

The background features a stack of books. The top book is dark grey with a gold-colored cursive word, possibly 'love', written on its cover. Below it is a brown book, and at the bottom is a spiral-bound notebook with a brown cover. A white rectangular box is centered over the books, containing the main title and subtitle.

# DIY BRAND DEVELOPMENT

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BUILDING A BRAND THAT NOT ONLY LOOKS, BUT ACTS, SOUNDS,  
& FEELS JUST LIKE YOU.

WHISKEY & RED

# ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

## YOU BOUGHT THIS WORKBOOK BECAUSE...

- *You're frustrated by not being able to clearly define what it is you do when people ask.*
- *You've been struggling to identify who your audience is how you can best serve them.*
- *You have so many ideas but you're having a hard time getting productive with your actions.*
- *You feel lost in your brand because you haven't been able to find your authentic voice.*
- *You're wondering if you're even capable of doing this...*

Well guess what... *You can, and you will!*

## WHAT IS THIS?

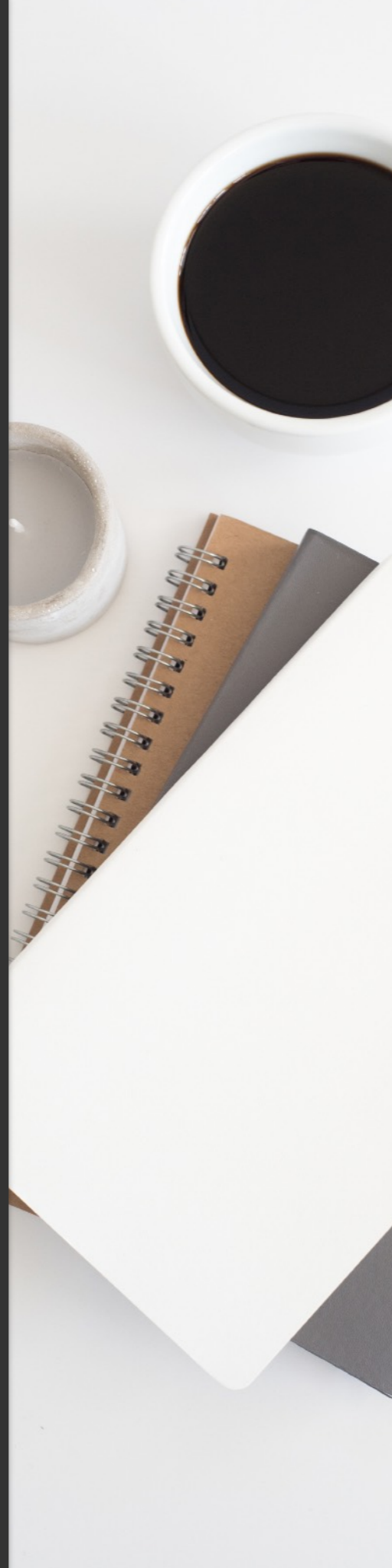
Here at Whiskey & Red, we strive to redefine what it means to be an online business professional by collaborating with other entrepreneurs, small businesses, freelancers, and bloggers to create brands that not only look, but act, sound, and feel just like them.

The one thing that no other business will ever have or will ever be able to offer that will be what your legacy will be build on... is you! So whether you are just starting out or you are already open and working, if you feel you're lacking focus and a confident creative direction, then this is the workbook is for you.

Throughout this workbook, we will explore, discover and define who you are and what you stand for – thereby helping you gain the clarity and confidence you need to support your small business and grow your brand.

From brand beginnings to brand expansion, we'll focus on creating a brand that feels, sounds, and acts just like you.

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# BRANDING V.S. BRAND IDENTITY

Just because we are small business owners doesn't mean there is anything "small" about us. Being a small business has nothing to do with size and all to do with the way in which we conduct our business. It's seriously a lifestyle choice to always create a personal customized, one of a kind, experience for the people we engage with. Because we are small, every decision we make is huge! The stakes are so much higher for us small business owners. With one interaction, we have the power to make or break our brands. There is absolutely nothing small about that.

Branding your business and designing your brand's visual identity are two separate steps in your overall brand experience. Understanding how they differentiate while also how dependent they are upon one another in order to convey consistency and clarity behind a brand is crucial. As a brand designer and developer, this is my main job. Helping you create a brand that not only *looks* like you, but *feels, acts, and sounds* like *you* too.

Often times branding and brand identity are assumed to be synonymous. While they work together, they are very different. In order to build a genuine, organic, one-of-a-kind brand and establish an identity that has longevity, it all starts with a foundation. You. Because, *after-all*, you are your brand.

Our personal brand is what paints the picture of who we are and what we do. It's an all encompassing collection of features and characteristics, from how we look, to the way our websites look, to how we handle conflict and all the details in between. Our brand is a result of how we see ourselves, but ultimately, it's what teaches others how to see us. Your brand affects the overall reputation of your business and even more so, your own professional career. It's how we treat our own brand that teaches others how to treat us.

People expect more from us small businesses, and it's our job to not only meet but exceed those expectations. Our brand's success depends on it. This is the life we've chosen for our selves, not because it's the easy route, but because it means more. It fulfills something within us that we can't find anywhere else.

L E S S O N 1

# IDENTIFYING THE YOU IN YOUR BRAND

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IDENTIFYING YOUR PERSONAL PASSIONS & CORE VALUES

# IDENTIFYING THE YOU IN YOUR BRAND

## YOU ARE YOUR BRAND

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One of the greatest lessons we've learned as we've run our own business, is that **YOU ARE YOUR BUSINESS**. When we own a small business, we have the opportunity to create an experience for our clients that makes them feel like they are our most important client. Beyond that, we can customize an experience for that client that makes them feel like an individual, a friend. Someone that actually means something to us on a personal level beyond simply monetary value. It's this custom experience that curates the consistent loyal following that our brands will be known for.

Often times, we are not the only brand offering our products and services. Chances are, there is probably a few other businesses out there doing the very same thing we do. A lot of small businesses we work with are fighting with this very issue. They are afraid to start their own business because there are so many other out there doing the same thing. But no matter how many other brands may be offering similar products or services, what they don't have and never will be able to offer is **YOU**. *Your ideas, your creativity, your passion and your ability* to create an incredible, unique, one of a kind custom brand experience.

You are your own secret weapon. That secret ingredient, the secret sauce, the magic formula... whatever you want to call it, it's you. Now the question is, *what's the quality of the "you" factor in your brand?*

So, who are you? Your business is a direct reflection of what you choose and what you don't choose. These specific distinctions that define who you are and what you stand for are your business's purpose. When exploring where you want to go with your brand, it's important to recognize and understand where you've been, and how it got you to today.



# IDENTIFYING THE YOU IN YOUR BRAND

## IDENTIFYING YOUR PERSONAL PASSIONS + CORE VALUES:

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Who are you *personally, publicly, privately, and professionally*?

1. Describe your personality in 2-3 sentences (*or terms*). How do you see yourself?

2. What are you naturally good at?

3. What do you have formal training or education in that you enjoy doing?

4. What do you receive the most compliments on? (*Personally and professionally*)

5. What do you find the most joy helping other people with?

6. What is your favorite way to spend your personal time outside work?

# IDENTIFYING THE YOU IN YOUR BRAND

## HOW YOU GOT TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY

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Your personal brand story becomes the narrative that portrays the heart and soul of your brand's past, present, and future. It emotionally unites your brand with your target clients by showing them that you're real. It shows them that you understand them. What your brand will ultimately communicate is what you stand for, what you promise, and what your clients will experience every time they choose to invest their own time and energy into you and your business. Why is this important? As opposed to products and services you may provide within your business, it's the story and the experience of your brand that people will always remember. People remember stories. So let's tell yours.

