



COMMUNICATION AND BRAND GUIDE

WHY A BRAND GUIDE?

Your experience with a brand is made up of what it makes you...

FEEL, THINK AND DO

This guide conveys who we are, how we communicate, and how we look to the audience we serve. It is a tool for strengthening our organizational identity through the way we:

- » Consistently tell the story of Athletes in Action
- » Help athletes understand everything we offer as a ministry
- » Speak with a consistent voice that represents our mission
- » Display visual elements that are attractive
- » Provide a common experience across every interaction with our organization
- » Unite toward a God-sized vision that impacts sport culture

BRAND STRATEGIES

+

VERBAL IDENTITY

+

VISUAL IDENTITY

=

COMMUNICATION & BRAND GUIDE





BUILDING A BRAND

The goal of the Athletes in Action Communication and Brand Guide is to inspire us to consider the ways our interactions can move people toward our mission. A brand is more than a name. It is more than a logo. More than promotional materials. It is how we want people to experience us. A brand builds trust when we consistently follow through on our promises.

When people see a brand that is consistently represented they intuitively connect all of those parts to better understand the whole. A unified brand lets a participant respond in a way that says, “this feels the same.” It is this type of response that we want routinely stated about Athletes in Action. That the mission, the message, the experiences that anyone has with our ministry are the same across all interactions.

Understanding how to bring our personality and our distinctives to life as we build relationships every day is crucial in our fulfilling of our brand promise. In this guide you will find information about brand strategy (who we are as a ministry), verbal identity (how we communicate to others), and visual identity (how we look and feel).

You are an ambassador of our brand. Whether you are engaging in a one-on-one meeting with a student-athlete, posting about our ministry on our social channels, recruiting a participant, or sending communication to a prospective donor, we have an opportunity to consistently represent who we are in each interaction. The Athletes in Action Communication and Brand Guide is intended to be an ongoing resource, please use it often.

If you have questions, please reach out to:
Marketing and Communications
branding@athletesinaction.org

What a privilege to run toward the Lord and our mission with you!

All for Him,



Mark Householder

President

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Brand Strategy [who we are]

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| What is Brand Strategy | 02 |
| Brand Promise | 02 |
| Mission/Vision/Values | 03 |
| Target Audience | 04 |
| Distinctives | 04 |
| Ministry Summary | 05 |
| Ministry Purpose | 05 |

2. Verbal Identity [how we communicate]

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| What is Verbal Identity | 06 |
| Communicate Theme | 06 |
| Brand Voice and Personality | 07 |
| Message Themes | 07 |
| Audience of One | 08 |
| Total Athlete | 10 |
| Victory Beyond Competition | 12 |
| Summary of Brand Components | 14 |

3. Visual Identity [how we look]

| | |
|--|----|
| What is Visual Identity? | 16 |
| Logo Usage [Color, Adaptations, Sizing, Co-Branding] | 16 |
| Fonts | 20 |
| Colors | 21 |
| Imagery Usage | 23 |
| Examples | 24 |

BRAND STRATEGY

WHAT IS BRAND STRATEGY?

Our brand strategy pulls together who we are, who we serve, what we offer, and how we relate. It expresses our commitment to those we serve and our promise in every relational opportunity.

Brand strategy is about intent. It is our intention to communicate the distinctives of our organization in a way that it is easy to understand and flows into the verbal and visual expressions of our identity.

With every interaction we will be able to reinforce our mission and values through incorporating the elements of our brand strategy.

BRAND PROMISE

We want every person to experience “Victory Beyond Competition” as they journey through interactions with our brand. “Victory Beyond Competition” serves as the desired outcome of a life changed for Christ.

VICTORY BEYOND COMPETITION

Every athlete competes with victory in mind; we have a chance to help shape how athletes experience this victory at the intersection of sport and life.

