Connecting with Your Audience:

Branding Guidelines for Small Manufacturing Businesses

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Abstract

In modern markets, products and services are regularly available to customers. There are many options available to customers when it comes to purchasing, and the key for a small business to stand out from the competition in their target market is to develop and deploy an effective brand.

To develop effective branding, a company must first understand its own purpose and value, and how it can help the target audience solve a need in their lives. To achieve this a company should develop a comprehensive brand, including guidelines on how and when to deploy branding resources to ensure consistent and effective visual resources. By deploying effective branding resources and strategies, a small business can be seen as professional and modern, and help a new business stand out in crowded markets and build their brand recognition within their target markets.

This project will discuss standard industry practices for developing branding materials, and will eventually demonstrate these principles through the development of a branding package for a small local business called Automated Solutions, LLC. This brand style guide can be found in the Appendix.
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1. Introduction

The purpose of this project is to create an engaging and effective branding style guide for a small business while following established industry standards. This project will develop a set of visual elements such as company logo, typography, and color palette that will act as a print and digital brand, as well as guidelines for how to implement these resources in a consistent and effective manner to promote a small business. In the end, a full brand style guide will be published and supplied to the business for their internal use.

My goal in initiating this project was to practice skills that I have not built through my professional and scholastic experiences. As a Regional Implementation Specialist with the Mohawk Regional Information Center, I work with 50 school districts in the Central New York region to support them onboard new technology solutions. In this work I create many digital presentations, flyers, support documents, and tutorial video presentations. All of this has helped me develop skills in these specific areas, but for this project I wanted to try something new.

By completing this project, I hoped to learn more about graphic design principles and practice. Specifically, I wanted to learn more about developing a logo for a small business, and how to create a style guide to promote a brand. Before starting, I planned to focus on the core design elements needed to create a brand- color, typography, and logo. To do this I focused my research on these areas.
1.1 Context

Many businesses deploy a branding strategy in their own way. Large corporations like Coca-Cola and Apple have built decades-long advertising campaigns that harness the tools of their branding strategy across multiple platforms and target multiple target audiences. Smaller businesses often rely on more targeted approaches that apply a single mode of delivery in a specific and repetitive way, carving out their own niche in the target market. This can be seen through the deployment of local radio jingles, billboard advertisements, and social media campaigns. Often, these techniques and methods ignore the benefits of developing a consistent and effective visual branding package, which can leave consumers confused about what the company or product represents, which prevents them from feeling any kind of emotional connection with the product or company.

One of the best ways that a new company can gain a competitive advantage in their market would be to develop a comprehensive and cohesive brand. If they are able to connect with consumers in their market in meaningful ways, and they have a persistent and visible brand, that will allow consumers to recognize their products or solutions moving forward, making them more likely to refer back to the brand. As Lam argues, “[T]he introduction of a radically new brand disrupts customer–brand relationships with an incumbent because it represents an attractive alternative to the incumbent, in terms of either a brand identity or functional value.” (Lam, et al., p. 133). As such, new companies should take time to craft a meaningful and unique brand that they can harness to differentiate themselves within their target market.
2. Background

To truly understand what “branding” means, it is important to first understand the meaning and origin of the word “brand.” Merriam-Webster defines “brand” in multiple ways, ranging from charred wood, to the mark created when burning something with a hot piece of metal. In the sense of design, they define brand as “a public image, reputation, or identity conceived of as something to be marketed or promoted” (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

It is commonly believed that branding was first used in ancient civilizations to mark livestock and property to denote ownership. In the world of the Old Norse, the word “brandr” was used to denote the phrase “to burn”. The English origination of the term branding meant anything that was hot or burning, such as a “firebrand”, or a burning stick. Most producers in ancient societies who sold or distributed their products others used a burned mark to denote their ownership or craftsmanship (S.Rajaram & C. Stalin Shelly, 2012). As far back as 4,000 years ago, cultures used a fire brand to mark their cattle, to quickly and easily identify ownership in a herd or in a market. When the Roman empire spread its reach throughout Europe and Asia, they brought these practices with them, and they were practiced within many of the cultures that thrived after the fall of the Roman Empire (Geider, 2021).