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## YOUR PERSONAL BRAND STORY

Answer the following questions with the mindset that you are talking to one of your followers. They are asking you this to understand who you are, what you do, and why you started doing it. They are looking to better understand where you came from.



Where did you come from? What were you doing before the concept for your business came to you?

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What were the key moments in your life leading up to your decision to start your business? What specific events/ decisions, did you make that lead you here?

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# IDENTIFYING THE YOU IN YOUR BRAND

## HOW YOU GOT TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY

➤ What was your big struggle, what was going on in your life leading up to the point before making the decision to embark on starting this new business venture?

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➤ What happened after that? What other experiences or choices did you make following your “ah-ha” moment that lead to where you are today?

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➤ What was the turning point? Your “ah-ha” moment that finalized your decision to start your business?

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➤ What made you do the work you’re doing? The main purpose for why it is you do what you do today? Why is it important?

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L E S S O N 2

# EXPLORING THE MAJOR "W's" OF YOUR BRAND

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WHO, WHAT, WHY, & HOW



# EXPLORING THE MAJOR “W’S” OF YOUR BRAND

## WHO, WHAT, WHY, + HOW

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When Brands stand out, it’s because they *stand for something*. They have a clear brand message that resonates with you in some way that causes them to win that #1 place in your mind. And when I say number one, I mean number one. It more powerful than the first page of Google or the top trending focus of the day. This is a place that is eternally theirs until they do something personally that alters how they see you.

Once a brand is the first in mind, all they have to do to stay there is to keep doing what they were doing when they got there. *Stay consistent*. Consistency is what breeds trust and trust is EVERYTHING in business.

As a brand, it’s hard to stand for something when you aren’t clear about what it is you really want. Take time and invest in researching what it is that you stand for. What is it that you want your brand to be known for? How do you want others to see you? Once you define what it is that you stand for, be consistent and live your message by sharing what it is you stand for.

As you answer the questions on the next few pages, think with the mindset that you are talking to your clients. They are asking you about you, but what they are really asking is “*what’s in it for me?*” “*Where do I fit in?*” “*What can I gain from you?*”

# THE BRAND INTRODUCTION

Your brand introduction is a statement that defines your brand in a simple bite-sized, digestible paragraph to keep in your back pocket for any and all situations. Similar to your mission statement, your brand introduction provides information that will help people decide how serious you are about your brand, what your brand stands for, why what you do matters, and how what you do is different from every other person within your market.

The formula for your brand's introduction isn't hard, but getting to a place where you can so clearly articulate your brand in a few sentences is what takes time. While your brand's vision and mission are big grand statements declaring the overall goals of your brand, this is a much more personal introduction, enticing the listener in to get inspired and want to know more.

Having the simple answers to each of these questions allows you to mix and match their order as it relates to the individual or group you are addressing.

## BRAND INTRO FORMULA

- 1 WHO ARE YOU?**  
Straight up, who are you? Your name and self appointed professional vocational title.
- 2 WHO DO YOU SERVE?**  
Who is your target audience? Who do you serve through your products and services? Think specifics. You may strive to serve “everybody” but realistically, there is a common thread that unites the followers of your brand. What is it that these people seek?
- 3 WHAT DO YOU DO?**  
What is it that you actually do? What do you provide?
- 4 HOW DO YOU DO THIS?**  
“Through \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ I...”  
The actions you take to create what it is you provide.
- 5 WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**  
Your big BECAUSE. Why is this important to both you and your clients/ audience/ followers? What value are your providing with all of this?

## BRAND FORMULA IN ACTION

1

EXAMPLE ANSWER	YOUR ANSWER
<p><i>Who are you?</i></p> <p>I am Julie Harris, a brand stylist and graphic designer.</p>	

2

EXAMPLE ANSWER	YOUR ANSWER
<p><i>Who do you serve?</i></p> <p>I collaborate with established small businesses owners, at all levels of industry...</p>	

3

EXAMPLE ANSWER	YOUR ANSWER
<p><i>What do you do?</i></p> <p>helping them translate their offline business into an online digital experience.</p>	

4

EXAMPLE ANSWER	YOUR ANSWER
<p><i>How do you do this?</i></p> <p>Through our structured and systematic creative process, we are able to keep costs low while allowing creative flexibility to each individual client; providing you with a completely customized and personal design experience.</p>	

5

EXAMPLE ANSWER	YOUR ANSWER
<p><i>Why is this important?</i></p> <p>It's our goal to make you look as professional online as you do in person. When your brand clearly communicates who you are at your best, you're going to discover a whole new level of confidence in your business - <i>online and offline.</i></p>	

## BRAND FORMULA IN ACTION

EXAMPLE ANSWER	YOUR ANSWER
<p data-bbox="644 649 987 690"><b><i>All together now...</i></b></p> <p data-bbox="480 731 1152 970">I am Julie Harris, a brand stylist and graphic designer. I collaborate with established small businesses owners, at all levels of industry helping them translate their offline business into an online digital experience.</p> <p data-bbox="452 1083 1179 1322">Through our structured and systematic creative process, we are able to keep costs low while allowing creative flexibility to each individual client; providing you with a completely customized and personal design experience.</p> <p data-bbox="452 1434 1179 1674">It's our goal to make you look as professional online as you do in person. When your brand clearly communicates who you are at your best, you're going to discover a whole new level of confidence in your business – <i>online and offline.</i></p>	<p data-bbox="1742 613 2058 654"><b><i>All together now...</i></b></p>

L E S S O N 3

# YOUR BRAND'S MISSION VISION + VALUES

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FUNDAMENTAL REASONS FOR YOUR BUSINESS' EXISTENCE

# BRAND VISION STATEMENT

## YOUR FUNDAMENTAL REASON - PURPOSE - FOR YOUR BUSINESS' EXISTENCE

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The primary role of a “purpose” is to guide and inspire your mission and business goals. Why does this business exist? Where do you see it going in the future? What are your long-term core values and plans? How do you want society to view your business? Describe your brand as you see it in the future. If you were to achieve everything you set out to do when you first started your business, what would that look like?

There are really no right or wrong ways to write your brand’s vision statement, but it should always be inspirational, aspirational, and answer the question: “Where (who) do I (we) aim to be in the future?”

### SHORT VISION STATEMENT:

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Disney - *“To make people happy.”*

### NUMBERS OR QUANTITIES:

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Nike - *“To become the number 1 athletic company in the world.”*

### BASED ON QUALITIES:

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Ford - *“To become the world’s leading consumer company for automotive products and services.”*

### BASED ON TRANSFORMATIONS:

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Tracy Wright Corvo Photography - *“Revolutionize headshot and portrait photography one face at a time.”*

### LONGER VISION STATEMENT :

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Coca Cola – *“To achieve sustainable growth, we have established a vision with clear goals:*

**Profit:** Maximizing return to share owners while being mindful of our overall responsibilities. **People:** Being a great place to work where people are inspired to be the best they can be. **Portfolio:** Bringing to the world a portfolio of beverage brands that anticipate and satisfy people's; desires and needs. **Partners:** Nurturing a winning network of partners and building mutual loyalty. **Planet:** Being a responsible global citizen that makes a difference.”

\* Vision Statement Resource: [LifeHack.com](http://LifeHack.com)

## YOUR VISION STATEMENT:

*What does your business look like in the future?*



# BRAND MISSION STATEMENT

## OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY THAT STIMULATES PROGRESS

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While your Vision statement provides an ideological control, preserving your core, your Mission Statement provides the operational autonomy that will stimulate progress in your business.

What are your responsibilities and commitments to your clients? What is your “business culture” and how will it shine through? How will you practically accomplish your vision during day-to-day operations?

