



BRAND GUIDE

YOUR BUSINESS BIBLE

ABOUT

This document is intended to provide a useful, best-practice guide to the thinking, planning, documentation and supporting materials required when developing a property across multiple media platforms. It is predominantly aimed at the producers of such projects, who have responsibility for the overall direction of all key areas, and should inform the input they need from their various multi-disciplinary team members.

The bible that this document will guide you towards is not a production bible in the traditional sense – a format document for franchising a TV property into other markets – but rather a catch-all that covers key components of a complex multi-platform service.

Your bible may be extended to a full production reference document as the sections it contains become more detailed. Some sections across each ‘chapter’ may appear to be repetitive but should reflect a different perspective and specialisation on common areas of the project.

The Brand Guide, also known as a *Production Bible*, is primarily a document that captures key story and design IP elements, rules of engagement, functionality and technical issues across multiple platforms, and an overview of the business/marketing plan.

Each of the five main sections requires specialist members of the project team to be responsible for its development as the service goes from conception to production and the document becomes a fully detailed guide.

You don’t necessarily need to follow this structure precisely as the final format will depend on the range of content, scope and scale of your proposition – the amount of story, technical complexity, business elements or design thinking, etc. The included diagrams and examples are intentionally simplistic to encourage your own interpretations.

CONTENTS

TAGLINE

WHO, WHAT WHY & HOW

BACK STORY

KEY EVENTS

TIMELINE

MEDIA FORMATS

PLATFORMS & CHANNELS

USER-CENTRIC SCENARIOS

USER JOURNEY

DESIGN AESTHETIC

BRANDING GUIDELINES & SPECS

WIREFRAMES

FULL ASSETS LIST

USER & CONTENT MANAGEMENT

TECHNOLOGY VISION

GOALS

SUCCESS INDICATORS

USER NEED

TARGET AUDIENCE & MARKETING

BUSINESS MODELS

PROJECTIONS & BUDGETING

PRODUCTION TEAM

COPYRIGHT, IP & LICENSING

STATUS SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

TAGLINE

A tagline is a single-line hook that ‘teases’ the reader about what the service will achieve, or what questions it raises, from an experiential point of view.

The best taglines for user-centric services include the user as ‘you’; for example,

“How will you save planet Orgon from Humans?”,

“Your journey into the mind & body of a
refugee”

or

“Uncovering the truth behind
Australia’s biggest secret,
and you’re
the detective.”

WHO. WHAT WHY & HOW

Who: (your short bio)

What: (executive summary of business/brand)

Why: (intention of service or personal
connection to cause)

How: (with what tools, platforms and skills)

BACKSTORY

This will describe the environment in which your service begun.

For a story universe, it would cover historical context, preceding narrative and/or the general mythology.

Services that have less story elements will talk about it as an experience, including competitor landscapes, consumer markets, and/ or technology trends.

It will set the foundation and scene for the rest of the business by bringing the audience into the realm of the service.

It can be used to enhance marketing in the future by giving a glimpse into the brand origin.

KEY EVENTS

Most multi-platform projects will play out as a sequence of events as the service evolves over time.

To aid understanding, a numbered list of how the service is launched in phases and sub-elements is very useful.

TIMELINE

It can refer to specific dates and include traditional project management Gantt charts.

MEDIA FORMATS

This is a catch-all format label and/or precise list of elements that defines what the service ‘actually’ is from a multiple platform perspective. Every multi-platform project can be described in a few words as a form, often made out of several sub-forms. Here are some examples of the components that may be a part of the service, and thereby indicate the form, some examples are:

1. Webisode: audio or video content delivered as a developing fictional or social series. Another option is podcasts, vodcasts or mobisodes.
2. Community Hub: a connected service site dedicated to growing and managing a community of interest around the franchise.
3. Games: easy to pick-up, dip in and out games, from single player to massively multiplayer.
4. Physical Installation: any project that is rooted in or focused around a fixed physical interactive build such as an interactive kiosk, sound installation or pop-up event.
5. Social Film or Social TV: a hybrid project combining social media and connected linear video elements (eg. IGTV)
6. Apps or downloadable software: phone or PC applications/software to generate improved function and engagement with users and service.

