



NATO BRAND GUIDE

*A practical guide to working
with the NATO brand*



If you have a brand-related question or would like advice on NATO branding, please contact the Public Diplomacy Division on brand@hq.nato.int.

*This is a living document that will be regularly updated.
North Atlantic Treaty Organization © NATO, March 2017*

OVERVIEW

1. Before we start	4
2. Why we exist	10
3. Our brand narrative	18
4. Who we are	26
5. Our language	34
6. Our images	38
7. Our logo	44
8. Expert tips	50



1.

BEFORE WE START

Setting the scene



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- **Overall awareness of NATO is high**, but there are large differences among NATO Allies.
- On average across allied countries, **61% of people believe NATO is essential for their country's security**.
- **Women and young people** generally have a weaker connection to NATO.
- **Younger generations are less likely than others to associate NATO with the idea of peace and security**, and more likely to relate it to war and military.
- NATO is perceived to be a strong organisation, but is also seen as **lacking transparency and honesty**.

Source: NATO research in 16 allied countries (2016).

BUILDING A STRONGER NATO TOGETHER

If you work for NATO, this guide is for you. Because you *are* NATO. Whenever you talk, write or tweet, or even when you choose not to say anything, you are helping to build our brand. And yes, NATO – like the EU or the UN – is a brand. We don't sell things, but we do provide an important service to the citizens of our nations: we safeguard peace, freedom and security. NATO's brand is the way that our publics, our partners, and our potential adversaries perceive our Alliance, its decisions and its actions, or how they think and feel about us.

Research shows that NATO is not always well known, and is sometimes misperceived. That is why building a strong brand is important. If we don't tell our own story, others will tell it for us. To connect with the almost one billion people who live across the Alliance, and to make sure they support and value us, we have to explain every day why NATO matters. Our brand makes NATO better known, and it makes it easier for people to understand who we are, why we exist and what we do.

This guide book is meant to help all of us communicate NATO more effectively and consistently. It is an important tool to help us build a stronger NATO together.

Oana Lungescu

NATO Spokesperson

Ambassador Taçan Ildem

NATO Assistant Secretary General
for Public Diplomacy



Good to know



THE 95% RULE

Psychologist Daniel Kahneman won a Nobel prize for his work on behavioural economics. He demonstrated how 95% of the decisions we make are guided by intuition and instinct, not by rational thinking. Although we like to see ourselves as rational creatures, our emotions guide us more often than we think.

If we want our communication to be effective, we have to reach the emotional and instinctive side of people (the 95%), not just the rational 5%.

Interested in reading more about how intuition guides our decision-making? Key books on the topic include 'Thinking, Fast and Slow' by Daniel Kahneman and 'Pre-Suasion' by Robert Cialdini.

System 1:
Intuition & instinct

95%



System 2:
Rational thinking

5%

CONNECTING WITH A WIDER AUDIENCE

If we want to make our communication more effective and reach a wider audience, we have to understand how to address the intuitive and emotional side of people, not just the rational one.

We will only create and sustain that strong connection if we let people feel who we are and why we are important in their daily lives.

The time to act is now. If we don't create and sustain that strong connection between NATO and citizens in Allied countries, others may do it for us. And the story they tell about us will be driven by their own agendas. If we let this happen, the NATO brand could suffer serious damage.



2.

WHY WE EXIST

...and why that matters

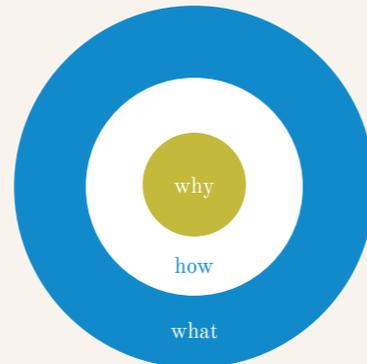


Good to know

EXPLAINING OUR “WHY?”

In his book ‘Start With Why’, Simon Sinek explains how most organisations know what they do and how they do things, but very few organisations can articulate why they do what they do. What is their purpose? What is their cause? And why should anyone care?

Find Sinek’s famous TED-talk about this subject by Googling “Sinek start with why TED”.



i

ANSWERING A REAL NEED

What would this world look like without us?
Why would anybody care?

