



Frontify

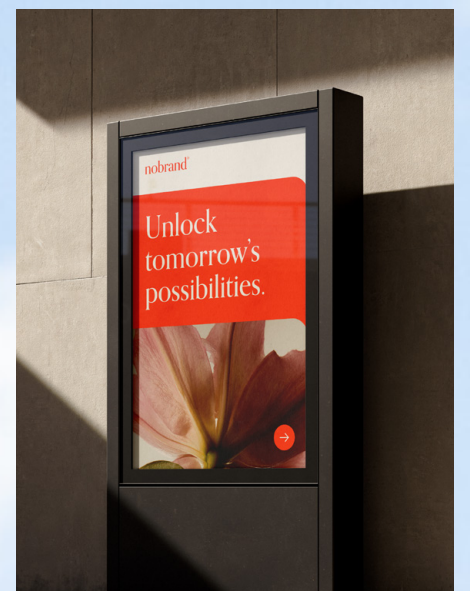


# Rethinking

# “on brand”



A practical guide to creative brand consistency



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# Brand consistency isn't just about looks — it's about standing out in a sea of sameness

The importance of brand consistency unites creatives, business leaders, and marketing scientists everywhere. But despite the consolidated expertise, the understanding and execution of effective brand consistency are often lacking. Consistency isn't about copying yourself; it's about setting the foundation for innovation while maintaining an unmistakable identity.

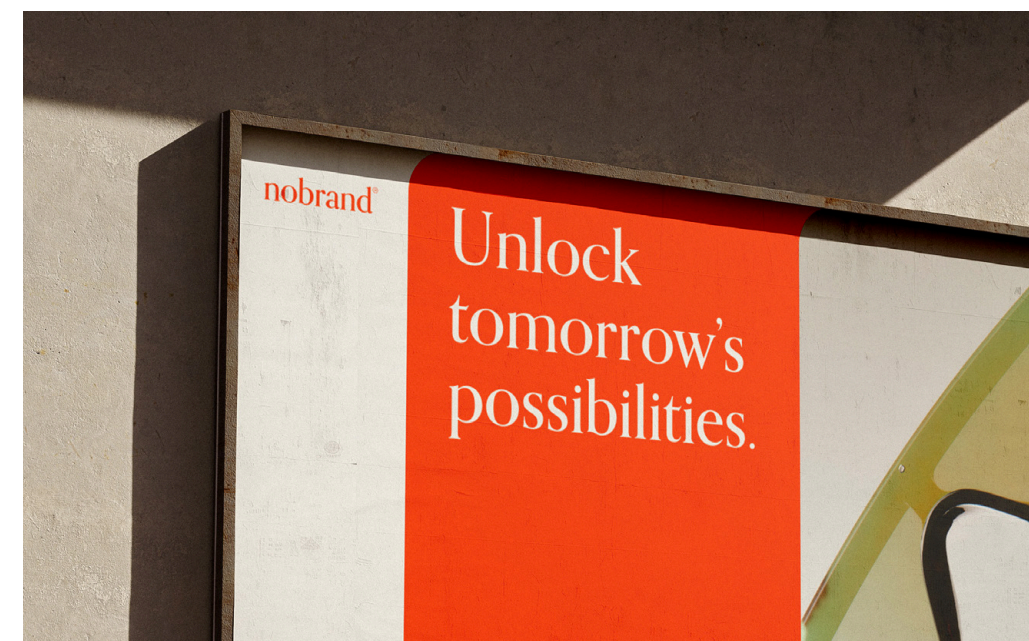
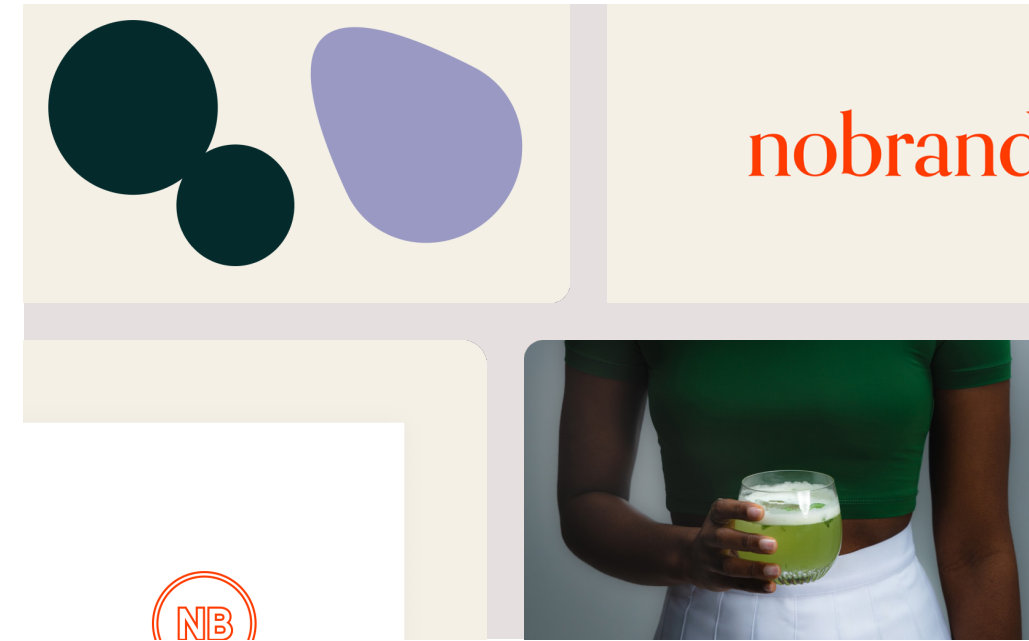
Consistency is commonly misunderstood as just being about visual repetition: As long as what you do looks on brand, any message or content will do — even Lorem Ipsum placeholder text. But that couldn't be farther from the truth. Correctly applied, brand consistency is one of the most powerful creative tools in your arsenal.

