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Design and Your Brand:

Selecting a Style That
Sends a Message



POSTNET



Aside from your name and the products you offer, one of the most important aspects of your brand is design. Consistent, high-quality design helps you establish a solid brand identity that makes you more recognizable and memorable to customers.

Building a design that works for your business is a crucial piece of the branding puzzle. If it's done well, you'll reap many benefits. Your design communicates what your brand stands for without words, helping to set expectations about what a customer's experience with your brand might be like. With a glance, customers will know whether your brand is timeless and traditional, youthful and fresh, luxurious or laid-back.

Design consistency also helps build customer trust. An unwavering visual identity sends the message that customers can always know what to expect from your business. When they see a new branded product, they'll be able to make the instant connection between the branding design and a good experience they've had with you in the past.

It's important to consider your brand's design choices carefully to ensure you're sending the right message about who you are. Use this information to evaluate your design and find the perfect style for your brand identity.



What Design Elements Make Up a Brand?

There are many intangible elements that help create a positive brand experience for your customers. The quality of your products and services, the language you use in your advertisements, how customers are welcomed into your stores, and even the music you play all build that customer experience. However, the visual elements of your brand's design are most likely to influence how memorable your brand is in your customer's mind.

Design elements of a brand typically include:

Logo: Your brand's logo is a simple combination of icons and words that describe your brand at a glance. It's one of the most prominent design elements of any brand, so it needs to truly speak to who you are.

Color Palette: The colors you use in your design send their own messages and can even influence customers' emotions. Most brands have a primary color as well as a few secondary colors or even an accent color.

Typography: The fonts and typefaces you use can influence how your messages are being read. Serif versus sans serif fonts, calligraphic styles, and even handwriting style fonts can become a signature part of your brand identity.

Imagery: In addition to your logo, the imagery you associate with your brand is key to design, including photography, illustrations, and abstract visual elements or icons.

Overall layout: Even something as simple as the spacing between design elements matters to your brand identity. Your brand should establish rules for how your logo appears, the spacing you use between elements, and how things like text, photography, and illustrations should be used together.





Current Design Trends to Consider

As with anything else, trends come and go in the world of graphic design. While you want your branding to be timeless to an extent, incorporating popular design elements can send a message that your brand is modern and understands what is important to people right now.

Following design trends also helps you capture attention. Because our brains create patterns of information, seeing something that feels familiar is more likely to make us feel good and want to engage further. Although it's important that your design be unique, incorporating popular design elements can put customers at ease and pique their interest.

Of course, not every design trend is appropriate for every brand. Take a closer look at some of the latest design trends you might pull inspiration from.



01

3D Designs

The 3D design trend involves designs that appear three-dimensional and have a lot of depth. 3D designs allow brands to play with texture and can help objects appear handmade, as if they were sculpted out of clay or made out of paper. Many brands use this approach to create a personality that is approachable and friendly.



02

Botanical & Organic

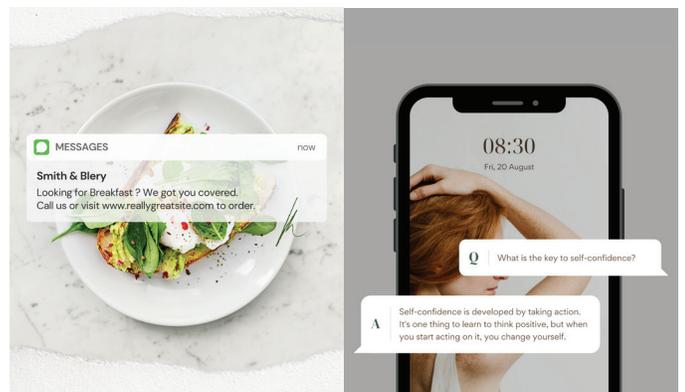
The botanical and organic trend is often used by brands that are eco-friendly, all-natural, and health-conscious. Nature is inherently soothing, so imagery of leaves and forests can make your brand feel calming and appealing. This trend leans into natural color palettes, using lots of earth tones, greens, and browns.



