

BRAND MOUNTAIN



A logo is easy to make.
A brand people care about?
That takes a little more work.



**Looking professional
isn't enough anymore.**



For years, small businesses struggled because professional-looking design was difficult to access.

That problem is disappearing.

Templates are better.

AI image generation is better.

Logo generators are better.

Website builders are better.

Soon, almost everyone will be capable of producing something that looks reasonably polished.

But there's a catch.



When everyone can make something polished, polished stops being the differentiator.

Taste matters.

Strategy matters.

Original ideas matter.

Context matters.

Knowing which idea not to use matters.

And understanding the humans on the other side of the brand matters.



TEST YOUR BRAND.



Could your logo reasonably belong to another company in your industry?

- ☐ No. It feels distinctly ours.
- ☐ Maybe.
- ☐ Probably.
- ☐ You could swap the business name and nobody would notice.

Could you explain why your logo looks the way it does?

- ☐ Yes. Every major decision connects to our strategy.
- ☐ Somewhat.
- ☐ Mostly because I liked it.
- ☐ The prompt said “modern minimalist logo.”

Does your visual identity extend beyond the logo?

- ☐ Mostly just the logo.
- ☐ Does making the logo really big count?
- ☐ Yes, we have a recognizable visual system.
- ☐ We have colors and fonts.

BRAND TEST



The goal of professional design isn't simply to create something AI couldn't physically generate.

It's to create something worth remembering.

Great designers listen.

They ask questions.

They notice contradictions.

They understand culture.

They connect ideas.

They recognize clichés.

And they build visual systems around the specific people, history, ambitions, audience, and personality behind a business.



Logo Test

Let's see how well your logo is currently working.

Give yourself one point for every yes.

___ Is it meaningfully different from your competitors?

___ Is it recognizable without relying on trends?

___ Does it work in one color?

___ Does it remain readable when it's small?

___ Does it work on both light and dark backgrounds?

___ Does it reproduce well in print?

___ Does it work digitally?

___ Does it feel appropriate for your ideal customer?

___ Does it communicate the right personality?

___ Is there an intentional idea behind it?

___ / **10**

BRAND TEST



8–10 — Strong footing

Your identity has a solid foundation. Your next opportunity may be expanding the visual system around it.

5–7 — There's something here

Your brand has some strong ingredients, but inconsistency or unclear strategy may be holding it back.

0–4 — Time for a fresh start

Your business may have outgrown the identity that got you here.

That's normal. Businesses evolve. Brands should too.

BRAND TEST



BEYOND THE LOGO



Your logo isn't your brand.

Cover the logos on a Nike ad, an Apple product page, or a Patagonia catalog and you'd probably still know whose work you're looking at.

That's the power of a visual system.

Your brand can be recognized through:

Typography

How your words look.

Color

The palette people begin associating with you.

Photography

The world your brand shows people.

Graphic elements

Patterns, shapes, icons, illustrations, textures, and visual devices.

Layout

How all of the graphic elements interact.

Voice

How your brand sounds when it speaks.



Visual Identity Check

Without your logo present, would someone recognize your:

Website?

Yes / Maybe / No

Social posts?

Yes / Maybe / No

Packaging?

Yes / Maybe / No

Signage?

Yes / Maybe / No

Advertising?

Yes / Maybe / No

BRAND TEST



If removing your logo makes your brand disappear, you don't have a visual identity yet.

You have a logo.



YOUR **THREE** NEXT STEPS

- 1. Something we need to clarify:**
- 2. Something we need to change:**
- 3. Something we need to protect:**



Today, anyone can open a template, type a prompt into an AI generator, or throw a business name into a logo maker and have something that looks decent in a few minutes.

That's actually made good branding more important.

Because when everyone has access to the same tools, trends, templates, and algorithms, **sameness becomes the default.**

The brands that stand out are the ones built around something real: a clear point of view, a specific audience, a compelling story, and visual decisions made with intention.

