A strong brand identity doesn't happen overnight. You can't just pick a few colors and slap together a logo. You need to approach your design strategically. This requires deep thinking, a team with strong communication and design skills, and an intimate understanding of your brand. The good news is that while this may seem intimidating, it doesn't have to be. With the right guidance you can move through the process effectively and produce a truly great brand identity. Luckily, we can provide that guidance. Here, you'll learn everything you need to know about designing a brand identity, along with our best tips and tools to do it. But before you start sketching out your logo, let's start with some brand identity basics.

### What Is a Brand Identity?

Is it your logo? Your color palette? Your infographic style? It's all that—and more.

Branding pro Marty Neumeier defines a brand identity as "the outward expression of a brand, including its trademark, name, communications, and visual appearance." To us, a brand identity is the sum total of how your brand looks, feels, and speaks to people. (Sometimes that even includes how it sounds, tastes, feels, and even smells.)

Ultimately, a brand identity is a way to communicate with the world, differentiate yourself from your competition, and create a brand experience that encourages people to engage with you.

Some brands elevate brand identity to an art (think Apple, LEGO, or Levi's). Some brands make it their entry into the

playing field (think Warby Parker or Casper). Unfortunately, some (okay, many) brands struggle because they don't know who they are or don't know how to communicate it effectively. (Not sure if your current brand identity works for you? Here are 9 signs it doesn't.) Regardless of where you fall on that spectrum, one thing is sure. If you want to be a competitive and successful company, crafting a strong brand identity is mandatory. When you can successfully communicate who you are, you can better communicate with people and form the strong relationships you need for long-term success.

What Does a Brand Identity Include?

A logo and a color palette alone do not make a brand identity. When designing your identity, you need to create a comprehensive visual language that can be applied to everything from your website to your packaging. Depending on your brand (and the type of content you plan to create), your needs may be more expansive, but a basic brand identity includes:

- Logo
- Colors
- Typography
- Design System
- Photography
- Illustration
- Iconography
- Data visualization
- Interactive elements
- Video and motion

Web design

Remember: Your brand identity should translate across mediums, so include everything you need to make sure it does.

# The Keys to a Strong Brand Identity

That said, just because you design those elements doesn't mean they're effective. A strong brand identity needs to work for everyone, both your internal team (e.g., brand ambassadors, content creators) and the people who will interact with it (e.g., customers). As you embark on the design process, make sure your brand identity is:

- Distinct: It stands out among competitors and catches people's attention.
- Memorable: It makes a visual impact. (Consider Apple: The logo is so memorable they only include the logo—not their name—on their products.)
- Scalable and flexible: It can grow and evolve with the brand.
- Cohesive: Each piece complements the brand identity.
- Easy to apply: It's intuitive and clear for designers to use.

If any of these elements are missing, it will be challenging for your brand team to do their job well.

### How to Build a Brand Identity

To demystify the process for you, we've crafted this stepby-step guide to build a brand identity. The process can seem intimidating, but we've been through it many times with our creative partners (and through our own rebranding), so we know firsthand what mistakes to avoid, and how to make it easier on everyone.

If your brand is in its early stages or preparing to rebrand and not sure where to start, follow these tips to move through the process seamlessly and build a stronger brand identity that sets you up for success.

## Step 1: Complete Your Brand Strategy

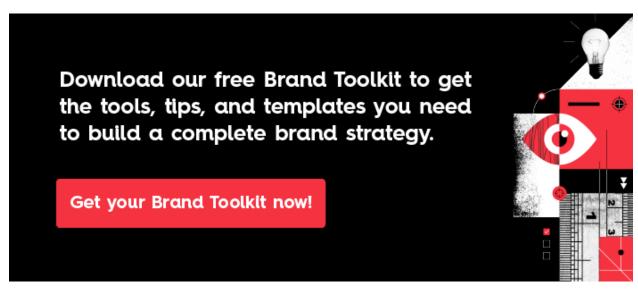
Your brand strategy is a detailed plan that outlines exactly what you're trying to achieve and how you're going to achieve it. It is comprised of your:

- Brand Heart (purpose, vision, mission, values)
- Brand Messaging (<u>brand voice</u>, <u>personality</u>, <u>tagline</u>, <u>value prop</u>, <u>brand messaging pillars</u>)
- Brand Identity (logo, color, typography, etc.)

