

# Angela Kelly Smith

## How to Create a Brand Identity

Brand + Design Scoop ep. 014

Podcast Transcript

Welcome to Brand + Design Scoop, where I share practical, relatable tips on branding, design, and building a business for do-it-yourselfers who want to stop doing everything themselves.

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

Today I'm going to discuss how to create a brand identity.

Too often we think of a brand identity as our colors and logo. But that's like saying you are simply how you look—your face, your body, what you wear, how you style your hair. You're so much more than that, right?

If you were asked to describe yourself, who you really are, you'd probably include how you look. Of course our appearance is part of our identity. It's like I discuss in my episode called "[The Matrix' and Your Brand Avatar](#)" (link in the show notes). Our exterior is a key way we show the world who we really are. In fact, it's the first way we make an impression on people that gives a hint at who we really are.

But who are we, really? We're not our face, our body, what we wear, or how we style our hair. What we do to our exterior is a way of displaying what's on the inside—what we think, what we value, and what we feel.

It's the same with a brand identity. If you pick a logo and colors without first knowing who the brand really is, you may end up with a mismatch between the interior and the exterior. It's as if

the brand were wearing a costume. It won't feel right. Potential clients will sense it. And they'll be turned off by it.

Let's look at a good example of logo alignment real quick. Coca-Cola's logo, with its red and white colors and its white wavy line, exudes appetite and excitement. It speaks to thirst-quenching and crispness.

How does the Coke logo reflect the company's identity?

Coca-Cola's purpose, as found on its website, is: "Refresh the World. Make a Difference." And it's vision reads:

"Our vision is to craft the brands and choice of drinks that people love, to refresh them in body & spirit. And done in ways that create a more sustainable business and better shared future that makes a difference in people's lives, communities and our planet."

So, Coke's identity is about refreshing, love, body, spirit, and making a difference.

Purpose and vision are key parts of a brand's identity. They're part of your identity, too, aren't they?

Same with vision. At an individual level, your vision is how you see the world and what you see for your future. For a brand, it's how you see your brand fitting into the world, how you want your brand to contribute to the world.

Consider your purpose and your vision in terms of how you dress. Maybe you're like me and you wear all black because you view the world as a canvas on which to create. My purpose is to support other people in blazing their own trails. As an artist, I use color on literal canvases and in film. As a website designer, I bring color to my clients' websites. My view of the world is that there is the potential to create and to change. For me, black is a color of infinite possibilities, a space to be filled.

Now, there is more to your identity and that of your brand than just your purpose and your vision. There are your values and goals. There are your voice and personality. For your brand, there are your tagline, value proposition, and messaging pillars. And, of course, there is your brand's name.

So, let's get into the steps to creating a brand identity. I'll tell you what they are, then I'll go into them in more detail. You may want to download the transcript from the episode page on my website since I lay out everything with lists and bullet points. Link in the show notes.

The steps are:

1. Uncover your brand heart — These are your values, vision, mission, and goals
2. Pick a brand name
3. Identify your brand essence — These are your brand personality and brand voice
4. Define your brand messaging — These are your tagline, value proposition, and messaging pillars
5. Research your target audience
6. Research your competition
7. Choose your color palette
8. Choose your typography
9. Design your logo
10. Design additional elements
11. Create a brand style book

## 1. UNCOVER YOUR BRAND HEART

Your brand heart consists of four components: Your values, your vision, your mission, and your goals.

**Let's start with your values.** Your brand will have lots of values, of course—just like you do. But you'll want to narrow it down to three to five top values. Your values will be part of your vision statement.

Can you tell what Coca-Cola's values are from hearing their vision statement? They are, in part, making a difference, sustainability, and refreshment.

If *you* are the face of your brand—that is, if you are a service provider—then your personal values will likely translate into your brand's values. Mine certainly do. My top values and those of my brand are authenticity, curiosity, and creativity. These come across not only in my brand vision, but also in my vision of the world, how I interact with people, and in the work I do.

To come up with your brand's top values, start brainstorming. Make a list of whatever values come to mind. Don't hold back. Make the list as long as you want. Don't censor yourself.

