

Rebranding for founder-led creative and tech businesses



Part I: Find your brand essence –
how to achieve clarity from the start





There are many reasons why you may be thinking it's time to rebrand your business.

Perhaps your old brand is no longer relevant or you want to enhance your brand reputation with a new professional identity. Whatever your reason, it can still be quite a struggle to articulate your brand's distinct value in the marketplace, so it's common to feel overwhelmed when starting the process.

After all, changing the way people perceive your business isn't something to be taken lightly. For a rebrand to appeal to your ideal audience, it needs to be carefully planned and thoughtfully executed.

So what does it take to rebrand in a way that not only appeals to your ideal audience, but also authentically represents you and your company?

This guide will take you through the crucial first step of the process: how to start thinking about identifying what makes your organisation different, interesting and appealing.



“Your brand is what
people say about
you when you’re
not in the room”

Jeff Bezos



So, what exactly is a brand?



“... a brand is a set of associations that a person (or group of people) makes with a company, product, service, individual or organisation.

These associations may be intentional – that is, they may be actively promoted via marketing and corporate identity, for example – or they may be outside the company’s control. For example, a poor press review for a new product might harm the product manufacturer’s overall brand by placing negative associations in people’s minds.”

The Design Council

While absolute control over the position you hold in the minds of your audience isn’t possible, being clear about what you stand for always applies.

You can do everything in your power to affect the perception of your brand through identity (visual and verbal), experience (websites and applications), culture (your team character and behaviours), and promotion (through a variety of channels).



No designer – no matter how creative – can come up with a truly authentic and compelling brand identity by simply jumping straight in, magpie-like, applying the trends they like to your visual identity. It may look good but...

- will it resonate with your audience?
- will it reflect your character, your vision and your values?
- will it stand out from the competition (or align itself where you need parity)?

So that you're able to demonstrate your difference, add value to your audience and connect with the right people, you need to start with finding your brand essence. Brand essence will inform your visual as well as your verbal

branding, determine the voice that you write in, help you decide on direction for your content marketing as well as help with hiring decisions and defining how your team should behave, so they reflect the values your business holds dear.

Find your brand essence at the start and everything else will fall into place.

Overview

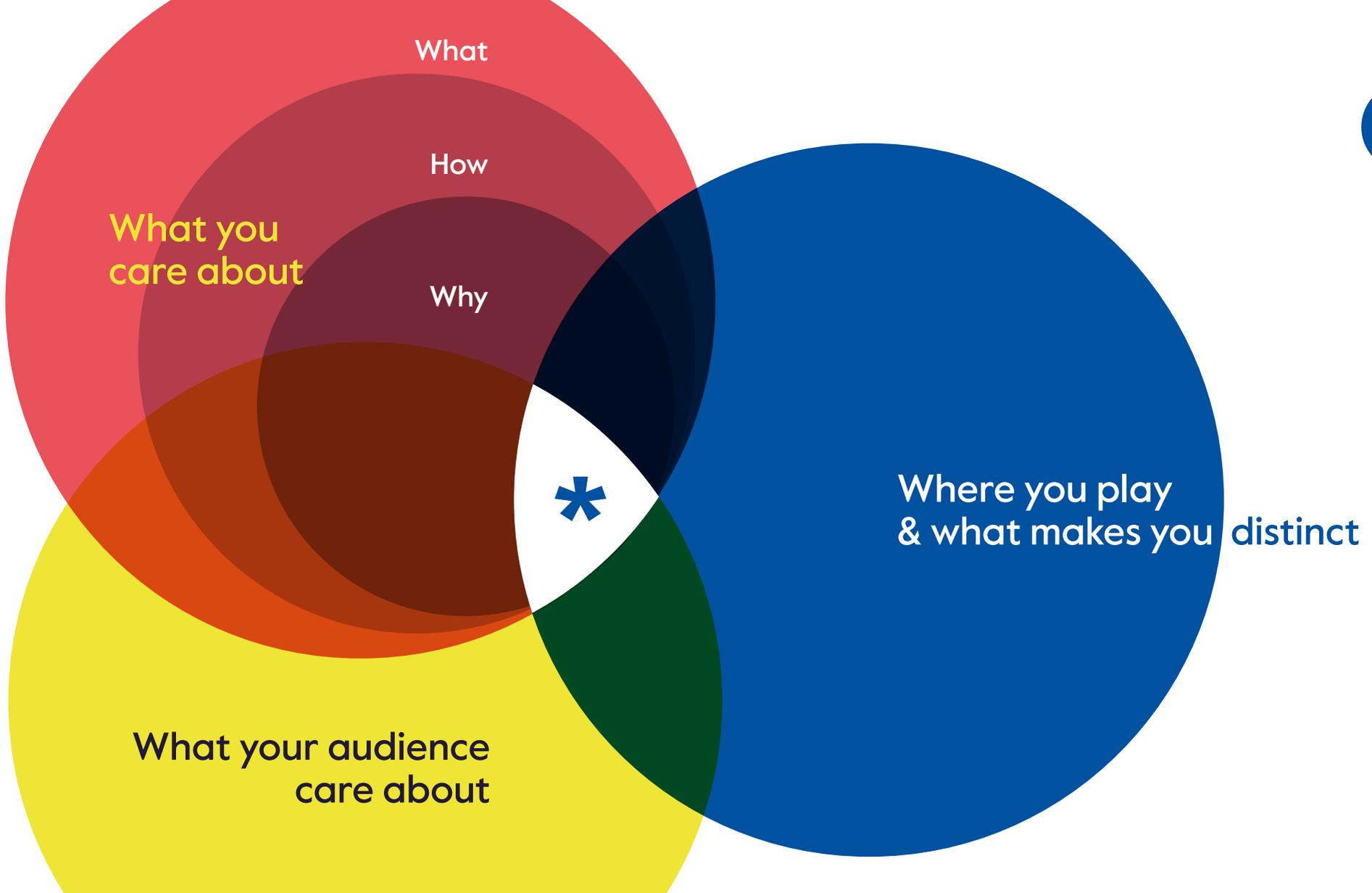
Where to start with finding your brand essence

