# HUBSPOT

# BRAND INSIGHTS

FOCUS LAB

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# INTRODUCTION

This document contains introductory brand impressions and recommendations for the HubSpot visual and verbal identity system from a brand expert perspective.

These findings are for example purposes only and are solely based on what we were able to learn about their brand identity from publicly accessible sources. Focus Lab is not affiliated with HubSpot.

We hope this third-party perspective provides you with useful insights as you consider your own brand and how a brand audit might help you take action to unlock its greater potential.

# WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

In our experience, successful brands exhibit three traits — they are simple, appropriate, and distinct. While they may seem broad, there is much nuance to consider. The following questions drive at that nuance, inviting us to evaluate how the traits interact to influence brand strategy and verbal and visual identity.

## SIMPLE

Is the brand identity simple enough to describe and remember?

- Is there a clear vision and strategy that comes through in the visual and verbal brand?
- Are the brand's mission, vision, and purpose clear?
- Are there easily identifiable and compelling brand-level differentiators?
- Is the logo memorable?
- Is the brand's target audience clearly identifiable?

## APPROPRIATE

Is the brand appropriate for its target audience, and consistently applied?

- Is the visual and verbal brand appropriate for the brand's audience?
- Is the color palette, type set, and visual language consistent and resonant with the audience's wants and needs?
- Is the voice and tone, brand positioning, and overall verbal identity resonant with the audience's wants and needs?
- Are grammar and syntax consistent and professional?
- Do visuals enhance the brand experience, or detract from it?

## DISTINCT

Is the brand distinct enough to set it apart from its competitors and establish ownability?

- Is the brand positioning distinct and authentic?
- Is the logo recognizable, memorable, and ownable, especially among the competitive landscape?
- Is the visual language differentiated and scaleable?
- Do the brand's proof point and value propositions stand apart from the competition?

# BRAND IMPRESSION

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# OVERVIEW

HubSpot is a powerful CRM (customer relationship management) platform that provides everything a company needs to connect its sales, marketing, content management, and customer service departments. Its software is most powerful when used together, as it integrates all departments for maximum collaboration and efficiency, creating a single source of truth to manage a company's customers.

The CRM industry has become a crowded competitive space, and it's increasingly necessary to develop strong differentiation to stand out. As HubSpot continues to grow, it aims to further its market differentiation and stand out as a leader in the field. In this deliverable, we will evaluate ways to create and clarify compelling brand positioning, and identify opportunities for HubSpot to be seen as a powerful but straightforward brand that appeals directly to its audience

# VERBAL IDENTITY

# AUDIENCE

**OBSERVATIONS**

- High-level messaging (e.g., being powerful but not overpowering) and the ability to start for free make HubSpot seem like it could be a good fit for smaller or older businesses, but client logo reels include large companies. Overall, it's not clear who, exactly, HubSpot is targeting; right now the brand casts a wide net.

Software that's powerful, not overpowering. Seamlessly connect your data, teams, and customers on one CRM platform that grows with your business.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- For being such a customer-centric company, there isn't an authentic focus on customers within the existing identity. We recommend flexing this further, with more prominent testimonials and case studies, and providing actionable insights on how HubSpot makes a difference for its customer's companies.

# DIFFERENTIATION/BRAND POSITIONING

**OBSERVATIONS**

- The homepage header immediately claims that its audience can "Grow better with HubSpot," and characterizes its software as "powerful, not overpowering."

- Other high-level value propositions are seamless integration, ability to grow with your business, an all-in-one solution, "award-winning" support, and a tight-knit community.

- Outside of these high-level claims (and product capabilities), there's little to further differentiate the brand.

- The ability to get started for free speaks to HubSpot's commitment to accessibility, and paints a picture of a down-to-earth and friendly brand, not an exclusive or stuffy one. There are also many free resources provided by the brand to back this up.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- HubSpot's accessibility to many sizes and types of companies is a strength, but isn't fleshed out into a true brand position. This can be further defined and explored, and potentially position the brand as an asset to smaller businesses.

## Grow better with HubSpot

Software that's powerful, not overpowering. Seamlessly connect your data, teams, and customers on one CRM platform that grows with your business.

### Grow better with HubSpot today

Get a demo     Get started free

# VOICE AND TONE

## OBSERVATIONS

- HubSpot's voice and tone is straightforward and approachable, and can be educational in some circumstances.

- This voice and tone works well for the company but isn't particularly remarkable, and could be developed further.

- There's more humanity, humility, and helpfulness woven through the brand's About page.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Given HubSpot's customer-centric nature, the brand's voice and tone should strive to be more personable. Enthusiastic, even. The kind of brand that celebrates its customers' wins — because that's The Big Win that lives at the heart of HubSpot. (Founder/CTO Dharmesh Shah's quote on the bottom of the About page captures this sentiment.)

- The seeds of personality — and the evident passion for helping people — live on the About page. Consider how some of these elements (e.g., the voice and tone of writing, the actual messages and philosophies themselves, etc.) can be more consistently woven throughout the brand experience, to amplify HubSpot's persona.

### Solutions for every business

Growing a business isn't easy, but we've got your back. Explore some of our customers' top business challenges and learn how HubSpot's integrated software and solutions can help you leave these problems in the past.

### Our Mission

There's this notion that to grow a business, you have to be ruthless. But we know there's a better way to grow. One where what's good for the bottom line is also good for customers. We believe businesses can grow with a conscience, and succeed with a soul — and that they can do it with inbound. That's why we've created an ecosystem uniting software, education, and community to help businesses grow better every day.

# VISUAL IDENTITY

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# LOGO

## OBSERVATIONS

- HubSpot is camel-cased in both its logotype and in all written instances. This casing is outdated. It was a popular trend in the 2000s, alongside the smashing together of two words — e.g., "hub" and "spot" — to create a unique company name. The brand name is still effective in communicating a gathering place of software, but its casing could be holding the brand back from becoming fully streamlined and inviting.

- The rounded letterforms of HubSpot's logo are friendly and approachable, while still remaining professional.

  - The logotype feels older and outdated in its construction of the "b" and "p" letterforms. They have a wide rounded edge, rather than soft rounded corners that feel more contemporary. The letterforms are reminiscent of Bauhaus type.

