



CREATIVITY
INCLUDED
Sample Brand Strategy

INTRODUCTION

 **This document will define** the most important aspects of your brand: your *brand vision*, *brand values*, the *identity of your audience*, your *brand promise*, and your *brand story*.

Your brand vision is the ultimate goal of your company. What does your finish line look like? You'll be able to ask yourself "What decision will get me closer to that finish line?"

Your brand values are the non-negotiable core beliefs you hold. Even if your company is just you, these values will influence everything from who you hire to how you respond to support tickets.

Your audience profile has been determined based on the poll we conducted. The first section explains the poll data visually. The second is audience personas; profiles that help humanize your decisions. Ask yourself "Would Alex understand this documentation?" or "Would Ingrid get excited about that feature?"

Your brand promise is telling your customers what you promise you'll do for them. You probably know this part as a "tagline". We'll keep it short, sweet, and easy to remember.

Your brand story is the sum of all of those parts. Once you've read the entire document you'll know who you are, who your audience is, and how to move forward and tell that story to your audience.

01 | BRAND VISION

 **Your brand vision** is your finish line—the point where you can look back and say *“It was totally worth it.”* We’ve defined three moments that will let you say *“I did it!”*

Milestone One

To have an army of robot minions

It’s impossible to take over the world without at least a small army of robot minions.

Milestone Two

To make a dent in the universe

I would like to change the world, even if it’s just the world of our customers.

Milestone Three

To change the way companies look at branding

When every company in the world, from a single freelancer to a major corporation applies the principles of branding first to their marketing materials, visual identity, design process and product development.

02 | CORE VALUES

I believe everyone has a story to tell

The essence of branding is telling potential customers who you are and why they should care. The best way to do that is with a compelling story. Discovering a company's own unique story and voice is the reason I'm in business. I've been a storyteller since I wrote my first book in the fifth grade.

I believe in giving back

I've been fortunate enough to have had some amazingly talented people teach and mentor me. They have all been such a huge example of generosity that I feel it's my duty to give back to others via pro bono projects and speaking at WordCamps.

I believe in empowering women

I'm not ashamed to say I'm a feminist. I don't limit myself to mentoring, sharing knowledge, and working with women, but I am active in expanding the visibility of women in technology.

I believe you should never stop learning

One of the things I love most about my job is that I'm always learning new things. It's important to me to stay ahead of the learning curve. It's also important for me to share that knowledge with the next generation of designers.

I believe in being a partner, not a vendor

Building a brand works best when the client and strategist are partners. A brand strategy where a client who just wants you to execute their idea as a vendor rarely works. The best work emerges when we work together and respect each other's unique skills, knowledge and perspective.

