Brand Guidelines Seminar

Table of Contents

What are brand guidelines?

A brand style guide is a collection of guidelines that encompasses everything from typography and colour to logos and imagery that contributes to the overall look and feel of your business. It tells you how to show the brand to the rest of the world. From blog posts and presentations to office spaces and business cards, it serves as a design guide for all of your content.

You start with a compelling brand narrative in your brand style guide, this unique brand message is at the core of any great brand. A brand story is a way of defining and describing what matters most to a company. It's used to express a company's principles to the public, and it can also be used to direct major organisational decisions. At different companies, brand stories can take on a variety of forms, but there is one common thread that runs through them all: Brand stories are concise summaries of a company's vision, mission, and core values.

Many companies are influenced by brand archetypes, and the best brand stories introduce their own individuality into the mix.

Why are Brand Guidelines Important?

Brand guidelines are documents that are really important to have, although they may not be seen directly by your customers, they will be the basis of all your branding and therefore it is important that they are completed thoroughly and to a high standard.

They will also be seen by any other brands or companies that you end up partnering, collaborating, or interacting with. As anytime your logo is to be used by someone other than your in-house marketer or team, that company will/should request a copy of your brand guidelines so they know how they should be using your logo and colour palette correctly.

It's important for your company that customers consistently see the same design throughout your space, and your guidelines allow you set clear rules and conditions for that, so you don't lose your vision or get carried away when creating anything new. It gives you a guide to refer back to whenever needed.

What's the difference between Brand Guidelines, Brand Books, and Brand Manuals? The terms brand book, brand manual, and brand guidelines are all often used interchangeably. It's typically just a matter of preference or geographical location. In the UK, it's mostly referred to as brand guidelines, whereas across Europe, brand book seems to be the most common term. Across the pond in the USA, creating a brand manual is often used as well.

Each term means the same thing. A brand guideline, brand book, or brand manual, is a document that summarises your brand. From brand strategy, through to brand identity and execution.

Who Should Create Your Brand Guidelines?

If you are just starting up with a small team, you should have someone who has a dedicated role or skillset that can cater to your marketing. This person is likely the one in charge of your branding. Once you expand, you'll likely have a marketing manager role, and eventually a small team that can deal with all things branding and visuals. At some point, you may decide to go down the route of instructing a branding agency to outsource all of this work too, if there's no one in your team with the skillset to do it. If you use an agency, It's a task that should be detailed in their proposal, so double-check before accepting the agreement if you want them to action that role for you.

You may assume that your new company logo and business cards are the most important aspects of a branding or rebranding project, but actually, I'd advocate that your brand guidelines are more important.

What matters is how the brand is presented, how it should and shouldn't feel, and how it looks and sounds. It's not all about the logo!

Your branding agency or team should hand over all assets as well as a PDF file of your latest brand rules at the conclusion of your project, specifically stating how your newly developed brand assets will be used.

What Should Be Included in a Basic Brand Guideline Document?

A comprehensive branding document would be built on the basis of a strong brand strategy, and include all aspects of the brand. However, you may not have the time, budget or need to do so, or you may need something that only records your brand's visual identity, so a simple brand guideline document may be more appropriate, which will likely skip through the brand strategy, task, and vision and jump right to the graphics. At the beginning of the document, you should always start with a history or background of the brand, explaining its vision, offering, ethos, and purpose. This can be as detailed or as brief as appropriate.

Logo Design

Your logo template should be the first section you have in your brand guidance. This is the most popular version of the logo, and it's the one you'll see 90% of the time. It should be seen in full colour, followed by alternate colourways or positions, known as variations.

Logo Variations

Your logo variations are the other logo designs that your brand could use. If your logo has a logo icon to the left, and the text to the right, it doesn't always need to be used in that layout.

Make sure you also have a 'stacked' or vertical version, a version without text, a version without the logo mark, a version in a different alignment, etc.