- The brand's mark is integrated into the logo, an abstract "O" with spokes emanating from it, symbolizing a literal hub.

- HubSpot has retained a form of this logo since its founding in 2006. Original at the time, the spoked "O" has become a popular graphic theme across industries due to its simplicity and clear message.

- Ultimately, the logo feels outdated alongside a largely modern and crisp visual brand.

- Each of HubSpot's software offerings has its own simple, abstract logomark, which creates easy and effective visual differentiation.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- The camel-casing in the logo and the spoked logomark date the brand. Update these elements to exude a forward-thinking, inviting, and compelling brand.

# TYPOGRAPHY

**OBSERVATIONS**

- Lexend Deca is HubSpot's primary type, a geometric sans serif. This typeface is a free Google Font, and is popular in web design for its readability.

  - This type is professional and straightforward, but is also more generic.

  - Because of its popularity and simplicity, this typeface doesn't add much distinction to the brand.

- Puzzlingly, HubSpot uses the typeface Queens in its homepage hero section — but nowhere else in the brand experience. A funky, progressive serif from the foundry Kilotype, Queens is an ownable typeface that stands apart from the crowd. Not using it consistently and throughout the brand feels like a missed opportunity.

  - We wonder if the choice was an afterthought or an attempt to be relevant or trendy.

  - Either way the effort falls flat, because it doesn't fully commit to what could be a bold and confident decision.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Queens isn't well-utilized as a lead typeface, but offers distinction and a spunky personality. We're curious if Queens supports the perception HubSpot wants to create; it certainly seems powerful and opinionated, aligned with the demeanor of an industry leader.

- Lexend Deca is a solid type choice, but doesn't offer distinction on its own. By creating a clear type hierarchy between Lexend and Queens, Lexend could move into a supporting, workhorse position.

# Lexend Deca

# Queens

# COLOR

## OBSERVATIONS

- Orange is HubSpot's lead color, and is bright and energetic. A muted version of this orange is also used as a background flood, creating color consistency without overwhelming the user. When these muted orange floods are used, they create a warm and engaging brand experience.

- Other bright/muted combinations are used throughout the brand experience as secondary colors, including teal, green, purple, and a darker orange. None are used in a consistent manner across the brand.

- Cool blue is also used as a secondary color, and its muted tone is applied as section background floods, as is pure white. The muted cool blue and white are stark and clinical, and create a colder brand experience.

- The color scheme is soft and approachable. It does not evoke feelings of boldness and confidence; this could detract from a customer feeling empowered to grow their business.

- The blue-and-orange combination scheme is found elsewhere in the tech industry. This overlap with other brands' color schemes erodes differentiation and ownability.

- The high-contrast toggle is excellent for accessibility, but it shifts the signature HubSpot orange to blue and takes away from the branded experience. We're curious if there's an available update to the palette that combines a high-contrast scheme with HubSpot's signature orange.
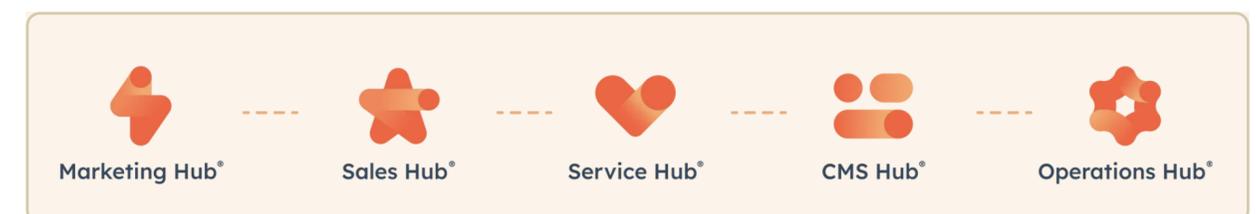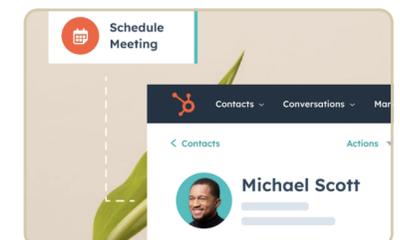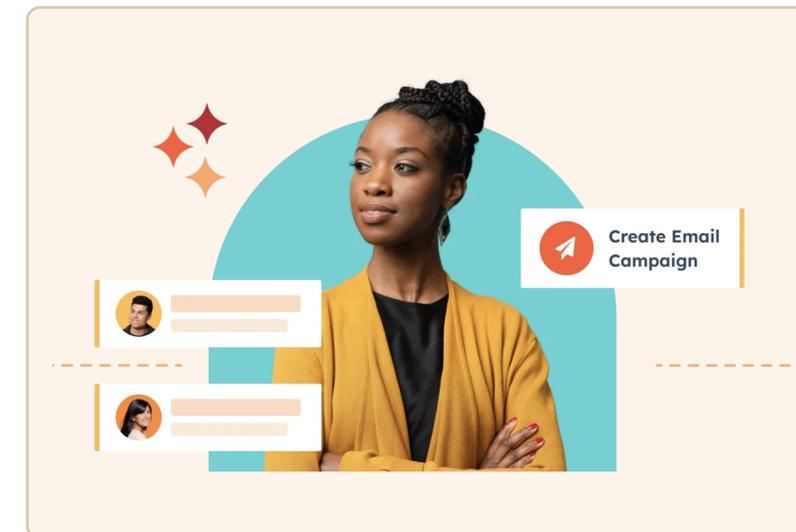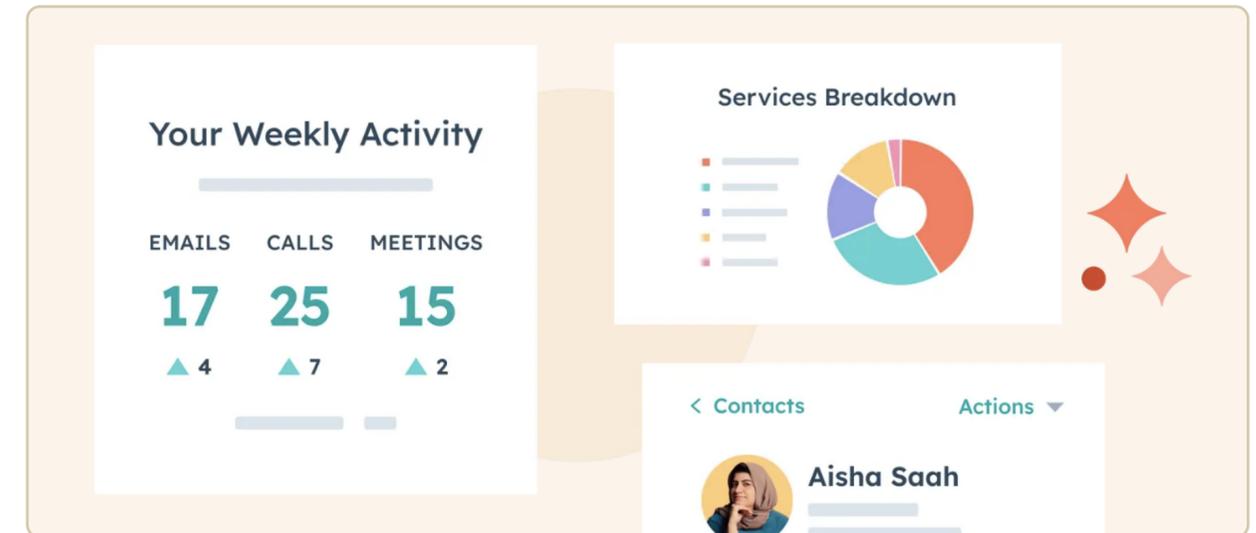
### OPPORTUNITIES