A brand exists in the mind of a customer – you need to understand what **they** care about, and it also exists in the marketplace – you need to understand where you play, as well as taking in everything that you're about – the why, how and what of your business.



When you find your brand essence you reveal the sweet spot* – the intersection between the three where your brand can create enduring value for your business.







What you care about

Define what products, services and solutions you offer. Think about how you deliver them: what values you and your team live by; the personality and character of the business. Examine your 'why' – why you started your business, what vision you have for it and why you do what you do – your purpose.

There may be a temptation to stop here, only going so far as looking inwards, but remember, you are only part of the puzzle. The single biggest mistake a brand can make is to just look inward and/or fixate on the competition. Looking through the lens of what your clients and prospects care about will mean your marketing and messaging becomes more empathic, focused on the value you provide.



Where you play and what makes you distinct

Think about your marketplace – who else is doing what you're doing? Consider the wider category, looking out for difference and parity – think about the vision that drives you and by looking at your aspirations, review what parity there may be with other category players.



What your clients and prospects care about

Who is your ideal prospect? Why do they want or need what you do? And most importantly, what do they particularly value about what you offer? Do your values and purpose resonate with them?

Five steps to authenticity



What next?

In the next instalment of this guide, we'll be covering steps 1 and 2 – recommending who to involve and how to start gathering insights.

1

1:1 founder
kick-off

2

Gather
insights

3

Discover &
diagnose

4

Set the
strategy

5

Co-create
the brief

About us

I'm Sue, a brand identity consultant with over 25 years' experience. I'm a big believer in the transformative power of branding and great design to help a business thrive. I work with small giants in the creative and tech world – people who choose to be great, not necessarily big; businesses fuelled by purpose and genuine belief, aware of their impact and doing what they can to create a better world for us all. Me and my team of design specialists work collaboratively with you in efficient, focused sprints to help you find and then communicate your distinct identity.

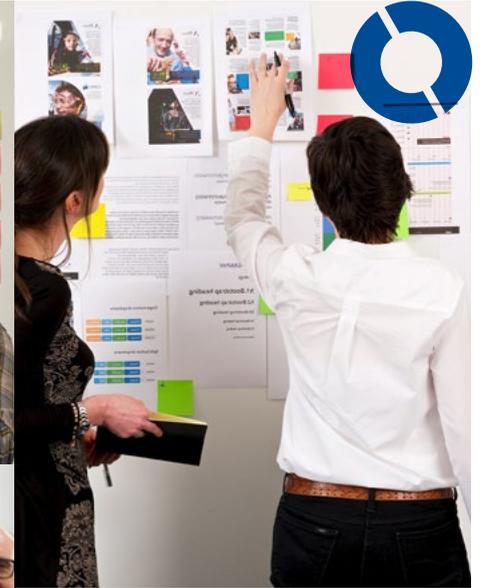


I set up The Co-Foundry because I believe there's a better, more personal and inclusive way to approach branding. We work together with creative and tech founders and their teams to forge unique, purposeful brands, using co-creation and interactive discovery sessions to bring everyone on the journey.

By always building out and bringing in experts, you get access to the best creative talent – in design, copy, content strategy – for your brief, without the bigger agency overheads. Teaming up with an experienced brand consultant will ensure that your rebrand is executed with the care and professionalism it deserves.

If your old brand is in need of reinvigorating to energise your plans for growth, we can help with one of our facilitated brand workshops. These get to the heart of what makes your organisation unique, authentically defining your vision and values while positioning you as the ideal choice for your audience.

The Co-Foundry team is on hand to help re-cast your vision. Get in touch with Sue.





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