



MODULE 7: PUTTING YOUR BRAND STRATEGY INTO ACTION

Welcome to Module Seven in the **Red Slice Brand Bootcamp** series: *Putting your Brand Strategy into Action*

And before we begin I just want to say congratulations for making it this far and putting so much hard work into building your Brand Strategy. It may have been extremely challenging, but you will now have so much more clarity, focus and confidence in your marketing efforts. This will truly help you ensure you reach the right people with the right messages at the right time!

SLIDE 2: In this session, we're going to DISCUSS the role of mission and vision in your brand, hiring, customer inspiration, partner selection. We're also going to LEARN about how to put together your final Brand Strategy, Visual ID and some tips for creating a more manageable marketing plan. Speaking of Visual ID, we'll DISCOVER the importance of choosing the right typeface, color and imagery to impact brand perception. I'll also EXPLORE some bonus content with you about how to work effectively with designers, writers and consultants so you always make wise investments and have all your ducks in a row in order to avoid wasting time and money. Actually, one of the bonus reports you received as part of this course will dig into these concepts more deeply. Just recently, I heard another horror story about a mid-sized company that was working with a marketing consultant who essentially took them for a ride and ended up not delivering what they expected while charging them a lot of money. Since they didn't understand the details of branding and design, they didn't know how to work with her, so I like to give folks on this course - and through my blog - advice on how to be smart about with whom choose to invest. Lastly, since you now have the bones of your brand story, I'll give you some high-level EXTRA content about how to start getting brand buzz with some high-level media pitching tips.

SLIDE 3: First of all, I want to discuss the role of your mission and vision on your brand. Your brand's underpinning on a daily basis is the mission and vision of your business. As you construct your Brand Strategy, it should align with this mission and vision and inform much more than just your marketing efforts. **Your brand is not just part of marketing, it's fundamentally how you run your company, INSIDE AND OUT.**

One, your mission and vision should impact your hiring decisions, as your employees are your most important brand ambassadors. I know a global consulting firm that literally assesses new hires based on the company's stated core values, not just the candidate's resume. To your customers, that one employee represents you entire company brand so you need to choose wisely and with your brand strategy in mind.

Two, your mission and vision should guide your partner selections. Don't just partner with anyone – be selective. Is there alignment? Do we stand for similar things? Will this partnership hurt my brand in any way? Until you know what your brand strategy actually is, these become much harder calls to make!

Finally, your mission and vision can serve to differentiate your brand by inspiring your customers. If you can inspire them beyond just the simple products or services you sell, they will pay a premium for that. You can connect with them by showing them how working with you serves a higher goal. That doesn't mean you have to save the world or even "be green" but do you, for example, offer simple copywriting services or do you make them look awesome on the Internet? Do you simply take photos or capture precious memories? Conveying your mission and vision through your brand can inspire and delight your audience – and make them seek you out over others just to be a part of that mission. The mission can even serve as a differentiator in and of itself if it's unique enough.

SLIDE 4: The Brand Strategy Document includes your mission, vision, values, messaging platform, differentiators, attributes, voice, pricing/packages/distribution model and ideal customer profiles – much of which we worked on during this course. It's a dynamic document that refreshes over time as you learn more about your customers, as your market changes, or as you adapt your offerings. But it forms the foundation for all your marketing and even operational decisions.

You may need to go back and forth between some of these questions to revise your answers to earlier ones. For example, you may find your current prices don't align with your ideal customer target, so you'll need to go back and reconcile this.

Your Brand Strategy Document could be two pages long – but some companies have brand strategy documents that are 60 pages long. I think the ideal is just whatever feels good for you.

There's no one right format, either; mine is in PowerPoint, just because I like being able to summarize things quickly but you could do it in Word or Excel if you want.

You should revisit it at least twice a year to ensure you're on track and things haven't changed.

