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The Uff Da

The Minnesota Atheist Brand Guide

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Your brand is a gateway to your true work. You know you are here to do something—to create something or help others in some way. The question is, how can you set up your life and work so that you can do it? The answer lies in your brand. When you create a compelling brand you attract people who want the promise of your brand – which you deliver.

– Dave Buck



Just Imagine how much easier drafting this guide would have been, had we had a branding guide...

–Alyssa Ehni

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Introduction

Design is the silent ambassador of your brand.
Paul Rand

Why

Since our inception, Minnesota Atheists has largely been a grassroots organization flying by the seat of our pants. Our leaders and organizers have shared an understanding of what the organization valued and often independently organized around that shared understanding. This method of organizing grew and sustained the organization to a point. With changing demographics, the desire for continued growth, and the changing expectations of community organizations, Minnesota Atheists needs to strategically take control of our identity and develop our brand.

The creation and documentation of formal branding offers a resource for leadership, organizers, and volunteers. As Minnesota Atheists formalizes and documents how we do things, it allows for more people to share in the work we are doing to improve our community. It is much easier to draft anything from a meetup description to a press release, when you know the general tone, content, and style that is appropriate for our organization. Our hope is that this guide will empower our volunteers to take ownership of their projects and develop themselves into our future leaders.

Our brand exists, whether we choose to actively manage it or not. If we do not manage it, people will manage our brand for us based on their first impressions. By choosing the aesthetics and style in which we communicate, we can strategically manage our brand and more effectively represent our organization.

Our Values

Although we are an atheist organization, defined by something we are not; as a community driven organization, we share many core values and tenants.

We value:

Education	Action	Intentionality	Change
Accessibility	Inclusion	Leadership	Utility
Passion	Welcoming	Adaptability	Self-Starting
Service	Uniqueness	Clarity	Consistency
Empowerment	Familiarity	Efficiency	
Community	Forethought	Environmentalism	
Truth	Light-Hearted	Growth	

Identity

Our Visual Identity mirrors and conveys our values. We are a simple, volunteer run organization, and we choose to display things simply when possible, choosing white-space with coloration as

an accent, rather than a bold and distracting display. We believe in community, and when possible, chose to highlight photography of our members to stock photography (although we are very careful to make sure people are ok with their photos before we use them). We strive to make every communication as welcoming as possible. While we are a passionate group, we generally reflect ourselves using milder color pallets, and a calmer iconography. As a community driven organization, we prefer to talk in 1st person rather than 3rd when dealing with internal communications. We generally prefer active tense to passive, but have been known to shift tense when it has suited us. We are ok with contractions, and we strive for readability and clarity. We are a light hearted group, and are ok with some in-jokes and light snarkyness. As a volunteer run organization, we prefer to make materials that can be economically produced and distributed. When possible, we try to keep communications electronic, to better be stewards of our environment. While many of our members live in cities, we represent membership across the state, and must include visuals representing a collective Minnesota. We are good people, and say Hot Dish, not casserole, when talking about the food. When possible, we use non-religious language, and poke fun at ourselves when we have to. We are an efficient organization, and prefer to use materials that are adaptable, and can update previous materials to suite new situations, rather than always having new things. We recognize that things change, and don't get bogged down in our old ways, and find better ways to do things.

How To Use

The intent of this guide is to provide our overarching branding standards as it currently stands. While our branding can change and grow over time, we want the standards to be observed whenever possible. If there is a need to go outside the bounds of the guide, the guide should be updated to reflect the new standards. For most materials, the brand colors and typography should be the primary source of content.

Logo

I strive for two things in design: simplicity and clarity. Great design is borne of those two things.

Lindon Leader

Concept

Our logo represents who we are, what we value, and what we do as an organization. It is simple and clean with plenty of white space. The logo clearly articulates the three focuses of our group: activism, community, and education. The simplicity of the design scales well at various sizes and allows us to adapt the logo to fit the circumstance. And obviously it includes a silhouette of Minnesota. Obviously. We're Minnesota Atheists. Our logo was designed then voted on and accepted by the general membership at the August 2018 picnic, replacing the previous logo which was designed by Pierre Tardif and had been in use since 2002.