For example, consider WhatsApp and how they use their logos:
- They have their 'wherever possible' logo
- Simple logo for colour backgrounds
- Simple logo for monochrome locations
- Stacked/vertical monochrome logo
- Icon and typography logo
- And a location-specific logo, e.g IOS application.

WhatsApp Logo
Use this whenever possible.

White and Green
Use simple white logo on green backgrounds.

Black & White
Use this with content that's primarily black and white.

Monochrome with Name
Use this with content that's black and white and laid out vertically.

Monochrome with Name 2
Use this with content that's black and white and laid out horizontally.

Green Square
Use this only when referencing the iOS version of WhatsApp.

Even if it's not part of your brand palette, it's vital that you still include a monochrome version of at least one of your logos. Sometimes you will be branding on places that are not on a digital screen, or do not have any colour at all, e.g a simple photocopy.

It's important that your logo design is fully flexible, and that all of these versions of your logo design should be represented within your brand guideline document.

Remember, your brand guidelines are an evolving document. If you start a new location, variation or find a new-use case, make sure it gets added.

Responsive Logo

This is the variant of your logo that can be used on smaller devices, such as a tablet or mobile phone. It's considered a sensitive logo style, and changes in stages to suit the size needed. You will need to establish how to use the logo on a number of device-sizes, and how the logo evolves as it increases/decreases in size. The most critical thing to remember is that your logo must be easily recognisable as your brand even though it is reduced in size.

There should also be a statement of the smallest your logo should be at any given time, after that an icon or variation should be used instead.

Maximum Sizing for Small Use Logo

90px wide, approx.

(or approx. 1.25 inches)

20px height, approx.

(or approx. 0.28 inches)

Minimum Sizing for Small Use Logo

50px wide, approx.

(or approx. 0.7 inches)

15px height, approx.

(or approx. 0.2 inches)

Slack LLC ©

Logo Spacing

The space around your logo is often as important as the logo itself, it can make or break the design. You want to ensure your logo does not appear cramped into a space that does not fit it, it shouldn't be surrounded by conflicting elements or negative space.

Your logo text should be displayed with "x-height" guides, showing how much clear space should be around the logo at all times. The x-height refers to the height of the lowercase x for a typeface or font. It is the distance between the baseline and the mean line of lower-case letters in a typeface, and indicates how tall or short each letter in a typeface will be. Typefaces with tall x-heights have

better legibility at small font sizes, as the white space within each letter is more legible.

As with your responsive logo as above, you should include measurements in mm for printed material and pixels for digital materials.

Brand Typography

The typography (appearance, style and organisation of fonts) used across your brand should be documented in full, as to not allow any mistakes. This should include the font used within the logo, as well as;

- Headers
- Sub-headers
- Body/Paragraph text

Your brand guidelines document should outline the typography used and the sizes they should be used at, as well as their relation to each other.

Brand Colours

Your brand colours exist in a variety of forms.

- Primary brand colours
- Secondary brand colours
- RGB (web) colours
- CMYK (print) colours
- The primary colours are often the colours found in your logo design, plus a version of black/white used as your main text.

Secondary colours exist to add depth to your brand's colour palette. These might be used across other forms of advertising, such as leaflets, exhibition stands, or your website.

When you're creating marketing materials, it's important to have flexibility while remaining "on brand." A vibrant colour that looks great on screen might not work in print. Translating it directly into a print colour might not get you the exact same vibrancy, so make sure you have tested out all forms of colours before committing.

There are many different ways to set this out, no one-size-fits all, so here are some examples:

MAY 2008	BRAND TOOL KIT	4.0 COLOUR	4.01	MAIN COLOUR PALETTE

The primary colour for UNICEF's logo is cyan: a bold, optimistic tone that is immediately recognizable, highly visible and universally available. It is also our link to the UN. It should be used in all our communication, and always on cover pages.