Your Brand Strategy can be used to determine the right partners, new hires, marketing channels and company decisions. **Use it as a Litmus test for making important, decisions that will effectively communicate who you are and the value you offer.**

SLIDE 5: As I've reiterated throughout this course, your Brand Strategy is your foundation. Now let's talk about next steps after you complete the brand strategy. Once you have a Brand strategy and your key messages, it is much easier to create a visual identity - design, logo, and color palette. **It saves you time and money if you know WHAT you are trying to communicate visually before you go off designing!**

Now I know some of you already have your businesses up and running. But I help clients rebrand all the time and that can take many forms: it doesn't necessarily mean you have to change everything but you might see there's massive misalignment and you can simply tweak messaging or polish up design to more accurately attract your target customers and say what you really mean to say. Often, businesses going through a brand clarification session with me find they had the answers inside them all along They intuitively knew what they were going for

when they created their logo or chose their colors but couldn't articulate it in repeatable way. Sometimes you get to a place where you can retroactively "make your visual identity fit your clarified brand story." But ideally, you craft the brand strategy and the key messages first – because you need to know what you want to communicate before you can visually communicate it.

The next step is hiring an experienced designer. I'm not saying you have to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars, but just because someone knows how to use Illustrator or your neighbor's 16-year-old niece is just a whiz at using Photoshop, it doesn't mean they're the right person to build your visual identity. Just knowing how to use the tools is not the same as knowing how to communicate visually. If someone knows how to type, that doesn't make them a good writer, right? Find out their process and philosophy and make sure they are not just asking you "what you like." It's not about YOU – it's about what you're trying to communicate to your prospects to grab their attention.

You want someone who is skilled at communicating messages in a visual medium, and you can find people at various price points who are still good at this.

If you communicate visually in the wrong way, it can actually prevent a sale. The example I showed you in Module One from the winery, about making an impression they didn't want to make, can also happen to you. You may think you're positioned in a certain segment when you're not. Maybe it makes you look cheaper than you are or people think you're fly-by-night, or on the other hand, your target audience thinks you're more expensive than you actually are and don't buy from you. Any of these things can prevent a sale and confuse your audience. I encourage you to find someone in your budget range who's an experienced designer.

Enough about that! The next step is for your designer to show you logo concepts (based on the stellar brand strategy you have created in this course!), recommend a color palette and determine a good image library if needed. Your image library is all the other graphics you use – photos, icons, information graphics, etc. Will you use custom illustrations of a certain style? Or do you want stock photos that are all black and white? You want to have a go-to image library – even if you simply document: "I'm only going to use black-and-white photos. I'm only going to use imagery with people. I'm only going to use abstract graphics." Whatever it is, it's good to think about that in advance, to maintain consistency and brand memorability. We all know Apple ads and packaging are black text on a white background, right? We all know Tiffany uses a certain shade of blue. We can look at certain magazines without seeing the title and just KNOW which one we're reading. That's what you're going for.

Markets and audiences are all different, so a good designer will help you find what's right for you. You don't want to mix amateur clip art with elegant photos. Whatever's on brand for you, you want to be consistent in all of your communications.

Next have your designer create your visual ID system, whether that's business cards, brochures, letterhead or presentations – whatever you need for *your* business. For example, I don't even have printed letterhead – just a Word document template with my logo, since 99% of my client communications are email. For all your needs, you want a consistent template so you're not reinventing the wheel. And you want to carry that visual ID system into your website, advertising and signage as well.

At the end of the project, always ask the designer for a style guide, which is simply a document that outlines the logo lockups, the primary and secondary color palette and any official typefaces or fonts. The style guide also includes color codes for various media: Pantone, CMYK and HEX. You want the codes for all your colors so you make sure you're using the same shade every single time –not dark blue on a print material, and then a light blue on the website, and another blue in your PowerPoint, for example. Again, it's about consistency – especially if you need to work with other designers in the future or get your materials produced in other places.

