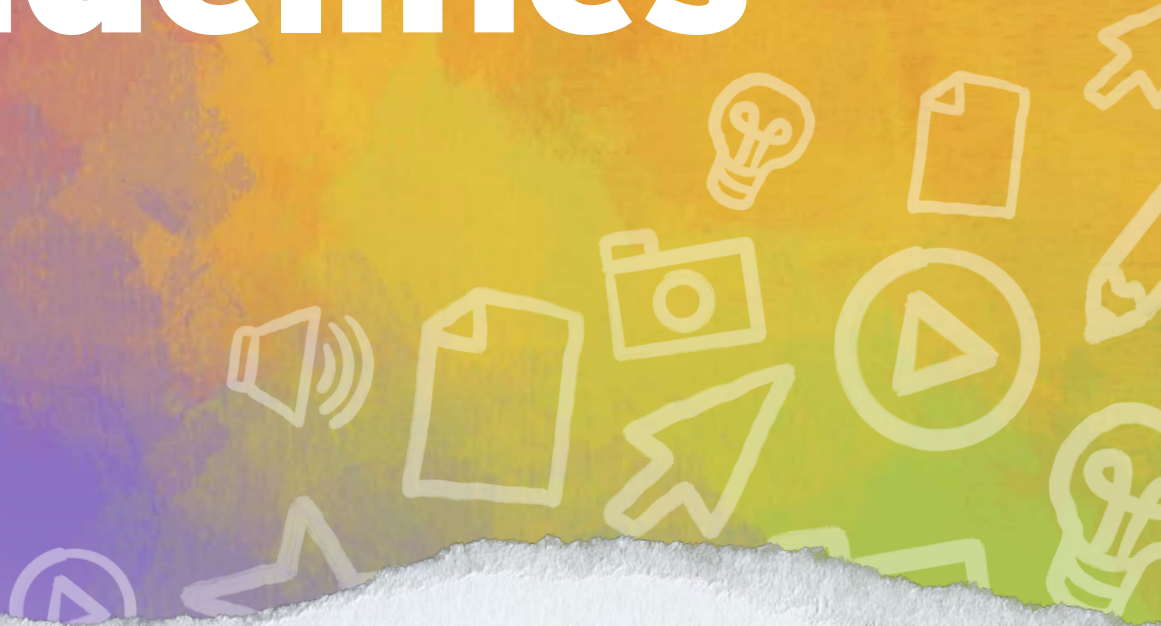
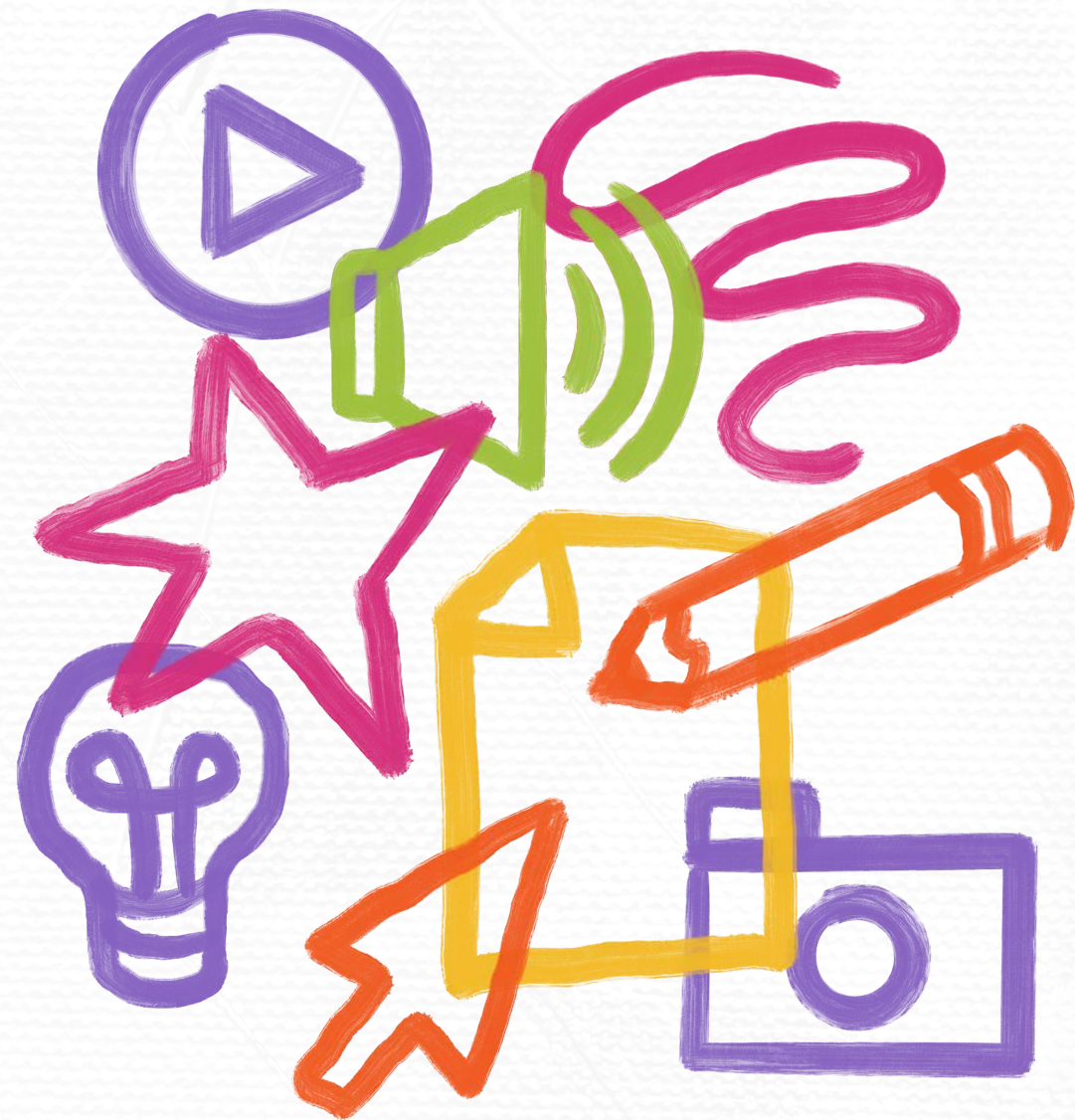


