

MARKETING YOUR MANAGEMENT COMPANY

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE



PART 1:

Brand AFFINITY



CINC
systems

**"Your brand is what
people say about
you when you're not
in the room."**

Jeff Bezos

Who is your company? What is your mission and vision? Why should HOA board members value you?

In this guide, we'll help you define your company's brand identity, positioning and targeting to craft the right message for the right ears so that your brand aligns with your dream client. In doing so, you'll be able to set the foundation for the way you want your brand to look to the outside world. This will help you develop a strong brand presence, acquire new customers, and improve client retention in the long run.

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01/03

BRAND IDENTITY



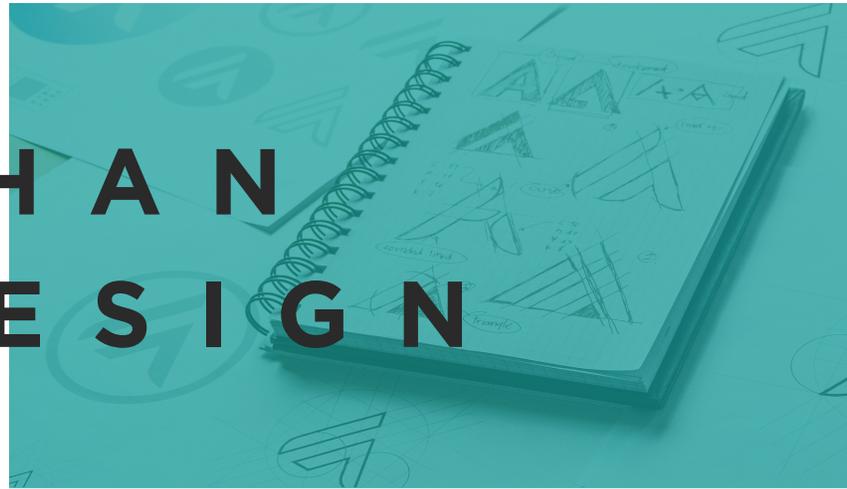
IF YOUR MANAGEMENT COMPANY
WERE A PERSON, WHO WOULD IT BE?

Perhaps you think of someone like George Clooney - classy, timeless, and dapper. Or someone like Dua Lipa may come to mind - fun, fresh, and ahead of the times. You may even consider someone like Steve Jobs - forward-thinking, bold, and a technological innovator.

The fact is, your business has a personality.

A lens through which your customers, your partners and your prospects perceive the company. A brand identity.

MORE THAN LOGO DESIGN



Many assume a brand identity is a design term. There are plenty of people on Fiverr who will sell you a brand identity package for fifty bucks. They assume that a logo design carries your whole brand identity. If that were true, nobody would ever need marketing. You would just put your logo out for people to see and they would buy. Logo design is important, but it's not your brand's identity. That goes much deeper.

So what is brand identity? Let's say you had to describe yourself to someone else. You might begin by describing how you looked, say, tall with short brown hair and brown eyes. That is your logo. It's the physical description of your brand. But we don't really know anything about you apart from that description. It doesn't tell us what kind of person you are.

Your brand identity fills in the gaps, painting your brand as a whole entity. It encompasses your company's personality, its purpose, its process and its results. The brand identity is who you are, and who you want to be as a company. It's how your company presents itself to the world.

Whether you have defined it or not, your brand already has an identity. The question is, does that identity match with how you want the company to be perceived? Let's find out in the following exercise:



WORKSHEET

Defining Your Brand Personality

To help you build your brand identity, we're going to define personality through a Tone of Voice exercise. A Tone of Voice is not what you say, but how you say it. This encompasses not only the words you choose, but their order, rhythm and pace. Through Tone of Voice, every statement made about your brand - from your website to your sales pitch - should align with the voice you've established.

Tone of Voice Dimensions

To the right, select the adjective that best describes how you want your brand to sound. Consider the example verbiage noted when making your decision.

