

ideas that work!

Do you want to become the next consumer product success story?

This guide can help you to create a brand that consumers will love!

Your Guide

It can be daunting when you are planning for growth. Success or failure will impact a lot of people, cost a lot of money and it can be bruising for your legacy.

Strategy and marketing is laden with unnecessarily complicated processes and industry terminology.



*Having spent 30+ years tasked with transforming complicated and sometimes over-inflated strategies into creative solutions for **consumable brands**, my aim is to demystify the process of building a brand. I also have a passion to understand and explain consumer psychology.*

We've worked directly with retailers to grow categories, created our own brands and helped our clients, both start ups and international brands, attain listings which has given us a unique overview.

Your Guide

This pathway can take any manufacturer of consumable products from concept to success.



Your Purpose

Articulating your true desires and purpose at the outset will inform everything you do. This should inspire your every choice and it will encourage others to follow your mission.

This is completely introspective and should not sound like an advertising strap-line, it is your true motivation, not what you think other people want to hear!

For potency use this sentence structure.

To _____ *(insert your contribution)* _____,
so that _____ *(insert your desired outcome)* _____!*

*The more personal this is to you, the more powerful and unique it will become.
“I want to be rich” or “I want to make a difference” simply won’t cut it!*

*If done right, it is singular in purpose and at the root of all you do.
See the example on the next page.*

Purpose example

This client from West Africa wanted to bring the recipes from her childhood to the UK as ready meals. She explained that mealtimes in Africa were very different to those in the UK; they were more like a party where everyone is invited.

Google image search for results for “Africa” and “food” showed starvation and poverty. Her shock was very apparent and subsequently her purpose became:

To **challenge the perceptions of African food** so that **cultural pride can be restored**.



This realisation made her story far more compelling and subsequently informed the creative brief for the brand: “A celebration of African culture”

Your Terrain

Consumers will never see your product in isolation as you will be placed by the retailer in a competitive set.
E.G. Sausages in a chiller: There is little point wasting any effort to inform the consumer (beyond legal requirements) that you make sausages. Concentrate on why they should choose yours.

Have a good look at your **competitors**. Who is the category leader and why?
What are the other choices available to sate the need of the consumer?

Amongst the many ways of categorising your competitors the simplest are the most effective.
Picture a relevant scene (a bar if you're a brewery) and attribute simple characteristics to all of the brands that could be an option for your consumer. Then imagine why they might approach one of the characters.
E.G. The quirky one, the traditional one, the moralistic one, the hippy ...etc.

It is inadvisable to go head to head with someone else's positioning, that rarely ends well for either party.
As John Heggarty put it in his advertisement for Black Levis "When the World Zigs, you Zag!"

Sometimes you can even create your own category, but this comes with its own challenges.

Then define your **tools**, imagine a game of chess; move your pieces around to demonstrate to your consumers that your positioning is the most relevant to them by using potent messages.

Terrain example

Wagg is a pet food brand that sits in a price point between the leading brands and the retailers' own brand. They expressed their frustration at the constant "tug of war" over price and margins with the retailers.

Their positioning put them at a considerable disadvantage, so we created a new, natural brand at the other end of the price scale which transformed their opportunities.



Model

Approximately 80% of UK companies fail within their first year according to figures from the ONS.

In our experience the most common reason for consumable product businesses to fail is due to the imbalance of production capabilities with the scale of retail opportunity.

You will need to be clear on the scale of business that you ultimately desire. Do you want a stable and manageable 'life style' business, create a family legacy or a growing brand that one day you intend to sell as an exit plan?

When you are clear on your objectives you can confidently take the steps to get there, defining choices along the way. E.G. "at X point we will invest in our own packaging and production lines".

This will clarify your retail strategy, when you are ready to talk to a national retailer or when to politely decline with a "We're not ready for you yet".

You tend to only get one chance... Be sure when they come knocking!

Contract Manufacturing

An option for any young brand is to abdicate the manufacture of the products to a partner who can handle greater volumes.

