

# Jumpstart your brand

 By [Tamsyn Kiddle](#)

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So you have a business idea, capital, resources and infrastructure. Now what? New businesses are started every month. Many will struggle during the first few years - and half will fail. Less than 12% of businesses in South Africa operating today were in business in 1994. 10% of all businesses are less than a year old and 53% are less than five years old.

Knowing what separates those that bottom out from those that bubble up is what can make the difference in the health and longevity of a start-up. A solid, defined brand is the driving force within a company and the promise to its customers that both moves the business forward and keeps it on track. Marketing and communicating well with potential customers is also essential to a business's success.

But it's not as easy as it sounds. "We're going to be green." "We're going to be the company that cares." "We're going to be luxury." "We'll deliver the best service." How do you find a place for your new business in the South African market? How do potential clients recognise you through all the chatter?

Whether you're a business marketing to other businesses (B2B) or a consumer brand (B2C), there is a similar path that successful companies take to find their place.

## 1. Identify your target market

Your product or service won't appeal to all clients in the marketplace, and it can be very expensive to try to do so. A well-defined target market will help you build a better product or service and come up with better ideas. Create a vivid picture of your ideal target client, and focus your efforts on them.



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As a new business owner you need to analyse your target market - be they businesses or consumers. Find out where they are located, what they read, how they receive information, and what would be the best way to reach them.

## 2. Get your brand right from the outset

A brand is anything-a symbol, design, name, sound, reputation, emotion, employees, tone, and much more-that separates one company from another.

Branding is something you should be focusing on even in your start-up days. It's much easier and more cost effective to get your brand name and design right the first time, rather than fix it later.

The benefits that a strategically defined brand can bring are the same as when people fall in love with each other. When customers connect emotively - because they share the same values and beliefs of a brand - it leads to higher sales and better brand differentiation. It also leads to loyalty, advocacy and can even protect your price in times when competitors rely on discounts to drive sales.

Some tips to keep in mind:

- Stay classic, less is more
- Match the branding to your company
- Make sure it won't be confused with another company
  
- Ensure it works on multiple platforms

### **3. Drive good publicity**

Publicity is a great way to exponentially grow your business and generate good interest from your target market from the start in the print, broadcast and online channels that reach them. Driving editorial publicity is credible and costs considerably less than advertising. Every business has stories to tell and information to share - creating valuable content.

On the business to business side, every industry has its trade channels - whether you're targeting businesses in a particular industry, or your business is in that industry. For example, you may be a manufacturer, or you may be targeting businesses in manufacturing - either way, you want to be in the relevant trade magazines.

### **4. Go direct**

Business-to-business start-ups usually have a good idea of who their potential clients would be. In this case, direct mailers such as newsletters that add value will get your business directly to clients.

Direct marketing specialist companies have various databases and techniques to help you reach target consumers. New technologies, such as geotargeting, help you be even more specific.

### **5. Take to social media**

Social media is one of the greatest free tools that so many start-up companies fail to use. Social media platforms already have a massive audience for you to tap into and they are also applicable to B2B companies.

Most companies fear social media for one of two reasons: Firstly, they fear the reputational risks involved, but in truth the conversation about your industry and business will happen whether you have a presence online or not. Social media platforms allow your business to become part of this conversation and steer the messaging in your favour.

Secondly, companies think they are too small to be on social media or that it is not appropriate for business use. However, social media is the only platform that levels the playing field between small businesses and large.

Social media platforms are increasingly being used for business and help you to be found, contributing to SEO (Search Engine Optimisation).

Your customers are out there. Using these five steps, you can reach them and keep them!

## ABOUT TAMSYN KIDDLE

Tamsyn Kiddle, Corporate PR Specialist. As Journalism graduate (UJ), she has experienced both sides of the media curtain. Her focus is on corporate brand reputation through public relations.

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