Playful

"Raise your hand if you love writing checks! No takers? Then sign up for our automated online payment system!"

Casual

"The way we see it, following up on violations from your HOA shouldn't be cumbersome. That's why we offer violations management through our Homeowner app."

Irreverent

"Most associations can take up to three weeks to provide financials to their board members - we complete by the 5th."

Enthusiastic

"Have you seen our new site?! Not only does it look super fresh, but it gives you a glimpse of all of your needs on one screen."

Serious

"Homeowners at [Company Name] often choose to pay online automatically so they never miss a payment."

Formal

"Mobile applications give homeowners the ability to manage violations in one place, on one screen, at any time. This in turn alleviates both time and friction."

Respectful

"[Company Name] completes financial packages by the 5th of every month, on average."

Matter-of-Fact

"The redesign of [Company Name's] homeowner sites offer more than just a fresh look - its one-stop-shop dashboard improves transparency."

WORKSHEET

Defining Your Brand Personality

In the below table, select three adjectives that you think best describe how you want your brand to feel to your consumer. We encourage you to complete this exercise with your team of employees as well; discuss points of difference and whether or not you feel this way when you review your company's current marketing content and communications.

Innovative	Educational	Credible
Plainspoken	Bold	On-Trend
Empathetic	Conversational	Respectful
Youthful	Introspective	Timeless
Humorous	Confident	Hopeful



BRAND ALIGNMENT OR IDENTITY CRISIS?

Now that you've reviewed how you want your brand to sound, take some time to review your website, communications, and other marketing tools. Does your desired brand's identity align with what you put out there to your clients and prospects?

When the way your brand is presented to the world matches, whether digitally, in print, or in person, we call that brand alignment. It means that you are presenting a consistent message of who your brand is across every platform. Here's a little-known secret: no company perfectly aligns with their brand identity. None. Even the biggest brands in the world have published something that makes you go 'Huh?'. If it seems tone-deaf or out of left field, it's generally because they are stepping away from the identity you perceive them to be as a company. Sometimes, it's on purpose, to shake things up, but sometimes it's a misstep. It's a testament to how strong a brand's identity is when they can recover and move on quickly from a gaffe.

They can move on quickly because they have a strong foundation.

That foundation is their company values.

Your Values are Your Compass

Your Values are the core beliefs that define who you are as a company. Values are aspirational, meaning that they describe how you want the world to see the company, not necessarily what they do see from day to day (although you should always aspire to!) Your values should be 3 to 5 statements that define who you want to be as a company. They generally start with an action word, followed by a statement that describes what that word means to your company.

Your values inspire and guide your choices in the way the company operates and deals with people. The core values guide leadership, inspire people, and demonstrate the best aspects of who your company is. Think of your values as a compass for your company, always showing you and your team true north. When you have a solid direction for everyone in the company to follow, achieving brand alignment is much easier. Before making any decision, you simply ask, does this align with my company's core values?

Your Values should:

- provide a common sense of purpose and identity;
- provide long-term direction; and
- communicate internally and externally what the organization is about.



FINDING YOUR CORE VALUES

Think about the things that you most want your clients and potential clients to know about your management company. Is it your responsiveness to homeowners? Your timeliness in delivering financials? Your communication skills? Your personal touch?

List all of the traits you can think of that fit who you want your company to be. Enlist the help of key players and ask them questions such as, ‘What does our company stand for?’ and ‘Why do clients choose us over another management company?’

You should wind up with a pretty big list of ideals. But you will probably see that many of those express the same thing in different words. For example, honesty, integrity and trustworthiness are all different ways to say the same thing. Sort those thoughts into categories.

Next, narrow down the categories into a single action word or phrase that encompasses all of the words in that category. Pick 3 to 5 of these words that you feel best describe your company values. (You don’t want to choose too many values, or they will be hard for you and your team to remember and follow them!)

