How to become a brand consultant: Everything you need to know

Category: Branding,Strategy
written by Stewart Hodgson | 22 September 2022
If you're wondering how to become a brand consultant, you probably have a passion for helping companies to discover and implement their brand identities.

While this career path is still relatively new to the branding world, it's gaining significant attention as more companies seek help in making their brands as lucrative and effective as possible.

After all, developing an effective brand can be a time-consuming and complex process. There are many steps involved in designing the ultimate identity. Tasks include everything from choosing the logo to represent a brand visually, to creating impactful marketing campaigns.

A brand consultant helps business leaders to define and align the various aspects of their brand identity, to improve the company's chances of connecting with the right audience. Today, we're going to take a closer look at what it takes to become a brand consultant.

What is a brand consultant or creative brand strategist?

A "brand consultant" is a strategic expert in the branding world. Otherwise referred to as a "brand strategist" in some cases, these professionals work with business leaders to identify, optimize, and implement branding initiatives.

Notably, the job duties of a brand consultant can vary depending on the role. Some of these experts are called upon during rebranding or brand refresh projects, to audit an existing brand identity, and make changes beneficial to the growth of the company.

Other brand consultants work with businesses during the initial stages of their development. They're there when a startup is first trying to identify its values, mission, brand essence, and promise.

As a brand consultant, you may be responsible for things like:

- Researching the business, marketplace, competition, and customers for a client.
- Predicting market trends and understanding current industry patterns.
- Assessing data to create marketing and promotional plans.
- Creating new brand names, or helping with product naming.
- Assisting with the choice of visual assets like brand colors and logos.
- Designing style guides or marketing guidelines for future branding initiatives.

Notably, brand consultants most commonly offer expert advice and guidance, rather than creating branding assets themselves. They're more likely to help guide a graphic design team towards creating the perfect logo, than to design the logo with their own creative skills, for instance.



How to become a brand consultant: Getting started

Branding consultants are the experts responsible for providing analysis, solutions, and general guidance to companies hoping to make the most of their brand identities.

While there’s no single defined route to earning a job in this field, there are some steps creative professionals can take to improve their chances of finding the right role.

For instance, some of the most important things you’ll need to do to become a brand consultant include:

Getting a relevant education

Some companies in search of a brand consultant won’t require their experts to have a specific degree or certification. However, a knowledge of business, marketing, and other branding elements can be extremely valuable.

At the very least, a bachelor’s degree in branding, marketing and communications can help to differentiate you from other candidates applying for the same role.

Develop branding knowledge

Outside of accredited courses and study, it’s also worth looking for ways to expand your understanding of the branding world. Following branding experts online and learning from their blogs and podcasts can be useful.

It can also help to keep up-to-date with the latest branding trends in the industry you’re most likely to serve. This will assist you in giving more up-to-date advice when you’re working with clients on their own branding strategies.

Gain work experience

Experience is something most businesses will prioritize when looking for a branding consultant. If you’re wondering how to become a brand consultant and you’re in the process of developing your education, it might be worth looking for ways to earn experience too.

Entry-level marketing positions and strategic roles working with other businesses can help you to expand your relevant skills.

