

## Finding & Crafting Brand Cool

So, we've established that as a part of 'being more human' and competing successfully for a longer period of time, a brand needs to know its purpose, its cause, the reason it exists... its why.

Once you have unearthed your 'why' and created the essential bits of communication you need to convey your mission / cause / movement or beliefs, **it's time to bring them to life through the words, deeds and visuals of your brand.**

The next step in how a brand gets built, is to bring your unique version of sizzle and sparkle to what could otherwise be a bland, boring, forgettable business.

This 'special sauce' is what Nic calls: '**Brand Cool**'

### **Brand Cool.**

One of a brand's greatest assets, and the key to its magic mojo, is its cool factor. Its magnetism. Its sex appeal. Its instant 'love it or hate it' polarity. This essential, emotional x-factor, which Nic calls 'Brand Cool', is one of the only things more valuable than money that most businesses desire, but few will ever really have.

### **WANT TO SEE WHO IS GETTING THIS RIGHT?**

**Check out Forbes 'Most Valuable Brand' List for the year**

<https://www.forbes.com/powerful-brands/list/>

**Brand Cool** is the secret to truly unlocking *all* of the treasures in the **Brand Advantage Cycle**. Just having a purpose isn't enough, you have to make that purpose shiny, sparkly, edgy or weird enough for it to stand out in a crowd.

Consider the Tech Goliaths in the Forbes list above... The chances of them being able to rely purely on technology innovation to stay ahead of their close competitors is unlikely, so **they need to a significant amount of their massive marketing budgets to keep innovating with their Brand Cool to keep their competitive advantage.**

## What is Brand Cool

Brand cool, as in most types of cool, is nearly impossible to quantify or create in a lab. It's personality, its energy. It's a thing of the streets... of smoky back rooms. It's a thing of long hot showers and damp earthy trails... of kitchen experimenting and bar napkin brainstorming.

Brand cool really belongs to the makers, to the doers... to the insomniacs and the freaks, to the artists and the inventors. It is not forced and it can't be rushed. B

Brand cool is like a puff of smoke, the more you try to wrap your hands around it, the faster it disappears from sight. It's an essential: it's an organic, wild, inexplicable thing that comes from real people, who say and make real things. It's for people who just don't give a f\*ck about what other people think. Many of these brand magic makers aren't looking for it, it just happens to them... like accidentally falling in love.

For the rest of us who are trying to make brand cool on purpose (and for those big corporations in the Forbes list), we have to try to break it down and recreate it as best we can.

**The first step is to get clear on its four essential elements, and then collaborate with the artists and inventors whose genius it is to create these bits of brand magic.**

## Four Elements of Brand Cool

1. **Words:** voice, copy,
2. **Visuals:** color, photography, graphics
3. **Experiences: moments of interaction, service,**
4. **Artefacts:** tangible proof, stationary, products, swag, physical things

With each of these elements, your brand has a chance to set itself apart. To be brave and take risks that will get it noticed. To make a statement. To get weird. To make people feel amazing, or awkward, or confronted, or however you want them to feel for your message to hit home (and for your product or service to become a must-have in their life).

## Make No Mistake

For a brand, these elements of Brand Cool are not 'nice to have' - they are *essential*.

If you're not ready to do the work, are not a super creative person and don't have the time or money to invest in working with geniuses, or can't see how this stuff matters, then stop here.

### **Do not pass go.**

Do not move forward with the creation of 'brand cool' - go back to growing your business. Work on developing your why and testing out in your business marketing, build up some momentum, save up some cash or contacts to do this part properly, and when you're ready, come back to this brand building process.

Consider this moment your 'minimum viable product' for branding, and do the bare minimum (some sort of logo, some sort of consistent set of colors: find some [templates you love](#) at [creativemarket.com](#) and just run with that for now). Put something clean and inoffensive together quickly, efficiently and inexpensively. Then... come back when you've got more insight, more time and more budget, and treat your business and brand to a 'refresh' (which basically just means adding more brand cool, or making sure your brand cool fits better or speaks more directly to your ideal client).

### **Do not spend any significant time or money on half-assing it.**

A brand that's 'meh' is not going to do the job you need it to do. Even Nic who is a *branding expert and designer herself*, waited YEARS and YEARS to develop a personal brand (with brand cool) until she found the right team of geniuses to work with and had saved the cash to invest in hiring them to do it right. In the meantime, ***she was patient, ignored her webshame, built an MVP (<https://workingwithdog.com/pet-product-development-101/>), which then developed into a businesses with a strong why, and then she added the brand cool on top when she was ready (and she knew more about her audience).***

## **I Am Ready to Invest in Brand Cool**

OK, so if you're still here, you're ready to invest in a brand that makes people go crazy. A brand that's delicious, and divine - that your ideal client wants to step inside and live in. Pulling this off, this level of brand cool, is a little bit science and a little bit magic - but it's mostly art. If you don't have an artistic bone in your body, you're going to have to call in reinforcements... the 'geniuses' I mentioned before.

Even if you do consider yourself an artist, it's *very likely* that this kind of art is going to require muscles you don't have. Even if you DO have them, you're probably too close to it to be objective, so plan to develop your brand cool with help, instead of in isolation.

## LEARN HOW TO AND WHO TO HIRE TO HELP

<http://jnicholesmith.thinkific.com/courses/branding-101-hiring-artists>

This is the real, raw truth of building a brand that has real magic – is that it's an art, and most of us are not the right kind of artist to do it on our own.

But for now, let's dive in to what you're going to need to create to build your Brand Cool

### Four Elements of Brand Cool

1. **Words:** voice, copy,
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In this module you will find PDF CHECKLISTS for each of these elements of Brand Cool. Print them out and keep them near to help you along your Brand Cool building journey. Below is a little intro to each and some additional resources to help you (including this one here with a BIG list of helpful tips relating to all-things brand cool!)

