

Solve

Solve Style Guide

rackspace[®]



How to use this guide

This guide introduces you to the foundational elements of thought leadership at Rackspace and the Rackspace brand in general. To help you create materials with a consistent visual style, voice, tone and message, we’ve broken the content of this guide into four categories:

1. An overview of thought leadership at Rackspace
2. Best practices around thought leadership content creation
3. A guide to Rackspace style, voice and tone
4. Design guidance on:
 - Fonts and typography
 - Logo usage
 - Look & Feel
 - Elements
 - Color
 - Photography
 - Layout principles

Questions

Need something? Have questions?
Email us: brand@rackspace.com

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Solve:
Thought
Leadership
at Rackspace

What is Solve content?

Rackspace uses thought leadership content as a marketing tactic to reach and shape the perspectives of an audience of IT decision makers within our pool of current and prospective customers. As much of our thought leadership content is attributed to leaders across various areas of our company, the central goals of Solve are to:

1. Build trust in the points of view held by specific team members at Rackspace
2. Make Rackspace a go-to resource for ITDMs who are looking to learn more about the challenges facing their organizations

To reach these two goals, we must deliver consistent, strategically timed content that illustrates our ability to present accurate, compelling points of view on big-picture challenges and changes across all areas of IT that are relevant to our customers, along with strategies for managing these challenges.

Seven thought leadership best practices

Below are guidelines distilled from Forbes, Medium and Fast Company around how to create and deliver valuable thought-leadership content to the Rackspace ITDM audience:

1. Thought leadership must be thought-provoking. Thought leaders should be thoughtful leaders. Contributors to Rackspace thought-leadership content are intimately aware of all aspects of the topic at hand and, through their examination of the benefits and challenges around a particular topic, have formed unique viewpoints and amassed wisdom that needs to be shared with our audience.
2. Create content in the spirit of nurturing relationships. Thought leadership content should be an entry point to a relationship. It should intrigue, challenge and inspire both strangers and those already familiar with Rackspace. It should help start a relationship where none exists, and it should enhance existing relationships.
3. Remember that we're here to help. As you'll see in the Voice section of our brand guidelines, Rackspace is the reader's friendly, insanely driven neighborhood genius, with a particular fondness for using our powers to help others. Through thought-leadership content, our enthusiasm for technology-based solutions extends beyond our customer/prospect base and into the general ITDM population.
4. Don't sell anything except ideas. Using our thought leadership platform to sell Rackspace services will erode the trust of our audience. Our readers know that we're here to make money. But if they've come to our thought leadership portal, we owe it to them to provide the viewpoints they need — without the clutter of a sales pitch. If our ideas are valuable and useful to our visitors, they will continue to come back. Eventually they may reach out directly for deeper insight to solving a challenge — that's the point at which we can shift to a more traditional sales engagement.
5. Know our audience and continue learning about them. Knowing our audience is the key to succeeding with any marketing strategy, and thought leadership is no different. Start with our buyer persona. What motivates, inspires, or causes our audience pain? What questions are they asking? To figure this out, look on social media or conduct customer interviews. Once we know these things, you can begin answering their questions with thought leadership content that resonates with the reader.
6. Make our audience feel smarter. Thought leadership can be its most effective when it has a perceived personal value. Think about an IT manager who visits our site to learn how to help their team with a specific problem. If the content they read helps them solve a problem in their organization, they reap the benefits while cementing confidence in our abilities as a service provider.
7. Always give it away. Thought leadership should be freely available and separated from any lead generation apparatus. Remember, our goal here is to accrue brand value. The dividends may be intangible, but when thought leadership flips from push to pull (writers are seeking out our opinion, conferences are inviting us to present), then we'll know that we have a thought leadership hit.

Solve Messaging Guidelines

Our brand style, voice and tone as it relates to Solve

Every interaction with a customer, prospect, Racker, vendor, potential new hire, analyst, investor and partner is a reflection of Rackspace. That means we are all ambassadors of the Rackspace brand — having the responsibility to represent the essence of Rackspace in a true, authentic and believable way through a mix of tangible and intangible concepts, words and images.

This portion of the Solve Thought Leadership Style Guide will introduce you to the foundational elements of the Rackspace brand and help you create materials with a consistent visual style, voice, tone and message.

Goals and principles

Solve content should be written with the following brand goals in mind:

Relate

Be a friend to our customers. Make it clear that we know their business and understand what they're going through.

Inspire

Share insights and real-world examples that inspire action.

Simplify

Make what is clearly a complicated, jargon-filled world a bit more palatable and easy to understand.

Educate

Give our customers the information they need to be great.

In order to pull that off, our messaging should embody these principles.

Be clear

Have an in-depth knowledge of the topic you're addressing, so you can explain it in the simplest, most direct manner. Avoid the buzz and get to the goods.

Be approachable

Speak to our customers like they're real people (hint: because they are). Avoid being overly formal or stuffy. It's ok to have a little fun as long as we're still informative.

Be an expert

Speak as an authority on the subject. Be confident and knowledgeable but not preachy. And remember the previous principle!

Be outcome oriented

Focus on the outcomes that readers can achieve by following the advice and applying the knowledge we are sharing.

Be empathetic

Pay attention to where our customers are in their journey. Understand their challenges and obstacles.

Be optimistic

Let your excitement for problem-solving show.

Our voice

So what is our voice? Well, think of us as your friendly, insanely driven neighborhood genius, with a particular fondness for using our powers to help others. We inject life and personality into what many would consider a very dry field. We are genuinely excited about our customers' successes.

Some things we are. And some things we are not.

- We're very smart, but not pretentious.
- We're conversational, but not flippant.
- We're witty, but not silly.
- We're simple and clear, but not dumbed down.
- We're optimistic, but not unrealistic.
- We're forward thinking, but not impulsive.
- We're proactive, but not presumptuous.

Solve logo

Logo

The Solve thought leadership logo is a combination of a word mark and a maze designed to be an “s”-shaped icon. No trademark symbol should be used with this logo.



Minimum clear space

The Solve logo should be given enough room to separate it from other composition elements. The minimum clear space should measure the height of the “S” maze icon on all sides.



Look & Feel

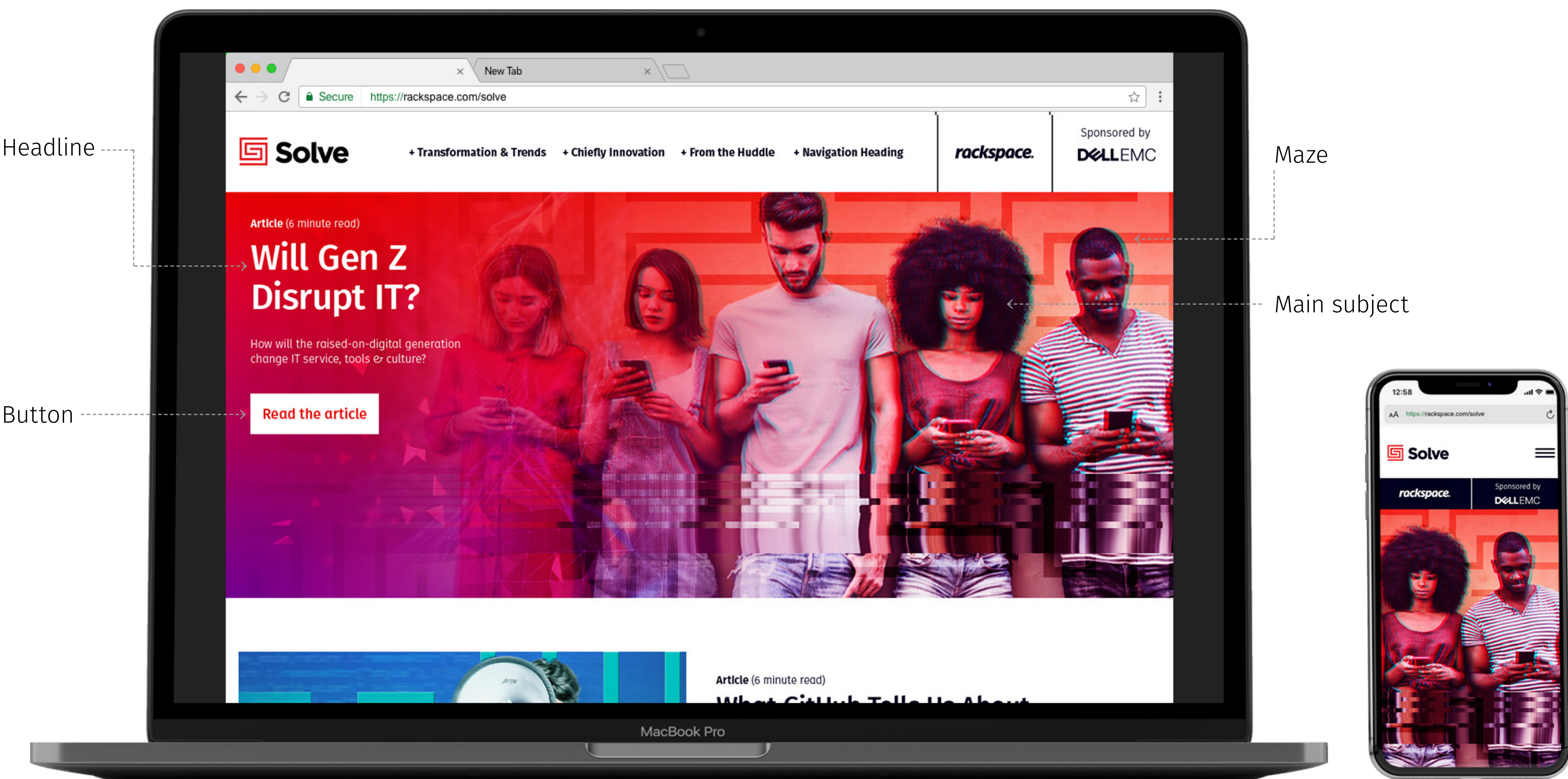
The design anatomy of a Solve post

Solve is where ITDMs come to learn new information and hear our perspectives on industry trends. It's not a marketing site — think of it more like a news site.

Goals

- Designs should have a news/editorial edge accomplished with photo composite, illustration, or mix.
- The arrangement of photography, colors and graphical elements should convey and enhance the storytelling aspects of the headline and article.
- The arrangement of photography, colors and graphical elements should convey and enhance the storytelling aspects of the headline and article.
- Create visual hierarchy: 1) main subject, 2) maze, 3) monotone texture.
- The final imagery should be: professional, complementary, interesting, metaphorical, stylized, layered, eye-catching, meaningful and related to the story.

