Why branding matters
in the course: Building your channel's brand

Your channel is like a storefront -- give it the right look to show off your style, and brand it like a pro.

Best practices

Why should you create a brand for your channel? Branding can establish your channel’s identity and attract viewers -- and help bring them back for more. It’s a symbol (or set of symbols) designed to convey a consistent message about your channel. Most viewers will be introduced to your channel through a single video that they find in YouTube Search or Suggested videos, or embedded on a site. Use branding to let the audience know, at a glance, that this YouTube content is yours and that they can find more of it on your channel. Read on to learn how to design impactful
branding and feature it across YouTube.

Create a sensational brand on YouTube

- Focus on the content: Your brand should correspond to the type of content you produce. You’ll want it to convey the essence of what viewers can expect to see now and in the future.

- Keep it familiar: Branding should represent your channel’s style in a logical and consistent fashion. It should communicate your channel’s key message so that viewers know what to expect. Keep it simple. Make sure all of your videos, including your channel trailer, align with your branding.

- Make it discoverable: Branding should make it easier for viewers to find your videos and channel. Tag your videos using consistent metadata (text-based information such as titles or themes) and post your video or channel across social media platforms. This will help viewers find your channel more easily when they search for it.

See it in action

Michelle Phan speaks to beauty on her channel
Michelle Phan has a strong brand presence on her do-it-yourself (DIY) channel featuring beauty and makeup tips. Both the graphics on her channel and in her thumbnails are consistent. Her channel art also lets viewers know when to expect her next videos. (Video in English)

The Good Stuff injects a recycling theme in their branding
The Good Stuff starts every video off with the same catchy 10-second introduction that illustrates the channel’s personality and communicates the brand. Their channel art, channel icon, and channel trailer are cohesive, to help fans instantly recognize their brand. (Video in English)

Channel icon

Your channel icon visually represents your channel everywhere across Google and YouTube, so
make sure it looks good large and small. It will appear overlaid in the left-hand side of your channel art banner and also on the watch page. Your channel icon could also be featured on the right-hand side on other channels’ pages if they select you as one of their featured channels.

☑️ Channel art

Channel art is the banner across the top of your channel. It provides a great opportunity to really show off your channel’s personality! Channel art appears on all platforms where viewers can see your channel (TV, mobile, tablets, etc.) Upload an image that is at least 2560x1440 px.

☑️ Channel description

Your channel description is shown on the About tab and gives viewers a short overview of what they can expect from your channel. It also shows up when users mouse over your channel icon on a watch page (see hover cards below). You can include up to one thousand characters and add links too.

☑️ Custom thumbnails

Custom thumbnails are a great way to package your video series with a consistent look and feel. They can also help viewers pick your video out from a sea of other thumbnails.
Cards are clickable overlays you can use to promote your videos, merchandise, associated websites and more. Viewers can see them on both desktop and mobile.

Hover cards
Hover cards pop up when you mouse over a channel’s icon on the watch page. They display your channel name, art, icon, description and the subscribe button (or indicate that the viewer’s already subscribed).

Watermark
A watermark is an embedded logo that you can enable to appear in the bottom right corner of each of your videos. Whereas annotations are customizable for individual videos, the watermark allows you to promote your brand at a certain moment across every video. When viewing on desktops and laptops, the branding watermark also allows your audience to subscribe to your channel without stopping the show or leaving the video. Watermarks allow your audience to see at a glance that a video comes from your channel. When creating your watermark, consider keeping these tips in mind:

Think about the type of visual messaging you want to convey with a watermark. Do you want to use your channel’s avatar or logo, or instead add an image that invites viewers to subscribe?

See it in action

Creator Academy uses a transparent branding watermark
Viewers can subscribe to
Creator Academy without leaving the video, thanks to transparent branding watermarks.

Featured video or playlist

These branding elements can be added to the bottom left corner of each of your channel’s videos. You can choose a specific video or playlist, or set it to display your most recent upload. Fans can click on the featured video or playlist to view. Be sure to select the content that you most want to promote across all videos on your channel. Is there one video your fans think is a classic? Do you have a “best of” playlist to share, or a channel trailer that you could use?

Channel trailer

Introduce an audience to your channel with your channel trailer. It can be the first thing an unsubscribed viewer sees when they come to your channel, so use it to make a great impression and encourage viewers to subscribe for more.

Activities

Put your new knowledge to work in the activity below!

to save your answers.

View questions

Create a list of the most important aspects of your branding message.
Are you promoting your channel's brand consistently on YouTube? What other branding elements can you utilize to market your channel?

Check your knowledge

1) Branding is important because

- it conveys to viewers when you post new videos to your channel.
- it communicates to a viewer what they can expect on your channel.
- it allows you to seamlessly post your channels on various social media outlets.
- it improves upload time.

2) A key point of branding is to

- keep it simple.
- keep it relevant to your channel.
- keep it consistent.
- All of the above.

3) Why should you use consistent branding?

- Because you want your channel to be discovered.
- Because you paid someone to market your brand.
- Because you want viewers to instantly recognize your brand.
- Because you want to provide a fun experience.
4) What can your audience click on when you embed a watermark?

- They could click to see your channel art and avatar.
- They could click to see the next video in your playlist.
- They could click to subscribe to your channel.
- They could click to see your channel trailer.

Follow up

What’s the most essential part of building a brand on YouTube for you?

Think about the most important message you wish to communicate when viewers see your channel icon. How do you want viewers to feel when they watch your videos? What do you want them to remember about you?

What will you do to ensure you’re creating a consistent brand?

Create a list of the most important aspects of your branding message. Tailor elements like your channel art, channel icon and thumbnail so that they all tell the same story and display optimally on all platforms. Make sure each branding element communicates the same message everywhere.

How many viewers will see your featured content on mobile?

Use the Devices report in YouTube Analytics to see how many mobile viewers you’re reaching by featuring content and maximizing channel branding.

Is your branding watermark driving new subscribers?

Look at the metrics for Featured channel or Playlist in the Annotations tab of YouTube Analytics.
This will show you whether your method of promotion is driving clicks.