

The CSIs of Branding

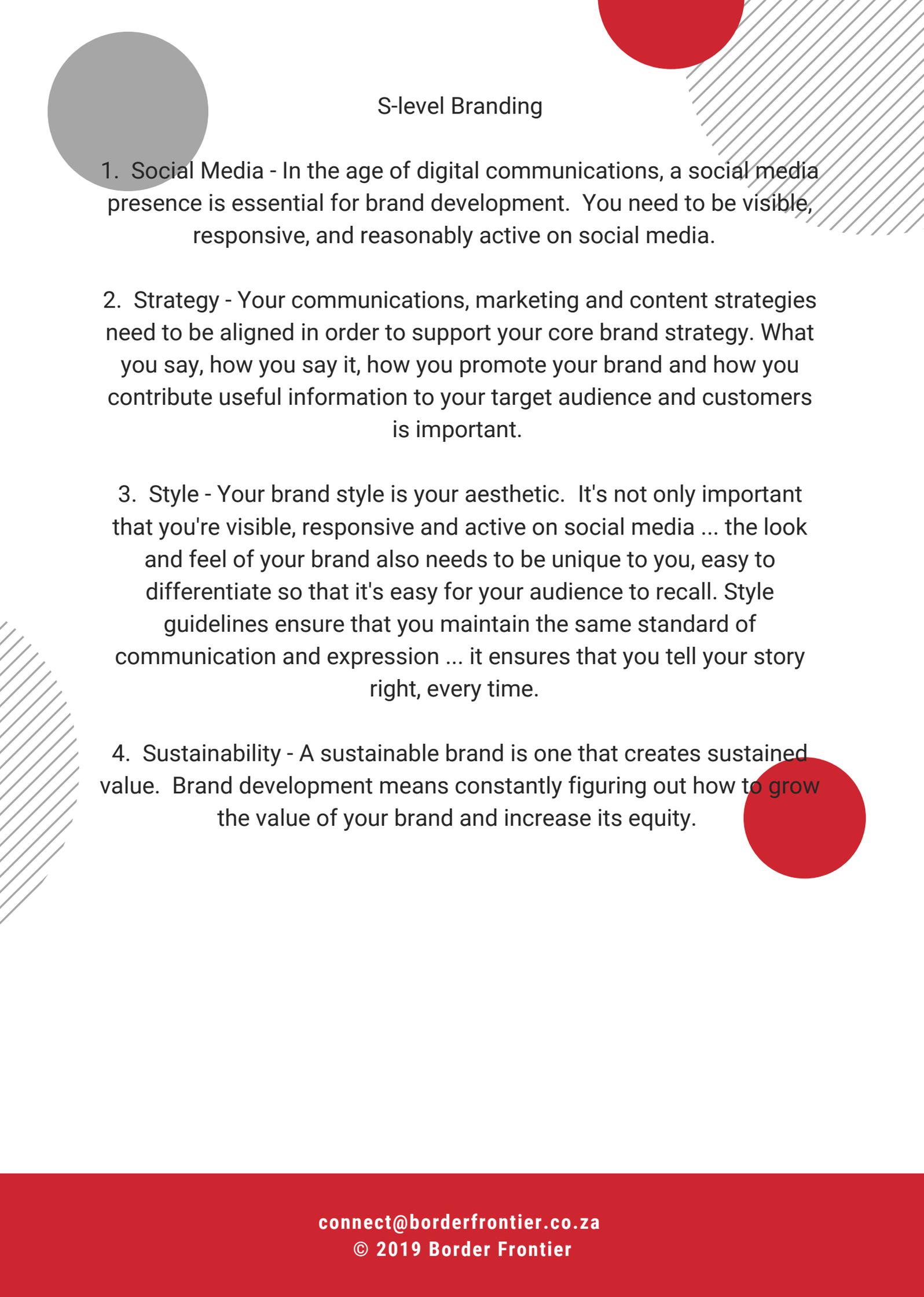
Building a brand requires a diverse set of inputs and insights from a strategic, operational and management point of view.

Key ingredients for brand development include:

- creativity
- conscious branding
- cohesive communication
- community mindset
- social media engagement
- strategic thinking
- style aesthetic
- sustainable value creation
- unique identity
- strong image
- innovation mindset
- impact
- investment