This will have a considerable impact on your margins, as your role reduces to marketing and sales, but can be done to create great returns for all.

The best partners will have 'open book' conversations with you. This is sharing all of the details of the costs involved in production. Together you can minimise any compromises required to ensure that your product remains true to its values.

Be clear on their capacity and aspirations for their own business.

In broad terms the largest costs fall into three categories which will need to work for all stakeholders.

*Production
and delivery*

*Sales and
marketing*

*Retailer
margins*

Margins

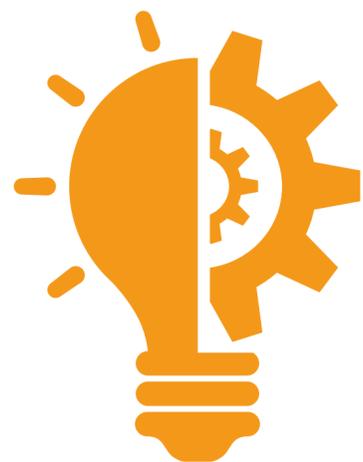
We were challenged by a supermarket to innovate the chilled burger category. Pork burgers were thought to lack flavour compared to beef, so we created a range of flavoured burgers inspired by our Eighteenth Century explorer.

We had to hit a price point that matched sausages on a '3 packs for £10' deal and tasked a contract manufacturer to work with our recipes.

With no guarantees of a limited time on promotion from the retailer and a manufacturer that refused open book conversations, we risked starting out only making 5p per pack which didn't make any profit for us, so the project was shelved.



	Production and delivery	Sales and marketing	Retailer's margins 37%	Price to consumer
Full price	£1.98	£0.22	£1.30	£3.50
Promo	£1.98	£0.05	£1.30	£3.33



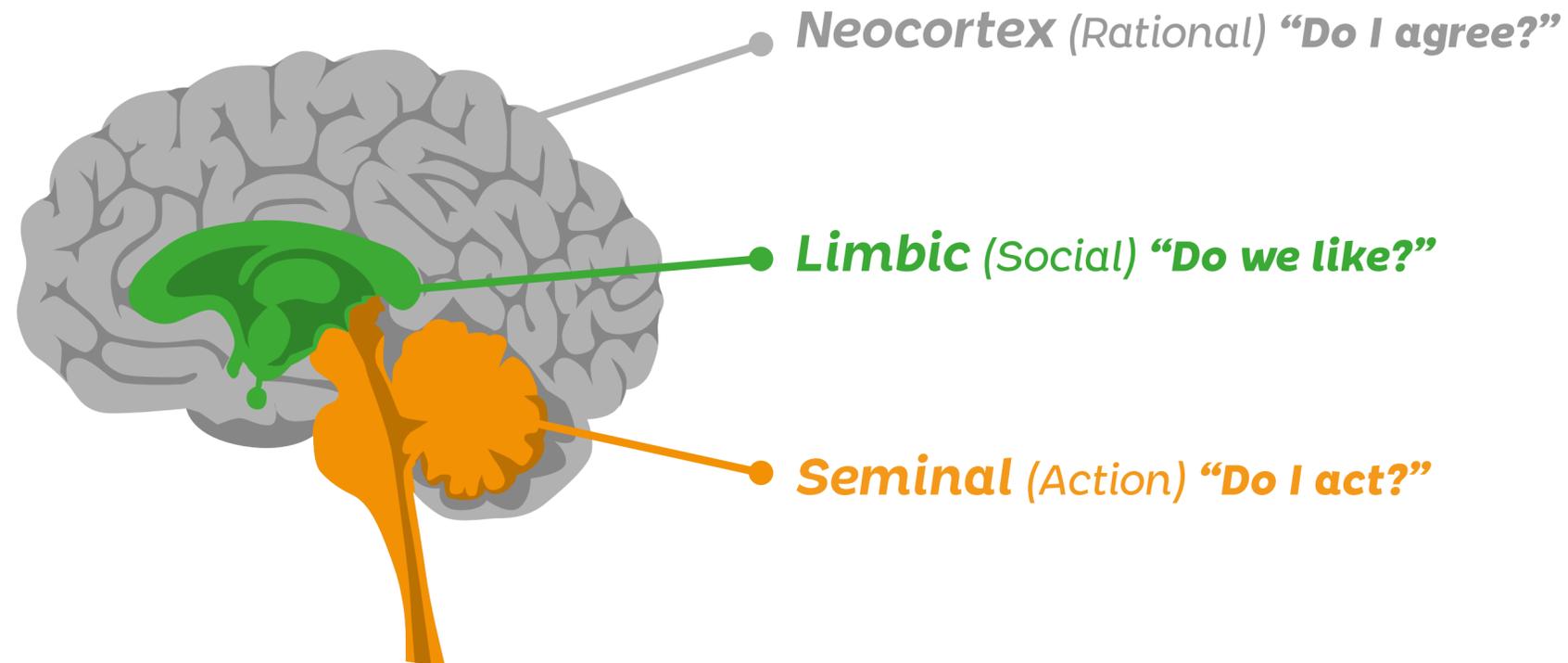
How do you get your brand noticed and understood by consumers?