The colours in our main colour palette are pure, bold and optimistic, and they complement cyan. This palette should be used in corporate communication.

	PRINT PANTONE	PRINT CMYK	SCREEN RGB	WEB HEX WEBSAFE	VIDEO DIRECT RGB
CYAN	Process Cyan	C 100 M 0 Y 0 K 0	R 0 G 153 B 255	0099FF	R 4 G 132 B 169
MAGENTA	Process Magenta	C 0 M 100 Y 0 K 0	R 255 G 0 B 153	FF0099	R 214 G 0 B 107
YELLOW	Process Yellow	C 0 M 0 Y 100 K 0	R 255 G 255 B 0	FFFF00	R 221 G 193 B 18
DARK BLUE	274	C 100 M 100 Y 0 K 0	R 51 G 51 B 153	333399	R 51 G 17 B 105
BLACK	Process Black	C 0 M 0 Y 0 K 100	R 0 G 0 B 0	000000	R 0 G 0 B 0

COLORS

Our colors are what gives us our personality. We're bright, bold and colorful.

FOURSQUARE LOGO BLUE

PMS 307
CMYK 100, 45, 16, 1
RGB 0, 114, 177
HEX # 0072b1

FOURSQUARE LOGO YELLOW

PMS 600
CMYK 7, 2, 40, 0
RGB 238, 235, 172
HEX # eeebac

1. LOGO COLORS
These are our logo colors. Use these sparingly so as not to outshine our logo.

2. SUPPORTING COLOR PALETTE
These make up our core color palette.

3. PERCENTAGES
Use the supporting color palette in the outlined percentages in all marketing material.

2

BLUE

PMS 312C
CMYK 0, 0, 0, 62
RGB 0, 170, 210
HEX # 0cbadf

GREEN

PMS 375C
CMYK 48, 0, 100, 0
RGB 143, 212, 0
HEX #8fd400

ORANGE

PMS 151 C
CMYK 0, 65, 100, 0
RGB 255, 121, 0
HEX # ff7900

YELLOW

PMS 116C
CMYK 0, 19, 100, 0
RGB 255, 203, 0
HEX # ffcb00
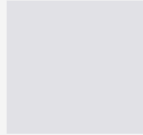
GRAY

PMS 427C
CMYK 17, 11, 13, 0
RGB 209, 212, 211
HEX # d1d4d3

3

60%   15%   10%   5%   10%

Foursquare ©

02 Primary Colours

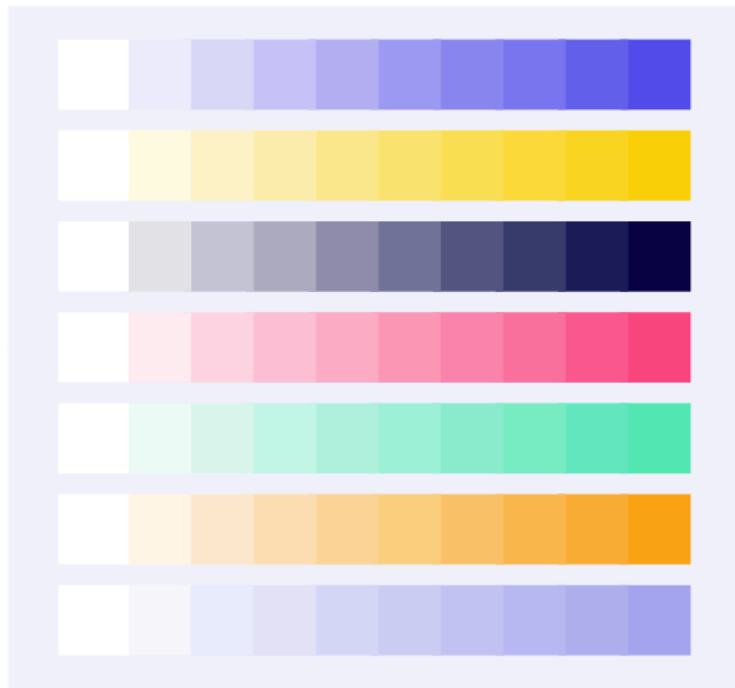Event Crowd Purple
#534eea
RGB: 83 - 78 - 234