PLATFORMS & CHANNELS

Drilling down further, this section will list each platform and a likely range of channels or services on those platforms, covering at a high level what the content will be on each.

For example, if the platform is a generic smart-phone, the range of channels used on that particular platform might include:

(a) generic SMS (b) a cross-mobile OS (operating system) bespoke-built app, and (c) a QR (quick response) pattern-based app.

This section will document all channels as a **reference point** for the rest of the production, and is likely to be updated regularly throughout development and execution.

USER-CENTRIC SCENARIOS

User-centric design begins by understanding typical users of your multi-platform project to such an extent that you can visualise them using it.

This section will focus on three or four hypothetical and individual users, defined psychographically <http://bit.ly/ICkv86> and describe at high level their chronological and individual routes through the service.

It will highlight their particular lifestyles, and how the project is relevant to them.

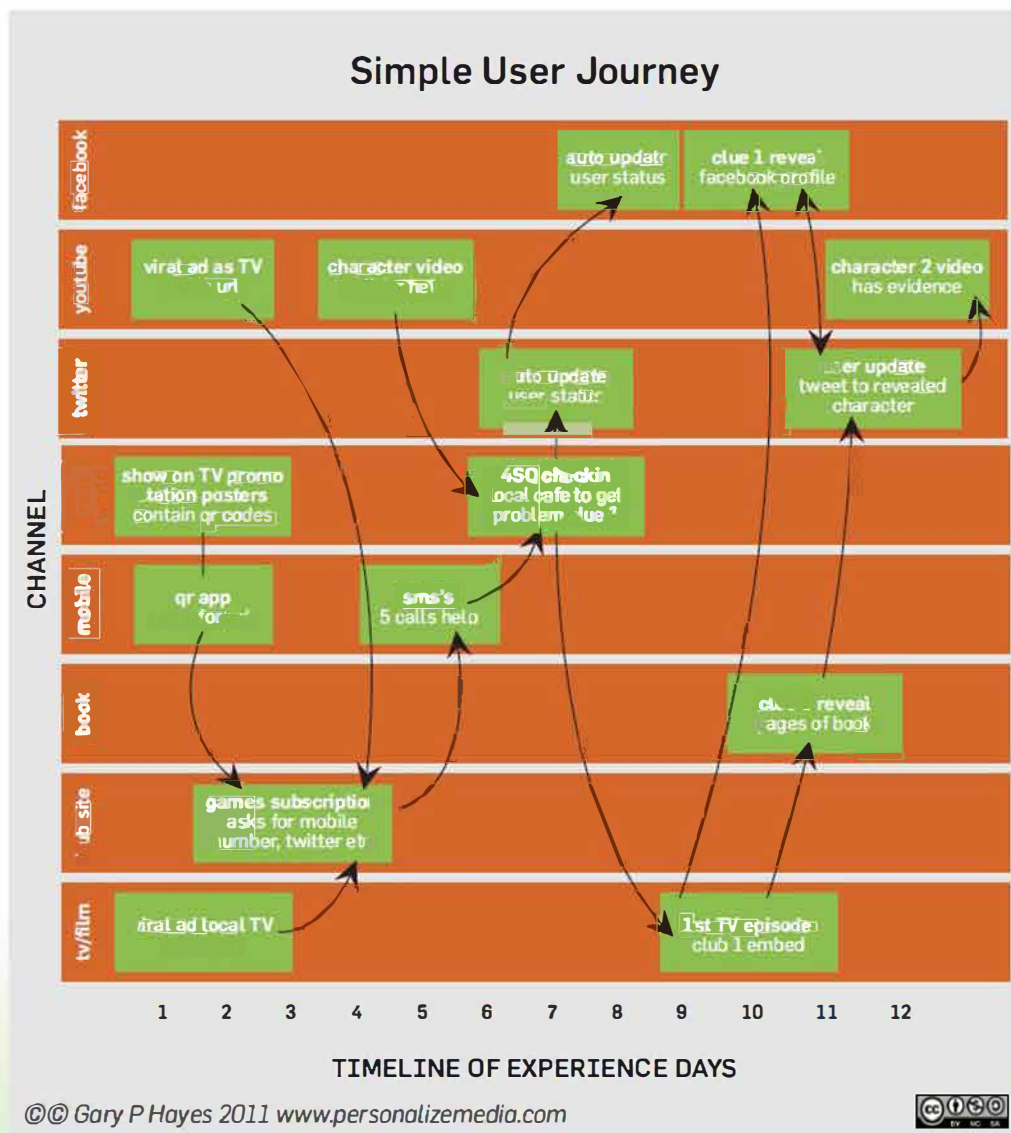
It will clearly state their points of entry (POEs) into the service, and elements that will motivate and call them to action.

