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Marketing Genie

The wizardry of storytelling

Marketing Genie: Start A Business and Build Your Own Future
by Nadia Finer

Version 2.0

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5-10TH
OCTOBER



9TH
OCTOBER



13TH
NOVEMBER



6-27TH
OCTOBER



23-25TH
OCTOBER



1-4TH
DECEMBER

OCTOBER

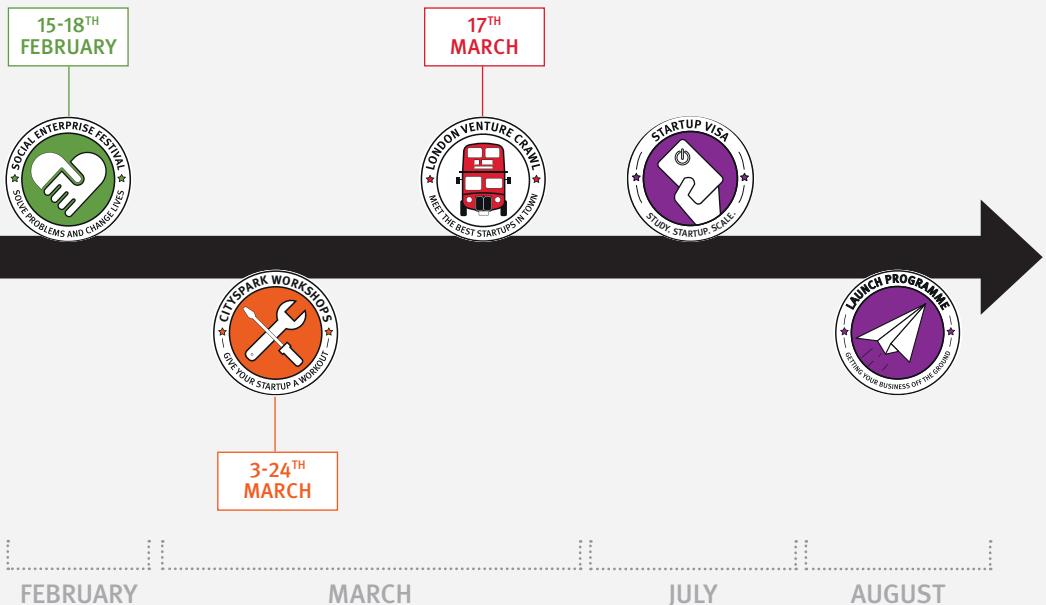
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DECEMBER

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Chapter 1

Once upon a time

The Art of storytelling



Why Bother?

TRY
THIS

People love stories. Having a story or a compelling reason for your business to exist will help people to remember you more.

Knowing why you are doing this will not only inspire and intrigue others, it will help to keep you motivated when it gets tough.

If you're passionate about your "WHY", you'll inspire and mobilise others to follow you, work with you and buy from you, over and over again.

To uncover your story, answer the questions below:

What are you hoping to improve through your business? (Aside from your bank balance)

Were you inspired by something that happened to you? If so, what?

Did you witness a problem and decide there and then to take action? Tell us more!

Did you have your idea in an inspiring or unusual situation?

Which piece of news or recent event prompted you to take action?

Useful stuff

If you'd like to find out more about discovering your "WHY", we recommend you to read author Simon Sinek's guide to leadership: simonsinek.com

Gut Feeling

Powerful brands latch on to innate human desires and make an emotional connection with people. If I buy a Magners cider in the pub, what does it say about me? What about the jeans I'm wearing, the facial cream I use?

Where do you go for your morning coffee? Starbucks? Costa? Nero? Or that independent place around the corner? When you're dashing to lectures holding your paper cup, think about why you chose that particular brand.

As consumers, we have a relationship with these products. Our decision to buy them says something about us.

Consumers choose brands based on the emotional connection they feel. This connection is based on the different elements of their

branding – from customer service to packaging, taste, price or where the product is available.

The connection is also created by tapping into the customer's emotions, desires and unmet needs. For example, a need to belong, the desire to stand out from the crowd, to be seen to care about the environment, to be on-trend, to be health-conscious, to be a caring person, to be cutting edge and so on.

What emotional connection will you make with your customers?

Get the Message

You need to decide the impression you want to give your potential customers. Using consistent messaging and the appropriate tone of voice will give people a good understanding of the brand they are buying into.

Are you....?



The words you use and the things you say will need to reflect this. Everything from your slogan or strapline, the brochures you write, the copy on your website, the signs in your shop and the messages on your packaging should be consistent.

What will your tone of voice be?

Jendaya

“ Be ready to pivot and as you go things will naturally start to align.”

A general interest in the fashion industry, but specifically,

my auntie always sending me to exchange to buy things for her at Selfridges and the like.

Whilst she was in Nigeria, it got me thinking a few years back about tackling the issue for continental Africans who are familiar with and can afford luxury.

Giving them something as trustworthy, convenient and exceptional online that you get everywhere else in the world.

What is your business?

We are there first to merge both Western and African luxury brands in the same platform that also looks to cater to the continental African buyers.

