



# How to Choose the Right Strategic Branding Partner

**If you're developing a new brand or evolving an existing one, choosing the right branding consultant is the most important decision you can make for your small business or organization.**

Before signing a contract, follow the 5 Tips in this checklist:

## 1. Ask them to define what a brand is

If their response is "A brand is a logo, marketing materials or a website", you need to continue your search, i.e. turn around and run...fast! Although these are all very important elements of a brand, they do not define a brand itself. **Your brand is your reputation in the marketplace.** It is how your audience perceives your company, not how you perceive it. It is much more involved than a logo or a color scheme.

## 2. Process. Process. Process.

Make sure they have a proven branding process that has helped past clients go from point A to Z successfully. Make sure they can articulate their process effectively. You want a branding partner with unique experience that can deliver on both brand strategy and design at an equally high level.

**BONUS TIP**

Ask them if they have taken their company through the same branding process they want to sell to you. This will let you know how confident they are with their own process.

## 3. What is their brand saying to you?

Take a long and hard look at your potential branding partner's website – especially on the homepage. Do any of the following ring true:

- First thing they talk about is themselves instead of having language that centers around strategy, process and results for their clients.

- There is a lack of client testimonials or their existing testimonials are vague instead of stating how they've helped grow their clients' business or saved them time.
- They highlight photos of a hip and cool creative office space. Great, if you need an interior decorator, however it has no bearing on if they can carry out a long-term branding process to help move your brand forward.

If any the above items are apparent, you may not be a long-term priority to your new branding partner, no matter how good they look on paper.

## 4. Don't be fooled by branding imposters

There are a lot of creative professionals and non-creatives alike that throw the word "branding" around loosely when describing their service offerings. Make sure you are working with a true branding expert, not just a creative individual or firm that claims they do branding.

It's easy to find a freelancer who will gladly whip up a trendy logo for you on the cheap; however, finding a true branding specialist who can implement a structured branding strategy for your organization can be a much tougher task.

## 5. Trust your gut

Are they genuinely enthusiastic about your company and services? Are they personable and friendly? Are they asking you more questions than you are asking them? When it comes down to choosing the right strategic branding partner, one size does not fit all. You need to do your research and trust your gut...and this checklist!

**Need help?** Call Damon at 602-695-1305 or visit [DamonAndersen.com](http://DamonAndersen.com)