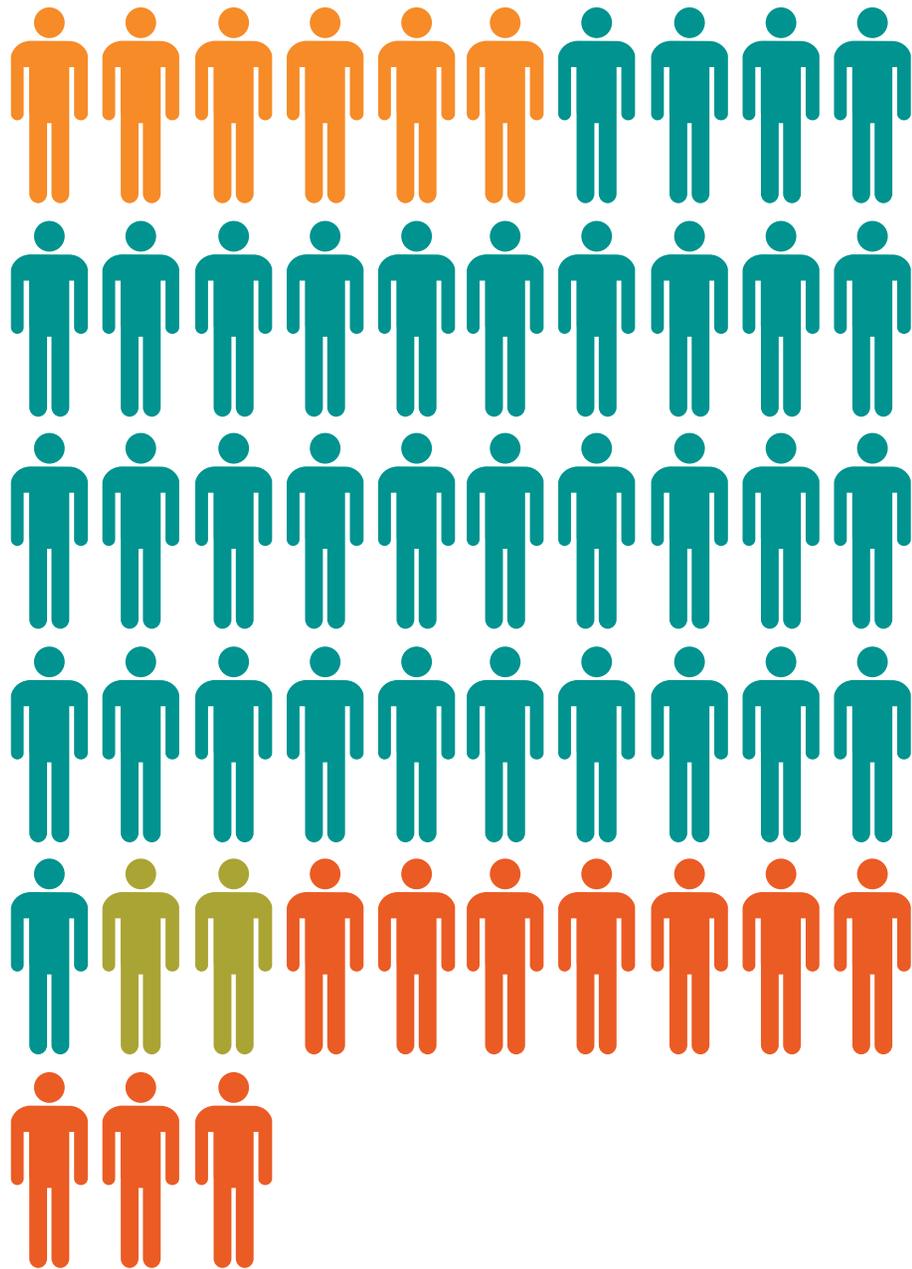
03A | AUDIENCE POLL

 **I conduct research as the first step** in creating a brand strategy. If you have an existing site we'll analyze your top content. If you're a new company, we'll create and conduct an audience poll.

I never start a project without data. It's like building a house without plans. Research doesn't have to mean months of testing and a huge corporate budget. If you're interested in a book that has influenced my view of the research page, check out "Just Enough Research" by Erika Hall from A Book Apart.

Research is not a one and done task. I recommend revisiting it every six months to gain a better understanding of how your audience is evolving and what messages they're responding to.

The next several pages are data visualizations. While numbers and data are great, spreadsheets are boring. Translating them into a visual language makes them more easily understood and accessible.