Now you need to chop those down to three to five. So, think about what values your brand really stands for. What values does your brand want to represent? What values would your brand fight for? Those are what you want to go with.

**Next comes your vision.** Your vision is focused on the future. Your vision statement describes where you want your business to be in the future. It includes your purpose and your values.

Let's look at Apple's values. They list them in the footer of their website: Accessibility, education, environment, inclusion and diversity, privacy, and supplier responsibility.

Apple doesn't have a link on their website to their vision and mission statement. But they list the following on their Product Feedback page:

"Apple strives to bring the best personal computing experience to students, educators, creative professionals, and consumers around the world through its innovative hardware, software, and internet offerings."

In this quasi-vision statement, you get some of their values, as well as an idea of where they see themselves: As being the best in personal computing.

Now let's look at Adobe. The first thing you see on Adobe's About page is the following:

"Changing the world through digital experiences."

This is essentially their vision. Now, they don't mention creativity in this statement, even though creativity is clearly a top value. But, in this case, that's okay because creativity just oozes out of Adobe in everything else.

Finally, here's Hulu's vision statement:

“Lead the future of Streaming TV by creating new and familiar experiences for our viewers, amplifying bold voices, and challenging our diverse builders and creators to push the boundaries of storytelling and technology.”

You really see their values and purpose here. Boldness, diversity, creativity, pushing boundaries, storytelling, and technology. And they want to be the leader in streaming television.

What do you notice about these three examples of vision statements?

They are all short. In fact, each one is only one sentence long.

So, for your purpose, of course it’s partially to make money. But what purpose is your business serving? That’s what’s going into the vision statement. Then sprinkle in your values. Keep it to one or two sentences. And make it inspiring. This is the future of your brand!

**The next part of the heart of your brand is your mission statement.** The difference between a vision statement and a mission statement is that a vision statement is oriented toward the future, while a mission statement is oriented toward the present. The mission statement discusses what your brand does and how it plans on getting to its vision of the future.

The mission statement, too, will be short—just one or two sentences.

Here is Hulu’s mission statement:

“To help people find and enjoy the world’s premium video content when, where and how they want it.”

Remember Hulu’s vision statement?

Their mission statement directly ties into how they will lead the future of streaming TV—by helping “people find and enjoy the world’s premium video content when, where and how they want it.”

This makes perfect sense as you can’t be a leader unless you have followers. Your followers can’t follow you unless you show them the way. Hulu articulates this perfectly.

Here is Nike's mission statement:

“Bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete\* in the world.” There's an asterisk by the word “athlete.” Underneath this sentence is the following line preceded by an asterisk: “\*If you have a body, you are an athlete.”

This is just excellent. I love this so much. You really see Nike living up to their mission statement on their website and in their ads.

So, to create your mission statement, look at your vision statement and work backward. How will you get to your vision? Refer back to Hulu's vision and mission as examples. Think present tense. Your mission is what you do right now, and it can include how you do it.

**The last piece of your brand heart is your goals.** These are really your long-term goals, not your monthly, quarterly, or yearly goals that you'll be changing and tracking regularly.

One of Bill Gates's early goals for Microsoft was, “A computer on every desk and in every home.” Quite a lofty goal, one that couldn't be measured regularly. Maybe one day! Notice he didn't say, “A Microsoft computer on every desk.” He just said, “A computer.” I find that really interesting and forward-thinking. Realistic, too, knowing that Microsoft wasn't the only hardware company in the industry.

Now, your goals don't have to be quite so lofty. They can be more measurable. For example, you could have the goal of being on pages one, two, or three of Google. I'm adding pages two and three since making it to page one is so difficult with all the domain authorities you have to compete against.

Your vision statement probably used a word such as “leader” or “go-to” or “top.” Those words may sound like goals, and they do point in the direction of a goal. But they aren't goals in and of themselves.

When you think about “a computer on every desk and in every home,” that one actually is measurable. It's very difficult to measure! But it is possible—well, in the way that taking a census is possible. In fact, the U.S. census does ask about home technology. So, we have an idea of the number of computers per household in the United States.