Event Crowd Yellow
#ffd202
RGB: 255 - 210 - 2

Event Crowd Navy
#020344
RGB: 2 - 3 - 68

White
#ffffff

Event Crowd ©

02
Alternative
Colour Tones

Brand Imagery

Since photography and illustration can play an important role in your brand's branding, it's crucial to create a clear photographic or illustrative style from the start. Are you illustrating ideas of conceptual photography or scribbly drawings to aid visualisation? A list of relevant photographs, illustrations or graphical devices are normally included in this part of the guidelines. With photography, this will focus mainly on light, composition, and subject matter. With illustration, you'll be looking at style, colour, and subject matter. Photographers and illustrators find this section particularly useful if they're being brought in to help your brand.

See Nike's photography example below, and Slack's illustration examples:

PHOTOGRAPHY

ALL SHOTS NEED TO BE GRADED AND CONTRASTED TO CREATE DRAMA, IN THE NIKEFOOTBALL STYLE. THIS UNIQUE WAY OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND RETOUCHING HAS BEEN DEVELOPED FOR WC10 AND MUST BE ADHERED CAREFULLY FOR CONSISTENCY.

BE
OWN−
ABLE

Illustrations

Nike ©

Our illustration style is bold, elevated, and dimensional, heavily defined by the use of negative space and perspective. It was created to distinctly capture the Slack brand and is used across a range of communications as well as within our product. Please refer to our Illustration Guidelines for specific notes on composition, style and use.

Slack LLC ©

Brand Stationery

Your brand stationery should also be documented within your guidelines.

Brand stationary tends to include (at a minimum), your business cards, letterheads and email signatures. The devil is in the details with this area, for example, are you using T, Tel, or Telephone when displaying your number? Are you setting out your number with or without the international dialling code? This will tie in with your brand 'tone of voice', and all of this should be confirmed in your guidelines.
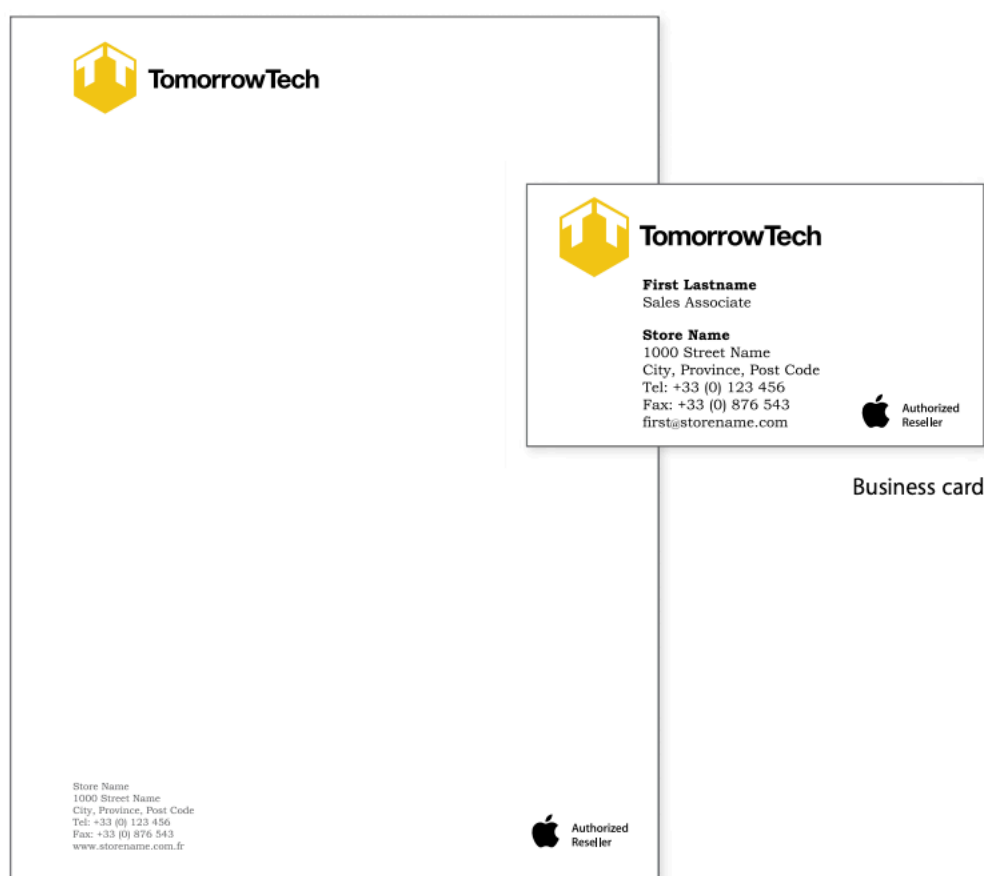
Stationery

