thoughtbot

Brand Guidelines

Contents

01

Voice & Tone

Voice

Who we are

- Professionals who are friendly and accessible

- Experts who are eager to teach you what they know

- Continuous learners who are open to new and different points of view

- Trusted advisors who are equal parts knowledgeable and empathetic

- Embrace teaching by example and being transparent

- The sum of our parts - a collection of creative, smart, kind, thoughtful people

Our formality

We speak in a way that is conversational but professional, rather than academic or enterprisey. Whenever possible, we cut out jargon. Our audience should feel like we are speaking to them personally.

Our writting

We write in easy-to-understand words and phrases with a broad audience in mind. This sometimes means breaking up sentences and paragraphs to optimize for readability. If you can't comfortably read a sentence out loud, it probably needs a more simple rewrite.

Tone

How we speak

Casual and lighthearted writing is often sprinkled into our communications. We enjoy puns and wordplay. We embrace getting nerdy. When appropriate, we use a more serious or authoritative tone.

We are serious about what we do but have fun in the process - this should come through to the audience. We encourage thoughtbotters' personal voices and brands to shine through (while remaining professional, of course).

[When in doubt, reference MailChimp's Grammar and Mechanics Guide]

How we write

- It's ok to write a short sentence that is grammatically incorrect if it's easily understandable in modern vernacular.

- We often use contractions that make for shorter, easy to read, and conversational writing.

- Typically we do not use words for numbers. Instead of "three," we write "3".

- When writing a list, we use the serial comma (also known as the Oxford comma).

- We sometimes use emojis and GIFs when communicating on social media, but typically not in other formats.

- You get one exclamation point per social media post or paragraph, choose it wisely!

- Case studies have a special set of rules in order to establish authority with the reader

  - We use a serious tone.

  - We speak about thoughtbot in the 3rd person and avoid using any specific thoughtbotter names.

  - We use the passive voice.

Social Media Examples
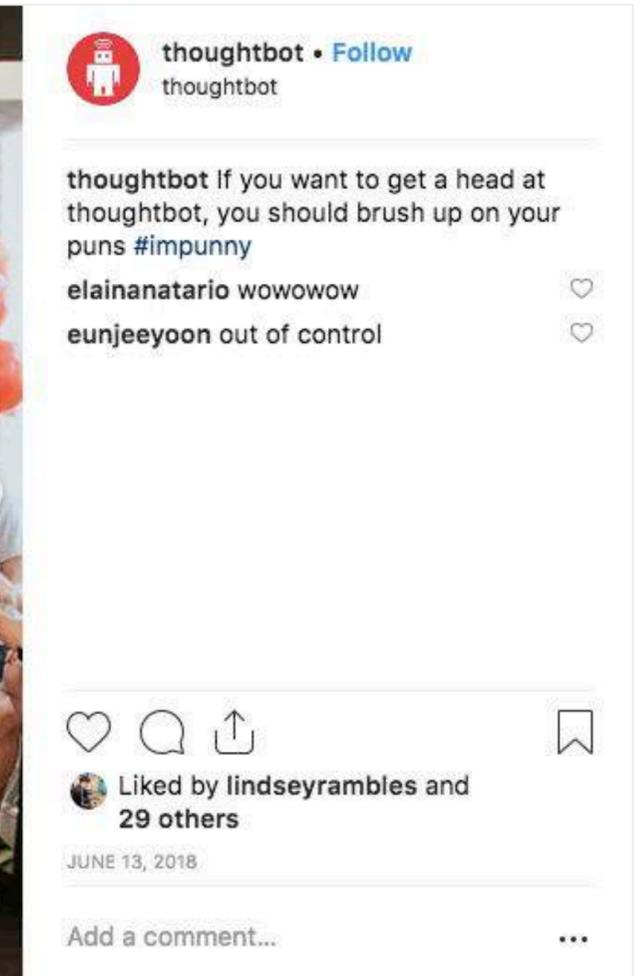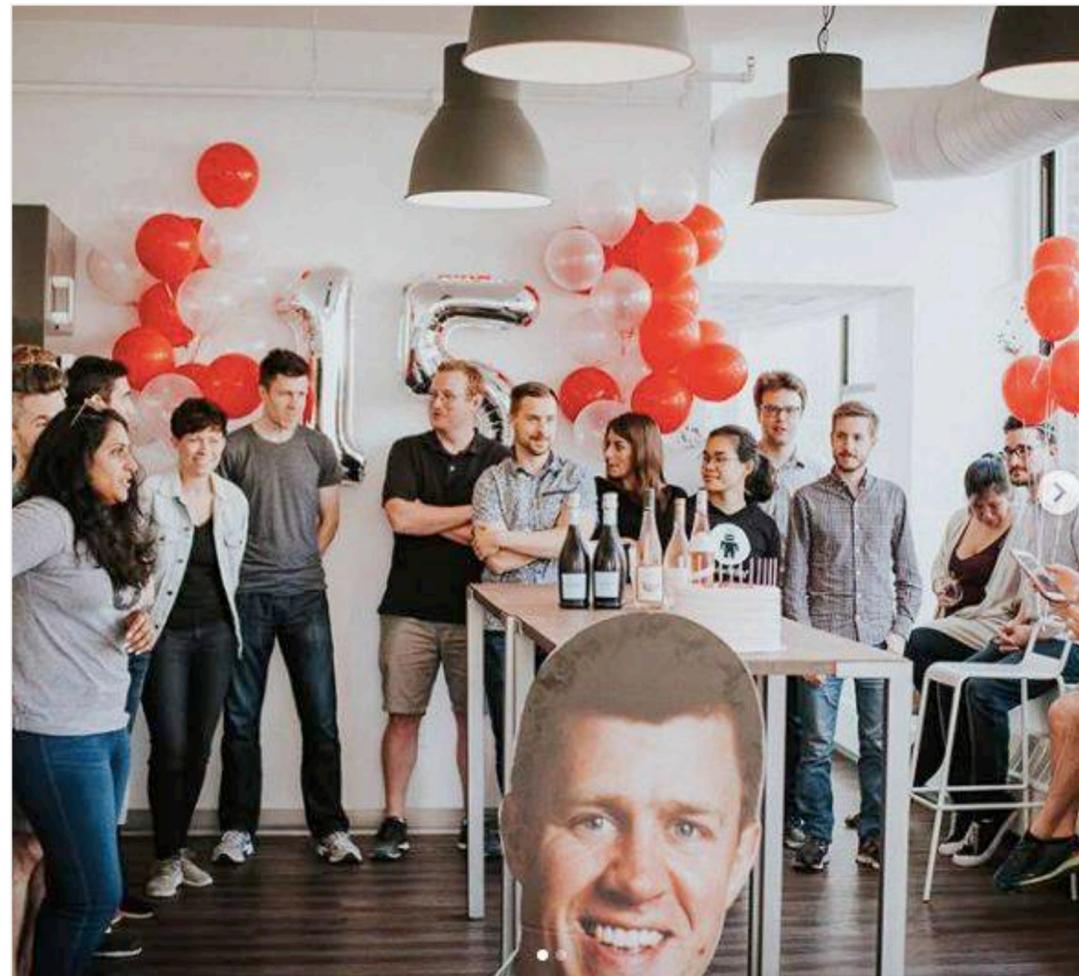
Long Form Examples