### GET A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF BRAND COOL TIPS

<https://workingwithdog.com/marketing-toy-box/>

### MORE ABOUT CRAFTING & COMMUNICATING YOUR BRAND COOL

<https://workingwithdog.com/brand-guidelines>

#### 1. Words

SO MUCH of the personality of your brand will be expressed through the words you choose to use and the ways you choose to combine them.

The 'tone' or personality of your brand through its words, is referred to as 'Brand Voice'. Your voice is essentially made up of the words you use (and don't use) as well as the general syntax, style and personality you apply to them... do you speak conversationally, with slang? Do you talk about your religious or political beliefs? Do you stick to grammar rules or break them?

My recommendation is to be as REAL and CONVERSATIONAL as possible in order to have the most powerful impact through your words.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT STORYTELLING & BRAND VOICE

<https://workingwithdog.com/storytelling/>

## 2. Visuals

### Color

One of the quickest ways creatures make decisions about things is through the interpretation of color. Not just humans, either, think of all those crazy colored birds, bugs and reptiles that use color as a way to scare of predators, attract mates or send other messages about where they fit in to the circle of life. Color is an incredibly important element in our decision-making, especially when it comes to what we buy:

**“Customers generally make an initial judgment on a product within 90 seconds of interaction with that product and about 62%-90% of that judgment is based on color”** (... here's more from the [wiki explanation](#))

and over here, is a [visual breakdown of the emotions & associations associated with color](#) as well as some more interesting [color statistics as they relate to purchasing](#).

Your customers and clients are operating under this same code of conduct – so color becomes an essential element in your ability to attract and communicate with them before they have a chance to meet you or read a single thing you have to say. Make sure the colors you are using are consistent to your brand and are a good fit for the product you're selling and your price/ position in the market. You want to ensure the colors you're using are giving your clients the feelings you want them to be experiencing (*see links above*) and if you're selling a product that will end up in their home, you better damn well make sure that product matches their couch/curtains/wallpaper etc.!

### COLOR

<https://workingwithdog.com/color/>

## Photography / Video



Ok. So this advice comes from Nic, and she IS a photographer, so there will be bias inherent in this next part... BUT she is also a designer, has Masters in Marketing, has run her own businesses for over a decade and has watched the results of her marketing and the marketing efforts of her clients (and WWD members) and she can tell you, there is no sales tool MORE effective per dollar-spent than wonderful, emotive, descriptive imagery (both still and video imagery).

With entrepreneurs, this is one of the most overlooked and underutilized ways to instantly connect with potential clients. Most companies dabble in photography – most businesses know they need it to show their products or fill their website up – but is the fair few who really, really get photography right and those that do, profit immensely from their investment.

*This is as true, or TRUER with video!*

## **LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO USE PHOTOGRAPHY**

<https://workingwithdog.com/photography/>

## **LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO USE VIDEO**

<https://workingwithdog.com/video-for-pet-brands/>

## **Graphics**

When they want information quickly, people don't like to read. It's time-consuming. It's an investment. They skim. They look and make a judgment within a few seconds as to whether or not to make that investment in you or your business. Also, reading is tiring so if I can take more information in through visual means, all the better. Graphics like icons and infographics and add HUGE leaps and bounds to the ability of your customers to get where you need them to go faster and with more ease.

When it comes to Brand Cool, graphics like your logo, like the layouts of your print, environmental and online marketing stuff and of course custom illustrations (repeating pattern anyone?) add TONS to the overall cool of your brand.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR LOGO & LAYOUTS

<https://workingwithdog.com/brand-guidelines/>

### 3. Experiences

In a digital, global, automated, outsourced, increasingly cynical world – the experiences we create for our customers (and potential customers) is more important than ever. Each ‘touch-point’ with your people is an opportunity to thrill them. At the start, of course we’re just concerned with the basics of getting all this stuff working properly – but eventually – when you’re in ‘Brand Cool’ territory, you want to take a long look at the way your people experience your brand, products, services etc.

Essentially, anything experiential in your brand, from customer service, to unboxing, to damage control, to ‘user experience’ on your website, is about two things:

1. Increasing desire
2. Reducing friction

Ultimately, as brands we are playing the long game, and we want not just the ‘quick buck’ – but to build relationships and invest in the lifetime value of our people.

## 5 PRINCIPLES TO HELP YOU BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

<https://workingwithdog.com/5-dogly-principles/>

### 4. Artefacts

Some of the MOST FUN bits of building a brand include the tangible artefacts you create to reflect your brand cool. This will include ‘brand swag’ like stickers, buttons, client gifts, tee shirts etc. It will also include your ‘packaging’ – literal packaging like boxes and tissue paper and ribbons and bags... as well as things like uniforms and environmental design like displays, event booths, vehicle wraps etc. (packaging up the stuff that’s not your actual product). It also includes the tangible ‘takeaways’ that your customer may hold on to... the



brochures, welcome packets, postcards, tags, magazines or other print pieces you produce to stay 'top of mind' at and after a purchase, or an encounter with you or your brand.

This is an element you have to be careful with because it's easy to spend a LOT of money going crazy with artefacts – but it IS important to consider this element of brand cool and make sure you at least have a few artefacts that exist in the real world (not just online) that reinforce your customers purchase decision, or increase their desire. This element is actually a part of #3 Experiences – because the goal is for these artefacts to create a wonderful moment, or memorable (or repeatable) experience.

### **CHECK OUT SOME GREAT #DOGBRANDSWAG**

<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/dogbrandswag/>