

Brand Identity Guide - Contents

Introduction for staff and other readers of the Guide

- Why are we doing this work? What do we hope to achieve with a strong brand?
- The overall voice and style of your brand and organization – description of the voice (with examples). How will we talk to our audiences? Formally, informally –what is the voice we strive to use and how will it be executed?
- Your main audiences – who are your main audiences (customers), what do you want them to know and do? Will your voice vary depending on audience?
- Are there cultural and social/emotional considerations in wording and imagery that you choose as part of your consistent voice to your audiences? What are the words we like to use and words we don't like to use?
- Storytelling voice: If human interest “stories” are important to your overall messages and communication plan, your Identity Guide should contain a sample of how one of these might look, along with notes about process – where will stories come from, who should they focus on, to what purpose, and how will you ask for and obtain permission from subjects.
- What types of images or art should we consistently try to leverage in our communications?
- Keywords we want our customers and community to use to describe us (embedded in the brand)

Brand Messaging (This is messaging that should be used by all, consistently, when talking about your organization in any context)

- Tag Line: This should be 3-8 word statement that conveys the essence of your brand value quickly and in a memorable way. It can and should be viewed alongside the organization's name and

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logo.

- Naming System: when do we use the full name, acronym, with/without tag line; and how to use it in conjunction with the names of our distinct services, programs, or sub-brands. This also describes when to use the organization logo.
- The organization's Branding Statement – 60-80 words. The Branding Statement is not a description of the services you provide; rather it is meant to convey who and what you are and what your unique promise is to your customers. The branding statement should be developed in a way that can strongly position you against competitors and help you to stand out from others.
- The summary description of the organization – boilerplate – use in press releases, fact sheets, annual reports, on the website, and as standard text in brochures and other pieces. What are you, how long have you been around, what services do you provide and to whom? This is not an exhaustive list – it should also be limited to 60-85 words at most.
- Positioning statement: This is a valuable statement for internal use by your staff, sales, and communications specialists. From this statement, they'll be able to readily draw the main components that differentiate you from competitors in terms of value, benefits, style and voice. These can be used in conversation, proposals, and the creation of ongoing messages. This will help to focus your stakeholders on how you are different from your competitors. This may or may not be accompanied by a brief analysis of main competitors – the strengths and weaknesses that are driving your positioning.
- Statement of key benefits of your organization and brand for customers, stakeholders, and partners. This is a place to elaborate upon your brand statement by listing and clarifying what your

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primary brand benefits are. What's best about you? Explain what you mean by the terms you use – words like excellent, high quality, caring, customizable can all become a blur due to over-use. What do they look like in relation to your work? What, exactly, are you promising? Remember that the benefits of your brand should be hallmarks that carry consistently across all that you do. If your brand has sub-brand, programs or services related to it, these are attributes that all should share.

- Product/service features: If you have a specific product or service that is primary to your brand, your brand guide should contain the language that you want others to use in describing the most important features of the product or service. Features are not benefits. (See features v. benefits blog post) These are a straight up description of what your product or service includes or does that's important to a purchase decision.
- Content vocabulary and usage across media (the architecture): Where do we use these different pieces of content, and are they used differently in different communication efforts and media? How do we use our names, titles – what do we call our staff, and how do we put people in touch with them? Are there things we should say in every communication, things we should save for only some?

Visual Assets and Style Guidelines

- Logo: Depending on the length of your organization name and whether you've chosen to incorporate a tag line, you may need multiple versions of this graphic. Think about the simple logo art, logo with organization name shown stacked or horizontally, Logo with and without the tag line incorporated. Don't forget to ask for versions that can be used in both print and on the web; and

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versions to use as avatars in social media. You'll also need to consider a version that is shown in reverse white on a background color, if your guideline allows for this.

- Color palette: what are the colors, both in print and on the web, that will belong to your brand? where and how will they be used?
- Brand font and size, usage of bold, italics, etc. What kind of headlines and sub-heads will be consistently used in your communications?
- Text elements: What line spacing will be your standard? How will you handle paragraphs and bullets in your corporate communications?
- Icon graphics for main ideas: If you have main ideas or types of content that can best be displayed with a graphic icon, make those part of your style guide.
- Background colors and white space - make sure to identify and direct how your communications will use white or other background colors in your efforts. This should not be left to chance or individual preference.
- Visual elements associated with your brand. In creating communications about/for your brand, should they only use photography? Info graphics? Cartoon based artwork? What types of subjects should be shown, ideally? Are there guidelines about the size and placement of such graphics when used?

Website Guidelines

- Website purpose
- How and where your website URL will be shown.
- Guidance on sub-URLs – when and where to use vanity URLs connected to your brand
- Online elements: does your brand's visual identity require a

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specific way to display links? Web icons? Button graphics? How about menus? What font and type size should be used on the web?

- Website target audiences – who are they, what are they seeking, and what do we want them to do on the site?
- Suggested keywords for the site (to drive search- these will not have been researched in Adwords)
- Proposed menu focal points, based on purpose and target audiences
- Draft sample messaging/copy for home page, how brand content vocabulary and voice will be executed on the web. Statement about how the brand identity and voice will be implemented on the web.
- If available, page mockups should show how the main types of website pages will be laid out.