Car Wash Marketing:
BRANDING

Diamond Shine®

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1:
What is branding in 2017?

Chapter 1: What is branding in 2017?

Branding has been evolving for over 150 years.

32,000 Years Ago
Cave Paintings

1876
First
Trademark

1900
The Michelin
Guide

1958
The Birth of
Corporate
Identity

2006
Google
Enters the
Dictionary

> ❝**Your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room.**❞
>
> - Jeff Bezos

BRANDING NOW

It's not what **YOU** say it is, it's what **THEY** say it is.

If you have a business, you have a brand. Being strategic about who you are and what sets your brand apart, will establish the foundation for your growth.

One of the best ways to bolster your brand immediately is to simplify. Another way to think about simplification is to "clear the clutter". As the market place has become more and more competitive, simplification is increasingly important. People are completely overwhelmed by choices. In fact, in a Columbia University consumer study, they offered brands of jam and chocolate for consumers to choose from. Consumers who were given a choice of 6 brands were 30% more likely to make a purchase than those given a choice of 24-30 brands.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Streamline & simplify your brand strategy:

- Focus
- Be selective
- Consolidate
- Strategize

Different markets have different needs. Reassess and refocus your brand marketing strategy to help your company identify who your consumers are, what it is they want, and how best to target them. A highly targeted brand experience offers greater value to the consumer and creates more lasting profitable relationships.

Messaging and delivery is a huge part of simplification. Just because you can use multiple channels to communicate with your market doesn't mean you should.   Using multiple channels can lead to noise and increased consumer confusion rather than creating a strong brand message. Be selective with your touch points to make it easier to monitor reactions and responses to your brand, and easier to create a strong brand message. This also extends to your marketing message.   Keep your messages clear and concise. You should be able to communicate your brand message in a few short sentences.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Your logo & name are the first thing people see and associate with your company.
They should communicate simply and clearly, reflecting your company's values. It helps to convey who you are through imagery, colors and fonts. It's important to think about what you want to communicate to potential customers, narrow that list down to the top 2-3 things, and those should be the priority in the logo.

Once your name is decided, it's time to design your logo! When working with a designer on your logo, give them your list of the top 2-3 items you want to communicate, so they can bring this to life in their design.

Additionally, if they don't ask you for this kind of information, you may want to look for a designer who is a bit more strategic in their approach.
As you will learn in later chapters, **DESIGN IS NOT DECORATION!**

SITE BRAND VS. CHEMICAL BRAND

Many chemical companies offer beautiful signs and menu boards to help push products at your site and drum up sales. Have you ever asked yourself whether this makes a difference or is compelling to your customers? The way to utilize branding to your advantage is to highlight your site branding versus the chemical brands. The site brand is who your customers interact with. This, the logo and website, the employees, and ultimately, the experience they have is with you, not the chemical company.

For instance, if your business was a restaurant, people might visit because the chef is well known, the food is fabulous, and the atmosphere is awesome on a Friday night. They are not coming because the dishwasher does an incredible job, or the lettuce comes from France. The emphasis is on the front of the house, the magic in the experience. All the pieces and parts that contribute to their evening support the whole restaurant and make it a great place to visit.

Your car wash can be this restaurant if the focus shifts to you!!
But, you're thinking, "There are a million car washes how could I possibly stand out without showing differentiation through my product line?" Odds are, your competitors have very similar products and their businesses appear superficially similar to yours anyways. DSW, Zappos, and Nordstrom carry a lot of the same shoes, but we don't think of them as similar stores, and this is because they have worked hard to distinguish themselves from their competition.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE DIFFERENT?

Our brains are actually hardwired to notice what's different. They act as filters to protect us from too much information. As a result, brands that don't stand out literally get filtered out of people's brains! Those people are potential customers. There are a number of ways businesses can work to create differentiation, and it's really up to you to decide what makes sense for you and your brand.