By helping athletes find an eternal victory through a relationship with Jesus, our brand promise leads us to equip them to find purpose in and beyond their sport. "Victory Beyond Competition" results in seeing people grow in Christ and multiply their lives into others.

MISSION: To build spiritual movements everywhere through the platform of sport so that everyone knows someone who truly follows Jesus

VISION: To see a day when there are Christ-followers on every team, in every sport, in every nation

VALUES:

FAITH: Everyone depends on God moment by moment which allows us to step out in bold faith

ONENESS: Everyone is intentionally building relationships that reflect the diversity of God in taking the gospel to the world

GROWTH: Everyone is maturing in Christ-like character and challenged to develop multiplying leaders who care for people

FRUITFULNESS: Everyone is bearing lasting fruit in their lives and ministries, continually examining the results of their efforts

Our mission is the reason for our existence. It is our rally cry and measuring stick for success. We are compelled to achieve our mission because of our commitment to our values.

Our vision is the future we are shooting for through our daily efforts. It allows us to evaluate our current realities and to strategically move toward our core objective as a ministry.

Our values are the way we go about achieving our objectives. They reflect what it means to be a good team player within our organization and the way we develop leaders.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Athletes in Action engages athletes in a way that enables them to use the platform of sport to **win** others to Jesus, **build** their faith, and **send** them out to become spiritual influencers.

Additionally, Athletes in Action will appeal to the sport-minded community (athletes, coaches, fans, parents, media, and sports leaders) who deeply consider the way to bring eternal hope through the intersection of faith and sport.

DISTINCTIVES

We exist to build "spiritual movements" that connect athletes to a relationship with Jesus. These "spiritual movements" serve as the distinctive process of our ministry. Within Athletes in Action we talk about changing lives through these steps:

WIN: Engaging with athletes to change the culture of sport as they understand the importance of knowing Jesus in a real and personal way.

BUILD: Teaching spiritual principles (including the gospel, the Spirit-filled life, testimony sharing, and discipleship) that grow athletes in their faith

SEND: Directing Christ-followers to take the initiative to relationally multiply their faith into the lives of teammates and those they influence.

When speaking about our distinct ministry process we can refer to it as "experiencing Victory Beyond Competition" (in place of "spiritual movement" or Win/Build/Send) since it matches our brand promise.

MINISTRY SUMMARY

(HOW WE ANSWER: "WHAT IS ATHLETES IN ACTION?")

To a general audience:

Athletes in Action is an international sports organization. We focus on developing athletes and coaches as leaders of influence, on and off the field. Our ultimate goal is to see athletes and coaches living to leave a powerful legacy on every team, in every sport, in every nation.

To a known Christian audience:

Athletes in Action is an international sports organization. We focus on equipping athletes and coaches to grow in relationship with Jesus and to multiply their life into others. Our ultimate goal is to see Christ-followers on every team, in every sport, in every nation.

MINISTRY PURPOSE

(THE REASONS WE DO WHAT WE DO)

- » From our founding in 1966 we have promised **to grow athletes on mission** with God and send them around the world
- » The DNA of our ministry process ("building spiritual movements through the platform of sport") aligns with a biblical call **to make disciples of Jesus**
- » Brokenness is systemic of sport. Having a global infrastructure, in partnership with Cru, allows us to **deliver solutions to the most urgent needs** of people in the world
- » Sport as a "universal language" provides a platform **to offer the gospel of Jesus Christ** to every person as the only lasting & eternal hope
- » The influence of athletes in every corner of the globe provides unmatched opportunity **to impact sport culture and change the world**

FOR WHILE BODILY TRAINING IS
OF SOME VALUE, GODLINESS IS
OF VALUE IN EVERY WAY,...

1 TIMOTHY 4:8a

WHAT IS A VERBAL IDENTITY?

Every word attached to our brand is our verbal identity. It turns words into positive points of connection that build relationships. Our verbal identity represents who we are as a ministry, and how we can consistently speak and write to our audience to reinforce our brand.

