Women's Council *of*
REALTORS®

BRANDING GUIDE

FOR WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF REALTORS®
NETWORKS AND MEMBERS

INTRODUCTION TO BRANDING

"An advertising campaign should be timely. A branding campaign should be timeless."

— Steven Howard, *Marketing Words of Wisdom*

A company's logo can be its most valuable asset. Think Apple. Nike. Google. McDonalds. Each of these company's logos is immediately recognizable to the vast majority of consumers and represents billions in value to the company. In 2015, Forbes valued the Apple brand at $145.3 billion. Apple and other companies invest significantly in protecting their brand. It is the most powerful visual asset a company possesses aside from their name.

The Women's Council of REALTORS® prepared this Branding Guide to help maintain a positive brand image and encourage consistent use of the logo throughout the marketplace for the Council, state and local Council networks and individual Council members.

Within this Guide, we discuss customizing the logo for local use, logo use guidelines for various communication channels, and individual members' use of the logo. Also included is an FAQ covering topics related to branding and logo use and links to various resources to assist in promoting the Women's Council brand.

PROTECTING THE COUNCIL BRAND

The Women's Council of REALTORS® is committed to protecting its brand and its logo. Well recognized in the real estate community, our goal for the Council logo is to convey *professionalism*. When you work with or refer business to a Council member, you're engaging with a professional who provides outstanding service to clients, and is committed to advancing women as professionals and leaders.

To ensure the Council brand remains recognizable and conveys the desired message, the Women's Council of REALTORS® maintains high-level oversight of its use – including among local networks, which are the primary delivery system for membership value and the Council brand, and often are the face of the Women's Council in the local marketplace with consumers.

Similar to the franchise model, the Women's Council of REALTORS® develops core standards and asks each local network to adhere to these standards, thereby safeguarding the all-important consistency and quality of the brand, regardless of the local market. The Council logo is perhaps the most important element within the core standards.

A RETURN TO THE CORE BRAND

Good brands evolve and change. Smart reasons for changing a logo include freshening up an outdated look, simplifying an image due to increased brand recognition (Starbucks is a prime example), or responding to company or market changes that call for a new identification.

In the mid-90s, we introduced the theme "Get Ready," which was graphically incorporated into the logo, and was useful for marketing and promotional purposes. To accommodate the broadest functionality for the logo while maintaining consistency and use standards, we have returned to the core, corporate logo:

LOCAL BRANDING

Local Council networks are the primary delivery system within the organization for membership value and the Council brand. The strength and consistency of these groups in large measure determine the success of the Women's Council in fulfilling its mission. The success and effectiveness of our local structures is a priority and strategic goal of the Women's Council of REALTORS®.

As part of the National Strategic Framework, the Council is working to streamline network management and operations to attract and enable member involvement, and to deliver a *consistent* and valuable member experience. *Branding is a core element as part of this strategic initiative.* The streamlined approach shifted the branding from "chapters" to "networks."

With the branding strategy, the name of a Women's Council chapter changed to "Women's Council of REALTORS® [insert location name]." As an example, "Women's Council of REALTORS® Placer County." The new associated logo looks like this:

Note the word "network" is not used.

The intent of the name is to be more descriptive of the distinctive, *dynamic* value of Women's Council that includes changing program content relevant to current business issues and needs, and the deep and evolving value of the personal and professional relationships formed between members of the Council. Placing "Women's Council of REALTORS®" first in the name reinforces this brand identity.

The Women's Council of REALTORS® has uploaded camera-ready custom logos, reflecting this brand standard, to all local Council network websites.

GENERAL USE LOGO GUIDELINES

To maintain a consistent brand image throughout the marketplace, the Women's Council of REALTORS® provides the following logo publishing guidelines to ensure proper use of the corporate, state and local logos. If you have questions or concerns regarding a specific publishing project, contact the Membership Department at 800.245.8512.

WHO CAN PUBLISH THE LOGO?

Any REALTOR® or National Affiliate member of the Women's Council of REALTORS® may publish the corporate logo online and in print. Nonmembers *are not authorized* to publish the Council logo in personal marketing materials. News media, including online, television and print, may publish the logo to promote the organization and its upcoming events.

For the Performance Management Network (PMN) logos, only designees and candidates of the PMN designation program may use these logos in their personal marketing.

