

# Angela Kelly Smith

## Don't "Just Do It" with Your Branding Brand + Design Scoop ep. 002 Podcast Transcript

Welcome to Brand + Design Scoop, where I share practical, relatable tips on branding, design, and building a business for sole proprietors.

I'm Kelly, a brand strategist and Squarespace website designer and founder of AKS Design Studio.

Today, I want to talk about some misunderstandings around branding a new website. When you're starting out as a sole proprietor, you often don't have much money to spend on your business. And there are a lot of things to spend your money on. There are business filing fees, whether you're filing as a fictitious name or an LLC. You need cash to open a business checking account. You need a website hosting plan and a custom domain name. You might need an attorney or an accountant. You might have inventory. You might need to upgrade your website to an e-commerce plan. You might need to buy industry-specific software to do your job. And you might even need to rent a physical space. All that is just the basic cost of doing business.

Then there are the marketing-related costs that so many people either overlook, don't want to pay for, or flat out do wrong. The one I'm going to discuss today is branding your website.

In my years as a marketing consultant and mentor coach, I came across so many clients who misunderstood what branding is. Totally understandable. Branding is sort of difficult to define because it involves emotions.

Here's how the American Marketing Association defines branding. "A brand is a name, term, design symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers."

Very plain there. Okay, so that's a good start. By that definition, Nike's swoosh is its brand. And "Just Do It" is their brand. But is that really it?

No. The swoosh and "Just Do It" are just pieces of the Nike brand. Nike isn't its logo. Nike isn't its tagline. Nike's brand, just like the brand of all companies and people, is a gut impression. **It's how you feel about the company or a person when you see the logo, the name, the tagline, or**

**an ad. It's how you feel when you go to their store, their website, or their social media account. It's how you feel when you talk with them, read a blog post, or listen to a podcast.**

Now, as a side note, if you get a different feeling at any one of those points, then something's going wrong somewhere with the brand. Something needs to be tweaked or fixed.

So, what's Nikes brand? How would we describe it in emotional terms?

Think about it for just a moment. For me, Nike is inspirational, heroic, and provocative. They make me want to get up and take action, whether that's in fitness or anything else, like my business or just cleaning the house. I just want to get up and do something.

So, I went to their website today. And the top of the page features children wearing coats and playing on a tree or like tugging on these ropes attached to the tree. There are white drop cloths representing snow. And the copy reads, "Players going to play play play."

Lower on the page is an image of five women of different body builds and ethnicities. They're in various different dance positions, and the photos are taken of the different women at different times. They're not all dancing together. And the copy reads, "Dance. Your style speaks just as loudly as your movement."

Both images and the copy feature action. The people are in motion, and the verbs are action words. This is perfect for Nike because they're all about movement. The swoosh represents action. Heroes take action. "Just Do It" provokes action. Did I say "action" enough for you there?

This is great branding.

Now what about the colors? Nike's logo is black. the typography on their website is black. So, they can let the color of their images do the talking without worrying about clashing with their logo or the general color scheme at their website. I'm sure they consider which images to put next to which other images. You'd want that to coordinate nicely. But the fact that the images never clash with the website as a whole makes things a lot easier for them.

Now, one more thing about Nike's brand: Nike's messaging is that they are for all people and people at any stage of fitness, having any ability or disability. This comes through to me on their website. I didn't see anyone with a visible disability on the homepage. But the ethnic diversity on the homepage was fabulous. And I felt like I could wear a Nike product without feeling like a fraud, even though I'm not an athlete.

**So, what can we learn from Nikes brand of website that we can apply to your brand and your website?**

Let's go back to some requests I get from consulting coaching clients. Some clients who tell me they needed to redo the branding on their website, it turns out what they meant was, they wanted a new logo or they just got a new logo. And they wanted to put the logo in the header of their website. That was usually it. And often they had new headshots to put up, too.

Technically, that was refreshing their website. That's not rebranding their website, that's not even branding from scratch. It's just throwing up what you've got on hand without thinking about what effect it's going to have on your visitors.

What do I mean by that?

So you've got a pretty logo. **How does that logo make people feel?** And is that the feeling you want your clients to have? I hope it is. I'm not saying it isn't. I'm just asking the questions.

**Do your photos coordinate with your logo?** Do they clash? May sound crazy. **But if you're a sole proprietor, you are the face of your business.** As such, the colors of your business should look good on you. Your face is going to be on your website after all. Make sure y'all look good together.

So, pick colors for your website that you'd be happy to wear not only happy to wear, but colors that look great on you and that make you glow.

**On top of that, how do your photos make people feel?** What do you want them [the photos] to feel? What do you want the people to feel? Is there a certain way that they should feel in your industry.

So, what I mean is, in certain professions, like in the law or banking, for example, your client should feel at ease, safe, and reassured. In coaching, they should feel motivated, inspired, and ready to take action. There's that word again.

**Your photos, your logo, and your colors all need to work together to convey your desired brand emotions.** Then, your website needs to hold these items and these emotions together in a strategic way to engage visitors as long as possible, so that they stay on your website as long as possible.

So, let's go back to Nike. Remember my brand emotions for them? Inspirational, heroic, evocative, provocative. All of these emotions revolve around and lead to action.

Remember the kids and the dancers in the images? They are all in action Nike's color black? Black represents power and strength, both components of action. All of this ties together beautifully on their website. Not only that, but we've seen Nike's brand being consistent across all of their media, in their TV ads, in their print ads, and on social media.

So, what do I tell my clients when they say they want to brand their new website or redo the branding on their website?

First, I asked them what they mean. Sometimes they get it. More people are getting branding now. But usually they don't fully get it. That's why there are branding experts out there.

We talk about the basics of branding, colors, typography, copy, photos, and the logo—and then how all of this ties into making a beautiful and strategically-designed website.

And what can you do if you don't want to pay someone to do your branding or your website for you? Well, you just got some great tips from this podcast. There are lots of articles out there about branding and website design.

I build my customized websites on Squarespace. If you use one of their templates, they have color palettes built right in. You can choose one of those and not have to worry about picking colors that coordinate. You're also able to adjust the colors precisely typing in the RGB and HEX codes. And you can look those up on various websites online. Their color pickers online to help you find complementary colors. You can use Canva to make good-looking logos. And there are various places to get legal stock photos.

And the most important thing is to be strategic in creating your brand and designing your website. **Everything serves a purpose in website design.** Don't just slap up a logo and a photo. Make them mean something, something that supports your brand emotions.

That's it for today. I'll be back next week with more branding, design, and business tips. See you next time on Brand + Design Scoop!

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Helpful links

[“What Makes a Good Website”](#)

[“3 Ways to Make a Great First Impression with Your Website”](#)

[“Branding, Color, and Style: An Interview with Personal-Image Consultant Julie Shields”](#)

[This episode on the website](#)

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Angela Kelly Smith provides custom Squarespace websites, branding strategy, and marketing instruction so freelancers and entrepreneurs can run a successful business while spending more time focusing on the work they really love doing. Check out her [website design + marketing strategy services](#).