

DESIGN MANUAL VERSION 2

BRAND GUIDE

Visual brand guidelines for The Non-Obvious Company and its family of brands.



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CORRECT APPLICATIONS

The stamp is the primary mark. It may be set tilted or straight, and may sit on any colour in the palette, in black or in white.



TILTED, 10° LEFT



STRAIGHT



ON BLACK



ON A PALETTE COLOUR

The tilt is always ten degrees and always to the left. It is the one piece of movement in an otherwise square system, which is why it has to be consistent. The same rule governs any tilted element on the website, including the award seals and photographs set at an angle.

INCORRECT APPLICATIONS



× EXAGGERATED ROTATION



× TILTED TO THE RIGHT



× STRETCHED



× LOW CONTRAST ON GROUND



× ADDED EFFECTS

- Do not rotate the stamp more than ten degrees, and never to the right.
- Do not use a stamp without its designation, and do not resize the text inside it.
- Do not stretch, condense or otherwise distort the mark.
- Do not apply strokes, shadows, gradients or other treatments unless specified here.
- Do not overlap the stamp with other graphic elements.

THE STAMP SERIES

Each part of the business carries the same stamp with its own designation. Set horizontally, or at ten degrees to the left.



COMPANY



BOOK AWARD



KEYNOTES



ACADEMY



INSIGHTS



PODCAST



TRENDS



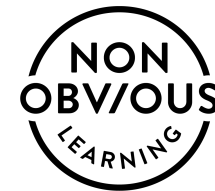
WORKSHOPS



STORYTELLING



COACHING



LEARNING



GUIDES

Additional designations exist in the 2018 manual and remain valid. Those shown here are the ones currently in use on the website.

SPECIAL USAGES

Four marks come out of the same drawing. Which one to reach for depends on whether the designation is needed and how much room there is.

NON
OBV/OUS

THE WORDMARK

Two lines, no circle. For tight spaces and partner lockups



WORDMARK IN THE CIRCLE

Unbroken circle, no designation. The general-purpose mark



THE STAMP

Circle broken by a designation around the lower arc



NON-OBVIOUS HOUSE

Unbroken circle with the name set in script below, in navy #296381

THE SLANTED I IS NOT OPTIONAL

✓ CORRECT

NON
OBV/OUS

The I in OBVIOUS is a forward slash. It is the one deliberate irregularity in the mark and the thing that makes it a logo rather than a word.

✗ INCORRECT

NON
OBVIOUS

Never set as ordinary type with a standard I, even in the right typeface. Use the artwork; do not retype it.

Inside the circle, the slash is mandatory. The wordmark may appear on its own without the circle, but the moment a circle goes around it the slanted I must be there. A circle drawn around plain type is not the mark and should never be used as one. Running text is different: in a sentence the company is written normally, as Non-Obvious.

COLOUR

THE PALETTE

Hex is authoritative: it is what the website renders. RGB is derived from it. CMYK is carried forward from the 2018 print measurements.



Navy

#296381

RGB 41/99/129

CMYK 86/53/31/15

Section colour: About



Blue

#0E94C0

RGB 14/148/192

CMYK 79/27/11/1

Section colour: Insights



Cyan

#2FC1D5

RGB 47/193/213

CMYK 67/0/17/0

Accent



Teal

#08AB98

RGB 8/171/152

CMYK 78/7/50/0

Section colour: Trends



Green

#00A05A

RGB 0/160/90

CMYK 93/8/90/0

Section colour: Experiences



Lime

#A1C14A

RGB 161/193/74

CMYK 42/7/91/0

Accent



Yellow

#F7C731

RGB 247/199/49

CMYK 3/21/91/0

PRIMARY. Buttons, underlines, the subscribe call to action



Orange

#E67325

RGB 230/115/37

CMYK 5/67/100/0

Section colour: Speaking



Magenta

#B71D61

RGB 183/29/97

CMYK 23/100/40/6

Section colour: Podcast



Red

#E71A2D

RGB 231/26/45

CMYK 0/100/90/2

Accent



Purple

#74257B

RGB 116/37/123

CMYK 65/100/11/8

Section colour: Publications

NEUTRALS



Black

#161616

RGB 22/22/22

Dark bands, borders, body headings

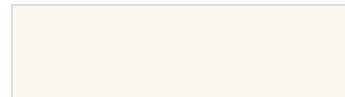


Ink

#1D1D1D

RGB 29/29/29

Body copy



Cream

#FBF8F1

RGB 251/248/241

Page background, alternating bands



White

#FFFFFF

RGB 255/255/255

Page background, cards



Gray

#979499

RGB 151/148/153

Captions, muted labels

BRAND FONTS

Google Sans Flex for display, **Poppins** for labels and interface, **Lora** for body copy. All three are webfonts and free to use. Sizes below are the live values; the display sizes scale fluidly between the small and large figures shown.

