

SMART COLUMBUS
BRAND STYLE GUIDE





WE ARE SMART COLUMBUS.

We are moving toward the future of Columbus, focused on enhancements in technology and mobility that will make living in our city better. We are also a movement. An idea. An inspired vision. A brand.

Perceptions of Smart Columbus will be formed early and at every level of interaction, from how we answer the phone to how a visitor responds to our website to how a potential partner reacts to a presentation.



WE ARE AN OPEN BRAND.

Our work began as the result of many people's contributions. It's the Columbus Way to engage with many different kinds of people to gain widespread participation in our brand. We encourage others to adopt our brand language to help further the cause. More about this later.

Note: This is an internal document intended for use by Smart Columbus and its partners. The following brand elements are internally facing, (e.g., the call to action is not an externally facing tagline). The brand platform is used as a reference point, guide and powerful "filter" for making decisions. It helps answer the question, "Is this us? Does this fit our brand?"

OUR BRAND CHANGES MINDS.

This brand style guide provides the basic understanding of who we are and what we stand for to all of our audiences. It also provides direction for anyone who helps bring the brand to life. By following and sharing these guidelines, Smart Columbus can:

- Align participants around a shared understanding to support our culture, strategies and goals
- Provide communicators with the necessary tools to express the brand consistently
- Focus our marketing efforts by providing a consistent guide for expressing the brand in marketing, events, public relations and even professional behavior
- Sharpen the perception of the organization across all touchpoints, including operational interactions, offices, website, gallery walk, communications, and more.



DESIGN NOTES throughout show you how we've used Smart Columbus brand elements to create our brand look and feel.

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BRAND PYRAMID OUR BRAND MAKEUP

This is what holds up the brand image that you see expressed on these pages. Our brand is made of building blocks that make us strong, and each piece supports the other. The following pages explain each level of our brand pyramid.



MISSION Why we matter in the world and why we exist.

VISION What we envision as the brand's ideal future.

BRAND PURPOSE How we advance our mission and achieve our vision.

BRAND PERSONALITY A set of human characteristics associated with our brand.

BRAND MESSAGE Statements that help people understand what we're all about.

BRAND MANIFESTO An engaging narrative that helps people understand our brand.

MISSION STATEMENT

“The Why”

Why we matter in the world and why we exist:

Our mission statement is our “why.” It defines our fundamental reason for being. It is purposely stated as a very lofty ideal. Our mission is what motivates us to roll up our sleeves and tackle big challenges every day.



DESIGN TIP:

The Smart Columbus brand uses bright, vibrant colors, and what makes these colors truly pop is the complementary use of fields of black that make our look more modern and future forward.

**MISSION STATEMENT:
TO ACCELERATE HUMAN
PROGRESS THROUGH OPEN
MOBILITY.**

SMART



VISION STATEMENT

“The What”

What we envision as the brand’s ideal future:

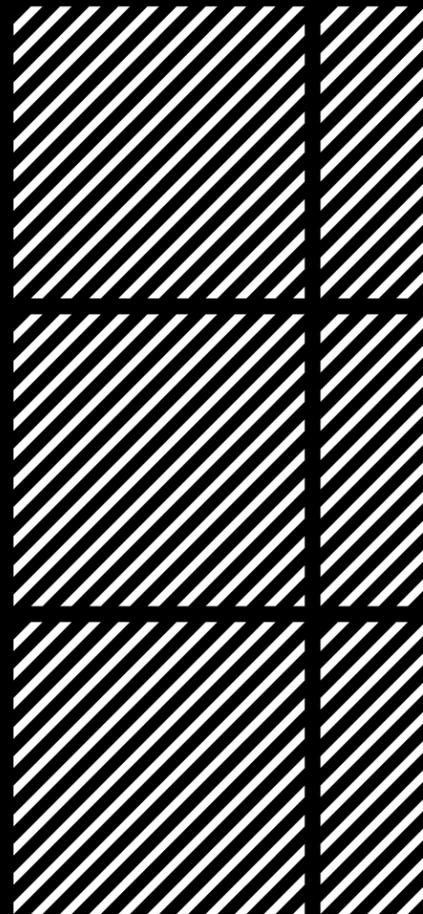
Our vision statement is what we hope to achieve as we move the brand forward, into the future. It answers the question: Where do we see Smart Columbus going?



DESIGN TIP:

We choose images that suggest our future, but avoid depicting specific technology, which may become obsolete in the blink of an eye.

**VISION STATEMENT:
TO BE THE MODEL FOR
CONNECTED CITIES OF
THE FUTURE.**



BRAND PURPOSE

“The How”

How we advance our mission and achieve our vision:

This simple statement captures the essence of our experience. This is the internal compass we use to guide the development of our brand. This is not an ad. This is not a tagline. Our brand purpose is an inspiring touchstone for all stakeholders, and helps them invest in us emotionally.



DESIGN TIP:

Smart Columbus tells a human story. We want people to “see themselves” in the message we are conveying, so we include images of people that are emotional and inspiring.

**BRAND PURPOSE:
WE ARE LEADING COLUMBUS
TO THE FUTURE AND
ENSURING YOUR PLACE IN IT.**



U S

BRAND PERSONALITY

Brand personality is a set of human characteristics associated with a brand:

Our personality decides how the brand expresses and represents itself. The brand personality gives audiences something they can relate to, effectively increasing brand awareness and popularity.



DESIGN TIP:

The letters “SMRT,” which make up our mark, are emblematic when used in a disruptive manner as a large, background graphic element. Our goal is to make “SMRT” unique to Smart Columbus.

FUTURE FORWARD

- Progressive
- Confident
- Bold
- Inspiring
- Empathetic

PRIMARY MESSAGE



DESIGN TIP:

Our initiative starts with the reinvention of mobility. Using simple, crisp graphics that imply movement, like these white lines, can be a strong supporting graphic element.

A few sentences that sum up what we are doing right now:

These few inspirational words are the result of rolling up the Brand Purpose, the Brand Message Pillars and the Brand Personality into a single, aspirational statement that contains them all. It evokes the spirit of Smart Columbus. It becomes our mantra and touchstone as we extend the brand, develop marketing materials, educate the public, and do the daily chores.