COLOR STANDARDS

Your printing company or promotional products vendor may request Pantone® numbers for the Women's Council of REALTORS®' three standard logo colors to ensure accurate presentation of the logo colors. They are as follows:

- Black
- Pantone® 135 yellow
- Pantone® 293 blue

The logo may be published in solid black, white against a black background, in the Pantone® colors listed for three-color process printing, or in matching colors using four-color CMYK process. Your printer will know how to match the colors for CMYK process. Following are examples of these various publishing formats:

FILE FORMATS

The corporate three-color logo file is available for download from www.wcr.org on the logo download page as a JPG or PNG file, for use with Word, PowerPoint or on a website. An EPS file (recommended for professional printing) is also available to download. EPS is a vector illustration and requires vector-editing software, such as Adobe Illustrator. With four-color printing process, your professional printer should match the defined Pantone® colors as closely as possible in accordance with universal printing standards. Networks may request to have their corporate logo with network name sent to a professional printer by sending email to wcr@wcr.org.

ALTERATIONS TO THE LOGO

Women's Council networks, product manufacturers or individuals may not alter the corporate or network logo. This includes:

- Changing the Council's defined Pantone® colors to other colors.
- Changing the font type, kerning and/or leading definitions for the logo's fonts.
- Resizing the logo disproportionate to the defined standard size.

Following are examples of *improper* presentations of the logo.

INCORPORATING THE LOGO INTO OTHER GRAPHIC ELEMENTS

In the past, there have been many instances of "enhancing" the corporate logo by adding additional graphic elements, often for use with a special event or theme. While this may seem like a good idea for a specific use, doing so weakens the corporate brand and diminishes the professional image the Women's Council of REALTORS® seeks to promote.

Please do not add elements to the logo, e.g., frame it with a rectangle or oval, add a tagline or theme, incorporate a local reference graphic, etc. Following are some examples of what NOT to do:

Avoid overlaying the logo onto another image, e.g., a photo that provides a backdrop for the logo in which the background image is visible "behind" the logo. If an overlay is appropriate for the design, create an area of solid white (or black if the logo appears in white as a reversed image). Following is an example of this best practice used with the Council's Twitter account.

CORRECT USE OF AN OVERLAY WITH THE CORPORATE LOGO.

WEBSITE BRANDING

Local Council websites are a prominent representation of the brand. Historically, every local website looked different with only the logo providing visual continuity. To build and maintain a strong brand, the Women's Council of REALTORS® provides a standard template for local use that determines basic layout, including consistent logo placement, key navigational tabs, presentation of officers, and interactive features such as a "Join Now" link and search tool. Beyond providing a strong, consistent brand, this also helps to maintain a clean and uncluttered site that conveys a professional image for the Council and its members.

ADDITIONAL CONTENT

Each network manages its own content, allowing for a unique public-facing presentation that reflects the personality of the group. To assist networks present the brand in the most positive light, we offer the following recommended basic best practices:

- Update information regularly with upcoming events, etc. and ensure all links function as intended
- Include a calendar of events/meeting dates
- List Project Team with team leaders (current officer information is maintained by Women's Council of REALTORS®)
- Provide a download option for important documents
- Include social media icons linked to local and/or national social media pages (link to the national Facebook page at facebook.com/wcrfans)
- Link to the Women's Council of REALTORS® and, if applicable, the state network
- Always present the term "REALTOR®" in all caps with the registration mark
  (Add the ® mark by pressing Ctrl, Alt and the letter R at the same time, or by holding down the Alt key and on the numeric keypad entering 0174.)

Additional elements to consider for your website:
- Link to a newsletter or blog
- Photos of members, including new member recognition
- Member testimonials
- Video message from the president
- Brief history of the Women's Council
- Current volunteer opportunities within the Council
- Strategic Partner and Sponsor acknowledgements/links
- Links to NAR and the local REALTOR® association
- Link to http://www.shopwcr.com for Council-branded products

Avoid the following:
- Pages with no content
- Outdated information
- Graphics that are unprofessional, e.g., "hearts and kisses"
- Too much content on a page, making it appear cluttered and/or requiring extensive scrolling (versus using link and tabs)

EVENT, MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS BRANDING

All communications should clearly be branded with your custom Council-provided logo. Strive for consistent placement of the logo e.g., top left corner. To ensure consistency, use templates for media releases, event fliers, electronic newsletters, etc. – anything you send to members or the public. This will help your target audience immediately recognize the source of the information—an important element in strengthening your brand. Create your own or download templates available in the Marketing Action Kit>

All communications and templates should be professional in nature; avoid "cute" or cartoonish graphics. View your communications as if you were a prospective client. Would you want this group to represent you in the purchase or sale of a property?