As society began to develop into more of a market system, eventually goods were marked with a brand specific to the artist that created them. This mark allowed artists to signify that they put their level of craftsmanship and quality into a given product, which they hoped would develop a sense of trust and a loyal consumer base. Over time, this same technique was adopted by not just individual artists, but also companies and organizations. In the mid-to-late 1800s, nations around the world were putting into place laws that set up protections for trademarks. Companies like Coca-Cola, Quaker Oats, and Campbell Soup were some of the first to register their trademarks (S.Rajaram & C. Stalin Shelly, 2012). This led to a new use of a
branding logo as a representation of a company, attempting to build a reputation of consistency, quality, and accessibility with consumers.

After World War II, the prevalence of the television led to further change in how products and goods were advertised. With their captive audience now growing, companies started working to develop emotional ties between their product lines and the consumers they were targeting. During this time, you saw the first attempts to personify a brand in human ways, where products were seen as integral to individuals’ way of living. This is often referred to as “brand centricity,” which can be defined by the following: “Brand centrality refers to the brand being in the heart of the consumers, and they perceive the brand as having importance and meaning in their life” (Japutra et al., 2023). It is important to note that this definition is not just loyalty to a brand, but rather a religion-like devotion consumers have toward the brand.

With modern society so connected through the Internet and social media, consumers have different relationships with the brands they interact with. “Because access to information is much easier in a hyperconnected world, consumers need to expend less effort in learning information about brands. Models of memory activation and learning need to be updated to account for consumers’ increased reliance on external sources of information as opposed to information that is retrieved from memory.” (Swaminathan, et al. p. 26).

2.1 Project Goals

The goal of this project is to develop a set of branding guidelines and visual resources that can be deployed across modalities by a small business to develop a consistent and effective brand representation. These guidelines will include examples of visual and print branding materials that can be deployed following industry best practices in order to promote a brand in the target market.
2.2 Project Overview

This project will focus on the graphic design of brand resources and development of visual and print resources to help promote a small business. This process and the products developed can act as a guide that would help any small business that does not already have a branding package that can help them develop a market share.

2.3 Project Scope

This project will be focused on developing the following resources for the target brand:

A. Branding guidelines
B. Branding resources (typography, color palette, and logo)
C. Social media graphics and resources

This project will focus primarily on the development of visual branding resources that can be deployed by the target company. The resources developed in this project are to be delivered to the target company, and all use of these branding resources is the sole responsibility of the target company.

This work is not to include ongoing support and maintenance, or future rebranding attempts by the target brand. This work will not support any marketing campaigns or customer outreach.

3. Literature Review

In order to produce a well-informed product that is backed by the power of industry standards, this project will be centered around academic research utilizing peer-reviewed, professional resources. In the following sections, you will find multiple theories from scholarly sources and discussion as to how they impacted this project.
3.1 Brand

Geider describes a brand as being composed of 3 primary components: brand strategy, brand identity, and brand marketing. Brand Strategy will map out how you are different, trustworthy, memorable, and likable to your customers. It will outline your purpose, promises, and how you solve problems for people. Brand Identity is the way that you convey your strategy with visuals, voice, and behavior. It should personify and expand upon your brand’s culture in a unique, distinctive and memorable way. Brand Marketing is how you bring awareness to products or services by connecting strategy and identity with the right audience through targeted communication. (Geider, 2021).

Chan argues that there are 5 key things you must know about your brand before you even develop a branding package (Chan, 2019). These can be described as follows:

A. Mission Statement (Why does your brand exist?)
B. Vision Statement (Where do you want your brand to be headed?)
C. Target Audience (Who are your customers?)
D. Brand Personality (What adjectives describe the personality of your brand?)
E. Core Values (What are the guiding principles of your brand?)

“Brands allow marketers to add meanings to products and services, but it is consumers who ultimately determine what a brand means. Simply put, while companies create brand identities, people create brand meaning.” (Kompella, p. 22).
3.2 Brand Identity

A brand identity can be described as the resources that make your business different from others in the same market. A technical definition of brand identity would be “the collection of all elements that a company creates to portray the right image to its consumer.” (deBara, 2023). To develop a strong brand identity, companies need to first know what they represent and value, then find a way to show through visual elements that they solve a problem/fill a need for consumers in their target market.

Brand Equity

Since the 1990’s, David Aaker has been providing his theory on brand equity. In his theory, Aaker argues that the most successful brands are those that are driven through consumer recognition. For example, when you see Mickey Mouse you instantly think of Disney, and when you see the “Golden Arches” you immediately think of McDonalds. This recognition is made in the part of the brain that handles emotional decisions, and therefore these brands have an emotional meaning to their end-users. In essence, the emotional connection your brand makes with your consumers can help them have confidence in using your products- “It enhances the customer’s ability to interpret and process information, improves confidence in the purchase decision and affects the quality of the user experience.” (Aaker, 2013). Therefore, the most successful brands are those that lean into this emotional connection between the brand and the consumers it is targeting.