In this guide, we'll explore how to balance consistency and creativity, and how Frontify's platform makes it easier than ever to keep things fresh without losing the core essence of your brand. And how to turn consistency from mechanical repetition into a strategic asset for driving brand equity and business results.

“I prefer the term *brand familiarity over consistency*. Brand consistency is a powerful glue that helps build trust and recall, and it reinforces positioning. But knowing when to break those norms to surprise, delight, and play is where great brands come to life and grow. Documenting the right frameworks and setting the right governance with the teams delivering your brand are paramount to help you scale in the hyper-personalized global, and agile world we operate in.”

# Repetition, recognition, and results

Consistency is one of those things you only notice when it's gone. In brand building, consistency does more than keep things comfortable — it shapes how people perceive your brand, builds trust, and drives efficiency.



## Distinctiveness and uniqueness

Sticking to your brand's essential qualities is like perfecting your signature dish — people come back because it's familiar, but it still stands out from the crowd. Combining your key recognizable assets in new ways and bringing your brand's unmistakable point of view to new problems and trends can enable you to be fresh yet familiar at the same time.

## Quality and trustworthiness

When people see the same familiar elements across your brand — the look, feel, and tone — they start to trust it, and with trust comes loyalty. And we all know loyalty isn't easy to win these days. We trust what we know, we know what we recognize, and we recognize what we see over and over. That's the simple but powerful formula for greater brand equity.

## Operational effectiveness

When your brand lacks coherence, it's a sign something's not right behind the scenes. Consistency doesn't just make things look polished on the outside; it shows that everything's running smoothly on the inside too.

# Evolving with purpose: The challenges of balancing consistency and openness

Consistency is one of those things you only notice when it's gone. In brand building, consistency does more than keep things comfortable — it shapes how people perceive your brand, builds trust, and drives efficiency.

*“The thing to remember is that guidelines are a way to inform and create new work, not simply repeating previous solutions like for like. It’s fine for brands to know their strengths and double down on what works for them, but anything that’s parroted over and over loses meaning over time.”*

Hugo Timm, Senior Creative Director at Frontify





### **Challenge #1: Keeping up with market dynamics**

In a fast-paced market, keeping up with customer preferences can feel like a race with no finish line. The challenge is figuring out how to grow without losing sight of what makes your brand unique. Trends come and go, but the heart of your brand needs to stay constant. The key is knowing when to pivot and when to hold firm so that you don't chase every new trend at the expense of your identity.

### **Challenge #3: Being local in a global world**

Going global while staying local is one of the toughest balancing acts for brands. You need to adapt to local preferences, but your brand still has to be recognizable no matter where you are. It's about knowing when to make small changes while keeping the core consistent. Each market should feel like the brand was made just for them, but without losing the universal identity that ties it all together.