Communications Theme

Brand Voice

Message Themes

Message Tiers

COMMUNICATIONS THEME

“VICTORY BEYOND COMPETITION”

Our communications theme stands as the ultimate goal in conveying our verbal identity to our audience. This singular goal allows us to be consistent in both the message we craft and the voice used to deliver it.

The communications theme matches our brand promise in communicating our desired outcome of a life-changed for Christ.

BRAND VOICE AND PERSONALITY

Brand personality is the unique way that we relate with our target audience. Think of yourself as a wise, seasoned teammate that others want to be around because we can directly relate to their challenges. As those around us tap into our experience, they develop as Christ-followers who find victory that goes beyond the competitive aspects of sport.

Brand voice is about projecting our organizational personality through the way we communicate. As we personify a trusted mentor from our own life, people can see us as a teammate who is authentic, inclusive, and caring. As we consistently model brand voice and personality to our audience, they too can begin interacting as a trusted teammate who helps others find purpose in life and in sport.

MESSAGE THEMES

Our messaging is what we say at every interaction. These themes work together to reinforce our brand promise and connect to the overall communications theme.

The message themes are the steps that a trusted coach or experienced teammate would express to take a participant to the next level. It reminds an athlete of the fundamentals in their faith development and the ultimate outcome in following this plan.

MESSAGE THEMES:

Audience of One

Total Athlete Experience

Victory Beyond Competition



WIN.
BUILD.
SEND.

VERBAL IDENTITY

Message Theme:

“Audience of One”

Encouraging athletes and coaches to adopt the perspective that winning in competition comes from viewing sport as an opportunity for worship

MESSAGE TIERS:

Sensory - “Ao1” / “Audience of One”

Short Form - “Audience of One - Worship God with your Life”

Long Form - “How to find freedom to worship in your sport: For many people sport is their life, their identity, the thing they worship. It becomes all-encompassing, but sport cannot satisfy the expansive needs of the soul. Only God can do that. Instead, worship God through your sport. When you give yourself fully over to him, sport becomes an avenue of freedom to share God’s character. Through your effort, attitude, intensity, and sportsmanship, you worship an Audience of One with your life.”

Story Form - “Finding Freedom Playing with an Audience of One” {athlete story}



AUDIENCE OF ONE

Finding freedom in the perspective of sport
as worship

VERBAL IDENTITY

Message Theme:

“Total Athlete”

Building athletes physically, mentally, and spiritually so they can compete at the highest level possible to honor God

MESSAGE TIERS:

Sensory - “Total Athlete”

Short Form - “The Total Athlete Experience - Develop Physically, Mentally, & Spiritually”

Long Form - How to Grow as the Total Athlete - Most athletes know where to find a training plan to get stronger physically. Anyone who has played on a team, however, knows that there is more to improving than just physical growth. Enhancing communication skills, growing in character, becoming a stronger leader, and discovering purpose in playing all make an athlete better in their sport. When athletes develop in all dimensions they not only play with greater motivation, but they live with focused motivation as well.

Story Form - “Passion and Purpose Through The Total Athlete Experience”
{athlete story}



Total ATHLETE

Developing in all dimensions - physically,
mentally, and spiritually

**ATHLETES
IN ACTION**
A Cru Ministry

Message Theme:

“Victory Beyond Competition”

Sending athletes and coaches out into the world to live with eternity in mind as they grow in Christ and multiply their lives into others.

MESSAGE TIERS:

Sensory - “Victory Beyond Competition”

Short Form - “Victory Beyond Competition - Live Every Day with the End in Mind”

Long Form - “How to Experience Lasting Victory in Your Sport: Competition pushes us to be the best we can be. Despite our efforts, circumstances will hold us back from our aspirations. God invites us to live above and beyond our circumstances, by living for something more important than sport. Every day we can live with eternity in mind by growing in our relationship with Jesus and by multiplying our lives into others. This eternal victory lasts for a lifetime.”