Think action words, verbs. Specific physical and mental actions. Your brand’s mission describes your brand’s intentions. It provides your actionable steps to achieving your brand’s vision. Unlike the vision, which is speaking of the future, the mission exists in the now. It provides the “what”, “why” and “who” of your business.

## INTENTIONAL AND ACTIONABLE MISSION STATEMENTS

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**Patagonia** - *“Build the best products, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis.”*

**Trader Joe’s** - *“To give our customers the best food and beverage values that they can find anywhere and to provide them with the information required to make informed buying decisions.”*

**Tracy Wright Corvo** - *“Provide my clients with more than just quality headshots and portraits at a great price, but quality headshots and portraits that actually meets their needs.”*

## YOUR MISSION STATEMENT:

*What is your brand’s actionable mission?*

# BRAND VALUES STATEMENT

## DEFINE + ESTABLISH YOUR BRAND'S CORE VALUES

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A third, and often not as addressed, element in a strong brand base is your brand's Values Statement. This defines and establishes your brand's core values. It describes what your brand believes in and how you will behave, your moral compass, guiding how you will conduct your business, today, tomorrow and in the future.

Your brand's vision, mission, and values rarely change. They are the formal building blocks that everything else will be built on. While your strategies, products, or services may shift or pivot depending on your brand's positioning, the internal reason for why you do what you do generally doesn't change.

Above all, beyond your vision and mission, your brand's values dictate your big promise to your readers/ clients / followers. This sets the tone and mood for your brand, establishing a set of guidelines of how to engage with you, and what your followers can come to expect from you.

## BRAND VALUES STATEMENTS:

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**Honest Tea** - *"Real Tea: We embrace the simplicity of tea - water, and leaves.*

*Real Taste: Our goal is to create a product in which the true taste of the leaves comes through.*

*Honesty: We strive to live up to our name in the way we conduct our business."*

**Tracy Wright Corvo** - *"Authenticity: Being true to your own spirit and personality.*

*Risk Taking: Following your heart and not just your mind.*

*Encouraging Confidence: Helping others appreciate who they are and helping them discover the beauty in their own strengths and talents."*

## YOUR VALUES STATEMENT:

*Above all, what do you strive to provide for your community? What are your unyielding values?*

L E S S O N 4

# MARKET + AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

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WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

# MARKET + AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

## WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

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Understanding the current market and other brands working with in a similar niche is crucial to understanding where you lie in the mix. Taking time to evaluate what else is out there, how it compares to what you offer, how it's similar and how it differs. Evaluating where these other brands are weak and how to capitalize on your strengths to help make that impactful impression on your audience.

Even more crucial is understanding who it is you are addressing. Who is your target clientele, reader, follower, and client? What are the specific characteristics and demographics of your market and how do they engage socially? How will they most likely come in contact with you, how will they engage with you and how will they take advantage of the products and services you offer?

Making sure that the work we commit to and the clients we commit to, are complementary to our brand's goals. Always ask yourself, is this work something that I will be proud of, the client will be proud of, and we'll want to share it with others? Does it contribute to the forward progress of my brand and business? If the answer is yes, then it's the right client. But if the answer is no, then maybe the greatest thing you can do for both you and the client is invest in your right to say no.



# TARGET AUDIENCE

## WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

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### IDEAL CLIENT PROFILES

Communication is only successful when the receiving party understands your content exactly the way you meant it to be understood. So by exploring what other factors influence your clients, we'll have a greater clarity on how to best position your content.

### BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS

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Think about some of the basic demographics of your target clientele. Think about their ages, genders, ethnicities, education levels, and jobs. Who are your clients at the most basic generic level? What specific commonalities do they have in common?

### SOCIAL

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What types of social issues are likely to affect your target clients? How often do your clients socialize? What kinds of relationships do they have? What is their general disposition? How do they see the world?

### PERSONAL

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Think about more detailed specifics about your target client's personal qualities. Think about personality traits, hobbies, passions. Also consider what other external factors influence your clients such as books, TV shows, technology, food etc...

### FINANCIAL

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What is the financial stability of your target clients? What are their biggest financial investments they make each month. How do they handle their money? (Are they frugal or do they like to spend) What is their spending confidence? Are they comfortable shopping online v.s. shopping in person.



# TARGET CLIENT PROFILE

## BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS

Fill out each of the boxes below with the basic demographic specifics of your target audience.

DEMOGRAPHIC	YOUR CLIENTS
GENDER	
AGE RANGE	
LOCATIONS:	
ETHNICITIES:	
EDUCATIONAL LEVELS:	
EMPLOYEEMENT:	

## PERSONALITY TRAITS

Fill out each of the boxes below with the personal qualities of your target audience.

PERSONAL TRAIT	YOUR CLIENTS
PERSONALITY TRAITS:	
PERSONAL HOBBIES:	
PERSONAL PASSIONS:	
PERSONAL INTERESTS:	
PRIMARY NEEDS:	
PRIMARY CONCERNS:	

# TARGET CLIENT PROFILE

## SOCIAL HABITS

Fill out each of the boxes below with the social habits and factors of your target audience.

DEMOGRAPHIC	YOUR CLIENTS
SOCIAL PREFERENCES:	
DO THEY USE TECHNOLOGY, IF SO, WHAT?	
HOW DO THEY SEEK OUT INFORMATION?	
DO THEY USE SOCIAL MEDIA, IF SO WHAT PLATFORMS?	
HOW DO THEY SHARE INFORMATION?	
HOW WOULD THEY FIRST COME IN CONTACT WITH YOUR BRAND?	
WHAT TYPES OF ENTERTAINMENT DO THEY ENJOY?	
GENERAL VIEW OF THE WORLD, HOW DO THEY VIEW SOCIETY?	
WHAT ISSUES ARE LIKELY TO AFFECT THEM?	

## FINANCIAL HABITS

Fill out each of the boxes below with the financial factors that influence your target audience.

PERSONAL TRAIT	YOUR CLIENTS
INCOME LEVEL:	
LARGEST MONTHLY EXPENSE:	
SECOND LARGEST MONTHLY EXPENSE:	
SAVING HABITS:	
SPENDING HABITS:	
WHAT MIGHT THEY SPEND THEIR MONEY ON?	
WHAT MIGHT THEY SAVE THEIR MONEY FOR?	

# TARGET CLIENT PROFILE

## IDEAL CLIENT PROFILE

Using the information provided in the tables, make a summarized description of who and what your ideal client might be like. Understanding that this is an educated assumption about the general factors that influence your audience, not all these qualities will always be true to your audience, but it assists with marketing clarity and content development, since we'll have a clearer picture of who it is you are focusing your energy towards.

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# MARKET ANALYSIS

## WHO ELSE IS OUT THERE?

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When developing a brand new brand, it's crucial to understand the market that you are emerging into. What is currently available? Who are the leading brands? What are their strengths, weaknesses, and potential growth opportunities? It's also important to explore who each of these leading brands are targeting their content towards. How are they engaging with their audience? How is their audience engaging back? You may be in the same market as another brand, but have a dramatically different target audience, there for your approach will be different in engaging your clients.

In branding, consistency and clarity are key in developing marketing trust between you and your community. The goal is always to be first in mind when an individual is looking for something. For example, when I say computer your first mental picture is probably a Mac. If I say phone you'll probably first picture and iPhone. If I said coffee, you'd probably picture Starbucks. If I say soda, you'll picture your favorite soda. Subconsciously we naturally categorize products and services into specific folders within our minds and associate them with very specific things generating a unique emotional response and personal relationship.

We want to position your new brand within your creative community in a memorable, impactful, and personal way, creating that unique relationship between you and your audience that will cause them to think of you first when they are in need of what you offer (products or services).

