

# 10 Tangible Tips for Better Branding

by Brad Stauffer, President, On the Mark™

**Is your business everything you want it to be?** Or do you have changes planned you just haven't gotten to? Maybe you've achieved all your goals and wonder what is next.

Whether you've experienced great success or just maintained your basic business goals, consider taking time to stop and look. Look at what you've created, where you are now, and what you want next. Running your own business is a big job. But no matter how busy you are, it is important to set aside time at least once a year to evaluate your business and also check in on your personal goals. In my life as an entrepreneur, I've begun a practice of regularly taking time, whether a few hours or a couple of days, to revisit my goals and dreams. This designated time presents the opportunity to ask yourself important questions: Am I happy with my business? What will make it more successful? What do I enjoy or not enjoy about my business? What do I want next?

Writing down your goals and intentions is an important step. If it has been awhile since you thought about or wrote down your goals, it is probably time to do that again. Writing down your goals and intentions will help you actually

achieve them. Really! Just the act of writing them down will help to make things happen. It helps to get your plans out of your head and down on paper. As you write your vision, be sure to include both business and personal goals. A fun way to create a "vision statement" is to pick a date in the future and write as if you already have it. For example, "It is summer 2007 and I just returned from speaking about my business success at the latest industry conference. Since my business has grown and I've been able to hire more people, it has allowed me to focus on my product ideas. I also just closed escrow on my new house and love my new BMW." Include everything exactly how you want it to be.

Whatever technique or tool you use, just focus on getting grounded on what you want. Consider hiring a personal coach to help keep you focused. Life is not about just taking things as they come. Take charge, get into action, and create or recreate your business and life just as you really want to have it. Marcia Wieder, America's Dream Coach and frequent "Oprah" guest says: "Making your dreams come true requires continually moving forward on what matters to you most.



## Simple Steps

It just takes a few simple steps to get going and get back on track. Overcome overwhelm by making just one goal tangible. Here are ten really easy steps to take, one at a time.

Demonstrate that you are more committed to your dream by taking action and powerful steps forward.”

## 1. Revisit Your Goals

Take the time to focus on what you want. Designate time to reflect on and write down your vision statement and mission. Set aside at least two hours the first time. Pick a favorite, quiet location that helps you get into a creative frame of mind. Dedicate a new notebook to write in or bring along your laptop. Be sure to include actual dates with your goals.

**Do It Now:** Open your appointment book and block out time to write down your personal and professional goals

## 2. Get Clear on Your Brand

Your brand is your main marketing message. It includes the quality and reliability of your service offerings and your customer service, as well as your logo and graphic look. And if you're a business owner with your name on the door, you are part of your brand too. Spend some time looking at what your business provides, what it says, and how you say it. Reflect on your logo, marketing materials, and graphics. Are your logo and marketing materials fresh and interesting? Does everything about your business reflect your standards and values?

**Do It Now:** Ask ten colleagues or employees for feedback about your business and brand. What is great about it and where do they see opportunity for improvement? Be open to constructive feedback.

## 3. Master Your Marketing

Get out your old marketing plan or write your first one. Your plan doesn't have to be complicated or a masterpiece. Its sole purpose is to provide an ongoing roadmap to regularly promote your business. Marketing can be indirect activities like redesigning your business card, sending out a postcard, or updating

your signage. The more direct side of marketing includes making phone calls, speaking, networking, or other “getting out there” activities. Have a balance of both types of marketing in your plan.

**Do It Now:** Write down five direct and five indirect steps you can do in the next month to promote your business.

## 4. Update Your Online Presence

If your website has been a low priority, it's time to change that. Whether you create your first site or update your current site, this should be one of your top priorities. If technology is not your friend, then find someone to lead this project for you. Most important, make sure your site is fresh, with current information, services, and pictures. And if you want people to find you through search engines, be sure to get help with search engine optimization. Also consider offering a giveaway that visitors can download, like an article or other useful information. It will keep them engaged and coming back.

**Do It Now:** Review your current website and look at your competitors' sites. Write down what you like. Then ask around for a good website developer contact to begin discussions. Or contact [On the Mark™](#).

## 5. Refine Your Customer Service

As you know, customer service can make or break your business. Getting feedback from your customers is the best way to learn how to improve. Once you have feedback, consider how to apply what you've learned to your day-to-day business. Consider creating a list of “Customer Service Practices” and introduce them to your staff. Get them excited about improving customer service.

**Do It Now:** Ask ten clients for feedback about your services and business. Why do they keep coming back, what do they like best, what bothers them, and what other services would they like to see?

## 6. Get Out and Get Known

Networking is the most effective form of business marketing. Much business is built on relationships and word-of-mouth today, so it's important to invest time in getting known. Attend local business organizations. Speak about your business. Work to establish yourself as an expert in your business. Get known for your expertise.

**Do It Now:** Start attending Toastmasters meetings to improve your speaking skills and get more comfortable in front of people. Go to [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org) to find a local and convenient meeting.

