

nd
wbc

BUSINESS
COACHING

BRANDING & MARKETING

RESOURCE PACKET

The North Dakota Women's Business Center is the leading voice, resource, and partner for women business owners. We are dedicated to amplifying the economic voice of our clients through advocacy and access to critical resources.





North Dakota Women's Business Center (NDWBC) partners with women business owners by walking them through different business aspects to understand their progress and knowledge. NDWBC is dedicated to providing women business owners with critical resources to equip them to make informed decisions about their business and guide them forward on their journey.



CONTENT IS NDWBC PROPERTY - DO NOT DUPLICATE.

In consideration of the counselor(s) furnishing management, technical assistance, or materials provided, the client waives and absolves all claims against NDWBC and/or their partners' personnel, and that of its Resource Partners and host organizations, arising from this training/assistance.



Introduction

A solid business brand helps build trust, recognition, loyalty, and reputation. Your brand helps determine many aspects of your business from the products or services you offer, to the training you provide your employees, to how the outside world views your business. Marketing provides the avenue on how you promote your products and services to your potential prospects, current customers, and other stakeholders.

BRANDING

MARKETING

BRANDING VS MARKETING

PUBLIC RELATIONS

TIPS & TRICKS



Branding

When people hear the word brand they may automatically think logo. While your logo is important for recognition, branding encompasses so much more. Overall your brand is how others perceive your business. These perceptions are based in four (4) main areas:

1. Brand promises
2. Brand personality
3. Brand reputation
4. Customer experiences and expectations

Your brand identity consists of your company values, what it says, what it does, and how these are communicated. Your brand identity plays an essential role in shaping the overall perception of your existing and potential customers. It influences existing and potential employees, partners, vendors, and more.

According to Accenture, 66% of consumers say a brand's culture and transparency attract them to buy from a certain brand, and 62% want companies to stand up for issues they are passionate about.

Source: Accenture

Steps to Brand Development

Outline Your Brand's Purpose

All aspects of your mission, vision, and values should be considered. It's recommended to ideate with your team or a trusted partner for all aspects of what your brand might entail:

- What are you promising to consumers?
- Why should your clients trust you?
- What type of work environment are you creating?
- What impact are you trying to make?

Research Competitor Brands

Researching competitors brands can provide you a path for your own. It can help you define why your business is unique and allow you insight into branding norms within your industry. This research will provide you with a better understanding of what works well and what doesn't. You may find other information as well when you take an in-depth look at your competitors.



Decide on Your Target Audience

Whether you are just starting your business, bolstering your brand, or re-branding selecting the target audience who is right for your business is just as important when you work on your brand. Being specific about your audience allows you to narrow your focus and create compelling direct messages that resonate with them. Consider demographics, values, market statistics, customer surveys, competitor's customers, and more.

Choose A Brand Personality

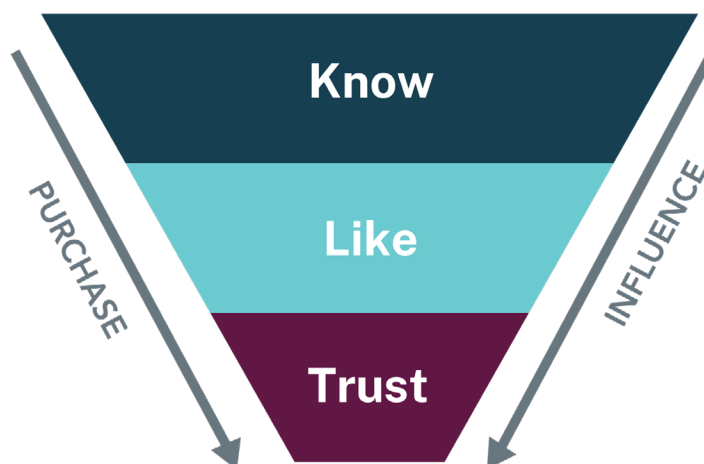
Your brand personality will have a significant impact on strategies both in and outside of your business. Will you be fun, playful, serious, traditional, or adventurous? When people think of your business what action will come to mind? This will influence your marketing, social media, prints, customer expectations, staff training, as well as your vision for the future.

