



Essential Guide to Branding and Design

Leverage your creative skills to boost engagement in your LMS/LXP with this design guide.



CHAPTER ONE

Design Thinking in your LMS pg. 3

Use the five steps of design thinking to create a human-centered approach to creative thinking and problem solving in your LMS.

CHAPTER THREE

LMS/LXP Design Best Practices pg. 7

Practicing what you preach isn't always as easy as it sounds. We took a step back and re-branded our internal LMS to follow our design best practices.

CHAPTER FIVE

Design Resources pg. 15

Here's a curated list of some of our favorite tools for creating learning content. Skim through and see what you can use to improve your training.

CHAPTER TWO

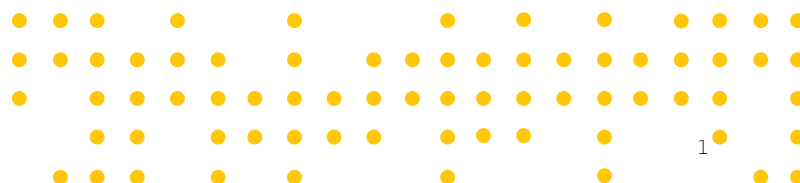
The Case for Captions pg. 5

Learn how to use free tools to create video captions in order to obtain more views, increase engagement, and maximize the return on your investment.

CHAPTER FOUR

7-Step LMS/LXP Rebrand pg. 9

Rebranding your LMS is daunting, but Matt Bassuk, instructional design manager at Urban Plates, found that a solid 42 percent of his sevenpronged rebranding approach was full-on fun.





“ For example, one of our clients redesigned its LMS and saw its number of active users quintuple. ”

INTRODUCTION

Design and branding have always mattered at Wisetail. After all, Wisetail began shortly after DVDs of custom training material were found propping up a wobbly table rather than being used. The thought was that if training is delivered in a way that looks and feels like a company's brand, with an inviting layout, then people would actually use it. Plus, quality design helped us stand out in the crowded learning management software marketplace.

It turns out that when it comes to learning and development design and branding do matter. For example, one of our clients redesigned its LMS and saw its number of active users quintuple. And, in the following months, course completions increased a hundredfold – from about 7,000 to more than 700,000.

Design and branding are about more than engagement and metrics, though. You can use it to make L&D material more accessible, which we detail in the chapter on video captions. Besides being the right thing to do—the World Health Organization estimates 466 million people worldwide are affected by mild to severe hearing loss—captions make your videos quantitatively better. [Facebook found](#) that captioned videos are viewed for 12% longer.

And, of course, we want to do more than pontificate about the benefits of intuitive and engaging branding and design. You'll find an actionable seven-step plan for rebranding your LMS, along with a list of free design resources.

Chapter One

Design Thinking in Your LMS/LXP



You don't need a background in design to re-imagine your company's LMS/LXP. One option is to work through the five steps of design thinking.

Sure, design thinking is a buzzword phrase at this point. But it became a buzzword because the concepts help people break out of their familiar grooves of thinking, the well-trod mental paths developed over time by putting your head down to simply get things done. Once a critical mass of people realized this, its use got out of hand.

Anyway, design thinking is a human-centered approach to problem solving. The five steps it follows are: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test.

Here's a hypothetical to help understand how these pieces fit together. Let's say that someone comes up to you—a dashing, accomplished, and innovative L&D professional—with a bit of an onboarding conundrum: they need to quickly find training material on the LMS/LXP, but don't want to bug their manager.

How do you make this onboarding content easy to find? How do you go about setting up this new learner, and all the ones who'll follow, for success in your LMS/LXP?

One route to take would be to move the particular training content onto the LMS/LXP's home page. But this hamfisted approach probably wouldn't address the core issue. Maybe the real issue is that the content in your LMS/LXP isn't well organized and easily searchable. Then the material you displaced from the main page might disappear deep into the void of a poorly maintained content library.

So, let's take a step back and apply the design thinking process to see if we can arrive at a more holistic solution.



EMPATHIZE

The first step calls for you to think of the user. Consider the ways they look for training content. Heck, search around for the content yourself. Be mindful of the number of steps taken to get there.

Sift through your vast reservoir of knowledge about how the LMS is set up and how the user fits into it. A potential solution is to create a cohort of users, if your platform allows that, going through the onboarding process.

DEFINE

Do a little research before you workout a definition of the challenge as you understand it. Maybe even run it by that hypothetical user who was so determined to learn and improve. Make sure you can sum it up in a single succinct sentence.

IDEATE

Brainstorm and toss around your wildest ideas. Do a quick review: How do learners use the platform? How do you want them to use it? What does each group of users see when they log on? It helps to focus on the basic steps. Simple fixes can easily be overlooked because they don't appear to match the size of the issue in question.

