
Module 3: Building green brand

Green brands

Brands are symbols that help us differentiate products and enterprises from other products and enterprises, as well as to enhance our marketing. Brands have three main elements: **identity**, **profile** and **image**. The brand identity consists of **brand attributes**, the characteristics of oneself. The brand profile can be described as a portfolio with attributes from the brand identity, chosen to be communicated. The image is how others perceive the brand and it cannot be directly controlled by the enterprise, although developing and communicating the brand profile is a way to influence the brand image.

Brand = identity + profile + image

An increasing number of brands have green attributes as part of the communication, and it is then part of their uniqueness and attractiveness. This could be a result of an increasing number of entrepreneurs saying that they want something more with their enterprises than just maximizing profits. This could also be the pressure from a growing number of consumers, who are willing to pay more for the green brand attributes. The SDG goals (see module 1.) can be a useful sustainability system to work with when finding out your brand's sustainable attributes.

A good way to start building a strong green brand is to make a **green brand plan**. The aim of a green brand plan is to create a document that will help you to communicate your brand in an effective way and achieve your internal goals. It will both be a plan with a green brand strategy based on an analysis of the current situation and your brand's USP (**Unique Selling Point**), as well as a tool to help you keep track of the effectiveness of the strategy. The plan is a so-called living document that should be regularly updated. The green brand plan consists of three parts: analysis, strategy and control.

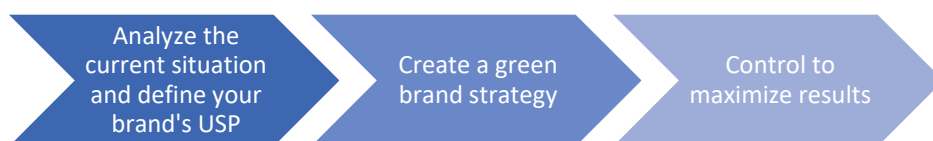


Figure 1. Green brand plan

Analysis of current situation and identification of brand's USP

The initial stage in creating a green brand plan is to analyze the current situation and to define your brand identity attributes. The first step in this analysis is a self-analysis, guided by questions related to the business concept, and the internal visions and goals, which could be about the product, the amount of sales, turnover, profit and other values of sustainability.

This analysis also includes the organizational values that are important in your business, the brand promise and how the brand is related to greenness.

The second analysis is about the identification of your brand's attractive attributes and consists of a customer analysis. This analysis is guided by questions about the brand's target groups, as well as their needs, demands and wishes and how your brand can meet these demands.

A third analysis is about the identification of your brand's unique attributes and consists of a competitive brand analysis. This analysis is guided by questions such as which the competitive or substitutive brands are and what their most attractive attributes in relation to your brand are. This analysis can be concluded by listing the most relevant attributes of all included brands in a competitive green brand chart (part of figure 3). You can also identify the two important attributes in your market and position your brand on a so-called position map (see figure 2).

The final step in this analysis is to compose your brand's USP, in a short and concise form, including values of greenness and sustainability. One to three sentences to describe the brand's USP is a good benchmark.

If you want a more graphical way to understand your brand's USP, a position map can be a good instrument to use. You can position your brand in relation to competitive brands only with two attributes, so make sure they are related to your brand's USP.



Figure 2. Position map to position your brand

Table 1. An exemplifying fictional case: Growing and selling certified ecological potatoes

Self-analysis: what are your brand identity attributes?			
Business concept	Selling qualitative, tasty and certified ecological potatoes		
Internal visions and goals	Grow and sell 30000 qualitative, tasty and ecological potatoes and increase this number with 10% every year		
Organizational values	Offer a qualitative product and service, as well as combine a good profit with values associated with ecological and social sustainability		
Brand promise	Trustworthy delivering of ecologically grown tasty potatoes of good quality		
Green attributes	Certified ecological potatoes		
Brand identity attributes: qualitative, tasty, certified ecological potatoes, social sustainability, trustworthy delivery			
Customer-analysis: what makes your brand attractive?			
<p>One primary customer segment (50%) is local green consumers, who come to the farm shop. They are willing to pay more for certified ecological potatoes and the visit to the shop is expressed as nice. Also, the conversations with us at the farm are important for the visitors. They are buying both a product and an experience. A second primary customer segment (50%) is local grocery shops, where we deliver potatoes every morning. The shop owners tell us that they appreciate the personal service, when we fill up the shelves in a nice way and adapt our deliveries to their stocks. The shops use three of our brand's attributes in their own marketing: local, ecologically certified, tasty. A secondary customer segment is the shops' customers. They are green customers willing to pay a higher price for local, certified ecological and tasty potatoes, but they are mostly not interested in visiting our farm shop.</p> <p>Most attractive attributes: The farm and farm-shop, the taste, the eco-certification, and that it is a local brand with personal service.</p>			
Competitive brand analysis: What makes your brand unique?			
Brands	Price	Availability	Greenness
Our brand	1,5 Euro / kg potatoes	Local brand north of Stockholm, available in local grocery shops and in the own farm shop	Locally produced with local natural resources and an eco-certification
Competitive brand A	1 Euro / kg	International brand, not local, found in the local, national and international grocery shops.	No eco-certification and not local.
Competitive brand B	1,2 Euro / kg	International brand, not local, found in the local and national grocery shops.	Eco-certification, but not local.
Most unique attributes: The local attribute, but also the eco-certification is special.			
What is your brand's USP?			
"We are the sole supplier of ecological potatoes in Norrtälje"			

