

BRANDING 101

Here's what every solopreneur, coach, consultant, creative or service-based small business should know.

(Before they book a web designer or DIY their website)

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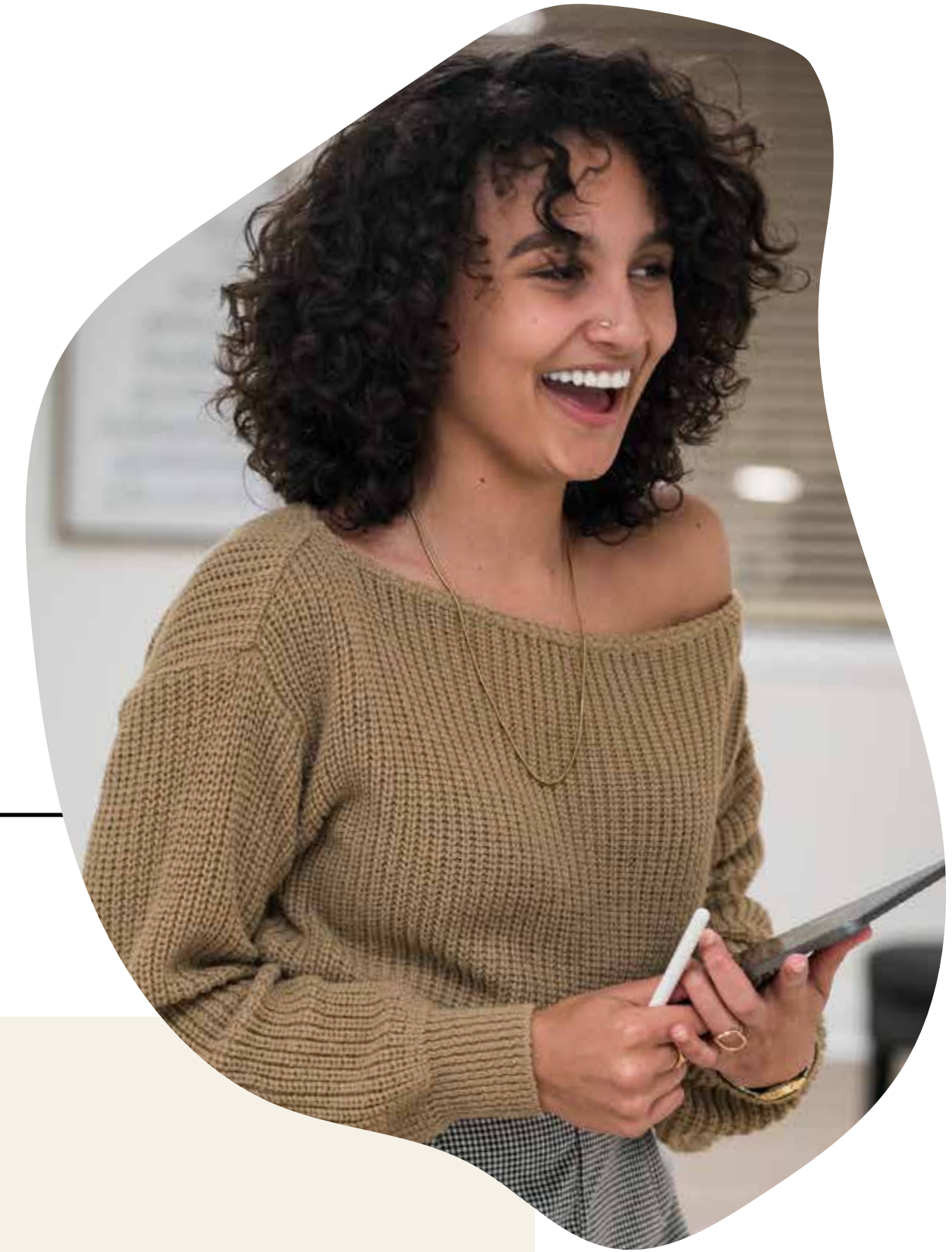
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OK LET'S GO

HI, I'M TAYLOR "SHMAY" HENDERSON.

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In the last few years I've worked with startups, authors, coaches, consultants, experts and creatives in all different stages in their business and can definitively say: there is a direct correlation between **thriving in your small business** and having a clear, functional, active **brand strategy & online presence**.



THE TRUTH IS:

You can make the web work for your business.

You can build credibility, attract your ideal clients or connect to an audience.

