

Brand Language Guidelines

Edition 3.1
2020

A large, light blue circle containing the letters 'FIT' in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly tilted and overlap each other.

State University
of New York

Introduction

FIT's new brand purpose, Nurturing Unconventional Minds, is a clear reflection of who we are and what we do. The brand initiative itself is supported by three foundational points: the brand goals are determined by the college's strategic priorities; the brand work is informed by market research; and brand adoption depends on community consensus, engagement, and investment. The brand goals enhance FIT's reputation, distinguishing the college among its peers and clarifying its image in the marketplace.

Consistent, effective use of the brand in our communications is essential in presenting FIT as an influential contributor to the creative economy, where innovation, original thinking, and inclusiveness are hallmarks. It's important to note that market research has shown that FIT students, prospective students, and other audiences identify strongly with the Unconventional Minds brand.

For FIT's brand identity to succeed, the visual and language guidelines need to be expressed clearly and

consistently across all of our materials, both print and digital, in everything from presentations to postcards, from advertising to social media. Everyone who creates FIT communications needs to use our brand in a way that's engaging and easily recognizable to all our audiences, from prospective and current students to alumni to industry and the public.

Brand guidelines have been developed to enable users to easily achieve the right look and voice in FIT messages. Our toolkit includes resources to help you create visuals and copy that are true to the brand. In the Visual Guidelines, you'll find official typefaces, wordmarks, lockups, color palette, and more. The Brand Language Guidelines provide ideas for using the words and concepts that express the FIT brand.

The goal of these guidelines is to help everyone in our community become an effective FIT brand ambassador. The toolkit provides a range of choices, to allow creative and “unconventional” use of the various components while still presenting a consistent brand position.

Contents

1.0
Brand
Language p. 6

2.0
About FIT p. 8

3.0
About the
Brand p. 10

4.0
Brand Pillars p. 12

5.0
Brand Language
Elements p. 16

6.0
Telling the
FIT Story p. 19

1.0

Brand Language

For the brand to succeed in carrying FIT's message to our audiences, the Visual Guidelines and language guidelines should be clearly and consistently applied in all college communications to ensure that FIT is understood as an institution that helps to drive the creative economy, and where innovation, creativity, and inclusiveness flourish.

The Brand Language Guidelines will help you in developing content for FIT communications. You'll find words and phrases that reflect the brand, and ideas for how to use them. Keep the guidelines in mind when writing your copy, so that all FIT communications materials are consistent in expressing the brand. But these are not hard-and-fast rules. We encourage you to be creative, and to adapt the language to your particular use.

2.0

About FIT

This boilerplate text can be used in communications materials or when someone requests a brief overall description of FIT.

About FIT: Nurturing Unconventional Minds

FIT, a part of the State University of New York, has been an internationally recognized leader in career education in design, fashion, business, and technology for more than 75 years. Providing an uncommon blend of practical experience and theory on a foundation of arts and sciences, FIT offers a wide range of affordable programs that foster innovation, collaboration, and a global perspective. FIT draws on its New York City location to provide a vibrant, creative environment for learning, exploration, and research. The college offers nearly 50 majors and grants AAS, BFA, BS, MA, MFA, and MPS degrees, preparing students for professional success and leadership in the creative economy. Visit fitnyc.edu.

3.0

About the Brand

Here, in a nutshell, are the essentials of the Unconventional Minds brand, and how it expresses what FIT is about.

As a community of unconventional minds, FIT encourages an open, experimental approach to teaching and learning, research, and problem-solving. We teach from diverse viewpoints, beyond traditional disciplines and perspectives, and we believe that risk-taking, questioning, and collaboration are essential to innovation. Though our outlook is adventurous, our approach is practical, with the goal of real-world outcomes that can ultimately change people's lives.

We are influential contributors to the global creative economy, working at the intersection of design, business, culture, technology, and science. FIT is a SUNY college located in New York City—the center of those industries. Reflecting the depth and breadth of our nearly 50 programs, FIT alumni are in demand in fields that require innovative minds, including design, marketing, advertising, manufacturing, technology, and, of course, fashion.

4.0

Brand Pillars

These are the basic cornerstones of FIT's identity that set the college apart from its peers. They are essential features that we want our audiences to associate with FIT.

Innovation

FIT brings fresh thinking and unconventional approaches to teaching and learning, research, and problem-solving. We see innovation through our own lens, focusing on practical application and commercialization. FIT works at the intersection of design, business, technology, and science to advance research related to applied innovation. As a top-level design and marketing authority, we partner with other organizations to turn new concepts into marketable products.

State University of New York

FIT is a part of SUNY, the largest comprehensive university system in the nation. As part of a leading public university, FIT provides superior education at an affordable cost. SUNY's international network of 64 campuses offers opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and research partnerships, and FIT students and faculty are eligible for prestigious SUNY recognitions and awards. FIT offers two associate degree programs at the SUNY Korea campus in Incheon.

Creative Economy

The global creative economy comprises a range of intersecting fields, including the arts, culture, fashion, business, design, communication, and technology. It's driven by original ideas, new technology, and innovations that transform how people live. FIT is an educational authority for the creative economy, which requires specialized skills, critical thinking, and bold exploration. FIT's faculty and alumni are an influential force in driving their fields toward continuing transformation.