We have been able to gain the support of industry leaders who have either made introductions or given their advice in order to iterate our business.

This led us to onboarding a great partner boutique from Italy.

AYOTUNDE'S WISDOM FOR A KEEN STARTER



Why Launch Lab

It has helped by allowing me to think outside of the box across different areas like funding and marketing. There always needs to be a contingency and always try and stay lean.

Your IP is safe

Have different versions of your deck and other material that you share with people depending on their interest level and where they are coming from (investor or just general supporter etc.) Also, trademark your name!

Learning

We spent a whole year learning and unlearning about the industry, landscape and potential customers. We were asking a lot of questions to companies who had similar ideas in the past.

Ayotunde Rufai, MSc Entrepreneurship

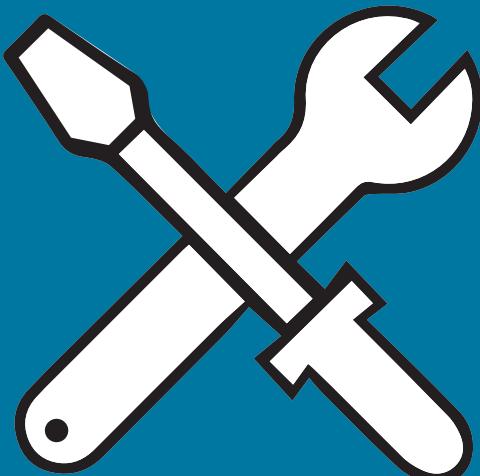


@cityuniventures | @citylaunchlab | @Jendaya.official

Chapter 2

Build-A-Brand

**The IKEA guide
to branding**



What Is A Brand?

Hands up if you think your brand means your logo.

The word “brand” tends to make us think immediately about Nike swooshes, McDonald’s golden arches and Mercedes badges.

Branding is a lot more than a symbol or a slogan. The way your business chooses to represent itself visually is only part of its overall branding.

Branding is all about that promise, emotion and gut feeling. It tells your prospective customers what to expect, how to feel, what your company stands for and how your product is different from the rest.

Your brand is made up of the following elements:

1. What you stand for – your brand values

2. What makes people connect with you – emotional connection

3. How you communicate – your messaging and tone of voice

4. How you look – visual elements – e.g. logo

5. What makes you stand out in your industry

Successful brands stand out from the crowd, promise great things and deliver on those promises.

Having clear branding from the start will help you make decisions – from knowing what colour to paint your store, to how you’ll handle a customer complaint.

Let’s say you’re opening a café dedicated to giving back to the community. If you’re clear about your values from the start, you’ll be able

to make good decisions on the kind of people you want to employ, the coffee you sell, who makes your cakes, which crockery you use and what everyone wears.

Powerful brands have loyal customers who choose their products and services over the competition, possibly paying a higher price for the privilege.

Branding is the reason why we always buy Evian mineral water instead of filling our water bottle with tap water. It’s the reason we love our New Balance trainers and our iPhone.

It’s not that we’re shallow, or easily led, but rather that we’re influenced by the allure of brands which appeal to our core values.

At times, the business starts before a brand has been identified – especially if your business just kind of happened, or if you were in a rush to be first to market. If you haven’t already sorted your brand, there’s no time like the present.



Be confident and be bold – you are the one who has to sell a vision and make people believe that they have a need for what you are offering.”

Ashuveen and Lukas Linsbichler, Executive MBA graduates, Cass Business School, and co-founders of VEVA.

Brand Inspiration

TRY
THIS

Track down brands that catch your eye for different reasons. From the good, to the downright ugly.



A great branding example I've seen is water repellent and protection for trainers. You normally see this being sold in shops in very generic cans, with no real brand association. Along comes J2k, a musician, who loves trainers, and creates "Crep Protect." Suddenly, trainer protector is cool and selling very nicely in places like Foot Locker and Schuh."

Dhruvin Patel, BSc Optometry graduate,
School of Health Sciences, and founder
of Ocushield.

What do the logo and branding tell you about the product?

Can you find anything that you bought purely because of the brand? What made you buy it?

Find things where the brand needs a LOT of work! What would you do to improve it?

What brands do you identify with in particular?
What makes them great?

Which messages do you identify with?

What do you like about their visual identity?

Which aspects would you like to emulate in your brand?

How radical/formal/informal is the brand in its context?

What is Your Purpose?

TRY
THIS

Your BRAND is more than your BRANDING. Think of your brand as the values that inform your decisions about what to wear, and your branding as the things in your wardrobe.

Your aim as an entrepreneur is to create a brand that engages and mobilises people.



You need to differentiate yourself from your competitors somehow and demonstrate that your brand offers something unique. You can always be more generic but you risk getting embroiled in a price war, which you won't win!"

Ashuveen and Lukas Linsbichler, Executive MBA graduates, Cass Business School, and co-founders of VEVA.

Here are some examples of brand values:

Coca-Cola:

Simple pleasures, optimism, happiness, human connections, bringing people together.

Virgin:

Fun, rebellion, self-expression, rock-star lifestyle (at accessible cost).

Apple:

Simplicity, design, premium quality, usability.