Samples



Anatomy of a post

Tips

- Use key words from the headline/article to create a compelling image.
- Use “primary_hero_1600x680_starter_kit.psd” and color palette to achieve visual cohesion.

Examples



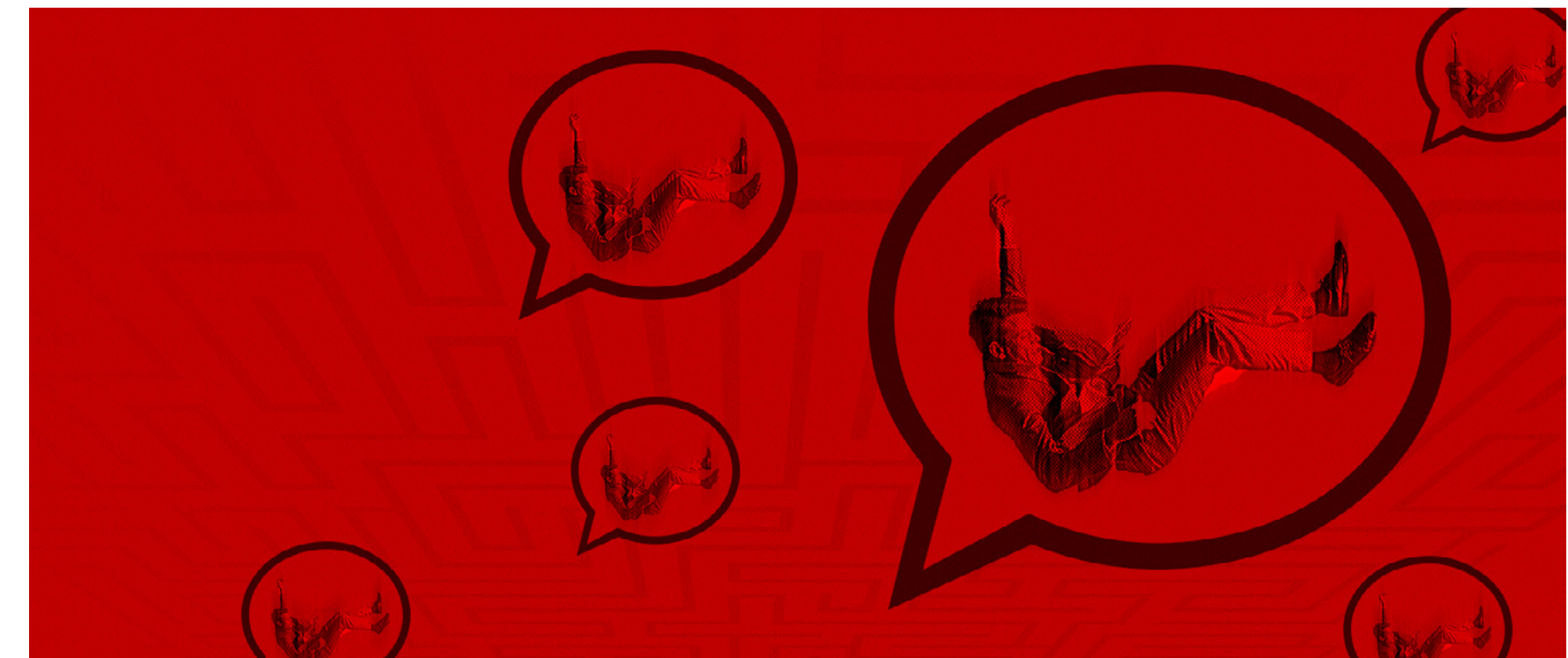
- Sample Headline: “Will gen z disrupt IT?”



- Sample Headline: “What GitHub tells us about tech trends so far this year”



- Sample Headline: “5 ways to build a customer-centric cloud”



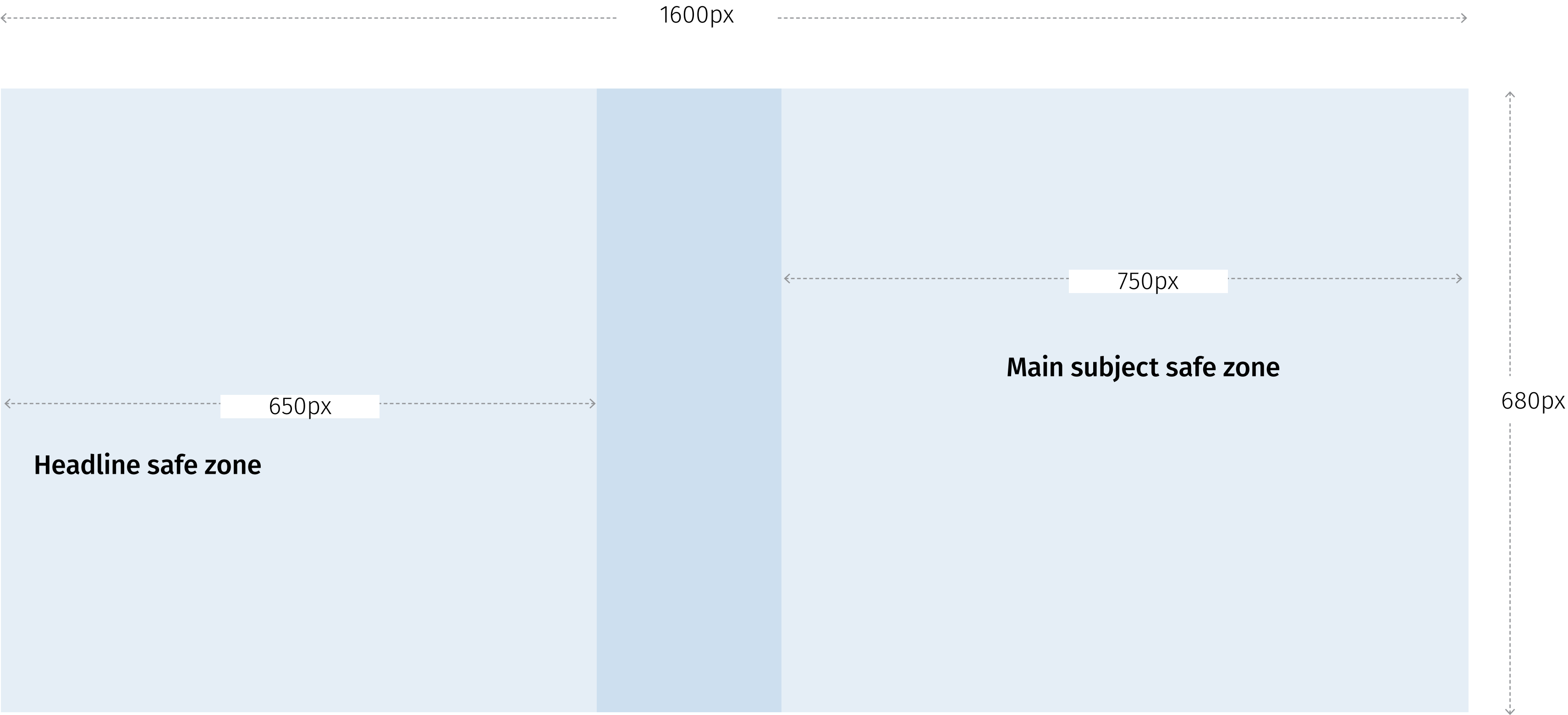
- Sample Headline: “Does tech talk too much about “failing fast?”

Anatomy of a post

Grid

- The primary post image should work for all three size tiers (primary, secondary and tertiary)
- Make sure there's enough contrast and space for typography in the headline safe zone.
- Make sure the main subject of the image is located in the main subject safe zone.
- The main subject safe zone is the priority in the visual hierarchy of the image

Things to keep in mind



Anatomy of a post

Tips

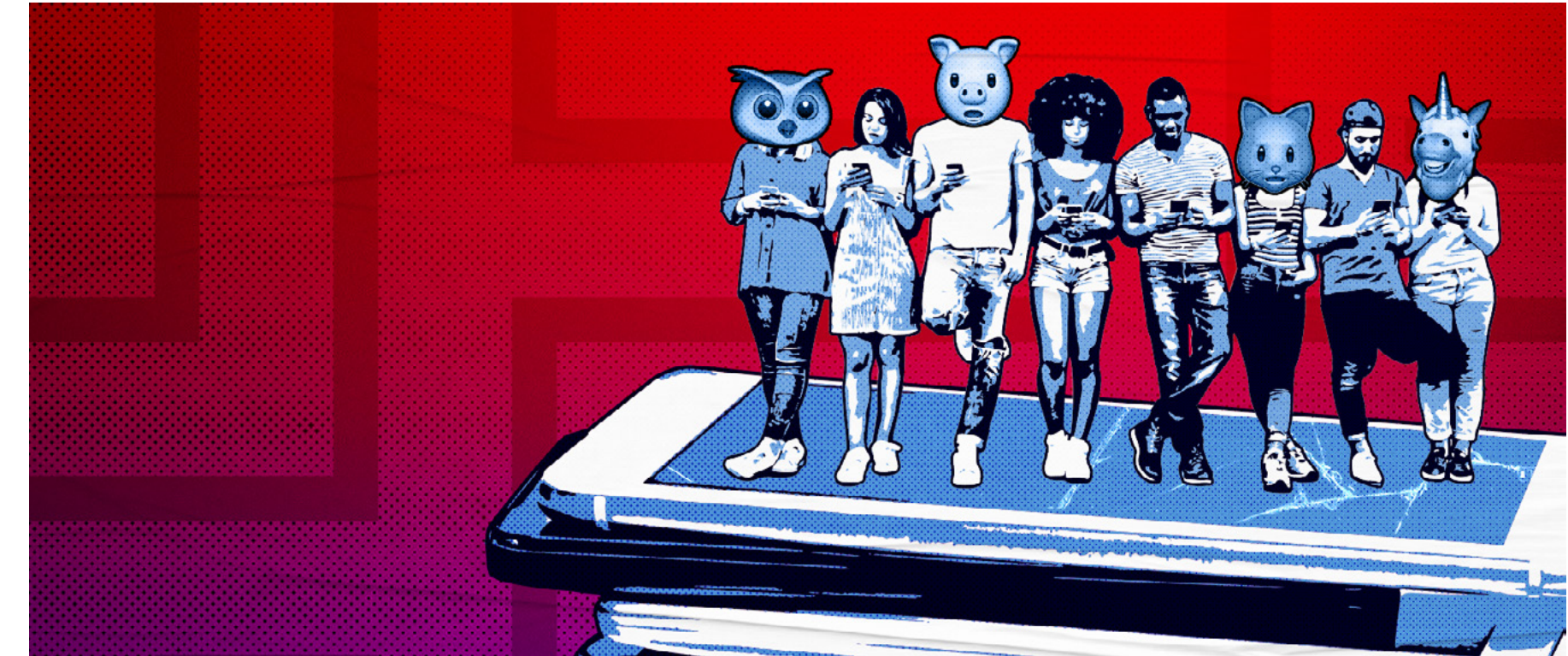
Sample Headline: Will Gen Z Disrupt IT?

