

## **Branding Your Small Business**

Branding your business is a necessity. Your “brand” is how people see your business. It is your identity and reputation.

And customers associate strong brand recognition with trust, one of the most important factors in decision making.

### **How do customers see your business?**

Before digging into your branding, decide not only who you are, but how you want customers to see you. Do potential customers view your company as modern problem solvers? Traditional and knowledgeable? Friendly and family oriented? Sophisticated and expensive?

Many times we are too entrenched in our own businesses to form an objective opinion. Try to look at it from the customer point of view.

### **Do your research**

Research other companies similar to yours. Analyze what makes the good ones look so good, and what makes the bad ones look so bad. Learn from their strengths and weaknesses. It will demonstrate why branding is a necessity.

### **Create a professional and memorable logo**

The foundation of your brand is your logo. It needs to reflect who you are. Discuss your ideas with a graphic designer and have it professionally designed. They will be able to execute a vector-based logo that can be reproduced effectively on signs, vehicles, websites, brochures, business cards, etc. They will also create versions that read well when placed on light, dark, and complex backgrounds.

This will pay off in the long run. An amateur design created in the wrong format will cause your sign shops and printers to spend time fixing and reformatting the art to work for their purposes, resulting in additional costs, and possibly appearing differently than intended.

Do you have an older logo that has already has brand recognition? Consider updating it to today’s standards. Perhaps slight modifications or a refresh is all it needs.

### **Be consistent**

Consistency is crucial to your brand. Your logo and message should always look the same in all places; on your trucks, business cards, flyers, website, signs, email, etc. Select and use coordinated visuals consistently:

*Logo* – Always use your logo as it was intended. Never modify your logo to fit in awkward spaces or adjust colors to conform to a specific need.

*Colors* – Using the logo colors for other graphics creates a strong and identifiable brand that is easily recognized. Integrate your main color wherever possible.

*Fonts* – Select a font that is easy to read and use it on all your communications. Introducing multiple fonts for different occasions will only cause confusion.

*Tagline* – If you have a tagline, or slogan, always keep the same size relationship between the logo and tagline. Never alter the size or font.

*Tone* – Express your company with a consistent tone in text and in visuals. Use your branded colors, fonts, imagery consistently in all your messaging. Avoid adding gimmicky fonts, colors, silly drawings, and alarming photos in an attempt to get attention.

### **More than just visuals**

Your brand is more than visuals. It also your identity. It includes your uniforms, your trucks, your estimates, how you answer the phone, how you treat customers, the words you use on your website.

GFC Global's [Influencing through design](#) does a good job explaining basic branding for beginning graphic designers. It is a good place to start if you are looking to rebrand your business.