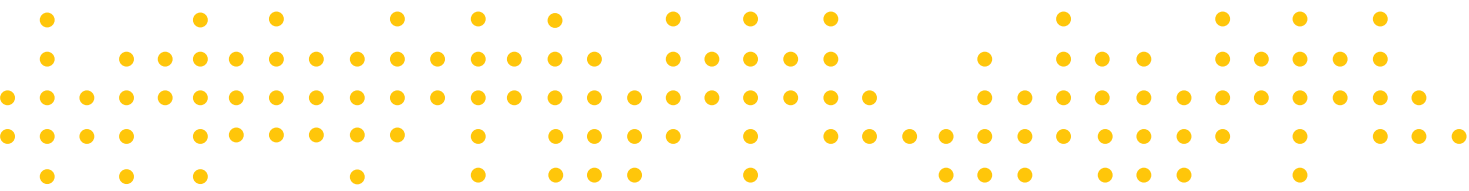
PROTOTYPE

Maybe it'll take a quick explainer video that outlines how to navigate the LMS. Maybe a wholesale site redesign, who knows. Whatever you think might work, give it a shot. Build a preliminary solution so you can get a sense of whether it'll work before you commit to the idea. One way to prototype in your LMS is to create a test user. Fiddle around with permissions and pages. It's an unobtrusive way test and make sure future users don't run into the same issue this hypothetical go-getter is experiencing.

TEST

The final and perhaps most important step. Run your ideas through the wringer and encourage beta users to give feedback. Whatever you do, don't be afraid to say something isn't working. Design thinking is an iterative process – go through it as many times as you need to get the best answer.

Having worked our way through this process, we've obviously solved the hypothetical dilemma with a dynamic solution, and delivered it with much panache and derring-do. As you go on to apply this thought process to your own realworld problems, keep the sage words of David Kelley, founder of Stanford University's design school, in mind: you have to fail fast if you want to succeed sooner.



Chapter Two

The Case for Captions



If content is king, then video is the supreme, not-going-away-anytime-soon, dictator. Don't take my word for it—a Cisco study predicts video will constitute 80% of all web traffic by 2021. But despite video's overwhelming popularity, the majority of producers and marketers continue to neglect a major facet of video: captions. Research shows that there is a correlation between captioned video and success for its producers. In other words, if you're not providing captions for your videos, you're missing out on more views, improved search engine optimization, and the maximum potential return on your investment.

One might tend to regard accessibility as the sole purpose of video captions, and traditionally that's been the case. It's certainly a worthy cause — approximately 466 million people worldwide are affected by mild to severe hearing loss. The Americans with Disabilities Act did much to guarantee the civil rights of millions but, since it was ratified in 1990, the ADA's reach is largely limited to the physical realm. It wasn't until a 2010 lawsuit brought against Netflix by the National Association of the Deaf that aspects of the ADA actually became applicable to online businesses. Even today, however, requirements for captioning remain relatively non-existent.

This lack of federal mandate for captioned video means that many companies don't even think about using captions in their online media. At present, streaming video is ubiquitous among the most popular social platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Just to give you some idea of the impact of these platforms, social media advertising represents a \$67 billion industry growing steadily by approximately 28% each year.

While captions have been estimated to increase viewership by upwards of 40%, it's a minor mystery why producers continue to forgo the relatively simple and inexpensive task of reinforcing dialogue with on-screen text. According to [Facebook's own data](#), 41% of the videos uploaded to its platform are essentially useless without sound, and most users have videos muted when scrolling through feeds on mobile.

Both YouTube and Facebook offer auto-captioning that uploaders can toggle on or off. It's a step in the right direction, but unfortunately this functionality offers only 60-70% accuracy. As it stands, auto-transcription remains a less-than-accurate solution that occasionally yields hilarious results. Manual captioning will be a thing of the past sooner rather than later. In the meantime, producers can utilize some free tools to make their videos accessible to wider audiences.

OPTIONS FOR CAPTIONING

Video producers with deeper pockets can quickly and easily reap the benefits of captioning by contracting a third party. Services such as Rev.com and GoTranscript take the legwork out of the transcription process while providing a reliable solution. These are just two examples of professional transcription resources; interested producers are encouraged to explore more options.

For the rest of us, there are a variety of avenues for creating industry-standard closed captions (as opposed to open captions which can't be toggled on or off by the viewer). Most exist within various post-production software. However, a number of free, web-based utilities allow manual transcription regardless of your editing software or intended destination, whether it be YouTube, Vimeo, or Facebook.

Unfortunately, if you're looking to post video captions to LinkedIn—currently it's the fastest growing video marketing platform—the process requires an additional step. Because LinkedIn only launched its native video uploader in the early half of 2018, presumably a more robust solution is on the horizon.

Video captions come in a variety of formats, so a bit of over-simplification is required here: When captioning a video, you're creating what's essentially a small text document, separate from the video file itself, called a SubRip (.SRT) file. Sometimes it's called a sidecar file, since the caption data is independent from the video. YouTube, Vimeo, and Facebook all accept SRT.

For LinkedIn, at least right now, you'll have to take this one step further by importing the SRT back into your video editing software for an open caption-type of solution. This is also called the burn-in option, meaning the captions are actually part of the video itself.

But back to creating that .SRT file to begin with: Closed Caption Creator is a web-based captioning tool that's free to use. Its developers release updates with added functionality on a regular basis, and they've included some handy tutorial videos to help you get started. Alternatively, the steps below outline the basics of transcribing for YouTube, Vimeo, and Facebook. Note that you can also create multiple versions of a caption file to support additional languages.