WORKSHEET

Finding Your Core Values

Considering the adjectives you chose in the earlier exercise, choose up to five values and write a corresponding sentence for each.

01

02

03

04

05

WORKSHEET

Finding Your Core Values

Example:

01 The Personal Touch.

We believe that relationships are important, and we work to foster them. We want our clients to know that we care, and we treat them like family.

02 Supportive.

We provide clients with the knowledge and skills they need so they can focus on their community.

03 Respect.

We treat all people with dignity and respect.

04 Transparent.

We want the board of directors to have a clear understanding of what we do, and feel as if they have a say in our actions.

THE BRAND ALIGNMENT TEST



Once you have defined your company values, you have a test against which you can apply every aspect of your marketing (and your business!). Whether it's something big like website design or a trade show booth, or something small like a Facebook update, an email signature or how your team answers the phone, consider how you can bring that back to your company values. Is it in alignment?



Finally, return to the personality test above. Does your brand's current personality align with your core values? If not, what changes can you make to project who you want your company to be?

Your core values reflect your brand's identity. With this information, you have a better understanding of who your management company is and what experience is important for you to deliver to your clients.

But this is all internal. Next in this series, we will look externally at Brand Positioning and how your brand affects the world.

02/⁰³



**BRAND
POSITIONING**

YOUR BRAND'S POSITION DICTATES
HOW MEMORABLE IT IS TO YOUR
IDEAL CLIENT.

The brand position answers the question, "How do we want to be remembered?"

A well-positioned brand needs to:

- Be relevant to your desired audience
- Stand out from the competition
- Evoke an emotional response
- Inspire the audience to take action

EXAMINE YOUR LOSSES

To understand why positioning is important, you need to think about your losses. Not the clients that have stayed with you for years, but the ones who you have lost to another management company. Or the ones whose business you never won in the first place. Why did that happen? Common reasons within our industry include:

- Lower Price
- Unreasonable Expectations
- Communication Breakdown
- Staffing Issues

You may see these issues as external factors. And they often are. But by changing your brand's positioning, you'll find that you can mitigate them to the point they become a non-issue. How? By engaging with your clients and prospective clients on an emotional level rather than a logistical level.



WHY YOUR MISSION STATEMENT IS NOT INSPIRING ACTION



Does your management company have a mission statement? Chances are that the answer is yes. It's one of those universals that every business creates when they first start out. But does your mission statement have a role to play in the day to day operation of your business? Does your mission statement guide your team in the actions they take? Does it inspire potential clients to choose you?

If you are like most small businesses out there (not just management companies!), the answer is no. In fact, you probably created the mission statement back in the beginning, slapped it on your website's 'About Us' page and promptly forgot about it. That's because most mission statements are not engaging on an emotional level. They do not inspire you, or your potential clients to take any action. They describe WHAT you do and HOW you do it, not WHY you do it.

Start With Why.

"People don't buy WHAT you do, they buy WHY you do it. The goal is not to do business with everyone who needs what you have. The goal is to do business with people who believe what you believe." **Simon Sinek**

Simon Sinek, author of the book, "Start With Why" calls WHAT, HOW and WHY the Golden Circle:

- **WHY is your purpose: What is your cause? What do you believe? How do you seek to change the world?**
- **HOW is your process: These are the actions you take to realize your why.**
- **WHAT is your result: What does your organization do? This is the result, or proof of your why.**

Once you can articulate your purpose, your belief, your WHY, you can craft a mission statement and a vision statement that inspires. These are the physical output of a soul-searching process that helps you get to the heart of your business to craft the messaging that inspires action, both internally (from you and your team) and externally (from your clients and prospects).

If you can answer your why in the time it takes to read this, you are probably not digging deep enough. Remember that the goal is to inspire people to action because they believe what you believe.

To find your why, you need to put your brain in the mode of a 4-year-old. Each time you think you have an answer, ask yourself, 'why?' again. Your why needs to be specific to your company and your customers. It needs to express a belief that inspires action and evokes emotion. It's time for some self reflection.

