



Creating Your Brand



# DIY BRAND MANUAL

MADE BY CREATIVE MESS DESIGNS



# Intro

“In order to succeed, we must first believe we can.”

*Charles Eames*

## What to Expect from this Manual

This brand manual is all about making simple decisions that you and a professional designer can build upon later.

- **Analyze your brand positioning:** you'll identify your ideal audience and what you want your brand's reputation to be.
- **Set your three “V’s”:** your brand **V**alues, **V**oice and **V**isuals will help you align yourself with your customers, keep you on the right track, and guide you in building a coherent brand you can be proud of.
- **Get clarity:** overall the purpose of this manual is to help you get clarity around your business and to give you a direction for future growth.

## Using Your Brand Guidelines

Brand Guidelines (also commonly referred to as ‘brand standards’, ‘visual style guide’ or ‘brand book’) are a set of rules that explain how your brand works. This cohesion helps establish a strong brand voice that resonates with your audience, which is essential for building brand awareness. Over time, that awareness and consistency build trust.

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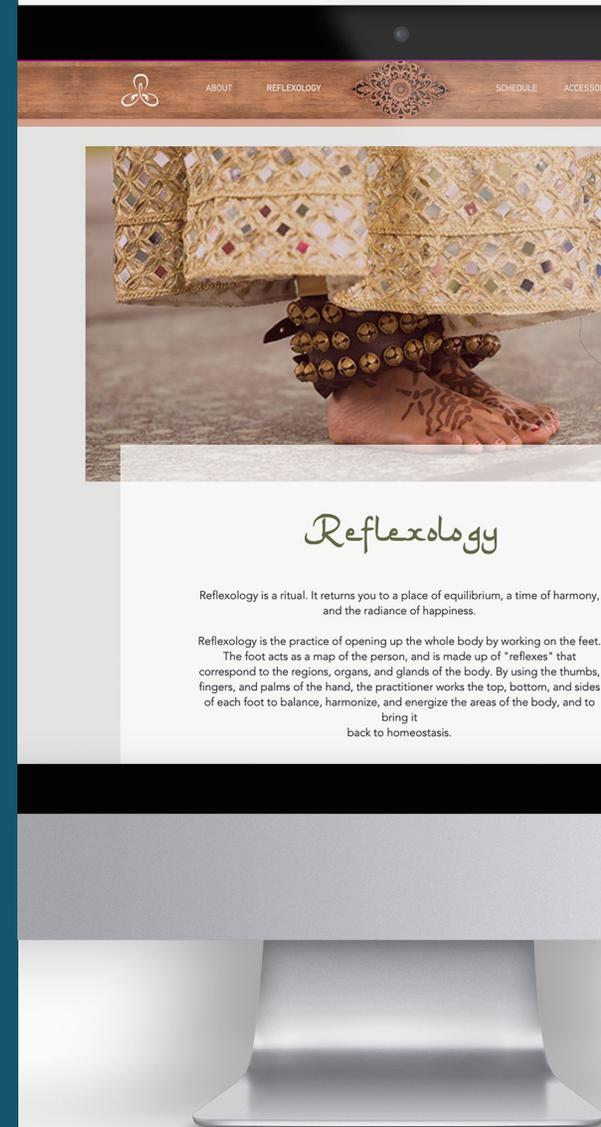
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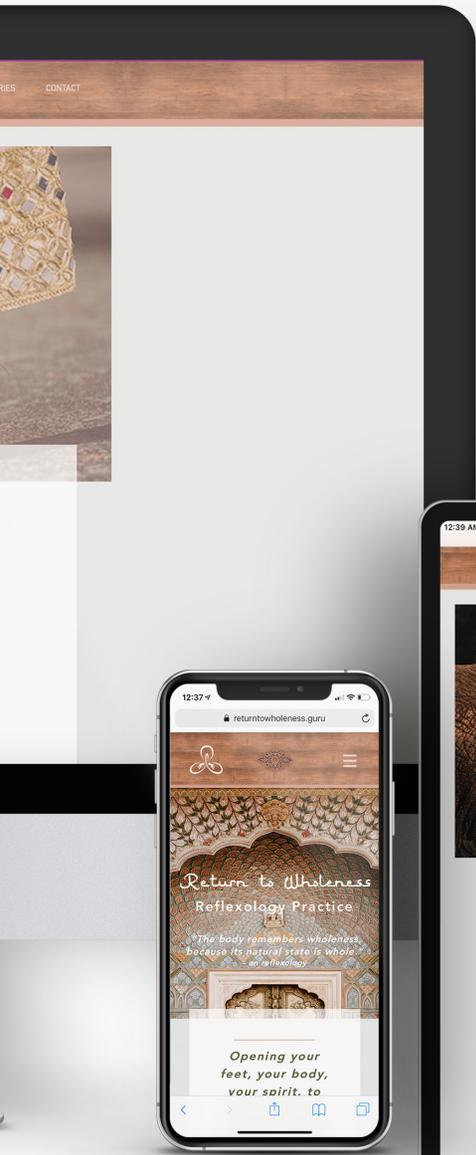
# External Standards

