

A simple guide to reviewing your brand

Getting started

- 1 Be clear what you mean by brand. This guide is about your organisational brand; the one that people are working in, and that everyone else knows about and engages with.
- 2 Think about what you already know about your brand, your reputation and the trust people have in it.
- 3 If you are thinking about reviewing your brand, do it because it isn't working hard enough for you; or because you're changing what you do. Change it for a reason and let the reason be business.
It looks different because it is different. Don't change for the sake of it.

01

Agree some principles

- What will drive your review?**
It's a good idea to think about how you're planning on conducting your review. If you're on your own, get a mate—a trusted adviser or friend—who'll challenge you and remind you of the principles you agreed to go by, because it's easy to slip into 'this is too hard'.
Choose your principles with care. They could be: 'Involving our colleagues.' 'Not forgetting our heritage, but looking over the horizon.' 'Sticking to our big idea.' 'Letting the right things go.' 'Asking our customers.' 'It's no good if it's not sustainable.'
You'll know what works for you.

02

Create a plan

Obviously, you would assume.
Although the review is the exciting bit it's the implementation bit that's hard. It's not exhaustive, but overleaf you'll find a list of things you may need to consider when thinking about implementation. Depends if you're offering apps or apples, oil rigs or healthcare.

03

Be curious



Know thyself

- A great starting place is getting together all the information you have about your business.
What do you offer?
People skills and experience. Locations and premises. Products and services, now and in the pipeline. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Centres of excellence. Under-utilised resources. Past performance and the secrets of your success.
Do you already have a managed brand?
How's it working out? Do you have any perception studies—not just from customers, but employees, suppliers, investors, partners and distributors—or other research you can draw on?
What you're looking for here is a SWOT analysis. It's got to be objective though.

04

Know your customer

List your customers by type, location, value, profitability. Do you have a 'long tail' of unprofitable customers? Why?
What do customers need, want, use? What convinces them to give you their cash or time, recommend you, return time and again? Could you do more? What do they see as your value?
Are their habits and priorities changing?
What you'll end up with is a prioritised segmentation of your customers: the types you have, and want, in the order you want them. It's also helpful to have some 'customer journeys' identifying every moment customers touch your brand, to see which encounters you can and can't control.

05

Look over the fence

What market are you in?
Is it commodity-driven or are you in a category of your own? Are your competitors really who you think they are? Are there new kids on the block?
What are their strengths and weaknesses? Where do you fit in, now and in the future? Why are your customers, or potential customers, turning to them? What's changing? Election coming up? New policies on the horizon? Category reputation dented? Technology opening up?
Ideally we're looking for a competitive landscape map. Choose your axes in terms of the market you're in.

06

Resources you can turn to

Whatever you can get your hands on. Sales reports. Supplier lists. Employee surveys. Industry data. Analysts' reports. Market overviews. Media and online monitoring and analysis. Broader consumer or market research.
In-depth interviews with as many people as you can get. Senior management team; employees—frontline and back office, on the road, in your partners, and franchises—investors, analysts, partners, volunteers, distributors. Use external interviews as a reality check against internal perceptions.
Customer perception and other tracking studies. Feedback from your customers or service users, and your competitors. Try mystery shopping, including online.

07

Mind the gaps

Between the marketplace and competitors you'll find 'points of parity' or what you share with the competition so that you are even-steven. Use the Venn diagram overleaf to find yours. Not having these points of parity may mean customers turn to your competition.
Seemingly the 'holy grail' is the 'points of difference', but they are just one of the three gaps you're looking at here. Why would people choose your brand over the competition? What's different?
And finally, looking at your customers and your market and competition, where are you vulnerable? List your vulnerabilities. They may need addressing, or you may decide they are red herrings.

08

Audit it

You can't implement the new brand without doing the legwork first.
Go through that list of items to be implemented on the reverse of this sheet and get samples, or pictures, or customer journeys or whatever you may need.
When you've got it in some order, go through it. What's the tone of voice? How consistently is your existing brand identity applied? What's the general impression? Is there duplication? Could things be done differently? Is the information accessible, inclusive, jargon-appropriate? Do you have any feedback from users?
It's a good time to think about how you might improve next time.

09

Be simple



Defining your brand idea

There are basically five parts to your brand idea.
1 A set of beliefs defined by a set of values. Your ethos
2 How you will behave as an organisation. Some guiding principles
3 Your attitude, or personality. How do you want to come across?
4 Your purpose. Why you get up in the morning
5 Your promise. Your commitment to all audiences.

10

A word about values

Most people expect to know what the values of an organisation are. But organisations aren't beings. They're collectives. They thrive if people share similar values and ideas. People come to work with their own values. Rather than tell them what you think their values should be, why not ask them what theirs are?
So it might be good to talk about your collective values, and one great way to do that is talk about them as 'three little words'.

