

Building a Brand That Lasts

mercha

Summary by



InhouseVentures

Overview

When you're building a startup, it's easy to treat branding as a nice-to-have—something to worry about after product, growth, or fundraising. But as Ben, CEO of Mercha, shares in this candid session, your brand is one of the most valuable assets you'll ever build. Drawing from his own hard-won lessons, Ben walks us through the five branding principles every founder should lock in early. Whether you're pre-launch or scaling fast, this is a practical, founder-to-founder guide to building a brand that actually lasts.

20-Point Summary:

1. **Branding is powerful** – It becomes more important as your company grows and scales.
2. **Ben's background** – He was a management consultant, not a brand expert, but learned branding's value firsthand.
3. **Start with intention** – Don't rush your brand. Take the time to think deeply about its meaning and purpose.
4. **"Go slow to go fast"** – Build your brand deliberately upfront; it saves time and pain later.
5. **Get help if needed** – If branding isn't your strength, hire someone to define visual and verbal identity.
6. **Missteps are costly** – Ben's first startup failed to get branding right early; changing it later proved nearly impossible.
7. **Think beyond the logo** – Consider the brand tone, feeling, and how it resonates with your target audience.
8. **Design for your customer** – The brand must connect authentically with those you're serving.

9. **Imbue values into brand** – Your company’s culture and values should be embedded in your brand.
10. **Use the 10-10-10 test** – Will your brand still make sense in 10 minutes, 10 months, and 10 years?
11. **Consistency is crucial** – Ensure the brand is expressed the same way across all touchpoints.
12. **Make it simple and digestible** – People should understand your brand at a glance.
13. **Great brands are recognizable** – Even without a logo, words or tone should cue your brand.
14. **Deliberate design choices** – Merch uses bright colors to stand out in a dull industry.
15. **Branding = emotion** – A strong brand can make even a commodity (like merch) feel exciting.
16. **Merch is part of the brand** – It’s a visual, physical extension of your company.
17. **Avoid cheap promo items** – 65% of merch ends up in the bin. That’s a brand liability.
18. **Buy less, buy better** – Quality merch can be exclusive and meaningful.
19. **Intentional merch tells a story** – It’s not about quantity—it’s about sending the right message.
20. **Final advice** – Don’t waste money or reputation on low-quality brand experiences.