

Expert advice and guidance from the
Communications Sector

BRANDING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

MEET OUR EXPERT

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Kaye Coleman-Rooney is founder of Cambridge-based agency Doing Words Communications Ltd. A specialist in brand development and marketing communications, Kaye has recently overseen the rebrand of her own business.

One of the architects of Anglian Water's groundbreaking Love Every Drop campaigning brand platform, Kaye came into the business world after a successful career as a Senior Producer with the BBC. Now with 30 years' experience spanning the UK, the Middle East and South East Asia, she believes that, in business, as in life, finding better answers starts with better questions.

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Would you like to get involved with our Communications Sector? Do you have ideas for future events or expertise to share in a guide like this?

Please get in touch with Helen Bosett, Sector Co-ordinator at Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce on 01733 370809 or email h.bosett@cambscci.co.uk

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The why and how of branding

What does a focus on brand do for the likes of Apple and Costa Coffee, M&S and Innocent? It brings identity, recognition, reputation and impact; emotional connection with their customers; loyalty; buzz and energy in the market place.

Couldn't your business do with some of that?

The good news is that branding isn't just for the big hitters.

Put simply, your brand is every experience your customers, suppliers and the wider community have with your business, your products and services and your staff.

So, whatever your business, you already have a brand.

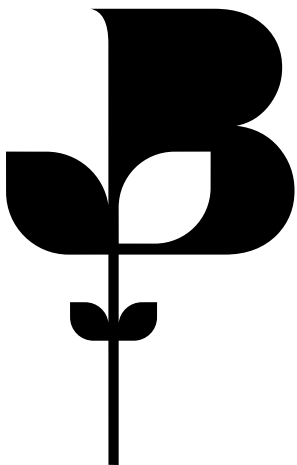
Actively managing your brand means managing those experiences to create a powerful whole with an impact greater than the sum of its parts.

- If you're a start-up, considering yourself as a brand will help you punch above your weight and build credibility.

- More established businesses can use strong branding to promote customer loyalty and employee engagement, banking reputational gold as a valuable safety net in hard times.

“You don't have to change much to change everything.”

Mark Rosewater



Invest in your own brand equity

Branding is more than just a logo. It's a powerful marketing strategy focused on understanding and improving every aspect of your customers' experience. That makes it an investment with a direct benefit on your bottom line.

To get started, break branding down into a series of manageable projects:

1. Be the best business you can be
2. Get out there and shake your customers by the hand – in person, print and online
3. Show them where you fit in their lives
4. Listen and learn to develop long-term relationships.

“If you are not a brand, you are a commodity. Then price is everything and the low-cost producer is the only winner.”

Philip Kotler

Build your brand action plan

- 1 Get to know your customers better**
How well do you know the people who buy from you? What are their goals in life and at work? What problems are you solving for them?
- 2 Go for the emotions**
What do you want your customers to think and feel about your business? What do you want them to say to their friends about their experience with you?
- 3 Be true to your values**
Underpin with your brand with real substance. If you want customers to see you as honest and ethical, make those values real. Set challenging targets and meet them.
- 4 Figure out who you really are**
People want to do business with people they trust and can connect with. If your business was a person, who would it be? Teacher, best mate, mad scientist, fashion maven, celebrity chef? What sort of personality traits will your customers most appreciate?

- 5 Get the tone right**
Define that persona with the right look and feel and an appropriate tone of voice and you'll make an emotional connection.

- 6 Figure out what you're really selling**
It is quite a skill, but expressing your brand persona and its values in a single memorable strapline is a powerful marketing tool. Think Just do it; Vorsprung durch Technik; Ah, Bisto!

- 7 Look the part**
Do your logo, your website, your brochures do you justice? It's ok to start out homemade, but go pro to communicate competence and quality. Twitter's original bird was a \$15 stock image. The 2012 Olympics logo cost around half a million. There's plenty in between.

- 8 Speak human**
You might be a solicitor, but your customers don't speak legal: they speak human. You should too. Let professional mean approachable, helpful and clear. You owe your business and your customers better than bland and baffling.

- 9 Engage your employees**
Everyone appreciates a worthwhile job. Use brand values and energy to boost pride and performance.

- 10 Protect your brand**
This works both ways. Don't infringe the rights of other businesses. To protect yours, consider buying related domain names; incorporating with Companies House; registering your logo and / or product names as trademarks.