If we want to be relevant in people’s lives, we must connect with them.
We have to make people feel that we can help them.
We have to convince them that NATO is a real answer to a real need.

But what innate need does NATO answer?
The need to feel safe and protected.



Good to know

WHAT DO OTHER ORGANISATIONS PROMISE?

UNICEF

People's need

To grow and to develop

Promise

To advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs, and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.

Google

People's need

To be informed

Promise

To organise the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.

i

THE PROMISE WE MAKE

NATO GUARANTEES OUR FREEDOM AND SECURITY.





MAKING A CONNECTION

NATO in general remains a very well recognised brand, second only to the UN among international organisations. So there is a strong foundation to build on.

But we also face some significant challenges. In some Allied countries, over half of 18-24-year-olds haven't even heard of NATO. Across all Allies, people with lower education levels are generally less likely to see NATO as relevant in maintaining peace and security, and almost a quarter of people believe NATO actually makes the world more dangerous.

This will be our most important challenge:

To create an emotional connection between NATO and those citizens who do not know who we are, what we do and why we matter.

A clear brand narrative will help us make this connection.



3.

OUR BRAND NARRATIVE

What do we want people to know about us?

A BRAND NARRATIVE IN THREE BRAND CHAPTERS

Our overall brand promise is clear:

NATO guarantees our freedom and security.

While this is not meant to be a slogan, we should incorporate this wording into our external communications, as it clearly captures what we want people to feel and understand about NATO.

But why would people believe us when we say that NATO guarantees freedom and security?

Our brand narrative has three chapters that combine to help us support this claim.

We call these core themes our brand chapters.

BRAND NARRATIVE - OVERVIEW

	NATO GUARANTEES OUR FREEDOM AND SECURITY		
Promise	NATO GUARANTEES OUR FREEDOM AND SECURITY		
Chapter	CHAPTER 1 POLITICAL An Alliance that cooperates to enhance security and stability.	CHAPTER 2 MILITARY An Alliance with the capability and the will to protect its citizens.	CHAPTER 3 CHANGE An Alliance that innovates to secure our future.
Keywords	Peace, democracy, individual liberty, rule of law, cooperation, determination.	Defence, deterrence, strength, security, protection, commitment.	Future, adapt, innovative, agile, train, invest.
Initiatives	Consensus decision making, summits, partnerships, information-sharing, promoting the role of women in peace and security.	Collective defence and Article 5, missions and operations, exercises, deployments, training, projecting stability.	Military adaptation, Science for Peace and Security, cyber defence, counter-terrorism, Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance.

HOW TO USE OUR BRAND CHAPTERS

Our three brand chapters give us a clear focus. All our communications should reinforce one or more of these three themes. Always ask yourself the question: What chapter am I making stronger?

You don't have to use the exact wording of the three chapters, but by using the same keywords we can help to build awareness and recognition, and make our communications more effective.

For each chapter, we have added examples of NATO initiatives that can be used to illustrate the different chapters. Of course you should also talk about other initiatives, but always try to link them back to one of the three chapters.

CHAPTER 1: POLITICAL AN ALLIANCE THAT COOPERATES TO ENHANCE SECURITY AND STABILITY

After World War II, the free nations of Europe and North America formed the NATO Alliance. NATO has secured peace and freedom for its members since 1949.

Our nations share important values: freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. We look for solutions to difficult problems through debate, diplomacy and consensus.

We work with countries around the world because of our fundamental belief that together we are stronger and safer.

Keywords: Peace, democracy, individual liberty, rule of law, cooperation, determination.

Initiatives: Consensus decision making, summits, partnerships, information-sharing, promoting the role of women in peace and security.

CHAPTER 2: MILITARY

AN ALLIANCE WITH THE CAPABILITY AND THE WILL TO PROTECT ITS CITIZENS

NATO protects you 24/7, 365 days a year.

By combining the military might of all Allies, we create a formidable fighting force. We stand ready to protect all Allies against any threat. Our men and women in uniform work, train and fight side by side. We raise the skills and ability of all our armed forces to the standard of the best.

We have made a commitment to protect each other. An attack on one Ally is an attack on all.

Keywords: Defence, deterrence, strength, security, protection, commitment.

Initiatives: Collective defence and Article 5, missions and operations, exercises, deployments, training, projecting stability.

