

 Smithsonian

identity guidelines

Version 1.1 — 08.01.18

Identity guidelines are always a work-in-progress.

table of contents



Brand Strategy

- 06** Our Vision
- 07** Our Mission
- 08** Brand Values
- 09** Positioning
- 10** Audience Segments
- 14** Messaging



Visual Style

- 16** Color
- 19** Typography
- 22** Our Identity
- 23** Logo Anatomy
- 25** Primary Logo
- 29** Secondary Logo
- 33** Tertiary Logo
- 37** Seal Logo
- 40** Legacy Lockups
- 45** Co-branding
- 46** The Hybrid Model
- 54** Logo Don'ts
- 57** Wayfinding & Signage
- 60** Brand Extensions
- 65** Visual Options



Digital Applications

- 72** Digital Co-branding
- 77** Social Media

letter from the Secretary

For more than 171 years, the name “Smithsonian” has embodied American excellence in museum collections, scholarship, education, and historic, artistic, and scientific exploration. During that time, the breadth and depth of our work has steadily expanded. We have become an increasingly international institution, and our museums, research centers, and educational divisions have forged their own strong identities. Understandably, many people outside the Institution are not aware of all we are and everything we do.

If we are to maximize our reach and impact, all of us must not only work more closely with each other, we must also more effectively convey to those outside the Smithsonian the full scope of our institutional activities. Our new Strategic Plan, with its overarching goal of “One Smithsonian,” underscores that necessity. With our important work in a wide variety of disciplines, the Smithsonian is truly “everything under the sun.” Nothing better represents that than our iconic sunburst logo.

The Smithsonian seal, since its 1966 unveiling, has been an apt symbol of our mission, “the increase and diffusion of knowledge,” a tenet of the Enlightenment era embraced by our benefactor, the English scientist James Smithson. This symbol was fully embraced by the late Ivan Chermayeff, the renowned graphic designer who developed our comprehensive logo system in the late 1990s.

Like the Institution writ large, our brand must keep up with the times and adapt to new forms of communication that were not prevalent decades before. Our organizations use the sunburst in a variety of ways, on many digital and analog platforms, and our team worked to make the logo easier to read and adaptable enough to be incorporated into the individual brands of museums and other Smithsonian organizations.

Guided by our “One Smithsonian” motto, the branding committee also solicited feedback from people across the Institution. These guidelines reflect your input, and I am confident they will help each organization amplify its message and reach. A more streamlined, unified brand will be mutually beneficial: individual parts of the Smithsonian will reinforce the association with the trusted Smithsonian name, and your dynamic, creative work will elevate the prestige of the entire Institution in the minds of the public.

Thank you to the Office of Public Affairs’ Marketing team for putting together this useful guide with the support of the branding committee. As you implement its guidelines, I encourage you to let us know what we can do to make it even more effective. In the meantime, I think you will be pleased with the results as we realize our goal of moving together as “One Smithsonian.”



Dr. David J. Skorton

13th Secretary of the Smithsonian

identity guidelines

This document captures the essence of the Smithsonian brand.

Our brand is how the world sees, talks about, and experiences the Smithsonian. Our public image is the sum of all impressions made in the media, advertising, wayfinding, stationery, web, social media, video, animation, and all other communications.

A strong identity captures the essence of an organization's purpose. A well-branded institution projects a unified character that effectively reinforces its various activities.

Use this guide to inform what we do and say, express how we look and speak, and, most importantly, remember why we do it.

Segmentation modeling by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (MHM), 2017

brand strategy

Our Vision

We aspire to:

Build on the Smithsonian's unique strengths to engage and inspire more people where they are and with greater impact.

Our Mission

We work for:

The increase and diffusion
of knowledge.

Brand Values

These are personality traits that give life to our brand:

Smithsonian is...

Authentic

We stay true to the Smithsonian's purpose to increase and diffuse knowledge.

Informative

We connect the dots so the public doesn't have to.

Trustworthy

We inspire confidence in our audience.

Relevant

We reflect an understanding of audience needs and interests.

Conversational

We're smart and accessible.

Enthusiastic

We genuinely enjoy sharing information with others.

positioning

We can no longer rely solely on demographic-based targeting. Treating everyone as one homogenous mass is ineffective — one size does not fit all.

An audience-first approach allows us to segment audiences based on behavioral patterns and cultural interest. The more we know about our audience, the better we can fulfill their needs.

Audience Segments

Expression

Members of the Expression segment actively pursue life and place a high value on their free time. They are open to different experiences, cultures, and ideas, and their cultural consumption is broad and frequent, making them one of the most highly culturally active segments.

Arts and culture are key elements of their lifestyle and a means of self-expression, a way of connecting with like-minded individuals and fulfilling their need for a sense of community.

They are receptive to new ideas and have a wide range of interests including culture, learning, and nature. They don't like hierarchies or exclusivity—all cultural experiences are valid to them and often no experience is more worthwhile than another.

This segment likes experiences to be authentic, and they enjoy opportunities to understand the creative process. They tend to respond to opportunities to participate and are most likely to have taken part in a wide number of artistic activities.

Actively engaged and well networked

Although they like adventure, innovation, and discovery, members of the Expression segment like to know what they're letting themselves in for and are therefore receptive to reviews and recommendations. Expressions like to feel part of a crowd and enjoy shared experiences, so offering an opportunity for dialogue and discussion appeals.

Their role in their communities means they are a valuable source of advocacy—Expressions love to share, so when they learn something, they tell everyone. Membership schemes and participatory events can be a useful way to maintain a dialogue with Expressions and secure their support and recommendation.

Audience Segments

Affirmation

Affirmations often lean toward brands as assurance to help them choose the best option. Affirmations welcome culture as a way of enjoying quality time with friends and family while at the same time improving themselves. This segment is interested in less traditional art forms and large, mainstream events and activities; the latter offers a low-risk means of satisfying their varied needs.

Seeking valid, worthwhile experiences

Arts and culture provide a means for Affirmations to validate themselves with their peers. This segment cares what others think about them, and, as a result, want to be seen as engaging with cultural activities, not just popular entertainment.

They view arts and cultural organizations as a resource providing them with enjoyment and education while offering an environment for spending quality time with others—in other words, a form of “wholesome leisure.”

They are inclined to be regular visitors to a small number of cultural organizations; ones they know from experience can meet their needs.

Conscientious decision makers

Affirmations want enjoyable quality time with others, but they also seek self-improvement. They need marketing to help them work out the “best” option, so they can be sure they are doing the right thing. Cultural institutions must clearly articulate the benefits affirmations will get from engaging with them, not just the features of an event.

Affirmations often research their visits carefully, so an organization’s messaging should demonstrate its value by offering a more worthwhile way of having a fun time with others.

Affirmations want to be viewed as “cultural consumers.” Organizations can capitalize on this by offering easy methods for sharing content online.

Audience Segments

Stimulation

Stimulations pride themselves in being ahead of the curve. “Do something different” is a maxim for life. They are naturally curious and open to a wide range of experiences. Their interest is particularly piqued by experiences that are out of the ordinary or conversation starters.

Adventurous and in the know

Stimulations seek a varied and entertaining life of novelty and challenge—hence the varied array of art forms they engage with and the level of risk they are willing to take. As well as being driven by curiosity, Stimulations enjoy the social experience of attending events and like to ensure they remain the ones “in the know” within their peer group.

As innovators and early adopters, they are not guided by the opinions of others. Rather, they are keen to break away from the mainstream, and they are at the head of the pack in finding out about new events and activities. Their strong sense of adventure and desire to stand out from the crowd constantly encourages them to try new things, even if it means going out on their own.

Aligning with quirky, unusual brands

Stimulations look for activities and brands that reflect their own self-image. They pride themselves in being ahead of the curve and will respond to clever, quirky, or “cool” marketing and design. Their early-adopter nature can also make them good brand ambassadors. Stimulations can see marketing as an art form in itself. They enjoy and appreciate “cool” marketing and could help it “go viral” for arts organizations.

While they keep an eye out for what’s on, they will be faced with lots of “similar” options. Their interest will be piqued by features that stand out as unusual, experimental, or with an interesting premise or hook.

Audience Segments

Essence

Arts and culture are an incredibly important part of life for members of the Essence segment. They will always make time for cultural experiences, and their appetite for culture takes them to a wide range of venues. The Essence segment is discerning and well-informed. Their cultural consumption is a source of self-fulfillment and a means for experiencing life.

Confident, sophisticated, inner-directed

The Essence segment often steers clear of the mainstream.

Essences praise quality and artistic integrity above all else, actively avoiding works they perceive to be amateur or populist. They enjoy discovering little-known names and will pursue their artistic interests as a priority.

They pride themselves on the breadth and sophistication of their tastes, and they particularly enjoy activities they consider to be “intellectual.”

Essences are arts advocates. They recognize the importance of supporting the arts at a personal and political level and tend to be the segment most likely to make financial donations to cultural organizations.