- The secondary color palette lacks hierarchy. Create and implement color guidelines to tell a stronger, more consistent story.

- The warmth of the primary and secondary brand colors is offset by cool blue and stark white color floods. Warmer neutrals would create a more energetic and welcoming brand experience.
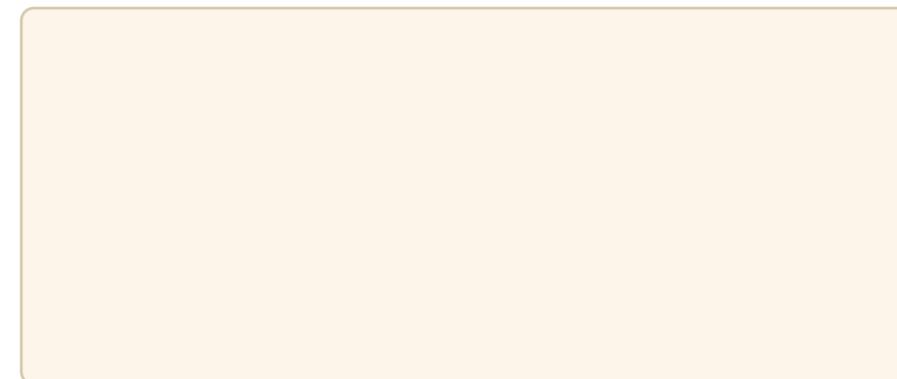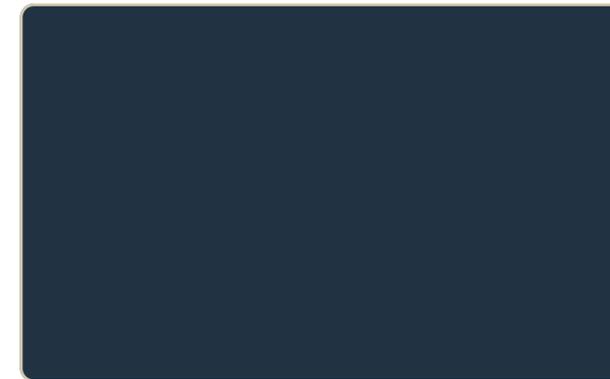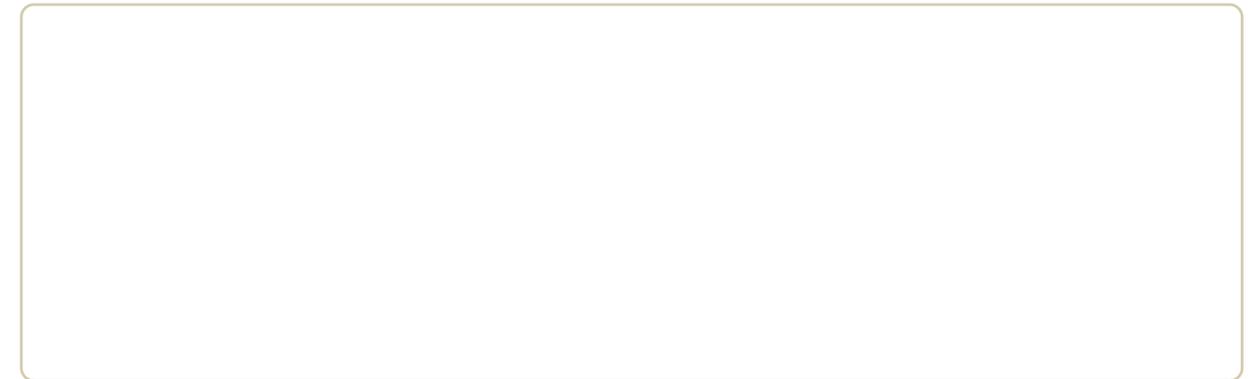
# VISUAL LANGUAGE

## OBSERVATIONS

- The overall HubSpot visual experience is clean and minimal. Visual language largely consists of simple product mockups, photography, and simple shape illustrations.

- The stylized product images, like the color choice and headline typeface, are in line with current design trends. They don't diminish the brand, but they also don't distinguish it.

- The product illustrations, the star shapes, and other brand elements don't correspond to the story of "Grow Better." There is a disconnection between an overarching brand concept and how the verbal and visual elements connect.

- Very few visual elements are used on a consistent basis. For example, squiggly, cloud-like shapes are used on the Pricing page, and aren't seen elsewhere in the brand identity.

  - These shapes are sometimes applied with bright colors, and sometimes with muted ones. Depending on color combinations and placement, they can have different emotional resonance.

  - The simple shapes are effective in theory, but lose impact when they aren't implemented consistently.

- Photography styles vary, and stock photography is used often to represent the customer.

- Collage-style graphics are used as blog imagery; this creates a more expert and editorial feel.