TIPS TO CREATE DIFFERENTIATION IN THE MARKET:

1. **INCREASE FOCUS –** Don't try to be everything to everyone. How you do what you do will allow you to separate yourself from the pack. Here are a couple of questions to think about when trying to really distill down and increase focus in your business.

   1. Who are you?

   2. What do you do?

   3. Why does it matter?

2. **CLEARLY IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET MARKET** – The better you can narrow down who exactly your customer is, the more you can cater your marketing, sales, and experience to that kind of person. Once you have identified them, learn what problems are specific to them and start to position yourself to solve them. In this way, customers will be able to easily recognize the value you offer, and feel like you understand them.

3. **MAINTAIN A CONSISTENT VOICE THROUGH TONE AND IMAGERY.**

4. **STAND OUT!** - Don't be afraid to offer unique solutions to the problems your customers face. This will position you as thought leaders in your industry and excite your customers too.

Can you identify your differentiator or USP (unique selling position)?

CHAPTER 2:
How to build a killer brand
- On Site

Chapter 2: How to build a killer brand - On Site

MASTERING THE MENU

Streamlining your brand offerings can lead to increased sales. Eliminating certain brand offerings can also eliminate consumer confusion. If 30% of your products generate 70% of your sales, then reducing your product offerings can actually boost sales.

This is important to think about with respect to your menu and add-ons. Do you have items on your menu or add-ons you are pushing that are detracting from more profitable offerings?

Creating simple decisions during the purchase processing is the number 1 reason consumers are likely to:

- **Buy your brand**
- **Do so repeatedly**
- **Recommend it to others**

Your menu is more than a listing of your offerings. When combined with strategic design it is a map leading customers down the path that you choose for them and landing on the item you most want them to buy. Remember, the purpose of your car wash menu is to help customers make an easy and quick decision based on your offerings.

USE THE RULE OF THREES

According to "How to Use the 'Rule of Three' to Create Engaging Content" on Copyblogger, the rule of three, or power of three, suggests that things that come in threes are funnier, more satisfying, or more effective than other numbers of things. As a result, the audience is more likely to remember the information. That is why you see adjectives grouped in threes to emphasize an idea.

MENU ORDER

Once you have identified your three packages (and 2 add-ons if needed), it's time to think about the order in which to display them. Customers read your menu from top to bottom and left to right. Place your most profitable package at the top, so it is the highest priority and make it bigger than your other options.

CONTENT

The description of each wash helps the customer assess its value. Try to keep descriptions concise and bulleted for easy reading, and list the items that are most likely to generate interest. If every car wash package cleans the exterior, then that is not differentiating information and doesn't need to be listed. Focus on transparency so that your customer knows what is included and can make an educated decision based on their needs.

READABILITY

Ensure your menu is readable with appropriate sizing, legible easy to read fonts, and colors that complement the words, not detract from them. Stay away from hard to read colors like yellow on a white background, or colors that don't correspond to your brand's look and feel. Consistency will help with readability too.

FORMAT

Your menu format is a really important part of communicating your offerings!

The sign at the front of the car wash, or menu board, should be simple enough to communicate the packages, pricing, and value in each category clearly.

A brochure is a great way to expand on information that doesn't fit on a sign. This is also a more appropriate place to go into further detail, because it offers an option for customers who want to learn more without overwhelming customers who don't.

Consider a display at the register as another quick form opportunity to communicate your offerings.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Don't forget about one of the most vital pieces of branding- the customer experience!
Your customers will have an experience with your business, why not take the time to craft that experience into something that they will want to come back and have again and again? This is a great tool in your branding toolbox that often small businesses don't take the time to explore, and it can help set you apart.

Customer Experience can be crafted through a number of avenues. Two sure fire ways to make a huge splash is through a focus on training your employees to create a specific experience, and through highlighting the five sense.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THROUGH EMPLOYEES

"I believe if you ask enough questions, you will pretty much come up with the same three values that it took me 15 years to discover, and these are 'curiosity, ethics and drive'. Those are the three attributes that I cannot train for and therefore I must hire for."
- Robert Stephens, Geek Squad founder

CORE VALUES

Creating a fun, positive, and engaging work culture is the best way to ensure your customers have a wonderful experience. If your staff is excited your customers will be too! Work with your staff to really understand your brand. One way to approach this is by identifying your core values and how they translate to both your staff and your customers.

