

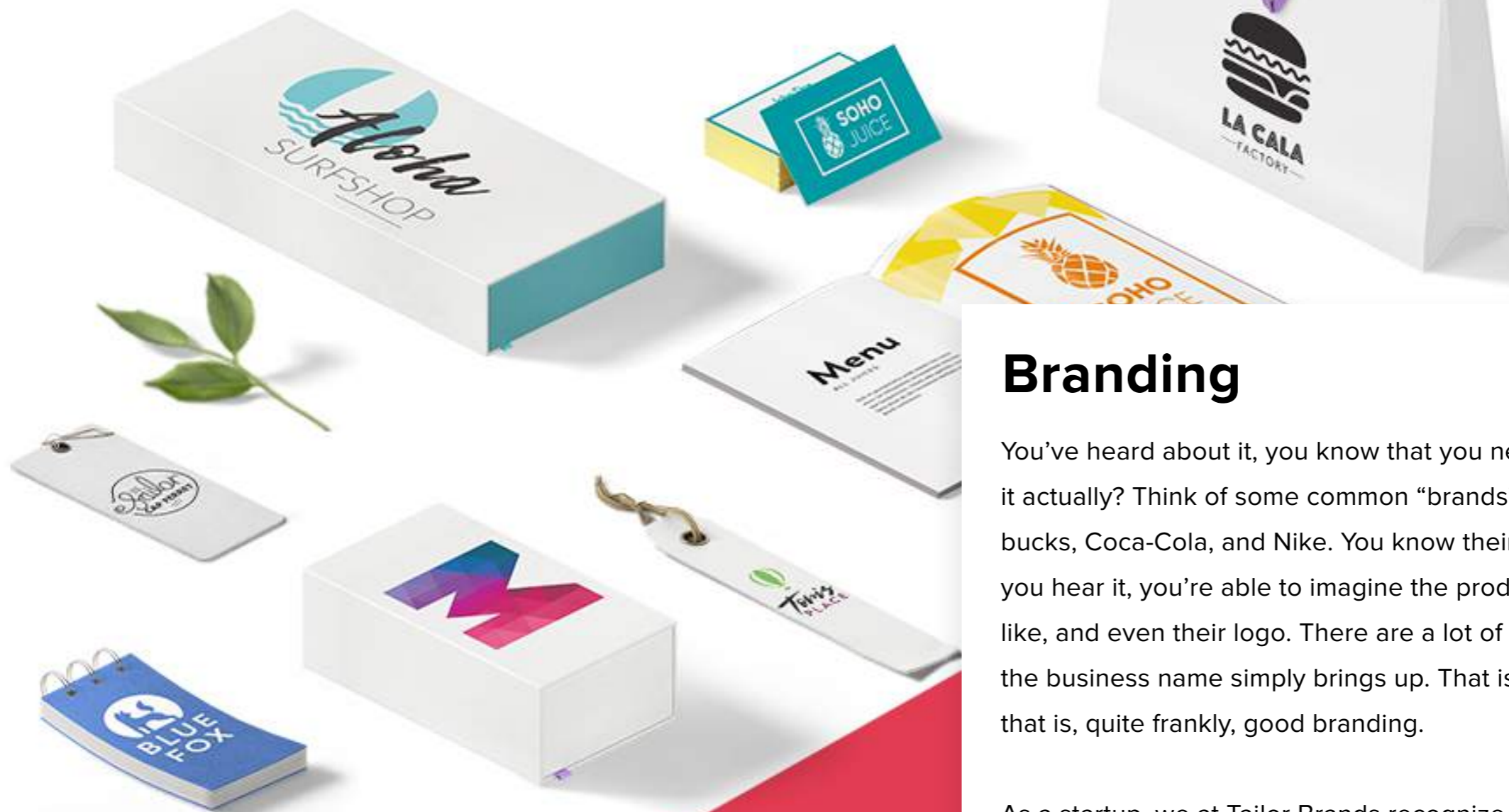


30 SMALL BRANDS

Anyone Can Learn From



What is Branding?

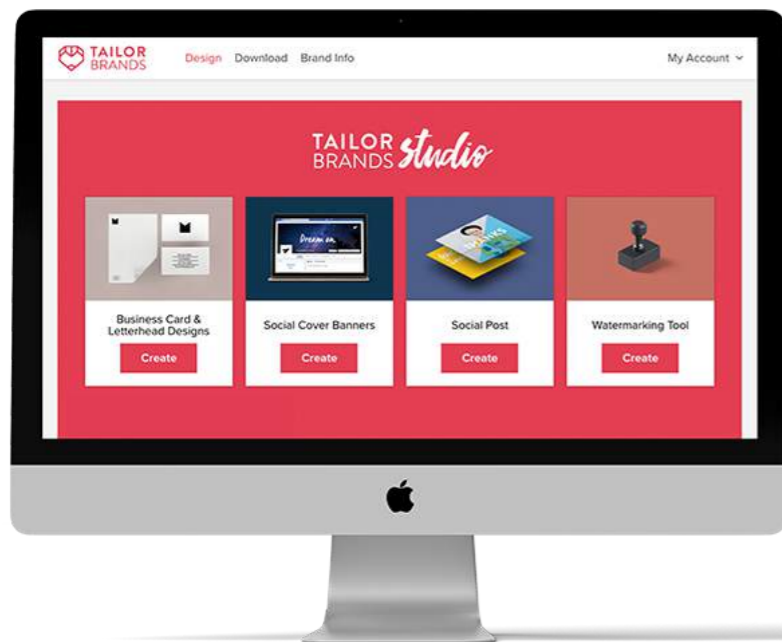


Branding

You've heard about it, you know that you need it, but what is it actually? Think of some common "brands" we all know: Starbucks, Coca-Cola, and Nike. You know their names, and when you hear it, you're able to imagine the product, what it looks like, and even their logo. There are a lot of associations that the business name simply brings up. That is branding, and that is, quite frankly, good branding.

As a startup, we at Tailor Brands recognize how intimidating starting your own business can be. Implementing any idea that involves a lot of steps is a tedious process, and the majority of us don't really have time to fuss with creating branding. You think you're too small, you think it's not possible. We're here to say that it can and should be done!

What is Branding?



Brands consist of a few things, including: color schemes, fonts, your logo, marketing collateral, a slogan or tagline, music, strategy, core values, and actions.

A brand is more than a logo.

A brand is absolutely everything about the company that you want to represent. Small businesses are at an advantage here. Since they're not yet locked into a specific image, they have the freedom to craft and create the type of brand they would like to portray to the world. At Tailor Brands, we think having a small team is no excuse to say that branding can't be done right. As inspiration, we've compiled a list of 30 small businesses that managed to create great branding.

Introduction

Branding starts with a logo and extends to a visual language, brand voice, values and even marketing. Branding elevates a product from its product category. It eliminates competition - making you want a Perrier, when you actually wanted some sparkling water. Good branding reduces consumer factors such as price and availability. But all too often businesses wait too long before working to create effective branding. Effective branding does not need to be expensive, and big brands aren't the only ones that are able to have wildly effective branding strategies. Any business, big or small, should start implementing a strong brand strategy as soon as possible since it takes time to see the fruits of your labor. Branding, is a promise you make to your customer or client, and you need to start working to match your product with your brand as soon as possible.

**Introducing 30 Small Brands
Anyone Can Learn From**



OddFellows Ice Cream Co. is an ice cream shop with a flagship store in Brooklyn and a shop in Manhattan. Ice cream stores are a dime a dozen in a city like New York, so how does Oddfellows stand out? By taking social media by storm, for one. Their social media presence appeals to anyone that has ever looked at ice cream in their life, regardless of if they'd enjoyed it or not. This company has a fundamental understanding of social media and what it is what people want to be looking at.

Especially on Instagram, users want to be looking at beautiful images, combining this with bizarre flavor combinations and ice cream products Cotton Candy Cone, Caramelized Onion and Prosciutto Melon, their content is sharable, racking up tons of shares and comments for people showing their friends what is happening at Oddfellows this week. They strongly repost other people's images of their products, encouraging people to share their ice cream on their own feeds for a chance to be featured on theirs.

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USE INSTAGRAM AS A VIRAL STORM, COMBINING GREAT VISUAL CONTENT WITH PERSONALITY AND USER-GENERATED CONTENT.

It's a dual benefit- word about Oddfellows gets out while thousands of people see one new post. Even further, Oddfellows oftentimes pairs with businesses in the community, discusses the science behind ice cream, and visits other locations for pop-up shops, posting all of this to social media for a natural virality. Holiday Kumar, co-owner of OddFellows, notes that as first-time business owners, branding wasn't necessarily their strongest suit, but wanted the business to appeal to adults and children alike with wacky, whimsical nostalgia.

With a logo designed by Umar Rashid, their brand is a innovative and new take on the classic ice cream shop, a memorable experience that resonates with their customer after they leave the store. With classic ice cream elements (banana splits, sundaes, and floats) combined with interesting and unique innovations, and their ability to connect with their customers on social media, the Oddfellows brand has definitely hit their niche unlike other ice cream stores in a competitive market.

ORIGINAL GRAIN

Even though many people use their cellphones as a means to tell time, there's still an active and thriving watch market. With so many big names in this space, standing out can be hard. While the Original Grain logo, designed in-house, does not create an immediate splash, what does make this company stand out is how they've managed to establish their brand outside of traditional marketing efforts. What Original Grain does better than many of their competitors is using Kickstarter to market not just their first launch, but each new product they introduce - driving their marketing spend very low.

Original Grain has used Kickstarter to their advantage, primarily relying on the platform as a means to market their new products. With a Kickstarter campaign creating hype for the company even before the first product was released, contributors raised over \$390,000 for exclusive access.

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USE KICKSTARTER NOT ONLY AS THE FIRST WAY TO ATTRACT ATTENTION FOR A BUSINESS OR PRODUCT, BUT AS A STRONG PLATFORM FOR REPEATED MARKETING EFFORTS.

What is notable is that Original Grain still uses Kickstarter to launch collections, including their Barrel collection, which went on to raise over \$430,000 in 30 days, becoming the third most popular fashion Kickstarter of all time. Crowdfunding has been a primary way for this company to appeal to customers and gain a new following without exhausting a marketing budget for each product.

Part of what made this so popular on the platform is not only how classic elements are used to create innovative and modern watches or how each watch is handcrafted with sustainably sourced exotic hardwood, but the purchase of every watch leads to the planting of 10 new trees. To keep prices affordable for their product, the watches are sold direct-to-consumer as well, ensuring that their prices are the lowest that they can be. For a Kickstarter project it hits a few important points: giving the customer something they want, keeps costs down, and gives back to the community.



MIZZEN+MAIN

So you just launched a fashion brand. Great! But it only makes you one in a million. You know what could be a great viral way to expand your idea? Celebrity endorsement. But those things cost heaps of money right? Wrong. With your product in the right hands, it could be a very effective and cost efficient strategy.

Mizzen+Main has quickly become the favorite clothing company of professional athletes. Football player J.J. Watt and baseball player Jake Arrieta are only two of the over 250 outspoken professional athletes advocates of the

company's clothing line.

In fact, the company is known for having a \$0 marketing budget, with athletes becoming investors in the product. How did they manage to create such a hype with such an influential group?

Simple. While they couldn't afford to gift their product to athletes, they offered special bundle pricing and brought the product to the players – in the locker room. Word spread from locker room to locker room and as more athletes became hooked they also became ambassadors by wearing the product and posting about

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KNOW YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE AND WHERE TO FIND THEM, EVEN IF THAT'S LITERALLY GETTING DOWN AND DIRTY IN THE LOCKER ROOM.

it on social media. Organic marketing in this realm has been hailed as the new way to think about endorsements. The brand has successfully utilized the social currency of their loyal athletic customer base to capitalize on low-cost marketing. The company's current logo was designed by Steven DeWitt, staying within the theme of simple timelessness embodied by their product. What makes them immediately stand out is the distinctive blue thread reminiscent of the sea that is used in the top button hole of each shirt. The blue button

hole serves to distinguish the product while remaining subtle. This blue thread is often how Mizzen+Main learned who was wearing their shirts on social media and often jumped into the conversation.



It helps to identify a need for improvement in the world, and having Google, Yahoo!, Twitter, Microsoft, AT&T, and more on your side helps too. Granted, not everyone can get such giants to believe in their mission but Girls Who Code has done just that as a nonprofit that aims to bridge the gender gap in technology-related fields by giving girls role models in the real world, educating them about the field of computer science, and giving them the opportunity to pursue careers in these traditionally male-dominated areas.

