

FEARLESS BRANDING

MANIFESTO

12 PRINCIPLES FOR DEFINING
YOUR UNIQUE VALUE

By Robert Friedman

Manifesto ma-nə-'fes-tō *Noun*
A public declaration of principles

WELCOME

THERE IS A MOMENT OF TRUTH

Every consultant and service firm faces it. You're sitting down with a potential client and you have to find out if there's a fit. Here's what the prospect is thinking:

Should we hire you? Or would one of your competitors do a better job?

Once the moment of truth arrives, most of your work should already be done.

Before you ever get to the meeting, your business must be positioned precisely in your marketplace – and in the mind of the prospect.

I am committed to preparing you to triumph in that moment of truth.

That's why I wrote this Manifesto. After you've read it, if you'd like to talk about how you can define and articulate your competitive differentiation more powerfully, I'd love to hear from you.

IS FEARLESSNESS FOR YOU?

INTRODUCTION

MAKE THE TOUGH DECISIONS

Your business delivers value your competitors can't match.

But are you doing a good job of defining and articulating it?

Most service firms and consultants look and sound alike. Their messages are not powerful enough, not emotional enough, not differentiated enough. They do not have a clear market position.

This lack of competitive differentiation makes sales and marketing difficult.

Everyone wants competitive advantage. But not everyone realizes that competitive advantage is the result of making a series of tough decisions.

It's often overlooked: to create competitive differentiation you have to actually BE different. Work differently. Define your audience differently. Communicate differently.

Most importantly, you've got to define what you stand for. And it's got to be demonstrably different than your competitors.

The Fearless Branding Manifesto shows you how to use fearlessness to grow your business. You'll learn 12 principles that will enable you to position your business more precisely in your market. Following each principle is a question that represents an important decision for you to make.

By asking – and answering – the tough questions that define your difference, your business becomes more relevant, more inspiring – and more fearless.

Attracting your ideal clients gets a lot easier.

WHAT WILL YOU DECIDE?

LEARN FROM THE WORLD'S GREAT BRANDS

When I was a brand manager, I worked on brands like Coffee-Mate and Hunt's Ketchup that had no personal meaning for me. I felt that helping those businesses sell more stuff was not a good use of my talents. I wanted to do different work. More meaningful work.

I contemplated leaving the world of marketing and branding. Then I had an insight: not all big brands were content just to sell more stuff. Brands like Apple, Nike, Polo and Tiffany were different. As I launched Fearless Branding, I studied these "cream of the crop" brands to figure out what made them so special – and so successful.

Here's what I learned: great brands don't just sell products – they fulfill a powerful human desire.

They are masters at creating meaningful experiences AND running a profitable business.

One of the tenets of Fearless Branding is that service businesses can learn from the world's great brands. You can apply the same strategic thinking - even if you don't have their budgets - so you can be seen as a great brand in the eyes of your ideal clients.

Your competition is not thinking this way.

Leveraging the principles you're about to read will become part of your business's competitive advantage.

WHAT CAN YOU LEARN?

THE PRINCIPLES

KNOW WHO YOU ARE

SEEK THE GRAIL

DECIDE WHAT YOU STAND FOR

OFFER YOUR GIFT

KNOW WHO WANTS YOU

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK

GO WHERE THE LOVE IS

KNOW HOW THEY WANT TO FEEL

KNOW YOUR BUSINESS

COMMIT

CREATE AN EXPERIENCE YOUR COMPETITORS CAN'T MATCH

KNOW YOUR RESULTS

TELL THE WORLD

SPEAK TO THE DEEPEST NEEDS OF YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS

FIND THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF

MAKE YOUR BRAND A WORK OF ART

PART I:

KNOW WHO YOU ARE

SEEK THE GRAIL

Doing good work is enough for most businesses.

When you're fearless, you're up to something bigger.

The myth of the Holy Grail tells the story of a young knight on a quest to find the most important thing in the world. In the myth, the knight sought a chalice. But his real journey was to develop his courage.

What does this have to do with your brand?

When you're on a quest to achieve something big, you inspire your clients.

They admire you. They want to join you. Your work becomes more powerful. Inspiration becomes a key element of your business development success.

Fearless Branding's grail is for you to be fearless.

You get there by understanding and claiming your unique value. And letting the world know about your quest.

Do you have a vision for how your work can transform your clients' lives and businesses – and perhaps the world?

WHAT IS YOUR GRAIL?

DECIDE WHAT YOU STAND FOR

When he came back to Apple, Steve Jobs said:

“Marketing is about values.”

“The way to connect with customers is not to talk about ‘speeds and feeds,’” he said. “Our customers want to know: Who is Apple? What is it that we stand for? Where do we fit in this world?”

Telling clients who you are is the most important thing your brand can do.

Jobs answered the questions he posed with a statement of Apple’s core value. Here’s what he said: “People with passion CAN change the world for the better. That’s what we believe.” Notice: not a word about a computer or a phone.

The belief Jobs articulated became Apple’s Central Organizing Principle, the philosophy that drives everything Apple says and does.