YOUR BUSINESS:

BRAND VALUES:

Identify Your Values

TRY
THIS

Some questions to help you identify your brand values:

Your aim as an entrepreneur is to create a brand that engages and mobilises people.

If your business was ice cream, what would it be like?

Who would feature in a TV ad to represent your brand?

If your brand were a superhero, who would it be and which superpowers would it have?

If your brand was a politician, what would their key policies be?

Once you've chosen your brand values, you'll need to write them up – stick them on the wall, make them into a screensaver, have them tattooed on your arm.

Leiho

“I actually ended up meeting my business partner at one of the CityVentures events!”

Say no to procrastination

By even building a prototype, a wireframe or speaking to people who might be able to help you, will already take you one step closer.

During lockdown there was a need for food for vulnerable communities in isolation, so we decided to convert our

sock donations into meals where one pair helped provide 4 meals for someone in need.

We were able to donate over 1500 meals and drinks to Slough Outreach and to even get 2 surprise shout outs on BBC Radio!

Branding is key

We focused a lot on trying to build brand trust and awareness by partnering with other brands, organisations and focusing on delivering our social impact.

For the first few months we tried to prevent taking any big risks such as expanding too soon or spending too much on marketing without getting any return or results.

Instead, we stuck to very traditional ways by investing in physical pop up stalls so that we could meet customers in person.

JOEY'S INSIGHTS FOR A KEEN STARTER



What we do well on

Leiho helps to provide vulnerable communities with the basic essentials they need using the buy-one-give-one model.

Leiho's journey started with socks. For every pair of socks sold, they give another pair to a homeless person because clean socks are the most requested item of clothing at homeless shelters.

Name it

We had two names. We started as 'Gentlemental Socks' but the word socks would have limited us to any other product expansion and the second option was Leiho.

Leiho means 'how are you' in Cantonese (and Hong Kong is where I am from) so I thought the brand name had a lot of meaning to me personally but also sometimes asking people how they are is all you need to do to show that you care and get a conversation going!

Asking a lot of questions and from companies who had similar ideas in the past.

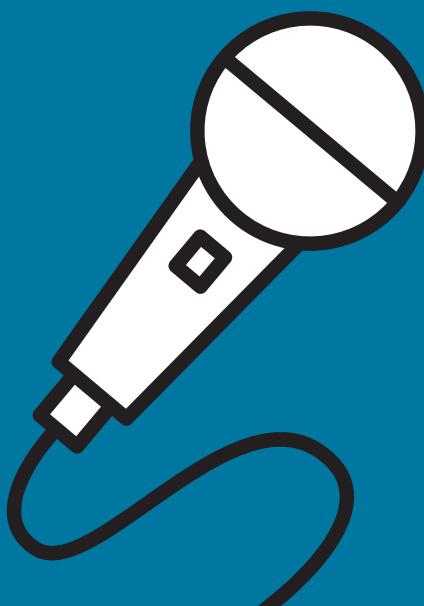
**Joey Li
MSc Marketing Strategy and Innovations**



Chapter 3

Name your child

**Making people aware
of your awesome new
product or service**



The Name Game

Choosing a name for your business is fun, but it is also going to create the first impression for potential customers. Plus, it's easier to refer to your idea by its name rather than just calling it “that thing.”

Here are our top tips for a great name:

Keep it short, catchy and instantly recognisable. Think about great brands that stick in your mind - Apple, Pepsi, Nivea, Google – if you printed your name on a t-shirt, would passers-by notice and remember it?

Make it reflect what your business does – framing, moving, cleaning, building?

If you think something more abstract would be suitable, consider using a unique word so that the only references on Google are links to your site – like Moonpig, or Google itself.

If you're stuck for a name or a domain that's untaken, check out the awesome (and free) Panabee tool.

It will help you generate some interesting new name ideas and it also tells you which names are available. www.panabee.com

Pick something that reflects your brand values. A traditional-sounding name, conveying durability and old-fashioned values, or a modern name, suggesting a fresh, innovative approach?

If you're likely to be trading overseas, check that the name doesn't mean anything rude in other languages and that it can be easily read and pronounced.

Check out the sensitive words and expressions guidance from Companies House

www.gov.uk/government/publications/company-names-that-include-sensitive-words-that-require-approval

Check to see if your name is already being used. If a sole trader at the other end of the country is using it in a different market sector it might be fine, but if a local or national business is using it, you'll have to find another name.

If your name is similar to another in the same sector you may have to change it, particularly if you want to register it as a trademark. Check here to see if your name is available: find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company-name-availability

What next?

Buy the domain name (web address) as soon as possible. It's a cheap way to protect your business name a little bit. Even if you're not selling over the Internet, people will look for you online and will be reassured to see a professional website that can be found easily in the search engines.

Go Daddy and 123-Reg are good places to register a domain.

Registering your domain might cost as little as a fiver – it could be the best fiver you've ever spent.

If you want to protect your name, you can take out a trademark, either by using a trademark attorney to guide you through the process or by using the Intellectual Property Office website.

This is quite expensive though, so it might be something to look into once things are up and running.