Aaker describes the emotional connections consumers have with brands in the following categories: brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand associations, and perceived quality (Aaker, 2013). This relationship can be both beneficial and harmful for brands. For example, when a consumer uses the Amazon marketplace, they believe that they will be getting a reliable, consistent experience that they can trust. The same goes for consumers who look to
purchase Apple technology solutions- buying an iPhone gives you a simple to use, but very rewarding experience. Conversely, once a brand is marred by a negative experience, it can turn consumers away. In the period of 2009-2015 the Volkswagen brand was accused of falsifying their EPA emissions results to make their products more attractive in a highly competitive market. Once news of this went public, Volkswagen’s brand reputation was marred for quite some time, as consumers felt a negative emotional reaction toward the brand in general, regardless of new or updated solutions. Aaker described this by stating “Even when the brand identity is defined by functional benefits, most studies will show that perceptions about those benefits are closely related to perceived quality. When perceived quality improves, so generally do other elements of customers’ perception of the brand.” (Aaker, 1996, p. 19).

Aaker further describes his brand equity theory by discussing how a brand can be perceived. He breaks this down into four main categories: The Brand as a Product: Product-Related Associations, The Brand as an Organization, The Brand as a Person: Brand Personality, The Brand as a Symbol. (Aaker, 1996, p. 78-85)

3.3 Branding Package

For the purposes of this project, we will broadly define a branding package as a bundle of materials that both identifies the style guide for the brand, and gives deliverable visual elements that help a company start to build and distribute its brand identity.

Brand Style Guide

The first part of developing deliverable visual elements for any brand is creating a brand style guide. Chan gives a wonderful way to visualize the elements all style guides should include (Chan, 2019). This visualization guided the author in developing the style guide used for this project.
3.4 Color Palette

When selecting color options for a brand, designers need to remember that while color can have a significant impact on customers, care must be taken to ensure that the use of color does not distract from the brand.

“Color is used in design to attract attention, group elements, indicate meaning, and enhance aesthetics.” (Lidwell, p. 48)

It is important to know the brand before selecting the colors for a style guide, as colors often elicit emotional responses. In general, warm colors (yellow, orange, red) will tend to display energy, while cool colors (green, blue, purple) often display calmness and security (Cloud Team, 2018). It is also critical to use color in a way that will prevent it from distracting viewers from the overall design goals. According to Lidwell, the eye can only process about five
colors at a glance, and designers should use that as a general guideline when creating color combinations for a brand style guide.

It is also important to know how to group colors effectively. When combining colors for a style guide, designers must be aware of a few types of color combinations. Analogous colors are colors that are adjacent on the color wheel. Complementary colors are colors that are opposite one another on the color wheel. Triadic and quadratic colors are colors that are “at the corners of a symmetrical polygon circumscribed in the color wheel” (Lidwell, p. 48). These concepts can be seen in Figure 2 below.

![Color Combinations Diagram](image)

*Figure 2: Types of color relationships (Lidwell, 2010).*

When developing a style guide for a brand, designers should ensure that they are aligning the colors they choose with the brand’s identity, to ensure that the use of color is enhancing the brand, not distracting from it.
In Figure 3 the color guidelines for Alienware computers are outlined. Here you can see that color options are limited and identified specifically, they are colors that go well together (complementary and analogous), and in the style guide above the swatches care is taken to describe when and how to use the colors within branded materials to remain consistent with the official brand.

**Primary + Metallics**

There are six main colors in the Alienware color palette, not including white. The brand should be chiefly monochromatic, though there may be exceptions to this guidance. Tints of colors are permitted as long as the integrity of the color is maintained—this is done by increasing the white value to create lighter shades of each color—and dark grey should be treated as the brand’s black. Gradients should be used subtly and mainly on backgrounds as a vignette treatment.

The Alienware Pantone Metallic color palette is designed for print and packaging use, particularly for foil stamping. It is not to be used digitally. It is almost never to be used as a primary color, but rather a secondary or accent color. Metallic colors should also never be used in combination, as they tend to clash.

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**Figure 3: (Alienware Brand Guide 2016 by Kevin Stich - Issuu, n.d.).**

Looking further, Figure 4 displays how many prominent brand logo color choices fall on the spectrum of intended emotions that brand hopes to elicit from consumers. This might seem
like common sense to think about, but when seeing these brands all organized in this manner it really shows how deliberate these brands have been crafted to help give consumers very specific emotional reactions. There is the trusty John Deere (with its own custom John Deere Green that is all too familiar), the innovative and creative Taco Bell (with its tricky use of purple to show intelligence and regality), and the bold red of the Target spot.