Meow That's What I Call a Purrfect Apprenticeship

Beth Haubert - March 4, 2019

Exerpt:

Month two I was moved to a more established React application which included two days a week at the client office and I got to work directly with my manager (who has so much great guidance to share, lots of it about programming, some of it about boats ⛵). My pair-programming partner-in-crime Sweta also joined

Telemetriks Case Study

Exerpt:

When Teikametrics reached out for help with their platform, thoughtbot initially built out a rapid MVP using Ruby on Rails. As customers started getting accepted into the system, it became clear that more firepower was needed on the data side.

In order to keep up, thoughtbot built a separate service to process data from Amazon. For this service, Scala, Akka, RabbitMQ, and Postgres were used to build a lightweight but scalable data platform for Teikametrics. By utilizing distributed data streams, the platform can break down a company's entire advertising history in minutes, providing continuous recommendations to sellers. Because the stream processes data in constant memory and applies backpressure, massive influxes of data won't overwhelm the system, and additional data can be processed faster by adding new workers to the cluster.

Typo-
graphy

Typefaces

We use two typefaces across our branding, Calibre and Tiempos. Calibre is to be used for headings. When using Calibre the only weights that we use are Light, Medium, Regular (Uppercase) and Semi Bold. Tiempos text is a serif typeface which will be used to complement Calibre as our body copy and other specific treatments such as blockquotes.

Calibre Light

Calibre Medium

Calibre Semi Bold

CALIBRE REGULAR UPPERCASE

Tiempos Text Regular

Tiempos Text Italic

Headings & Paragraphs

There should be a clear distinction between headings and body copy, because contrast is key to a good reading experience.

- Headings should use **Calibri semi-bold**
- Paragraphs should use **Tiempos Regular**

Notice how a font weights Regular and Medium were skipped for Calibri to created greater contrast between paragraphs and headings.

✔ # Product design

All our projects are design-led, starting with post-its and sketching, ending with design implemented as code in the app. We use design sprints and user research to build products that are user-centered.

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Text Alignment

Headings and paragraphs should be aligned on the same direction as each other. If the heading is justified left the paragraph should also follow suit. This makes the block of text cohevise and visually appealing to read.

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Blockquotes

Tiempos Text italic typeface should be used for blockquotes. There should be a sensible and equal amount of spacing between blockquotes and paragraphs as shown in the example. See the Components section for more detail.

