

The Little Book of...

A purple-tinted photograph of a cupcake on a tray with other pastries in the background. The cupcake in the foreground is the central focus, featuring a swirl of white frosting and a single dark berry on top. The background is filled with various other pastries, including what looks like a cinnamon roll, all rendered in a soft, out-of-focus manner. The overall mood is warm and inviting, typical of a baking-themed book cover.

Baking a
Brand

Ingredients

You will need:

- Cupcake cases (aka company values)
- Eggs (aka name)
- Flour (aka logo)
- Sugar (aka colours)
- Butter (aka typography)
- Baking powder (aka messaging)
- Vanilla extract (aka credentials)
- Icing (aka imagery)
- Decorations (aka tone of voice)
- Cherry (aka editorial style guide)
- Box (aka brand book)

Company values

Before you add a single ingredient into your bowl, you need to get those company values out.

Company values are not:

- Something that the management team spends hundreds or thousands of pounds on, employing a facilitator to come in and tell you what you stand for.
- Some pretty words that get hung on the wall or scattered around internal stationery, like notepads, laptop decals or water bottles.
- Meaningless nothings that are set and then left to hide in a corner of the office, never to see the light of day again.

Company values are:

- The key ingredient that holds everything together.
- What your company actually stands for and the things that make you, you.
- Evident in everything your company says and does and there to guide your decision making.

Top tip!

If you've not yet got company values in place, or are sceptical about the ones you have, ask your clients what they value most about your service. I can guarantee that you'll start to see some key themes coming through – these are the values that underpin your business.

Method

Let's start by getting the basics in place...

Brand name

You've probably already got your brand name sorted, but if not, these are some ideas to help you brainstorm:

- Founder's name.
- Description of what you offer.
- Encapsulate how you make people feel.
- Use an ordinary word out of context.
- Combine 2 words in 1.
- Create a new word.

Logo

Some people associate a brand with just the logo – an iconic mark that symbolises your brand and encompasses everything you have to offer and all the value you add.

Top tip!

Don't follow the latest design trends as this is a sure-fire way of ensuring your brand dates quickly. Instead, create something that is completely personal to you and therefore meaningful to your audience.

Colours

Did you know... colour improves brand recognition by up to 80%?

Source: <https://www.rebootonline.com/blog/what-importance-colour-brand-recognition/>

Imagine you're at an exhibition...

Your senses are being bombarded from all angles with different companies trying to get in your face.

Sometimes it's something as simple as a colour that can cut through the noise long enough to catch your attention.

Pick something bright, bold and different, and own it!

Typography

At some point you'll need to write about your brand, which means you'll need to select a distinctive font. Most typefaces can be classified into 4 groups:

1. **With serifs:** like this.
2. **Without serifs:** like this.
3. *Scripts: like this.*
4. **Decorative styles: like this.**

Top tip!

When choosing your script, be mindful of accessibility and select something that's going to be easy on the eye for any reader. And when paying for a font, bear in mind that the person receiving your communication probably doesn't have your font, so Word will convert it into something else.

This is where the
magic happens!

Now it's time for the ingredients that turn your basic batter into a fully formed cake...

Messaging

When you bake a cake, you add baking powder as the raising agent. It gives the cake what it needs to transform from a flat, dense batter, into something light and fluffy. Messaging does the same job for your brand.

Your messaging should comprise of different layers:

- **Organising idea:** the single idea you're recognised for.
- **Logline:** think movie summary - character-problem-plan-success.
- **Value proposition:** up to 2 paragraphs that sum up what you're offering and why people should buy from you.
- **The Golden Circle:** WHAT products/services you offer to your customers, HOW you're different from the competition, WHY you are passionate and exist.
- **Target audience:** the 'pains' they face that might drive them to come to you and their aspirational identity.
- **What you will be remembered for:** think 'Friends' episodes, you're "*The one with...*"

Building on the company values, your messaging elevates them by showing how they translate into practice, and guiding you on how you present your brand to the world.

But...

Credentials

Without evidence, your messaging is just marketing fluff.

Just as you would add vanilla extract to your batter to enhance the flavours, ensuring your cake tastes as good as it looks, backing up your messaging with your core credentials and evidence ensures that your claims resonate and are believable.

Back up your claims with a mix of the following:

- Typical company credentials, such as skills, knowledge and experience.
- Professional memberships and associations
- Awards.
- Third-party testimonials from clients, partners or analysts.
- Case studies.

- Research you've commissioned.
- Third-party research, such as Gartner Magic Quadrants or Forrester reports.
- Internal statistics, such as customer satisfaction surveys, NPS score, first-time resolution.

The finishing touches

By now you'll have a pretty impressive brand that will actually mean something to someone. But to use Bake-Off terminology, we need style as well as substance...

Imagery

Close your eyes and imagine a cute little cupcake sat in front of you...

I bet one of the first things you notice is that impressively piped icing, swirling its way around the top and tempting you to take a bite.

Imagery is the same. With so many amazing stock photography sites available (many of them free) there's no excuse for using bad or boring imagery. Although if your budget allows, there's nothing quite like commissioning a photographer to create something personal to you.

Top tip!

Treat your images so they're instantly recognisable to your brand. For example, add new elements to make the ordinary unusual, add a filter or wrap in a quirky frame.

Tone of voice

We're looking good! But right now, that brand could belong to anyone – we need to make it yours.

When it comes to cakes, I love a multicoloured sugar strand - that rainbow sugar always brings a smile to my face. But perhaps you prefer a silver ball or a chocolate drop. By 'decorating' your brand with your specific tone of voice, you present a brand that is instantly recognisable in the market.