- Use a stock image as the base on which to create the image.
- You have the freedom to interpret the headline/article into the style of your choice.
- Try to create visual hierarchy between the main subject, the maze and the monotone texture.

Dos and Don'ts



- Apply effects to exaggerate the subject



- Create illustrations using the appropriate color palette



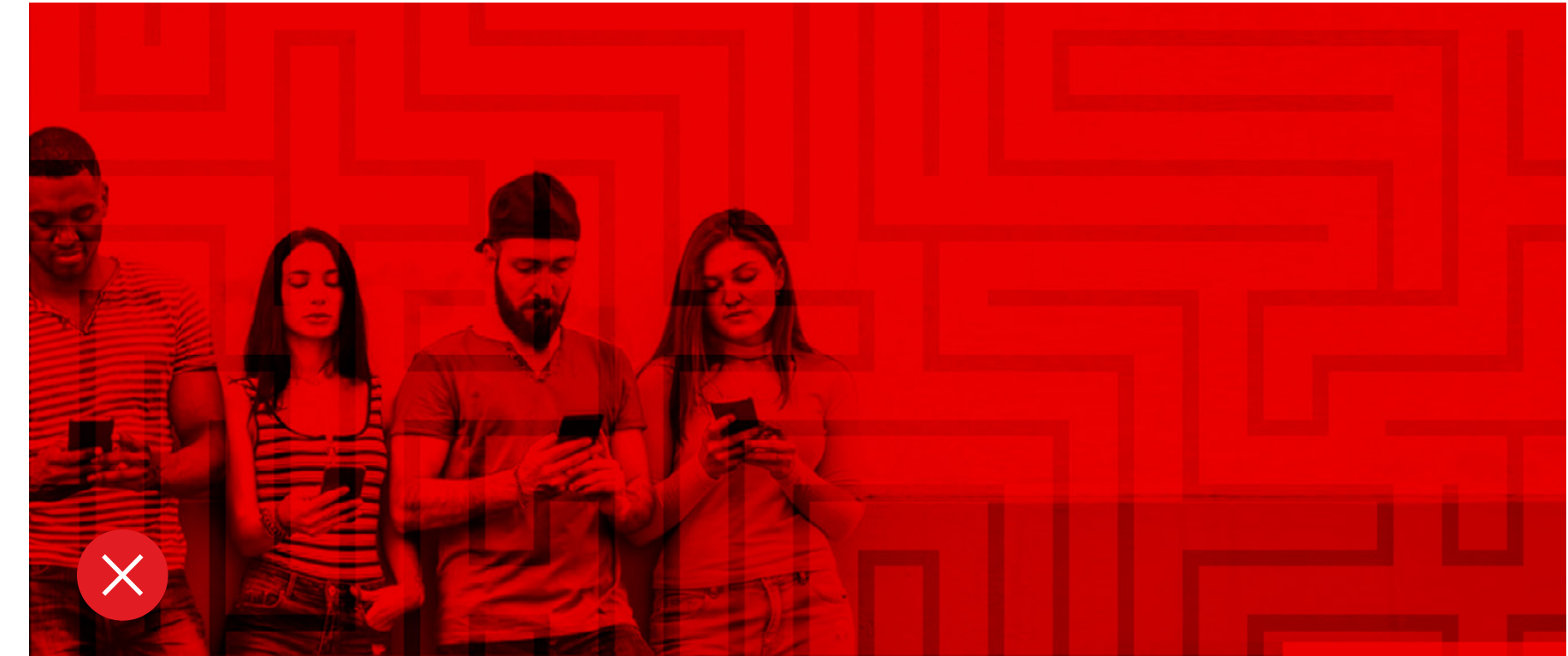
- Use graphic elements in combination with photography

Anatomy of a post

Don'ts



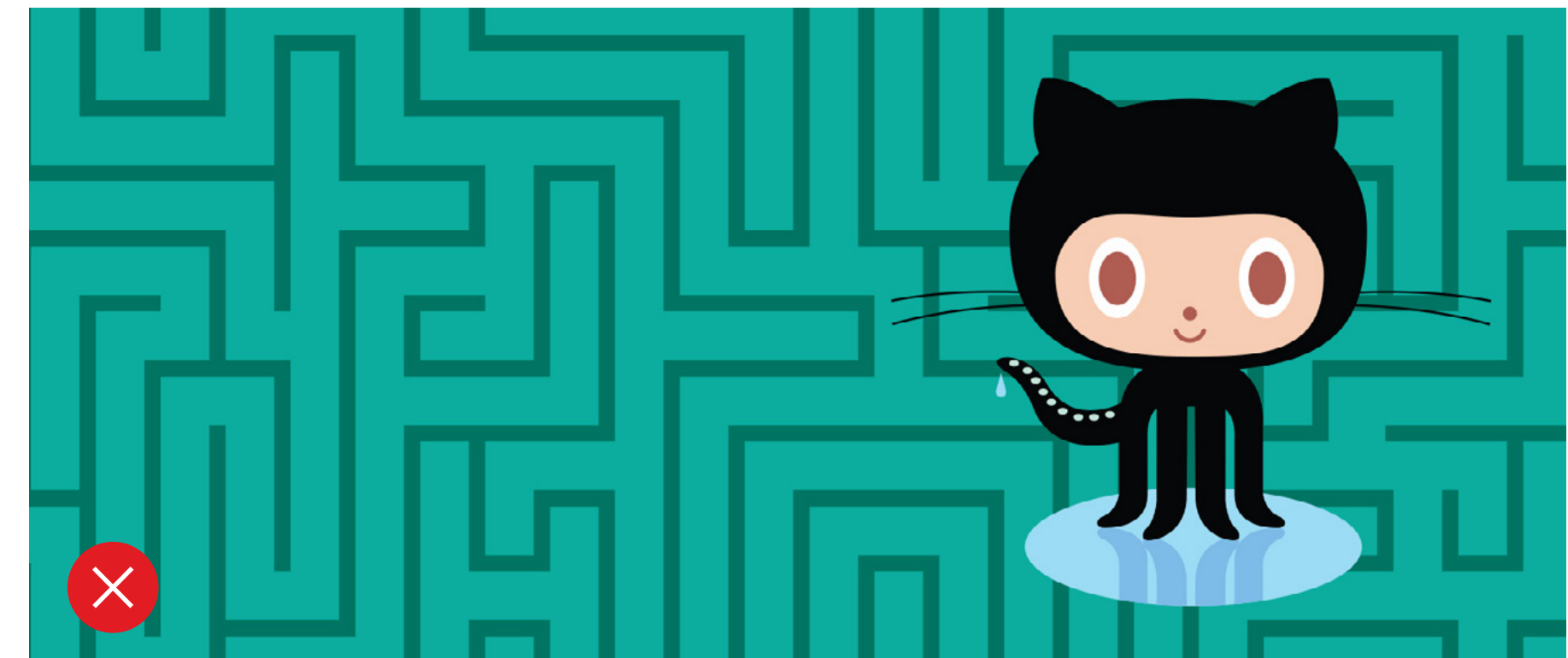
- Use stock photography “as-is”
- Omit the maze
- Cover the headline safe zone



- Main subject justified left
- Keep main subject safe zone area empty



- Keep image flat with no visual hierarchy
- No contrast in the headline safe zone

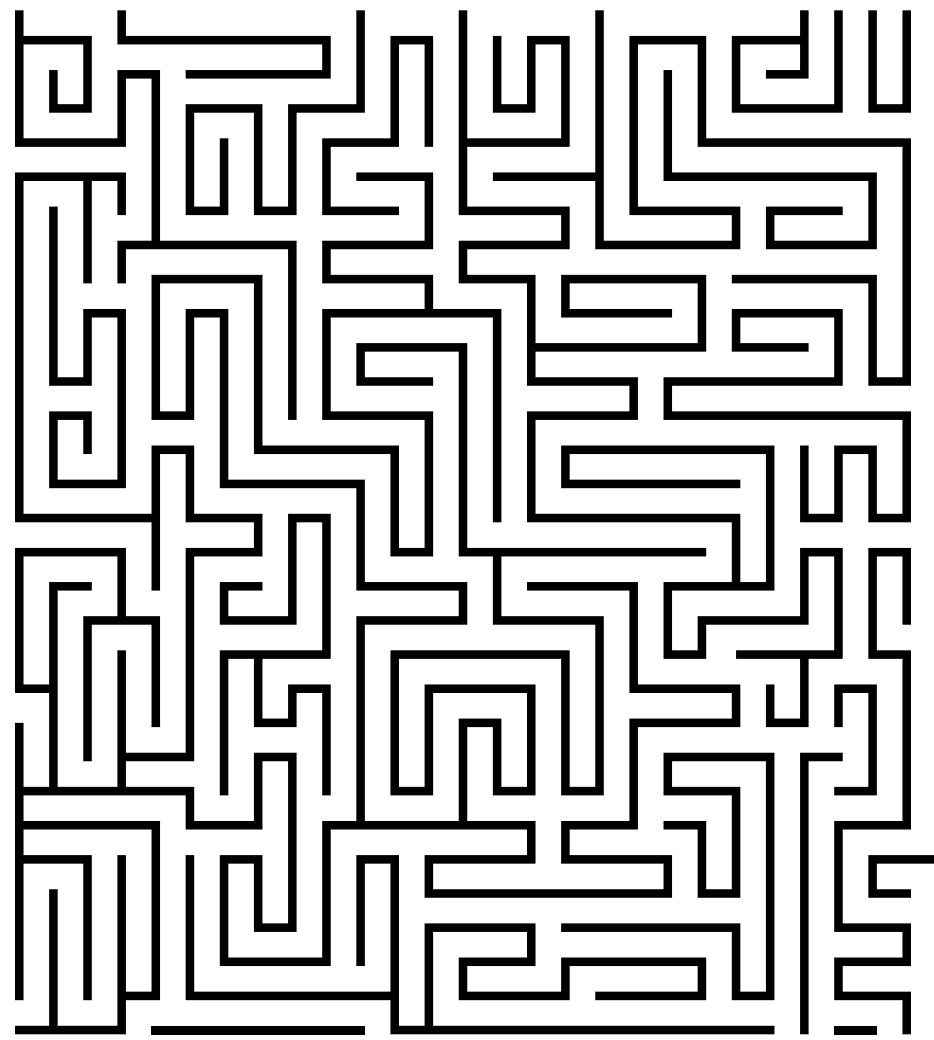


- Copy and paste a logo on top of the maze.

