

outfit



# The Ultimate Guide to Franchise Branding





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## The brand consistency problem in a franchise network

When looking at consistency, one of the major headaches franchise marketers face, day in and day out, is wrestling with their design teams, multiple external agencies and their franchise network to ensure their brand guidelines and principles are being followed to a tee.

While most franchise marketers already have a vision in their mind as to how their brand should be represented out in the world, this is often not the result that they are able to produce across their networks.

If this sounds like you, you're not alone!

This **Ultimate Guide to Franchise Branding** has been developed to:

1. Provide you with additional guidance on key areas of franchise branding.
2. To help you to (finally!) realise your vision for genuine brand consistency throughout your franchise network.



## The power of branding & brand positioning

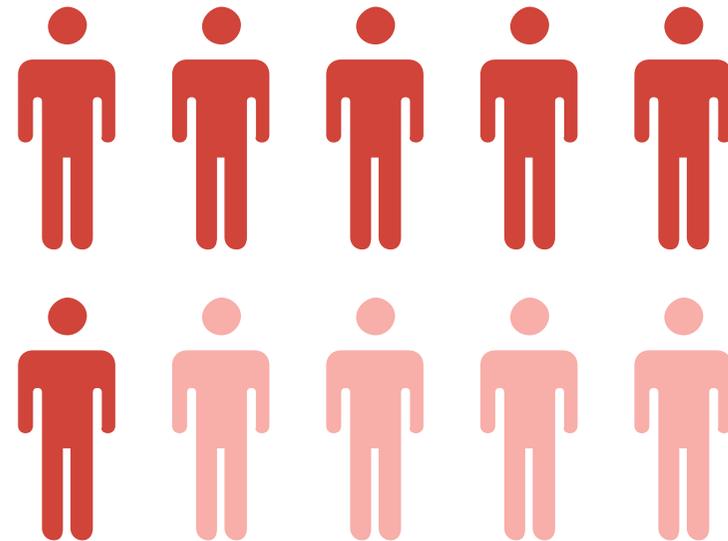
*Why should branding be such an important priority for your franchise network?*

The enormous advantage that franchises have over non-franchise competitors is the fact that you have the opportunity to become a known quantity; with consistent branding and positioning, your customers will know exactly what their next experience with your brand is going to be like - no matter which individual franchise they make contact with. You can become the dependable, reliable and trustworthy option for your most valuable customers.

Possessing this dependability and ingrained trust really does make a huge difference (if your franchise is able to achieve it). In fact, a recent Nielsen study found that “nearly 6/10 global respondents (59%) prefer to buy new products from

brands that are familiar to them.” People flock to brands that they recognise, know and love as these are safe bets.

While it is widely understood that branding is one of the most powerful tools in any franchisor’s toolkit, it is also one of the areas that is often most neglected.



6/10 consumers prefer to buy from brands that are familiar to them.

## So what exactly is branding?

In 2001, Hislop defined branding as “the process of creating a relationship or a connection between a company’s product and emotional perception of the customer for the purpose of generating segregation among competition and building loyalty among customers.”

In its essence, your branding is the collective functional and emotional associations your key customers have with your business.

This includes things like:

- Your logo
- Your slogan
- Why you do what you do
- Your key benefits
- What makes you unique
- What you stand for
- Your marketing materials and brand collateral
- Your ability to deliver on your brand promise
- The perception your critical audiences have of your brand in both their hearts and their minds

When you are able to provide clarity and consistency around these emotional and functional elements in a manner that cuts through to your audience’s needs and desires, your franchise brand as a whole, will become that much stronger.



## Try this with your brand

Ask some of your colleagues, customers and non-customers to draw your logo and write down your slogan/tag-line (using colour if possible).

How consistent were the results? If they are not consistent, you may have a branding awareness or consistency issue.



Branding is the combined functional and emotional associations your key customers have with your business. When you can create clarity and consistency in these areas, you will amplify your franchise's success.

## Developing & positioning your brand

Your brand position is not how you want your brand to be perceived by your target audience, but rather, how your brand is actually perceived within the hearts and minds of your current and potential customers.

