

# **Branding 101**

## **Toolbox Teleclass Transcription**

**By Debra Russell**



### **Foundation Program**

**Track 4: Be Seen: Promotion, Marketing & Sales**



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## WHAT IS BRANDING

Welcome to the September 2012 Toolbox Teleclass called Branding 101. Has anyone called in and want to say hello? Okay great! Let's get going then. So branding is a foundational and critically important tool and concept for creating success in your business.

### DEFINITION: FROM ENTREPRENEUR.COM:

I found great definition of branding from Entrepreneur.com, and this is the quote - "Simply put your brand is your promise to your customers. It tells them what they can expect from your products and services, and it differentiates your offering from that of your competitors. Your brand is derived from who you are, who you want to be and who people will perceive you to be."

*SIMPLY PUT, YOUR BRAND IS YOUR PROMISE TO YOUR CUSTOMER. IT TELLS THEM WHAT THEY CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, AND IT DIFFERENTIATES YOUR OFFERING FROM THAT OF YOUR COMPETITORS.*

So your brand is your promise to your customers. It's how to stand apart from your competitors, and it is...comes out of who you are, who you want to be, and who people perceive you to be. I find this to be a very good, comprehensive definition of branding.

Welcome who's joined me? You want to say your name?

Andy: Hi Andy.

Debra: Hi Andy! Great! Do me a favor. Hit \*6 and put yourself on mute, so that we have a nice clean recording of this. And then if you have questions, you can always hit \*6 again to take yourself off mute.

*YOUR BRAND IS DERIVED FROM WHO YOU ARE, WHO YOU WANT TO BE AND WHO PEOPLE PERCEIVE YOU TO BE.*

### HOW WE EXPERIENCE IT IN LIFE

So going further with what is branding. You know, we experience brands all the time, everywhere we go in our lives. In thinking about yourself and what you do and how you brand it, it's really good to study what other businesses and artists and services do to create their brands.

### EXAMPLES:

**Advertising messages – When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight.**



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Here some examples of how we experience it. First of all, it's through advertising messages. So you know, if you think about commercials or you think about ads in magazines or radio, you know things like for example:

"When it's absolutely positively has to be there overnight." That was FedEx's original brand message. For what it did. It was pretty unique at the time in the world nobody else is doing what they did then. They now have a lot more competition, but "When it's absolutely positively has to be there overnight" is a very clear statement of the service they provide, but also what you can depend on.

You can depend, unlike the United States Postal Service, you can depend on FedEx to get it there overnight.

#### **Logo – Fedex again is a great example, but think also of the Rolling Stone's Lips or the Grateful Dead's skull and roses.**

Another example or way that we experience it in life is through logos. And if you think about the FedEx logo, you always know when it's FedEx because of that logo.

It's clear, it's obvious, but think also of the Rolling Stones' lips. When you saw those lips, you knew it was the Stones or the Grateful Dead's Skull and Roses. You know, you always knew when you see a guy with shades on that it's Bono from Youtube.

It's those particular shades, the particular look. So the logo is also part of branding, and it may--one of the things that is interesting around branding is sometimes there will be individual branding by product.

And sometimes there's branding by company, and whenever you're dealing with Starbucks, no matter whether you're getting a latte, a muffin, regular cup of coffee, you know that logo. That's Starbucks.

#### **Product uniqueness – the sound of Dylan's voice, the brush style of Van Gogh Look or clothing – Adele or Bieber's hair, Cher's outfits, KISS' makeup**

Another example of branding is through the product uniqueness. Now think of it in these terms. If you hear a Dylan song on the radio, you don't need the radio announcer to tell you it's Dylan. You hear his voice. You hear the sound, the quality of the sound, and you know that's Dylan.

If you see a Van Gogh painting, whether or not you ever seen it before and knew it to be Van Gogh, if you're familiar with Van Gogh's painting you will recognize it, because it is distinctively him. No one uses brush strokes, no one uses colors, no one explore the texture and background in the same way that Van Gogh did.



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So when you're looking at a piece of Van Gogh art, you know it's Van Gogh. So the uniqueness of the product can be in it of itself part of its brand.

It could also be in a look or clothing. For example, if you think of Adele or you think of Bieber and you think of their hair. When you see that big blonde hair, you know you're dealing with Adele. When you see the brushed aside bangs, you know you're dealing with Bieber, even though he is now started to move away from that look as he's gotten older. That look is still his. It's still part of his brand.

