



Consistency is Key

By John Reiss

After a recent reduction in staff, a local company's marketing manager found herself overburdened with new business initiatives, research requests, and product updates. After outsourcing numerous projects, inconsistencies began to appear in many of the materials and too much time was wasted searching for logo files, document templates, sales presentations, imagery files, fonts and color palette information, etc.

A key resource to alleviate many of these issues is an online corporate standards guide.

Corporate Standards

A corporate standards guide is a centralized reference intended to help companies apply their image standards easily and consistently across all media in order to build and maintain a strong corporate brand identity. Of the utmost importance for any successful business, a company's identity is influenced by a variety of internal and external communications vehicles; including marketing materials, event displays, PowerPoint presentations, product/service satisfaction, and Web representation. With partners, distributors, reps, and other sales channels involved in applying and carrying through the corporate and product brands, assuring informational and image integrity is a trying task.

With the advent of increased Web use, creating an on-line standards guide offers maximum convenience and flexibility with the ability to post the most recent information and downloadable files. An on-line standards guide enables:

- Brand consistency
- Content control & accuracy
- Reduced production costs
- Reduced distribution costs
- Remote accessibility
- Centralized current information

Often housed on an intranet or extranet, this centralized location supplies information and tools required for consistent brand communications. With electronic versions of corporate and product logos (EPS, GIF, JPEG, TIF) in all the approved color options, proper print specifications, fonts, color palettes, diagrams and imagery, PDFs, and PowerPoint templates and the latest presentations available in an organized and searchable format, relevant information and mission critical applications can be located in an efficient and timely manner.

To ensure the on-line guide's content accuracy and integrity, only key personnel have the authority to post and remove information. From there, any partners, designers, or vendors can be assigned passwords that permit limited access to the specific site locations that contain files they require.

An on-line standards guide is significantly less expensive than its more traditional off-line counterpart, because there are no print or distribution costs. Its on-line status and centralized location allow for up-to-date postings and access to anyone with a password and an Internet connection.



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In today's world, where it is imperative to maximize your efficiency, it is an investment well worth the time and expense. Imagine the next time a partner requests your logo as a GIF on a white background or your sales team in Dallas needs the latest PowerPoint presentation and PDFs of product literature ASAP, and it is quick and painless to supply.