The first modern franchise empire – Coca-Cola – put an unprecedented level of importance and energy into the way it was perceived by the American public. In 1886, Coke’s directors decided that instead of positioning Coke as medicine or wine (as many other competitors did at that time), they would market it as a “delicious, refreshing, exhilarating and invigorating” beverage.

None of Coke’s directors could have ever guessed that this same strategy would be used with great success by an Australian mum over 100 years later.

Most Australians have heard of ‘Boost’; the fruit juice and smoothie empire founded by Janine Allis in 2000. But fewer people know where the idea for Boost was born.

During a trip to the U.S. in 1999, Janine noticed that the juice and smoothie market was booming. But there were barely any juice bars in Australia. She sensed an opportunity, and went to work taking advantage of this opportunity in the Australian market. Janine would eventually position her own beverages as “healthy and fresh”. At the time, this was as unique a position as Coca-Cola were able to adopt back in 1886.

The strategy clearly worked, Janine opened her first store in 2000, and now Boost is in 17 countries with over 350 stores.



Boost did what every successful franchise business has done since 1886 - engaged in intelligent, consistent and innovative brand positioning in order to capture the attention of the buying public.

Are you aware of how your franchise brand is currently positioned in the market? What does your audience associate your brand with and how do they compare you to your competition?

On this page are some ways that you can start to understand and influence your franchise brand's actual position in the market.



## Study your competitors

Many franchise businesses avoid having anything to do with their competitors. This is a mistake. If you want to ensure your target brand position remains strong, visit your competitors, learn from them, study them and unearth your competitive advantage (or opportunities).



## Ask your customers

In order to properly position your franchise brand, you must first understand what people think of your business right now. You can achieve this by actually talking to and listening to your customers. Find out specifically what they do and don't like about your business and your competitors. What comes to mind when they think of your brand? This is your actual brand position.



## Get your marketing and brand collateral in order

If you are not using a branding automation platform (like [Outfit](#)) to develop and police your brand collateral, you run the risk of losing control of your core messaging and brand consistency. This, in turn, can seriously affect your franchise brand's position in the market by creating damaging brand confusion and noise.

A brand automation platform enables you to automate many aspects of your brand building and asset development efforts. This is especially important when it comes to streamlining and unifying your marketing materials.



## Try this with your brand

Your positioning statement is your branding roadmap. It is your end goal as to how your franchise would like its audience to perceive the franchise's brand.

If you have not yet developed a clear positioning statement (or have lost focus on reinforcing this positioning statement), you are losing your ability to at least try to influence your audience's perceptions of your franchise.

Grab a piece of paper and write out a quick brand positioning statement for one (or all) of your key target audiences using the following template (right).

### **Positioning Statement:**

**For** [your target audience] **who wants / needs** [what is the problem they are trying to solve], [your brand] **is a** [brand category/vertical] **that provides** [your key benefit]. **Unlike** [your main competitor/s], [your brand] [your unique selling proposition/key differentiator].

Your position in the market revolves around how your franchise brand is perceived in the hearts and minds of your key audiences. First, you need to understand your current position and next, you'll need to decide if this position is competitive and appealing enough to compete (or if you need to work on changing this perception).

# What to include in your franchise brand guidelines

*The essential brand guideline elements every franchisor should consider*

In its essence, your franchise brand guidelines are simply a set of rules to be followed by any stakeholders developing branded material for your franchise. If you don't already have your brand guidelines set up, put this at the top of your to-do list!

So what should you include in your brand guidelines, and how can you keep it flexible and adaptable?

Here is a short list of the essential tips for when developing your brand guidelines:

- Provide approved **logo styles** and **placement** instructions
- Set **photography** tone and standards for your franchise brand
- Pick your approved, dedicated and uncompromisable **colour palette**
- Provide specific, approved **fonts**
- Provide specific, approved **icons**

- Include in-situ examples of **everything**
- Include in-situ examples of **what is NOT acceptable** in each section as well
- Include your **brand tone** and personality statement
- **Update regularly**  
If any aspect of your brand is updated or changed, this change should be reflected in your brand guidelines.
- **Consistency is key**  
Logos, colours, font choice, spacing – all of these design aspects must be outlined with a consistent theme or message in mind. Always ask yourself – ‘what am I trying to communicate with this font/colour/image?’. Make sure to include measurements, dimensions, whitespace/cushioning and all relevant information.

