

A BRAND-BUILDING GUIDE

The Brand Identity Checklist

*Thirty decisions that turn a business into a **brand** people trust, remember, and buy from.*

BY ALTAURA

Most founders build the brand last.

They register the business, source the product, open the page, and start posting. The brand gets improvised along the way: a logo from a free app at midnight, colors that change with the mood, captions written in whatever voice the day produced. Then they wonder why the business feels invisible next to competitors with weaker products.

Here is the truth nobody tells founders: a brand identity is not a logo. It is a set of decisions, made once, written down, and repeated everywhere. Who you serve. How you look. How you sound. Where you show up. Make those decisions deliberately and everything you publish compounds into one recognizable thing. Skip them and every post starts from zero.

This checklist walks you through all thirty of those decisions, across the six areas that make up a complete brand identity. It is the order we use with clients, arranged so each section builds on the one before it. And it is not only for day one. Whether you are launching next month or have been selling for years, the test is the same: how many of these thirty decisions actually exist for your brand? Most established businesses are surprised by their own count.



Check It

Only if it exists outside your head: written down, saved as a file, or live where customers can see it.



Leave It

If it is half-done, undocumented, or "basically decided." An unchecked box is a to-do, not a failure.

30

Count It

Five items per section, thirty in total. Tally your checks at the end to see how complete your identity really is.

01	Foundation	WHO YOU ARE, IN WRITING
02	Logo & Marks	YOUR FACE IN THE MARKET
03	Color Palette	OWN A FEELING
04	Typography	HOW YOUR WORDS LOOK
05	Voice & Messaging	HOW YOU SOUND
06	Brand Kit & Touchpoints	READY EVERYWHERE

Foundation

A brand is a set of decisions. Write them down before you design anything.

Most founders start with the logo, because the logo feels like the brand. But a logo is a conclusion, and you cannot draw a conclusion from decisions you have not made yet. Who exactly do you serve? What do you stand for? Why should anyone choose you over the dozen others selling the same thing? Identity built without those answers is decoration.

Foundation work feels invisible, which is why it gets skipped. Nobody sees your positioning statement. But every future decision, from the colors to the voice to the offers, answers to it. One honest page is enough. Vague ambition disguised as a mission statement is not.

DONE LOOKS LIKE

One page that states who you serve, the problem you solve, why you over the alternatives, and the three feelings your brand should evoke. A stranger could read it and design for you.

WHERE BRANDS SLIP

- ✓ Choosing a name nobody can spell, say, or search for
- ✓ Defining the ideal customer as "anyone who needs my product"
- ✓ A mission statement that could belong to any business in any industry
- ✓ Copying a competitor's positioning because it seems to work for them

THE CHECKLIST

CHECK IT ONLY IF IT EXISTS OUTSIDE YOUR HEAD

- 1 You have a one-sentence positioning statement: who you serve, what you offer, and why you.
- 2 Your ideal customer is described specifically, with their situation, budget, and problem, not just "everyone."
- 3 You have three to five brand values written down, the kind you would turn down money to protect.
- 4 Your business name is easy to spell, say, and search, and the matching handles are secured.
- 5 You can name the three feelings your brand should trigger at first contact.

ITEMS CHECKED / 5

Logo & Marks

Judged in seconds. Repeated for years.

Your logo is not your brand, but it is your most repeated asset. It will sit on every post, invoice, package, and profile you ever publish. Founders tend to go one of two ways: obsess for three months, or improvise in twenty minutes. Many established brands are still running on the twenty-minute version years later. Both miss the point. A working logo only has to do three things: stay legible, scale cleanly, and look like nobody else in your market.

And one version is never enough. You need the full logo for headers and documents, plus a simplified mark for the small spaces, like the profile photo, the favicon, and the package seal, where detail turns into mud.

DONE LOOKS LIKE

A primary logo plus a simplified mark, saved in transparent PNG and vector formats, readable at thumbnail size, with versions for both light and dark backgrounds.