Notes

Tagline-tastic

TRY
THIS

Your brand tagline or strapline is the short sentence or phrase that accompanies your logo.

It should communicate your brand's personality and explain why someone should shop or work with you.

[BUSINESS NAME] is [KIND OF PRODUCT OR SERVICE] for [KIND OF PEOPLE].

Not rocket science really, but it might help you to get clarity!

Have a bash at writing some different versions of your tagline using the above formula and see if anything sticks.

Onaria Technologies

Name your child

We went on a session that made us think colors, animals, symbols and words that defined us as well as questioning our WHY.

For Onaria, we saw ourselves as a company being a step ahead, so we found that there was a Latin word ‘Visionaria’ which described how we felt the company was and we took the ‘Onaria’ from the Latin.

UUNN was one of the name options the Special Projects

came up with to replace PlaqueChecker.

We have also learnt that PlaqueChecker was a name that made people feel anxious as teeth care is seen as tedious or negative experience and we are on a mission to change that.

Make a change

My company is now called Onaria Technologies and our first product the plaque checker was renamed to UUNN.

UUNN, is the first plaque tracker for your teeth that you can use from the comfort of your home using just your phone.

For the first time, we can see how our teeth cleaning is doing from the comfort of our home...we shouldn't have to go to the dentist for this check!

We have been featured on television as well as British Vogue magazine!

ONARIA'S TOP TIPS



On taking risks

Always try to work with teams/contractors/freelancers that are recommended to you by someone you trust this saves you making a mistake especially in the early stages. Never leave any area of business vague. Make sure you have understood someone's terms and expectations and the expectations are always clear and understood from both parties or team members

On pricing

We started by looking at dental care products and also tracking products and subscription and did this pricing research with Special Projects. We used this to decide what price range we sat within based on the service we were providing and tested this with users to see how they responded to these prices and began to change based on this.

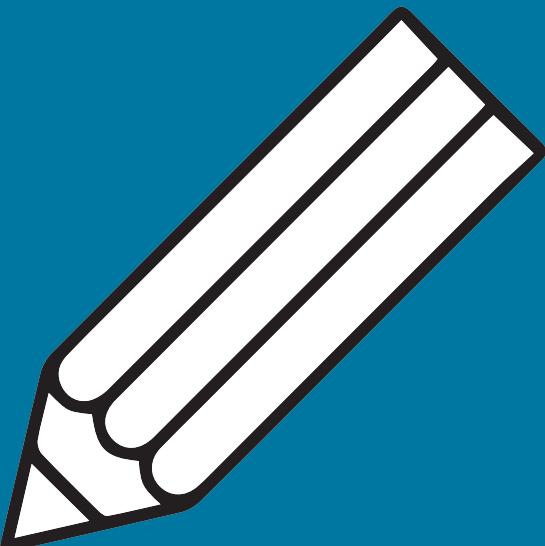
Hawaa Budraa & Gina Dorodvand, BSc Biomedical Engineering



Chapter 4

Do Your Homework

Will it fly? Make it fly.



Go Graphic

How will your branding look? Which colour, graphic and font will you use?

Most businesses choose a business name, logo, colour scheme, symbol, strapline to reflect their brand values.

Keep it consistent – use the same fonts, colours, graphics, strapline and logo on everything. This will help establish your brand, boost recognition and avoid confusing people.

The following methods of communicating your business may need a brand makeover:

Product design

Packaging

Brochures

Website

Business cards

Uniform

Office / shop front

The way you answer the phone

Email footer

Vehicles

It makes us feel sad when we see poor branding. You know the kind: higgledy-piggledy, inconsistent, messy, unclear. There's no excuse!

After all, a strong, alluring brand can entice customers to part with more money. Why wouldn't you want some of that

Top tips for creating an awesome logo and brand identity

Use a professional designer!

Be original – don't just copy a brand you love – it's lazy and you could get sued

Gather images and keywords and create a mood-board to inspire you

Keep it simple – do not include too many different elements or it will look a mess

Be aware of cultural differences – check your logo is acceptable in countries you plan to operate in

Ideally, your logo will look good in black and white as well as in colour

Keep to one or two fonts to avoid it looking messy

Check your logo works on a white or black background

Check it's legible from a distance

Ensure it's timeless and won't go out of style in a year

Turn your logo upside down and round and round to check it doesn't look odd or rude from a funny angle

Check for hidden words. People discovered a rude word when Weight Watchers was written in lowercase

Show draft versions to lots of people and get feedback before you decide

Design Brief

Chances are you're not going to be designing your logo yourself. You'll need to write a brief for your designer including key information. This will save you time and money and keep your designer happy.

Here are some suggestions for the things you'll need to include:

Contact details

Your business name

What the business does

Strapline

Brand values

Emotional connection: how do you want potential customers to feel about your brand?

Colours and fonts you like

Target audience e.g. women aged 25-45 living in London who are interested in fashion

Style preferences e.g. cutting edge, hipster, traditional

Competitors – what do your competitors' logos look like?

Inspiration – include any images or graphics you're drawn to. You could create a Pinterest board for this, or send over some scans

When you get the final design, be sure to get it in different sizes and formats including a vector*.

