



MENU

## Onto 2021 Optimism with a Fresh Brand

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Many are relieved to have 2020 approaching the rearview mirror. There is no doubt that this past year has been a roller coaster ride. As our daily lives saw a drastic change this past year, so did our brands, businesses, and relationships. At Callosum, we are determined to help you overcome obstacles you may have faced and allowed you to enter the New Year with optimism. We are here to prioritize your needs, with a Brand Audit, in order to help you take an effective next step in 2021.

### How Can I Prepare my Brand for 2021?

We recommend an annual assessment, or Brand Audit, of your brand. To do this:

***PRO TIP:** Branding is the 5 senses + intuition*



1. Bring the front and center of your guiding piece (Hopefully you have these pieces as they are the foundation of your company):
  - Brand Platform document
  - Style Guide
  - Archetypes
  - Brand Strategy: SWOT, competitive analysis, positioning, pillars, etc.
2. Pull out all corporate identity, collateral, digital pieces. Are they “on brand” based on the guiding documents? How do you know?
  - They **SOUND** like your archetype. Mistake example: Have you veered from being the hero to now sound like a jester?
  - They **LOOK** like your palette and font families. Mistake example: A graphic artist got a wee to creative and added fonts that are not in your style guide. Or the logo was dismantled and used in a fashion that is not allowed.
  - They **FEEL** like your brand values. Mistake: If the consumer/client is left feeling confused. You have lost them.
  - Is **TOUCH** on target? Mistake: You panicked and ordered business cards of cheap paper stock and it shows.
  - (We’re skipping **TASTE** and **SMELL** as it’s unusual in our industry; however, if you’ve suddenly veered from Asian flavoring to Jamaican you’re off-brand. 😊)
3. Review your SWOT analysis. What has changed?
4. Review your competitive analysis. Are the players the same? Have they shifted?

The above steps prepare you to assess the marketplace.



Photo Credit: Steve Halama

## How to Overcome Adversity and Hardships

## Assess the Marketplace:

Don't let adversity and hardship hold you down and blur your vision. It is essential that you keep your eyes focused down the road and your head up; stay optimistic! It is essential that you assess the marketplace – what's changed about it? Where is it headed? Once you can answer these questions, you have now determined how to redirect your brand efforts. If you can get an understanding of how the market is changing and innovate your brand to follow the new trends, success will follow. You might see a need for a new service that is based on the new marketplace. Get ahead of the curve and be a leader.

Slow down your brand strategy development. Adversity can create a sense of worry and urgency to rush your business planning which often ends in failure. In our process, a comprehensive strategic plan may take 2-6 months to develop. If you'd like to get into the action faster, much like a Start-up Weekend, you could develop a skim brand build in a month's time. The more time and effort you can put into your research and planning, the more likely your brand is to overcome adversity and start seeing success once again!

## How To Stay Positive Through Difficult Times

Don't keep your head down during difficult times, times like these are an opportunity to slow down to shift focus on personal health and business. Tough times provide time to assess your business and vision to see where you want to go in the future. It may seem counterintuitive, but the best thing is to take a day off, go into nature, and leave your phone at home. Nature decompress your nervous system and releases endorphins which will help you return to the office with a much clearer state of mind.

During these times, gather your team and colleagues to find a time to brainstorm in order to bring some new ideas to the table. Community is helpful in stressful times, make sure to use yours! From your brainstorming session, make sure to end with some heat-seeking. This is when you take a look at your notes (make sure to proactively highlight them) and identify three short term action items and three long term actions to apply to your business.

***PRO TIP:** Research shows that teams are most creative in the early afternoon. We recommend scheduling a zoom call following lunch.*



## Bounce Back or Maintain Momentum

We recognize that many companies are in financial strife currently. We miss our communities and the world feels upside down.

Our recommendation to help propel you is to unplug from the news for at least 48 hours. Gather your team for a wellness check-in! Utilize these slower times to focus on preparing for when we are prepared to bounce back, so we can return swinging strong.

Financial dips and cultural strife moments are a wonderful opportunity to turn inwards and huddle. As the market slows and many withdrawal marketing budgets, you can choose two roads – 1) Market now to garner more exposure with fewer players on the field 2) Hunker down and do the strategic brand work while client/consumer work is slow to prepare you for when the market recovers. We find our clients have time to speak to us in the slow times, yet are MIA in peak season, thus the need for making the most of off-seasons.

***PRO TIP:** Integrate a minimum of one hour per week to inspirational learning whether it's reading, listening, or watching something. As you know, we are fascinated by the brain. When you learn, your brain naturally looks for connections between the new subject you're learning and your business.*



**Clare Hefferren**