Elements

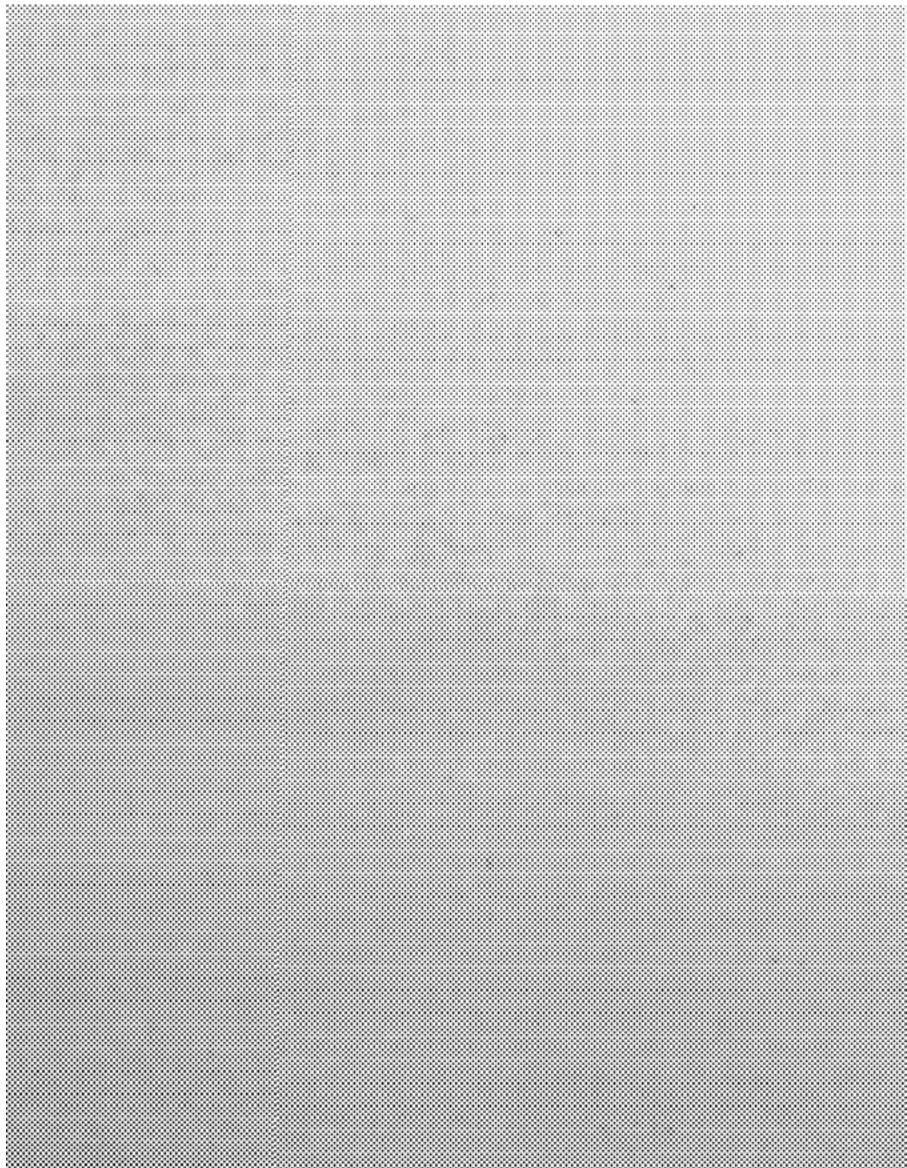
Maze

The maze element should be used in all principal imagery. You may scale and position it at your discretion.



Monotone

The monotone element may be used as a texture on the image. You may scale and position it at your discretion.



Using the maze as a graphical element

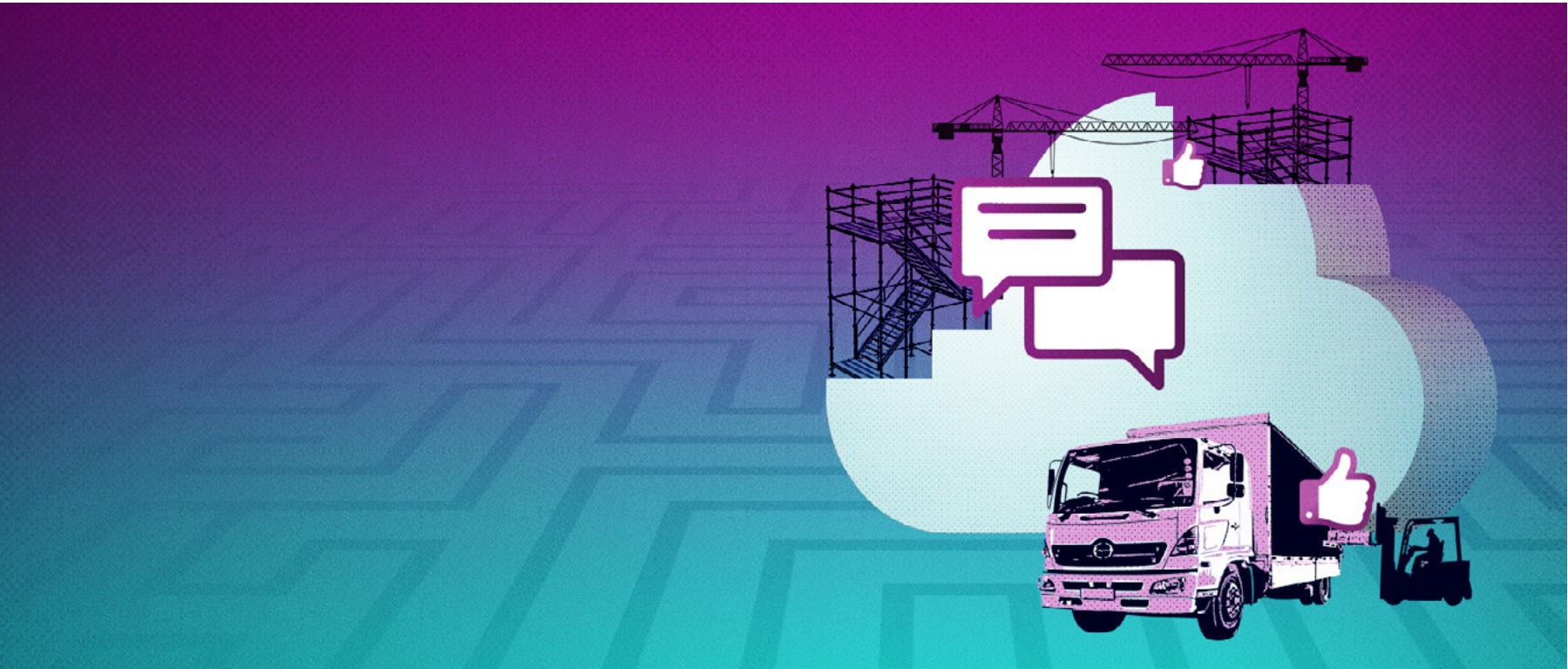
Examples



- Using the maze as a graphical element



- The maze can utilize any color in the color palette.
- The maze should interact with the principle subject of the image.



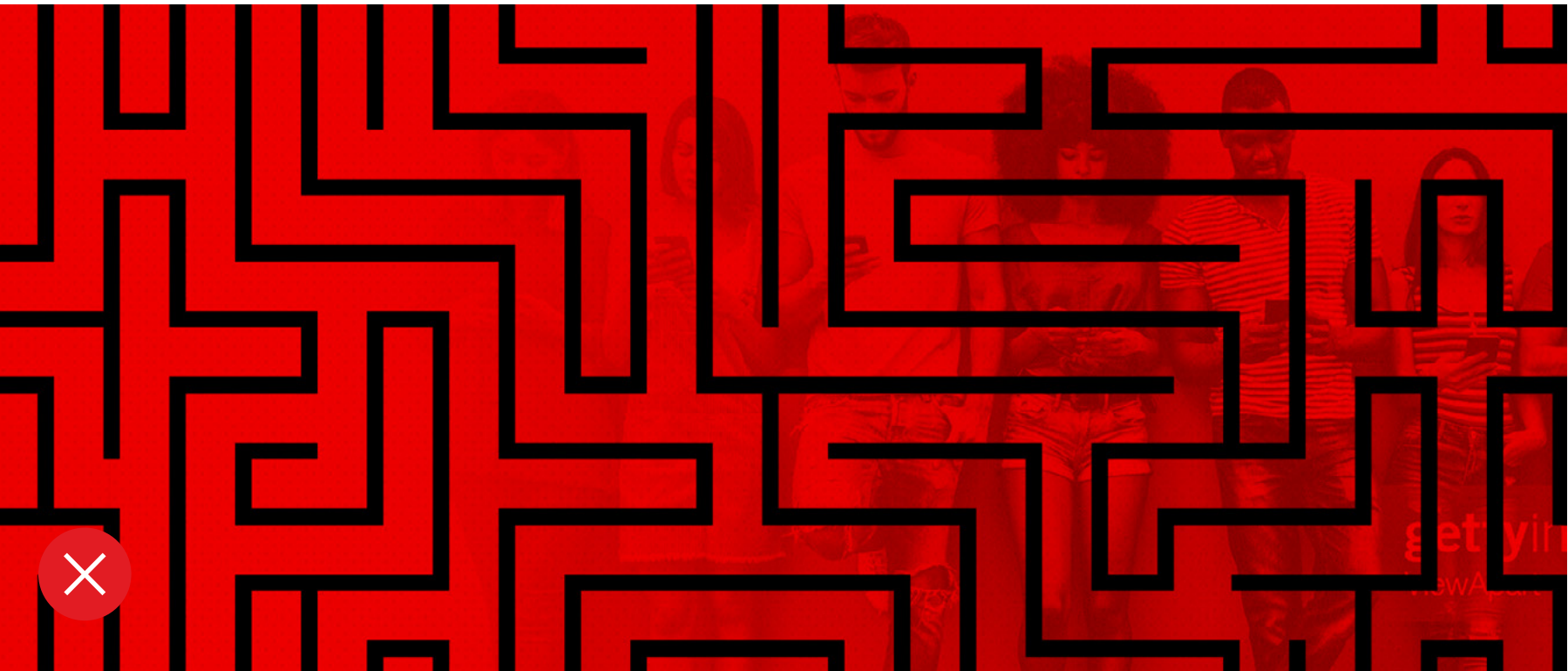
- Different perspectives of the maze element can be used to create depth in the background or foreground.