Your Apple channel signature can appear on stationery items, including letterhead, business cards, notepads, and folders. An Apple channel signature cannot be printed on envelopes. The signature must be accompanied by your store or business identity and cannot take the place of that identity. Follow the graphic standards in Using Apple Channel Signatures on pages 7–24.

The signature must be smaller than your company or store identity. A rule of thumb is that the Apple channel signature can be no more than one-half the height of your store identity and no less than the minimum size shown on page 10. The signature must be placed in a secondary position on the stationery layouts, such as the lower edge of the item.

Do not imitate Apple typography on your stationery by using a Myriad font. Use your company's own font and layout style.

Never place an Apple logo alone on a stationery item. Always use your Apple channel signature along with your company or store identity.

TomorrowTech

TomorrowTech

First Lastname
Sales Associate

Store Name
1000 Street Name
City, Province, Post Code
Tel: +33 (0) 123 456
Fax: +33 (0) 876 543
first@storename.com

 Authorized
Reseller

Business card

Store Name
1000 Street Name
City, Province, Post Code
Tel: +33 (0) 123 456
Fax: +33 (0) 876 543
www.storename.com.fr

 Authorized
Reseller

Social Media Assets

The last thing typically included in the most basic of brand guidelines is social media assets.

What do your avatars look like? How about your header images? Your patterns & backgrounds? Even the content itself. You can also think about how ad-hoc or seasonal variations will be here. For example, for Pride week you may decide to change your logo variation across social media to one that displays the rainbow colours synonymous of LGBT+ support. This is different from your staple variations in the previous section, as these are only used for a very short amount of time for a specific purpose, and no other collaborators or partners would use them on their cross-brand materials.

With so many varying degrees of social media content, it's important to establish a 'house style' and build up from there. Consistency helps get your brand recognised, especially in the noisy social media space.

See below an example of Slack's avatar assets:

Slack LLC ©

Slack icons are used across different brand touchpoints from marketing to environment to product.

They provide symbolism, conceptual clarity and visual interest in simplistic shapes and forms.

Slack.com

Roles

Events

Miscellaneous

The Brand Guideline One Sheet

An emerging trend when creating brand guidelines, is the brand guideline one sheet. Not every single business needs an entire book that states every single output. You may have this need, but not all the time, so having multiple versions of your brand book with varying degrees of details can be very useful. Make sure you consider your needs and requirements before rushing into creating a huge brand guideline document.

The previous sections covered the basics of a visual identity, and how to document it within your brand guidelines. Fully comprehensive brand guidelines include all of the above, and more.

Typically, more advanced guidelines are used for larger corporations, and start to include elements of brand strategy, and further use cases. If you are starting up from scratch, it is unlikely you will need every single mentioned section with that much detail.