A little bit of neuroscience.

What we now know

The branding of consumable products is the sharp end of the carrot & stick of marketing; you are asking people to put your product in their mouths and swallow.

The decision making process happens in microseconds and understanding how this works inside the consumer's head can be 'make or break' for any business in this space.



Based on neuroscience (fMRI scan studies) and modern behavioural psychology, we now have a greater understanding of the factors in play when we make decisions.

What happens where?

Neocortex: “Do I agree?”

*This is operational when we are conscious that we are thinking (Descartes).
It is this part that responds when you ask consumers what they think. Their answers
don't always correlate with their behaviour, therefore always need interpretation.*

This part of the brain doesn't decide!

Limbic: “Do we like?”

*Concentrates on how we feel; tone of voice, alignment of values, aesthetics and belonging.
It will enquire if the brand is “for them and their tribe” and is powerfully employed by influencers.*

Social proof is strong motivator.

Seminal*: “Do I act?”

*This part of the brain is 1000 times faster (fight or flight) and
it makes the decisions. It is where a consumer's habits reside.*

Speaking to the seminal is required when you want to effect change!

Communicating with the Seminal

Imagine that you see a snake, your seminal reacts within 2 milliseconds. It takes a full 500 milliseconds for the rest of your brain to identify that it was just a stick... Too late, the adrenalin has already been released and fear experienced.

What **is** the Seminal like?

(Illustrated as if it were a individual person as this helps us to understand how to best engage)

It's very self centred and cynical - not interested in hearing about you, only what you can do for it.

It's got an incredibly short attention span - only use potent words, it is enraged when you waste its time.

It is immensely perceptive - listen out for "it doesn't feel/look right or I've a gut feeling about it I don't trust"

It loves contrast and variety - that's why you being the first or best is crucial.

It knows best - it has been around millennia and once it decides, it will use 'confirmation bias' to justify choices.

It is sensitive to primal fears - think in terms of death, pain, hunger, scarcity, fear and rejection from the tribe.

It makes snap decisions and doesn't like to change it's stance. First impressions are everything.

It can smell a fake a mile off! Don't get caught selling to it, that is considered an offence.

What does the Seminal like?

It likes being placed as the hero of any story that you create, use the word “you” as often as possible. Never start with “We are...”

It loves stories and they are even more potent when you paint in sensory detail; imagine that you are reading a bedtime story to a child, the detail places them in the story.

Clarity; don't wrap things up in long words or complicated, conflated concepts – Talk straight!

It loves humour, especially humour that makes it feel included, part of a tribe or clique.

