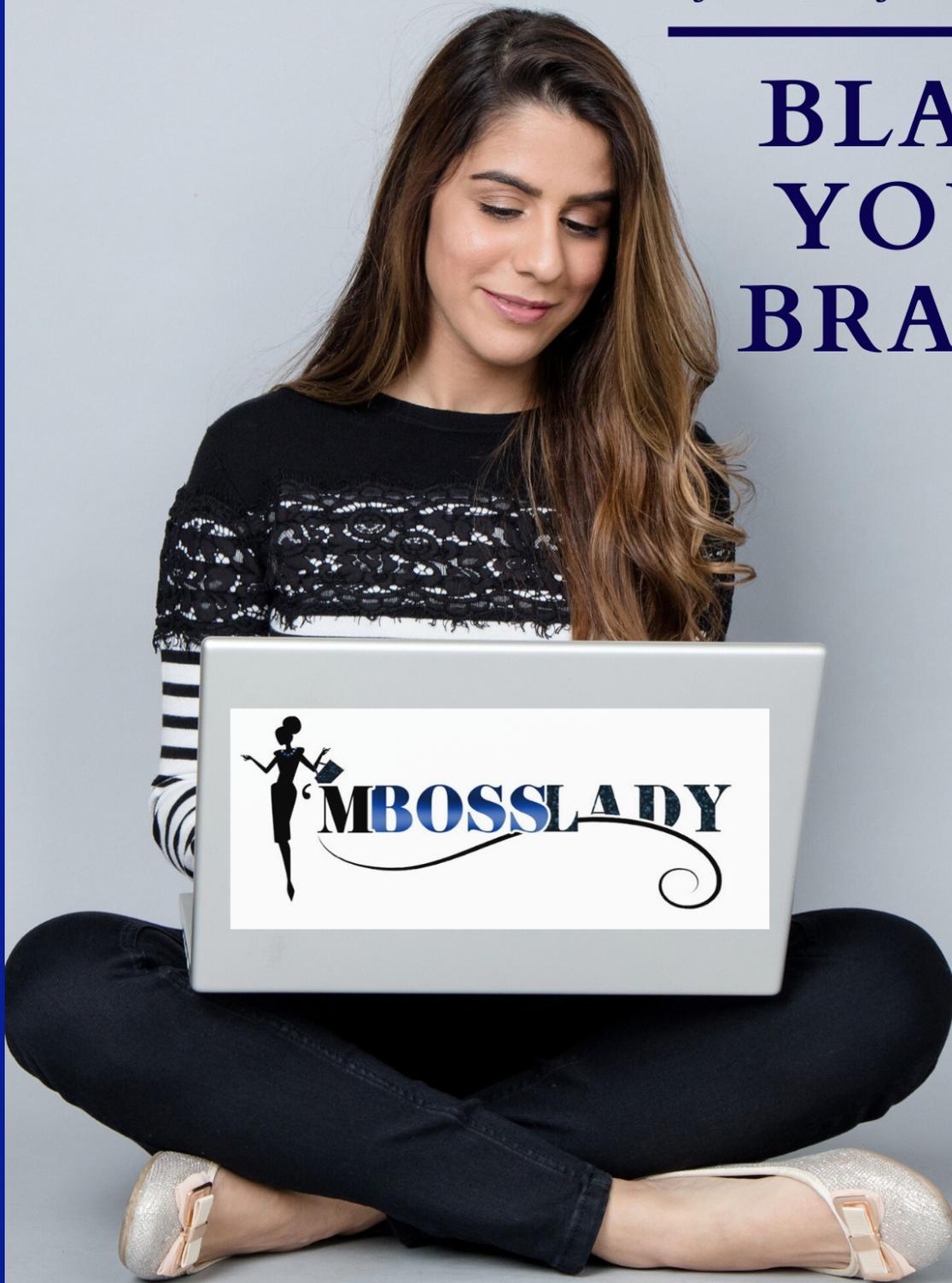


JILLIAN~JADE JAMES

BLAZE YOUR BRAND



Learn simple yet effective ways to build your business
by creating a blazing brand identity.

