

SHARPEPRINTS

& BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

The SHARPE Small Business Branding Checklist

Your Essential Guide to Building a Professional & Profitable Brand



Welcome to Your Branding Journey!

At Sharpe Prints & Business Solutions, we believe every dream deserves to be seen. This checklist is designed to empower entrepreneurs, creatives, nonprofits, and small businesses like yours to build a strong, consistent brand that attracts your ideal customers and drives growth. Let's make your vision SHARPE!

Sharpe Prints & Business Solutions delivers high-quality, budget-friendly creative services and hands-on support that help small organizations and creators build professional brands, reach more customers, and increase revenue. We provide everything from design and printing to packaging, distribution, and practical mentorship — because no dream should stall for lack of resources.

Your Brand Foundation:

1. Define Your “Why”: What’s your mission, vision, and core values?

Your “why” is the heartbeat of your brand. It’s not just what you do, but *why you do it*. A clear mission defines your purpose, your vision paints the future you’re working toward, and your values guide how you show up in the world. When people connect with your why, they don’t just buy your product — they buy into your story.

👉 *Tip: Write 1–2 sentences for each: Mission (your purpose), Vision (your future goal), Values (your guiding principles).*

2. Identify Your Target Audience: Who are you trying to reach? What are their needs/desires?

Your brand isn’t for everyone — and that’s a good thing! Knowing exactly who you’re serving helps you speak directly to them with clarity. Consider their age, lifestyle, struggles, and what excites them. The clearer you are, the stronger your connection.

👉 *Tip: Create a short profile of your “ideal customer” — give them a name, describe what they need, and how you solve it.*

3. Craft Your Brand Story: What’s your unique narrative?

Your brand story is the journey that makes your business relatable and memorable. It’s about where you came from, what challenges you faced, and why you built what you did. People don’t remember products — they remember stories that move them.

👉 *Tip: Use a simple structure: The Problem → Your Spark/Idea → The Solution (your business).*

4. Determine Your Brand Personality (e.g., playful, sophisticated, trustworthy, innovative)

Think of your brand as a person. How would they talk? How would they dress? What energy would they bring to a room? Defining your brand personality creates consistency in your design, messaging, and customer experience. This makes your brand feel authentic and trustworthy.

👉 *Tip: Pick 3 adjectives that describe your brand (e.g., bold, approachable, creative).*

5. Competitor Analysis: What makes you different?

Every business has competition — but your advantage comes from knowing what sets you apart. Study others in your industry: what do they do well, where do they fall short, and how can you position yourself differently? This ensures you stand out rather than blend in.

👉 *Tip: List 2–3 competitors, write one strength they have, one weakness, and how your brand fills the gap.*

Visual Identity Essentials:

1. Logo Design: Is it memorable, versatile, and professional?

Your logo is often the first impression of your brand — it should be simple, recognizable, and adaptable across all platforms (from business cards to billboards). A good logo is clean, timeless, and works in color and black & white. A bad logo is overly complicated, blurry, or hard to read at smaller sizes.

👉 *Checklist:* Does my logo look good in black & white? Can it scale up (banner) and down (social icon) without losing quality? Is it aligned with my brand personality?

(Example: A clean wordmark with an icon = Good. A cluttered design with too many colors and fonts = Bad.)



2. Color Palette: Choose 3–5 primary and secondary colors (Hex codes/CMYK).

Colors instantly create emotional connection and brand recognition. Choosing the right palette ensures consistency and strengthens trust. Use 1–2 primary brand colors, 2–3 supporting colors, and stick to them across all your materials. Include exact codes (Hex or CMYK) so they're always consistent.

👉 *Tip:* Primary colors should be used 70% of the time; secondary colors add contrast or highlight key areas.

(Example: Primary = Deep Blue (#0047AB / CMYK 100,80,0,20), Secondary = Yellow (#FFD700 / CMYK 0,10,100,0)).

3. Typography: Select 2–3 fonts (headline, body, accent).

Fonts communicate mood and professionalism. A consistent typography system makes your brand instantly recognizable. Choose one strong headline font, one clean body font, and an optional accent font for emphasis. Avoid using too many fonts — it weakens your brand identity.

