
THE 4 Cs TO BRAND CLARITY

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The 4 Cs to Brand Clarity

Can I be honest here since it's just you and me? I understand why people get stuck when it comes to personal branding.

You have one expert telling you that you need to be a “badass,” and then one telling you to “kick ass.” Then, to add to the mix, you're supposed to be “empowered” to be your true self.

It's like, “Huh? What the heck does that even mean?” You want to grow your brand, not train to be ninja.

Maybe you think:

- *I just want to make more money in my business.*
- *I just want to stop working like a madwoman to only make ends meet.*
- *I just want to stop struggling to get new clients.*
- *I just want to show my expertise so that my value is not questioned.*
- *I just want to be me and not feel like an imposter.*

Do any of these things hit home for you? Because these are often the true motivators behind building a strong brand for your business.

You don't get out of bed, stretch your arms up, and say, “Yes! The first thing I'm going to do today to bring money in is work on my personal brand.”

It's not to say that you don't think it's important. It just means it's not always on top of your to-do list.

Fair enough to say?

Well, you're not alone. The main challenge with branding is twofold.

1. Time is not on your side when you're a small business owner or freelancer who wears several hats. *You spend most of your time working with clients and trying to get new ones and don't always make the time to work on your business.*
2. There's so much noise out there, for goodness sake! *The internet is flooded with businesses that offer similar services, and it feels like you have to be someone else to stand out.*

The noise is a lot to take in if you're trying to figure it out on your own or you don't know where to start.

You may think you have to find your voice. But I'm here to tell you that it's right in front of you. Instead, DEFINE your voice so your brand story attracts exactly the type of clients who value your expertise.

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My four secrets to defining a clear brand will give you a good starting point (and reminders) for communicating a strong brand voice.

Why does this matter?

Well, let's talk about what keeps you up at night.

Whether it's attracting high-paying clients who value your expertise, zeroing in on how to make your business more profitable (and less burdensome), or feeling confident about your brand voice, getting help with these areas will chip away at the confusion.

(Hello, clarity and more money without sacrificing your weekends.)

But before we get rolling, let me first say this: Personal branding does not have to be complicated.

Repeat after me: **Personal branding does not have to be complicated.**

Got it?

Let's get some clarity!

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STEP ONE: BE CLEAR

The path to clarity is like walking through a maze blindfolded with your hands tied behind your back holding a map.

Some of your business challenges come from the inability to answer questions about your personal brand that make your next steps more obvious.

Being clear about your brand is the first step to any marketing activity you implement. THIS is how you shape your message and grow your business.

The process is overwhelming. It's like cleaning up an old room filled with so many things that it becomes hard to figure out what to keep versus what to throw away.

The same thing can be said about your business. It's not always easy to identify what part is unique to your competition and what part you can do without.

So, what do you usually do when you don't know where to start?

You move on to something else to tackle, of course!

It's like when you know you need to write an article but suddenly don't know how to draft a simple sentence. So, naturally, you clean out your DVR because at least that makes you feel like you got something accomplished.

If you want to be clear about your brand, take a moment and consider these questions:

- What is special about the way you do what you do (the way you achieve results) that's unique to your business?
- What part of your business do you love the most?
- What are your top four strengths that your clients rave about?
- What do people who know you well tell you is your greatest strengths?
- Do your clients see those same qualities?
- What part of your business does not support your strengths?
- What part of your business fuels your passion?
- Are the services you market profitable?

Some of these questions may be easier to answer than the others. Yet taking the time to answer them helps you see the blind spots in your business.

Now, once you've answered the questions above, dive into the questions below:

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- Which question(s) was the easiest to answer?
- Which was the hardest to answer?

Take note of your answers and see if you can identify the “why,” especially where you struggled. This sheds light on the areas of your business that need the most attention.

STEP TWO: BE CONSISTENT

Truth talk: **Personal branding isn't a “set it and forget it” kind of thing.**

Once you're clear on your brand message, use it to attract your ideal clients.

This means getting out there by:

- Writing blogs on your website.
- Sharing blogs with your email list.
- Posting social media updates.
- Reaching out to potential clients.
- Engaging with people in your industry.