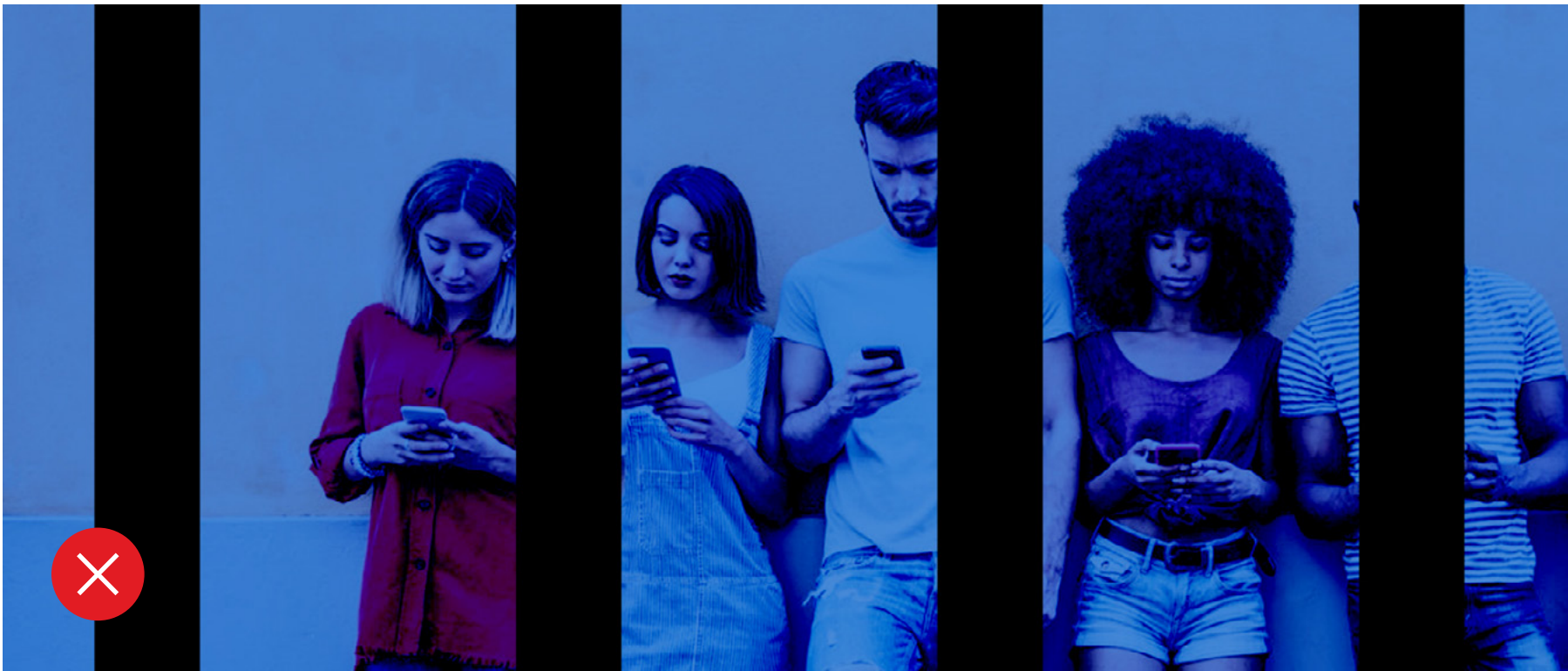
- Scale the maze within reason

Using the maze as a graphical element

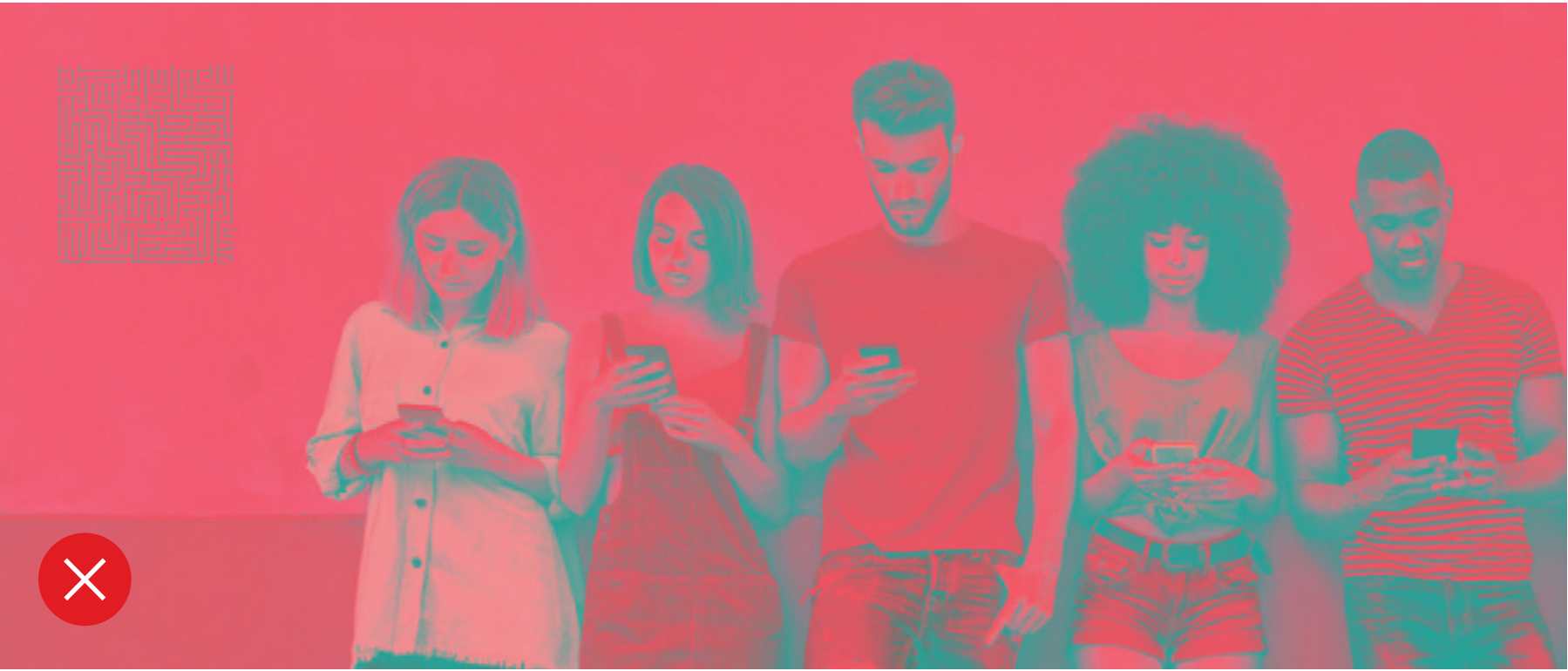
Don'ts



- Make the maze the focal point



- Over scale the maze beyond recognition



- Float the maze without any context

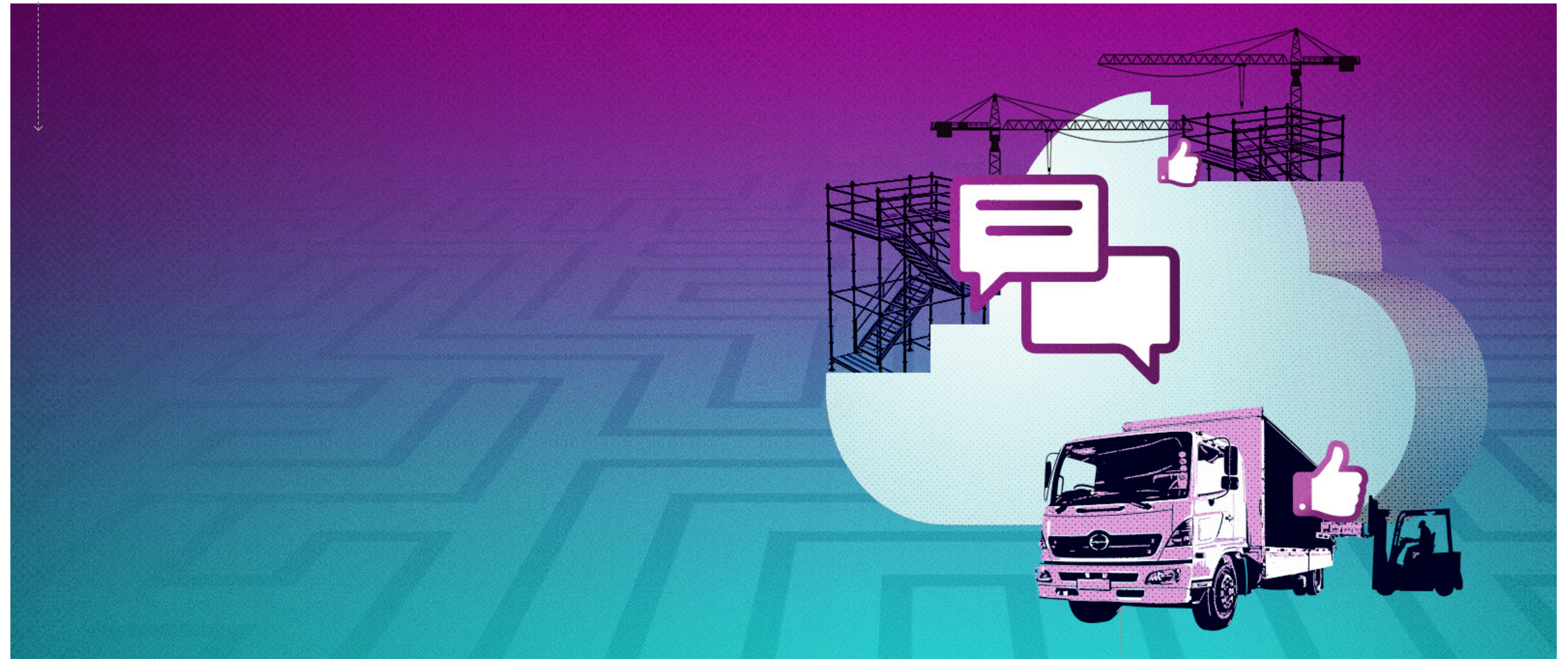


- Over skew or use perspective beyond recognition

Using the monotone element as a texture

Dos

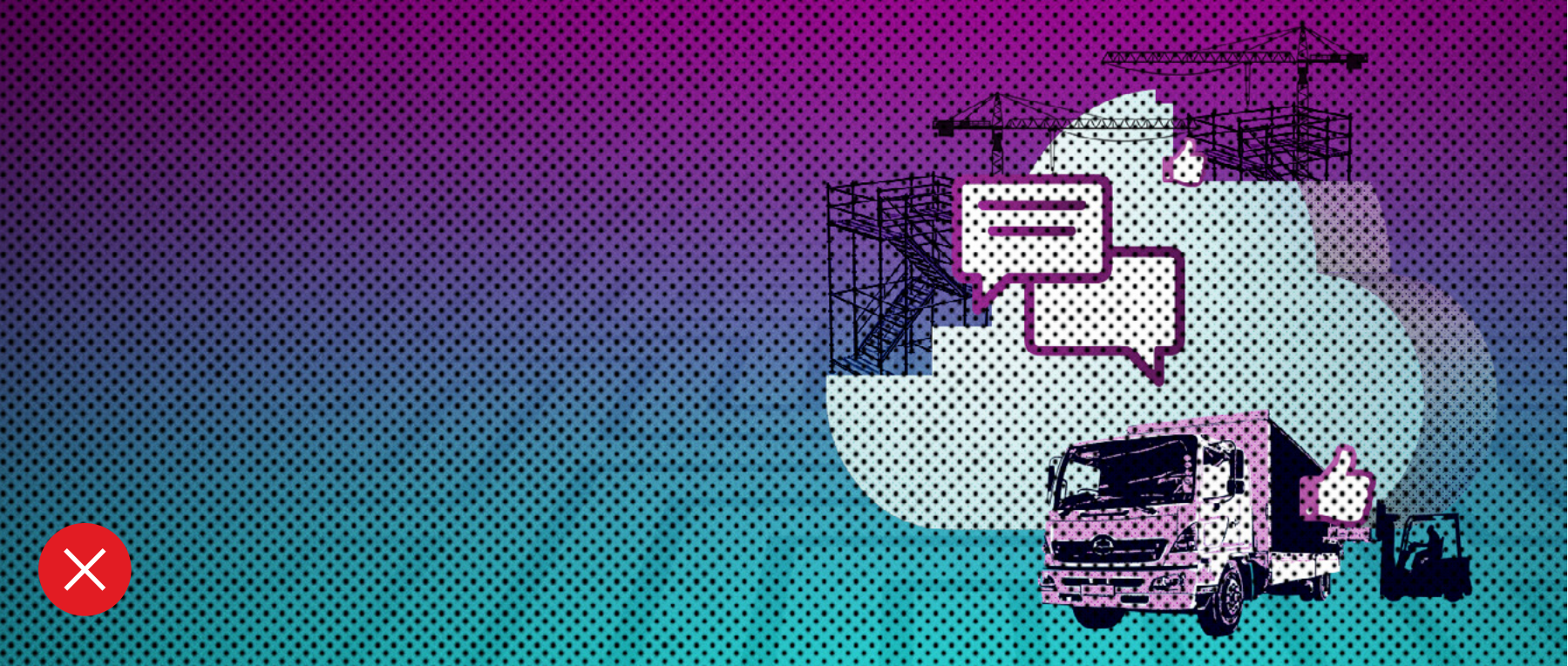
- Use the monotone element in the background. It should be subtle.