## 1.0

1.0.1 Positioning

1.0.2 Identifying Your Audience





## What are your brand's external standards?

External standards represent how others view your brand. They dive into your unique selling proposition, ideal customer/client profiles, as well as content marketing and digital marketing strategies. External standards are highly influenced by your audience's perception of your brand. We're going to focus on two of your brand's external standards. First is your brand positioning, which is how you *want* your brand to be positioned in people's minds (aka how you want them to think of your brand), Second is identifying your audience, which can be used as a basis for creating detailed client profiles later.



# Positioning

Before you even create your first product or service, you should start with research. Research will reveal the segment of customers you want to target, ie. your ideal customers or ideal audience. **Your ideal audience will be the people who are struggling with the same problems that you are solving through your products or services.**

Brand positioning is about understanding **where and how you want to position your business in the minds of your ideal customers.** What do you want their perception of your brand to be? Some questions to consider:

*What do you want your brand to be synonymous with in your customers' minds?*

*(For example, xerox = copiers or dove soap = good for the environment)*

*What problems are you solving, and are you the first?*

*If you aren't the first, how can you differentiate yourself from your competition?*

*read this book! it'll change  
everything you thought you knew →*

## **BOOK**

Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind

[Al Ries, Jack Trout](#)



# People

*"Socrates said 'Know thyself.' I say 'Know thy users.' And guess what? They don't think like you do."*

Joshua Brewer

Your **ideal customer/client** dictates everything from your content creation strategy, which social media networks you use, what types of promotions and sales you run...everything about your business revolves around the customer. The better you know them and relate to them on a personal level, the stronger the connection that forms between them and your company, leading to engaged, loyal fans.

Later, audience segmentation (a technique which divides your audience into different groups based on demographics, lifestyle, purchase history or other criteria) can be used to help you target your marketing strategies. Creating client profiles (aka "buyer personas"), which are very specific criteria for individual ideal customers, will also help you understand and target your audience better.

Here are some questions to get you started:

## **READ**

Customer Segmentation & Targeting

[digitalmarketinginstitute.com](https://www.digitalmarketinginstitute.com)





## Your Ideal Audience

*What is their gender?*

*How old are they?*

*What are their interests or hobbies?*

(think food, technology, music, travel, arts)

*Are they family or career oriented?*

*What is their financial situation? Are they pinching pennies or willing to splurge on quality products?* (this affects your pricing strategy)

*Where can you find them online?* (this affects your social media strategy)

# Internal Standards

## 2.0

2.0.1 Values

2.0.2 Voice





## What are the three V's?

Your brand's internal standards are primarily focused on the three V's, which are your Values, Voice and Visuals. These are the parts of the brand that you create and control; they are not independently determined by the changing or growing perceptions/opinions that others have of your brand.

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# Values

Your values help you to communicate what you believe as a company, to customers who share your beliefs. Research shows value-driven companies achieve better brand and business performance. Let your values drive your content strategy, customer service, even your product creation.