And I looked it up! As of 2020, U.S. residents had access to an average of 2.12 computers per household. They also had access to 2.27 mobile phones. Link to source in the show notes. These amazing numbers don't mean that every household has a computer, of course. It means that some households have multiple computers, while others have no computers.

You can have some lofty goals like Bill Gates's where it would be extremely difficult to measure the results. But you should also have some long-term goals that you can measure.

What kind of goals could these be?

They can be financial goals; number of clients acquired or products sold; Google ranking; or number of appearances on podcasts, TV shows, or radio shows. It could be something like being the most recognized lifestyle brand in the world—or whatever industry you're in. How would you measure that? Well, surveys show that Coke's logo is recognized by 94 percent of the people around the world. You could measure brand awareness by number of social media followers and website hits.

How many goals should you have?

I like to keep things short and simple and keep it to three to five. Any more than that becomes difficult to follow.

Let's move on to the next step in creating your brand identity.

## 2. PICK A BRAND NAME

“What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.”

That's Juliet contemplating Romeo's family name in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, of course. And, when it comes to naming your brand, it's all wrong!

So, what *is* in a name when it comes to branding?

Your brand name should be meaningful.

It should be distinct from other brands.

It should say-able, spell-able, and google-able.

You'll want your name to work well into the future, not be something fad-ish or trendy that you'll need to change in a few years.

And you may want to be able to trademark your name—or at least the logo design.

How do you start to pick a name for your brand?

Steve Jobs picked the name Apple for two main reasons. One, he liked apples. And, two, Apple comes before Atari in the phone book—back in the days of phone books!

In Nike's case, Nike is the Greek goddess of victory. Perfect for an athletic company.

Hulu got its name from the Mandarin word that means gourd. In a Chinese proverb, a gourd is used to hold precious things. In English, the word Hulu has no meaning. So, there would be no preconceived notions in the mind of consumers as to what Hulu meant. It would be a blank slate. Really fabulous for a name.

**Your brand name can be something descriptive, essentially what the brand does.** General Motors. Greater Pittsburgh Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling.

**You can name your brand after yourself.** Think Ben and Jerry's and Louis Vuitton.

**You can make up a word as your brand name.** Think Kleenex, Xerox, and Instagram. Just remember to make sure that the word is say-able, spell-able, and google-able. Also, if you plan on being an international brand, the new word should be pronounceable in other languages. And make sure that your word doesn't mean something questionable in other languages! Actually, this holds true whether you're using real words or made-up words.

For example, in 2001, Honda introduced the Fitta minivan to Nordic countries. They quickly discovered, after the fact, that "fitta" in Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish is a vulgar term for women's genitals. Yeah. So, they renamed the minivan Jazz.

So, please google the meaning of your name before you go with it!



Okay, your name can be an acronym. There's AT&T, KFC, and BMW.

Your name can be a god or goddess, an animal, or a feature of nature. Think Nike and Patagonia.

Finally, you can smash two words together or use a real word with different spelling. For example, Squarespace, LinkedIn, and Hootsuite. For wrong spelling, there's Publix, Froot Loops, and Cheez Whiz. All of these words are able to be trademarked, and the URLs are most likely available.

Speaking of URLs, when you've narrowed down your name, see if the URL is available. You really, really want the URL to be the same as the brand name.

While you're searching URLs, be sure to google your potential name to see if anyone else is already using it. If you have the same name as someone else in your industry, that's going to be really tough.

Let's move on.

### 3. IDENTIFY YOUR BRAND ESSENCE

Your brand essence is your brand personality and voice.

Let's discuss your personality first because your voice will come out of your personality. Your brand personality will reflect your values, vision, mission, and your brand name. If you value imagination and optimism, you wouldn't have a brand personality that's closed off, down, or too conservative.

With a name like Twitter, the brand can't have an overly serious personality. With a value of creativity, Adobe can't be too staid or stoic. With a mission to "Bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete\* in the world," Nike's personality has to be inspiring.

To identify your brand personality, start out by reviewing your values, vision, and mission. Pull out key words that can be personality traits. Write all these down.

**Next, look at your brand name.** Write down personality traits that you think of when you see your brand name.

**Now think about your ideal client.** And I'll get to that topic in just a minute. How do you want them to see you? Now, remember, you're creating an authentic brand. So, you're not molding your brand to fit what you think your ideal client wants your brand to be. But, once you know the heart of your brand, it's okay to take your ideal client into consideration.