- The branded iconography has good detail and is executed well. Icons have an ownable style. But beyond a trendy gradient, there is a lack of connection to the deeper brand.

# VISUAL LANGUAGE

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Visual language is lacking in both originality and consistent application. Consider picking a lane and going all-in, instead of sprinkling different types of visual language throughout.

- Lean into a brand strategy and a story that will drive the brand beyond "Grow better." Use this strategy to align the visual language and brand with a deeper source of inspiration and ownable style.

- Photography would be stronger if it moved away from stock, and represented real customers.
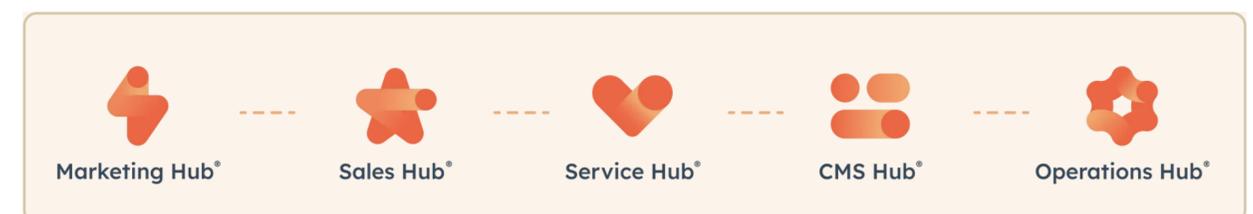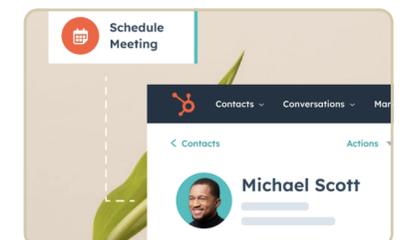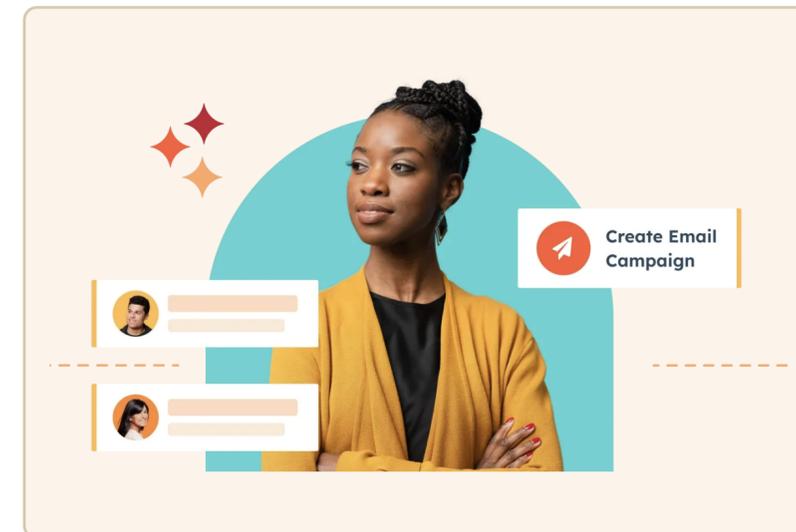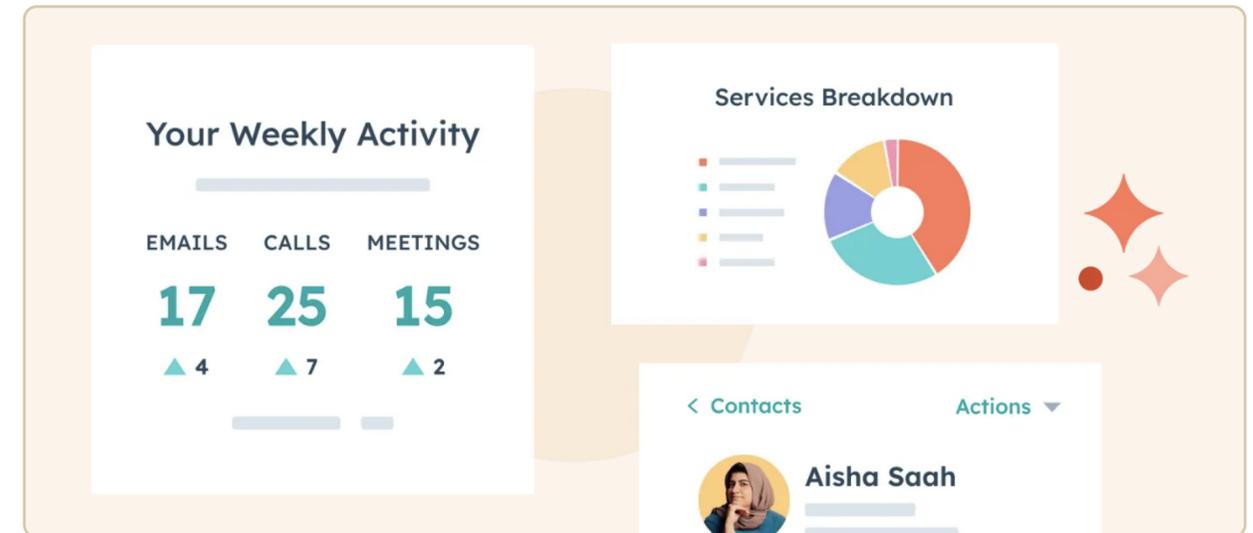
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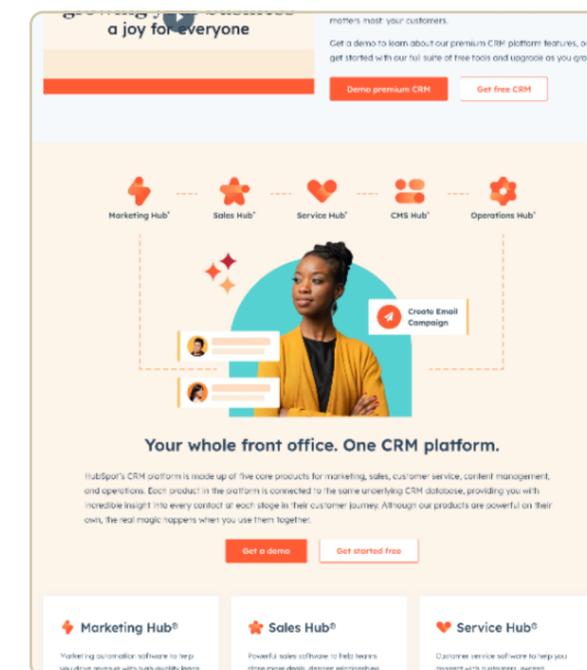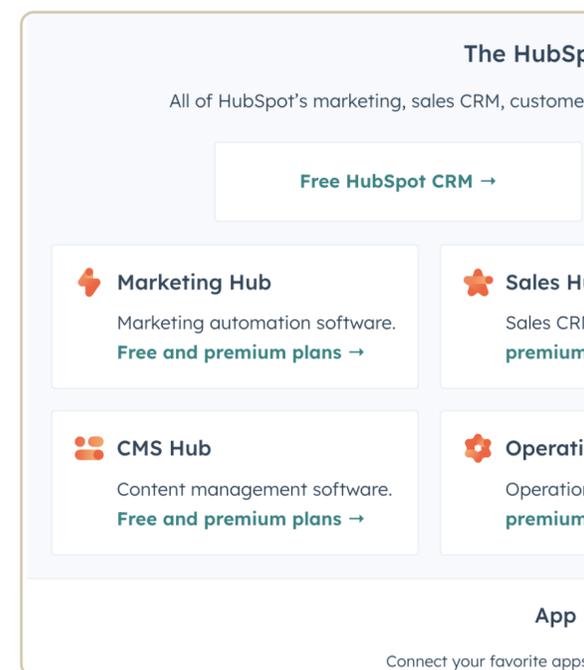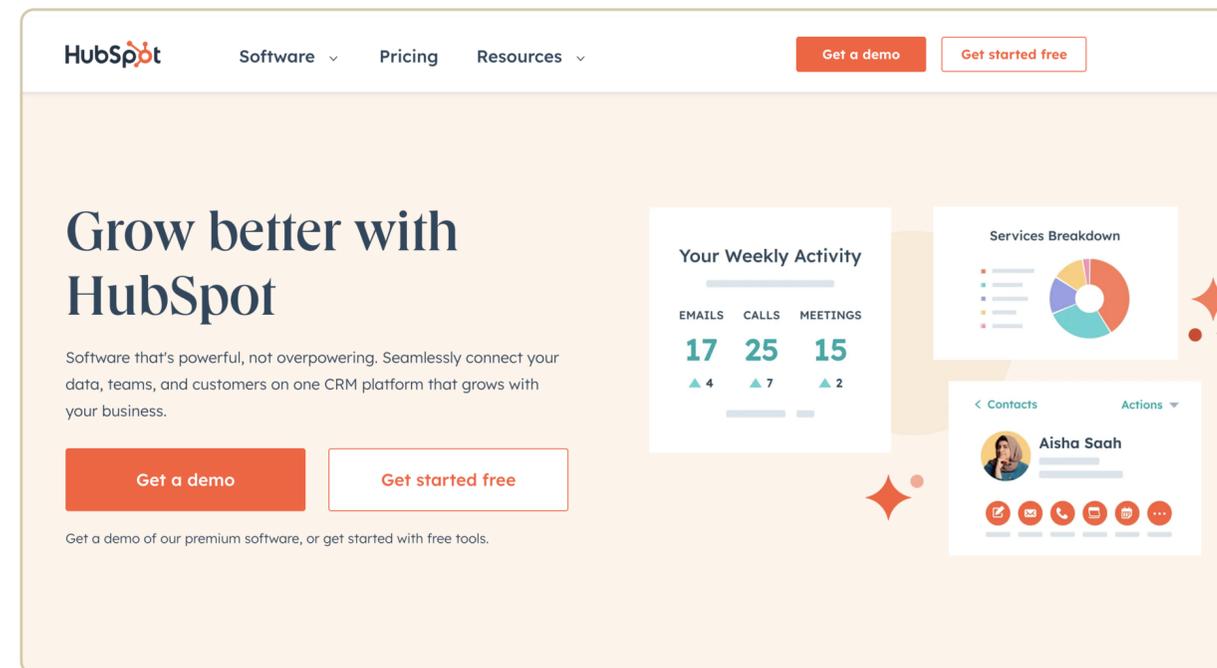INSIGHTS

