

**Grey Coffee.**

| BRAND STRATEGY TEMPLATE

# Grey Coffee.

**Thank you for downloading our Free Brand Strategy Template. Included you will find a range of exercises which will help support your brand strategy efforts.**

They will provide you with valuable insights and make you ask the big questions surrounding your brand. Taking the time to work through these will go a long way in helping you to shape your brand strategy. Many of these brand exercises are widely available online and in books we have simply put a collection together we think you will find most useful.

Are you ready? Let's get started ...



@greycoffee\_uk

## WE BELIEVE IN BRIDGING DESIGN AND BUSINESS

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**Duncan Milne**

Grey Coffee Founder & Brand Strategist

### **Duncan believes in bridging the gap between design and business, but what does this actually mean?**

Bridging the gap between your business and customer is one of the biggest challenges you face as a brand.

In day to day business this gap is incredibly real it is just not visible to the naked eye. The challenge that brands face is how to close or bridge that gap.

We define this gap as the 'grey area' and the most profitable brands we work with successfully bridge that gap or better eliminate it completely. Duncan believes that this can only be achieved with consistent brand experience across all customer touch points.

Grey Coffee lives at the critical intersection of digital and physical brand experience. Digital and physical brand experience is more connected than ever before. In a world that is digital first it is highly likely that you will interact with a brand online before you even make any consideration of visiting a leisure, retail, hotel or hospitality space.

Our expertise lies in connecting these dots and leading your brand through a strategic process which then provides consistent brand experience across these critical touch points. It's about creating clarity around your brand which will help to eliminate that grey area and bridge the gap between your brand and customer.

## UNDERSTANDING THE TERM 'BRAND' AND 'BRANDING'

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Naturally when anyone mentions the word brand, the first thoughts are extremely visual. If you're not from a branding background this would be a totally logical place to start. Ideas of look and feel, logos, typefaces, colours and icons are usually the very first destination.

To actually pin down what the term brand means in a short concise sentence can be very difficult. In Marty Neumeier's book 'The Brand Gap' he cleverly identifies what a brand is not.

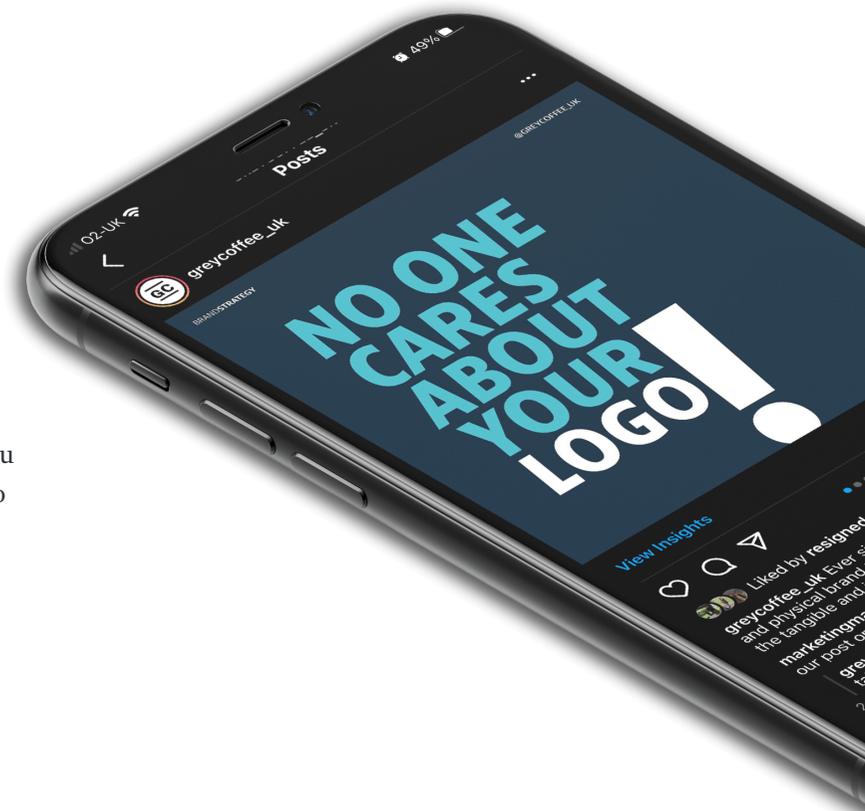
- A brand is not your logo
- A brand is not a product
- A brand is not a corporate identity system

I know what you're thinking if a brand is none of the above then what is? Simply put your brand isn't what you say it is, a brand is defined by your audience or community and the feelings and values they have in regards to your business.

