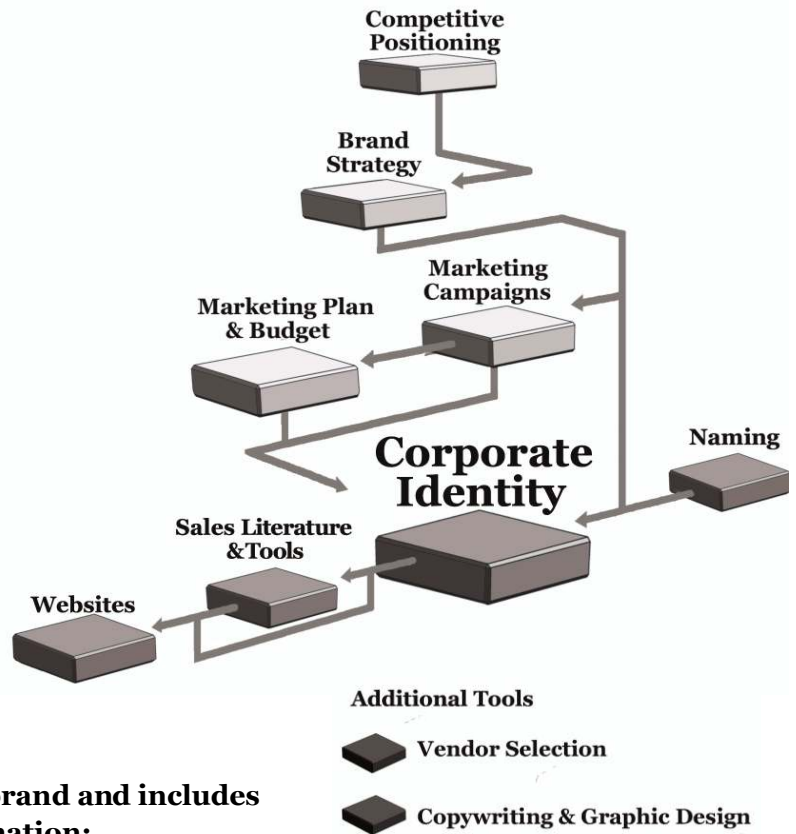


Corporate Identity

When was the last time someone gave you a fantastic business card? Did you turn it over and look at it closely? Did you comment on it? And did you generate some sort of impression of that person and company?



Corporate identity is an extension of your brand and includes everything with your logo or contact information:

- ▶ Business cards
- ▶ Envelopes
- ▶ Letterhead
- ▶ Mailing labels
- ▶ Email templates & signatures
- ▶ Fax covers
- ▶ Proposal/quote templates
- ▶ Invoices/statements
- ▶ Memos
- ▶ Signage
- ▶ Promotional items

Many companies spend time and money on things like business cards yet overlook proposal templates, invoices and email signatures that prospects see more frequently. For example, when an employee customizes an email template with unusual designs or fonts, it can contradict an expensive and serious business card – and convey a far different impression to the customer.

Each element in your identity should use the same fonts, colors, layout, etc. The design itself may not be incredibly important unless you're in a creative field, but consistency and professionalism make an impression. In many cases it may be a first impression, so why not make a good one?

BEST CASE	NEUTRAL CASE	WORST CASE
<p>Every touch with your prospects and customers is consistent and professional. They see a simple, effective design that strengthens your messages.</p>	<p>Some of your identity is great and other things, like invoices or shipping labels, don't match up. Prospects and customers probably notice, but you don't think it's a problem.</p>	<p>Your prospects and customers see a mishmash of poorly-produced identity. They may wonder how you can deliver the product or service you're selling if you can't produce a professional-looking document.</p>

Key concepts & steps

Before you begin

Naturally you need a **name** before you can create your corporate identity. You should also develop a **brand strategy** since your identity should support it and help bring it to life.

If you're already in business, does all of your identity reflect your brand?

Check everything from invoices and shipping labels to email signatures. Make sure your logo is used correctly (sometimes they get accidentally re-sized) and that all of your materials are consistent with your value proposition and brand strategy. For example, if you're focusing on innovative, expensive new products but you have flimsy business cards, you're not reinforcing your value.

Create professional, consistent templates for every touch with your market

Use a consistent style for everything your company sends out. It make take only ten minutes to create a better template, and that template may be seen by hundreds or thousands of prospects and customers over time.

Keep inventory

Templates can be altered or misplaced; make sure team knows how to use them and check them regularly.

What's next?

Once you've finishing your identity, the typical next step is to focus on your **sales literature** and your **website**.

