

COMMHERITOUR

BRAND-BUILDING WORKSHOP

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How Heritage Becomes Identity

Brand-building workshop

This summary outlines how strong brands are built through identity, storytelling, positioning, and authenticity, showing how craft and heritage businesses can transform traditions into modern value and long-term customer connection.

Keywords: *Brand identity – Heritage – Storytelling – Positioning – Craft industries*

The workshop material provides a practical and human-centred guide to understanding how successful brands are built, with a special focus on the craft, heritage, and cultural sectors. It combines essential branding theory with real-world examples and hands-on strategies that demonstrate how traditional producers, from artisans to small regional makers, can enhance their visibility, credibility, and long-term market position.

1. What a brand really is

A brand is much more than a name, logo, or design. According to the American Marketing Association, it is the combination of elements that distinguishes one seller from another. But within the workshop's approach, **a brand is also the sum of experiences, feelings, and perceptions that people associate with a product or service.**



Heritage-based brands, like traditional ceramic workshops or textile makers, often demonstrate this clearly. Their products embody local meanings, patterns, and colours that instantly signal authenticity. These visual and emotional cues create a **brand identity**, helping consumers recognize and connect with the product at a glance.

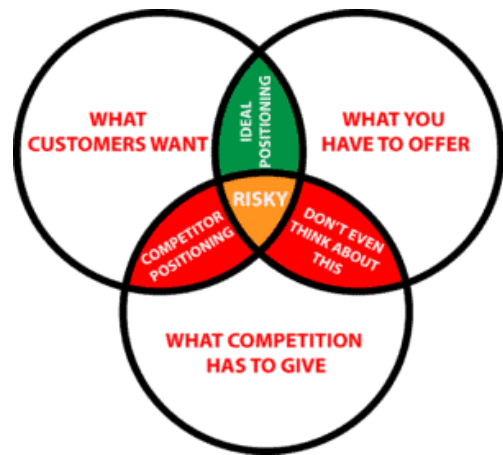
Alongside identity sits **brand personality**, the human traits we associate with a brand. A family-owned brewery might feel warm, nostalgic, and rooted in local culture; a contemporary craft design studio might feel bold and innovative. **Brand image**, however, is how consumers actually perceive these characteristics. Ensuring personality and image alignment is essential

for trust. A strong brand also needs a clear, **unique value proposition (UVP)**: a simple, convincing explanation of why the product matters and how it is different. For example, a heritage textile maker might highlight that every piece is hand-embroidered using patterns passed down through generations, offering cultural value that mass-produced alternatives cannot match.

2. Positioning: finding your place in the market

Brand **positioning** defines how a product stands relative to competitors. Getting this wrong can lead to several issues:

- **Under-positioning**: customers don't understand the benefit
- **Over-positioning**: appeal becomes too narrow
- **Confused positioning**: mixed messages blur brand meaning
- **Doubtful positioning**: claims sound unrealistic
- **Irrelevant positioning**: benefits are not important to customers



Heritage brands must often balance tradition with modern expectations. Consider an artisan cheesemaker using centuries-old methods. To position effectively, they must show why the traditional recipe still matters today - perhaps through taste, sustainability, or a story that connects past and present.

3. Brand equity and communication

Brand equity is the value a brand holds in people's minds: how well it is known, trusted, and appreciated. In heritage industries, equity often grows from authenticity and consistency.

Storytelling plays a powerful role here. When a glassblower shares behind-the-scenes footage of how a piece is made, they invite customers into the world of the craft. Communication becomes more than advertising; it becomes a window into heritage, skill, and emotion. This strengthens loyalty and builds a community of supporters who care deeply about the craft.

4. Strategic steps that make heritage brands succeed

The workshop outlines real-life strategies that brands can use to apply theoretical principles. These include (**tips and examples are highlighted in red colour**):

- **Authentic storytelling:** Heritage brands thrive on sincere **narratives** rooted in culture. Sharing the history of woodworking methods or embroidery patterns **transforms products into meaningful cultural objects**.
- **Community building:** Craft and heritage brands often become cultural meeting points. **Workshops, open studios, or craft fairs allow customers to participate, learn, and feel part of something** larger.
- **Collaborations and partnerships:** Linking with museums, cultural institutions, or **complementary brands adds credibility and widens the audience**. An artisan jeweller partnering with a museum, for example, connects craftsmanship with cultural history.
- **Sustainability and ethics:** Modern customers value environmentally responsible production. A ceramics maker **using locally sourced clay or recycled materials** reinforces integrity and transparency.
- **Distinctive packaging:** Design that reflects tradition, such as **labels inspired by old recipe books or patterns, creates emotional and aesthetic value** that supports premium pricing.
- **Exclusive experiences:** Heritage brands can offer studio tours, tastings, or **“make your own product” sessions**. These experiences deepen the emotional bond between brand and customer.
- **Loyalty programmes:** Wine clubs, **collectors’ memberships**, or return-visitor benefits reward loyal customers and help build long-term relationships.
- **Minimalist branding when appropriate:** Sometimes showing less communicates more. **High-quality craftsmanship often needs only simple, elegant branding to let the materials and story shine**.

5. Practical application: from theory to action

Workshop participants are asked to select a brand, identify its challenges, benchmark against good examples, and propose steps for renewal. This exercise shows how abstract concepts turn into actionable plans. For example, a small craft brewery might modify its positioning by emphasizing historical brewing traditions while updating packaging for a stronger shelf presence. This practice-oriented approach helps heritage producers understand that **brand building is not just theoretical - it is a structured, achievable strategy**.

6. Conclusion: tradition as a competitive edge

The workshop’s content highlights a powerful message: in a fast-changing world, heritage brands hold a rare and valuable asset: authentic cultural meaning. **By combining clear identity, compelling storytelling, thoughtful positioning, and community-focused strategies, craft makers and heritage producers can turn traditional knowledge into modern value**.

Strong branding helps ensure that traditions are not only preserved but also appreciated, purchased, and passed on to future generations. The framework presented encourages heritage brands to embrace both their past and their future, creating products that connect deeply with contemporary audiences while honouring the craftsmanship of earlier times.