for our purposes we're going to review the most basic of basics - serif vs. sans-serif fonts. This will give you an understanding of this primary element of type so that you can speak the same language as your graphic designer.

SERIF vs. SANS SERIF

In typography design, serifs refer to the tiny “accents” that are applied to certain letters.

That means that “sans serif” fonts - you guessed it - don't have serifs on the letters. The illustration below shows a sans-serif font followed by a serif font. You can see the “accents” highlighted in red.

AaBbCc Sans-serif font

AaBbCc Serif font

AaBbCc Serif font
(red serifs)

Image source: Wikipedia

Generally speaking, serif typefaces feel a bit more traditional and professional, while sans-serif typefaces feel more modern and clean.

There are many, MANY more elements of typography that your designer will have deep knowledge of, including leading, kerning, tracking, and alignment. (And not to mention all the different types of fonts, like scripts, old style, decorative...) Your job? To review your brand strategy with your designer to ensure that the typefaces he or she chooses are on-brand for your business.

CHAPTER 15:

MOOD BOARD

Oh, the mood board. Possibly one of the most polarizing elements of branding, because it's also one of the most subjective. But as polarizing as it may be, it's also an extremely useful reference for translating your brand architecture into something more tangible, like a website or brick-and-mortar storefront.

A **mood board** is a collage primarily made up of images (but it can also include text) that communicates your brand identity visually. For example, if you wanted to communicate your brand in words, you might use your UVP. A mood board can do the same thing in images, which is helpful when working with people who are visually driven - like designers.

Providing your graphic designer with a mood board can be a great way to give him an idea of the way you want your brand to feel. Or sometimes, a graphic designer will take your written brand identity and translate it into a mood board himself, which you could review & approve.

To the right is an example mood board for Java Joe's. If he's feeling creative, Joe could build this himself and give it to his designer as direction for the way he wants his website to feel, or he could provide his designer

with his completed Brand Book, and the designer could create this mood board. Either way, you'll notice that this mood board feels friendly, warm and approachable - just like Java Joe's.



YOU: “UM, NO WAY AM I GOING TO MAKE MY OWN MOOD BOARD.”

It's actually a lot easier than it looks! If you want to try your hand at creating your own brand mood board, below is a little cheat sheet I created for you. Simply use a resource like Unsplash, Stocksy, or Pinterest to find images that you believe represent your brand well, and plug 'em in!



YOU: “YEAH, STILL... THAT’S GONNA BE A NO FOR ME DAWG.”

No problem. As mentioned, any graphic designer familiar with branding should be able to whip you up a grade-A mood board after a consultation. Together, you will ensure that the mood board represents the aesthetic, personality, and tone of your brand.

KEY

Texture: In the example on the previous page, “texture” is represented by the brick wall, warm wood, or rich leather.

Lifestyle: This generally means people. Lifestyle images convey action or mood, like friendliness or professionalism.

Color Swatch: These are just what they sound like - swatches of colors pulled from your brand color palette (see Chapter 16).

Other Inspiration: Break (some of) the rules! This mood board is an expression of your brand, so if you find an image that just SPEAKS to you, add it in. Just keep an eye on the overall aesthetic of your grid, and ask yourself: Does adding this particular image in change the feeling to something unintended? Does it contradict another image? Do you just like the image and what it represents, or do you like it for your brand?

CHAPTER 16:

COLOR PALETTE

The **color palette** is a fundamental element in the creation of your overall brand identity. Using a color combination that represents the personality of your brand will help your target customers to identify with you - it's another tool that says to your audience, "Yep, this brand's for you, all right!" Your palette will also help to build brand recognition, because customers will come to associate these colors with your brand.

As important as your brand color palette is, coming up with the perfect color combo might seem a bit intimidating. But deciding which colors to choose, how many colors to include, and how to use the colors together is actually simpler than you might think. Here are a few tips for selecting a brand color palette:

1. Consider color associations.

People have strong associations with color - so strong that these associations alone can actually affect whether or not someone buys from a brand at all. So it helps to have a bit of color psychology in your back pocket as you start considering your brand color palette. For example, blue is often seen as trustworthy, dependable and calming. Yellow is associated with happiness and warmth. Purple often represents luxury and sophistication. A quick Google search of "color psychology" will tell you everything you'll ever need to know.



2. Gather color inspiration.

Don't worry, I'm not going to tell you to make another mood board (but I mean, you could...). Instead, do a quick Pinterest session and find images with color schemes that appeal to you, and that fit the personality and color psychology you want your brand to reflect. Save or screenshot the images.

