

Inviting BRANDING

How treating your brand like an invitation
helps you get more clients
(and even makes your brand more fun... promise!)



by Erin Ferree



BrandStyle
DESIGN™

*would you
like to have
more
clients?*

If you're like most small businesses, your answer is probably a resounding YES! More clients means more people to help, more lives to transform, and more money and fulfillment for you (*happy times!*).

Even if you're currently a busy bee, you can imagine a point in the future when you will have solved your current clients' problems and you'll need a few more deliciously-fun, fantastic people to serve.

*how do you find and connect with
more of those people?*



You've heard the rumors about the Age of Relationship Marketing, right?

we're supposed to be engaging, authentic, personalized, individualized and focused on people instead of selling.

If relationships are all the rage, then why are so many small business owners and internet marketers still flinging marketing messages directly at their ideal clients? Catapulting programs and offers at people is most impolite!

what to do instead?

well, it's really quite simple: start building your brand FOR your clients.

- Account for their unique needs, wants and desires.
- Make sure your brand answers their questions and communicates fully with them.
- Encourage chit-chat, engagement and dialog.
- Invite them to play full out with you.
- Reward them and celebrate them.

Think of your business as a party, and your brand as the invitation.

You're no longer asking people to hire you or work with them – you're inviting them to come play with you.

That's what

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is all about.

of course, I've got 10 secrets for you about how to do that...

I. Why Are You Inviting Them?

*"There are two great days
in a person's life –
the day we are born &
the day we
discover why."
-William Barclay*

Rule One of inviting people over is to first decide why you're inviting people over to play. To use the party example, throwing an 80th birthday party for your grandmother has a very different purpose than throwing a bachelorette bash for your bestest friend.

the invitations are different. the guest lists are different. even the intent is different.

The same is true in your business - if you don't know why you're inviting people over, then how can you put out the appropriate invitation in your brand?

This will guide and inform everything about your brand. Guaranteed.

Once you really understand the why behind your business, you'll be able to

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create a stronger, more appealing brand that communicates better with your clients.

And, better communication leads to more clients.

There's one final benefit to figuring out your why... and that's this: once you know why you're doing it, and why your clients want what you're offering, then you can make sure that those two things are in alignment.

That you're offering them something they want to buy. That you're throwing a party they're interested in.

Genius plan, huh?

why are you inviting people to play with you?

- What are you offering (in other words, what party are you throwing in your business?)
- Why should your clients come and get it?
- What's your deepest desire for your clients? What do you want to have happen for them?

2. Who Do You Want To Play With?



Who you play with can make or break the fun of the playing experience. Just think back to your childhood... and that one friend you never really wanted to invite over because they were more work than fun to hang out with. Maybe your mom made you invite them over to be nice.

the same is true in business – you want to make sure your invitation speaks to those just-right clients... and then compels them to click, subscribe, enroll, buy, become a client or follow you, right?

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And that it DOESN'T speak to those clients who you don't love... who eat up your time, make you roll your eyes when the phone rings and whose emails you avoid opening until the last possible moment, when you just can't take it anymore.

Well, here's the secret – you don't have to invite anyone over to play with you in your business that's a drag. You get to choose to work with only those people who make doing your “thing” an absolute pleasure.

Clients who inspire you, are easy to work with and who get tremendous value from working with you. All you have to do is figure out exactly who they are and call them up so they'll come over.

some food-for-thought on who to invite...

- Who do you love-and-adore playing with?
- Who can you help best?

3. Set The Tone For The Party

There are two major components to your brand – meaning and emotion. You’ve got to make sure the people who you’re inviting over to play with you understand what you and your business can do for them – the meaning of it all.

And then, for the second step into a successful, easy relationship, you’ve got to make sure they’re in agreement with the emotional tone and experience of working with you.

that they “feel” you.

This lets your clients see what your business is all about on a whole different level, and to decide whether that’s the type of experience they want to have before they’re committed to playing with you.

Feelings create richer, more meaningful experiences. They help people understand one another. They help people see themselves in your business - and decide if they like you. They bring people and businesses together.