# Brand Guidelines



**exclamation**

marketing • creative • web



exclamation

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# Who is Exclamation?

## **Keep Purpose Constant**

We are a team of creators that believe in things like cooperation, collaboration, community, and we have an unparalleled drive to make things better for everyone we meet.

Your success, and the success of the people you serve, matters to us.

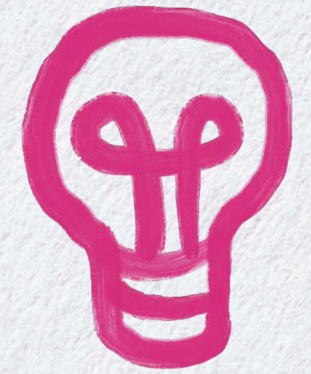
We were founded in 2018 by Simplicity CU in Marshfield, Wisconsin to serve the unique (and ever-changing, and people-focused) needs of small- to mid-sized credit unions. Pretty quickly we saw that a lot of businesses were facing some of the same challenges so we wrapped them into our growing list of clients.

Today we serve clients of all kinds: Solopreneurs, local restaurants and boutiques, national manufacturers, schools, credit unions, trade associations...the list keeps growing.





# What is a CUSO?



## **You may ask yourself “What the heck is a CUSO?”**

And that’s fair.

That handy acronym stands for Credit Union Service Organization...and that’s a mouthful.

CUSOs like Exclamation are for-profit businesses created to share their service and expertise with not-for-profit credit unions (and other people who can use their help).

We help bridge the gap between high-cost, high-end professional services and organizations working with tight margins that might not be able to afford them. Through our unique cost-sharing model, more amazing people can do more incredible things and keep their budgets from breaking their bottom line.



# Brand Voice

## It's Simple

When you think about who we are and where we came from, it's only natural that we'd create a brand focused on creative people helping people. And when you're a helper, like we try to be, you look people in the eye, listen to what they need, and do your best to give it to them.

Most importantly, our brand voice is designed to connect with people who are the heart and soul of the businesses we serve.