Here's a definition which we think provides clarity on the term 'brand'.

**"your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room"**

**Jeff Bezos | Founder of Amazon**



## WHAT IS BRAND STRATEGY

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Brand Strategy is the work that is undertaken in order to identify and set out longer term goals which can be successfully achieved with brand planning, thinking and implementation.

Having clarity surrounding your brand will help you to develop the key areas of your brand. In many companies these thoughts are often blurred and inconsistent. It is about aligning your team, defining your position and consistently articulating your message.

Every purchasing decision we make is built around a need. These needs can be extremely logical and in other cases they can be complex and much deeper than that even reaching an emotional response. As a brand we need to ensure that you do not make 'noise' but create something deep and meaningful which will actually connect with your consumers needs.

A successful brand strategy will ensure your brand lasts way beyond the infancy and growth phase of your business. Brand strategy gives you focus and a direction that your brand is heading towards. Being able to understand your brand in such depth will give you the tools you need to make sure it stands the test of time.

*Brands do not like to stand still!*

*Your brand lives in the minds of your customers, online, offline and any channels that you create content for  
Make positive change, promote organic growth and keep moving forward...*

*Duncan Milne | Brand Strategy*

# THE GOLDEN CIRCLE

Simon Sinek's Golden circle is a fantastic starting point when it comes to understanding why some brands are so much more pioneering, creative and inventive than others. It's a Ted Talk that broke the internet back in 2009 but it is still incredibly relevant today.

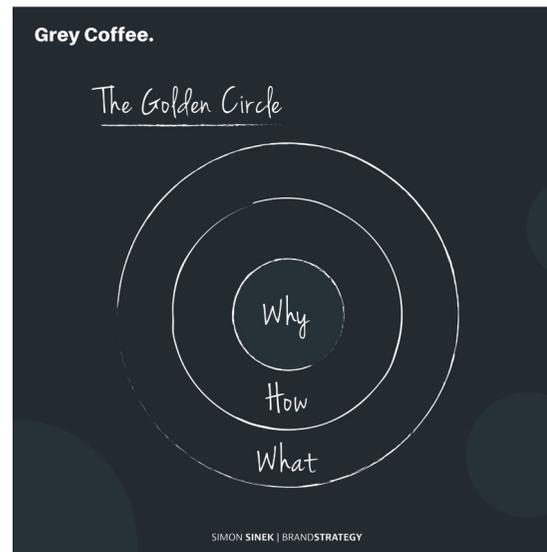
The golden circle breaks down a key idea that the most successful brands think and communicate in the exact opposite way to most brands. Simon Sinek cleverly codified this theory and called it the Golden Circle named after the mathematical Golden Ratio. The key thing being that the golden ratio is a mathematical formula with many applications, is repeatable and able to provide predictable results to what some would consider to be of random value or occurrence.

As you can see from the sketch the Golden Circle is labelled 'why', 'how' and 'what'. Try answering these three questions.

- What do you do?
- How do you do it?
- Why do you do it?

Many will be able to answer the 'what' and 'how' but the 'why' often can be the hardest to articulate.

**Why** does your company exist? and **Why** should anyone care?



## THE GOLDEN CIRCLE - TASK



Start with why!

Start with Simon Sinek's Ted Talk on the Golden Circle. This is approx a 20 min talk but well worth the investment of time.

**Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qp0HIF3SfI4>

Now go back to the 3 questions but this time start with why.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE

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There are many challenges you will face when building a brand, the casing point mainly being the ability to consistently translate your message across a number of different customer touch points that is **unique**, **consistent** and **authentic**.

We like to use these key attributes for the following reasons:

**Unique:** If your offering is not unique then there's a good chance that you will simply blend in with many other 'me too' offerings.