CHAPTER 3: CHANGE

AN ALLIANCE THAT INNOVATES TO SECURE OUR FUTURE

The world's security is constantly under threat from terrorism, cyber attacks and hybrid warfare.

In such a fast changing world, NATO acts today to be ready for the challenges of tomorrow. Together with the EU and others, we are adapting with new and innovative ways of thinking. We work with industry to make sure that our forces have the technology and equipment they need to do their job.

Keywords: Future, adapt, innovative, agile, train, invest.

Initiatives: Military adaptation, Science for Peace and Security, cyber defence, counter-terrorism, Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance.

“

The reason why NATO is the most successful alliance in history is that we have been able to adapt when the world is changing.

Jens Stoltenberg
Secretary General of NATO

4.

WHO WE ARE

If NATO were a person...



NOT ONLY SOLDIERS*

The way people see us is not just defined by what we say, but also by the kind of words we use and the images we show.

Today, most people think of NATO as a soldier, ready to fight.

Although the military aspect of our identity is an important part of who we are, some people will find it easier to relate to other aspects of the Alliance.



* For the purpose of this brand guide, “soldier” refers to all service personnel, including sailors, airmen and marines.

A MORE NUANCED IMAGE

To provide a complete view of NATO, we should regularly show people all sides of our organisation. The best way to do so is through our people.

To make things easier we present three types of NATO ‘representatives’.



The negotiator



The soldier



The expert

Each representative symbolises one aspect of NATO’s work. They allow us to tell complementary stories that resonate with different audiences, and come together to convey a rounded and convincing image of the Alliance.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A NEGOTIATOR

Win-win

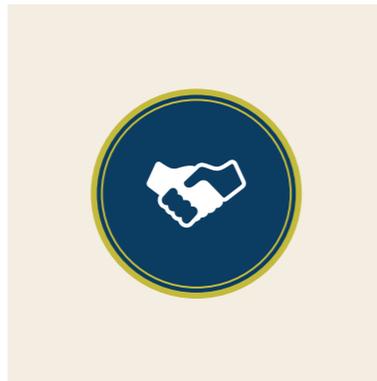
Results-oriented

Tireless

Trustworthy

Resourceful

Patient



CHARACTERISTICS OF A SOLDIER

Powerful

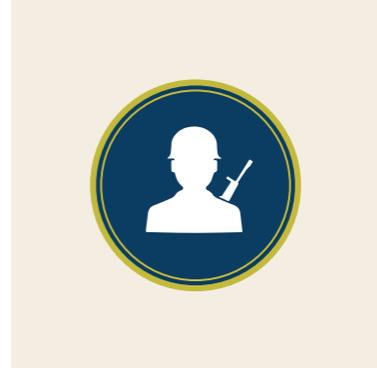
No-nonsense

Disciplined

Determined

Confident

Brave



CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EXPERT

Smart

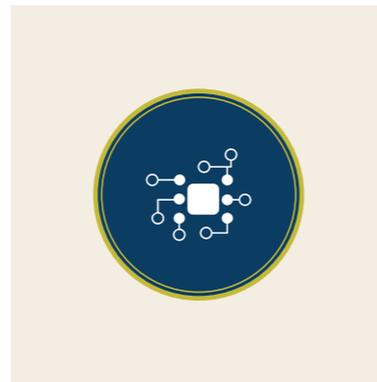
Innovative

Forward-looking

Tech-savvy

Knowledgeable

Skilled



USING OUR REPRESENTATIVES

- Our representatives can tell our story, but they can also be the subject of our story.
- Communications should focus on different representatives, depending on who we are talking to and what we want to achieve.
- For certain audiences, one representative might already be well established (for instance the soldier). In that case you can put more emphasis on the other representatives.

NATO



The soldier



The negotiator



The expert

“

*People don't always remember what you say or even what you do,
but they always remember how you made them feel.*

Maya Angelou
American poet

5.

OUR LANGUAGE

How do we say the things we say?



THE WAY WE SPEAK IS IMPORTANT

Words can convey powerful emotions. As humans, we are very sensitive to language. We form impressions of people and organisations as soon as we hear or read their words.

The language we use and the way we speak help to convey NATO's character and personality.

HOW TO SPEAK CLEARLY ABOUT NATO?