Pro-active and independent consumers

Engaging Essences is, on the surface, not difficult. Culture is not what they do—it is part of who they are—so they are proactive in keeping themselves updated on the arts scene. However, they are fiercely independent. They take pride in liking things that are outside of the mainstream.

Rather than attempting to sell to them—they inherently mistrust and reject overt marketing speak—organizations should provide them the tools that help them filter their options. Allowing this segment to seek information themselves is most effective.

Segmentation modeling by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (MHM), 2017

Messaging

This is how we talk:

We are more than a museum.

We are the world's largest museum, education, and research complex.

Ex.: We are an active institution of more than 22,000 people across 19 museums, nine research centers, 21 libraries, and the National Zoo.

We are relevant and accessible.

We are opening new doors, analyzing big questions, and sharing stories with you.

Ex.: We research the impact of invasive species to help solve environmental challenges.

We are active.

To better understand the world and our place in it, we are on the ground in more than 140 countries researching, conserving, designing, and educating.

Ex.: We inspire hope in underrepresented communities by training them to protect and recover their cultural heritage in the face of crisis.

visual style

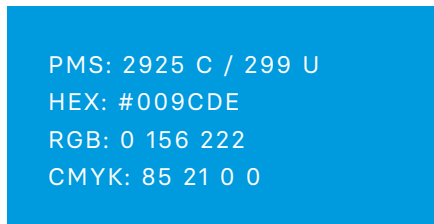
color

Our color palette gives us a voice and personality that elicits an emotional reaction. The Smithsonian color palette evokes a vibrant, bold, approachable, and everyday sensibility. The primary blue and yellow are the foundation of the brand and represents a sun and sky. Secondary colors are designed to emphasize how wide-ranging and diverse Smithsonian's offerings are.

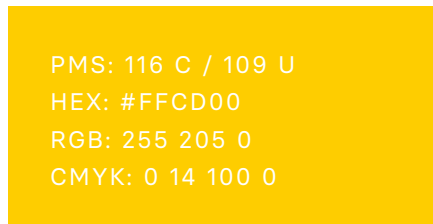
Color Palette

Primary

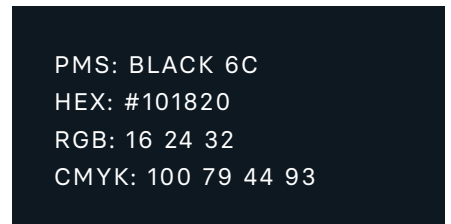
The primary color palette is our resting place. It is designed to be used in situations where the brand palette is not being used. For instance, use these colors sparingly only on white, black, or non-duotoned photography.



PMS: 2925 C / 299 U
HEX: #009CDE
RGB: 0 156 222
CMYK: 85 21 0 0



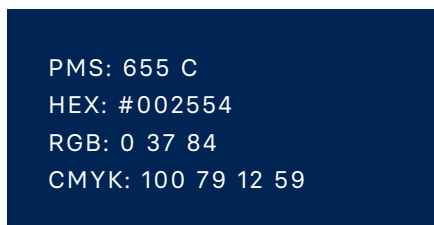
PMS: 116 C / 109 U
HEX: #FFCD00
RGB: 255 205 0
CMYK: 0 14 100 0



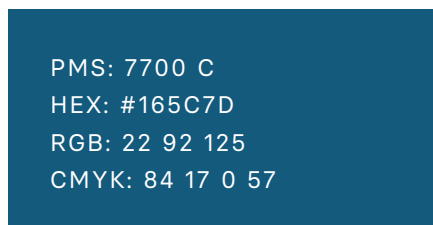
PMS: BLACK 6C
HEX: #101820
RGB: 16 24 32
CMYK: 100 79 44 93

Secondary

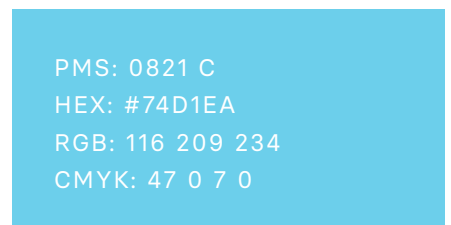
The secondary palette consists of six main colors. These colors complement the primary palette and are used to create emphasis and promote variety in content.



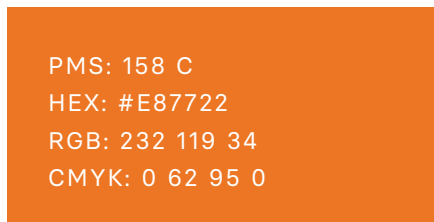
PMS: 655 C
HEX: #002554
RGB: 0 37 84
CMYK: 100 79 12 59



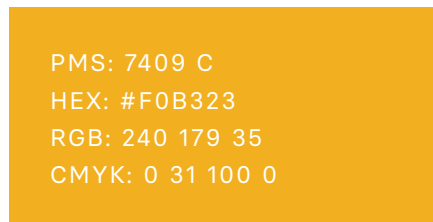
PMS: 7700 C
HEX: #165C7D
RGB: 22 92 125
CMYK: 84 17 0 57



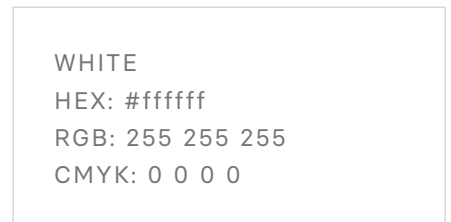
PMS: 0821 C
HEX: #74D1EA
RGB: 116 209 234
CMYK: 47 0 7 0



PMS: 158 C
HEX: #E87722
RGB: 232 119 34
CMYK: 0 62 95 0



PMS: 7409 C
HEX: #F0B323
RGB: 240 179 35
CMYK: 0 31 100 0

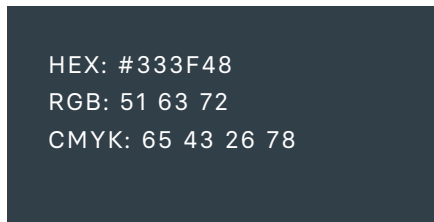


WHITE
HEX: #ffffff
RGB: 255 255 255
CMYK: 0 0 0 0

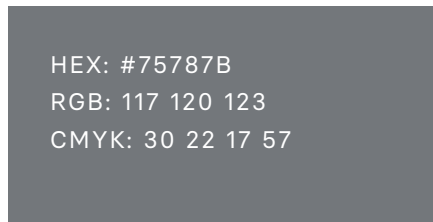
Color Palette

Tertiary

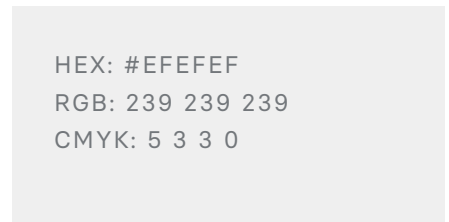
The tertiary palette is neutral and subtle. Its purpose is to allow flexibility when working on websites. You can use the light blue or light gray for page divides or hover states. The darker-value gray tones can be used on type to give a more approachable readability.



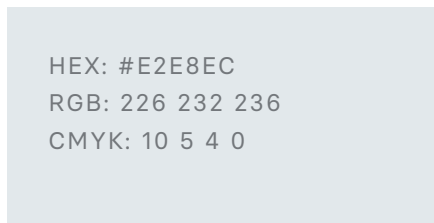
HEX: #333F48
RGB: 51 63 72
CMYK: 65 43 26 78



HEX: #75787B
RGB: 117 120 123
CMYK: 30 22 17 57



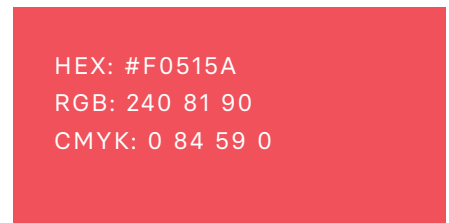
HEX: #EFEFEF
RGB: 239 239 239
CMYK: 5 3 3 0



HEX: #E2E8EC
RGB: 226 232 236
CMYK: 10 5 4 0



HEX: #D0D7DE
RGB: 208 215 222
CMYK: 17 10 8 0



HEX: #F0515A
RGB: 240 81 90
CMYK: 0 84 59 0

typography

Two typefaces have been selected to support the Smithsonian brand: Minion Pro and Basier Circle. Each font has a personality of its own, yet they work well together and are used in a way that allows the identity system optimal flexibility in a variety of applications.

Typography

Primary Typeface

Minion Pro

Characters

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Styles

Regular	<i>Semibold Italic</i>
<i>Italic</i>	Bold
Medium	<i>Bold Italic</i>
<i>Medium Italic</i>	Bold Cond
Semibold	<i>Bold Cond Italic</i>

About This Font

Minion Pro is inspired by classical, old-style typefaces of the late Renaissance, a period of elegant, beautiful, and highly readable type designs. Minion Pro combines the aesthetic and functional qualities that make text type highly readable with the versatility of OpenType digital technology, yielding unprecedented flexibility and typographic control, whether for lengthy text or display settings.