![Color Emotion Guide](image)

*Figure 4: The Color Emotion Guide (The Logo Company, 2020).*

3.5 Typography

One of the keys to a successful brand is to choose a standardized font that fits the overall style of the brand and matches/enhances brand goals. Meg Reid breaks down the types of font in a very succinct and effective way. In essence, there are 4 primary font types- serif,
sans serif, script, and decorative fonts. Serif fonts are some of the oldest and most iconic fonts of print media. A serif is a small decorative line at the end of a stroke. This can be seen in the popular font Times New Roman. Sans Serif fonts are fonts that do not contain serifs. These fonts are often more easily read at lower resolutions, so make great fonts for websites and e-readers, but also read very nicely in printed forms as well. Script fonts often resemble handwriting or cursive writing. They can be anything from formal calligraphy to friendly handwritten in style, which can make them very personal for certain uses, but also not suitable for lengthy or professional texts. Decorative fonts are highly stylized fonts that often impart specific reactions/emotions for viewers. These fonts are not recommended for most brands as they are often very poorly crafted, but can make for a great secondary font in certain situations (Reid, 2017).

Figure 5: Serif Font (Reid, 2017).

Figure 6: Sans Serif Font (Reid, 2017).

Figure 7: Script Font (Reid, 2017).

Figure 8: Decorative Font (Reid, 2017)
Each of these font types can be effectively used by a brand if deployed correctly. Mercedes Benz has long used a Serif font in their branding, which reflects their classic design aesthetic and rich heritage in the luxury vehicle market. Gap has used a serif font since 1969, which again gives the company a timeless, classic appearance. A more modern example of this is Whole Foods, who has had their brand since their inception in 1980 (Bogazkesenli, 2022). The use of serif font allows them to create a sense of trust and tradition with their customers. Brands such as Jeep, Google, and Linkedin all use sans serif fonts, allowing them to look modern, clean, and futuristic (Oliver, 2021). Sometimes, the trick is not just finding the right font in one style, but one that works across the entire brand style and in all use-cases. While it is very tempting to use some of the widely available free online fonts, designers should be aware that “…[Y]ou might find you need various weights (bold, semi-bold, italic, etc) that free fonts often don’t have. You might find you need a character or symbol that isn’t included. Many free fonts don’t have extended characters for foreign languages and currencies; others don’t even have apostrophes and hyphens!” (Reid, 2017).

3.6 Graphics/Imagery

Brand imagery is “the result of all the visuals that represent your brand’s identity.” (Reid, 2019). This encompasses your print resources, digital ads, and social media. In essence, this is the way that you reach out to communicate your brand to customers in a visual context. This does not include your brand logo.
3.7 Logo

A logo is the images, text, and shapes (or some combination of the three) that represents a business, and is often used on websites, in letter head, and in marketing materials (Tailor Brands, 2019). Logos come in a variety of design styles, including monogram, wordmark, pictorial mark, abstract, mascot, combination mark, and emblem (Morr, 2019). Here you will find descriptions of these logo types along with examples to demonstrate the differences between each type.

Monogram Logo

A monogram logo is one that consists of letters, often representing a longer version of the brand name. By using shorthand via a monogram, designers are able to make a brand more easily memorable, recognizable, and simple (Morr, 2019). Examples of this include HBO (Home Box Office), CNN (Cable News Network), and IBM (International Business Machines Corporation).

![HBO Logo](image1)
![CNN Logo](image2)
![IBM Logo](image3)

*Figure 9: HBO Logo (HBO, 1980).*  *Figure 10: CNN Logo (CNN, 2018).*  *Figure 11: IBM Logo (IBM, 1972).*

Wordmark Logo

Wordmark logos are also font-based logos that focus on a business’ name, but in this case the full name is included. In many cases, the name of these companies is already memorable and works well in the brand style, so it is kept for the logo (Morr, 2019). Examples
of a wordmark logo include some of the oldest and most prominent brands: Coca Cola, Google, and FedEx are a few great examples.