- **Connect with our audience.** Start with acknowledging a specific need they might have (the need to feel protected, to feel safe, etc.) before talking about what NATO can do to help them. Make use of the brand narrative, in particular the keywords and initiatives, to relate what NATO can do to address the needs of our audience.
- **Avoid jargon.** Do not use abbreviations. Try to use short sentences, since those are the easiest to understand. When speaking, repeat the most important message throughout your talk. Do not be afraid to stop and ask people whether they understand what you are saying.
- **Be confident.** What we do is important. Take a clear position, but be open for discussion.
- **Beware of jokes.** Avoid sarcasm or cynicism. A lot of the people we communicate with come from different cultural backgrounds and do not speak English as a first language. Humour can easily be misinterpreted.
- **Stay positive.** We believe people are capable of doing great things, even when under stress. We are human so we do make mistakes, but we conduct honest assessments of our performance and seek to learn and grow from our mistakes. We are ready for the worst, but we always expect the best to happen.

HOW TO WRITE CLEARLY ABOUT NATO?

ARE YOU WRITING CLEARLY? DO THE TEST ON WWW.NATO.INT/CLEARWRITING

- **Make the message relatable.** Think about who the audience is and what message you want to convey.
- **Get your products into shape.** Use plenty of white space and informative headings, and ask yourself if each section is really necessary.
- **Keep it short and simple.** Split long sentences. Cut out unnecessary words and use simple, everyday language.
- **Consider the logic.** Pay attention to logic and reasoning throughout your text.
- **Cut out excess nouns.** Excessive use of nouns makes sentences sound dull. Use strong verbs instead.
- **Be concrete, not abstract.** Concrete nouns will appeal to your readership more than abstract ones.
- **Use active verbs instead of passive.** Active verbs make communication more dynamic.
- **Avoid jargon and abbreviations.** What might seem like obvious abbreviations to you might not to our readers, and quite often they just won't have time to find out what they mean.
- **Beware of "false friends".** "False friends" are pairs of words in two languages that look similar, but differ in meaning. Be careful not to write something completely different from what you intended.
- **Revise and check.** When you have finished drafting your document, always read through it and perform a spell-check. If your text is intended for reading out loud, you should read it out loud after you have drafted it.

6. OUR IMAGES

What do we show and how do we show it?



AN IMAGE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Most people don't read all the material we communicate, but it is difficult to ignore a strong image.

The images we use play an important role in the way people look at us.

We have to decide what aspects of NATO we want to show through pictures and video, and how we want to show them.



THE IMAGES WE USE

- **Show our diversity.** Our images should show our different representatives: negotiators, soldiers and experts. They should show the world we live in: men and women, young and old, of all backgrounds.
- **Make a connection.** People like people, and have an even stronger connection when they see faces. Show the societies we work with, and don't use images that point a gun directly at the audience. Try to avoid images that show NATO representatives from behind.
- **Tell stories.** Images make a story come to life. Use images that are large enough to recognise faces and details. Try to use images that add an extra layer of information to the story.
- **Be real.** There is nothing wrong with images that show emotion. Our images show real life, so they do not have to be perfect. Dare to go behind the scenes and show the wider picture.
- **Show the logo.** Try to include the NATO logo in every picture. Show a logo in every video.
- **Show clarity.** Bad pictures tell the story badly. The minimum resolution of the images we use should be 72 DPI for web publishing and 300 DPI for print products.

“

“There is plenty of scientific evidence for the strong link between familiarity and trust. Because something familiar requires little effort to process mentally, we are more likely to feel at ease around it. Over time and unconsciously, familiarity builds trust.”

Robert Cialdini
Author of 'Pre-Suasion'



...and when to use it.

WHEN TO USE OUR LOGO

Always.

If we don't use our logo when we communicate, people won't know it is NATO talking. Even if we tell our story in the best possible way, we will not build our brand if people do not recognise us.

At the moment, most people don't link the compass symbol on its own to NATO.

Always use the correct logo.

There is only one logo. It can be used horizontally or vertically.

Visit WWW.NATO.INT/VIGS/ to see how to use the NATO logo in your communication.



THE FLAG NEVER REPLACES THE LOGO

People often don't recognise the NATO flag when they see it on its own. They confuse NATO with the UN or the EU.

Avoid using the flag on its own in any communications.