Typography

Secondary Typeface

Basier Circle

Characters

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Styles

Regular

Italic

Medium

Medium Italic

Semibold

Semibold Italic

Bold

Bold Italic

About This Font

Basier Circle is a neo-grotesque sans-serif typeface. This modern and neutral font family is ideally suitable for logotypes, branding, and editorial design, as well as web and screen design.

our identity

A brand is more than just a logo. And a logo is more than just a mark or symbol. A logo must work with other design elements to seamlessly adapt across colors, dimensions, and uses. This is called a logo identity system.

The Smithsonian has created a logo system that is flexible enough to be broken apart or used in totality, depending on the design need.

As we roll out this expanded identity system, it's important to note that the logomark has not changed. In honoring our legacy, we not only retain the spirit of the original identifier last updated by Ivan Chermayeff but also recognize the historical significance of the logomark itself.

Logo Anatomy

Positive and Reversed Spacing

When the logo is reversed on a dark background, the Sunburst expands to fill the sky to maintain visual balance. The space between the logomark and the letter "S" should never be altered.



Logo Anatomy

Clear Space

Our logo must have space to breathe, with rules concerning spacing and margins. It should not be cramped or overshadowed by other visual distractions. The logo clear space equals the ascent or ascender height of letter “S” around all edges of the logo, which should be free from other graphics and interference. If there is an instance where this rule has to be broken, please contact a brand supervisor.



Size Parameters

The Smithsonian logo may be resized as necessary. However, it should follow these minimum size requirements to ensure that it is still readable, even when scaled to smaller dimensions.



Minimum print size

To maintain the integrity of the primary lockup in print, a minimum width of 1.5 inches has been set. The height should be proportional.



Minimum digital size

To maintain the integrity of the primary lockup in digital, a minimum width of 108 pixels has been set. The height should be proportional.

Visual Style

Primary Logo

Color



Minimum Size



Visual Style

Primary Logo

Positive



Minimum Size



Visual Style

Primary Logo

Reversed



Minimum Size



Primary Logo

Color Variations

These color variations provide flexibility in usage but can only be used on Smithsonian black. These color variations should be used sparingly.



Visual Style

Secondary Logo

Color



Smithsonian

Minimum Size



Smithsonian

Visual Style

Secondary Logo

Positive



Smithsonian

Minimum Size



Smithsonian

Visual Style

Secondary Logo

Reversed



Minimum Size



Secondary Logo

Color Variations

These color variations provide flexibility in usage but can only be used on a Smithsonian black background. These color variations should be used sparingly.



Smithsonian

Minimum Size



Smithsonian

Tertiary Logo

Color



Tertiary Logo

Positive



Visual Style

Tertiary Logo

Reversed



Tertiary Logo

Color Variations

These color variations provide flexibility in usage but can only be used on a Smithsonian black background. These color variations should be used sparingly.



Visual Style

Seal Logo

Positive



Minimum Size



Seal Logo

Color

To be as flexible as possible with the brand, the Smithsonian logo can be used in a variety of ways. This is to promote brand usage on all platforms. The secondary logo lockup is centered and the sun dimension increases for extra visibility and balance.



Minimum Size



Visual Style

Seal Logo

Reversed



Minimum Size



legacy lockups

There's a lot of value gained when a museum creates its own brand. They appeal to nuanced audiences while acknowledging their place in the Smithsonian family. However, while there is value in these custom graphic identities, they don't always work.

For that reason, the following lockups are available for every museum, research center, and educational unit associated within the Smithsonian. This allows every branch of the Smithsonian to have a logo available for use if needed. These logos are great for stationery, outreach materials, research papers, etc.

Legacy Lockups

Museum and Research Unit Lockups



Smithsonian
Museum/Unit Name

Legacy Lockups

Logo Anatomy

When the logo is reversed on a dark background, the sunburst expands to fill the sky to maintain visual balance. The space between the logomark and the letter "S" in the logotype should never be altered.



Legacy Lockups

Reversed Color Variations

Museum and research unit lockups can be used in a variety of ways. When reversed, color variations are limited to what is designated below.



Legacy Lockups

Examples

Museum and research unit lockups are available for download at logo.si.edu.



co-branding

The Hybrid Model

To promote brand recognition, it is important to provide each museum with a co-branded lockup or a solution around co-branding. The following rules are in place to help promote cohesion throughout the entire Institution.

This concept firmly establishes the Smithsonian as part of every museum and marries the two brands together in one lockup without any additional clutter.

The Hybrid Model

The Lockup—Visual Relationship

The Smithsonian logo will be locked up or “married” with each unit logo. The scale will be customized for each use in order to maintain hierarchy and visual balance.

Below is the ideal visual relationship based on the golden ratio. This calculation is based on the width of the unit logo. **It’s important to note that this proportion is only a visual starting place.**



NATIONAL
MUSEUM *of*
NATURAL
HISTORY

 Smithsonian

S

The Hybrid Model

The Lockup—Examples

National
Portrait
Gallery

 Smithsonian

FREER | SACKLER

 Smithsonian

NATIONAL
MUSEUM *of*
NATURAL
HISTORY

 Smithsonian

 NATIONAL
MUSEUM
OF
AMERICAN
HISTORY
BEHRING CENTER

 Smithsonian

The Hybrid Model

The Lockup—Examples Reversed

National
Portrait
Gallery

☀ Smithsonian

FREER | SACKLER

☀ Smithsonian

NATIONAL
MUSEUM *of*
NATURAL
HISTORY

☀ Smithsonian

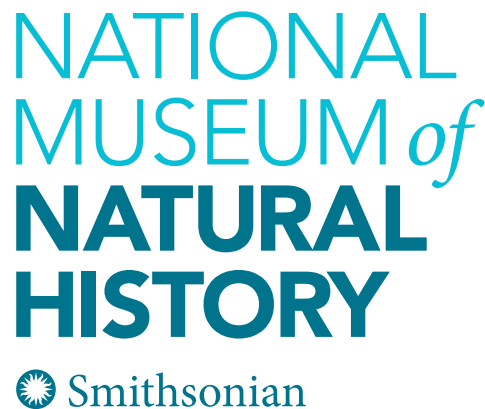
 NATIONAL
MUSEUM
OF
AMERICAN
HISTORY
BEHRING CENTER

☀ Smithsonian

The Hybrid Model

The Lockup—Color Flexibility

By allowing more flexibility with the Smithsonian logo, units can adopt a more cohesive approach to co-branding. The custom sky color is only allowed in the locked up version of the unit logo. **When using the Smithsonian logo on its own, use approved Smithsonian brand color variations.**



The Hybrid Model

The Lockup—Mockups

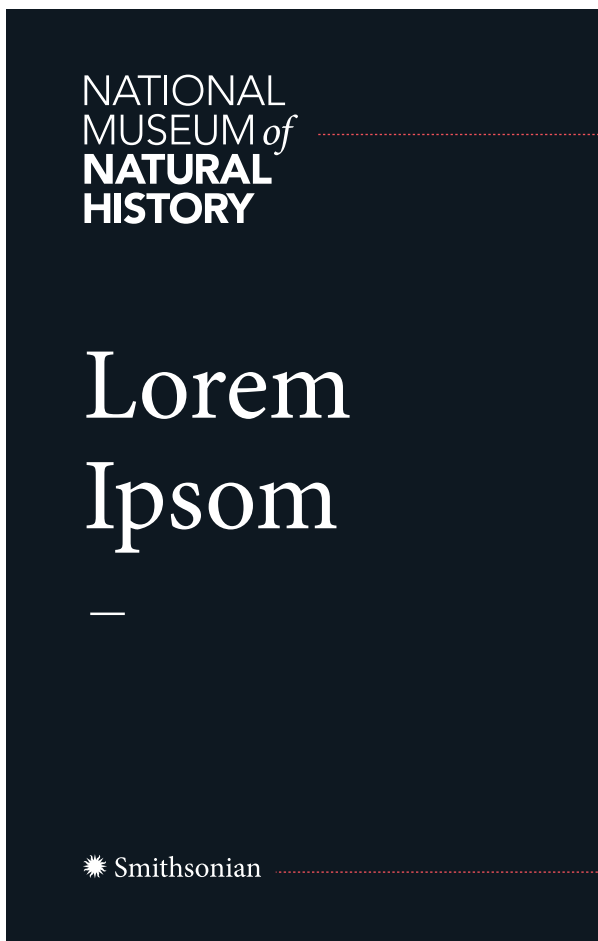
The examples below show how “The lockup” can be used.



The Hybrid Model

Initial View

The Smithsonian Sunburst logo can also be separated from a unit logo as long as it fits within specific parameters. In order to maintain a connection with the Smithsonian Sunburst and the unit logo, both have to be present in the “initial view” whether in a digital or print application.