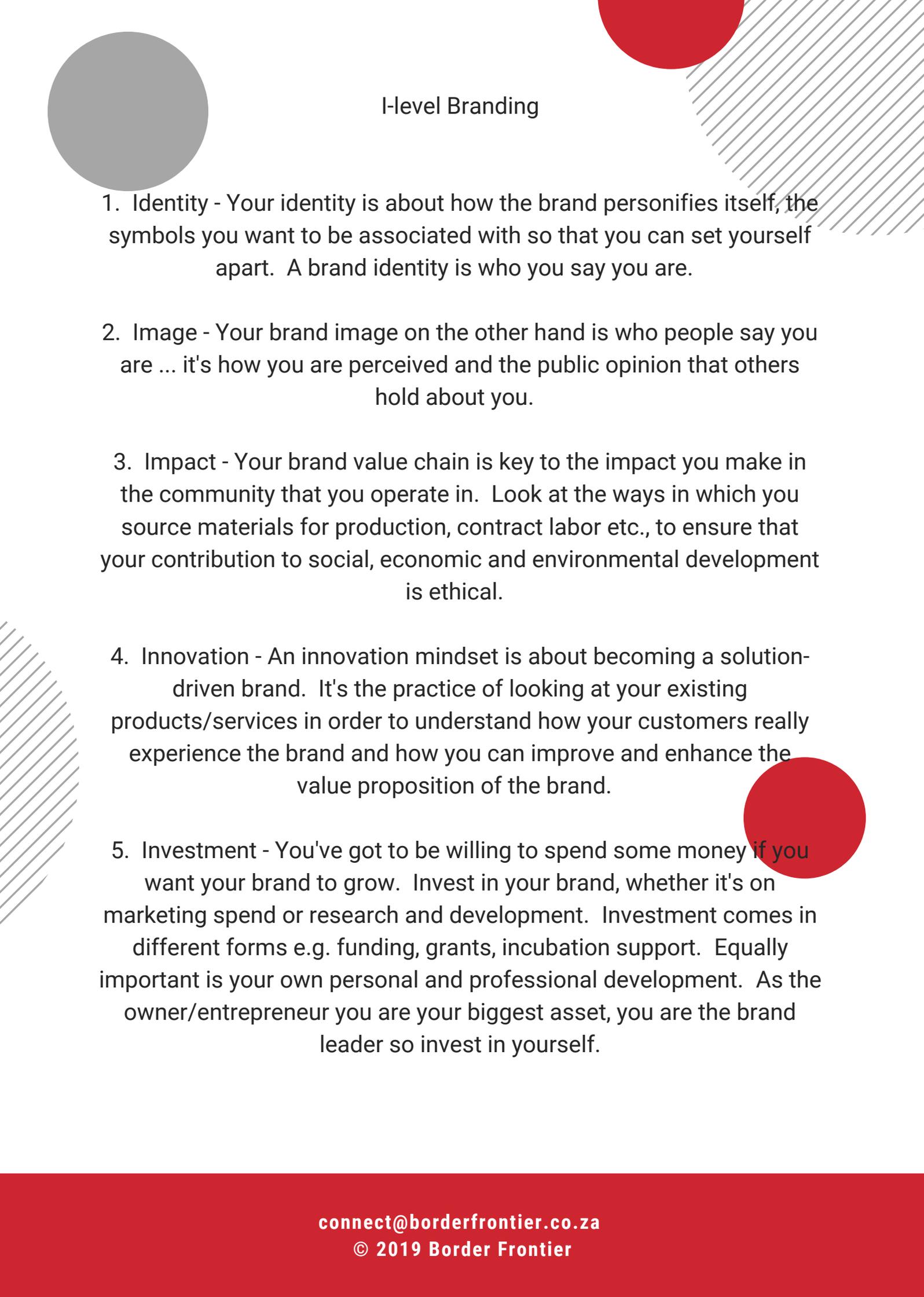
C-level Branding

1. Creativity - Branding is not about being clinical. There absolutely needs to be creativity and fun in the process. The key to creativity is not to do something that doesn't come naturally to your brand's personality.
2. Cohesive communication - To be cohesive in your brand simply means to be consistent ... and being consistent means you gotta tell the story right every time. This is where messaging is important. Your message needs to be the same whether you're on Twitter/ Facebook/ YouTube/ LinkedIn, etc.
3. Conscious branding - A conscious brand means that you understand the lived experiences of the people you serve with your products/services. People who want to know that you are accountable for your role as a brand in social development, national economic priorities, and global sustainable development.
4. Community - Your brand is about building a community. People are not just marketing metrics on a spreadsheet or indicators on a report. Patrick Hanlon, says it best: "The quality of your brand is not just in the idea, but in the community you build around that idea"



S-level Branding

1. **Social Media** - In the age of digital communications, a social media presence is essential for brand development. You need to be visible, responsive, and reasonably active on social media.
2. **Strategy** - Your communications, marketing and content strategies need to be aligned in order to support your core brand strategy. What you say, how you say it, how you promote your brand and how you contribute useful information to your target audience and customers is important.
3. **Style** - Your brand style is your aesthetic. It's not only important that you're visible, responsive and active on social media ... the look and feel of your brand also needs to be unique to you, easy to differentiate so that it's easy for your audience to recall. Style guidelines ensure that you maintain the same standard of communication and expression ... it ensures that you tell your story right, every time.
4. **Sustainability** - A sustainable brand is one that creates sustained value. Brand development means constantly figuring out how to grow the value of your brand and increase its equity.



I-level Branding

1. Identity - Your identity is about how the brand personifies itself, the symbols you want to be associated with so that you can set yourself apart. A brand identity is who you say you are.
2. Image - Your brand image on the other hand is who people say you are ... it's how you are perceived and the public opinion that others hold about you.
3. Impact - Your brand value chain is key to the impact you make in the community that you operate in. Look at the ways in which you source materials for production, contract labor etc., to ensure that your contribution to social, economic and environmental development is ethical.
4. Innovation - An innovation mindset is about becoming a solution-driven brand. It's the practice of looking at your existing products/services in order to understand how your customers really experience the brand and how you can improve and enhance the value proposition of the brand.
5. Investment - You've got to be willing to spend some money if you want your brand to grow. Invest in your brand, whether it's on marketing spend or research and development. Investment comes in different forms e.g. funding, grants, incubation support. Equally important is your own personal and professional development. As the owner/entrepreneur you are your biggest asset, you are the brand leader so invest in yourself.