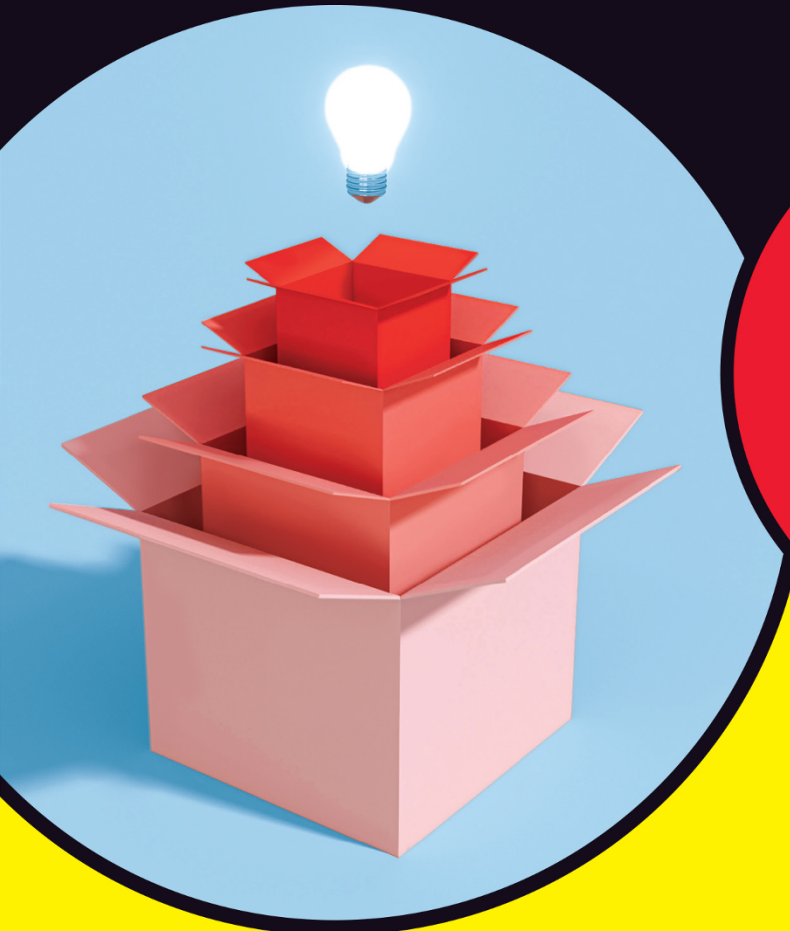


LEARNING MADE EASY



Launching & Building a Brand

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand



Build a successful
brand strategy

Identify your
customer avatar

Create a viral launch
campaign

Amy Will

Founder, *Girl Gang the Label*
Host, *Girl Gang the Podcast*



Launching & Building a Brand

by Amy Will

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand

Launching & Building a Brand For Dummies®

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Introduction

These days, nearly everything is a brand — from large corporations to people, from products and services to government agencies, special-interest groups, and celebrities. Some organizations and people have more than one brand — a business brand, a product brand, and a personal brand, for example. Bloggers, podcasters, and YouTubers have brands. And whether you're aware or not, you have a brand too: your professional or personal reputation, which is all a brand really is.

People build and launch brands for all sorts of reasons: to sell products or services, build trust, advance their careers, promote a cause, gain exposure to new opportunities, and more. Launching & building a brand gives focus and clarity to everything you do, from defining the essence and purpose of what you're promoting to deciding what you'll do to promote it. As a result, everything you do to reinforce a positive brand image in the minds of others has greater impact.

I don't know why you're interested in launching & building a brand. My husband and I built and launched the Color Me Book brand to bring a cool product (a personalized coloring book) to market and profit from it. I launched my Girl Gang brand to promote women empowerment and connect with like-minded women. Whatever *your* reason is for launching & building a brand, you want to do it as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Welcome to *Launching & Building a Brand For Dummies*.

About This Book

Launching & building a brand isn't easy. Some people seem naturally gifted at it. They're outgoing and engaging. Their charisma is contagious, and whatever they choose to promote attracts an eager following.