### **Challenge #2: Finding opportunities in technological disruptions**

Technological disruptions are like a game of Whac-A-Mole: Just when you've mastered one platform, another pops up. The real challenge is knowing which ones to focus on and which to pass by. You don't need to hit every (imaginary) mole — you need to pick the right ones. By staying consistent across all these evolving technologies, you ensure that no matter which platform is in the spotlight, your brand's identity remains strong and recognizable.



#### Challenge #4: Navigating consumer empowerment

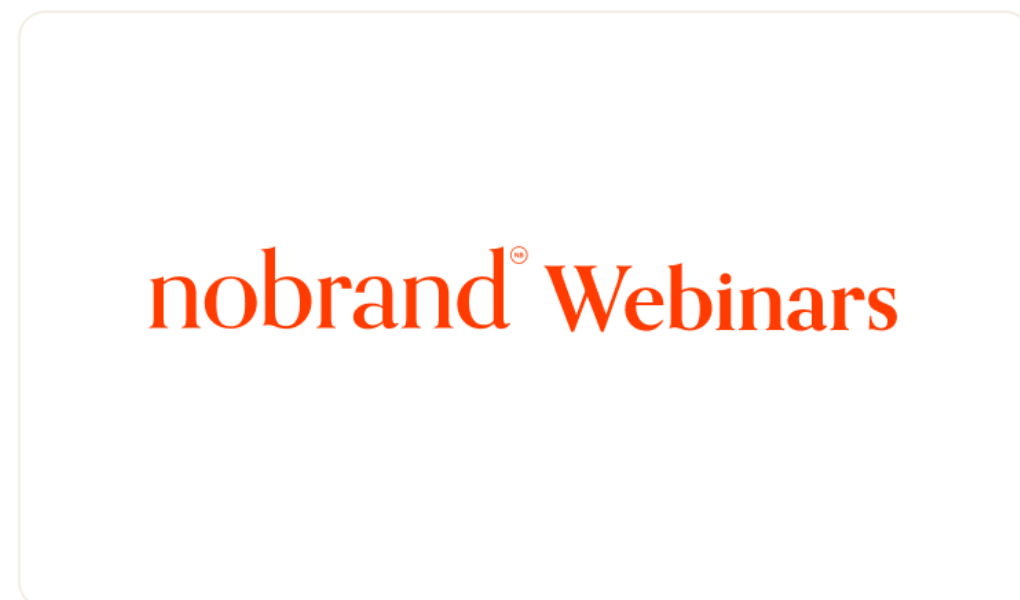
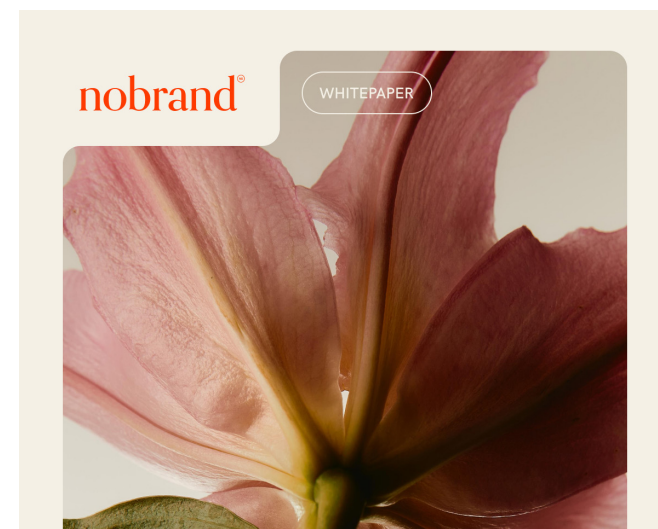
Today's consumers have more control over your brand than ever before. They're not just customers; they're co-creators. Reviews, social media, and user-generated content can help shape — or shake — your brand's image. The trick is giving the public room to engage without losing control of the narrative. It's like being the director of a play where the audience can change the script. You need to stay in control of the overall story while still giving them a voice.

#### Challenge #5: Knowing when to change a winning formula

Many brands find a recipe for success and stick to it. This is solid business practice, especially in light of the fact that brands often tire of their own marketing ideas long before their customers do. But there always comes a time when familiarity deteriorates into staleness, and repeating what works fades into fear of trying something new. Brands must occasionally engage in a bit of "creative destruction" and abandon well-worn assets and ideas that lock the brand in the past.