WHERE BRANDS SLIP

- ✓ One JPEG with a white box around it, pasted onto everything
- ✓ A logo that turns unreadable at profile-picture size
- ✓ Logo fonts and colors that appear nowhere else in the brand
- ✓ No vector file, so every enlargement comes out blurry

THE CHECKLIST

CHECK IT ONLY IF IT EXISTS OUTSIDE YOUR HEAD

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|---|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | You have a primary logo and a simplified mark or icon for small spaces. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Your logo files exist in transparent PNG and in a vector format (SVG, PDF, or AI). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Your logo is still legible at favicon and profile-photo size, viewed on a phone. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | You have versions that work on both light and dark backgrounds. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | You know your logo's minimum size and clear space, and you respect both everywhere. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

ITEMS CHECKED / 5

Color Palette

Color is the fastest thing customers remember about you.

Color reaches people before a single word is read. Customers will recall your palette before they recall your name, which is exactly why it has to be decided, not discovered post by post. Brands fail in two directions: too many colors, so every post looks like a different company, or default colors, so every post looks like a template anyone could be using.

A working palette is small and governed. One or two primary colors, one accent used sparingly, and calm neutrals doing most of the work. The accent is seasoning, not the meal. The moment it covers everything, it stops meaning anything.

WHERE BRANDS SLIP

- ✓ A new color scheme for every post, depending on the day's mood
- ✓ Heavy, dark backgrounds that drown the content they carry
- ✓ The accent color used everywhere, until it signals nothing
- ✓ Colors eyeballed each time instead of saved as exact codes

DONE LOOKS LIKE

Four to six colors with exact codes, a written rule giving each color a job, and the discipline to let the accent stay an accent.

THE CHECKLIST

CHECK IT ONLY IF IT EXISTS OUTSIDE YOUR HEAD

-
- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | Your palette is defined: primary, accent, and neutrals, four to six colors in total. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Every color is saved as an exact code (HEX or RGB), not re-picked by eye each time. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Each color has a written job: background, text, or accent. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Your text is comfortably readable on its background, even on a phone in sunlight. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | Your last nine posts look like they came from the same brand. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
-

ITEMS CHECKED / 5

Typography

Your fonts speak before your words do.

Type carries tone. A refined serif whispers heritage and editorial polish. A clean geometric sans says modern and direct. A swirling script says personal, and too often, unreadable. Your customers will never name your fonts, but they will absolutely feel it when a premium product is dressed in a font that came free with a meme app.

You need exactly two: one font for headings, one for body text, with a clear hierarchy of sizes and weights. Every font you add after that subtracts from the brand. Restraint here is what reads as professional.

DONE LOOKS LIKE

Two fonts, one for headings and one for body, with defined sizes and weights for titles, subtitles, and text, used identically across your website, posts, and documents.

WHERE BRANDS SLIP

- ✓ A different font on every graphic, chosen at the moment of design
- ✓ Decorative or script fonts used for entire paragraphs
- ✓ Body text too small or too faint to read comfortably on a phone
- ✓ One font on the website, a different default in every email and invoice

THE CHECKLIST

CHECK IT ONLY IF IT EXISTS OUTSIDE YOUR HEAD

- 1 You use one heading font and one body font, and no more.
- 2 Both fonts are licensed for commercial use, or are open-source.
- 3 You have a written hierarchy: heading, subheading, and body sizes and weights.
- 4 Your fonts render the same on your website, social templates, and documents.
- 5 Your body text passes the phone test: readable at arm's length without zooming.

ITEMS CHECKED / 5

Voice & Messaging

If your captions could belong to anyone, they belong to no one.

Voice is your brand's personality in words: the bio, the captions, the replies, the thank-you note in the package. Most founders never decide it; they borrow it. Corporate on the website, playful on Instagram, slightly desperate in the DMs. Each piece is fine on its own. Together, nothing sticks, because there is no single voice for the customer's memory to hold onto.

Voice gets decided the same way color does: in writing, before you need it. A tagline you repeat without flinching. A pitch that fits in two sentences. Three tone words with real examples of what you say and what you never say.