To help define your tone of voice, answer the following:

- **How the experience of working with you makes people feel:** if you don't make your audience feel, they're never going to buy.
- **Through the content, I:** for example: educate, challenge, show your personality...
- **Words I like...:** also think about any words you don't like.

Editorial style guide

If you want to go that extra step, the cherry on the top of your brand is to create an editorial style guide. Going beyond the words, your guide dictates how you use the English language, for example, UK English, simple English, how to write numbers, writing in 1st/2nd/3rd person...

With an editorial style guide in place there can be no doubt about how you write about your brand in the world, ensuring you always deliver a consistent brand experience.

Top tip!

If you go completely over the top and create a comprehensive guide to spelling, punctuation and grammar, you run the risk of no one reading it. Therefore, focus on the things that really matter and get those down – bonus points if you can get it on one sheet of A4!

Brand book

If you've got this far, CONGRATULATIONS! You're nearly done, there's just one last step...

When I visit my clients with some delicious home baked treats, I always present them in a lovely little box, tied up in a bow. We need to do the same with our brands.

Creating a brand book, you pull every element of your brand together in one place. Now whether you're sharing it internally, or externally with agencies, freelancers or partners, you can be assured that everyone is reading from the same sheet so your brand is being used consistently.

An example...

Creating my brand was one of the most enjoyable experiences of my career. And since launching my brand, it's had a big impact on my business.

Here's how I baked it...

Company values

- Quirky.
- Continuous learning.
- Happyness – purposefully misspelt because things don't always go according to plan!

Name

More than words®

Logo



The pen is representative of my profession as a copywriter, while the flowers are lily of the valley, which represent the month I was born.

Colours



Purple: #57007F

Mint: #018E76

Grey: #808080

(purple is my favourite colour, while the mint is taken from the fin of The Little Mermaid – I always wanted to be Ariel!)

Typography

Logo font: Lovers Quarrel

Alice Hollis Ltd.

Heading font: Special Elite

Alice Hollis

Online body font: Montserrat

Some little girls dream about owning a pony, or becoming a princess...

I wanted to own my own company.

Ok. Truth be told, I have always wanted to become Ariel from the Little Mermaid, and who knows, maybe one day I'll achieve that goal. But until then, I'm happy sitting as the CoE (Chief of Everything) at Alice Hollis Ltd.

Messaging

Organising idea

More than words.

Logline

IT companies that want to be more than their tech need copy that's more than words.

Value proposition

I work with small IT and tech businesses who have achieved a certain level of success organically and are now looking to scale to get 'to the next level'.

Establishing a schedule of regular, interesting and engaging content to clearly position and differentiate you in the market, I can start to create the tribe that ensures a constant drip feed of leads into the top of your funnel, ready for your sales team to qualify.

The Golden Circle

- **What:** top of the funnel content – blogging and thought leadership (white papers, guides, reports and case studies).
- **How:** IT sector specialism, weekly content turnaround, dedicated to learning, and everything is underpinned by ‘the cupcake promise’.
- **Why:** to make other people happy.

Target audience

- Small businesses moving towards medium-size companies.
- Achieved a certain level of success organically.
- Now looking to scale to get ‘to the next level’.
- Need a go-to-market strategy.
- Want to be: Bigger. Better. Different. Quirky. Leader. Remembered. More than the tech.

What will you be remembered for?

- Doing what I said I’d do (sounds stupid, but amazingly this is a thing).
- Quick turnaround.
- Cake!!

Credentials

- Degree in business and marketing.
- Over a decade working as a B2B marketer before turning freelance.
- Worked in-house as a marketing manager, agency-side as a marketing consultant and sat on the senior leadership team.
- 6 years specialising as a freelance copywriter.
- Member of ProCopywriters.
- Various client testimonials and case studies.

Imagery

Something quirky with a purple filter:



Tone of voice

- **How the experience of working with me makes people feel:** Safe. Like they want to smile. Happy.
- **Through the content, I:**
 - Am generous - share everything, my skills, knowledge and experience to genuinely help people.
 - Honest - there are no secrets or rose-tinted glasses.
 - Teach, don't tell (or sell).
- **Words I like:** Tribe. Movement. Remarkable. Imagination & intrigue. Reflect. Emotion.
- **Words I don't like:** Solutions. Utilise. First class service. Trusted partner. Unique.

Editorial style guide

- UK English.
- Simple English.
- Spell out 'and', but use symbols like '%', '£', '\$'.
- Use 'for example', not 'e.g.'.
- Use “*double quotes and italics for speech*” and ‘single quotes to emphasise’.
- It's ok to start sentences with 'and', 'but', 'however'.
- Write numbers one to three, and then use numerals from 4.
- First person ('I', 'we' or 'our') and/or second person ('you').
- Don't assume the audience understands.
- Use headings to guide the reader - even if they skim read, they need to take away the key points.

Brand book

Printed out and sat on my desk at all times!

Craving cake?

Then here's my incredibly simple, 'all in 1' fool-proof cupcake recipe...

Ingredients

1x egg
60g self-raising flour
60g caster sugar
60g butter
¼ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp vanilla extract

Method

This will make about 3x cupcakes – if you want more, simply multiply the quantities by the number of eggs.

- Pre-heat oven to 180°C.
- Mix altogether in a bowl.
- Spoon into cupcake cases.
- Bake for 12 minutes.
- Remove from oven and immediately remove from baking tray to cool on a wire rack.
- Decorate!

Say hello!

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**More than
words**