You should also get a style guide detailing fonts used and colours with their references (get Pantone and CMYK and RGB references).

This will make it easier to use the logo in different formats and if you want to print cards, t-shirts etc.

Where to find an affordable designer

With the advent of online market places, you don't need to spend a fortune to get a professional-looking logo.

People Per Hour

www.peopleperhour.com

Fiverr

www.fiverr.com

99 Designs

www.99designs.co.uk

Design Crowd

www.designcrowd.co.uk

Odesk

www.odesk.com

If you fancy having a go yourself, use an easy-to-use designing tool like www.canva.com.

* A vector is a digital graphic that is not made up of a set grid of pixels but plotted lines with a start and endpoint. Because Vectors are not made of pixels, they can be greatly enlarged without pixelating.

Write Your Design Brief

TRY
THIS

A Site to Behold!

If you need a basic site giving potential customers information about your business, the days of paying a designer thousands of pounds to build something from scratch are long gone.

The wide range of professionally designed templates available makes it easy to achieve a super-stylish result.

You can even create a landing page or one-page site to announce you're coming soon and start gathering people's email addresses for when you're ready to launch.

It's possible to register your domain for a few pounds and build a site for free. Nothing is stopping you!

Reasons you need a website

Everyone else has one – including your competitors. If your business is the only one without a website, you immediately seem less professional

You'll get found. Considering people reach for Google when they're looking for something, it pays to be online

A great website can give the impression that you're more established than you are, making it easier for potential customers and suppliers to trust you

Being online will immediately expand your potential reach to a global audience

More and more networking is taking place online. Your website is like a talking business card for your business

Your site gives you the ability to chat to customers when they're browsing, resolve any issues and answer their questions – giving your sales a nice big boost

Save yourself lots of time by placing useful information, guides and FAQs on your website

Adding a regularly updated blog to your site will help to get people talking about your business

Build a list of people interested in your business using sign-up forms on your site. Use this list to send newsletters and marketing emails

Build an online store on your site with downloads, books or products for sale 24/7

If a potential client is on their way to meet you and they've forgotten your address, it makes it easy for them to find your contact details and location by featuring these details on your website

Top web design tips

Make it clear of what you do – in a few lines. Don't force people to read a whole thesis before you get to the point

Use simple language and avoid jargon that makes you sound pretentious

Keep your structure and navigation simple

Use a white or light-coloured background to make your site easy to read

Use simple fonts which are large enough to read

Bring your site to life with images and videos

Responsive mobile design – make sure your site looks great on mobiles and tablets too

Link to social media accounts – so people can engage and connect with you

Sharing buttons – to encourage people to share your content

Include the basics - contact details, opening hours and a map if necessary, so clients can find you

Contact form – make it easy for people to get in touch

FAQ – to answer any potential questions people might have

Blog – makes it easy for you to update content and build engagement

Include a STORY page detailing the story of your business

Useful tools

If you're not sure what to call your website – then check out Panabee for inspiration. It's easy to use and fun way to find cool domain names that are available. www.panabee.com

Domain name

Once you've decided on a name for your site, buy your domain name from a registrar like www.godaddy.com or www.123-reg.co.uk

Reliable hosting

You'll need website hosting – the storage location for the content of your site. If you're looking for someone to host your new site check out GreenGeeks. Their 24/7 support is second to none. www.greengeeks.com

Build your beautiful website

Build your professional-looking website in a matter of hours with template tools.

Choose from hundreds of stunning templates created by designers, simply adapt to your own needs using the drag and drop editor. Check out www.wix.com or www.squarespace.com

Themes for WordPress

If you've decided to go for WordPress, you'll be needing a theme to give your website an individual feel.

Check out ThemeForest. They have a huge selection of themes that are easy to use and will give your site the right look. www.themeforest.net

Thrive editor for WordPress

WordPress is great for lots of reasons, but when it comes to formatting posts and pages, it can be rather tricky.

Thrive makes creating beautifully structured posts quick and easy. You don't need to code or drive yourself insane trying to manage shortcodes. It will save you hours every week. And you can use it to create sales and landing pages too. Nice. www.thrivethemes.com/contentbuilder

Images

Looking for gorgeous impactful images for your website? \$1 per photo is a total bargain. www.dollarphotoclub.com

Find a freelancer

If you need some expert help with your site, but you don't know any good web builders or designers, check out www.peopleperhour.com

There are thousands of freelancers on there, able to sort out any glitches and design additional graphics, as well as experts on hand to get your site up and running.

You could also try advertising for fellow students to help!

Spread the Word

What are your plans to promote your business? You will need to get yourself in front of the right people at the right time and persuade them to part with their cash on social media!

This is about common sense, not spending millions on a global ad campaign. Sometimes the more creative – and much cheaper – guerrilla tactics can be more fun and have more impact.

Task

To build a short term social media strategy to gain data insights and feedback from the user group(s) Things you need to consider:

1. Set your objective (vision, mission, and values)

What sort of branding images do you want to communicate through your social media?

It can dictate the aesthetic of your page as well as the communication style (formal/casual/funky)

2. Set your key message(s)

Do you want your content to be educational, promotional or insightful?