This guide includes how to create your brand, understanding
your target market, your online presence, sales, and more.

BASIC BUSINESS GUIDE FOR ENTREPRENEURS

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Blaze Your Brand



Introduction

Hey there!

I'm Jillian, owner of ImBossLady. The Blaze Your Brand guide is for the solopreneur looking to build, grow, and blaze their business through successful branding strategies. If you haven't launched your business yet, these strategies will help you through the startup process on a successful launch. As a small business owner, you are your brand, and I will help you keep your authenticity in your business through marketing, ensuring your audience recognizes your mission. Remember your mission is your purpose, your brand is how you convey it.

I have a degree in entrepreneurship and small business management. I started my entrepreneurial journey in 2006, as an event planner. Experiencing the many ups and downs in business, I have realized what it takes to run a successful company through your branding strategy. I know what it's like to have a great idea for starting a business, the knowledge and experience in your field, but have not truly created a brand your audience will recognize. Like many people, I thought a brand was just a visible aspect and quickly did I learn it is so much more. I had no idea what was included in a brand identity other than I had a logo, color scheme, website, and business cards, but that did not work either. I thought I wanted to serve everyone and boy was I wrong! Once I created a specific plan about what I wanted my business to look like, even on the back end, I started to see the results I wanted. Does this sound like you? Well let's get started!

Chapter 1: Basics of Branding

According to *Entrepreneur's Business Encyclopedia*, the definition of branding is "The marketing practice of creating a name, symbol, or design that identifies and differentiates a product from other products." Therefore your branding strategy defines how you convey your business message. You have to know who you are, what you do, who you want to serve, and how you plan to serve them, in order to start your branding process. So you may be wondering, "Where do I begin? How can I do this?" Well, I am here to start you at the beginning.

Let's start by choosing a name for your business. This is generally pretty simple, however there are some things that you have to consider.

- Is the name descriptive of the business? Let's say you choose the name, 'The Crazy Eight.' Hhhmmm... Are you a group of 8 comedians doing stand up? Or are you a group of bakers that create out-of-the-box wedding cakes and treats? The name is cute, quirky, and pretty simple, but does it tell your audience what you do?
- If your business expands, will the name still be relevant? You have now grown and receiving so much business, you needed to hire on 4 more bakers. Are you still 'The Crazy Eight?' or will you have to consider including your new team? Unless all of the original 8 are all partners as owners in the business and one of each will be involved in every event, is the name still relevant?

- Will your name work internationally? If you only want to be known in your current country, then your name may be efficient. But what if you offer services or products that will ship internationally, carefully consider that some words have different meanings in different countries.

Now you should register your name. The type of registration you choose should mainly depend on the level of business you anticipate, as well as how you want to be taxed. Every state has different laws on registering business names, so be sure to start by visiting your specific Secretary of State website as a start.

The simplest way is to file with your state your DBA, or doing business as, which is most used by solopreneurs or partnerships when first starting out. This protects your name in your area alone. So depending on the type of business you are running, this may be sufficient in the beginning. But remember, someone in another state could legally use your same business name.

In order to protect that name even further, many business owners choose to trademark their name, ensuring no one can use the same name in business in the United States. Registering as a trademark is a timely and specific process which can take months to complete. I suggest hiring a trademark attorney to ensure all paperwork is completed properly and by deadlines. An attorney is not required, but as in some court cases you can represent yourself and win. However if you do not know all of the terms and conditions required, you may be out of more time and money than if you invested in the beginning.

Many entrepreneurs also consider applying for an LLC, or limited liability corporation. The main reason for this type of filing is to protect the owners' personal assets from any liability in business. This is also a good way to file if you intend on hiring employees for your business. Again, each state has its own specific laws on who needs to file and why, so be sure to check out the information specific to you. However, the LLC title does not mean that your business is the only official business. DBAs are recognized as well. Do your research for your industry and your state.

