

Gitcoin Brand Brief

This Brief summarizes recent work on the evolution of our Brand and Brand Strategy. It is intended to serve as the foundation upon which evolved Brand Identity will be built.

Here, we will summarize the following in order to empower our designers to execute against our strategic and creative objectives. This document includes:

- I. Discovery Interview Summary
 - II. Brand Audit Summary
 - III. Brand Strategy Summary (including Narrative, Vision, Mission, Values, Positioning)
 - IV. Design (Brand Identity) Brief
 - V. Brand Messaging
 - VI. Terminology Definitions
 - VII. Market Research & Competitive Analysis Summary (COMING SOON)
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WAIT! [START HERE FIRST](#) to ensure you have a clear understanding of:

- What is Brand
 - What is a Decentralized Brand
 - What is Brand Strategy
 - Why does Brand Strategy matter
 - What is a Rebrand vs. a Brand Refresh
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I. Discovery Interview Summary

Overall Task: 🧡 To interview key thought leaders across the organization, asking them a series of questions that will help us distill key insights (specifically areas of alignment and misalignment), uncover key strategic opportunities, understand history, flag challenges.

Action for Group: Find full Discovery Findings [here](#).

The TLDR:

- **Where We Are:** We're in the in between - a state of flux - but we know there's greatness in our future.
- **What We Do & Why We Do It:** We're mission aligned and inspired - we empower communities to fund their shared needs. This expansive purpose shapes our product vision.
- **What & Who We're Here For:** We are for the greater good. We're human centric and community first - and we build in service of their needs.
- **What's Next:** Our current brand identity isn't always serving us - and there are opportunities for us to optimize to make the community feel more connected to our vision.

II. Brand Audit Summary

Overall Task: 🧡 To review publicly available expressions of Brand Strategy (Mission, Vision, etc.) and Brand Identity (Logo, Illustration/Graphics, Web Design, etc.) to showcase where our Strategy and Identity are working in or out of alignment in order to make strategic recommendations for future design considerations.

Action for Group: Find entire Brand Audit [here](#).

The TLDR:

- **Challenge 1: Mission Cohesion:** expressed in different ways in various places across owned and partner channels
 - **Challenge 2: Logo Cohesion:** There are inconsistencies in how our logo and lockups are used
 - **Challenge 3: The Astronaut (or Robot) as a Symbol:** While we use this as a symbol, some of the symbolic elements are misaligned with what we do
 - **Challenge 4: Iconography & Illustration:** Iconography style inconsistencies which can create confusion and mistrust
 - **Challenge 5: Website Visual Impact:** Across certain touchpoints, we've intentionally created moments for users to feel connected and engaged with the overall experience - but interactive elements are inconsistent and lack relevance to our messages/intentions
 - **Challenge 6: Inconsistency Across Product & Protocol:** Extreme visual and vibe inconsistencies across product and protocols
 - **Challenge 7: Messaging:** Overall inconsistencies; Style, tone and comms hierarchy are unclear; often lacking call to action and reliant on descriptive, prescriptive language rather than inspiring or insightful
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III. Brand Strategy

Overall Task: 🧡 To develop a Brand Strategy that builds upon our existing Brand Purpose, creating a cohesive Brand Narrative - giving us more clarity around key strategic elements and considerations that can inform the evolution of our visual identity.

Please read through the Proposed Brand Strategy elements below in preparation for our discussion with the intent to align and pass off this brief to the Design team.

The TLDR:

- This strategy will define vision, mission, core principles, and strategic approaches for the foreseeable future (until another revision is deemed necessary by the community).
- The aim is to align the DAO around a set of common values and objectives so we can collectively do a better job in allocating resources, setting priorities, executing, and evolving towards a shared "North Star."
- The proposed Brand Strategy is not meant to be overly prescriptive. Rather, it aims to offer a framework as well as a set of tools that should give contributors and the community a clear sense of direction.

- To better understand how we reached the below, and to understand it more comprehensively, visit our [Brand Evolution Board](#)
- We've referenced our community's past work - including the Other Internet work and the [Mission and Vision work](#)
- Once the below is aligned on directionally we will begin building out a more robust presentation that will be copyedited to align with our Messaging Strategy, Voice and Tone - all in progress right now (preview the [Gitcoin Content Style Guide](#))
- To be clear, this copy is NOT final - we are only looking for DIRECTIONAL alignment at this time in order to provide the Design team with what they need to begin pulling references. We can still wordsmith copy once the Design process has kicked off

Proposed Brand Vision:

A brand vision is the message telling our audience(s) why we're here - our north star.

A better future shaped by community led positive change.