3. Set your KPIs

What does success look like?

i.e. New followers, numbers of likes, conversation metrics

4. When will you post? How frequent will you post?

Always post around the same time, your metrics tracking will be more accurate

5. Who are the key opinion leaders in the field?

You can work with them in future through collaborations/paid ads

6. What graphics/media format will you go for?

Would your audience prefer reading journals or blogs? Or, would they have a shorter attention span, which makes flashy graphics and videos more appealing to them?

7. How can you repurpose your content?

i.e. Re-using the same framework, same copywriting/milestone announcement on a different day as a throwback

8. What's your call to action?

Is it to sale, to subscribe, to donate or to volunteer?

Top tips

Try to focus on one core channel, expand to more channels when you see success.

You can easily benchmark against your competitors, do not pick the giants, pick the small, indie companies that are just starting out like you, what works for them?

How to make the data meaningful:

Set one day aside every week for content creation and copywriting, it will help you to prevent last-minute panic when you hit a bottleneck in the idea department.

Conduct A/B testing, you can put two ads or two posts out with similar messages, to observe which visual style/tone/content copy gets more engagement

Start paying attention to the visiting pattern of your followers, do they tend to spend more time on social media on Wednesday night? Does your content attract people outside of your targeted age groups? Are the results the same as the hypotheses you made?

Work towards a revised plan for the next month of your social media calendar to pivot closer to your audience's liking

Within your follower base, discover what other brands they keep track of, to create a fuller consumer profile of their purchasing habits and lifestyle preferences

Top Marketing Tips

If you need a basic site giving potential customers information about your business, the days of paying a designer thousands of pounds to build something from scratch are long gone.

1. Friends and family

Your friends and family will probably be the first people to buy into your product or service. Your business can't live solely off their goodwill, but don't forget them!

Practise your sales pitch on friends and family and see which version works the best.

Ask them for testimonials that you can use on your website (ideally don't use family members with the same surname as you!)

Send them copywriting to circulate in their own social circles

out eye-catching flyers is an affordable way to spread the word.

Top tips:

Keep it simple. Focus on your key messages only.

Do include your website and Facebook details, but don't expect that alone to drive sales.

Use a call to action, like a coupon or discount code to stop people chucking your flyers in the nearest bin.

Start with 100 to begin with, you can make changes if you need to.

Don't just stand anywhere. Go where your people are, like near a competitor café or by the train station.

Use a special domain or code so you can track the effectiveness of your flyers.

If you decide to scale up, consider using a flyer distribution company to do the work for you.

2. Testimonials

Always ask for feedback and testimonials from customers, starting with friends and family. Put these on your website or in brochures to help raise your credibility.

Always feature the name of the person, their company, if appropriate, and a photo of them next to the quote if possible. You could even create video testimonials of them extolling the virtues of your brand.

3. Flyers

Flyers may not involve the latest technology, just a flimsy bit of paper, but they're still an effective way to tell people about your business.

A one-page flyer is cheaper than a leaflet or brochure, but it's also easier for people to chuck away. If your business is targeting people in your local area, hitting the streets and handing

out eye-catching flyers is an affordable way to spread the word.

Before the big day, ask the exhibition organisers if you could write a guest post on their blog, or perhaps give a talk on your subject as part of the schedule of events, as this may be free.



Get your idea out there, be your brand's biggest advocate! I was really shy about sharing my idea and was afraid of criticisms and judgement. However, when you get your idea out there, all you get back would be wonderful support and feedback. It will forever remain just an idea if you don't actively make it a reality."

Liz Nguyen and Joseph Tam, MSc Marketing Strategy and Innovation graduates, Cass Business School, and co-founders of Eat Chay.

Prize draws, caption contests and even creative competitions are a great way to get people engaged in your brand.

8. Promotional clothing

Another old-school marketing tactic is to wear your brand. Design some brightly coloured t-shirts, hats or bags featuring your logo and encourage people to wear them on campus.

9. Brand ambassadors

Recruit a team of aspirational people to represent your brand. They could be bloggers, designers, models, musicians, sports-people; anyone relevant to your brand.

Give them a free product and incentivise them with free stuff, a photoshoot, or a feature on your website with links back to their site. In return, they should help spread the word about your business on social media.

10. Blogger outreach

Create a list of influential bloggers in your field and send them a press release about your product or service.

Bloggers are keen to get free stuff, so if you can afford to give them a free sample in return for a review, you'll be more likely to get a good number of reviewers.

Always insist on a link to your website, and ask if it's possible to see the review before it goes live.

Useful stuff: InkyBee – powerful outreach tools
www.inkybee.com

11. Email marketing

Use pop-ups and sidebar widgets to encourage people to sign up to your list. Consider offering them something for free in return for signing up.

For example, a guide to improving something related to your business, an article on the "Top Ten Pitfalls to Avoid When...", or a special offer for subscribers.

5. Key influences

Invite a list of influential people in your industry to contribute to your blog. You could even consider pulling together an e-book about your industry featuring these interviews.

This is a great way to get people with power to know about you and spread the word about the work you are doing. Cunning.