Minimum print size

To maintain the integrity of the primary lockup in print, a minimum width of 1.5 inches has been set. The height should be proportional.



Minimum digital size

To maintain the integrity of the primary lockup in digital, a minimum width of 108 pixels has been set. The height should be proportional.

**Example is not to scale.*

The Hybrid Model

Initial View—Mockups

The examples below show how “initial view” can be used.



The Hybrid Model

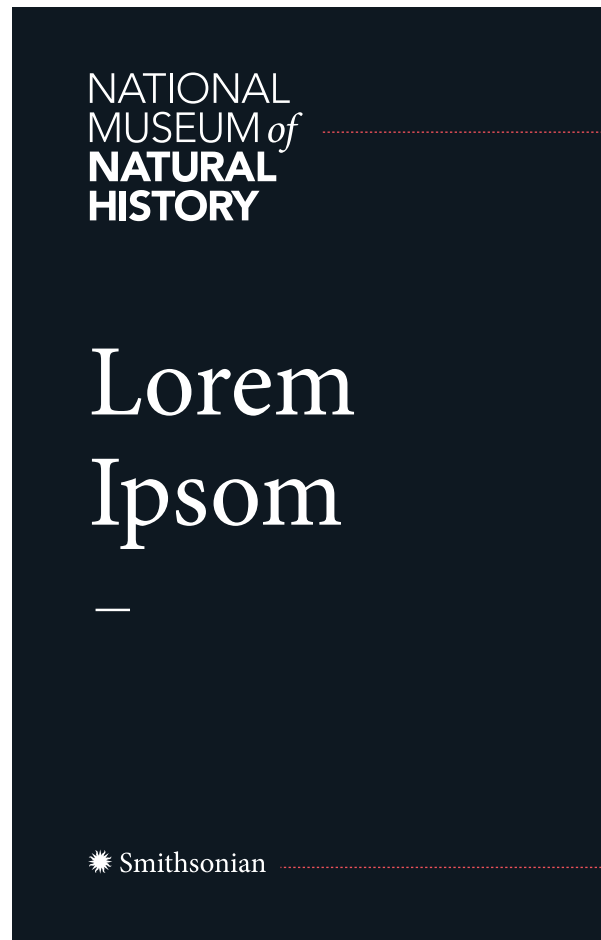
The Lockup and Initial View Recap

The Lockup

NATIONAL
MUSEUM *of*
**NATURAL
HISTOR**

☼ Smithsonian

Initial View



Initial View

logo don'ts

The integrity of the Smithsonian logo must be respected at all times and should not be altered in any way. **DO NOT** link elements, including names, logos, or symbols, to the Smithsonian lockup unless approved by the Smithsonian brand team.

Logo Don'ts

The integrity of the Smithsonian logo must be respected at all times and should not be altered in any way.



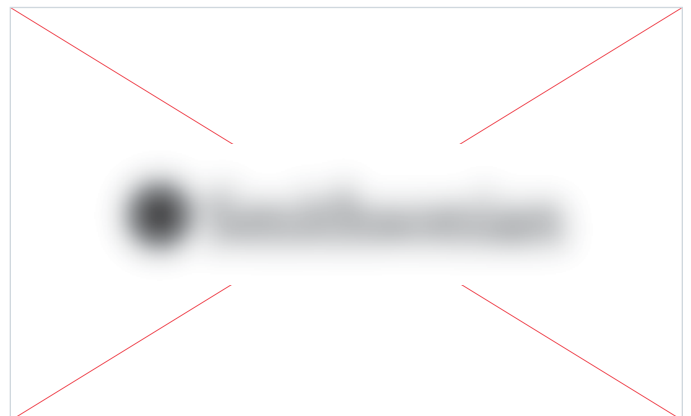
DO NOT attempt to recreate or alter the logo with the original assets.



DO NOT change the orientation of the logo.



DO NOT stretch, distort, or scale the logo disproportionately.



DO NOT add extraneous effects, like drop shadows, outlines, or bevels.

Logo Don'ts



DO NOT alter or substitute the color.



DO NOT place the logo on backgrounds that are too busy or have insufficient contrast.



DO NOT position wordmark over crucial photographic details such as faces or products.



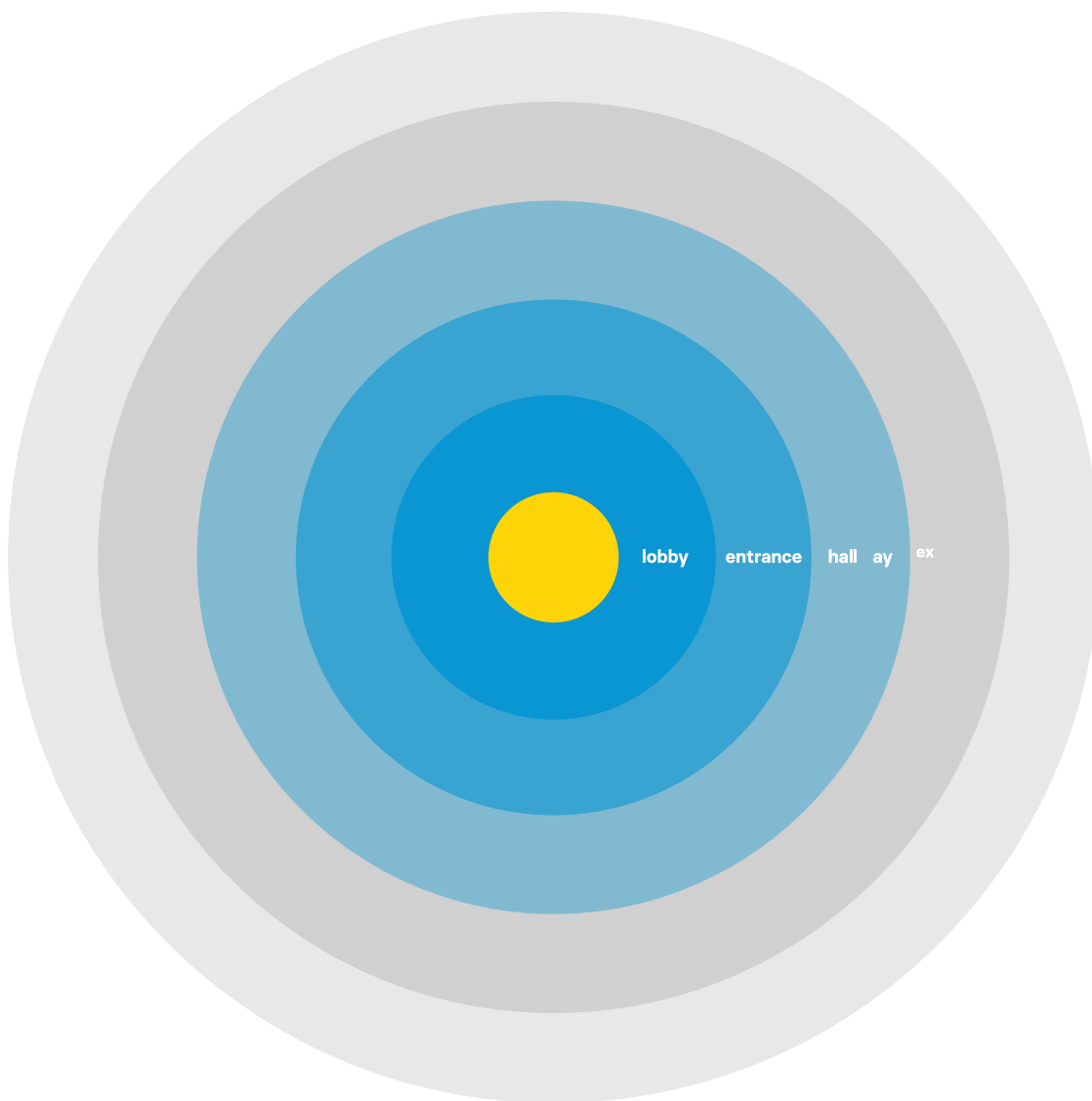
DO NOT use the logo with the TM symbol.

wayfinding & signage

A wayfinding system helps to create connections between a visitor and the physical environment. When a visitor navigates one of our public spaces, there should be clear communication and consideration in design that helps bring awareness to the Smithsonian brand. The following pages demonstrate ways the Smithsonian brand can be considered in solving wayfinding problems.

Wayfinding

The center of the diagram below is the most important touchpoint for brand recognition. At this stage of the visitors' experience, it should be obvious that they are in a Smithsonian museum. As visitors begin to explore the interior walls of one of our museums, Smithsonian brand awareness becomes less dominant and the connection is made with the unit brand. This is to promote the opportunity we have to create stories and connect with our audience.



Signage

The example below shows how co-branding can be applied to museum signage.



brand extensions

To create a fun and engaging branding system, it is important to include visual elements. The following pages highlight key elements that support our logo identity. These are called brand extensions and should act as a visual guide to help start the creative process when working with the brand.

