



WHY YOU EXIST · WHO YOU'RE FOR · HOW YOU SOUND · WHY YOU'RE DIFFERENT

# Ly's brand builder system

WHERE **CURIOSITY** MEETS CREATION

**THE WORKBOOK**

8 SCENES · ABOUT 60 MINUTES · FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AND PERSONAL BRANDS

YOUR NAME OR BRAND

Mai Coffee

DATE

Example workbook

A FREE BRAND SYSTEM BY **LY VIET VU**

REFINED OVER 20 YEARS · VANCOUVER · KYOTO · HO CHI MINH CITY

## BEFORE YOU START

# the film facts.

|                |                                                                                |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GENRE          | Brand building, for small businesses and personal brands                       |
| RUNNING TIME   | 8 scenes, about 60 minutes. Stop and come back any time.                       |
| YOU LEAVE WITH | Why you exist, who you're for, how you sound, and why you're different         |
| DIRECTED BY    | Ly Viet Vu. 20 years building brands, former CEO of Wunderman Thompson Vietnam |



## THE 8 SCENES

01

**purpose**  
Why you exist

02

**audience**  
Who you're for

03

**character**  
Your personality

04

**voice & tone**  
How you sound

05

**more like / not like**  
Your references

06

**positioning**  
Why you're different

07

**point of view**  
What you believe

08

**name & line**  
How people remember you

## A LETTER

Dear builder,

**you don't need an agency or a big budget to build a brand. you need honest answers to a few simple questions.**

Why do you exist? Who are you really for? How do you want people to feel? Answer those, and your logo, your posts and your website all get easier.

Ly

## HOUSE RULES

- ◆ Stay with it
- ◆ Build on every answer
- ◆ Be honest
- ◆ Have fun
- ◆ Phone off
- ◆ Be daring
- ◆ Debate is good
- ◆ Messy is fine

Ask "why?" more than feels polite. The good answers are usually the third or fourth one.

## THREE WAYS TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

1

### print it

Write by hand. Pencil is fine. Cross things out. Messy pages are good pages.

2

### type into it

Open this PDF on your computer and click any box to type. Save it and come back later.

3

### do it with me

Stuck on a scene? Email [letstalk@lyvietvu.com](mailto:letstalk@lyvietvu.com) or message @lyvietvu on Instagram.

# purpose.

*Define the opportunity, get everyone on the same page, and set what you believe.*

**OUTCOME** A clear purpose, audience and values

LY'S NOTE

Ask "why?" three times on every answer. The first answer is usually the product. The third is usually the purpose.

## Describe what you do in plain words

The way you would explain it to a friend.

We make strong Vietnamese coffee and cold brew in a tiny shop in District 3.

## Why do you need to exist?

Personal brand: why do you do this work?

Because people need good coffee. Why?  
Because a good coffee breaks a hard day.  
Why? Because everyone deserves a small moment where someone takes care of them.

## Who would be affected if you didn't exist?

Personal brand: who would miss you?

The night-shift nurses from the hospital next door.

## Who are you trying to help?

Be specific.

Nurses, doctors and carers who look after everyone else, and the families waiting at the hospital next door.

## THINKING ABOUT YOUR BRAND PROMISE

## What business are you really in?

One level deeper than the product.

The business of small kind moments.

## When would you not need to exist?

What would have to change?

When every carer gets a proper break, and someone looks after them for a change.

## How do you change the lives of the people you serve?

We turn a 5-minute coffee stop into the one moment in their day that is just for them.

## Values: 3 to 5 ways you behave

Kindness, Honesty, Fun

## Vision: where are you in 3 to 5 years?

Three shops, and every nurse in the district knows our name.

## Your purpose in one line

To [do what] for [whom]. Example: To build better futures and human connections for everyone through a healthy lifestyle.

To give a small, kind moment every day for people who look after everyone else.

# audience.

02

*Know exactly who you serve, in enough detail that you could pick them out of a crowd.*

**OUTCOME** 2 to 3 audience profiles, each with a real insight

LY'S NOTE

Give each one a name people remember. "The Active Boss" beats "Segment B". Write the insight in their words, starting with "I am..."