If your staff understands what is truly important to you as an organization then they can begin to embody that and make it their own. Additionally, make sure you and your senior staff are living the core values too. Being a true part of the team goes a long way for overall moral.

COMPANY CULTURE

Creating a thriving company culture isn't easy, but it's something you can and should continue to work on. Introducing rituals through celebrations, eating, storytelling, and more help to engage your team around things that matter most to you as an organization. This helps staff feel connected with a sense of shared purpose and can reinforce positive behaviors that help you as a company succeed.

Entrepreneur.com featured 10 companies and their incredible culture approaches here:
https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/249174

Check it out to get your ideas flowing.

GENERAL BEST PRACTICES

Your employees are an extension of you and your brand. They are the second impression, aside from the building and signage, when someone arrives. A smile goes a long way! How they look, speak to customers, and act, are all a reflection on your company and can prompt someone to want to come back or not.

Uniforms are a great way to create a cohesive presentation of your staff and ensure everyone looks professional and coordinated. In an industry where people are walking up to customers in their cars, you want them to feel safe and promote a positive image of the brand.

Upselling is typically driven by your employees. Train them on how to talk about your offerings and alert them to what is most important and why.   Arming your employees with information to understand what differing options do and how they can help, will allow them to communicate that to your customer more successfully.

For instance, instead of saying "Hi, welcome to Pete's Car Wash. Here are our packages, can I interest you in a wax today?" Try "Hi, welcome to Pete's Car Wash. I noticed your tires could use a heavier clean, do you want to try our power tire wash today with your wash?"

Upselling done right is a solution to a problem and leaves the customer feeling like they are better off, not annoyed with another unnecessary add-on.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE SENSES

Engaging the senses, especially in the car wash industry, can create a unique and memorable experience.

How much show is going on? Keep it fun and exciting, something memorable to keep people coming back.

Visually you can create a unique experience through:

- Foam.
- Color.
- Lights - huge trend. People are moving away from juicing chemical with color and instead using led lights on white foam so you can tailor the colors.
- A Clean Car - most importantly, make sure the actual wash is clean, shiny, and dry. This is, after all, what your customer came for in the first place!

SENSE OF SMELL

People actually think their car is cleaner when they can smell the soap during the wash.
There are scent specific products you can introduce to capitalize on this phenomenon.

SOUND

A car wash is a noisy place, so incorporating sound might not be the best approach!
However, if you have a waiting room, some light music to give your visitors a bit of an oasis from their hectic day to day lives could be a welcome addition.

CHAPTER 3:
How to build a killer brand
- Online

Chapter 3: How to build a killer brand - Online

Research has shown that when things are inconsistent, we find it difficult to predict and control the future. Also, when we are uncomfortable we act to make things more consistent. The more we as brands, and businesses, can contribute to consistency, the more identifiable and reliable people will find our products, and want to incorporate us into their day. Alternatively, if we are not able to find consistency directly, typically we distance ourselves from inconsistent items or people.

If you go to the grocery store and they keep moving the items you buy regularly, first, you get super frustrated, and then stop going to that store altogether! It's important from a marketing perspective to maintain consistency across all your channels.

> Let's use an example to flesh this out.
> If I see an ad in the paper that says "Our friendly staff can't wait to hand dry your ride 20% off today only!"
>
> **On site:** Staff should be friendly, they should know about the deal, and they should be prepared to hand dry the car, or fulfill any claims made in the ad.
>
> **Online:** If I go to your website and social media platforms, I should see a friendly guy with a towel in his hand as the cover photo, to help bolster any claims you made in the ad.

In any area where you are visible you should use similar wording, similar styles of photos or iconography, and have similar messages so that you are driving home what you have identified as important. See how each medium is supporting one another?