**Finally, look at your competition.** What kind of brand personalities do they have? You want yours to be at least a bit different.

Once you have all of these personality traits written down, go through and pick out three to five (yes, there's that number again!)—three to five that really fit your brand.

**Now we move on to brand voice.**

Your brand voice is how your brand communicates its personality. It's how your brand sounds on your website, on social media, in emails, on your blog, in your podcasts, in your logo—wherever and whenever people interact with your brand.

When finding your brand voice, a big question you want to answer is how you want your ideal client to feel when they interact with your brand. Your brand voice is responsible for eliciting feelings.

If you want them to feel safe and protected, for example, you need a brand voice that's dependable and trustworthy. If you want your ideal client to feel relaxed and grounded, you need a brand voice that's calming and earthy.

This is a great instance of when to take your ideal client into consideration. It's not that you're molding your brand to fit what they want. It's that you're refining your voice to elicit the feelings you want your ideal client to feel. This is really key to developing trust and engagement from your ideal client. This results in longer visits on your website and more clients.

Another thing to do to find your brand voice is to look at the adjectives you're using for your brand personality—and look at the ones you decided not to use. Your brand voice doesn't have to be the exact same words as your brand personality—though they usually overlap. For your

brand voice, you may end up using some words that didn't make your top three to five brand personality words. Or you may use synonyms for your brand voice. Or you may need to translate your brand personality words into words that work better for your brand voice.

For example, if your brand personality includes being quirky, can you translate that to your brand voice? Yes, quirky can be part of your brand voice. But you may find a word that's easier to relate to, voice-wise, particularly as it pertains to eliciting emotions. How do you want your quirkiness to affect your ideal client? Do you want it to inspire them? Do you want it to make them laugh? Do you want it to encourage them to be more authentic? Your brand voice, then, could be inspiring, humorous, or no B.S.

Next up...

## 4. DEFINE YOUR BRAND MESSAGING

Your brand messaging consists of your tagline, value proposition, and messaging pillars.

**Let's start with your tagline.** Honestly, most freelancers don't have a tagline. It's not always necessary. But I think that it's a helpful exercise to go through for a couple reasons.

First, a tagline puts the essence of your brand into one small soundbite. Once you've gone through the exercise, you can now say exactly what your brand is about in one short sentence or phrase.

Working on a tagline can be really helpful when you're working on answering, "So, what do you do?" Honestly, this can be so difficult for freelancers and service providers to answer in a way that differentiates them from the competition.

The other reason to go through the tagline exercise, even if you think you won't end up using it, is that you just may love what you come up with and decide to use it after all. People love a good tagline. And people remember a good tagline.

You've got Wendy's with "Where's the Beef?"

De Beers with "A Diamond is Forever."

And Wheaties with "The Breakfast of Champions."

Don't miss out on your opportunity to make *your* brand more memorable by skipping this exercise.

When you work on *your* tagline, start out writing a long paragraph that captures the essence of your brand. Put in everything you can think of. It should include pieces of your brand values, vision, and mission.

Now rewrite that paragraph to make it more exciting and emotional.

Now chop the hell out of the paragraph. I mean, cut everything out of it. See just how short you can make it.

Okay, with what you've got left—hopefully no more than one or two super-short sentences—really tighten it up to one phrase or one sentence.

Here are three examples to strive for:

“Just Do It”

“Got milk?”

“Melts in your mouth, not in your hands”

I don't even have to name what brands those taglines come from, do I? How's *that* for a brand goal?!

**Next comes your value proposition.** Your value proposition is a statement that describes (1) the problem you solve, (2) who you solve it for, and (3) why you're better at solving it than the competition.

You can follow the Harvard Business School model of looking at the clients you're going to serve, the needs you're going to meet, and the price you're going to set. Your point of differentiation can come for any of these legs. Maybe you're serving a niche market or meeting a new demand within an existing market. Or maybe you're going to price your service differently from how your competitors price themselves.