Booking.com

Booking.com logotype

Blue indicates **Clear Space.** The blue area must be kept free of other elements. Grey padding indicates **Safe Zone**.

The minimum required clear space is defined by the measurment "x" (equal to the space between descent line and baseline / cap height and median line).

Minimum logotype width

40 mm (113 px)

Favicon, social profile and app icons

Transparent PNG version

Rounded app version

Minimum logotype width

40 mm (113 px)

Favicon, social profile and app icons

Transparent PNG version

Rounded app version

Grayscale logotype version

Grayscale favicon, social profile icon

Logotype colors

003580
RGB / 0 53 128
CMYK / 100 84 26 6
PANTONE (PMS) 294

009FE3
RGB / 0 159 227
CMYK / 75 22 0 0
PANTONE Process Cyan Uncoated

Additional Brand Strategy

As we've touched upon throughout, brand strategy includes;

- Audience personas
- Brand/competitor positioning
- Brand story
- Brand values
- Brand mission
- Brand touchpoints
- Brand messaging
- Tone of voice

This are not sections that are essential in a basic brand guideline document, but if used properly, you can take elements of this and carry them over into your document and they can really help enhance the information and 'feel' you're trying to convey. You don't need to have all of them in the same document, as it may not be appropriate.

Audience Personas

Your Audience Personas should epitomise your customer base. These fictional profiles will help to ensure your brand and marketing efforts will appeal to your audience. By using your consumer personas in your brand guidelines, you'll be able to show clearly who you're trying to target and how your design decisions have been influenced.

Brand/Competitor Positioning

It can sound counterintuitive to profile your competitors as part of your brand guidelines. However, it provides viewers with a perspective into the overall industry and your place within it. By diving deep into the competitive environment, you can get a sense of where you are and how you can improve to meet or surpass consumer needs. Usually, you would not specifically designate any competitor brand names, so disregard this from the below example.

A mock-up example of McDonalds USA shows where it sits on the Price/Quality scale versus related fast-food chains:

BRAND POSITIONING 2

We have positioned ourselves at the forefront of the industry, as a family friendly, low cost fast food restaurant that offers customers worldwide a consistent, pleasurable experience. When our customers see the Golden Arches they know what they can expect: simple, easy enjoyment with great service, cleanliness and value. This is the brand promise that we stand behind.

We have thousands of competitors, each seeking a share of the market: from large burger and chicken chains to independently owned fish and chips shops and other eat-in or take-out establishments. Therefore, we are continuing to differentiate the McDonald's experience by uniting consumer insights, innovation and execution.

Over the years, we have been successful in doing so, as we have become a household name. In the fast food industry, McDonald's is the most recognized and trusted restaurant chain in the world.

Brand Story

Your Brand Story is one-of-a-kind; it can be entertaining, unpredictable, funny, or optimistic... But one thing is certain: it must elicit an emotional response. It tells the story of your company and how it came to be, or how it serves its customers.