Creation of green brand strategy

A **green brand strategy** is built upon the analysis of the current situation, the brand definition, the organizational goals as well as available resources. The first things to consider in your green brand strategy is the concrete goals that the brand communication should reach. The goals can be quantitative or qualitative and be about informing, increasing knowledge, changing attitudes, motivating or changing behaviours. These goals should be linked with the internal visions and goals.

The next thing to consider is a brand name, a brand logotype and a graphic brand profile. You also need to find appropriate language that matches your brand profile. The language should be uniform in terms of style, tonality and attitude in all brand communication.

Based on your brand analyses and your other resources, you need to choose the most effective marketing tools to communicate the brand. Examples of marketing tools can be social media or online media, newspaper advertisements or PR, personal sales meetings, newsletters, creating an effective store communication etc.

What makes it effective depends on your brand's USP, your customers, your competition, external conditions and your available resources. Think about the customers and other possible target groups that are important for your business: Where do they look for information and how can you best reach them?

Controlling to maximize results

Testing and tracking the communication activities is a must in a **brand communication strategy**. Your brand communication strategy might look nice beforehand, but you never know its effects until afterwards. Therefore, every communication activity needs to be tested and tracked in order to maximize the results.

This can, for example, be facilitated by continuously and systematically writing notes, archiving materials, advertisements, snapshots of social media, keeping records of sales and other external interests in your business, together with your plan. A good idea is to divide your strategy into monthly periods so that you keep track every month of what is working and what is not working. A fictional example of a month's strategic communication activities is shown in table 2.

Table 2. An example of how to systematize a green brand communication

Systematize the brand communication: a fictional case of the potatoes producer's strategic June plan with notes.			
Activity	Target groups	Deadline	Goals/Results
Create a website	Customers, suppliers, local community and other local interest groups	1/6	<p>Type of goals: Increase information, knowledge, availability and attitude. Goal 1: Motivating or changing behaviours – increase visits. Results: 0, 5 % increase in June. Goal 2: Affecting visitors' attitude, to make visitors write positive reviews. Results: One positive review in June.</p> <p>Comment: The website might have increased the number of visits and customer interaction. The website will remain, and we will continue to update it.</p>
Start a blog on the website + write one blog post	Customers and the local community	5/6	<p>Goal: Increase information, knowledge and curiosity of the brand. Results: A school asked for a guided visit the following autumn, after a teacher had read the first blog post, and a local newspaper asked if we were interested in writing a column based on our blog.</p> <p>Comment: The blog increased our contact with the local community. An aim could be to write one to two blog posts per month and to work together with the local newspapers.</p>
Five Facebook posts	Customers, suppliers and the local community	1/6; 8/6; 15/6; 22/6; 29/6	<p>Goal: Increase information and curiosity of the current 200 followers. Results: The visibility has been good, especially when a film from our farm shop was posted. Goal: Increase engagement through more interaction, e.g. through comments and likes. Results: The film from the farm shop gained most "likes" and brought about a few questions about our opening hours.</p> <p>Comment: Posting a film from our shop created engagement and we should therefore continue to create films and post them on Facebook.</p>

Assignment

1. Analyze the current situation – What is your brand identity?



Self-analysis

- What is your business concept?
- What are your organization's vision and goals?
- What are your organization's internal values?
- What does your brand promise?
- What are your green attributes?
- What are your brand identity attributes?

Customer analysis

What makes your brand attractive?

- What are your brand's target groups and what are their needs, demands and wishes that you meet through your brand?

Competitor analysis

What makes your brand unique?

- What are the competitive brands (including substitutes) and what are their attractive attributes?
- What are the most relevant attributes (e.g. price, quality, geographical location, certifications, greenness) of the competitive brands in relation to your own brand identity?
- With this as a starting point, how can you position your own brand in a comparative chart and on a position map?

What is your brand's USP? (One or two sentences expressing your brand's attributes of uniqueness, attractiveness, greenness and sustainability in comparison with other brands.)

2. Create green brand strategy

What are your communication goals?

What is your brand profile (the attractive and unique attributes in your brand portfolio)?

- Based on the self-analysis, customer analysis and the competitor analysis, what brand attributes do you think should be communicated?
- What makes your brand unique and attractive?
- What attributes should your brand profile be based upon?
- How do you want others to see your brand, e.g. name, logotype, graphical profile?

What is the language of your brand?

What marketing tools and channels will you use to communicate your brand?

3. Controlling to maximize results

How should you test your marketing activities?

How can you know what worked?

Brand image: How do others see your brand?

Your answers should be written in one document with texts, charts and a position map. The text should be simple and concise. This is not a plan you write and leave, it is a document to update and use constantly.

Finally, revise your business model!