Start out by looking at your core values. Form them into a statement, 'We believe that...' Then ask, 'What's the benefit?' 'Why?'

WORKSHEET

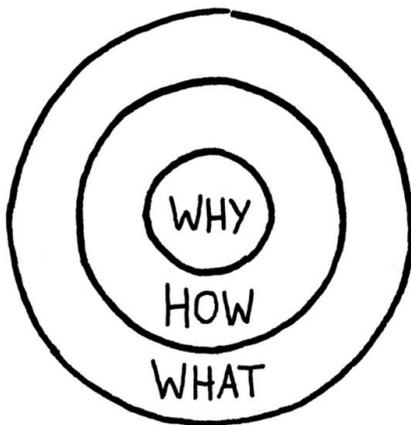
Finding Your Why

Build your own Golden Circle, listing out what your company does, how you do it, and why you do it. From here, consider your why when reviewing your company's mission statement.

what

how

why



What

Every organization on the planet knows WHAT they do. These are products they sell or the services they offer.

How

Some organizations know HOW they do it. These are the things that make them special or set them apart from their competition.

Why

Very few organizations know WHY they do what they do. WHY is not about making money. That's a result. It's a purpose, cause or belief. It's the very reason your organization exists.

TEST YOUR POSITIONING

Think you've got it? Now test it. Ask these 5 questions about your positioning:

- **Is it relevant to our dream client?**
- **Does it stand out from the competition?**
- **Does it evoke an emotional response?**
- **Does it inspire the audience to take action?**
- **Is this how we want to be remembered?**

If the answer to any of the above is no, modify your position. By the end, you should have a concise positioning statement for your brand. (Your why is also a great resource for your company's tagline, if you don't already have one.)

CAN YOU LIVE IT?

The final test is a personal one. Can you live it? This is not a one and done. You cannot pay lip service to it. You cannot throw it on your About Us page and forget about it. Your positioning means nothing if you and your team don't live by it. It's time to start changing the world, one client at a time!

03/⁰³

**BRAND
TARGETING**



THERE IS NO MAGIC BULLET WHEN
IT COMES TO MARKETING YOUR
BUSINESS. HOWEVER, THERE IS A
SECRET SAUCE.

A playbook that successful
businesses have followed and honed
over centuries to become the
successful brands they are today.

**That secret is this: to
not be all things to all
people.**

YOUR MESSAGE IS BEING DROWNED OUT



When you are trying to serve too large a market, your message becomes more muddled. You cut words and phrases from your language so that you are inclusive to every possible client. Your message is like the light from a streetlamp - wide and diffused over a large area.

Say for example, your business does property management, but you want to grow, so you are willing to do it all. Commercial management? Sure, we do that! Community association management? We do that too. Rental property management? You betcha. Now, how do you talk about the services you offer? You can't say Condos and HOAs because you might cut out the commercial and rental markets. You can't say malls and retail spaces because you might cut out the community association and rental markets. Suddenly, you find yourself couching your message in vague terms that might appease every market, but don't speak directly to any market.

Instead of making you look big, this strategy actually makes you look small. Your generic, please everyone message gets lost in the noise of thousands of other businesses making the same mistake.

IF YOU WANT TO GET BIG, YOU NEED TO THINK SMALL

What we mean by that is to find your niche. By narrowing your market, you can turn your messaging from a streetlamp to a laserbeam - narrow and focused on your target market. Your message penetrates your target market more deeply because you are speaking their language, using terms and ideas that they understand, and they respond to you better because they feel that you 'get' them.

Whether you're a startup or an established business managing hundreds of HOAs, establishing your niche is a highly effective way to further hone in on your brand's positioning and your WHY. Some of the benefits include:

- **Personalization:** Now you can cater everything to your dream client's interests, from a social post to your About Us section.
- **Segmentation:** By determining your clients' needs, you can further segment your messaging and improve response.
- **SEO:** By incorporating specific keywords and phrases onto your site, your dream clients have a better chance of finding you in their search for a management company.