You can generate results and grow your business without burning out.

You can take an idea and turn it into a sustainable stream of income.

You can have a brand and website that helps you help others.

You just need to get your business, brand and online presence in alignment with the results you want.

So let's start with the **basics of branding**.

DEFINING “A BRAND”

A brand is an automatic byproduct of engaging with & being in the world. It is not a logo, website, business or self-sustaining idea. And in this digital age it is not a voluntary factor exclusive to large businesses. A brand is a multi-dimensional shared connection and inseparable feedback mechanism of creation. Too abstract?

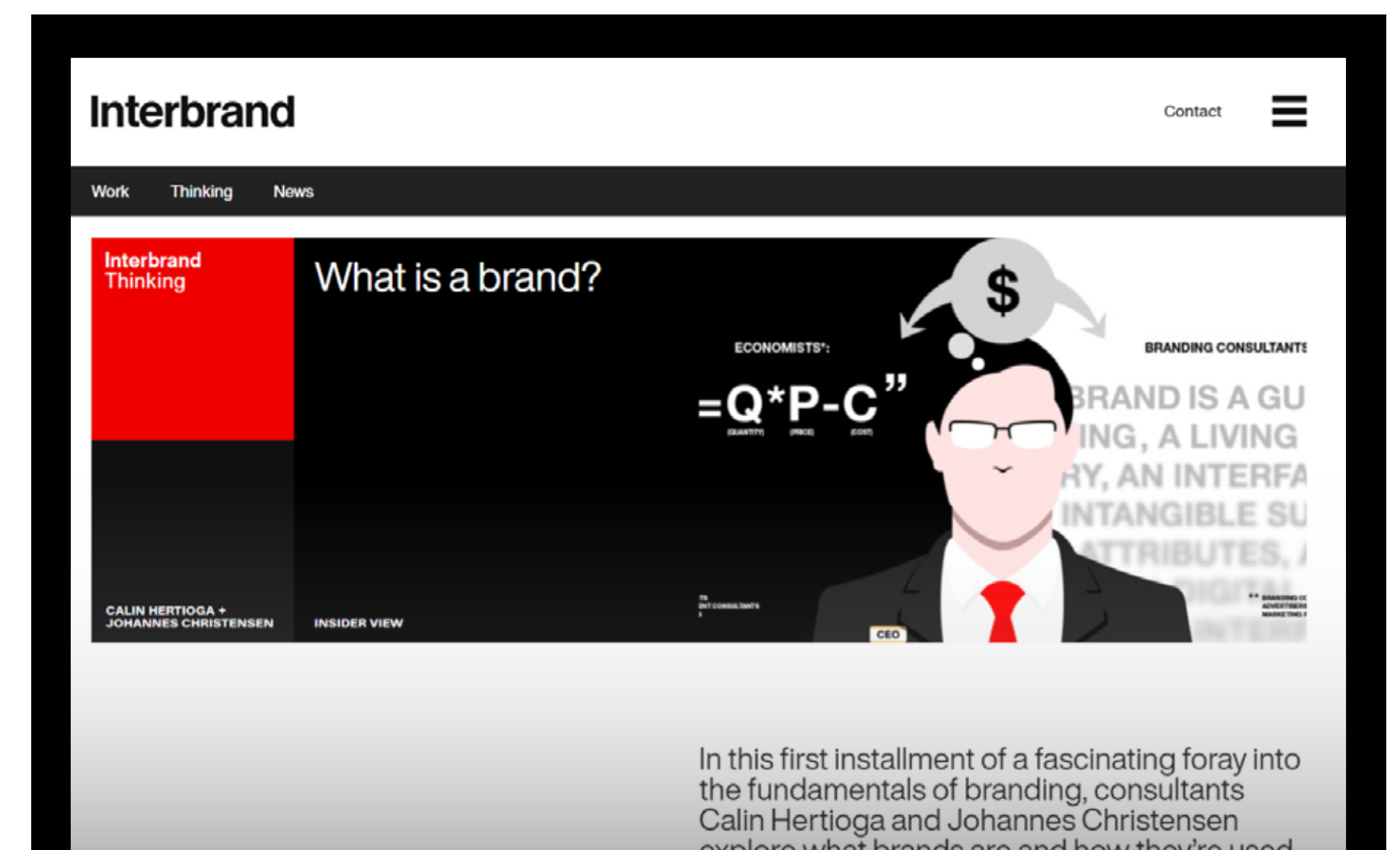
The practical definition we use at OS Design Co. is:

A brand is the RESULT of all expressions and demonstrations by which an entity originates or can be recognized.