The brand story should be displayed in the same style as your final branding, of course. Whether that be just a paragraph of text, a whole page of rich history, or visually. For a great visual example, see Skype's brand story slides below:
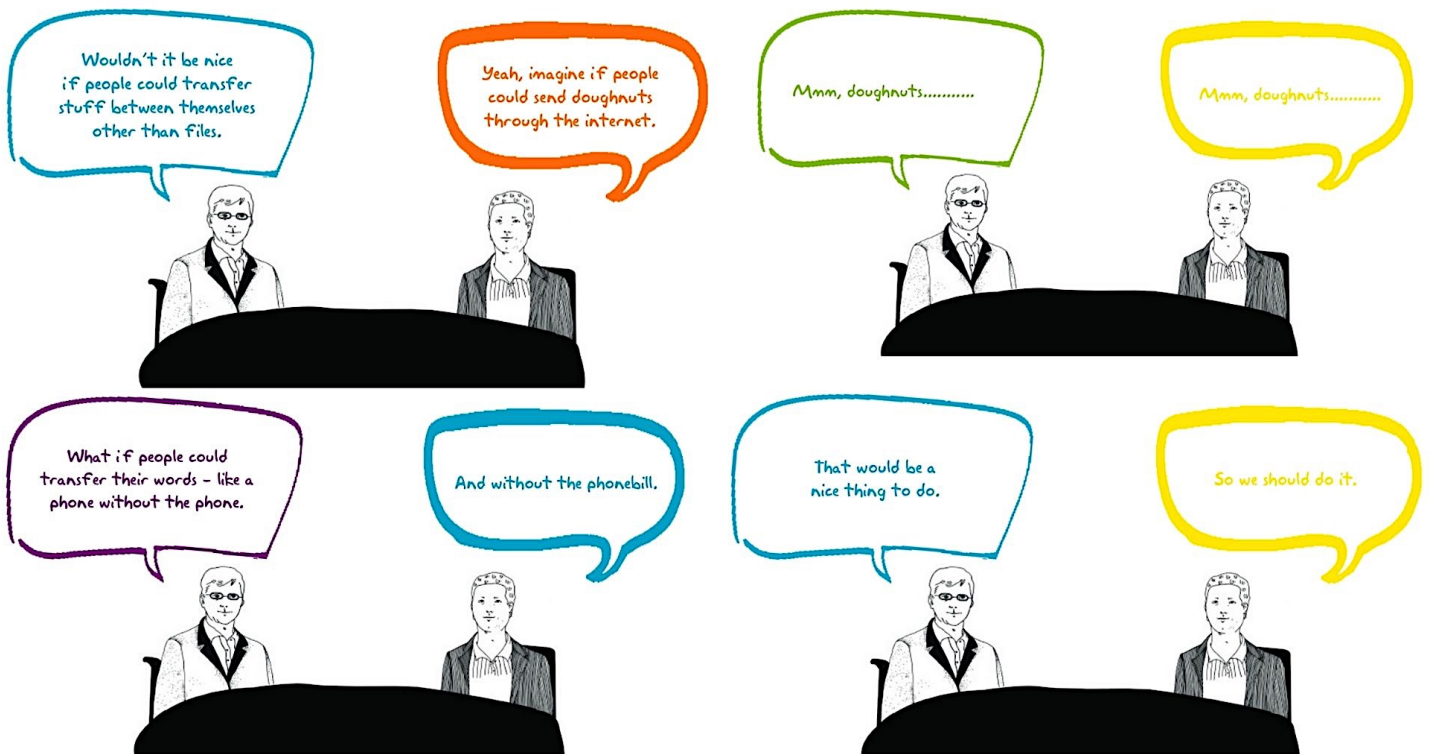
Skype ©

Brand Values

Your Brand Values are at the heart of the Brand Strategy. This set of words should read as a quick, impactful way of summarising your brand. They are essential to all aspects of your business, not just your marketing materials.

You should state the importance and follow it with a descriptive sentence to link it all together.

Try to avoid clichés like "transparent" and "honest", they are so commonplace that we expect everyone we deal with to be honest and open. Choose these words carefully to really make a unique statement.

Brand Mission

Also known as a brand vision, ethos, or purpose, a brand mission statement should clearly state the aims an objective of the brand. What are you intending to accomplish, where are you aiming to go?

It can just a paragraph or so, nothing too extreme. Just make sure you describe exactly where the brand is headed and what you want to accomplish.

Brand Touchpoints

The time and place when a customer comes into contact with your company is referred to as a Brand Touch Point.

It's not a necessary feature to include, and it can be difficult to chart touchpoints in the brand guidelines as it's not always a clear-cut location. Even keeping a list of them, or a table that records how and where consumers can come into touch with the brand, has proven to be beneficial. If you wish to, include them next to each suggested touchpoint so you can state what kind of impact it will make and what the ideal outcome would be.