## 7. Build a Support Circle

Even in the best of times, it's always good to have support from friends and colleagues who believe in you and your goals. Build a circle of supporters who are willing to give you feedback and time. By surrounding yourself with people who believe in you, know your goals, and are willing to give you some time, you will keep focused and moving.

**Do It Now:** Make a list of at least five people you feel you can rely on for advice, support, and practical help. Send them an email, asking them to be a member of your support circle.

## 8. Practice Personal Growth

Just like exercise and healthy food help our bodies, good intellectual stimulation and positive input into our minds keep us mentally healthy. Whether you practice a faith, read self-help books, or take motivational workshops, it all helps to keep you on track. Personal growth studies provide an opportunity to regularly look at how you operate in life and what you want to do about it.

**Do It Now:** Sign up for a class or workshop that will stretch you a little further than you're used to.

## 9. Acknowledge Your Success

It's always easy to see where we've failed or what we're

### RECOMMENDED READING

- **Change Your Life in 30 Days: A Journey to Finding Your True Self** by Rhonda Britten; Dutton Books, 272 pages
- **Extreme Success** by Rich Fettke; Fireside, 288 pages
- **Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don't** by Jim Collins; Collins, 320 pages
- **Making Your Dreams Come True** by Marcia Wieder; Harmony, 235 pages
- **Now, Discover Your Strengths** by Marcus Buckingham; Free Press, 272 pages
- **Take Time for Your Life** by Cheryl Richardson; Broadway, 272 pages
- **Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential** by Joel Osteen; Warner Faith, 320 pages

not doing. But we rarely take time to acknowledge our achievements and successes. Getting positive feedback is always good, but don't forget to congratulate yourself. Take some time to look at what you've accomplished — your successes and wins. Honor yourself for the great things you have done.

**Do It Now:** Make a list of 20 successes from the last six months, from small accomplishments to big rewarding business achievements. Tack it up on your bulletin board or someplace where you will see it often.

## 10. Hire a Coach

Working with a professional coach could be one of your best investments this year. Oprah often talks about the impact of working with her coach. Rhonda Britten of NBC's former afternoon hit "Starting Over" works with young women to make dramatic changes in their lives. You and your coach can design the working relationship that best meets your style and goals. Most coaches offer a complimentary introductory session.

**Do It Now:** Google "life coach" or "business coach" and start making calls. You can also find coaches at [www.thecoaches.com](http://www.thecoaches.com), [www.coachfederation.com](http://www.coachfederation.com), and [www.dreamcoach.com](http://www.dreamcoach.com).

Name

Date

# On the Mark™ Personal Assessment Profile

Taking a personal assessment gives you an opportunity to honestly answer some thought-provoking questions. There is no right or wrong answer and no one will be grading you. Use this assessment as a tool to help you honestly look

at your business and life. At the bottom of this page are some action steps to record. Also, feel free to write more about your feelings, learnings and what you discover about yourself as a result of this work.

## Starter Questions

If money, time or space were no obstacle, how would you be living your life right now?

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What two steps could you immediately take that would make the biggest difference in your current situation?

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In what areas do you feel stuck currently, or want to stretch further?

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On a scale of 1-5, rate your self on these statements using the following criteria:

**1 (Strongly Disagree) 2 (Somewhat Disagree) 3 (Neutral) 4 (Somewhat Agree) 5 (Strongly Agree)**

### Business Survey

- I am a successful business person. \_\_\_\_\_
- I am genuinely happy with my professional career. \_\_\_\_\_
- I make the amount of money I want to make \_\_\_\_\_
- I like my business just as it is. \_\_\_\_\_
- I know everything I need to know about my business. \_\_\_\_\_
- I regularly get help or ask for help in areas I'm unsure about. \_\_\_\_\_
- I handle and resolve all situations, no matter how difficult. \_\_\_\_\_
- I am good at getting things done that matter. \_\_\_\_\_
- I am satisfied with the amount of business I have. \_\_\_\_\_
- I am satisfied with my marketing and branding plans. \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Survey

- I am smart and confident. \_\_\_\_\_
- I know who I am and what I want. \_\_\_\_\_
- I am not afraid to ask for what I want. \_\_\_\_\_
- My relationships are healthy and enjoyable. \_\_\_\_\_
- I regularly take time to relax or enjoy activities. \_\_\_\_\_
- I am living my dream life. \_\_\_\_\_
- I regularly set goals. \_\_\_\_\_
- I usually achieve my goals. \_\_\_\_\_
- I exercise and take good care of myself. \_\_\_\_\_
- I keep my word to myself and others. \_\_\_\_\_

## Next Steps

Now that you've completed this assessment, take time to absorb your answers or even change them if you want. What do you see? How do you feel? What comes up for you? As the results of this work, now list three things that you are either going to reflect more on or actual action items you'll do.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ By when? \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ By when? \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ By when? \_\_\_\_\_