What is a brand strategist, and what does a brand strategist do?

Category: Strategy
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What is a brand strategist, and what can they do for your company? These are questions you may be asking if you've been struggling with the brand-building process for some time.

A brand strategist can be a valuable addition to any team when you need help defining your identity, creating clear guidelines, and developing a plan for growth.

Defining a successful brand image and identity is crucial for any business in today's competitive world. Your brand determines how well you can resonate with your target audience, and differentiate yourself from other organizations.

However, branding is a complex process.

To build a powerful brand, business leaders need to be able to conduct extensive research, understand their target audience, and translate their values into engaging brand assets. One of the easiest ways to ensure you sidestep the potential challenges of branding, is with a brand strategist.

Today, we're going to take a closer look at what brand strategists can do for a company, to help you determine whether you need to enlist the help of one of these professionals.

What is a brand strategist?

An introduction to brand strategy

Let’s start with the basics: What is a brand strategist?

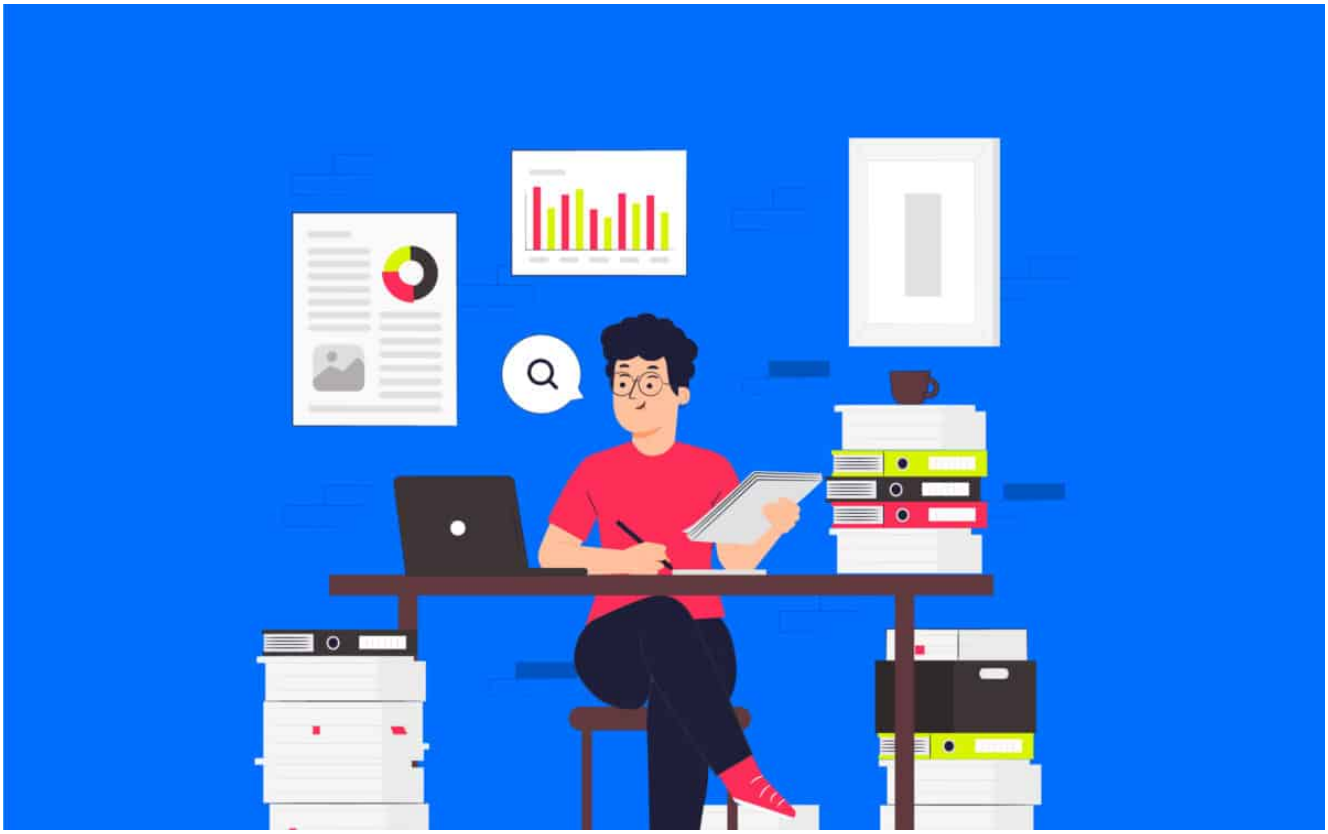
A brand strategist is an expert in branding capable of developing positioning recommendations, guidelines, and insights for business leaders. They work closely with each individual company to determine their goals for branding, and define a clear “identity” for the organization.

Brand strategists are experts in conducting market and audience research. They know what it takes to stand out in any industry, and understand how customers make purchasing decisions.

The right professional can act as a consultant for a company, answering important questions about growth and marketing opportunities. They also help businesses to make decisions about personality, tone of voice, and visual presence, based on their distinct goals.

A brand strategist can assist businesses in building a powerful identity from scratch, but they’re also excellent for maintaining your brand image.