Story Form - “Having an Eternal Perspective in my Sport” {athlete story}



VICTORY BEYOND COMPETITION

Living with eternity in mind as we grow in Christ
and multiply our lives

**ATHLETES
IN ACTION**
A Cru Ministry

EVERY TEAM SPORT NATION

A day when there are Christ-followers on every team, in every sport, in every nation

Brand Promise/Communication Theme:

Victory Beyond Competition

Vision Statement:

“To see a day when there are Christ-followers on every team, in every sport, in every nation”

Vision Slogan:

Every Team, Every Sport, Every Nation

Vision Phrase:

EVERY

Message Themes:

Audience of One

Total Athlete Experience

Victory Beyond Competition

Brand Voice:

Personify a trusted coach or experienced teammate who can directly relate to someone's challenges; perceived as authentic, inclusive, and caring in interactions that connect purpose in life and in sport

WHAT IS VISUAL IDENTITY?

Visual identity are the aspects of the brand that evoke specific feelings and expressions through an individual interaction. It includes logos, fonts, images, and graphic elements which support the communication of the mission, values, and promise of our brand.

Visual identity is important for the representation of our brand because perceived consistency correlates to connectivity. When a person sees a visual display that is consistent with a previous experience with Athletes in Action, the awareness and trust equity of our ministry is also transferred to this new experience. We can help elevate the journey of an athlete or coach by being consistent and compelling in our visual display across the organization.



LOGO USAGE

The Athletes in Action logo is a consistent representation of our ministry that should not be altered. We always start with the white logo as the default. If that is not easily readable we proceed to the next color of black and continue to gray and silver as needed.

The AIA logo is represented in one color. The color that is chosen should have a high contrast that sets it apart from the background.



Using the Colored Mark

Please consult with Digital Strategies directly before using any two color logo to represent Athletes in Action.

LOGO ADAPTATIONS

When adding a school or department name to the logo, follow these guidelines:

1. The name must fit evenly under the word “Action”, between the long arm of the A and the right end of the N in the logo and aligned right.
2. The font must be **FREIGHT SANS PRO SEMI BOLD ITALIC** in all caps.
3. The name must be legible when the logo is at 1.5 inches wide.
4. The name may not be larger than 2/3rd the height of the logo’s S.
5. Acceptable colors for the name are gray, black, or white.
6. You can choose what name to use under the Athletes in Action logo. However, you must stay consistent with that choice
7. You may use abbreviations and symbols, such as ampersands (&).



LET US RUN WITH ENDURANCE THE
RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US,...

HEBREWS 12:1b

LOGO SIZING

The Athletes in Action logo creates a unique shape that is easily recognizable. For this reason the logo does not have to be huge to do it's job. The logo should be used as a mark of trust that accents more dominant visual elements of a shirt, flyer, or web page.



Clear Space

Make sure the logo is legible when used in a small size. Leave empty space equal to the height of the "s" on all sides.



Minimum Size

The logo should never be smaller than 0.9 inches wide.

Ordering Gear for an Event or Tour?

Ordering gear for a event or tour can be difficult. Below are steps that allow you to approach this task with clarity and outfit your athletes with confidence.

1. **Color Choice:** Choose gear that is some variation of the AIA colors. See page 21.
2. **Logo:** The AIA logo should follow the rules below and be no smaller than 3" wide on all gear.
 - a. **Logo Color:** The rule of thumb is "match the swoosh." And follow the guidelines laid out on page 16.
 - b. **A Cru Ministry:** This co-branding is not required on any gear. It can be used if the printed AIA logo will be bigger than 3" for screenprinting purposes. And 4" for embroidery (hats, polos, backpacks, etc.).
 - c. **Registered Trade Mark:** Use the AIA logo without the registered trade mark on all embroidery work. Any screenprinting of the logo bigger than 3" can have it, but is not required to have it.
 - d. **Adaptations:** Any text or department names under the logo need to follow the guidelines on page 17.
3. **Fonts:** Check page 20 for the full list of font choices you have at your disposal to personalize and use.