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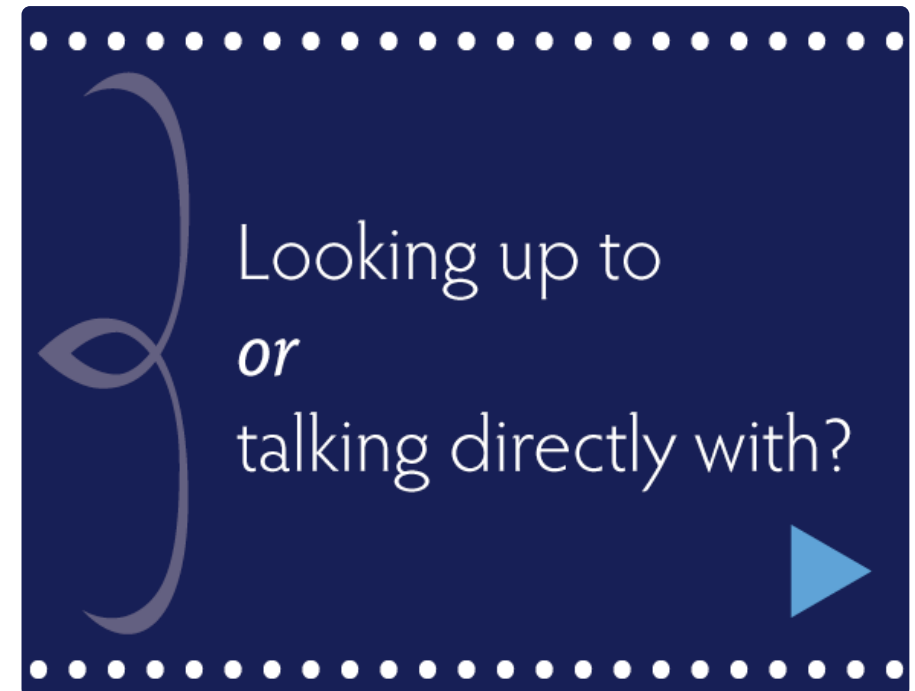
here's the best part:

You get to design the emotions your business creates.

And designing those emotions starts with choosing the "feeling profile" you'd like your business to have.

Click through the slideshow on the right to choose your tone!

*how do you want your clients
to feel when they think about
your business?*



4. Let Them Know What To Expect



When you're crafting an invitation, it's only polite to let people know what is expected – the rules of engagement.

People like to know what's going on, for a sense of understanding and feeling like they're playing by the rules (or that they know how to intelligently break those rules... for those troublemakers out there).

And, they like to know what's happening next and how they're doing along the way.

it's only polite to let them know.

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Your brand invites your clients through transitions with you:

MARKETING → SELLING → SERVING

And, naturally, your clients want to know what will happen on the other side of each of these transitions. You'll be a step ahead of a lot of service providers if you let them know!

In fact, if you set their expectations carefully and then manage those expectations the whole time they're working with you, you'll get a magical thing: happy clients.

how to get happier clients.

- Let them know what to bring to the party. What past experience or accomplishments they need to have before working with you?
- Tell them what will happen when they get to the next step. How will you work together? What can they expect? How often will you meet? How soon should they expect results?

5. Make Them Comfortable (Enough)

What does a good host do when you get to a party? They say hello. Show you where to put your coat. Make sure you have a drink. Introduce you to someone interesting.

They don't just scamper off and let you fend for yourself.

are you letting your clients fend for themselves? do you mean to be?

Depending on the tone you're creating in your brand (see point #4), the level of comfort you need to create in this step will vary.

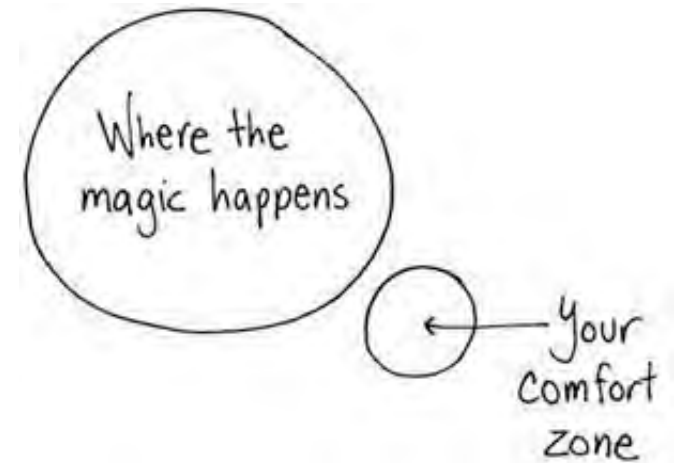
You may want to create a lot of comfort in your brand, to let your clients know they're taken care of. To make them feel pampered and safe. To reassure them that you've got their needs handled.