Advances in voice recognition technology and artificial intelligence mean the days of manually transcribing your videos are numbered. Until then, it's worth the extra effort for video producers and marketers to spend the time (or money) to provide captions. Not only does this additional undertaking serve millions of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, for advertisers it's an asset in an increasingly saturated and competitive marketplace.

HOW TO CREATE CLOSED CAPTIONS

Start a new project from the file menu and enter your project's title and framerate. If you're not sure of your video's framerate, open it in Quicktime and select "Show movie inspector" from the Window" drop-down menu (I on Mac).

You can either upload a file or import an existing video from YouTube, Vimeo, or Facebook. CC Creator supports a number of formats, notably MP4. Click the "Create" button to get started.

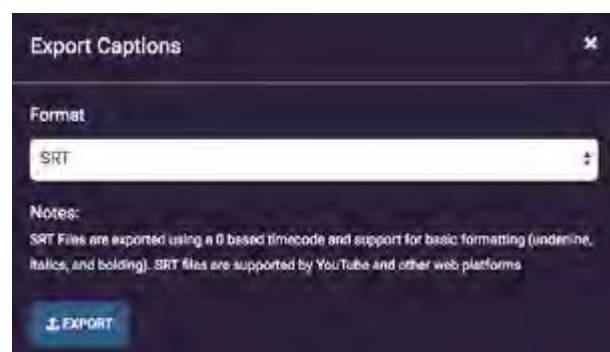
Let's not sugar-coat this: transcribing a video can be a tedious process. Since there's no auto-save functionality, it's a good idea to save early and often to prevent losing any progress.

Up next, you can start transcribing, setting "incodes" and "outcodes," or timestamps in the format 00:00:00:00 (Hours:Minutes:Seconds:- Frames) for each section of text. One of the toughest aspects of transcribing dialogue is with timing, finding a reasonable words per minute (WPM), in particular. According to the BBC, the general rule of thumb is to aim for 180 WPM. This can be especially challenging if you're transcribing the words of a fast-talker, such as a radio ad announcer or auctioneer. If this is your case, I'm sorry and good luck.

Once you've completed transcribing, export your captions from the File menu. From the format dropdown, select "SRT" and click "Export" to download the file to your hard drive. This is also a good opportunity to go ahead and save that CC Creator project itself if you haven't already done so. This last step will allow you to easily make future changes and edits.

From there, it's easy to upload that SRT file to Vimeo, YouTube, and Facebook.

And, hey presto, you've not only done the right thing in making your content more accessible but you've made it more effective for those who come across it either with the sound off or in a situation where they can't blare the soundtrack and voice over. Wins all around.



Chapter Three

LMS/LXP Design Best Practices



GRITTY TEXTURES



MONTANA IMAGERY



NATURE ICONS

Practicing what you preach isn't always as easy as you'd like it to be. Not too long ago, we took a step back and re-branded our internal LMS to follow our design best practices.

Your LMS should be an extension of your brand, but it wasn't always ours. The system Wisetail uses to connect our clients and employees was far from our external brand.

We weren't following our own best practices. Our messaging was off, our designs weren't consistent, and we weren't creating a simple platform for our company to connect. We decided it was time to rebrand our LMS.

So, where did we start? How do you go from bad to fab in just a month's time? We began by crafting an artist statement that reflected what we wanted to achieve:

"It is a new year, and this is a new Apex. Pulling inspiration from our surrounding area of Bozeman, Montana, we have redesigned Apex to better reflect our best practices. This redesign is a better reflection of the Wisetail brand and thematically presents our system as that mountain of learning.

"Think of the Learn tab like a compass, and the Share tab like your trusty camera you bring along the way; the Discuss tab is a group of L&D folks sharing thoughts around a cup of coffee, and the Connect tab is the binoculars you use to find one another. Happy trails!"

Our artist statement helped us visualize our direction before we began to build our brand assets for our LMS. We knew that we needed to better integrate our surrounding area and illustrate the mountain of learning for our users. So that's precisely what we did. We used Montana imagery, created gritty textures, chose icons that helped evoke camping in the mountains, and designed a logo that illustrated our trail map concept.

Next, it was up to us to hold our feet to the fire and follow our best practices.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Think of your graphics as teaser photos for your content. Draw your users in by creating original graphics and limiting the amount of words on your banners and thumbnails. Utilize them as forms of navigations with a clear call to action.

EMPLOY YOUR BRAND

What are the strongest elements of your brand? Color? Photography? Iconography? Make note of where you excel and use them to your advantage.

UTILIZE ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Use imagery from your company, not stock photos. Authenticity is as important as ever in the age of social media, and your users know this. Encourage them to share their original photography through user contributions.

TELL A STORY

A cohesive brand tells a story in both its graphics and messaging. Make it fun for users by crafting clever messaging and designs. Use a human-centered approach to your storytelling by using Design Thinking practices.

ESTABLISH CONSISTENCY

Create a style guide for anyone posting in your LMS. Establish the basics of size and color for headlines, subheads, and body copy.

An LMS rebrand is tricky, and following these best practices can be tough, but establishing a set of guidelines will help usher in a new era of success for you and your users.