# Crafting creative cohesion: Steps to achieving brand consistency



## Step #1: Consistency starts with intent

Consistency is a question of purpose — ensuring that all actions, campaigns, and messages reflect the same core values and vision. When everyone is on the same page, your brand doesn't just look consistent — it feels consistent. Achieving such a harmonious state requires investing time in building a shared sense of the objectives and the impact. So, while strategies may vary, team members are aligned on the brand's ultimate destination.

## Step #2: Combining alignment and governance

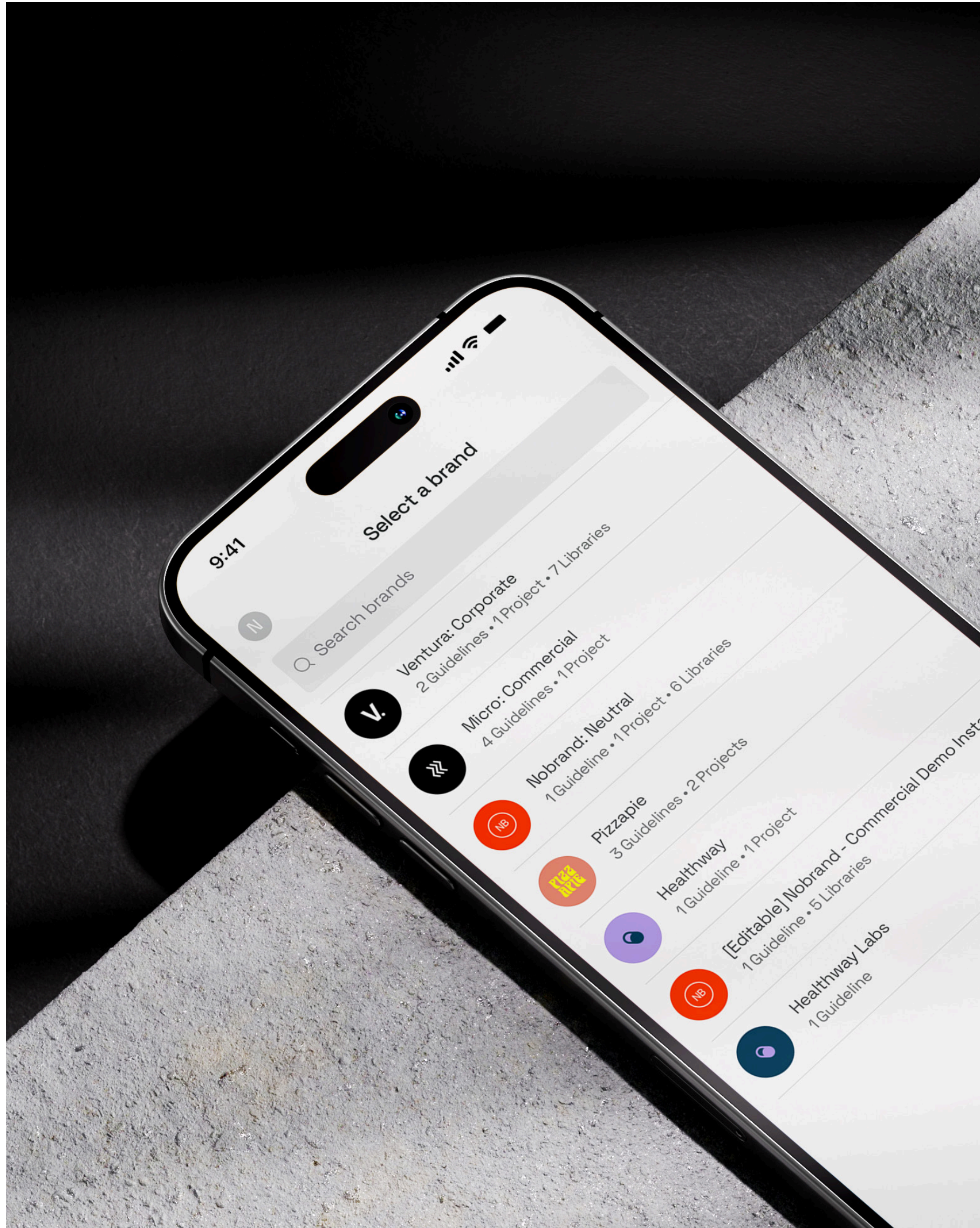
It takes a lot of coordination to unlock consistency. You have to commit to the meetings and tools to effectively shape, discuss, and communicate the brand's vision, creating a two-way process that allows teams to take independent ownership of the brand strategy. This alignment becomes the foundation for your creative strategy.