Brand Messaging

Your Brand Messaging is "what" you're trying to communicate, and how you communicate it. It acts as a framework on which to base all of your external communications.

Again, you can list out your key messaging with little to no difficulty in bullet points or a few sentences. You can be even more thorough and show an example of your messaging in use alongside that. E.g. slotting a Facebook advert or a banner you've created onto the messaging page.

Nike ©

Tone of Voice

Your brand's tone of voice is "how" you communicate your brand messaging, it explains how it interacts with its audience and, as a result, affects how they interpret your message. Do you sign off your communications with a "thanks!, thank you, regards, kind regards, faithfully, or yours truly"? Do you greet customers with a "Hi, hey, hello, or howdy"?

Your brand's tone of voice will help to emphasise the message you want to send. You can do this visually, like Skype has below, or using a more formal "do's and don'ts" table of brand-specific language.

Our tone of voice.

The Skype tone of voice is unique. As a company built around our users, the Skype voice is always plain-speaking and human.

Our products are always explained in the simplest terms. If your mum couldn't understand what is being written, then it's not the Skype voice.

Humour is an important part of the Skype voice. We don't tell one liners, but employ a gentle wit to engage our users.

For instance "You could think of us as that overly generous Aunt who always insists you have a third helping. We prefer to think of ourselves as a big group hug, even a present. Yes that's it, we're a present but without the ribbon."

hahahahahaha

hehe

I don't get it.

Skype ©

Additional Visual Considerations

Depending on the scale of the brand reach, there are a number of additional details to consider, for example accessible or adaptive logos, locations or colours. Think about Braille, Sign Language, or hearing considerations.

Signage

If your company has physical locations, signage would be a common thing to find inside your brand guideline document. Are your signs 2D? Are they levelled vinyl? Or are they built up on plastic and back-lit? How do you use your brand identity within your signage? You should also think about how temporary event signs will display brand consistency.

These are all considerations that should be addressed within your documentation.

The Great Exhibition of the North 2018 ©

Icons

Over the past few years, the use of iconography in lieu of logo/typography branding has skyrocketed. Do you use icons or simplified logos of any kind? Are they strong icons or outlined icons? Vector or raster based?

Make sure your icon library is included in your brand guidance, as they are a key part of your logo variations.
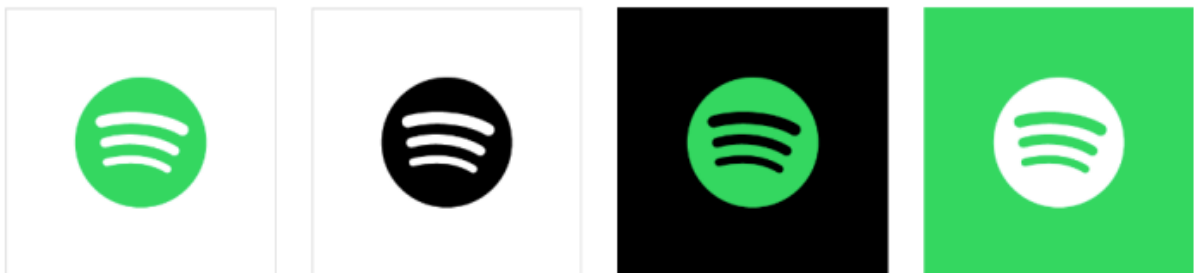
Spotify ©

Conclusion

Your brand guidelines are a comprehensive guide to your company's image. Your brand strategy as well as your brand identity are also essential.

It's important that the brand guidelines don't get left by the wayside. It's a living, breathing document that's constantly evolving.

When working with new suppliers or hiring new employees, they can be used to communicate concisely how your design ethos works. They should be updated and expanded as the business expands and evolves.