11

Three little words

Choose three words that sum up who you are and want to be. Define each under three headings:
1 core beliefs
2 core behaviours
3 core attitudes.
The first is how you think. What is your ethos? The second is action. How do you behave? And the third is what you would like others to say if you overheard them describing you.
Avoid more than three words. No one remembers more than three. Infuse them with meaning.
Overleaf you'll find an example for a social enterprise called Livelihood.

12

What gets you up in the morning?

If you have a set of beliefs that drives what you do and other people believe in them too, they'll sign up. Employees, customers, partners, volunteers, whoever.
Great brands connect people with an idea, something that is more than about their products or service. It could be about helping people to a better life, or improving mankind's knowledge, or saving the planet. It's a big idea that's brave and just out of reach. Something exciting to strive for.
This is your brand purpose and is why people work with you and customers buy from you. It answers the question, Why are you doing what you are doing?

13

Getting a big idea

Define your idea by reviewing all the stuff in sections 4 to 9 above. Be a chameleon: one minute an objective analyst, the next a creative maverick. Think strategically first. Do you need to make a shift in how you run your business, or design your product or service?
Have you reprioritised your customers? Do you need more skills in-house to overcome some vulnerabilities?
If all that was in place, how would you describe your business idea in a lift, on a date, down the pub, to your MP, to someone applying for a job? It will be a blend of:
1 what you do
2 how you do it and
3 what difference it makes.

14

Ideas for getting ideas

A walk round the park
Not a metaphorical one, a real one. You'll get better ideas away from your desk. Better still, go away somewhere. Things are clearer from a distance.
A workshop
Design one yourself for you and colleagues, customers even, or get in someone who can help you.
A creative thinking session or brainstorm
Invite people who aren't directly related to your business like an artist, or a nurse, or an engineer. Someone with empathy for what you're trying to do, but doesn't do it for a living.

15

Promises, promises

We've all heard the adage, better to under-promise and over-deliver. Brand promises often take the form of straplines.
There is one thing to remember when thinking about your promise. It must be true. And not just to customers, but to employees, investors, suppliers. In fact, anyone who engages with you.
Your promise may be a much shorter version of your big idea.

16

Briefs

The secret of a great brief is to let your agency write it. They want to get to the right answer as quickly as possible, and know what information they need to do so.
Things you should see
A detailed description of what you've asked them to do. A clear understanding of your prioritised and segmented audiences, and the single idea they should have of you. Engagement with all the stuff you've done: looking at your competition, your big idea, your three little words, and how they translate into ethos, behaviours and attitude. Your promise, and any business plans you have. Plus anything you deem mandatory, such as inclusivity issues, or the fact that you hate purple.

17

Be true



What's in a name?

Everything
It's your most important brand asset, the vessel that holds every perception people have of your brand.
Before you start spending money on logos, check three things.
1 Search online and see what comes up. Don't forget images as well as videos, news and blogs.
2 Search for registered brands containing your proposed name on the Intellectual Property Office's website.
3 Look on the Companies House website to see if your name's been taken. You still may be able to use the name. Ask your legal adviser.
Naming is one of trickiest parts of branding
Consider using your creative agency or a naming specialist.

18

Straplines and false promises

If your name 'does what it says on the tin', question why you need a strapline. If your name is well known, think what a strapline would add. If you're new to the market, a strapline may help explain what you do.
But remember, you can only use your strapline in places you control: marketing, packaging, business cards, on your vans. Journalists won't use it, neither will employees.
If your strapline highlights your key point of difference, be sure you're able to live up to it.

19

Logos, typefaces, colours, images

Or 'brand identity assets' as the jargon has it. While they are very important, they aren't the brand. They're ways of showing ownership and offer a guarantee or signpost to your audience.
Heed the advice of your designer, who's trained to guide you through the options, and highlight the pros and cons of different approaches.
The general rule is: keep it simple. Think about the brands you most admire. Their logos will almost certainly have simplicity at their heart. Don't forget to check out the competition to make sure you're standing out.
You are advised to get a search of trademarks. Ask your designer or legal adviser for help.

20

Testing, testing

Test as much as you can afford, with as many people as you can reach. You'll be surprised what others see that you didn't.
Your designer will advise you.

21

That implementation plan again

Go through the list of items to rebrand and allocate responsibilities. You may have little more than a website and some stationery, in which case it's relatively simple.
Or you may have a lot more. For the most part your designer or agency will guide you.
Some basic considerations
Do you want to start afresh on a designated day, chucking out all your old branded stuff? Or do you want to go for a 'natural wastage' policy and run down stocks, replacing them with the new brand as you go? Obviously there's a big difference, not least in the effort involved.

