

The background features a series of thin, vertical black lines of varying lengths on the left side. On the right, there are three large, overlapping geometric shapes: a dark grey parallelogram, a light grey parallelogram, and a teal parallelogram. The text is positioned at the bottom right, overlaid on the dark grey shape.

A GUIDE TO DEVELOPING

VISUAL BRANDING

TO DESIGN A BRAND GUIDE, START HERE

Ask Yourself...

WHAT IS THIS BRAND?

MESSAGE » VISION » CONTENT

MESSAGE

What is the brand's mission statement & values? What story does the brand want to tell? How do we define this message as a guide to pass along to content creators? How can we use the brand message to connect to the audience?

The message of the brand drives aesthetics and reinforces the visuals, content and marketing decisions behind the brand. Having a powerful message helps maintain clarity on the goals of the design work and allows aesthetics to be more clear and concise. The **message** is the overarching definition of the brand inspired by the mission, values and story that summarize the brand's voice, tone and authenticity. Visuals are then designed with the brand's message in mind.

WHAT IS *THIS* BRAND'S...

MISSION

WHAT DRIVES THE BRAND? WHY DID THIS JOURNEY BEGIN? WHAT KEEPS THEM GOING? THE MISSION OF THE BRAND GOES BEYOND COLLECTING MONETARY GAIN FROM GOODS & SERVICES. THIS SHOULD IDENTIFY HOW AND WHY THE BRAND SERVES THEIR AUDIENCE. IT CAN BE EXPLORED AS A LIST, MOOD BOARD, COMPILATION OF ASSETS OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT HELPS GATHER INSIGHT ON WHAT THE MISSION OF THE BRAND IS.

VOICE

HOW AND WHERE DOES THE BRAND SPEAK TO THEIR AUDIENCE? HOW IS THIS VOICE PERCEIVED? HOW CAN THIS VOICE BE FURTHER REINFORCED BY DESIGN ELEMENTS AND WHAT NEEDS TO BE DEFINED TO FIT WITHIN THE BRAND'S STORY? CONSIDER THE PRODUCTS AND THE AUDIENCE THEY SERVE WHEN DEVELOPING THE VOICE.

TONE

WHAT TONALITY DOES THE BRAND USE WITH THE AUDIENCE? WHAT DESIGN ELEMENTS CAN FURTHER REINFORCE THIS TONE? COLORS, FONTS, VISUALS AND TREATMENT OF SPACING WITHIN LAYOUTS ARE GREAT TOOLS TO DEVELOP TONE.

AUTHENTICITY

HOW CAN THIS BRAND PORTRAY AUTHENTICITY? CONSUMER LOYALTY IS ENHANCED WHEN THE AUDIENCE RELATES TO THE BRAND AND WANTS TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THEIR MISSION. WITHOUT AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION OF THE BRAND AND PRODUCTS OFFERED THIS CAN BE CHALLENGING TO ESTABLISH.

GATHER & ESTABLISH

MISSION

THIS IS NOT THE STORY OF THE BRAND'S ROOTS, RATHER THE DEFINITION OF THE BRAND USED TO ESTABLISH HOW THE AUDIENCE RECOGNIZES AND EXPERIENCES THE BRAND. THIS ENCOMPASSES THE BRAND'S REASON FOR EXISTING, AND IS FELT THROUGHOUT THE COMPANY AS A WHOLE.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE BRAND?
HOW DO WE SERVE THE AUDIENCE?
WHY DO WE WANT TO SERVE THE AUDIENCE?
WHAT MAKES OUR SERVICES OR PRODUCTS UNIQUE?

VOICE

THIS ESTABLISHES WHAT WILL BE SAID, WHERE IT WILL BE SAID, AND HOW TO EFFECTIVELY PORTRAY THE MESSAGE OF THE BRAND. THIS IS THE PERSONALITY OF THE BRAND AND IS THE AUDIENCES INITIAL REACTION TO THE PRODUCT AND REPRESENTATION OF THE BRAND.

WHAT IS THE BRAND SAYING?
ON WHAT CHANNELS WILL THE VOICE BE HEARD?
WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO SPEAK TO THE AUDIENCE?
WHERE CAN STRONG VISUALS ENHANCE ENGAGEMENT THE MOST?
HOW CAN THE VOICE BE UNIFIED ACROSS ALL MEDIA?