- Use the monotone element inside an image.

Using the monotone element as a texture

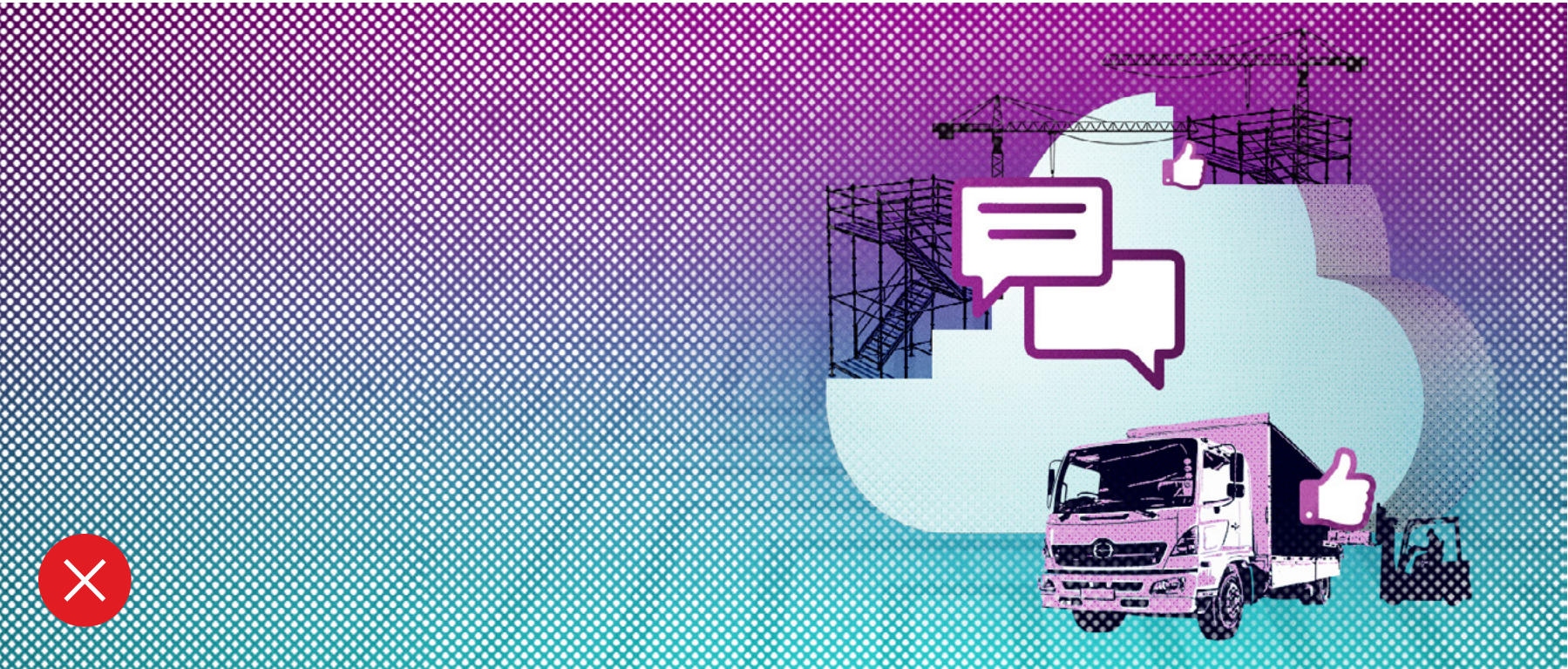
Don'ts



- Make the monotone element overbearing or a focal point



- Over scale the monotone



- Create a headline safe zone with too little contrast



- Over skew or use perspective beyond recognition

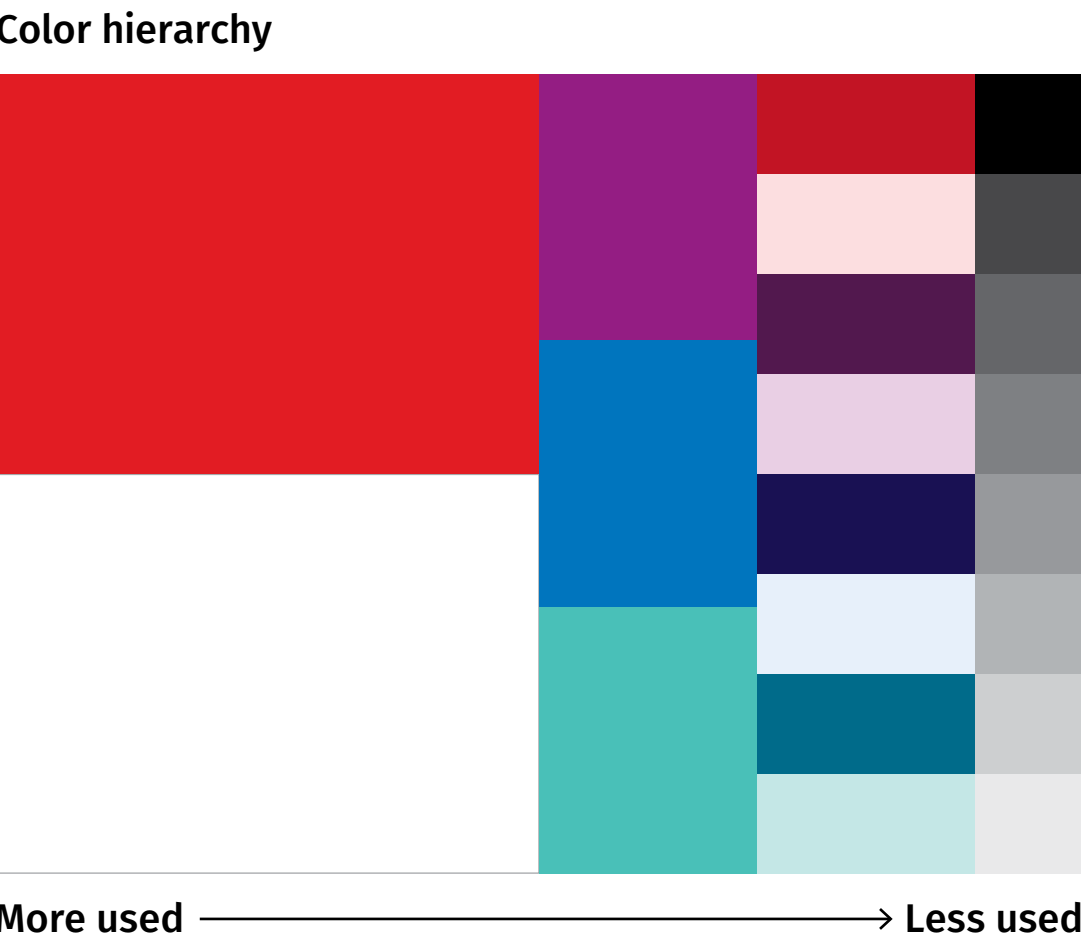
Color

Color

Primary, secondary and neutral palettes

Usage

Select primary colors at your discretion.