Translation: **Be seen. Be found.**

Another piece of the puzzle is to always present a cohesive brand. This means using the same brand colors across your website and social media posts (for graphics). Also, it includes having the same brand voice and message.

It's not to say that you don't make tweaks based on the actual platform (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, your website). In fact, you should.

But your audience should have a clear idea of what you do and who you do it for no matter how they find you.

Make sense?

This is easy to miss because sometimes it's quicker to just post in the moment, but the truth is that you need an action plan.

If you're acting without intention, you'll miss out opportunities to reinforce your value, sell your services, and more important, connect with your target market.

Set a schedule to use as a guide or hire a professional to manage your writing for you. It shouldn't feel like a chore, so pick the best way that doesn't leave you staring at an empty Word document (because you don't have time for that).

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Are daily micro blogs easier for you to write?

Are you better at writing longer posts bi-weekly?

Are you creative, preferring to post quick and meaningful graphics with quotes?

Are you more comfortable in front of the camera, preferring videos to writing?

There's no one-size-fits-all solution, and often it's trial and error. I don't want you to get caught up in what other people are doing. I want you to focus on what works for YOU.

You'll be more confident if you take the route you enjoy rather than force yourself to follow a trend.

Not sure what works best for you?

Start by mixing up different approaches and seeing where you get the most engagement or where you're able to be most consistent.

Hint: There is a correlation between the two.

Here are some additional things to consider:

- Tweak your content for each social media platform.
- Be consistent with colors, fonts, and (most important) your brand voice.
- Cross-promote your content across various social media platforms.
- Add your social media links to your website, business cards, and email signatures.
- Check your links on each platform often to make sure they work, especially if you make changes (links are the devil!).
- Show your personality, but always stay on message.
- Capture your unique value and brand positioning.
- Be yourself (it's easier and enough!).

Based on what we've covered, I hope this gets you thinking about ways to be more consistent in your messaging.

Is there something you want to try but haven't already? Is there something you're currently doing that you want to stop?

Pick one of the tips above to work on this week and see how it helps you consistently connect with your current audience and draw in new clients.

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STEP THREE: BE CREDIBLE

Credibility is big when you're a service-based business. After all, people do business with people they know, like, and trust.

If your audience doesn't trust you, they will not show you the money.

When potential clients check out your website and read your About page, they want to know if you're authentic.

They want to know:

- Do you have the experience to deliver the results you promise?
- Are you someone who is easy to work with?
- If your services are worth the money?

So how do you present your brand in a way that eases your ideal client's concerns right off the bat?

Show and tell!

I'm not talking about bringing out all your "goodies" and talking about it like in grade school. I'm saying to show your expertise by writing thought-leadership blogs, sharing client testimonials, and highlighting your credentials.

Here's the thing: If you oversell yourself with no proof, you won't be believable and will struggle to get clients. If you undersell with all the proof, you'll be broke because you'll have plenty of clients who will love you for your cheap prices and tell their friends who want to pay pennies too because...why not?

I know self-promotion is a pain in the tush, but if you don't toot your own horn then your horn gets no play.

Don't *solely* rely on others to spread the word about how amazing you are.

So how do you show your expertise in a credible way so that you stand out? By avoiding buzzwords that EVERYONE in your industry use.

Buzzwords are buzzkills.

Maybe you can slip in one or two without a problem, but if your brand is a greatest hits of every cliché known to man, you'll come off as an imposter. Your audience wants facts, not fluff.

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When you're describing your experience, keep an eye out for words like:

- Guru
- Ninja
- Queen
- Diva
- Game changer
- Authority
- Visionary

Now, I don't want you to panic if one of these names are associated with your brand. It's not always a negative thing.

But you want to make sure you have the experience, or a good story, to back it up. Otherwise, people who are not familiar with your brand will glance right over you and not take you seriously (you won't stand out from the crowd).

Early in my career, I trained pharmaceutical sales rep on a handheld PC called the Jornada. It was an older technology before the fancy tablets, so they broke all the time.

I, on the other hand, learned the ins and outs of the system and became the go-to person because I knew how to use and fix those little suckers.

The reps started to call me the "Jornada Queen" every time I handed them back their PC problem-free.