Heading 1

Google Sans Flex 900

Uppercase, 2.6 to 4.3rem

Line height 1.04

SEE WHAT OTHERS MISS

Heading 2

Google Sans Flex 900

Uppercase, 1.9 to 2.7rem

Line height 1.15

THE BACKSTORY

Heading 3

Google Sans Flex 800

Uppercase, 1.0 to 1.5rem

NON-OBVIOUS THINKING

Kicker / Label

Poppins 800

Uppercase, 0.62 to 0.72rem

Letter spacing 0.02em body, 0.06em

reversed

[MORE STORIES LIKE THIS ONE](#)

Body

Lora 400

17px, line height 1.7

1.62 on phones

The world needs more non-obvious thinking. We help leaders be more open minded, see what others miss and be more interesting.

Lede / Pull quote

Lora 400 italic

1.1 to 1.45rem

Curated stories to help you be more interesting.

THE RECURRING DEVICES

RAINBOW BAR



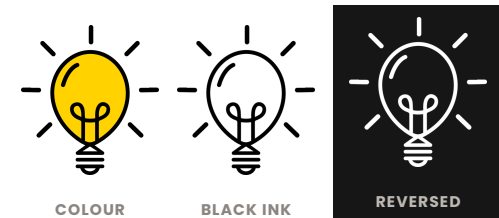
All eleven colours in fixed order, equal widths. Sits at the very top of every page. Horizontal only, never vertical.

DIVIDER



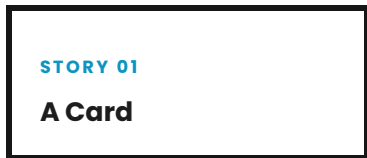
Short heavy rule above or below a heading. Any palette colour. 54 by 8px on desktop, 48 by 6 on phones.

BALLOON LIGHTBULB



The idea mark. Colour is the default. Black ink for one-colour print and anywhere the yellow would fight the ground. Reversed to white on dark. The fill is never a different colour.

OFFSET SHADOW



Hard shadow, no blur, offset down and right. The house depth effect: 3px black border, 7px offset. Never a soft drop shadow.

WAVE



Soft transition between two section colours. Replaces a hard edge where two coloured bands meet.

SECTION COLOUR



Each area of the site owns one palette colour, used for its nav underline, kickers and hero. About navy, Speaking orange, Podcast magenta, Publications purple.

THE NON-OBVIOUS BOOK AWARD

The award has its own seal, distinct from the company stamp: a scalloped coin with a book at its centre. It appears in four colourways and on three tiers of ribbon badge.

THE SEAL



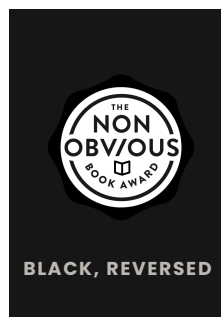
GOLD



SILVER



BLUE



BLACK, REVERSED

Gold is the default. Silver is for longlist use. Blue carries the yellow scallop and is for pale grounds. Black reverses to white on dark, shown here on its correct ground.

THE RIBBON BADGES



LONGLIST
SELECTION



SHORTLIST
SELECTION



MOST
ORIGINAL



MOST
USEFUL



MOST
ENTERTAINING



MOST
SHAREABLE



MOST
IMPORTANT



TOP TEN
COVER DESIGN

The ribbon signals the tier

White ribbon and silver seal for longlist. Yellow ribbon and gold seal for shortlist. Black ribbon and gold seal for a winner. The colour does the work; read it before the words.

Five winners, named

Each December five books are named the most Original, Useful, Entertaining, Shareable and Important of the year. Top Ten Book Cover Design is awarded separately.

Always dated

Every badge carries its year in the ribbon. Badges are issued per year and are never reused or re-dated. Authors keep the year they won.

THE NON-OBVIOUS PODCAST



Two marks, two jobs. The show artwork is what appears in Apple, Spotify and every podcast directory: yellow ground, black type, the glasses. The stamp is the same one used across the family of brands, with the PODCAST designation, and is what appears on the website and in print.