This organization simply has no reason not to exist, and offers no reason why such large companies should not be a part of their process. In fact, companies invest in Girls Who Code due to the long-term potential in the tech world, which spreads the word and piques the interest of other organizations, and it makes companies who aren't involved look bad for not being involved in this cause. Their visual branding is a reflection of these goals, making sure to use the word "Girls" and reflecting femininity in their logo and font choices, but also power.

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FIND YOUR NICHE, AND PERKS IF THAT NICHE HAPPENS TO HAVE A SOCIETAL BENEFIT THAT NO ONE CAN ARGUE WITH.

The design firm Pivot was tasked with creating the most recent iteration of the company's logo, highlighting the powerful yet feminine core of their mission. Visiting their website or looking at their logo, it is clear the connection between girls and coding, between the light, fun colors, the font combination in their logo, and the way they speak about their business. The brand reflects inspiration, innovation, and the power of girls to positively affect the technological world around us. With summer immersion camps, YouTube videos explaining code

by women and for women, and sponsorship by companies like AOL, Verizon, General Electric and Adobe, and giving away \$1 million in scholarships for their summer program, Girls Who Code filled a niche in a new space, giving them a heavy branding advantage. Branding should convey the essentials of your company to anyone looking at your brand, and the branding from Girls Who Code leaves nothing to the imagination: it's for girls, it's for technology, and it's for combining the two to change the world.



Chairish first launched their brand without any direct competitors and as a brand-new business that allowed vintage furniture and design lovers to buy and sell decor from one another. Since their launch, numerous other competitors have taken the stage, which is always a struggle for any business, but Chairish offers the most options in the largest area, and works with vintage shops selling bulk items rather than one-off sellers selling one or two pieces. But is this enough to stand out from the rest? One person in their marketing team must have thought otherwise. They introduced a cool concept: Instagram-only online

auctions, where users are able to claim and purchase items directly from social media, sets them apart from many of the new furniture sales websites that have sprung up. Combined with a large blogger following inspired by the ease of buying high-quality furniture from a singular marketplace at an affordable cost and using well-known designers to design a space around an item, Chairish has been able to latch onto the design-oriented community, even offering an app to make buying and selling a breeze. Even further, they've been able to tap into a gigantic Instagram following, reaching over 75,000 users on their account by posting inspirational designs.

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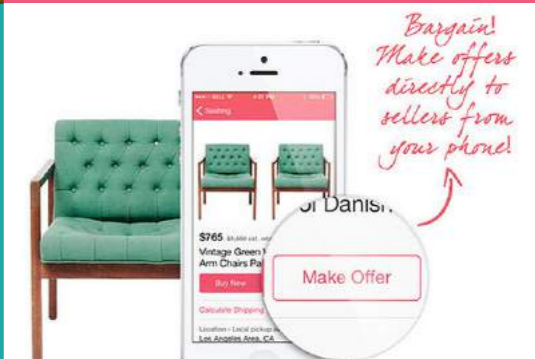
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DON'T BE AFRAID TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MORE THAN SELLING YOUR PRODUCT. COMBINED WITH VISUAL INSPIRATION, ANY BUSINESS CAN BECOME A TRUSTED RESOURCE IN THEIR SPACE.

There's a large social market for this type of Pinterest-inspiration, which encourages people to tag, comment, and share with their like-minded design-oriented pals. One of the ways they've worked to make design accessible is by leveraging their Instagram following to make sales. Hosting Instagram-only online auctions, these 75,000 users are encouraged to purchase from vintage resellers. With celebrities like Jessica Alba using Chairish to furnish their home and being vocal about it, along with well-known designers using the marketplace

to help furnish spaces, Chairish has experienced a large growth in the wake of other furniture reseller options on the market.

Visually, the Chairish logo is the heart icon woven into the chair, embodying the design aspect of the company's offerings, explaining that they care, and uses a font that is professional and clean. Developed in-house, the Chairish team has rebranded twice since 2013, making improvements to their fonts and colors as they grew their brand, even working with Mucho Design to help with their branding.

The Bearded Bastard

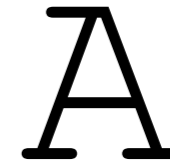
Do you have a beard? Do you know someone with a beard? Then you probably know someone that is interested in The Bearded Bastard. Highlighting a small segment of the population (bearded humans and those that interact with them), The Bearded Bastard is taking something that is not considered to be communal and making it something that is. The personality that is associated with beards through this company has given them almost a cult-like following, with users speaking highly of this business online and through social media. Named after founder Jeremiah

Newton's nickname when he began making mustache wax for his iconic handlebar mustache, and the brand is an authentic reflection of the founder. The message sent to customers and fans of The Bearded Bastard is to just be proud of who you are. Cock your hat. Walk with a swagger. Wear unconventional clothes if you feel like it. Develop your own personal style and dive into your life's passions. But The Bearded Bastard is an intentionally open-ended brand that lets the customer fill in the blanks, which has led to a large organic following of both men and women excited about

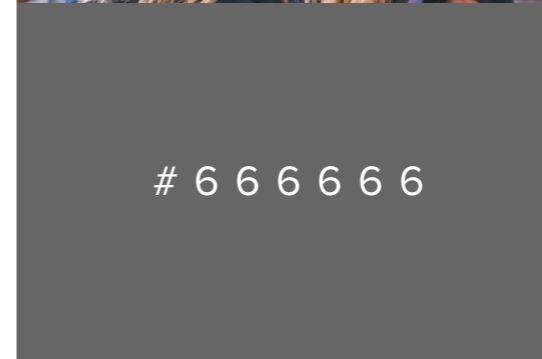
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TAKE SOMETHING THAT SEEMS MUNDANE AND MAKE IT EXTRAORDINARY, BUILDING COMMUNITY AROUND THIS SHARED TRAIT WITH OTHERS.

their products and has been able to breach the traditional audience for men's goods, in person and on social media. Blogs can be the best friend of a small business, especially one that is just getting started. For The Bearded Bastard, the men's blogs across the web reviewed their products, and began suggesting this line of products in their writings and across social media. The virality began with product reviews and has expanded in the local Austin, Texas retail community and on social media. Both Austin and customer's images play a huge role in their social

marketing strategy as well. The quality of the products was meant to play a larger role than the logo and their external marketing efforts, which does not strike a strong visual impact upon immediate inspection. However the classic logo was designed in-house, using the skills of close friends, and is inspired by Old World family crests and craft guilds, meant as a homage to traditional craftsman's marks. Their secondary logo is a script debuting in 2015. A reminder that a logo is not the be all, end all for branding!

m a k e r s | k i t

When a job or relationship is testing our nerves, it's safe to say that everyone has an outlet. For some, that outlet is taking the time to do something with your hands. This love of creating, a DIY platform, and partnerships with large retailers is the cornerstone of MakersKit's success. MakersKit offers all the materials and video tutorials aimed at helping people explore their creativity and make something with their hands.

Their use of video tutorials has been one of the ways that MakersKit has discovered their following. YouTube is increasingly becoming a search engine as well as a video service, with many creatives looking for video tutorials when crafting, and typing queries into the website to get results. Uploading these video tutorials to YouTube, MakersKit has tapped into a large market of people seeking video guidance to create, thereby becoming

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The background of the page features three bamboo stalks in clear glass vases, each with a black base, set on a light-colored wooden surface. The bamboo stalks are green and have several leaves at the top. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**YOUTUBE IS NOT JUST
A PLACE TO WATCH
HILARIOUS CAT VIDEOS,
BUT ALSO A VALUABLE
SEARCH ENGINE. VIDEOS
CAN HELP EXPAND A
BRAND.**

familiar with the MakersKit products. Part of that branding process involved publishing a book and partnering with retailers such as Nordstroms to host live events, creating personal relationships with stores and attendees.

MakersKit is embodied by the idea of being authentic and fun, while supporting communities and makers themselves. With all products made in the United States, the kits are high-quality, ensuring that you'll be able to enjoy putting something together with the confidence that it will last. In the vein of

being makers, the company's logo reflects the dotted line pattern seen in tutorials and guides when anyone is making a product- in fact, this logo was created by the founder himself and has undergone around a dozen iterations, but always reflects the dotted line pattern of the original design.

Photojojo!

Photojojo should be the first place anyone should go if they think that taking pictures is even a little bit of fun. For many small businesses, there is an immense focus around matching competitors- with products, with pricing, and even with support. Using fun props, unique products, and everything you didn't know you needed to take pictures, Photojojo makes photography more than enjoyable, which has made them stand out time and time again. Photojojo has

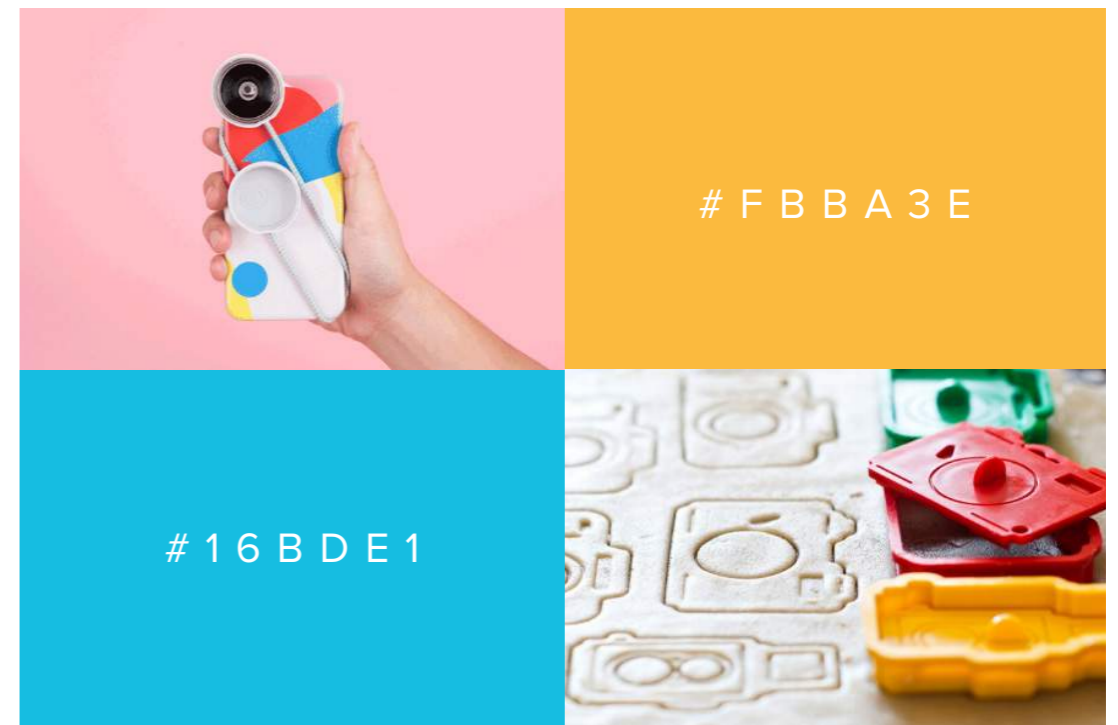
been known for their business community and culture, always going above and beyond to create a really important value from there. Their brand, very specifically, is remaining true to their core beliefs over time, regardless of what other photography, iphoneography, or printmaking services break into the space.

Even with how much fun Photojojo is (seriously, just say Photojojo!) the brand is still passionate, knowledgeable,

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ALTRUISTIC GESTURES MAY
SOMETIME ELEVATE YOUR
BRAND HIGHER THAN ANY
MARKETING PLOY.
DON'T SPEND TIME
WORRYING ABOUT THE
COMPETITION. STAY TRUE
TO YOUR BRAND, YOUR
MESSAGE, AND WHAT
MAKES PEOPLE SMILE.

and professional when it comes to photography. But professional doesn't need to be dry, and the business explicitly seeks to make people smile when visiting their website. You can offer people a bag of Lucky Charms marshmallows-only upon purchase and also offer high-quality camera equipment too. Or instruct people how to take food photos while hosting a mystery box giveaway-seriously, it's all about fun here - and the beautiful thing is it doesn't seem to be dictated by their marketing efforts.