If you think about Cher's outfits or Kiss's makeup, those are all part of the branding of those musicians, those artists.

#### OUR EXPERIENCE OF BRAND IS EMOTIONAL, NOT INTELLECTUAL

Our experience of brand as consumers is emotional not intellectual. See, we may intellectually say, "Oh, golden arches. I know that's McDonalds." But our connection, our relationship is emotional.

And it may be emotional positive or may be emotional negative. That's not my point. My point is that it's emotional, it's not intellectual, and effective branding always connects emotionally.

*YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING – STARBUCKS IS ALWAYS STARBUCKS, NO MATTER WHERE THE STORE IS.*

You know what you're getting. If you're going into Starbucks, it's always Starbucks. You can trust that no matter where the store is.

*FAST FOOD AROUND THE WORLD – BRANDS OFTEN ADAPT THEMSELVES TO THEIR CUSTOMER'S CULTURE AND TASTE – SO THAT LONDONER'S FEEL COMFORTABLE IN MACDONALD'S IN LONDON.*

But what is also interesting is that brands very often will adapt themselves. For example, fast food restaurants around the world are not the same. If you go to a McDonalds in Paris and you go to a McDonalds in Tokyo, the food is actually different, because brands will often adapt themselves to their customers culture and taste.

So that a Londoner walking into a McDonalds in London feels comfortable in that store, in that restaurant.\



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*PART OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP AS A CLIENT/CUSTOMER/FAN TO THE ARTIST IS A RESULT OF THE CONNECTION YOU'VE MADE WITH THEIR BRAND – IT'S AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION.*

Part of your relationship as client-customer-fan to an artist is...or anything...is a result of connection you've made with their brand. It's an emotional connection, and when you, as a business owner, decide what your brand is, you have to keep in mind what emotional connection do you want the customer/client or fan to experience.

And set about providing that experience through your brand. And set about providing that consistency of experience through your brand.

## 2 FACETS OF BRANDING YOU MUST CONSIDER

So when thinking about your brand, there are really two facets that you have to consider.

### THE UNIQUE EXPRESSION OF YOURSELF WITHIN YOUR MEDIUM AND GENRE

The first is the unique expression of yourself within your medium and your genre. I am not a big fan of making something up that really isn't organic to who you are or authentic to who you are.

I think for two reasons. One, it will quickly pall. You will get bored with it. Because if it's not really who you are, then you're always putting on a mask. You're always being something or someone other than who you are. So ideally you want to find that which is unique and express that through your medium and genre.

### WHO YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE IS AND HOW YOU ARE UNIQUELY WHAT THEY WANT, NEED AND DESIRE

This other facet is who your target audience is and how you are uniquely providing what they want, need, and desire, and find a way to express how you uniquely provided in language, in images, in colors, in sounds and experiences that they recognize, so that their connection with your brand becomes organic for them.

So you want it to be organic for you, but you also want it to be organic for them. By organic, I don't mean that you don't consciously and intentionally create it and use it. It is conscious and intentional. The best brands are. They may not start out that way, but they become that way.

You know, Bieber may not have started out thinking, "Well, if I style my hair this way, everyone will identify." No, but once he saw people identifying that look with him and copying it, he really embraced it.



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So there may already be things that are uniquely who you are and your audience may already be connecting with them. And if you can quantify and qualify what those are, and then begin to consciously and intentionally incorporate that as part of your brand, that's really the best way to go about doing this.

It may well be that the makeup for Kiss was kind of a whim of the moment, but boy, once they realized how that set them apart and what it really did for them as a brand, they completely embraced it. Completely. It became really part of who they were.

## HOW TO EXPRESS YOURSELF AUTHENTICALLY THROUGH YOUR BRAND

So let's talk a little bit about how to express yourself authentically through your brand, but actually you know what before I do that I did want to give the option for questions about this.

And by the way, these concepts apply to anything and everything. You know, I can say as a coach--as a business coach, really the truth is I can be a business coach for any business and have been and am.

And I have worked with clients everything from acupuncture and health care to lawyers to financial products to IT managers, you know, to engineers--- I've worked with people in a lot of different avenues.