Brand automation software such as [Outfit](#) can save you a lot of time in this respect as they allow you to control your brand

and synchronise your marketing materials across the entire franchise network. No more stretched logos, wrong fonts or wacky colours – all of your design guidelines are set in stone and simplified.

- **Include instructions and checklists**  
For example, is there a specific way that your marketing materials need to be printed by franchise owners? Include the instructions on which kind of paper to use, how to avoid clipping the margins, preferred printers, etc.
- **Evolve with the market**  
Revise your guidelines every two or three years. Your brand guidelines document should always be ready to adapt with changing market needs.

## Try this with your brand

If you do not yet have your brand guidelines/brand style guide developed, use the tips above to start thinking about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable for your franchise brand.

If you do have brand guidelines developed already, cross-check them with the above tips to see if there are any gaps you still need to fill.



Your brand guidelines are an absolutely essential tool in your quest for creating consistent, impactful branding for your franchise.

## Going beyond traditional brand guidelines

*How to maintain brand consistency in an increasingly fragmented media landscape*

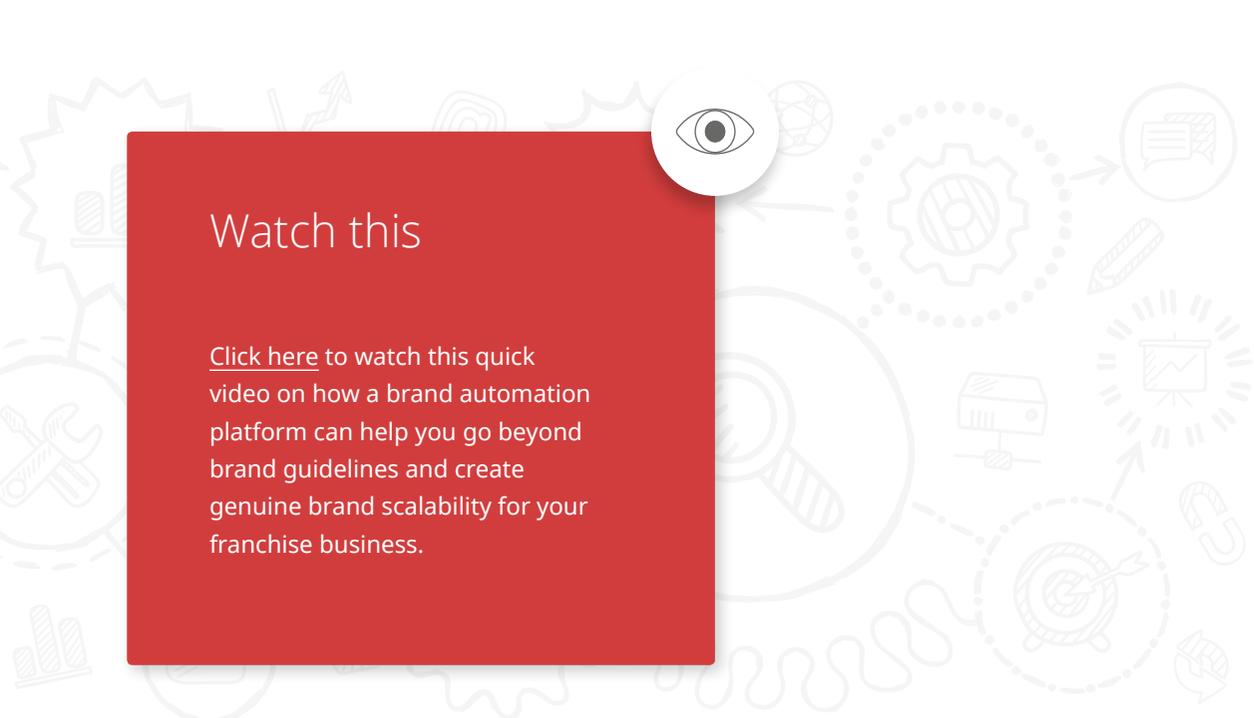
In the digital age, a set brand guidelines document (PDF or hard copy) is rigid and clunky with regards to keeping up with an ever changing media landscape. As new ad units and branding opportunities pop up almost daily, franchise businesses are constantly having to juggle between brand consistency, brand policing and brand building efforts.