The only way to make that memorable impression is to know what is lacking within your target market that your brand can fill. In order to understand where the holes in your market are, we need to study the leaders of your market and identify where you stand out from all the rest.

In business and in life, confidence and trust are invaluable qualities to have and give to everyone around you. In branding, the goal is to create an overwhelming sense of trust, confidence, clarity, and understanding on behalf of your audience. Showing them that you understand their needs because you had them once too. And to demonstrate how you have the knowledge, skills, and resources to fulfill whatever their current needs are. As a small business, we have the ability to do this on a much more personal scale, solidifying and strengthening the bond between brand and client.



When introducing a new brand into a market, people will tend to lean towards brands that they already trust. Not because they don't like change or are afraid of new things, but because they might not be aware of the added benefits of what this new brand has to offer that hasn't been offered before.

Instead of asking ourselves how are we "better" than other brands in our market, we need to ask ourselves how are we "new"? What new category are we creating by emerging into this market and how can we promote this new category. By promoting what's new and not what's better, we essentially have no competition and create a platform solely focused on the benefits of the new product/service and we, as the brand, have the ability to create that personal experience, becoming number 1 in the minds of our clients.

To find our "new" we must become aware of what's "old", "already existing," and where the doors to opportunity are. We accomplish this through a detailed market analysis.



# MARKET CASE STUDY

Take a look at 3 of your main market brand competitors and to an in depth analysis on the state of their online presence. Fill in each of the sections below as it relates to your chosen brands.

**BUSINESS NAME:** *Fill in the main brand name here.*

**BUSINESS URL:** *Fill in the main site URL here.*

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## BRAND VISION

Take a look through the brand's content. See if you can identify their brand vision statement.

## BRAND MISSION

Take a look through the brand's content. See if you can identify their brand mission statement.

## BRAND QUOTE

"Inspiring Quote": Do they include any personal brand statements or inspiring personal brand quotes?

## BRAND GOALS

Does this brand outline any goals for their business, or for the outcome of their services?

## BRAND VALUES

List out all the core values you identify through the brand's content and visuals.

## S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

Identify the external strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of each brand from what you can see through their online platforms, and explore how you could utilize elements of their business structure to benefit the growth of your own business. Think as both a potential customer of this brand, as well as a potential new owner.



### STRENGTHS

*What about this business makes them stand out to you? What do they do really well?*



### WEAKNESSES

*What is one area that they are lacking or not taking advantage of?*



### OPPORTUNITIES

*If you owned this business, what would you focus on or do differently?*



### THREATS

*What are some serious threats or dangerous areas of this business that could threaten its success?*

## MARKET CASE STUDY: BRAND 1

BUSINESS NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ BUSINESS URL: \_\_\_\_\_

BRAND VISION > BRAND MISSION > BRAND QUOTE > BRAND GOALS > BRAND VALUES

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### S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS



WEAKNESSES



OPPORTUNITIES



THREATS



## MARKET CASE STUDY: BRAND 2

BUSINESS NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ BUSINESS URL: \_\_\_\_\_

BRAND VISION > BRAND MISSION > BRAND QUOTE > BRAND GOALS > BRAND VALUES

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### S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

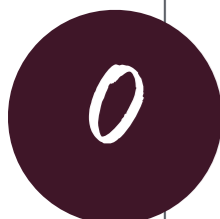
STRENGTHS



WEAKNESSES



OPPORTUNITIES



THREATS



## MARKET CASE STUDY: BRAND 3

BUSINESS NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ BUSINESS URL: \_\_\_\_\_

BRAND VISION > BRAND MISSION > BRAND QUOTE > BRAND GOALS > BRAND VALUES

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### S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

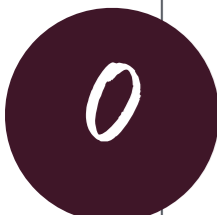
STRENGTHS



WEAKNESSES



OPPORTUNITIES



THREATS



L E S S O N 5

# BRAND MONETIZATION

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CHARGE WHAT YOU'RE WORTH



# BRAND MONETIZATION

## CHARGING WHAT YOU'RE WORTH

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When you're really good at something and you absolutely love doing it, it's only natural to want to turn it into your profession, hence why you became an entrepreneur in the first place! But – often, for passion-focused businesses, we often feel afraid, or unworthy to charge for the products or services we provide when it's something that we already love doing in the first place. This is particularly true for artists or service based businesses.

This is because when we love what we do and we do what we love, working doesn't always feel like work.

We as entrepreneurs need to shift our perspectives – instead of thinking as the service provider, think as the service recipient. Pretend we are our own clients for a moment and think about what it is that we are buying. How much value does it provide to me? What is that value worth? What am I willing to do and pay in order to receive this value?

We are our brand. We need to treat our brands the way we would want to be treated. We teach others how to treat and respect our brands by how we treat and respect our brands. And this includes how we price our value.



# WANTS V.S. NEEDS

Anything that provides pleasure or joy to others is valuable. Whether it's art, food, music, or anywhere in between, if what you're passionate about provides joy in the lives of the people you work with, then your passion provides value.

But understanding what that value is worth for your clients is where the clarity in your pricing will come from. Are you fulfilling a want or a need? And what is that solution worth?

Do you provide a product or service that comes from a place of need? I'm talking about something critical to the health, and well being of an individual? This could be food, transportation, medicine, etc...

Or do you provide a product or service that comes from a place of want? Something not necessary for survival, but it's necessary for the soul?

When we talk about making purchases we'll often say, "I NEED to buy this". Looking at our own products and services, do people really need to buy it? What is it that they are ACTUALLY buying from you? An item, or an experience?

Here's an example: When I was going to purchase my new computer for my business, I knew that I NEEDED a Mac. There was no other option in my mind for the brand of computer I was going to buy. I am a Mac girl through and through. I still have my original iPod from way back when.

While other PC computers are perfectly capable of handling the requirements I have for my technical needs, I NEEDED a Mac.

Did I really NEED a Mac? Honestly, no. I WANTED a Mac. I could have done just fine with any other laptop and I probably would have saved a lot of money, but to me, the Mac was what I needed and I was willing to pay more for it. The simplicity of the Apple programs, user-friendly experience, completely connected applications to all the Apple products and the quality that comes with the Apple brand is worth it to me. So while another computer could have filled the most basic needs for my business, to me the Mac was worth it.

We make purchases like this all the time. It's a combo of both WANT and NEED, and it's so important to know what that combo is worth to our clients.

So how do we build up our want-need value in our brands? By amplifying our brand's experience.

*Your brand needs to be seen, felt, touched and heard.*

Life is all about the experience. Our brands need to create an incredible unique experience that is seen, touched, felt and heard, making that lasting impression that helps provide the clarity in the value we offer. We can give them something that they can't get anywhere else.

Through our products and services, we are actually providing someone with an opportunity for a treasured experience. No matter how mundane we might think the product to be, focusing on the experience it provides for the user will help provide clarity in its value.

# DEFINING YOUR INCOME GOALS

## CALCULATE YOUR SALARY

With both totals from our monthly personal and professional expense lists as well as their estimated combined total, figure out a monthly and annual salary. Figure out what you *need* to be *paying yourself every month in order to live* according to your current standard of living, covering all of your personal costs, which will be separate from your business expenses.

If you are just starting out, this can be quite a daunting task. While understanding that you may be new to the industry, setting a target goal salary for yourself that you can grow into is a great way to keep yourself accountable to your pricing.

Realistically, when we are just starting out, often what we're actually making will be less than what you want to be making in the future. Set a clear and realistic goal for where you want your income to be with in a specific designated amount of time. What would you like to make a year?

