



Top 10 Branding Best Practices

1.) Distribute Logo Usage Guidelines to Your Network/Center

- a. Make sure that all centers know the best ways to use the brand
- b. Have one person serve as the branding point of contact for questions or to review center-developed materials for compliance

2.) Share a Checklist of *Required* and *Optional* Branded Items for Use at Centers

- a. This can be a quick resource guide to supplement the logo use guidelines
- b. Explain the minimum requirements for branding (i.e. email signatures, letterhead, website) and those that are optional (i.e. name tags, apparel, etc.)

3.) Provide Templates When Appropriate

- a. Keep in mind most centers do not have marketing expertise or graphic designers on staff
- b. Consider hiring a designer or using a graphic design student (if applicable) to design templates as a starting point during the branding roll-out
- c. Print templates
 - i. Brochures, business cards, letterhead, thank-you cards
- d. Web templates
 - i. Banners, headers, web ads, email signatures, video, PowerPoint
- e. Promotional Materials
 - i. Apparel, giveaways, tradeshow displays, signage

4.) House All Logo Files and Templates Online for Easy Access

- a. Utilize your network intranet or a cloud-based service such as dropbox.com or Google Drive
- b. No center should have an excuse for not being able to access the proper branding files!

5.) Form Relationship with Promotional Company for Product Pricing and Ordering

- a. Provide baseline pricing for ordering promotional products or other branded merchandise to your network/center – this is one less step for your centers!

- b. Setup an online store for easy ordering through a preferred vendor or share price sheet and ordering information with centers (by centralizing this offering, costs could potentially be reduced)

6.) Ask Partners to Use New Logo and Branding

- a. Provide logos and guidelines to economic development partners or other SBDC referral sources
- b. Encourage backlinks to partner websites and co-brand materials when appropriate

7.) Document and Share Best Practices within Your Network/Center

- a. Reward and recognize centers that use the brand in the recommended ways
- b. Share examples of best practices in your internal communications or on your intranet

8.) Research Other SBDC Networks for Best Practices

- a. Why reinvent the wheel? Share or exchange templates or design ideas with other networks that have re-branded
- b. Check the America's SBDC website for examples of templates and branding best practices

9.) Regularly Monitor and Track Brand Usage within Your Network/Center

- a. Build branding into your center reviews so that centers realize the importance of using the brand
- b. Utilize marketing interns to perform regular audits of brand usage, follow-up as necessary
- c. Send out branding reminders through internal communications
- d. Designate a marketing point of contact at each center to champion brand best practices and enforce guidelines at their center
- e. Survey center staff to see what new templates or guidance is needed and develop additional templates for use

10.) Update Branding Guidelines Annually with Center Input

- a. Make changes to the guidelines to reflect new ways that the branding should be used as technology evolves (i.e. new social media portals, apps, and other virtual uses)