

# How to Build a Consulting Brand

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A [consultants.actionable.co/thoughts/2017/03/build-consulting-brand/](https://consultants.actionable.co/thoughts/2017/03/build-consulting-brand/)

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## What Is Brand?

Is brand your logo? Your website? Your social media presence? Sure, those elements and others play a key role in brand building—but we'd be vastly oversimplifying to define brand as any one item (or list). Your brand is the identity of your business—and it requires thoughtful and strategic development. Alyssa Burkus recently wrote about her own journey to create a [cohesive brand identity](#)—below you will find some tactics to help you apply those lessons to your own business growth.

## Why Brand Matters for Consultants

You might be wondering *what's in it for me?*

Establishing your brand will give you a better understanding of yourself (and what your business stands for) as well as your target audience—sharpening your focus as an individual or a firm.

Presentation matters. Like it or not, “people often choose products based on their perceived value rather than their actual value.” (*Logo Design Love*, 8) In an era of information overload, where many clients find it challenging to find time to meet with a consultant (let alone implement learning and development programs), your visual identity and voice matter greatly. How do you stand out in the noise? Having a clear and consistent brand builds recognition, trust, and professionalism. A good brand creates connection and plays an important role in building relationships with your clients.

## The High Level

Here at Actionable, we hope to dive deeper into strategies for promoting your brand and building your business in the coming months. For now, we'll focus on the high-level of brand: starting with defining values and culture, creating a consistent “look” across all mediums, and establishing a unified voice.

## A Unified Culture

At the start of Actionable's own rebrand last May, our team had many conversations about culture, which eventually resulted in determining our core values. In *What Great Brands Do*, Denise Lee Yohn reminds us that putting internal brand culture first is key to branding success. As consultants, you can naturally appreciate the influence of culture on your clients—but have you reflected on its impact in your own business? Whether you're a solopreneur or a multi-consultant firm, establishing core values that guide your business is important.

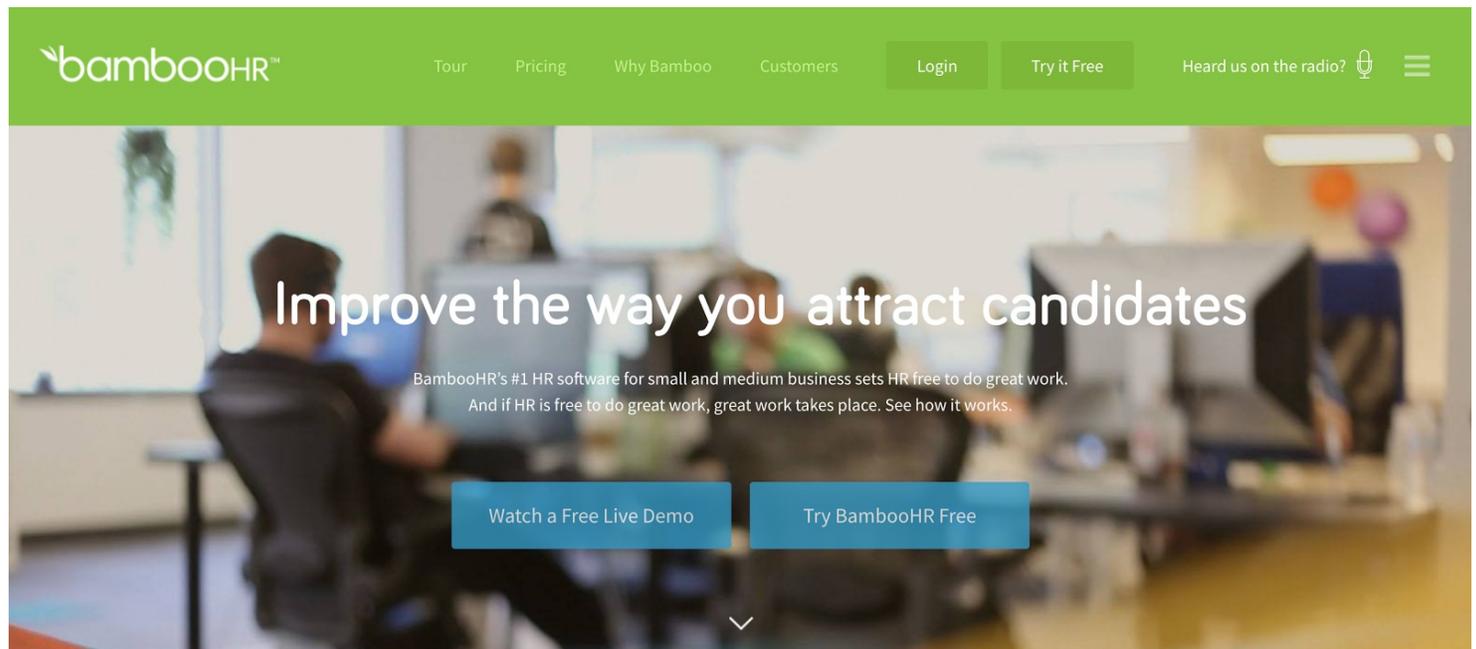
## Critical Elements of Establishing Your Culture