It loves big pictures (your eyes feed information to the seminal by a structurally more direct path than any other sense) and it rejects complexity and complicated details, that's for a different part of the brain.

***The full list is exhaustive, and your seminal has probably switched off by now!
Always put important information at the beginning and end of dialogue,
that's when it's most attentive.***

Whenever you're writing marketing copy look out for the use of “I” and “we”, question every one as there is usually a better way of phrasing to put the Seminal centric to the message.

Your Seminal Sentence

In the last decade many methods have been tested for efficacy across all marketing and sales globally and we've put this into practice specifically for consumables.

We have found that this check list, usually in this order, is most effective to influence.

In any situation describe the...



*Along the way the most powerful word to use is **“you”** and remember the preferences of the Seminal! Once established this becomes the shorthand for what you say about yourself every time.*

Seminal Sentence example



Pain

Parents whose fussy kids won't eat veg...



Gain

...Need to give them food they'll love but is also good for them.



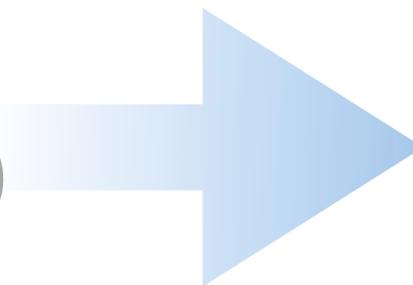
Claim

These look like their favourite foods but have veg hidden inside.

Packaging (brand embodiment)

We conflate the brand and the packaging as the pack is the object that consumers are presented with; they can touch it, feel it and take it home.

The packaging is the embodiment of the brand itself. Imagine the glass Coke bottle, it is like an icon on your computer's desktop, linking to every brand encounter, experience and advert.



Like an icon on your
Computer desktop...

...To a folder of all of the encounters with
the brand and what it has been telling us.

The brand and pack form the visual link for the consumer to recognise everything that you do.

Be Bold and Memorable

The majority of purchases are habitual, you'll need to jolt people out of their current habit... Be bold!

Consumers mostly partake in 'sleep shopping': Sainsbury's even sent a man in a gorilla suit in store to see who would notice... Surprisingly few!



Being memorable is key, we call this 'visual and emotional stickiness'. Don't be afraid to give your brand 'elbows', these are deliberately included oddities that work because they are unexpected.



Versus



Always have a visual **focal point**, this is the biggest element and the main thing that you want to communicate. In this environment you need to lead the shopper's order of cognition.

Packaging

The pack should have a clear **idea** to stimulate the shopper, otherwise it's a passive experience.

Be conscious of the Limbic: **“What will others think of me?”**. By choosing a brand consumers are wearing it like a badge, their choices can say a lot to others about them, this consideration can be part of their decision.

In a fraction of a second you can't communicate too much, however there is a lot you can achieve...



Pack format can position your product or challenge norms, even re-frame price



Typography can subliminally give cues of provenance or personality



Imagery can evoke emotion far more potently than words



Your key message can extol your intent and align with values



Colours can either position your product or challenge expectations

Packaging Examples



“I am the Goats’ milk brand”



“They’ll love you for it”



“Inspiring home baking”

Seminal story*

When anyone visits your website or clicks play on your video, they are inviting you to tell them a story. Make the audience the hero of the story to encourage them to align and invest in your brand.

Use the framework behind most stories based on a formula used since Homer's Iliad.

(The Hero).
Luke Skywalker

(The problem).
Must defeat the Empire.

(The guide).
Meets Obi-Wan Kenobi

(The plan). Who tells
him to trust the force.

(The deed). In order
to defeat the Empire

(The jeopardy). Or the
Rebellion will be crushed.

(The results).
Death Star is destroyed.