As a company around for 10 years, the initial branding was

done by founder Amit Gupta, which remained the same until the Photojojo rebranded last year. As part of that rebrand came a logo by Fuzzco, which was a clean, new take on the older company logo. Something that was fresh but immediately recognizable as Photojojo and maintained the fun elements the company loves so much. What has remained the same, however, is the company's love of bright blue, stars, exclamation points, bright photos, and hidden dinosaurs, all of which can be found on the company's website.



Technology is booming, and it's every day that some new product, service, or brand is developed that capitalizes on this trend. Entrenched in this are developers, who are acutely and intimately familiar with the trends in the field, not as easily impressed as us non-developers may be. Sure, you give out swag, but how do you convince developers to wear yours over any other brands?

Since branding for technology can be difficult, Codeship

focused its branding primarily on developers and where and how they communicate. From sending personalized notifications to their users to offering random discount emails, it's worked in their favor. However, many tech companies use swag to create feelings of camaraderie with their customers, so what makes Codeship different?

One of Codeship's most prominent features is their blog. It turned into a product within a

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CREATING COMMUNITY CAN BE ACHIEVED EVEN IF YOUR PRODUCT ISN'T COMMUNAL IN NATURE.

product that fosters community. Codeship's blog shares company knowledge but also invites other developers to write in and share knowledge. Being part of the Codeship's content network makes their clients feel as if they are part of the company, and support it accordingly. This is no ordinary thing if your product isn't community focused in nature. But Codeship did it - one customer even wore a Codeship shirt to the birth of his second child and send the company a picture to show his support.

Founder Manuel Weiss was tasked with creating the company's logo and brand identity, which is strongly influenced by their their focus on the customer relationship with developers, and wanted this reflected through their entire company from first impression to last.



Interior decorating is a pretty saturated field. For young designers, being showcased by a big franchise like Urban Outfitters used to be a huge stepping stone. But today, as more and more independent designers sell their creations online, it's very hard to get spotted, regardless of how good your products are. Erica Feldmann understood this problem, and decided that if Home Decorating isn't interesting enough on its own, she'll need to spice it up.

How? By harnessing the image of her hometown: Salem, Massachusetts.

HausWitch Home + Healing is one of the only stores we know of that allows you to purchase furniture and house spells side by side, because if you're planning on moving into a new place, you might as well protect yourself, and what better place to do it than in Salem: home of Halloween and witches? By bringing the history and story of Salem into the shop, something

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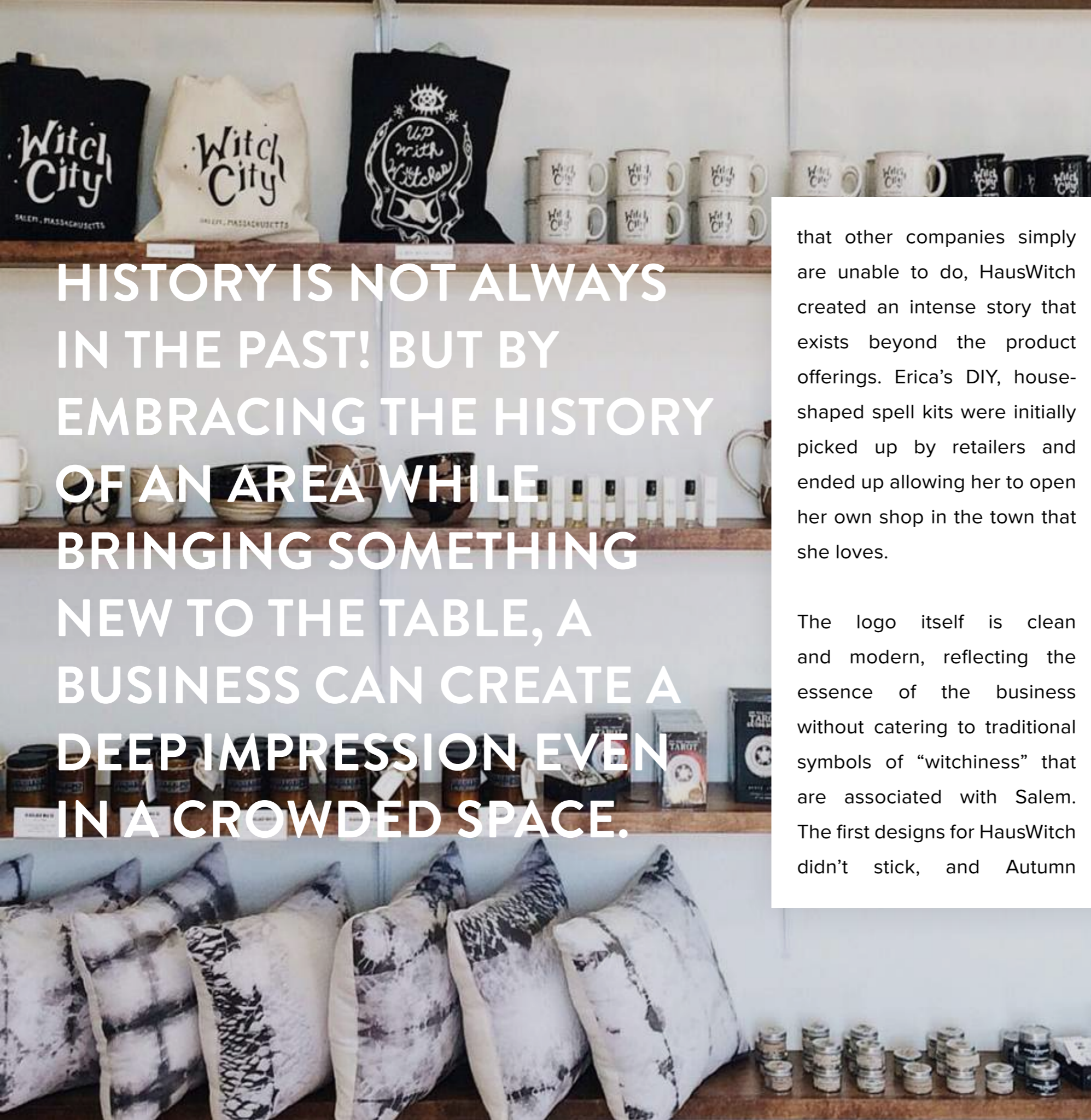
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**HISTORY IS NOT ALWAYS
IN THE PAST! BUT BY
EMBRACING THE HISTORY
OF AN AREA WHILE
BRINGING SOMETHING
NEW TO THE TABLE, A
BUSINESS CAN CREATE A
DEEP IMPRESSION EVEN
IN A CROWDED SPACE.**

that other companies simply are unable to do, HausWitch created an intense story that exists beyond the product offerings. Erica's DIY, house-shaped spell kits were initially picked up by retailers and ended up allowing her to open her own shop in the town that she loves.

The logo itself is clean and modern, reflecting the essence of the business without catering to traditional symbols of "witchiness" that are associated with Salem. The first designs for HausWitch didn't stick, and Autumn

DesLauries of Secretary Deluxe developed the current visual brand of HausWitch, as well as helps out with brand sprucing once a year. However, the brand does not shy away from Salem's history, creating a great middle ground between respecting the past and embracing modernity.



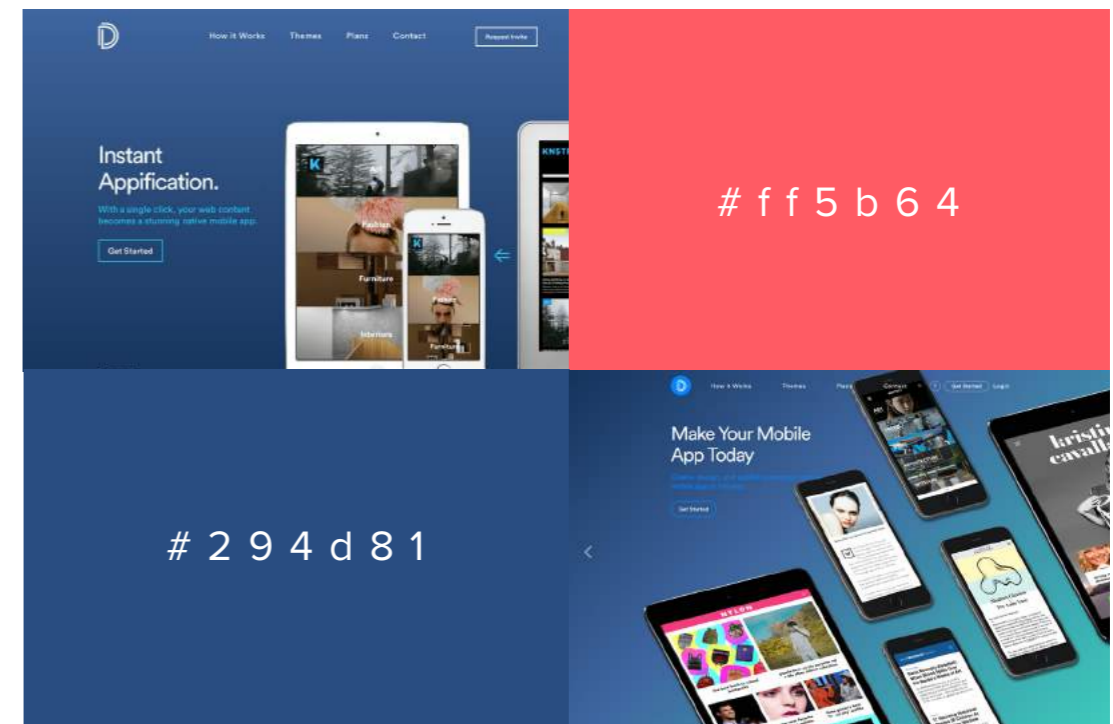
Your first branding strategy isn't going to always work, even if you have all the experience in the world about implementing it. The initial strategy of DWNLD was simple; they were to offer big business the option of lowering the cost of mobile development by using their low-cost app making model. This strategy seemed like a slam-dunk; companies always like to cut costs and if you get big names to use you then the small ones will be sure to follow.

After launch, DWNLD realized that big companies weren't ready to be the guinea pigs, but their brand was actually picking up with YouTube stars and internet celebrities. Instead of trying to find new ways to make their old idea work, DWNLD decided to ride the wave and leverage their customers digital influence. This worked! Not only did this market have a gigantic following of users, but this led to celebrities such as Molly Sims and Kristin Cavallari using DWNLD to publish their

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**DON'T BE WARY OF
CHANGING WHAT YOU
KNOW DOESN'T WORK
FOR YOU, AND WHAT
WORKS FOR YOUR BRAND
MAY NOT BE THE CHANNEL
YOU ORIGINALLY
CONSIDERED.
IF OPPORTUNITY
PRESENTS ITSELF, RIDE
THE WAVE.**

personal phone apps.

With so many tech companies mimicking the Google-inspired, flat logo design for their visual elements, DNLD wanted a retro, double-lined D that harkens to old-school video game systems (think Atari and Sega) and tech brands of the 80's and 90's. This ode to geeky culture of the past speaks to their products as well. Don't be fooled- DWNLD keeps app design modern and slick, wanting their apps to look and feel as premium as those made at a much higher cost. The current logo is the result of the first rebrand done by in-house

Creative Director Rusty Munro, created to help encourage a strong brand identity. The double-lined D is flexible in its usage, and is currently used with different color variations. They're planning on taking an even closer look at their visual branding, updating their email templates, editing their user interface, and even releasing products and tools to advance the brand even further, based on their new branding strategy.



The craft beer movement has exploded, and there are tons of markets available for beer drinkers to connect with one another. Social media is one such place, and Untappd is social networking for beer drinkers, allowing users to “check in” not only the location they were consuming beer at, but the kind of beer they were drinking, allowing followers to comment, cheers, and connect over their love of the beverage.

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A photograph of two hands holding beer bottles against a sunset background. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The bottles are in the foreground, and the hands are visible. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

PROVIDE YOUR CUSTOMERS WITH MOTIVE FOR SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT YOU.

Untappd's "Foursquare" approach continues when it comes to recruiting new businesses to use their platform. Bars and breweries can "claim" their business on the app. Since most small businesses opt for whatever free publicity they can get, there is no real reason for businesses not to claim their business. This creates a snowball effect: if your competition is there then you'll be there, and if they get better ratings, you'll try and get your customers to rate you as well - supplying free marketing for the app. Untappd created what many startups dream of:

viral marketing. Now there is even a subreddit devoted to discussing all different kinds of craft beer under the Untappd name. Even recently, Untappd has partnered with businesses to provide them with data and analytics around what people are drinking, helping these companies rely on Untappd as a sort of bar manager, making decisions about what people drink and what to stock.