![Coca Cola Logo](image12) ![Google Logo](image13) ![FedEx Logo](image14)

**Figure 12: Coca Cola Logo (Coca Cola, 2021).**  
**Figure 13: Google Logo (Google, 2015).**  
**Figure 14: FedEx Logo (FedEx, 1994).**

**Pictorial Mark Logo**

Pictorial mark logos are graphic-based logos that represent a brand. Due to the lack of words, this is often a difficult logo type for new brands to deploy, when they have little brand recognition (Morr, 2019). Some examples of the pictorial mark logo would be the famous Apple, the Target bullseye, and the Snapchat ghost.

![Apple Logo](image15) ![Target Logo](image16) ![Snapchat Logo](image17)

**Figure 15: Apple Logo (Apple, 2015).**  
**Figure 16: Target Logo (Target, 2014).**  
**Figure 17: Snapchat Logo (Snapchat, 2019).**

**Abstract Logo**

An abstract logo is similar to a pictorial logo, but in this case the imagery used is usually abstract geometric shapes that represent a brand. This type of logo is sometimes helpful to designers of new brands as the abstract nature allows for creativity in their design (Morr, 2019). Some examples of abstract logos would be Adidas, Mastercard, and Spotify.
Combination Mark Logo

A combination logo is made of up both text and graphic elements that together represent the brand. The elements can be combined in a variety of ways, and this combination of elements allows designers to be flexible with their use of the imagery, and in time can sometimes allow for a rebrand that takes the text out and moves to a pictorial mark logo (Morr, 2019). Some examples of a combination mark logo would be Burger King, Amazon, and Domino’s Pizza.

Emblem Logo

The emblem logo is composed of text elements within a symbol or icon graphic image like a seal, badge, or crest. This leads most of these logos to have a traditional design, and are often highly detailed and ornate. This sometimes leads to them being less versatile, and
difficult to use in small formats like business cards (Morr, 2019). Some examples of emblem logos are Harley Davidson, Starbucks, and the NFL.

4. Brand Development

To help Automated Solutions build an official style guide, we first had to develop the resources that would be used to promote the brand. To do this, we used the outline from Chan to identify the primary elements of a brand- brand story, logo, color palette, typography, imagery, and voice.

4.1 Brand Story

Jeff Jones was a hands-on learner from a very early age, joining the BOCES HVAC, plumbing, and electrical programs throughout high school. He has long held a belief that with the proper skills and training, there is a solution for any problem. After earning his Masters Degree in Electrical Engineering in 2008 from Clarkson University, Jeff began his career building data centers and expanding broadband network access in the Central and Upstate New York area for Spectrum. His desire to be a lifelong learner led him to join the team at Tesla, where he held multiple roles, including Super Charger Engineer and Automated Assembly Supervisor. This work led to his interest in the automation of industrial processes, and
eventually to him starting Automated Solutions, LLC, based in Syracuse, New York. His goal is to create a world-class company right in Central New York that can be a global leader in the automation of manufacturing and automated services in the automotive and industrial markets.

### 4.2 Brand Identity

The following list is composed of the primary brand identity guidelines. The answers outlined here were obtained through direct lines of questioning with the company owner. All answers were discussed with the designer and honed down to those seen below, to best fit a properly formatted branding guideline.

a. Mission Statement (*Why does your brand exist?*)
   
   i. Automation in manufacturing made simple.

b. Vision Statement (*Where do you want your brand to be headed?*)
   
   i. We help our customers build for the future by helping them develop manufacturing processes that exceed their expectations, improve their efficiency, and boost their product output through managed automation services.

c. Core Values (*What are the guiding principles of your brand?*)
   
   i. Develop cutting edge technological solutions

   ii. Integrate hardware, software, and AI components to create easy to use, reliable automated solutions.

   iii. Create individualized deployment plans with each project to ensure customer timelines and expectations are met or exceeded.

d. Brand Personality (*What adjectives describe the personality of your brand?*)
   
   i. Semi-Formal
ii. Energetic
iii. Focus on lifelong learning
iv. Positive
v. Knowledgeable
vi. Focus on consistent skill development

e. Target Audience (*Who are your customers?* )
i. Primary focus on industrial companies
ii. High-end manufacturing producers
iii. Small businesses that desire to scale their production without the need to hire and manage a large workforce

### 4.3 Mood Board

The following mood board was developed through direct conversations with the business owner. Here we have worked to capture the essence of the business identified in the “brand personality” above. This, along with the target audience, was used to develop the visual elements that are considered the finished products of this project.
5. Brand Deliverables

The following section will cover the actual graphic elements that will be included in the branding package supplied to the company. These items are shown in the brand style guide, which is available in the Appendix.