6. Make an infographic

Visual representations of complex issues or problems are very popular online at the moment.

Use an online package such as Easelly www.easel.ly to create a branded infographic and then spread the word online, encouraging people to share and embed it into their site. It's an easy way to raise brand awareness and to get yourself known as an authority.

7. Online competitions

Use a social media platform such as Rignite www.rignite.com or a tool like Rafflecopter www.rafflecopter.com to run a competition on Facebook and or Twitter.

Useful stuff

Email capturing pop-ups:

Sumo Me www.sumome.com

Hello Bar www.hellobar.com

Mailchimp www.mailchimp.com

Aweber www.aweber.com

Get Response www.getresponse.co.uk

Sign up to an email marketing service and send your list an email every week with news of your business or links to useful content, or special offers.

Top tips:

Set up a series of automated messages, when someone signs up to your database, you can move them along the sales funnel without having to lift a finger!

Consider always emailing on the same day so that people almost expect to hear from you

Always include a call to action in your emails so recipients get used to doing something – when you're set to start selling to them, they'll be good and ready!

Only email people who have opted in to hear from you – otherwise, you could get into big trouble for spamming people

Ask for people's first names as well as their email addresses so you can send them a personalised email

12. Countdown

Using social media and email, create a sense of excitement and curiosity around your business by counting down to launch.

Offer a limited special price or special offer to your first customers to entice them in.

Set up a sales page on your website where people can sign up to register their interest in the new business.

This could even include the countdown clock on a landing page, such as those you can build on LaunchRock www.launchrock.com

Offer a limited number of places at the reduced price to encourage people to cough up as soon as the product goes on sale.

13. Partnerships

Organise a partnership with a larger website or organisation in return for free stuff, free content or a special rate.

Be sure to pick a business with similar brand values and a huge audience you are keen to tap into.

14. The big launch

You could invite potential customers to a champagne reception to tell them about your business. Or, you could organise something a lot less expensive and a lot more exciting.

Depending on your business idea, think of something radical that will prove a big draw for potential customers and even journalists.

If your product is online, think of ways of creating a virtual launch party on Twitter or Facebook.

Your goal should be to raise awareness of your business and get people excited about your brand.



We kept talking to customers and figured out exactly what their pain points were. If you can address those pain points to potential customers (and show how you can solve them), it shouldn't be too hard to get a meeting or a phone call set up."

Jody Orsborn, MA Culture, Policy and Management graduate, School of Arts and Social Sciences and co-founder of The Backscratchers.

Do Your Own PR

Writing a press release is not as hard as it sounds. It's also not necessarily the answer to getting pages and pages of press coverage.

A press release contains basic information about your new business and includes a couple of images as well as your contact details.

There needs to be a hook or a story to grab the attention of journalists and their readers. Is there a time of year or event that makes your business particularly pertinent? For example, Kim Kardashian's wedding or the World Cup?

The fact that you have started a business is important to you, but not necessarily to the media. They are looking for stories to sell newspapers and magazines and drive people to their websites. They're not there to provide you with free advertising.

So, think carefully about creating lots of different hooks and angles to your story – both in your personal life and in the business. For example:

The business started by an ex-boyfriend and girlfriend

The business started by students in dad's garage

Overcoming adversity – got ill, leg fell off, the dog ran away. Journalists love triumph over tragedy

Make a list of publications you wish to target and contact them one by one. Don't just send spam, make each call and follow-up email personalised and relevant.



To launch our app, we held an the event at Cass Business School. As part of this launch, we also utilised social media channels, PR and guerrilla stunts (reverse graffiti) to get our brand noticed. PR and brand ambassadors have helped us spread the word. Word of mouth is really powerful, you just need to get a the community of people who believe in and trust your product."

Ashuveen and Lukas Linsbichler, Executive MBA graduates, Cass Business School, and co-founders of VEVA

Top tips:

You have a whole journalism department at City – so go and speak with them. Show them your press release and ask for their help

As a student starter, you should contact the university magazine www.carrotnetwork.co.uk. If your business is being launched by students at the university, that's news!

Don't be shy, pick up the phone. Emails can get ignored, so it's better to make contact in person if possible

Organise a survey and publish the results in a press release e.g. 98% of students say they never eat fruit. Link into the launch of your new fruit delivery service designed to combat vitamin deficiency and rickets in students

Don't be scared of journalists. If they are grumpy on the phone it's just because they're super busy

The headline and first paragraph of a press release are the most important bits. So make your headline incredibly catchy. The first paragraph needs to answer all the key questions – who, why, when, what, how

A press release should only be one page long – not a short book!

Call first and press send on the email with your press release while you're on the phone, so you can check it has arrived

Whatever you do, at this stage, don't waste thousands on a PR agency. Talk to the CityVentures Team for more advice

Likeminded females

“ An entrepreneur’ secret – often business ideas come from grey areas in their own lives.”

The biggest achievement so far comes from my largest failures – 2 out of 3 companies I worked for I left after 9 months each due to the lack of fit.

These “failures” provided me with the confidence to take my idea forward; focus on an entrepreneurial social enterprise and believe in my side hustle. This same idea which started from a place of loneliness

has allowed me to deliver 2 TED talks and win numerous entrepreneurial awards.