My branding is that I am a business coach for the Arts and Entertainment industry. Right? So that's how I brand myself. That's how I set myself apart from all the other business and life coaches out there in the world.

Another part of my brand is I am very pragmatic. It's really how to, specific, detailed, this is what you got to do, whereas a lot of people doing what I do are kind of vague and airy-fairy about how they express themselves.

But I as a person am very pragmatic. That's who I am. That's who I organically am, and so that's also what sets me apart and I always build that into my branding to my expression of myself.

So no matter what you're doing in your business if you're an artist, if you are a producer, if you are a filmmaker, if you're a writer, whatever it is you're doing, whatever your business is all of these concepts are applicable. Okay, questions?

THE FINE LINE BETWEEN:





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#### *BEING AUTHENTICALLY YOURSELF AND BEING A SELF-ABSORBED AND NARCISSISTIC ARTIST*

How to express yourself authentically through your brand. And I think part of the challenge of this stuff for a lot of people is that there is a fine line between being authentically yourself and being a self-absorbed and narcissistic artist.

There is a fine line between being truly connected and in touch with your audience and being a "commercial sellout." And where people get stuck isn't so much walking the fine line.

#### *BEING TRULY CONNECTED AND IN TOUCH WITH YOUR AUDIENCE AND BEING A "COMMERCIAL" SELL-OUT*

It's that they think that branding yourself is the negative, is being self-absorbed and narcissistic, is being a commercial sellout, is kind of being that negative image in one way or another, and that judgment of what it would mean for you to develop your own brand gets in the way of developing your brand.

#### *IF YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE, WHY WOULD THEY CARE ABOUT YOU?*

Because the truth is just being authentically and truly yourself and saying, "This is what I do and if you don't like it you can go stuff it, and I'm just going to do it and I don't really care how it's received out in the world."

#### *IF YOU DON'T CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE, HOW CAN THEY POSSIBLY CONNECT WITH YOU?*

I mean, you know, maybe you don't care in which case it's a hobby, but if you actually want to make a business out of it, want to make a living out of it, you got to care.

Because you got to take that feedback or you're never going to get better and be successful. It's just the bottom line. So how do you authentically express your voice and stay open to the feedback?

How do you really listen to your audience and connect with them and see what you're doing through their eyes without sacrificing your unique voice? And that to me is the fine line, but it really is the essence of living as an artist is finding out for you where that fine line is and walking it, and examining it and questioning it and saying, "Wait a minute. What's my attitude on this?"

And how am I being authentically myself? Am I just making every change that everybody ever suggests to me or am I finding my own voice? Am I not listening to anyone and being closed off and not being open to learn and develop or am I really staying open, so that I can truly connect with my audience?



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IF YOU AREN'T ACCESSIBLE TO YOUR AUDIENCE – OPEN, AVAILABLE – WHY DO YOU EXPECT THEM TO OPEN THEIR HEARTS TO YOU? LET ALONE THEIR WALLETS...

It's walking that fine line because you know if you don't care about your audience, why on earth would they care about you? Why should they care about you? If you don't connect with your audience, how can they possibly connect with you?

If you aren't open and accessible to your audience, and by open and accessible I don't mean that you invite them over to your house for pizza necessarily, but I do mean that you listened to them and you respond when they tweet at you or post on your Facebook page, that you connect with them.

If you aren't accessible to them, why do you expect them to open their hearts to you, let alone their wallets? True expression and communication demands reciprocation. Because without the receiving part, it's not communication. It's really just, you know, to be crude, it's really just masturbation. It's really just jerking yourself off.

Whereas if you are really in communication with your audience, if you're creating an expression because you want to have that impact, and you want to find out what that impact is. That's communication.

TRUE EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION EXPECTS RECIPROCATION. ART IS SERVICE – IT'S ALWAYS A TWO WAY STREET.

Art is service. It's always a 2 way street. If it's not a 2 way street, it's narcissism. So you know, check yourself. If you're being really arrogant and saying, "I don't care, I don't care whether anyone ever likes this. This is just my expression." Then it's not art. It's not. It's narcissism.

By the way these are my opinions, you may hold different ones, but that's my belief. And I believe that in order to be a successful business owner if you are not aware of and connecting with your clients, customers, and fans, you won't be successful.