48 px

✔

" *You have to have that trust and thoughtbot built trust very quickly.*

48 px

70 px

✕

"You have to have that trust and thoughtbot built trust very quickly.

48 px

Labels / Capitalized Headings

Headings and paragraphs should be aligned on the same direction as each other. If the heading is justified left the paragraph should also follow suit. This makes the block of text cohevise and visually appealing to read.

INTRODUCING

Letter Spacing: 2 px

INTRODUCING

24 px

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Type Hierarchy

The type hierarchy follows the classic typographic scale ie. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 21, 24. Visit http://spencermortensen.com/articles/typographic-scale/ for more info.

Use the correct type treatment in your design where neccersary i.e. The main heading on the page should be use a h1, subheadings should use h2-h4 respectively.

H1 – 84 PX

Product Design

H2 – 60 PX

Product Design

H3 – 48 PX

Product Design

H4 – 24 PX

Product Design

BODY / PARAGRAPH – 16 PX

The predominant typeface we use is Calibre across all of our branding. Light, Medium, Regular (Uppercase) and Semi Bold should be the ONLY font weights used in Calibre. Tiempos text is a serif typeface which will be used to complement Calibre in very specific treatments of text i.e. Blockquotes.

Type Hierarchy (Continued)

The type hierarchy follows the classic typographic scale ie. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 21, 24. Visit http://spencermortensen.com/articles/typographic-scale/ for more info.

Use the correct type treatment in your design where neccersary i.e. The main heading on the page should be use a h1, subheadings should use h2-h4 respectively.

See Components section to learn more about links

LABEL – 14 PX

INTRODUCING

BLOCKQUOTES – 36 PX

" *You have to have that trust and thoughtbot built trust very quickly.*

LINKS – 16 PX

This is a link

Leading (Paragraphs)

Leading is the amount of space between lines of text within a paragraph. When designing we need to ensure our text has resonable leading (line height) because this determine how easily we can scan through the lines text as we read. Set the leading too tight and text will feel crowded and become harder to read. Set the leading too large and lines will appear unrelated and spacey.

We set our body copy to a line height of 1.6 as this feels just right for readability. (Font Size * 1.6 = Line Height)

✔   1.6   We are able to manage ourselves and don't need someone to tell us what to do in order to be productive. Our first instinct is to take initiative rather than expect a policy or ask for permission. We are able to make decisions on our own, to initiate change, and to take action independently. Taking action independently doesn't mean we do everything alone.

✘   1.2   We are able to manage ourselves and don't need someone to tell us what to do in order to be productive. Our first instinct is to take initiative rather than expect a policy or ask for permission. We are able to make decisions on our own, to initiate change, and to take action independently. Taking action independently doesn't mean we do everything alone.

✘   1   We are able to manage ourselves and don't need someone to tell us what to do in order to be productive. Our first instinct is to take initiative rather than expect a policy or ask for permission. We are able to make decisions on our own, to initiate change, and to take action independently. Taking action independently doesn't mean we do everything alone.

Leading (Headings)

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We set our headings to a line-height of 1.1 or 1.2 depending on the size of the heading. For example:

- H1 - Line-height: 1.1
- H2 - H4 - Line-height: 1.2

✓   1.2   **Giant Robots Smashing Into Other Giant Robots**

✗   0.8   **Giant Robots Smashing Into Other Giant Robots**

Measure

Measure is the width of a block of text, usually measured in units of length like inches or points or in characters per line. Simularly with Leading, the measure of block of text needs to be at a resonable size to ensure a good reading experience. A good rule of thumb for good measure is between 40 - 75 characters long. Anthing longer than that will be considered too long and uncomfortable to read. Use example on the right as a reference.

40   75

✔ We are able to manage ourselves and don't need someone to tell us what to do in order to be productive. Our first instinct is to take initiative rather than expect a policy or ask for permission. We are able to make decisions on our own, to initiate change, and to take action independently. Taking action independently doesn't mean we do everything alone. Rather, that we know when to collaborate, and when to ask for help.

75

40   75

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03

Photo-graphy

Profile Photographs

Profile images should be natural, personable and friendly as this reflects the thoughtbot brand. Profile images should be consistent in photographic quality and lighting mantaining a single colour background as shown in the examples.