Some sample core values to get you started:

Ambition	Empathy	Justice
Adventure	Excitement	Kindness
Belonging	Excellence	Knowledgeable
Bravery	Fitness	Loyalty
Balance	Family	Logic
Change	Focus	Mastery
Confidence	Gratitude	Mindfulness
Connection	Growth	Passion
Dedication	Generosity	Playfulness
Diversity	Humor	Reason
Directness	Hard Work	Self-Awareness
Dependability	Integrity	Sustainability
Drive	Innovation	Simplicity

Some additional questions to get you thinking deeper:

*What will help guide you when facing a difficult decision?*

*Are these values that you will still believe in 5 or 10 years?*

*What are you willing to give up to “live” your value?*

## JOIN

Creative Mess on Patreon

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1.0.1

*want to dig deeper? get access  
to worksheets, templates and  
more, as low as \$4 a month!*





# Voice

The second V is your brand's voice, also known as it's 'character,' or 'personality.' This should guide every piece of content that you write.

First we focus on the “**your**” of **your brand's character**; in order to be authentic, your writing (be it on your website, blog, in a brochure, etc) needs to sound like you. So the first step is to **write the way you speak**.

Next we focus on your audience; your writing needs to be in a ‘**tone of voice**’ that will appeal to your customers.

Funny	Neutral	Serious
Casual	Neutral	Formal
Irreverant	Neutral	Respectful
Beginner	Neutral	Industry Pro

Finally, we focus on your clarity. Sometimes when we speak we have a tendency to ramble, and this is a quality that does **not** belong in copywriting. **Clarity over cleverness.**

2.0.2

*she will teach you so much about copywriting!* →

## **FOLLOW**

Chelsea Baldwin  
[getcopypower.com](http://getcopypower.com)

## **BOOK**

Predictably Irrational  
[Dan Ariely](#)

**Brand Character**

**Brand Language**

**Do this when communicating**

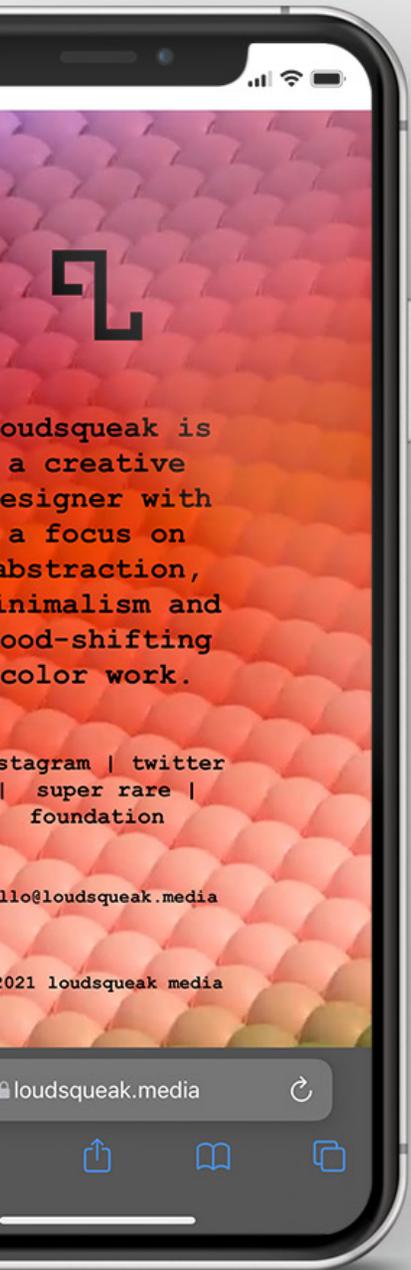
**Avoid this when communicating**

# Visuals: Color

## 3.0

3.0.1 Color Palette





## What are the color models?

Color is the element of art that is produced when light, striking an object, is reflected back to the eye. RGB (for on-screen applications) adds and mixes different intensities of red, green and blue to get your desired color. CMYK (for printing) is subtractive, so a reading of 0% gives you white and 100% gives you black. HEX, or hexadecimal is a numeric character-based reference of RGB numbers, used for website development. Pantone Matching System (PMS) is used by some printers to ensure standardized colors - there's a slight difference between PMS and other color models. Model information is provided in your software's color picker tool.

• • •

# Color

Did you know that there is a whole psychology to color selection? It's important for your brand colors to support the character and personality you want to portray. Before you begin, do some research to see what colors can affect your customers perception of your brand. Also consider what colors appeal to you; neutrals, warm tones, cool tones. It's important to appeal to your audience but it's also important to be authentic.

Next create a coordinating color palette using [coolers.co](https://coolers.co): this site generates gorgeous color palettes with every click of the spacebar. Spend some time playing around with the site until you find a palette you love!