# INTERACTIVE

## OBSERVATIONS

- Clicking on content in the Resources tab navigates the user to a different website experience, and it can be frustrating to be unable to easily return to the homepage.

- Pricing is front and center in the navigation, speaking to HubSpot's pragmatic and straightforward approach.

- There are some nice features with the ability to turn on high-contrast colors and change languages. However, the high-contrast experience could be more in line with the HubSpot color palette.

  - When a user changes languages, the custom imagery and photography changes as well to represent the audience.

- The CTAs are straightforward but generic. Especially in the hero, a short but punchy CTA could resonate with a customer and get them to click.

- Within the main navigation, sections are well organized and categorized, and broken into drop-downs that don't overwhelm a casual user. But once you get into the drop-downs, there is some decision fatigue in understanding what route to take. Reorganizing the software menu, especially, could be helpful for the user.

- Sometimes the amount of general content, especially on the homepage, borders on feels overwhelming. Overall, content could be more scannable to more quickly convey high-level benefits for the audience.

- The footer nav is especially overwhelming. Although it may exist mainly for SEO purposes, it would definitely be tough to navigate for a casual user.



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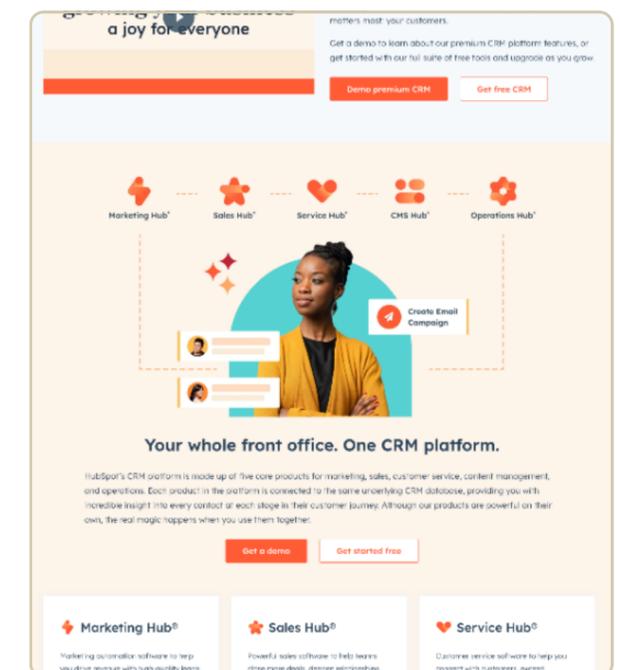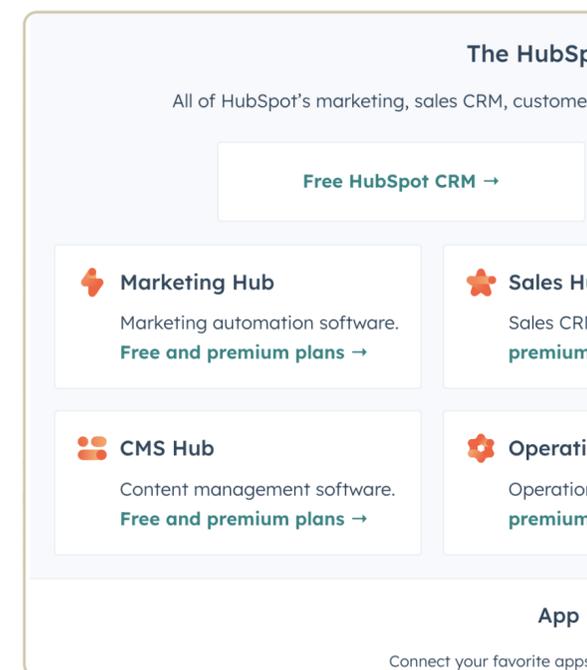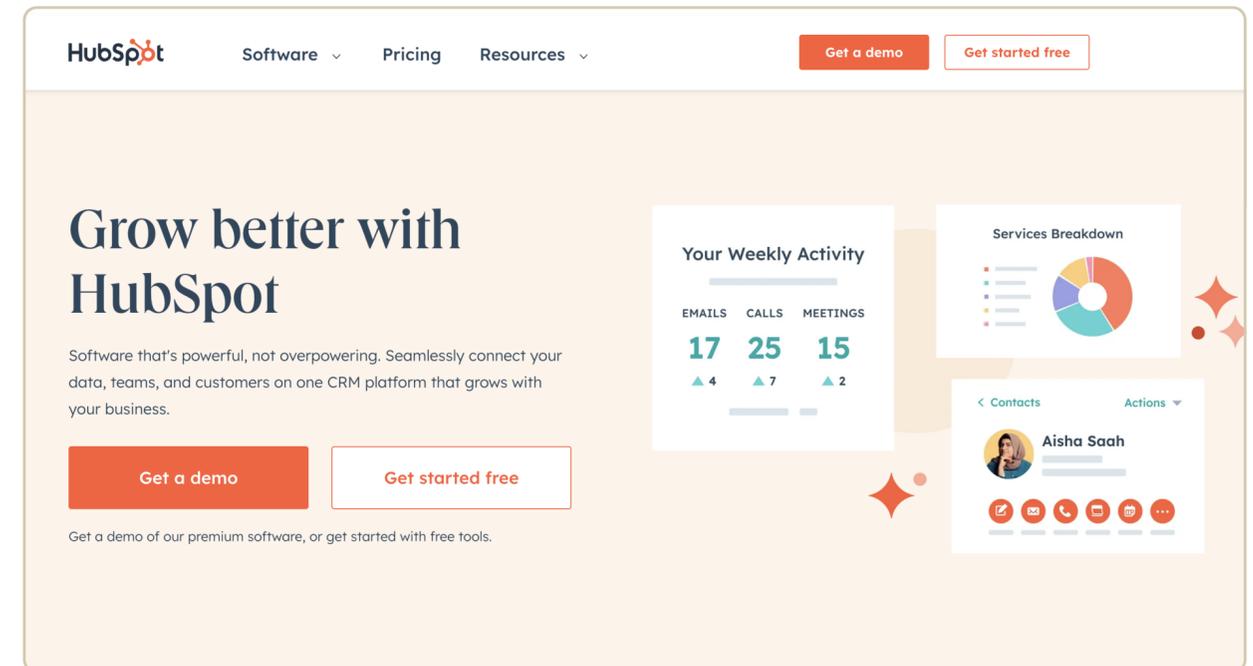
# INTERACTIVE

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Reduce the information on the homepage to be more scannable and digestible.

- Allow the user to get high-level details, then dive deeper into the pages they need and want to further explore.

- Tell a bigger and more inspiring brand story on the homepage.

- Reorganize the software menu to guide the user to the products they need — rather than making them think through too much up front.

- Ensure all the pages throughout the website are seamless and easy to navigate.
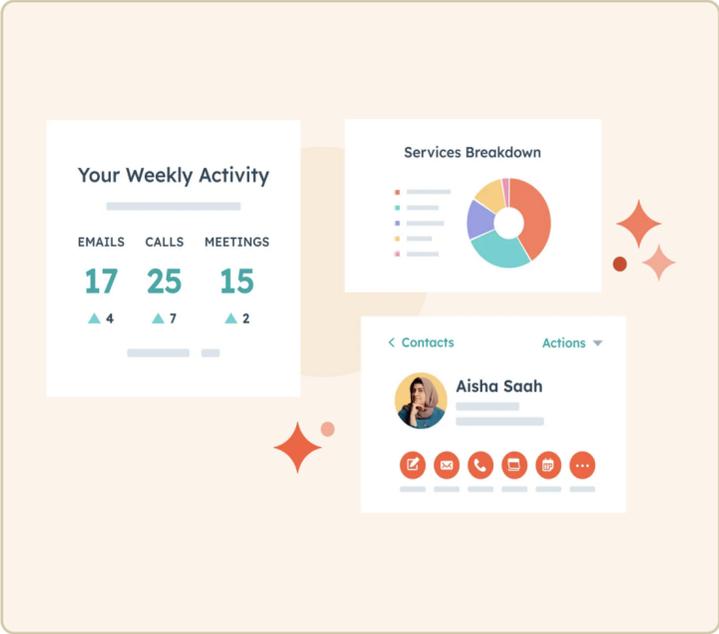
# COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

