



How To Ensure **Brand Consistency Across Your Site Network**



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If you operate across a number of sites, stores or facilities, then your customers, staff and suppliers will value adherence to a set of brand standards. Having a good brand can make your customers feel comfortable in familiar surroundings when they visit your stores, can make it easier for service to be provided to a common, consistent standard, and makes the whole organisation look and feel more professional.

The larger your network of customers and suppliers is, and the further their geographic spread, the harder it becomes to achieve a consistent look and feel. This disconnect in brand recognition for customers, staff and suppliers erodes the brand equity you have built up through investment in marketing spend over years of hard work.

What Are The Benefits Of Consistent Branding In The Bricks And Mortar Environment?

- Consumers prefer buying from brands they know. Purchasing is as much an emotional decision as a practical one. If your customers trust your brand, then they are much more likely to buy from you.
- Branding builds trust. Interacting with customers consistently helps them to get to know your company. When they know you, they will begin to trust you and therefore be more likely to make a purchase.
- It reinforces your greater brand strategy.
- It underpins your values – such as quality, dependability and performance.
- Consistency makes your brand feel dependable. People grow familiar with your company and prefer to stick with what they know. They tend to always buy the same brand of milk or brand of pen. They build an association with companies in exactly the same way.

So how do successful brand managers make sure their audience gets a consistent brand experience every time they visit a store or facility? There is a two-step solution to the problem of branding, but first, let us take a look at how branding becomes inconsistent in the first place.

Do You Have Store/Facility Branding Guidelines?

Most corporations have a brand manual that thoroughly outlines the colours, fonts, proportions and designs that are within the corporate strategy. It will often contain guidance on how to use branded imagery, the voice and tone of communications and the design elements that should be used. These guidelines are usually focussed on the way that brand should be represented in two dimensions, such as digital, electronic media, online and in print.

When you start to apply the branding to buildings, a new set of challenges comes to light. As well as jumping into three dimensions, you will find that no two buildings are the same. The location, size and surfaces of each building can all bring different challenges. Your logo may suddenly appear too big, or too small, or clash with the architecture. Add to this the need to add secondary messages, such as directions, place names, and so on, and you have a tough environment in which to try and portray a consistent brand image.

Without clear guidelines on how to apply the brand in these situations, you are leaving it in someone else's hands to decide how it should be done. Every site could have a different person interpreting the rules differently. Before you know it, your carefully planned branding has been diluted beyond all recognition. It may even look worse than no branding at all.

Here's our two-step guide to avoiding the pitfalls and building better business branding.

Step 1: Draft A Branding Guideline

A professional store branding guideline will enable you to give a clear direction on how to represent your brand in any space or location.

The contents of a good store branding guideline should include:

- The 2-dimensional brand guidelines taken from the brand manual. These will include corporate choices of layouts, fonts, colours and some do's and don'ts
- Several real-life photographic examples or an artist's impression of how to incorporate each of the branded elements in some typical building formats
- Preferred building treatments such as painting or cladding for external and internal surfaces
- Locations and designs of standard signage for the exterior, interior and statutory notices
- Other elements including: Joinery, Furniture, Lighting, Carpeting, Vehicles, and Uniforms