WHERE BRANDS SLIP

- ✓ A bio that describes a vibe but never states the offer
- ✓ Tone that changes with whoever happens to write the post
- ✓ Explaining the business differently every time someone asks
- ✓ Taglines that sound clever but say nothing about you

THE CHECKLIST

CHECK IT ONLY IF IT EXISTS OUTSIDE YOUR HEAD

-
- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | You have a tagline or one-liner you repeat consistently, everywhere. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Your elevator pitch covers what, for whom, and why it matters, in two sentences. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Three tone words define your voice, with examples of what you say and never say. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Your bio on every platform makes the offer clear in under ten seconds of reading. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | You have three to five core messages you repeat on purpose, not new themes every week. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
-

ITEMS CHECKED / 5

Brand Kit & Touchpoints

If it is not packaged, it is not a brand yet. It is a memory.

Everything you have decided so far has to live somewhere other people can use it. That is the brand kit: one document holding your logo files, color codes, fonts, and voice rules. Without it, consistency depends on your memory and your mood, and the brand drifts the first busy week you have.

Then walk your touchpoints like a stranger would: the profile, the link page or website, the invoice, the packaging, the reply to a first inquiry. Each one is a handshake. A brand that is polished on the feed and improvised on the invoice is only half built.

DONE LOOKS LIKE

A brand sheet anyone could follow, reusable templates for your recurring content, and a profile, site, invoice, and packaging that all clearly belong to the same company.

WHERE BRANDS SLIP

- ✓ The brand exists only in your head and your last good post
- ✓ Every new design starts from a blank canvas
- ✓ Invoices and packaging that look unrelated to the feed
- ✓ A collaborator would have to guess your colors and fonts

THE CHECKLIST

CHECK IT ONLY IF IT EXISTS OUTSIDE YOUR HEAD

- 1 A brand sheet exists: logos, color codes, fonts, and voice rules in one document.
- 2 You have reusable templates for your most frequent content formats.
- 3 Profile photos, banners, and bios match across every platform you use.
- 4 The unglamorous touchpoints, like invoices, receipts, packaging, and your email signature, carry the brand too.
- 5 Someone else could create a post for you tomorrow, and it would still look like yours.

ITEMS CHECKED / 5

YOUR RESULTS

Count your checks.

YOUR TOTAL

_____ / 30

25–30

FULLY BUILT

Your identity is decided, documented, and in use, which puts you ahead of most businesses, including many far older than yours. Your work now is protection: keep the system tight, resist the urge to redesign out of boredom, and revisit this checklist every quarter. Consistency is what converts a good identity into a known one.

14–24

HALFWAY
THERE

You have made real decisions, and left real gaps. This is the most common place for businesses to land, new and established alike, and the unchecked boxes are exactly where your brand looks inconsistent to strangers. Do not fix at random: finish Foundation and Voice first, because every visual decision downstream depends on them.

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STILL A SKETCH

The business may be real, but the brand mostly lives in your head, which means it disappears the moment you are not personally holding it together. The good news: whether you are starting fresh or untangling years of improvisation, every decision you finally make releases value that has been trapped in your business. Build in order: foundation, then logo, color, and type, then voice, then the kit. Every piece will reinforce the last.

One more thing before you close this guide. Whatever you counted, you now have something most founders never write down: a complete picture of what your brand identity is, and what it is still missing. The difference between brands that stay invisible and brands that get elevated is what happens to that list next.

THE NEXT STEP

*You know what is missing.
Now let's build it.*

This checklist tells you what a complete identity contains. What it cannot tell you is which choices are right for your market: the positioning that sets you apart, the look that matches your price point, the voice your customers will actually trust. That is where Altaura comes in. **The Altaura Brand Identity** builds the full system with you, from positioning and visual identity to voice and brand kit, so your business looks like the brand you intend to become, not the one you improvised along the way.

5 wks

BRAND TRANSFORMED

5

WHOLESALE PARTNERS

60%

REPEAT & REFERRAL RATE

In five weeks, we took a grooming brand from invisible to supplying five barbershops with a 60% repeat and referral rate. Not with more posting. With strategy.

*Brands are not built by chance.
They are built by **strategy**.*

BUILD YOUR BRAND IDENTITY

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