→  
*you can start simple  
and add more later!*

Tips: [Coolers.co](https://coolers.co) generates palettes of 5 colors. To lock a color and prevent it from changing, press the lock icon on it's swatch. If you'd rather keep it simple, it's ok not to use all 5 colors. I recommend a minimum of 3 but a maximum of 7.

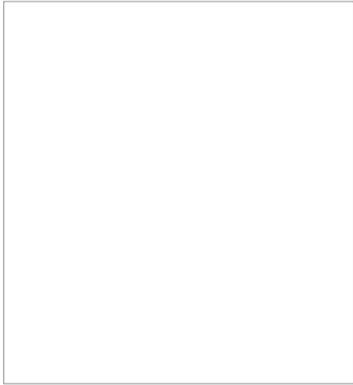
## READ

Psychology of Color

[helpscout.net](https://helpscout.net)

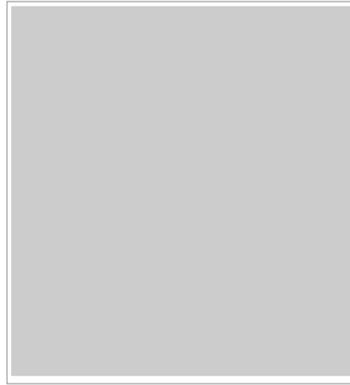
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HEX #  
RGB  
CMYK



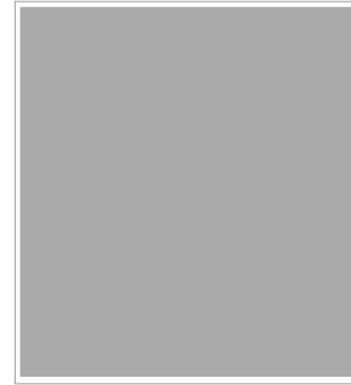
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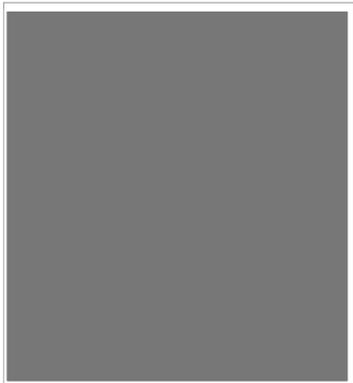
Color Name:

HEX #  
RGB  
CMYK



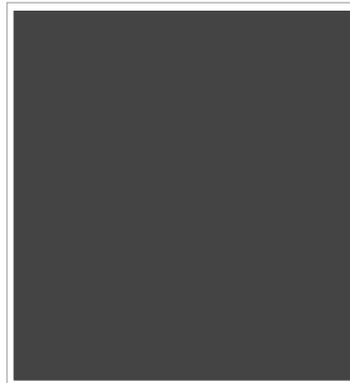
Color Name:

HEX #  
RGB  
CMYK



Color Name:

HEX #  
RGB  
CMYK



Color Name:

HEX #  
RGB  
CMYK



# Visuals: Typography

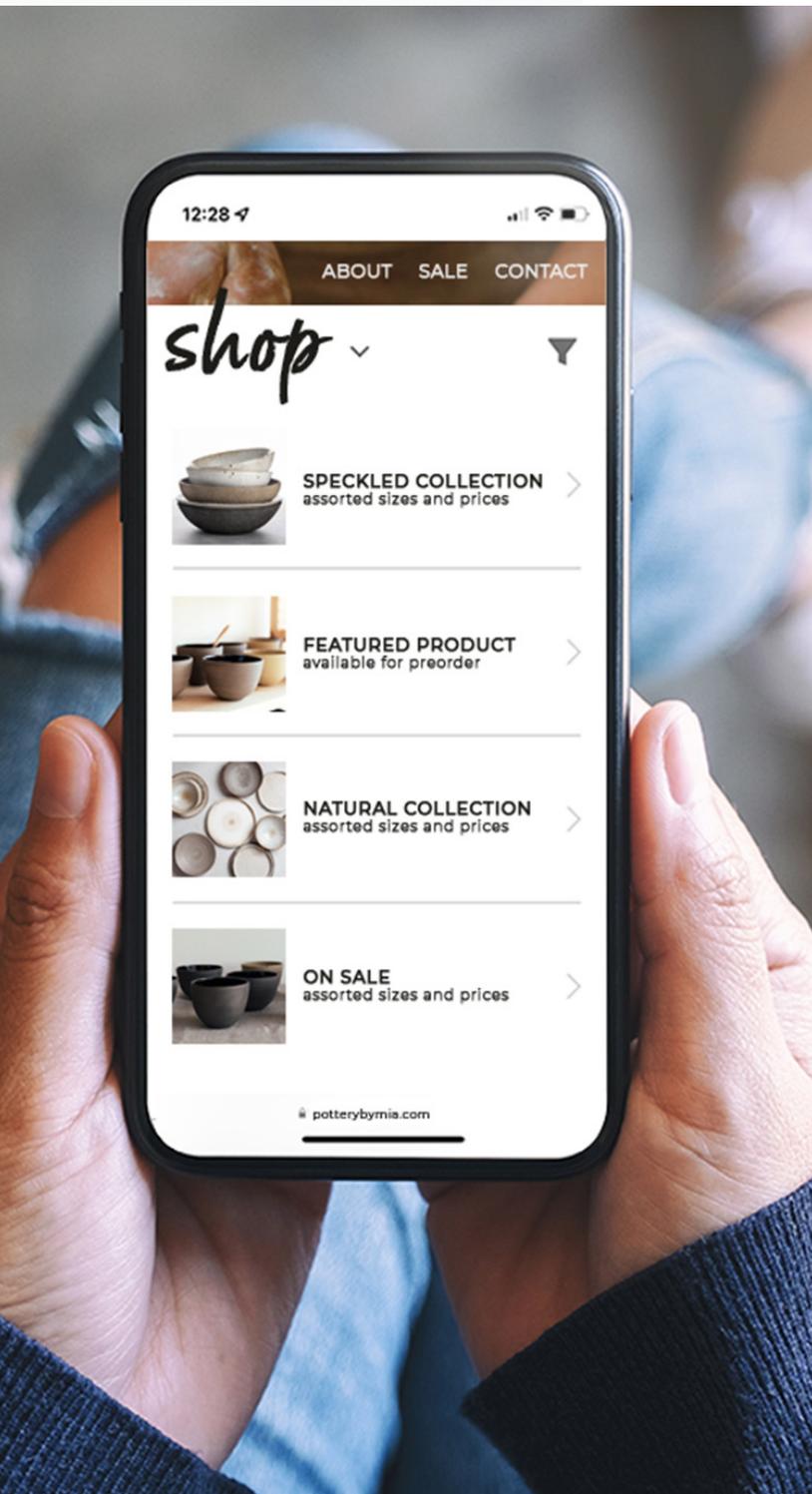
## 4.0

4.0.1 Font Pairings

4.0.2 Primary Typeface

4.0.3 Secondary & Accent Typefaces





## What is typography?

Typography is the art and technique of arranging type to make written language legible, readable, and appealing when displayed. The term typography is also applied to the style, arrangement, and appearance of the letters, numbers, and symbols created by the process. There are many typefaces; the four main style categories are serif fonts, sans-serif fonts, script/handwriting fonts, and display fonts.



# Type

Typography adds to your brand personality, deepening the connection between your company and your customers. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

*What font type best fits my brand personality?* (think about the values and voice you already created)

**Serif fonts** have a slight projection (serif) at the end of each stroke of the letter and are classic, sophisticated and timeless.

**Sans-serif fonts** are modern, versatile and practical, yet they can also be sophisticated.

*Script* and *handwriting fonts* come in many varieties and can be fun and easygoing or formal and elegant.

**DISPLAY FONTS** are unique and attention grabbing; while they may be great for headings, they can lack legibility in paragraph form.

*Who is my ideal audience?*

Are you targeting professionals? Elderly adults with poor eyesight? Parents of young children? Each of these groups would connect with different font types.

*Looking for just a touch of fun or whimsy?* Add a script or handwritten font as an accent rather than a primary font (see this book or [my website](#)). A note of caution: make sure all your text is readable even when it is small (mobile-friendly!).

4.0.1

→  
*to use a new font you must  
close your programs, install,  
then reopen.*

## TRY

Google Font Pairings  
[fontpair.co](http://fontpair.co)

## READ

Psychology of Fonts  
[crazyegg.com](http://crazyegg.com)

Here are some versatile font pairings to choose from, or use as inspiration. All these fonts are available for free on [Google Fonts](#).