Develop a Brand Story and Voice

Connecting emotionally to your current and potential clients is a strong reason to develop a compelling brand story. Today's customers and clients want to relate in some way to the businesses they are buying from. If you can find the connection, you can widen your customer funnel. You should clearly define your brand voice so it is consistent no matter what platform is being used.

Create a Visual Identity

This is the area you will spend time considering what the face of the company will look like. The right visual identity reflects your brand's purpose, personality, and story. Consider this identity across all media sources. The more consistent you are, the better your customers will be able to identify your business and come to understand who you are. Design professionals can help you build your logo, select your color palettes, and develop an overall style guide to help you be consistent across all marketing and communication platforms.





It is important to integrate your brand into every aspect of your business. The goal is for your customers to **know**, **like**, and **trust** you and your business. Trust comes from a space of safety and understanding. The more familiar your customers are with your company brand, the higher your loyalty rates will be. All your employees should complete some form of brand training so they are familiar with the expectations you have. Your leadership should reflect the brand you have identified for your company. When all of these aspects are in alignment, your brand foundation will be strong and the likelihood of customer satisfaction is guaranteed.

Marketing

A marketing strategy is a business's overall game plan for turning potential customers into actual customers. A clear marketing strategy should revolve around the company's value proposition, which communicates to consumers what the company stands for, how it operates, and why it deserves their business. The ultimate goal is to achieve and communicate a sustainable competitive advantage over rival companies by understanding the needs and wants of its consumers. A marketing strategy helps a company direct its advertising dollars to where it will have the most impact therefore allowing efficient budget usages and direct connections with ideal clientele.

The 7 P's of Marketing



- Product**
Total service product, core product, supplementary services, facilitating services, or supporting services
- Price**
Based on cost, demand, operations, competition, or relationship
- Place**
Access, location, delivery services, or electronic delivery
- Promotion**
Internal marketing, direct marketing, advertising, or other promotional methods
- People**
Customers, employees, social interactions, roles & scripts, relationships
- Process**
Service design, standardization, customization, operational efficiency
- Physical Evidence**
Facilities, equipment, uniforms, signage



Product, price, place, and promotion are the main P's of marketing are key considerations which need to be thoroughly reviewed and strategically implemented to have a successful marketing plan. Additional P's are included such as people, process, and physical evidence.

Product

Fully understanding your product and/or service is the key first step to marketing it. You have to know why your customer wants or needs it. Is it brand new or are there iterations out there? What makes it better than the competition?

Price

Marketers must link the price to the product and/or service's real and perceived value. They need to consider how this price is affected by competitors, time of year, supply costs, and retail market. When marketing a price you need to consider what it may do to the overall look of your product and/or service. Price it higher than the perceived value and people may think it is a waste of money. Price it too low and people may think the quality may be subpar.

Place

This is the consideration on where the product and/or service should be available and where it should be marketed. For example, a makeup brand you find at Sephora would not typically be found at Wal-Mart. Just like a high end tax firm won't be advertising in your local small town newspaper.

Promotion

Promotion encompasses advertising, public relations, and the overall media strategy for introducing a product. The goal is to communicate to customers they need the product and/or service at the price it is being sold at.

People

This is one of the three newest P's and came about because of the importance of who is representing the brand. It encompasses sales, customer service, social media influences, and viral media campaigns.

Process

This consideration focuses around logistics. When a society's want stems from instant gratification, small businesses need to ensure their products and/or services are delivered correctly and on time.

Physical Evidence

Everything your customers see when interacting with your business. This includes the environment where you provide your product and/or service (either physical or online), the design of these spaces, your logo and branding, product packaging, social media presence, how your staff interacts with customers, even your customer facing forms.