Studio Photographs

Studio images should be candid / natural as this shows transparency in the way we work. The lighting / tone should of these photo should be the same or marry up with profile images.
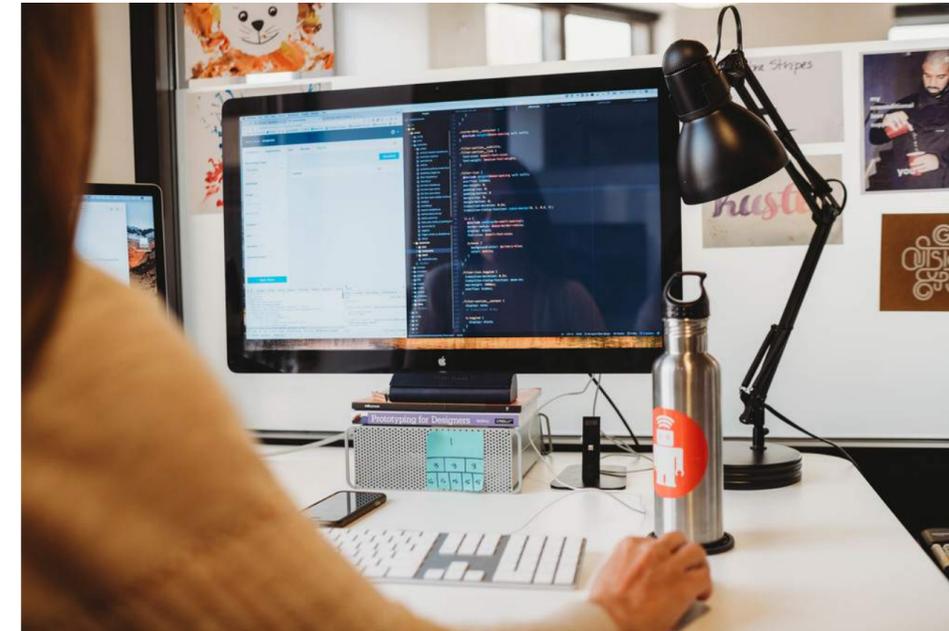
Additional Photos

Studio images should be candid / natural as this shows transparency in the way we work. The lighting / tone should of these photo should be the same or marry up with profile images.

04

Color

Color

Consistent use of color is important in
making a design visual appealling. Further,
accesibility should be taken into account.
Higher contrast colors are to be use for text
and a contrast ratio of 4.5 or above
constitutes good contrast.

PRIMARY COLOR

Ralph

#e03131
rgb(224, 49, 49)
cmyk(0, 78, 78, 12)
Pantone® P 48-8u

SECONDARY COLOR

#353539

#4e4e53

#67676e

Renee
#29292c
rgb(41, 41, 44)
cmyk(7, 7, 0, 83)
Pantone® P 98-16u

Renee-Medium

Renee-Light

Renee-Ultralight

Heading Colors

Heading text should use the color **Renee** (29292c). This ensures that headings have high contrast and will enforce a visual hierarchy as it relates to body text. Please see typography section for heading sizes.

✓ **Product Design**

✓ **Product Design**

✓ **Product Design**

✗ **Product Design**

✗ **Product Design**

✗ **Product Design**

Labels & Capitalized Heading Colors

Labels and capitalized headings should be in in the color **Renee-Ultralight** (#67676e). When using capitalized headings the sub heading, in this example 'product design' should be in the color Renee.

INTRODUCING

✔ **Product Design**

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INTRODUCING

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✕ **Product Design**

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Body Copy

Body copy should be 16px and in the color **Renee-light** (#4e4e53). This will help enforce a visual hierarchy between headings and body copy. Please see the typography section for more details.

✓ The predominant typeface we use is Calibre across all of our branding. Light, Medium, Regular (Uppercase) and Semi Bold should be the ONLY font weights used in Calibre. Tiempos text is a serif typeface which will be used to complement Calibre in very specific treatments of text i.e. Blockquotes.

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Blockquotes Color

Blockquotes should be placed in **Renee-light** (#4e4e53) color, along with Tiempos, will help set blockquotes apart from headings. Further, a lighter color makes blockquotes appear more subtly ensuring that they do not compete with headings for viewers' attention.

✔

" *You have to have that trust and thoughtbot built trust very quickly.*

✘

" *You have to have that trust and thoughtbot built trust very quickly.*

Background Color - Default

By default the background color of documents, web pages, and other visual collateral is white (#fff). This background will allow other visual elements such as photos, graphs, logos, and interactive elements (buttons etc.) stand out. When using the default background text should follow the rules stated on the previous pages.