Most of our personal vendors have these guidelines already and Digital Strategies is ready to answer any of your personal questions as well.

CO-BRANDING

If you need to use both the Athletes in Action and Cru logos it is important to represent both brands as equally as possible. The dimensions of the Athletes in Action and Cru logos are different, so it is important to keep the logos visually balanced. When using the Cru, follow these guidelines:

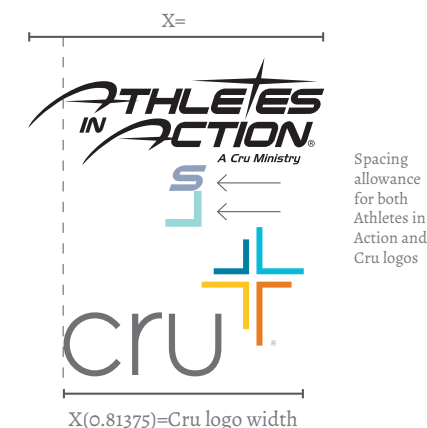
Horizontal

- » Keep the logos at equal height, as depicted by "Y"
- » Align the base of the word mark "Cru" to the base of "ction" of Action.



Vertical

- » To find the proper width for the Cru logo: Multiply the width of the Athletes in Action logo "X" by 0.81375.
- » Align the left edge of the "c" in Cru to the left end of the crossbar of the "A" in Athletes.



**A BRAND IS MORE THAN A
NAME OR LOGO, IT IS HOW WE
WANT PEOPLE TO EXPERIENCE
US. BRAND BUILDS TRUST.**

MARK HOUSEHOLDER, PRESIDENT

CHOOSING IMAGES

Great images grab people's attention in ways that text copy often cannot. When choosing images choose compelling shots of people doing ministry, working with students or nationals from other countries, or playing their sport. Action shots are always best.



What to Avoid

We never use images that are stereotypes or trivialize our mission. Avoid imagery that lacks diversity. Avoid clichéd images—if we've seen it again and again, so have our audiences. Religious artifacts such as Bibles and crosses should never be used as props. Instead, they must be integrated into true-to-life situations (e.g., students participating in a study group, or a cross displayed in the background). Never use photos of people impersonating Jesus. Imagery depicting people should never seem staged, posed or forced (including group photos). Instead, they should be candid and believable, like we've captured a brief moment in time. When viewed as a whole, our imagery must be diverse in both gender and ethnicity.



**ATHLETES
IN
ACTION**
A Cru Ministry

EXAMPLES

Reference these example pages when designing or requesting projects with visual graphics



SLIDES



BUSINESS CARDS



WALL GRAPHIC



EXAMPLES

FLYER

JUNE 24-30, 2018

Location:
Athletes in Action
Sports Complex, Xenia, Ohio

Cost:
\$399 before December 31st
\$429 January 1st - April 30th
\$449 May 1st - June 24th

Register:
GOAIA.ORG/UTC-HS

For more info contact:
Laurel.riley@athletesinaction.org
231.499.1317

VICTORY BEYOND COMPETITION

SIGNS

THIS ROOM
RESERVED

WEEKLY MEETING
7:30-9PM

BANNERS

SOCIAL IMAGES

"You are an ambassador of our brand, you have an opportunity to consistently represent our ministry and move people toward our mission"

Mark Householder, President

LET US RUN WITH
ENDURANCE THE
RACE THAT IS SET
BEFORE US,...

HEBREWS 12:1b

**“You are an ambassador of our brand,
you have an opportunity to consistently
represent our ministry and move people
toward our mission”**

Mark Householder, President



*All assets, resources, and templates are available at my.athletesinaction.org
and by contacting branding@athletesinaction.org*