The rest of us struggle. We don't even know where to start. Launching & building a brand is so overwhelming that we freeze in our tracks.

Fortunately, with the right tools and guidance, anyone can build and launch their own brand. In this book, I provide the guidance you need, and I highlight numerous tools that simplify the process. To make branding even more accessible, I break my guidance into five parts:

- » **Part 1: Getting Started with Branding** introduces key topics covered in the book and guides you through the process of creating, defining, and financing your brand; clarifying your branding goals; and getting to know your audience — the people you'll be trying to impress.
- » **Part 2: Attending to Brand Fundamentals** picks up where Part 1 left off. In Part 2, you tackle the basics of getting your brand off the ground: creating a logo and style guide, building a branded website and email account, building strategic partnerships, and taking the first steps to launch your brand.
- » **Part 3: Building a Strong Brand Presence** explains what to do to increase brand recognition and awareness, including creating in-person experiences, blogging, podcasting, posting on social media, doing email marketing, buying advertising, and building community.
- » **Part 4: Feeding and Caring for Your Brand** covers everything you need to know to protect your brand and extend its reach. Here, you find out how to scale your brand, build on existing customer loyalty, and defend your brand against threats from the competition.
- » **Part 5: The Part of Tens** covers ten ways to make a marketing campaign go viral; ten ways to differentiate your brand from the competition; and ten ways to drive traffic to your website, blog, or other online properties.

You can't get lost in this book, because everywhere you turn, you'll find valuable information and advice.

Foolish Assumptions

In this data-driven age, all assumptions are foolish. After all, who needs to make assumptions when Google knows *everything*? But to keep this book focused on the right audience and ensure that it delivers the information and insight you need to grasp a topic as complex as branding, I felt compelled to make the following foolish assumptions about you:

- » You have a great idea for a brand but little to no idea about how to get started, or you have a brand that's struggling to get traction.

- » You don't have a college degree in marketing, and you're not a self-educated marketing maven.
- » You want to brand the right way from the start and not waste time and money on a trial-by-error process.
- » You're willing to invest time and effort developing marketing skills.

Other than those four foolish assumptions, I can honestly say that I can't assume much more about you. For all I know, you could be a teenager or a septuagenarian, an intern or an executive, a work-at-home mom or dad, a doctor, a lawyer, rich, poor, or somewhere in between. You could be living in a beach house on the coast, a bungalow in a small town, or a studio apartment in a big city. Regardless of your demographic, I celebrate your interest in branding, your eagerness, and your can-do attitude. You'll be rewarded handsomely as your brand goes viral!

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, icons in the margins highlight certain types of valuable information that call out for your attention. Here are the icons you'll encounter and a brief description of each.



REMEMBER

I want you to remember everything you read in this book, but if you can't quite do that, remember the important points flagged with this icon.



TIP

I've been branding for myself and various employers for more than a decade, and I've picked up dozens of marketing shortcuts and tips along the way. In this book, I share those tips with you and flag them with this icon so you'll be sure not to miss them.



WARNING

You'll find nothing dangerous about branding, but the process does have some pitfalls you'd be wise to avoid, and I use this icon to point them out.

Beyond the Book

In addition to the 300-plus pages of do-it-yourself branding advice delivered in this book, you have access to even more help and information online at Dummies.com, and that information isn't limited to branding. You can dig up all sorts of interesting stuff on a wide variety of topics.

While you're there, check out my *Launching & Building a Brand For Dummies* Cheat Sheet. No, I didn't forget to put it in the book. Making it available online is just another clever marketing ploy by the *For Dummies* brand to sell more books — a teaser, a giveaway, which is a technique I discuss in the book.

Where to Go from Here

Where you go from here is up to you. I wrote this book to be used as a reference, so feel free to skip around, following where your curiosity leads. Every part, chapter, section, and subsection is a self-standing component, so you don't have to tackle topics in some predetermined order.