Learn how to use branding tools

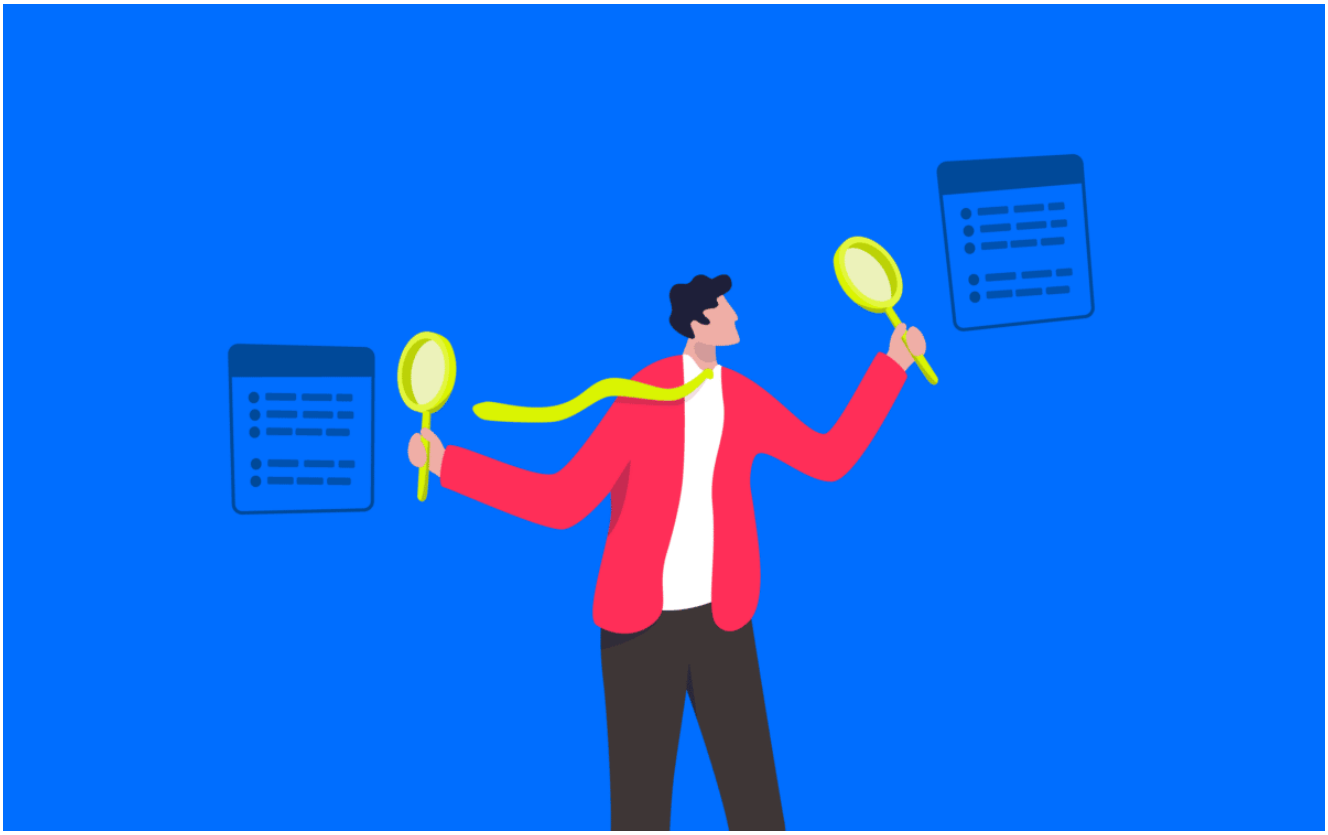
As the world becomes increasingly digitized, there’s a good chance you’ll need to leverage a number of valuable tools to become a brand consultant. You may need to use software to conduct market and competitor analysis, or work with CRM software to develop user personas.

Learning how to use common tools which might be relevant to your role can be extremely useful. At the very least, you should have a basic knowledge of how to use analytical tools, and social media platforms.

Decide what kind of employment you want

As expertise in branding becomes increasingly sought after, you may find there are a number of ways to explore a role as a brand consultant. You could work as part of a comprehensive branding agency or offer your services on a freelance basis.

Consider what kind of job opportunities might be most appealing to you before you start searching for roles.



What qualifications do you need to be a brand consultant?

The exact qualifications you need to earn a position as a brand consultant with an agency, or sell your services to freelance clients, will depend on a number of factors.

Some companies prefer their brand consultants to have clear expertise in the business landscape. This means it’s often helpful to have at least a bachelor’s degree in a relevant area, like marketing, or business management.

There are certain educational institutions around the world today beginning to offer more educational experiences focused specifically on branding. You can also look into diplomas and online certifications in things like brand strategy.

Some other educational areas you may want to consider if you're planning on learning how to become a brand consultant include:

Communication, English, or media courses

Strong communication and writing skills are essential for any brand strategy role. Having a good grasp of different writing styles and how to communicate your ideas to different groups of people can be extremely useful.

Since branding and advertising often go hand-in-hand, a knowledge of the advertising world can also make you more appealing to your clients.

Psychology

While it might seem unusual, psychology certifications and study are becoming a lot more appealing in the branding world. A lot of the work a brand consultant does for their customers involves understanding a larger marketplace and researching how consumers think and feel.

