

---

## 16. Prepare Collateral

*When:*

*Phase: Implement, Activity 16.*

*Who:*

Entrepreneur, Employee(s), Mentor

*What:*

We produce our collateral materials, ad campaigns, digital presence and begin getting customers.

*Why:*

Marketing your company and your brand is the important first step towards getting your products and/or services recognized. Your company image is equally important to the overall success of your business.

In this activity you are preparing all physical materials, the digital look and feel that brands your company. Your results should make your company really stand out, within your product/service line offerings among your peers.

Your marketing strategy normally involves target market focus, emphasis on certain services or media, or ways to position your organization and your service uniquely.

Strategy is creative, and hard to predict. Your marketing strategy depends a great deal on which market segments you have chosen as target market groups. You might also want to look at media strategy, organizational development, or other factors.

Sales strategy comes later. Do not confuse the two. Marketing might affect image and awareness and propensity to buy; sales involve closing the deal and getting the order.

*How:*

First you need to create some core branding items for your business. A logo is most important since it will uniquely identify the company. The logo should feature your company name, splashed with a little color and perhaps a few graphic touches here and there. Your logo is the most important design element because it is the basis for all your other materials, business cards, stationary, packaging, promotional materials, signage and website.

If budgeting allows, I advise using a reputable marketing firm to help you setup your strategies, designs, etc. If not, local college and universities have resources as well as organizations like SCORE, etc. The “look and feel” of your organization is most important and it starts here, do it right .

Most entrepreneurs have good instincts for the “look and feel” aspects of the business and by now, the strategy should be coming together. If you elect the “do it yourself” approach I would at least advise using a marketing firm/college/university to adjust your results.

When I started Structured Solutions, I hired a Public Relations consultant to come up with some of these designs. I shopped around and found one that was willing to work on a small budget. One of my best decisions. I gave them some items that I would like to have incorporated in the logo/design elements to help them along. They created several logos that surpassed my expectations. I know I would not have come up with such great designs. Graphic designers from local schools could help you here as well, they work cheap and that is good for a startup!

Marketing basically, is all about “promotion.” How will you get the word out to customers? What image do you want to project? How do you want customers to see you? Advertising: What media, why, and how often? Will you use methods other than paid advertising, such as trade shows, catalogs, dealer incentives, word of mouth, and network of friends or professionals? Should you have a system to identify repeat customers and then systematically contact them? Have you identified low-cost methods to get the most out of your promotional budget?

Questions to answer in your Promotional Budget. How much will you spend on the items listed previously? Before startup? (These numbers will go into your Startup Budget.) Ongoing? (These numbers will go into your Operating Plan Budget.)



Once the all-important logo is designed, move on to your business cards, brochures, stationary, your signage, and your website design. Website design is an all-important effort when it comes to marketing presence.

# Etc...