Small businesses are very much the backbone of a great economy, and Storenvvy allows anyone looking to buy from independent brands the opportunity to do so in a convenient marketplace. But Etsy is already here and already a giant in this space. How has Storenvvy even begun to compete with Etsy for a share of the craft-based marketplace?

Etsy has some limitations in their platform, including

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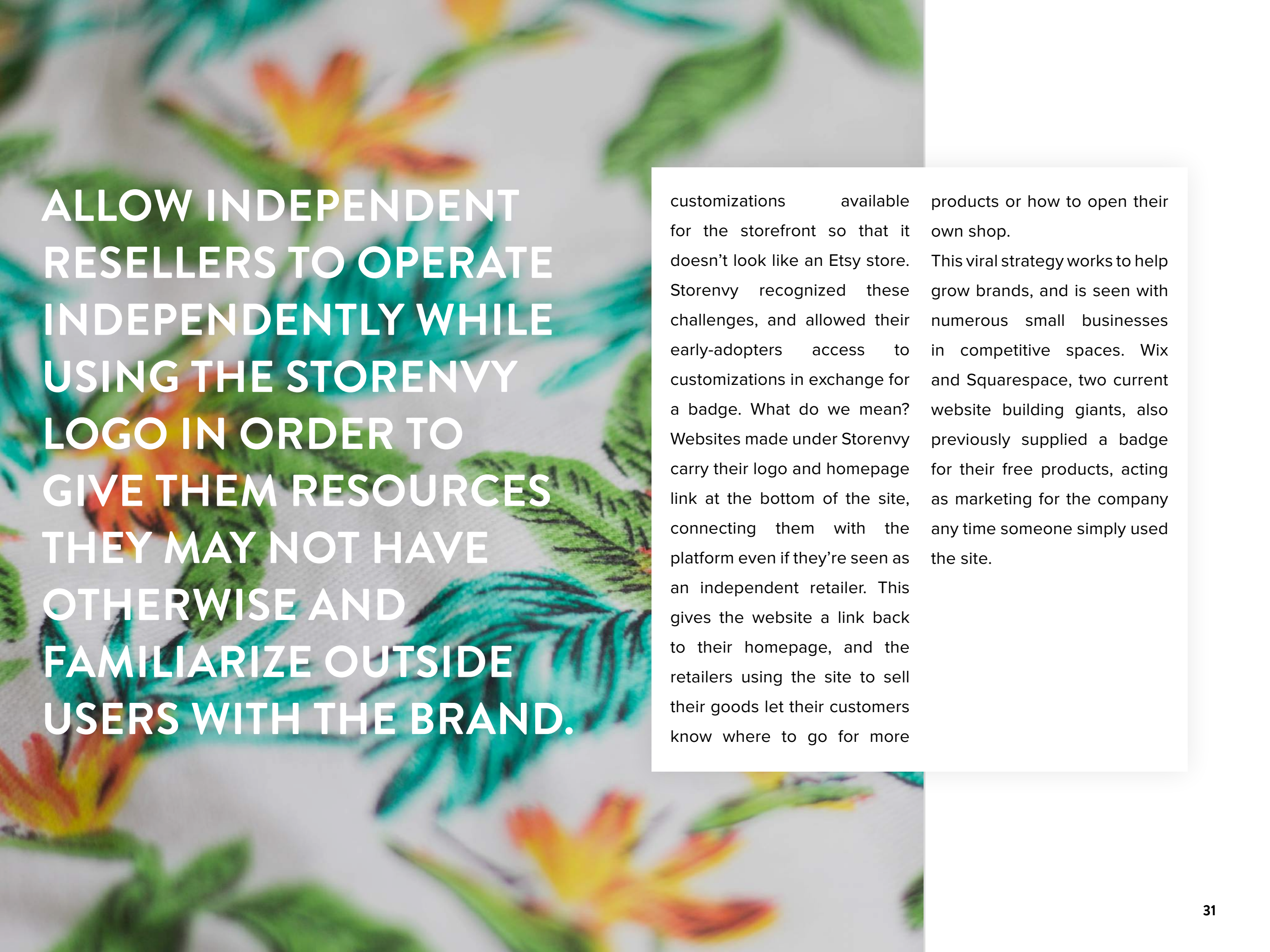
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**ALLOW INDEPENDENT
RESELLERS TO OPERATE
INDEPENDENTLY WHILE
USING THE STORENVY
LOGO IN ORDER TO
GIVE THEM RESOURCES
THEY MAY NOT HAVE
OTHERWISE AND
FAMILIARIZE OUTSIDE
USERS WITH THE BRAND.**

customizations available for the storefront so that it doesn't look like an Etsy store. Storenv recognized these challenges, and allowed their early-adopters access to customizations in exchange for a badge. What do we mean? Websites made under Storenv carry their logo and homepage link at the bottom of the site, connecting them with the platform even if they're seen as an independent retailer. This gives the website a link back to their homepage, and the retailers using the site to sell their goods let their customers know where to go for more

products or how to open their own shop.

This viral strategy works to help grow brands, and is seen with numerous small businesses in competitive spaces. Wix and Squarespace, two current website building giants, also previously supplied a badge for their free products, acting as marketing for the company any time someone simply used the site.



The branding behind Maker's Row relies heavily on the "Made in America" concept that's been making a huge comeback. By connecting American designers with American manufacturers they managed to put values at the forefront of their product while also solving a huge issue for designers who are oftentimes forced into using overseas manufacturers, which can be a terrible downfall for a business. Similarly, for factories that rely on an influx of business to stay afloat, maintaining business can be difficult. So when Maker's Row was able

to connect designers who could have more of a hand in the development process with factories needing to maintain their business, they turned their brand into something more than simply a business, but an entire value-system. When American manufacturing, a topic that many Americans hold dear to their heart, stands at the forefront of your business then you float above the regular competition of simply price of product that may be an issue for others.

A maker with an idea can take it to Maker's Row, where they're

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**TAP INTO A VALUE AND
PUT THIS VALUE AS THE
FACE OF YOUR BRAND
SINCE IT'S CREATING
SOMETHING BEYOND THE
COST OF THE PRODUCT.**

Nuance

connected with skilled pattern makers, material suppliers, samples of the product, custom tools, and production to bring any idea to life. This works great for ideas getting their momentum through Kickstarter and other crowdfunding websites that are also looking to bring manufacturing to the United States. Factories don't often market themselves, and being included on Maker's Row helps them get noticed. This, combined with videos that intimately discuss the manufacturing process, opens the doors for a strong relationship between

designers and manufacturers that engages workers and encourages small shop owners, strengthening and allowing the "Made in America" movement to grow and flourish.

BOW & DRAPE

In this current market, there is something to be said about out-niching other brands. When the item you're selling appeals to a small portion of people who don't often have something marketed heavily towards them, you'll get some intense brand ambassadors, without even asking for them. So why are Bow & Drape so niche? They sell customizable basics, aimed towards young adults, the kind that seek high-end clothing and fashion without the high cost. This

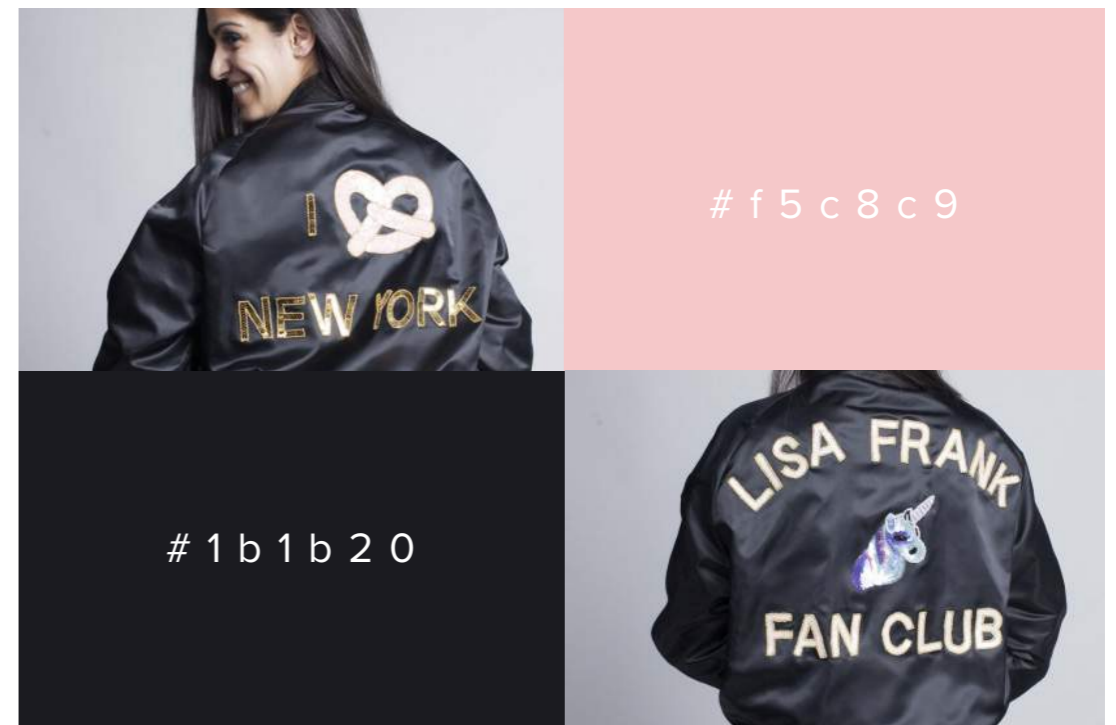
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YOU THINK YOU HAVE A
NICHE, AND THEN YOU
OUT-NICHE THAT NICHE.

by itself makes for a more targeted demographic than most companies have in much later stage. Once Bow & Drape had their early adopters, they used them as ambassadors. They launched Instagram caption contests with a custom hashtag for puns they would be able to use on their products. Being naturally sharable, their early adopters got their friends involved and soon the whole thing was spreading like Gangnam Style video.

THINX

We first noticed Thinx when they took on an impressive New York City subway ad campaign, advertising their menstruation-proof underwear for women. Impressive meaning that they got everyone to stop and take a second glance, at the images of women, snarky quotes, eggs, and grapefruit. The ads were not only well-done, but provocative, prompting the MTA to consider time and time again whether or not they would even allow the ads to run in stations and trains.

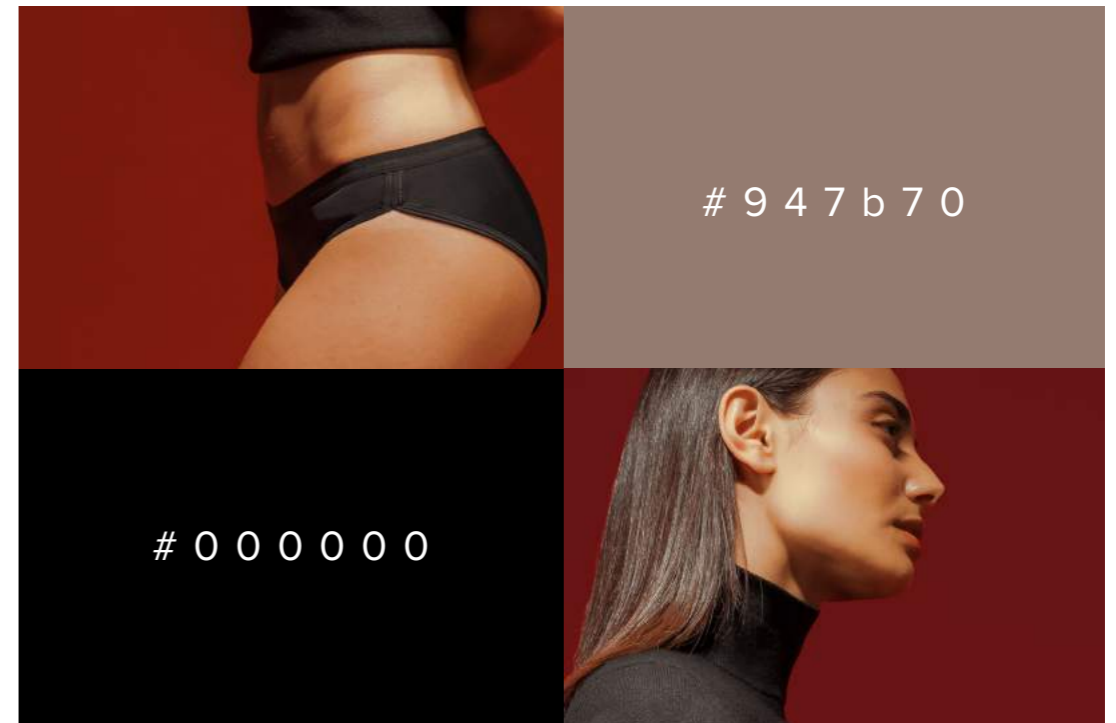
TYPEFACE



LEAGUE SPARTAN
BOLD



GRAPHIK





**WHILE MANY SMALL
BUSINESSES SHY AWAY
FROM CONTROVERSY,
SOMETIMES THE BEST
THING TO DO IS LEAN
RIGHT INTO IT AND GET
YOUR CONTROVERSY ON.**

In fact, this is one of the ways that helped the company go viral: the MTA in New York had declined the ads a few times, which led to a number of articles and pieces questioning this choice. Nothing like a bit of controversy to get people interested! Thinx took this a step further recently, incorporating a transgender man on the forefront some of their advertisements, which has been the first time advertising of this kind has been seen in the subway system.