THIS DEFINITION IS A DIRECT ADAPTION OF THE DEFINITION PROVIDED BY INTERBRAND.

A brand is the sum of all expressions by which an entity (person, organization, company, business unit, city, nation, etc.) intends to be recognized.

source: interbrand article



Most people don't understand the relationship between action and results, cause and effect, lead versus lag. Let's get really clear on what this definition is saying before we move on:

A brand is the RESULT of all expressions and demonstrations by which an entity originates or can be recognized.

WHICH MEANS

All **the expressions and demonstrations** that come from or represent you or your business will **RESULT in your brand.**

What that means is that a brand is not your logo, online presence, services, instagram feed, a tagline or your own opinion. It is a result that can get you results (sales, subscribers, the trust of your audience, influence, pricing, etc).

LEAD METRIC = WHAT YOU DO, SAY AND CREATE (EITHER STRATEGICALLY OR ERATICALLY OR NOT AT ALL)

LAG METRIC = YOUR BRAND

WAIT, WHAT IS LEAD & LAG?

These are terms to label the data points or indicators used in tracking KPI's (Key Performance Indicators)

Lead Metrics

They define what actions are necessary to achieve your goals with measurable outcomes.

Lag Metrics

Measures output, or the current production and performance.

Leading indicators are dynamic (often way sexier and fun) but difficult to measure, a lagging indicator is typically easy to measure but hard to change.

BRAND COMPONENTS

Now that we know what branding is and that our focus needs to shift to the actions and assets that result in our brand, it's important to set a standard for those results. Because while you technically "have" a brand after you create that blank, inactive instagram account, having a brand is useless if it can't help you reach your goals.

You get what you're aligned with, which means your brand has the potential to attract what you want (or what you don't want). The lead metrics of any complete and effective brand can be desected into 3 components.

IDENTITY

EXAMPLE LEAD METRICS:

Foundational Clarity (brand vision, mission statement, your "why", goals)

Visual Assets (logo, fonts, color palette, etc.)

Client Profile (target audience, market research, dream client profile)

External Clarity (services, positioning statement, brand voice)

STRATEGY

EXAMPLE LEAD METRICS:

Marketing (social media, exposure, content creation, SEO)

Conversion (client journey, lead capture, calls to action)

Client Facing (branded touchpoints, deliverables, offers and upsells)

Positioning (prices, access, brand association, tools, messaging)

ACTIVITY

EXAMPLE LEAD METRICS:

Online Presence (social accounts, website, searchable content)

Client Experience (1:1 interactions, testimonials, trouble shooting, trends and pain points)

Experiments (plan & launch new offers, track campaigns, marketing trial/error)

These are the most common lead metrics or deliverables we deal with as a brand strategy & design studio, the details and emphasis varies from business to business. But still, the only lead metrics worth tracking will be the ones that support or strengthen these aspects of your brand.

IDENTITY

WITHOUT A CLEAR BRAND IDENTITY, YOU WILL CONFUSE YOURSELF, YOUR AUDIENCE OR BOTH. STARTING WITH A CLEAR, COHESIVE, AUTHENTIC FOUNDATION IS A MUST

STRATEGY

DON'T WASTE YOUR ENERGY, RESOURCES AND TIME. WITHOUT STRATEGY, YOU'RE RISKING YOUR IMAGE, MOMENTUM AND INCOME ON TRENDS AND CAN'T EXPECT SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS.

ACTIVITY

DON'T GET STUCK DREAMING OR DESIGNING IN CANVA, BRAND ACTIVITY INSIDE (SERVICES) AND OUTSIDE (MARKETING) IS THE KEY TO CONSISTENT RESULTS. ACTIVITY FEEDS ACTIVITY.

If you aren't where you want to be or you're struggling to launch your idea or personal brand, you're likely neglecting, sabotaging or half-assing one or more of these categories.