Or, you may want to intentionally make them uncomfortable, so that they get "out of their comfort zone to stretch and grow.

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let's make them feel "enough" at home...

- Consider how comfortable - or uncomfortable - you want them to be while they're working with you.
- Play the host (or hostess) and settle them in at the beginning. Even if you want them to feel discomfort with the work you're doing, you should make them feel comfortable with your agreements, how to schedule calls with you, and those sorts of details.
- Creature comforts are critical. The natives get restless when there's no coffee. A late lunch break makes people edgy. Make sure that when you're in control of such things, they get fed, watered, and cared for.
- If they're in a group program, get them mixing and mingling early - go the extra mile to create conversation. Make introductions. Get the conversation started!



6. Let Them Know They're Special



Think about the last time you got a special invitation in your (real-life, physical) mailbox that really brightened your day.

Was it mass-printed and officially addressed to “Current Resident” or was it hand-addressed directly to YOU? I bet it was the latter. And that the part that made it special was that you knew, immediately, that it was made especially for you.

When you design your marketing invitations for your ideal clients, think about those special touches that will show them that you were thinking about them.

Address their wants, needs, desires, challenges, problems, secrets and insecurities – the whole time you were writing, designing, developing, pricing, selling, and, well, everything else. Every step of the way.

how to show them you care...

- Send them love notes. Idea notes. Any notes at all!
- Ask them how they're feeling and what you can create to make their lives better.
- Call them one-on-one to see how they're doing. Don't charge for it.
- Get curious about your clients. Ask them all sorts of questions so you know what's up with them (no guessing!)
- Write your clients thank-you notes and let them know how much they mean to you.
- Send your students gold stars and compliments when they do a good job.

7. Plan An Irresistible Party

Why are barb wires so indecisive?

They keep sitting on the fence.

(POCKET
puns)

Think about the last time you got an invitation to an event that you were on the fence about. How often did you have to look at that invitation, wondering if you really wanted to go at all?

How can you make sure your clients don't have to sit on the fence with your business?

plan a party that's so fabulous they'll say "yes!"



And, I'm not saying this in a sleazy, pushy, manipulative or icky way. I think that if you've put out an invitation that's really honed to and crafted for your ideal clients, and that's a good value and explained well, they'll want to say yes to you.

how to make your brand easy to say yes to...

- Explain things clearly. If it's easier to understand, it will be easier to jump in.
- Use the same words your clients do when describing what you're offering. That way, it sounds like them, and they won't have to spend precious time figuring out what you're talking about.
- Think about what your clients really need and offer them a package that covers all the bases.
- Offer incredible value. Make the price completely justifiable (and perhaps even a steal!)
- Test your offers out with a few people before announcing them to the public. Make sure their questions are answered, the ordering process works and that there's no confusion.

8. Generously Give Party Favors



I know it's traditional in the "real world" to give out party favors only after people have shown up to the party.

In the small service-based business/ internet marketing world... that's just not the way it plays out.

Around here, it's expected that you'll give out a party favor for each and every RSVP – a.k.a. "opt-in". That's the price of entry – that you'll give your new, potential client **SOMETHING** in exchange for their first name and email.

the question is, how to make it count.

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How to make it more resonant, warm and inviting? Be generous with your party favor. Give something fantastic. Value-ridden. Actionable. Genius-inspiring. Business-changing. World-rocking.

Don't give away the farm, and DO give away some thought-provoking tidbits that they can do something with and that makes them hungry for more.

I'll leave you with one more bold thought on giving it away...