Proposed Brand Purpose:

A brand purpose explains what we're here to do.

To empower communities to fund their shared needs.

Proposed Brand Mission:

A brand mission is how we work towards our vision – or the “how we do it” complement to the “why we're here” and “what we're here to do.”

We create tools and touchpoints that foster more equal opportunities for communities to build what matters.

Proposed Brand Values:

1. **Empowerment:** We define empowerment as giving others the tools to step into their power and *do something*
2. **Impact:** We define impact as having a measurable effect or influence
3. **Mutuality:** We define mutuality as the sharing of feeling, action, or relationships
4. **Trust:** We define trust as the belief in the reliability and intent of someone or something
5. **Forward Thinking:** We define forward thinking as favoring innovation and progress as tools for building a better future

Question for Group: *Where does humanistic element - the focus on the natural world - come into play? What about human collaboration? How important is it that these are included here? What role does creativity play when it comes to forward thinking? Do we need to be more explicit about this?*

Proposed Brand Positioning Statement:

A brand positioning statement encompasses what we do, target audience, need state, unique differentiator and key benefit/value proposition.

Gitcoin empowers communities to fund their own shared needs. Through solutions from programs to protocols, we enable more egalitarian funding and investing opportunities to ultimately drive positive change in our world.

Proposed Brand Personality Guardrails:

These give a scale of where we want to play and where we don't want to play, how far to push something or where to not fall too far over

- Knowledgeable not pretentious
- Relatable not casual
- Dynamic not brash
- Intentional not chaotic
- Generous not overbearing
- Open not reckless
- Optimistic not naive
- Delightful not silly

THE GRANTS PROGRAM MISSION

We create programs that help communities secure the funds they need to action positive change

We value / our community values

Creativity
Generosity
Social & Ecological Responsibility
Open Source
Shared Experiences

Our personality

Quirky but not zany
Nostalgic but not retro
Warm but not silly
Approachable but not overly laidback

THE GRANTS PROTOCOL MISSION

We develop foundational tools that enable community led funding and investing opportunities

We value / our community values

Credible neutrality
Accessibility
Community Sovereignty
Industriousness
Efficacy

Our personality

Direct but not boring
Practical but not dry
Informative but not overkill

PASSPORT MISSION

We build solutions that ensure personal data security and verifiability.

We value / our community values

Practicality
Security
Individual Sovereignty
Reliability

Our personality

Serious but not intimidating
Comforting but not coddling

Other words: Authenticity, genuine, playful, intuitive, energetic, fun, positive

Question for Group: Where does the quirky/zany/weird factor come in, if at all? Where does the human to human element come in? How important is it that we call these out in our brand guardrails?

Proposed Brand Narrative:


Action for Group: Please read the entire [Gitcoin Brand Narrative: From Program to Protocols](#).

This document pulls together past written accounts of our journey - including blog posts, press articles, and social media - to create a cohesive narrative with a common thread connecting our past, present and future. This is critical for establishing a shared understanding of why we are launching Protocols and going from Impact DAO to Impact-Protocol DAO.

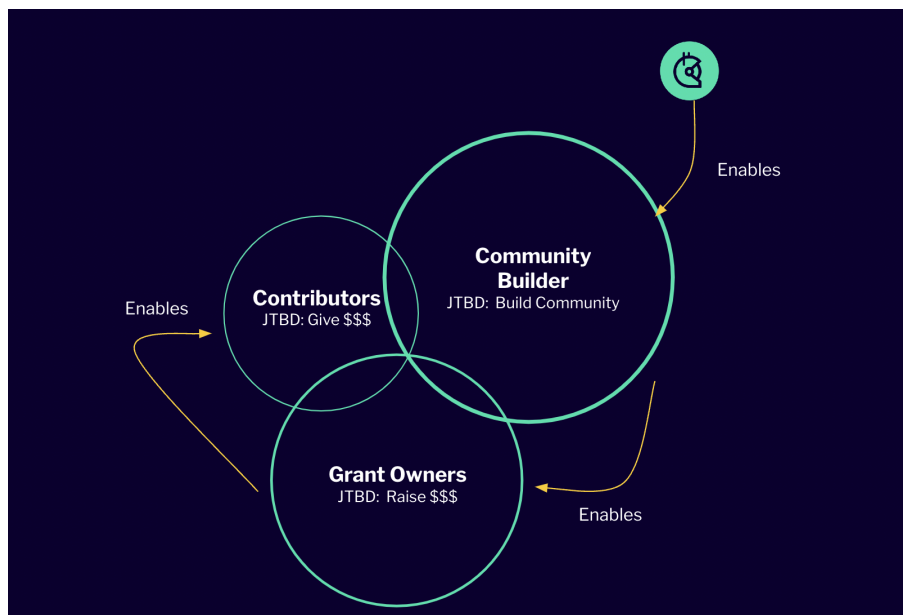
Its intended use is internal only - to ensure our team is aligned in how we tell the Gitcoin story.