Thinx additionally hosts online question and answer sessions

for women and girls to ask questions about their product and related menstruation issues. By tackling a space for women and not being afraid to challenge previously held standards has been the greatest branding method for this company and contributed to their growth.



In the cities that MakeSpace is currently found in, there is no lack of storage options, especially considering how tightly cramped these areas are. That means for a business to make a splash in this realm, they need to be doing something right. The MakeSpace company idea takes storage a step further: they come to your house to pick up what you want stored, take it to their storage facility, and keep it there until you want it back, when they deliver it back to you. With free moving help, and free bins, your stuff will also be photographed so

you'll know that you're getting everything back the way you sent it. As an additional perk, MakeSpace makes free Goodwill donation pickups for when you're ready to do a large cleaning and save space.

Great, but is that enough? Hardly when there are so many other options in the market that are trying to make you disappear. When MakeSpace launched they got into an advertising battle with two bigger competitive companies. Instead of bowing out, MakeSpace used their competitor's marketing slur

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AVENIR



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3 e a e 5 f





**CONSIDER MAKING
YOUR COMPETITORS DO
YOUR BRANDING FOR
YOU BY ACCEPTING AND
RESPONDING TO THEIR
CRITICISMS.**

dollars in their favor, which has helped to propel the company into the eyes of those that may not have experience with them. Understanding the limits of these storage giants was crucial, and turning storage high-tech resulting in their competitors launching ads that directly referenced the company's motto ("Your closet in the cloud") and used their company color. MakeSpace used this to their advantage, calling out their competitors and using their campaigns to cast light in their own direction. What may have just been another storage company was

pushed right into the forefront, thanks to their competition's ads and the savvy to use these to their advantage.

BLOOM THAT

Let's call BloomThat the comeback kid. With immediate success in San Francisco, the company sought to expand their offerings into other cities. This is when they learned they had blown through a large portion of their seed funding and were quickly on the road to bankruptcy. This doesn't seem like a great branding story, right? Wrong. The company quickly reevaluated their financial plan and put what they learned to great use- both for better understanding their business and being a great example of what many small businesses

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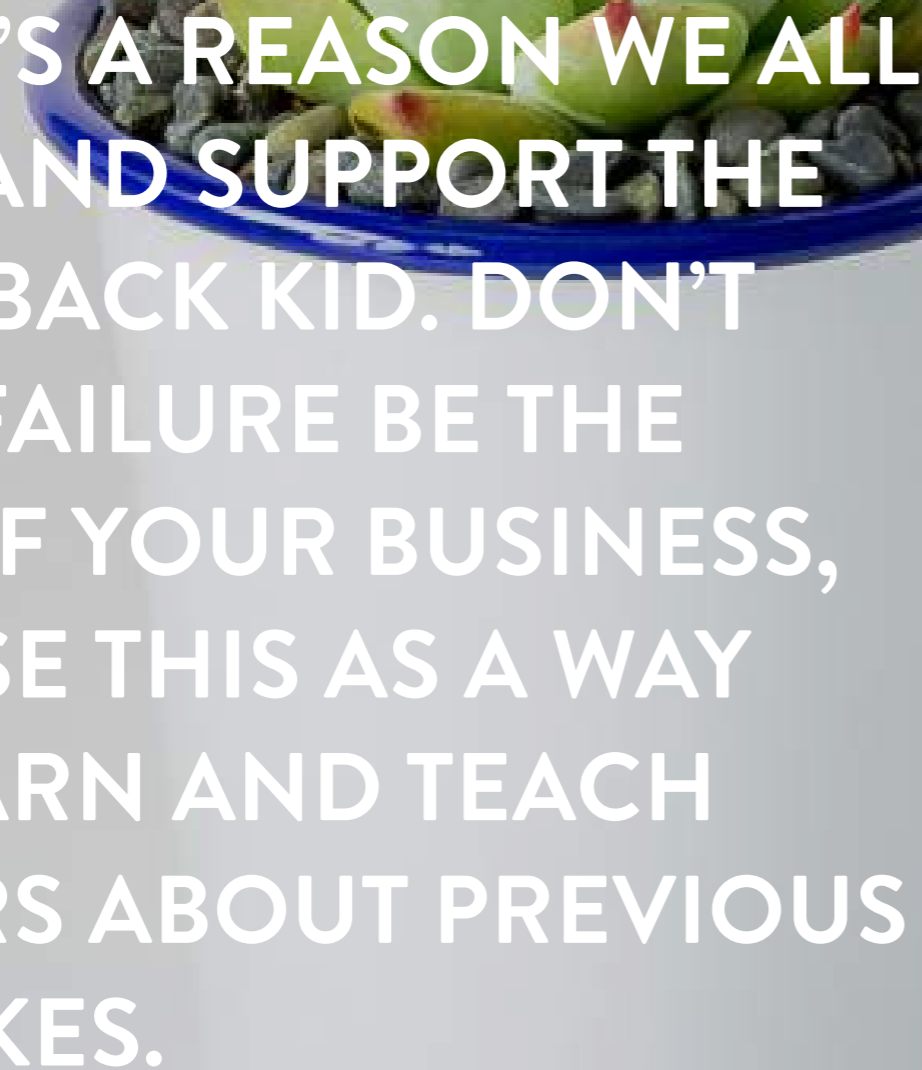
PROXIMA NOVA



f 2 6 7 2 2

4 0 4 3 4 c



A succulent plant with green leaves and red tips, growing in a blue pot. The pot is placed on a white pedestal. The background is a light gray gradient.

THERE'S A REASON WE ALL
LOVE AND SUPPORT THE
COMEBACK KID. DON'T
LET A FAILURE BE THE
END OF YOUR BUSINESS,
BUT USE THIS AS A WAY
TO LEARN AND TEACH
OTHERS ABOUT PREVIOUS
MISTAKES.

need to do in order to succeed in competitive industries. They turned their business failure into a branding success, playing off of this failure to show other businesses, and especially startups and newer companies, how important the difference between lifestyle and company actually is.

BloomThat has the benefit of being partially backed by celebrity Ashton Kutcher, but notably, their brush with failure is one of the significant parts of their brand. Does it hurt to fail? Perhaps it hurts the ego, but everyone loves

an underdog. In the realm of flower delivery services, it is exactly that failure that defines the brand, their offerings, and allows them to connect with the flower consumer better than other flower services.

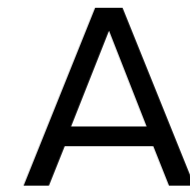
BARON FIG

Baron Fig does not spend a lot of time branding their notebooks, and the branding that is there is tucked away, almost a reminder to the customer. This minimal branding approach can be seen in brands like Muji and even Uniqlo, and the idea behind it is letting your product speak for you, relying on the customers to act as evangelists, and lowering your marketing dollars in a way that would be reflected in the price.

TYPEFACE



BRANDON
GROTESQUE



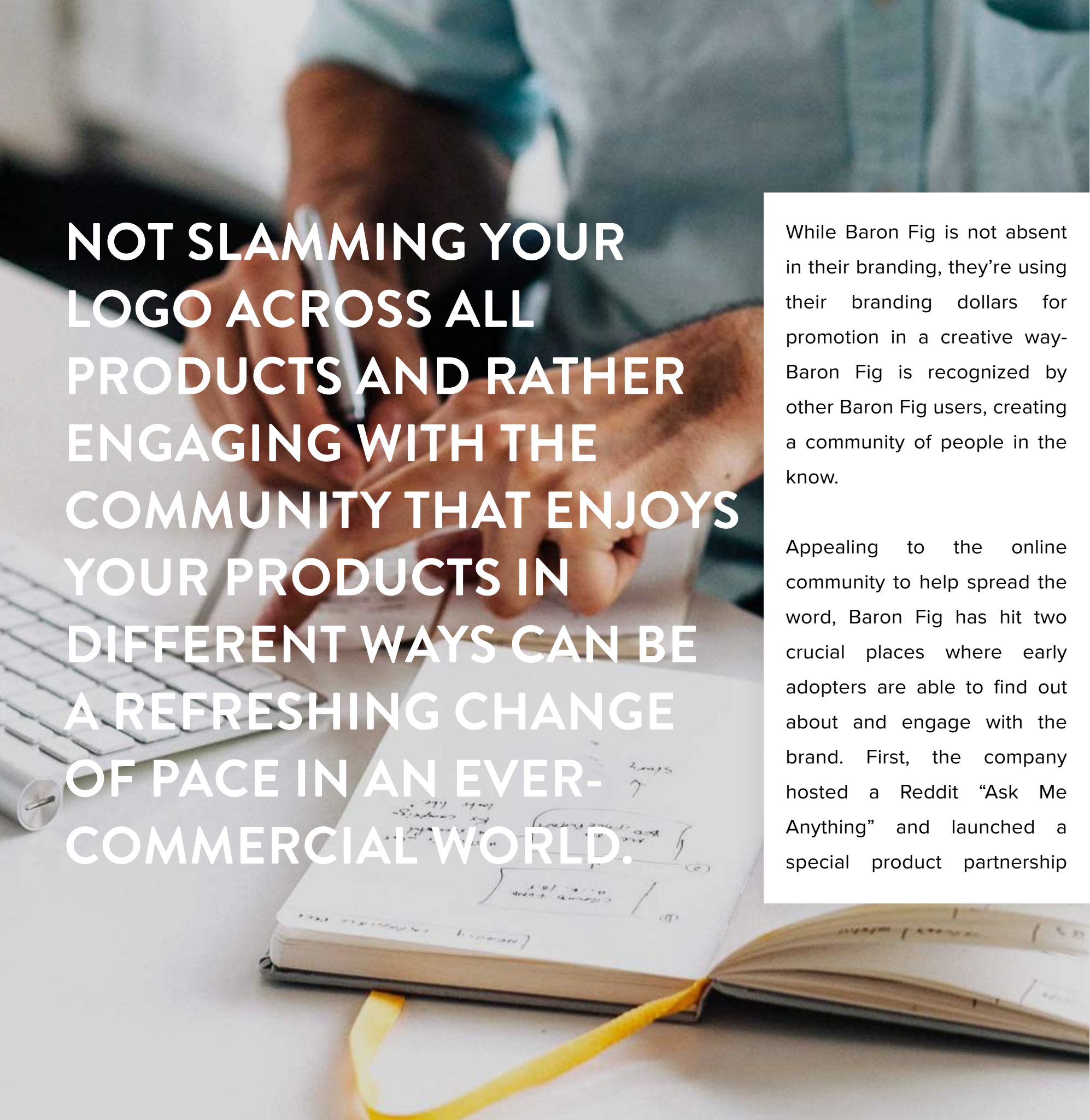
PROXIMA NOVA



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5 5 1 7 3 0





**NOT SLAMMING YOUR
LOGO ACROSS ALL
PRODUCTS AND RATHER
ENGAGING WITH THE
COMMUNITY THAT ENJOYS
YOUR PRODUCTS IN
DIFFERENT WAYS CAN BE
A REFRESHING CHANGE
OF PACE IN AN EVER-
COMMERCIAL WORLD.**

While Baron Fig is not absent in their branding, they're using their branding dollars for promotion in a creative way- Baron Fig is recognized by other Baron Fig users, creating a community of people in the know.