The screenshot displays a Learning Management System (LMS) interface for 'APEX'. The top navigation bar is blue and includes the APEX logo, a home icon, a 'Learn' icon, and icons for Drive, Chat, and Connect. On the right side of the header, there are icons for a search, a gear, a share, and a user profile picture. The main content area is white and features a large 'LEARN' title in blue, a search bar, and a list of course cards. The course cards include 'CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS', 'APEX DEMO', and 'END OF WEEK 2'. A right sidebar contains filters for 'FILTER BY TYPE' and 'FILTER BY CATEGORY'. The bottom of the page features a decorative pattern of yellow dots.

Chapter Four

Urban Plates 7-Step Rebrand



Rebranding your LMS is one of those tasks that becomes increasingly daunting. But that doesn't mean a rebrand can't be both successful and fun. Sometimes it's [Type II fun](#), of course. Well, at least some phases of a rebrand are fun.

Matt Bassuk, instructional design manager at Urban Plates, found that a solid 42 percent of his seven-pronged rebranding approach was full-on fun.

The seven phases Matt used will be familiar to learning and development professionals—flow and structure, permissioning and legal, graphics and design, communication and internal marketing, content, reporting and accountability, and ongoing engagement.

Wisetail was lucky enough to have Matt walk us through each phase in a webinar this spring. We'll walk through each of them, and hopefully, you'll find some actionable pieces sprinkled throughout.

PHASE 1: FLOW AND STRUCTURE

The whole exhaustive process of Urban Plates' LMS—called the Huddle—rebrand began as so many do: on a whiteboard covered with color-coordinated text blocks. Matt described this phase as more or less the in-real-life version of the Zach Galifianakas math meme.

"I still have this whiteboard sitting at my desk," Matt says.

In this first phase, the goal was to understand, conceptually, how the LMS should be setup. Intuitive user experience is dependent on whether the LMS structure matches the content within it, and how that content is supposed to work.

Figuring out what buckets to create and what should go in them is tedious, Matt said. You have to think of ways to consolidate the material. Matt and his team ended up building the LMS home page around six separate pages, used as portals.

The pages are:

- **Operations manual**
- **Docs and forms**
- **Team member newsfeed**
- **Trainer’s Corner**
- **Points store**
- **Our Story**

“We spent quite a bit of time in this phase, just game planning, brainstorming. I did a couple of mock-ups,” Matt said.

All the strategizing paid off. You likely don’t have to stretch your imagination to guess the contents of those six pages. This type of organization helped mitigate the nesting doll effect—when content is built within content within content. Now, the information users might need from Urban Plates is available within one or two clicks. Easy to find in the flow of work.

PHASE 2: PERMISSIONING AND LEGAL

This essential step was not Matt’s favorite part, but it was certainly one of the most important ones.

All modern LMSs should have the ability to grant content access via location, job title, or any number of relevant data points. What permissioning does is allow access to certain content based on those relevant points. So, someone front of house will view different content than a trainer or the general manager. On the legal side, Matt had to determine a strategy around for non-compensated use of the Huddle.

One much-deliberated decision Matt’s team made was to not put any user-contributed content on the LMS home page. That content now lives within the team member newsfeed page.

“We split that off because we really wanted control over what was on the home page, but still maintain that engagement piece,” Matt said. “Hopefully, if we did this right, it’s a little bit more intuitive of a structure.”

Through permissions, the Urban Plates team turned Trainer’s Corner into a one-stop-shop for trainers. Guides, logs, various job aids, each trainer’s queue of people ready for in-person evaluation. It’s all in one easy to reach place.

PHASE 3: GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

These middle three phases are the ones Matt and his team enjoyed the most. With the hard work of crafting a structure out of the way, they were able to get creative and push the boundaries.

Initially, the Huddle followed strict branding guidelines, with a set list of colors and only two official fonts.



"It took a little bit of me pushing back and saying, 'Hey but this is internal. We don't have to stick to this if we don't want to. That's great for external, but internal I think you get a bit more latitude, you can try some new things. You can be a bit more edgy,'" Matt said. "We wanted to try some new things to make it a little bit flashy."

Graphics aren't easy to create out of hand. Matt and his team turned to a team member at the La Hoya location, named Nathaniel. He didn't have any formal design training, Matt says, but he had a great aptitude for it, and they were happy to provide an opportunity. Ultimately, Nathaniel designed the Huddle's new logo.

"This was a long process and we tried a million different things before we got to one we liked," Matt says.

The final logo is a hexagon with an 'H' built in it. On the left side is a magnet strip with chef's knives. It's a strong logo, Matt says, because the H is recognizable on its own, or if it's followed by letters to spell Huddle.

The standalone nature of the new logo, and its off-brand yellow color, played a significant role in the next phase.

Phase 4: Communication and Internal Marketing

Internal marketing and communications around an LMS is key. No one will use what they don't know about. One of the more difficult aspects of internal marketing is doing so in a way that makes prospective users truly intrigued and excited.

Luckily, Matt's team relishes a challenge.

"This is where we really got to push the envelope," Matt says.

The group decided to do guerilla marketing. One of the hardest parts was gathering email addresses from all the team members. Some in the system were outdated, some team members didn't have email. Matt's team loaded the emails into MailChimp and built a six email strong campaign around the rebranded Huddle.