Once we've aligned on this Strategy, we will continue to refine our Messaging, which will include a streamlined version of this narrative, an updated Content Style Guide (working version [here](#)), Glossary of Brand Terms, and naming territories for our Programs and Protocols.

Current Audiences:

AUDIENCE	MAIN "JOB TO BE DONE"	EXAMPLES OF CONTENT WE PLAN TO TEST W/ THEM
#1: Early Stage Web3 Project Builders 🧑‍💻 	Trying to get funding and traction for his 6-month old web3 project (We're starting a focus group to get regular insights from this audience)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to use Gitcoin Grants to build alliances w/ other grantees How to be really good at using social media to build a web3 ecosystem ft. Stani from Aave/Lens
#2: Leaders of Established, Influential Web3 Organizations 🧑‍💻	Trying to take their well-established web3 organization to the next level—more devs, more projects, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intro to Grants Protocol campaign - multi-part blog series (e.g. "Successful grants programs in web3 history") Impact Report (Armando is covering this shortly)
#3: Everyday Ideologically-Aligned Supporters ❤️	Interested in staying up to date with the world of web3, especially the more impact-oriented side	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A post on the state of the regen web3 ecosystem—including a map of top organizations to be aware of (this could be a partnership post with something like ReFi DAO)

The Flywheel



When each of these audiences understand how Gitcoin is relevant to them, the fly wheel spins off more capital/goodwill, in turn spinning the flywheel faster

Current Product Portfolio:

1. Gitcoin Grants Program
2. Gitcoin Passport Protocol
3. Gitcoin Grants Protocol (encompassing Grants Hub, Grants Round Manager & Grants Explorer expressed as one)

For now, we've outlined 3 separate but closely related missions for our Programs and Protocols:

THE GRANTS PROGRAM MISSION

We create programs that help communities secure the funds they need to action positive change

THE GRANTS PROTOCOL MISSION

We develop foundational tools that enable community led funding and investing opportunities

PASSPORT MISSION

We build solutions that ensure personal data security and verifiability.

IV. Design (Brand Identity Expansion) Brief

Overall Task: 🧡 To create a new Brand Identity & design system (across Programs and Protocols) Gitcoin can use in multiple formats, along with providing site mocks and digital templates for future use.

Brand Expansion Goals & Objectives

- Strengthen the connection to Gitcoin across everything we do
- Capitalize on our strongest brand equities
- Modernize the look and feel of the brand
- Drive consistency and reduce complexity

Brand Design System

To guide us in seamlessly executing the new brand in a variety of formats/platforms/executions. This should include, but is not limited to:

- Color Palette System
- Type System
- Patterns
- Iconography
- Social
- Digital
- Landing Page/Website – Complete re-design according to new brand guide
- Icons, Banners, Etc. for Discord, Github, Twitter, Notion & Medium
 - Discord – Branding the Discord
 - Github – Need a Github avatar and blurb (copy)

- Twitter – Need a Twitter avatar and blurb (copy)
- Notion – Notion that will need some brand attention
- Medium – Need a Medium avatar, banner and blurb
- POAP Guidelines

Further considerations:

- At the moment, we are still debating whether or not to redesign the logo - we would ideally like to see directions that allow us to keep OR change the logo
- We're looking for guidance that provide a balance between clarity and flexibility to allow for future community interpretation and contribution/co-creation
- The regen/solarpunk concept ties well into our vision for impact - and we'd like this to be part of the exploration specifically as it relates to illustration
- Also would like to consider the concept of our ecosystem (visual of the roots, tree, leaves image and how our products fit into this)
- Interested in exploring the concept of infrastructure and foundation

Product Design System

To guide us in seamlessly executing our suite of products (programs and protocols) in a variety of formats/platforms/executions. **A system will need to be completed for our 3 protocols AND our Grants Program.** For each one, this should include, but is not limited to:

- Dynamic logo
- Color Palette System
- Type System
- Patterns
- Iconography
- POAP Guidelines

Further considerations:

- If we keep our existing brand logo, there is a preference for the product (program/protocol) logos to feel cohesive