22

Brand toolkit. No spanners

This can be a comprehensive package or a series of resources on how to manage your brand. Use it in employee induction and as part of brand engagement sessions. It helps employees understand the brand and the definitions you use, such as your three little words.
It explains your brand ethos, guiding principles and personality. In fact, everything that influences how customers experience your brand.
Your toolkit will give help in using the brand identity; it may be light touch or heavily detailed, depending on your needs.
'Tone of voice' is as much a part of your brand as the visual element, so writing guidelines and a consistent house style are useful, too.

23

Be smart



Rethinking CSR

Explaining why CSR departments should close down is worthy of a book. Such a book, *Supercorp*, by Rosabeth Moss Kanter, champions 'vanguard corporations'. Vanguard, she explains, means 'ahead of the pack... leading the parade toward being values-based, led by principles and a sense of purpose at the heart of the enterprise.'
She calls it 'bringing society in': it's "the thinking of people who say, We have a purpose beyond today's markets and products. How is society changing? What are the big problem areas? What are our capabilities so that maybe we can find a commercial opportunity that also does good?"

24

Was it all worthwhile?

If you don't measure, you won't know
It's so easy to suggest that brand development, management and implementation is a cost to business that comes straight off the bottom line, like advertising. Well for starters, evidence suggests that businesses that invest in their brands don't need to spend so much on advertising and sponsorship. But know what difference your investment is making.
Tracking studies are a good start and finding out whether more people are buying your product or service more often. Use experience surveys to assess customer satisfaction. The Design Business Association has experts in design and brand effectiveness measurement. Try them.
www.dba.org.uk

25

Credit where it's due

Written by Peter Mills at Brand Ethos, London
Designed by Lisa Cromer at Featherstone Studio, London
Printed by The Social Enterprise Press, Mitcham, Surrey
With thanks to Tamara O'Brien for tinkering with the words so they are perfect and to Cherry Parker at The Shaftsbury Partnership for agreeing to the idea.
© Brand Ethos, 2014

- Documents for you to create
- Look overleaf for further help

Clear thinking for spirited organisations

Brand Ethos is a brand strategy consultancy for organisations looking to make positive change in the world

dba Association Member



www.brandethos.co.uk

Five things that make brands great not just good

1

And you can't argue with this
Brands start inside your organisation. If it's just you, well your brand is pretty much you. But whether you are 10 people or 10,000, you can't put a veneer on your organisation and hope that people 'live the brand', because it just won't happen.

Having a clear ambition for your business, based on a set of ideas and beliefs that people are attracted to and live their own lives by, is a good starting point.

2

You're not selling stuff
You are convincing people about your idea and finding those who match your beliefs. The simpler the idea, the easier it is to comprehend. This is nothing to do with the intelligence of your employees or customers. Everyone craves ideas that can be readily grasped.

Great brands don't need to chase customers. You'll soon be found out if you pretend to match your customers' beliefs, but don't really.

3

Brands are in it for the long haul
Think beyond your technology, tomorrow, next year.

Answer the question 'why' you're doing what you're doing, then 'how' and 'what'.