Side note: Be carefully about discounting yourself. Some brands benefit from being known as discount brands. Think Dollar Tree. But, in the service industry, you should really consider whether it's appropriate to be known as a discount brand.

If price is not going to be part of your value proposition, then make sure something else is. In other words, who you're serving, the specific need you're meeting, or how you meet that need.

Finally, you could follow Steve Blank's model of writing your value proposition like this:

"I help X do Y by doing Z."

Notice that this is essentially answering, "So, what do you do?" — your elevator pitch. Isn't that awesome?! This means that once you've come up with your value proposition, you can use it to answer that question. I love that Steve Blanks' model.

You can go really deep into developing your value proposition. This is barely scratching the surface. If you feel like going deeper, just google "value proposition," and you'll probably be overwhelmed by all the awesome results you get!

**The last part of brand messaging is messaging pillars.**

Your messaging pillars are three selling points or benefits that make your brand different. These may be aspects of your services. They could be benefits of working with you. They could be the uniqueness of your niche. For more information on picking a niche, check out my blog post called "[How to Pick a Niche for Your Business](#)" — link in the show notes.

One of my messaging pillars is freelancers who want to stop doing everything themselves. Yes, that's a mouthful! But it's very specific. It's a unique niche that I create Squarespace websites, not just any websites, for this target audience.

On that note, let's move on to the next step.

## 5. RESEARCH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Why are you researching your target audience? Because you want to make sure that you're giving your target audience what they want and what they need. And you want to make sure that you're honing your brand message for them in a way that they will get it.

As I mentioned before, you aren't designing your brand to meet their wants and needs. Your brand has to be authentic. But you absolutely have to take your audience into consideration when you create your brand identity. Otherwise, your audience won't resonate with your brand.

So, your target audience is your ideal client. Think of it that way, and it's easier to imagine that one person you're really appealing to. For help with identifying your ideal client, check out my podcast called "[How to Identify and Attract Your Ideal Client](#)" — link in the show notes.

You already thought about your ideal client when working on your brand personality. So, you've already done some of this work. But now I want you to write it down.

Here are some things you'll want to know about your ideal client:

- Their wants and needs
- Their goals
- Where they go for information
- What they want from you
- An age range
- An income range
- Where they live
- Their marital status
- What industry they're in
- Their psychographics—that is, their interests, hobbies, beliefs, and attitudes

Your brand doesn't exist in a vacuum. Your ideal client is essential to your brand. Honestly, it's your ideal client who keeps your brand alive. You can do everything in your power to keep your brand going. But if it doesn't resonate with your ideal client, if they don't feel it and love it, then your brand will fade away.

Next is...

## 6. RESEARCH YOUR COMPETITION

You already started this when you were uncovering your brand heart and your brand essence—and looking into brand names. Here's where I want you to write everything down.

Why? Because the point of this whole brand identity process is to create a unique brand—one that your ideal client will distinguish from the competition and, ultimately, choose over the competition.

If you don't know who your competition is, you won't know what makes you unique or how to compete.

Side note: There are people who don't see this as a competition. I agree with that in the sense that I believe there are enough clients to go around. That's why we pick a niche. If I'm in a unique niche that's big enough, then I'll have enough clients. Same thing for the "competition."

I don't view this as a competition in the sense of "I can win only if you lose." Not at all! I believe that we can all succeed. But these are other brands in your industry who could take clients who might otherwise choose you. So, yeah, the competition.

Anyway, I want you to google your keywords—the words and phrases you want people to use to find you online. See who pops up. Now, if you're not on page one, then those brands aren't truly your competition. But you can list them anyway because those are like "reach goals."

If you've got local competition, list those. If you've got people in your industry whom you admire, list those.

Put their URLs on your list.

Write down what you think the essence of their brand is: Their brand personality and voice. Make note of their colors. What kind of logo do they have? Do they blog or podcast? What kind of services do they offer? What are their prices—if they list their prices?

Remember, the whole point of this is to find ways to be different.

Now let's get into some of those ways—the visual forms of expressing your brand.

## 7. CHOOSE YOUR COLOR PALETTE

I have a detailed blog post about this called “[How to Create a Color Palette for Your Brand](#)”—link in the show notes. So, I'm going to give just an overview here.