Your brand identity is really a tool to help you communicate your brand visually, thus supporting your brand strategy. As such, before you dive into your brand identity, it's important to have a fully fleshed out strategy.

### How to Do It

To design a strong brand identity, you need to complete the foundational work of your brand strategy, specifically your Brand Heart and Brand Messaging. These help you understand what it is you're trying to communicate so that you can design a brand identity that successfully does so. If you don't have your brand strategy documented (or have never gone through the exercise), follow our stress-free guide to creating a brand strategy, and download our free Brand Strategy Toolkit below.



Once you've documented your brand strategy—and received approval from leadership—you can focus on brand identity.

Step 2: Dig Into Your Current Brand Identity When you begin a branding project, you want to approach each phase from a philosophical and highly critical standpoint—inspect, poke, and prod until you get to the core of your brand.

Whether you're building your brand identity entirely from scratch or updating a stale identity, you need a full assessment of:

- The current state of your brand's identity
- How that brand identity might be crafted or tweaked to align with your goals going forward

The goal is to understand how your brand is perceived, both internally and externally. Getting an honest and accurate reflection is the only way to understand how and where you're succeeding or how you need to course correct.

### How to Do It

Start with our Brand Audit Questionnaire. This survey is a deep dive into every aspect of your brand, from your values and personality to logo and positioning. Distribute the questionnaire to your internal team. You may also need the perspective of:

- Brand Employees
- Stakeholders
- Customers

While completing this questionnaire may be laborious, it's crucial to build the foundation upon which your visual language will stand.

Example: Brand audit responses provide valuable insight for our designers.

Traditional, Classic	x	<b>Progressive</b>	"my goal is do stuff	
Exclusive	X	Accessible	iiiy goat is do staii	
Corporate	x	Friendly	onginoor	s think is soal"
Serious	x	Friendly engineers think is cool"		
Understated	x	Bold		
Simple	x	Complex		
City, urban	x	Natural	Not Corporate	Hacker
Familiar	x	Disruptive	Innovative	Friendly
Steady, stable	x	Dynamic	Fun	Exclusive
Realistic	x	Idealistic	ruii	Exclusive

# Step 3: Know Your Personas

Your brand identity is the "face" that interacts with the entire world. Whatever you create should accurately communicate who you are. However, one common misconception is that a brand identity is exclusively informed by what your brand wants to present. This isn't

entirely true. It's also informed by what your brand's customers want to engage with, or are accustomed to interacting with. If your identity doesn't resonate with them, it won't be effective.

This doesn't necessarily mean your brand's customers will choose your logo color; it means that you will make more effective design choices once you understand their needs, wants, and values.

### How to Do It

To understand who you're trying to reach, try this easy exercise to create personas that represent your different target segments. These personas identify both demographic and psychographic information that gives you insight into who these people are and what drives them.

Beyond your primary audience (customers), you also want to consider how secondary or tertiary groups might perceive your brand (e.g., other brands or potential employees). This information can also influence your design decisions.

# Step 4: Identify Your Competition

Building a brand identity is all about differentiation: making your brand visible, relevant, and unique. However, without a firm understanding of your competitive landscape, it's easy to blend in. Thus, it's crucial to understand not just who your competition is but how your brand compares, in perception and presentation.

How to Do It

To get a snapshot of the competition, follow our guide to complete a competitive analysis. As you move through the process, pay special attention to how your competitors present themselves in terms of common visual elements, trends, industry-specific visual themes, brand personalities, etc.

For example, we once did competitive research for a brand and found that all of their competitors used the exact same four colors. This isn't uncommon, as many industries tend to gravitate toward the same visual elements (think Netflix and YouTube's red color), but it revealed a great opportunity to differentiate.

One notable example of this: In 2011, video platform Twitch made a splash with their all-purple branding, at a time when their competitors used bold greens and reds. The color instantly became a hallmark of their brand. (BTW, the company was so successful it sold to Amazon for a cool \$1 billion in 2014.)