5.1 Color Palette

To reflect the emotional values of the target company, the brand will deploy the colors dark blue (0C356A), medium blue (0174BE), golden yellow (FFC436), and white (FFFFFF). Gray (D7D7D7) and black (000000) will also be used as a background/fill color when necessary. Dark blue was chosen for the way it represents trustworthiness, dependability, responsibility, and confidence. Golden yellow is being used to represent positivity, warmth, energy, motivation, creativity, and happiness. White is being used to represent the qualities of being pure, noble,
clean, and soft. All of these qualities support the vision and image identified in the branding guidelines.

![Brand Color Palette](image)

Figure 28: Brand Color Palette.

### 5.2 Typography

This brand is for a modern, professional business that needs to show that it is a leader in a very technical industry. To help with this, we will be using a Sans Serif font, which will look modern, clean, rounded, and will be easily read. This will also transfer between modalities well, working for websites, documentation, and print resources. To achieve these goals, this brand will deploy the Raleway font from Google Fonts. This font has a wide range of customization options for sizes, weights, styles, and comes with a large bank of special characters as well. This means it will deploy across all intended use forms and cases effectively.
Figure 29: Raleway Font (Google Fonts, 2023).

Figure 30: Raleway Font Styles (Google Fonts, 2023).

Figure 31: Raleway Font Special Characters (Google Fonts, 2023).
5.3 Logo

To represent this brand, a clean, modern, simple logo was created that highlights the name of the company name as well as gives hints to the focus of the brand. The typography used is the brand’s chosen font family, Raleway. The colors used reflect the brands chosen color palette. The images chosen for this logo represent a balance of the primary focuses of this brand. The robotic arm represents the automated manufacturing that this business helps customers develop, while the brain/gear represents the AI and automation software solutions that this business develops for their customers. The images of the robot arm and the brain/gear were both taken from Adobe Stock photos, which grant a license for their use to the end-user. The brand needs to recognize that while they have a license to use these images in their branding, they are not licensed to use them in any merchandise without first obtaining an enhanced license through Adobe Stock images.

![Automated Solutions Logo](image)

*Figure 32: Automated Solutions Primary Logo.*

An image only version of the logo was created and supplied here as well, to allow the company to use this simpler image when necessary. This simplified logo represents a pictoral
mark logo, which will make it easy for the company to utilize this brand in social media accounts, business cards, letterhead, and other applications where a smaller logo is necessary due to size restraints.

![Logo Image](image1.png)

*Figure 33: Automated Solutions Image Only/Small Logo.*

### 5.4 Social Media Assets

1. Facebook Profile Logo (360px x 360px)

![Facebook Profile Image](image2.png)

*Figure 34: Automated Solutions Facebook Profile Image.*

2. Facebook banner Image (820px x 312px)
The images of the robot arm, the robotic assembly line, and the brain/gear were all taken from Adobe Stock photos, which grant a license for their use to the end-user. The brand needs to recognize that while they have a license to use these images in their branding, they are not licensed to use them in any merchandise without first obtaining an enhanced license through Adobe Stock images.

3. Instagram Profile Image (320px x 320px)
6. Methods

To complete my style guide, I needed to go through the full research process prior to creating any brand material. This way I could ensure that I was following best practices and producing an end-product that would be effective for the business. I worked through the SUNY Poly library to find many of my resources. In some cases, there was work referenced in those sources that I then went and found myself. I also used the Internet to find additional sources that allowed me to pull in more modern information that would be more relevant to the topic. At the recommendation of Dr. Stam, I also read many previous IDT thesis submissions, which really helped me to understand some of the scope of the projects, and helped me give structure to my project as well.

I worked on the research phase of this project throughout September and October of 2023. Once my research was complete, I then needed to start building my branded materials. My first focus was the primary logos, as those would drive the rest of the brand style guide. To do this, I had to first work to select colors and typography, build a mood board, and then work through the creative process to generate the logos. Once I had the primary logos, it was a matter of manipulating them in multiple ways to create versions of them that could be used across use-cases by end users. Then I needed to create the style guide document/presentation that would drive the use of those resources moving forward. This style guide also acts as an example of a presentation using the braided resources for this company. The development of the visual elements and brand style guide was done throughout October and November of 2023.

I had gone through a minor version of this exercise in SUNY Poly IDT 536 (Graphic Design). In this case, I was working to rebrand an existing local business, so some of the information was already available. In this case, there was graphic design for a new version of
their logo, but the other information regarding the brand was already in place and publicly available. This made the process very streamlined and simple. For this project, however, I was working with a new business that had no previous branding guidance in place, so I had to have discussions with the CEO and I had to build everything from scratch. I found this process exciting, as I have never built a full brand before, and I do not currently get to be this creative in my daily work life.