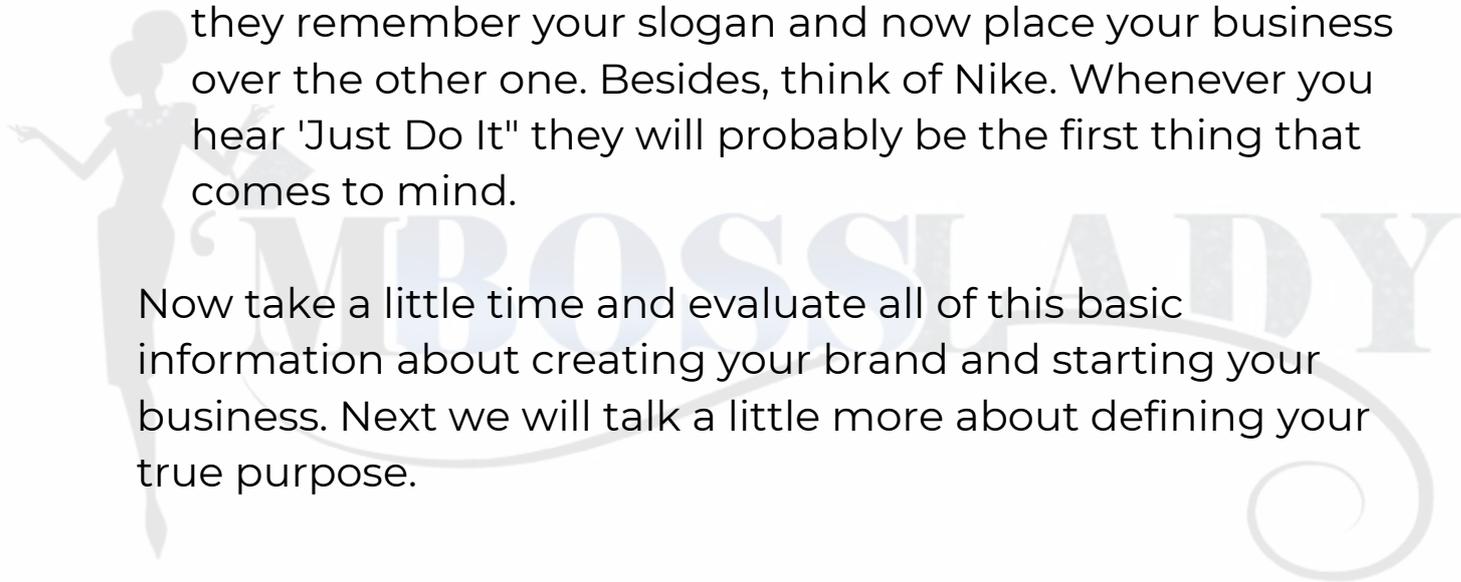
Before you can actually get into determining your brand identity, you must understand the purpose of your business. This is usually found in your business plan. If you haven't created a business plan, now is a great time to get started. Your business plan does not have to be complicated, as long as the main points are covered, many small business, especially entrepreneurs, can begin with a two page plan. Now, what is your mission or purpose for your business? Your why? If your reason for business is simply to make money, you may want to go back and reevaluate this. Financially freedom is a great ultimate goal but not why you are doing what you do. If you are an artist but start a business as a personal bartender, that may not last because that is not where your passion lies. Your audience must be able to feel just as excited as you are about your business so that it will be successful.

Now it's time to develop your visual brand. There are several aspects to this step. so let's talk about the basics.

- Color scheme: Choose your brand colors wisely as colors can bring certain emotions when seen by consumers. The color pink gives the impression that you cater to women, or that your brand represents femininity. The color green may give your audience the representation of health and wellness. See the chart on the next page for a more detailed outlook on color psychology.
- Font: This may not seem like a big deal but it is. Every time you put out media for your business the font should be consistent. It's clean and professional. Every time your business name is shown, it should be the same font. Not only the name but depending on your business, think about sending out newsletters, emails, flyers, brochures, and even your business cards, and all the fonts are different. Your audience will not clearly recognize your business.
- Logo: Your logo should definitely represent your business and the audience you are trying to reach. Logos can be designs, words, or a combination of both. Your logo does not have to include the entire name of your company, a specific graphic or photo could be sufficient, and vice versa. Whatever you think will represent your company, and the message you are trying to convey.
- Website: This has YOU written all over it. Every single piece of your website speaks your brand. From the type of language you use (formal or informal, first or third person), to your font, color scheme, graphics, information, and layout. Even how you represent your customer service speaks about your brand.

