



BRAND FOUNDATION WORKBOOK



BRAND YOURSELF

AS A FOOD + DIY BLOGGER

HOW TO DEFINE YOUR NICHE
AND ATTRACT BRANDS

MELISSAROSEDESIGN.COM

HEY THERE BUSINESS-MINDED BLOGGER!

Do any of these sound like you?

- You want to attract brands and gain readership credibility.
- You've been blogging for a few years feeling like you're just throwing spaghetti at the wall (ie. blog posts) and hoping they stick.
- You want your site to draw more people in and create more loyal readers.
- You know you need to brand yourself online but aren't quite sure how.
- You are hesitant to invest in branding because you feel stuck with where your brand is headed.
- Your site doesn't convey a brand to the reader.
- You want your site to look and sound more professional so that higher-end brands want to work with you.
- You want people to think you are professional, take blogging seriously, and that your brand is well thought out and cohesive.

You want all of these things, right? I can't wait for you to dive into this Branding Foundation Guide. In a loud online world, it's easy for us bloggers to get swept into what everyone ELSE is posting that we often lead ourselves astray from what OUR brand is about. This workbook will help you define your core readership, help you zone in on content, and organize your site so that you are set up to gain readership credibility and attract reputable brands.

TRUE STORY: When I first started blogging, I had no strategy with my content. I merely came up with an idea and posted it without thinking about how it would help my brand grow. And while that helped fuel my creative outlet (which I think a blog should totally do!), it gave my readers a mixed message of what I was about and ultimately caused the growth of my site to become stagnant. One day I was trying to be an educational Martha Stewart listing out fancy names of flour, while the next day I was writing about how to make a microwavable s'more. When I nailed down my niche, I no longer felt like I was throwing pasta (or sprinkles) at the wall - I knew that every single post I published was in line with what my brand stood for.

Most people think of branding as fun mood boards and fancy site design, and while that's certainly a component, it is not the end-all solution. Behind every design there needs to be a solid foundation. Some real brain-power needs to go into getting honest with yourself about who you serve so that you always have that core mission to go back to when making design or content decisions.

You ready to transform your brand? Let's do this.

If you have any questions, make sure to ask inside my private Facebook group, Branding Clubhouse (bit.ly/BrandingClubhouse)
We are here to support you!

XO,
Melissa
Creator of Design Clubhouse
Brand Stylist & Designer at Melissa Rose Design



GET EXCITED! IN THIS WORKBOOK, YOU WILL CREATE 7 VALUABLE ELEMENTS THAT WILL MAKE UP YOUR BRAND'S FOUNDATION:



YOU WILL CREATE A READER PROFILE

Define your target reader to know how to serve them best through the content you create.

Where it will be used: Media Kit Demographic Section



YOU WILL DEFINE YOUR CONTENT STRATEGY

Define your niche and stop wondering what to post



YOU WILL ORGANIZE & DEFINE YOUR MENU BAR AND CATEGORIES

Nail down your site's first impression so your reader (and brands!) know exactly what you're about - right away.



YOU WILL CREATE A CONDENSED "ABOUT ME" BLURB

Where it will be used: Sidebar about me, Pinterest profile description, Instagram biography



YOU WILL CREATE A SOLID SITE TAGLINE

Where it will be used: Header of site, business cards, Facebook cover photo, Facebook profile blurb



YOU WILL WRITE AN "ABOUT THE BLOG" BLURB

Where it will be used: Media kits, website about page, guest articles on other sites



YOU WILL CREATE A PROCESS FOR CONSISTENT BRANDED GRAPHICS

Define your branding style and streamline your blogging process

Where it will be used: Pinterest collages, social media posts, marketing collateral (media kits, invoices)

PHASE 1

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

In this phase, you will lay the foundation of your brand by defining your reader and content strategy. This is the most challenging phase, but trust me - after you nail down the rock-solid groundwork in this step you will be off to the races in Phase 2!

DEFINE YOUR READER

As bloggers, it's easy to get caught up in creating a site that every human on the planet wants to read. But the truth is, you need to understand **your** audience in order to serve them. Think about 3 attributes that describe your target reader. What does her day-to-day life look like? What does she struggle with? Think about those problems and how you can help solve them with the recipes or projects you create. Throughout this workbook, I'm going to use an example blogger (we'll call her Lisa) to help you follow along with how these questions help define your reader. Lisa is a food blogger who creates family-friendly recipes for busy moms.