Because they will never--you will never create loyalty with them. If they don't feel like you care about them, they will not be loyal to you. And that's just human nature. If you don't care about them, why should they care about you?

And believe me people can tell. So another thing that can really become part and parcel of your brand and what can set you apart and really create loyalty within your fans is your BOP. Now if you've been studying the [Multiple Streams of Art/Music Income Business Model](#), you're familiar with your BOP but if you haven't I'm going to define it here.



## USING YOUR BOP TO ESTABLISH YOUR BRAND

YOUR BOP IS YOUR BOLD OUTRAGEOUS PROVOCATIVE STATEMENT OF WHO YOU ARE, WHAT YOU STAND FOR, WHAT YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT AND WHAT YOU WILL FIGHT FOR

Your BOP which is Step 8 in that business model is your Bold, Outrageous, Provocative statement of who you are, right? That really is the essence of your brand. It is your bold, outrageous, and provocative statement. It's who you are, what you stand for, what you're passionate about, and what you will fight for.

IT CAN BECOME YOUR BRAND.

And it can become a really important aspect of your brand.

IT CAN SET YOU APART.

It can set you apart, and it can open up doors to your niche and give them away to a line with your stand.

IT CAN OPEN UP DOORS TO YOUR NICHE MARKET AND GIVE THEM A WAY TO ALIGN WITH YOUR STAND, CONNECT AND ENGAGE WITH YOU WITH PASSION AND COMMITMENT.

Connect and engage with you with passion and commitment because if they are enrolled by your BOP in who you are, they will believe in you in a way that if it's just about, you know, what makes your tissue unique from everybody's other brands of tissues, then they're not going to be committed.

They're not going to be loyal. They are not going to necessarily share you with their friends. Okay? It is this essence, this energy that makes things go viral. And it makes people to live and just share you, because they align themselves with what you stand for and with what's important to you, because it matches their values.

What's interesting with all of this stuff is that it's about alignment. It's about matching values. It's about emotional alignment. It's not about sale. It's not about convincing. It's about features. It's about emotional connection, benefits, and what you believe in authentically, and what your audience believes in authentically. And finding where is the match, okay?

I found it really interesting back a few years ago. This is early, it's about midway through Bush's first term when we got into the war with Iraq. And the Dixie Chicks, who were a very big national-based country group, whose...and a big chunk of their audience would consider themselves you know, conservative, republican, walkin' the party line.



And they came out against the war. And they came out strongly against the war. They did that because it's part of their BOP. It was part of what was so important to them that they were passionate about it, and they were willing to take a stand for it, even if it lost them fans.

But here's what it did for them. It did lose them fans and what it gained them were really, truly die-hard passionate fans, who aligned with their values and even if they didn't agree with them, they were so honored and impressed by their willingness to take the risk and say what they believed.

And so initially, it may have hurt their numbers, but in the long run, it build them a much stronger base of fans, because they took that risk and they boldly and outrageously and provocatively as heck took a stand.

## MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT YOUR BRAND

YOU MUST IDENTIFY AND EMBRACE THAT WHICH SETS YOU APART FROM YOUR COMPETITION – BE OUT AND PROUD WITH IT.

So now that we've talked in gore detail what a brand is and how to be thinking about your brand, how do you then design your brand? Now remember I said that you may already be organically expressing things that you can then incorporate as part of your brand, but the step that you need to take is being conscious and intentional in incorporating it.

*FIND 1 THING THAT IS REALLY TRULY UNIQUELY YOURS – EXPLORE IT, DEVELOP IT, AND FIND WAYS TO EXPRESS IT EVERYWHERE – YOUR PRODUCT DESIGN, YOUR WEB DESIGN, YOUR MERCH DESIGN, YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA DESIGN, EVERYWHERE.*

So you must identify and embrace that which sets you apart from your competition. You got to be out and proud with it. Find one thing that is truly uniquely yours. Explore it, develop it, find ways to express it everywhere.

Your product design, your web design, your merchandising design, your social media design, your tagline in your email signature line, everywhere.

YOU MUST DEEPLY UNDERSTAND, GET INTO THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF YOUR AUDIENCE. You must deeply understand, get into the heart and mind of your audience. And it's really about not only understanding them intellectually, but really kind of groaking them on an emotional level.