But first, Matt's team got together with the Urban Plates IT squad. Together, they "hacked" into the recipe screens in each location. Each location has three recipe screens that team members use to prep food and cook all the food in-house.

Twice a day for about a week, the screen went blank. And, for a minute or so, a GIF of glitchy screen with the new 'H' logo and the rebrand launch date ran on the screen.

This way, Matt says, his team could slice up the interview answers with questions about the Huddle, effectively building a hype video for the LMS rebrand, all to create a sense of intrigue and interest.

"We just went for it. We thought, 'Hey, what's the worst that could happen?' It was only on screen for a couple minutes," Matt says.

The strategy worked. People started sending in support tickets, emailed IT, theorized that the Russians had somehow gained access to the recipe screens—building a grassroots level of intrigue. Some people were upset about the tactic, to be fair, but Matt subscribes to the school of thought that no publicity is bad publicity.

Traction gained, Matt and his team turned to the email campaign. Each of the six emails had a unique video, and was structured in such a way that readers were given the impression of an incoming transmission from headquarters. The team had interviewed a handful of employees in a sort of cryptic way. They asked questions like 'how big is the ocean,' 'how expansive is the universe,' or 'tell me how you feel about coffee.'

This way, Matt says, his team could slice up the interview answers with questions about the Huddle, effectively building a hype video for the LMS rebrand, all to create a sense of intrigue and interest.



PHASE 5: CONTENT

The content strategy Matt and the team developed for the rebrand was built on three pillars: a video contest, video walkthroughs of each location, and a points store.

Their idea was to carry over the initial traction and turn that into engagement with the Huddle. A video contest gives each group of users a personal stake in the rebranded system.

The rules around the contest were kept purposefully simple. Each location could submit a two-minute video. It should introduce the location and the team working there. And the video should be as creative as possible. Because the videos were uploaded to the Huddle and the entire company voted for the one they thought best. Winners got an exclusive breakfast for the team.

Once again, the strategy worked. Matt says the contest helped strengthen company culture as well, even though that wasn't a stated goal. Urban Plates has locations all around California and on the East Coast, with plans to expand. People in California got to watch the videos from locations in Washington, D.C., and vice versa, which helped make the geographically big brand feel smaller and tight-knit.

That sense was helped, in turn, by the store walkthroughs. Urban Plates hired a freelancer to come through each location with a 360-degree camera. The person created an interactive video, put it on Google, and Matt was able to embed that into the LMS platform. Then everyone could check out other places, and then connect through the platform.

The points store let users make a positive connection between their actions in the Huddle with real-world benefits, which encourages them to work through content, whether it's compliance-based or a professional development course.

PHASE 6: REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

One of the more unique reports Matt and his team pulled in the weeks after launching the rebrand was the percent of team members logged in at each location. They compiled the stats and sent out the list to all GMs each week.

Every opportunity Matt and his team had they encouraged GMs and managers to push people to log into the Huddle and use the system. Again, it worked. The Urban Plates GMs are a proud bunch, Matt says, and they responded to the call.

It helped that others in headquarters regularly asked the GMs what their goal for percent usage was for the upcoming week.

"That actually started to move the needle," Matt says. "We got a bunch of logins and kept driving that."

PHASE 7: ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

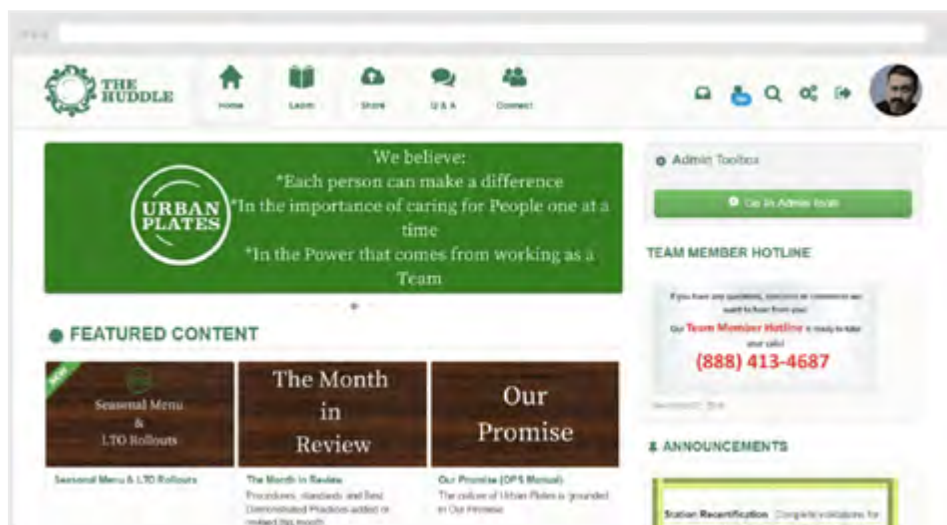
The final phase is one that never really ends, which is always the case when you're trying to keep people's attention.