But alignment alone isn't enough. You also need brand governance — the guidelines, processes, and checks that help maintain consistency. By giving teams the structure to ensure every decision supports the brand's identity, you facilitate flexibility and innovation.

## Step #3: Collaboration for more creative brand consistency

Teamwork makes the brand-consistency dream work. Promoting the tools and environments in which collaboration thrives helps teams share the same creative vision and, more practically, the same assets. Having a centralized brand platform further encourages reusing content — and inspiring each other.

Creativity emerges when diverse perspectives come together, keeping your brand reliable and innovative. The more your team collaborates, the more impactful and cohesive your brand will be.



#### Step #4: Dynamic guidelines for consistent success

The ideal of creative consistency is not unchanging guidelines but a living discussion on how and when to modify those guidelines to ensure the brand keeps up with the ever-changing world around it.

With dynamic guidelines like Frontify's, you can make updates on the fly or course-correct what doesn't work. Like a roadmap that adjusts in real time, guidelines take you through every new turn while keeping your destination in sight. Brand consistency doesn't mean standing still; it's about moving with purpose.

#### Step #5: Personalization within consistency

Your brand needs to speak to different audiences, but it should always sound like you. Personalization centers on creating that sense of connection while sticking to the core of who you are. Frontify's customizable templates let you fine-tune your messaging for each market without reinventing the wheel every time. Your customers get something that feels tailored to them, and you stay firmly on brand — same wardrobe, different outfit. That's the key to efficient and consistent communication.

#### Step #6: Measuring and optimizing brand consistency

Having guidelines and assets is one thing; knowing how well they're being used is another. Tracking how your brand elements perform across touchpoints gives you the data you need to (re) evaluate. With Frontify's tracking and analytics, you can see which assets are hitting the mark, who's sticking to the guidelines, and where there's room for improvement. The goal? Optimizing your brand engine to keep everything running smoothly and on brand.

Frontify

# How Frontify provides room for creativity grounded in consistency



## From fragment to form: Unlocking the power of an integrated brand-building platform

Inconsistent brand elements weaken your message and confuse your audience. Frontify empowers teams by combining assets, messaging, and strategy in one place, ensuring cohesion without stifling creativity. With up-to-date assets and guidelines, your brand stays flexible yet consistent across every touchpoint.

*“I’ve used many asset management systems over the years, and Frontify’s platform is far and away the best tool I’ve worked with to date. It’s incredibly intuitive and easy to use, both from a user and developer standpoint. The number of available features and functionalities is astounding.”*

Leah Palmquist, Creative Director  
at Caribou Coffee

## Versatile but consistent: Embracing flexible guidelines for brand evolution

Your brand is dynamic, so why should your guidelines be static? Frontify turns PDFs into living documents that evolve with your brand. Need a quick update? No problem. With real-time changes (no coding or agency support required!), your team can adapt on the go so your brand remains relevant, consistent, and ready for whatever’s next.

## Simplifying workflows: Boosting efficiency with a user-friendly DAM

Digital assets are the building blocks of your brand identity, and efficiently managing them is crucial. Frontify’s user-friendly digital asset management (DAM) system provides a centralized and easy-to-organize repository: Everyone has access to the relevant, up-to-date files to create, edit, and share efficiently.

*“Frontify’s platform is our single source of truth to upload, organize, search, convert, download, and share all kinds of assets. The DAM enables all our users to find what they need quickly and facilitates asset reuse.”*

Lisa Pfurtscheller, Digital CX Innovation  
Manager & Lead UI Design at Zumtobel Group

## Breaking silos: Being creative in a collaborative workspace

Effective brand management requires collaboration across departments and regions. Frontify’s collaborative workspace allows teams to work together and share insights, feedback, and approvals in one centralized location. The result? A unified brand vision that stays consistent no matter how many people are involved.