COMMON'S

- Only having a visual brand identity (logo, graphics, photos, etc.) and no foundational clarity or plan.
- Thinking "going viral" counts as a strategy, with no structure or lead capture or services outlined.
- Burnt out because the services or content requires too much time & energy.
- Trying to grow an audience on social without any ways to make money in the meantime.
- Inauthentic marketing tacticts lead to only attracting stressful or stingy clients.
- Trying to match branding to existing perception instead of aligning it with specific goals.
- Trying to match branding to existing perception instead of aligning it with specific goals.

here are 3 things
to do instead

→ BEFORE YOU BOOK

You don't need to have it all together right now today. But there's a reason people pay brand designers and coaches thousands of dollars for their services, time and expertise. The most common mistakes that leave people stuck at side-hustle or hearing crickets online can often be traced back to the "health" or completeness of their brand (not because they don't have a 4 page website).

Here are three things you can do right now to prepare to move forward with an expert or business investment.

BEFORE YOU BOOK A DESIGNER, BUY ANOTHER COURSE, LAUNCH WITHOUT A PLAN OR THROW YOUR IDEA AWAY...

CLARIFY YOUR LONG TERM GOALS

You don't "just want to get started" you probably want to get paid to create content or help your own 1:1 clients. Clarify success and work backwards from that.

DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT IN THE NEXT 60 DAYS

What is a measurable achievement you can set and create a plan for that *directly* reflects your long term goal for your brand?

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Have a bunch of ideas for the future but have no idea how to get from here to there? Look at how someone else with similar resources and experience got started & learn from them.

EXAMPLES —
COMING UP NEXT

EXAMPLES & SUCH

CLARIFY YOUR LONG TERM GOALS

is it your dream to write a best selling book?

do you want to go full time as a creative freelancer?

are you trying to offer a course or digital product?

DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT IN THE NEXT 60 DAYS

how about build an email list of 30 subscribers?

are you ready to start offering online booking & scheduling?

do you need to establish yourself as an authority online?

DO YOUR RESEARCH

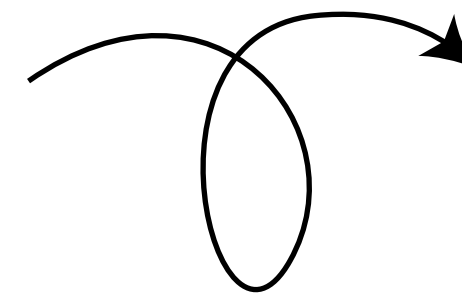
have you looked into how other authors market via email?

what tools & strategies are other people in your niche using to convert clients?

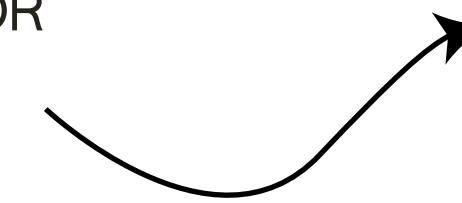
find 3-5 examples of digital products from similar brands, what inspires you?

EXAMPLE FOR FUTURE AUTHORS

IF YOU WANT TO WRITE A BEST SELLING BOOK SOMEDAY BUT ARE JUST GETTING STARTED AS A BRAND OR CONTENT CREATOR... MAYBE CREATING A WEBSITE OR STARTING A YOUTUBE CHANNEL ISN'T THE NEXT MOST HELPFUL STEP.



YOUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT YEAR MIGHT BE TO PRACTICE WRITING LONG-FORM BUT FOR A SMALL AUDIENCE LIKE AN EMAIL LIST. SO WHAT IF CONTENT CREATION IS JUST A VEHICLE TO GROW AN EMAIL LIST OF READERS TO TEST IDEAS ON?



WHAT IF YOU DID RESEARCH ON THE SOCIAL PLATFORM YOU PLAN TO USE AND FIND 5 AUTHORS WITH EMAIL LISTS AND SIGN UP SO YOU CAN STUDY HOW THEY ENGAGE WITH THEIR SUBSCRIBERS

STORYTIME

OS Design Co operated without a functioning website or active marketing for 2 years.

We thought we had a brand (silently lol) but it was mostly in our heads and legal documents. Without identity, we had no control over how our clients saw us, no confidence when pricing our services. Without strategy there was very little room to grow or leverage the power of branding. Without an online presence, we didn't get to decide who we worked with. Did we book clients? Yep, pure referrals babyyyyyy.

Which was fine if that's where we wanted to stay. If your goal is to be underpaid, overworked, anxious and not able to help more than one client at a time, by all means, don't worry about these things.

But if you want to grow something that is intentional, functional and authentic... something you can build a business or community on...

Hopefully this information helps you.

TAYLOR
“SHMAY”
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BRAND
STRATEGIST
& DESIGNER



VISIT [OSDESIGNCO.COM](https://osdesignco.com)

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