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Background Colors - Alternative

There are some cases when it may be advantageous to utlize alternative backgrounds. When using alternative backgrounds ensure that contrast with other elements such as text, icons, graphs, and interactive items (buttons etc.) maintain good contrast. To do this, please use white (#fff) for all text and use Calibre Regular for body copy.
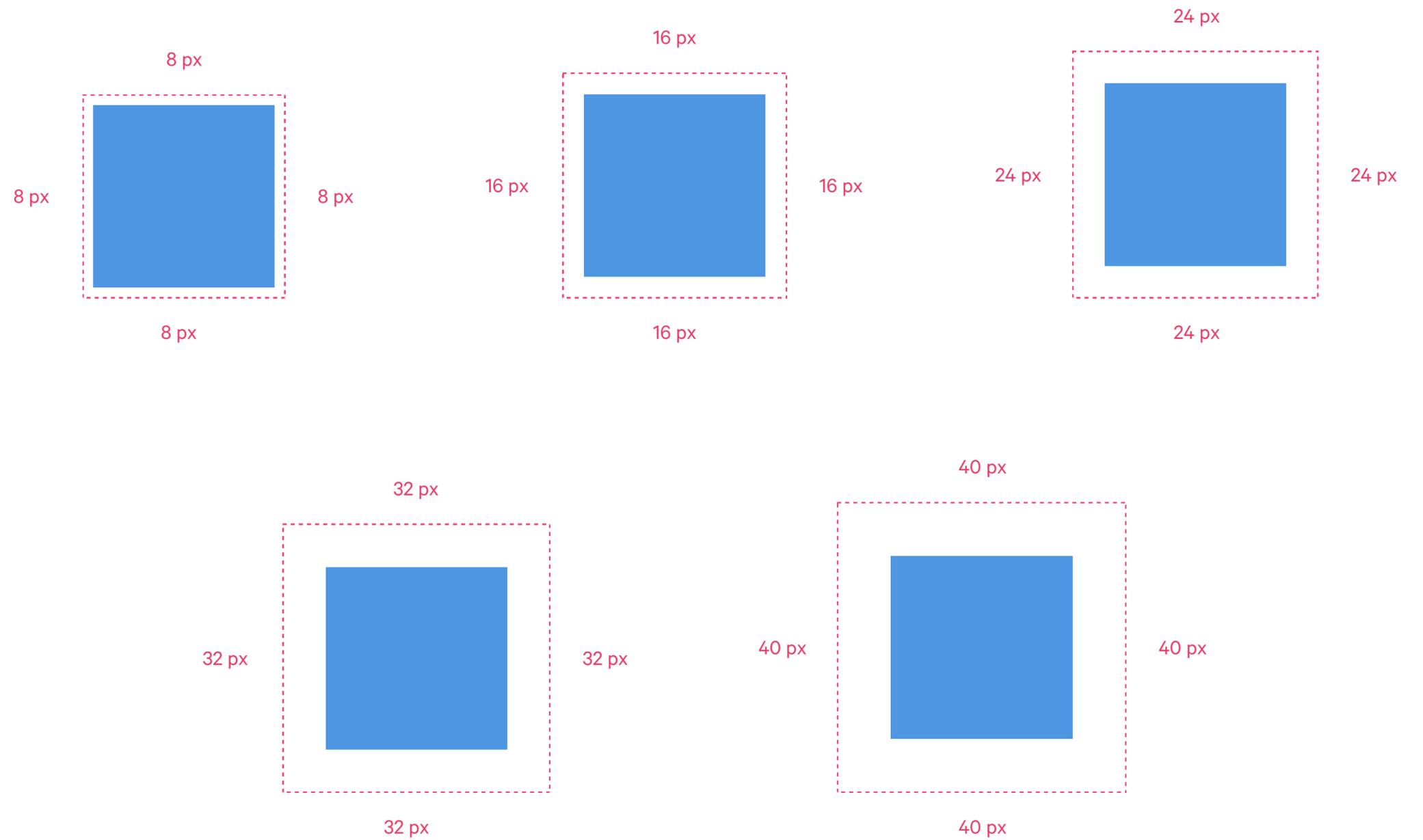
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06

Spacing

Spacing & Padding

Consistent spacing and padding is
important in making a design visual
appealling. To ensure consistency, padding
and spaces should be in increments of 8px
i.e 8px, 16px, 24px, 32px, 40px, 48px etc.

8 px

8 px   8 px

8 px

16 px

16 px   16 px

16 px

24 px

24 px   24 px

24 px

32 px

32 px   32 px

32 px

40 px

40 px   40 px

40 px

Media
Ads

Video Content - Name Straps

Name straps and logo signage should be simple, legible and unobtrosive to the video content.