4

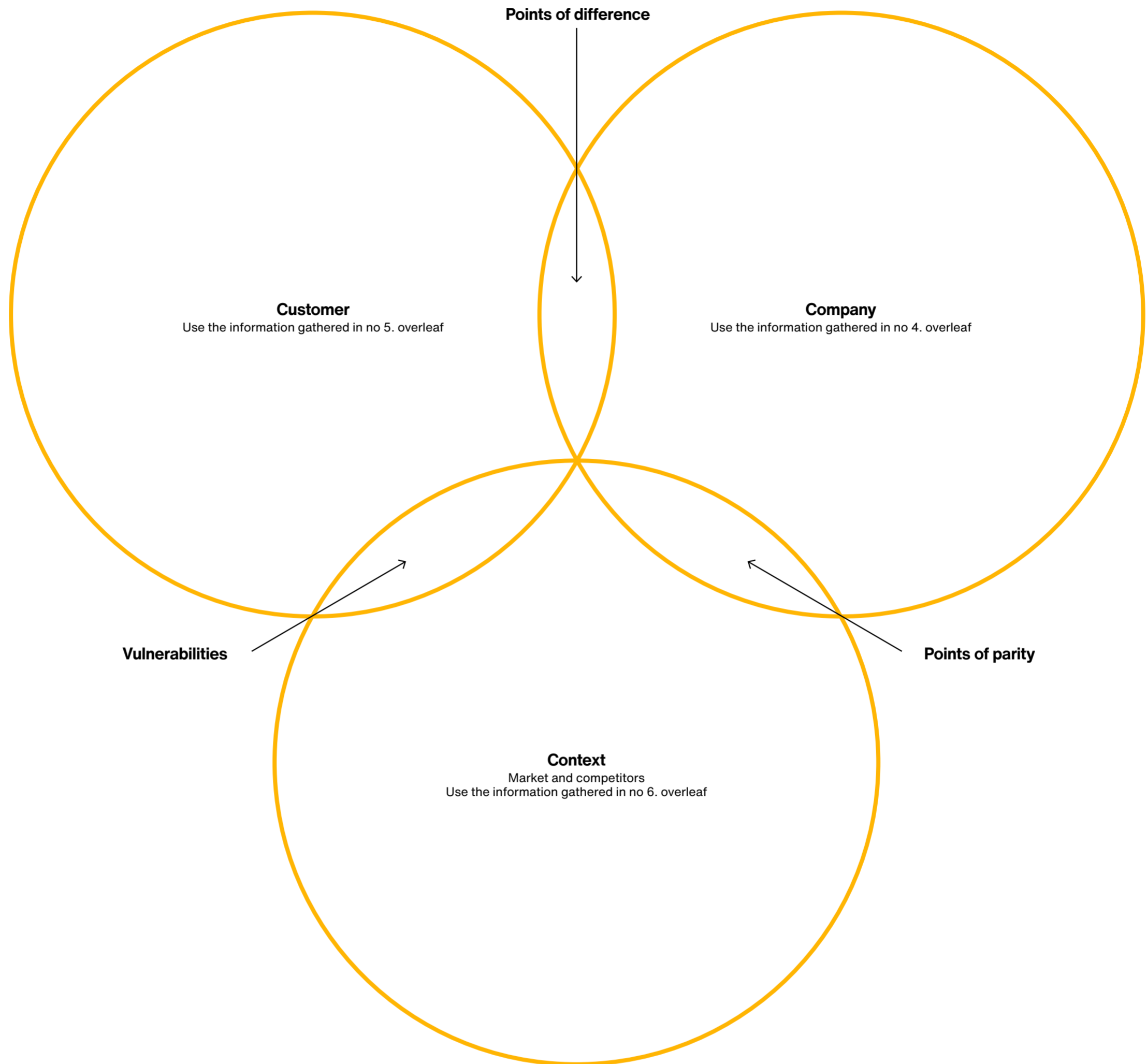
The devil is in the detail
The temptation is to think that brands live in the marketing department. However, everyone in your business lives and breathes it all the time, in every detail.

It determines all your decisions, guides you when things go well or when you have a hiccup.

5

Do the right thing
By doing the right thing you'll be doing the right thing. There is no need for a corporate responsibility department.

Complete your brand diagnostic use this diagram



Three little words case study

Livelihood, a social enterprise which helps businesses take on people who they may otherwise overlooked like ex-offenders.

Their three words are: **work, can, open.**

Thanks to Livelihood for sharing their model.

| Core belief How we think | Core behaviour How we are | Core attitude What others say |
|--|--|--|
| Work hard We know what we do is difficult and requires exceptional dedication | Work smart We think imaginatively to meet our goals and seize opportunities | Work proud We have a responsibility to make work fulfilling and useful |
| Can be We can all be part of a community that benefits from wider employment | Can do We are agile and entrepreneurial, adaptive to make things happen | We can Build better communities by leading with experience and know how |
| Open to possibility We have seen what can be achieved and lead to make it happen | Open minded We see opportunities all around us and are brave to achieve more | Open hearted We embrace the human condition and celebrate our achievements |

Get a plan your brand to do list

Promotional

Advertising
Sponsorship
Promotional literature
Website
Social media
Apps
Branded merchandise
Animations, videos, films, YouTube
Bid templates
Presentations

Your Customers

User literature
Forms
Call centre scripts
Website
Social media
Uniforms, liveries
Extranets
Apps
Badges, IDs
Branded software, including tablets
Branded services/products/labels
Surveys, compliments, complaints
Recorded messages
'Standard' letters
Packaging

Corporate

Printed material
Stationery
Electronic templates
Visitor books/cards
Forms
Business cards
Co-branded partnerships
Newsletters: print and digital
Training
Branded software
Branded services
Franking machines, rubber stamps
Annual report
White papers, research documents
Corporate policies

Legal

Registered office, HMRC, etc
Trademarks, company name
URL, email addresses
Contracts
Terms and Conditions

Your space

Signage
Interiors

Your people

Recruitment material, including adverts
Intranet
Newsletter: print or digital
Policies, staff handbook
Internal communications
Training and development materials

Communications

Consider 'soon to be' option
Customers
Service users
Employees
Partners
Suppliers
'Stakeholders' eg regulators
Training
Volunteers
Trustees
Shareholders, investors