



Icon Graphics: Branding Guidelines

We want to be perceived as:

- Friendly
- Open
- Honest
- Collaborative
- Community-oriented
- Leaders in our field
- Understanding
- Clear communicators
- Expressive
- Passionate

Our strengths are:

- Creativity
- Experience
- Flexibility
- Integrity
- Personal touch
- Client care

To illustrate our strengths & present ourselves the way we want to be perceived, we will:

- **Use a mix of hand-written lettering and sans-serif type with a large x-height.** This communicates friendliness, clarity of communication, and expressiveness, as well as hinting at creativity with a personal touch.
- **Use lower case in display/handwritten language, all caps for headings and subheading, and sentence case for everything else (do not use title case).** This communicates friendliness, clarity of communication, expressiveness, creativity, and flexibility (and is less distracting than title case).
- **Use contractions when possible (“We’re a full-service graphic design firm” rather than “We are a full-service graphic design firm”).** This communicates friendliness, openness, understanding, clarity of communication, expressiveness, personal touch and client care.
- **Use a mix of illustrations and photography to help communicate concepts in our marketing and writing.** This communicates friendliness, clarity of communication, and expressiveness, as well as hinting at creativity with a personal touch.
- **Use photography that is candidly editorial in nature to show our personalities, workspaces, and work processes from start to finish.** This communicates openness, honesty, expressiveness, passion, creativity, and clarity of communication.





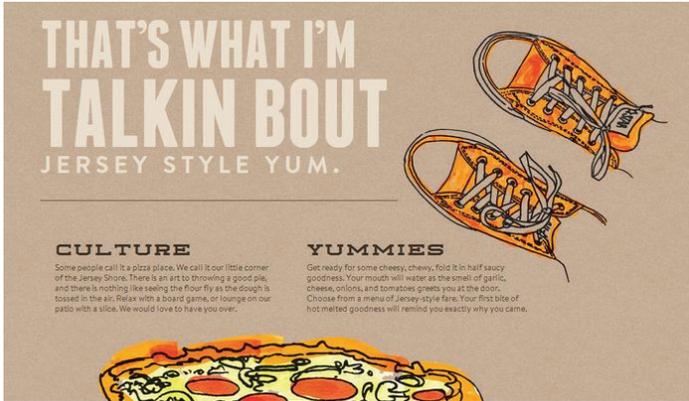
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- **Use simple, direct language from a first-person point of view (“We’re here to help you stand out,” not “Icon Graphics has the ability to assist your B2B marketing needs”).** This communicates friendliness, openness, clarity of communication, understanding our clients, and integrity.
- **Write a biweekly blog answering common client questions, highlighting our work processes, exploring case studies, and revealing things we’re learning or working on both in the work setting and within our communities (could be Keith’s hunting/fishing, Kim’s illustration, Dani’s involvement with HCC/AIGA Blue Ridge).** This communicates creativity, openness, collaboration, involvement in our communities, passion, leadership, experience, client care, integrity, and clarity of communication.
- **Interact with local companies (including other design companies) on social media.** This might look like celebrating with companies as they reach milestones, collaborating with local companies (like we did with the Potomac River Atlas). This communicates friendliness, openness, collaboration, our involvement in the community, flexibility, and integrity, as well as hinting that we’re not intimidated by other designers.
- **Join AIGA and become involved in the meetings and activities.** This communicates collaboration, community involvement, our leadership in our field, our passion for our work, and helps show that we are continuing to gain experience.
- **Collect and share on social media quotes about design and business practices that reflect our work ethic, recommendations from clients, articles or projects that resonate with us, snippets of projects as we work on them, and soundbites of our appreciation for our work, clients, and lives.** This communicates friendliness, openness, collaboration, understanding our clients and our work, expressiveness, passion for our work, experience, creativity, and flexibility.
- **Create and sell custom artwork as apparel, prints, and stationary.** This communicates growth, community involvement, creativity, friendliness, collaboration, the personal touch of custom work, and passion for our work.





Icon Graphics: Mood Boards



- **What could work for us:** Mix of strong typography and color with loose illustration style
- **What won't work for us:** Color scheme, typeface



- **What could work for us:** Quote, the color scheme (matches our colors), loose hand-written type



- **What could work for us:** Doodles and hand-written elements mixed with clean photography and strong layout.
- **What won't work for us:** Color scheme, subject matter





Icon Graphics: Mood Boards



- **What could work for us:** Mix of clean roman caps with brush-tipped script; illustration has the whimsy that could work well when paired with strong typography and photography
- **What won't work for us:** Focusing too much on this style — don't want to be so whimsical and loose that we aren't seen as being able to produce clean, professional design

THE WAY WE SEE IT

The more we know about who you are, the better the chances of success for everyone — you, us and the people you want to reach.

