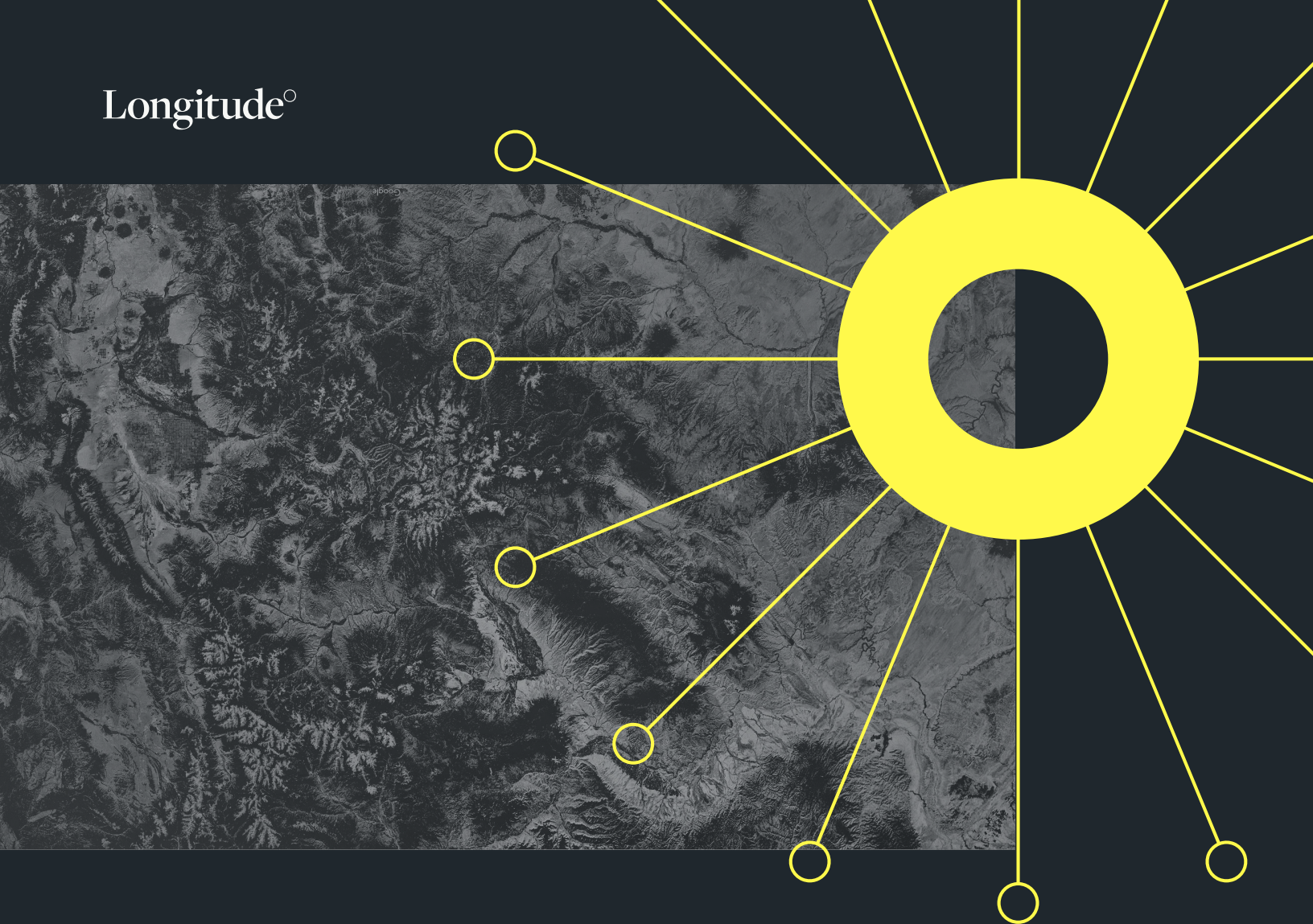


Longitude°



The Business of Branding

Understanding the Basics of Branding
and How to Leverage it Effectively to
Build a Profitable Business.

Branding with Benefits

Bad Branding Could Be Harming Your Business

What is Branding? If you ask ten different people this question, you'll get ten different answers.

There are a lot of misconceptions around what branding is, and what it isn't. Some people think branding is marketing or advertising, others think it's your logo or colors, or the sign on your front door.

To state it simply, branding is your reputation. Branding isn't who you say you are, but rather who everyone else says you are.

Whether you realize it or not, if you own a business – that business has a brand.

This brings up one important question; are you leveraging your brand and using it to the maximum potential?

If you cannot answer that question with 100% certainty, then it's very likely that you're harming your business.


You could have already invested thousands into your business – desperately trying to connect with the right audience and gain more customers.

Maybe you already have a logo, and a website. You could have already hired a marketing or advertising agency to run paid ad campaigns for your business.

But are those efforts being rewarded? Are you seeing the most optimal results? Is your business growing?

A brand strategy gives you the confidence in knowing that every penny you spend will be spent wisely, and that you'll get the best results on all of your marketing efforts.

Branding affects every aspect of your business. It can enhance, or inhibit your marketing efforts. It can draw people to you, or steer people away from you.

An aerial photograph of a mountainous landscape, showing a network of roads and valleys. A white rectangular frame is overlaid on the image, and a yellow circle highlights a specific area in the lower right corner of the frame.