- Names: **Calibre semi-bold font weight, 55px**
- Job title & Company: **Tiempos italic, 24px**
- Logo: **Width - 64px, Height - 64px, Opacity - 85%**
- Line Decoration: **2px solid Line, White (#fff)**
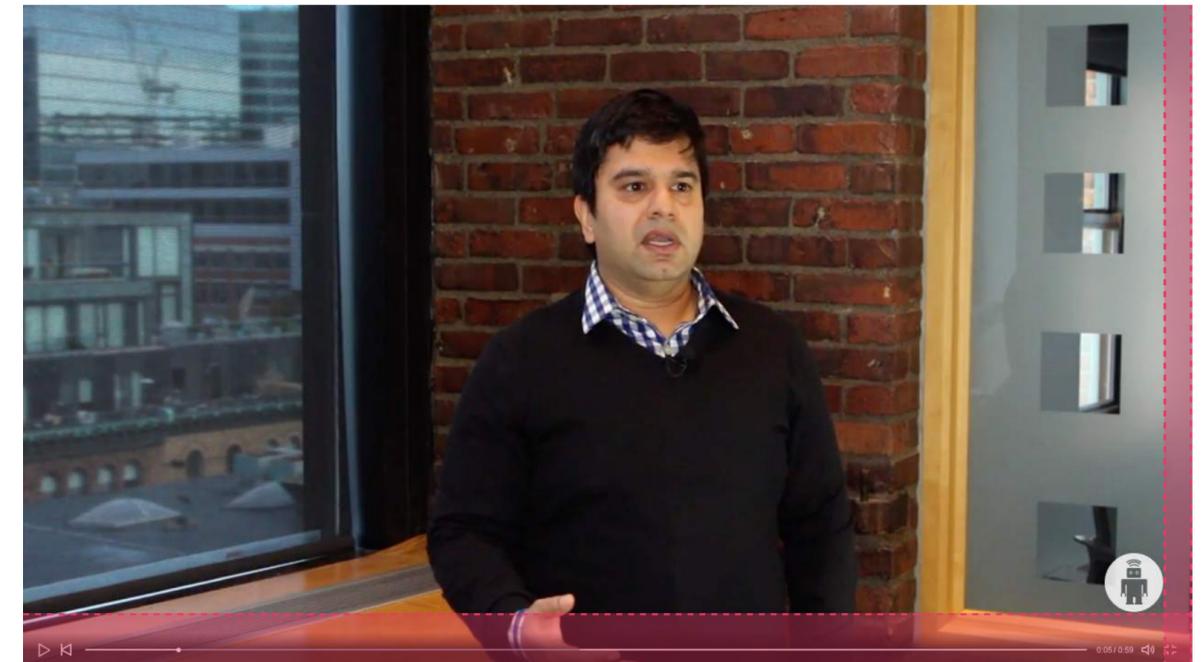
32 px

