FREE PLAYBOOK · BRAND

THE BRAND PLAYBOOK

FOUNDATION BEFORE FACADE



A FREE PLAYBOOK FROM

BINA

BUILDWITHBINA.COM

BEFORE YOU START · 12 MINUTES

MOST BRANDING STARTS AT THE WRONG END.

How to find the one true thing only your business can claim, and how to build everything else on top of it. For owners of businesses that already exist.



WATCH THE FILM · 1 MINUTE

THE WHOLE PLAYBOOK IN ONE MINUTE

Eight steps, from the arena to the one-page system. Watch it first, then read the pages that matter to you.

Watch the film →

Opens the film in your browser

WHAT'S INSIDE

01 THE ARENA
Who you actually lose work to

02 THE STUDY
Five columns on four real competitors

03 THE ONE TRUE THING
The fact only your business can claim

04 THE TEST
Two questions every claim must pass

05 ONE SENTENCE
Your position, with a "because" in it

06 VOICE
Five bans, three always-words

07 THE LOOK
Colour, type, photography, then the logo

08 WRITTEN DOWN
One page, and make everything match it

Then: the ten-point brand check (p. 14) and the short version (p. 15).

A LOGO IS THE LAST THING

YOUR BRAND IS THE ANSWER A CUSTOMER GIVES WHEN ASKED WHY THEY CHOSE YOU.



Everything else, the logo, the colours, the type, the photography, is just how that answer gets carried around.

WORK IN THIS ORDER, AND EACH LAYER HAS SOMETHING TO STAND ON

01	**The true thing:** the operational fact that makes you different. Already inside the business.	Found
02	**Position:** who it's for, and the one sentence that says why you.	Decided
03	**Voice:** how that sentence sounds everywhere you write.	Written
04	**Identity:** logo, colour, type. The clothes, not the person.	Designed

WHY REBRANDS FAIL

A business that can't answer the question buys a new logo, and six months later nothing has changed, because the logo was never the problem. Most businesses do this backwards and wonder why the new look didn't sell anything.

01 · THE ARENA

PICK THE ARENA BEFORE YOU FIGHT.

Most owners name their competitors wrong. They name the biggest companies in the category, or whoever is cheapest. Neither is who they actually lose work to.



YOUR REAL COMPETITOR IS WHOEVER THE CUSTOMER WAS ALSO CONSIDERING

The only way to know is to ask. Every customer who bought from you in the last six months, one question:

Ask this

"Before you picked us, who else were you looking at?"

Not this

"Who do you think our competitors are?"

WRITE DOWN EVERY ANSWER

Ten answers will give you your real arena, and it is usually three or four names you weren't tracking. Sometimes the honest answer is "doing nothing" or "my brother-in-law". Write those down too. They're the hardest competitors you have.

02 · THE STUDY

THE AFTERNOON COMPETITOR STUDY.

Take the four names from step one. For each, write down only what you can see. No opinions, no guesses.



01
THEIR ONE SENTENCE
Copy the headline off their homepage, word for word. Not what you think they mean: what it literally says.

02
WHAT THEY PROMISE
Speed, price, quality, care, scale? Most categories only have four or five promises in circulation.

03
WHAT THEY PROVE
Numbers, names, photos, reviews, certifications. Anything a buyer could check.

04
HOW THEY LOOK
Colour, type, photography. Three words for the feeling.

05
WHAT THEY NEVER MENTION
The most useful column. Gaps are where positions live.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND

Put it in a five-column table. The pattern shows up fast, and it's almost always the same: everyone promising the same thing in slightly different fonts.

03 · THE ONE TRUE THING

IF YOU ONLY TAKE ONE IDEA FROM THIS PLAYBOOK, TAKE THIS ONE.



It's the difference between a brand people believe and a brand people scroll past. You don't have to invent it, because it is already sitting inside your business.

EVERY CATEGORY RUNS ON THE SAME GENERIC PROMISES

~~Quality workmanship~~ ~~Customer-focused~~ ~~No job too big or small~~

They're invisible, because every competitor says them and no customer believes any of them.

Underneath them

There is usually one operational fact that makes yours true, and most owners don't think it's worth mentioning, because to them it's just how the business runs.

FIND THE THING ONLY YOU CAN SAY

Not a promise every competitor makes. A fact about how your business already runs, that a competitor can't copy.

THREE REAL EXAMPLES

Each business had one operational fact that made its promise true.

A renovations company makes its own cabinetry in its own workshop. Every competitor in the city outsources it to a third party.	**Held timelines**
A property staging company owns its furniture. Every competitor hires theirs in from wholesalers.	**Can commit to a date**
A coffee roaster roasts on Thursday and will not ship anything roasted the week before.	**Freshness you can date**

What they had in common

None of them was advertising the fact. All three thought it was boring. In each case it was the only thing on the website a competitor couldn't copy by Friday.

WHY OWNERS MISS IT

You've lived with the business for years, so the thing that makes it unusual has stopped looking unusual. The fastest way through that is to ask someone who has just joined, or a customer who has used a competitor. They'll name it in a sentence.