**PRIMARY MESSAGE:
SMART COLUMBUS IS THE
SMART CITY INITIATIVE FOR THE
COLUMBUS REGION. WE HAVE
A VISION THAT STARTS WITH
THE REINVENTION OF MOBILITY,
WHICH WILL LEAD US TO A
FUTURE BEYOND WHAT ANYONE
HAS YET IMAGINED.**

BRAND MESSAGING PILLARS

The key messages that help people understand what our brand is all about:

Brand Messaging Pillars are the “takeaways” we want to be sure people get. Our work is extremely complex and can be overwhelming to try to explain to others. Using these concepts as the starting point for communications will keep our message consistent and ensure that anything we say balances the issues that are critical to our brand’s success.



DESIGN TIP:

Using photography as a background can be visually dynamic. Just make sure there is always enough contrast with the color of your type. The legibility of our message should be a primary goal.

SMART IS JUST THE START.

- Smart Columbus as the means to an end: economic prosperity, access to better jobs, better quality of life, an inspired, connected community, world-class logistics.
- Our relentless drive to grow our people, our businesses, our city culture
- We won the grant for being smart & open; now let's join forces to show the world how it's done
- Open to the future: there's always something new we can discover or invent; the collective effort never ends

TECH- EMPOWERED HUMANS.

- A new way of looking at infrastructure, technology, transportation as extensions of people, means for living a better life
- A human story: real people are creating this and real people benefit
- Tech enabling greater public/private/academic/ resident partnerships
- Creating an amazing experience for residents and visitors
- Sustainability through imaginative application of new technology

WE'RE ALL INNOVATORS.

- An inspired vision that benefits everyone
- A magnet for tech innovation and startups
- You become an innovator by participating and being a user
- Easier access to opportunity and well-being for people who need it most
- Reconnecting neighborhoods to the city; connecting the city to itself
- Creating ladders of opportunity; the most powerful kind of transformation is having the means to make your own life better

OUR CALL TO ACTION:

TOGETHER, LET'S TRANSPORT OUR CITY TO THE FUTURE.

BRAND MANIFESTO

An engaging narrative that helps people understand our brand:

The Brand Manifesto captures all of our brand elements in an engaging narrative. It's a statement of our vision, our inspiration, our beliefs, and our path to destiny. This is where we begin to turn the corner into public-facing communications. Some brands have opted to put their Manifesto on a wall within the workspace. Leaders can adapt the Brand Manifesto for speeches and presentations. This story, or pieces of it, is often adapted as a call to action for others to join us.



DESIGN TIP:

Color is a critical part of the Smart Columbus visual language. This background image, which we call "the schmear," is available as a background or to complement other images in layouts—just take care not to overuse one particular element.

Smart Columbus looks forward to the future.

We're known for being smart and open. That's the Columbus Way, how we get things done.

Now it's time to leap into our future, Columbus. Time to be relentless, inventive, the spark.

Time to join our talents and unleash our drive for limitless improvement.

The moment is now: To recreate our city as a vast, collaborative, highly interactive, human experience.

We believe this inspired vision benefits everyone. Grows our economy. Improves our quality of life. Builds our reputation.

Our people will move around more efficiently and live more sustainably.

Our neighborhoods will forge even stronger connections, driving our economy forward and creating ladders of opportunity.

Our progress in technology and world-class logistics will bring the world, and more jobs, to Columbus.

We're designing journeys to success for everyone who lives here.

By re-thinking technology and transportation as extensions of people... as the means for having a better life.

A better job. A healthier child. A safer commute. A connected downtown. A cleaner planet.

Our future is... Integrated transportation. Information flowing into a wide-open database. An idea still forming in some kid's brain.

But the most important thing about our future is that there's always something new to discover.

Our future is going to be big, in ways we haven't even imagined yet.

Smart is just the START.



DESIGN TIP:

This vertical, one-line version of "SMART" may be used sparingly within the visual system as a supporting graphic element. It should never be used as the primary logo.



WE ARE SMART, COLUMBUS. BUT WE ARE “SMRT” TOO.

Look to the right, at our logo. Notice anything missing? There’s no “A.” We did this to make our logo more emblematic. It’s modern and minimal. It feels less like a modifier, and more like a movement. It makes our public “face,” our logo, more attention-getting. It’s intriguing, inviting a conversation.

Above all, in a world where even toasters are labeled “smart,” it’s a smarter way to be remembered. And a whole lot more ownable.

There are many cities out there who claim to be smart cities. There is only one Smart Columbus, leading the way. Our logo makes that clear.”



OUR LOGO

This is the logo for Smart Columbus

What's it all about?

Our logo builds on the collaborative spirit of the city of Columbus.

The “COLUMBUS” type is closely related to the Columbus logo. The letters “SMRT” work with the Columbus logo, made strong and dominant to highlight the importance of being smart for our city’s future.

Then we gave ourselves a star for being smart. In this context, the star symbolizes our smart city leadership, as it continues to highlight the US in Columbus.

The black box adds intrigue, boldness, and uniqueness to our mark. It stands for the inner workings of technology, the large database we are building, and the inclusiveness of our approach to technology. There’s room for everyone here.



OUR LOGO WITH OTHERS

How to put our logo with yours.