Think about this for everything you give in your brand:



Are you giving it to get the message out, to build your email list or to truly give your client a gift?

The energy behind – and results from – those three actions are very different.

Often, we try to combine them... we really want to get our message out and we try to do so by building our email list. And then we dress it all up as a special gift for our clients. All together, it feels kind of icky, and it's not as effective as it could be.

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In every marketing transaction, you have to decide whether you're doing it for the message or to grow the list.

If you're doing it for the sake of the message, then give generously and freely. Spread that message far and wide and get it out into the world. Give it all away and open your arms for people who value the message to come back to you. You win when the message gets out there and spreads.

If you're doing it for the sake of your list, then you can tease a bit. Intentionally hold a bit back and then promise how they can get more. Ask for their email, and know that your message won't spread quite as far this way since you're asking for their permission to contact you in exchange.

If you really want to give your clients a gift (say, around the holidays, for example...) then consider what would make it truly feel like a gift. No sales pitch? No opt-in? No strings? Perhaps a physical gift would be more precious than a digital one. If you're going to give a gift, make it a treasure.

a thought-provoker:

how will you approach generosity in your brand?

9. Invite Them To Take Small Steps



You're not going to invite the new person you just met to a week-long vacation house-party. You'll probably start with something more reasonable – like a coffee.

This is one of the biggest mistakes small businesses make... they invite brand-new clients to dive in deep with them, before they have even gotten to know you. Most clients aren't ready to go from meeting you to working with you immediately.

You want to design the invitations in your business and brand to invite people into your circle one step at a time.

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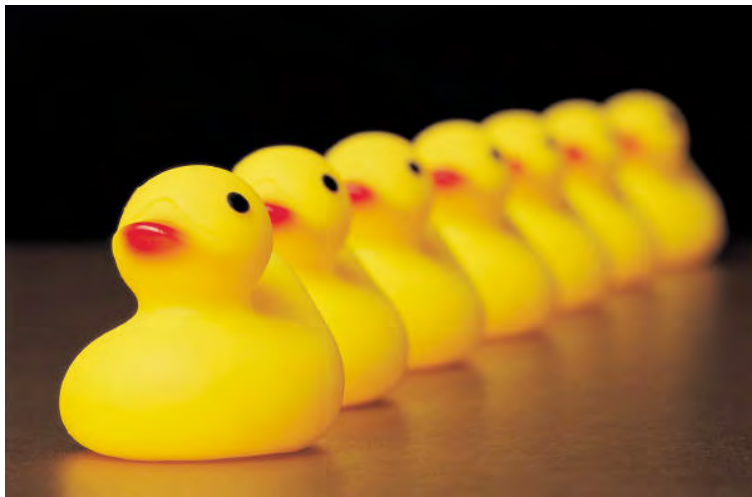
There will be the people who know, immediately, that they're meant to work with you and giant-leap in. They're called to work with you – and often require no invitation at all (or the barest whisper of one).

And for every one of those giant-leapers, you'll have many, many more who take the cautious, reasonable, step-by-step approach. You need to focus your attention on rolling the welcome mat out for this crowd – since they need more soothing and reassurance that they are on the right path with you.

how can you build more small steps into your brand?

- Can you create a low-investment, low-risk, high-payoff product, workshop or something else to get them started?
- Can you take your “big package” and break it down into incremental steps?
- How can you celebrate small steps with your clients to make them see that they add up to big accomplishments?

10. Make It Gorgeous



This is the last step you should consider along the way to creating your inviting brand. First, you have to get all of your “ducks in a row” – the first 9 secrets here. Then, you can get to the fun part... making it gorgeous.

You have to get those ducks in a row first because you need to know what your designs should say first.

they're serious about a picture saying 1000 words.

Your designs should communicate all of that meaning and emotion behind your business that we were talking about earlier. In one single image, you have the opportunity to tell your clients a lot about your business. Your brand is powerful because you can show, not just tell.

