

Deep Dive into the Many Ways You ID Yourself

YOUR BRAND NEEDS A RULEBOOK AND A TOOLKIT

By **David Gould**, Staff Editor

Golf instruction isn't officially part of the entertainment industry, but it's close. Expressing his or her personal qualities and personal style is part of the coach's job—CPA's don't get to do that. These days, teaching golf also involves specialties. Over time, you become known for exceptional short-game training, or developing elite juniors, or mental-side coaching, or working with the disabled, or some other area of particular achievement. Likewise, you might become associated with players who flourished under your guidance, or with a learning center that rose to prominence thanks to your energy and talents.

Even your appearance and manner of relating become part of what makes you unique: Could Proponent member Andree Martin teach golf without wearing her trademark leather cowboy hat? Would Will Robins succeed if he lost his English accent and began coddling students instead of exhorting them? What would happen to Cameron McCormick's brand if he quit being detail-oriented and suddenly became a life-of-the-party type, constantly self-promoting? Confusion would reign and the branding effort would sputter.

OK, that's the fun, creative, expressive aspect of a coach's personal brand. This article focuses on blocking-and-tackling stuff. Tools from the marketing toolkit and a set of rules from the marketing rulebook do not of themselves define your brand identity, but they do support it and amplify it, in highly significant ways. First and foremost they establish consistency, which prevents "static in the airwaves" between you and your audience. These tools and rules also intensify the aura of professionalism your business relies on, just as a house needs a solid foundation beneath it.

So, be they tools, rules or guidelines, the elements discussed here need to be included in your ongoing business-management practices.

Among those elements are your logo, the

tag line you place alongside it, your photo file, the fonts and colors you most often use, even the tone of voice people "hear" in the written copy you send out. Coaches who are employed at clubs must be particularly vigilant, *(Continued on next page)*



COACH STYLE GUIDE

GOLF CHANNEL ACADEMY COACH STYLE GUIDE

BUSINESS CARD - 4 OPTIONS

FRONT

BACK

Local Logo: 100% Black Centered
No larger than the GCA logo

FRONT name, ALL CAPS, 100% Black
GC Frank Regular 9pt or similar condensed sans serif font

LAST name, ALL CAPS, 100% Black
GC Frank BOLD 9pt or similar condensed sans serif font

CARD INFO DIRECTIONS
RANK, DEPT, ETC., ALL CAPS, 85% Black
Email, lowercase, 85% Black
GC Frank Medium 7/8pt or similar condensed sans serif font

ADDRESS & PHONE, ALL CAPS, 65% Black
GC Frank Regular 7/7pt or similar condensed sans serif font

Business Cards are 130# Classic Crest Avon Brilliant White Cover.
All Illustrator/production files available here → [DOWNLOAD](#)

Golf Channel Academy provides a 23-page Brand/Style Guide to all of its coaches to make sure GCA is represented in an identical fashion at all of its nearly 100 locations.

because promotional materials produced by the club will at times feature the teaching professional, and those messages should be in line with the look and feel and tone of what originates with you.

In a recent article written for PGA Magazine, the golf professionals who founded and operate a company called Golf Web Design stressed the point that your support staff (okay, that may simply be you) must be equipped and trained to use a consistent look, feel and sound in everything concerning you and your teaching business that goes out to the marketplace. "People who design your golf cart signs, flyers, email campaigns, print ads, digital ads and the like must all follow the same rules," caution Nick Ondrake and Erick Arbe, the Golf Web Design duo.

Arbe and Ondrake state the matter thusly: "Imagine if one day you showed up to the course in pajamas—people would be confused and your identity would suffer. While it may be funny, it's not what your customers have come to expect. Your brand would take a small hit. If you add up enough of those 'small hits' you become unpredictable and unreliable. People don't become raving fans of businesses with those attributes."

Proponent Group member Travis Fulton recently sent along to headquarters an eight-page "toolkit" for his academy's graphic presence in the marketplace. Perhaps owing to his years working for the PGA Tour (as director of instruction for all TOURAcademy locations nationwide) Travis is well-versed in these brand-supporting nuances.