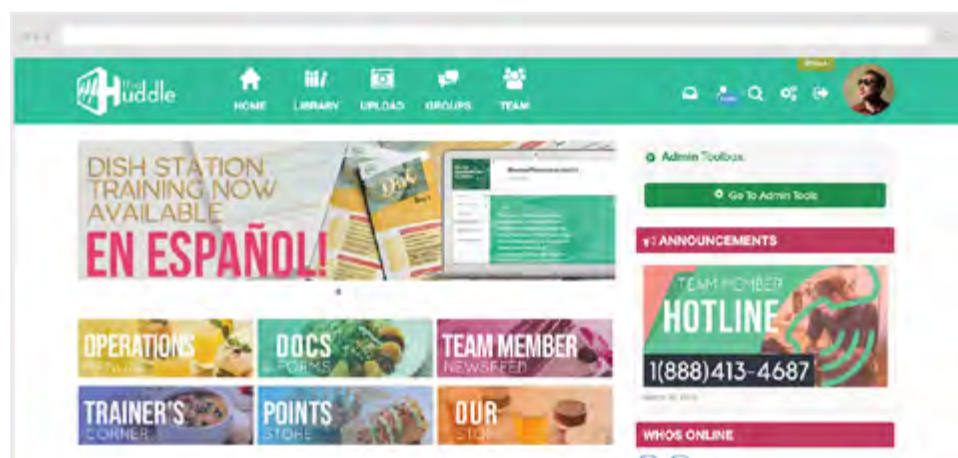
Urban Plates has robust limited-time offer rollouts, with videos and short quizzes to pass. They pull together industry news pieces, in which they aggregate relevant news from around the hospitality world. But perhaps the most engaging piece is a weekly 'surprise and delight' module.

Each week Matt's team puts together a different scenario. Each one has three different possible answers. The user goes through the scenario and picks out whatever they believe is the best answer. If they answer correctly, their name is put into a weekly raffle of sorts for a \$10 gift card. Simple and to the point.

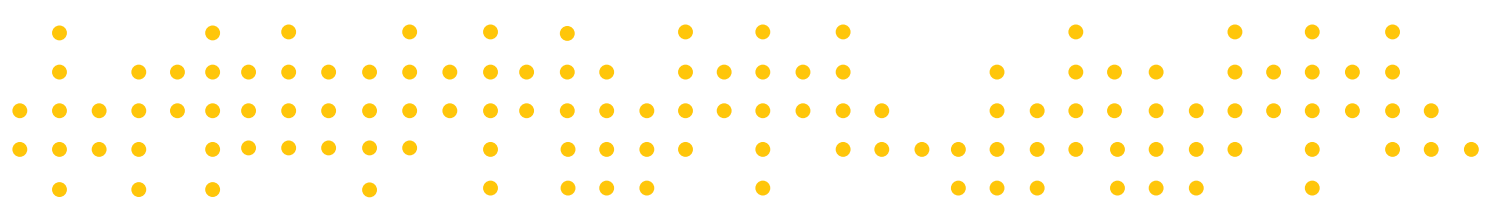
Every rebrand is unique to the organization doing it, but the seven steps laid out by Matt and his team at Urban Plates provide a good foundation to work from. Take it one step at a time—one phase at a time—and get creative. No one knows what will resonate with your company culture better than yourself.



BEFORE



AFTER



Chapter Five

Design Resources



By now, we assume you've seen the light and understand the power of quality design and branding and the positive impact it can have on your training program. We'll leave you with some free resources so you can go ahead and put these concepts to work.

We scoured the interwebs and pulled some of our favorite free resources. Peruse the following and impress your penny-pinching boss by building an engaging, interesting LMS under budget.

- **Foundations of Design**
- **On Design and Emotion**

First things first, we need to understand the elements of good design. You know, why it's important and what it looks like in other situations. This is a Ted talk from design critic Don Norman that illustrates the basics of design.

It's a bit of a meandering talk. But he touches on three key elements to design: beauty, functionality, and reflective. Good design leaves your LMS easy on the eyes, intuitive to use, and something that you can tell stories about.

LESS, BUT BETTER

Now we're getting closer to putting these design concepts into action. This article summarizes legendary designer Dieter Rams' philosophy of design. Rams believed that purpose should drive design. Be mindful of the concept when filling out your LMS. Don't get carried away with frills and kitsch. Users need to be able to log in and move through the system intuitively.

There are plenty of examples of this done well and done poorly. For example, the way Google shows the number of pages yielded by your search by stretching its name out with as many o's as there are pages. Quality design.

On the flip side, think about the last time you went to small news organization's website. Oftentimes, you'll open a story to find an auto-playing video. Ads take up the right third of the screen. Oh, and another ad pops up as you scroll down. Look, now there's a banner ad bouncing up on the bottom of the screen.