56 px
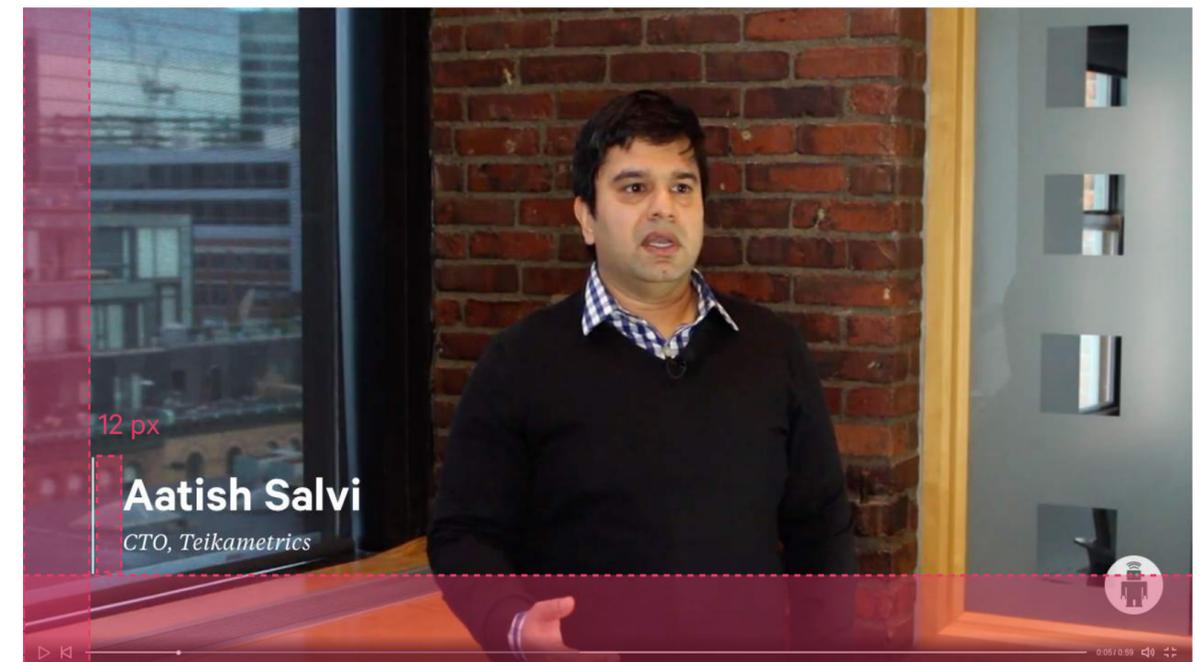
72 px

12 px
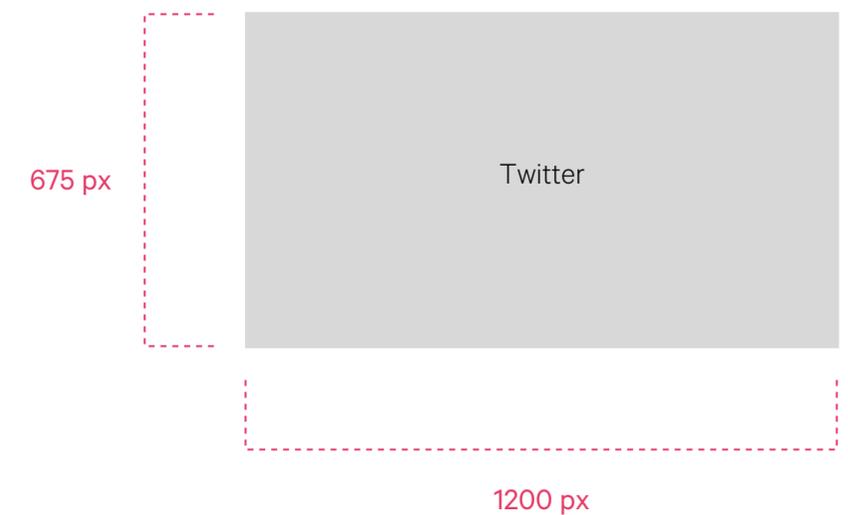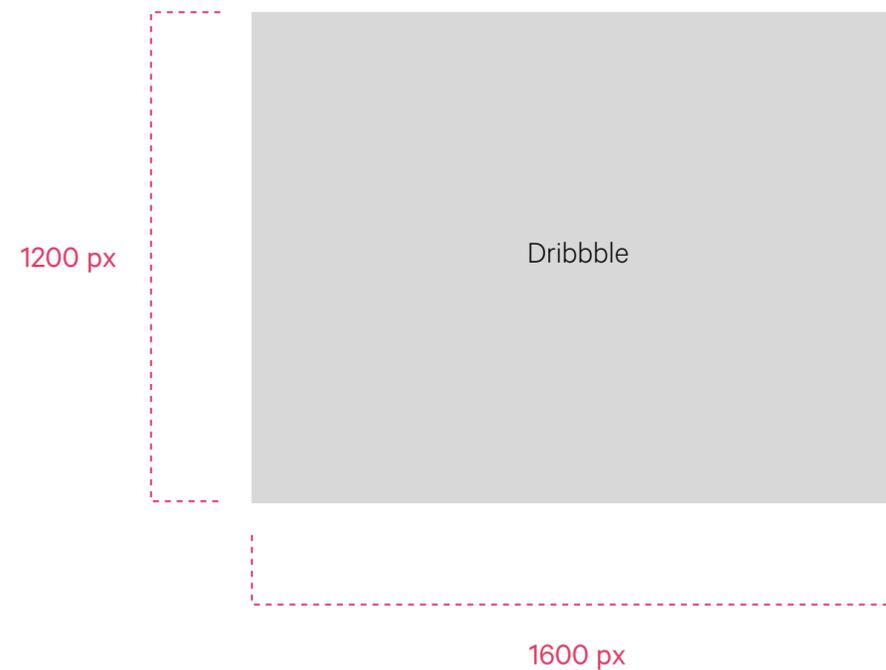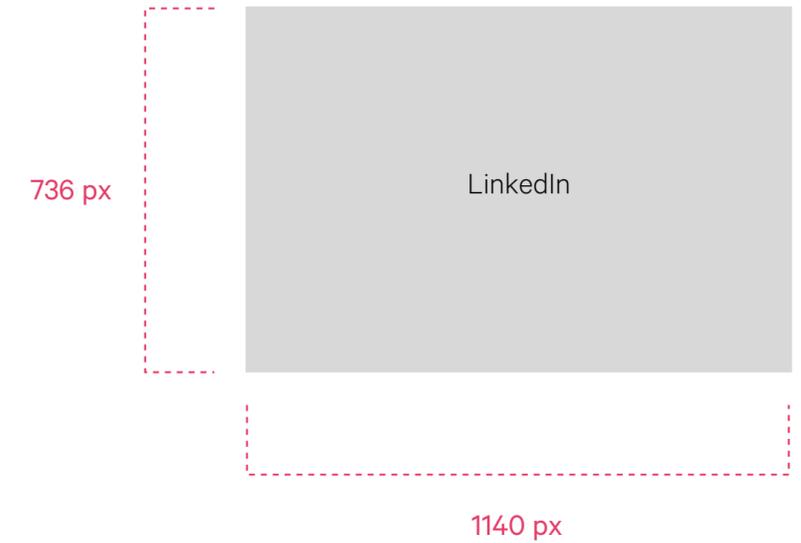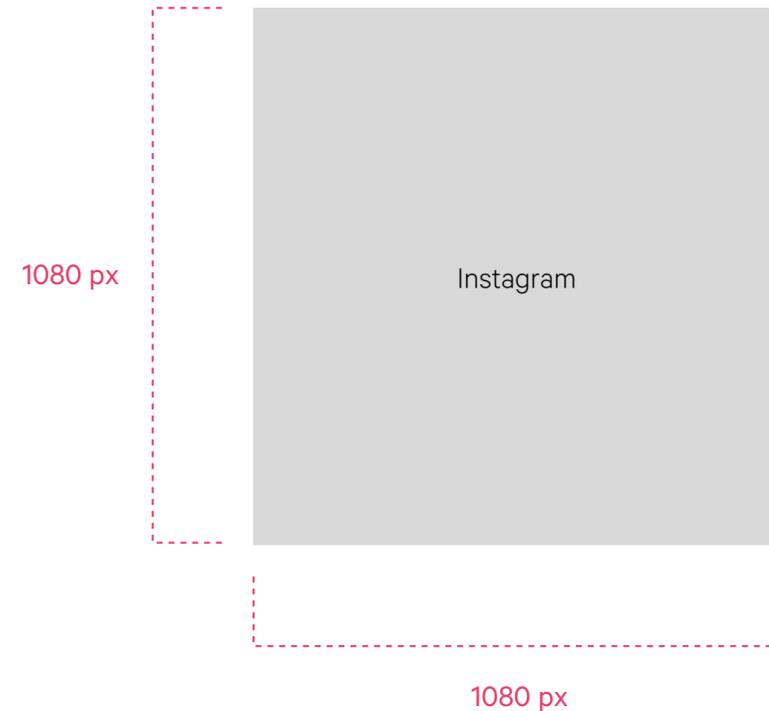
Aatish Salvi
CTO, Teikametrics