This is where branding automation platforms such as [Outfit](#) are an absolute lifesaver. These platforms provide a scalable system for branded marketing across your entire franchise network.

Rather than archiving your brand guidelines in a static document, you have the ability to embed your brand rules within the tool itself. You can also update these in-built rules when necessary in no time at all. This ensures that any collateral you create, no matter what size, automatically complies with your most up to date brand guidelines.

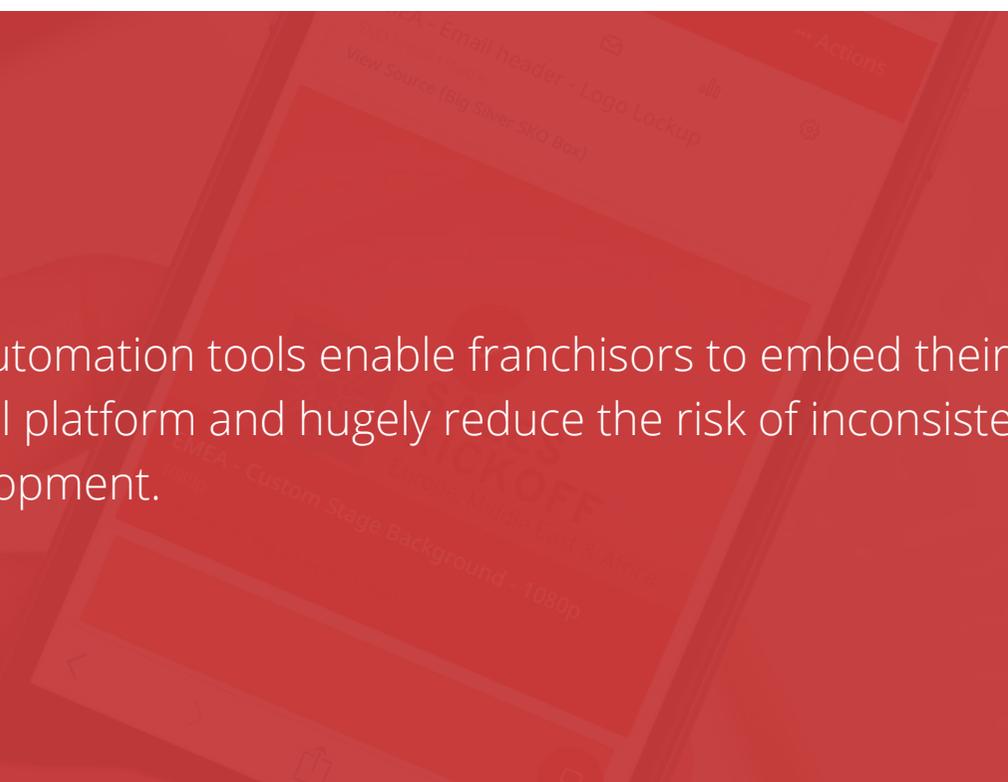
Brand automation platforms are essential for franchises who are ready to start taking their brand consistency seriously.





## Watch this

[Click here](#) to watch this quick video on how a brand automation platform can help you go beyond brand guidelines and create genuine brand scalability for your franchise business.



Branding automation tools enable franchisors to embed their brand rules into a digital platform and hugely reduce the risk of inconsistent brand asset development.

# Policing your franchise brand & maintaining consistency

Franchise brand policing and consistency tips from the team at [Outfit](#)

*How has the digital landscape affected brand consistency?*

**Ash:** The digital landscape has delivered a huge amount of marketing opportunity to franchises. But it has also opened up a can of worms. Take just one platform as an example - Facebook. If a franchise opts for saying 'yes' to using this, they take on the responsibility of trying to govern as many Facebook pages as they have locations.