Before we create anything that evolves or reshapes your digital strategy, we get to know you. What's working? What's not? What does your audience know about your company that you don't? The

- **What could work for us:** Mix of illustration with clean layout, and the great pull-quotes — really like how clean, strong, and friendly this feels
- **What won't work for us:** This particular illustration style, typeface

“It's time to think about people, not 'users'”



- **What could work for us:** Illustrations married with strong photography, clean background/layout
- **What won't work for us:** Drop shadow





Icon Graphics: **Categories & Tags**

Portfolio Categories and Sub-Categories

■ **Branding**

- Business Cards
- Letterhead
- Logo Design
- Signage
- Stationery
- Style Guidelines

■ **Print**

- Annual Reports
- Booklets
- Brochures
- Catalogs
- Direct Mail
- Folders
- Infographics
- Invitations
- Maps
- Menus
- Postcards
- Posters

■ **Illustration**

- Characters
- Custom Logos
- Labels
- Magazine Covers

■ **Advertising**

- Ad Campaigns
- Animated Web Ads
- Billboards
- Conceptualization
- Copywriting
- Print Ads
- Vehicle Wraps

■ **Web**

- Content Strategy
- Design
- Development
- Hosting
- Maintenance
- Online Business Placement
- SEO

■ **Email Marketing**

- Business Planning
- Copywriting
- E-Casts

■ **Large Format Printing**

- Event Graphics
- Posters
- Tradeshow Booths
- Window Graphics





Icon Graphics: **Categories & Tags**

Blog Categories

- **Articles** — Long thoughts on the design and web industry.
- **Case Studies** — In-depth looks at awesome projects we're proud of.
- **Noteworthy** — Status updates on life at Icon.
- **On the Go** — Short thoughts and quick tips on the design and web industry.
- **Motivation Mondays** — A little motivational wisdom to kick off the week.
- **Tuesday Teasers** — Sneak peeks of current projects.
- **Witty Wednesdays** — A little humor to get through the week.
- **Throwback Thursdays** — Memories of projects and events gone by.
- **Friday Fun** — Fun things happening in our lives or in the community.

Tags (Topics)

- **Advertising**
- **Art**
- **Branding**
- **Client 101**
- **Communication**
- **Content Strategy**
- **Design 101**
- **Email**
- **How We Work**
- **Marketing**
- **Printing**
- **Social Media**
- **Web 101**
- **[Client Names]**





Icon Graphics: **Courses of Action**

■ **Create/sell T-shirts & prints**

- Promote via website, Facebook, Twitter, ecast (set up landing page with Paypal payment, don't print shirts until orders are complete, similarly to how Pixelworkers sells shirts, so we only print however many are already paid for. Maybe have a month-long window for people to place their orders, with plans to fulfill orders within 2 weeks of the cut-off date).
- Icon-specific designs, quotes on creativity for the site, illustrations.

■ **Collect and share (Twitter and Facebook)**

- Quotes about design & business practices that reflect our work ethic.
- Recommendations from clients (the one or two sentence exclamations in emails from clients).
- Articles or projects we think are interesting related to design.
- Photos of projects as we work on them — bigger/recurring projects get their own albums.
- Appreciation of our work, clients, lives — show our passion for what we do, show a bit of our personalities.

■ **Blog**

- Write a periodical blog — each entry doesn't have to be article-length, it can be shorter tidbits of our work ethic, things we're learning, etc. (See Boagworld for a good example)
- Would be best if we each contributed, even just a little. We can repurpose things we tell clients a lot, maybe have a category of "frequent questions from clients" that we answer from time to time (initially culled from emails, like the time Keely asked for several full design iterations and we talked about how we work internally to create one solid solution based on the scope of the project, but eventually maybe we'll get more interaction from clients/followers)

■ **In general, be more social**

- Celebrate and collaborate with other local design firms (maybe not more direct competitors like High Rock, but people like Worx and Hagerstown Magazine). Promote an image of us as friendly.
- Join AIGA, maybe try to make it to meetings here and there, network with local designers and developers (could be good to help us in our search for developers).