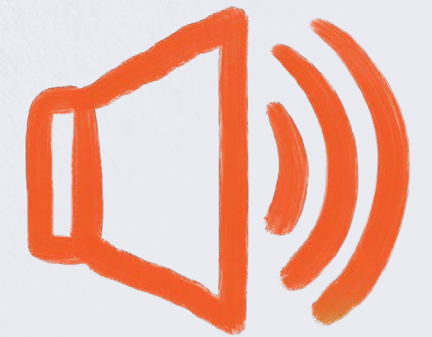
## Humble, Direct, Informative, and Fun

When you want expert advice, we don't talk down to you.

When you need tough love, we're honest and compassionate.

When you feel a little lost, we show you a path.

And when you need a laugh, we're happy to oblige.





# Our Mission

**Doing what we love  
to make you look  
great, together.**

Exclamation is a strategic creative marketing agency serving businesses, non-profits, and credit unions. We meet our partners' needs with passion, experience, and expertise to allow them to grow by focusing on what they do best.

# 6 Big Ideas

## **We were meant to work together.**

It's our job, all of us humans, to watch out for each other, and we take that job seriously.

## **Expect to exceed expectations.**

"Good enough" isn't the goal, and when we simply meet someone's expectations, we can do better.

## **Spend time doing what you love.**

Doing what you love creates the best version of You. Know your stuff, do your thing, and enjoy every minute of it.

## **Curious minds create opportunities.**

Dig deeper, ask more questions, listen for the real answers, and allow them to guide you.

## **Growth is the goal.**

New information, fresh connections, and deeper relationships with friends, these all move us forward.

## **Our world runs on fresh ideas.**

Why wait for someone else to show you the path? Grab your tools, blaze one, and people will follow.



# Logo

## Why a logo matters

The right logo says it all without saying anything. It has the power to connect your virtues and values to what you do without needing a big book like this to explain it. It connects how a person or community feels about your organization including your products and your people.

A brand logo is exclamatory (it may even be an actual exclamation point). It acts as a symbol of success and a commitment to the customer. It is the fulfillment of a partnership between a business owner and a graphic designer, whose collaboration is an act of communication and whose final design is the result of discussions about what the logo should do.





# Logo

## Primary & Secondary

Use the vertical logo as the primary lockup. Use the horizontal lockup as a secondary logo in situations where the primary logo doesn't fit.





# Whitespace

## As important as the other stuff

Whitespace not only creates harmony, balance, and helps to brand a design, it can also be used to lead a viewer from one element to another. Our main goals are to make our work look simple and uncluttered and to deliver information that our readers will enjoy and appreciate. It's not just blank space — it is the element of design that enables the objects on the page to exist. It is the space that balances things out and reminds us that designs are beautiful. We don't need to create a layout overcrowded with text and images to deliver a clear message.





# Logo

## Do This

There are plenty of ways to change the logo to create a particular look and feel. Here's some ways that work.

1. Vertical Logo
2. Horizontal logo
3. On white, the logo can be any color in the primary palette
4. On a gradient background, the logo should be completely white
5. On any brand color, the logo can be turned completely white
6. On any color in the secondary palette, the logo can stay in full color
7. On a light textured background, the logo can stay in full color
8. On a full color background, the logo should be completely white

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8





# Logo

## Don't do this

Just as there are some ways that the logo can be modified, there are also some ways that it can't. Don't do this stuff.

1. Do not change the colors of the logo
2. Do not skew or stretch the logo
3. Do not add a drop shadow or other effects to the logo
4. Do not split the colors of the logo. It's either full color, completely black, completely white or a color from the primary palette
5. Do not make the word "exclamation" in full caps
6. Do not change the size of any part of the logo
7. Do not change the font used in the logo
8. Do not move any elements of the logo

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8





# Lockups

## 1. Text Only

The text-only version of the logo can be used in situations where the logo-mark becomes redundant.

## 2. Icon Only

The logo-mark can be used without text in places where the brand is already well recognized or there is limited space available.

## 3. Partnership Lockup

This version of our logo shows what it should look like when paired with a partner logo. This lockup should be used when the Exclamation logo appears next to a partner logo. The vertical or horizontal version of the logo can be used depending on the situation.