TONE

USE THIS TO SET THE BOUNDARIES OF THE VOICE AND TO FURTHER REINFORCE IDENTITY, DESIGN, UNIFICATION AND CONSUMER TRUST. STAY IN LINE WITH THE TYPE OF PRODUCT OR SERVICE OFFERED.

WHAT IS THE MOOD OF THE BRAND?
HUMOROUS? SERIOUS? RELAXED? NOSTALGIC? ASSERTIVE?
WHAT DOES THE BRAND WANT THE READER TO FEEL WHILE CONSUMING IT'S CONTENT?
WHAT WORDS, DESIGN TOOLS AND MARKETING DECISIONS CAN FURTHER REINFORCE THIS MOOD?

AUTHENTICITY

ESTABLISH BRAND VALUES THAT DEFINE AUTHENTICITY TO ENHANCE THE BRAND STORY. THIS SHOWS THE AUDIENCE TRANSPARENCY AND HONESTY, AND CAN BE REINFORCED BY SHOWING EXPERTISE IN THE BRAND'S DOMAIN.

WHAT DOES AUTHENTICITY LOOK LIKE FOR THE BRAND?
HOW CAN THIS BE FURTHER REINFORCED BY DESIGN AND MARKETING DECISIONS?
WHAT MAKES THE BRAND AUTHENTIC?
WHERE DOES AUTHENTICITY SHOW UP TO THE VIEWER?
HOW CAN THE BRAND SHARE ITS EXPERTISE WITH THEIR AUDIENCE?

TAGLINE

THIS IS A FANTASTIC WAY TO SUMMARIZE THE BRAND AND EVOKE THE PRIMARY DESIRED EMOTION TO THE AUDIENCE. SIMPLIFY THE ABOVE TO CREATE THE MOST AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION OF THE BRAND'S MESSAGE.

VISION

What is the vision of the brand?
What impact does the brand create in the world?
What makes the brand's visuals unique & how can they further stand out?

Explore and establish this to enhance design parameters. What visuals already exist within the brand? What are the current aesthetics portraying to the audience? How can these visuals be unified to represent the voice & message of the brand? What are the brand strengths? Where are its weaknesses? How can this be summarized and expressed to those creating the content to unify & strengthen the brand as a whole?

WHAT IS *THIS* BRAND'S...

AESTHETIC

COMPILE OR CREATE VISUALS THAT ARE IN LINE WITH THE BRAND'S VISION. DEVELOP AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE BRAND AS A WHOLE. FIND SIMILARITIES WITHIN THE VISUALS THAT UNIFY THE BRAND, THEN DEFINE THEM WITH SPECIFIC PARAMETERS.

FEELING

OBSERVE HOW THE BRAND MAKES THE CONSUMER FEEL. WHAT PARTS OF THE VISUALS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CREATING THESE EMOTIONS? ARE THERE ANY PARTS OF THE EXISTING CONTENT THAT ARE NOT REINFORCING THE OVER-ARCHING FEELING OF THE BRAND? HOW CAN THESE BE TIGHTENED UP, DEFINED AND UNIFIED?

DISTINCTION

WHAT MAKES THIS BRAND EXCELLENT? HOW CAN THAT EXCELLENCE BE USED INSPIRE CONTENT THAT STANDS OUT? WHY IS THIS BRAND EXCITING? HOW CAN THAT BE EXPLAINED TO THOSE WORKING ON THE BRAND? FOCUSING ON WHY A BRAND IS DISTINCT ALLOWS THOSE ENGAGING IN THE BRAND TO EMBRACE THE VISION - BOTH CONSUMERS & CONTENT CREATORS ALIKE.

AUDIENCE

WHO IS THE BRAND'S AUDIENCE? WHO IS CONSUMING THE BRAND CONTENT AND HOW CAN WE IDENTIFY WITH THEM? WHERE IS CONTENT BEING CONSUMED? HOW DOES THE PRODUCT SERVE THE AUDIENCE? HOW DOES THE CONTENT SERVE THE BRAND? HOW DOES THE VISION RELATE TO THE AUDIENCE?