**Consistent:** Consistency is something all major brands aim for, however few actually achieve this with such clarity across their brand estate. Your ability to consistently deliver your brand positioning and communication across a number of channels (online & offline) is critical when it comes to developing your brand.

**Authenticity:** Authentic actions can't and will not be ignored. As consumers we want to align ourselves with brands that we share values with. Being authentic isn't just about attaching such 'value' to your brand. Being authentic needs to be part of your brand DNA. Authenticity will not be ignored by an audience quite the opposite, in most cases it can be the defining attribute of your brand that consumers fall in love with.



If everyone on your team sent out a tweet about your brand to people who lived on another planet and have never heard of it, would they know what to say?

Try this with a few people within your business. You have 10 minutes and 280 characters to craft a tweet about your brand. Your tweet will be received by people who live on another planet and have never heard of your brand.

Now review your answers and see how consistent they are!

## SAY LESS LISTEN MORE

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As you get further into this document you will continue to come across tasks that require you to think about your brand and get your thoughts down on paper. As you note these down (in a document, white-board, notebook, paper whichever you prefer) you need to be particularly aware of the language you use to describe your brand but also how many words it takes too.

As humans it is impossible to self edit even as online and offline brand specialists we suffer from this same issue and that's why we test ideas with a wider audience. We also have our own brand mentor who helps us to remain completely focussed surrounding our own positioning and the story we tell.

As humans when we get the opportunity to talk about something we are really passionate about then we simply can't stop adding and adding and adding and adding.... (you get the point) At this point this is not helpful, your audience has switched and all you're creating is noise. The same goes for language, if your using technical language, acronyms, and quite simply words people won't understand you need to go back to the drawing board.



### SAY LESS LISTEN MORE - TASK

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*Define your core purpose in 12 words or less...*

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Brand expert Marty Neumeir believes that you should be able to define your core purpose in 12 words or less.

Your core purpose is the fundamental reason your company exists beyond making money.

As an example BrewDogs core purpose is;

‘To make other people as passionate about craft beer as we are’

## TIME TO GO BACK TO THE FUTURE

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To shape a vision you have to understand where you are going. Brands that are able to adopt this approach of 'survival of the furthest', thinking long term, embracing change and understanding that there is a long and exciting road ahead.

Smart brands will stand the test of time, by adapting, changing and being agile enough to navigate a path to success. In order to craft your vision you need to have an idea and understanding of the longer term business objectives. The vision of a brand is usually determined by the problem you solve for your customers (usually your 'why') and a key differentiating factor that makes you unique and memorable.

It's time to go back to the future which in turn will make you start thinking about the bigger brand picture. This is not about creating a detailed plan but more about thinking about the longer term life-time of your brand.



Photo Credit: Universal Pictures Back To The Future

*"Roads? Where We're Going, We Don't Need Roads."  
Emmett Lathrop "Doc" Brown*

### BACK TO THE FUTURE - VISION

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*What will your company be doing  
at each of those future dates?*

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Think about the next 5, 10, 15 and 20 years. There should be some obvious milestones - start to map them out against a time line in bullet point format.

Be ambitious but try and align this with goals or markers that are also realistic. This task can be done individually but you'll get better results if you can pull together some of the key decision makers within your business.

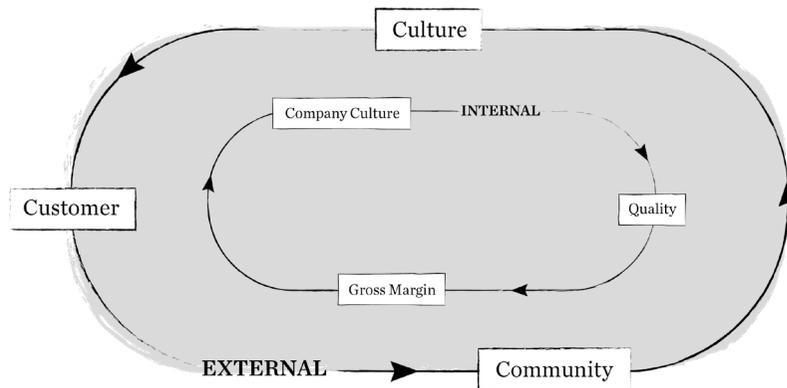
## CULTURE, WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Developing a brand culture isn't easy, culture is built and delivered around a core set of ideas and values that form your true north. Everything you do and say as a brand is based around these ideas and values and you will not waiver on this idea for anyone or any client.

