



If I Were Starting Over Again: Branding + Marketing

The Power of Branding

And why it's important to get it right early on

My mom is one of the best entrepreneurs I know.

Though she's retired from the world of business in favor of becoming a full-time therapist, she spent decades leading businesses to 7-figure success in male-dominated industries.

Y'all, this was in the 1980's, when society did not make it easy for a woman to be in the CEO's chair.

So, when I was staying with her in my hometown of Louisiana for a bit last year, I wanted her advice on the one question I've been discussing with y'all:

If you were starting your business again in 2021, what would you focus on?

Well, she looked at me with absolute conviction and said, "Lise, it's ALL about the branding".

And after sleeping on it and waking up the next morning, I realized she was right.

So, if I were to go back and start again, I would pay a lot more attention to marketing and branding.

In fact, I'd even change my title from Studio Owner to **Studio Owner AND Chief Marketing/Branding Officer**.

So, let's start with that shall we?

Making Branding a Priority

Y'all, I know I can count on one hand the number of studio owners who'd jump up and down with excitement when I talk about marketing and branding.

Don't get me wrong, plenty are excited when we talk about colors and Instagram palettes. Those are fun and easy to get excited about.

But, that's not all there is to branding and marketing.

When I talk branding, I'm talking the nitty gritty, day-in and day-out strategy your studio HAS to have in place.

Why?

Because in today's day and age, you're not just running a studio, you're building a brand.

Your brand doesn't need to be as large as Peloton or SoulCycle to be considered a brand. It doesn't have

to be massive, it just needs to be concise, honest, and truthful to who you are.

Let me put it this way - if people see a t-shirt on someone when they're walking down the street, if they see an Insta story as they're mindlessly scrolling Instagram, or even if they see a flyer on a random wall, they should be able to immediately tell that they're from your studio.

That's what good branding gives you - instant recognition.

So, keeping all that in mind, I would rewrite my title on LinkedIn and every business card I ever gave out in my early days.

This is important stuff y'all!



Creating your brand guide

Your next step in your branding journey will be to make sure your brand story and brand guide is completely airtight.

Remember, you don't have to wait until you make money to create your brand guide.

In fact, by creating your brand guide in advance, you'll save tons of time and coin because your staff and contractors will have a clear vision of what they need to work off of while building out your studio.

So, here's everything you'd need to detail in the all-important brand guide (get your notebooks out y'all!):

- Logos/Watermarks. Make these downloadable!
- Fonts
- Color schemes (think Pantones that fit your studio's vibe)
- Textural patterns
- Words to use and never use (remember, your brand should attract and repel)
- Your brand story

When we created our brand guide back in 2018, we used it as a springboard for everything - our ads, our website, physically in our offices and so forth. And the effort paid off. Now, people know and recognize our brand anywhere and (most importantly), they already have strong feelings about us and whether or not they want to work with Studio Grow.

That type of instant connection is important, and the biggest gift you can give to your business.

So, how does this apply to your studio?

And more importantly, how can you make sure that your branding gets the facelift it needs?

Well, allow me to break it down for ya!



Making the changes to your studio

1 Upgrade Your Website

After you set your brand guide, make sure to upgrade and update your website to fit it!

We're huge fans of Squarespace and Showit - two softwares that are inexpensive and easy to update.

Trade for new images to ensure they're bright, airy and light.

2 Make sure your virtual and physical spaces work together

Ensure that your website and virtual feeds are congruent with your in-person studio. If not, bust out cans of paint and slather it anywhere it may be needed.

Now, I wouldn't recommend going ahead and spending a fortune on paint and anything else you feel like you might need to upgrade your brick and mortar studio.

I sincerely believe **major** branding investments should take place only **after** you've got some major profits to support them. And, if you're going to do a massive facelift on your brick and mortar, I'd ensure that you have an open conversation with your landlord to support it.

3 Create an exceptional Content Calendar

I'll admit it - our Content Calendar is our baby. We use it to map out and track everything, including:

- Email
- Text Blasts
- Insta
- Stories

To make sure we stay organized, we map all these out 60-90 days in advance. It gives our staff a visual representation of everything content-related that leaves our mailboxes or appears on our socials. That way, we leave no room for confusion.

Of course, a prerequisite to this is actually making sure you're putting effort into creating the content itself. However, we know that copywriting may not be your strong suit, and you simply may not have the funds to hire a full-time copywriter.

In that case, **Revenue Remedy** is the answer to your prayers!

With plug-and-play emails and daily social media prompts (refreshed monthly), it's a bargain and a half for those of you who are tired of staring at a blank piece of paper.

Now, when it comes to your socials, please remember that numbers **do not** equal success. It's much better to have 100 engaged followers as opposed to 10,000 people who barely connect to your posts at all!



To outsource or not to outsource?

As a studio owner, you don't need to be an expert in every facet of marketing. I personally think that most studio groups who earn under \$100K per month should outsource their marketing and branding. Start small and scale the level of your outsourcing as your studio grows.

And that's it y'all! This is my cheat sheet on ways to approach your branding and marketing if you were starting over today.

If you do apply these tips in your own studio, find us at [@studiogrowco](#) and tell us how they helped!

