

Defending Your Brand, A Field Guide

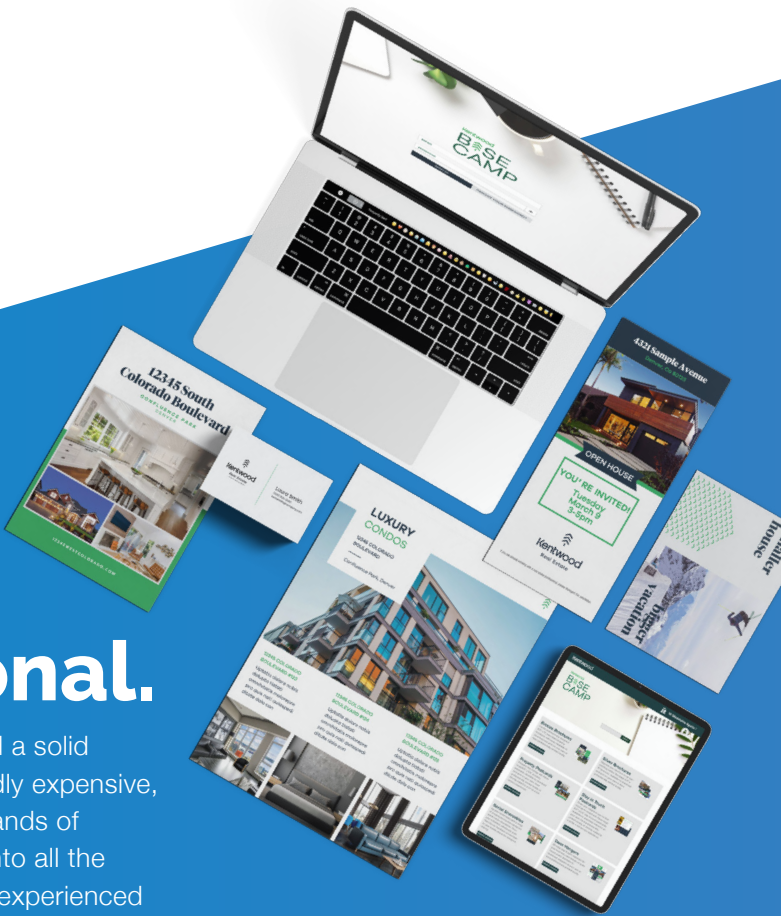
By Nathan Froelich, Co-Founder and CEO of Breakthrough Broker



As a former broker owner, I vividly remember the crazy days, late night phone calls, thrill of recruiting, and satisfaction of seeing your agents crush it! Everyday there are wins and losses, both big and small, and I found that it could be hard to think six months, a year, or even five years into the future. Getting caught up in the day to day happens to all of us, even now it happens to me while running Breakthrough Broker.

Now, I have the benefit of hindsight when I look back to my days of running a brokerage, and I've consistently said for years that not focusing more energy on building our brand identity, including brand standards, brand consistency, and brand rules that agents adhere to, was one of my bigger mistakes. Truthfully, when you're starting out, it's hard to imagine needing to worry about brand

standards when you're trying to sell homes, recruit agents, and build a business. Then, you wake up a few years later with a team of agents running around representing your brand through their own unique interpretation. At that point, it becomes very difficult to "unscramble the omelette" and take control of your brand. There is hope though! Below are some practical tips to building, repairing, or creating your brand.



01 Hire a Professional.

Depending on your size and budget, you really need a solid foundation for your brand. This process can get wildly expensive, with marketing firms happily charging tens of thousands of dollars to help you storyboard your brand and get into all the gooey marketing slush. Instead, I suggest hiring an experienced graphic design professional who has experience working with companies to develop their brand assets. If they've worked for a marketing agency and been through the previously mentioned "slush", they will know what you need in terms of brand guidelines. This option allows you to establish a beautiful brand and create all your assets, colors, logos, and fonts without having to pay an extra premium for the additional advice and input.

02 Create Rules & Standards.

It's difficult to blame your agents when they misrepresent your brand if you've never given them any rules to follow. Once you create brand assets, share them with your agents and outline the exact way they should be used and not used. Many companies create lengthy brand style guides to achieve this, including tone, history, vision, personality, key values, asset usage, and more. However, a short summary of brand standards may work fine for your purposes. The most important thing is getting something in place sooner rather than later. You can always add to your brand style guide and refine it over time. Here's a good example of a [brand style guide from Hubspot](#). Inevitably, you will have agents who push back on the rules and standards, like someone wanting to make your logo neon yellow. This is where you need to be strong. Letting one agent modify the brand is a slippery slope and hard to come back from.

03 Create Marketing Templates.

Now your agents have the assets (logos, colors, fonts, etc.), but they don't have designs for flyers, brochures, social media posts, postcards, and so on. Without templates, your agents will either have to create their own designs using software like Canva or they will need to hire a designer. These options leave a lot of room for wildly varying design styles. A great solution is to hire a designer to create templates for each of these marketing items and provide them to your agents. The tricky part is your agents will have to find a way to edit these documents, which I address below.



04 Subscribe to Marketing Center Technology.

Yes, this is a plug for our Breakthrough Broker custom marketing center services, however it's sincerely relevant to the topic and will help you defend your brand. Breakthrough Broker builds customized marketing hubs where your agents can find, edit, download, share, print, and mail marketing items branded specifically for your brokerage. The designs can be provided by us and modified with your brand colors and logos or you can provide your own designs. The templates are editable, allowing agents to drop in images and text without allowing them to venture outside your brand standards. Most templates offer MLS integration so the agent can use an MLS number to populate them with photos and property details in seconds. The finished marketing items can be downloaded and printed at home or the office or we provide excellent printing and mailing services with some of the fastest turn-around times in the industry. This allows you to provide a valuable tool to your agents to help make their life easier while easily maintaining your brand standards. It's also relatively inexpensive. You can learn more about our custom marketing center technology by [clicking here](#).