This workbook will help you uncover those things.

**Grab a coffee. Find somewhere you can think.
Don't worry about getting every answer perfect.**



BASECAMP



UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION

01

We help (audience):

02

Do / achieve / experience (what you do):

03

By (how you do it):

Now put it together:

We help 01 do / achieve / experience 02 by 03.

Before choosing colors, fonts, logos, photography, or packaging, you need to **understand what your business is trying to communicate...and who needs to hear it.**

BASECAMP



THE TEN SECOND TEST

Imagine someone asks:

“What does your company do?” You have ten seconds. What do you say?

Quick Check

Could someone outside your industry understand your answer?

- ☐ Absolutely
- ☐ Probably
- ☐ It needs some work
- ☐ I somehow made it more confusing

BASECAMP



BASE CAMP NOTE

**Clarity beats
cleverness.**

**If people can't
quickly
understand what
you do, great
design can't
rescue the
message.**



UNIQUE VALUE

What makes you worth choosing?

Your customers have options.

The question isn't simply: "What do we do well?"

It's:

"Why should someone choose us instead of everyone else?"

List three things your company does exceptionally well.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

BASECAMP



BASE CAMP NOTE

"Quality,"
"service," and
"integrity" are
good values.

They're usually
poor
differentiators.

Your competitors
probably say
those things too.

Keep digging.



UNIQUE VALUE

Go a little deeper.

What do your best customers consistently appreciate about working with you?

What do you do differently from your competitors?

What would be difficult for a competitor to copy?

BASECAMP



**Trying to appeal to everyone
usually creates brands that
are interesting to no one.**

**Strong brands know exactly
who they're talking to.**



IDEAL CUSTOMER

Age / life stage:

Occupation or industry:

Income / budget:

Where they live:

BASECAMP



IDEAL CUSTOMER

Demographics only tell us so much. Let's get more interesting.

What matters to them?

What are they frustrated by?

What are they afraid of?

What would make them immediately trust a company like yours?

What might make them hesitate to hire or buy from you?

BASECAMP



IDEAL CUSTOMER

What brands do they already love?

Not necessarily competitors.

Think clothing, cars, restaurants, technology, entertainment, coffee, outdoor brands—anything.

Why do you think they connect with those brands?

BASECAMP



THE BIG QUESTION

When your **ideal customer** encounters your brand for the first time, what do you want them to think?

“These people are

”



You are at a party and
your brand walks in.
What do they do?
What type of person
are they?



Brands have personalities.

Some are sophisticated.

Some are rebellious.

Some are warm.

Some are technical.

Some are playful.

None of those are automatically right or wrong.

The question is whether the personality fits your business and your audience.



VOICE

Go a little deeper.

What do your best customers consistently appreciate about working with you?

What do you do differently from your competitors?

What would be difficult for a competitor to copy?

BASECAMP



VOICE

Choose where your brand belongs.



BASECAMP



Pick five words that should describe your brand:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Pick five words that should NEVER describe your brand:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

BASECAMP



**Pull up the websites or
Instagram profiles of five
competitors.**

**Don't analyze whether
they're “good” or “bad” yet.**

Just look for patterns.



THE LANDSCAPE

Where could you zig where everyone else zags?

What colors keep appearing?

What fonts or typography styles are common?

What imagery keeps showing up?

What phrases does everyone seem to use?

What visual clichés exist in your industry?

Think houses and keys for realtors, roofs for roofers, bubbles and sparkles for cleaners...

BASECAMP



A good brand begins with clarity.

Understanding what makes your business different.

Understanding who you're talking to.

Understanding what you want people to feel.

And then translating those ideas into a visual identity people can recognize and remember.

AI can generate thousands of options.

Templates can make almost anything look polished.

But your business doesn't need more options...



It needs a point of view.

**That's where thoughtful,
human design becomes
increasingly valuable.**



BRAND MOUNTAIN

jtrammell@brandmountaindesign.com