You should read the blog post for lots of details on the nitty-gritty of picking specific colors, finding color codes, and using various programs, such as Adobe Capture and Adobe Color CC, to help the process. It's really so much fun!

The three things you're going to do here are:

1. Research color meanings
2. Search for inspiration
3. Pick your colors

These three steps are in the context of all the other work you've already in the brand identity process. When you read the blog post, you'll see that I have you do the brand heart and brand essence parts of this process. I also have you research your ideal client and your competition.

You've already done this work here. So, you're ready for color meanings, inspiration (a lot of which you've done in researching the competition), and picking your colors.

You already know that different colors carry different meanings: Both “positive” and “negative” meanings.

Red, of course, represents passion, love, energy, desire, and confidence. It also represents danger, anger, and aggression.

Dark blue represents communication, responsibility, confidence, peace, trust, and reliability. It also represents being conservative, passive, or predictable.

Purple represents spirituality, royalty, imagination, inspiration, wisdom, and fantasy. It also represents being immature, emotional, or disconnected.

You can find more color meanings in my blog post and simply by googling “color meanings.”



You'll want to pick brand colors that represent your brand personality and brand voice. If your brand personality is earthy and grounded, you'll go with greens and browns, not purples and pinks, which are too airy. If your brand voice is quirky, you may want to use orange, bright yellow, or purple.

Consider how you want your ideal client to feel when they see your brand colors. Tap into color meanings to elicit the feelings you want your ideal client to feel.

Look around online, particularly at your competition, for websites you really like — and also don't like. What colors really appeal to you? What colors repel you?

When you've found some colors that you love, that really reflect your brand personality and voice, and will elicit the feelings you want your ideal client to feel, you're ready to narrow them down. Adobe Capture and Adobe Color CC are great tools to help you get precise colors.

You should pick a base color, an accent color, and a variation of a white and a black. They don't have to be pure white or pure black. You can also pick a neutral that may be a monochromatic version of your base color.

Your base color will be your main color. It may be in your logo. It will be the main color on your website — appearing in your buttons, as the background in some sections, maybe as the background color for the main navigation menu, and possibly as the background color for a whole page.

If you're working in Squarespace, you can watch my video blog called "[How to Change the Color Palette in Squarespace 7.1](#)" — link in the show notes — that walks you through changing the colors in your Squarespace website.

Next up is...

## 8. CHOOSE YOUR TYPOGRAPHY

Just like with your brand message and your brand colors, your brand fonts are going to reflect your brand personality and voice. So, you'll want to pick fonts that align well with your brand and don't clash with it.

How do you do that—especially if you're not an expert in typography?

Okay, some people can do it by feel. They see a font and can sense that it feels right with the brand. This is what happens unconsciously with your ideal client. It's not as if they see your brand and your fonts and think, "Wow, yes, those fonts are exactly right for that brand!" It's just a feeling.

But that doesn't mean that you shouldn't put a little work into picking your fonts.

I'm sure you already know the basic differences between serif fonts and sans-serif fonts.

Serif fonts have the little extra bit at the end of the letters. Sans-serif fonts don't. Serif fonts were originally used in printing. They are considered highly legible. They are also considered traditional, classic, and even trustworthy.

Sans-serif fonts are modern, minimalistic, and clean. They are very popular online. They are considered very legible. But there is lots of debate about serif vs sans-serif as they are used on screens. I think it comes down to the individual font.

I'm sure you also know about Comic Sans. Please don't!

Okay, you also know about script fonts. These are elegant, sometimes formal, and can be unique.

There are three other categories you should know about: Slab serif fonts, handwritten fonts, and decorative fonts.

Slab serif fonts are serif fonts that are wider and sort of rugged. They are bold and confident. Handwritten fonts are causal and artsy. Decorative fonts are highly stylized and totally unique to the brand. Think IBM and Disney.

So, how do you pick your fonts?

Start by comparing your brand personality to these font category personalities.

If your brand personality is trustworthy, supportive, and honest, you'll go with a serif font.

If your brand is imaginative, communicative, and quirky, you'll go with handwritten or maybe decorative.