- Media: This includes everything you are going to use to market your business through printed items. If possible, it is a good idea to hire one person to create all of your printed media for you. This will ensure that everything is uniformed and on brand. Your media can include your business cards, flyers, brochures, table runners, social media templates, and more.
- Slogan: Is this necessary? No, not at all. But it does make you stand out from your competition. Imagine having a business name similar to someone else, but maybe two people are trying to remember which name is yours. Then they remember your slogan and now place your business over the other one. Besides, think of Nike. Whenever you hear 'Just Do It' they will probably be the first thing that comes to mind.

Now take a little time and evaluate all of this basic information about creating your brand and starting your business. Next we will talk a little more about defining your true purpose.



Color Psychology

Photo credit: Nicholas Schriver

RED
MEANS: passionate, active, EXCITING, bold, youthful, physical, PIONEERING, leader, confidence, ambition, POWER
BRANDS: Kellogg's, Virgin, LEGO, Coca-Cola, Nintendo, Red Bull, Pinterest

PINK
MEANS: love, calm, respect, WARMTH, longterm, feminine, intuitive, care, assertive, sensitive, NURTURE, possibilities, UNCONDITIONAL
BRANDS: BBC, three, Barbie, COSMOPOLITAN, VICTORIA'S SECRET

PURPLE
MEANS: DEEP, creativity, unconventional, original, stimulation, individual, WEALTH, modesty, compassion, DISTINGUISHED, respectable, fantasy
BRANDS: Cadbury, YAHOO!, Hallmark, Milka, Zoopla.co.uk

NAVY
MEANS: trust, order, LOYALTY, sincere, authority, communication, confidence, PEACE, control, responsible, SUCCESS, CALM
BRANDS: Facebook, Reebok, British Gas, Twitter, GAP

GREEN
MEANS: BALANCE, growth, restore, sanctuary, EQUILIBRIUM, positivity, NATURE, generous, clarity, prosperity, good judgement, safety, stable
BRANDS: bp, Holiday Inn, LACOSTE, Starbucks

BLUE
MEANS: spirit, perspective, CONTENT, control, rescue, determination, self-sufficient, modern goals, aware, OPEN, ambition
BRANDS: Intel, Blu-ray Disc, Skype, Twitter, WordPress

ORANGE
MEANS: INSTINCT, WARMTH, gut reaction, optimistic, spontaneity, extrovert, social, FREEDOM, impulse, motivation
BRANDS: Fanta, Orange, MasterCard, bitly, Blogger

Chapter 2: Define Your Purpose

Now we discuss your purpose in business. Why are you doing this? Why are you even in business? If your answer is money, like I stated before, you need to try again. Financial freedom is a goal, not a purpose. Your business should wake you up an hour earlier in the mornings, or keep you up an extra hour at night. It should fill your mindset. Your business should be something that you would do happily for free, but know the value of your talents enough to put a price tag on it. So how do you define your purpose?

What is your why? Why did you decide to take your talent and turn it into a business versus keeping it as a hobby? Sometimes I hear people say it is their children, and they want to leave them their legacy. There is nothing wrong with that, however if your kids do not have the same passion for this industry, how or will they be able to keep your business growing once you've retired? Let's say you are an event planner. Your why may be that you are creative and enjoy bringing other's visions to life. Maybe it is because you like putting together awesome events. Or you could be a fool for love, and it gives you peace and happiness to see how your hard work made the bride cry tears of joy on her big day.