MARKETING IDEATION WORKSHEET

Directions: Decide which marketing methods would work best for your business.

CATEGORY	METHODS	EXPECTED COSTS	NOTES
Social Media	Facebook Instagram LinkedIn Tik-Tok Youtube Misc.		
Online	Website Video Publishing Email Campaigns Blogs Online Advertising Google My Business		
In-Person	Tradeshow Exhibit Conference Participation Webinar Hosting Product Samples Sponsorships Merchandise		
Advertising	Brochures/Flyers Product Sheet Posters/Postcards Slidedeck Presentations Newspapers/Magazines Publications/Handbooks Outdoor Media (Signs/ Billboards, etc.)		
Direct Marketing	Direct Outreach (Mail, Email) Telemarketing Customer Visits		
Broadcast Media	TV (Local/National/ International) Radio (Local/National)		



Branding vs Marketing

Small business branding is about who your company is including its brand personality, voice, and purpose. Marketing is the process of achieving tactical short-term goals around sales and revenue, new customer acquisition, and market expansion. They both play hand-in-hand when it comes to the overall business success. Branding serves as a guide for the marketing plan and marketing promotes the products and/or services by leveraging the power of the brand.

Branding IS WHY.



- Communicating your position
- Creating the context of how you are perceived

Marketing IS HOW.



- Promoting and selling your product and/or service
- Actively getting your message out



Public Relations

Public Relations or PR, involves strategically communicating with the public to establish and build a beneficial image and reputation for your business. PR typically involves someone else telling your story and, in some cases, interviewing you to do so. Public relations is not marketing or advertising but it compliments both. A good PR strategy can help you build your brand on a tighter budget, solidify your presence in an industry/location, and help you manage damage control. Popular components of a PR campaign are:

- Assessment
- Image
- Promotional Campaigns
- Branding
- Media Relations
- Social Media Campaigns
- Press and Media Releases



Online Reputation Management

Online Reputation Management (ORM) has been considered technical PR. Where PR is typically a forward facing public approach, ORM typically happens behind the scenes. ORM leverages a variety of components typically seen online to improve the brand image or initiate damage control. Here are examples of three (3) tactics used to do so:

1. Boosting the search engine optimization (SEO) value of existing web properties, pushing positive content higher in search engine result page (SERP) mentions, thereby pushing negative content down.
2. Responding directly to online messaging and reviews and boosting positive comments.
3. Submitting takedown requests (under applicable laws and customs) when online publishers post inaccurate or defamatory information or even taking legal action when needed.

Ideas on How to Manage Negative Press

No matter how well your business runs and how great your team is, there will always be issues that arise and vocal unsatisfied customers. How you respond to these situations impacts your business's future. By preparing yourself and your team can be one of the best ways to recover faster.



Have a Unified Approach

Make sure that you understand all aspects of the issue at hand. Talk to each employee that may have perspective on the issue. Then make a decision and ensure the entire team knows the reason and how to communicate to the public.

Be Transparent

Own up to the error (if it is warranted) and publicly communicate your corrective action. The more responsive you are the quicker you can save face and rebuild trust.

Be Authentic

Your response to the issue should hold true to your brand and your culture. When you respond with sincerity and humility you the public is more likely to be understanding.

Be Comprehensive

Focusing on the immediate matter is important but don't be too quick to just take care of surface level issues. Analyze and respond to any additional systematic or underlying issues that may have caused the situation.

Pause Before Responding

As a small business owner, you may feel that a negative comment or situation is a reflection of yourself. You may have an impulse to immediately respond. It is important to pause here. First determine if it is worth it to respond. Ask yourself, will it have a positive effect in the long term? If it does, then carefully construct your answer, review it, edit it, and then pause again. Doing this will ensure that the response isn't coming out of anger, frustration, or fear. Have others review it and make sure that it is on brand.