104 px

Social Media Posts

thoughtbot is company that believes in providing quality for our customers, the same should hold true for consumers on social media. To ensure we are quality and integrity remains high in social media posts we should aim to deliver our content at the best resolution possible.

- Twitter:
  - Single Image: **1,200 x 675 pixels**
  - Sharing links with an image: **800 x 418 pixels (Open Graph)**
- LinkedIn: **1104 x 736 Pixels**
- Instragram:
  - Posts - **1080 x 1,080 pixels**
  - Stories - **1,080 x 1,920 pixels**
- Dribbble: **1600 x 1200 pixels**

You can find these resolution canvas in our dropbox thoughbot/design/Social Media/Templates

Instagram

1080 px

1080 px

LinkedIn

736 px

1140 px

Dribbble

1200 px

1600 px

Twitter

675 px

1200 px

Giant Robots

Notice how the design of this podcast ad is altered to the accomodate social media platform it is intended for. This approach in design thinking should applied around our media ads.

There is a sketch template for this design in our dropbox: thoughbot/design/Social Media/Giant Robots/giant_robots.sketch
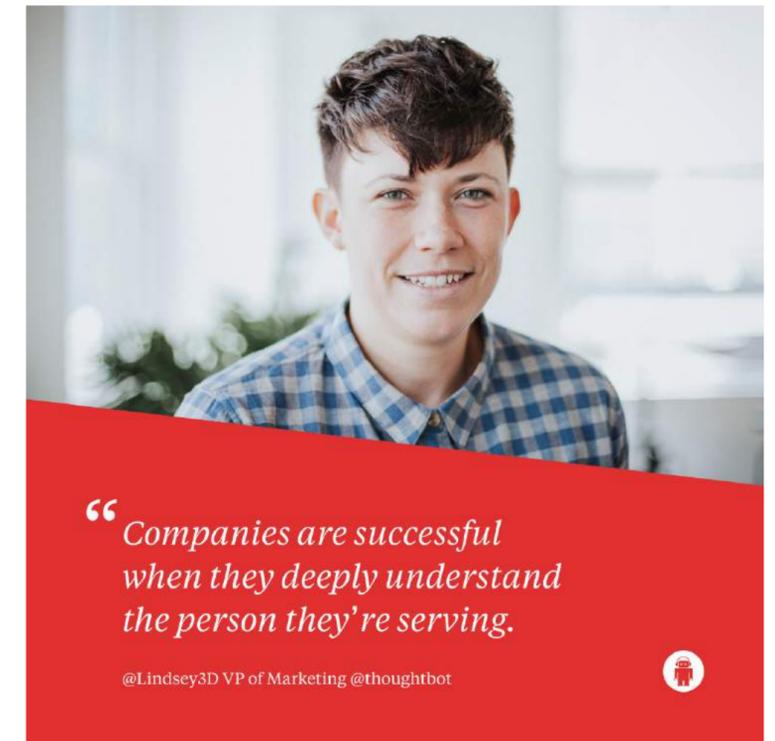
LinkedIn

736 px

1140 px

Instagram

1080 px

1080 px