## Step 5: Write Your Creative Brief

Once you've completed the previous steps, you have the information you need to start design. However, you shouldn't jump right in. Start with a creative brief that details the pertinent info you need to keep your team on the same page—and ensure you create a visual identity that aligns to your brand.

### How to Do It

Use our creative brief template. Note: Don't provide too much or too little info. Your brief should always inform, not overwhelm.

# Step 6: Brainstorm Your Visuals

By this time, you have a ton of information to help inform ideation, between your competitive analysis, brand audit, personas, and brief. At this stage, you want to take that text-based information and translate it into visual concepts.

Luckily, the information you have is often steeped in emotional language about your brand's personality, goals, and values. Now the challenge is to figure out how to communicate and enhance those sentiments through visuals.

### How to Do It

To start, have your team brainstorm word clouds that describe your brand. (Or you can come in with 5-7 descriptors to start.) The focus is not to free associate words into other words. The goal is to bring those words to life through visuals.

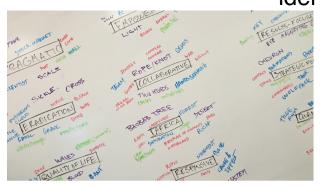
Think about what those words make you visualize. The associations may be abstract, but it is important to get everything out. For example, if your brand service is "fast," don't talk about other words for "fast" (e.g., "swift"). Think about what fast brings to mind.

FAST > CHEETAH > LIGHTNING BOLT > ZEUS
Think about what concepts you can visualize. Pro tip: It's usually the elements that elicit the strongest emotional response, trigger additional imagery, and help you build a visual playground to go nuts in.

Example: Our team at work for the ESPEN (Expanded Special Project For Elimination of Neglected Tropical

Diseases) brand identity, a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation project. After brainstorming, our design team began to quick sketch every visual idea that came to them.

These ideas helped form the foundation of the brand identity.









Step 7: Design Your Individual Elements
Here comes the fun (and challenging) part. You want to
design each element in the order dictated here, as each
element influences the other.

### Logo

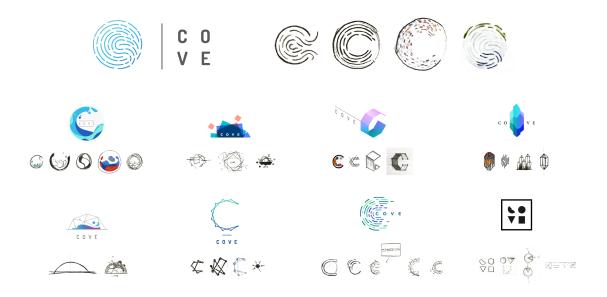
A brand identity is an intricate design system. Each element influences the other, but it starts with your logo.

### How to Do It

You can go old-school here and bust out the pencils to free-sketch. As you go through iterations, flesh out logo mark, core shapes, and complementary imagery—all in

black and white. As you receive feedback and iterate, you want to make sure that the core imagery is powerful enough to deliver the message on its own, without the enhancement of color. For more tips on logo design, check out our guide to designing a logo you love.

Example: You can see many iterations of our logo for UCI Applied Innovation, from the most basic black-and-white sketch to fully rendered images.



And the final result:



### Colors

Once you have a solid logo, you can explore your color palette. Color is a great tool to differentiate your brand from competitors, but know that color can also elicit strong emotions, so choose wisely.

How to Do It

A good color palette is clean and flexible, supplying designers enough choices to be creative but not enough to overwhelm. This includes:

- 1 main color
- · 2 primary colors
- 3-5 complementary colors
- 2 accent colors

For more tips, see our guide to <u>choosing the right colors</u> <u>for your brand identity</u>.

Example: Color guidelines from the Visage brand identity help the team create a variety of colorful and, most importantly, on-brand content.



# **Typography**

Every visual element in your identity should contribute to a cohesive visual language, and thus each should

complement the other. This is particularly true of typography, which should be informed by the shape of your logo.

### How to Do It

Every stage has its own unique challenges, but typography can be tricky in a visual language, especially when brands follow trends (serif vs. non-serif) that are hot for a second but quickly become dated or appear unoriginal.