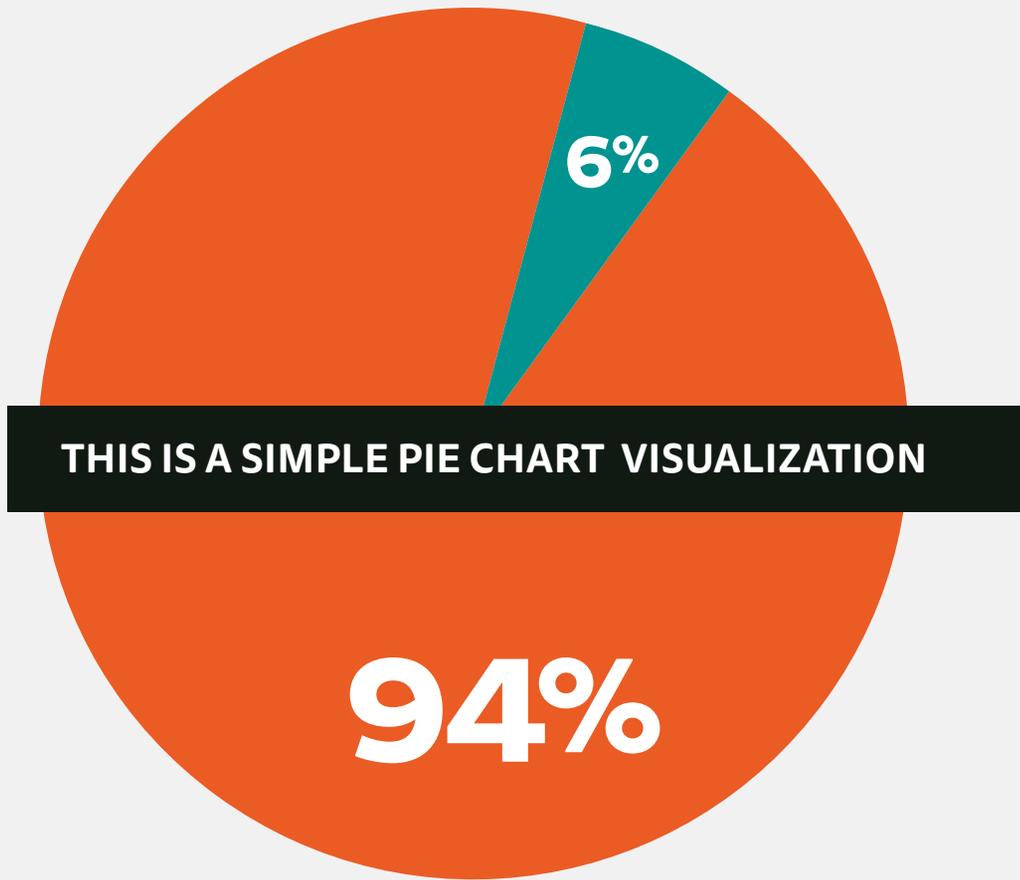


*** This is a data visualization** that represents the answer to a question in an audience poll.

This is one style of chart used to show the results of an audience poll. It is created specifically for data that is best when trying to visualize the number of people in your audience who respond to a certain message.

THIS IS THE CHART'S LEGEND

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DATA TYPE ONE



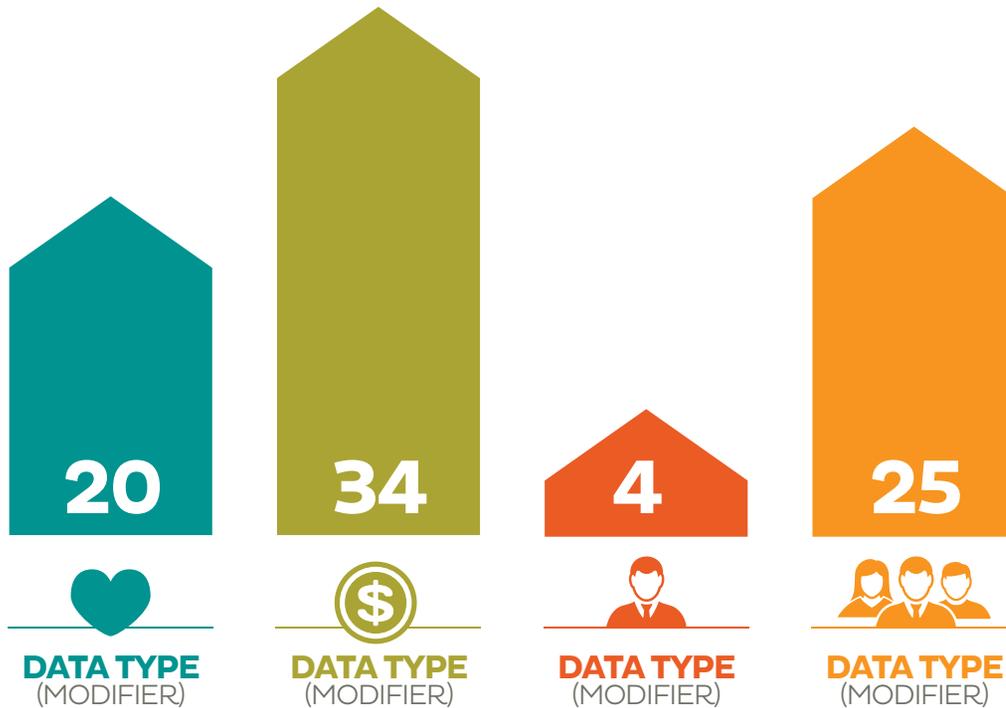
DATA TYPE TWO



This is a data visualization that represents the answer to a question in an audience poll.