Primary

Red family

HEX: #EB0000
RGB: 235, 0, 0
CMYK: 1, 100, 100, 3
PMS: 1795 C

HEX: #C40023
RGB: 196, 0, 35
CMYK: 0, 100, 90, 21
PMS: 1805 C

HEX: #FFDEDF
RGB: 255, 222, 223
CMYK: 0, 15, 5, 0
PMS: 2050 C

Purple family

HEX: #95008A
RGB: 149, 0, 138
CMYK: 41, 100, 0, 9
PMS: 513 C

HEX: #52194F
RGB: 82, 25, 79
CMYK: 69, 100, 37, 34
PMS: 519 C

HEX: #F6D7F4
RGB: 246, 215, 244
CMYK: 6, 20, 0, 0
PMS: 2080 C

Blue family

HEX: #3300FC
RGB: 51, 0, 252
CMYK: 99, 47, 0, 0
PMS: 2174 C

HEX: #14064E
RGB: 20, 6, 78
CMYK: 100, 100, 15, 45
PMS: 2758 C

HEX: #E8F2FD
RGB: 232, 242, 253
CMYK: 8, 2, 0, 0
PMS: 2707 C

Teal family

HEX: #00C8BC
RGB: 0, 200, 188
CMYK: 65, 0, 34, 0
PMS: 7465 C

HEX: #056E8D
RGB: 5, 110, 141
CMYK: 92, 49, 31, 3
PMS: 7468 C

HEX: #D1FFFB
RGB: 209, 255, 251
CMYK: 22, 0, 10, 0
PMS: 7457 C

Secondary

Neutral

HEX: #000000
RGB: 0, 0, 0
CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 100
PMS: Black C

HEX: #FFFFFF
RGB: 255, 255, 255
CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 0
PMS: White C

The full spectrum between black and white may be used.

Color

Bringing families together

Every standalone design should start with the red color family. But, as you move through a design, you can add in the other color families using the options below.

Start

Add family

Add family

Add family

Red family

Purple or blue

Teal or blue

Blue, teal or purple

Gradients

Gradients should be used according to the combinations below.

Blue – red

Purple – red

Blue – purple

Purple – teal

Blue – teal


Extending the palette

Each color has tints that are designed to go with primary and secondary colors in more complex designs. These tints are never to replace primary colors, but are used to add the right amount of contrast for complex designs such as infographics and data visualization.

The figure displays color gradient swatches for four color families: Red, Blue, Purple, and Teal. Each family has two sets of gradients: one from 'Root' to 'Dark' to 'Darkest' and another from 'Root' to 'Light' to 'White'. The 'Root' color is the first swatch in each set.

Color Family	Dark Gradient (Root to Darkest)	Light Gradient (Root to White)
Red	Root, Dark, Darkest	Root, Light, White
Blue	Root, Dark, Darkest	Root, Light, White
Purple	Root, Dark, Darkest	Root, Light, White
Teal	Root, Dark, Darkest	Root, Light, White

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 Solve

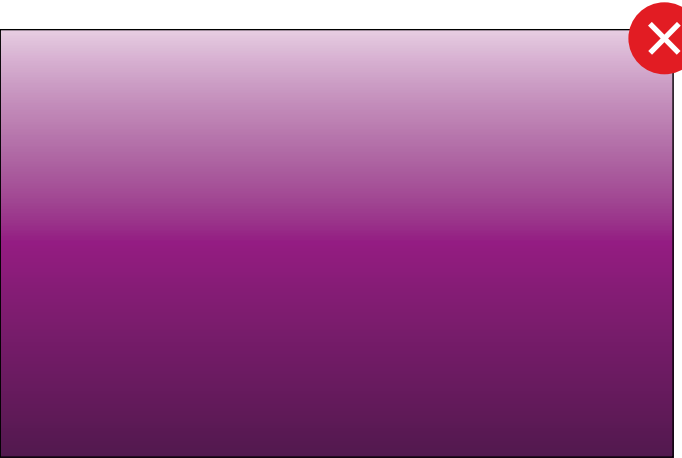
25

Color

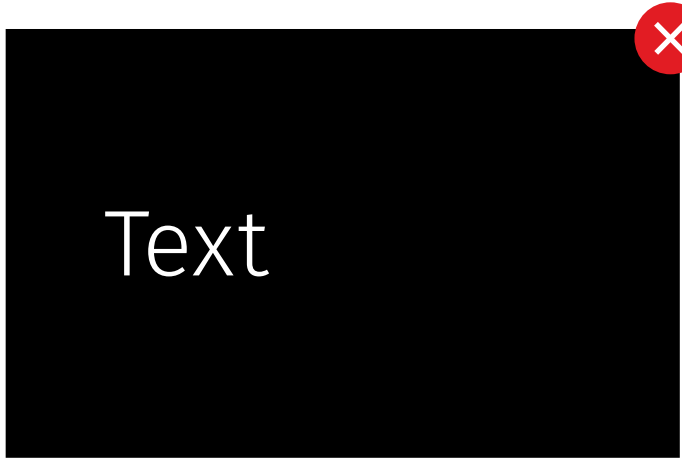
Don'ts



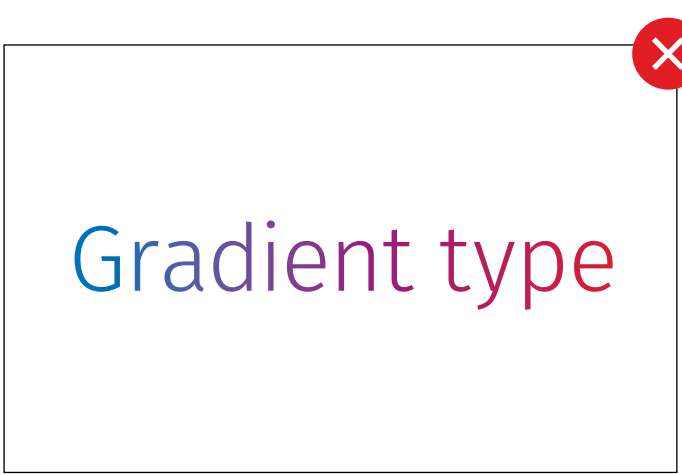
Invent other gradients



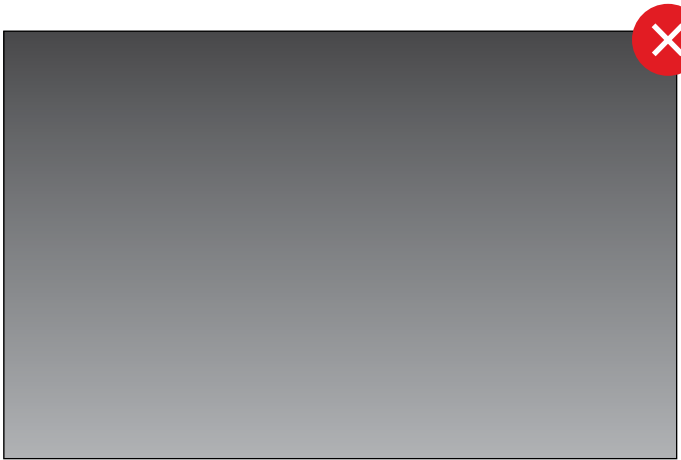
Create gradients using a color family



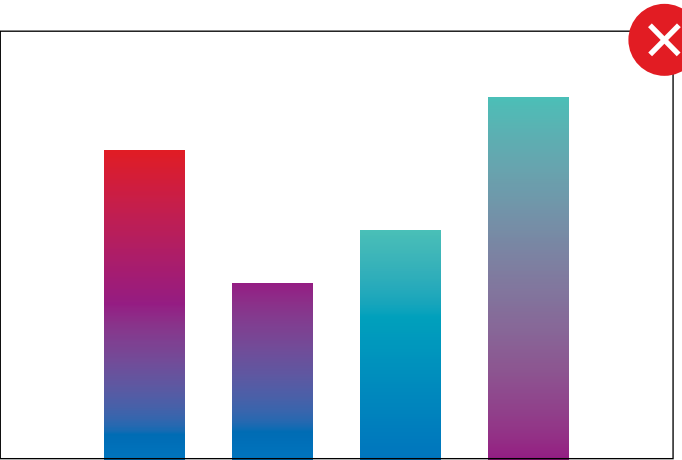
Use black as a background



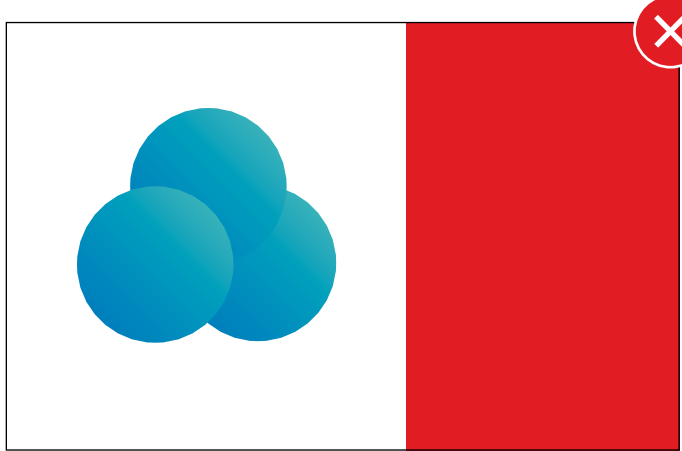
Apply gradients to type



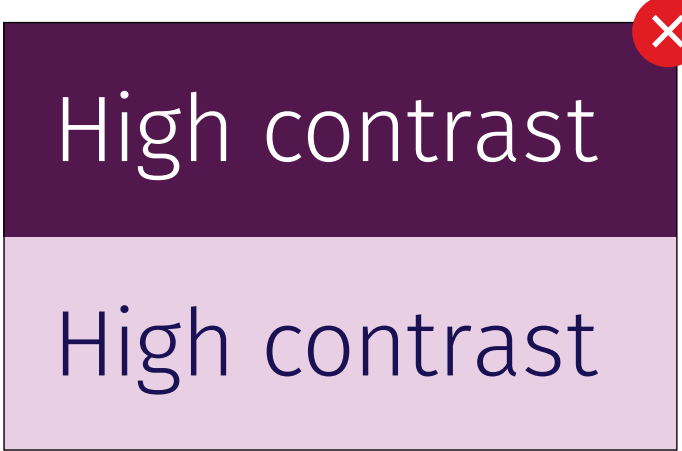
Create gradients using the neutral color palette



Use gradients in data visualizations



Mix color families



Use color combinations that provide high contrast and distract from the headline

Photography

Photography

Tips

- Use key words from the headline/article to choose a photo.
- Use stock photography as a base to create the a photo composite or illustration.
- Use a photo that enhances the storytelling of the headline/article.