You can use this structure to keep the seminal engaged, experience the story and allow the consumer to see themselves benefiting from their alignment with your brand



A character
(The consumer)



With a problem
(Their pain)



Meets a guide
(You)



Who gives them a plan
(The solution)



Calls them to action
(Inspires them to buy)



Or else failure
(The jeopardy)



Or success
(Happy consumer)

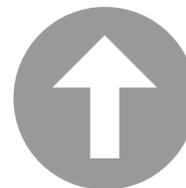
Based on the story arc you can effectively structure website setting the story out for your consumer. This also applies to a storyboard for video or podcast.

BREAKFAST - Like a - KING

Start your day satisfied

Story Example*

A personal trainer and nutritionist wanted to make a hearty breakfast easier to accomplish for everyone. Eating in the morning is better for your circadian rhythms and reduces the calories that are turned into fat by eating most of your intake in the evenings. He noted that the convenience of ready meals was aimed at the evening meal, yet we are more time pressured in the morning. His solution was 'Breakfast like a King'.

 <p>People who are too rushed for a proper breakfast and are...</p>	 <p>...Hungry before lunch, eating late and not using calories they eat,</p>	 <p>Meets a personal trainer, nutritionist and foodie, Sam King,</p>	 <p>Who recommends a full, hotel style breakfast ready meal,</p>	 <p>That they can cook whilst they prepare for work.</p>	 <p>So they don't put on unnecessary weight or get hungry mornings.</p>	 <p>They can enjoy a satisfying breakfast & improve their health.</p>
<p>"Do you have time in the morning for a hot satisfying breakfast?"</p>	<p>Do you know that breakfast is the most important meal of the day?</p>	<p>I'm a PT, a lot of my clients' diets are back to front impeding improvements.</p>	<p>A ready meal to satisfy you in the morning that you can swap for a full evening meal,</p>	<p>It's easy to pop in the oven when you shower in the morning. Just add an egg!</p>	<p>Our bodies are messed up because we consume most of our calories in the evening.</p>	<p>Now you can enjoy a hearty breakfast, easily prepared in the morning and keep to you health targets"</p>



Bring the story to life

Add as much sensory detail as possible, this a great way to avoid the 'liar's tell' and enable people to experience the story for themselves.

Movement (animation and video) is a sensory must. With the development of 5G and phone system software, so much is now possible to bring your story to life. If you are not taking advantage of presenting a 'moving brand' it is like designing in black and white after the invention of coloured inks!

Social proof can be powerful, use testimonials where possible and phrases like: "Join the growing numbers who follow us" or "Contribute to the cause by..."

The website can have unique URL entry points, this way the story can be customised for maximum impact for different customers or facets to your business.

With an e-commerce website, look to how the retailers present your products and make the experience as simple as possible.

Website Example*

breakfastlikeaking.com

BREAKFAST Like a KING HEALTHY START MEALS SHOP STOCKISTS PAGES CONTACT

Your Personal Trainer: Are you too busy in the morning to have a satisfying breakfast?

BREAKFAST is the MOST important meal of the DAY
By switching your main meal of the day to breakfast you can...

BETTER THROUGHOUT THE DAY BETTER PERFORMANCE AT WORK LEADS TO BETTER SLEEP BETTER BLOOD SUGAR CONTROL BETTER GUT HEALTH

CALORIE BURN RATE

Eating earlier

Eating later

TIME OF DAY

Breakfast Lunch Dinner



BREAKFAST is the MOST important meal of the DAY



BREAKFAST is the MOST important meal of the DAY



Action

Every marketing plan will be inherently unique. By now you will have established who you will need to convince, of what, when and why.

Research can be conducted for either clarification or confirmation and observational studies of actual shopper behaviour can be enlightening.

There are many more tools (or channels) available to us in the 21st century, from social media or lumpy mail to relevant influencers or high profile sponsorship, meaning the investment can be balanced with rewards.

At any budget level there is always a positive impact that you can instigate.

A three year plan is advisable, encompassing the steps identified in your business plan. Each step will require you to solve different challenges.

Start with broad brush strokes before getting into granular detail.

Tune your message and activities to your marketing objective and seek out the best channel to reach your target audience.