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# COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE


HubSpot

**Lexend Deca**


salesforce

ITC Avant Garde


Adobe | Marketo Engage

Adobe Clean


ZOHO

Zoho Puvi
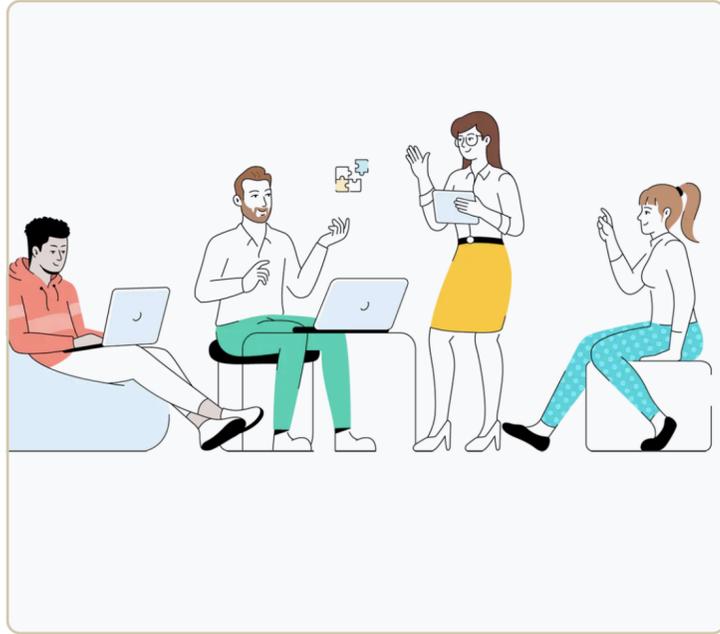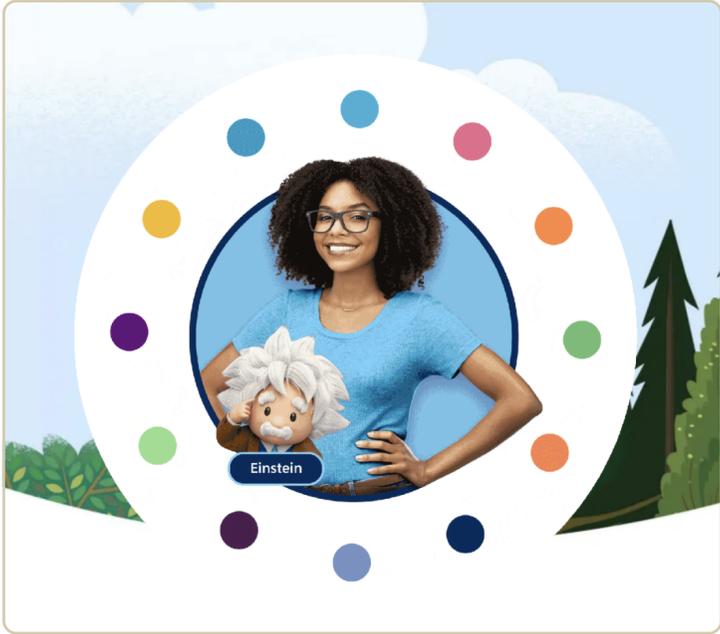
# COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE TAKEAWAYS

## GENERAL

- At a high level, both Zoho and Salesforce have product sets that are more wide-ranging in capability than HubSpot, and their brands reflect this broad appeal. On the other hand, Marketo is a product of Adobe, and doesn't have its own independent brand.

- HubSpot exists at an interesting intersection between these three brands — independent, yet small enough to be agile and flexible.

## VISUAL

- The logos in this group leave a lot to be desired. Both Zoho's and Salesforce's logos are overly complicated, and render the logotype tough to read at small sizes. Because it's a product of Adobe, Marketo does not have a distinct logo.

- Both Zoho and Salesforce have distinct logo systems for their products. Compared to HubSpot, these products take on more distinctive — and individual — personalities. HubSpot has the advantage of a more integrated and streamlined product system.

- Although Zoho has a large primary palette, blue is reserved for its CRM tool. Salesforce is also a largely blue brand, and Adobe is largely red. Each of these brands use large swaths of color to inject energy and excitement.

  - Similar to HubSpot, each brand uses one color primarily, likely to create association and ownability. Compared to the blues and reds used by these brands, HubSpot is clearly elevated above the rest, and its orange feels the most notable of the group.

- No competitor is using more than two to three colors in their brand palette.

- All brands use sans serifs, and most use a single typeface. Every brand has some sort of proprietary typeface, custom created for them.

- Adobe feels the most elevated in terms of typefaces, and the most technical. Salesforce is almost overly friendly with its geometric, rounded sans serif.

- Product mockups dominate the visual languages of these brands, with Zoho having the most original brand element in its illustrations. However, these are implemented inconsistently across the brand.

- Similar to HubSpot, all competitors use stock photography to represent the customer.

# COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE TAKEAWAYS

## VERBAL

- In terms of differentiation, Salesforce focuses on the end customer, ensuring happy experiences that also result in more sales.

  - Zoho focuses on happy customers as well, in addition to speed and growth. The brand's value propositions feel the most generic of the group.

  - Marketo is the most engaging and vibrant, focusing differentiation on "setting your pipeline on fire" and bolstering more leads for your company.

- Marketo also stands out with its voice and tone — it's easily the most energetic, edgy, and rallying of the group.

## INTERACTIVE

- Visually, competitors' websites vary in their look and user experience.

  - The Salesforce website is clean, has ample white space, and lacks clutter — it's the easiest to navigate.

  - Marketo's website is not visually engaging or inviting for a user. As a product of Adobe, it takes on the Adobe brand identity and is positioned as a product; the web experience feels old and outdated. There doesn't seem to be much care or thought applied to the experience, which could erode user/customer trust.

  - Zoho's website is also clean and has ample white space. Their content is well organized and very scannable. Its interactive experience is not overwhelming and is easy to navigate.

- Each page is static and doesn't employ many interactive features. Salesforce doesn't use anything with motion or interactions. Zoho uses interactions in statistics that help engage the user and keep them on the page.