*“By providing consistency, we have been able to see a growing number of teams using our design and code and working with us on developing new components and variants across the markets.”*

Thorsten Jankowski, Design & User Experience Strategist and  
UX Lead Group IT at Volkswagen AG

### **No more barriers: Scaling your brand with easy tool integration**

Frontify integrates with the tools and platforms you already use, from design software to project management systems. This compatibility allows your team to continue using their preferred tools while benefiting from Frontify's brand management capabilities to streamline processes and enhance efficiency.

### **Consistent personalization: Elevating your brand with customizable templates**

How do you personalize your message without losing consistency? Frontify's customizable templates make it easy. Your team can tailor communications for different audiences without straying from the core brand. All emails and posts feel personal, but they all look and sound like your brand. That's how you keep consistency without sacrificing connection.

**Empowerment and self-service capabilities:** With Frontify, Datacom was able to increase employee self-service by an estimated 40%, as well as design output in 2023. Frontify's brand portal enables all employees — even non-designers — to own brand management through easy customization while maintaining brand consistency.

### **Data-driven branding: Tracking and analytics for smarter asset use**

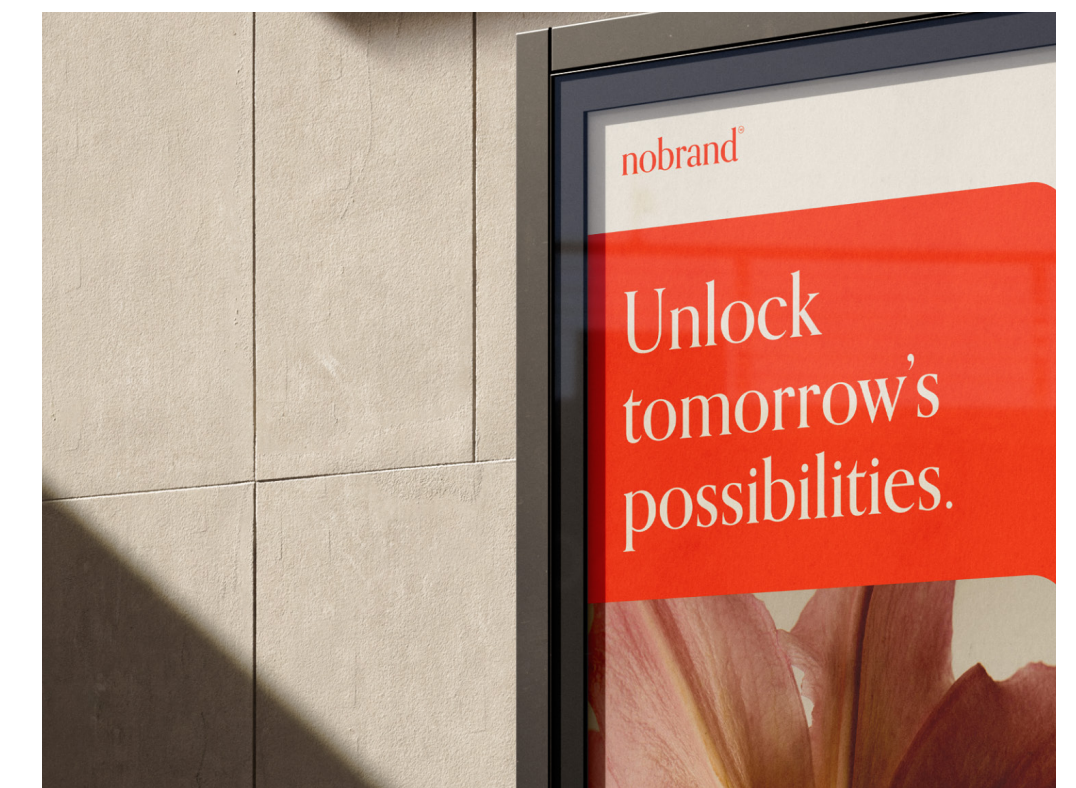
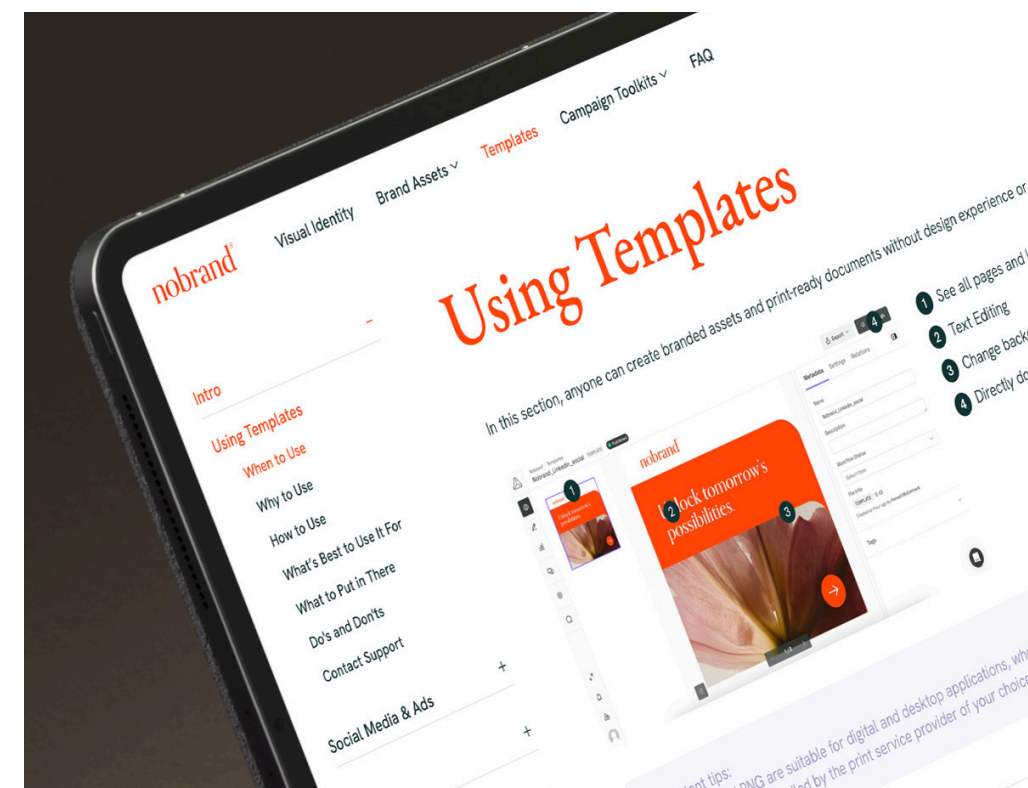
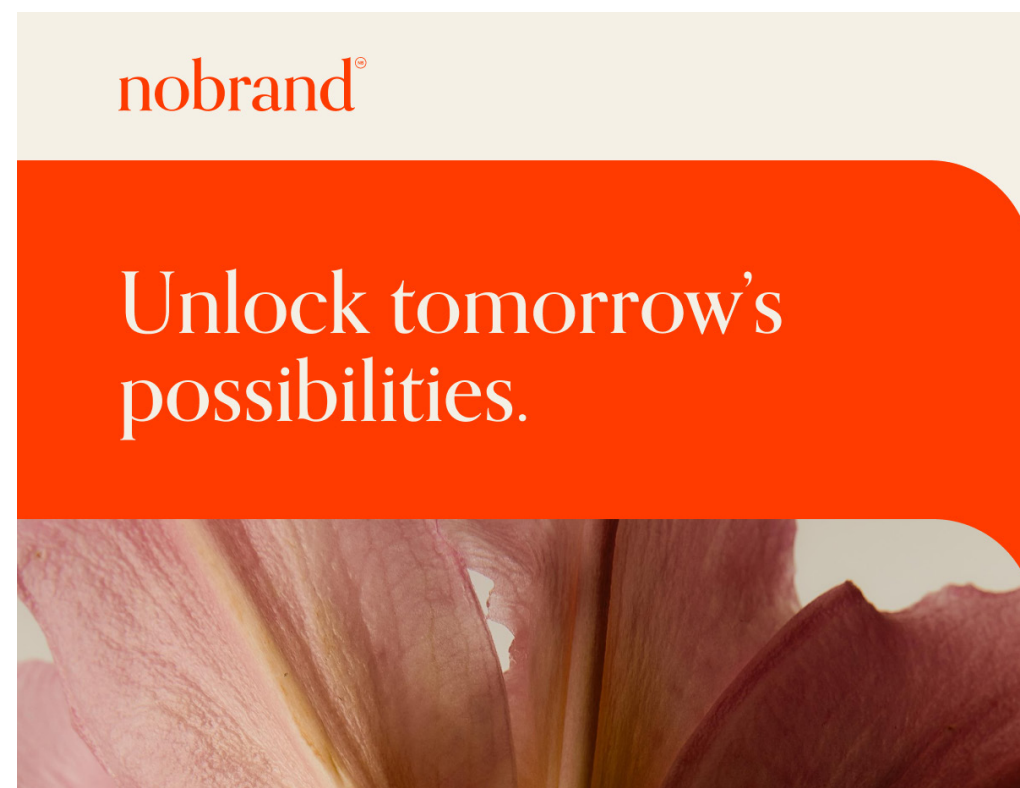
Having the right assets is great, but how do you know they're being used effectively? Frontify's tracking and analytics give you the full picture — who's using what and how often. It goes beyond keeping track and ensures that every asset is pulling its weight and contributes to a consistent presence.