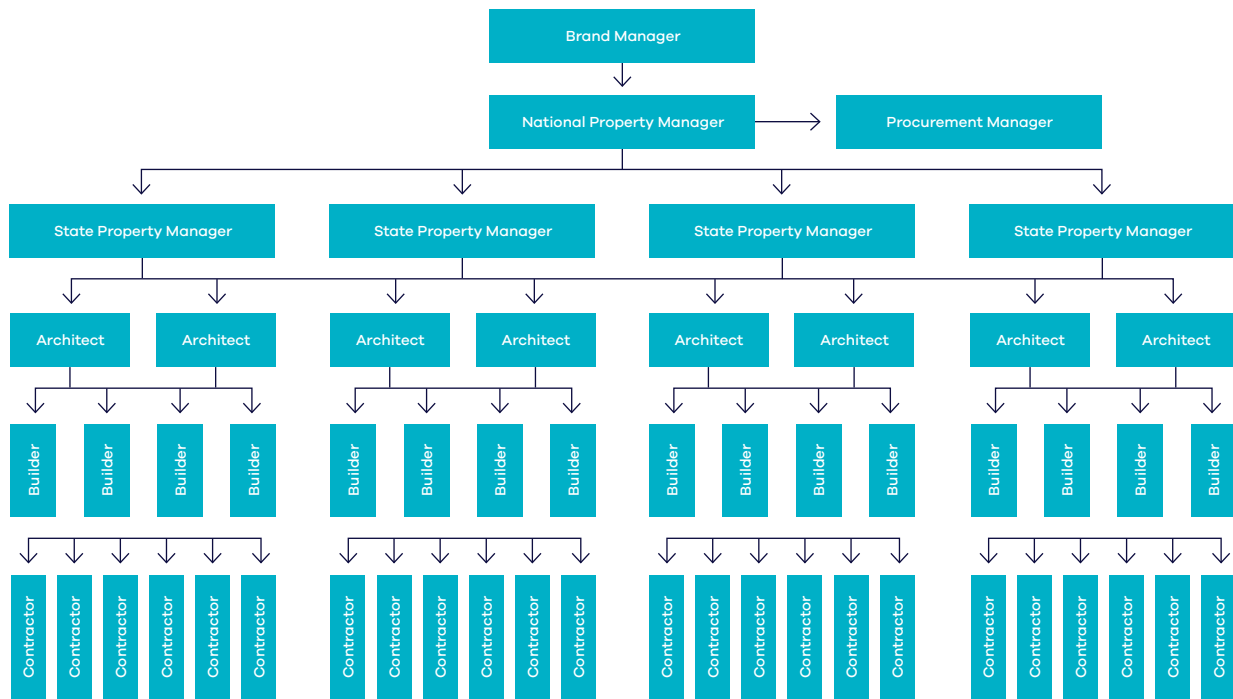
Each element should be meticulously detailed, with images of the finished product for reference, and include brand and part numbers for any stock that can be ordered. For design elements that are not available off the shelf and need to be manufactured, provide full construction drawings. Instructions on how to source each element will also help with compliance. If you can stock and supply items directly, this makes meeting branding standards even easier.

This might seem like a chore, but failing to provide a sufficient level of detail will result in an inconsistency in the look and feel of each element. Remember that any room you leave for interpretation will result in variations and inconsistency in every implementation.



Step 2: Ensure Your Store Branding Guidelines Are Being Followed

Large companies have many stakeholders, sometimes numbering well into the hundreds. All of these can have a role in setting up stores and facilities.



With such a large number of people involved, it is challenging to make sure everyone is aware of the guidelines. And, checking that your carefully designed guidelines are being adhered to is probably the hardest thing of all!

While brand managers tend to be responsible for setting the brand standards and the look of stores and facilities, the responsibility for implementing their plans is often delegated to property managers, who are often required to work in tandem with the procurement team. Because the performance measures for these teams can be based on meeting completion dates, tight budgets and risk management, it is sometimes the case that brand guidelines are compromised to achieve a lower price or to try to complete the job in a quicker time frame.

The best way to ensure your guidelines are followed accurately is to make sure you have a central point of approval for the work. The work that needs to be done can be clearly specified in a site-specific design pack, which you can develop centrally, based on the store branding guidelines. This reduces the amount of discretion that other stakeholders have in interpreting the rules, and it allows you to agree on any interpretations before expensive work is done. The person who is responsible for the final approval should have a direct link into the branding team. They should be given the authority to override any local decisions to diverge from the branding guidelines.



This role could be performed by the brand manager directly if they have sufficient technical knowledge, or you may choose to employ a specialist consultant with the appropriate technical ability and sufficient awareness of the content of your branding rules to identify and resolve any deviations.

Get Help From SignManager



SignManager are independent consultants who help large corporations improve the way they manage their branded assets across all their stores and facilities.

Some of the benefits of outsourcing your sign program include:

Brand And Marketing Managers benefit from a single point of control to ensure the brand is consistently applied across their national and international presence. You may also wish to set up systems to manage the brand throughout its lifecycle.

Property And Construction Managers benefit from having a single point of contact to assist their team. This can provide expertise, a national network of resources, and access to specialist systems to make implementing signage projects simpler. They will also see improved quality control processes, better risk management, a more flexible supply chain and achieve the best market value.

Facility Managers benefit from quicker response times from a national network of service-providers and lower costs through the intelligent use of asset data and mobile tools.

Procurement Managers are empowered to achieve the best market value for their full Capex and Opex budgets.

SignManager provide a mechanism for a competitive bid process for 100% of the spend, rather than just the 60% made up of standard products and services. We can also help you cut costs through improved product design, better buying behaviour and strategic spend analysis.



If you'd like our help with a strategy to better manage your signage and branding requirements, simply email us at info@signmanager.com.au

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