Program Breadth and Depth

FIT's nearly 50 programs blend experiential learning and theory on a foundation of arts and sciences. We offer a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs in a variety of fields relevant to the creative economy, including computer animation, marketing, film, entrepreneurship, product development, and cosmetics; our wide array of design programs includes toys, jewelry, accessories, advertising, textiles, interiors, packaging, and, of course, fashion. Our programs cross boundaries, fostering collaboration, rigorous scholarship, and thought leadership.

Points of Distinction

To support FIT's brand pillars, use any facts from this selected list. Find a comprehensive list with dozens of additional points [here](#).

Innovation

FIT won one of eight 2016 **Environmental Excellence Awards** from New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation, for its carbon reduction, green roofs, curricular initiatives, special events, student projects, and waste-reduction efforts.

SUNY

Niche.com ranks FIT the **10th best public college in New York State**, based on a comprehensive assessment of U.S. colleges based on millions of statistics and student reviews

Eighty percent of students say the college is a **good value**.

FIT students can also take advantage of SUNY's **650-plus study-abroad programs**, as well as those offered by the College Consortium for International Studies.

Creative Economy

One year after graduation, 86 percent of the class of 2017 were **working full-time**, and 68 percent in the creative field they studied.

FIT alumni are among the **highest earners in the country**, according to the 2018 College Salary Report by compensation data site PayScale.com. From a pool of 1,393 community colleges across the country, FIT ranked 25th—in the top 2 percent—with an average mid-career salary of \$74,400. And an FIT education is an excellent value: It's in the top 10 percent of all colleges nationwide for its return on investment.

Nearly one-third of FIT student interns are **offered employment** on completion of their internships.

Program Breadth and Depth

FIT students consistently win a wide range of national and international **design and business** competitions through organizations such as the World Retail Congress, LVMH, and The Clinton Global Initiative.

5.0 Brand Language Elements

Use of the Tagline

“Unconventional minds” or “Nurturing unconventional minds” can be used as a headline, a subhead, or in text.

Depending on the audience (prospective students and parents, current students, alumni, faculty and staff, industry, etc.) and the purpose of your communication, you can vary the basic tagline.

Some examples:

- Celebrating unconventional minds
- Engaging unconventional minds
- Expanding unconventional minds
- Connecting unconventional minds
- Unconventional minds at work

Brand Voice

These five qualities have been identified as the essence of the FIT brand, and should be expressed through our communications. You can use the actual words or other words that convey a similar message.

Daring.

FIT fosters a culture in which taking risks, making mistakes, and going back to square one are embraced as stepping stones to innovation. We're pioneers and trendsetters, unafraid of challenge. Imaginative.

We are original thinkers who explore widely, experiment boldly, and dream extravagantly. We teach from a diverse array of viewpoints, beyond traditional disciplines, theories, or perspectives. We envision new ways of teaching, learning, and creating.

Confident.

We are proud of our ethos as an industry-driven institution committed to excellence and change. We take pride in shaping the next generation of unconventional thinkers. FIT is an educational authority for the creative economy, preparing students for responsible leadership in the global marketplace. Our expertise positions us as influential contributors to our fields.

Realistic.

FIT is not an ivory tower. While our approach is experimental and unconventional, our thinking is rooted in practical solutions. Our research is market-driven, and our work addresses real-world concerns.

Hands-on.

We believe in experiential education: learning through doing. We are committed to the intellectual and physical engagement needed to develop skills, understand problems, overcome obstacles, and achieve successful solutions. We foster innovation through practice.

“Un” Words

In addition to “unconventional,” other “un” words have been selected to convey the brand. No more than a few should be used in any one piece of content, since overuse can become gimmicky and dilute their effectiveness.

These words need to be used carefully to avoid connoting negativity, so consider the context. For instance, “unbelievable” shouldn’t generally be used to describe a technological advance, where credibility is important.

CER’s editorial team can provide guidance regarding “un” word use.

Unafraid	Unexpected
Unbeatable	Unfettered
Unbelievable	Unforgettable
Unbound	Unleashed
Uncharted	Unlimited
Uncommon	Unmatched
Undaunted	Unplugged
Undeniable	Unpredictable
Undeterred	Unquenchable
Unequaled	Unstoppable

6.0

Telling the FIT Story

There are so many good stories about FIT and its students, faculty, and alumni that we need to be selective when deciding which stories and proof points best illustrate our goals and objectives. When you're creating FIT communications, keep the following questions in mind when considering whether a project or initiative is relevant and effectively makes the case for FIT.

- Does this tie to nurturing unconventional minds?
- Was there an unconventional approach to problem-solving?
- Is innovation evident?
- Can you communicate this in a way that is daring, imaginative, confident, realistic, or hands-on?
- Does this tie to or bolster FIT as an international, high-impact educational influencer contributing to the global creative economy?
- Does this connect with or reflect FIT's relationship with SUNY?
- Does this tie to or bolster the fact that we live, learn, and work in a city known for boundless creative opportunities?
- Does this support FIT's breadth of programs and depth of expertise?
- Does this tie to or bolster FIT's position as an educational authority in the new creative economy?