One of my biggest challenges in creating this brand style guide was using photoshop for the graphic design of the logo files. I have used photoshop in the past for some basic photo editing (cropping, changing backgrounds, altering canvas size, etc.), but in this case I had to not only create the initial logo versions, but then take those and create multiple other versions of the logos for different use cases. I was able to learn many new Photoshop skills and techniques that I think I will now be using pretty regularly to help in my work when creating documentation and presentations in the future.

Another interesting part of this project was creating the style guide document itself. This work leaned heavily on my experience in my current career, where I often create support documentation and presentations. For the style guide, I use Keynote, as I knew I could create the style guide, and also create a template for presentations for the business at the same time. One of the struggles I had with this part of the process was understanding how users should NOT be using the branded materials for this business. To help with this, I looked up the brand style guides for multiple major companies online, which really helped me to understand what this part of the style guide should focus on. Then I created some “bad” examples using my brand logos, and added them to the document to highlight the guidelines I had created. This is not something I would have ever thought to include in a style guide myself, but after the research for this project I understand the value of keeping your branded materials consistent to promote brand recognition.
7. Conclusions

7.1 Discussions and Reflections

After completing this project, I feel that I successfully fulfilled the goals I had outlined prior to this work. I was able to use skills I had previously learned and combine them with the research I completed for this project, and use them to create a full branding style guide that could be implemented by a local business. I was able to create deliverables that would be effective, engaging, and memorable to viewers, and as a result I feel like I have expanded my skills and my experience as a designer.

I also feel that I was able to successfully take the visual elements of my design and think through their use effectively, making sure that I was thoughtful and thorough in their designs and delivery options contained within the style guide. I also did a fair amount of research in the principles of graphic design, and was able to incorporate them into my finished work. As a result I was able to successfully create the primary identifiers of a core brand profile— a brand story, logo, color palette, typography, imagery, and brand voice. Each of these elements are consistently used across the style guide, resulting in a balanced and consistent brand design that can work across multiple platforms.

Were I to have more time to work with this brand, I would like to move to creating digital video content that could be used in social media and web applications. I feel like there is a wonderful opportunity in the manufacturing market to use video to showcase the physical structures of this business, as well as to capture customer testimonials that could be used to promote the business. All of this, matched with the brand style guide already developed, could really reach out to potential clients, and be used to reinforce relationships with existing clients as well.
7.3 Closing

The Information Design and Technology program at SUNY Polytechnic Institute guided the development of this project, and the branding guideline developed within. The information received in this coursework prepared me with graphic design, information design, and investigative techniques, along with best practices in all of these areas. The research completed throughout this project helped to give the structure and format to the completed branding guidelines, enforced by peer-reviewed academic research and best practices that have been shaped through decades of information design.

The final result of this project was the brand style guide, which can be found in the Appendix.
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9. Appendix- Brand Style Guide

AUTOMATED SOLUTIONS
BRANDING STYLE GUIDE

PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2023

AUTOMATED SOLUTIONS

Brand Style Guide

OUR STORY

Jeff Jones was a hands-on learner from a very early age, joining the BOCES HVAC, plumbing, and electrical programs throughout high school. He has long held a belief that with the proper skills and training, there is a solution for any problem. After earning his Masters Degree in Electrical Engineering in 2008 from Clarkson University, Jeff began his career building data centers and expanding broadband network access in the Central and Upstate New York area for Spectrum. His desire to be a lifelong learner led him to join the team at Tesla, where he held multiple roles, including Super Charger Engineer and Automated Assembly Supervisor. This work led to his interest in the automation of industrial processes, and eventually to him starting Automated Solutions, LLC, based in Syracuse, New York. His goal is to create a world-class company right in Central New York that can be a global leader in the automation of manufacturing and automated services in the automotive and industrial markets.
Mission and Vision

**Mission**

*Automation in manufacturing made simple.*

**Vision**

We help our customers build for the future by helping them develop manufacturing processes that exceed their expectations, improve their efficiency, and boost their product output through managed automation services.

**INTRODUCTION**

At Automated Solutions, we want to develop some of the most technologically advanced automation solutions on the planet. Our customers are able to recognize our products just by seeing them, and we want the same effect in our branding materials. Our visual identity is vital to our ability to develop and maintain a proper market share. To ensure that our visual resources are easily recognized, we hope to deploy our branded materials in a consistent manner.

