

IDENTITY



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED STATES
SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, INC.

1. The Importance of Identity

Fellow Vincentians,

As you know, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is an international lay Catholic charitable organization composed of ordinary men and women seeking to grow in holiness through friendship with each other and service to the poor. We embrace the world in a network of charity, and no work of charity is foreign to us. This is who we are and what we do. This is our identity.

There are numerous visible manifestations of our shared identity: the name of our organization, what we call ourselves (Vincentians), our logo, our vests and aprons, our badges and pins, etc. These outward signs let others know who we are, and serve as reminders to us as well. They have both intrinsic and ever-accruing value, and should be cherished and protected.

We do, of course, cherish our shared identity as Vincentians and want to protect it, but we need help. The guidelines in this manual will provide that help, enabling us to maintain consistency in the look and usage of our various insignia.

Please take these guidelines to heart and embrace them. Then, with our shared identity, we can embrace the world together.

Yours in Vincent and Frederic,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Flannigan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "F".

Joe Flannigan
National President

1.1 Protecting our Identity

Our Vincentian identity, this unique expression of who we are and what we do, is deeply rooted in the history of the Society. We must remember, however, that the way we present ourselves to the public at any given time can affect the impression that others currently have of us, either reinforcing the positive value of our Vincentian identity or undermining it. Seemingly trivial aspects of our self-presentation can have a powerful and lasting effect. To make sure that we are always enhancing, rather than damaging, our public image, we must continually monitor and safeguard our “corporate” identity.

1.2 What Is Our Identity?

“Vincentians serve the poor cheerfully,” the Rule tells us, “for we are all created in God’s image.” And we try “to establish relationships based on trust and friendship.” As an integral part of our corporate identity, our special relationship with the poor must be communicated consistently in words and pictures and “branded” with our unique Society of St. Vincent de Paul logo, typeface, color, etc. The following pages take us through these key elements one by one.

1.3 Branding

“Branding” is a buzzword in advertising and public relations. It refers to a service that ad agencies and PR firms have always provided, though perhaps, in the past, with less deliberation, sophistication, and self-consciousness. Branding is simply the establishment of a unique identity for a client and that client’s products and services.

New companies and organizations have to establish their values and create their identity from scratch. Even existing companies and organizations may have to study and reflect on their corporate history in order to discover or rediscover what their values and identity are.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul does not have this problem. With our long history and our carefully defined mission, vision, and values, it is easy for us to know and understand “who we are and what we do.” The Rule and the Manual are the repositories of our “brand positioning statement” and our catalogue of “brand values.” There we find the Essential Elements of the Society (Spirituality, Friendship, and Service), our Core Values, etc. All Vincentians, and Vincentian leaders in particular, should familiarize themselves with these two foundational documents and refer to them often to make sure that we stay “on brand.”

2. Basic Elements

A “brand identity” is established and maintained through consistent use of basic verbal and visual elements: logos, typefaces, graphics, color, tone of voice, etc. Simple rules ensure that usage remains consistent from one application (stationery, banners, decals, etc.) to the next. For applications not covered here, or for answers to other questions you may have about usage, please contact our national director of membership & technology services.

2.1 Signature

Our “signature,” the combination of our logo and the type treatment of our name, is the key building block of our identity, the primary visual element that tells who we are. As a unit, our logo and name have a fixed relationship that should never be embellished, diminished, or altered in any way. An approved electronic version of our signature should always be used.



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2.2 Multiple Logo Usage

When the St. Vincent de Paul signature is used in combination with those of other organizations, the signatures should be equal in visual mass. They can be placed side-by-side with the St. Vincent de Paul signature on the left . . .



