



Online Accounting Software

TOP 10 BRANDING TIPS GUIDE



The importance of branding to businesses, no matter their size, is now recognised as a critical component of business growth and sustainability. Ignore branding at your peril especially in a world that is digitally supercharged and where for many consumers, both B2B and B2C, their journey will begin online and may well be completed offline in your own business premises.

So it goes without saying, that if your brand doesn't stack up or meet certain expectations of your target sectors, then you'll not win sufficient business for long term growth and sustainability. Sheer hard graft and sweat does and will work for many small business owners but there comes a time when the return on the effort just isn't worth it. By taking the time to invest in the brand it will unlock the financial returns to help share the work load required to grow the business.

Before we look at the reasons why you should take branding seriously, let's take a quick look at exactly what is branding. The definition from Entrepreneur.com is a good one: branding is the marketing practice of creating a name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates a product from other products.

At this point I think it's fair to say that most of the presentations we go to use branding case studies from large brands as best-in-class examples of how it should be done. The issue with this is that Coke, RyanAir (they do



invest in branding, believe it or not), Kerrygold, Apple, BMW, etc, all have multi-million euro budgets with well-staffed branding teams and agencies. We as small businesses most definitely don't, so it's more often than not difficult to relate to their branding successes or failures.

Our advice here is to take the following 10 branding tips and look no further than a 20 mile radius of your business community and take a close look at your competition and how they brand themselves. Why a 20 mile

radius? For most small businesses and yes there are many exceptions, the majority of business will come from within a 20 mile radius.

1. We are more likely to buy from a **brand we are familiar with** – that's human nature. Look at your brand design and messaging – is it clear and easy to recall. That's critically important!
2. 'On the internet, everyone's a monkey.' Great quote and it's true; anyone can launch a website or online business and you'll never know who is behind the business. Why should I buy from you? This point alone should reinforce the importance of branding. Your **brand will distinguish** you from the competition and make you stand out.
3. Small businesses or self-managed businesses are very strong on personal selling – the human interaction element. Your **brand should represent** that at every single touch point.
4. Ok, you've a small business and probably a small team but it's vital that they too embody some of the feelings that you have for the business. The **brand acts as a beacon** or lighthouse to guide and assist your team to fulfilling your goals and ambitions.
5. Not happy as a consumer, let's go online and dish out the bad news about our experience, be it on TripAdvisor or Boards.ie or at the next

social gathering you attend. Nurturing your brand will self-perpetuate as happy customers will refer and refer and refer.

6. What does your brand tell your potential customers what they can expect by coming to you? Look at **Nobo**. **Great message to accompany the brand** – Delicious Dairy-Free Ice Cream.
7. What is your promise to your customers? What is it that you feel your business delivers? **Does your brand reflect this promise?**
8. Simple Online Accounts – our main tagline. There is no doubting what we provide and this serves a double purpose – it's as much for internal focus as it is for the market at large. Small businesses can ill afford to drift off message or pursue non core activities. We provide accounting software and we are clear on that. **A clear brand provides** this key signpost to help keep everyone focused.
9. When is the last time you saw a car ad that led with fuel efficiency or engine performance or the number of adults it can seat. Today's car manufacturers all lead with emotional branding. If you can **build an emotional attachment** with your audiences then price may become secondary or not even figure at all.
10. Building a brand takes time. It takes great care and attention. Look around your business community and see if you can come up with a shortlist of small businesses that you feel are worth more than the building they are in. Now, if these businesses moved would you follow them to their new location? If you would, you now understand **the power of branding**.

Take the 10 steps and benchmark yourself against it. It will give you a measure of where you are and the areas you need to focus on. Branding isn't difficult, it takes time and patience but without adhering to something along the lines of the 10 steps, you'll be hopelessly adrift.

Don't forget that all the brand gurus and experts can't undo bad customer service. Check out our **Customer Service Guide** for small businesses.





Online Accounting Software

WHO WE ARE

Big Red Cloud is a leading supplier of online account's software to the SME market.

Our online account's software is simple and easy to use and takes only minutes to set up. It is designed to enable smart business people get on with doing what they do best which is to sell their products or services.

We believe in giving exceptional value by including multiple users, unlimited transactions, telephone, email, live chat support and free access for your accountant and bookkeeper, all for a low monthly fee.

Join over 35,000 businesses that have already made the smart move and get your business up and running with Big Red Cloud's online accounts software.

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