

What Are Brand Guidelines?

Brand guidelines, also called a brand style guide, are essentially an instruction manual and rule book on how to communicate your brand.

They lay out all the visual details, as well as important notes about the company's voice, tone, and messaging. They come in the form of a physical or digital booklet filled with examples of what to do and what not to do.

Brand guidelines comprehensively cover a company's **brand identity**, including its:

Logos: full logos, secondary logos, and icons

Color palette: primary and secondary colors

Typography: font styles, sizes, and spacing

Other imagery: photos, illustrations, and artwork

Voice and tone: how the brand uses language and emotion

When companies take the time to create brand guidelines, it helps to ensure that their brand image stays consistent no matter where it shows up.

<https://www.micahdaigle.com/asana>

<https://www.audi.com/ci/en/renewed-brand.html>

https://issuu.com/design.st.ch/docs/alienware_brand_guide_2016_pages

https://issuu.com/themarkit/docs/urban_outfitters_brand_book_final_p_d1cb1321abd5a6

https://issuu.com/lindsayclarke/docs/wolf_circus_style_guide

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Tips on How to Create Brand Guidelines

1. Include Dos and Don'ts

Truly helpful brand guidelines don't just tell you what you should do. They also paint a picture about what you shouldn't do.

This helps to drive home your usage requirements in a visual, easy-to-understand way.

OGSystems has a playful way of telling you the don'ts, like making sure that the logo is never placed on high-contrast backgrounds or backgrounds that are too similar to the logo colors.

Don'ts

My eyes!
DO NOT sit the logo on high contrast or vibrant colors.

Do not place the logo on colors and tones similar to the logos colors

That's just wrong...
DO NOT tilt, rotate, stretch, skew or distort the logo in anyway.

That's just unnecessary...
DO NOT add unnecessary embellishments like drop shadows, gradients, embossing etc. to the logo

The guidelines also make it clear that you'll be harshly judged if you tilt the logo or add embellishments like drop shadows and gradients.

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2. Don't Be Afraid to Get Specific

The more details, the better. If you've addressed this in your brand strategy, explain specific scenarios and uses for different colors, fonts, and imagery.

In [Element Three's brand guidelines](#), the company has an exact font for pretty much every communication channel.

<https://elementthree.com/blog/what-do-brand-guidelines-include/>

The Typeface Usage section discusses the font name and style for titles and headlines, as well as body copy. These rules apply to multiple channels, including web and print content, emails, and internal employee events.

No room for uncertainty there.

TYPEFACE USAGE

A handy reference for each of our fonts

	WEB	PRINT	GOOGLE SLIDES	MICROSOFT	EMAIL	INTERNAL EMPLOYEE EVENTS
TITLE/HEADLINE	OSWALD MEDIUM	OSWALD MEDIUM	OSWALD REGULAR	OSWALD REGULAR	ARIAL BLACK	UNITED SERIF FAMILY
BODY COPY	Chronicle Roman	Chronicle Roman	Times New Roman Regular	Times New Roman Regular	Arial Regular	Oswald Regular or Chronicle Roman

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3. Brand Your Guidelines

The purpose of brand guidelines is to make sure your brand is always conveyed in the same way – and the document itself is no exception.

Think of it as another marketing material that showcases your brand's vibe.

You can accomplish this by adding small touches that are in line with the guidelines you're explaining.