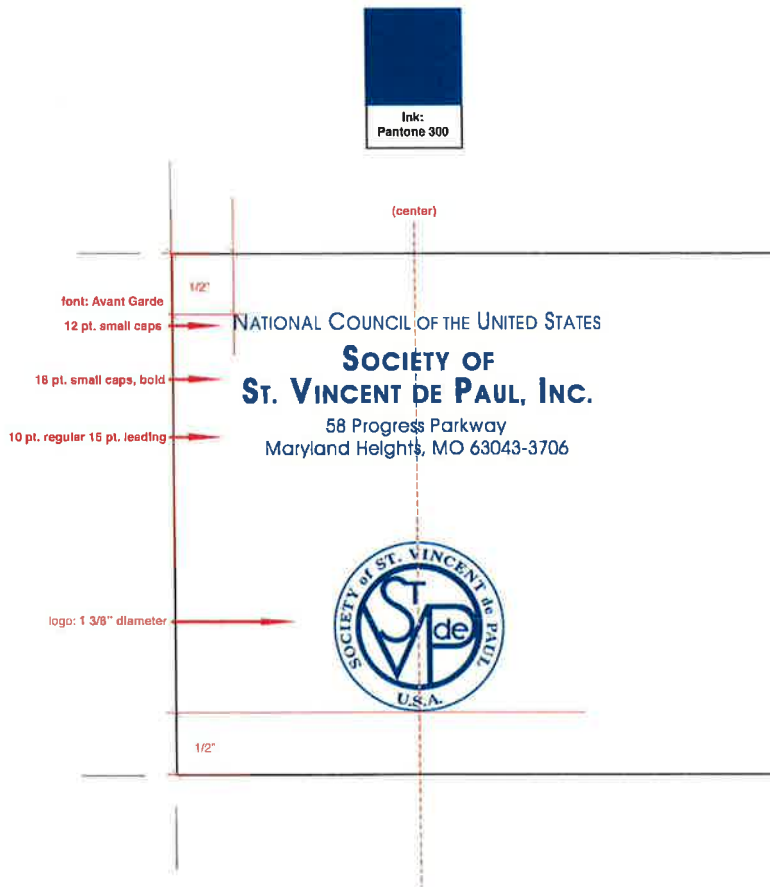
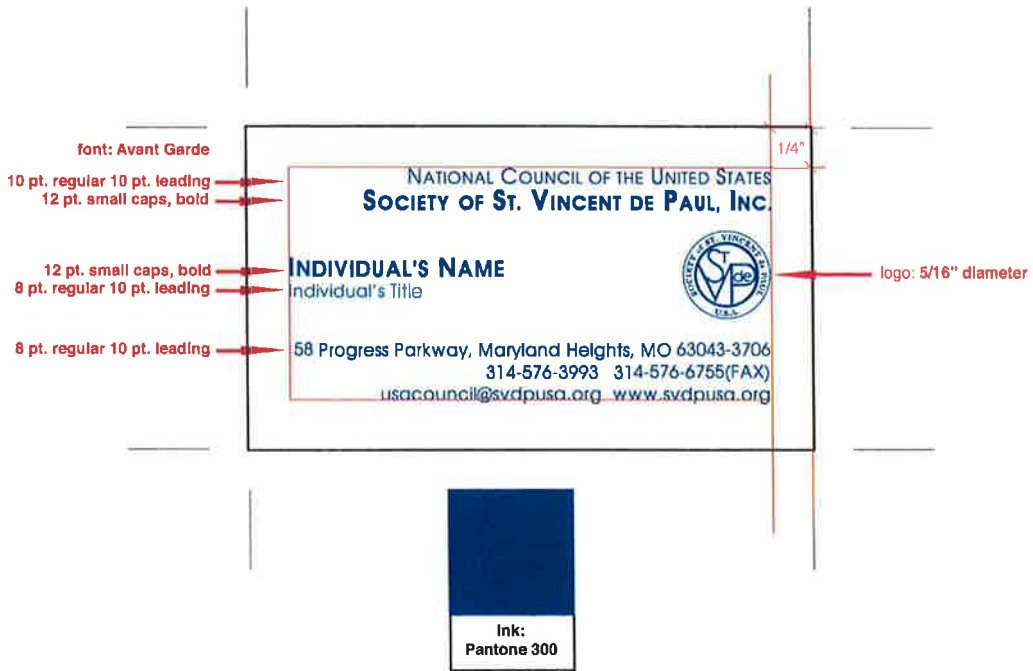
. . . or stacked with the St. Vincent de Paul signature on top.



2.3 Primary Color

The Society of St. Vincent St. de Paul has substantial equity in the color blue (REFLEX BLUE), our primary organization color.

2.4 Signature Sizing



1/2" margin

3/4" margin

font: Avant Garde

16 pt. small caps

20 pt. small caps, bold

logo: 1 3/8" diameter


ink: Pantone 300U

ink: Red 032U

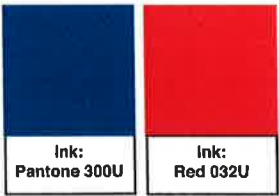

PMS 032U

10 pt. Avant Garde
15 pt. leading

58 Progress Parkway Maryland Heights, MO 63043-3706 314-576-3993/6755(FAX)
usacouncil@svdpusa.org www.svdpusa.org



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2.5 Typography

Consistency in the use of typography enhances communications effectiveness, reinforces public recognition, and strengthens the St. Vincent de Paul identity. Our preferred type font is Avant Garde.