I believe that without this philosophy Apple would not be the most valuable company on earth.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

OFFER YOUR GIFT

Think of your service not as something to sell, but as a gift you give. It changes the marketing paradigm.

Fearless Branding client Roger Schwarz & Associates (RSA) works with leadership teams to help them get to the heart of their toughest challenges – and resolve them. The root cause of many teams’ struggles is a command and control mentality – what RSA calls “Unilateral Control.” Talented people feel unappreciated. Valuable contributions get thwarted. Even experienced leaders get stuck.

RSA’s antidote is The Mutual Learning Approach. It’s based on five values: Transparency. Curiosity. Informed choice. Accountability. Compassion.

Would you like to be part of a culture built on curiosity and compassion? It’s different than typical corporate BS.

What if I told you these differentiating values would actually help you make more money?

In my work with RSA, I spoke with clients who grew revenue and profits in divisions of public companies by many millions of dollars and advanced careers to the highest levels of management at places like American Airlines.

[Read the case studies I wrote for the RSA website that tell these stories.](#)

These leaders said Mutual Learning made the difference in their success.

Sounds like a gift to me.

WHAT IS YOUR GIFT?

PART II:

KNOW WHO WANTS YOU

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK

Understanding your clients and prospects is essential for creating a strong market position for your business.

Until you know precisely where your best clients find value from working with you, you're just making stuff up in business development with new prospects.

Get insight by having conversations with clients and prospects that go beyond your everyday work. There are two ways to do it:

- 1) Hire an expert with significant experience talking to clients like yours.
- 2) Learn to have the conversations yourself.

Both methods produce rewards.

As part of every Brand Vision, I conduct in-depth interviews with about a dozen of my clients' clients. These conversations always lead to the "gold" that drives the brand position.

We may think we know our clients, but the stories they tell about you flesh out your story.

You can't figure it out on your own.

WHICH QUESTIONS ILLUMINATE YOUR VALUE?

GO WHERE THE LOVE IS

An essential goal for a Fearless Brand is that your ideal clients understand there are no substitutes for the value you provide.

You need to know who loves you and why. Then focus relentlessly.

A common pitfall is defining your target market too broadly – and resonating with no one.

By casting a wide net, you talk to too many prospects who will *never* love you. This lack of focus makes sales and marketing harder.

Use insight gleaned by talking to your current clients to create a precise profile of your ideal client. This ideal client profile is the homing device that ensures your sales and marketing land where they'll do the most good.

The profile has two parts:

- Your demographic profile includes tangible and external attributes such as industry, company size, title of decision maker and geography.
- Your psychographic profile describes what your clients think, feel, believe and value.

Fearless Brands meet the emotional *and* functional needs of their ideal clients in a way their competitors can't.

WHICH CLIENTS LOVE YOU?

KNOW HOW THEY WANT TO FEEL

Sales training 101: Buyers make decisions emotionally then justify their decisions with logic.

Great brands speak to the head *and* the heart.

A fearless brand delivers a feeling your best clients want more of.

Charles Schwab embodies this principle with the “Talk to Chuck” campaign.

Charles Schwab’s brand promise is respect.

In a sea of undifferentiated financial brands, Schwab was willing to put a stake in the ground. The company identified a segment of the market that it could serve best: investors who felt disrespected and even pissed-off. Here’s copy from their homepage:

“I don’t have to qualify to get guidance. I just get it.”

Can you feel in your gut that they’re talking to an investor who wants to be respected for who he is, not for the size of his account?

Schwab investors will not get the same emotional connection from another financial brand. No one else is speaking their language.

Understanding your ideal clients’ emotions is a competitive advantage.

HOW DO YOUR CLIENTS WANT TO FEEL?

PART III:

KNOW YOUR BUSINESS

COMMIT

“At the moment of commitment the entire universe conspires to assist you.”

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Decide what’s important and what you want. Put your stake in the ground.

What are you willing to do to get there?

It takes commitment to grow your business, increase your fees and work with better clients. Building a strong brand is part of that commitment.

But here’s what I’ve seen: Commitment is rare.

Many people say they want to grow their business. But only a few actually create the tools that enable them to hit their goals.

Commitment means doing the work and making the investments that will produce results.

WHAT ARE YOU COMMITTED TO?

CREATE AN EXPERIENCE YOUR COMPETITORS CAN'T MATCH

Some businesses sell “stuff” (some of it very good “stuff”) while others provide a deeply meaningful experience.

Let's look at a great example. Tiffany is known for diamonds – a valuable commodity, but a commodity nonetheless. How does Tiffany command a premium price *and* a large market share?

The true value of the brand is in the experience.

If you ask a woman what makes Tiffany so special, chances are she'll draw a breath and say, “*Oh, it's that blue box!*” But the value in Tiffany is NOT the blue box.

Tiffany's blue box is a powerful symbol for what the brand believes its customers really want: love.

Tiffany has intentionally created a brand experience that means: I love you. Did you know that Tiffany pioneered the concept of an engagement ring over 100 years ago? They also developed an entire website - [*What Makes Love True*](#) - just to tell stories about couples in love.