Project Phases/Timeline PLACEHOLDER ONLY

- Phase 1: Circulate Brand Brief among key thought leaders for review
- Phase 2: Review Brand Brief with key thought leaders for signoff and delivery to Design team
- Phase 3: Design begins circulating references for feedback
- Phase 4: Design shares 3 brand visual directions including references for color palette, typography, graphics and other visual cues with thought leaders & key MMM contributors
- Phase 5: Thought leaders & MMM contributors share feedback with Design
- Phase 6: Design shares final brand direction
- Phase 7: Thought leaders & MMM contributors share feedback with Design
- Phase 8: Design shares product brand direction for Grants Program, Passport Protocol and Grants Protocol

Further considerations:

- We are also establishing an unofficial “design council” of experts who can offer guidance throughout the process - further details of what this entails will be established once Brief and Timeline are aligned upon

V. Brand Messaging Strategy

Overall Task: 🧡 To create a Brand Messaging strategy that will establish clarity around what we say and how we say it, empowering our Content team and contributors to write and speak about Gitcoin, our programs and protocols with confidence.

To establish clear guidelines around our Voice, Tone and Vernacular. This should include, but is not limited to:

1. Brand Voice
2. Brand Tone
3. Content Style Guide
4. Glossary of Terms
5. Naming

Question for Group: *What do we want to achieve with our language? Do we want to be prescriptive (telling) or empowering (inspiring)? Do we want Gitcoin represented across our product names? Do we want to use temporary names or be vague in what we call our grants protocol (Grants Protocol?), do we want to establish compelling names upfront, even if we aren't yet separating the sub-protocols? Do we want a different voice/tone by product/protocol?*

Voice

- We are plainspoken. We understand the world our community are living in: one muddled by hyperbolic language, upsells, and over-promises. We strip all that away and value clarity above all. Because communities come to Gitcoin to fund their shared needs, we avoid distractions like fluffy metaphors and cheap plays to emotion.
- We are genuine. We understand what it takes to build a Web3 community because we have done and are doing so. That means we relate to the challenges and passions faced by budding collectives and speak to them in a familiar, warm, and accessible way.
- We are translators. Only experts can make what's difficult look easy, and it's our job to demystify Web3-speak and actually educate.
- Our humor is dry. Our sense of humor is straight-faced, subtle, and a touch eccentric. We're weird but not inappropriate, smart but not snobbish. We prefer winking to shouting. We're never condescending or exclusive—we always bring our frens in on the joke.

Tone

Our tone is usually informal, but it's always more important to be clear than entertaining. When you're writing, consider the reader's state of mind. Are they relieved to be finished with a campaign? Are they confused and seeking our help on Twitter? Once you have an idea of their emotional state, you can adjust your tone accordingly.

Content Style Guide

Action for Group: Read through the working version of the Content Style Guide [here](#)

VI. Terminology Definitions

The topic of brand – and more specifically, brand strategy – is one that cannot be simplified, especially at a “decentralized brand,” or, as others sometimes refer to it, a “headless brand.”

This section will address:

- What is Brand
- What is a Decentralized Brand
- What is Brand Strategy
- What is a Decentralized Brand Strategy
- Why does Brand Strategy matter

The terms **brand** and **brand strategy** are frequently used interchangeably. There isn't always a shared, clear understanding of what they actually mean, or how they're different from each other. This lack of clarity can sometimes result in misunderstanding – and a communication breakdown around a critical part of any organization or business.

So first goal: define Brand.

For many modern companies, their brand is their single most valuable asset. Nike. Patagonia. Coca Cola. This is also becoming true for many recognizable brands in the web3 space - Uniswap, Aave, Lens, Zora, FWB.

What first comes to mind when you think brand? Probably logo. Maybe color. Maybe typography. But it's also likely something else; something intangible yet incredibly powerful at the same time. It's a feeling. It's the gut reaction that happens when someone thinks of the brand.

It's not just the logo, the font, the color palette. It's more than the **visual identity** (all of those things – logo, font, palette - plus other visual elements like iconography.)

It's more than the verbal identity (the vernacular or words you use, voice, and tone.)

Brand is the emotional connection that our audience, community and customers have with our organization. It is shaped by our name, logo, overall visual and verbal identity, marketing and advertising, and—most importantly—the experiences customers associate with us. It's the sum of all expressions by which an entity (person, organization, company, business unit, city, nation, etc.) intends to be recognized.