This chapter will uncover how to take your incredible site brand and translate that into the digital world.

First off, your potential and current customers are online.

79%
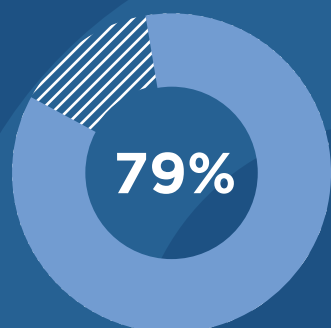
79% of Adult Americans use the internet.

78%
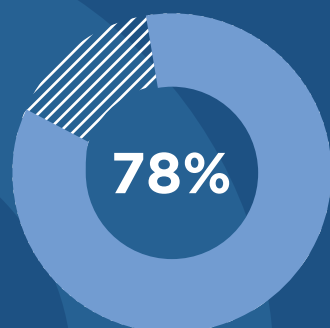
As many as 78% of internet users conduct product research online before pursuing a transaction.

This encompasses both users who are looking for places to buy products online and those who are conducting research on local businesses that they'll eventually go on to buy from.

1/3

1/3 of US consumers spend 3 or more hours online everyday.

40%
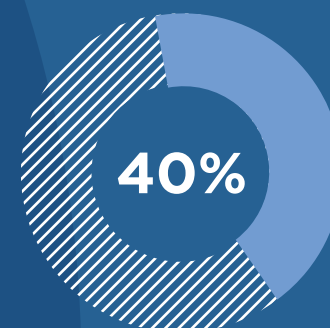
40% of US smartphone owners compare prices on their mobile devices while in-store shopping for an item.

They are searching your site, using a maps application on their phone to find you, and if these things are not easy to do you are not capturing this digital traffic.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF WEBSITES

OPTIMIZE YOUR WEBSITE FOR 2017- The basics

There are a handful of things that all websites in this day and age should have that are standard best practices.

1. **Mobile Friendly -** According to Google's research more than 50% of search queries in the world are being done on mobile. A recent report from the firm Hitwise, explored that even further and for the US specifically, roughly 58% of overall searches are being done on mobile. Whether capturing leads, informing customers or obtaining sales, if your website is not mobile friendly people will leave, be annoyed, and probably not come back.

   - Try Google's "Mobile Friendly Test" to find out if your site is mobile friendly. **https://search.google.com/search-console/mobile-friendly**

2. **Responsive Layout -** A responsive layout ensures that your site looks and acts similar on different screens. This takes into account whether someone is browsing on a desktop, laptop, tablet, cell phone, etc.

   - See if your site is responsive with this online test: **http://mattkersley.com/responsive/**

3. **The Touch & Scroll -** Long gone are the days of clicking! Websites need to take into account that people scroll through, often with their thumbs, on a touch screen device more often than not.

PEOPLE **DO** SCROLL,
THEY WANT TO SCROLL,
JUST LET THEM SCROLL.

4. **Simplicity -** No matter what screen you are presenting your website on, if users can't find what they are looking for and are bombarded and overwhelmed they will leave. Simplifying your site and really thinking about what is most important and how you can use a hierarchy to convey that will go a long way in promoting your business online. Think of your site as a pyramid. The most important items are at the top, work your way down to the details.

Those are the basics. Are you ready to dig deeper into your website?

DIGGING DEEPER

The most important thing to think about as you move forward, is that your customers have different goals and needs than you do. If you can think about how to solve their problems and reframe what you are selling through that lens, they will see what is in it for them, and how you are a part of helping them.

Does your site reflect what your customers want or what *you* want?
The following highlights some strategies revealed through the lens of common website problems and solutions used to solve them. These solutions can be used from both a content and a search engine optimization (SEO) perspective to help create a site that functions as a digital store, open 24 hours, helping you generate sales.

PROBLEM 1: People skim website content.

Hours are spent creating long, specific, and complete explanations that NO ONE READS. In 2013, analytics vendor Chartbeat analyzed Slate and other websites and found that most visitors scroll through about only 50-60% of an article page. Additionally, there seems to be no correlation between sharing and scrolling: people readily share articles without even reading them. An eye-tracking study, by Jakob Nielsen in 2008, indicated that less than 20% of text content is actually read on an average web page.