This is one style of chart used to show the results of an audience poll. It is created specifically for data that is best when trying to visualize the number of people in your audience who respond to a certain message.

THIS IS A BAR CHART VISUALIZATION WITH ICONS



 **This is a data visualization** that represents the answer to a question in an audience poll.

This is one style of chart used to show the results of an audience poll. It is created specifically for data that is best when trying to visualize the number of people in your audience who respond to a certain message.

THIS IS A SIMPLE HORIZONTAL BAR CHART



Type of **data one**



Type of **data two**



Type of **data three**



Type of **data four**



Type of **data five**



Type of **data six**



Type of **data seven**



This is a data visualization that represents the answer to a question in an audience poll.

This is one style of chart used to show the results of an audience poll. It is created specifically for data that is best when trying to visualize the number of people in your audience who respond to a certain message.

03B | AUDIENCE PERSONAS

 **Let me introduce you to your target audience.** While this sample only contains one persona (to reduce redundancy) an actual brand strategy document will determine a secondary and tertiary audience as well.

You should keep these people in mind when making decisions about design, typography, logo direction, headline messaging and copywriting. Always ask yourself how this person would react to your decisions and choose accordingly.



DOUG | Primary Audience Segment Label

WHAT'S DOUG'S STORY?

This is a summary of who Doug is. This is the story of why he came to your site and what pain point you can solve for him. We expand on the story below.

You want to include details that matter. I like to explore why they initially come looking for the product, service, or idea.

This is who Doug is now. Your goal is to know him as a person as well as a customer. What does he like. What common vision and values do you share?

This is who Doug wants to be. People want a product, service or idea to make their lives better. Figure out what makes Doug feel like you've changed his life for the better.

What's a guy to do?



WHAT PROBLEM IS DOUG TRYING TO SOLVE?

Explain his problem in-depth here. I like to create a specific scenario. Creating a complete story here helps us to clarify that Doug belongs in this audience.

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Explain how you will solve that pain point here. Do you understand this audience segment's immediate need? This is where we figure out how to explain why they should become a part of your tribe.

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04 | BRAND PROMISE

A tagline-length promise



The big picture idea behind your product, service or idea is articulated here. It's not about what you do, or how you do it, but about why you do what you do, and why a potential customer should care. The goal is to articulate your why.

05 | BRAND STORY



Have you ever read a book or watched a movie where nobody really did anything of interest, there wasn't a lot of conflict and you didn't care about the characters at all? (*Cold Mountain, I'm looking at you.*) You don't want your brand to tell that story.

Your story is non-fiction, not a fairy tale. It isn't about who you want to be, or think your customers want you to be. It's about who you really are, right now.

Each step of the strategy process leads up to this narrative.

Brand Vision

Your brand vision is the key to determining if your story is successful. This is where you can dream huge. Know what your happy ending is.

Core Values

Articulating your brand values allows you to determine what type of story you're telling. Is it an uplifting tale of the underdog defeating the giant, or is it a story of rebirth, renewal and hope? All of those components help us craft the language and tone we use.

Research

Research defines our story arc—how we build toward the point of greatest interest in your story, defines the climax or crisis and answers questions like "How is the conflict resolved?" (*Here's a hint: it's usually by buying your product, service or idea.*) Ultimately your research helps you communicate how the character's life is better once the conflict has been resolved.

Personas

Our audience personas are our character sketches. Who's the hero? Who's the villain? How do they change during the course of the story?

Promise

This is the theme that runs throughout your story. Everything should lead up to this one simple, memorable thing you do.