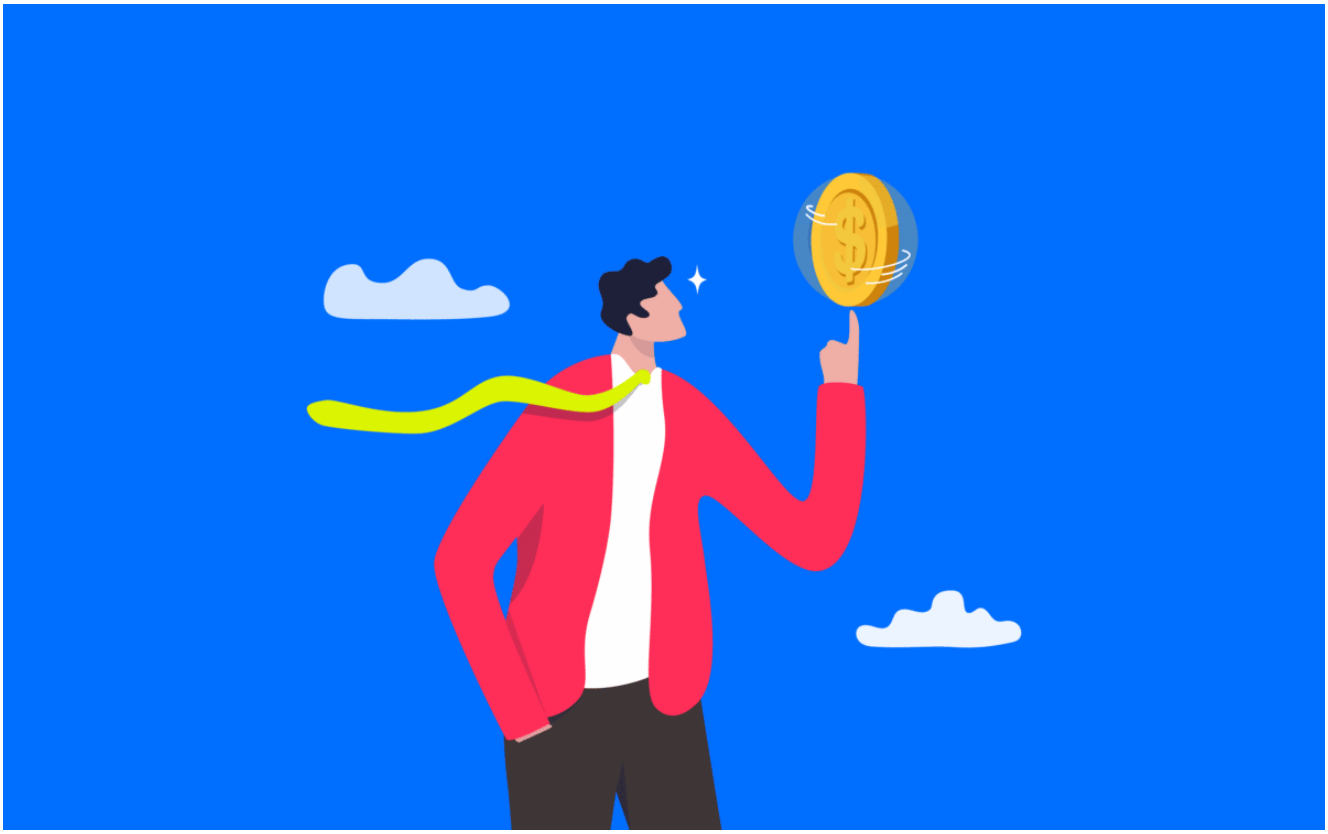
A knowledge of human psychology, even just on a basic level, could be useful in making your guidance as a brand consultant more effective.

Business or economics

Brand consultants need to understand how companies work to deliver useful guidance and support to today's market leaders. A business-related degree shows the clients you're going to be working with you understand their goals and expectations.

Many business degrees will also include at least some coverage

on topics to do with branding and marketing too.



How much do brand consultants earn?

The exact amount you can charge as a brand consultant, and the wages you're likely to earn from a full-time job, will vary according to a range of factors.

Salary ranges for branding and marketing consultants in the US often extend from $33,530 per year, to $120,460 per year. This makes the average income around $62,150 annually.

Your earnings will depend on where exactly you're going to be applying for a brand consultant job, how much experience you have in your field, and what kind of services you're going to offer.

You may also find your earning potential differs depending on whether you're going to be working in an agency or offering services to customers on a freelance basis.

Could you become a brand development strategist?

Learning how to become a brand consultant is similar to becoming any kind of branding expert or strategic professional. If you have a good understanding of branding, and you're committed to helping companies achieve their goals, you're already on the right track.

One point to keep in mind is life as a brand consultant may be slightly less hands-on than a career as a fully-fledged brand strategist. It's worth looking carefully at the job description for the role you're applying for before you dive in.

Fabrik: A branding agency for our times.