Marketing plan example*

The decision was made that we would focus the business on the ready meals, getting listings in supermarkets, rather than any other opportunities for eating on the go, or fast food selling opportunities.

Objective: Introduce consumers to health values of a hearty breakfast made at home.

To challenge people's habits by encouraging healthy, satisfying cooked breakfasts rather than an evening meal when calories just turn into fat.

Channel 1: Social media campaign educating people on healthy eating patterns, extolling breakfast's importance and downsides to consuming calories in the evening.

Channel 2: Website: Educational and motivating message (animated) with lifestyle suggestions (video).

YouTube friendly podcasts, interviewing both health specialists and chefs.

Channel 3: Messaging in gyms: Target personal trainers, offer discounts and recruit influencers.

Channel 4: Sampling in stores: Aisle end sampling stations with personal trainers explaining the importance of a satisfying breakfast.

Social Media

Social media is a **tactical tool**, it can be used to accomplish many things:

Ingratiate independent retailers.

Treat your retailers like a community with aligned desired outcomes. Follow, like and share their content and provide them with collateral that they can share and like. This is potent on a local level.

Campaign for positioning (pain/gain/claim, inform and educate)

Provide genuinely interesting enquiries and facts to drive consumers to your other channels.

Build a community (FaceBook)

Encourage debate and user generated content.

Promote products, sell direct & offer promotions or promote events.

Clarity of intention is more important than simply measuring likes.

***Relevant platforms for consumables (at the time of writing)
are Instagram, FaceBook, Twitter and TikTok.***

Animated posts



To view animations visit: www.carrotjuicecreative.com/socialmedia

Plan (Retailer Strategy)

The selection of your retail partners will be informed by a balance of a number of things:
The profile of your target market, volume and rate of sales & logistics.

This is like climbing a ladder that matches your production capabilities.
Select your ladder with an understanding of the profile of your ideal target market.

Independents:

The relationship with independent retailers should be a personal one where you share common, mutually beneficial goals. E.G. increasing their footfall, their basket price, rate of sales and value per inch of shelf.



Supermarkets:

A supermarket buyer's success depends on the margins and rate of sales they can attain from their allotted category shelf space. They are tasked with keeping their shelf interesting, therefore they welcome innovation and interest for their shoppers.



For some tips visit: www.carrotjuicecreative.com/how

Sales (Retailer approach)

Begin with the Seminal Branding logic, only this time consider the 'pain' of the buyer/retailer.

In the majority of cases you will be asking to take the shelf space currently occupied by another brand or product. Be prepared for this with a compelling story to justify their change.

Will they make greater margins? Is your brand more relevant to their consumers than their current listings? Can they see a faster rate of sales from the same precious few inches of shelf?

There are a number of tactics, beyond great products and beautiful packaging, that can help lift your brand above the crowd.

Make it personal



A great tactic is the personal touch, offering tasting sessions can be a powerful way to allow for some theatre in-store.

Little would be as strong as meeting the business founder in person.

This worked incredibly well for the Mercers, as we put them at the centre of the story and played on the novelty of them being on pack.



Add Value

The premium sausage market has grown exponentially over the last two decades and has stagnated in recent years.

We were tasked with adding value to the category and developed a range of accompanying sauces to make more of the staple family meal.

Saucy Gee's creates new interest in a static environment.



Break New Ground

We wondered why ready meals were so popular for evening meals, yet we are always more time pressured in the morning. This is a range of hotel style breakfast meals. Simply add an egg and you're set for the day!

This would create a whole *new usage occasion* for ready meals.



Create a Category

If you are lucky enough to have a broad range of products and enough of a unique purpose, then you could create your own retail category.

This technique leads a consumer to make the sustainable decision or entirely new habit first and select which product from within your range.

It is also a great way for the retailer to create some theatre on their shelves, align themselves with your values and draw attention to your brand.



This example creates a sustainable brewing category within the beer shelves of a supermarket.