Honestly, I loved the title because it showed my reputation as an expert (and who doesn't want to be called a queen every now and then?). But if I walked in the classroom proclaiming to be the queen before proving myself, they would have looked at me like I was crazy.

It's okay to brag about your experience. You should! But it's more credible when your target audience anoints you as the expert.

Another thing that can take away from your credibility is vagueness. Again, it goes back to being clear.

If you find that your message is vague or too broad, it's a sign that you're not sure what your niche is, and you need to get to the root of that first.

You want to be as specific and strategic as possible, so there is no question about what you do and how your business is different from the next.

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Here's an example:

"I empower you to dig deep into your soul to create the business of your dreams."

While this sounds great on the surface, it's ambiguous. Here's a way to be more specific.

"I help nonprofit business owners fuel their true calling and turn their passion into profit."

Even though both examples allude to the same thing, the second example paints a more tangible picture of results, which is something you always want to connect your message to.

Look at your website with fresh eyes. Are your brand message and unique value clear throughout each page?

Does it tell your target market that they've found a credible expert? If not, clarify your message so there's no guessing about the value you offer.

STEP FOUR: BE CAREFREE

As you implement ways to define your brand voice and grow your business, consider how honest you are with yourself in the process.

Is there a discrepancy between the person you are inside and the business you present to the outside world?

For many, this discrepancy hinders growth because YOU are the face of your business. And business, at the end of the day, is personal. It's an infusion of who you are and what value you bring to your clients as an expert.

Here's the thing: Self-examination is not easy, but it's necessary. The key to defining your voice is to be comfortable with being yourself.

There's freedom in knowing you don't have to be a "badass" if that's not how you identify your brand. In the same way, embrace that *you are* a "badass" unapologetically if that's true. (Maybe you're somewhere in the middle and a combination of different characteristics.)

The problem is when you feel like you have to be someone you're not.

One of the major aspects of personal branding is the use of social media for visibility. Your potential clients will often be first introduced to you by what they find on the internet.

If you develop an authentic personal brand online, you'll expand your reach and attract clients who adore your personality and business. This is a good thing, but it also adds another dimension of managing the "face" you show to the world.

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As you step outside of your comfort zone, it will feel like someone is putting a big magnifying glass up to your face that may draw out your insecurities. (And if you ever *really* looked at yourself under a magnifying glass, boy, oh boy, you know what I mean!)

But I'm not talking about a pimple or robust grey hair that just came out of nowhere. I'm talking about the possibility of someone criticizing your brand or questioning your expertise.

It can sometimes make you want to hide, or even worse, feel like you need to pretend to be someone you're not. But don't buy into the illusions, especially on social media.

You can't "Photoshop" the perfect version of yourself in real life. Plus, people are drawn to people who are *authentic*—you can spot a fake a mile away.

What does this mean for you?

It means that being carefree allows you to forget about what your competition is doing. If you focus on defining your authentic brand voice, you won't care what others have to say.

Remove the titles and the boxes that tell you that you must be one way or fit into one group. Forget for a moment about brand archetypes or characteristics like "introvert" versus "extrovert."

Focus on being authentic.

When you're confident in who you are, you'll naturally be carefree and care less about those who don't get you. Because who wants to work with them anyway?

So now that I've shared the 4 Cs to brand clarity, the next move is on you. Digest the tips and read the steps again that you need to marinate on more.

If you're overwhelmed, focus on one "C" at a time. Even the smallest steps can lead to BIG results if you make it a habit.

Your personal brand deserves some TLC, so show it some love and move it up your to-do list. (I promise it's less painful than a bad date.)

About Marietta

Marietta Gentles Crawford wants to live in a world where imperfections are embraced, dreams become reality, and laughter is a requirement.

As a writer and personal brand strategist, she's been featured on [The Muse, Inc.](#), [Fast Company](#), [Thrive Global](#), [HuffPost](#), and [Lifehack](#).

When she's not traveling with her husband (or thinking about being on a white sand beach with the sea playing background music), you can find her helping brands turn their voice into profit.

She released her first book [From Nine to Thrive](#) in 2017.

Want to learn more about defining your brand voice? [Click here](#) to work with me. I'd love to show you how to start attracting your ideal clients today.