Imagine trying to create brand consistency across over 100 Facebook pages! Challenging is an understatement. Embracing technologies like Outfit can give you the much needed scalability.

*We know that larger national brands can benefit from more consistent branding, but could branding consistency help smaller franchises? How?*

**Bruce:** Certainly! Smaller franchises can tackle the brand consistency issue before it gets out of control. They can offer a "Marketing in a Box" platform with branded documents, so their staff and franchisees can produce materials whenever needed, without compromising the brand.

They can grow their franchise brand (and company) without necessarily having to grow their team exponentially.

*In addition to brand consistency, what are the other ways franchisors can protect their brand?*

**Dave:** There are plenty other ways! Monitor social media sentiment towards your overarching brand, monitor franchisees social media pages to spot any misbehaviour from staff or clients, run customer satisfaction surveys every year.

Google Alerts and Google Image Search come in handy for policing brand misuse, in addition to media monitors from PR companies. If you're willing to go the extra mile, you can even offer incentives to your staff for reporting branding compliance issues.



Ash Thompson  
Brand & Marketing Consultant



Bruce Stronge  
Managing Director



David Barzilay  
Marketing Manager

## Four tips on creating consistency (without being boring) within franchise networks

### 1. Never compromise your standards

Every business should know, by heart, the core values they consider to be unbreakable. Exceptional customer service, always offering the highest quality products, being honest and truthful – these are some examples of core values that should never be broken.

### 2. Have a focussed message

Once you know what your business' core values are, you can now create a consistent and focused branding 'message'. These are the little 'chapters' that will build over time into a powerful brand story.

### 3. It's all about consistent delivery

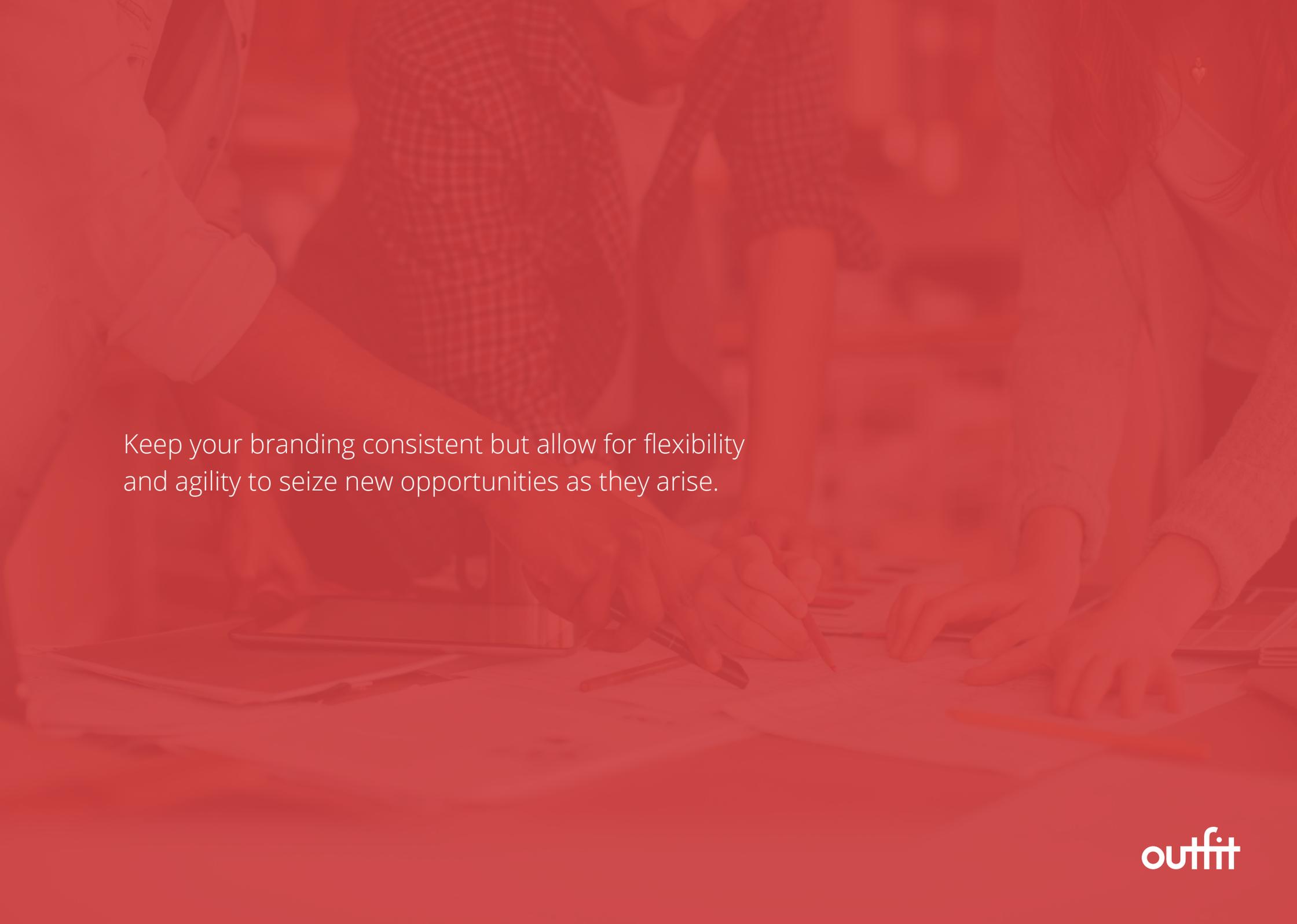
At the end of the day, how you spread your brand story is just as important as why you do it. It's no use having an incredible brand strategy that is executed poorly and inconsistently.