I started the community because I needed to surround myself with career ambitious professionals who also wanted to discuss work, life and progression openly. This was to cater to our busy lives, the lack of communication around being a “Working professional” and to manage our mental health issues, which often are heightened when working.

What is your business?

Since starting in May 2018, the network to date has grown to a social following of 30,000.

@LMFnetwork [LMF network] is a non-profit social enterprise founded to upskill women and marginalised groups into industries which predominantly have barriers to access, such as technology, business & entrepreneurship. Our business model started as a community brunch club though soon progressed organically into a service-based network, providing global initiatives such as a mentorship program, accessible workshops led by experts and supportive community forums.



INSIDER’ S TOP TIPS

How to become viral

Have an authentic voice, a clear purpose and always fall back to your why. This journey has taught me that

people buy into people. Growing your digital presence requires you to take time to understand your principles, your reasons why, consistently share relevant media and engage with others.

Utilise your social media metrics

Focus on 2 social accounts: a primary and secondary. Post content and don’t be afraid to make mistakes! Your metrics will tell you which posts work and where to head next!

Networking and being noticed by companies

Reflect on the 5 things you want to be known for. Stick to these 5 core values to navigate your career, decisions and challenges. If you are given an opportunity which you can do 60% of – say, yes and figure the rest out later! Companies and connections are looking for proactive people, interested in learning, not afraid to get their hands dirty and showing up with clear confidence!

Sonya Barlow – Likeminded females



@lmfnetwork

On the Inter-Web

One of the best things about being a student entrepreneur these days is the Internet. Once you know where to look there are oodles of smart tools, apps and websites out there to help you run your start-up. Here are some of our favourites.

Project management

Trello: (FREE and fun to use) www.trello.com

Asana: www.asana.com

Wrike: (Includes GANTT charts, if you want to)
www.wrike.com

Thrive Solo: (Perfect for freelancers)
www.thrivesolo.com

iDoneThis: www.idonethis.com

Slack: www.slack.com

Finances

Wave (small business software for invoicing, accounting and payroll) www.waveapps.com

Tide: (small business account)
www.shoeboxed.com

Coconut: (accounting) www.getcoconut.com

Start-Ed: (For free professional legal advice)
www.start-ed.org

Stripe: (Take payments online)
www.stripe.com/gb

Social media management

Hootsuite: www.hootsuite.com

Facebook Creator Studio

Later: (ultimate scheduling tool)
www.later.com

Buffer: www.bufferapp.com

Customer relationship management

In Touch CRM (includes email marketing)
www.intouchcrm.com

Capsule: (includes the great app, integrates with Mailchimp) www.capsulecrm.com

You Don't Need a CRM (sales focus)
www.youdontneedacrm.com

HubSpot: www.hubspot.com

All in one business management

Skylight: www.skylightit.com

Blue Camroo: www.bluecamroo.com

Sellsy: www.sellsy.com

Email marketing

Mailchimp (great free plan, easy to use)
www.mailchimp.com

Aweber (very powerful) www.aweber.com

Dotmailer: www.dotdigital.com

Find freelancers

Fiverr (marketplace for jobs priced at \$5)

www.fiverr.com

People Per Hour (quality freelancers around the world) www.peopleperhour.com

Odesk: (more quality freelancers around the world) www.odesk.com

99 Designs: (logo, web and graphic design) www.99designs.co.uk

DIY websites

Wix: www.wix.com

Moonfruit: www.moonfruit.com

Squarespace: www.squarespace.com

Lead generation

Kick Off Labs: (Includes viral kick and email marketing) www.kickofflabs.com

Launch Rock: www.launchrock.co

Leadpages: www.leadpages.net

Printing

Solopress: www.solopress.com

Moo: www.uk.moo.com

Vistaprint: www.vistaprint.co.uk

Customer support

Keeping: (Handle customer support in your Gmail – it's FREE!) www.keeping.com

Olark: www.olark.com

Zendesk: www.zendesk.com

Video

GoAnimate: (easy to use animation tool)

www.goanimate.com

Adobe Spark: (awesome video slideshows) spark.adobe.com

Powtoon: www.powtoon.com

Stock images

Dollarphoto Club: www.dollarphotoclub.com

Unsplash: www.unsplash.com

E-commerce

Shopify: (Awesome ecommerce solution)

www.shopify.co.uk

Amazon Marketplace

Big Commerce: www.bigcommerce.com

TicTail: www.tictail.com

Market research

Google Trends: (Free market research) trends.google.com

Bitly (trackable links): Bitly.com

Talkwalker (trend tracking): talkwalker.com

Google forms/Typeform

Survey Monkey: (Create your own surveys) www.surveymonkey.com

Feedly: (keep up with your topic, news and blogs) www.feedly.com

Google Alerts: (monitor mentions on the web) www.google.co.uk/alerts

App building

Appery: (Build your own app, no coding knowledge required!) www.appery.io

Heroku: (Free cloud bases for your app) www.heroku.com

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cityuniventures](https://youtube.com/cityuniventures)

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