It is important to have a plan in place when negative situations arise. Being open and honest with you costumers is a way to rebuild trust and ensure they come back again. Don't forget about that your leadership team and your employees are a pivotal part of this crisis management process as well. Make sure they understand how they should respond both internally and externally in these situations.

Research shows when you answer a customer's complaint, that customer's advocacy for the business increases by up to 30%. And if you can actually solve their problem, they remain a customer 70% of the time. Conversely, if you do not answer a customer complaint, the decrease in advocacy is as much as 50%.



Tips & Tricks

Social Media Best Practices

Use high-quality photos/video for your social media posts. Crisp clean photos that are vibrant, clear, and well-lit do well and communicate that your brand is clean and safe. Filters can be helpful. To achieve the right tones, consider what your brand is trying to convey to your customers.



The purpose of social media is to engage, authentically connect, and organically drive people to do business with you. It can get easy to lose your direction, so remember to engage, educate, and follow our tips simplify your marketing time and money.



Engage

Share From the Heart

A memory, your why, inspiration, family ties, a time of year when something impactful happens, the significance of what you or your employees are doing right now, or how you established your brand.



Create a Poll

A collage of two pictures can be posted for your audience to choose this or that. Consider product categories or specific aspects like color or flavor. Encourage them to do their research to test it.

Just Ask

Ask your audience to share or leave a review. Reviews can be reposted on your social media page.

Special Invites

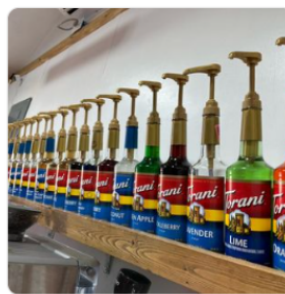
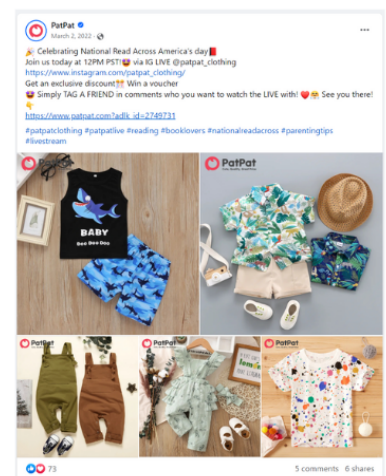
Ask your community influencers to try your products and services and get pictures of them enjoying it.

Offer Something Free

Ask your followers to post a picture of your product or service and tag your profile to win a discount or a free offer. Remember to cap the contest with a time limit to encourage action.

Be Personally Involved

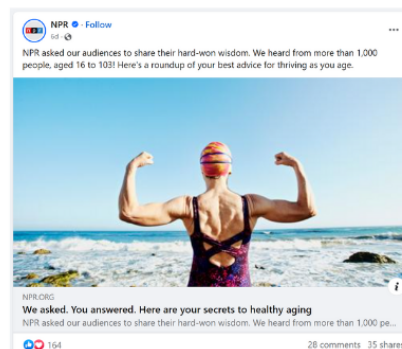
People want your product and service, but they crave authentic connection. Feature people's faces such as your staff, sales representatives, owners, vendors, family etc. Share your why you started your business, your passion, your start, your heart. You will be surprised who chimes in with encouragement. Engage and be part of the community conversation.





Educate

- Help your audience understand and appreciate the complexities of your product/service. Tell them what they are looking at and why it stands out. Teach them how it starts and what you contribute. Help them observe the perfect occasion or what they experience.
- State the exclusive benefits. You might call it selling, but your words influence how they experience and understand your brand.
- Understand your values and your brand/culture. What are they, what is the driving force, how do you provide services, and are you motivated by relatable goals? Share an example of how you treat your customers. Your audience wants to be part of good things.
- Ask your audience to teach you what they know. You can learn a lot from them, spread information, and increase engagement.