ABCDEFGHIJKL
abcdefghijklmnop

Avant Garde

ABCDEFGHIJKL
abcdefghijklmn

Avant Garde Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKL
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO

Avant Garde Bold Small Caps

3. Photography

Photography is a key element in our visual identity. It allows us to differentiate ourselves from our competitors by focusing on our members, showcasing them in an honest, open, and heroic way in combination with images and settings that show the end results of our charitable work.

What makes the Society of St. Vincent de Paul different from other charitable organizations? Our members, obviously: Vincentians. And our focus on the spiritual complement of good works: faith. Donors make contributions to the Society and new members join because they have come into contact with existing members and been struck by our generosity, our fellowship, and our spirituality. This is what our photography should celebrate.



When we succeed in seeing the face of Christ in others, the face of Christ is seen in us. That's why there's such joy in the faces of Vincentians, an infectious joy that communicates perfectly who we are and what we do.

Close-up, tightly framed pictures of actual Vincentians exulting in the opportunity to serve their neighbors – that's the kind of photography that will capture the essence of the Society.

4. Our Story

Our story is the story of the poor, and it's a story of triumph over adversity. Vincentians are uniquely qualified to tell this tale, because we visit the poor in their own homes and become their friends, hearing their stories from their own mouths. The public needs to know that the poor are still with us. They need to know the nature and extent of the problems faced by the poor. They need to know about the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and how we help the poor. They need to know these things, so they can help too. If we don't tell them, who will?

4.1 Getting Our Story Told

How do we get the media to tell our story? The answer is simple: Identify the Vincentians around the country who succeed at getting the story told, and do what they do. Read the stories in *The Ozanam News* (e.g., Fall 2006, pp. 4-5) and on the national website that have been culled from actual newspapers and media websites around the country. Search Google News for "St. Vincent de Paul" or sign up for Google Alerts on that topic. Find out for yourself what Vincentian stories the media carry in other communities, and then pitch those same types of stories to the newspaper, radio, and television reporters in your area.

Another good approach is to customize the press releases issued periodically by the National Office, playing up your own Council's activities, and submit them to your local media.

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4.2 Ask the Experts

Don't hesitate to ask for help. Call some of your local reporters and ask what types of stories interest them, what's the best way to submit a story idea to them, etc. Better yet, ask representatives from your local media (the daily paper, the diocesan paper, the alternative weekly, the city monthly, the major TV stations, the most popular radio stations, the Catholic station, etc.) to participate in a workshop for your members.

The people best able to tell you how to capture the attention of the local media are local media personnel. By inviting them to participate, you show that you recognize and appreciate their expertise, you get their attention, and you learn something from them. At least half the benefit comes from planning the workshop. You'll have to identify the best local media people to invite (the ones you've tried to pitch ideas to, the ones you'd like to pitch ideas to, etc.) and then make contact and invite them. Whether they accept or not, you'll establish relationships that can grow and prosper. If you do manage to get them to participate, make sure they enjoy the experience. That way, the next time you pitch a story, you'll be pitching to a friend.

4.3 Press Releases

Not everyone can write a good press release. If you can't, don't even try. Find someone who can, or dispense with the press release altogether and just pitch the idea by phone or email. The personal touch is often more effective, but make sure your idea is clearly defined, that you have specific examples to illustrate it, and that you provide any necessary contact information for persons to be interviewed. To reinforce our identity, always provide a nutshell description of the Society, along the lines of the following:

The largest lay Catholic organization in the world, operating in 135 countries, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is best known for its thrift stores and food pantries, and for the personal visits of its members to the homes of the poor and needy. Established in France in 1833 by a college student named Frederic Ozanam, the Society began its existence in the United States 12 years later, in 1845, in St. Louis.

4.4 Tone of Voice

Vincentians are caring, can-do people, and our tone of voice should reflect that. No work of charity is foreign to us. There is no problem we will not tackle – and no problem, with God's help, that we cannot solve. We really do believe that it's better to give than to receive. We know that doing a person good does a person good: helping someone else helps us, too. We are the ones who benefit most. We the benefactors are really the beneficiaries, because our acts of charity help us to grow in faith and become better Christians. Our tone of voice should be relentlessly upbeat and cheerful, reflecting our gratitude for the opportunity God has given us to serve those in need.