HOW TO FIND YOURS

It's hiding in the parts of the business you take for granted. Work through these five questions and write the answers down even when they feel too obvious to count.

01 · What do you do in-house that others buy in?

Manufacturing, installation, delivery, support, design.

02 · What do you own that others rent?

Equipment, stock, vehicles, premises, the recipe.

03 · What do you refuse to do?

The jobs you turn down say more than the ones you take.

04 · What takes you longer, on purpose?

Longer than everyone else. Slowness you've chosen is a quality claim with evidence attached.

05 · What does a customer always say when they see it?

The same sentence, from stranger after stranger. That's the brand telling you what it is.

WORKED EXAMPLE

A small bakery answered question three with "we won't do custom cakes". It sounded like a weakness. It meant every oven ran one product line all morning, which is why their sourdough is out by six when the supermarket's is out by ten. **"Bread before dawn, because we don't make anything else"** came straight out of a refusal. Then apply the test on the next page. The answer that survives it is your brand.

04 · THE TWO-QUESTION TEST

A CLAIM HAS TO PASS BOTH TO BE WORTH BUILDING ON.

Run every candidate through both questions. Most answers won't survive. The one that does is your brand.



1

COULD A COMPETITOR SAY IT BY FRIDAY?

If yes, it isn't a position, it's a slogan. "Passionate about quality" takes a competitor four seconds to copy. "We make it in our own workshop" takes them a factory.

2

COULD A CUSTOMER CHECK IT?

If nobody can verify it, nobody will believe it. A claim that can be photographed, counted, visited or named is worth ten that can't.

ONE RULE ABOUT HOW YOU WRITE IT

Say what is true in the positive, about the thing in front of you. Never write a negative absolute. "We never buy in parts" dies the first time one client supplies their own. "If we supply it, we made it" survives, says the same thing, and can't be broken by a single exception.

05 · ONE SENTENCE

ONE SENTENCE A STRANGER UNDERSTANDS IN FIVE SECONDS.

Now compress it, with nothing in it you can't prove.



THE FRAME

We help [who, specifically] get [the outcome they want], because [the true thing].

The "because" is what most positioning statements are missing, and it's the only part a competitor can't lift.

Weak

"Premium renovations with a focus on quality and customer service."

Strong

"Kitchens that land on the promised date, because we build the cabinetry ourselves."

THE RULE

Write ten. Read them aloud. Keep the one that doesn't make you cringe.

06 · VOICE

VOICE IS A LIST OF BANS.

Most voice guides are useless because they're adjectives. "Friendly, professional, approachable" tells a writer nothing. A voice becomes real when it's a list of things you don't do.



We don't use exclamation marks.	Checkable
We never say "passionate", "bespoke" or "solutions".	Checkable
We don't claim a number we can't screenshot.	Checkable
We're approachable but professional.	Useless

Then three words you always use. These are almost never the industry words. They're the ones your customers reach for.

They say

"the bench", "the fit-out", "my bloke"

You were writing

"benchtop solutions", "project delivery", "account manager"

THE WHOLE DELIVERABLE

Five bans and three always-words fit on a sticky note, and anyone you hire can follow them.

07 · THE LOOK

NOW, AND ONLY NOW, THE LOOK.

With a position and a voice decided, the visual work stops being taste and starts being translation.



01
COLOUR BEFORE LOGO

Pick a palette the category isn't using. Three colours, one accent used sparingly. If every competitor is blue, don't be blue.

02
TWO TYPEFACES, MAXIMUM

One for headings with character, one for body that disappears. A third is almost always a mistake.

03
PHOTOGRAPHY IS THE BRAND

People see your photos far more than your logo. Bad photos on a good logo still reads as cheap.

04
THEN THE LOGO

It must work at 40 pixels and in one colour. Test it as a profile picture before you fall in love with it.

THE QUESTION TO ASK

You're not asking "do I like it". You're asking "does this carry the sentence".

08 · WRITTEN DOWN

WRITTEN DOWN, OR IT ISN'T REAL.

A brand that only lives in the owner's head stops being consistent the moment a second person touches it: a designer, a VA, a printer, an agency. One page is enough. If it doesn't fit on one page, nobody will use it.



01 THE SENTENCE

Your position, as written in step five.

02 THE TRUE THING

With the safe wording, and what you must never claim.

03 COLOURS

As hex codes, with which one is the accent.

04 TYPEFACES

With where each one is used.

05 VOICE

Five bans, three words you always use.

06 LOGO FILES

And the one rule for clear space around it.

THEN MAKE EVERYTHING MATCH

Website, Instagram, invoices, van, email signature, the sign on the door. Consistency is most of what people mean when they call a brand "professional".

THE TEN-POINT BRAND CHECK

Answer honestly. Any "no" is cheaper to fix now than after you've printed it on something.