In some cases, these professionals can also be helpful during rebrand or “brand refresh” initiatives, as they can help companies decide on the next steps for their business growth.



What does a brand strategist do?

The role of a brand strategist can be extremely varied. When asking “what does a brand strategist do?” it’s worth speaking directly to each agency you’re considering working with. Some professionals will offer different services and support to others.

In general, a brand strategist can assist with all of the strategic elements of developing and maintaining a brand. They help to build holistic brand experiences based on industry and customer knowledge, and can carry out research for actionable insights.

In most cases, these professionals also work hand-in-hand with creative team members like content creators, marketers, and graphic designers to build logos, brand visuals, and promotional strategies.

Some of the most common responsibilities of a brand strategist include:

Research

To determine how you can differentiate yourself in your target market, brand strategists need to conduct extensive research. They learn about your competition, your audience, and your industry, to provide informed insights into your next steps.

They may also use sales and conversion data to help you understand which branding campaigns are working best for your business.

Strategy creation

A major responsibility of a brand strategist is simply creating crucial strategies and guidelines for the business. They can help you with developing a differentiation strategy, or deciding what kind of brand guidelines you need to follow.

They'll also be able to help with the production of documents to assist in guiding your employees towards the development of a consistent image.

Consulting

A brand strategist has extensive experience in the branding and marketing world, which makes them an extremely effective consultant. These professionals can answer important questions about how to position your brand, or develop new promotional campaigns.

They can also provide reports and analytics to help guide you.

Collaboration

Most brand strategists will collaborate with graphic designers, artists, and creators to ensure the image and identity of the brand remains consistent.

They can also work alongside business leaders to cultivate a plan for growth, and decide what the next steps for the business should be during major turning points.

Creation

Some brand strategists can also help with content creation, building various assets for the business. This could include writing articles or thought leadership material for a blog.

It could also mean aiding with the critical copy you place on your business website and social media pages.

What skills does a brand strategist have?

Answering the question “what is a brand strategist” also means defining some of the skills these experts are likely to possess. Notably, the varied nature of brand strategy can mean there are some major differences between the abilities of different experts.

However, most brand strategists will use the following skills in their daily work:

Creativity

Brand strategists use their creativity to find effective ways of marketing clients or employers. They can also use their skills to come up with slogans, top-leve messaging, or strategies for enhancing the visual brand image.

Research

As mentioned above, brand strategists rely heavily on research to understand the most effective ways of reaching a specific audience. Their research and analysis skills help to ensure your business is spending its branding budget as effectively as possible.

Empathy

Many brand strategists are excellent with people. They

understand which psychological factors influence customers when they’re making decisions about what to buy. They can also develop a deep understanding of company goals and values.

Organization

Brand strategists must be able to deal with a wide variety of different branding initiatives, often at the same time. Excellent organization skills can help a strategist to ensure they’re delivering a consistent and holistic brand plan, according to deadlines.

Communication

A good brand strategist is an excellent communicator. They know how to translate complex topics and ideas into messages consumers can understand. They also know how to position important branding strategies to stakeholders and business leaders.

Problem solving

Branding strategies don’t always go according to plan. A brand strategist can help you pivot your brand identity when something goes wrong, so you can preserve your reputation. These experts are fantastic at solving problems creatively.

Leadership

Many brand strategists spend a lot of time working with other professionals and creating briefs for creative experts to follow. As such, they need to be able to motivate, inspire, and guide other employees with fantastic leadership skills.



Questions to ask your brand strategist

Once you've answered the question "what is a brand strategist?" you may start thinking about whether one of these experts could be ideal for your needs. A brand strategist can bring a lot of value into a business, but it's important to ensure you're choosing the right professional for your team.

When sorting through your list of potential brand strategists, ask questions like:

Have you worked in our industry before?

A brand strategist with a deep knowledge of your industry or marketplace will be able to jump into action a lot faster. They'll know exactly what it takes to reach your target audience, and separate your brand from the competition.

Do you have any client testimonials?

Asking for reviews and testimonials from previous clients will give you a good insight into the kind of benefits your strategist can deliver. Talk to a couple of the previous clients your strategist has served if possible.

What is your process?

How does your brand strategist ensure they can deliver the best results for your business? What kind of initial research are they going to do, and what sort of information will you need to prepare to get started with your project?

How do you view our current brand?

If you need help enhancing your existing brand, it's worth asking your strategist what they think about your current identity. They may be able to give you insights into where they believe you'll be able to improve.

What is the greatest value you can bring to our brand?

Asking your brand strategist how they believe they can help you will ensure you can set clear expectations for what you're going to get from your service.

Do you need a brand strategist?

The question "what is a brand strategist?" has grown increasingly common in recent years, as more companies continue to recognize the value of a clear and powerful brand.

Without a successful brand, your business has no hope of connecting emotionally with your target audience and boosting conversions.

Fortunately, a brand strategist can help.

The right brand strategist will find ways to enhance the branding of your company, or assist you with developing a new identity from scratch. They'll give you the guidance you need to effectively reach your target audience and differentiate your business from the competition.

What's more, they should provide you with helpful guidelines and strategies you can continue to use in the future.

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