This means:

- How people identify us
- How we express ourselves
- How we create a shared understanding, appreciation or association
- ...through visual cues like logo, color palette and typography
- ...through written cues like ownable vernacular
- ...through memes

- ...through serial content like blogs, podcasts
- ...through events and experiences online and off

A few things brand has the power to do:

- Garner loyalty
- Inspire word-of-mouth marketing
- Set you apart from other competitors in the marketplace
- Allow you to command premium pricing for your products or services

Brand is not in our direct control – it's in the minds of our community. This is true for all brands, not just **decentralized** ones. A **decentralized brand**, as defined by [Other Internet](#), belongs to no one, and can be remixed by anyone. It's a meme. It can only be "designed" in a very limited sense. It has its own autonomy, generated by the contributions of individual actors, a million person chorus acting as one.

That said, there are ways we can take action to shape our brand indirectly in order to strengthen it and shift perception.

How do we decide on those actions? How do we even know what kind of brand we want to have? How do we decide how we want to be perceived? How do we help shape the way our community perceives us as a whole? **This is where brand strategy comes into play.**

Brand strategy is the 'big picture' plans and tactics deployed by an organization to create long-term brand equity and competitive advantages from branding.

Aka, it's:

- a plan to actively influence how people perceive our brand
- clarifies where we're headed
- defines what we're trying to achieve
- provides a map and compass, setting a True North so to speak, to help us get there
- helps us figure out what to do, and perhaps even more importantly, what not to do

According to Other Internet, "**headless brand strategy** is an ecosystemic affair and entails the mobilization of a decentralized set of actors. At its core, it revolves around giving agency to different stakeholders in a way that lets them coordinate more effectively and feel connected to the brand. What projects can do, in this context, is provide the resources, tools, and wayfinding devices for different stakeholders to converge around a single narrative."

Why is Brand Strategy important?

1. To help us articulate and communicate our core values: People usually buy into why you do what you do before they buy into what you do. To attract and retain loyal contributors we must understand and communicate what we stand for.
2. To help us identify weaknesses in our brand experience: If the experiences our audiences have interacting with us aren't consistent, we'll struggle to build trust and customer loyalty.
3. To filter out ill-advised ideas that would damage your brand-building efforts: It's easy to succumb to shiny-object syndrome. A clear brand strategy makes it easier to make prudent decisions.

4. To create accountability: Committing to a clear brand strategy helps keep everyone in the organization accountable, focused on high-yield initiatives that will actually move the needle. It helps us stay on track.
5. To focus our marketing efforts: By narrowing and clarifying the scope of your marketing efforts, we can ensure smoother and more effective execution of marketing campaigns. We know who we're targeting, we know what they care about, and we know how to speak to them.
6. To help designers and creatives do better, more effective work. Without a strategy to underpin creative decisions, they are inherently subjective and arbitrary.
7. To align and engage the team in the vision: A major part of the brand strategy process is getting our team to buy into the vision and values of our brand.

Components of an effective brand strategy

1. Values: These are the beliefs that inform everything we do.
2. Vision: The message that speaks to our target audience, telling them what we're here to do and why we're here to do it. It tells them what to expect when they interact with our brand.
3. Mission: A brand mission is how we work towards our vision – or the “how we do it” complement to the “what are we here to do”.
4. Positioning statement: A positioning statement encompasses all of the above and effectively communicates value proposition to your ideal customer or target audience(s).
5. Audience: This is who we're here for - and our target audience should be laser focused.
6. Voice and tone (as well as specific messaging/vernacular): A framework around how we communicate.
7. Look and feel of our brand identity: A good strategy can guide the creative expressions of our brand identity to make sure they are aligned with our positioning goals and the tastes of our main audiences.
8. BONUS!: Prioritized brand touchpoints and awareness-drivers: Brand touchpoints are any points of contact between our business and our audience/users. They can include website, email newsletter, social media accounts, events, and merch—to just name a few.

Ultimately, a good brand strategy will help you focus on the most important, high-yield touchpoints to avoid spreading your organization too thin.

When not building a brand from the ground up, there are two ways we can talk about updating Brand Identity. They are **brand refresh** and **rebrand**.

A **brand refresh** is when a brand attempts to modernize its image while maintaining its core identity and strategy. A **rebrand** is a complete overhaul of the brand's identity and strategy, typically enacted when the current brand strategy fails.

At Gitcoin, we haven't had a clearly defined strategy, thus it is challenging to objectively say whether or not we've succeeded or failed. However, given the success of our Grants Programs, which can be considered our “MVP,” the subsequent initiatives that have succeeded and ultimately “spun out” of Gitcoin, and the brand affinity and equity we've established among our core audiences, it is appropriate to say we enter this next phase of our evolution with a range of achievements.

Whether or not we move forward with a brand refresh, rebrand, or something in between is up to us - but the main goal is to ensure there is intentionality behind our design elements, and that we feel confident our brand upholds our strategy.