## PROFILE 1

Nickname

The Night-Shift Hero

Who they are (age, job, stage of life)

Nurse, 28 to 40

Lifestyle and interests

12-hour shifts, family first, little time for himself

What they spend on this

40,000 VND a day on coffee

Their motto

Just get me through today

Insight: "I am..."

I am always looking after other people, and nobody looks after me.

## PROFILE 2

Nickname

The Waiting Family

Who they are (age, job, stage of life)

Son or daughter, 30 to 55, visiting a parent in hospital

Lifestyle and interests

Long days in waiting rooms, work calls in the corridor, worried but trying to stay calm

What they spend on this

60,000 VND a day, often buying for the whole family

Their motto

I have to stay strong for them

Insight: "I am..."

I am so busy being strong for my family that I forget I am tired too.

## PROFILE 3 (OPTIONAL)

Nickname

The Home Carer

Who they are (age, job, stage of life)

Daughter or wife, 45 to 65, caring for a parent or partner at home

Lifestyle and interests

Stays close to home, small daily routines, knows every neighbour

What they spend on this

25,000 VND, three mornings a week

Their motto

One good hour out of the house

Insight: "I am..."

I love looking after my mother, but some days I need someone to ask how I am.

# character.

Give your brand a personality people can relate to. Tick one main (M) and one supporting (S) character.

## LY'S NOTE

These are the 12 characters behind most of the stories we love. Pick the one that sounds like you on your best day, not the one you think sounds impressive.

### ● YEARNING FOR PARADISE

#### the innocent

Wants to be happy and do things right

Gift: optimism · Watch out: naive, plays it safe · e.g. Dove

☐ M ☐ S

#### the explorer

Wants freedom and to find out who they are

Gift: independence · Watch out: never settles · e.g. Patagonia

☐ M ☐ S

#### the sage

Wants to find the truth and understand the world

Gift: wisdom · Watch out: studies forever, never acts · e.g. TED

☐ M ☐ S

### ● LEAVING A MARK ON THE WORLD

#### the hero

Wants to prove their worth through brave action

Gift: courage · Watch out: arrogant, must win · e.g. Nike

☐ M ☐ S

#### the outlaw

Wants to break what isn't working

Gift: radical freedom · Watch out: destructive · e.g. Harley-Davidson

☐ M ☐ S

#### the magician

Wants to make dreams come true

Gift: transformation · Watch out: manipulative · e.g. Disney

☐ M ☐ S

### ● MAKING PEOPLE FEEL THEY BELONG

#### the everyday friend

Wants to belong and fit in

Gift: down to earth · Watch out: blends in · e.g. IKEA

☐ M ☐ S

#### the lover

Wants closeness with people, work and places

Gift: passion · Watch out: obsessive · e.g. Chanel

☐ M ☐ S

#### the jester

Wants to enjoy the moment and lighten the mood

Gift: joy · Watch out: not taken seriously · e.g. Old Spice

☐ M ☒ S

### ● GIVING THE WORLD STRUCTURE

#### the caregiver

Wants to protect and help people

Gift: compassion · Watch out: gives too much · e.g. UNICEF

☒ M ☐ S

#### the creator

Wants to make something that lasts

Gift: imagination · Watch out: perfectionist · e.g. LEGO

☐ M ☐ S

#### the ruler

Wants order, success and control

Gift: leadership · Watch out: controlling · e.g. Rolex

☐ M ☐ S

### How should people feel when they deal with you?

Pick up to 4 words.

Cared for, Happy, At home

### Your character in one line

[Name] is a [personality] who [does what], with a [attitude] attitude.

Mai Coffee is a warm neighbour who looks after people who look after others, with a cheeky attitude.

# voice & tone.

*Decide how you talk, so every post, email and caption sounds like the same person.*

**OUTCOME** 6 voice rules: what you are, and what you are not

LY'S NOTE

The "but not" half does the real work. "We are confident, but not arrogant."

WE ARE / I AM

Warm

Funny

Simple

Personal

Short

Honest

BUT WE ARE NOT / BUT I AM NOT

Sugary

Silly

Boring

Nosy

Cold

Harsh

# more like / not like.

LY'S NOTE

Mix people and brands from anywhere. It's about the feeling, not the industry. Always write why.