This brand style guide was created as a resource for employees and contractors of Automated Solutions to use when publishing materials in print or digital formats. This resource is meant to ensure that all company logos are deployed in clear, consistent, and appropriate distribution standards.

By using our logo, you agree to conform to the guidelines outlined within this document.

**Questions?**

We ask that great care be taken in the use of these branding resources. By using them in your own materials, you agree to conform to the guidelines within this document. Should you need any assistance, or have any questions, please contact Jeff Jones at jeff.jones@automatedsolutions.ai
AUDIENCE AND TONE

At Automated Solutions we are always looking to the future. As such, all publications should reflect our optimistic, futuristic outlook.

Our customer base is wide and varying in demographic composition. We have worked with customers ranging from small businesses through industrial manufacturers. While traditional manufacturing was for the ultra-wealthy, primarily white, male-dominated business owners, today’s automated industry allows anyone with an idea and the means to support it to create a major manufacturing hub.

Our products are designed to be effective today, but future-proofed and dynamically reactive to market influences and changes in available technology. Our brand is a reflection of that—it is inspiring, inclusive, and ready for any opportunity that comes our way. When publishing print/digital documentation or social media posts, our confident, knowledgeable, and passionate tone reflects the desire of our customers to tackle the problems of tomorrow.
### DESIGN AND IDENTITY

**Automated Solutions**

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### Automated Solutions

#### Brand Color Palette

The official brand colors are identified by specific color codes here.

All branded logos will always be used in these colors. If these official colors are unacceptable in a specific design, both all black and all white versions are acceptable as well.

These colors will also be deployed in any print or digital communications, where available.

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<th>Hex Code</th>
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<th>G</th>
<th>B</th>
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<th>S</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Typography**

The official brand font is Raleway, a free font available from Google Fonts. This font should be installed and used whenever possible to ensure brand recognition and memorability.

Acceptable variations in typeface include regular, light, medium, bold, and italic.

All company logo files were created using Raleway, and should never be replicated using other font families.

In cases where Raleway is not available, especially in daily clerical communications, we recommend the use of Arial or Calibri.

Railway can be downloaded at Google Fonts: [https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Raleway](https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Raleway)

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**Approved Company Logos**

The official company logo files here should be used for all branded documents, presentations, or social media posts.

We have supplied multiple formats of the company logo over the following pages for use across multiple use-cases.

![](full_logo.png)  |  ![](image_only_logo.png)
FULL LOGO - VARIATIONS

If there is need to use different versions of the full logo to accommodate design needs, please use the images supplied here. Each of these logo images have a transparent background.

FULL LOGO - SINGLE COLOR VARIATIONS

If there is need to use single color versions of the full logo to accommodate design needs, please use the images supplied here. Each of these logo images have a transparent background.
**IMAGE ONLY LOGO - VARIATIONS**

If there is need to use different versions of the image only logo to accommodate design needs, please use the images supplied here.

- **Blue Logo**
  - Yellow BG
- **Blue Logo**
  - Transparent BG
- **Yellow Logo**
  - Blue BG
- **Yellow Logo**
  - Transparent BG
**IMAGE ONLY LOGO - SINGLE COLOR VARIATIONS**

If there is need to use single color versions of the image only logo to accommodate design needs, please use the images supplied here. Each of these images has a transparent background.

![Yellow Logo](image)
![Blue Logo](image)
![White Logo](image)
![Black Logo](image)

**INCORRECT LOGO USAGE**

Any modifications to the proportions of the logo files, or use of non-brand colors are unacceptable. There should also never be a shadow, gradient, reflection, rotation, or borders applied to the logo files. Do not reverse the logo orientation. The name "Automated Solutions" is not to be used in a branding context without the image logo included. Our branding materials are not to be used in derogatory or damaging ways, or in any other service that violates our terms of service.

![Incorrect Logos](image)
SOCIAL MEDIA LOGO FILES
The official company logo files here should be used for all branded social media posts. These formats should work on nearly every platform, so only one version of a banner and one version of a profile image are being supplied here. All other posts can use the company brand where appropriate, as long as the provisions of this style guide are followed.

Banner Image

Presentation Templates
Automated Solutions
PRESENTATION TEMPLATES

All presentations should use the following templates, when possible.

If these templates are not available, or if you must work within a different template, you MUST adhere to the guidelines for using the company logo identified in this guide.
10. References


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