- Schedule a time to think through (if you work alone) or discuss (if you work with others) what's most important to you as a consultant or group.
- Schedule a time to brainstorm a list of words or brief statements that sum up who you are and what's a “must” for yourself and/or other team members.

- Choose 1-2 people to finalize your values.
- Return to these often and use them to guide both internal and external decisions.

## A Unified Look

Go beyond logo and create a visual identity for your business. Graphics and images should have a recognizable look across all mediums. Does your website connect with your social media pages and graphics? Does your printed collateral match the look of your emails? Are all of your visual pieces working together? If not, it might be time to re-evaluate—or put some thought into it for the first time.



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## Critical Elements of Creating Your Visual Identity

### **Logo**

While a logo should be simple, creating one requires a solid understanding of the business. If you're working with a designer to create a logo, you can find some [key principles here](#).

### **Typography**

Choose one or two (no more than three) specific fonts to use in all of your marketing. Select something timeless and versatile. Consider what you would use for headlines or copy you'd like to stand out (likely a stronger/boldface font) and what you would use for body copy. Avoid hard-to-read fonts.

### **Imagery**

Whether you use illustrations or images (or a combination of both as we do here at Actionable), be sure that the style is consistent and compatible with your brand. For example, don't use hand-drawn illustrations in one graphic

and icons in another. Avoid cheesy stock images at all costs (i.e., images that look staged, where people are often looking directly at the camera). There are many high quality, free images available online today. Grab some eye-catching pics from a few of our favorite sites [Unsplash](#), [Stocksnap](#) and [NegativeSpace](#).

### **A Unified Voice**

What you say and how you say it is wildly important to your brand identity. Your personality should shine through your words—whether in a sales meeting, on your blog, or in your direct mail outreach. Language and tone are a powerful reflection of who you are and what you represent.



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## **Critical Elements of Finding Your Voice**

### **Choose your channels wisely**

Consider what channels you'll leverage to speak to your audience. A website is a must. Social channels, blog, direct mail, and/or an email campaign? What makes the most sense for your clients? Don't choose everything. Select the best avenues to reach your client base while also recognizing your own strengths and limitations as an individual or firm.

### **On positioning and being true to yourself**

Think through language and what tone you want to convey. Are you professional? Casual? Playful? Academic? Corporate? A combination? In the past at Actionable, we sometimes described our business persona as "jeans and a sports jacket." Professional but fun.

Work to understand your clients' pain, and communicate how you can provide a solution. Maybe you target a specific industry or have a consulting specialty. Get clear on your offerings and strategies internally and make this equally clear on your website or marketing. Be unapologetically you and don't worry about appealing to everyone. Live by the wise words of Seth Godin in *Purple Cow*, "If you're remarkable, it's likely that some people won't like you ... That's part of the definition of remarkable. Nobody gets unanimous praise—ever."

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With an investment of about one hour per month, Actionable Conversations will help your organization develop stronger leaders, develop individual skills and enhance team culture.

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## Actionable Conversations

What makes Actionable Conversations unique? Triple impact of learner skill development, leader credibility enhancement, and real-time insight for the organizational leaders around measurable behaviour change and leader impact. A ground-breaking solution, Actionable Conversations are:

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**Dale Wilcox highlights *the triple impact of Actionable Conversations: learner skill development, leader credibility enhancement, and real-time insight.***

## Final Thoughts & Recap

### **Know your audience**

Who are your clients? How can you best connect with them?

### **Consistency is key**

Be sure all of the pieces of your branding puzzle are working together. Your brand should be like a well-known friend—familiar and someone your clients can count on.

### **Do you need a full rebranding, or just a refresh?**

As a general rule, branding should be something that lasts, but sometimes an overhaul or a brand evolution is necessary.

### **Work with experts**

Don't attempt to do graphic design or copywriting if that's not your skill set. *Ugly Powerpoint presentations, I'm looking at you.* Enlist outside help upfront—your brand will be better for it.

### **Focus on the big picture and always return to your core values**

Don't neglect your internal culture and be sure your business objectives align with your values.

Happy Branding!

Are you a business consultant or coach looking to leverage your brand to grow your business? Take our [Fit Assessment](#) to find out if partnering with Actionable is right for you!