For promotional materials, lead off with a strong value statement (what's in it for me) and use high quality photos or graphics that are relevant to the message to create visual interest. Avoid cramming every detail into the communication. Instead, present the most important information and include a link and/or contact details for more information.

Spell out the full name of the organization (versus using the acronym, WCR) as much as is practical. Always use the full name in first reference. If your communication includes multiple uses of the name, alternate with "Women's Council" or "the Council" to minimize the monotony of repeatedly using the same phrase.

There are specific best practice guidelines for providing information to the media. The Women's Council of REALTORS® offers a media tool kit to assist you in writing press releases, establishing a media contact list, pitching story ideas to editors, etc. Download the Media Tool Kit>

SOCIAL MEDIA BRANDING

Social media presence is increasingly synonymous with an organization's brand. It is also increasingly visual. Images speak loudly. Just as with your website, always be thoughtful and intentional about the presentation of your brand on social media.

LOGO PRESENTATION

Be sure your local logo is included as part of your social media presence. Most social media sites are restrictive in dimensions for cover or profile images. For example, the rectangular logo doesn't neatly fit the square profile image box on Facebook. Use the logo as your cover photo, or size it appropriately to fit the profile box. Following are proper and improper examples for Facebook profile images.

CORRECT USE FOR FACEBOOK: INCORRECT USE FOR FACEBOOK:

COLOR PALETTE

Social media is a visual medium. Use the Women's Council of REALTORS®' official colors (black, yellow and blue) in your template to reinforce your brand. It will also visually complement your logo, resulting in a polished and professional presentation.

Most image software will provide a RGB (red, green blue) color-matching formula, which you can use to create complimentary color graphics for your website and electronic communications. As these vary by software, we do not provide a formula here.

POSTS & IMAGES

Social media is fun and there's nothing wrong with fun. It allows you to present the "people" aspect of your organization. With that in mind, don't ignore the obvious: never post anything you might regret in the future. Once it's out there, it's out there. Be mindful of this when posting pictures from social events and never post anything that might detract from your professional image.

Adhere to copyright laws. Do not post photos or images you do not own, including photos from the National Council website.

LOGO USE GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Individual Council members are held to the same high expectations for proper use of the logo as state and local networks. Women's Council members may use the corporate logo in conjunction with personal marketing materials, but may not alter or add to the logo. To help encourage correct usage of

the logo, a one-page overview of the basic logo publishing rules is available to download and give to members.

Individual members who wish to use their local custom logo in personal marketing may download it from the Documents page at their local network website.

[Download branding-related business resources in the National Council Member Center>](#)

BRANDING FAQS (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS)

Q: **Can a network create and use a custom logo to reflect the local market in place of the logo provided by national?**

A: *To maintain a consistent brand, regardless of location, the Women's Council asks each group to use the logo it provides.*

Q: **Can we use the colors, typeface and/or graphic layout of the corporate logo in communications to promote local Council resources or events?**

A: *Yes. Using the same typeface and colors reinforces the Council brand and makes your information easily recognizable to members.*

Q: **Our incoming president is creating a theme for her year. Can we add the theme as a tagline below the logo?**

A: *Use of themes to brand a local group is discouraged as it competes with the primary brand. Please limit the use of themes to individual programs or events. If a theme is used in conjunction with an event, the theme should not be incorporated into the logo.*

Q: **Can we overlay the logo onto our local market skyline for use as our website banner?**

A: *Overlays are discouraged as they can detract from the logo itself and/or make the logo difficult to read. The three-color logo should always appear on a white background, or may appear in white, reversed out from a black background. An example of the proper use of an overlay is included under General Use Guidelines.*

Q: **Can we re-size the logo to fit onto our Facebook cover?**

A: *You may re-size the logo to fit any print or online placement so long as the logo is readable and the height and width proportions remain the same, e.g., any change to the width must result in an equally proportionate change to the height. Where the horizontal rectangular logo does not fit well into an existing placeholder shape, e.g., a box or vertical rectangle, proportionately*

resize the logo to fit, or choose a different image for that space. For assistance in resizing the logo, use free, easy-to-use design tools, such as those available at Canva.com.

Q: **As an incoming local president, what can I give to my members to encourage their appropriate use the brand?**

A: *A one-page logo usage guide is available for download from the Council site. This guide is specifically designed for individual members to help them understand and adhere to the basic rules for logo use.*

BRANDING RESOURCES

If you have questions about this Branding Guide or are unsure of proper use of your logo and would like Women's Council of REALTORS® to review, please contact our Membership Department at 800.245.8512 or via email at wcr@wcr.org.