- The Salesforce navigation is massive and overwhelming. There are many choices to pick from, which could lead the user to wonder where to go and what they need.

- Marketo's navigation seems sparse and unfinished. It is even unclear on where to start and how to interact with the page.

- The Zoho navigation is modern and extensive. But in contrast to Salesforce it is organized, has a strong hierarchy, nd employs helpful descriptors that guide user navigation and decision-making.

- All of the CTAs are similar, with variations of "Get Started" or "Try for Free."

# SUCCESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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# SUCCESSES

## VERBAL

- Punctuation and style are consistent across the site. The attention to detail evokes polish and professionalism, and encourages trust.

- The "powerful but not overpowering" sentiment conveys empathy.

- The About page furthers that empathetic, humble-and-helpful vibe with a mission-manifesto that speaks to "soul" and "conscience," and a brand-and-founder story customers can relate to.

## VISUAL

- HubSpot's lead orange is bold, ownable, and recognizable in the market.

- The logotype is appealing and approachable.

- Product logotypes are appropriate, streamlined, and differentiated.

- The brand's colors are largely energetic and exciting.

- Queens is a compelling typeface, and creates a potential foundation for the future type system.

- Visual language is clean, minimal, and polished.

## INTERACTIVE

- Content is well-organized and structured

- The site contains a nice assortment of accessibility features, such as high-contrast colors and language controls.

- CTA's are straightforward and clear, but lack originality.

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

## VERBAL

○ Develop a clear and compelling voice and tone for HubSpot. There is a huge opportunity to be more rallying, engaging, and even playful when speaking to your audience.

○ HubSpot's audience seems to be straightforward and pragmatic. HubSpot begins to lean into these characteristics in its own messaging, but doesn't go all in — a missed opportunity to develop voice and tone, and one we recommend reexamining.

○ So much of the brand's helpful and human qualities are restricted to the About page. This approach not only limits HubSpot's personality, but hinders the brand from realizing a more cohesive verbal identity.

○ We also recommend clearly defining your audience in plain terms. Although HubSpot serves a wide range of customers, who is your ideal one?

○ HubSpot has strong differentiation, but lacks a clear brand position to tie all of these elements together. We recommend further exploring and defining this, and making sure it comes through in your web experience.

## VISUAL

○ Remove the camel casing of the logo, restyling to "HubSpot," in both the logo and all written instances.

○ Reconsider the logomark, either refreshing or removing it. As a simple and sophisticated brand, there's an opportunity for HubSpot to lead strongly without a mark.

   ○ If a mark is retained, we recommend ensuring that it is repeated throughout the visual identity.

○ We recommend revisiting the exact shade of HubSpot orange. There is opportunity to create a more accessible, high-contrast experience on the website while still using orange.

○ Create a strong type hierarchy. It would be compelling to promote Queens to a more prominent lead typeface, and use it more strongly throughout the brand identity. We also recommend downgrading Lexend Deca's role, and using it simply as a workhorse typeface.

   ○ If budget allows, it would be worthwhile to explore proprietary typeface(s) to further set HubSpot apart.

○ Create a clear and strong color hierarchy, using existing colors as a foundation, removing cool neutrals and replacing them with warm neutrals.

○ Choose strong, leading visual language elements — think collages, more complex illustrations, and/or simple animation or video.

○ Replace stock photography with photos of real customers. This photography style does not need to be overly polished; it can reflect real life.

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### INTERACTIVE

○ Reduce the information on the homepage to be more scannable.

○ Allow the user to get high-level details, then dive deeper into the pages they need and want to further explore.

○ Tell a bigger and more inspiring story on the homepage.

○ Reorganize the software menu to help guide the user to the products they need rather than making them think through too much up front.

# WHAT'S NEXT?

**BRAND INSIGHTS**

# CHAT WITH US

Let us help you bring these recommendations to life. The Growth team at Focus Lab can guide you through options to update, refresh, or reinvent your brand.

Get in touch: newbiz@focuslab.agency

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# BRAND EDUCATION

Hand-picked articles from us to help you through some of your brand challenges.

Learn about the power of voice and tone, and how it packs a powerful punch in your brand messaging.

Learn more about the difference brand positioning makes in standing out from the crowd.

Learn more about how premium typography can be a differentiator and make a big difference in top-tier brands.



**VERBAL IDENTITY**

Your Brand Walks Into a Bar: Voice and Tone

Learn More

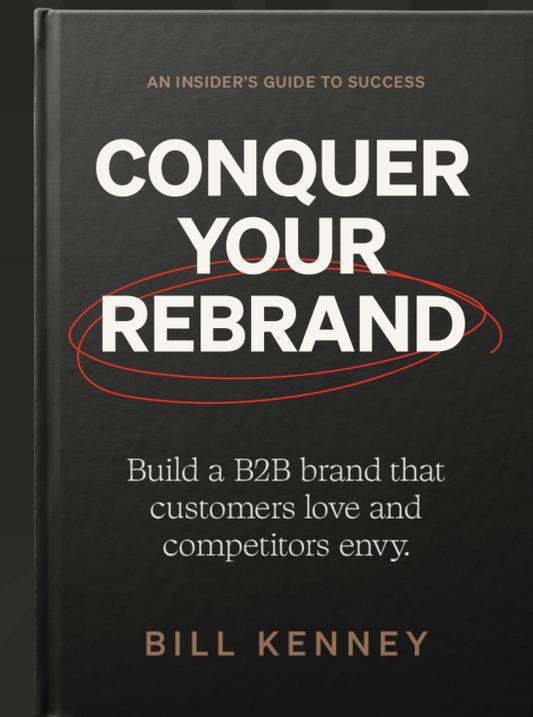

**BRAND STRATEGY**

A Position on Positioning

Learn More



**VISUAL IDENTITY**

Invest in Typography

Learn More

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AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

# CONQUER YOUR REBRAND

Build a B2B brand that customers love and competitors envy.

## BILL KENNEY

**BOOK**

## CONQUER YOUR REBRAND

This is Focus Lab's complete brand-building playbook to guide your rebrand. It covers the actionable details of how to prepare to rebrand your B2B business, and what to expect when embarking on this journey.

Learn More

Produced by Focus Lab, a team of B2B branding experts.

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