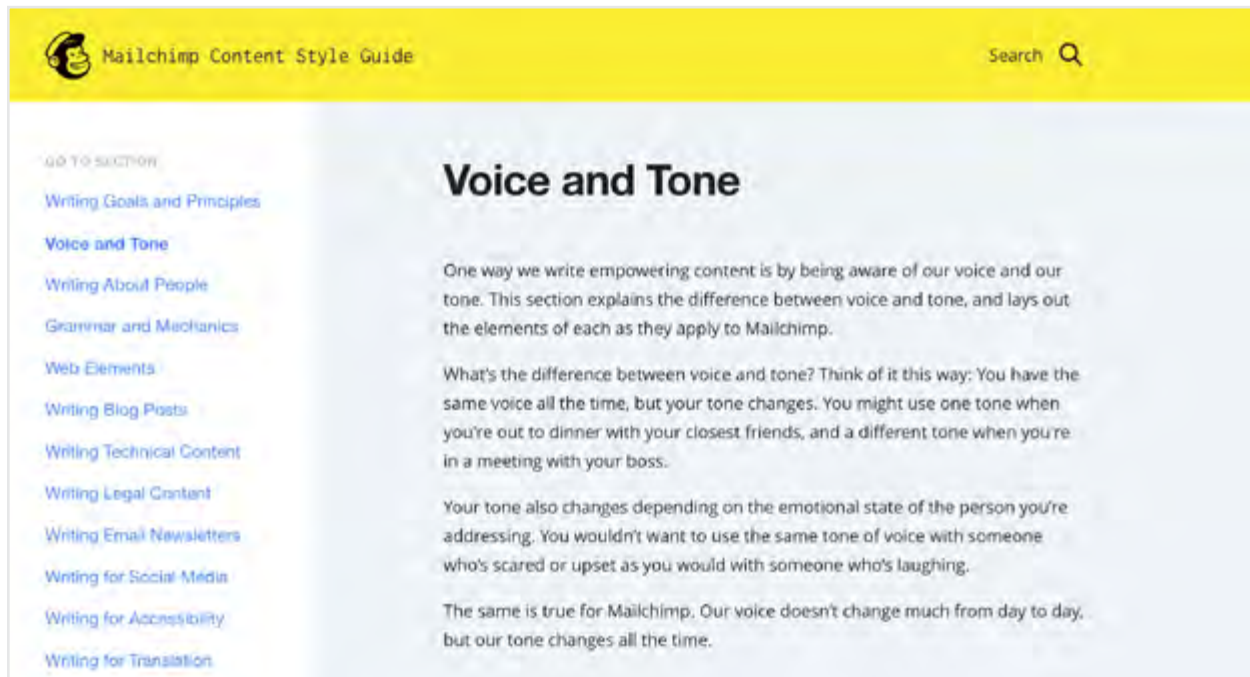
You opened the page to read a story. But the text was crowded into a small block in the center of the screen, hemmed in by moving, flashing, talking advertisements.

It's terrible—don't do that.

MAILCHIMP'S STYLE GUIDE

Design goes beyond color schemes and logos. It includes the content templates, how to handle SEO, and the voice and tone of your writing. The marketing automation platform MailChimp is renowned for its strong design and content. And their style guide is online and open to everyone! Look over the guide before you start building out content. Make sure to check out these sections: creating structured content, content types, and resources.

Be mindful of the concept when filling out your LMS. Don't get carried away with frills and kitsch.





VIDEO

[Renderforest](#) is an cloud-based software that lets you create broadcast quality videos and animations. It has more than 400 customizable video templates to help you get going. Subscriptions start at \$168 annually, but there is a free version.


[Vyond](#), formerly GoAnimate, is a SaaS video creation company. It has a library of templates for hundreds of industries and occupations, and exports to the platform of your choice. A subscription for a small team run \$159 per month.

[HapYak](#) is interactive video software on a SaaS platform. Features include overlays, “choose-your-own-adventure” format, quizzes, and calls to action. Pricing details are not directly available.

VISUALS

[Unsplash](#) is a collection of over 500,000 photos from the world’s most generous photographers. Find inspiration by browsing galleries or use the handy search functionality to find the perfect photo. The best part, it’s all free.

[FancyCrave](#) publishes high-end stock imagery. Two new photos are available each day under the Creative Commons Zero license, which means you can use the photos for commercial projects.



[Snappa](#) is a graphic design tool that allows you to create images for social media, the web, or wherever. It has a library of visual assets and templates to work from. Pricing starts at \$120 per year.

[Google Maps](#) is a great free tool you can use to create a responsive map. Once the map's layers and details are all in place, you can embed the map. BBC News used the mapping tool to create an interactive weather map.

MUSIC AND AUDIO

[Spotify](#) is one of the most widely used music streaming services out there. Chances are you already know about it and/or have an account. But Spotify is a great resource for creating and sharing playlists among locations or departments, and coordinating music for fitness classes.

[Gray V](#) is a sound design firm that creates curated playlists tailored to fit your brand, among other services. The firm works with a range of businesses, from restaurants and bars to conferences and art galleries. Also, the Gray V site has an array of great music available for listening.

[SoundCloud](#) offers a simple way to launch a podcast. SoundCloud is embeddable, you can submit the feed to other media networks like Stitcher or iTunes, and for a subscription you can get deeper analytics.

PRESENTATION

[FlipBuilder](#) is a digital publishing platform that lets you turn PDF files into interactive eBooks, complete with embedded video, audio, and Flash, among other features. Pricing starts at \$99.

[Sway](#) is a tool inside Microsoft's Office 365 that lets you create interactive, engaging presentations, newsletters, and messaging.