2



3





# Lockups

## Logo with Tagline

This version of our logo includes our tagline, “marketing, creative, web”. It is used in situations where brand messaging should be reinforced, or when extra context is needed for brand recognition.

The tagline should always sit below the primary logo. To keep spacing consistent, the tagline should always sit away from the logo by the height of the “m” in “marketing,” as shown below.





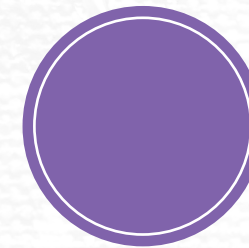
# Color

## It's for more than just making things "pop"

When building our brand—just like when building a house, we used all the tools at our disposal. Color is just one of those tools but one that we got a lot of use out of. Of course with a name like Exclamation, we knew that we needed something bold. We use a range of colors in a palette that's made for all types of color blindness and passes contrast checkers. We want to make sure that our brand is thinking about everyone, so we can create more inclusive designs overall.

Our color palette also communicates the flexibility that we have on our team and in the work that we do. Each color in the primary palette represents a different service that we provide: Marketing, Creative, Branding, Print, and Speaking.

## Primary Color Palette



Pixel Purple  
CMYK: 56, 70, 0, 0  
RGB: 129, 99, 171  
Hex: #8163AB



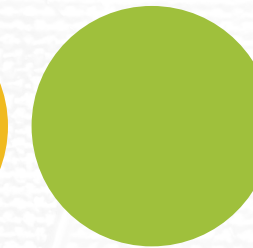
Persona Pink  
CMYK: 13, 95, 21, 0  
RGB: 213, 47, 123  
Hex: #D52F7B



Offset Orange  
CMYK: 0, 80, 98, 0  
RGB: 241, 91, 37  
Hex: #F15B25



You-Centric Yellow  
CMYK: 5, 27, 97, 0  
RGB: 241, 186, 35  
Hex: #F1BA23



Graphic Green  
CMYK: 43, 7, 99, 0  
RGB: 159, 192, 60  
Hex: #9FC03C

## Secondary Color Palette



Light Grey - Hex: #D3D3D3  
Dark Grey - Hex: #6E6E6E



Royal PPI Purple  
CMYK: 70, 100, 18, 6  
RGB: 107, 41, 119  
Hex: #6B2977



B2B Blue  
CMYK: 100, 93, 41, 56  
RGB: 12, 19, 58  
Hex: #0C133A

\* A white outline indicates that this color has high contrast on a white background



# Gradient

## We live in a full color world

We'll use a gradient to add variety from time to time. And, because we care (a lot) about how things look, we'll only do it with a few of the colors from our brand.





# Typography

## No Comic Sans here folks

While we're on the topic, no Papyrus either. We use two fonts in virtually everything that we do. Museo Slab (500) and Proxima Nova. We'll use some decorative or script stuff from time to time if the work we're doing calls for it, but the combination of a modern slab serif like Museo and something smooth and clean like Proxima Nova is perfect for us!

## And speaking of perfect...

There are two perfect ways to write our name. Either as a proper noun (Exclamation) when you're talking about us (only good things) or as a text only logo like this: exclamation

**Proxima Nova Black:** Headers

**Museo Slab 1000:** Sub-headers

Proxima Nova Regular: Body Copy

Aa  
Proxima Nova  
A B C D  
E F G H I  
J K L M N O  
P Q R S T U  
V W X Y Z  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