Brand Extensions

The sun can be used as a decorative element as long as it is accompanied by the Smithsonian logo. The colors stem from the primary and secondary palette. The sun should always be brighter than the background color.

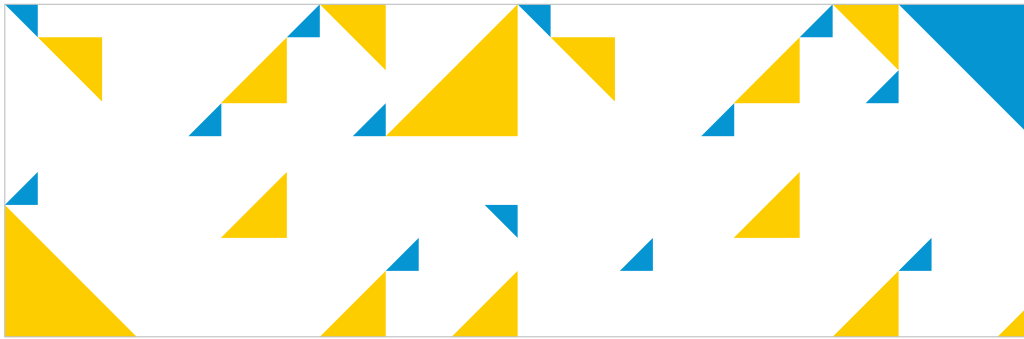


Sunburst Rules

- Stay within the approved Smithsonian primary and secondary color palette.
- The sun should always be brighter than the background color.
- Do not crop too much of the sun so that it loses its recognition.
- When using the sunburst as a design element, you are required to have the Smithsonian lockup included in the composition.

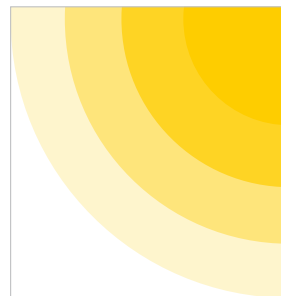
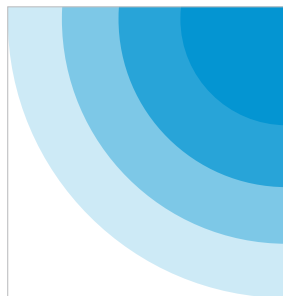
Brand Extensions

These abstract elements can be used to create cohesion and brand awareness in a composition. These visual elements fit within our brand and can be used in a wide variety of ways.



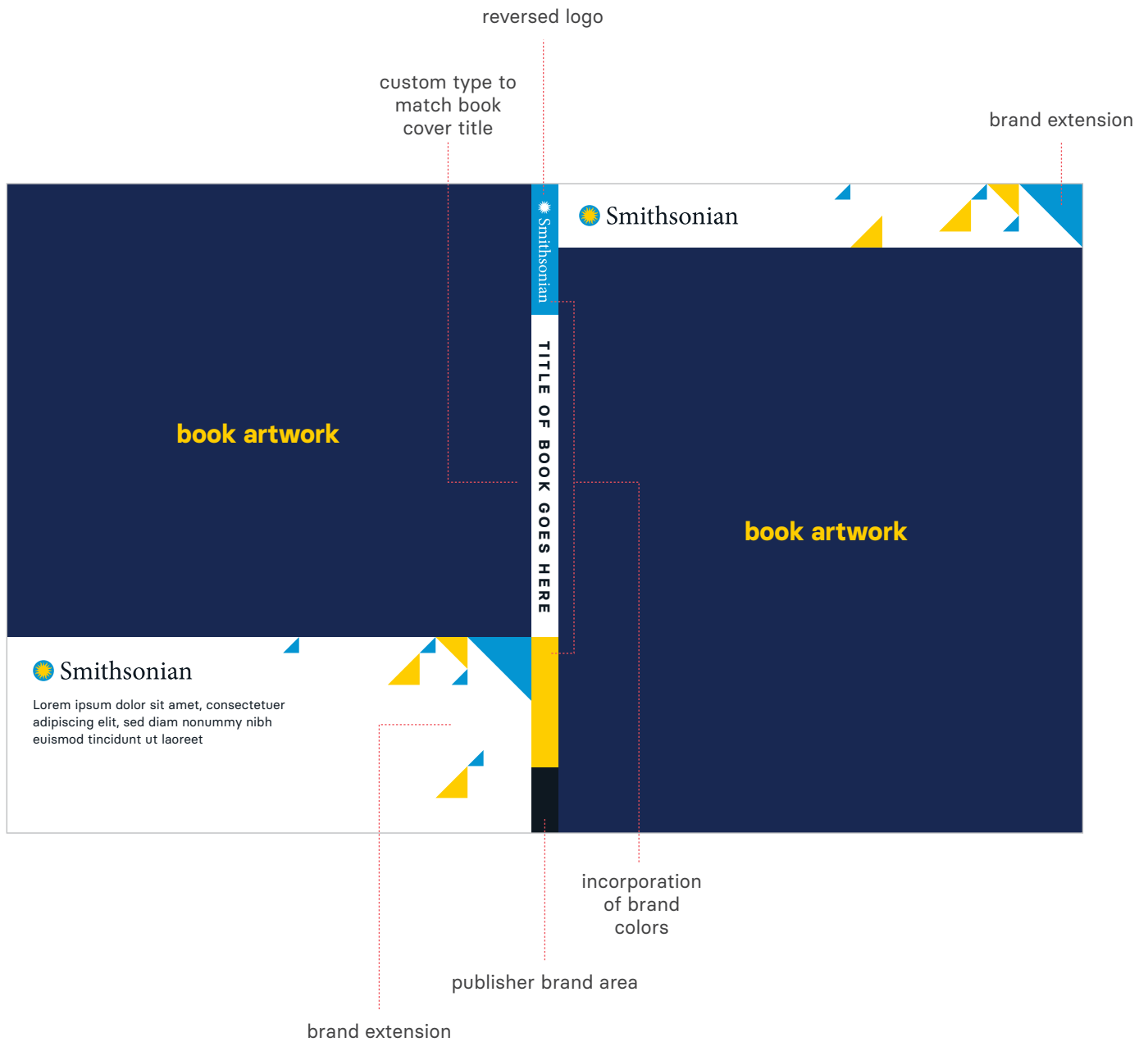
Brand Shapes Rules

- Use these brand elements sparingly.
- Do not combine more than one style of brand extension into a single composition.