Usage

The Minnesota Atheists logo should be used on final drafts of all Minnesota Atheists publications, documentations, and advertisements. When possible, the logo should be over white space, or without artifacts intersecting the logo. Additionally, the logo should be given enough size and prominence to be legible.

If there comes a time when the current logo is no longer relevant or otherwise usable, the issue should be brought up to the board. Until that time, the logo, as it currently exists, should be primarily used when possible. For example, while the logo may have an alternative color scheme for a specific event, it should not take precedence over the official (black and grey) logo.

In the case of a member or third party wishing the logo to be used on non-Minnesota Atheists materials or for personal use, the board should be consulted to make sure the use is suitable and aligned with the brand.

There are situations where it will be appropriate to adapt the logo to better fit the event. Generally, the preferred method for updating is to change the grey of the Minnesota silhouette to an alternative color scheme or simple picture. For example, our logo may be updated with a rainbow on documentation handed out at Pride.

Lockup

The following is our logo, along with some alternative single use versions





Colors

Color does not add a pleasant quality to design - it reinforces it.

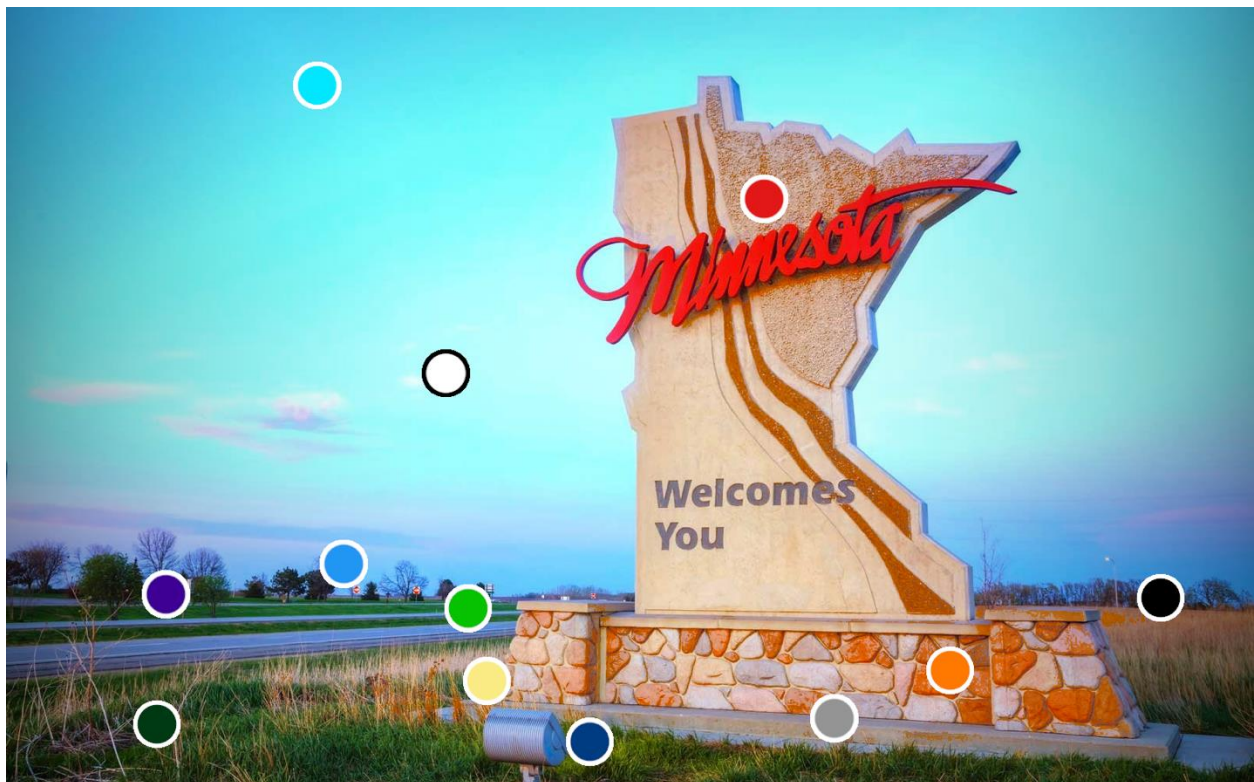
Pierre Bonnard

Concept

In developing our brand, we chose the following photograph of the 'Minnesota Welcomes You' sign. We chose this photograph because it displays many of our core values. It is a very welcoming sign, as it is literally welcoming you to the state. As such, it is light hearted, and demonstrates a fun attitude. It is also a sign that can represent all Minnesotans, rather than just a single geographic area. The photograph itself is colorful, but focused on a cooler pallet, which we generally identify with. As a subject matter, we found that it was more than just generally acceptable to meet our needs, we truly felt it represented who we want to become as an organization.