The style guide is your visual ID bible. It can be as complex or as simple as you want. I use a two-page style guide but I've worked with bigger companies that have a 40-page style guide which includes every possible use case. But keep it simple. Consistency is what makes you memorable, professional and effective.

SLIDE 6: Now let's talk about typeface and color because they really do matter. They can compel your audiences to buy when used correctly. But as I mentioned, they can also repel people from buying when not. You have to be mindful about why you're choosing different things and what they will communicate. I always advise not to just pick your favorite colors or logo options – simply BECAUSE they're your favorite. You may love cats or the color blue but do those elements convey your message? Obviously you shouldn't pick something that you don't like, but you should always be thinking about your audience and what they're going to take away from it. Is that color or typeface communicating what I WANT to communicate to the audience?

Bridget Perez is partner and creative director for TRAY Creative, a go-to partner of mine when I work with small to mid-sized businesses. She says that 60 percent of the decision to buy is based on color. The brain registers shape first, then color, then content when recognizing or remembering something like a logo. So even subconsciously, these decisions impact how people will perceive your brand, and will affect which mental file drawer people stick you in as we talked about in Module One.

As an example, I had an executive coaching client once who was trying to target executive men in medium- to large companies – real Alpha male, power players! But her site was all pastel pinks and greens and feminine, script typefaces. You can imagine if an Alpha male goes to her site, he'll quickly think she's not the right fit! But she didn't even realize it, because she had recently flipped from coaching only women to now including men and never revisited her brand strategy and visual ID. She thought 'Oh, this looks good and professional', which it did but it was not going to appeal to the target audience to whom she was now trying to speak.

Another designer I know, Ayesha Matthews-Wadhwa, says it's crucial to pick a brand font not simply for its popularity but for its message about the brand. It enhances the features of the brand visually. Fonts carry important first impressions. They can stimulate opinions about company character, moral aptitude, and credibility. So not only do you need to make an intentional decision about whether you want a Serif font versus a Sans Serif – Sans Serif just means it doesn't have the tags on the ends of the letters like the font you're looking at right now.. But then you also need to think about the actual typeface. Are you trying to be elegant and feminine? Maybe a script, flowing font may work. Are you whimsical and targeting kids? You may just love Comic Sans!

I went to the website of a best-selling author whom I admire (who shall remain nameless, as she just – thankfully – updated her site) and I couldn't believe what I saw. It was a garish, bright yellow site with amateur graphics and all the copy was written in Comic Sans. I thought it was a joke. This person who sold millions of books, a movie deal and speaks at TED was ruining the brand impression I had. Luckily, it's all been recently updated!

When I worked as a marketing director in Silicon Valley, our sales reps were calling on billion dollar companies selling strategic enterprise software. It came to my attention that one of our reps was sending his emails in Comic Sans – to C-level executives at the head of global companies! He just didn't get that it made a brand impression. I tell this story to share an extreme example, but fonts really do carry an impression. They can make you look classic and elegant, they can make you look modern and sleek - or tired and dated. They can make you look amateur or trustworthy. So choose your typefaces and fonts with care. A good designer can help you do that.

SLIDE 7: Today's module is a little bit of a hodge-podge of next steps to take. That said, as you finesse your brand strategy, you're going to have this great brand story to tell. You're going to have your elevator pitch, you're going to have the three main benefits to tout, your proof points, differentiators and some juicy content marketing themes. Now you might start thinking, 'Oh wow, some of these will make really great stories for the media. I want to get buzz.' And you're right. But there are some guidelines to consider.

The biggest mistake – and I wish I could say just small businesses, but even some of the large companies I've worked for have fallen into this trap – is thinking that your product or service alone is news. You get a lot of people saying 'I want to do get press because I'm launching this new product.' As much as we malign today's media and what they consider newsworthy, that's not always news – unless you finally developed that hovercraft from the Jetson's or found a way to produce processed food that's good for us! However, you *do* want to tie your message into what's newsworthy.