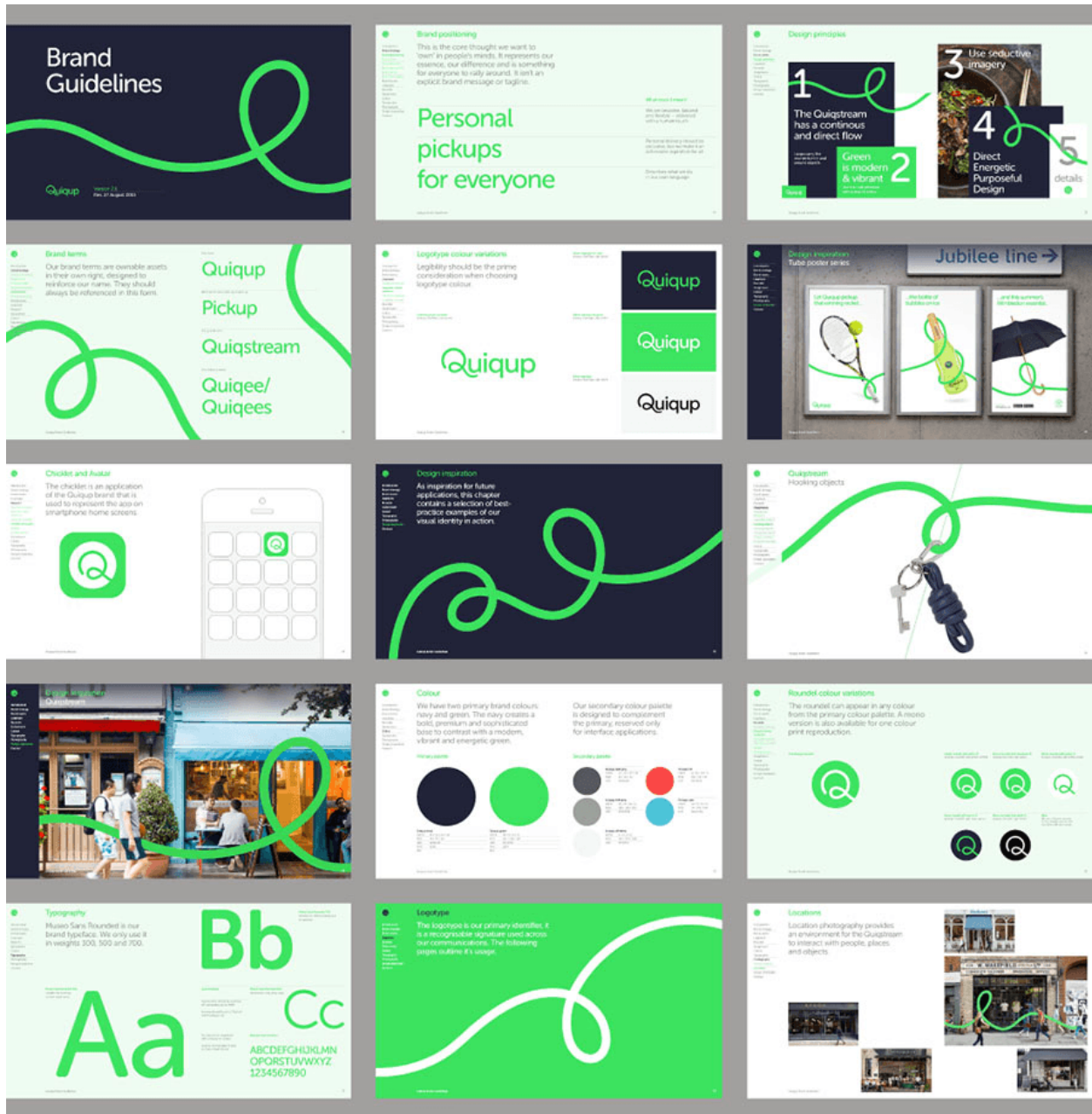
For example, instead of numbering pages with plain black numbers, use your logo icon and [color accents](#) to make it your own. Use your brand colors and fonts in section headings, as well as in your explanations and descriptions.

<https://www.oberlo.com/blog/color-combinations-cheat-sheet>

Here's an older iteration of the [Quiqup](#) brand, which used a fun curly Q in its logo and icon. The company extended this looped line throughout the brand guidelines document to create a visual flow while enforcing the visual identity.

<https://identitydesigned.com/quiqup/>

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4. Name Your Primary Color

If you want to go a step further in solidifying your brand, name your primary color.

For example, Netflix calls its primary color “Netflix red,” and HubSpot uses “HubSpot orange.” Spotify uses—you guessed it—“Spotify green.”

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In doing this, it creates an air of importance around your brand, while claiming the color as your private territory. (Spoiler alert: it's not, but it sure looks cool.)

This brand guidelines tip is so simple that it almost feels like cheating.

Make Your Brand a Consistent Experience

As we already discussed, consistency is critical if you want your brand to stick in consumers' minds. Every little detail counts, from your primary color all the way down to the font you use in your company emails.

Brand guidelines are a great tool for laying all of these rules out and ensuring that they're always followed. Guidelines are especially helpful if you partner with other businesses that will be using your visual brand elements, like in promotions and advertisements.

By proactively making sure that everyone is always on the same page, you'll have greater control over your brand image.

Source: <https://www.oberlo.com/blog/brand-guidelines>