After pulling defining colors from the photograph, we separated these colors into 3 distinct groups. We found a strong blue and a complementing grey to serve as our primary colors, as well as standard white and black. We next separated out a bold red, a deep blue, a strong purple, and a muted green, which serve as accent colors, to be commonly used, but not as primary brand. We also found a light blue, a natural orange, a muted yellow, and a bright green, which serve as extended colors, to be used in as additional options to the pallet.




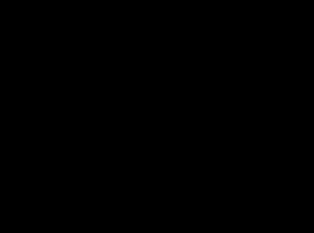
As many of these colors are non-standard, we light-heartedly named all the colors in our pallet after lakes in Minnesota.



Usage

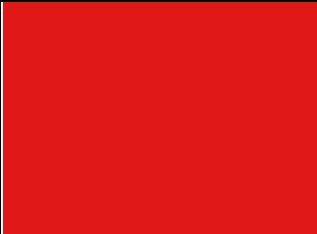

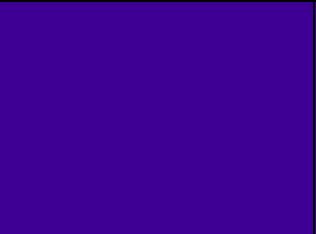

Primary

The following colors are preferred for use in most materials. These colors are a core part of our brand, and should appear prominently in communication pieces when possible. Avoid using colors other than those shown here and in the following palettes. When possible, choose color combinations that ensure high contrast and readability.

			
Half Moon Lake Blue	Duck Lake Gray	Bde Maka Ska White	Burntside Lake Black
HEX 2196F3	HEX 949493	HEX FFFFFF	HEX 000000
RGB 33 150 243	RGB 148 148 147	RGB 255 255 255	RGB 0 0 0

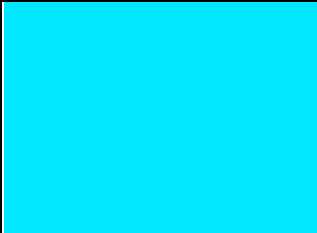

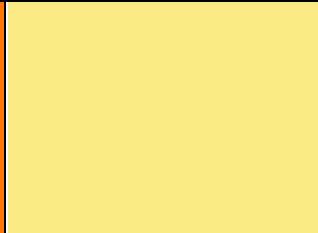

Accent

These colors can be used in visuals such as charts and graphs, and when you need a variety of colors beyond the primary brand colors. Make sure to choose text colors carefully to ensure high contrast and readability.

			
Devil Track Lake Red	Girl Lake Blue	Lake Minnetonka Purple	Hiawatha Lake Green
HEX E11818	HEX 003C81	HEX 3E0094	HEX 003A14
RGB 225 24 24	RGB 0 60 129	RGB 62 0 148	RGB 0 58 20

Extended

These colors are allowed to add flexibility in elements where the primary and accent colors are not sufficient. Use these colors sparingly.

			
Echo Lake Blue	Gull Lake Orange	Goldmine Lake Yellow	Eden Lake Green
HEX 00E7FF	HEX FF7900	HEX FAEB85	HEX 06C200
RGB 0 231 255	RGB 255 121 0	RGB 250 235 133	RGB 6 194 0