WHERE	COLOUR
Show artwork	Yellow #FFD600 ground, black type
Episode graphics	Blue #005E8C ground, yellow accents
Page hero	Blue #005E8C, matching the episode graphics
Section colour	Magenta #B71D61, in the nav and on card shadows

WHERE THE PODCAST APPEARS

Directories

Apple, Spotify, YouTube and every aggregator show the yellow show artwork at 3000px square. It is the only place the show art is used at size, so it has to read at 60px.

The website

The podcast section uses the stamp, not the show artwork, on a blue hero. Episode graphics carry the visual weight on the listing and episode pages.

Social and print

The episode graphic travels as-is. Never crop it to a rectangle for a feed - letterbox it on a blue field instead.

THE PODCAST COLOURS



Show Yellow

#FFD600

RGB 255/214/0 | CMYK 0/12/100/0

Show artwork ground, guest name and the band on the episode graphic. Warmer than the brand yellow and used only by the podcast.



Episode Blue

#005E8C

RGB 0/94/140 | CMYK 100/58/17/3

Episode graphic ground and the podcast page hero. Deeper than the palette blue, which is not a substitute for it.



Magenta

#B71D61

RGB 183/29/97 | CMYK 23/100/40/6

The section colour, straight from the core palette. Nav underline and card shadows only, never inside artwork.

THE EPISODE GRAPHIC

Every episode gets one square graphic, and it is the only artwork the show produces regularly – so it is specified here in full. Masters are drawn at **9375 x 9375px** and exported to 600px square for the website; the same file serves Apple, Spotify, YouTube and social.



Reference master, Season 6



The three zones

Three zones, always in this order. The name sits above, the band sits below, and the guest stands between them and in front of the band. Nothing else enters the square.

The yellow here is #FFD600
Not the brand yellow #F7C731. The show art and the episode graphics share their own warmer yellow, and mixing the two in one image is visible.

The band always bleeds
It runs off both edges. A band that stops inside the square reads as a sticker rather than as part of the artwork.

ELEMENT	SPECIFICATION
Canvas	Square, 1:1. Master 9375px, delivered at 600px for web. Never cropped to a rectangle
Ground	Blue #005E8C, with the balloon lightbulb tiled across it as a slightly lighter outline pattern
Guest name	Yellow #FFD600, heavy uppercase, across the top 18%. Two guests take two lines and the type reduces to fit; the name never wraps mid-word
Portrait	Cut out, background fully removed. Centred, shoulders overlapping the band so the guest stands in front of it. Never a square crop or a drop shadow
Show band	Yellow #FFD600 parallelogram across the lower third, tilted 7.7 degrees rising to the right , running past both edges. Carries THE NON-OBVIOUS SHOW and WITH ROHIT BHARGAVA in black, with Rohit's cut-out at the right end
Band type	Black only. Never reversed, never in a palette colour
Episode number	Optional, white, upper right under the name. Use it on every episode in a season or on none

BUTTONS, CARDS AND RHYTHM

BUTTONS

SUBSCRIBE FREE

READ MORE

SECONDARY

Poppins 700, uppercase, 0.85rem. Square corners, never rounded. Yellow is the primary action; there should only be one on a screen.

CARDS

THIS WEEK

A Headline Sits Here

White on a 3px black border with the offset shadow. Kicker, then headline in Google Sans Flex 800.

SECTION RHYTHM

Desktop 86px top and bottom

Phone 34px

Column 1140px max

Reading 800 to 900px max

Bands alternate white and cream so adjacent sections separate without a rule.

One accent, one job. Yellow means "do this". Blue means "this is a link or a label". A yellow element that is not the main action on the page dilutes every other yellow element on the site.

NAVIGATION AND THE PHONE LAYOUT

NAVIGATION



Desktop. Black bar, section links in Google Sans Flex 600, the active section filled with its own colour, subscribe in yellow at the end.



Below 860px the links collapse into a menu. This is built without JavaScript on purpose: the bar is the only way around the site, so a script that fails to load must not be able to strand a reader.

THE PHONE LAYOUT

RULE	VALUE
Breakpoint	640px
Section padding	34px, from 86px
Body leading	1.62, from 1.7. Never below 1.5
Side margin	4vw
List cards	Become rows with a square thumbnail
Story images	Float beside the text, not full width
Smallest supported	320px

Pictures give way before words. Where space is tight on a phone, crop or shrink the image rather than the type. Turning list cards into rows made the newsletter archive 65 per cent shorter without removing anything.