This example creates a micro-herb category of living, flavoursome herbs that can be used as a condiment.

Price re-framing

A tactic we often employ is the re-framing of price: Think about how Nespresso pods are not compared gram for gram with a jar of Nescafé granules, or how Redbull's smaller cans are twice the price of a can of Coke.

If you can take consumers with you on a journey where the value your brand adds is worth paying more, then you can reset the pricing.

When we spoke to retailers about Saffron Tree curries, we didn't encourage any comparison with other ready meals. The products were so premium we compared them with the cost of an Indian restaurant meal.

This allowed a higher price with extra margin, beneficial for the manufacturer and the retailer.

The packaging helped to break the usual associations.



Selling Example

Our opening statement to ASDA, Morrisons & Tesco, when we worked with Dickson's the butcher was...

“Farmer’s don’t make sausages & pies, butcher’s do!”



“We’ve conducted some research and found that 92% of consumers would prefer to buy sausages, bacon and pies from their local butcher who are not represented in your chiller! Allow us to be that representation, as we’ve been around since 1953 and have a loyal following.”

Grow

The first time a consumer notices your brand, impressions are formed and they are near impossible to alter later. However, the environment around your brand will change, competitors will also be evolving along with technologies, trends and social attitudes.

A radical re-brand is perfectly acceptable, as long as you take your audience along with you. Before making changes ensure you know what makes you recognisable; don't throw the baby out with the bath water.

Your evolution should only serve to vindicate your consumers' choice in the first place with the social proof that you are growing and evolving for them.

At least every three to four years your brand and packaging should undergo a round of scrutiny; maybe your profile of stockists has evolved or maybe it will just need a clean up.

As your brand builds its place in your consumer's mind, you will have fewer reassurances required to bring them on your journey. Always be mindful of how you are currently regarded, there may be a better way to engage them or attract new consumers.

Steps 1 - 4 of this guide are very difficult to change after first impressions, at best they can be tweaked or refined.

Evolve

Be mindful of your own desires to change something because you have become over-familiar with the brand or new staff or agencies wish to make their mark. It is the consumer's engagement that should be the consideration.

It is worth noting that if you wish to make any changes, bring your stockists along with you, explain your motives and plans. Your brand will have become part of their financial projections.

Throughout this entire process you should be building a brand bible, this can take the form of a simple document that you will be proud to share with every stake holder both internally and externally to your business. It should inform everyone of your dreams, plans, methods and rationale. It will form a powerful tool to both remind you and recruit others to your cause.

At the design stage you should also build tone and design guidelines. Other's will have to represent your brand (staff, agencies and partners). Every time your brand 'speaks' it should be consistent and familiar.

Summary



DISCOVERY

1

Develop a deep understanding of your true motivation, it is a powerful guide to inform your future.

2

Identifying your environment and competition to form a more robust and successful approach.

3

Model your business to achieve goals and create a time line with trigger points for growth.

4

Create a simple statement that activates the part of the consumer's brain to inspire purchase.



CREATION

5

Use design tools based on psychology that can give you the potency required in your brand and packaging.

6

Use techniques that have been successful in story telling for millennia. This leads engaging websites and video.

7

Define your marketing plan, activities and channels to engage your with consumer base.

8

New media is a powerful tactical tool, understand how to make best use if it to drive sales.



DELIVERY

9

Identify your route to market, where to make your first and lasting impressions.

10

Learn how to ensure your selected retail partners list your brand and create a win/win situation for all.

11

Ensure consistency and adapt as you grow to match an ever changing market place.

***“A moving door hinge never corrodes.
Flowing water never grows stagnant.”***

Ming-Dao Deng.

*It is vital that you stay fresh, alive, growing and evolving,
otherwise someone else will become more relevant to your audience.*

*Getting the best results from this process, without external help,
is like trying to read the label when you're inside the bottle.*

*If you need any assistance with any topic or
to discuss this guide, please call Nick Lock
on 07966 372 916.*

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