**For Example:** Ask yourself how much money you wanted to make. Let's say you want to earn \$5,000/month. That's about \$60k a year before taxes. Now, you may just be starting out or you might be transitioning from a similar full time job, but despite where you're coming from, set a realistic goal for what you'd like to be making on a monthly basis after a specific designated amount of time.

**Another example:** If we wanted to make \$5,000 per month. That's averaging \$1,250/week, \$250 per day working 5 days a week, and just over \$30 per hour for an 8 hour workday. We'd need to charge clients a minimum of \$30/hour in order to meet our monthly goal of \$4000.00.

## GOALS:

GOAL ANNUAL SALARY:	\$
GOAL MONTHLY SALARY:	\$
GOAL AVERAGE HOURLY INCOME:	\$

## CURRENT:

CURRENT ANNUAL SALARY TOTAL:	\$
CURRENT MONTHLY SALARY TOTAL:	\$
CURRENT HOURLY INCOME:	\$

## GOAL SALARY DEADLINE:

*"I want to be making \$\_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_."*

# BILLABLE TIME

## CALCULATE YOUR AVERAGE BILLABLE DAYS + HOURS PER WEEK

This is one of the most difficult things to do when we are first starting out. It can be very daunting to try and guess how much you will actually be working, especially when you don't have a completely clear idea of how long it will take you to complete specific tasks. We are only one person and are limited by how many hours there are in a day.

## ESTABLISH BRAND BOUNDARIES

Setup best practices and guidelines for how, when, and where you will and will not do business. Always make sure these rules complement and support your brand's promise, as well as your personal life. Make sure that they are still serving within the best interests of your community. Then, we need to make sure we communicate these boundaries openly with our clients from day 1. This provides clarity in how we work and how others should expect to work with us, clarifying the brand experience we are creating for our clients. It creates a transparency in our creative process and helps eliminate potential conflicts down the road. Most of all (or at least to me this is the "most of all") these boundaries establish our core values and professional morals as individuals, beyond our brand.

**EXAMPLE:** I, as your client will respect you more when you say up front that you don't check emails or answer phone calls after 6:00pm because that's family time. It shows me that you value your family and being apart of their life is more important to you than my email. As your client, I want to be treated as well as you treat your family, and I'll make sure I earn that right by respecting the rules you place to take care of what's most important in your life. If I don't then I might not be the best client for you, and you might not be the right hire for me.

Take some time and look through your calendar. Set a consistent start and end time for each day of the week and estimate how many days + hours per day you think you'll be working that you'll need to bill for.

## YOUR TURN:

HOW MANY DAYS PER WEEK WILL YOU WORK: \_\_\_\_\_

HOW MANY HOURS PER DAY WILL YOU WORK: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT IS/WILL BE YOUR START TIME EACH DAY: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT IS/WILL BE YOUR CLOSING TIME EACH DAY: \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT DAYS/TIMES WILL YOU NOT BE AVAILABLE:** *(This is important to establish up front so that you know and your client knows when exactly you will be billing them for your time and when you won't be available.)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT OF BILLABLE DAYS PER MONTH:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT OF BILLABLE HOURS PER MONTH:** \_\_\_\_\_

## DIVIDE YOUR EXPENSES BY YOUR BILLABLE DAYS/HOURS:

*Now that you know how much it will cost to do the work that you love, and the number of days you can expect to be working, you can proactively calculate what your day rate or hourly rate should be.*

**AMOUNT IT COSTS PER MONTH TO WORK = \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**DIVIDED BY THE AMOUNT OF DAYS YOU'LL WORK PER MONTH**

**= \$** \_\_\_\_\_ *per day.*

**DIVIDED BY THE AMOUNT OF HOURS YOU'LL WORK PER MONTH**

**= \$** \_\_\_\_\_ *per hour.*

# H O U R L Y V . S . V A L U E

## H O U R L Y R A T E P R I C I N G

Understanding that time is money (especially when you run your own business and are responsible for all the different departments with in your brand) we need to consider exactly what our time is worth.

When just starting out, time might not be as clear as it will be 6, 12, 24 months down the line. But by using the exercise from our last chapter, you'll get a clear idea of exactly what you'll need to charge hourly to meet your personal and professional expenses.

The better we get at what we do, it's fair to assume that we will get faster too. If we are strictly charging by the hour, then by us working faster, we'd be essentially losing money on each project instead of making more as we get better. This is where value based prices come into play.

H O U R L Y

- There are only so many working hours in a day, so you can only make so much money in a day.
- Time is the greatest factor in your value. Working longer makes you more money, but also costs your clients more and they have to wait longer for their end product.
- You will be capped at how much you can make once you max out your billable hours.

## V A L U E B A S E D P R I C I N G

As you continue to work, gain experience, skills, and knowledge, your time will be worth more. What you'll be able to accomplish in an hour will be dramatically different from what you were able to do way back when, and that should reflect in your pricing.

Consider the products or services you are offering. If you design and develop a product, how much faster have you been able to create your products? Or, how much more quality is included in them now that you're much more experienced and skilled as what it is you provide?

Think about what it is you are providing for your clients. If it's product based, what value does that product bring into their life?

V A L U E

- Your time becomes more valuable and can be worth more financially based on how fast, efficient, and details your work is.
- The better you get, the higher your value, the higher your pricing, despite time.
- You can continuously grow and expand, increasing your value, and increasing your income, without having to be limited by time.

V.J.

# WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

*When it comes to understanding what motivates an client to make the decision to invest or purchase a product or service, we need to understand the 3 primary influencers that effect someone's purchasing decision: TIME, ENERGY, and MONEY.*

## ➤ HOW WILL YOU SAVE ME TIME?

How will what you offer (products or services) save me time? Time is a crucial element for most investors who want a quick fix, immediate gratification, long term value, or productivity boosters. By investing in you, your products, services, are you saving me time from doing it myself, having to find someone else to do it, or having it not done at all.

## ➤ HOW WILL YOU SAVE ME ENERGY?

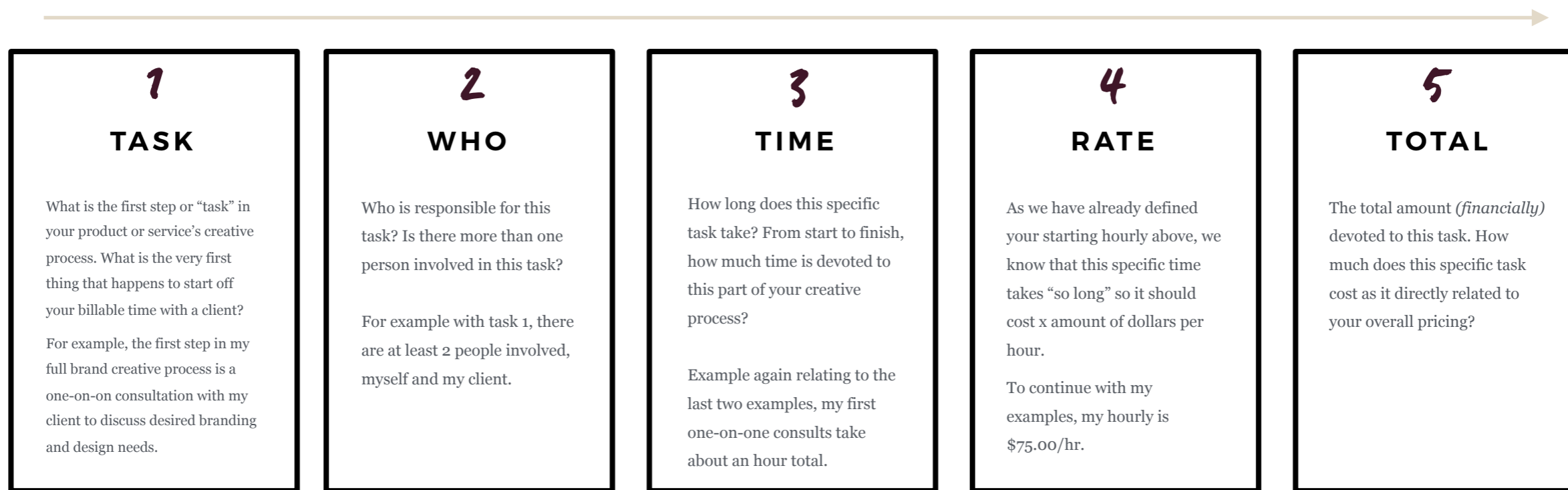
How will what you offer (products or services) save me energy? Right along side time, the amount of personal energy someone needs to invest into working with you or utilizing your end product is very important. How easy is it for me (*your client*) to immediately utilize my investments value? How much energy have you saved me?

