

*There is so much talk about branding these days, it can make your head spin. Branding, schmanding. It all sounds so complicated, but it's not rocket science. Branding gives a style to your business and may take into account the 5 senses: sight (visuals), sound (language/ tone), touch, smell, and taste in order to make contact with the intended target audience. Having a strong brand is a way to define your business and capture your audience.*

## KEY POINTS:

- 1 Unique Difference:** It's important to set your business apart by a unique feature. This key difference is what should be promoted to help draw in customers.
- 2 Appeal to Emotions:** Customers, or target audience are who you are aiming toward. Your branding should be consistent through all marketing materials and appeal to their emotions.
- 3 Competition:** Know who your competition is and what they look like. And then set yourself apart from them.
- 4 Look Professional:** Invest in a professional. It is important. Having your cousin do a logo because he knows a bit of Photoshop is not branding and probably won't help strengthen your image. To be on target or capture your company's objectives you need strategy, competitive analysis, defined goals and a plan. A professional is a professional for a reason.
- 5 Branding Guidelines:** Once your logo is complete, you should have branding guidelines developed. This includes a written document outlining your company colors, dos and don'ts for correct usage of a logo, fonts and supporting graphics, words and language that are your company's personality. It is important to have branding elements remain consistent across marketing assets to strengthen your company's image in someone's mind.
- 6 Watch that expiration:** Keep everything fresh. Don't think any design is forever. You want to look current and have your brand and supporting elements evolve with the times. Competition changes, and your materials may have to adapt with them to stay relevant.