# Bottom line: It's all about brand consistency

Consistency isn't just about keeping things the same — it's about creating a reliable, recognizable experience that builds trust over time. When your brand strikes the balance between consistency, creativity, and adaptability, you stay relevant in fast-changing markets. And you strengthen the connection with your audience. This isn't just good for your brand's image — it drives real business results.

*“The effect of Frontify was immediate. We increased the quality of communication through a higher brand consistency, strengthened individual work due to better access to information, and measured a considerable cost reduction — resulting in a possibility for higher production rate.”*

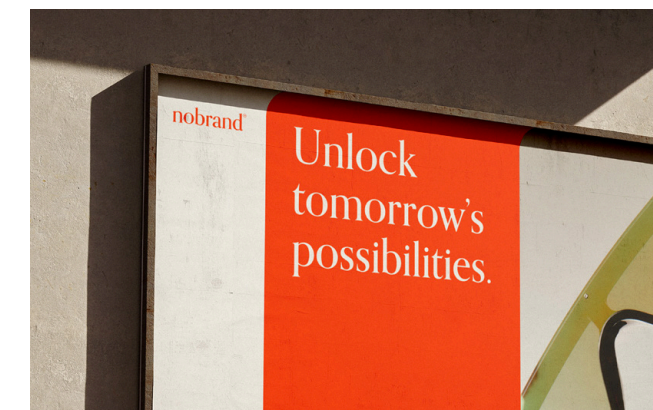
Ronald Wild, Chief Designer at Lufthansa



# Brand strength becomes tangible business value

Consistency is more than a brand strategy. It directly translates into measurable business results. When your touchpoints are consistently branded, you'll see increased customer loyalty, higher engagement rates, and a stronger return on investment (ROI). Consistency strengthens the impact of every interaction, turning each touchpoint into a building block for trust and recognition.

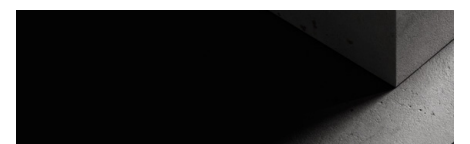
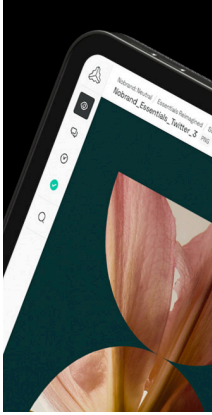
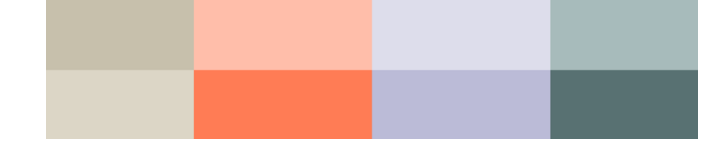
Achieving flexible consistency isn't out of reach — it's a tangible goal when you have the right tools. With features like dynamic brand guidelines, a user-friendly DAM, collaborative workspaces, and seamless integrations, Frontify's platform is designed to help you harmonize consistency and adaptability.



*“Frontify is a proven ROI solution. Every end user can find key assets quickly and self-serve more autonomously, which really alleviates the number of requests directed at the brand teams.”*

René Ciocca, Head of Corporate Identity & Design at Nestlé

By investing in brand consistency through platforms like Frontify, companies aren't just polishing their image — they're making a strategic decision to boost creativity and collaboration, which will pay dividends in customer trust, market position, and financial performance.



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