To keep it simple, limit the number of font families to 2-3. This generally includes primary and secondary brand typefaces for specific purposes, such as body copy typeface, UI typeface, etc. For a deeper dive into choosing typography (including whether or not to license fonts), see our guide to choosing the best typography for your brand. Example: Guidelines from the Visage brand identity dictate how typography should be used.

### SANS SERIF TYPEFACE

The primary sans serif typeface is Mark Simonson's easy to read, and open. With its modern proportions for display and text. It reads well on mobile devices

Semibold, Bold, Extrabold, and Black. It has matching italics for all weights and widths.

Thin, Light, Regular, Semibold, and Bold.

### WEB AND SCREEN

provide consistent typography styles across print and digital communications.

### NOTE

The Extrabold and Black weights should be used

Proxima Nova Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Proxima Nova Regular ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefahiiklmnoparstuvwxvz

Proxima Nova Regular ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopgrstuvwxyz 0123456789

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789

Proxima Nova Bold ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789

Proxima Nova Extrabold abcdefghiiklmnopgrstuvwxvz 0123456789

Proxima Black Italic ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPGRSTVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Proxima Nova Regular ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Proxima Nova Regular ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijk/mnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789

Proxima Nova Reaular Italia ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopgrstuvwxyz 0123456789

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ** abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789

Proxima Nova Bold Italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789

Proxima Nova Extrabold ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefahiikimnoparstuvwxvz 0123456789

> Proxima Black Italic ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

# **Design System**

PROXIMA NOVA IS AVAILABLE AT FONT BUREAU

This is often a weak point in visual languages. Brands think that because they have their logo, color, and typography set, they can combine them however they like. But because brand identity is all about introducing yourself to people effectively, it's important to make it an enjoyable experience. In information design, that means providing a truly consistent and cohesive presentation.

### How to Do It

The goal is to design an intuitive hierarchy and layout that makes it easy to navigate visual communication. Consider the proper order of content, including headers, subheaders, body copy, images, blurbs, etc. For more tips, see the Interaction Design Foundation's guide to visual hierarchy.

Example: The hierarchy guidelines from the Avalere Health brand identity include detailed real-world examples of proper layout.

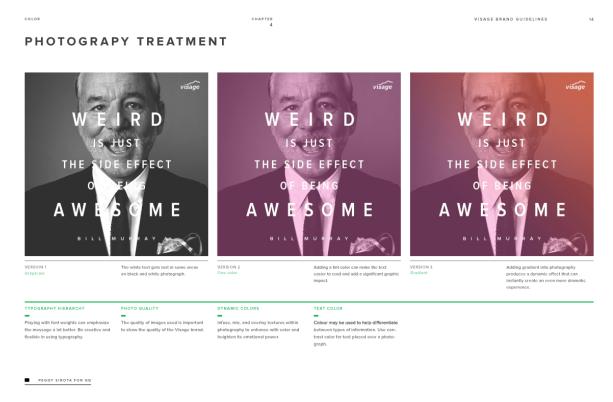


### Photography

Photography plays a huge role in your brand identity, from your product images to your advertising. It's important to identify clear guidelines about the types of images (and visual treatments) that are and aren't appropriate.

### How to Do It

To learn more about the role of images in storytelling, see Fabrik Brand's guide to brand photography. Example: The photo guidelines from the Visage brand identity include detailed instructions on the use of filters and typography as well.



### Illustration

When it comes to illustration, you need a cohesive and uniform language. Don't over-illustrate or use clashing styles. Instead, think of how your illustration will be used in conjunction with other visual elements.

### How to Do It

To figure out how to illustrate your brand, follow Smashing Magazine's tips for drawing a strong visual identity. Example: The Civ.works brand identity includes a simple and clean illustration style.



### Who's on board





### GEORGE A. POLISNER, FOUNDER

The resident old guy on the team, with more than 20 years of development and engineering experience in the tech industry. George brings his extensive background in corporate social behavior to the field of participatory democracy.

