

4 Key Elements to a Soulful Brand

Developing a branding approach for your business that is both authentic and strategic



Bringing Out the Soul of Your Business



BRAND

What is a *Brand*?

A *brand* is akin to Socrates' invitation to "*know thyself.*" It's a deep articulation of your business that helps you communicate your unique value to your best-fitting customer* in the marketplace.

Not everyone will resonate with a brand, but your best-fitting customers will. And for those who do resonate, they will seek you out and stay engaged with you because YOU feel right FOR THEM.

You do a great service to yourself and others by knowing who you are and who you are not. **The ideal case:** *that you articulate your brand so well that you never feel like you have to sell potential customers on your product or service—you simply have to pay attention for the right resonance in your communications, which is exactly what they are doing with you.*

**I'll use "customer" throughout—however, this refers to clients, users, and donors as well.*



MESSAGING

How does Messaging relate to a Brand?

How you design your messaging will come from the clarity of your brand. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to messaging, especially for those who desire to express themselves authentically in the marketplace.

Your messaging will have as much of an impact on people as your product or service. Ideally, the two are interrelated, both carrying the energy of your vision for a better world.

If branding answers the question, “*who am I?*” messaging answers the question, “*given who I am, how do I express who I am?*”

Branding establishes the **context** (i.e. your topics) in which your communications will take place and **with whom**. Messaging is the **content** of those communications.

When you *skip* the articulation of your Brand

A lot of businesses try to create their taglines, promotional copy, and their offers before articulating their brand. As a result, they:

- Think anyone and everyone is a potential customer and don't spend their own and other people's time wisely,
- Try to sell from a place of *convincing* rather than *resonating* and come across as a type of business they don't want to be (*i.e. desperate, pushy, or unclear*),
- Have a harder time being themselves in the context of business.
- Feel disconnected from a sense of meaning behind their work.

When you Embody your Brand

Some businesses try to articulate their brand without paying attention to how they match up with who they say they are.

This is about *embodiment*.

If there is anything out of alignment between how you present yourself and how you embody your values and message, you may create confusion for others. This does not mean being perfect—it means being real with yourself and others: in other words, authentic.

Brands that have a hard time with embodiment:

- Say they are one thing and then act another way.
- Try not to be anything and therefore don't resonate with others.
- Try to be everything and therefore don't resonate with others.

When you practice embodying who you are and what you stand for, you're helping to:

- Develop trust with customers in the marketplace
- Pave the way for a new movement of authenticity that is resonating with today's customers

Uncovering Your Brand

You'll have the hardest time seeing your own brand clearly because it's something that emanates from you. Uncovering your brand is just like any other inner work—it takes attention, self-exploration, feedback from others, and an intention to expand more deeply into your potential as a leader in the marketplace.

I define a brand as a harmony between these 4 elements:

- **WHY** you're in business
- **WHO** you wish to serve
- **HOW** you uniquely serve
- **WHAT** your customers gain after engaging with your service/product

What follows is a structure for Brand clarity

As you know, building a business includes strategy related to: *pricing, messaging, self-promotion, etc...*

In this ebook, I won't be addressing those. Instead, I will be highlighting what's often missing in a business' sense of self and others and, as a result, hinders the development of meaningful and clear communications.

A nice side-effect of clarifying your brand is that when you know what you're really up to with your brand, you can save a lot of time and money (*as well as frustration and confusion*) when it comes to deciding:

- The messages you want to leave people with
- How to spend your **marketing budget** and focus your **marketing activities**
- Which **business model and partnerships** are in alignment for you (and which are not)

In this guide, I've broken down the **4 Key Elements to a Soulful Brand**. Follow the structure below to make sure you've covered these essential elements before moving into messaging or marketing.



The 'Why' – Purpose

It's your reason for being in business.

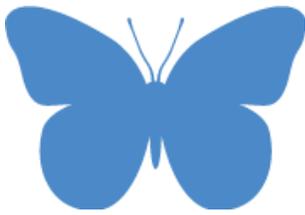
It feels like the internal inspiration and commitment.

To have a business that inspires you and your potential customers, you must understand the source of your inspiration. From this place, you can stay connected to yourself while sharing your contribution with others.



Uncover Your 'Why':

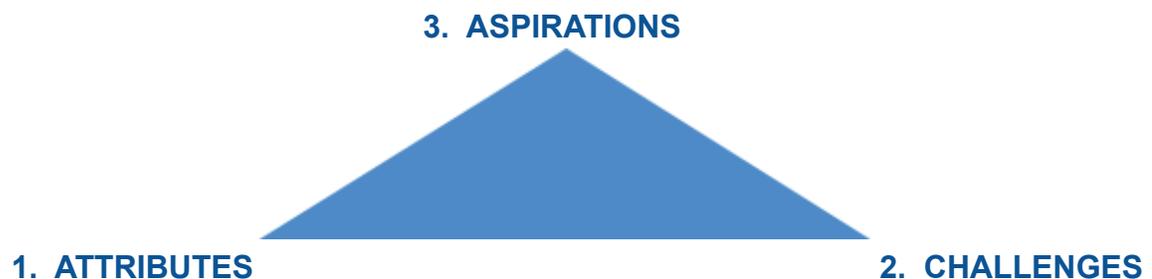
1. **Story:** Identify experiences (possibly to share) that inspired the creation of your business and that hold key learnings which guide how you now serve.
2. **Stands:** Identify the core principles you are committed to and that make your business important to you. They guide how you live your life, do your work, and grow yourself & your business.
3. **Vision / Mission:** Use the above to articulate and inspire the world you'd like to help create for a community of people (Vision). Then identify what your role is in bringing that vision to life (Mission).