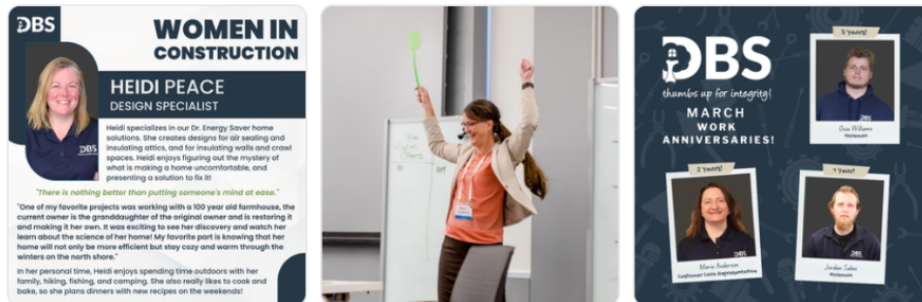
- Tell them how to do business with you. Consider how a simple graphic could make them feel confident enough to order.

Tips for Effective Social Media Management

- Batch content creation to save time by setting specific times each month for scheduling content.
- Use scheduling tools to schedule posts in advance to streamline the process.
- Leverage Canva (free version available) to create engaging graphics, add motion, logos, etc. The mobile app simplifies uploading.
- Embrace imperfection and fun by focusing on authentic and enjoyable content.
- Reengage past customers by collecting customer information and re-invite them to special promotions.
- Review your posts. What types of posts are the most successful with your audience? What time of day gets the best responses? Invest in the areas that drive results.



- Be aware of what your competition is doing and explore how your brand and audience are different and similar.
- Develop and maintain consistent branding by using fonts, colors, and logos across all content to help your customer remember you.



Pro Tip: Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, like **ChatGPT**, can help streamline the creation, design, and polishing of social media posts. These tools can generate content ideas, improve text quality, and even suggest visuals to enhance engagement. Tips for effective AI use are to provide clear and specific instructions and context, always review and edit the AI-generated content to ensure it's validity and it aligns with your brand's message, and use it to enhance your creativity but combine it with your personal voice and experience.



Tips to Enhance Your Website

Customers First

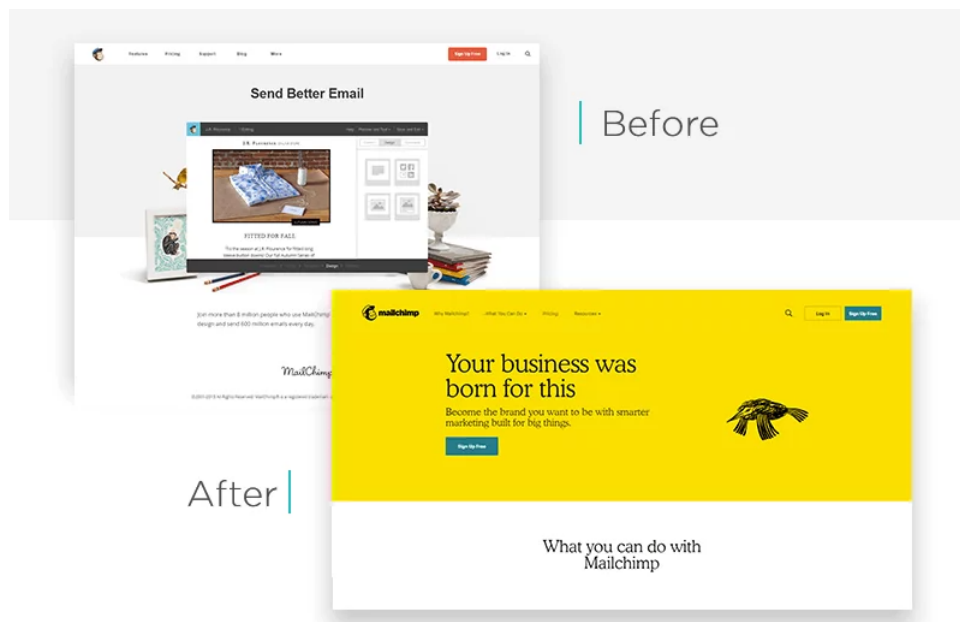
To create effective website content, focus on your customers to help them relate to your product or service. Building empathy fosters trust. Develop compelling content that addresses your customers' needs, identify their problems, and present your product or service as a solution. Use images that represent your customers in your website design to strengthen this connection.