The NATO flag can be used in addition to our logo whenever it is appropriate but our flag never replaces our logo.



WHAT ABOUT OTHER LOGOS & SYMBOLS?

Adding other logos, symbols or shields to NATO's communication can create confusion.

NATO ultimately is one brand. Even if other parts of NATO such as the military also have symbols, they are subordinate to the NATO brand and we must keep things simple and build familiarity over time by giving NATO's brand clear primacy.

As a default we should always use the NATO logo.

Existing logos should always be accompanied by the NATO logo. Do not create a new logo or shield without consultation, and in the military follow the approved directive.

Visit WWW.NATO.INT/VIGS/ to see how to use the NATO logo in your communication. In the military use AD005-004.



Summit logos are developed in close cooperation between NATO and the host nation. The Warsaw Summit logo is a good example of this. It has a simple design and doesn't detract from the NATO logo itself. If you want to create a new logo, always consult the Public Diplomacy Division first via brand@hq.nato.int.

WORKING WITH THIRD PARTIES

At NATO we often work with external partners such as NGOs, think-tanks or universities. We sponsor or co-sponsor external events undertaken by third parties.

Partners should always comply with the NATO Visual Identity Guidelines for Organisers or Sponsors.

Visit WWW.NATO.INT/VIGS/PDF/NATO-VIGS-2016-EN.PDF to see how to use the NATO logo when working with third parties.





8.

EXPERT TIPS

SOCIAL MEDIA

- 1 Include the NATO logo not only in the images and the posts that you share, but also in the profile picture of your accounts.
- 2 Bring the negotiator, the soldier and the expert to life. Go behind the scenes and tell their real stories.
- 3 Think about which (media) partners might be interested in sharing our stories.
- 4 Avoid using picture-perfect smiles and handshakes, and focus more on images of citizens that are actually benefiting from NATO's missions and activities.
- 5 Don't create new social media accounts or channels without consulting your respective social media coordinator.



“ This link post is a good example of properly branded content. It contains all the required elements to reach and engage our audience. It includes the logo and an appealing visual with a text overlay. It's important to keep a certain level of consistency, so it's best to work with templates like this. Having a text overlay makes it easier to get the audience interested in the message. This post performed well thanks to a clear message and an appealing visual.

VIDEO

- 1 Always start by addressing the need of the audience before telling the story.
- 2 Show people that your audience can relate to. For example, work with a young video reporter to reach students.
- 3 Keep it simple and focus on one chapter and one representative per story.
- 4 Show people - faces and emotions - not just facts.
- 5 Listening and watching at the same time can be difficult. Use simple and clear language, and keep it short. Focus on a few keywords and repeat them throughout the video. Stick to one colour scheme.



“ Strong copy ('Winter doesn't tolerate mistakes') in combination with strong emotions made this video very engaging. As a viewer you want to know more. Within its first week online this video had over 300,000 views and it was picked by various international media. Since not everybody watches videos until the very end, we should have added the NATO logo throughout the video. This would have helped to make sure that all viewers associated this video with NATO.

Google '**US soldiers ice jump in Latvia**' to see the video.

WEB CONTENT

- 1 Make it easy for mass audiences to understand your content. Use photos or preferably infographics instead of text.
- 2 If you must use long text, put the most important information at the top in the simplest language, as only the most committed readers will get past the first three sentences.
- 3 56% of visitors come to the NATO website via search, so consider producing your content in national languages to make it easier to find.
- 4 Over a third of user sessions on the NATO website are from mobile devices, and the proportion is continuously increasing. Always ensure your website and all its content is mobile-friendly.
- 5 Every page of every NATO-owned website must be share-ready, with sharing links for email and the key social media platforms.



“ Whenever somebody sees content on a screen produced by anybody within the NATO family, it must be immediately clear that it is NATO content. On our websites this is obvious since they are NATO branded. But when that content is shared, the NATO context often disappears. The solution: use the word ‘NATO’ in the title, or add a NATO logo to your picture if possible.



NATO GUARANTEES OUR FREEDOM AND SECURITY

If you have a brand-related question or would like advice on NATO branding, please contact the Public Diplomacy Division on brand@hq.nato.int.



NATO GUARANTEES OUR FREEDOM AND SECURITY

*NATO Public Diplomacy Division
1110 Brussels, Belgium
www.nato.int*