READERS GENDER

READERS AGE RANGE

* Think in terms of: 18-24, 24-35, 35-45, 45-60, 60+

LIST 3 ATTRIBUTES THAT DESCRIBE YOUR READER:

Lisa's reader attributes: Woman, Mother of Kids at Home, Busy

** Note that I defined that Lisa's reader's kids are at home. Mothers of kids that are in college and beyond aren't running around to soccer practices and are probably not looking for the type of dump-and-go meals that Lisa creates. It's important to define this so that you can create content for **your readers**.*

WHAT DOES YOUR READER STRUGGLE WITH? THIS HELPS DEFINE HOW YOU CAN SERVE THEM.

Lisa's readers struggle with: Getting dinner on the table in between her kid's activities.

** Note that even though Lisa writes a food blog, her reader doesn't struggle with knowing **HOW** to cook, but what to cook. Lisa's reader doesn't want long instructional posts explaining how to make homemade ravioli. Lisa's reader wants to know new ways to feed her family without spending hours in the kitchen.*

DEFINE YOUR CONTENT

I get it, as bloggers we have 500 recipe ideas or DIY ideas in our notebooks at all times. We tend to think of an idea and run with it without thinking about how it fits our site's overall mission. To create a memorable and well-defined brand, we have to remember that just because we *can* do something, doesn't mean we should. Let me explain. Let's say you have a blog all about being gluten-free. You are naturally going to attract people that live that lifestyle or want to live that lifestyle. And then people are going to come to **your** blog when they want to make a gluten-free recipe.

They aren't going to think about coming to **my** food/DIY blog even though I may have posted a gluten-free muffin recipe 2 years ago, because that's not what I'm known for. I simply can't compete in that space. So when I'm planning my content, am I going to focus on a gluten-free cupcake recipe even though I see Pinterest pins going crazy with them? No, I'm not. Because ultimately, that is not the type of reader I want to attract.

IN 1-2 SENTENCES, LIST WHY ARE YOU DIFFERENT THAN OTHER FOOD/DIY BLOGGERS. WHAT DO YOU DO THAT OTHERS DON'T? THIS WILL BECOME YOUR UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION.

Example: Lisa creates family-friendly recipes that take less than 30 minutes & 7 ingredients to prepare. She includes photos of each recipe step to take the guess-work out of cooking so that her reader can quickly glance at the steps and feel confident that they can whip it up in 30 minutes.

LIST YOUR TOP 3-5 CATEGORIES ON YOUR SITE & LIST WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THEM.

Lisa's Category Example:

Dinner recipes: Take less than 30 minutes to prepare.

Soups: All soups are slow-cooker friendly for toss-and-go busy mornings.

Desserts: No-frill desserts (i.e. not making layered cakes or fancy French pastries)

PHASE 2

FORMULATING RESULTS

This is where you will start seeing all your hard work & ground work pay off. In this phase, you are going to take your responses from the last two pages to formulate defined “about me” blurbs, a solid site tagline, and a blog bio that you can use throughout your site, marketing collateral, and social media.

GET INTENTIONAL WITH YOUR SITE'S COPYWRITING

Much like a resume, the first-glance of your site sets the tone for brands about how serious you are about blogging. And let's face it, we all want to work with brands. It should be very clear upon arriving to your site what you are all about. Brands want to know what YOU bring to the table that would help sell **their** marketing message. Think about it this way: you might have the greatest gluten-free recipes on all of the web, but if you just causally mention it on your about page and don't nail that message through imagery or copy (think tagline & sidebar about blurb), then how do you expect to attract brands who want to work with gluten-free bloggers?

So how do you let them know who you are and what you are all about immediately after arriving to your site? You straight up tell them with the copy on your site. You already wrote exactly what you need on the previous two pages, now it's time to simply combine it to create your "about me" blurb, tagline, and "about the blog" blurb.

CONDENSED "ABOUT ME" BLURB

Where to use: Sidebar about me, Pinterest profile description, Instagram biography

WHO YOU SERVE + YOUR UNIQUE
VALUE PROPOSITION



Welcome! I'm Lisa and I help **busy moms**
create **no-fuss dinners in under 30 minutes**.