We have already referenced Brewdog earlier in this strategy template but as a company we really align to their ideas and principles around culture.

Culture is critical in reducing the gap between your business and customer. The best businesses eliminate this gap by creating a brand culture so strong that it forms part of their brand DNA and attracts like minded people with shared values who want to be part of their journey or story.

Brands with an authentic culture break down any barriers between their business and the customer. In doing so, are rewarded with loyalty and an audience that many businesses fail to engage.



### James Watt BrewDog Founder - Internal = External

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3ged2QPz64&t=393s>

## BRAND CULTURE - VALUES

*What really matters to your brand? Think about it, write them down and then pick 3.*

Brand values are very often discussed as a team, agreed upon and treated as a box ticking exercise. You cannot just simply attach 'values' to your brand. They need to be considered and every brand choice you make needs to ensure it aligns with these values.

Think about what matters to your brand. Start to list these things. Now look at that list again and ask yourself what really matters.

# BRANDS ARE TRIBAL AND BUILT ON COMMUNITY

When building your brand you need to be able to dial in and have a deep understanding of your audience. Building a community or tribe of loyal followers that fall in love with your brand is how you develop a long and successful sustainable future for your brand.

Branding has often been described as matchmaking and it is a great reference because it is exactly that. Your customer has a problem, the answer to that problem could be your brand but they don't know that yet. This is where you have to make the match, do you solve the problems your customer has? You do?... that's great but what makes you different from the other products or service offerings out there?

How will their experience with your brand elevate you from just being a product or an offering to something they fall in love with and want to tell others about?

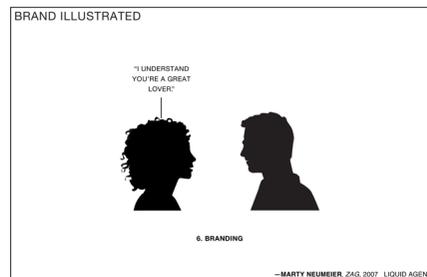
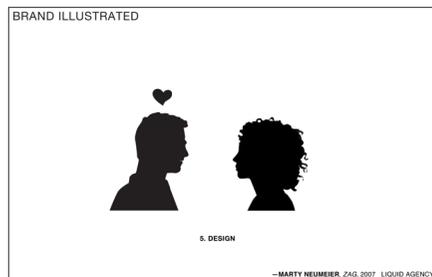
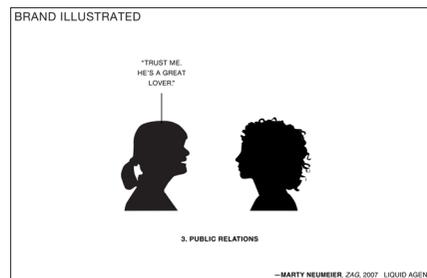
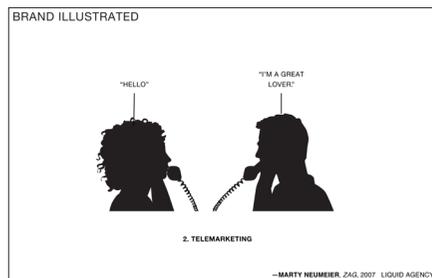
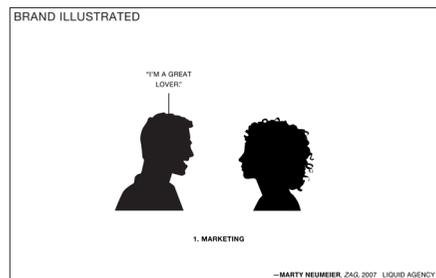


Photo Credit: Brand Illustrated | ZAG | Marty Neumeier

## BRAND COMMUNITY - AUDIENCE

*Start to think about your primary audience, who are they, what are their problems and what problems do you solve for them?*

Building customer persona's will really help to understand your key audiences and the problems you solve for them.

