

Brand | Foundation

**charity
wise**

Brand book guidelines



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Why you need a brand book

It's easy to overlook the critical role and value of a strong brand. A strong brand isn't just for big organisations – it's a powerful tool for any charity, especially the smaller ones!

Properly defining your brand can make a significant difference in how it is supported and embraced across the organisation.

Your brand signals your presence and underscores the importance of your work. Most importantly, it answers the fundamental question, “Why choose our charity?”.

This is why having a brand book, even a simple one, is crucial. A brand book captures the essence of your brand and provides clear guidelines on how to communicate it effectively.

Don't be intimidated by the idea of branding, think of your brand book as your charity's personality guide. It captures your vision, mission, and core values – the essence of what makes your organisation unique.

In this guide, we explore the key elements of a brand book and outline the purpose of each section, equipping you with the knowledge to create or update your own.

Vision & mission



Vision statement — This is your “big picture”

Your vision paints a vivid picture of the future you’re striving for. It represents the desired future state the organisation aims to achieve. It should be inspirational, aspirational, and align with the core values and beliefs of the charity.

Key Characteristics:

- Future-oriented
- Inspires and motivates
- Broad and ambitious
- Reflects the charity’s core values

Example vision

A community where every family has access to the support and resources they need to thrive.

Mission statement — This is your “how-to” plan

Your mission outlines the specific activities and strategies you’ll employ to achieve your vision. It’s your daily work plan, the actionable steps that translate your dream into reality.

Key Characteristics:

- Present-focused
- Clear and concise
- Describes the charity’s activities and objectives
- Specifies the target audience and the impact

Example mission

To strengthen local communities by providing essential resources, education, and support to families in need, creating resilience and hope for a brighter future.

Core values



What you stand for: Your beliefs and guiding principles

The core values section of your brand book is like the compass that guides everything your charity does. It defines the fundamental beliefs that drive your organisation and how you approach your cause. Here's why it's so important:

- **Clarity and consistency:** Core values provide a clear framework for decision-making. When faced with a question or opportunity, you can refer back to your values to ensure your actions align with your overall mission
- **Brand identity:** Core values shape how the public perceives your charity. They help build trust and credibility by showcasing your commitment to specific principles

- **Employee & volunteer engagement:** Core values create a shared sense of purpose for everyone involved. When employees and volunteers understand and believe in your values, they're more likely to be passionate and effective advocates for your cause
- **Attracting supporters:** People connect with brands that share their values. Clearly defined core values help attract donors, volunteers, and partners who believe in your mission and approach

In essence, your core values become the DNA of your charity. They are the heart and soul that informs everything you do, from fundraising campaigns to community outreach programmes.

Audience



Who you serve: Speaking their language

Effective communication is a two-way street. Your message will only resonate if it reaches the right people in the right way. That's why defining your different audiences and potential audiences is the first step in crafting powerful communication for your charity. By taking the time to understand who you're trying to reach, you can tailor your message to their specific needs and interests, creating deeper connections and maximising engagement.

You'll need to consider:

- **Who are you trying to reach?** Donors, volunteers, beneficiaries, policymakers
- **What are their demographics and interests?** Age, location, social media habits
- **What are their values and pain points?** Specific issues your audience faces that your charity aims to address. Why should they care about your cause?
- **How do they prefer to be communicated with?** Email, social media, events

Understanding your audience allows you to tailor your message for maximum engagement and connection.

Tone of voice



Find your voice: Build trust

Think of your tone of voice as the personality behind your brand. It's the distinct way your writing and communications "sound" across all platforms. This includes a cohesive approach to tone, style, and messaging.

What it should contain:

- **Core characteristics:** These are the key attributes that define your charity's voice. Consider words that reflect your charity's values. For example: friendly, authoritative, compassionate and hopeful
- **Consistency rules:** This is how you maintain the same tone across different types of content and platforms. You might want to include examples for each area, such as; social media posts, emails, website content and fundraising appeals

- **Language guidelines:** These are specific words and phrases you'd like to use or avoid. For example: you may want to use language that is positive, simple, and inclusive. Words like "hope," "opportunity," "together," and "support" inspire and uplift, while straightforward terms such as "help," "join us," and "make a difference" ensure clarity. You might want to avoid language that feels technical or negative. For example, negative words like "problem," "struggle," and "failure" should be avoided if you want to maintain a positive tone

A consistent tone of voice helps build trust and recognition, making your charity's communications more effective and enabling a stronger relationship with your audience.

Key phrases



Powerful words, lasting impact: Messages that resonate with your audience

Key phrases are the specific messages or slogans that encapsulate your charity's mission, values, and goals. These key phrases should be easily understood by your audience and memorable.

Memorable phrases make communication easier, simplify your story, and leave a strong impression with your audience.

Elevator Pitch:

A brief summary of your work and its impact

Tagline:

A short, impactful phrase that captures the essence of your charity

Key Messages:

Tailored messaging for specific campaigns or fundraising initiatives

Visual identity



See, remember & support: Your visual identity

Your visual identity is more than just a logo. It's the complete visual package that makes your charity instantly recognisable.

This includes:

- **Logo:** Usage guidelines and variations
- **Colour palette:** Consistent colour codes for different application
- **Typography:** Approved fonts for headings, body text, and marketing materials
- **Design elements:** Any additional design elements like icons, patterns, or illustrations
- **Usage examples:** Correct and incorrect usage examples to ensure consistency



A strong visual identity enhances brand recognition, making it easier for people to identify and remember your charity. It also conveys professionalism and trustworthiness.

Imagery style



The power of images: Show your message through your imagery

The imagery style section of your brand book should outline the visual aesthetic and guidelines for using images in your charity's communications. It will help to create a consistent and professional look that aligns with your brand identity and will help get your charities message across visually.

The imagery you use can have a profound impact on your audience's emotional connection to your cause. Your imagery can be photographic, graphical, illustrative, or a mixture.

Your imagery style should include:

- **Style guidelines:** Preferred types of photos e.g., candid or posed, black and white or colour, or a particular illustration style e.g., cartoon or life-like
- **Editing and filters:** Approved editing techniques and filters to maintain a cohesive look
- **Usage examples:** Examples of approved imagery and those that do not meet the guidelines

A consistent imagery style enhances the visual appeal of your communications, making them more engaging and memorable. It also helps to convey your charity's story and impact more effectively.

Brand management



A "Brand Management" section is often included within a brand book to help with the policing of your brand.

Here's what you can include in this section:

- **Brand management team or person:** List the key personnel responsible for overseeing the brand book and its implementation. This could include roles like Brand Manager, Marketing Director, or Communications Lead
- **Contact information:** Provide email addresses or internal communication channels for reaching the brand management team
- **Brand book version control:** Indicate the current version number and date of the brand book. This helps with tracking revisions and ensures everyone is using the most up-to-date version



By including this information, your charity's team has a clear point of reference for any brand-related questions or updates to your brand book.

Everything you need

With the information provided within these brand book guidelines, you now have all the insights needed to create or update your charity's brand book.

By referring to this guide, you can ensure consistent and effective communication that resonates with your audience and strengthens your charity's identity.

Remember, a strong brand is a powerful asset that helps to build trust, engage supporters, and amplify your impact.

Use this guide as your roadmap to create a brand that truly represents your mission and values.

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