Appealing to the online community to help spread the word, Baron Fig has hit two crucial places where early adopters are able to find out about and engage with the brand. First, the company hosted a Reddit "Ask Me Anything" and launched a special product partnership

with Product Hunt, reaching out to those seeking new products and those who know exactly how to get those new products noticed and loop more people into the "know" about their product.

KINGS COUNTY DISTILLERY

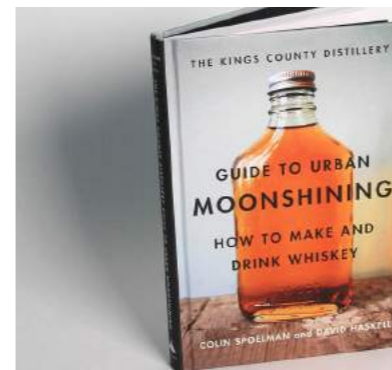
Kings County Distillery is benefitting from Prohibition, over 80 years after the amendment to ban alcohol was repealed. How does this work? Nostalgia and simplicity. Nostalgia marketing is the idea of reliving moments in the past, connecting a product to a value, feeling, or concept bigger than the customer. It works to create a meaning for the customer beyond the product itself.

As New York City's oldest operating whiskey distillery, it opened in 2010 but it is the first of its kind since Prohibition. Since then, they've directly

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OPTIMA NOVA LT
PRO LIGHT



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6 7 4 e 4 9





**NOSTALGIA AS A NOVELTY
CAN WORK WELL FOR A
BRAND IF THIS CONCEPT
IS PROPERLY EXECUTED.
FOR SOMETHING LIKE
PROHIBITION, THE
“SPEAKEASY” CULTURE
IS THE PERFECT
CONNECTION.**

hearkened to the sense of history and nostalgia that surround the Prohibition era, calling to mind the idea of “moonshine”, or homemade whiskey. This premise plays throughout the entire company, from their logo to their physical products. The packaging is simple, using bottles reminiscent of one found in any home and uses a typewritten label for their products, to the chagrin of liquor store owners.

But it's this simplicity that drives people to the brand. It's not a fancy bottle with tons of embellishment, but a call to a

simpler time that keeps people interested in their product.



While the company's blog notes that Petnet's branding strategy is a combination of customer experience, design, technology, and details, this strategy can be associated with any number of startup products and companies. The true brand value of Petnet, and the reason why they've been able to grow so expressedly, is the value of using their connections to their advantage and allowing a larger organization to do their work for them. Launched in 2014, the company applies "The Internet of Everything" strategy,

TYPEFACE

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PROXIMA NOVA
LIGHT



6 9 c 8 c 7

7 6 7 7 7 b





AVOID SPENDING THOUSANDS ON ADVERTISING AND PERSONAL BRANDING BY PARTNERING WITH ANOTHER, MORE POWERFUL ORGANIZATION. AMAZON, AS ONE OF THE LARGEST COMPANIES OUT THERE, IS A GREAT START IF YOUR BUSINESS IS A FIT.

meaning that regular tasks can be made convenient through the use of smart devices.

Invested in by Amazon, PetNet is a part of their series of “Dash-Replenishment” devices, which allow for automatic replenishment when the product is empty. For pet owners, this means that Amazon orders are submitted on their behalf when their pet food supply is low. As part of this partnership, PetNet is in the eyes of thousands of potential customers without spending any additional advertising dollars, since Amazon

promotes their service to the millions of users that already use their website. That’s not to say that PetNet doesn’t brand using more traditional routes, but rather that they rest upon the shoulders of a giant, putting their energies into the product rather than the branding.

MVMT

Anyone developing a watch company is entering a crowded and established market, which makes standing out for your branding all the more difficult. MVMT is known for their standout social selling model, which has been picked up and gotten great press in publications such as GQ, AskMen, and more. Instead of relying on other forms of advertising, the company turned to social media, and took this even a step further than many other businesses in this same space.

TYPEFACE

A

GOTHAM

A

OSWALD



b 1 8 2 5 4

0 0 0 0 0 0



A hand holding a magnifying glass over a coin, symbolizing search and discovery. The background is a blurred image of a person's hand holding a magnifying glass over a coin.

SOCIAL SELLING, OR THE IDEA OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETPLACE, REDUCES THE STEPS THAT NEED TO BE TAKEN FOR A USER TO CONVERT FROM SOCIAL MEDIA.

Social selling is the idea that took MVMT to win the Shopify Build a Business competition and it goes like this: using social media to bring customers to a site without spending any additional money. Also called social commerce, this allows a user to buy directly from the social site they're interacting with you on without needing to leave the site and visit the seller's website. Reducing the roadblocks to purchase helps to increase sales, something MVMT did by opening a shop at the top of their Facebook page and utilizing Promoted Pins on Pinterest. By allowing a user to

purchase without visiting their website, they took selling their product to a whole new level.

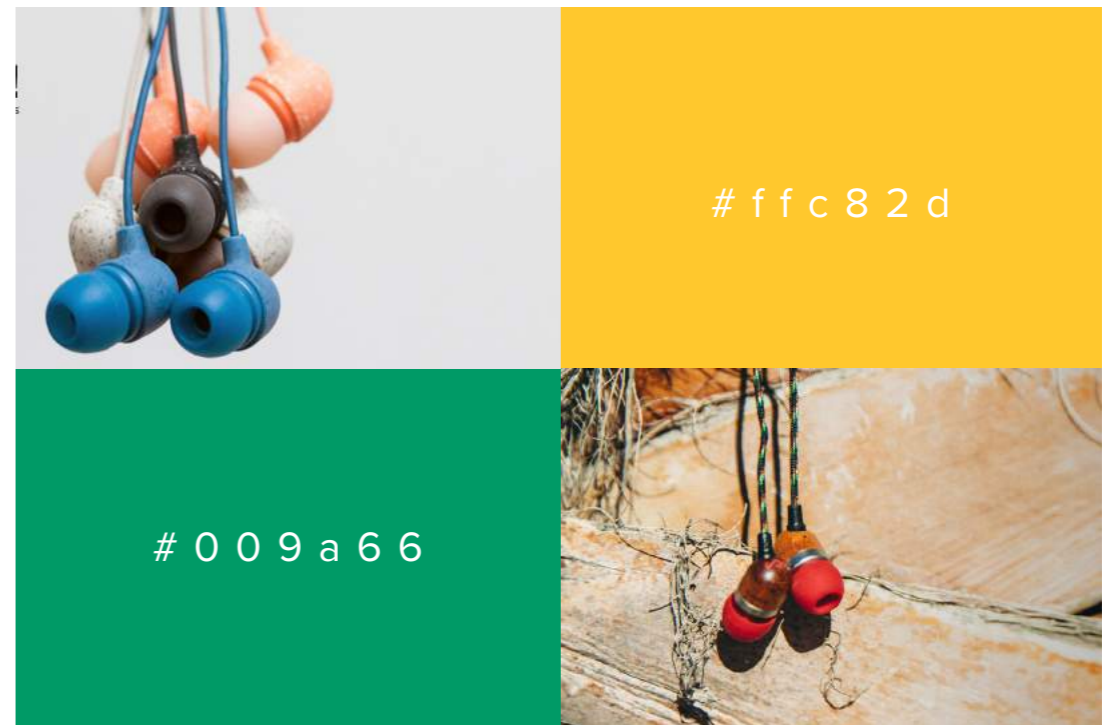



House of Marley is largely built on the concept of branding a person. The person in question is legendary reggae musician Bob Marley, the father of House of Marley founder Rohan Marley, who you've likely shaken your body to whether you've realized it or not. The reputation afforded to Marley is the core of the brand, using the red-orange-yellow-green visual identity associated with the musician, keeping products eco-friendly, and giving back to charity, all things that are heavily associated with the musician's brand.

TYPEFACE

A

FLAMA
CONDENSED





USE SEO TO YOUR
ADVANTAGE BY NOT JUST
TARGETING THE WORDS
AND PHRASES THAT YOU
WANT TO APPEAR FOR,
BUT DIRECTLY FILLING
THE GAPS IN YOUR
COMPETITION'S SEO.

Even posthumously, the Marley name is being reified and strengthened through this company.

There are some big players in the headphones market, oftentimes associated with a specific cache of consumer. With the initial strategy of reaching out to the target audience on social media failing due to lack of engagement and limited social reach, the brand outreached their target audience and hit using search engine optimization (SEO), social media, and content. Specifically, their SEO strategy

was to insert House of Marley in their competitor's SEO gaps. This has led to first-page and high ranking on terms their customers search for but their competitors have yet to exploit, looking at very specific groups that may be interested in their products. Smartly using SEO differently than their competition has put the company on the radar of some that may not have been seeking their products to begin with.

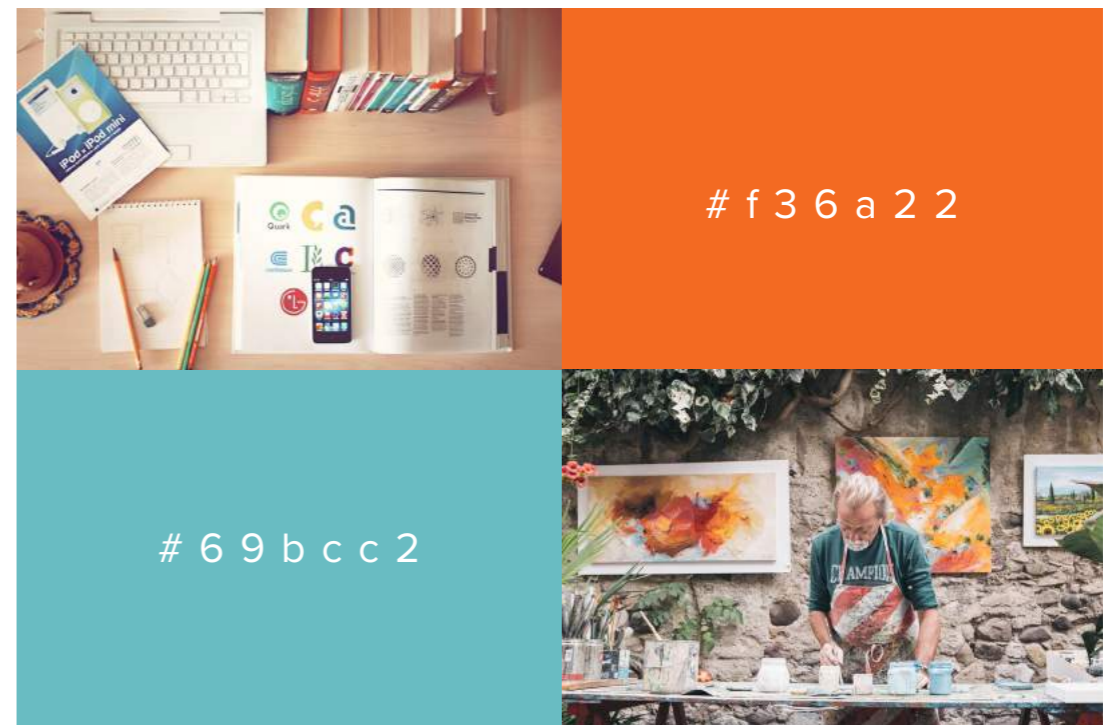
SKILLSHARE

If Skillshare was going to teach a class on its own personal branding, it would likely focus on educational content and self-promotion. First off, the company uses video content marketing to bolster their SEO efforts, and video in the teaching of their classes. Videos posted online are accessible via search, and popular classes can be viewed and shared over and over on social media. This educational content is valuable from a search engine perspective as well, tapping into the do-it-yourself mentality of many online searches and

TYPEFACE

A

PROXIMA NOVA





HAVING HIGH-PROFILE INDIVIDUALS CONTRIBUTE AS WELL CONNECTS TWO BRANDS TOGETHER AND GATHERS THEIR MUTUAL AUDIENCES.

providing a means for information to be quickly spread. Video is the truly core of Skillshare's content, which is an increasingly popular and effective means of sharing information (think using YouTube as a search engine).

As easily digestible tidbits of information, videos are taught by industry leaders and celebrities, which naturally attract a lot of attention as these are promoted through their platforms. Interest in these classes is inherently high since these are respected and sought after educators, encouraging

new students to come and learn from the Skillshare platform. Reaching out to influencers in different spheres to contribute to this content helps enrich the value of Skillshare's brand, automatically bringing their audiences into the fold and bringing both the educator and Skillshare a new batch of users into the fold.