Next, you'll look at fonts within the category that best fits your brand personality. You find free fonts at Font Squirrel and Google Fonts. Google "free fonts" to find more sources. If you are an Adobe subscriber, you get tons of free fonts there. That's what I use.

So, scroll through whatever source you'll looking at. Type in your brand name so you can see exactly what it would look like in the fonts. Save your favorites. Then go narrow them down.

When you've got three to five favorites, look at them all side-by-side. You could even take a screen shot of each and paste them into a document or open them in Preview to get a better view.

When you've picked a couple that you love, look into the licensing terms. Make sure that you can use it on your website, on business cards, in social media, and in advertising. You probably won't be selling the image. But, if you do plan on selling merchandise with your logo on it, be sure that the licensing agreement allows that.

So, *now* pick your main font!

At this point, you'll need a secondary font. You can chose mixed fonts or fonts from the same category. That is, your fonts can both be serif or sans-serif. Now, you shouldn't have both fonts be slab serif, script, handwritten, or decorative. Those are just for logos and headers. Though decorative fonts are best for logos.

Next up...

## 9. DESIGN YOUR LOGO

You're finally ready to design your logo!

There are seven types of logos: Wordmarks, lettermarks, pictorial marks, abstract marks, mascots, combination marks, and emblems.

Wordmarks are simply the brand name written in a distinctive font, possibly with color. Instagram, Google, and Facebook are examples of wordmarks.

Lettermarks, or monogram logos, are like wordmarks but use just initials instead of full words. HBO and IBM are examples of lettermarks.

A pictorial mark is a simple image that represents the brand. Apple and Twitter use pictorial marks.

An abstract mark is a symbol that is used to represent the brand. Pepsi and Nike use abstract marks.

A mascot is a cartoon-y character that represents the brand. Wendy's and KFC use mascots.

A combination mark is a mixture of wordmark or a lettermark and a pictorial mark, abstract mark, or a mascot. Lacoste uses a combination mark.

Finally, an emblem is a font inside a symbol. It's like a college crest or the Presidential Seal. Starbucks uses an emblem.

I'll leave it to you to figure out which logo type is best for your brand. I do suggest working with a designer.

The next step...

## 10. DESIGN OTHER VISUAL ELEMENTS

After you have your logo, you'll need to design other visual elements. These include:

- A website
- Business cards
- Social media cover images
- Social media profile images
- Social media posts
- Your website photos, headshots, social media photos

Depending on your skills, you may be able to do some or all of this on your own. For some of these, it's best to hire a professional.

Finally!

## 11. CREATE A BRAND STYLE GUIDE

You've got your brand identity. So, you're going to put all of this together into a brand style guide. You've already done the work. Now you just need to put it all into one cohesive document that you can refer to regularly to keep your brand consistent.

A brand style guide is your brand bible. It stores everything you just did in one place. You don't have to go searching for your mission or your brand personality. You'll know exactly where your fonts and color hex codes are.

You'll also write down the rules for your brand in the style guide. Such as, can you ever use different colors for your logo? Can your logo be used on a black background or a green background? If your brand name is written horizontally, can it ever be stacked?

Writing all of this into your brand style guide will ensure consistency. This is important for maintaining the integrity of your brand.

Okay! That's it! I know that this is a lot of work. But it's really essential work. Too many people come up with a brand name, randomly pick colors they like, go with whatever font comes with their website host provider, and have a logo made with no thought about brand personality or brand voice—much less values, vision, or mission.

You now understand how all of these pieces come together to make a really coherent, powerful brand that is unique, that you can easily articulate, that can become memorable, and that can help you achieve your brand goals.

I'd love to read your thoughts on this episode. You can leave comments on this episode's post on my website. Link in the show notes.

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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Links mentioned in the episode:

[“Average number of connected devices residents have access to in U.S. households in 2020, by device” — Statista](#)

[“How to Change the Color Palette in Squarespace 7.1”](#)

[“How to Change the Font Family in Squarespace 7.1”](#)

[“How to Create a Color Palette for Your Brand”](#)

[“How to Identify and Attract Your Ideal Client”](#)

[“How to Pick a Niche for Your Business”](#)

[Link to this episode](#)

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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](#).