### GOLDA VELEZ, CHIEF ARCHITECT

Golda has worked for Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Oracle. and other major enterprises and startups to direct complex projects, programs, and teams. She lends her rocket scientist mind to building our visually compelling, easy-to-use, privacy-protected social network.

### ADAM LAKE, NETWORK/OUTREACH

Adam has promoted civic cooperation, empower and engagement since his early days as a Virginia Tech student. His ideas and vision as a disruptor of the conventional actively help us shape the civ.works concept.

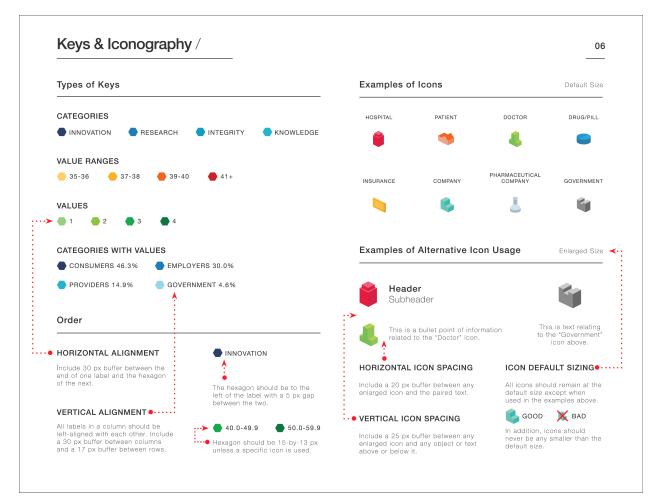


### Iconography

Good iconography is influenced not just by the creative visual language but by the applications for the work. It depends on what your product or service is, as well as the industry and medium (e.g., web-only vs. UI vs. sales brochures).

### How to Do It

Iconography is part art, part science, so you want to make sure things are as clear as possible. For more tips, see Design Systems' complete guide to iconography. Example: Iconography guidelines from the Avalere Health brand identity.

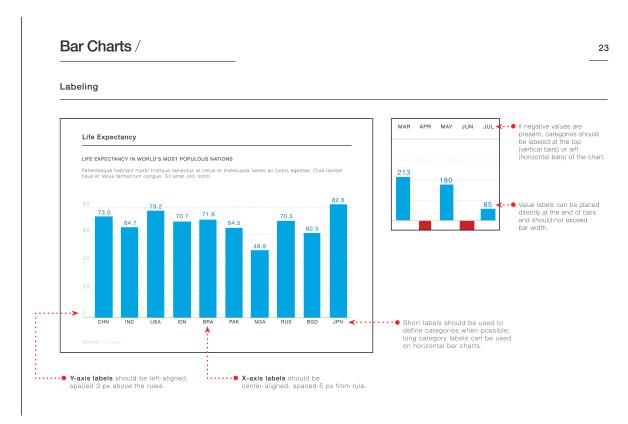


### **Data Visualization**

Data should be designed for clarity and comprehension, in addition to aesthetic appeal. Thus, it's important to design visualizations that adhere to data visualization best practices.

### How to Do It

If you're not familiar with designing data, find out how to design the most common charts and graphs with our Data Visualization 101 guide, and check out these 25 tips to improve your data visualizations.



### Additional Elements

Again, your brand may have unique communication needs, depending on your industry, content, etc. Make sure that your brand identity includes these elements, such as:

- Interactive elements
- Motion graphics
- Video
- Web design

For more tips, check out our <u>checklist of everything to include in your visual identity</u>.

Step 8: Build Your Brand Style Guide
The only thing more heartbreaking than a poorly designed brand identity is a beautifully designed identity that is

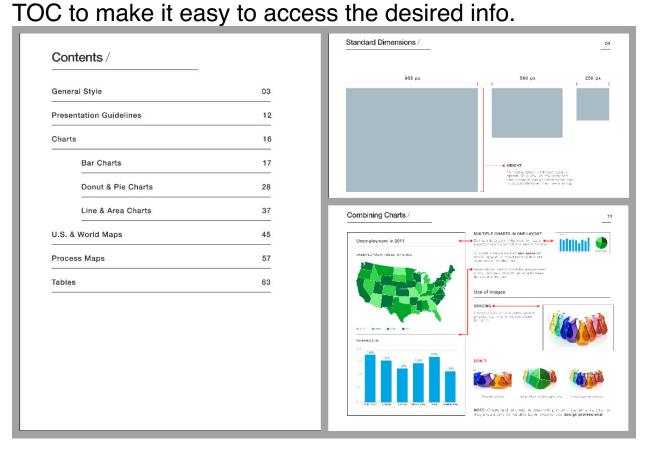
never used or used incorrectly. A brand style guide is the savior here—if it's crafted the right way.