If your business
is not a brand,
then it's a
commodity.

The Missed Connection



Why Businesses Fail to Connect with People

You may already be convinced that branding is vital to your business. But, understanding what branding means is one thing...

Understanding how to leverage it effectively, will unlock incredible potential for your business. Let's give it a try.

If you're in business, it's safe to assume you want more people to buy more of your things. Whether it's food, widgets, or consulting services, you name it.

However, as a business owner there is a major hurdle you must overcome.

No one cares.

That may sound harsh, but it's the truth. The fact is, most people aren't going to give you the money out of their wallet simply because they care about supporting you.

When a purchasing decision is made by a consumer, it's typically because your product or service offers them a desirable outcome, that will benefit them in some way.

Think about it like this; I recently hired a tree trimming company to trim some large trees at my house. The trees were in very bad shape.

Now this may surprise you, but I didn't write a check to the owner of a tree trimming business because I was impressed with his knowledge of trees, he was a nice guy, and I wanted to make sure that he hit his sales quota for the month.

No. I gladly wrote a check and handed it over because I believed that the services he could provide could help me achieve my desired outcome.

What was that outcome? Well, it's simple. I wanted my trees to look nice and well-kept, I didn't want to worry about limbs falling on my house or car, and I wanted make sure my family would be safe.

So, what's the lesson here?

The fact is, nobody cares about you and your business. People buy things to make their lives better, even just a little bit. The faster you understand this, the better off you'll be.

What is Your Logo Saying?

A Design Without Strategy is Just Decoration

If you're like most businesses, it's likely that you don't have a true brand strategy in place, and chances are your branding isn't all it could be. That's ok, for now. But it's not sustainable.

A good way to start thinking strategically about your brand is to audit your logo. Virtually every business has one, and chances are you have one.

Your logo, although not solely your brand, is likely the first part of your brand that people will see. It is a key element of your brand identity, and it sets the tone for communicating who you are and what a customer can expect.

So, what is your logo telling people about your business? Could it be saying:

- **We are unique and interesting.**
- **We are bland and forgettable.**
- **We specialize in one area.**
- **We focus in a lot of areas**
- **We are fancy and expensive.**
- **We are quick and cheap**
- **We have a strong heritage.**
- **We are struggling to find our identity**
- **We are committed to quality.**
- **We have low standards.**

To help you determine what your logo is saying to your potential clients and customers, here are three ways your logo speaks:

Does Your Logo Convey a Story?

Does your brand story come through in the design? Does your logo have meaning? What is it that makes you unique? Does the logo effectively communicate that? Is it intriguing to someone passing by?

Do Your Colors & Typography Serve a Purpose?

Selecting colors for your logo is more than a stylistic decision. Color can set the feeling or the mood for your brand's personality. It is interesting to look at the psychology behind how colors generally make you feel.

The typefaces (or fonts) used in the logo are equally important in communicating the style of the restaurant. Certain typefaces can imply a higher-priced menu or a luxurious experience. They can also imply fast service.

Does Your Logo Impart Quality & Excellence?

Does your logo demonstrate to potential customers that you pay attention to detail? Does it show that you have high standards and are trustworthy?

Invest time and energy up front in getting your logo right so that you can get the most out of your future investments.

The background is a dark, monochromatic aerial topographic map showing terrain features like mountains, valleys, and rivers. A white rectangular border is centered on the page, enclosing the text. In the top right corner, a yellow circle is partially cut off by the edge of the frame.

Your brand is a
story unfolding
across all customer
touch points.

Are You Surviving or Thriving?

The Symptoms of a Weak Brand

Remember, your brand is how you're perceived in the marketplace. And whether you nurture it or not, you will have a brand.

Your brand is made up of the sum of your customer interactions. Contributors to your brand include your products, how you treat your customers, the environmental design, your logo and signage, your online presence, and more.

The average person is exposed to 6,000 advertisements each day. Your brand has to rise above the noise and make an emotional connection with the consumer.

If you have a weak brand, you will experience some or all of these issues:

- Your customers aren't telling their friends about you.
- Your messaging is all over the place and you keep trying things hoping something will stick.
- Your advertising efforts fall flat and don't get the results you need.
- You are not really known in the community for anything.
- You never know if you're going to have a good week or a bad week.
- You can't clearly articulate why you're better than the competition.

And, if the day-to-day struggle doesn't sound bad enough, think about the larger implications of having a weak brand.

Do you dream of one day selling your business for a profit? People don't want to buy a weak brand.

Do you want the freedom to get away and trust that your employees would run things correctly? Employees don't take pride and ownership in working for a weak brand.

Do you want to feel good about your brand knowing that you're making your competitors jealous? If you have a weak brand, this isn't happening.

Weak brands are diluted at best, and repulsive at worst. But don't worry, there is a better way.

There are two components that make all of the difference. Establishing a Brand Strategy and Brand Identity. Build the right strategy at the core of your business, then all of your business efforts are rooted in a cohesive, strategic way.

Becoming a strong brand takes the guess-work out of your marketing efforts and business decisions. You will experience clarity and confidence.

BrandGPS™

by Longitude°

Experts in brand strategy and identity.

As your partner, Longitude° understands that you're pouring your life into your work. You need the right look and a clear message to make a great first impression, attract more customers, and beat your competition.

This is why we created BrandGPS™ – a proven process to help you grow your business and build the reputation you want.