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*WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOU THAT THEY ARE CONNECTING WITH? WHAT DO THEY SEE THAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT YOU – HOW DO THEY EXPRESS IT?*

What it is about you that they connect with? What'd they see unique about you and how did they express it in their language? This is an area which can really benefit from a survey. You could interview a handful of your most passionate diehard fans. The people who really tell everybody about you and share you with everybody and refer people to you and comeback to you over and over again no matter what. Always show up.

Ask them. What is it about you that they think is unique? What is it you that they're in love with? And particularly listen for the language that they use to express it, because they are much more likely to use emotional language, and you want to use emotional language, because you want to create an emotional connection.

*AND AGAIN – TAKE THAT AND FIND WAYS TO EXPRESS IT EVERYWHERE*

And again once you've find out that information, take that and find ways to express it everywhere.

So the first two, identifying and embracing what set you uniquely apart. So what is it about how what you do what you do that is unique? And the second is what is it about what you do that your audience connect with?

What is it that--how are you fulfilling their wants, needs, and desires in a unique and differentiated way?

*IDENTIFY THE BELIEFS THAT CAUSE RESISTANCE FROM DEVELOPING YOUR BRAND.*

But thirdly, you've got to identify any beliefs that cause resistance within you. That cause you to resist doing this work, to resist developing your brand.

*WORK TO SHIFT THEM – THIS IS CRITICAL.*

Now those ideas could be about not wanting to stand out from the crowd. You know, I know from myself that I had to battle, you know, childhood traumas. What happened to me in grade school and junior, middle school when I stood out from the crowd and the response and the reception I received--I have to move pass that and release that and let that go before I could really--before I could stand in front of a room and teach a class and feel okay about that.

And feel like, you know, yes, I do have something unique to share with my audience. I need to get pass that. You may find that there are things, there were messages that you got from different places in childhood about being unique, about being special, about standing out from the crowd.



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And by the way, when you take a stand, when you put yourself out there as unique and different, there is responsibility intrinsically in that—you know there is a responsibility around the response people have to you.

#### *RESPONSIBILITY*

In other words, your outcomes are your responsibility. They are yours. You have to own them, and one of the ways we avoid taking responsibility for our outcomes is by not stepping out, because, you know, we can kid ourselves. We can lie to ourselves. We can pretend that those outcomes, they are not really mine, because I didn't really take a risk. I didn't really stand out.

I know I would have got different outcomes if I had really fully stood out. So these outcomes that I am really getting they are not really mine. And there's a way in which you can delude yourself to avoid the responsibility of your outcomes that feels less available when you are really putting yourself out with courage in a bold, outrageous, and provocative way.

It feels more vulnerable, more risky to take that stand. And if that's true for you, it not true for everybody. But if that's true for you those beliefs that underlie that--that behavior, they're in your way.

They are not just in the way from establishing your brand. They're in your way from really fulfilling your potential. They are in your way from finding what level of success is actually part of you. You know, what is your God given potential? How far can you take this? What level of success can you achieve if you really put yourself out there?

And it's funny, but those issues really show up for people when they start exploring what their brand is because there's a way in which if you decide this is who I am and this is the stand I'm taking in the world, you can't pretend anymore.

*UNTIL YOU ARE WILLING TO COURAGEOUSLY EMBRACE AND BOLDLY EXPRESS YOUR BRAND – YOUR SUCCESS WILL BE LIMITED BY THAT RESISTANCE.*

Until you are willing to courageously embrace and boldly express your unique voice, your unique value, your bold outrageous provocative statement of who you are. Your difference from your competition. What makes you special?

Until you are willing to courageously embrace and boldly express your brand, your success will be limited by that resistance. And so figuring out how to let go of whatever it is you need to let go of, how to shift whatever beliefs you need to shift, how to release yourself from whatever old memories, experiences, lessons that you need to release, they are going to be in your way of fully expressing your potential and experiencing the level of success that you have every right to experience.



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So that's my talk about branding 101. If you have any questions, you can feel free to hit \*6 and come off mute. Also for those of you who are listening to the recording, you can feel free to submit your questions. If you are a foundational level member, you can submit it to the Ask Coach Debra call or a professional program member, you can submit it for email coaching, and of course, if you are in the professional mentorship program, you can certainly talk about it in a laser coaching session. Any questions? Alrighty then, thanks very much and we'll see you on the next call!