



The Point of Vision Brand Framework™

Practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect.

– Vince Lombardi

It's as true for brand communication as it is for football. Unless you're using the right technique, repetition doesn't guarantee success.

Brand communication wizard Joe Duffy, author of the book "Brand Apart," says people in the marketing world are finally recognizing the importance of consistent brand expression. More and more, parallel messages and similar design looks come out of companies' various departments, divisions and even subsidiaries. But, Duffy notes, many of these efforts – though constant as the North Star – are just plain uninspired. And if your communication is ineffective, then becoming a master of consistency only makes you consistently ineffective.

Being consistent is not enough. You have to be consistently compelling.

Point of Vision developed the Brand Framework to help organizations find their compelling brand essence, then communicate it consistently. To create a Brand Framework, we compel our clients to wrestle with what their organization truly stands for and what makes them valuable. We ask them to think about who they are today, who they aspire to be, and who their customers want them to be.

It's no surprise that not everyone who sits down at the branding table sees these fundamental traits in exactly the same way. So, in many cases, the value of creating a client's Brand Framework lies as much in the discovery process as in the document that we deliver when it's all over. You could say that the Brand Framework process nails down how to make communication compelling. Then, the Brand Framework document serves as a tool which, when shared, makes consistency possible.



A Brand Framework has six components. We call the first three the brand definition – a description of who you are and what you stand for.

Brand position. The brand position is the central theme of your brand – the big idea behind your organization. This is often just two or three words. For example, the Federal Express brand position might be stated as “on-time delivery.”

Brand promise. The brand promise tells people what they can count on you to do. Using FedEx as an example again, the brand promise might be, “FedEx will deliver your critical items on time.” A brand promise often sounds like a bare-bones mission statement. Like every part of the Brand Framework, it’s not intended for public consumption, so it doesn’t have to be clever or catchy like a tag line. It just needs to sum up your central commitment.

Brand proof. Even if your brand promise grows up one day to become a catchy tag line, people still won’t buy it unless you back it up with something real. Your brand proof gives people reason to believe your brand promise is more than just marketing hocus pocus. Some examples of brand proof: a unique product feature, a secret formula, better-trained staff, or a quantifiable track record of success.

Once your brand is defined with a position, promise and proof, it’s time to turn to the three elements of brand presentation – how your brand should be communicated.

Brand message. Your brand promise and brand proof create a core brand message. But if you’re like most organizations, you communicate with many different audiences, and each one needs to hear a slightly different version of that core message. The brand message portion of the Brand Framework prescribes the key points to emphasize with each audience you touch.

Brand voice. Your brand has a personality, and your brand voice is a big part of how you express it. Word choices and writing tone can make you appear fun or serious, cutting edge or conservative. Will you use simple language or technical jargon? Will you favor short, punchy sentences or more elegant prose?



Brand appearance. The final element of the Brand Framework outlines how to portray your brand with colors, logos, typefaces, imagery and so on. All of these visual elements should reflect your brand definition. For example, if your brand proof rests on your long history of reliable performance, you'd want to use colors that bring to mind stability and strength.

Once the Brand Framework is completed, it becomes a valuable tool for every person in your organization who touches your key audiences, from your webmaster to your receptionist. It can guide the look of annual reports, customer newsletters, even your logo itself. It helps you ensure that anything you use to represent you makes a consistent, compelling statement that's true to your brand.

Is it possible to develop brand communication guidelines without going through the Brand Framework process? Sure. But we believe that communication rules work better when they're built on a rational foundation. For one thing, people react better to sensible, brand-based principles than to edicts handed down by the brand police.

But more important, a Brand Framework keeps you out of the predicament Joe Duffy describes. It makes sure you're not just being repetitive, but being effective.

Wondering whether a Brand Framework could help you? Check out POV's brand quiz (www.pointofvision.com/download/brandquiz.pdf) to see how you rate in delivering a compelling, consistent brand.

Who is Point of Vision?

We are a senior team of thinkers, writers and designers who ask questions and listen to what you – and your key stakeholders – have to say. We are creative professionals who think first, dig deep – then act. We are men and women with families and pets. We are serious about our craft, but we don't take ourselves too seriously. We have garnered hundreds of awards and accolades for our identity and communications design, and we have been ranked among Atlanta's top 25 Web designers two years in a row by the Atlanta Business Chronicle. Above all else, we are a company that's driven to surprise and delight you at every opportunity.