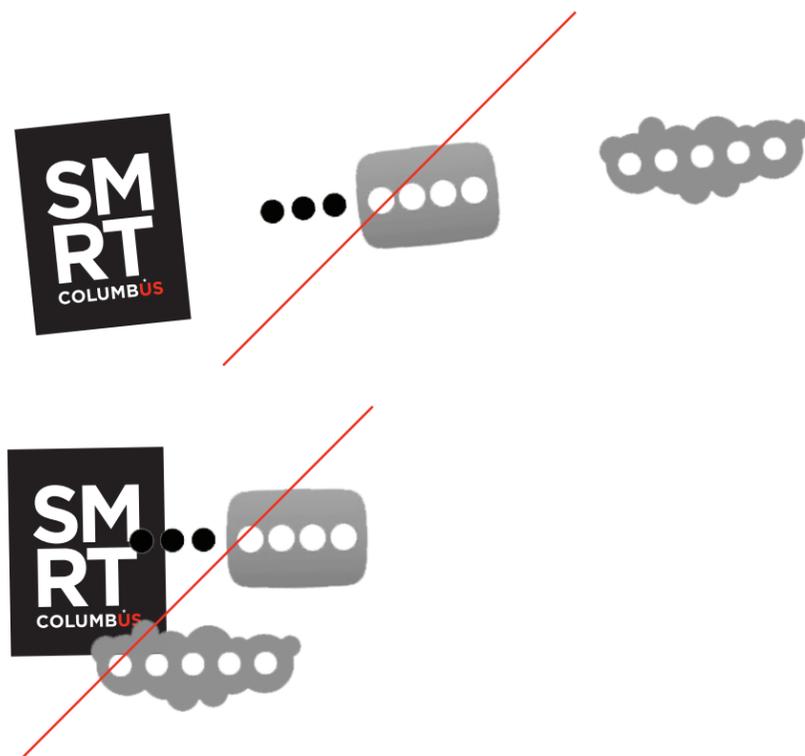
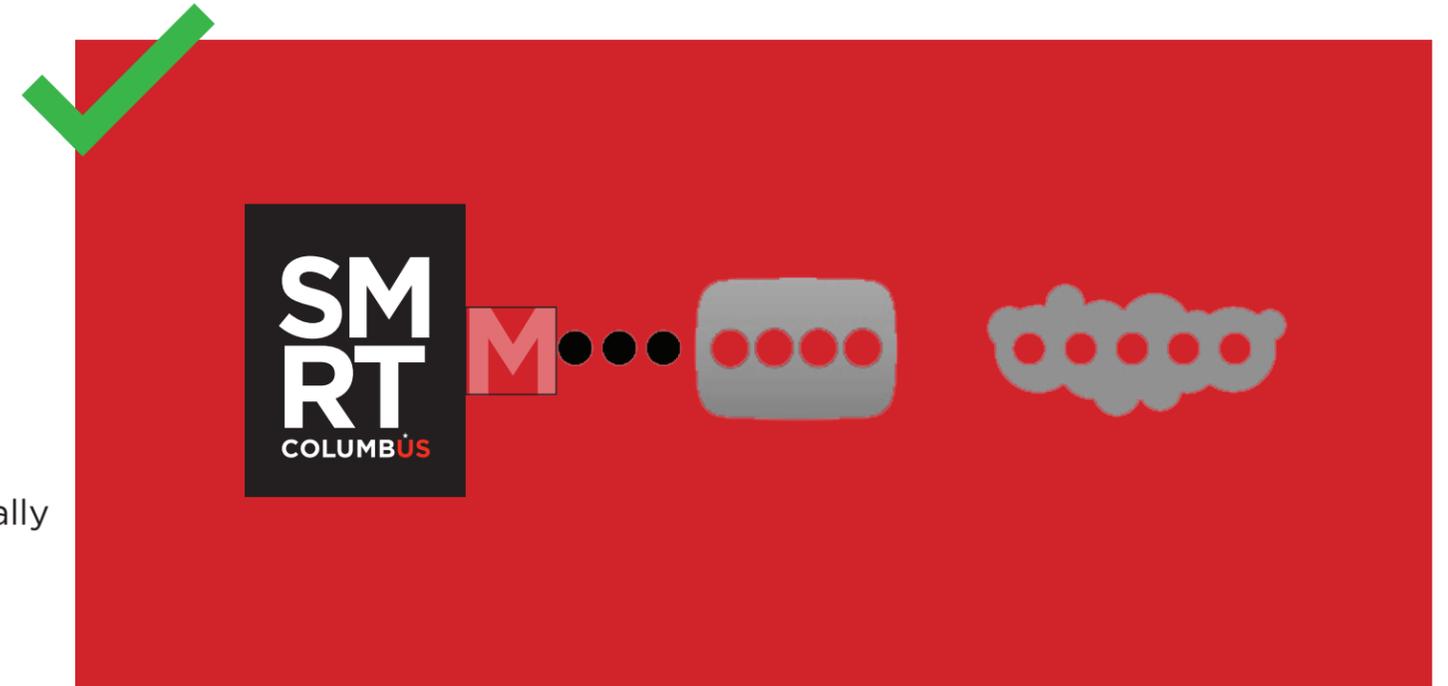
Our parent brand, Columbus, operates as an open brand. So do we. We're excited to share our inspired vision—and our logo—with everybody. You may want to include our logo in an event name or initiative logo.

We absolutely want people to understand who's involved—we want you to shout it from the rooftops. Whenever your logo needs to pull up next to ours, here's how we like to do co-branding.

Do this. (Please.)

DO
Keep our logo flat, straight, parallel to the edges.

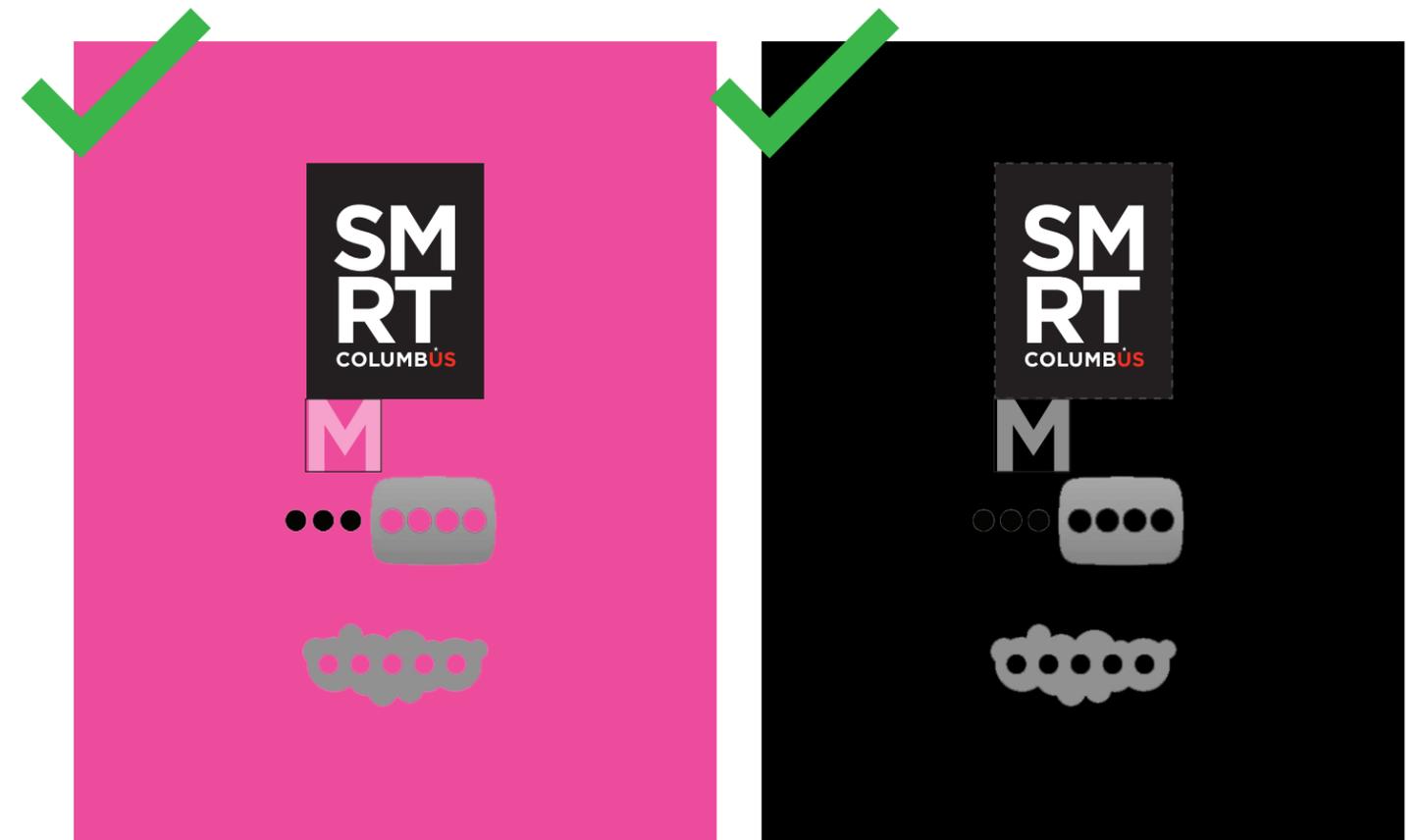
DO
Align our logo horizontally or vertically with partner logos.