SITE TAGLINE

Where to use: Header of site, business cards, Facebook cover photo, Facebook profile blurb

YOUR UNIQUE CONTENT PROPOSITION



30-minute recipes for busy moms

"ABOUT THE BLOG" BLURB

*Where to use: media kits, about page,
guest articles on other sites*

WHO YOU SERVE + YOUR UNIQUE
VALUE PROPOSITION
+ HOW YOU SERVE



BusyFoodieMoms.com is a digital brand that **helps busy moms** create no-fuss dinners in under 30 minutes. The recipes on BusyFoodieMoms.com **focus on healthy whole foods, call for minimal ingredients, and provide easy to follow instructions**. As a busy mom herself, Lisa strives to create approachable recipes that **help moms with crazy schedules feel confident in whipping up dinner in between dance recitals and tennis lessons**.

CONDENSED "ABOUT ME" BLURB

Where to use: Sidebar about me, Pinterest profile description, Instagram description

WRITE YOUR "ABOUT ME" BLURB HERE:

SITE TAGLINE

Where to use: Header of site, business cards, Facebook cover photo, Facebook profile blurb

WRITE YOUR SITE TAGLINE HERE:

"ABOUT THE BLOG" BLURB

Where to use: media kits, about page, guest articles on other sites

WRITE YOUR "ABOUT THE BLOG" BLURB HERE:

PHASE 3

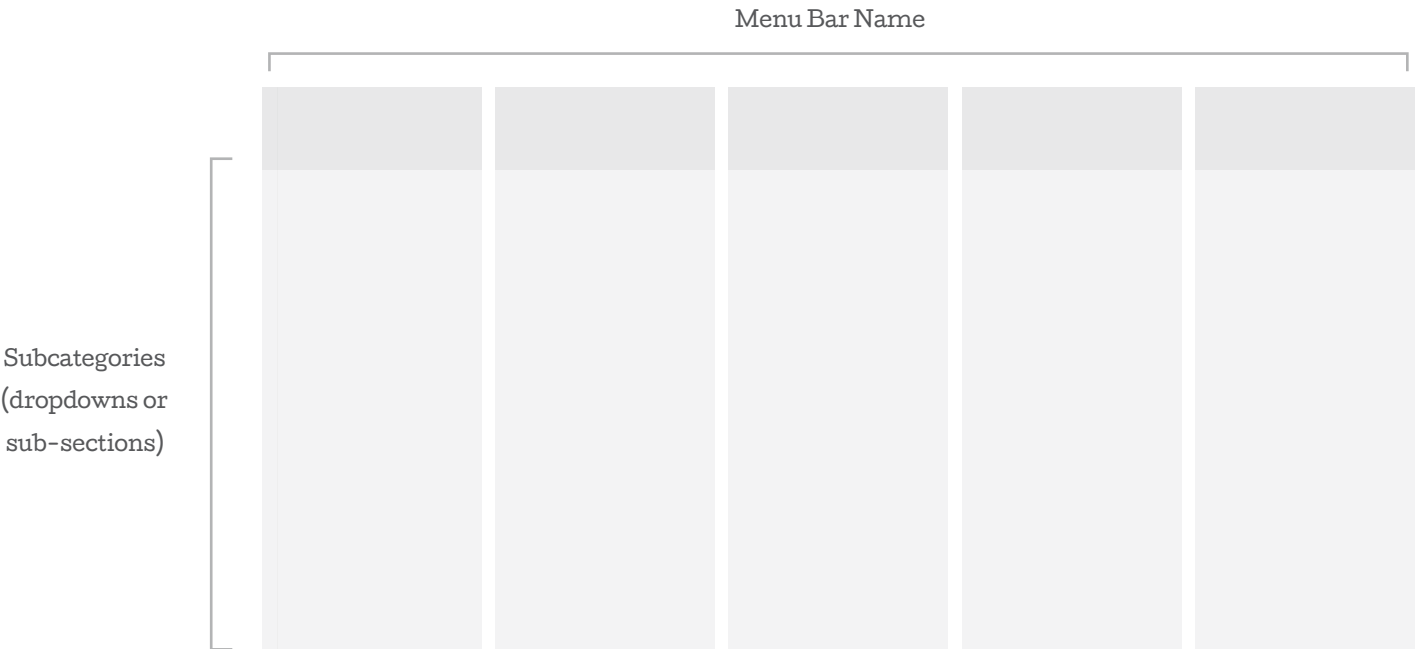
ORGANIZE & STREAMLINE

Nice work! Now that you have defined your reader, nailed down your unique content proposition, created rock-solid “about” blurbs, and formulated a killer tagline - it’s time for the final stage. In this phase, you will organize the content on your site to reinforce your brand’s message, as well as streamline the process for creating blog graphics.