These 'colourful', textual descriptions will be used later to map out a global user journey.

(Essentially, this is a summary of your key demographic)

USER JOURNEY

This is primarily a diagram with accompanying notes, which figuratively demonstrates a range of routes through the service as a multi-channel / multi-platform experience, and echoes the user-centric scenarios section above. With time mapped on the X axis, and channel or platform on the Y axis, it provides a clear idea of dependencies and bridges between each component serving to highlight any issues with points of entry, calls to action (CTAs), or service exits.



DESIGN AESTHETIC

This section sets out the overall vision behind the design.

Similar to the art direction in film and TV, it will describe and portray the environments and scenes for the brand.

For both fiction and utility services, this will include interface design, comparing and contrasting with existing projects, and clearly showing points of difference.

It can also be extended with **mood board** examples illustrating the evolution of the design process.

BRANDING GUIDELINES & SPECS

This is a treatment and design style guide describing the thinking behind the branding of the franchise across platforms.

It will cover aspects such as logo design and, where logos and other branding elements appear across channels, may have precise coordinate charts for each platform.

It will also introduce the first sight of key interfaces for the service as mock-ups and 'look & feel' diagrams.

WIREFRAMES

Wireframes are detailed interface maps and outlined charts that will allow a web builder, games designer, or mobile app builder, for example, to create the structural elements of a build, prior to final assets and graphics being put in place.

They can themselves be elements in the storyboard above, but are likely to have much more detail and so are best documented separately.

The wireframe will usually have pixel coordinates and block references to different sections of the app, game scene or site.

For early planning documents, these wireframes are not as important as 'look & feel' mockup designs, but are useful nonetheless to develop thinking around functionality.

FULL ASSETS LIST

Flowing on from previous sections, this provides a hierarchical list of assets to be produced, and will aid production planning if everyone is clear on what needs to be created vs bought in.

During early planning stages, this will be high level, but as production nears will start to become a deep hierarchy of assets to create.

It will focus on media assets that have a design need, rather than a pragmatic catch-all asset production list.

USER & CONTENT MANAGEMENT

A critical aspect of all multi-platform services is managing users in real time or asynchronously.

Technically this section will define how user data collected from subscription and during the use of the service will be managed.

Also, how content will be generated and how often.

TECHNOLOGY VISION

Identifying the types of technology desired to carry the brand and the special features.

eg: accessible on Apple watch, application able to use on both mobile and PC
synchronisation, accesible on Play Store and App Store, etc.

GOALS

A. What do you want to achieve from the perspective of the user through the service? For example:

- Stimulate community-based storytelling
- Get the audience to be highly active during a live broadcast
- Create deeper engagement between scheduled events
- Get the audience to become active outside the home
- Stimulate massive community created content contribution
- Make the service highly personalised

B. What are the goals from the perspective of the creative team? For example:

- Reach a younger or older demographic
- Experiment with never before tried multi-platform concepts
- Improve the skills of the team
- Raise awareness of issues, social good or another media property
- Design a service that lasts two years and longer
- Build a strong female or male viewership
- Build a loyal local and/or international community for your franchise

C. What is the economic goal or model?

- Commercial: revenue generation through mature digital business models
- Marketing: at cost, promotional/marketing/advertising of another product or property
- Social good: at cost, awareness and issue raising or cultural, educational and/or artistic statements
- Experimental: a new type of project designed to push boundaries, with the freedom to fail and lose money but learn from.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

How will the stated goals be measured, and from those results how will you decide if the service has been successful?

The KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and ROI (Return On Investment) are traditional ways to measure success, but from a story perspective there may be other engagement metrics you are building into your service/s.

