

# [Brandeders]

MAGAZINE

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## BRANDING

What is a brand and why is it important to know?

**DIGITAL  
BRANDING**  
The Digital  
Evolution  
Revolution

A close-up portrait of Debbie Millman, a woman with blonde hair and black-rimmed glasses, wearing a black turtleneck. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

# DEBBIE MILLMAN

## WHY DESIGN MATTERS



THE NECESSITY  
OF GOOD DESIGN

BRAND IDENTITY:  
DESIGNING BRAND IDENTITY

DESIGN THROUGH AI, DESIRED  
OR DYSTOPIAN FUTURE?



# The necessity of good design

Beautiful, thoughtful design isn't just a nice-to-have—it's a strategic imperative to stay ahead in the marketplace.



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**H**ow do you define design? Is it an output, a process, or a strategic tool? The answer is D, all of the above. All too often, however, people think of design purely in terms of outputs, without insight or regard into what actually makes for a good design. And that's as it should be—because good design is invisible. Good design is attractive, evocative, and subconsciously makes people want to

engage with a brand. In contrast, bad design stands out like a sore thumb. The untrained eye might not understand that a design doesn't have enough breathing room, is too generic, or demonstrates any number of other issues outside their expertise, but they know if something looks wonky. You can have the best intentions of using all the right elements—yet if they're put together in the wrong way or in the wrong proportions, it's a recipe for disaster. At best this can be annoying; at worst, it can

turn people away. When success relies on a veil of invisibility, a glaring mistake is trouble.

That's where design as a process comes into play. Every design project should follow a process that starts with some element of strategy in order to recognize the design problem you're trying to solve. Jumping straight to solutions is inefficient, messy, and expensive. Unless you can think critically about the client and their brand up front, you're going to spin a lot of wheels on the back end. Doing strategic

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strategic work to understand the gap between where the client was, is, and where they want to go is what helps the creative design really thrive. Layering solid design principles on top of these strategic insights makes things next-level. Meeting at this intersection of strategy and creativity is how we work to really showcase our clients' brands. The final design output is only the tip of the iceberg of the whole design process. There's a lot of behind-the-scenes effort that went into creating something attractive, memorable, and seemingly effortless.

But good design can embody so much more than a process—it's also a strategic tool that businesses can, and should, use to their advantage. Brands of today have to be thinking about how they're going to weather what may come tomorrow, in order to withstand the test of time. That means being authentic and flexible. It means consistently following your brand guidelines across everything you put out there to promote brand awareness. And it means designing in a way that's not going to alienate potential customers. This is especially important in this day and age when we're experiencing more age diversity in the marketplace than ever before—meaning that there are more generations represented. You can't target a single generation in your marketing at the expense of others if you want to survive for very long. Designing with generational commonalities in mind is a strategic decision with an eye toward growth and longevity as a business. The bottom line: coaching design in strategy is necessary to support the long-term interests of your clients.

Speaking of couches... When we're educating our clients, we often liken good design to a couch. You want the couch in your home to be well-built, with a solid base and good bones that can be supportive. You also want it to look beautiful in your home, and you want it to last a long time. Do you go buy a flashy couch? No. You buy the timeless piece with a solid foundation that can be dressed up with throw pillows that meet your style. And when you're ready to freshen up your look, you can simply swap out the throw pillows rather than kicking the whole couch to the curb. Sofa, so good, right? Do the up front work that's going to lend substance to your design. Layer on the right elements, and develop the guidelines that will anchor your marketing while still being flexible and giving you room to shift and stretch. That's how you'll really hit home with your brand. [B]