If you're new to branding, you may want to head to Chapter 1, which introduces branding and key topics covered in more detail in later chapters. If you've already launched your brand and are looking to improve brand recognition and awareness, head to Chapter 6. If you're looking for branding tips and tricks, check out the chapters in Part 5.

If you're in a hurry because you're up against a deadline, or if you need urgent help dealing with a branding issue, turn to the table of contents (at the beginning of this book) or the index (at the end). Either will point you in the right direction.

Keep in mind that branding isn't a linear process. You can start just about anywhere. What's important is the collective impact of everything you do to promote your brand.

1

Getting Started with Branding

IN THIS PART . . .

Get a quick primer on branding, including the purpose of branding, the different types of brands, what brand architecture is all about, deciding when creating a brand makes sense, and a bird's-eye-view of the 10-step branding process.

Build a brand from the ground up, starting with deciding what you're going to brand and identifying a market niche and moving on to the process of creating a business around your brand and securing the money to finance it.

Position and define your brand, which involves differentiating your brand from everything else already out there, deciding what your brand's essence will be, and coming up with a clever, catchy name for your brand that also clearly describes it.

Identify your branding goals, build a plan to meet those goals, and measure the success of your branding activities, so you can make data-driven changes to your strategy and tactics.

Define your customer avatars (after, of course, figuring out what the heck a customer avatar is). It all starts with getting to know the people in your target market and then describing them as a group in 50 words or less.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Grasping the purpose of branding
- » Differentiating among brand types and why it matters
- » Getting up to speed on brand architecture
- » Recognizing when branding comes in handy
- » Getting a bird's-eye view of the ten-step branding process

Chapter **1**

Wrapping Your Brain around Branding

Because you're reading this book, I can safely assume that you want to build and launch a brand. You already have a general idea of what that entails. You create something that people value: a business, product, service, worthy cause. Then you position it as being something unique so that people will do what you want them to do: buy your product, subscribe to your service, join your cause, listen to your podcast, vote for you, whatever your goal may be.

That's what branding is all about, but to do it, you need to take a deeper dive, which is why you're reading this book. In subsequent chapters, I take you on that deeper dive. In this chapter, I encourage you to wade in slowly, building overall understanding of branding so that when you encounter the more detailed topics, you'll know how they fit into the overall picture.

Consider this chapter to be Branding Orientation Day. Here, I introduce you to the topic, explain some key concepts, and lead you through the ten-step process for building and launching a brand.

Understanding What a Brand Is and Does

A *brand* is a mental construct that identifies an entity (a business, product, service, organization, or person) as something special. As a mental construct, a brand is intangible; you can't see, hear, touch, smell, or taste it. But it can have a powerful impact on how people perceive and feel about something, such as an organization, person, or product.

Although a brand itself is intangible, several tangible items contribute to creating a brand, including the following:

- » Brand name
- » Mission and values (for corporate or individual brands)
- » Personality
- » Distinctive features (quality, design, value)
- » Visual design elements (logo, color, typography, tagline, images, packaging)
- » Content (website, blog posts, social media, images, video, white papers)
- » Customer experience (location atmosphere, convenience, customer service)

All these elements and others contribute to the perception consumers have of the brand. Just think about one popular brand: Coca-Cola. Its brand name, red-and-white Spencerian script, and unique bottle shape are recognizable everywhere in the world and have been for more than a century. But although the company is built around soft drinks, its marketing focuses on selling happiness and camaraderie and on eliciting a strong emotional response from customers.

Creating a strong emotional bond with customers is the primary purpose of a brand. But a brand also serves other purposes, including the following:

- » Differentiating an organization, product, or person from any competitors
- » Building trust
- » Building loyalty
- » Establishing credibility
- » Motivating customers to take action (buy a product or service, join a cause, vote for a candidate, watch a video, and so on)
- » Building equity or value that can ultimately be sold

BRANDS VERSUS COMMODITIES

One way to think about what a brand is and does is to compare it with a commodity:

- **Commodities** are indistinguishable goods and services that serve the same purpose regardless of who makes them, such as gasoline, batteries, dishwashing detergent, coffee beans, Internet bandwidth, and vacuum cleaners. Unless you have a good reason to buy one commodity instead of another, you buy the cheapest one.
- **Brands** are offerings that are different in some way that matters to customers or clients, such as Shell gasoline, Energizer batteries, Dawn dishwashing detergent, Starbucks coffee, Verizon Internet service, and Shark vacuum cleaners. You're willing to pay more for your favorite brands because they're different and better in your mind than the competition.