USER NEED

This is a short high-level section covering the key question of why your service will be noticed and used.

A simple user-needs analysis will highlight gaps in the market, weak competition, or just a strongly 'needed' utility-like service.

TARGET AUDIENCE & MARKETING

This section will cover two key areas: Who will use the service, and how will you attract them to it?

It will include a general overview of who the audience is, where you'll find them, listing competing services or examples of similar services, quoting numbers.

Also how to utilise the network you already have: short snippets of work to share on whatsapp, friends and family's testimonials, connecting with distant followers or those you see locally (colleagues and neighbors).

It will be a comparative analysis and might use some bespoke research you have completed for the project. A logical progression from this is how you will attract and market to them so they are aware your service exists. A range of techniques from traditional to social media marketing needs to be covered here, and estimates of numbers over time should be front and centre.

Another key element that needs to be covered is the community strategy for the service, confirming what will be put in place to grow a community of interest as well as a loyal subscriber base.

BUSINESS MODELS

This provides an overview of how the budget will be raised or revenue generated. For many multi-platform services there will be a mix of business models, so this section will detail primary and secondary models, which may include the following:

- Sponsorship (commercial or funded by agency)
- Advertising: text based or rich media advertising (surround or product placement)
- Subscription (to use the service): part of the freemium/premium model
- Transaction: direct sales of product, pay per use or pre-mium or extended elements
- Affiliate marketing: money for connecting with like services
- Virtual currency: taking a percentage of exchanges for virtual currency from real world money
- Direct sales of the multi-platform 'format itself' to third parties
- Sales to market intelligence of anonymous user data
- Peer-to-peer: taking a percentage of user-to-user fees in your project's 'market', such as virtual goods exchanges or embedded online auctions
- Sales of product placement spots
- Donations to parts of whole elements of the service

PROJECTIONS & BUDGETING

This section will detail all the important costs and/or likely revenues and/or profits from the service.

It should include a spreadsheet listing how much the service will cost to build, and this may develop in granularity as the service planning moves forward.

It will be linked to the schedule of production, and should break down potential budget spend at each milestone. Due to the nature of a complex production, the spreadsheet should also break down according to platform, so further down the track decisions can be made on deployment.

Finally, a project management Gantt chart will minutely detail timelines linked to budget requirements.

The projections will be a realistic assessment of likely revenues generated, including whether and when the project will break even and move into profit.

PRODUCTION TEAM

The team should be comprised of those involved, brand ambassadors and yourself. Provide biographical backgrounds on each of the team with head shots if possible and feature this on your webpage or social sites to share favourable behind the scenes content.

A complex project will require the key roles of the producer/s, writer/s, designer/s, technical lead, system architect, programmers, business managers, marketing and so on to a maximum of say ten project leads.

COPYRIGHT, IP & LICENSING

This section will cover a range of intellectual property such as signature catchphrases, identifiable words, products or styles.

Example of this would be:

Star Wars which uses it's own Universe, lightsabers and phrases "May the force be with you"

Nintendo which uses Mario as a mascot

or for personal brands,

Michael Jackson had a coined sound and physical stamp with hair, eyeliner and military shoulder pads

Queen Elizabeth goes for colourful two-pieces and cheeky facial expressions

Whether the King of Pop or the Queen of England, the identifiability is what makes a brand and brand persona valuable. This can be loud, subtle, physical or internal traits so long as it's used consistently and shared.

Patents for products are available on government sites online, for a price. But the true power comes from an unwavering fan base from a large enough loyal audience who would ensure you claim all the glory for your impact to whichever industry you're contributing to -- and not someone stealing your ideas and doing so before you had your chance in the limelight.

STATUS, SUMMARY & NEXT STEPS

Often the business and marketing plan is a natural finish to the production and/or planning guide from a production document perspective.

As a presentation document it is worth re-iterating the opening tags: why the service is unique, and key story or service goals as a focused wrap outside of the business plan in a casual way if desired.

For example, you may indicate here:

Where the business currently stands in the grand scheme of things; currently business is/isn't affected by pandemic restrictions which would change in time for the launch of x (?)

What is the next major move (s)

Whether there are complementary areas to address and add to this document that may be missing: scripts, templates, privacy policies etc.