



ARTIFACT

The Branding Agency Interview Guide: 15 Questions to Ask Before You Sign a Contract

You're about to make a major investment in your company's brand—no pressure, right? This guide will help you weigh your options, even if you've never hired a branding partner before.

Use these questions in every agency conversation. Take notes, compare answers, and remember: the agency with the best pitch deck isn't always the one who'll deliver the best work.



What You're Getting

01

Do your branding services include visual and verbal brand guidelines?

You need both: visual guidelines (logo system, colors, typography) and verbal guidelines (brand voice, messaging, tone).



What to Listen For

Specifics about what's included in each area, or better yet, actual examples.



Red Flag

Verbal branding treated as an afterthought or upsell.

02

Will it include more than a logo?

A complete brand identity includes:

- Primary and secondary logos
- Color palette
- Typography system
- Graphic elements or patterns
- Photography/illustration direction



What to Listen For

A comprehensive toolkit, not just logo variations.



Red Flag

Vague answers like "We'll create a complete brand identity" without specifics on what that includes.



03

Will my visual identity include a responsive logo system?

Your logo should work everywhere: on website headers, social profiles, business cards, building signage, email signatures, and favicon spaces. It should also be fully functional and identifiable in one color.



What to Listen For

Multiple logo versions designed for different contexts (horizontal, stacked, simplified icon).



Red Flag

"We'll design one logo and you can resize it as needed."



How You'll Work Together

04

Who will be my main point of contact?

Find out if you'll be working with the person who sold you or getting passed to someone else.



What to Listen For

Specific names and roles. Clarity on who's leading your project and who you'll communicate with day-to-day.



Red Flag

Vague references to 'our team' without mentioning at least one specific person, or promises that the agency owner/director will be involved in every meeting.



05

What does the discovery process look like?

Discovery is where the agency digs into your business, goals, and audience.



What to Listen For

Structured approach with stakeholder interviews, competitor research, and audience analysis, not just a questionnaire.



Red Flag

"We'll send you a form to fill out" with no mention of deeper exploration.

06

What does your typical project timeline look like?

Understand realistic timelines and what could cause delays.



What to Listen For

Honest timeline expectations and transparency about dependencies (your approvals, their workload, etc.).



Red Flag

Overly aggressive timelines ("We can have this done in 2 weeks") or reluctance to commit to any timeline at all.

07

How do you handle revisions and feedback?

Every agency has a revision process. It should be realistic and collaborative.



What to Listen For

Clear revision rounds with realistic flexibility. Openness to feedback and course corrections.



Red Flag

Defensiveness about revisions or rigid 'two rounds, no exceptions' policies that don't account for the collaborative nature of branding.



08

What happens if we're not aligned after the first round of concepts?

Sometimes creative doesn't land, and you need to know how the agency handles it.



What to Listen For

Problem-solving approach, not blame-shifting. Willingness to revisit strategy if concepts miss the mark.



Red Flag

Responses that suggest you're wrong if you don't love the first concepts, or suggest it's all on you to provide clarity. Upcharges for revisions (two rounds are common).

09

How do you handle multiple decision-makers and conflicting feedback?

If you have a team involved in approvals, the agency needs a plan for managing different perspectives.



What to Listen For

Experience managing stakeholder alignment and structured feedback processes.



Red Flag

"We leave that up to you to figure out" or hesitation at the mention of multiple stakeholders.



Brand Handoff

10

What format will my final brand deliverables be in, and will anyone on my team be able to use them?

You should receive vector files (AI/EPS), high-resolution PNGs with transparent backgrounds, and ideally SVG files for web.



What to Listen For

Specific file types explained in plain language, plus guidance on when to use each.



Red Flag

Overly technical jargon without explanation, or vague promises like "You'll get everything you need."

11

Do you consider physical production in your logo design?

If your logo will be embroidered on shirts, etched on signage, or printed on promotional products, it should be designed with those constraints in mind.



What to Listen For

Awareness of production limitations and design that works across applications.



Red Flag

"We design for digital first" with no consideration for physical applications, or confusion about why this matters.



12

Is accessibility an important consideration in your brand work?

Your brand should work for everyone, including people with visual impairments.



What to Listen For

Color contrast ratios, legibility at small sizes, and alternatives for color-dependent communication.



Red Flag

"We've never had anyone ask about that," or treating accessibility as an afterthought.

13

How do you ensure the brand system works in real-world applications?

Brand guidelines are only useful if they translate to everyday use.



What to Listen For

Examples of real-world applications during the project and testing across different contexts.



Red Flag

Focus only on how the brand looks in the guidelines PDF, not how it performs when your team tries to use it.



Post-Handoff

14

Do you provide implementation support, or just hand over the files?

Some agencies walk away after they've sent the final deliverables. Others help you actually use what they've created.



What to Listen For

What's included (training, application review, ongoing questions) vs. what costs extra.



Red Flag

"Our job ends when we deliver the files," with no support for implementation.

15

How do you measure the success of a branding project?

Success should be tied to business outcomes, not just subjective opinions about aesthetics.



What to Listen For

Metrics like increased brand recognition, improved conversion rates, or a stronger pipeline.



Red Flag

"If you're happy, we're happy" with no connection to business results.



AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Next Steps:

- Compare answers side-by-side**
Create a simple spreadsheet with agencies in columns and key questions in rows.
- Check references and ask specific questions**
How did they communicate? If there were challenges during the project, how did they handle them?
- Request work samples similar to your needs**
Ask to see examples from similar industries or business models.
- Review proposals for what's NOT included**
Look for gaps, like what costs extra, what happens after delivery, and what surprises might pop up later on.
- Discuss internally before deciding**
If you have a team of stakeholders involved, align on priorities now.
- Ask follow-up questions if needed**
A good agency isn't offended by due diligence.

Still deciding between agencies?

We created this guide because too many companies hire branding agencies without knowing what separates good work from expensive fluff.

When agencies look similar on paper, the real difference is often strategy, execution, and experience.

If you'd like an honest conversation about your options, we're here.

[START A CONVERSATION ↗](#)