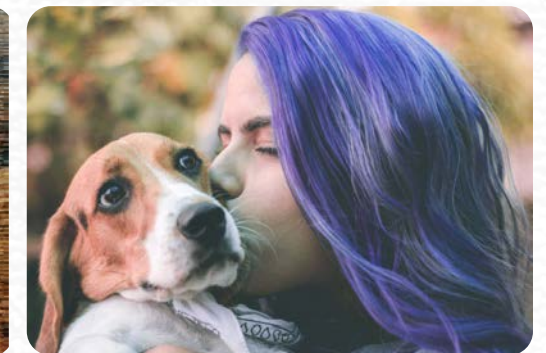
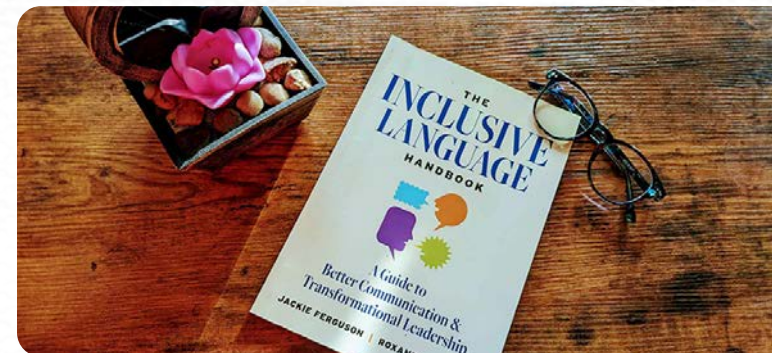
Aa  
Museo Slab 500  
A B C D  
E F G H I  
J K L M N O  
P Q R S T U  
V W X Y Z  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0



# Creative Assets

## Aggressive in curation

The images we use are super important. We'll try to use our own original images whenever we can and when we need to choose stock, we'll do it selectively and with purpose. This goes for us and the work we do for our clients. Gone are the days of the handsome fella smiling and pointing at you on a white background.





# Supportive Graphics

## Shapes are fun

If our logo, some copy and good images can't do the trick by themselves, we'll use some fun graphics from time to time to strengthen the message.

1. Paper Texture
2. Gradient Background
3. Watercolor Background
4. Icon Pattern
5. Gradient Color Bar





# Putting it all Together

## This is the fun part

The puzzle pieces come together and we've created something beautiful. Here's a few examples of how we use all of the pieces we just described and build the brand with them.







  
 exclamation

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## Award Winning MARKETING

  
 Branding/  
Rebranding

  
 Graphic  
Design

  
 Video  
Production

When everyone (and we do mean everyone) is competing for attention, how do you know your voice will get heard?  
 Start with the award-winning Marketing team that will take the time to (really) understand your business.  
 We'll deliver unique and innovative design, photo, and video that will get eyes on the great work you do.  
 From there, the sky's the limit.

GET STARTED AT  
[exclamationcuso.com](http://exclamationcuso.com)



## ARE YOU BRINGING THE REAL YOU TO YOUR BRAND?

If we had a nickel for every blog/article/webinar/helpful co-worker that claims to have the best advice about our 'Personal Brand', we'd be writing this from our private villa somewhere.

The truth is, it's on everyone's minds because impressions are important, but it's not that complicated. To prove it, here are some no-stress, no buzzword tips to help you show off your personal awesomeness.

- 1. Do what you love.**

Some people (like us) find their absolute favorite thing to do and get paid doing it. Even if you're still figuring out the 'getting paid' bit, keep doing things that make you happy. Nothing lights up a room and catches people's eyes like someone engaging in the things they're most passionate about.
- 2. Know who you are.**

Hey, we all know what it's like to have that not-quite-right feeling, and sometimes that means we're making choices that don't align with what we really believe. Take the time to think through – and write down – your personal Core Values and let them guide you personally and professionally.
- 3. Transparency goes a long way.**

Want to earn respect for your valuable insights? Then honesty really is the best policy, not just something you tell a kid when you catch them with their hand in the cookie jar.

Nope, it's not fun to have to admit when you've made a mistake, but an honest admission, sincere apology, and plan to do better next time will beat a lame excuse any day.
- 4. Show us the real you.**

Think about the images you or your company are sharing of you. Does button down, blazer-clad, barely smiling look tell people who you really are? If it does, perfect! Use that picture all day, every day because we need button down people in the world.

If not, why not refresh that image with something that shows the world all of your (considerable) charm. Wear something that makes you feel amazing and find a photographer that can bring a real smile to your face.


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## **Want more? Give us a shout!**

Whether you're a member of our team, one of our clients, or someone that just wants to learn more about our brand, your brand or why we do what we do, we'd love to chat!

Visit [exclamationcuso.com](http://exclamationcuso.com) today and you'll be connected to one of our super friendly and amazingly awesome teammates in no time. Then, we'll see what kind of magic we can create. And, like our core values say, we'll do that together.



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