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What is a style guide and how to create one?

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From tech titans like Apple to retail giants like Target, authentic, consistent brands rely on style guides to elevate and “safeguard their brand identity and essence,” says Leandro Castelao, Brand Designer at Figma Brand Studio. “Brand style guides help drive a deeper understanding of your brand story not just for designers, but for everyone on your team.”

Read on to learn more about:

- What a brand style guide is—and how your team can benefit from having one

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What is a brand style guide?

"A brand style guide maintains brand consistency and coherence," explains Leandro. "It gives you helpful templates and guidance on how to use brand elements, including fonts, typography, logo, color palette, and imagery. It's also a key tool to guide messaging and content creation, providing valuable insights into your company's brand voice, tone, and writing style."

Benefits of a brand style guide

As your go-to reference for what is and isn't on-brand, brand style guides "nurture and build a strong brand," says Leandro. Brand guidelines align key stakeholders, from designers and copywriters to strategists and producers. This helps them deliver a unified and consistent user experience across multiple channels, including your website, app, email, animations, video, and social media platforms. "Your entire team can use this brand guide to understand and uphold your brand identity," Leandro adds.

Brand style guides also speed up product development with easy access to design elements, such as brand colors, iconography, typefaces. Good

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When do brand guidelines come in handy?

"Teams will need a brand style guide very early on in the product development cycle," says Leandro. "However, keep in mind that it should continuously evolve. Once you have a few brand assets, you can create version one of your brand book." You don't need to wait for a rebranding effort to refresh your guide, he says: "Update and add to it seasonally as your brand—and customer needs—evolve."

Create your own style guide in Figma for free

5 key elements of a brand style guide

"A brand style guide should be your source of truth for information that's fundamental to the brand," says Leandro. Essentials of any brand style

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vision, mission statement, and core values address your customers' problems. Effective brand narratives use simple, authentic language to build connections and trust with your target audience.

- **Target audience:** Knowing who your target customers are helps you develop a brand identity that resonates with them. You can conduct user research to develop personas to better understand their needs and preferences.
- **Visual identity:** Typography, font size, logo usage, imagery, iconography, and brand color palette (RGB, HEX, and CMYK) all contribute to your brand's visual identity. Designers depend on this technical documentation to create cohesive brand assets and design systems.
- **Brand voice:** Your messaging and content should express your brand personality. Find a unique, compelling combination of adjectives that express your company's brand voice and persona, such as "modern, clever, and brave, yet caring." Consider tone of voice nuances for different communication channels—for example, casual for Instagram, professional for LinkedIn.
- **Writing guidelines:** Brand style guides can also provide a framework for your company's writing style. Consider readability level, grammar guidelines, and brand-approved words and phrases.

How to create your brand style guide in 4 steps

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create their brand style guide.

Step 1: Build an outline for your brand guide.

What chapters do you want to include in your brand book? Incorporate key elements such as your brand story, target audience, visual identity, brand voice, and writing guidelines. Use your chapters to create a detailed table of contents.

Step 2: Capture brand guidelines.

Your company probably already has vision, mission, and values statements. If not, FigJam has a [template to help create them](#). Use these statements to craft your own brand story, and lean on user research to make sure it connects with your key customers.

Collaborate with your brand team to develop specs and [accessibility guidelines](#) for your brand guide's visual and copy components. Limit your style guide to 25–35 pages, recommends Leandro. Then provide in-line links to additional resources as needed.

Step 3: Revise your guide.

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director and leadership team for final approval.

Step 4: Share your style guide.

When your style guide is ready for prime time, you can present it at an all-hands meeting, circulating it via email afterwards for all teams to use—from content marketing to HR. Figma's style guide plays a pivotal role in the employee onboarding process, says Leandro.

3 pro tips for an effective style guide

1. **Make it accessible.** The goal is to make your brand guidelines useful and usable for everyone who touches the brand, including full-time staff and freelancers. Post it where teams can easily access it. "Make sure your guide is interactive, so that people can submit requests and questions on the fly," Leandro says.
2. **Update your guide regularly.** Your guide is a living and breathing document that needs to adapt to changes in your brand, business, and user needs. Leandro recommends updating your brand book every six months to a year.
3. **Give real-life dos and don'ts.** "Include examples that illustrate how your brand behaves in different contexts," says Leandro. This makes it easier for stakeholders to implement the brand identity.

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What is a style guide?

If you're starting from scratch, tips and tricks from [Figma's resource library](#) and [design systems publication](#) can jumpstart your style guide. Then brainstorm a table of contents and headings with your brand team using FigJam's [online whiteboard](#).

Once you've mapped out your guide, you can start building it on [Figma's design platform](#). For inspiration, check out professional [brand style guide examples and templates](#) shared by the Figma community.

More resources to spark your creativity

Want more style guide examples, graphic design ideas, and use cases to inspire your guide? Leandro recommends checking out these design websites:

- [Brand New](#)
- [It's Nice That](#)
- [The Index](#)
- [Standards](#)
- [Branding Style Guides](#)

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