GATHER & CONSIDER

AESTHETIC

LOGO
FONTS
COLORS
GRAPHICS
FONT TREATMENT
PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY
PRODUCT REPRESENTATION
CONTENT USAGE
PARAMETERS

FEELING

EMOTIONS
COLORS
APPROACH
VOICE
TONE
PRODUCT
IMPACT

DISTINCTION

EXCELLENCE
UNIQUENESS
EFFECTIVENESS
AWARENESS
WHO WE ARE
WHY WE ARE THE BEST

AUDIENCE

WHO ARE THEY?
HOW DO THEY ENGAGE WITH
THE BRAND?
HOW DO THEY ENGAGE WITH
THE WORLD?
WHAT DO THEY SAY ABOUT
THE BRAND?
WHAT DO WE WANT THEM
TO SAY ABOUT THE BRAND?
HOW CAN DESIGN &
MARKETING DECISIONS
BETTER SERVE THEM?

PARAMETERS

Setting design parameters is the primary intention behind creating a branding guide. If parameters are set but not reinforced by content creators and managers the brand will lose strength. Design parameters guide content handlers to develop the brand within the story told to the consumer. Creating a rich content guide provides perspective for creatives to elaborate upon the brand's theme so they can better enhance the story with their unique gifts, and in turn better serve the brand's mission.

CONSISTENCY

Design consistency is crucial to branding. Ensuring content is consistent, within the brand parameters and to the standard of the brand reinforces authenticity and consumer trust. It also establishes a culture within the content creation process to live up to the elevated expectations developed through consistent reinforcement of the brand. This ensures products and services are presented to the audience with their fullest potential. Accepting nothing less than impeccable content is the fastest way to gain consumer trust and brand excellence.

WHERE DOES THE BRAND LIVE?

COMPILE A LIST OF EVERYWHERE THE BRAND LIVES, INCLUDING PACKAGING, WEBSITES, PRESENTATIONS ETC.

CONTENT

Where will the content live? What are the design parameters of the content being created? How can the content be unified to the brand? Is the content properly portraying the brand's message & vision?

Understanding the content being produced clarifies what design and marketing decisions will need to be defined. It is also important to understand and identify the parameters of the content and communicate these to content creators. Things like correct color spaces, dimensions, consistent fonts and font treatments are all valuable to establish to maintain consistency within brand identity.

WHEN CREATING CONTENT, ALWAYS CONSIDER...

WHERE

WHERE WILL THE CONTENT LIVE?

WHAT

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE? WHAT DESIGN PARAMETERS EXIST WITHIN THE WORLD OF THE CONTENT BEING CREATED? WHAT ALREADY EXISTS WITHIN THE BRAND THAT SHOULD BE UNIFIED WITH THIS CONTENT? WHAT NEEDS TO BE IDENTIFIED WITHIN THE BRANDING GUIDE TO ACHIEVE UNITY THROUGHOUT THE BRAND'S CONTENT?

WHY

WHY IS THE CONTENT BEING CREATED? WHY WILL IT BENEFIT THE BRAND? WHY WILL THE AUDIENCE WANT TO CONSUME THIS CONTENT?

UNIFY

ENSURE CONTENT IS UNIFIED ACROSS ALL CHANNELS. KEEP TRACK OF THE VISION. EXPLAIN THE VISION AND MESSAGE OFTEN AND UNIFY CONTENT ELEMENTS SO THEY REINFORCE THE MESSAGE OF THE BRAND.

DELIVERY & COMMUNICATION

WHEN DEVELOPING CONTENT, ALL PARTIES INVOLVED SHOULD CONSIDER...

BRAND GUIDE

DOES THIS CONTENT REPRESENT THE BRAND? DO THE CONTENT CREATORS INVOLVED HAVE ACCESS TO THIS GUIDE? ARE THERE PARAMETERS SET WITHIN THE GUIDE THAT SHOULD BE HIGHLIGHTED TO THE CONTENT CREATORS BEFORE MAKING THE CONTENT?

STORY

DOES THE VISUALS OR CONTENT BEING CREATED REPRESENT THE BRAND STORY? DO THEY HAVE THE PROPER TONE AND VISUAL APPEAL TO REINFORCE THE STORY?

LEVEL OF EXPOSURE

HOW FAMILIAR WITH THE BRAND ARE THE CONTENT CREATORS? IS THERE A RESOURCE OR CONVERSATION THAT CAN HELP THEM TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE BRAND AND CONTENT BEING CREATED?