**Heading**

Paragraph

Oswald and EB Garamond

**Heading**

Paragraph

Montserrat and Neuton

HEADING

Paragraph

Amatic and Josefin Sans

**Heading**

Paragraph

Raleway and Roboto Slab

Heading

Paragraph

Spirax and Open Sans

**Heading**

Paragraph

PT Sans Italic and Neuton

*Heading*

Paragraph

Playfair Display Italic and Source Sans Pro

**Heading**

Paragraph

Fjalla One and Noto Sans

Heading

Paragraph

Raleway and Roboto Slab

**Heading**

Paragraph

BioRhyme and Roboto

**Heading**

Paragraph

Cabin and Old Standard TT

**Heading**

Paragraph

Noto Serif Italic and Oxygen

**Heading**

Paragraph

Merriweather and Montserrat

**Heading**

Paragraph

PT Sans and PT Sans Narrow

Heading

Paragraph

Cormorant Garamond and Fira Sans

Tip: If you're overwhelmed by the options, use a single font family which has a lot of different weights (thin, regular, medium, bold, black), such as Futura, Montserrat or Roboto.

# Primary

→  
*copy and paste your own  
font description here*

→  
*install your fonts then change the fonts  
of this section to display yours*

# Secondary

---

# Accent

Optional

# Visuals: Logo

## 5.0

5.0.1 Wordmarks

5.0.2 Logo Design





## What are the types of logos?

There are seven different types of logos; the two most popular are the 'pictorial/brand mark' and the 'combination mark.' A brand mark is a graphic or icon-based logo, such as Apple's apple, Twitter's bird, and Target's, well, target (*or bullseye*). A combination mark combines a graphic or icon with text. Think Domino's Pizza, Microsoft or Mastercard. The five other types are 'abstract marks' (*abstract geometric forms such as Pepsi's swirl*), 'emblem' or 'badge' logos (*think Starbucks or Harley Davidson*), 'mascot' logos (*such as Planter's Mr. Peanut*), 'lettermarks' (*monograms such as HP, HBO or CNN*), and 'workmarks' (*think Google or Coca-Cola*).

• • •

# Logo

key takeaway here →

A wordmark logo is a font-based logo that focuses on your business name alone. Think Eddie Bauer, Disney or Sony. **The name of the game is simplicity. Simple decisions that a professional logo designer can build upon later, without losing brand equity.**

Try different combinations of your brand fonts and colors until you find one that conveys your brand personality. I suggest going for big impact by choosing the font and color combination with the biggest contrast between the background. You may find that your accent font (*if you have one*) is a good fit for your wordmark too.

Don't be afraid to reverse your wordmark, either. Consider the brand colors navy, white and gold. Navy on a white background would make a bold primary logo, but gold on a navy background would be a gorgeous alternative for marketing collateral, like a business card.

Following the samples on the next page, you'll find space to try some logo ideas, as well as a spot to add your final wordmark to your manual, by swapping the placeholder with your own fonts.

When you're ready, a professional designer can help you create a brand mark, abstract mark, emblem or combination mark logo that coordinates with your wordmark.

**Tip:** I recommend a full wordmark over a lettermark because the goal is to get your name into the mind of the customer. Lettermarks work best for companies that are so well known the customer can recognize them from their initials.

*Kellogg's*

Jettison

curious

Google

lookfantastic®

Margaret Wood  
PHOTOGRAPHY

*Coca-Cola*

Amplify.

Jeep

J.CREW

Southern Living

FedEx

5.0.2



# End?

*"If you're going to try, go all the way.  
There is no other feeling like that."*

'Roll the Dice' by Charles Bukowski

Well, that was fun!

This manual has been all about making simple decisions that a you and professional designer can build upon later.

Through consistent and engaging visuals, an authentic brand personality, great products and top of the line customer service, you'll be able to form an unforgettable picture in your customers minds.

Want ti dig deeper into some of the topics covered in this manual on your own? Become a member on Patreon for access to worksheets, templates and more. Just \$4 a month!

***When you're ready to team up with a professional, bring along this manual to your first intensive with me to receive \$100 off.***

A  
brand  
makes  
it real.