Social marketing plus a cult following plus word of mouth plus a gigantic personality has been the driver of this brand's success. Social media engagement began with tweets explaining where the truck would be parked and their daily recipes, but the owners quickly used Twitter to beat the craziness of being stuck in an ice cream truck all day. These initial bursts of humor resonated, turning followers into avid fans, following, retweeting, and visiting the truck to promote their love of the owners' voices. The brand's sense of humor and presence on Facebook and Twitter propelled them to

TYPEFACE

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KREON

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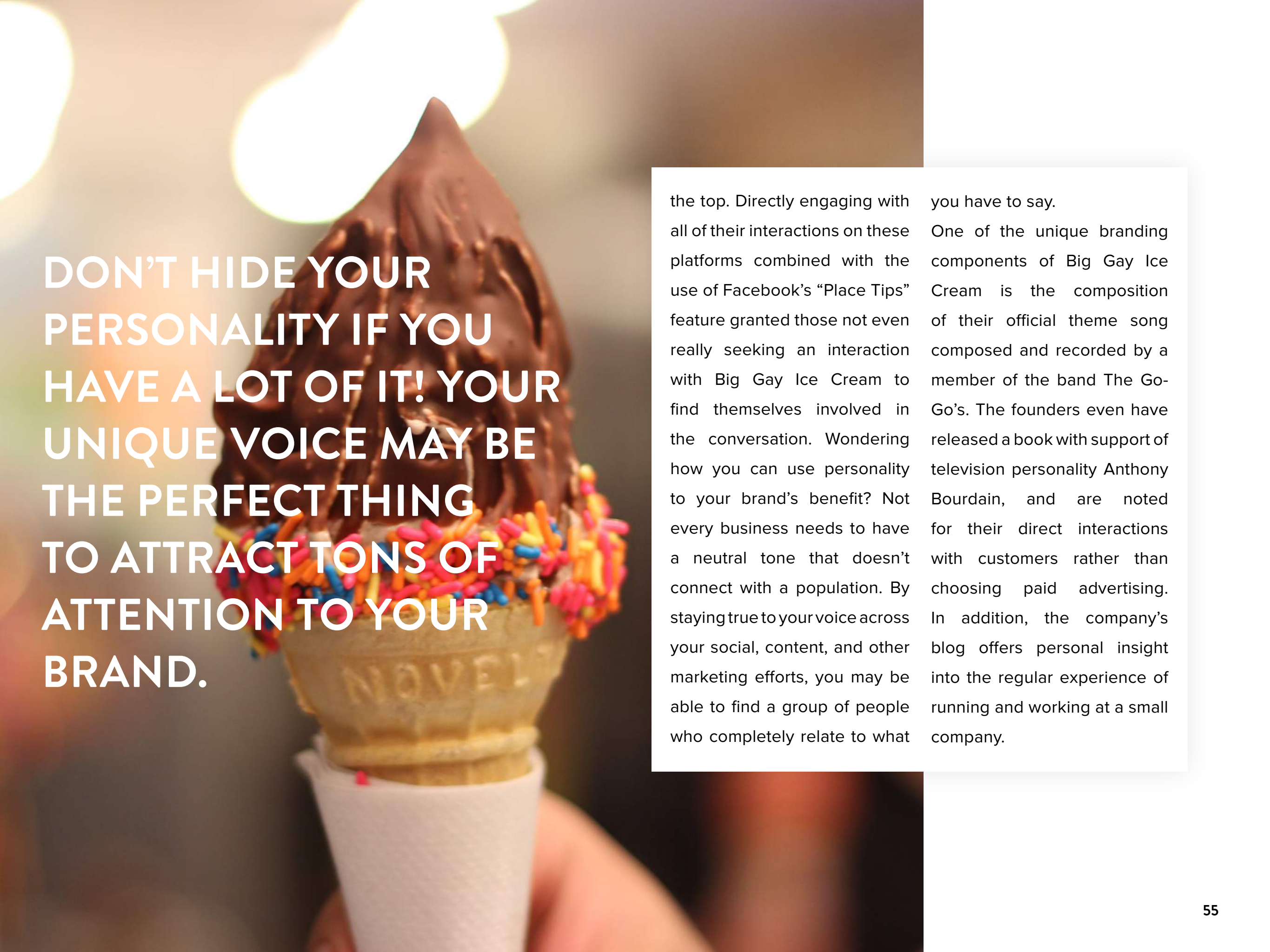
HELVETICA NEUE



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1 c b 1 d f





DON'T HIDE YOUR PERSONALITY IF YOU HAVE A LOT OF IT! YOUR UNIQUE VOICE MAY BE THE PERFECT THING TO ATTRACT TONS OF ATTENTION TO YOUR BRAND.

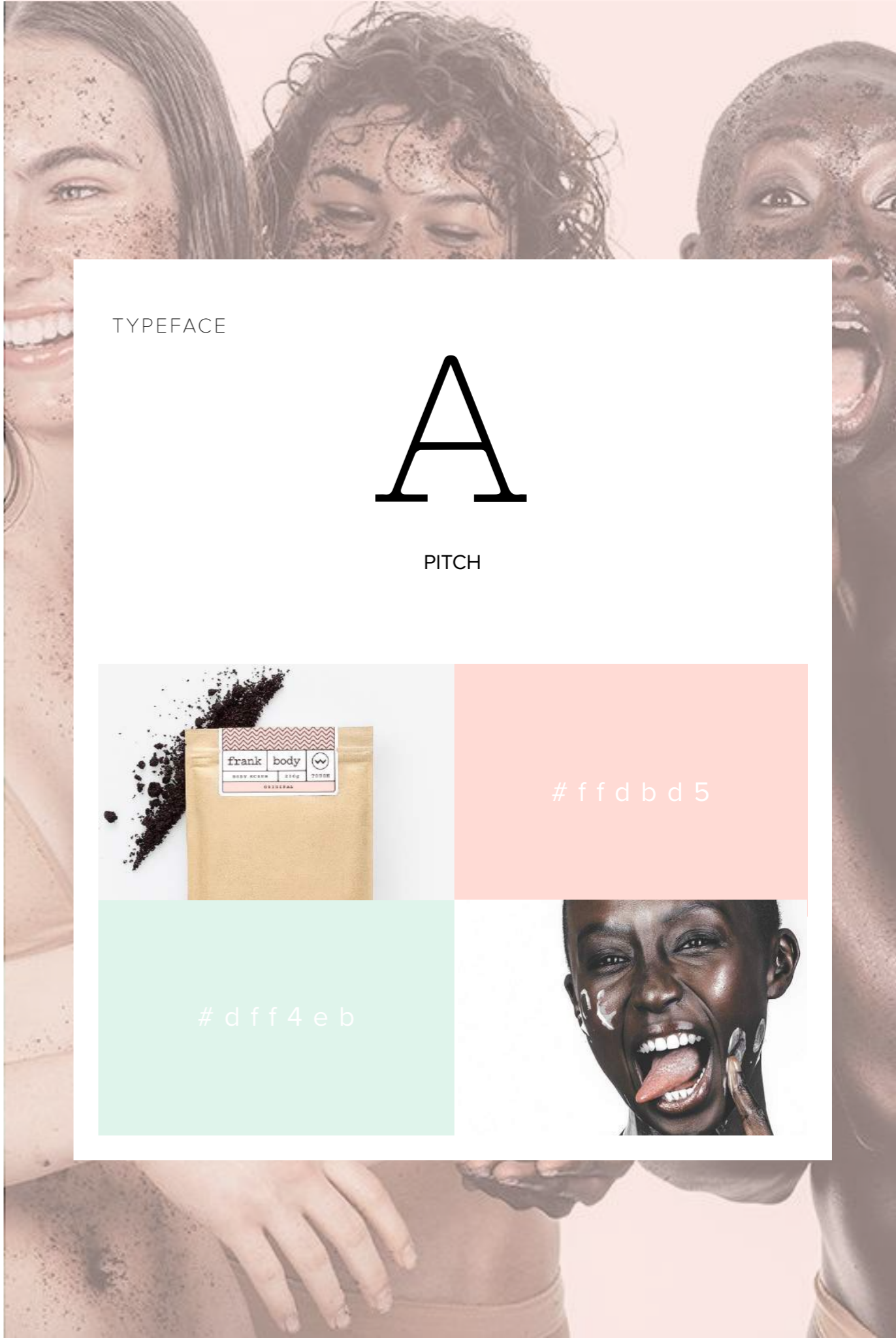
the top. Directly engaging with all of their interactions on these platforms combined with the use of Facebook's "Place Tips" feature granted those not even really seeking an interaction with Big Gay Ice Cream to find themselves involved in the conversation. Wondering how you can use personality to your brand's benefit? Not every business needs to have a neutral tone that doesn't connect with a population. By staying true to your voice across your social, content, and other marketing efforts, you may be able to find a group of people who completely relate to what

you have to say.

One of the unique branding components of Big Gay Ice Cream is the composition of their official theme song composed and recorded by a member of the band The Go-Go's. The founders even have released a book with support of television personality Anthony Bourdain, and are noted for their direct interactions with customers rather than choosing paid advertising. In addition, the company's blog offers personal insight into the regular experience of running and working at a small company.

frank body

Selfie-powered marketing is the key to the Frank Body. Encouraging customers to take selfies using their products, Frank Body reuses these images to market their business. Is this a new idea? Not at all. But Frank Body has tapped into the right market to make this a viral trend. Selfie marketing fits right in with the onslaught of user-generated content, whereby someone uses a brand's product and promotes it to their friends, also creating a conversation with the brand in real time.



TYPEFACE

A

PITCH





INSTAGRAM IS A BRAND'S BEST FRIEND. MAYBE NOT FOR EVERY BRAND, BUT ENCOURAGING SELFIES IS A GREAT ENGAGEMENT TOOL THAT ALSO HELPS TO SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT A PRODUCT.

Using a brand-oriented hashtag found every time a product is shipped to a user, Frank Body has even published a blog post highlighting the perfect way to take a selfie for the company. What this has uncovered is a trove of users (over 40,000 for this small business) that have shared their Frank Body selfie with the company on social media, and have thereby acted as a brand ambassador. One of the key factors to Frank Body's success is their use of Instagram as advertising in this manner. Using a targeted social media campaign, the company gained a lot of followers and launched

spin off accounts focused on the users of the products, with Instagram driving a majority of the brand's sales, which, in February 2015, was set to exceed \$20 million.



Sevenly as a concept strongly uses a few different tactics to brand themselves and expand. One, by partnering with different charities for one week each per year, Sevenly is guaranteed 52 partners every year that are promoting their business to their base. Secondly, all shirts are limited edition, and only associated with that campaign for the one-week time frame, so there is no time to second-think a purchase. You need to act, and you need to act now. With the idea of cause marketing included, it looks good for a customer to be socially conscious, making the items a fashion statement and social capital.

TYPEFACE

ROKKITT

ROBOTO



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4 7 b a c 1





SOCIAL MEDIA IS USED TO DRIVE TRAFFIC TO THEIR SITE AND THE CHARITIES THEY ARE PROMOTING, WHO IN TURN PROMOTE SEVENLY. IT'S CONSTANTLY GUARANTEED PROMOTION, WEEK OVER WEEK.

Initially launched on Facebook, social media and promotion on social sites have been key to the brand's success.

Named as the winner of Capital One's title of "America's Most Social Small Business", Sevenly used Facebook ads and Promoted Posts for the charities they're involved with as well as their own, bringing in \$3 million in donations over two years, bringing in four times the return on ad spend and using Facebook to bring in a large portion of the company's traffic.

The combination of having sharing built into the platform with a reach on social media is the foundation of the brand's reach.



Kentucky For Kentucky launched a hilarious unsanctioned and unasked for rebranding of the state of Kentucky, bringing attention to their Kentucky-based brand and highlighting some of the very unique things that make Kentucky unique to the United States. The tourism industry in the state was not exactly booming at the time the campaign was created, and Kentucky For Kentucky was created to fund a Super Bowl campaign ad aimed at assisting the state's tourism with a sense of humor.