Try find common traits like industry sector, gender, age, job position and geographic location.

## CRAFTING A TAGLINE

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Your brand is really starting to come to life now but it misses that all important tagline. Your tagline should be built around your positioning but also what makes you different. The key thing here is that both your positioning and differentiation have to be clearly thought out. If they are not the message will be easily watered down or diluted by another competitor who positions themselves with a similar communication piece.

Far too often a tagline is crafted with very little thought about your audience or customer. When you're coming up with ideas ask yourself;

Will our customers relate to this?  
Will they find it valuable?

Working on your tagline takes time and a thorough understanding of the previous steps within this strategy template. You need to have a fundamental understanding of your brand to be able to translate that concisely into a tagline that is truthful, meaningful and successfully differentiates your business.

When working on our own tagline for Grey Coffee we have this core belief of bridging the gap between your brand and customer. We use our skill and expertise in design to be able to do this which is why we crafted the tagline 'Bridging design & business'



### BRAND - TAGLINE

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*Your tagline should be, short concise and highly polished. Create a list of ideas in order to start crafting your tagline...*

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There is no right or wrong way to craft a tagline. Some brands already have a few ideas they start with. If this is the case write them down but then check back to see how relatable they are to everything else you have done so far. Evolve them and craft different versions until you arrive at one that fits.

If your a little stuck where to start then simply start to brain storm ideas and group words together. Certain words will stick out and resonate, highlight these and then slowly start crafting these together into short sentences. From there you can continue to refine and polish.

## THE BRAND FOUNDATION

If you have worked through all the tasks in this strategy template you should have uncovered a lot of rich and insightful information which will move towards building a strong brand foundation.

Hopefully by now you have started to form a more comprehensive understanding of your brand and have clarity over the biggest challenges you face. You should also have answers to many of the key questions. It's time to start bringing that all together and moving forward with purpose.

Quite often when we work through brand strategy it often takes the lid off the box of many new unanswered questions. Don't worry that's completely normal the key now is to break each question down and make sure that any decisions or changes you plan to make align with your brand and don't conflict with decisions made throughout the strategy phase.

If you have found this strategy template helpful then please feel free to share our blog article with others who you think would benefit from this also.

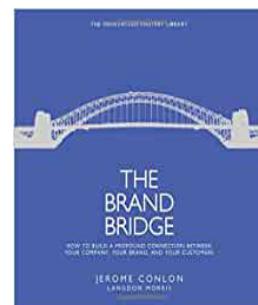
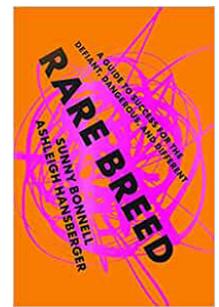
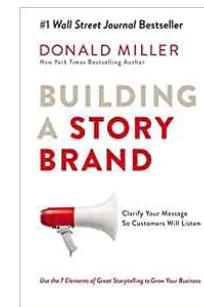


If your new to this start here →

## BRAND STRATEGY BOOKS

As mentioned at the start many of these brand tasks are widely available online and in some of our favourite brand strategy books. Here are a selection of the books that we have referenced throughout this strategy template.

Branding In Five And A Half Steps | Michael Johnson  
Building A Story Brand | Donald Miller  
How To Launch A Brand | Fabian Geyrhalter  
Rare Breed | Sunny Bonnell, Ashleigh Hansberger  
Start With Why | Simon Sinek  
The Brand Bridge | Jerome Conlon & Langdon Morris  
The Brand Gap | Marty Neumeier  
The Brand Therapy Book | Fabian Geyrhalter  
ZAG | Marty Neumeier



## FOR MORE BRAND INSIGHTS

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We'd love you to be part of our community, for lots more brand insights and more of what we do at Grey Coffee check out any of the following:

**Grey Coffee Blog:** <https://greycoffee.co.uk/journal/>

**Grey Coffee Brand Matters Monthly Newsletter:** <https://greycoffee.co.uk/brand-matters/>

**Instagram:** @greycoffee\_uk

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/grey-coffee>

# Grey Coffee.

All good relationships can start over a cup of coffee. If you're ready to explore the 'grey area' between your business and customer let's start with coffee and a chat.

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