SOLUTION:

Create relevant, scannable content.

- Get rid of long text blocks.
- Toss out unnecessary instructions.
- Ditch promotional writing and "smalltalk".
- Simplify your message.
- Use keywords, infographs, bullet points, and pictures to garner more attention and engagement.

PROBLEM 2: The assumption that design is decoration.

Apple's one and only sage, Steve Jobs said...

"Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works."

Design on a website is no different. The design is guiding users around the page, moving them through in strategic ways in order to create specific actions. Jared Spool, an American writer, researcher, speaker, educator, and an expert on the subjects of usability, software, design, and research, explained this perfectly when he said "Good design, when it's done well, becomes invisible. It's only when it's done poorly that we notice it. Think of it like a room's air conditioning. We only notice it when it's too hot, too cold, making too much noise, or the unit is dripping on us. Yet, if the air conditioning is perfect, nobody says anything and we focus, instead, on the task at hand."

SOLUTION:

Hire a professional. The goal of design is to efficiently solve problems.
Design is based on the understanding of how users see the world, how they think and behave. The toolset of the designer is broader than just colors and font-styles, it also includes user-research, prototyping, usability testing, and more.

PROBLEM 3: Having choices is normally considered a good thing.

Having too many elements in a website design can be confusing – and frustrating – for users. Cluttered, busy layouts make it difficult to find information. With more people using smart phones and tablets as their primary internet access source, there is a real need for information to be displayed clearly on the smaller screen size and accommodate current browsing habits.

SOLUTION:

Cut down the choices.
The more choices a website or web application offers, the harder it is to understand the interface. Studies have shown that having too many options often leads to decision paralysis and frustration. The clearer and easier a site is to use, the more likely the user is to get to the information or action that they came to the site to find and do!

PROBLEM 4: Assuming our customers are like us.

SOLUTION:

Be user centric. Use research techniques to gain a better understanding of your users and how they use your site, what they use it for, what they are looking for but can't find, what they find most important, and more.

Some research techniques you can use are:

• Interview users

• Site Test Drive followed by a questionnaire

• Surveys

• Send it to friends and family to explore

PROBLEM: Content isn't fun.

It's annoying to track down all the content, and write it, and think about it. It's so much easier and exciting to just give a designer some fake "BLA BLA" text and have them make you something really cool, that you can see and play with! Yay so fun! BUT, if you go that route you are ultimately doing yourself a disservice because the whole design has no context. Content specialist Kristina Halvorson argues that design decisions should be driven by the content; and the entire layout is to be created to support the content.

THINK ON THIS:

> **Content precedes design. Design in the absence of content is not design, it's decoration.**
>
> - Jeffrey Zeldman, web designer and author

SOLUTION:

Create the content first. Using dummy text often results in an aesthetically pleasing but unrealistic design. It creates the illusion that content is secondary, and users come to your site for the content, not the design. A webpage with a simple structure but quality content performs much better on usability tests than a nice layout with subpar text

PROBLEM: White space is wasted space and that real estate is important!

Can you believe this was a topic as early as the 1930s?! Jan Tschichold, a German typographer and author who heavily influenced the development of graphic design and typography wrote that white space is an essential element in web design and "is to be regarded as an active element, not a passive background."

White space is responsible for readability, content prioritization, visual layout, and brand positioning. The basic role of white space is to reduce the amount of text visitors see all at once and makes reading much easier. As you probably experience while surfing the web, a cluttered page is unattractive and doesn't make users want to read the content. A lab research conducted by Wichita State University showed that white space actually improves reading comprehension.

SOLUTION:

Treat white space as a design element. White space allows for easier readability and scannability, allows you to prioritize what your user sees and interacts with and how, guides users on a page, can create the feeling of sophistication and elegance, and is essential for a balanced, harmonious layout.