ORGANIZE YOUR SITE NAVIGATION

Why should brands work with YOU vs. the thousands of other bloggers? Is it because of your unique approach to vegan desserts or kid-friendly recipes? Brands don't have time to dig into your archives from 2013 and stumble across your goldmine of kid-friendly recipes. If you want to work with brands who are looking for kid-friendly recipes, those recipes should be easy to find with your navigation and then reiterated in your copy.

Use the chart below to lay out your main menu bar and its subcategories. These subcategories would be the dropdowns or sections of each category. You should then go into Wordpress and reorganize the categories you assigned for each post to match these. If you're a chronic over-tagger (guilty!) then this might take some time to clean up. But trust me, if you ever work with a web developer they will love you forever for having a clean & organized category system!



EXAMPLE
We're simply taking the categories on Page 4 and creating category names that are clear & concise.

30-minute meals	slow-cooker soups	no-frill desserts	lunchbox friendly
easy chicken	chicken beef vegetable	beef vegetable	ice cream cereal treats cookies

CREATE CONSISTENT BRANDED GRAPHICS

A logo may be the first thing you think of when the term “branding” comes to mind, but creating a recognizable brand goes far beyond that. Every graphic should look cohesive whether it be for a Facebook cover photo, email newsletter, media kit, or Pinterest graphic. You should be able to remove the logo and still be able to recognize it as coming from your brand.

So how can you do that? Use the same colors, fonts, and graphic elements (patterns, illustrations) across all platforms and graphics. Create templates for things you use over-and-over again. The key to staying consistent with branded graphics is to establish an identity and then be very intentional in sticking to it. If you don’t lay the groundwork at the beginning, you will waste a lot of time with each blog post recreating graphics. Just think, if your template is already created you don’t have to go back and forth for 2 hours deciding how and where to use your fonts (and you will be less likely to create inconsistent graphics because you won’t be swayed to use that new off-brand font you just found on Pinterest!).

DETERMINE THE 2 FONTS YOU WILL USE ON ALL BRANDED GRAPHICS:

1.

2.

DETERMINE THE COLOR HEX CODES YOU WILL USE ON ALL BRANDED GRAPHICS:

Don’t have any yet? Go to www.htmlcolorcodes.com to select.

Hex codes are 6 digits of numbers/letters that make up web colors.

#

#

#

#

#

LIST THE GRAPHICS YOU CREATE OVER & OVER AGAIN ON A WEEKLY BASIS THAT WOULD BENEFIT FROM TEMPLATES

ie. Pinterest collages, social media posts, marketing collateral (media kits, invoices, business cards)

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU JUST BUILT A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR YOUR BRAND.



YOU CREATED A DEFINED READER PROFILE

Where it will be used: Media Kit Demographic Section



YOU DEFINED YOUR CONTENT STRATEGY



YOU ORGANIZED & DEFINED YOUR MENU BAR AND CATEGORIES



YOU CREATED A CONDENSED "ABOUT ME" BLURB

Where it will be used: Sidebar "about me", Pinterest profile description, Instagram biography



YOU FORMULATED A SOLID SITE TAGLINE

Where it will be used: Header of site, business cards, Facebook cover photo, Facebook profile blurb



YOU WROTE AN "ABOUT THE BLOG" BLURB

Where it will be used: Media kits, website about page, guest articles on other sites



YOU CREATED A PROCESS FOR CONSISTENT BRANDED GRAPHICS

Where it will be used: ie. Pinterest collages, social media posts, marketing collateral (media kits, invoices)

NOW I WANT YOU TO RE-READ THE LIST BELOW AND THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH MORE CONFIDENT YOU FEEL KNOWING YOU MADE POSITIVE STEPS TO DEFINE YOUR BRAND:

- Do you feel more confident that your site will attract brands and gain readership credibility?
- Do you still feel like you'll be throwing spaghetti at the wall (ie. blog posts) and just hoping they stick? (I hope not!)
- Do you feel more equipped in knowing how to brand yourself online?
- Do you feel less hesitant to invest in branding because you have clarity with where your brand is headed?
- Do you feel like your site now conveys a brand to the reader?
- Do you feel like your brand now conveys that you take blogging seriously and that your brand is well thought out and cohesive?

SO WHAT'S NEXT?

**SHARE YOUR NEW BRAND PROPOSITION
IN THE PRIVATE FACEBOOK GROUP!**

If you're not yet a member of my FREE Facebook community,
The Branding Clubhouse, be sure to pop on over and join!
We'd love to have you and give you feedback!

CLICK BELOW TO JOIN

bit.ly/BrandingClubhouse