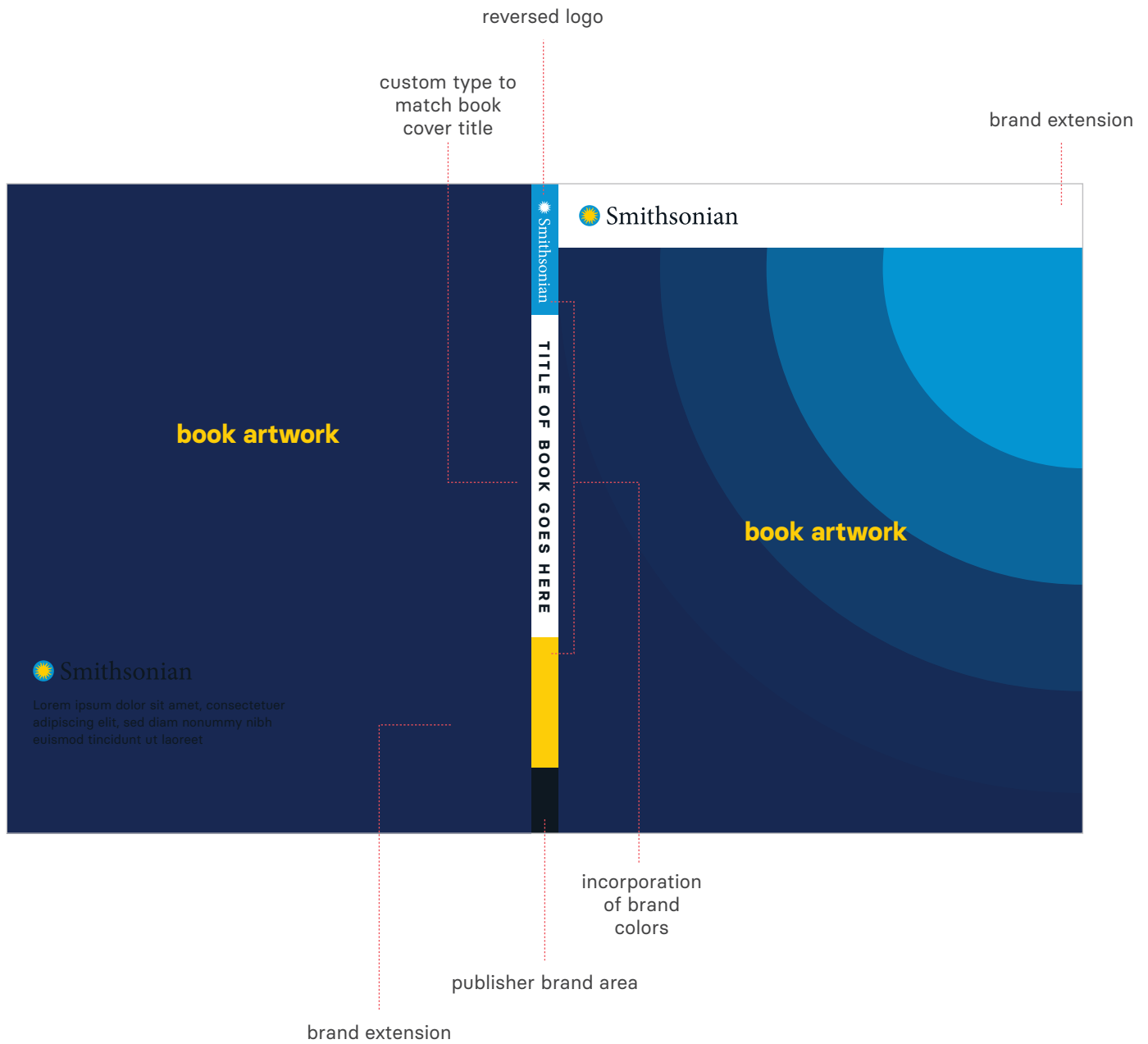
Brand Extensions in Use

This example incorporates the Smithsonian logo identity along with complementing brand elements.



Brand Extensions in Use

This example incorporates the Smithsonian logo identity along with complementing brand elements.



visual options

There are always going to be several ways to treat the Smithsonian brand when working with outside sponsors, vendors, and donors. The following section provides guidance on how to work around some of the complexities.

Smithsonian-dominant Communications

Smithsonian dominance is when the Smithsonian has the biggest impact on what influences the communications. This is when the Smithsonian is driving the experience or if our resources are most depended upon.

Design Elements:

- Smithsonian logo (full-color option preferred)
- Partner logo
- Smithsonian color palette
- Smithsonian font (Minion Pro)

Smithsonian-dominant Visual Components



Dominant Brand Rules

- The Smithsonian logo should always be bigger or more prominent than the partner logo.
- Always follow rules surrounding partner logo usage (e.g., color, background, etc.).

Partner-dominant Communications

Partner dominance is when the partner brand has a larger influence on the communication experience. As a result, the partner brand is featured more, and the design is geared toward their visual system. In those instances, it's critical that we protect and appropriately display the Smithsonian logo.

Design elements:

- Smithsonian logo (full-color option preferred on a white background)
- Partner logo
- Color

Partner-dominant Visual Communications



Partner Brand Rules

- Partner logo should be bigger or more prominent than the Smithsonian logo.
- Don't change the color of the Smithsonian logo to match the partner's visual system.
- Use the single-color Smithsonian logo on colored or textured backgrounds. For example, the layout shown uses the white logo option.

Multi-unit Logo Placement

When displaying multiple units, it can become redundant to show the Smithsonian logo lockup more than once. To solve this visual problem, you can separate the logo.

Design Elements

- It is preferable to use the full-color horizontal logo on a white background whenever possible.
- All logos should be the same visual size.
- All brand logos should be center-aligned along the vertical and horizontal axes.

Multi-unit Visual Communications



Multi-unit Rules

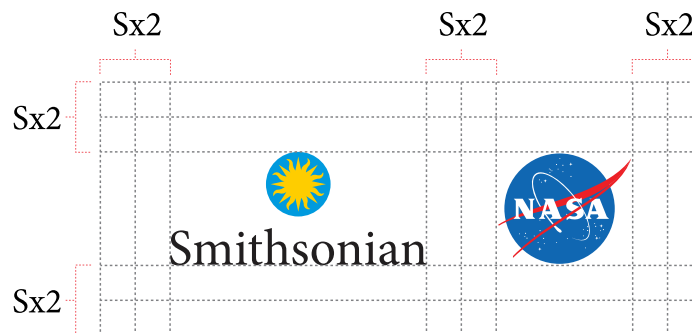
- The Smithsonian logo should be more prominent than unit logos.
- Always keep the Smithsonian logo in Smithsonian-approved brand colors.
- Don't show the Smithsonian logo over and over again.

Sponsorships: Individual Sponsor

Sponsorships are a partner-dominant situation. We need to respect the partner brand but ensure the Smithsonian is communicated proportionately.

Smithsonian as the only sponsor displayed:

- It is preferable to use the full-color secondary logo on a white background whenever possible.
- The two logos should be of the same visual size.
- The two logos should be separated by a distance of 2-S as shown in the examples below.

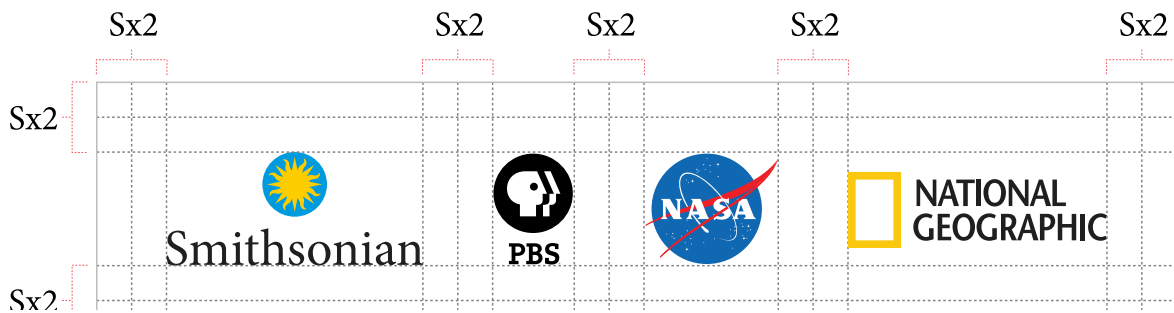


Sponsorships: Multiple Sponsors

Sponsorships are a partner-dominant situation. We need to respect the partner brand but ensure that the Smithsonian is communicated appropriately.

Smithsonian featured with multiple sponsors:

- It is preferable to use the full-color secondary logo on a white background whenever possible.
- All logos should be the same visual size and separated by 2-S.
- All brand logos should be center-aligned along the vertical and horizontal axes.
- The preferred placement of the Smithsonian logo is in the first top-left position if available.



digital applications

digital co-branding

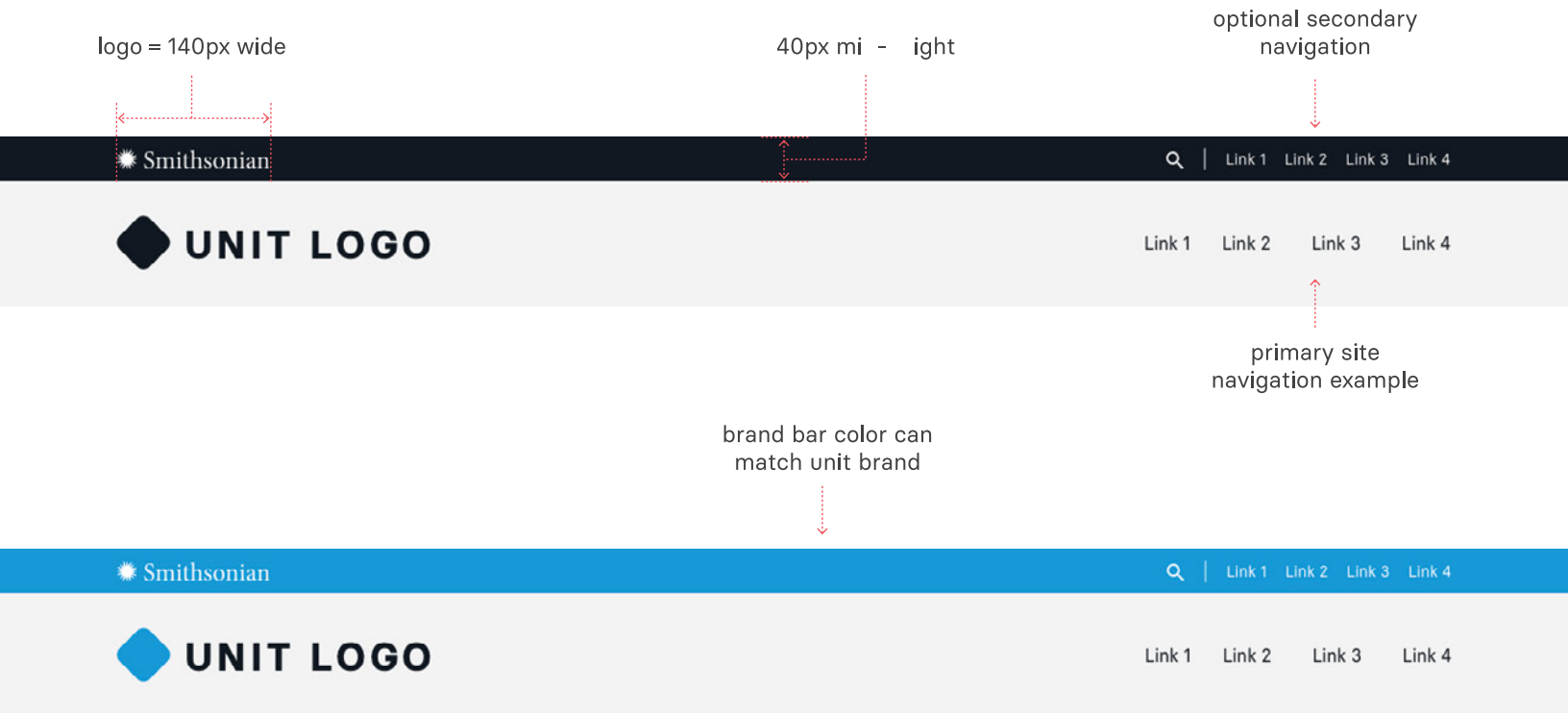
Digital is an umbrella term that covers a variety of dynamic platforms that help the Smithsonian reach its engagement, outreach, and promotional goals.