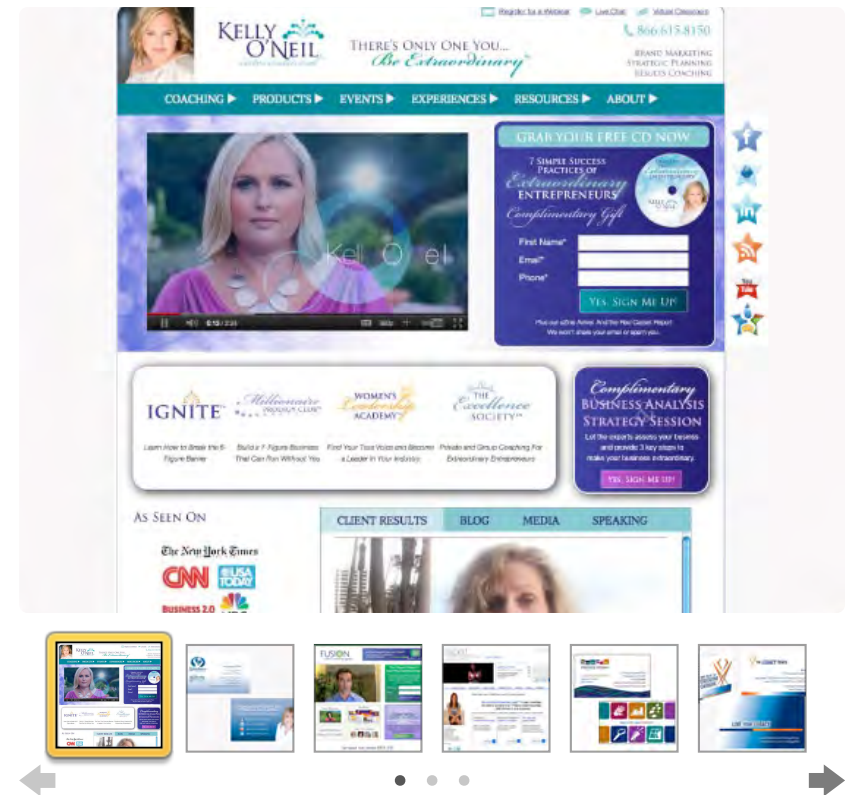
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A gorgeous brand can do so much more than communicate.

- Gives your invisible, intangible service a face and makes it more real and less abstract.
- Turns heads and opens doors for you. Clients will say, “have you seen this?” and pass your marketing along for you.
- Sticks in peoples’ minds, making a memorable, lasting impact.
- Moves your clients from “know” to “like” quickly... and ease the transition into “trust.” You’ll know this is happening when you hear them say, “wow, I love that! Tell me more...”
- Raises the perceived value of your services, cut back on sales objections and speed up your sales cycle.

how gorgeous is your brand?

*how about some inviting
brand inspiration?*



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Invitations – they're welcoming, gorgeous and fling the doors wide open for your clients to come on in and enjoy you. And I hope you enjoyed these 10 secrets to treating your business like a party and your brand like an invitation help you get more clients.

If you're interested in making your brand more inviting...

Let's create your brand together & make it inviting, not icky.

There are two ways that I'd like to invite you to play with me, for free:

Inviting Branding Newsletter

I'd love for you to have a complimentary subscription to my newsletter, where I share and send you occasional gifts. You can do that simply by visiting www.brandstyleddesign.com or sending an email to invitingbrand@aweber.com.

Inviting Branding Strategy Session

You're also welcome sign up for a complimentary strategy session to see how your brand can be more like an invitation. You can get yours by clicking here:

<http://www.brandstyleddesign.com/strategysession>

If you're ready to dive right in and start creating your inviting brand, here's my direct and personal contact info so we can chat:

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About Your Hostess...

My name is Erin Ferree.

I'm a branding coach and design genius!

I've been told my right-brain, left-brain combination of creativity and strategy is hard to come by... and I just can't help it. I love connecting the dots between passion and profit, mixing strategy and inspiration and shaking things up.

I (heart) working with entrepreneurs who want to help more people and look good doing it. Who want all of their branding and marketing to make sense and speak to their ideal clients. And who want an open, honest, inviting brand with integrity – instead of using icky, pushy, sleazy marketing tactics and trickery.

I also love hugging my corgi-dog Stanley, going for long walks, lazing about on the couch, cooking, and throwing parties (of course!)