COMMUNICATION

HAVE THE BRAND STORY AND PARAMETERS BEEN PROPERLY COMMUNICATED TO THE CONTENT CREATORS? ARE RELEVANT AND UPDATED RESOURCES BEING PROVIDED TO THE CREATORS SO THEY UNDERSTAND THE PROJECT AND HOW IT FITS WITHIN THE BRAND?

PARAMETERS

THIS IS CRUCIAL FOR DESIGNERS. WITHOUT PROPER PARAMETERS, DESIGN PROCESSES CAN BECOME LONG AND MESSY. PROVIDING PARAMETERS EQUIPS CREATIVES WITH THE PROPER TOOLBOX THEY NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE PROJECT AND ALLOWS ACCESS TO DEEPER CREATIVITY WITHIN IT'S REALM.

UNIFICATION

THIS IS THE NUMBER ONE WAY TO ENHANCE AND ESTABLISH A STRONG BRAND. WITHOUT A UNIFIED VOICE AND VISUALS, THE AUDIENCE LOSES THE BRAND IN THE SEA OF CONSUMERISM. KEEP PROPER CHECKS IN ALL DEPARTMENTS ON CONSISTENCY AND CONTINUITY WITHIN BRAND

EXAMPLE

TAGLINE
MAKE YOUR SUMMER SHINE



MESSAGE

MISSION

To be the solution to summer fun by offering dreamy products at an incredible value.

VOICE

Creatively express the simplicity of enjoying summer, worry free and surrounded by beautiful and engaging products. Add value to summer events through aesthetics and enjoyability.

TONE

Light, funny, airy. To the point marketing material with hints of humor, entertainment & relaxedness.

AUTHENTICITY

Sloosh takes pride in offering **creative solutions** to summer fun with **engaging products** that offer **beautiful aesthetics** at a **value**

VISION

AESTHETIC

Product focused imagery that shows people enjoying themselves. Simplistic, non-distracting backgrounds that flow within the Sloosh color scheme

FEELING

Relaxed enjoyment, excitement driven by aesthetics, joyous summer fun solutions.

DISTINCTION

Unique designs offered at a value. Commitment to summer enjoyment and simple pleasures.

AUDIENCE

Families purchasing for multiple children. Summer party participants. Consumers with pools. Young adults looking for engaging aesthetics to enhance photography

CONTENT: STOREFRONT MEDIUM IMAGES

WHERE

Created to live on Sloosh's Amazon Storefront

WHAT

12 Images at set pixel dimensions used to showcase each category of product sold by the brand

WHY

Enhance the storefront and display beautiful imagery of the best products offered in each category

UNIFY

These must align with the branding guides, the banners for each category, the marketing material tied to the storefront, and the general marketing material as a whole.

PARAMETERS

DIMENSIONS

1500x750 px

FILE TYPE

JPG under 3mb

COLOR SPACE

RGB

CONTENT MESSAGE

Define product categories & include desirable lifestyle product images

RESOURCES

Links to images, fonts, style guide past imagery, inspirational imagery, web space where product will live

LIMITATIONS

Only category font & product focused lifestyle imagery. Do not edit photos.

TIPS, LINKS & INSPO

BRANDING DEVELOPMENT AND PROCESS FOR ASANA →

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

BUILDING BRAND AUTHENTICITY

<https://learn.g2.com/brand-authenticity>

INSPIRATIONAL BRANDING DECKS

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/examples-brand-style-guides>

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

BRANDING GUIDELINE EXAMPLES

<https://www.contentharmony.com/blog/great-brand-guidelines/>

COMPONENTS OF AN AUTHENTIC BRAND

CONTINUITY (FAITHFUL TO ITSELF)

CREDIBILITY (TRUE TO CONSUMERS)

INTEGRITY (CARING & RESPONSIBILITY)

SYMBOLISM (SUPPORT CONSUMERS TRUTH)

DEVELOP A BRAND SYSTEM

Inspired by this article

CORE IDENTITY

MISSION & VALUES

VOICE & TONE

VISION

BRAND ELEMENTS

LOGO • FONT • COLORS

ILLUSTRATION • PHOTOGRAPHY

MOOD • SHAPES

BRAND APPLICATION

WEBSITE • STOREFRONTS • ADS • SOCIAL

CHANNELS • PACKAGING • PRINT

SWAG • LETTERHEADS • VIDEOGRAPHY