Do



Photography

Don'ts



Type placed directly on top of images that competes with headline overlay



Obviously staged images (stocky)



Photos with crowded backgrounds



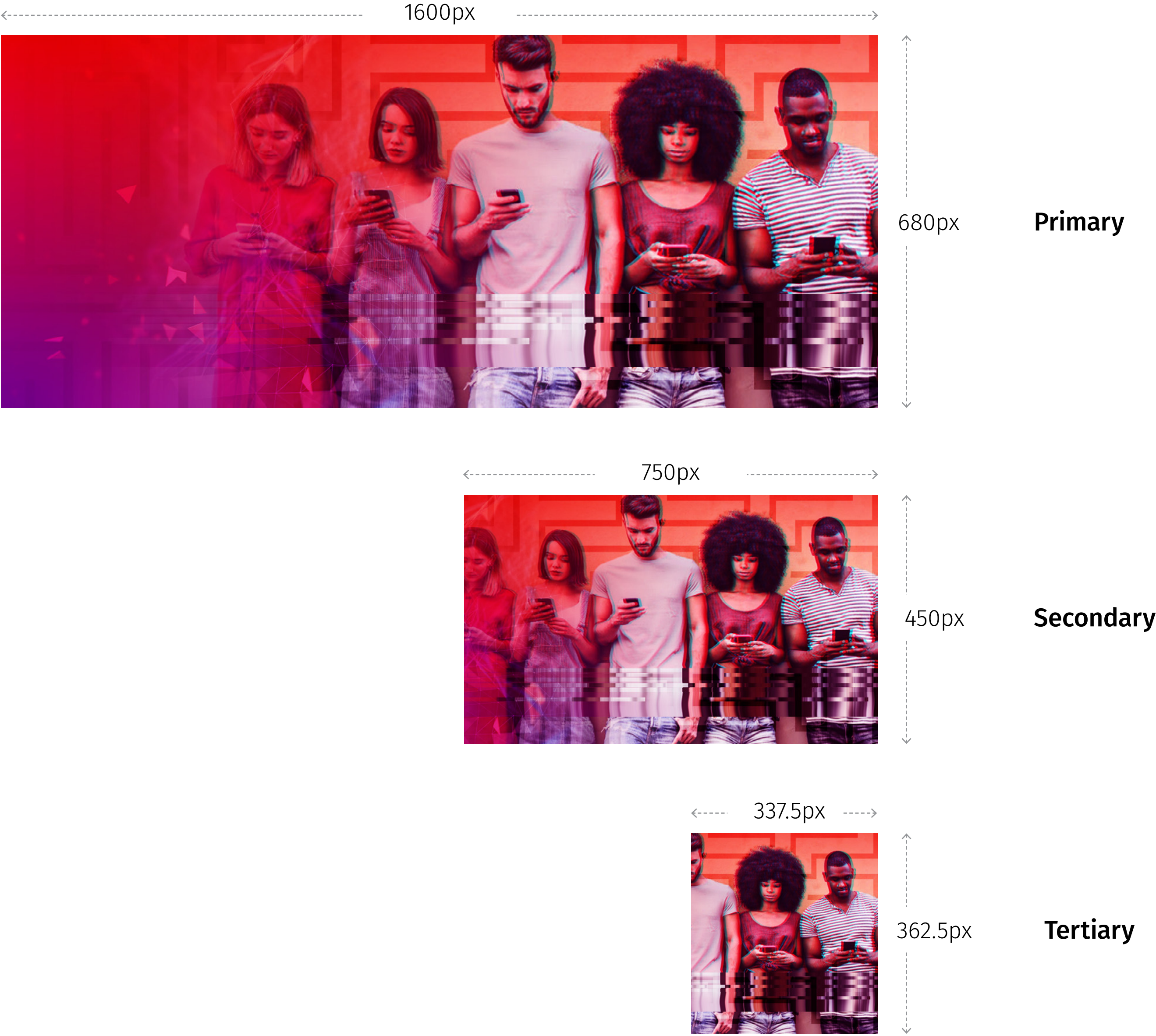
Photos that are wall-to-wall color

Sizes

Sizes

The primary post image can be recycled for use in the secondary and tertiary images by resizing it to the new height and cropping it by aligning to the top right corner.

Things to keep in mind

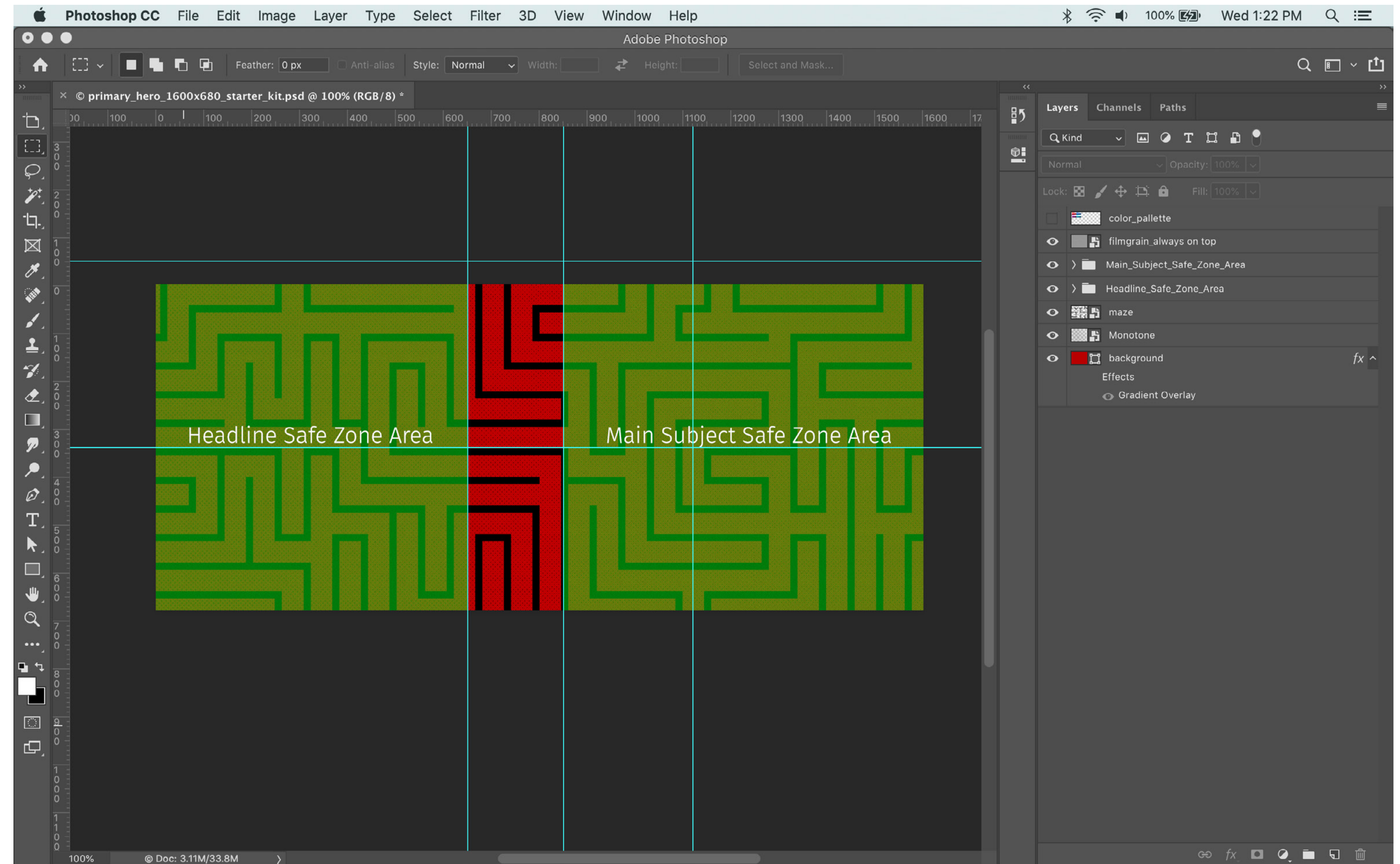


Photoshop Template

Design and layout principles

Things to keep in mind

- Use blend modes and opacity to achieve desired look
- “filmgrain_always on top” layer, use b
- “Main_Subject_Safe_Zone_Area” layer guide
- “Headline_Safe_Zone_Area” layer guide
- “Maze” layer
- “Monotone” layer
- “background” layer



That's it, for now.

Questions?

Send us an email: brand@rackspace.com

About Rackspace

At Rackspace, we accelerate the value of the cloud during every phase of digital transformation. By managing apps, data, security and multiple clouds, we are the best choice to help customers get to the cloud, innovate with new technologies and maximize their IT investments. As a recognized Gartner Magic Quadrant leader, we are uniquely positioned to close the gap between the complex reality of today and the promise of tomorrow. Passionate about customer success, we provide unbiased expertise, based on proven results, across all the leading technologies. And across every interaction worldwide, we deliver Fanatical Experience™ — the best customer service experience in the industry. Rackspace has been honored by Fortune, Forbes, Glassdoor and others as one of the best places to work.

Learn more at www.rackspace.com