Don't do this. (Ever.)

DON'T
Angle our logo (or anybody else's) in any layout.

DON'T
Crowd our logo with partner logos.



OUR NAME

“SMRT” or “Smart”?



This is our logo.
Nice, isn't it?

Smart Columbus

And this is our name.
Simple, right?

Know which one to use.

We want to be known as “smart.”
Not as being too clever. So we use “SMRT”
in our logo, but “smart” everywhere else.
Including in our name.

Here's how to remember
when to be “SMRT” or “smart.”

“**SMRT**” is our logomark.
“**Smart**” is our name.

“**SMRT**” is what we see.
“**Smart**” is what we say.

OUR NAME DO'S & DON'TS



Do this. (Please.)

DO
use **"SMRT"** only
for our logo.

DO
use **"Smart"**
in our written name.

DO
use **"smart"**
as a word in headlines
and sentences.

Don't do this. (Ever.)

DON'T
put **"Smart"**
in our logo.

DON'T
use **"SMRT"**
as part of our name.

DON'T
use **"SMRT"**
in a headline or sentence.



LOGO SIZE

The most important rule

Our logo is available for download to anyone who needs it. This is not a concept or suggestion... if it's going to be used, it should be used as art.

Always scale the Smart Columbus logo elements together as a unit – to keep the design intact. Nothing else, except the star, the letters “SMRT,” and the word “Columbus,” should ever sit inside the box.

 **minimum**
1/2” for print
85 pixels for digital



GUIDELINES

Minimum size, print

Staying above our minimum size requirement ensures people can read our logo. In print, the Smart Columbus logo should never appear smaller than 1/2 inch wide, measured from the left of the black box to the outer right of the box.

Minimum size, digital

For digital uses, the Smart Columbus logo should never appear smaller than 85 pixels wide, measured from the left of the black box to the outer right of the box.

Clear space

Our Smart Columbus logo doesn't like traffic jams. Space around the logo ensures people find their way to it.

If you must place our logo in a tight space, always maintain a minimum clear space around the logo. The minimum clear space is based on the cap squared size of the letter “M” in our logo.

LOGO COLOR



DESIGN TIP:

The preferred version of our Smart Columbus logo uses the black box. However, on a field of black, as on this t-shirt, the logo appears as white and red type with no box.



GUIDELINES

Two-color preferred

The PMS 1795 + Process Black version of the Smart Columbus logo is our preferred color combination on a light or white background.

On images or color backgrounds, the same two-color treatment should work.

Two-color reverse without the box

Only on a black background, use the Smart Columbus logo without the black box. The proportion and position of the letters and the word “Columbus” should not be altered.

One-color

Only when a second color is not an option, the logo may be used as one color.

GRAPHICS

LOGO SUPPORT

SM
RT

←
Primary

SM
RT

←
Secondary

SM
RT

←
Tertiary

The power of our logo is ensured through consistent use. It may also be enhanced by adding graphic variations of the letters “SMRT.”

Using these logo-based supporting graphics, always with our complete logo, helps convey motion, movement, and mobility in an impactful way. Additional graphic elements (next page) also build brand recognition and add visual interest.

Please see the next page and examples throughout this guide for inspiration and proper use.

SM
RT

DESIGN TIP:
These logo-based graphics can help support our identity. The tertiary version is best used rather large, so the more complex lines have room to breathe and don't visually vibrate.





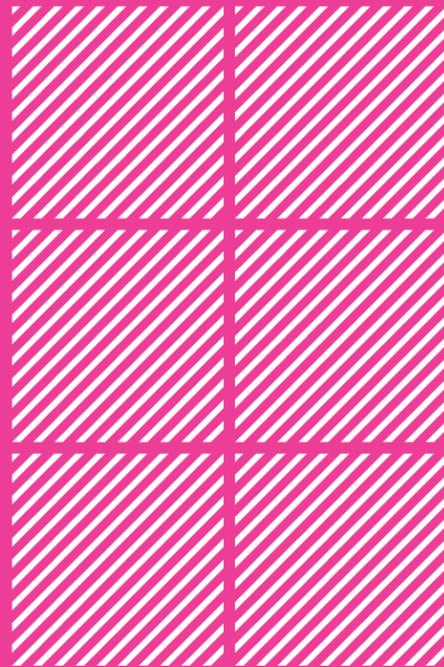
GRAPHICS

SECONDARY: VISUAL SUPPORT

★
US

STAR US

Smart
is just
the
START.



DIAGONAL STACK



LINE STAR



MESH LINES



DESIGN TIP:

The Smart Columbus visual system relies on using multiple elements together. Using just one piece dilutes our brand identity; the dynamic mix of several elements is what truly gives our system life.

Using these supporting graphic elements reinforces our brand identity and helps express our Future Forward brand personality. See examples within this document for inspiration and proper use.

COLORS

Smart Columbus shows its colors.

Our colors reflect the present and point to our future.

In keeping with our origins, our official logo appears in Columbus red, black, and white.

To these colors, we've added a complementary set of bright, futuristic colors. They exemplify the concept of collaboration. We started with cyan, magenta, and yellow—which you may recognize as the building blocks of four-color printing. Then we overlapped them to create even more colors—orange, green, and purple.