Here are five tips to think about when pitching to media:

1 – Put yourself in their shoes. Media outlets today are in turmoil. Understaffed, over worked. Reporters and editors' attention spans are short, their time is even shorter, they are under an

extreme amount of pressure and they want something that's interesting yet easy for them to use. Considering all that, put yourself in their shoes when you're pitching them.

You do not want to send them a nine-paragraph email pitch. They'll never read it. They've got two seconds to go through their overflowing inbox. You've got to grab them with something novel and newsworthy and show them quickly 'here's why your audience should care.' And it's not 'I'm this business that's really great and I have this new product to sell.' They care about what's valuable, interesting and important to their audience – and given the competitive nature of the media these days, they love to be the one to get a good scoop first.

2 – Be timely and relevant. If you can find a hook or something provocative in the news to which to tie your product or service, do it. Be relevant by showing you have read, listened to or watched their work before – you need to show that you understand *their* audience and what's important to them. Pitch local news as a local doing something amazing or with something else tied to the local community. Don't pitch business news to a lifestyle magazine. As much as you can tie yourself into trends, news events, or even something seasonal like back to school, the holidays – the more timely and relevant you can be and the more you're going to get attention.

3 – Be concise. We talked about being brief; totally short attention spans, totally overworked. Grab them immediately, have a great, compelling subject line, and don't ramble. Respect their time and be brief. Share a quick nicety to show you are helpful and want to forge a relationship but get to your point in the first few sentences. Think of it like it was already in the paper or on the air. What is the headline, what are the bullet points? Explain why it matters, and briefly share your credentials as a source or expert.

Same goes for voicemail messages. Write a script in advance if you have to so you can get to the point!

4 – Be persistent but not annoying. You may have to follow-up a few times; if you send an email, you might want to follow up in three or four days, and it's not to say 'Hey, I'm seeing if you read my email.' Maybe, 'Following up to see if you need more information', 'Following up to make sure you've got everything you need'. You don't want to be calling them every day and emailing them five times a day. That said, you WILL have to follow up several times; they're not going to respond to just one email or call. I had a personal contact at MSNBC through a friend and still had to email them about seven times and call twice before we were able to get the segment scheduled. But I was respectful about when I followed up. It took us three months but we eventually made it happen and now I'm a recurring source as a result of my respect and professionalism. They just get really busy, even if they like your idea!

5 – Be helpful. You want to present yourself as making their life easier, so whatever you can do to package the story in a really easy way, like 'My story is about 10 tips to...' . If you're pitching TV, you want to have visuals, for example: video they can use or pictures that tell your story. Ask them if they need anything else from you and make sure you deliver. Remember, they are human beings just like you and me and kindness and helpfulness go a long way. How can you make it as easy as possible for the editor or producer take your story and package it

into an on-air segment or post in their column? Can you line up customers for them to talk to ahead of time? Can you make yourself available at a moment's notice to come into the studio? Be helpful!

In summary, the media care about increasing their audience so they want stories that are interesting, not just infomercials. The soft sell comes from you being mentioned as a source. Tie yourself into something that's newsworthy, that's interesting to that outlet's listeners, readers or audience, and then you'll have a way in.

SLIDE 8: So, we talked about working with the media after you build your Brand Strategy. But you'll also use the Brand Strategy to enable contractors like writers, designers, developers, marketing, PR or social media consultants to hit the ground running. You're getting a bonus report on working effectively with consultants, but I want to briefly share five tips with you, especially as someone who's been on both sides of this equation. Early in my career, I was a management consultant and then an ad agency executive and then I spent a long time in corporate America as the "client" hiring consultants and agencies. Now I'm a consultant again – hopefully older and wiser! I've learned some best practices having walked in both sets of shoes and I'd like to share them with you.

Let's say you hire someone to design and develop your website or you want to hire someone to do your social media strategy or you want to hire somebody to implement your marketing plan – whatever it is; even if you want to hire somebody to do some financial consulting - there are five ways to ensure success. Keep in mind, this comes from the perspective of hiring marketing-type consultants or agencies, but again, it could apply to any type of contractor.