### 4. Allow for local autonomy

Your franchises don't need to be an absolute clone of all the other franchises in your network.

For example, each franchise can sponsor a local sporting team, promote localised content on social media or organise an event in their community. It's all about staying fresh, unique and true to your brand's positioning.

This is where branding automation platforms such as Outfit come in handy; they provide a scalable system for branded marketing across your franchise network. You really need this ability if you're going to stand a chance of growing without diluting your brand's image.



Keep your branding consistent but allow for flexibility and agility to seize new opportunities as they arise.

# The ROI of creating genuine design efficiencies

*The advantages to having 'unbreakable' designs for your branded materials*

If you have any experience producing marketing campaigns on a national and local level, then you'll know there are plenty of tasks that can (and should) be automated.

Some examples include:

- Resizing existing assets to fit in different online and offline media;
- Creating assets for franchisee conferences and events;
- Creating new assets from scratch;
- Synchronising and collaborating on several rounds of copy/design changes;
- Localising your creative;
- Repurposing your historical creative;

At Outfit, we believe these tasks don't belong to the creative process, so we offer a faster way to perform them, while maintaining strict brand consistency according to your custom franchise brand rules and guidelines.

By utilising web technologies, Outfit locks in the design elements of your franchise materials and makes them unbreakable. With unbreakable designs, you avoid the brand inconsistencies that pop up in your marketing and brand collateral when working with internal teams, external agencies, contractors and franchisees.

This ensures your marketing staff and franchisees can only create marketing materials that comply with your brand guidelines (and in a fraction of the time it would have taken previously).

[Click here](#) to watch this quick video on how Outfit helps franchises accelerate the production of marketing materials while complying with your brand guidelines.



# The advantages of having 'unbreakable' designs for your franchise business

## Resource savings

With the Outfit platform, you can reduce production costs by up to 65%. Our largest client generated \$81,000 worth of design materials globally with an investment of only \$27,000!

## Turnaround speed

For many franchise businesses, launching campaigns to market in an agile fashion is their key to success. Moreover, quickly taking advantage of seasonality and marketing opportunities can help you establish a strong position against your competitors.

Platforms that offer a proven marketing production model, such as Outfit, are priceless in value for franchise businesses as they help speed up the creative asset development process at extremely lower production costs.

If your franchise has implemented a proven marketing production model, it will assist your business in two major ways: it will increase your marketing production speed and consistency, and it will give you an edge over your key competitors.

