

How to...

Create a Style Guide

What is a style guide?

A style guide is a document that clearly defines the proper presentation of your organization's name and logo in written communications. A style guide is a cornerstone of good brand management. It ensures consistency in colors, typeface and logo display and placement.

Developing a style guide:

Step 1 Document your logo style

A logo is a graphical element meant to elicit immediate recognition of your organization. The shape, color and style of your logo should distinguish you from others in your field and be easily identifiable with your organization. If possible you should have your logo professionally designed. If budget is an issue, you can ask design students at a local university to submit designs, see if a local design firm will provide a pro bono design, or try to get the cost underwritten by a benefactor.

Once you have decided on a logo, you should detail all aspects of it including placement, colors, type and sizing in a document – your style guide. Include samples of your logo in color and black and white, and make sure that anyone creating communications materials for your organization has access to the appropriate files.

Colors – You should document your colors with exact Pantone Matching System (usually called PMS) numbers. Pantone is the color system, used by printers and graphic designers to ensure consistency. PMS color charts are available online, but because every monitor varies slightly, you should specify color with the exact PMS number. Online colors are specified by a hexadecimal code – usually referred to as a hex code. Your style guide should detail PMS numbers and the corresponding hex codes.

Size and Placement – You should clearly document the minimum reproducible print size for your logo, position on the page, and the recommended area of isolation (white space around your logo).

Fonts – Document the font (or typeface) for your electronic and printed materials. If a font is included as part of your logo, then its details should be documented as well.

Step 2 Define key messages

There are certain points about your organization that you will want to include in most of your marketing materials. These key messages help to define who you are, who you serve, and enforce the mission of your organization. All members of your organization should be able to clearly articulate these few key points.

Examples:

XYZ Organization is a community partner providing free educational resources to local children.

XYZ Organization is an advocate for education and literacy programs for the underserved.

XYZ Organization is primarily supported by grants and private donations.

Step 3 Set your tone

Define the tone that you want your marketing materials to take and describe it in detail. Always keep your audience in mind when developing your tone: who will be reading your marketing literature and who will be utilizing your services.

Example:

We use an informal tone for most of our communications (both electronic and printed). Materials should be written in an active, first person voice, and the use of contractions is acceptable. One exception to this is our annual board report which is much more formal in its tone.

Step 4 Determine vocabulary and grammar preferences

Make a running list of word style preferences documenting the use of hyphens, compound words, preferred terms, and any other word preferences.

Determine your organization's preferred, published reference guide like Chicago Manual of Style, or the Associated Press (AP) guide. Be sure to have a copy available in the office for reference.

Example:

We use the Chicago Manual of Style as our primary reference guide. Please reference it if you have particular questions regarding use of punctuation, grammar, etc.

Preferred

underserved
at risk
clients
nonprofit
XYZ Nonprofit

Do not use

underprivileged
disadvantaged
customers
non-profit, non profit
XYZ (always include Nonprofit)

Step 5 Distribute and update

Once your style guide has been created you should distribute it to your staff and outside contractors who develop communications materials for you. Make sure people clearly understand its purpose.

Because it's a living document, you should also develop an update process for it. Assign ownership to a single person to ensure that it is revised as new vocabulary and grammar preferences are determined.

Example:

Our style guide is typically updated once a year. Our Director of Development and Outreach manages the revision process: please contact our Director if you have a suggestion for the next update cycle.

CCA For Social Good: Branding Guidelines

To ensure we communicate our powerful brand personality, we must present our identity consistently across all channels. By adhering to our positioning and branding guidelines you will ensure the consistent, effective communication of our brand, its personality and value.

1. Logo

The Company uses the CCA For Social Good logo in all sales and marketing initiatives as well as with partners or certain co-branding initiatives. This color version on a white background best represents the brand in corporate settings. Color should never be manipulated for any reason.



2. Logo (Vertical Version)

There is an alternate version of the logo that can be used in situations where horizontal space is limited.



3. Area of Isolation

To uphold the integrity of the corporate identity, the logo must stand out from other elements on the page. Be sure to leave .25" from the bottom, left and right points of the mark. Add extra to the top (.40" is recommended) as a safe zone for the "star-catcher".



4. Logo Size

The smallest reproducible print size of the logo is 1" in width, with a proportional height from the top of the "star-catcher" to the bottom point of the wordmark. For online applications, a width no smaller than 100 pixels is recommended.



5. One-Color Reproduction

The one-color identity should appear using only 100% black. If necessary, a knocked-out version on a solid hue from the color palette may be used. At no time should the logo be placed on non-solid backgrounds.

CCA For Social Good

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6. Corporate Color Palette

The CCA For Social Good corporate color palette incorporates a diverse base of hues for a strong, vibrant look and feel across print and electronic media. The hex color codes are based on the nearest match to the PMS color and not limited by the 216-color web-safe palette, which is generally accepted to be unnecessary.



7. Fonts

The font in the CCA For Social Good logo is Flux Bold. In all marketing applications involving print or electronic media, Flux Bold should be used in headers and titles. Subheaders and body copy should employ The Sans. For online applications, Powerpoint templates, or anywhere a system font is required, Trebuchet MS would be the recommended substitution due to its similar characteristics.

Flux Bold : ABCDEFGHIJKLM
NOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklm
nopqrstuvwxyz

The Sans : ABCDEFGHIJKLM
NOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklm
nopqrstuvwxyz