

Branding Worksheet for Specialty Food Producers

Fill out this worksheet as completely as you can. Once you've completed it, ask a few trusted customers if it matches their perceptions of your business or product. Your final worksheet will contain words and messages that will help you build a strong brand for your product.

YOUR STORY

- **WHO is producing?** Who started your business? What is your background? What is your connection to your product?
- **WHERE are you producing and selling?** Is your product locally made? Is there anything special about the place you produce or the locations where you sell your product?
- **WHAT are you producing?** What is your product category? How is your product similar to or different than other products?
- **HOW are you producing your product?** What ingredients do you use, how do you source them? What methods or techniques do you use to produce your product?
- **WHY are you producing?** Why did you start your business? What are your values and beliefs?
- **Summary:** In 2-3 sentences, describe who you are, what you offer, and why you exist.

YOUR NICHE

Your Customers: (If you serve more than one type of customer, answer questions for each type.)

- **Demographics:** Age, gender, ethnicity, race and cultural background, education, economic status, marital status, children living at home, zip codes, and other characteristics.
- **Problems/needs:** Are they trying to eat healthy? Cook gourmet meals? Eat on the go? Cook the foods they grew up eating? Make healthy meals their family will enjoy? Are they on a tight budget? Do they need advice about how to prepare your products?
- **Summary:** In one sentence, summarize who your customers are and how you meet their needs.

YOUR COMPETITORS (List the top 3-5.)

- **Competitor #1:** How are we similar? How are we different? What do we do better than them?
- **Competitor #2:** How are we similar? How are we different? What do we do better than them?
- **Competitor #3:** How are we similar? How are we different? What do we do better than them?
- **Summary:** In one sentence, summarize how you're different/better than your competitors. If you claim to have the healthiest or most convenient products, you must be able to say why (because...).

YOUR IMAGE (How you want to be perceived.)

Brand Personality. If your business or product was a person, which 3-5 adjectives would you want your customers use to describe you? (If you don't know what they'd say, ask them.) **Examples:** ABC Yogurt is fun, youthful, and innovative. XYZ Cookies are sophisticated, unique, and grown-up.

1.

2.

3.

Descriptor: A few words or a phrase to use with your name, logo and tagline to describe who you are or what you do. A descriptor is especially helpful if your name is not self-explanatory. Can be used in addition to or instead of a tagline. **Examples:** Hand-made fair trade chocolates. Gluten-free small batch bagels.

- **Longer Descriptions:** You may also want to add a few more words to your descriptor to create a 25-word, a 50-word, and a 100-word description that you can use on your website, social media, and anywhere you might need it.

Tagline: (Optional.) A short snappy phrase to use with your name, logo to inspire a positive association for your customers. The purpose of a tagline or slogan is to convey the benefits that your products provide. **Examples:** Apple: Think Different. Kashi: Seven whole grains on a mission. Campbell's Soup: Mmm good. Disney: Where Dreams Come True.

Key messages: List the 3 most important concepts, facts, or statistics that you most want people to know or think about your products. Are you using a family recipe? Are you a former Wall Street executive? A worker-owned business?

1.

2.

3.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Once you've come up with the words you'll use to talk about your business, you can use them on everything for your business, including your website, signage, and social media. You can give this to your graphic designer to develop a logo, a color palette, a typeface, and images that reflect your brand personality and values.

Everything that you and your employees do should consistently share the same attitude, look and feel. Your customer service and operations can also help you build a strong brand.

Here are some of the items that you should review to make sure that they consistently reflect your brand.

- Signage
- Product cards
- Postcards/Rack cards
- Website
- Social Media
- Emails
- Operations
- Employee outfits or accessories
- Customer service