## Franchisee empowerment

Franchisors and franchise marketers are caught in an ongoing balancing act; they are continually tasked with the job of both governing (and controlling) their franchisee network's local area marketing efforts whilst working to empower their franchisees to drive local business themselves.

It's this challenge and contradiction that franchise business owners need to pay close attention to.

Brand Automation platforms like Outfit are the perfect middlemen to help balance and enhance the franchisee/head office relationship as it opens up the conversation.

Outfit is the only platform to address the challenge in a way that will ultimately empower the franchisee, rather than stripping them of their autonomy. Now they can take advantage of marketing opportunities in genuine collaboration with head office (and without the risk of going off brand).

Repetitive requests like business cards, flyers, posters, social media images and more can now be produced by each individual franchise, without the need for design software or a professional designer.

## Helping to reduce 'Rogue Franchisees'

You've probably dealt with a 'rogue franchisee' before. They are those owners within your network who go 'off script' and start taking their local marketing into their own hands without your knowledge!

It takes years to build trust, and only one negative experience to destroy it. It only takes one poorly designed or inappropriate advertisement or social media interaction from a rogue franchisee to shatter the public's trust in your brand.

To identify potential rogue franchisees, look out for any of the following signs amongst franchisees within your network:

- They have negative responses towards new head office initiatives;
- They do not adopt head office recommended products, services or vendors;
- They provide little positive communication and are not responsive to head office requests;
- They do not attend franchise support groups, events, training days. Or when they do, they are there to complain;
- Their franchise is generating negative reviews and/or complaints on social media channels; and
- They may have a history of enacting their own marketing initiatives without approval or knowledge of head office (and this promotion is often off brand).

Having rogue franchisees is a very slippery slope for franchisors as franchisees are in a constant battle for autonomy and ownership over their business. If one franchisee does start developing their own marketing materials without consent, it's possible that many more who see or hear about this will feel they can start to justify their own activities.

Imagine having over 100 locations in your network and trying to stop this from happening....it's almost impossible without a systematic approach.

Beyond writing branding and marketing clauses into each franchise agreement (and policing these strictly), brand automation tools like [Outfit](#) can genuinely help you manage any rogue franchisee issues you may be encountering.

By empowering these franchisees with a platform that has embedded, unbreakable branding rules, you can create invaluable business and design efficiencies:

**Business Efficiencies:** You will spend less of your time battling and debating with one-time rogue franchisees and more time actually collaborating with them.

**Design Efficiencies:** Once you have your rogue franchisees working with you to generate cut-through local content and collateral, it's one less design job that you need to deliver from head office!

Further to these reasons, the benefits go beyond return on investment; through empowering your once rogue franchisees and giving them a platform that enables to work within the brand guidelines that you've set for them, you will be on your way to seriously strengthen your relationship with these active, outspoken network members.



## Marketing your brand consistently

*A recap on why brand consistency is so important*

All successful franchises have built their value and position in the market by developing systems and procedures that help them maintain a high level of consistent service and branding. In many ways, it is this structure that investors are buying into when they invest in a franchise business.