**More like... and why**

A favourite aunt's kitchen: you always leave fed and laughing.

**Definitely not like... and why**

A chain coffee shop: fast and forgettable.

# positioning.

*Find the space only you can own, so people stop comparing you on price.*

## LY'S NOTE

Most brands describe features. Few describe a mission. Move toward the mission end of the line and you stop competing on price.

### Your offer: 2 to 4 things you deliver

Strong phin coffee

Cold brew

Local pastries

A quiet corner

### Who else could people choose, and what do they promise?

Competitors, or simply doing nothing. One line each.

The hospital canteen: cheap and close, but nobody knows your name.

The chain café on the corner: fast, and the same everywhere.

The street vendor: quick and cheap, but nowhere to sit down.

### Place them, and yourself, on the line

Write their names above the line where they belong.

Street vendor, chain café, hospital canteen (product and price) ... Mai Coffee (mission led)

Product and feature led

Mission and value led

### Reasons to believe you

Experience, results, partners, culture, credentials.

Open from 6 a.m. for the shift change. We know your order by the second visit. Hospital staff get 10% off with their badge. Mai's mother was a nurse for 30 years.

### What can you say that nobody else can?

Your unfair advantage.

We are the only coffee shop built around the hospital's shift times, started by a nurse's daughter.

# point of view.

*Say what is wrong with how things are done today, and what you believe instead.*

## The old way

What is broken in your industry today?

Coffee shops are built for laptops and photos.  
The people who work the hardest get a paper cup and no seat.

## The new truth

How should people see it instead?

Coffee is a small act of care. The people who look after everyone else should be looked after first.

## Your point of view

We believe... / I believe...

We believe the people who look after everyone else deserve to be looked after too.

## The call

"If you are tired of X, it is time to Y."

If you're tired of always looking after everyone else, it's time to sit down and let us look after you.

# name & line.

### LY'S NOTE

Don't start with names. Start with the feeling. Then write 20 options, even bad ones. Number 17 is often the winner.

## What must your name or line make people feel?

3 to 5 words.

Welcome, safe and cared for, like someone saved you a seat.

## Shortlist: names, taglines or bio lines

Star your favourite.

Mai Coffee. We saved you a seat.  
Coffee for the carers  
Your 6 a.m. friend

# your blueprint.

*Bring your best answers together on one page. Hand it to any designer, editor or team.*

## PURPOSE · WHY YOU EXIST

To give a small, kind moment every day for people who look after everyone else.

## REASONS TO BELIEVE

Open at 6 a.m. for the shift change. We know your order by the second visit. Started by a nurse's daughter, right next to the hospital.

## CHARACTER · HOW YOU SHOW UP

Mai Coffee is a warm neighbour who looks after people who look after others, with a cheeky attitude.

### Main + supporting character

the caregiver + the jester

### People should feel

Cared for, Happy, At home

### Voice in three words

Warm, Funny, Simple

### Next steps

What you build first: profile, content, visual identity, website.

1. Instagram profile with the line "We saved you a seat."
2. A sign at the door for the shift change: "Nurses first, from 6 a.m."
3. A loyalty card for hospital staff.
4. Logo and cup design: hand this blueprint to a designer.

FEELING STUCK? TALK TO ME

# want me to coach you through it?

Some people like a guide. We do it together, one to one, and think out loud.

- 1 We talk first.** 15 minutes to hear about your business or your personal brand and where you feel stuck.
- 2 We work through the 8 scenes.** One 90-minute session, on screen or in person. You answer, I push, we write it down.
- 3 You leave with your blueprint.** A one-page brand guide you can hand to anyone.



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## BRANDS I BUILT WITH



AND 99 MORE ACROSS 11 INDUSTRIES, AT SOFRESH, MIRUM, JWT AND WUNDERMAN THOMPSON

**20**

years building brands

**150+**

people in the agency I led

**4 years**

Vietnam Digital Agency of the Year, Campaign Asia-Pacific

**40 under 40**

Campaign Asia. The first Vietnamese person ever named

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