

Self Branding 1

Cakeflix Business Boot Camp

Self-Branding, Business Branding, Brand Color, Logo, Endorsements and Sponsorship

Branding:

Personal branding, business branding or rebranding is something you may want to consider as part of your new or existing business plan and set up.

In 2006 I decided to rebrand myself as I have been involved in the cake and pastry industry for over four decades.

Just like a musician or singer, like Cher, Madonna and Elton John, they must reinvent and rebrand themselves in image, music and style to stay complacent in the market. As a sugar, cake or cookie artist our businesses are no different.

It's sad for me to think about all the artists and companies who are much younger or had a business for less time than me not being around anymore. Of course, that can be due to many factors such as burn out, ill health or personal circumstances. But many are gone because they felt okay with where they were as far as what they taught, created, manufactured, etc. but never tried anything new. They never taught any new class material or manufactured new exciting products. So eventually no one desired to learn or buy from them as it was "the same old thing" and often out of style or no longer in trend.

I have reinvented myself several times during my career and you can read my story at the end of this download of how I started and the many different steppingstones I took to build and reach a successful business. (Well not so much currently due to the current world-wide health crisis and pandemic. But let's hope things improve for us all very soon.

Self-Branding:

In 1990 I relocated from the UK to Atlanta, Georgia and in 1992 I started the International Sugar Art Collection, (ISAC) and used the Original International Sugar Art Collection by Nicholas Lodge and the International School of Sugar Art logo until 2006. The original company colors were cream and dark green. In my classroom I used a southern magnolia theme wallpaper border. One day in 2006 I just decided to "rip-off" the border and make a fresh start.

At that time the classroom had new grey tables and that was the starting point. So, I settled on a combination of black, grey and white with an additional focal point color. Ever since I was a young child, I have always loved orange as my favorite color. But orange just did not work and was very "Halloween looking" especially if the walls were painted orange. So, I gathered paint samples and decided on a shade of bright apple green, now known to many as "Nicholas Lodge Green."

If you are interested in choosing a brand color for yourself, I would suggest that you order a Pantone book used for printing. This booklet of color swatches is a universal color matching system used by printers to enable them to color match. I purchased one that was used on eBay, as a new one in on the expensive side, but I use it so often and so much for a multitude of projects, even now 15 years later.

The Pantone color books are updated and every year a new Pantone color is announced. This year there are 2 Ultra Grey and Illuminating Yellow as the colors of the year. This new combination might be the perfect color for some of you to use for your brand color.

The great advantage of having a Pantone color is when ordering business cards, stationary, printing labels, choosing paint, etc. By using a Pantone color, you will get a perfect color match each time.

Of course, when I make purchases, I try to obtain them as close as possible to my accent color. I as always have my business card with me to help with the color matching.

My accent color is a shade of apple green, but not just any green but Pantone number 368C was chosen has as become my signature brand color. This was a huge change for me in color, but color is part of our world and makes us blend in or stand out in the crowd, and Pantone 368C defiantly makes me stand out! A big business like "Tiffany and Co." has the iconic "Tiffany Blue." I have "Nicholas Lodge Green."

By using a color, whatever it may be, is a great way to define and separate yourself from the crowd. My students and followers on Facebook, Instagram, etc. associate me with this color. It's my signature color that I wear every day in some form or another. And strange as it sounds, I never tire of it! And of course, I always wear this color at cake shows, when teaching, traveling, etc. As such, I'm recognized all the time by the Atlanta airport security saying, "There is Mr. Green, flying out again." And by flight crews all over the world as well.

My clothing is mixed with grey, white and black, just as in my classroom, and in a more casual way with jeans, or for formal affairs and occasions i have dinner jackets and tuxedos in this apple green color too.

i own close to 200 pairs of shoes and dozens of these are in my signature green color. Some have been custom made, yes, a luxury, but it makes me stand out. In travelling I get stopped all the time by people commenting on my luggage, my shoes, what I'm wearing, etc. Often, they ask if I am Irish? Or do I support Notre Dame? And sometimes when asked, "Why the green?" and I respond, "Why not?"

After brand color came a new logo. My business is multi-faceted as I manufacture products as well as teach. It was not just me; it was my brand of products too.

In my opinion, there are three avenues to go about in designing a logo. The first is to use your name, or in my case, initials in the form of a monogram. Second, come up with a business name. This will not reflect you so much but your business. And third, combine both, like “Deliciously Scrumptious Cakes by Rosalind Lodge.”

I love how my current logo turned out. I designed it myself and then used a graphic artist to create a professional version in both the JPEG and PNG formats. This logo says it all and I couldn't be happier!

There are software and apps available to help you with this task, but personally I believe this is an important part of your business and brand and I would advise working with a graphic artist to create the final version of your logo.