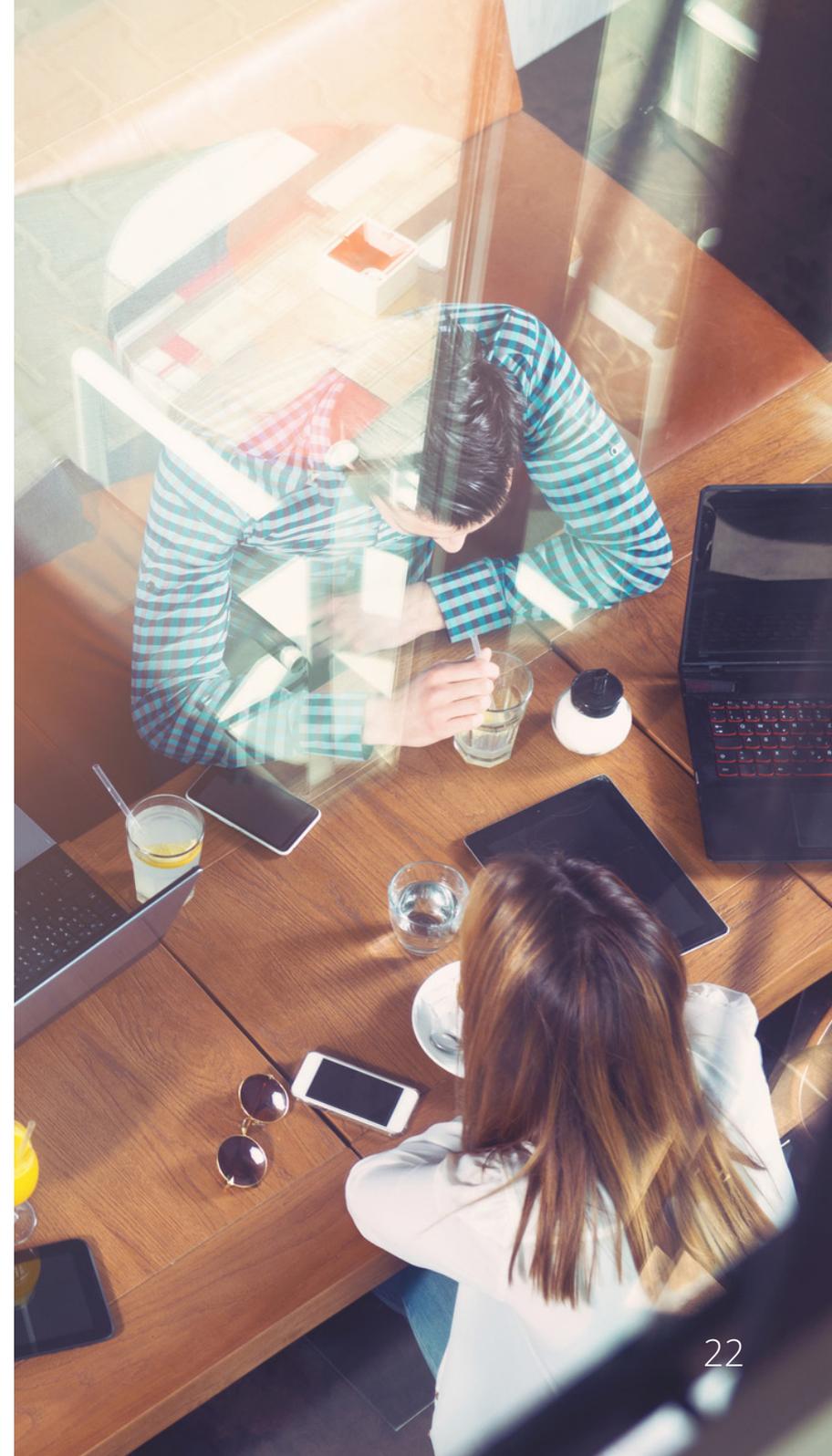
By consistently reinforcing the tone, themes, look, feel, communication and customer experiences behind your products and services, the perceptions and position of your brand in the consumer's mind will solidify. From this firm foundation, repeat business and customer loyalty become a natural progression.

### A final bit of advice on the pitfalls of franchise brand inconsistencies

Brand inconsistencies are misrepresentations of your brand. You may have spent years or even decades trying to craft your brand's image, only to have it begin to unravel quickly as you try to scale and manage your franchise network.

Even a small stream of inconsistencies can have a negative impact on the perception of your franchise brand over time. For this reason, it is so important to guard and police your brand positioning and to ensure the right frameworks and tools are in place so you can enable your franchise network to scale effectively while growing your brand.

If you have any questions about franchise brand consistency, or how Outfit can help streamline your franchise branding process, visit our website [outfit.io](https://outfit.io), or send us a question via our [contact us page](#).





## Our Story

Until Outfit, the status quo of up-scaling branded marketing production was met with a costly and centralised approach. However, throwing more people at the problem equated to the need for ever-growing budget allocations, costly design licenses and slow turnaround times.

The Outfit platform solved brand consistency and scaled marketing production for a global technology company with over 85 office locations across 35 countries. Now we're solving these problems for franchises like yours. To request a demo, visit [Outfit.io](https://outfit.io)