## ➤ HOW WILL YOU SAVE ME MONEY?

How will what you offer (*products or services*) save me money? Money is directly tied into time and energy. Your services/products might be a bigger investment now, but in the long term (*time*) this investment will save your clients money by not having to spend more on the same service, save money on not having to spend more to complete the product/service, or spend more to replace your product/service. Saving money doesn't always mean "discounts and sales".

# HOW YOU DO WHAT YOU DO

When our business is in startup mode, and finances are tight, it can be really hard to make certain decisions that could or could not greatly alter the standards our brand long term. Defining and establishing not only *what* we do, but *how* we do it as well as *how we don't do it* are incredibly useful in maintaining and managing a strong brand. just because we are small business owners doesn't mean there is anything "small" about us. Being a small business has nothing to do with size and all to do with the way in which we conduct our business. It's seriously a lifestyle choice to always create a personal customized, one of a kind, experience for the people we engage with. Because we are small, every decision we make is huge! The stakes are so much higher for us small business owners. With one interaction, we have the power to make or break our brands. There is absolutely nothing small about that.



Ok, now it's your turn. Take the chart on the next page and focusing on only one specific product or service at a time, list out each of the individual tasks involved in your billable client time.

# TIME RATE TOTAL

*Take the chart below and focusing on only one specific product or service at a time, list out each of the individual tasks involved in your billable client time.  
(Reprint this chart for each of your various product/service creative processes.)*

**PRODUCT/SERVICE #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>PHASE/ORDER</b>	<b>TASK</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>RATE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

**TOTAL TIME =** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL COST =** \_\_\_\_\_

# TIME RATE TOTAL

*Take the chart below and focusing on only one specific product or service at a time, list out each of the individual tasks involved in your billable client time.  
(Reprint this chart for each of your various product/service creative processes.)*

**PRODUCT/SERVICE #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>PHASE/ORDER</b>	<b>TASK</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>RATE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

**TOTAL TIME =** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL COST =** \_\_\_\_\_



# TIME RATE TOTAL

*Take the chart below and focusing on only one specific product or service at a time, list out each of the individual tasks involved in your billable client time.  
(Reprint this chart for each of your various product/service creative processes.)*

**PRODUCT/SERVICE #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>PHASE/ORDER</b>	<b>TASK</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>RATE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

**TOTAL TIME =** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL COST =** \_\_\_\_\_

# PRODUCT + SERVICE EXPANSION

## DEVELOPMENT OF BRAND SERVICE STRUCTURE

This is where your current sales strategies come into play. Think about the various products you are currently selling. Which are the most popular, which can be expanded on, how can we create exclusivity, and how can you differentiate yourself from your competitors.

One additional element that's often skipped, but probably the most important when it comes to sales, is HOW you are going to sell and WHERE the sales will take place. Take into account your package structure and how you plan to navigate your client to the sale through your website.

**Example:** If you were a jewelry designer, your product line might consist of Necklaces, bracelets, rings...etc...If you are a service provider, your products/services might consist of coaching packages, consults, or blog posts.

## POTENTIAL PRODUCT EXPANSIONS:

List out all potential expansion opportunities based on your current products/product lines. How can we add additional value to what you are already currently offering and how can we expand their monetary costs while increasing their value and not increasing too much more of your time?

Example: Jewelry designer expansions could be Specialty Jewelry Lines - Mother's day special pieces only offered at Mother's day that you can sell in special sets or produce in advance to prepare for mass orders at this specific time of the year.

A Service provider might be able to expand on a service from coaching packages to workbooks, or workbooks to eCourses, or eCourses to workshops, or Blog posts to workbooks...etc...

## CURRENT PRODUCT LINES:

*List out your current products/services available today.*

## PRODUCT EXPANSION OPPORTUNITIES:

*List out any potential avenues for expansion based on your current products or services*

# TIERED SALES STRUCTURE

With only so many in each day, we can only do so much and create for so many clients. That means we become capped at a certain point and reach a financial wall. With the goal of reaching the most amount of people, providing the widest range of products/services, and all within your billable timeframe, you will want to create a tiered sales structure. Brainstorm below your options on how each tier would apply to your business, maintain your brand goals, and still include for client engagement and interaction?

TIER 1: BASE LEVEL / FREE RESOURCES	TIER 2: SEMI CUSTOM/PRE-STRUCTURED	TIER 3: FULLY CUSTOM ORDERS
<p><i>What products/services do you provide that are free of cost while high in value? This is for your bottom tier clients and follower who can't afford your full services. Ex: Blog posts, Resource Pages, Newsletters...</i></p>	<p><i>This would be your mid level offerings. What repeatable offerings to you have that are easily duplicatable, reasonably priced, and don't require a significant amount of your time? Ex: Workbooks, eCourses, Videos, or pre packaged products/pieces.</i></p>	<p><i>Your most exclusive level of offerings. Must likely custom projects, or your most expensive products that require the most amount of your time. Therefore the most valuable and highest cost.</i></p>

L E S S O N 6

# BUILDING YOUR CREATIVE COMMUNITY

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SOCIAL MEDIA BRAND EXPANSION

# BUILDING YOUR CREATIVE COMMUNITY

## WHO ARE YOU ONLINE

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It's no secret that social media is an invaluable tool for today's contemporary business. Over 80% of Americans are actively engaged in some form of social networking. With over 30 million Facebook users in the United States alone, it's unarguably one of the most crucial networks to market your business on. But not all social platforms are perfect for every business.

We only have so many hours in our day to get everything we need done when running our own business. That doesn't leave much room to waste time trying to be everywhere at once. Study each platform, look for social trends, and search for where your target community engages the most. We need to go to them. Seek them out through shared interests, and common communities. We can't afford to wait around for them to engage us, so let's seek them out and start the conversation.

Each platform serves a different purpose and speaks to a different audience in a unique way. Facebook and Google+ are longer informative content, while Twitter is short clips of information. Pinterest is imagery driven to other content, while Instagram is in the moment captured - memories shared.

Understanding how to represent your brand accurately across all your platforms, while complementing the purpose of each platform is key to relating with your followers.



# PLATFORM SPECIFIC TARGET AUDIENCE + GOALS

In each section below, answer the following questions: What is your goals for each platform? What are you trying to achieve through each platform? Who are you talking to on each platform? What types of content are you going to share on each platform? How can you engage your social community on each platform? What resources or actions can you utilize to do this?