01	Can you name the four businesses you actually lose work to?	☐ Yes	☐ No
02	Have you asked a real customer who else they considered?	☐ Yes	☐ No
03	Can you name one operational fact a competitor couldn't copy this week?	☐ Yes	☐ No
04	Could a customer verify it without taking your word for it?	☐ Yes	☐ No
05	Is your position one sentence, with a "because" in it?	☐ Yes	☐ No
06	Does your homepage headline say that sentence, or something vaguer?	☐ Yes	☐ No
07	Do you have five written bans for how you write?	☐ Yes	☐ No
08	Does your logo still read at profile-picture size?	☐ Yes	☐ No
09	Do your photos look as good as your product actually is?	☐ Yes	☐ No
10	Does it all match: site, socials, invoices, signage?	☐ Yes	☐ No

7+
YES
You have a brand. It just needs tightening.

4–6
YES
The pieces exist, but they're pulling in different directions.

0–3
YES
Start at step one, and don't buy a logo yet.

FOUNDATION BEFORE FACADE

Branding goes wrong when it starts with the visible part. The logo, the palette and the photography are real work and they matter, but they're carrying something. If there's nothing underneath them, they're just decoration on a business that still can't say why it's different.

The good news: you don't have to invent the difference. It's almost always already there, in the way you actually run the place, written off as too ordinary to mention.

THE EIGHT STEPS, IN ORDER

01 ARENA
Ask ten customers who else they considered

02 STUDY
Five columns on four real competitors

03 THE TRUE THING
Five questions about how you actually run

04 TEST
Could they copy it by Friday? Could a customer check it?

05 POSITION
One sentence, with a "because" in it

06 VOICE
Five bans, three always-words

07 IDENTITY
Colour, type, photography, then the logo

08 SYSTEM
One page, and make everything match it

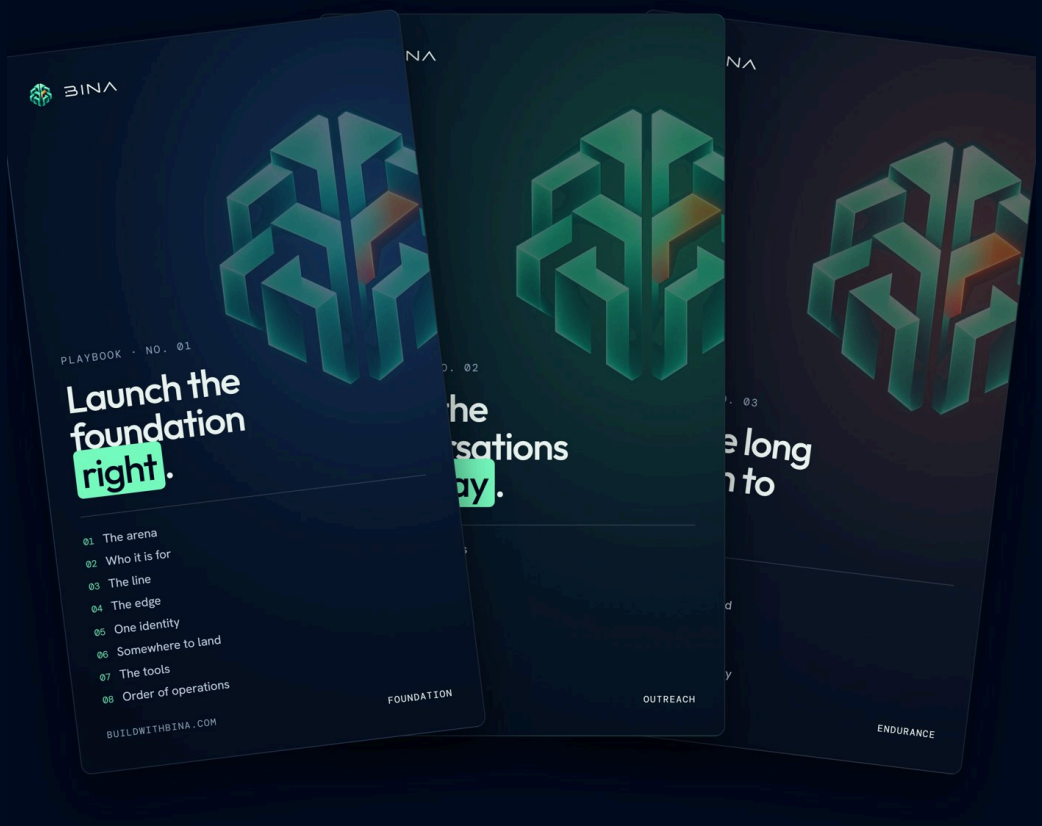
THE BIG GOAL

Find that. Say it in a sentence a customer can check. Then dress it properly.

THIS WAS ONE PLAYBOOK. HERE'S THE WHOLE SYSTEM.

THE DAY ONE SYSTEM

Three playbooks that take a business from idea to its first real customers: how to set the foundation right, how to start the conversations that pay, and how to keep going long enough to win.



Get the Day One System →

buildwithbina.com/day-one

Five steps, three playbooks, the films and five bonus books.