[Prezi](#) posits itself as a presentation resource, because it's software is somewhat hard to describe. It allows you to create a presentation on single screen, which zooms and moves along with the presentation, more so like a touchscreen than a slideshow. The software is optimized for mobile as well as desktop and provides analytics for your presentations. Subscriptions start at \$1,800 annually for three users.

SCREEN CAPTURES

[Snagit](#) is screen capture and recording software. It allows you to edit and annotate images and screen recordings, which is great for tutorials or walking people through workflows. Pricing starts at \$50.

[Skitch](#) is a screen capture and editing app from Evernote. As such, Skitch integrates with Evernote. The screen grab app allows you to edit screenshots and is free, though you need an Evernote account to use its cloud storage.

[Recordit](#) is a sort of bare bones screen capture app. It's available for free, but a one-time \$29 fee lets you place a password around your recording and the manipulate the video's frames-per-second.



PHOTOGRAPHY AND DESIGN

[CANVA](#) makes it possible to design anything and publish anywhere. With its user-friendly drag and drop tool and thousands of customizable templates get ready to design everything from marketing materials to presentations to logos.

[Pexels](#) offers free stock photos for creators to use in whatever work they choose, whether personal or commercial.

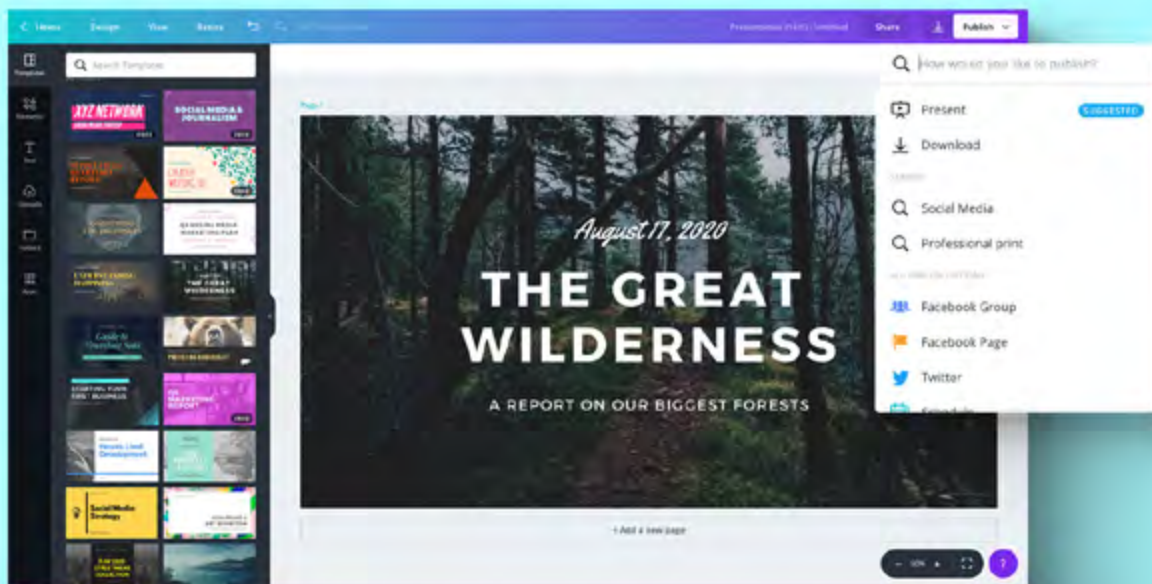
[Gimp](#) is a free and open source image editor. The name is an acronym that stands for Gnu Image Manipulation Program.

[Pixlr](#) is photo editing software that works on the web and on mobile, with a user interface similar to Photoshop. A free version exists, but Pixlr Pro is available for a monthly subscription.

SCORM

[Adobe Captivate](#) is an authoring tool that added several new features for 2019, including virtual reality as well as 360-degree images and videos. Captivate is also available for a perpetual licensing agreement, which goes for \$1,299.

[Articulate](#) is an authoring tool that gives users access to several other authoring apps within it. Users also have access to a library with millions of course assets like templates, photos, and icons, among others. Annual subscriptions start at \$1,299 per user.



About Wisetail

Wisetail is a forward thinking training and communication platform built to engage today's workforce. Based in the heart of Bozeman, Montana, we build Learning Management Systems and Learning Experience Platforms for innovators who, like us, know a people-first culture is the most important driver of success in the modern workforce.



Our software gives millions of users the chance to learn and develop in an engaging environment and our platform is crafted to meet the unique needs and challenges in today's workplace. That's why so many of today's leading brands—including Shake Shack, SoulCycle, Jamba Juice, Cheesecake Factory, Einstein Bros, and many more—use Wisetail's LMS every day.

We combine award-winning learning management with unequalled customer support for organizations to create an online community. Administrators are able to develop and share content while investing in each learner's personal and professional development, while we focus on the human side of eLearning, and encourage culture as well as growth.

We are proud to have ranked as one of the "Fastest Growing Companies in the U.S." on Inc. "5000's" list, "50 Best Small Workplaces" by Fortune Magazine, "One Of The 50 Best Small Workplaces In The U.S." by Great Places to Work Institute and Outside Magazine's "The 100 Best Places to Work."



Learn more at [wisetail.com](https://www.wisetail.com)