HOW TO BUILD A DREAM CLIENT TEMPLATE

01 COLLECT CLIENT DATA

The first step is to collect information about your current top-tier clients. Who are your most profitable accounts? Who had the shortest sales cycle? Who do you enjoy working with? This will set your foundation to distinguish your great from not-so-great.

03 RESEARCH COMPETITORS

Consider competitors who have a similar niche to yours and research their reviews on sites like Google and Nextdoor. Negative reviews will help you understand where they've missed the mark so you don't make the same mistake, and positive reviews will give insight into what specific benefits excite your dream client.

02 CLIENT INTERVIEWS

Next, conduct interviews with your list of top-tier clients. Glean from them information about their short-term and long-term goals, pain points, and understand what keeps them up at night. Bonus: client interviews will also help further establish rapport.

04 GATHER THE INFORMATION

Now you're ready to build out your Dream Client Profile! Be sure that you have the following information available to you, based on previous research:

- Background information
- Demographics
- Communication practices
- Goals
- Common challenges faced
- Common objections
- Average sales cycle

WORKSHEET

Client Interviews

Use the below template as a starting point when conducting your client interviews. Speak with key decision makers within your top-tier HOA/COA boards. This is just a starting point, so add any questions where you see fit to build the right persona for your brand.

01

How do you define success within your role(s)?

02

What positive and negative commentary do you hear from your homeowners?

03

What would you consider your biggest challenges?

04

During the sales process, why did you choose our company? Was there anything that made you hesitant to work with us?

05

What are three things you aim to do this year to improve homeowner satisfaction?

WORKSHEET

Dream Client Profile

Segment

Location

Doors

Average Home Value

Homeowner Demographics (age, occupation, etc)

Board strategic goals

Board pain points

Why they should choose us

KNOWING YOUR NICHE



Now that you've built your Dream Client Profile, observe your niche. Perhaps you are a boutique-level community association, servicing condo owners in affluent neighborhoods. Or perhaps you are servicing HOAs in starter home environments for young, up-and-coming families. By truly understanding your niche, you will now be able to create messaging that will have your dream client running to you.

In creating messaging related to your Dream Client, you'll want to be sure to:

- **Show empathy. Showcase that you understand their pain points and challenges. Make it feel as though they are talking to a colleague rather than a sales or marketing person.**
- **Take pride in your niche. Don't shy away from messaging that shows that you are looking for a specific HOA/COA for your portfolio. This will help ideal clients realize that you are specifically catered to them, while also helping not-so-ideal clients disqualify themselves before the sales process even begins.**
- **Test out your messaging. Through landing pages, social media, email and more, see if your newfound segmented messaging is grabbing the attention of your dream client. If the test is not as successful as you hoped it would be, don't scrap your idea entirely. Go back to the drawing board to find key areas where your marketing could be improved.**

Brand Affinity



When you
know exactly
who your
brand is,

everything comes easier. From a quick social media post to a full-fledged brand guide, developing your voice and your mission lays the groundwork to your acquisition and retention goals.

MARKETING YOUR MANAGEMENT COMPANY

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

CINC Systems has joined forces with community association marketing agency, Frontage Marketing Group, to bring you the ultimate guide to marketing your management company.

We will be presenting this guide in 4 installments, each designed to teach you how to market your management company, and what steps you can take to build up your brand. The installments include:

- 1 Brand Affinity
- 2 Brand Attraction
- 3 Brand Acquisition
- 4 Brand Adoption

CINC Systems is the largest provider of SaaS solutions for the community association industry. Founded in 2005, CINC Systems became the industry's first Internet-based integrated accounting and property management system. CINC Systems is backed by founder Bill Blanton, a third-generation banker, and Spectrum Equity. The company serves more than 16,000 homeowners associations and 2 million homes. Learn more at www.cincsystems.com.



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