These four colors make us bold and inspiring, adding warmth and excitement to everything we do.

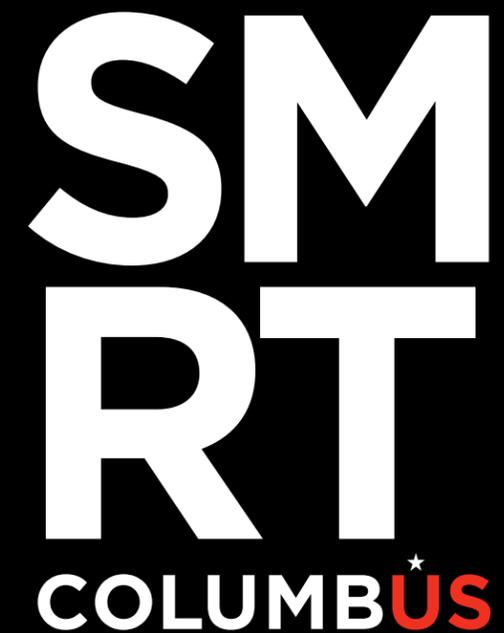
GUIDELINES

Red + black for the logo

Use these colors for the two-color version of our logo to tie us closely to the Columbus brand.

Brights for everything else

This palette of four colors can be splashed boldly across our communications. Use the colors as if we own them, and we will. They play well together, so you can mix and match. Use a few or use them all. Put them on type, apply them to patterns and other graphic elements, use them as filters over photographs.



PMS 1795
R: 238, G: 53, B: 36



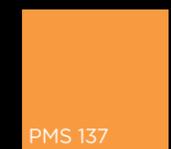
PMS 299C

R: 0, G: 174, B: 239
C=100, M=0, Y=0, K=14



PMS 297

R: 108, G: 197, B: 233
C=54, M=4, Y=2, K=0



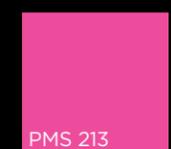
PMS 137

R: 255, G: 164, B: 0
C=0, M=42, Y=100, K=0



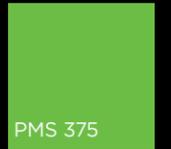
PMS 123

R: 255, G: 198, B: 39
C=0, M=22, Y=93, K=0



PMS 213

R: 234, G: 29, B: 118
C=0, M=85, Y=0, K=0



PMS 375

R: 149, G: 214, B: 0
C=62, M=0, Y=100, K=0

PHOTOGRAPHY

GUIDELINES

What's the subject?

Be direct with your image choices, yet not too literal.

Our style is part image, part treatment.

Because color is such an important part of our brand look and feel, we often bring brand colors into our photos to make them more unique to us.

Go bold.

Add a “smart” filter to photography, always adding interest and color to existing photography so it doesn't appear conventional.

Choose confidently.

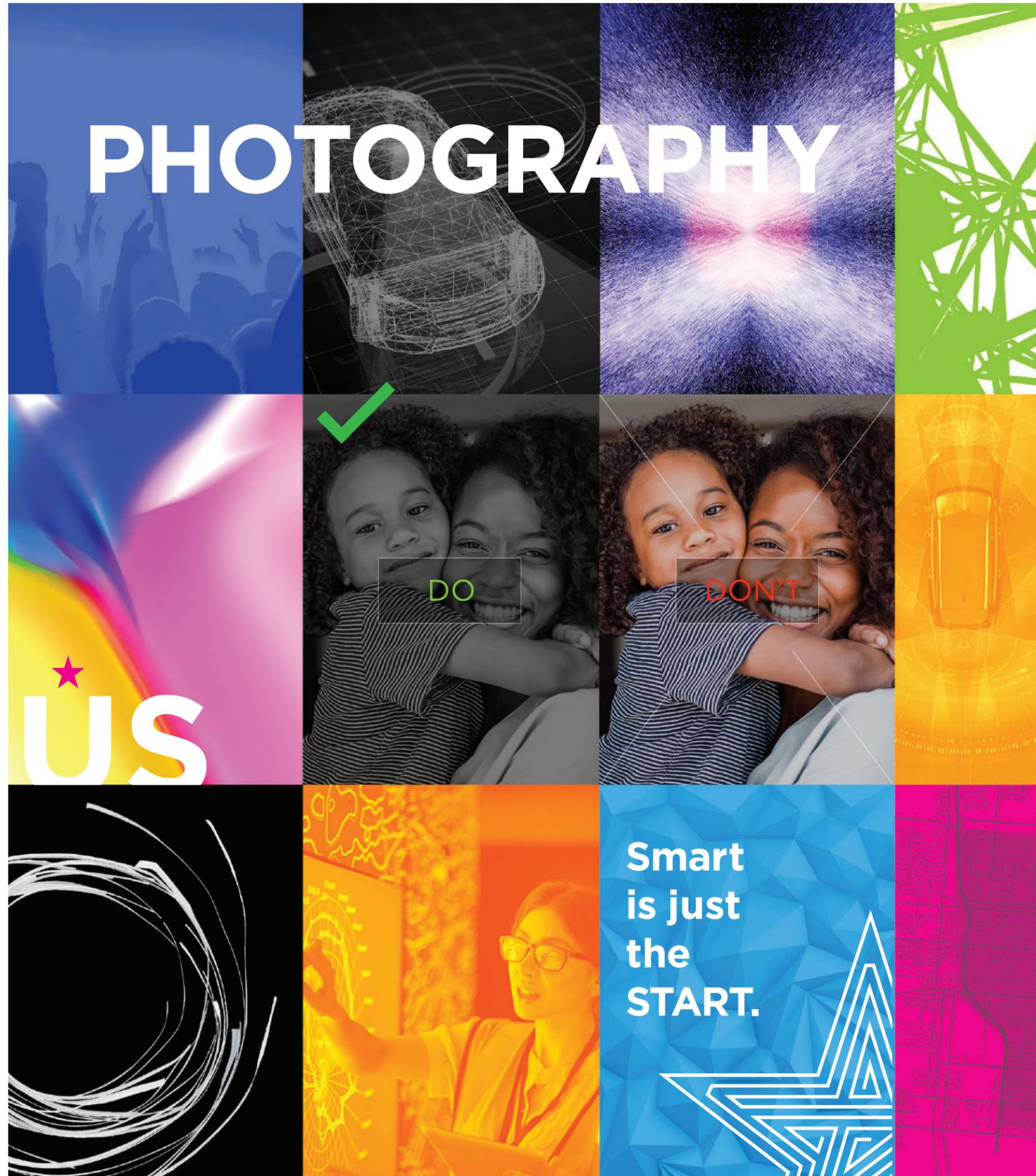
Think less about shooting new images, and more about choosing the right images—modern and thought-provoking, not cliché. Consider subject matter and focal point, too.