The sheets he provided included one showing the "Primary, Secondary and Tertiary"



Proponent Group member Travis Fulton has worked with a design team to build the prototypical brand guide for an individual instructor including logos, color schemes, fonts and high resolution files for all of his brand art.

versions of his logo, which is bold and sharply designed. Generally these variations involve color—green and blue on white, green and white on blue, blue and white on green. And not just any green or blue, either—Fulton's "corporate ID" colors are specific Pantone shades, with equivalent "CMYK" color ingredients, similar to what you see on labels the paint store prints out when you buy a custom houseplant color.

Additional spec sheets from Travis's "brand book," as it's called, include:

- color groupings for the front and back of his business cards
- a sample letterhead with guidelines for text, coloration and placement of logo/contact info
- a sample rate card to be printed only on 4-by-9-inch paper stock

There is even a spec sheet for his note cards—which are always 4-by-6 with a green-and-white logo against a blue band at the bottom. Imagine being a student or prospect of Fulton's and receiving several notes from him over a period of time. Instead of being written on whatever scratchpad paper is handy, they all come on this graphically pleasing card stock. It adds up to "brand trust" and increased goodwill.

Proponent members who are also part of the Golf Channel Academy network receive a "Coach Style Guide" that is 23
(Continued on next page)

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pages long and specifies brand-identification practices that start at the front entrance of the property and covers just about everything but the coach's underwear. Described in its introduction as the "official roadmap to the look and feel of all things involving the Golf Channel Academy brand," it's similar to what the marketing teams at Nike, BMW, FedEx and all recognizable brands live by.

"Brands only succeed when they are consistent and memorable," the GCA intro explains. "It is our job to make the brand memorable to the golfing public, but we will need your help to make the branding consistent at every GCA location. You play a critical role in maintaining proper brand standards and making the experience consistent, wherever a student chooses to go within our network."

Clearly depicted in the 20-plus pages that follow are brand graphics as they are to appear on letterhead, business card, shirts, hats, visors, golf balls, pin flags, pop-up tents, range dividers, "sky flags," shag bags, money clips and ground-mounted range targets. To help guide the ordering of permanent exterior signage, GCA's brand book includes three pages that lay out the guidelines at a level of detail similar to a draftsman's architectural blueprints.

All of the guidance in the book is clear and detailed whereas none of it, as noted, is particularly original. This is the execution side of the branding effort, not so much the creative side. Somewhat like preparing for a golf shot and then executing it, your brand work will always involve right-brain freedom



The Flying WV



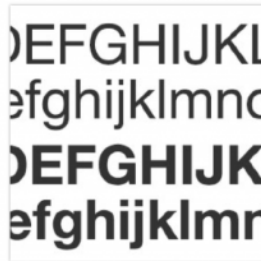
Flying WV + Signature



Color Palette



Patterns



Fonts



WVU Seal



The Mountaineer Logo



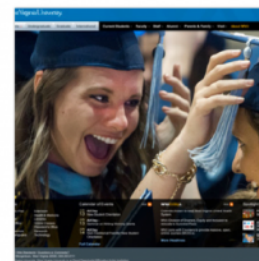
Wordmarks



Print Templates



PowerPoint Templates



Website Theme



Stationery

The brand guide for West Virginia University is a great example of the varied ways a brand is showcased.

and flow but it also requires left-brain planning and organizing.

In Proponent Group's early years, a call came in from a renowned golf coach seeking basic branding assistance. To get the project started, a request went back to the instructor for high-resolution EPS files containing the various version of his logo. After a thorough search of academy computers, not one such file could be located. In other words, the basic digital building block of any brand—a high-res logo—didn't exist, requiring using a physical logo from a letterhead to reverse-engineer the digital version.

It was an extreme example of how dramatically a top instructor's real-life brand—his or her esteemed reputation and established presence at the top of the teaching field—could contrast with the execution side of branding, and the lesson wasn't forgotten. The need to continually stress the importance of a toolkit-and-rulebook approach to personal brand marketing was recognized clearly and remains a fundamental priority, now and in the future. PG

Somewhat like preparing for a golf shot and then executing it, your brand work will always involve right-brain freedom and flow but it also requires left-brain planning and organizing.