The entire Tiffany experience provides giver and receiver the gift of feeling more love. *That's* the irreplaceable value of the brand.

You can create an experience *your* best clients won't find anywhere else.

HOW IS YOUR EXPERIENCE IRREPLACABLE?

KNOW YOUR RESULTS

Why do your clients hire you? What do they *really* want?

Often, what clients say they want is just a starting point – a tactical part of a more complete solution.

For example, a client may come to Fearless Branding asking for a new website. But they rarely frame their request like this:

We need a website that will help us to sell fewer, larger engagements and charge more for them.

Fearless Branding’s job is to show how our work enables clients to achieve their ultimate objectives – not just to create a website.

When you prove your work produces measurable results, you’re worth more.

Positioning your offer as a tactical solution is usually worth less to a client than an offer that’s proven to help them achieve their real objectives.

That’s why strong case studies are so important.

The rigor of measuring your work pays off. Selling becomes easier because you’re selling results, not tactics.

WHAT RESULTS DOES YOUR WORK PRODUCE?

PART IV:

TELL THE WORLD

SPEAK TO THE DEEPEST NEEDS OF YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS

As you build your brand, you gain a deeper understanding of who your ideal clients are: what drives them, what inspires them, what motivates them.

Find the most important desire that your business can fulfill. Build your brand around that.

Your clients want to know what difference your brand will make in their lives. That's the job of your brand – to communicate how your business goes beyond what's expected to fulfill their deeper needs.

- Fearless Branding is built around helping our clients to be and feel more fearless – to stop being generically positioned and to deliver unique value.
- Tiffany is built around giving and receiving love.
- Fearless Branding's client Brilliant Ink is built around honoring employees' brilliance.

Fearless Brands generate sales by helping clients fulfill a profound desire.

WHAT DESIRE DOES YOUR BRAND FULFILL?

FIND THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF

Think back. It's Saturday morning. You're watching cartoons.

BEEP. BEEP. Roadrunner zooms by in a cloud of dust.

Miraculously, he stops. Right at the edge of the cliff. Long pause. Wile E. Coyote streaks by. Uh, oh. Wile E.'s over the edge, hanging on for dear life. SPLAT.

Moral of the story: Fearless Brands find the edge of the cliff.

If you think you're playing it "safe" by staying away from the edge, you're wrong.

There's risk in playing it safe. You're boring. Generic. You don't motivate prospects, employees or anyone else.

Of course, if you're too different you fall off the edge – the business equivalent of SPLAT.

By far, the bigger issue among professional services firms is playing it safe.

Most firms are indistinguishable from each other to a new prospect.

A dose of fearlessness is needed. C'mon – you can get a little closer, can't you?

It takes work to find your edge. But once you do, your business will be positioned on valuable turf.

Enjoy the view.

WHERE'S YOUR EDGE?

MAKE YOUR BRAND A WORK OF ART

Approach your brand like a consummate artist approaches his art.

Of course, your brand is *not* art for art's sake. A fearless brand is art intentionally designed to make a strong impression on your best clients and prospects.

The only way your brand will be a powerful sales tool is if you commit to excellence in the way you present it.

Every word counts. Every image counts.

Focus on the foundational elements that will make the biggest impact.
For example:

- Your website homepage
- Promises you make to clients
- Questions you ask prospects
- A report that defines your thought leadership
- A talk explaining your unique point of view

Work on these. Hone them. Polish them. Get the details right.

You will see results.

WHAT IMPRESSION DO YOU WANT TO MAKE?

A CALL TO ACTION

MAKE THE TOUGH DECISIONS

Your business delivers value your competitors can't match.

Now it's time to tell the world.

Are you ready to get fearless and use the principles from this Manifesto in your business?

Explore it.

If you want to powerfully and precisely express your business's competitive advantage, let's start a conversation.

Schedule your complimentary introductory consultation.

You'll gain clarity about:

- What you are really committed to in your business
- Your financial objectives and the characteristics of the work and clients you want more of
- What kinds of branding and marketing you'll need to realize your commitment

If you'd like to take me up on the offer, send me an email to me at Robert@fearlessbranding.com. We'll set up a time.

It's time to take action.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

ABOUT ROBERT FRIEDMAN

I founded Fearless Branding with the mission of eradicating generic brands.



I am passionate about helping service firms and consultants think strategically to answer their most important questions about their competitive differentiation and how to attract their ideal clients.

I love everything about what I do – from strategy sessions, to interviewing my clients' clients and prospects, to developing the final expression of a brand.

I also believe that a brand is fundamentally a tool that helps businesses achieve their objectives, so I work holistically, in incorporating strategic planning and business coaching with branding and marketing.

I've worked with many kinds of service businesses including

- Business consulting
- Professional services
- Architecture and design
- Marketing and communications agencies

Prior to founding Fearless Branding I worked in brand management for Kraft on The Budget Gourmet (which I loved), as well as for Nestle and ConAgra. Prior to brand management, I worked in the ad agency world in New York City.

I live and work in the Oakland hills.