

A person wearing a red jacket and dark pants stands in a narrow, snow-filled rock crevice. The person is looking up at the high, dark rock walls. The ground is covered in snow, and the rock walls are dark and textured. The overall scene is dimly lit, with the person's red jacket providing a strong contrast.

BRANDING 101

Step by step guide for outdoor/ sustainable startups

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YOUR BRANDING IS NOT A LOGO.

A branding is a person's gut feeling about a product, service or company. We can try to influence how they perceive the brand. Keep reading and find out what branding includes.

1. FIND YOUR UNIQUENESS

If someone ask you what is your business is about, how do you explain to them in one sentence? What makes your product so unique that your investor will keep listening to your pitch?

Background photo: [Puffin](#) is currently the only brand that makes beverage insulated jacket and bottle sleeping bags. The unique proposition gives it advantage to enter outdoor and gift industries.

Brand statement template

**I'M THE ONLY
BRAND THAT**

provides products/ services

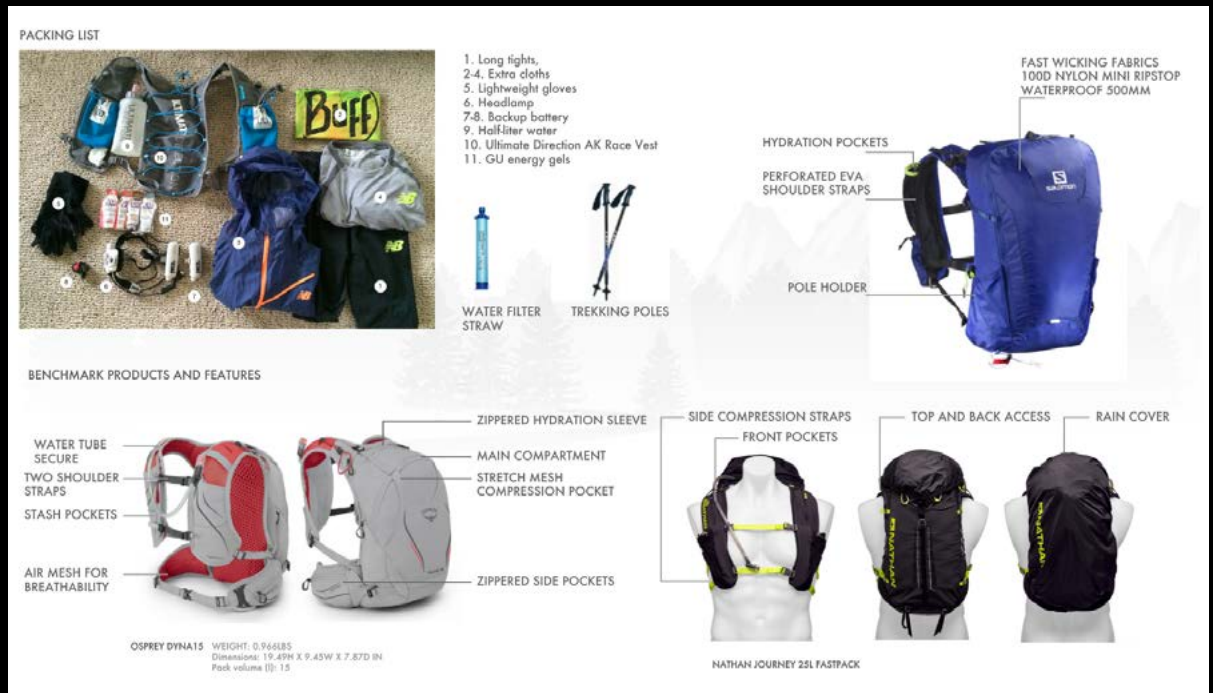
IN

market / industry



2. DO THE RESEARCH

What are other similar offerings in the same market? Who are your competitors? What are the trends? Besides doing market research, also do research on your users and understand their behaviors.



Example is the basic research for hydration pack design - understand what user brings and the existing design.

3. DEFINE TARGET AUDIENCE

Who are your ideal customers? Write down their names and start to picture them. What are they passionate about? Where do they usually hang out and go shopping? What do they care? What's their taste and style?

This part we also call *persona* - they are your hypothetical ideal customers. But their characteristic should be like real people, so you can eventually find them.



4. CREATE A MOOD BOARD

Based on the information you wrote in pervious exercise, collect the images that present your ideal customers' style. It's not the collage of their daily life; it's the visualization of the *feel*. The board should give you a good sense of this person's vibe without any verbal explanation.

You can also use this board to find the brand colors.



Resources for free high-quality images:
[unsplash](https://unsplash.com)

5. DEFINE THE BRAND VOICE

You got your brand statement, persona and visual languages - now it's time to curate the whole story for your brand. You can start from defining *6 attributes* - 6 adjectives that describe your brand best. The more specific the better. Avoid using *innovative* or *creative* this kind of word that can be used in any companies.

After that, write a paragraph briefly introducing the brand. It's less about the product itself; it's more about the experience you want to bring to your customer.

Green and Black's organic chocolate aims to inspire people to recognize the most detailed natural flavor from the soil. To celebrate the ethical farming of organic chocolate, the new series of products represent the four stages of the chocolate process in a contemporary and minimal way.

6. DESIGN A LOGO

Yes, we highly recommend you to hire an experienced designer to curate a logo that really speaks to your audience. But what if you have very little budget? We suggest you to type out your brand's name with the cleanest and simplest font as the temporary logo. Don't...! Don't add any symbol. It's usually when it goes bad.



Resources for logo inspiration:

[Pinterest](#)

[Designinspiration.com](https://www.designinspiration.com)

Less is more. Simple and clean is usually the go-to.

7. CREATE A STYLE GUIDE

It sounds very intimidating... what's this for? Style guide is a document that define your brand elements such as logo placement, color palette, typography, icons, persona, mood board and what your website, business cards, packaging and social media should look like. It keeps your branding consistent inside out.



Is that helpful?
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About the author

Cerra Teng is a design strategist that helps companies to increase their audience by integrating marketing, branding, storytelling and design. She has worked with numerous startups and mid-size outdoor companies.

She is addicted to rock climbing and snowboarding. She also loves drawing her life on her [Instagram](#).



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