1 – When you're going to talk to a consultant or contractor, have an actual goal in mind.

Often people like me get calls that say 'I want to find out what you do.' Which is fine if you are just doing research, but not when you have an actual project. The reason to pay someone for engaging in work should be to accomplish a certain goal – unless you are one of the lucky ones who just have extra budget lying around that you need to spend on *something!*. You want to articulate 'I'm looking for...X'. I'm looking to... increase my audience on social media so I can build my email list. I'm looking to... attract more of this type of client. I'm looking to... reposition my products for higher income customers.

Make sure you're clear about your needs so that the agency or consultant can best prepare a proposal, recommend a service, or more importantly tell you 'I'm unable to help because I don't do that type of work, but here's somebody who can.'

2 – Define success. This sounds really basic but again, it has to do with articulating your goals. At the end of this collaboration, in your mind what's going to tell you that it was successful? Are they going to deliver certain tangible deliverables? Are they going to increase your Twitter followers by X percent? Are they going to help you execute a really great and flawless event, including pre and post follow up? Whatever it is, define it clearly so at the end, both parties can measure it and say "We're happy" and more importantly, you make sure you get what you paid for.

3 – Be honest. You want to be honest if you're talking to a consultant or agency, because if they're really good, they're going to spend time on you before a contract is even signed. Be honest; if you're just researching and have no plans to start the work for more than six months, tell them that. It doesn't help if they're spending all this time putting together options and a proposal just to be told 'I'm not ready to do this for another year, but thanks for the information.' You can tell them you're looking at other vendors as well. You won't offend them, believe me. And also, be honest if you're just looking for some pricing information to help you budget for the future.

I know many good designers who put a lot of time into a proposal. They have to gather requirements, find subcontractors, build rate schedules and go back and forth to align production schedules. Only to be told 'Well, I was just looking for a ballpark cost. I'm not ready to do anything right now.' I've also had the experience of spending a few hours on the phone, putting together a proposal, emailing back and forth - only for the person never to be heard from again. Nothing. Not even an "I've put the project on hold" or I decided to hire someone else." Just nothing. That's just rude and it makes me wary to spend my time doing the same thing for the next prospective client – not to mention what it says about *their* brand! Be a professional, close the loop and be honest.

4 – Determine a timeframe and a deadline. Even if you have to create an artificial one, we call that 'having a compelling event'. Things will drag on and on without a target in mind, trust me from experience on both the client and agency sides! Sometimes it's best to manage against something you know has to happen. For example, if I'm working with a client who's going through a re-brand, if we know that they're going to be launching a new website and kicking off a new campaign by December 1, that's awesome. It keeps the project moving along. The worst kinds of projects for both parties are the ones where the client says 'I'm not in a rush' and you don't get timely feedback and it drags on for months.

First, the contractor or agency is budgeting resources and time for your project, so even if you have to create an artificial deadline, create one so they can build a project plan with dates and times attached and keep the project moving forward. Also, it helps you avoid analysis paralysis and make clear decisions, rather than having something go on and on in to perpetuity. Choose a date in the future, put a stake in the ground and then say 'We're going to choose an arbitrary deadline; is this realistic or should we choose a different one?'

I've had some mid-sized companies come to me and say 'So, we're looking at creating a brand strategy, but by the way, we want to have our new website up in six weeks.' I'll usually tell them I'm not the right person to work with— my Brand Strategy process alone takes at least a few weeks, plus it usually takes more than six weeks to build that type of website once you *have* a brand strategy. I usually say 'I'm not the person for you, but I'm sure there's someone who can

help you with that.’ At least it starts the discussion about “What’s more realistic?’ and they find out if things are really going to take four months or three months or whatever.