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TRADE GOTHIC LTC

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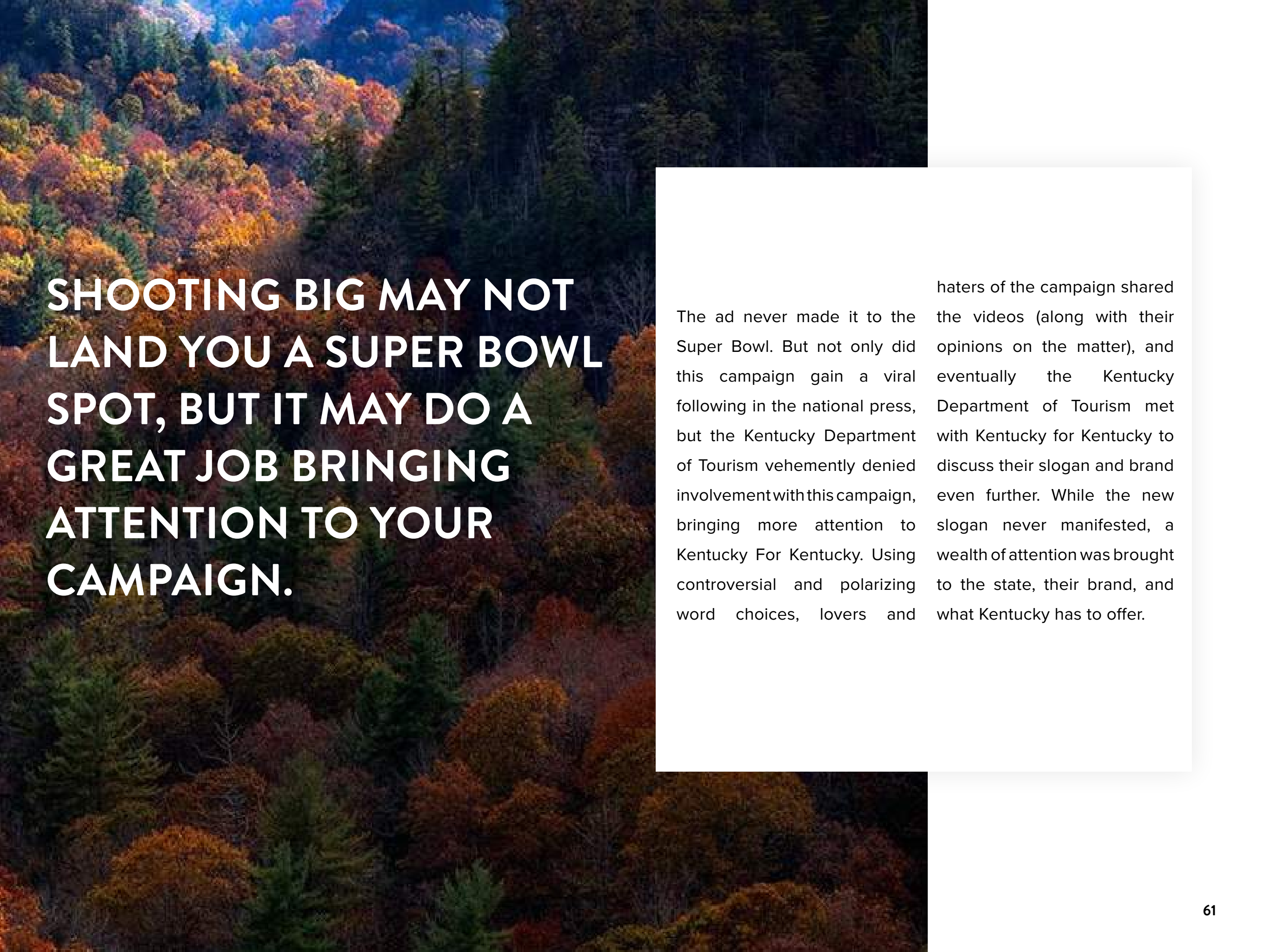
FUTURA BOLD



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2 0 1 b 0 c





**SHOOTING BIG MAY NOT
LAND YOU A SUPER BOWL
SPOT, BUT IT MAY DO A
GREAT JOB BRINGING
ATTENTION TO YOUR
CAMPAIGN.**

The ad never made it to the Super Bowl. But not only did this campaign gain a viral following in the national press, but the Kentucky Department of Tourism vehemently denied involvement with this campaign, bringing more attention to Kentucky For Kentucky. Using controversial and polarizing word choices, lovers and

haters of the campaign shared the videos (along with their opinions on the matter), and eventually the Kentucky Department of Tourism met with Kentucky for Kentucky to discuss their slogan and brand even further. While the new slogan never manifested, a wealth of attention was brought to the state, their brand, and what Kentucky has to offer.



Being transparent isn't all that it's cracked up to be. TheFamily is a program that encourages European startups and provides the necessary education to help those startups thrive. The ecosystem is reminiscent of a family, but as with many family secrets, it's hard to comment on what's happening unless you are a part of this family.

TYPEFACE

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HELVETICA

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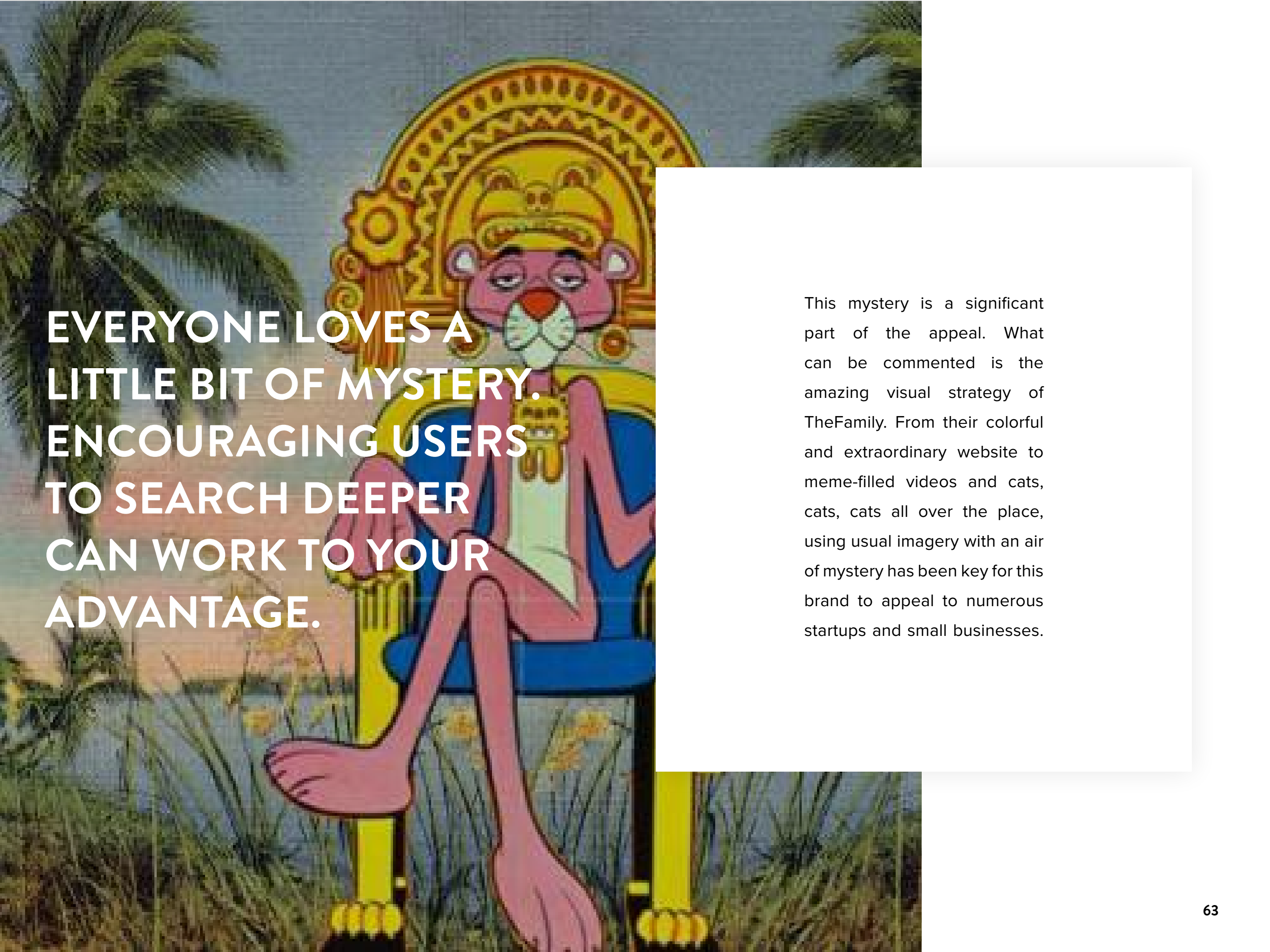
OSWALD



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4 1 a f 8 5

A pink cat with a white mustache and a crown is sitting on a golden throne. The background is a lush jungle with palm trees and a blue sky. The cat is wearing a blue sash and has its legs crossed. The throne is ornate with gold and blue details.

**EVERYONE LOVES A
LITTLE BIT OF MYSTERY.
ENCOURAGING USERS
TO SEARCH DEEPER
CAN WORK TO YOUR
ADVANTAGE.**

This mystery is a significant part of the appeal. What can be commented is the amazing visual strategy of TheFamily. From their colorful and extraordinary website to meme-filled videos and cats, cats, cats all over the place, using usual imagery with an air of mystery has been key for this brand to appeal to numerous startups and small businesses.



WINTERCROFT MASKS

An accident and the absence of branding define Wintercroft. Started after artist Steve Wintercroft made a cardboard mask after being invited to a Halloween party last-minute, the template was made accessible online. The popularity of the ease of the mask and how great they were to create led to other explorations.

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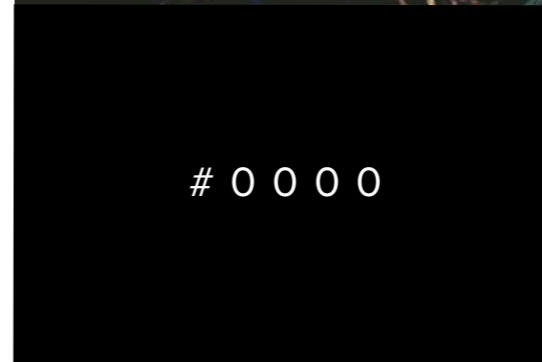
OPEN SANS

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f f f f





WINTERCROFT HAS NO BRAND, AND DOES NOT PROMOTE THEIR BRAND. FOR SOME INDUSTRIES, NON-BRANDING IS THE NEW BRANDING.

Protesters wearing Wintercroft masks thrust the brand into the spotlight, involved previously in fashion shoots and music videos due to their sheer beauty.

Working with numerous animal charities has also worked to the brand's advantage, enlarging their audience . Aside from word-of-mouth marketing and features in publications, Wintercroft is not known for an actual branding strategy to bring attention to their wares.

Additional Small Business Branding Lessons

- 1** **DON'T BE AFRAID TO REBRAND** if your current branding doesn't fit your business offerings or what you'd like people to understand against your business.
- 2** **PROFESSIONAL DOESN'T NEED TO WORK AGAINST FUN**, and there's great places to do both within your brand. Explore these options!
- 3** **THINK PAST YOUR LOGO TO OTHER VISUAL ELEMENTS AND HOW THESE REPRESENT YOUR BRAND.** What seems perfect or problematic may be solved with other branding components.
- 4** **IT'S OKAY TO DO IT ON YOUR OWN IF THAT'S WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU.** There's a lot of pressure in the myth that everything must be done perfectly the first time, but many successful brands use their business evolution as a way to evolve their branding too.
- 5** **THINK OF WHAT MAKES YOUR BUSINESS UNIQUE AND EMPHASIZE THIS!** Are you paired with a charity? The first of your kind in a field? Use this to your advantage!
- 6** **GROW YOUR COMMUNITIES AND YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS.** Brands that focus on their customers and taking care of their customers oftentimes see good results.
- 7** **CONSIDER HOW YOUR NAME, LOGO, AND BRAND ALL INTERSECT WITH ONE ANOTHER.** Are they complementary or do they fight one another? Having common threads through these is important!
- 8** **THINK ABOUT THE VALUE THAT CUSTOMERS GET FROM YOUR BRAND.** Value isn't always providing the lowest price or the most competitive rate, but giving the person looking at your brand the most unique benefits you can possibly provide.
- 9** **USE WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU AND YOUR BRAND AS THE CORE OF IT.** Many of the brands on this list have involvement with charities or strong regional ties- these tell the customer a lot about the brand and encourages them to use you over and over!
- 10** **LISTENING AND ENGAGING WITH CUSTOMERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA IS IMPORTANT.** Building a brand on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram opens a gigantic market with immense value. Don't let this go ignored!

THANK YOU !