If you're not a brand, you're a commodity, and if you're a commodity, the only way you can compete in your market is to offer the lowest price.



WARNING

Don't confuse the purposes of branding with brand purpose. *Brand purpose* is the brand's *raison d'être*. The brand purpose of Starbucks, for example, is to help facilitate human connections. And although Walmart is committed to charging low prices, its purpose is to help people provide better lives for their families. To define your brand's purpose, answer the question "Why is my brand here?" When you define your brand's purpose, you don't need to be concerned too much about the competition; you just need to be sure that everything you do aligns with that purpose.

Recognizing Different Brand Types

One of the first choices you make when you decide to build and launch a brand is what to brand — your business, a specific product or service, or yourself. In this section, I describe the brand types you can build and explain how branding differs for each one.

Business or corporate brand

Small businesses to large corporations often brand themselves to

- » Differentiate themselves from competitors
- » Increase recognition among customers and clients, investors, suppliers, potential partners or associates, and other stakeholders
- » Build a strong positive reputation
- » Attract high-quality job applicants
- » Facilitate the introduction of new products
- » Generate press coverage
- » Charge a premium for offering something different and better
- » Increase the market value of the business

The focus of corporate branding is mostly on mission, values, relationships, and the business's culture. Regardless of the size of the business, the goal is to position itself as a respected and valued member of the community — the industry or market in which it operates and the world overall.



REMEMBER

Corporate brands are slow to build and slow to change. You're building the brand the entire time you're building the business. Every decision you make from the time you name the business contributes to the brand, including the suppliers you choose, the people you hire, the culture that develops within the company, how you interact with customers, and your choice of businesses to associate with.

Product brand

A *product* is anything that's manufactured for sale to consumers. A *product brand* is the distinct value of a specific product in the minds of consumers; the product is different from and better in some way than something else the consumer could spend money on. The purpose of branding a product is to

- » Differentiate it from competing products
- » Make it easily recognizable
- » Increase loyalty among consumers
- » Compel consumers to pay more for the product

The focus of product branding is *differentiation* — making the product stand out in the marketplace. You build a product brand through product development, packaging, and messaging — everything that contributes to the consumer’s perception of the product.



REMEMBER

Although corporate brands are slow to build and slow to change, new product brands can be developed quickly and often undergo rebranding.

Service brand

A *service* involves doing something for someone, so how can you possibly brand a service? Usually, you brand the service provider — the business or person providing the service. The purposes of creating a service are very similar to those for creating a business or personal brand:

- » Differentiating the service and service provider from competing services
- » Building credibility (demonstrating that the service provider is qualified)
- » Building trust (showing that the service provider is reputable and reliable)
- » Charging a premium for superior service

With a service brand, your efforts focus mostly on the following credibility- and trust-building activities:

- » Earning certifications, awards, and other credentials and then getting them in front of customers, such as posting them on your website and mentioning them in brochures
- » Presenting content that demonstrates your knowledge and expertise, such as articles, blog posts, social media posts, photos, videos, podcasts, and white papers
- » Engaging with customers and prospects to answer questions and solve problems to further demonstrate your knowledge and expertise
- » Soliciting and posting testimonials or positive reviews from satisfied customers
- » Getting positive reviews from journalists, business organizations, and other trusted sources



REMEMBER

Like corporate brands, service brands are slow to build and slow to change. Your brand continues to evolve as your service evolves. As you introduce new services or develop ways to provide the same services faster, more conveniently, or more affordably, your brand evolves.