Now that your website is catering to the correct audience, easy to read, focused on a clear user path, and just in all around great shape, let's get visitors to your site!

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOUR CAR WASH

A car wash is a business to consumer (B2C) facing business. This is great news for owners looking to use social media to increase revenue and bring more people to the car wash.

There are **5 main tactics** we recommend when starting or trying to grow you social media presence and increase ROI through this medium.

1. **Decide on a platform or platforms.**
   There are soooo many social media apps out these days it's hard to know what is worth your time and effort. In Chapter 1 you identified your target market. Taking that knowledge, visit the Pew Research Center website to see where your target market is concentrated and those would be the best platforms to concentrate on. (This data is from 2016.)

2. **Defining and creating a brand voice.**
   Your brand voice is the source of your authenticity both in person and especially online, when there is no physical person for people to associate with. It helps people relate to your brand and also helps to create consistency across all of your platforms.

   HOW TO CREATE A BRAND VOICE:

   A. **Create a Character/Persona.**
      Make a list of adjectives that describe your brand. (Some Examples: funny, educational, friendly, a leader, reassuring) Try to distill this list down to the top three descriptors that really encompass your brand voice.

B. Identify the Tone and concrete ways to implement your voice.
Use the below chart to expand on the three words you chose above.

	CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION	DO	DON'T
	(Three Words)	(Describe why this word is important for your brand and how it relates to what you do and who you are.)	(List tangible things you can do to bring this to life)	(List tangible things your brand shouldn't do.)
EXAMPLE	Fun	We don't take ourselves too seriously and try to create a fun and enjoyable experience for our customers.	Use playful imagery like colorful illustrations or examples and speak to our audience like they are a friend.	Don't use industry jargon or obscure examples that our customers don't understand.

3. Create content buckets.

Think about the different types of content you want to create, and gather these into themes that most of your content will fit into. Then, when you go to create content you have easily identifiable topics that you know align with what you want to communicate.

SOME EXAMPLES ARE:

Informational.
This can include updates on when you will be closed, your hours, and if there is weather or construction updates.

Questions & Answers.
This is a fun way to communicate complicated information online in an easy to understand way. Think of common questions people have, and answer them!

Staff/Employee Highlights.
If your goal is to create an authentic brand, one way to do this is to highlight the staff and help people start to build relationships with them. This type of content always performs really well on social media because you have the added benefit of capturing the featured person's family and friends if they share it with their networks. It also can be great for team moral!

4. **Identifying posting logistics.**
There is no perfect answer, but Hubspot, a digital marketing leader gives these general recommendations.

People use Facebook at work and at home, on mobile and desktop.

BEST TIMES TO POST:
12:00 – 1:00 pm on Saturdays and Sundays
3:00 – 4:00 pm on Wednesdays
1:00 – 4:00 pm on Thursdays and Fridays

Twitter is used at work and at home, usually during down times like commutes and breaks.

BEST TIMES TO POST:
12:00 – 3:00 pm on Mondays through Fridays
5:00 – 6:00 pm on Wednesdays

LinkedIn is for professionals, and they tend to use it during working hours.

BEST TIMES TO POST:
7:30 – 8:30 am, 12:00 pm, & 5:00 – 6:00 pm
on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays
10:00 – 11:00 am on Tuesdays

Instagram is meant for use on mobile devices, so user tend to use the network all the time, any time.

BEST TIMES TO POST:
Anytime Monday through Thursday. Except between 3:00 – 4:00 pm

5. **Creating a content calendar.**
The final step to launching an amazing social media presence is to create a content calendar. This way you can plan ahead to make sure you are populating your social media accounts regularly and not scrambling for content at the last minute!

There are many great content calendar resources. An effective way to start is a simple Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

Using a calendar, add in the days you want to post and the content bucket for the post. It's also helpful to add a column for the deadline that you want the content created by, and who is responsible for creating it.

Now you know how to optimize your website, great techniques to solve common website misconceptions, and how to bolster your social media to entice you followers.

So, get started and build your brand!