Call to Action

Provide a clear call to action that tells visitors how to engage with your organization. This can give visitors a sense of purpose and improve the user experience. Show an easy and clear path to doing business with you.

User Experience

Create a user-friendly website with readable fonts, colors, and visual hierarchy for a pleasant user interface (UI). Utilize white space to enhance readability, improve user attention, and achieve a minimalist, stylish appearance. A fast website enhances user experience, attracts more visitors, and improves Google search rankings. Effective navigation helps users find information quickly, encouraging longer visits and return traffic. Responsive design ensures a positive experience on all devices, broadening your audience and boosting rankings and revenue. Maintain consistent organization across all pages to enhance navigation, and update outdated pages to maintain a cohesive, professional appearance and prevent user confusion.



Social Proof







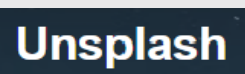



Adding social proof to your content builds trust, especially with new visitors. Use genuine customer stories instead of vague testimonials. Link your social media accounts to your website and share the same information across both platforms, such as sales promotions, to maintain credibility and consistency. Ensure everything looks uniform to avoid confusion and encourage interaction with your site.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Visibility

Implement strategies to boost visibility on search engine results pages (SERP) through SEOs. Key practices include a thorough keyword research to target relevant terms and optimizing content (titles, headings, meta descriptions) with these keywords. High-quality, engaging content optimized for readability and SEO helps maintain relevance and improves rankings.

Free Tools

Whether you are getting your copy error-free or editing a stock photo, you don't have to be a professional or spend a pile to get good results. Check out the free tools below to step up your marketing. Click the logos to get your free resources.

COPY		
EMAIL		
GRAPHICS		
IMAGES		
SEO		



ENJOYING THIS CONTENT? CHECK OUT THESE OTHER RESOURCES

Ask your business coach about NDWBC's other resources for additional information on but not limited to: Business Model Canvas, Closing a Business, Writing a Business Plan, Marketing Your Business, Understanding Business Credit, and other topics.

NDWBC is a 501c3 funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration and by state funding from the North Dakota Department of Commerce. Information provided in this report is for reference purposes only. Any decisions made based on its contents are the sole responsibility of the entity, not NDWBC.





The leading voice, resource, and partner for women business owners. We are dedicated to amplifying the economic voice of our clients through advocacy and access to critical resources. With a statewide presence, we offer in-person and virtual business coaching, technical training, and intensive development courses to women business owners.

FUNDING FRIDAYS

Follow us on Fridays to see unique funding opportunities in the market for small business owners.



DISCOVER YOUR
ELIGIBILITY TODAY
NDWBC.COM

Services + Programs FOR WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS



BUSINESS COACHING + TECHNICAL TRAINING

Access free and confidential coaching for entrepreneurs and owners at any stage of business. Schedule a session.



VIRTUAL INTENSIVES COURSES

Our virtual courses include financial training and skill building to equip owners to make informed business decisions.



WOMEN-OWNED STATE CERTIFICATION

Certify with NDWBC's fast and simple woman-owned business state certification to access new opportunities and contacts.



STRONG WOMEN, STRONG CONNECTIONS

Attend our statewide networking events with facilitated community building, and authentic discussions about business ownership.



THE WOMEN'S BUSINESS SUMMIT

Annually, this summit experience accelerates business growth and deepens connections through hands-on training and networking.



FOLLOW US ON



www.NDWBC.com
701-223-0707
info@ctbnd.com



NDWBC is a 501c3 funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration and by state funding from the North Dakota Department of Commerce.