Personal brand

A *personal brand* is one that develops around a person. You already have a personal brand: your reputation. People may know you as a sharp-dressing, punctual over-achiever; a careless, fun-loving creative; a devoted parent and respected member of the community; or something else entirely. In a career or business, people develop personal brands to

- » Increase demand for a product or service they provide
- » Further their career
- » Expand their opportunities
- » Build credibility and trust
- » Establish themselves as thought leaders

With a personal brand, your efforts focus mostly on the following activities:



WARNING

- » Discovering who you really are and finding your most attractive (and in-demand) traits, knowledge, and skills
- » Expressing, in a genuine way, who you are, what you do, and what makes you so special
Fake it till you make it doesn't work; people will eventually see past the façade.
- » Being your best you — you are your business and your product, so you need to embrace learning and self-improvement
- » Building a strong portfolio, which may involve earning credentials, developing or gathering samples of your work, or soliciting customer testimonials or reviews — anything that demonstrates success in your field
- » Attending or speaking at industry events and other opportunities to get your name and face in front of people
- » Presenting content that demonstrates your knowledge and expertise — articles, blog posts, social media posts, photos, videos, podcasts, white papers, and so on
- » Engaging with customers and prospects to answer questions and solve problems to further demonstrate your knowledge and expertise



REMEMBER

You're constantly developing your personal brand whenever you do anything that affects other people in any way. Whether you're working as an employee or freelancer, launching your own website, posting content on your social media accounts, or driving through town, all your engagement with others contributes to your brand.

Other brand types

The brand types I've covered to this point are all business and commercial. Other brand types include the following:

- » **Public brand:** One owned by the government, such as the Internal Revenue Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Central Intelligence Agency
- » **Nongovernmental organization brand:** One owned by a not-for-profit organization that isn't affiliated with any government group, such as the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Anywhere, Ceres, and the American Heart Association (AHA)
- » **Event brand:** One created to attract participants, attendees, and sponsors, such as Burning Man, NASCAR, the Olympics, and the Cannes Film Festival

Grasping Brand Architecture Basics

If you're planning to create several related brands, you need to choose the brand architecture that establishes how they're related. You have two options:

- » **Branded house (monolithic)** consists of a master brand (usually, a company) with multiple subbrands (typically, divisions, product families, products, or services), all of which ride the coattails of the master brand. Virgin has several subbrands, including Virgin Records, Virgin Atlantic, Virgin Mobile, Virgin Comics, Virgin Wines, and Virgin Care.
- » **House of brands (freestanding brands)** consists of several stand-alone companies, product families, products, or services, each with its own brand identity, none of which refers to the corporate brand. Proctor & Gamble has a wide variety of consumer brands, including Bounty, Charmin, Gillette, Puffs, and Tide.

Most organizations and people use branded house architecture because it offers the following benefits:

- » **Easier and more affordable:** You build and manage a single brand.
- » **Stronger:** Everything you offer reinforces a single brand. Another way to look at it is that you don't have a bunch of separate brands that dilute the master corporate brand.
- » **Increased brand equity:** A single brand generally has more equity built into it and is easier to sell. With multiple brands, a prospective buyer of the business may want some brands and not others, and will expect to pay less for the business as a result.

Here are a few situations in which the house-of-brands architecture may be the better choice:

- » You have deep pockets and a large corporation with diverse companies, divisions, or families of products or services.
- » You want to introduce a new product to the market that would dilute or clash with your existing brand's identity. Suppose that an automobile manufacturer that built its brand around luxury vehicles decides to offer a line of economy vehicles. Selling economy vehicles would weaken the company's reputation for designing and building luxury vehicles, so creating a stand-alone brand probably would be best.
- » You build or are planning to build a company by acquiring multiple stand-alone brands.



REMEMBER

A key factor in successful branding is consistency, so if anything you're introducing to the marketplace is inconsistent with your existing brand, consider creating a separate, stand-alone brand around it.

Knowing When to Brand

Do you really need to build a brand to accomplish your business, organization, or career goals? Well, not really, but building a brand will generally enable you to accomplish your goals faster and raise your level of achievement. In this section, I explain situations in which building a brand is always beneficial.