5 – Have a budget number in mind and share that. I know we’re always taught how you don’t want to be the first person to throw out a number. But especially for companies our size, you really don’t want to waste people’s time. If you have a certain amount of money allocated in your mind, share that information. It’s a sanity check: If you think you’re going to be able to get a complex 20-page eCommerce website designed, developed, and live in 2 months for \$5,000, let’s say, you need to share that up front because they may say ‘I can’t do that, but somebody else can’ and you don’t waste anybody’s time on either end.

I advise you to allocate a set amount of marketing budget upfront for whatever you’re doing. How do you determine your marketing budget? It depends on how much revenue you’re shooting for, mapped to how much you can afford. If you are looking to build a business that brings in \$250,000 on an annual basis in revenue, it’s reasonable to expect that you should spend at least 5% on marketing-related items to get to that revenue number. If you are launching a new product or training course, and you hope to generate \$10,000 in revenue, it’s reasonable to spend about \$1000 in marketing, and so forth. It’s your job as the business owner to come up with your marketing budget based on revenue and cash flow, it’s not the consultant’s job! And if they’re out of your price range, you save time on both sides. So often, clients have consultants spend a lot of time on a proposal just to find out that their base rates are out of their price range, and that’s not good for anybody. That doesn’t help you with your budgeting and your business plan, and it’s not good for the consultants or agencies because, really, it could’ve been a very quick conversation of ‘This is your budget? Here are three people I think might be a very good fit for you.’

Be open and share information with consultants. You’re not buying a car, this is not “wheeling and dealing.” This way, you will get what you want and need, versus the horror stories that I hear about people wasting lots of money or getting shafted because expectations weren’t aligned. You want to make sure that if you’re paying good money to hire a consultant, agency or vendor that you get what you want and need out of that relationship.

SLIDE 9: Now that you have this great new Brand Strategy guiding your decisions, let’s talk about planning your marketing activity. **Where the Brand Strategy comes to life is in how you create your marketing plan.** And your marketing plan guides your precise promotional actions and investments – “I’m going to be doing these things on these days and here’s how much they’re going to cost and here’s what I’m going to get out of them.” I specifically call this a **marketing tactics plan** because what you decide to put in that plan, in my view, should be based on your brand strategy. Who do you reach, and what do you want to say?

Marketing today can be confusing and overwhelming, believe me I know! Back in the old days, there were only so many ways you could spend your promotional money to build your brand: events, direct mail, print, TV, radio and basic online banner ads. Now, there are so many options and it can be daunting: Twitter, Google+, Facebook (both fan pages and ads), blogging,

AdWords, partnerships, email campaigns, Pinterest – ay yay yay!. But you only have so much budget, so much time, and so much bandwidth. **A good way to approach your marketing tactics plan is to use what I call the “Rule of Three”** and there are two ways you can do this.

First determine your planning cycle: for me, even though I have a very high-level annual plan, I like to break it down into quarters; What goal do I have each quarter that will drive me toward my annual goals? Which activities next quarter will help me achieve those goals? Where should I focus? Especially in terms of expenses and time, I don't want to engage in 24 random acts of marketing for the quarter. I just can't take that on! So I **pick three big focus areas**, because I think three is just a really good, manageable number. You can pick more if you have a team or extra support.

For example, Sally the boutique owner might say “I'm going to focus on social media, email marketing and sponsoring this one big event next quarter.” But then you can go deeper into each of these focus areas to engage in integrated activities, so that you consistently hit the same audience with your message. A marketing adage suggests people need to see your message 7-10 times before it sticks. You don't want to skip a stone across the water and do 25 different marketing tactics and just hit a group of people once with each one.

I'd rather you pick three things to focus on and go really deep with those audiences so you hit them multiple times. Back to my example, Sally wants to focus on social media, email marketing, and sponsoring some big events in her area. First she determines her goals and metrics for using social media in her marketing plan. What does she hope to gain from that activity? **Never engage in marketing activity without a clear goal!** She then outlines certain tactics within her 'social media bucket'. For example, “Update her Facebook page three times a day, tweet three times a day, run one Pinterest contest” or something like that – she's going to do a few activities within that focus area. This keeps things manageable for her.