Make it inspiring.

Showing people or an interesting detail? Crop in tight. Consider compositions that are dynamic or asymmetrical. Mix in a variety of closeups, wide shots, unusual angles, textures, and dynamic shots.

Stay empathetic.

Remember to include human elements. Convey empathy and humanity with large faces, emotion and action. Check images to make sure we're representing the diversity of our community.



TYPOGRAPHY

The font we use reflects our brand and helps ensure bold clarity in the messages we convey.

We use GOTHAM, a clean, simple sans serif typeface.

GOTHAM BOLD

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

GOTHAM BOOK

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

We use ARIAL as an alternate font only when GOTHAM is not available.

ARIAL REGULAR

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ARIAL BOLD

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

GUIDELINES

Type reinforces hierarchy

Use variations in type weight and size to match the hierarchy of the message: headlines, bolder and larger; subheads, lighter and smaller; body copy, smallest. Variation within lines of copy can be distracting and make it hard to read.

Headlines: **GOTHAM BOLD**

Use in all caps, with a -25 letter spacing.

Subheads and body copy: GOTHAM BOOK

Use with standard letter spacing. Add a bit more line spacing for paragraphs to make the content more inviting and comfortable to read.

TONE OF VOICE

Our tone of voice is how we speak and write. Like the other elements of our brand, it reflects our Future Forward brand personality.

We speak in a unique voice.

Our voice is not the sum of US. Not the voice of an impersonal organization. Not the voice of an engineer or a politician. Our brand voice is a unique, clear, singular tone and style that we use for writing to all of our audiences. We may pitch it up or down, be high-brow or super-familiar, but it should always feel as if it comes from one person—the same person.

Here we offer some guidelines for achieving the right tone and writing effectively.

Our Future Forward personality comes through:

PROGRESSIVE.

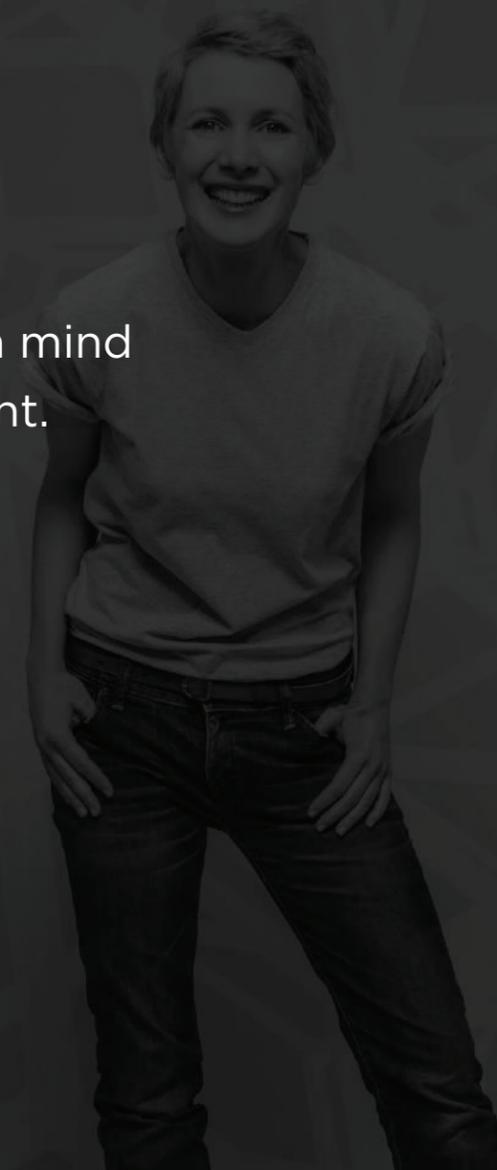
INSPIRING.

EMPATHETIC.

Keeping these personality traits in mind will help you structure your content.



US



STONE OF VOICE PROGRESSIVE

Bold, concise, direct. Being progressive means being bold and concise. Intelligent without being too clever. Smart (of course). Honest. Direct. Accountable. We answer the question that is asked.

No need to embellish. We are leaders and innovators. We don't make outrageous claims. Our vision and confidence impress people, so we don't need to embellish or overstate things. At the same time, our voice is not humble. Our work is too important for that.

Thoughtful, logical, linear. We are thoughtful, logical, and linear when explaining things. Because our subject is complex and unfamiliar to many people, we lead people through new concepts by bridging from the familiar to the unknown.

GUIDELINES

Begin each paragraph with the most important information. Use short paragraphs and single-sentence paragraphs to make key statements really pop.

Avoid "weasel" words: maybe, somewhat, perhaps, generally, usually, mostly, probably, possibly, would, might, seems... They make us less bold.

Clichés and jargon cloud your point. Avoid putting too many adjectives and nouns together, such as: consumer multimodal transportation options. Better: consumer options for multimodal transportation. Best: Different ways for people to get around.

Don't throw lists of unfamiliar terms or acronyms at people. Include a brief explanation or more context so they understand.

Be informal: use contractions. Sentence fragments OK. Especially for simplicity or emphasis.

Write it. Cut it in half. Remove redundant sentences, phrases, and words. Delete flowery or overly complex language. (See Hemingway for examples.)

TONE OF VOICE INSPIRING

Passion for action. Even though we deal in big, abstract ideas and complex systems, our passion for action always comes through. What are we doing now? What are we going to do next?

Enthusiasm. It's not just our inspired vision that gets people excited—it's our enthusiasm. We want people to see what we see and feel what we feel. So we make it personal, not remote and theoretical.

The human connection. We talk a lot about benefits and the human connection. We want people to get the feeling that we're all in this together.

GUIDELINES

Don't make it technical if you don't have to. We want people to see the human connection and feel what we are doing for themselves.

Use concrete examples from everyday life to make our vision tangible.

Use inclusive pronouns: you, we, us.

Sprinkle in a surprise now and then to hold attention. Example: Have you thought about what a smart toaster has to do with our city's transportation systems?

Favor active voice and present tense—verbs and actors—rather than passive voice—things or people being done to.

TONE OF VOICE

EMPATHETIC

Approachable. Our message is for people of many different levels of education and sophistication. We speak (and write) the way people talk. We make our message approachable, using more familiar terms, shorter words, and simpler sentences.