*\*Only answer for the platforms you want to focus on. Not all platforms are perfect for every business so be sure to focus on your top ones.*

## **PINTEREST:**

*What is your goals for Pinterest? What are you trying to achieve through this platform?*

## **INSTAGRAM:**

*What is your goals for Instagram? What are you trying to achieve through this platform?*

## **FACEBOOK:**

*What is your goals for Facebook? What are you trying to achieve through this platform?*

## **TWITTER**

*What is your goals for Twitter? What are you trying to achieve through this platform?*

## **OTHER:** \_\_\_\_\_

*What is your goals for \_\_\_\_\_? What are you trying to achieve through this platform?*

## **OTHER:** \_\_\_\_\_

*What is your goals for \_\_\_\_\_? What are you trying to achieve through this platform?*

# WHO ARE YOU ON SOCIAL MEDIA

## WHO ARE YOU ONLINE? AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE?

With each platform focusing on a very unique form of content creation and communication, it's important to select your platforms with purpose as it directly relates to both your overall brand Mission and your target audience. Being able to clearly communicate who you are, what you're doing there, and what you want your audience to do will help in generating the authentic engagement and growth you want across all of your social platforms. But first, we need to get all the basics in line.

With a limited amount of characters in your Social Media bios, it's important to make the most of every single one to help clearly define your major brand W's:

### LOOK GOOD

Choose a clear and attractive (statement piece or brand logo) photo to help your followers identify with you. I recommend using the same image or a variation of the same image across all your SM accounts. This helps people recognize you and your brand faster if they are familiar with you on one platform, but maybe not another. I also recommend using a picture of your face. People want to follow people before they want to follow brands.

### BE SEARCH FRIENDLY

Just like your website, Pinterest, Facebook and every other major social platform, the use of keywords and popular search terms in your bio can make all the difference in helping others looking for you find you faster.

### BE SPECIFIC

Each platform allows a very specific character max for each bio section. Your bio must be equally brief while maintaining a sense of compelling and entertaining copy. Make the most of each and every character and, make sure to leave enough space to potentially add any important external links to off-platform resources.

### GRAMMAR CONSCIOUS

Yes, spelling totally counts! In an attempt to squeeze everything into your specific platform character limit, make sure not to portray yourself poorly through the use of skipped apostrophes and commas. "Let's eat, Grandma" v.s. "Lets eat Grandma"... one is perfectly normal, and the other is considered cannibalism.

### CALL TO ACTION

What do you want from your followers? Or even better, what do you want your readers to want from you? Help them make the best of your friendship by showing them the way.

### HOME BASE

Every platform has a place to add a permanent external link, usually used to link to your website or blog. Be sure to use this space wisely. Input a link that will help guide your followers to the most important areas of your content and try to find a way to integrate information collection through your link.

### HAVE SOME FUN!

Social media is all about being social. Remember that the first part of making a friend, is being a friend. Share a little fun friendly piece of you in your bio. One strong fun fact that will make you memorable.



**WHO ARE YOU ON:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLATFORM BIO:**

---

**CONTACT URL:**

---

**SOCIAL HANDLE:**

@ \_\_\_\_\_

**GUIDELINES + BEST PRACTICES:**

**INDUSTRY RELEVANT HASHTAGS:**

1	#
2	#
3	#
4	#
5	#

**POST SCHEDULE:**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

**PLATFORM NOTES:**

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**WHO ARE YOU ON:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLATFORM BIO:**

---

**CONTACT URL:**

---

**SOCIAL HANDLE:**

@ \_\_\_\_\_

**GUIDELINES + BEST PRACTICES:**

**INDUSTRY RELEVANT HASHTAGS:**

1	#
2	#
3	#
4	#
5	#

**POST SCHEDULE:**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

**PLATFORM NOTES:**

---

---

**WHO ARE YOU ON:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLATFORM BIO:**

---

**CONTACT URL:**

---

**SOCIAL HANDLE:**

@ \_\_\_\_\_

**GUIDELINES + BEST PRACTICES:**

**INDUSTRY RELEVANT HASHTAGS:**

1	#
2	#
3	#
4	#
5	#

**POST SCHEDULE:**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

**PLATFORM NOTES:**

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# SOCIAL PLATFORM AUDIT

It is vital to have a smooth transition experience for your followers between each of your social platforms. Each platform serves a different purpose and speaks to a different audience in a unique way. Facebook and Google+ are longer informative content, while Twitter is short clips of information. Pinterest is imagery driven to other content, while Instagram is in the moment captured memories shared. Understanding how to represent your brand accurately across all your platforms, while complementing the purpose of each platform is key to relating with your followers.

AUDIT CHECKLIST	✓ = DONE	NOTES:
Rewrite and fill out completely bios in each platform as it relates to that platform's target audience. Should match or relate to all other platforms.		
Include links to your blog/website/ other social accounts everywhere.		
Audit followers and unfollow any accounts that are no longer active, relevant, or supportive of your brand.		
Remove any unprofessional or unbranded images and photos from accounts.		
Update all profile photos, consistent with every platform, using professional and high resolution images.		
Update all cover photos with branded, professional header images consistent across all platforms.		
Secure the same handle on all major platforms.		
Double check all external links and update out of date ones.		
Include relevant and important contact information where appropriate.		
Grammar check all content.		
Use the same style images + visual content creating branded consistency across all platforms.		

L E S S O N 7

# BLOGGING TO BRAND YOURSELF

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HOW TO USE YOUR BLOG TO BRAND YOUR BUSINESS



# BLOGGING TO BRAND YOURSELF

## WHY BLOG?

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If we're still a newer business or just getting started in the online business world, how do we successfully bring traffic to our sites and expand our brand's engagement? The answer is Blogging.

If you are a blogger already then this post's subject might seem like a no-brainer to you. Of course blogging is important! But if you aren't a blogger and you're on the fence on whether or not you should start one, or even if you are a blogger looking to branch out and pivot your brand into a full out online business, this post is for you.

While blogging is by no means a new practice, having existed since pretty much the beginning of the invention of the written word but just in different formats (journalism, reporting, fiction and nonfiction writing) any form of free content meant to either entertain, educate, or empower others.

As a business, especially an online business, and existing in an era of tech-savvy entrepreneurs, it can seem like a blog might be a waste of time for your brand. But blogging is by far the best way to brand your business. You have the ability to address your audience directly, on your turf (aka your website) surrounded by all your resources, products, services, and contact information, creating opportunities for personal engagement, conversation, and even potential sales just through sharing your expertise.

# WHY BLOG?

Why start a blog? *Hmmm...* let me list the reasons my friends:

- *Thought Leadership*
- *Creditability*
- *Product/Service Promotion*
- *Client + Community Education*
- *Entertainment*
- *Thought Provoking + Conversation Sparking*
- *Community Engagement*
- *Community Building*
- *It's Fun*
- *Collaboration*
- *Networking*
- *Artistic Outlet*

## BLOGGING TO EXPAND YOUR BRAND:

Let's think about our business for a moment. What is it we do? Who is it we serve? Why is this important?

Next up think about the different products, services, or value we have to offer through our business.

Are you a teacher, doctor, cook, coach, artist, student, freelancer... *{insert your profession here}*. No matter who you are, a blog opens up the chance to share your credibility as an expert professional in your industry.

It's a great way to show that not only are we knowledgeable in our trade, but we also know how to teach it and pass on our knowledge to others. It helps provide a form of social proof, validating our role as a thought leader within our industry.

## WHAT ARE YOUR BUSINESS GOALS:

*Think about your short term and long term brand and business goals. How can you use blogging to help you accomplish those goals faster, and with a stronger presence?*

**Brainstorm a list of ways you can use a blog to expand your brand:**

# BLOG CATEGORIES

## WHAT SHOULD YOU BLOG ABOUT

Going back to that little question I asked earlier, what do we provide? What specific areas within our industry do we address through our business?

### **Break down the various focuses within your brand, for example:**

Erika Madden of Olyvia Media is a communications and reputation expert and digital marketing strategist who provides products and services that support building and maintaining a delightful presence online. So it makes sense that her blog content directly relates to just that, being delightful online.