### How to Do It

Include clear, easy-to-follow guidelines for every part of the brand identity, including examples and use-cases. Also include practical detail, denoting as much information as needed to help your designer replicate the brand identity successfully. For more direction, follow our guide to creating a brand style guide people will actually use. Once completed, make sure guidelines are distributed to the team, stored in an easy-to-access place, and regularly

updated.

Example: The Avalere Health style guide includes a handy



**Keep Your Brand Identity Strong** 

Designing a successful brand identity takes a lot of work and collaboration. To keep your team on the same page and empower them to do the best job possible, make sure they are:

- Educated: Find out what <u>brand identity mistakes to</u> <u>avoid</u> at every stage.
- Inspired: Check out these <u>15 examples of brands with</u> an awesome visual identity.
- Equipped: Bookmark these 75 tips, tools, and resources to help your team create a great brand identity, and find out how to make sure all your content is on brand going forward.

And if you're feeling overwhelmed or don't have the resources to take on the project yourself, consider bringing in some expert help. Follow our tips to find the right creative agency for you, or chat with us. We're happy help you get your brand on the right track.

Note: First published in 2016, this post was updated in April 2020 to include additional resources.

# Course +enrollment +transformation =ambassadors business wheel

Online business engine

Most profitable course Problem solved Obstacle overcome Skill mastered Career/expertise
Over to hero

People will pay for your expertise Youprenuer pay to solve their problem

Your clients is at 0 we must get them to 100 Course
Then the formula they apply the formula and become the hero

What is the 0 position.

What is the hero stage for my client.

Create a formula to get them there

Pre-sell your course prototype
Profitable offer prototype
Testing out what the clients need
Formula transformation
Selling the program doing it live

6 to 8 weeks test live first then video

Easiest sell
Profitable content
Book a call
Enroll

Content

Educate
XExperience
Problem solving
Execution
Relevant to pain
Take action

Evergreen
Traffic-email list-masterclass- cash flow

Who I want to work CEO, business, owners, coach, expert

Sacrificing on your price
Breaks boundaries
Devalues your worth and outcome
Makes you vulnerable resulting in bad clients (complaints and headaches
Short game
Vs

Charging my worth
Makes you premium choice
You know your value you come desirable
More profitable makes you less reactive
Long game

Your price is to high how to respond

Recap (what is this costing you) current cost and repeat that for clarity what are you comparing that too?

Compare

Fit- if don't think it will work i cant provide a guarantee this isn't a magic pill you have to believe it will work

Value based pricing

Cost + income-barrier what is everyone else charging Emotional cost physical cost mental cost by not having the solution

Find ideal client how much will they make. Income goal for me

### Course Curriculum

KNOWLEDGE: Content Creation for Boutiques

• Start

Message from Your Instructor

Start

Things to Know Before You Pass Go

• Start

An Overview of Content Creation & Planning (17:59)

• Start

Developing a Strategy

• <u>Start</u>

**Content Marketing** 

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Worksheets

Implementation

- <u>Start</u>
  <u>Taking Your Photos, Recording Videos & Editing</u>
  (15:04)
- Start
  Using Canva to Create Consistent Content (38:08)
- Start
  Organizing Content Posts (27:29)
- <u>Start</u>
  <u>Developing Blog Topics Based on Products/Collections</u>
- <u>Start</u> <u>Using Pinterest for Inspiration & Extra Content (8:11)</u>
- <u>Start</u> <u>Email Content</u>
- <u>Start</u>
   <u>Creating Captions & Establishing Your Brand Voice on Social</u>
- <u>Start</u><u>Photography Tools I Use</u>