The ‘Who’ – Customers

It’s the customers you will focus your marketing on.
It feels like a conversation—listening and responding.

It’s important to honor your past, present, and future customers by truly understanding their concerns and what they care about. This clarity allows you to offer them what *they* say they want, intuit what *they* need, and communicate in language *they* understand.



Uncover Your ‘Who’:

1. **Attributes:** Identify the common characteristics of a specific customer group, or groups, that you can bring your curiosity and experience to—a kind of person you care about and understand (*or are willing to understand*).
2. **Challenges:** Listen for what they say is a problem, as well as what you observe is holding them back (*pay attention to the language they use*).
3. **Aspirations:** Listen for what they want and the new possibilities they want to live into (*pay attention to the language they use*).



The 'How' – Unique Approach

It's the unique attributes, common across your offerings.
*It feels like **the way** in which you serve your customers.*

Customers choose you for a reason. It's not about being better, it's about being right for them. Different strokes resonate with different folks. When people refer you, they are probably giving clues to your 'HOW' by saying, "you need to work with (so and so) because of how they (x, y, and z) ."



Uncover Your 'How':

1. **Gifts:** Identify what you do naturally & the qualities people experience in & around you. Ask clients and colleagues how they experience YOU. *(then look for what you keep hearing consistently and let it in :)*
2. **Skills:** List the skills & credentials that bring expertise, knowledge, and grounding to your approach.
3. **Approach:** Identify the method/s and/or innovation/s that you are bringing to the market in a way that your potential clients can see as valuable *(you will need to test and practice this).*

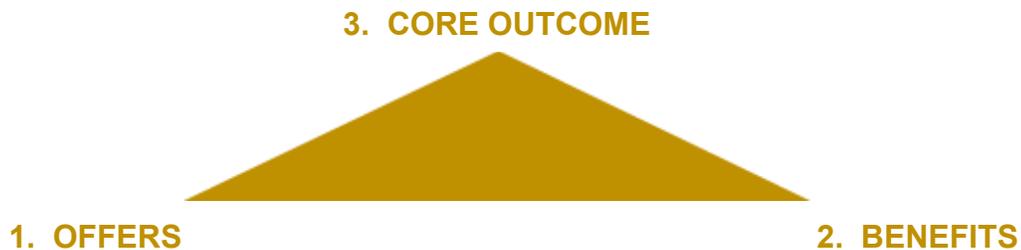


The ‘What’ – Service & Outcome

It’s the offers that create customer-desired results.

It feels like what they walk away with.

The tangible deliverables invite your customers to engage with you and benefit from your essential gifts, while the experiential value you provide keeps them engaged.



Uncover Your ‘What’:

1. **Offers:** Develop your offer/s (services and/or products) based on what your community needs AND what you love to do.
2. **Benefits:** Identify both the inner shifts and external results that your customers get from each service/product you offer. *(keep in mind, this is about how their lives are enriched **beyond** interacting with your product or service)*
3. **Core Outcome:** Uncover the most common outcome that customers are taking away from working with you across all of your offers.



the ‘Essence’

It’s the unification of the elements.

It feels like a guiding light for the entire brand.

If your key elements don’t relate to each other, your brand will feel disjointed. On the other hand, when your **4 Key Elements** are aligned, you’ve tapped into the sweet spot—the flow—and you have a business brand that can be expressed in a meaningful and relatable way.



Why: Purpose



Who: Customer



How: Approach



What: Outcome

Check for Cohesion Between your 4 Key Elements:

1. Does your ideal customer resonate with your purpose, approach and outcome?
2. Does your outcome get delivered by way of your approach and specifically address your ideal customer’s needs?
3. Does your approach address a particular outcome that resonates with your ideal customer, in service of your larger purpose?

Create your essence, or common thread between all elements:

- If you had to use only a few words (like 2–5), what would you say to remind you what it all comes down to at the end of the day?

Mindful Action

You now have a structure you can use to begin crafting or improving a solid **brand strategy** for your business—one that acknowledges the human dimension (what is inside you and/or your team as well as the people you serve). This strategy will grow with you as you grow, so let this be an organic practice that you revisit.

By the way, you may not know all the elements to your brand today. That's okay—just be where you are right now.

Your patience in this process is key. If you rush it, it will come from your head and sound and feel like jargon to others. Keep a reasonable pace with breathing room.



If you enjoyed this ebook and would like to either conduct a self-guided assessment of your brand, using the Soulful Brand methodology, or learn more about my brand consulting services, email me directly at ryan@ryanrigoli.com for more information.

In co-creation,



— *Ryan Rigoli*