👉 *Tip: Use Google Fonts or Adobe Fonts for free, professional options. Example: Headline = Montserrat Bold, Body = Open Sans Regular, Accent = Playfair Italic.*

4. Imagery Style: Define your photo/illustration style (e.g., bright, minimalist, authentic).

Your visuals should feel consistent, whether you're posting on Instagram or creating flyers. Decide what kind of imagery fits your brand — is it vibrant and bold, minimal and modern, or authentic and community-driven? Stick to one main style so your audience instantly knows it's you.

👉 *Tip: Collect 5–10 images that represent your look and create a mini “inspiration board.”*

DO YOU FEEL
YOUR VISION
COMING
ALIVE ?



5. Brand Guidelines (Basic): Document your logo usage, colors, and fonts.

Consistency is key. A basic brand guideline is a simple document (even just 2–3 pages) that shows your logo, color palette, and fonts, with instructions for how to use them. This ensures that anyone creating materials for your brand keeps everything on point.

👉 *Tip: Save this as a PDF so you can share it with designers, printers, or collaborators easily.*

Application and Consistency

1. Website/Online Presence: Does your branding translate consistently?

Your website is often the first place people meet your brand. Every element — from the logo in the header to the colors and fonts on each page — should reflect the same style. Consistency builds trust and makes your brand instantly recognizable.

👉 *Tip: Compare your site to your brand guidelines. Are your fonts, color palette, and tone of voice aligned?*

2. Social Media Profiles: Are your logos, colors, and voice consistent?

Each social media platform is an extension of your brand. Your profile pictures, cover photos, post designs, and even your captions should align with your identity. Customers should recognize your brand immediately when scrolling their feed.

👉 *Tip: Use the same logo version for all profile images, and ensure post graphics follow your color palette.*

3. Marketing Materials (Flyers, brochures, business cards) – do they align?

Your printed materials should look like they belong to the same family. From flyers to business cards, everything should use the same fonts, colors, and logo placement. When your materials are consistent, you appear polished and professional, no matter where people encounter your brand.

👉 *Tip: Lay your materials side by side. Do they all “look related”? If not, it’s time for alignment.*



4. Packaging: Does your product packaging reflect your brand?

Your packaging should tell your brand story before your customer even opens it. The colors, fonts, and design should mirror your identity while also creating excitement and trust. Strong packaging makes your brand memorable and sharable.

👉 *Tip: Ask yourself — if someone removed the label, would your customer still recognize it as yours?*

5. Email Signatures: Professional and branded?

Every email you send is an opportunity to reinforce your brand. A branded signature with your logo, name, title, and contact info makes you look professional and keeps your identity consistent.

👉 *Tip: Add your website and social links in your email signature to drive more engagement.*

6. Internal Documents (Invoices, proposals) – branded?

Even the behind-the-scenes details matter. Branded invoices, proposals, and contracts show that you value professionalism at every level. It reinforces trust and shows clients that your business pays attention to detail.

👉 *Tip: Add your logo and brand colors to templates so they're always consistent.*

Next Steps & Resources

Ready to Bring Your SHARPE Brand to Life?

Completing this checklist is a huge step! Let's review what you have accomplished by completing this checklist.

By completing this checklist, you now have:

✦ a solid brand foundation — a clear purpose, audience, story, personality, and edge over the competition. This clarity gives you the confidence to share your vision boldly and consistently.

✦ a strong visual identity that looks polished, professional, and consistent everywhere your brand shows up — helping you share your vision with confidence.

✦ ensured that your brand identity doesn't just live in theory — it shows up everywhere you do. Consistency creates trust, makes your business memorable, and gives you confidence to present your brand boldly.

Now, let Sharpe Prints & Business Solutions help you turn your vision into stunning, tangible results. We offer professional, affordable printing, design, packaging, and distribution services tailored for businesses like yours.

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Thank You for Choosing Sharpe Prints!

We're committed to empowering your success.

We look forward to helping you make your mark!

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