With categories including: tools for business and blogging, interviews with sparkling biz women, delightful business advice and posts ranging from discussing social media, customer service, offline branding, and reputation management. Everything Erika shares supports her unique perspective and expertise on how to stay consistently delightful online and offline despite what you are doing and where you are doing.

### **YOUR TURN:**

In the brainstorming section on this page, start listing out all the various areas of expertise you have within your industry. For example, if you are a designer what areas of design are you most knowledgeable in and how could you potentially break those focuses down into segmented blog topics?

List out as many as you can and then evaluate which ones are similar to others and could be categorized together. Eliminate any duplicate sections and try to come up with at least 3-5 core categories of topics that your blog content could be broken down into.

Now, with your 3-5 core categories of topics in hand, brain storm a number of post topics that could be filed under each of those categories. These could be post titles, examples, portfolio pieces, case studies, DIY, instructional pieces, recipes, anything that directly relates to your business, audience and will support the creditability of your brand.

### YOUR VALUES STATEMENT:

*Above all, what do you strive to provide for your community? What are your unyielding values?*

# BLOG GROWTH

## GUEST POSTING

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I read a quote somewhere about how “experts become experts by sharing expert resources”. Your blog is a fantastic place to attract not only clients and followers, but other professional (*experts*) within your market or “neighboring market” who could be excellent networking and collaborative opportunities for you to expand your audience.

Everyone thinks differently and digests content differently, so by collaborating with other individuals who complement our own brand and skill sets only makes the content we create together that much more valuable and engaging. Win-win if you ask me!

Guest posting or allowing guest bloggers on your own site is another excellent opportunity to bring in new engagement and strengthen your own blog’s credibility by providing more expert opinions and resources. This also alleviates some of the stress of having to constantly create new fresh exciting content.

One of the scariest things about guest posting is often the “big pitch” especially while we are smaller brands that don’t yet have the major traffic and attention that other bigger brands generally search out in their guest bloggers.

But they were once our size too and remember what it was like to have a bigger brand welcome them to their creative space and open up the chance to show the world wide web the creative genius you have to offer.

For myself, when an interested brand approaches me to collaborate on a guest post and they’ve done a little research into my audience and what content I generally address, that speaks volumes to me! I’m like yes, this person is serious, and chances are I’ll be totally open to the collaboration.

I never recommend just throwing out there into the inter-webs that you want to guest post. Have some post topics in mind and be ready to outline a potential post option for someone if they reach out in return. Never show up empty handed and expect the other blogger to provide the content for you. If they have to do that then they might as well just write the post themselves.



## HOW TO PITCH YOUR GUEST POST

*When deciding what brands to pitch to, a little pre-research goes a LONG way.*

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1. First, **make a list of all the brands with blogs that you admire most and directly relate to your target audience.** What is it about those brands that would benefit you by contributing your content there and what would they gain by bringing you on as a featured guest?
2. Next, **go through their past posts and see if they even allow guest authors to contribute content to their sites.** Not everyone does, but also don't let that stop you from trying. If you have a piece you've written that would be PERFECT for a specific brand, but they rarely let guest authors on their site, I say go forth and ask! The worst thing they could say is no, but the best thing they could say is YES! Plus, even if they say no, you've shown your cards and introduced yourself personally acknowledging your recognition of their content and they'll remember that. They might even hop on over to your site to check out your content further. And now, if in the future they ever decide to potentially welcome guest authors to their blog, chances are you're name will be on their mind.
3. While you are pursuing through their old posts, **take note of what content they've already shared and what content they haven't.** What new idea can you present that hasn't been covered already by that brand that could open up a chance for you to spark a new conversation for their community?
4. If they clearly allow guest posters, **check their site for any rules or guidelines for how they want guest posts submitted.** Some sites have this and some don't but showing that you looked just in case demonstrates how serious you are about collaborating with that brand.
5. **Personally engage the brand.** Directly address the main brand owner (or specific designated individual if that is established). I recommend emailing them directly v.s. an open post on social media calling them out on whether or not they'll let you post to their blog. Keep it private and keep it professional. Introduce yourself, give a little background to who you are, how you found them, maybe a past post that resonated with you, why you want to collaborate and what your ideas are. Remember that this post should be valuable for both parties so outlining what this collaboration will do not only for you, but for them and their creative community will really enhance the sincerity and seriousness of your post proposal.



### LIST OF BLOGS TO PITCH TO

*List out at least 10 different blogs appropriate to your niche that you can pitch a guest post idea to. Include both the name and the focus of the post topic you could write about.*

LESSON 8

# BE A GOAL GETTER

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PLAN OF ACTION FOR GROWING YOUR BRAND

# SETTING GOALS FOR GREATNESS

## THINK LONG TERM

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I'm not talking about just once a year, setting those new year's resolutions, and forgetting about them till the next year rolls around. Im talking about creating a long term vision for your ideal personal and business life, then setting personal and professional goals that will guide you toward that vision.

## GET INSPIRED

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Your goals should inspire you, excite you, and even scare you sometimes. They should be **specific, measurable** and thought of in **present tense**; not something you'll do later... but something you're doing **NOW**. Continuous action and growth as you move down your own personal path. Chase those goals with urgency!

## CELEBRATE THE SMALL STUFF

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Goals don't always have to be big overwhelming life changers. Sometimes the simplest goals can make the greatest difference in the long run. And sometimes, it's the small goals that help keep you motivated to achieve the big ones. Remember to celebrating the small achievements.



# BRAND + BUSINESS + BLOG GOALS

Never undervalue the importance of the simple things like waking up a little earlier to accomplish *that much more* in your day, finally organizing your design files, returning emails that have been piling up in your inbox, finishing that book you've been wanting to read, working out one extra day a week... If you only focus on the big ideas, it's easy to get overwhelmed or feel like nothing is moving forward. But, by taking the time to stop and acknowledge all the little steps along the way, you'll stay motivated and driven to keep growing.

## OBJECTIVES:

Short objectives for your brand, business in the next six months to one year. Your objectives should be concise and measurable so you'll be able to determine whether or not you met the objectives. Remember to also set specific dates for each of these goals declaring when you want to achieve them.

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

List three or more keys (or crucial items) to your business' success. Choose items that are vital for growth. Set keys to success that will make your objectives from the previous section possible.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	KEYS TO SUCCESS

## BRAND EXPANSION

when your brand clearly communicates who you are at your best  
you're going to discover a whole new level of confidence in your business



# JULIE HARRIS

AUTHOR + BRAND STYLIST

Julie Harris is the founder and Lead Designer of Whiskey & Red; a digital design studio specializing in small business branding and WordPress website design for established small business owners.

She comes at branding with a people focused perspective, targeting the one-on-one individual opportunities and the long-term client relationships that can come from brand loyalty. She brings this “branding by Julie” perspective to every design project, whether it be brand development, brand design, or website design.

## WHISKEY & RED

Here at Whiskey and Red, we collaborate with small businesses owners, at all levels of industry, helping them translate their offline business into an online digital experience. We believe that being a “small business” has nothing to do with size and everything to do with the way in which you conduct your business. It’s more than just a label, but a choice to always create a personal, customized, one of a kind experience for your clients. And there is absolutely nothing small about that.

It’s our goal to make you look as professional online as you do in person. When your website clearly communicates who you are at your best, you’re going to discover a whole new level of confidence in your business – online and offline. Together, we are a complete team. You with your experience and professional understanding of your ideal clients, and us with our blend of design, development, digital marketing expertise. We are the professional team you need to bring your small business to life online.

We aim to meet your business where you are today, while preparing you for where you’ll take your business in the future.



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