03

Inspired by Digital Interfaces

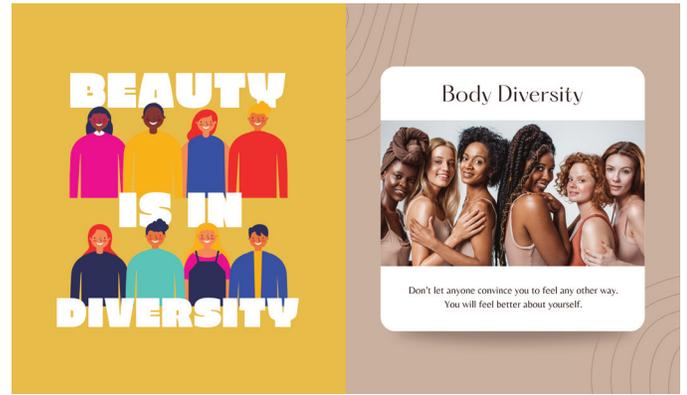
Designs inspired by digital interfaces incorporate elements reminiscent of things like search bars and messaging apps, which have become huge parts of our day-to-day lives. People use smartphones and computers to interact with each other and seek out information, so these design elements make your brand feel modern and relatable, particularly to younger generations. The trend is a great choice for brands that want to communicate that they're tech-savvy or cutting-edge.



04

Inclusivity and Body Positivity

Now more than ever, consumers are aware of the importance of inclusivity and representation in advertising. Tough conversations about race, disabilities, body types, sexual orientations, and religious expressions have led brands to put diversity at the forefront of their designs. Incorporating inclusive imagery helps customers know your brand is welcoming to all, is forward-thinking, and takes a stand on important social issues.



05

Hand-Drawn Illustrations

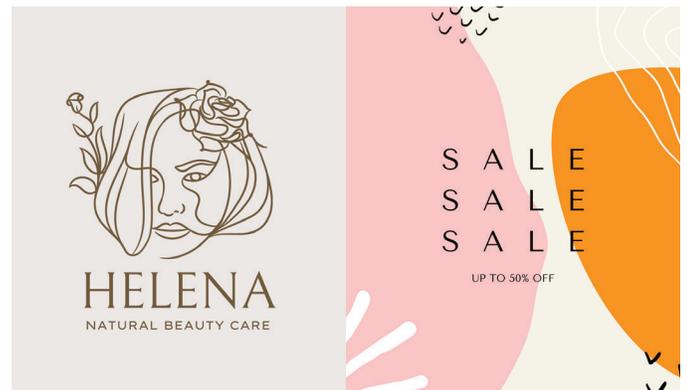
Hand-drawn illustrations have been overtaking photography in visual branding. Many illustrations evoke a whimsical, childlike, or nostalgic feeling, whether they're done in a retro-inspired style or a modern stylistic approach. By using hand-drawn illustrations, you can communicate that aesthetics are important to your brand and that you're not afraid to have a little fun.



06

Minimalist Illustration & Abstract Shapes

Minimalism and abstraction have become popular elements of design lately, taking cues from the ever-popular mid-century modern aesthetic. Elements of this style often use neutral and earth-tone color palettes and blend abstract, organic-feeling shapes with simple, minimalist line drawings or brush strokes. The resulting style presents your brand as calming, centered, and positive.



How to Choose the Right Design Style for Your Brand

Now that you understand the importance of design to your identity and the elements and trends that make up a great brand design, it's time to determine what your brand's design should look like. You don't want to just choose a style that is trendy or looks interesting. Your design style must make sense for your brand, be relatable and interesting to your target audience, and accurately represent your brand's personality.

Asking a few key questions can help you narrow down your brand's design.



Who are we as a business?

Think carefully about the experience you want your customers to have with your brand. Come up with five adjectives you'd want customers to use when describing your brand or that experience. For example, do you want to be relatable, exciting, traditional, fresh, innovative?

Also consider the industry you're in. Is it known for being timeless, trustworthy, and unchanging (like a life insurance company), or for being innovative, unique, and disruptive (like a tech startup)? Will your customers value creativity and out-of-the-box thinking, or do they simply want the job to be done correctly and efficiently?

Finally, think about what products and services you offer. Would images of your products fit with a whimsical or creative aesthetic, or would they feel out of place in that design style?

Who are our customers?

You also want to take a closer look at who your customers are and their aesthetics. Is your target audience younger or older? What design trends might they gravitate to most?

What do your customers value most in a brand? Do they prefer cost-effectiveness and reliability, customer service and quality, or aesthetics and trendiness? What is their socioeconomic status? Do they splurge on luxury brands or hunt for a good deal?

How do your customers act? Are they tech-savvy and on social media, or do they stick to more traditional media? What world issues are important to them?



Bring Your Brand's Design to Life

By answering questions about your business and your customers, and by examining popular design trends that fit your brand's and customers' needs, you'll be able to hone in on a design style that speaks to you. At the end of the day, you want to make sure your design accurately represents your brand's personality and will be perceived favorably by your customers.

Whatever design style makes the most sense for your brand, PostNet can help you bring it to life and apply it consistently across your entire suite of business materials.



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