Let's talk about my why. My first business was as an event planner. I had a great idea and definitely enjoyed being a creative, so I just started putting all of my ideas into a business. I created my name, got my DBA, created a social media page, made my website, and put out ads. But there were so many steps that I missed. I didn't understand why my business wasn't growing and just staying still.

I was taking on all the clients that would reach out to me but I still wasn't happy in business. And honestly, I did not want to work with some of these people. I did not have a clear vision on my target audience. I did not have a real plan for handling clients, no marketing strategy, no real business plan. I was just doing the most. I paused my business and took a step back. I went and got my degree in entrepreneurship and small business management. I changed the way I did business. I did not even think about becoming a branding consultant. I had a local organization reach out to me based off of my online presence. I hadn't planned an event in years, I had someone reach out to me for their wedding. I shifted how I did business because now I had more information, education, and I knew what worked and what did not.

When I started consulting had such great responses. My techniques were working for others and this is because I found the passion in me. Helping others to build and grow their business the right way the first time. It gave me such a great feeling to see how I helped another entrepreneur reach their goals. Yes, this is my passion. This is what I want to do. Yes, I still plan events, it definitely keeps me happy, I enjoy the creativity, and who doesn't love a good party? Hopefully my own story of purpose helps you determine how to find yours.

Answer these simple questions to determine your purpose:

- What is your why?
- What is your passion?
- Map out your ideal day. (If you were already where you wanted to be in business, what would your day consist of from waking up in the morning until you went to bed at night.)
- Write out your 30, 60, 90 day goals. Then 6 months and 1 year.



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Chapter 3: Your Target Market

Do you know who you serve? Or who you would like to serve? That's your target audience. I remember when I first went into business as an event planner, I did not have a target audience. I wanted to take on any and every client I could get. I wanted to be booked and busy. Does this sound familiar? When you first get into running your own business you may think that you do not want to turn anybody down. But that is totally incorrect. By accepting anyone who contacted me to plan an event, I found myself drained. I was negotiating below my price range, I was dealing with bridezillas (not the good kind), I was simply doing too much. At one point, you have to be able to learn to say no. So how do you create your target market?

Who do you want to work with? There are so many factors in determining this aspect. Before you break down their characteristics, ask yourself, what problem will you solve? For me as an event planner, I wanted to bring their vision to life, allowing them to be a guest at their own event with no worries, and create an out-of-the-box, nontraditional event. Then ask yourself, why do they need your products or services? People can plan their own events of course, and save money on hiring a planner, so why would they hire me? Well I had resources for vendors that may provide them with better deals, I have an understanding of the contracts, I am creative in design, I can keep their stress level at a low by them not having to deal with deadlines, contracts, and meetings, plus I could actually save them money knowing where they can cut costs and stay within budget.

Now break down their specific characteristics. Create your client avatar.

- Gender: This may not be necessary but is something to consider
- Age: This is definitely important. The age does not have to be specific but can be generational. Baby boomers, millennials, and Gen Z consumers have different mindsets.
- Income level: This is based on what your price range will be for your products or services. It is okay if you want your prices to be at the lower end. Just remember that is the client you will attract. If you want to work with high end people, don't be afraid to charge those prices.
- Career: It helps determine their average lifestyle.
- Family: Single, married, divorced, children. Sometimes that makes a difference based on what you are providing.
- Hobbies/ Interests/ Where they shop: Think about the mindset of someone who shops at Target vs. Walmart. Whole Foods vs. Fiesta. Chanel vs. Fashion Nova. The Galleria vs. the outlet mall.
- Where do they hang out?: Do they get their coffee at Starbucks or 7-11? Do they have girls day out at the local pub or are they drinking mimosas over brunch? Do they take their kids to the museum on the weekends or Chuck E Cheese?

- How will you reach them?: Are they active online? Which social media platforms? Do they prefer direct mail or email marketing? Are they frequenting events or prefer to stay in the house?

Now you can go even further and break it down into more categories, like ethnicity or demographic, the above suggestions are simply a starting point to get you in the right direction. Take the last point of how you will reach them into serious consideration. This will help you through the next chapter as we discuss marketing.