3. Pull up to 6 colors from your saved images.

Or hire a graphic designer to help. You'll probably see some common themes come through just from glancing at your saved images - do they feel light & airy? Bold and energetic? Calm and peaceful? And which reflects the way you want your brand to feel? After you've had this heart-to-heart with yourself (or your designer), use the selected image(s) to pull up to 6 colors from them. It might look something like this:



Image source: Elle & Company Design

4. Hand over the reigns to your designer, or skip ahead to selection.

At this point, a graphic designer can really come in handy for determining the type of color palettes you could use (such as monochromatic, analogous, or complementary) and suggesting the tints, tones and shades that work best

together for each. However, since this is your fast, DIY Brand Book, we're going to assume ain't nobody got time for that. Which means that now you can select your dominant and accent colors. Using the example to the left, your selections might look something like this:



Image source: Elle & Company Design

Your dominant colors are - you guessed it - the colors you'll use more often. You might use these in your logo itself or in high-visibility areas of your website. Your accent colors are secondary, and are usually reserved for small touches, like call-to-action buttons.

5. Do the competition test.

Before settling on your brand color palette, look at competitors' colors. Ask yourself two questions: First, is there a reason all of my competitors have a certain type of color palette? For example, banks usually use safe, conservative colors to give their customers a sense of security. If you're opening a bank but have chosen hot pink, you might not give the same positive impression. And secondly: Is my brand still standing out from the competition? You can differentiate without going hot pink! Bright accent colors (instead of dominant colors) are great for adding a pop of personality in a sea of sameness.

CHAPTER 17:

LOGO



There's a reason I saved the **logo** as the last piece of the visual identity pie. It combines brand persona, copy, typography, and color palette, all in one (hopefully) easy-to-read, super-recognizable graphic. And who knows - if your business does well, your logo is what might be printed on highway billboards across the country, or on millions of t-shirts that grace the backs of brand fans everywhere!

But no pressure. You got this.

In order to speak logo-language like a champ, we're going to stick with the basics: Why you need a logo, how to get one, and the different types.

Q: Why do I need a logo?

A: Technically, you don't... if you don't care whether a customer can differentiate your business from Joe Schmoe's across the street. Logos in general help to establish your brand as the real deal, and give customers faith in the product or service you offer. A logo backed with a strong brand strategy & great design can also help potential customers identify with your brand, and generate positive brand recognition over time. In short, your logo helps your brand stand out from the crowd, and distinguishes your brand from competitors. Helpful for a growing startup, no?

Q: Okay, so I need one. How do I get one?

A: There are a ton of great resources out there to get logos designed by freelancers. 99designs is one, as is Canva if you want to take a stab at it yourself starting from a template.

But often, the really genius logos are created after an in-depth consultation with a graphic designer who's well-versed on your brand and its goals.

Q: Are there different kinds of logos? How do I know which is right for my brand?

A: There sure are different types! And because I love you, here's a quick intro into the different kinds & their uses:

Lettermarks

Often, simple is best. And when companies have long complex names, like "National Aeronautics and Space Administration," an abbreviation can help people remember your brand name and talk about it easily (hence, "NASA.") When a company's logo reflects this shortened acronym or monogram instead of the full name, it's called a lettermark.

Wordmarks

Wordmarks are similar to lettermarks in that they're composed of type, but wordmarks consist of the entire company name. In both of these types of logos, choosing the right typeface & color palette is key, as that's essentially all they are - no complex graphics or imagery here. Wordmarks work well for brands whose product or service is widely well-known, and as a result an icon or graphic isn't needed.

Logomarks

Also known as a logo symbol, logomarks are icons, not text. Sometimes the logomark is a representation of the brand's name (i.e., the retail chain Target's logomark is a target symbol), and sometimes they reflect a less literal meaning for the brand. Logomarks can be both realistic or abstract - for example, the Pepsi logomark is an artistic sphere, not an actual object one would associate with anything other than Pepsi. If a brand chooses to use a logomark by itself (an alternative might be a combination mark, below), it should already have strong brand presence and recognition.



Lettermark Example



Wordmark Example



Logomark Example

Combination Marks

These are logos that utilize some combination of a lettermark or wordmark, and a logomark. They tend to be a bit more straightforward and descriptive. The Burger King logo is an example of a combination mark: The iconic burger graphic paired with the actual “Burger King” brand name. These are one of the most popular types of logos, for their ability to differentiate a brand through graphics while also stating the brand name in full.

Emblems

Sometimes referred to as badges, emblems can also be crests or seals. These work well for brands with multiple elements to communicate in their logo, such as an “established” date, a tagline, a logomark, and the brand name itself. The badge is a nice way to house all of this content in a clean, compact space.

* * *

Q: More examples, please?

A: The internet is PACKED with inspiring logo designs for companies of all sizes. Pinterest is great for finding unique, modern, often minimalist designs. Designspiration has thousands of different logos of all types and styles. And Behance is awesome for finding specific designers’ portfolios when you’re ready to get your own logo!



Abstract Logomark Example



Combination Mark Example



Emblem Example

THANK YOU! YES, YOU.

Well friends, that's a wrap. I can't tell you how much I appreciate your interest in this little workbook, and I hope you've enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it for you.

If I could ask you just one favor, it would be to let me know what you thought of Brand Book. I take your feedback very seriously, and I read every single email and comment that comes my way.



If you have thoughts or questions, please contact me through our website, at www.regan.agency.

Wishing you & your brand all the success in the world.

Now go out there and get it!

Bridget Regan
Founder/Principal
Regan



ETC.

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