As more viewers experience our brand while navigating social media, exploring websites, and watching videos, it's time to ride the digital wave and gain control of our visual identity. The following pages address concerns of co-branding we've all had in our digital practice.

Websites

Desktop—Brand Bar and Footer Use

The brand bar is a tool used to communicate to our audiences that your website or app is an officially endorsed part of the Smithsonian and a consistently implemented route back to the Smithsonian homepage. If you're unsure whether you're required to use the Smithsonian brand bar, or if you have any other design related questions, please contact the brand team at branding@si.edu.



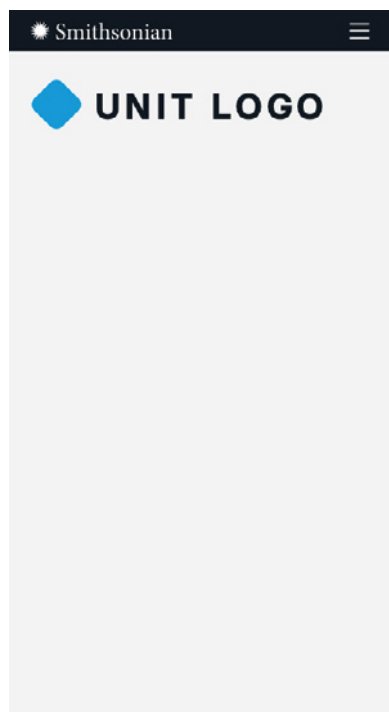
Desktop Application Rules:

- The standard brand bar color is Smithsonian black (#101820) with a white logo. Alternatively, the brand bar color can match a unit's website color palette.
- The brand bar improves user experience by providing a consistent way to navigate between our websites. This becomes increasingly important as pan-institutional initiatives highlight web content from across the Smithsonian.
- The Smithsonian logo in the brand bar and the footer should link to [si.edu](https://www.si.edu).

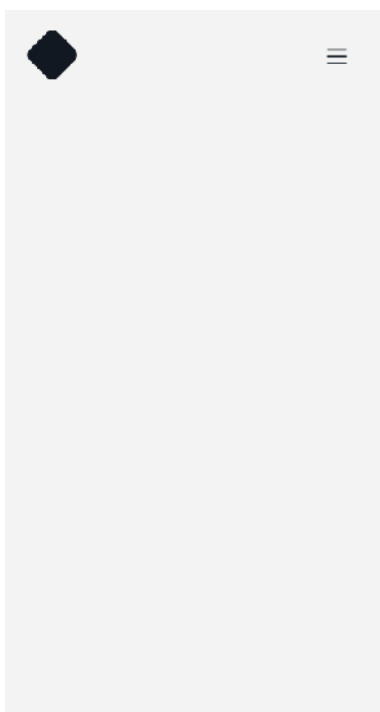
Websites

Mobile—Brand Bar and Footer Use

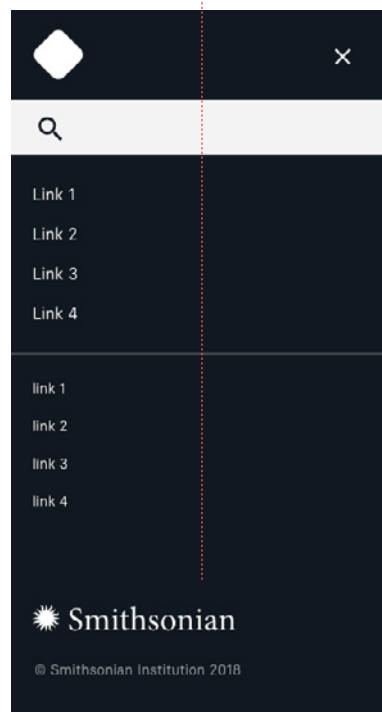
option 1
brand bar on screen



option 2a
Smithsonian brand hidden
to save real estate



option 2b
Smithsonian brand
shown in the navigation



Mobile Application Rules:

- The standard brand bar color is Smithsonian black (#101820) with a white logo. Alternatively, the brand bar color can match a unit's website color palette.
- The brand bar improves user experience by providing a consistent way to navigate between our websites. This becomes increasingly important as pan-institutional initiatives highlight web content from across the Smithsonian.
- The Smithsonian logo in the brand bar and the footer should link to si.edu.
- To save space, the Smithsonian brand can alternatively live in the navigation.

Websites

Color Variations

Unit website colors are a reflection of the unit's unique brand identity. The W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 require that color combinations meet clearly defined contrast ratios. To check if your website colors meet WCAG standards, use the following tools: [Contrast Checker](#) and [Contrast-A](#).



The full-color logo is reserved for logo.si.edu



Primary logo for web use

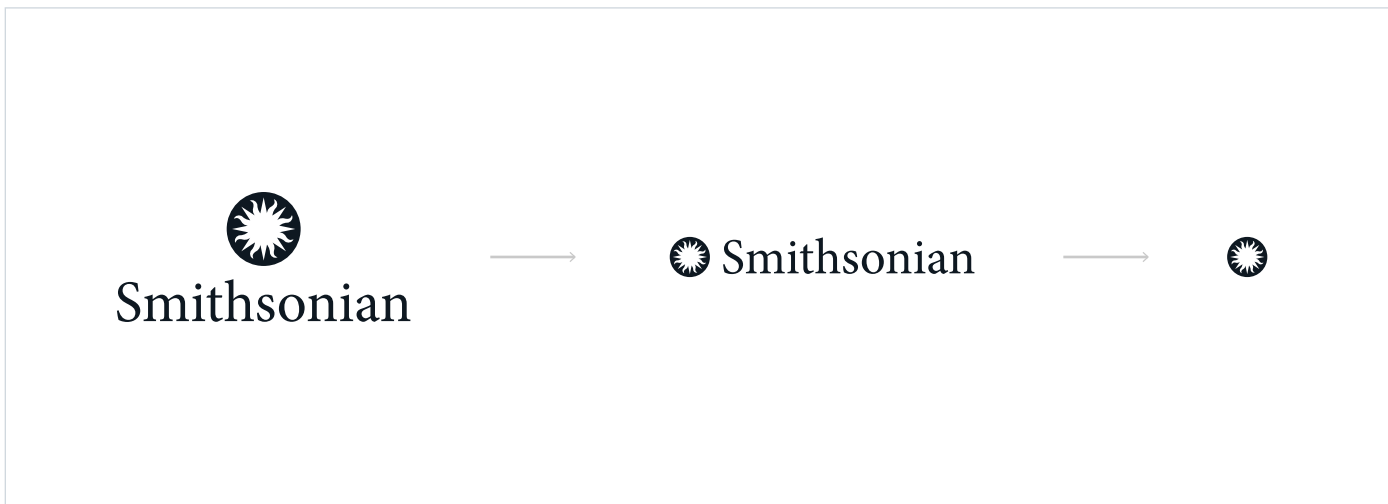


Secondary logo for web use

Websites

Responsive Logo Breakdown

To provide a comprehensive user experience across multiple mediums, our logo can be used in a variety of ways. Below is a basic breakdown of how our logo can be used to fit in various formats or align with content. When designing a website, icons and logos should also be flexible enough to follow similar responsive design principles



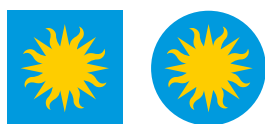
social media

As mentioned earlier in the guide, the logo needs room to breathe—even in the small space of your Twitter or Facebook profile picture. The banner, or header, image on social media profiles give you plenty of room to visually represent yourself as well as establish your Smithsonian brand identity.

Profile Picture

Options

When creating a profile picture for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, use the following examples as guidance. Keep in mind that depending on the platform, your profile picture can be cropped to a circular shape in ads and posts. Always be sure to preview your page's profile picture to see what the crop will look like.



Option A

This color combination is reserved for Big Brand Smithsonian only.