SLIDE 10: The second way you can think of the Rule of Three is on an outlet or channel basis. For example, let's say you're a life coach and, in a given quarter, you're going to sponsor this big women's conference. This partnership is going to be a huge focus for you, bringing in lots of leads. So your tactic #1 would be *Sponsoring the National Women's Conference*. Again, why are you doing this? Who is the audience, what is your goal, why is this conference in your marketing plan?

Now, how will you partner with this conference? You may say, “Well I'll just buy a booth.” But that is not nearly enough – how deep can you go with other integrated activities to hit this channel or outlet's audience multiple times? You want to do at least three integrated activities at the event.

So you negotiate a vendor booth, but you also see if you can get a speaker's slot at the conference, or sponsor a lunch or breakfast, or present a workshop, or do a follow-up mailing to all attendees – you want to be in front of that same audience multiple ways, multiple times. That's how you go deep, make an exponentially bigger impression with that audience and get

more out of it than simply ‘Oh, I’m going to pay \$3,000 to sponsor this event but all I’m going to get out of it is my logo on the program that no one’s going to read anyway.’ Usually when you’re doing things like conferences or online advertising with a website you’ll want to be smart about it and negotiate other things with the sales rep – they are usually open to being creative, but sometimes you have to ask.

Just remember: shallow, one-time activity is bad (unless it’s some unbelievable opportunity), deep, consistent activity is good!

SLIDE 11: Now let’s review what we talked about back in Module Two – how we measure success. **Effective brand building is a journey as you find a Brand Strategy that works and you start to bring it to life. How will you measure that you’re on the right track?** You want to think about those metrics, qualitative and quantitative, that ensure you’re headed in the right direction. As we discussed, brand building is not binary. There’s no on or off switch, but you want to track trends and ensure they are headed upward.

Again, here’s where you can keep the sales cycle in mind, especially when you’re thinking about goals for your different marketing tactics. If you’re doing a certain marketing activity, *why* are you doing it? What do you hope to achieve? Are you doing it for brand awareness? Are you doing it to push those who are in the Evaluation phase closer to purchase? At each stage, your marketing effort needs to give them the different information they require.

SLIDE 12: After you come up with your Brand Strategy, you should then establish those key metrics you want to track and think about what you need to measure and understand so you can meet those brand building goals and get these people to an eventual engagement or purchase with you. I’ve listed just a few examples here, but there are hundreds – it all depends on what is most important to your brand and business plan. And it’s not a requirement, but I like to also map it to which part of the sales cycle it impacts the most- obviously those impacting brand awareness are going to impact a bigger pool of people at the top of your sales funnel, but as you go down the sales cycle, you need to influence less people but with different engagement and information.

SLIDE 14: As I’ve mentioned before, too often business owners get stuck in the details and flurry of activity, but forget the big picture. So let’s do a fun little Visioning Exercise to help us see the forest for the trees again. When you think about all your brand and marketing efforts and visualize yourself a year from now, imagine yourself getting coverage from the *Wall Street Journal* or whatever trade journal that’s important to your line of work. I want you to visualize that article in your mind. What is the headline? What is the main quote they have from you as the business owner or thought leader? How does the article talk about what you’re doing? Is it about your company specifically, or are you commenting on some larger trend? What does it say about what you’re doing for your clients or customers or industry? In essence, what are you doing that has made news?