I think as a cake, cookie or flower artist, the use of your name is a good idea as helps to keep your name out there. Lauren Kitchens, a cake artist friend in Dallas, Texas uses her name for her cake business and her product line she developed is sold under the “LK Collection” name.

We call our business “ISAC” which is the acronym for “International Sugar Art Collection.” But within that company we have several umbrellas; “NL Exclusive Brand Products,” and “NL Flower Pro” were we inserted the “NL” into the Flower Pro logo to look like a daisy.

My little child-like NL logo was designed by the uber talented Sachiko Windebel. She created this rendering of a much younger me wearing my Renshaw teaching uniform. I adore this logo and feature it on tote bags, tee-shirts, etc. It's fun and I use it for my “Green Tornado” logo for a series of video demonstrations in 2019 on CakeFlix. Of course, I had stickers created with both the “NL Brand” and “NL Flower Pro” logos and I use these stickers on many personal items. Remember, it's all about the brand!

Business Branding:

Twelve years ago we rebranded and separated our product lines to include the “NL Collection” and the “NL Exclusive Brand Collection.” This was for exclusive brand collection that was manufactured, designed or acquired as part of the collection. This takes time and resources but makes you stand out at cake shows and conventions. Needless to say, everything is in my brand colors!

Try and be unique in your choice of logo, brand, color choice, etc. as it should reflect you as an individual, your work and your bakery or business. At the cake shows held prior to the new Millennium, I would say there was no one in our industry who had a color reflecting their business or self. Now everyone and every vendor has adopted a look, logo and color. I'm not saying it happened because of me, but feel I influenced many people in our industry to be more bold with color.

When you attend a cake show it's easy to find me and my NL brand of products. Just look for the green tablecloths! Even at the “Cake International” show in the UK it's easy to find the

“Flower Pro” and Chef Nicholas Lodge apple-green aisle. And companies like “Simi Cakes,” have the same draw. Whenever you see yellow and black you think Sidney Galpern and “Simi Cakes.”

Personal Attire:

I personally have no problem with anyone wearing a chef’s jacket. It’s like anyone could buy and put on a judo suit. A chef’s jacket is like any uniform. It demonstrates professionalism. But at the end of the day it’s up to you to prove that you are a true cake and pastry professional to your peers, clients and family. The title “Chef” cannot be bought. It must be earned! Even after graduating from a pastry program the title of “Chef” is not usually used. The title “Chef” from hard work, industry accolades and respect. Most importantly, by your peers in the industry over many years. It is a sign of respect, like the way we address any professional.

Professionalism is a very important part of our industry. Your business attire, like a freshly pressed chefs jacket when you make a cake delivery, are touches that set you apart from your competition. Here you can see the type of jacket I would suggest wearing for a cake delivery or consultation with a potential client.

You may choose long or 2/3 or 3/4 sleeve which is a little more formal than a short sleeve jacket as you can see here with competition or judging jackets.

If you are entering or judging a competition and you are provided with a chefs jacket, you must not attach any logo patches or any other affiliate / ambassador patches, pins, metals, etc. to the jacket unless you are given permission. These jackets, due to sponsorship of the competition, are usually very plain with one perhaps two logos. Here you can see my jacket from the “Walt Disney World Epcot Food & Wine Festival.” The food and wine festival logo is on the front of the jacket along with “Culinary Classics” who sponsored the chefs jackets.

For example, if “Satin Ice” sponsored a competition and I was judging, I could not wear a “Renshaw” patch on my jacket.

These jackets were all provided for me to wear. After the event you may add your own patches and accessories to them and have them made into short or 2/3 length sleeve, as competition jackets are almost always long sleeve, as this looks more professional but not as comfortable as a short sleeve jacket.

Due to the current pandemic, with more free time on my hands, I had a big clear out of my closets and disposed of over 100 chefs jackets, including 27 “Food Network” jackets from judging the “Food Network Challenges” over the years.

For everyday work when I’m not meeting with anyone or teaching, I work in a tee-shirt, with my brand logo of course, or a basic short sleeve chef jacket and apron. I prefer short sleeve jackets as I personally find them more comfortable.

When conducting classes and teaching I wear a short sleeve chefs' jacket with an apron. I have my own NL brand of chefs wear for the whole family, with my logo patch and name. This collection is available through "Cake Wear" at:

www.cakewearx.com

Info@cakewearx.com

As a chef, when I'm in a pastry kitchen, I wear professional attire like black Danskos clogs, black pants and a white chef's jacket. But I stand out by wearing NL green socks, which is the only thing I can change.

As a chef instructor at the "French Pastry School," (you see here my uniform,) all chefs and students wear the same jacket, just the toque for the chefs and our interns and skull caps for the students (when class is in progress.) It's like growing up in the UK, where all the school students wore the same uniform, so everyone looks the same. Time has proven, this is very smart!