Option B

If you want to use a sunburst as your profile image, you can use a sunburst in our approved white sun/black background.



Option C

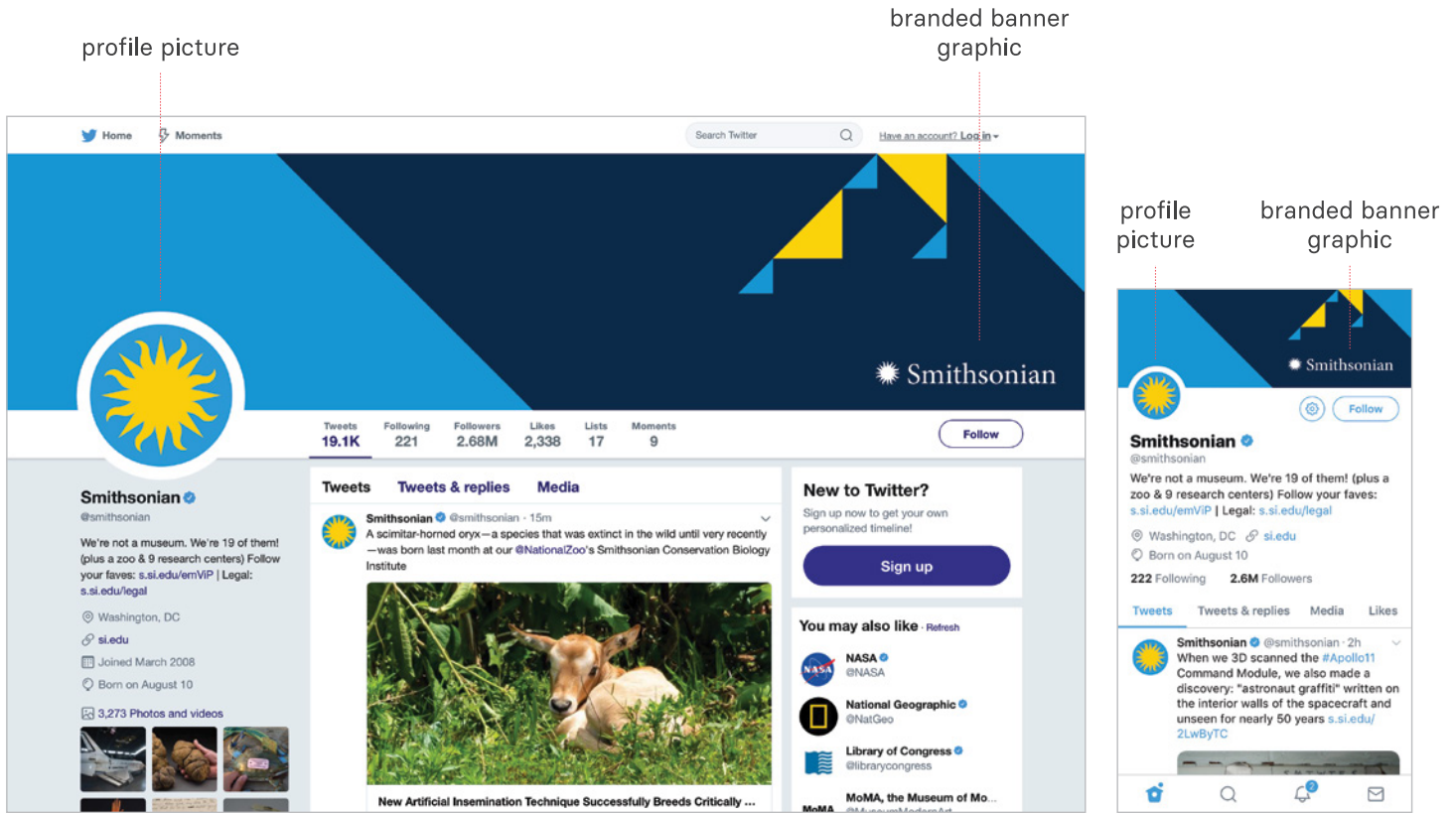
If your profile image is not the sunburst and you chose to use your own logomark, you must have the Smithsonian logo present in your header or banner image.

Additional Rule:

As much as we love the Smithsonian sunburst, minimal use is best, as overuse is too much of a good thing. And with more than 600 social media accounts, it can be confusing to our audience if they all look identical.

Profile Picture

Mockup

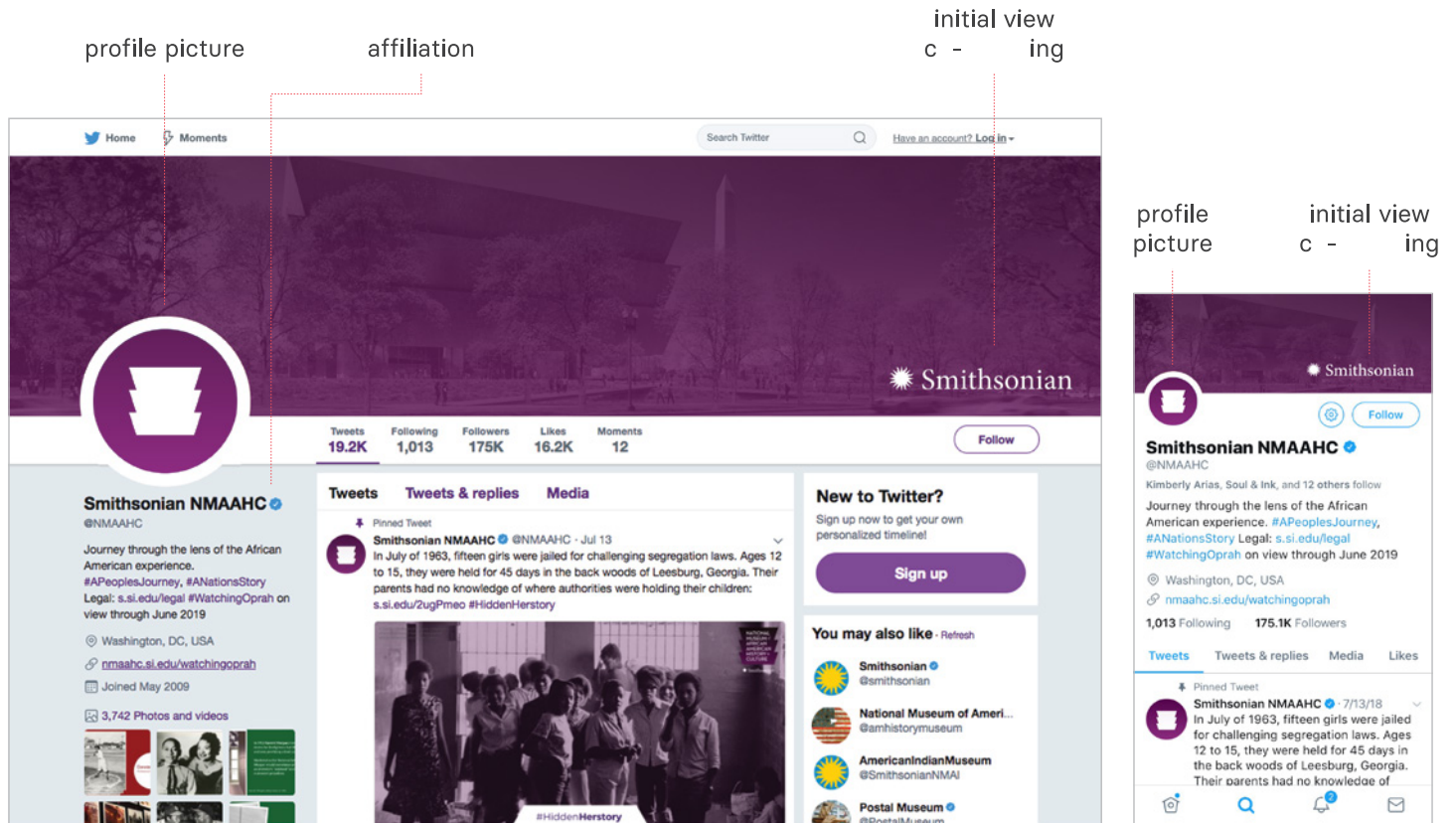


Additional Rule:

Aside from your visual identity, your affiliation with the Smithsonian must also be clear from your account name and display name, or if those two are not possible due to character-limit restrictions, in the text of your bio.

Profile Picture

Mockup



Additional Rule:

If your profile image is not the Smithsonian sunburst, you must have it in your header or banner image under the "initial view" standards. See the co-branding section of this brand guide for more details about initial view. (The exception to this is on Instagram, where there is no banner image.) The sunburst in a banner image must follow standard logo-treatment rules.

If you are having trouble with anything in this guide, are missing brand elements from our [website](#), or are unsure if your communication best represents the Smithsonian Brand, please contact the Office of Communications and External Affairs brand team and we will be happy to help.

branding@si.edu