Maybe they’ve interviewed a client or customer of yours as well; what does that quote say? And what are any other stats or nuggets that you see? This is a really useful exercise because it

grounds you and helps you see the fruition of your efforts, your goals.. Where do you want all these tiny little efforts to lead? Sometimes it's easier to visualize it this way rather than 'Oh, this is what my brand goals are.' You'll find aspects of the story that are eye-opening for you, that maybe you never consciously thought about. For example, some of my clients realize they actually want to change the game, revolutionize the industry, invent a new methodology or product – goals that they wouldn't have been able to articulate as a brand goal, but when they do this exercise, those are the things they want people to be saying about them. It could be something less lofty, like maybe the impact you're having in the community or on the profession itself. This is a really good way at getting to your ultimate brand goals and can inform how your brand takes shape and "behaves". If you like, when you do this exercise, share it with the Brand Bootcamp Facebook group, just to spark discussion, generate excitement and put it out there!

SLIDE 15: In summary, your Brand Strategy is the foundation that helps you define who you are, crisply and cleanly. Articulating this enables you to more easily spread the word about what you do as well as provide others with the right words to talk about you and refer you. It gives you focus to choose the most effective channels and tactics and not blindly follow the next big shiny thing just because everyone else is. Crafting your strategy first is your compass and it's really going to guide you. It enables you create customized messaging by audience if you've got several different segments so you can effectively engage the right people at the right time, rather than trying to be all things to all people, which means you'll be nothing to no one!

And I really believe it helps you remain true to yourself in all your business decisions – who you hire, who you align with as a partner, where you decide to invest, which channels you'll use. The biggest benefit I see for clients and even for me engaging on my own Brand Strategy is that it saves you time and money. You don't waste money doing the wrong marketing tactics; you don't waste time hiring the wrong consultants or designers. You're able to hit the ground running with the people that you choose and have them deliver for you because you know where you're going and what you're trying to accomplish.

SLIDE 16: So what's next? As always, the next step is to polish your vision and strategy and most importantly, take action., I have this quote here: *'Vision without action is a daydream; action without vision is a nightmare.'* **It's all well and good that we talk about strategy, but now you've got to bring the brand to life once you create it. It's not enough to fill out all your pretty little exercises and check all the boxes – you have to implement to see the results.**

SLIDE 17: Put all your work thus far together into your Brand Strategy Document as we just discussed earlier in this module. Polish up your Key Messages Document as well. Now you have your Brand Strategy version 1.0, and you'll want to revisit it quarterly, or even yearly.

Next, you're ready to work on or finesse your visual ID or website if necessary. Use the advice about working effectively with consultants and freelancers that we talked about, and which you have in your free report and choose wisely. They may kiss you when you present them with a

completed Brand Strategy and Key Messages document before they begin, as that will make their lives easier, as well as your wallet happier!

Next, put your marketing tactics plan in place; find whatever help you need to get yourself off the ground: consultants, interns from a local college, volunteers. Partner selectively and creatively to amplify your efforts, and make it happen. Moving to the next level will mean different things to each of you. Whatever that next level is, articulate it and make sure that the metrics you measure and goals you determine all lead up to getting you to that next level.

Logistically, your next steps are also to ensure you have downloaded your free reports, that you've requested access to the private Facebook mentoring group – which you can continue to update with your progress and wins. As you're making things happen and revisiting messaging or building your website or relaunching something or starting a new campaign based on the works that we've done here, I'd love to hear how things are working for you or if you have questions or get stuck along the way. Lastly, please fill out your Course Evaluation form on this website and let me know what worked and what could use improvement so I can strive to deliver greater value to you and your business.

SLIDE 17: Thank you so much for your hard work and energy throughout this course. I'm confident your business – and your sanity – will be better for it as you streamline your efforts, focus on what matters and now have the tools and knowledge to make all the right brand moves.

I'm still here, **so if you have any questions, post them on the private Facebook group, follow me on Twitter @redslice or shoot an email to me directly;** I'm here for you and I would love to keep up with your progress. Anything exciting that you're doing, please let me know; I'd love to promote you!

If you enjoyed this Bootcamp, please tell your friends, colleagues and professional groups or give us a shout out on social media #rsbootcamp.

Thanks again and class dismissed!