Storytelling. We tell stories and talk about human situations. We are inclusive, friendly, and helpful.

Respect. We organize information with empathy for our reader or listener. We assume the best of our audience and the people of our city and speak to them with respect. It's up to us to make sure they understand us.

GUIDELINES

Use fewer, cleaner, more conversational words.

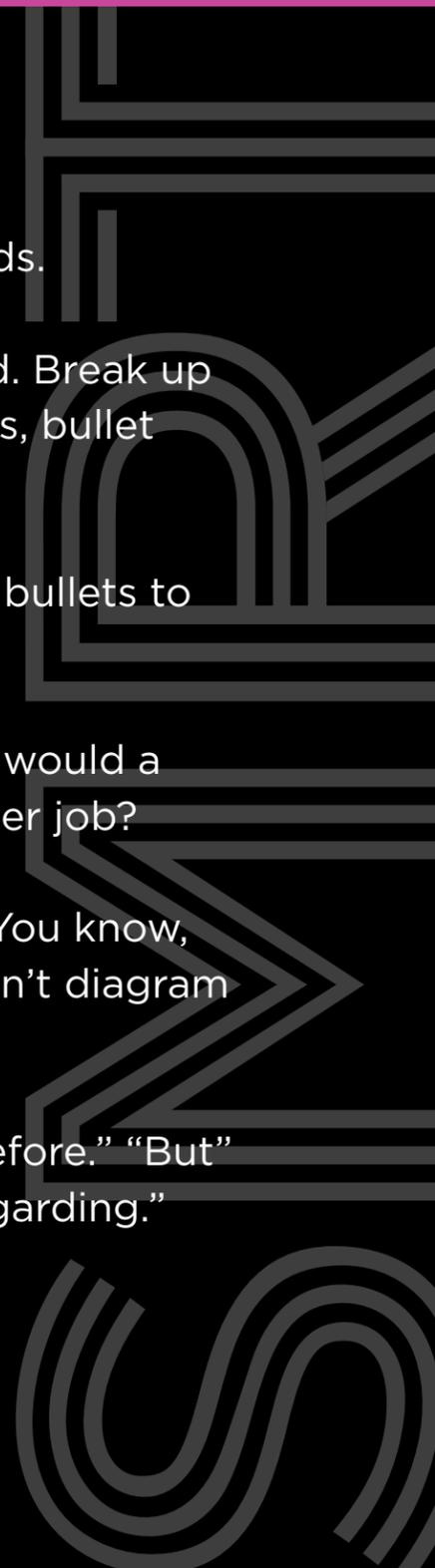
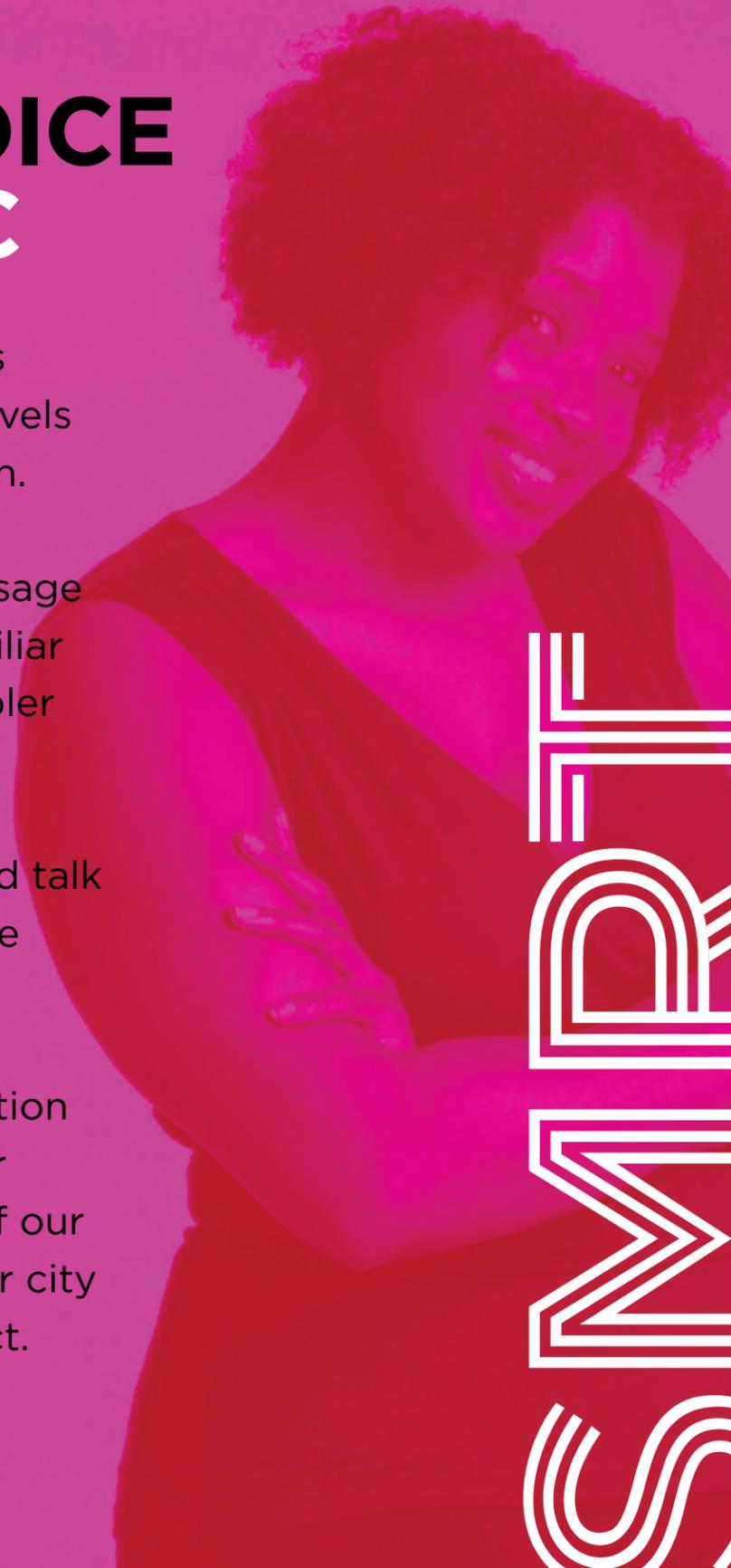
Make it look like something you want to read. Break up info-overload with subheads, topic sentences, bullet points, and captions.

For brevity, number unrelated points, or use bullets to pack a lot of information into a small space.

Think visually. Do you need to write this? Or would a simple chart, infographic, or photo do a better job?

Avoid a lot of dependent clauses and such. You know, the stuff you hated in English class. If you can't diagram it that way, don't write it that way.

Use simple transitions. "So" instead of "therefore." "But" instead of "however." "About" instead of "regarding."

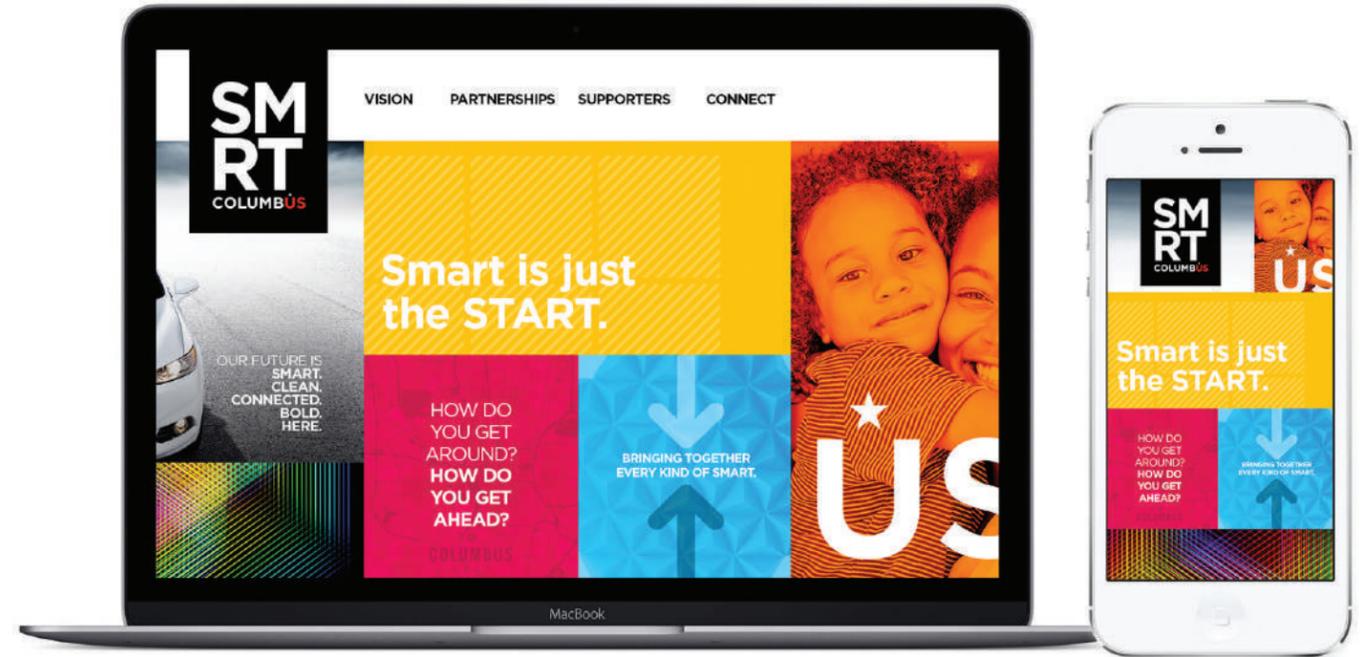


NOW YOU LOOK SMART

Columbus is a smart and open-minded city with a progressive attitude, where people are free to go out on a limb. You now have a toolkit and a license to be creative.

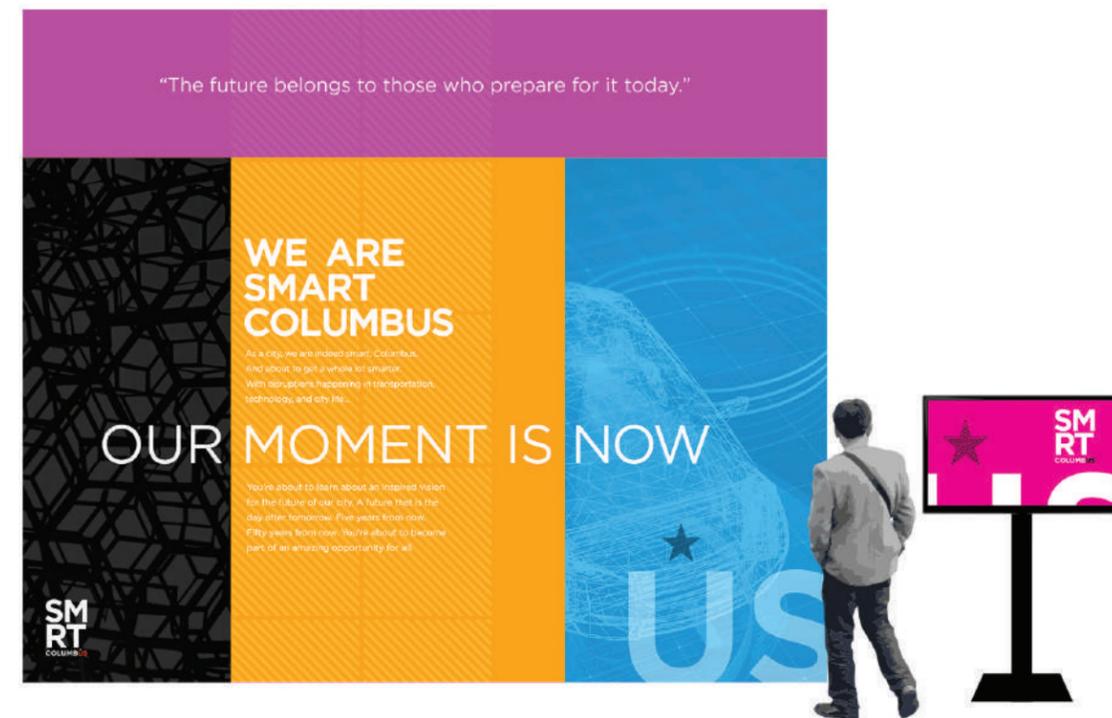
That said, we expect our brand won't go too far off the road. With these guidelines, we hope you're inspired to join us in making Columbus even smarter.

★ DESIGN TIP: Each piece of communication needs care and attention to become visually compelling. The combination of logo, typography, color, graphic elements, photography, and voice is what brings our "future forward" brand to life.



Logo's, Fonts, Graphics and all that fun stuff.

DOWNLOAD





SMART

FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT

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BRANDI BRAUN: BJBraun@columbus.gov.