



How New York Insight  
Meditation Center  
evolved its brand identity  
to convey a "more  
profound and holistic  
message"

BRAND RECIPE CASE STUDY



# Introducing New York Insight Meditation Center (NYI)

New York Insight Meditation Center is an urban center, based in midtown Manhattan, for the practice of mindful awareness, called Insight or Vipassana meditation. Everyone is welcome to begin or deepen meditation practice based on the teachings of the Buddha.





# Branding Challenges

*What needed to change? Our client told us:*

“We know it is time to re-brand because we realize that our old logo of the circular hands and tagline ‘A peaceful refuge in the heart of the city’ do not resonate for us anymore as a full expression of what we have become—a diverse community dedicated to transformation.”



# Brand Recipe: The Steps Taken

Stone Soup's proprietary process is an intensive one that identifies and strengthens an organization's brand through a positioning strategy that effectively differentiates an organization, allowing the brand to move forward with confidence.

1. **Decision-makers** should be involved on the **Branding Team**
2. **Character** and **personality** of the brand is built from the organization's **core values**
3. **Positioning** and direction of the brand is determined by character and personality
4. **Mood** of the brand is developed
5. **Brand elements** are designed
6. **Brand messages** are developed
7. **Brand Guidelines** are developed



# Brand Values

*Stone Soup worked together with NYI's Branding Team to uncover truths about the organization that were already there, that we could all agree upon – including these Brand Values: who the organization is, on a core level.*

## **Peaceful**

Calm and conducive to reflection

## **Diverse**

An eclectic, multi-cultural group

## **Urban**

Mid-town Manhattan location

## **Welcoming**

A warm and supportive community

## **Transformational**

Through the teaching and the practice

1. Brand Values

2. Personality

3. Brand Positioning

4. Ideal Audience

5. Validation Research

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7. Internal Audit

8. Brand Guide

# Brand Personality

*How the organization looks, feels, and sounds;  
it's "dressing". What you see outside is a  
manifestation of the culture inside.*

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Warm Welcoming  
Personal Connections Diverse  
Fulfilling Peaceful Instructive  
Transformative Friendly Open  
Informal Supportive Urban  
Spiritual Ethical Happiness  
Generosity Community Forgiving

# Brand Tone

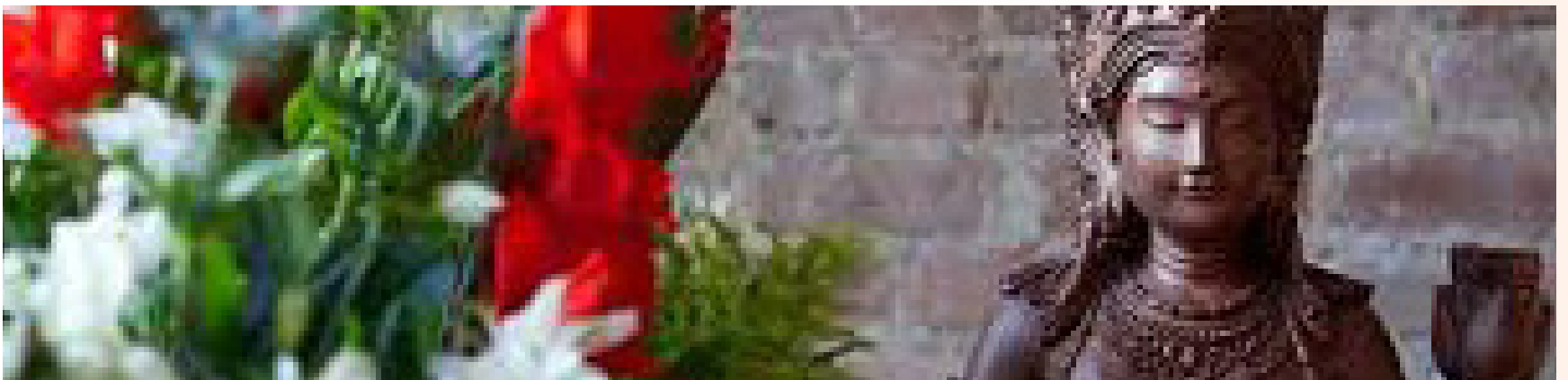
*Values and personality inform the tone for later Brand Elements.*

## Values

## Personality

## Tone

Peaceful Refuge .....	➤ Reflective, Subdued .....	➤ Quiet
Diversity .....	➤ Eclectic, Variety .....	➤ Colorful
Urban Setting .....	➤ Contemporary, Hip .....	➤ Bold
Welcoming Atmosphere ...	➤ Friendly, Warm .....	➤ Warm
Transforming Lives .....	➤ Active, Powerful .....	➤ Dynamic



# Mood Board

*Color chips, photography, icons and symbols provide a visual recollection – feelings evoked – of our branding discussions so far.*

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# Brand Positioning

*One unique element, something no one else can say, that will give the organization a competitive edge, it is used to set up a benefit for their audiences.*

**“New York Insight is the only urban Vipassana meditation center to welcome everyone of different cultures and backgrounds to begin or deepen their meditation practice.”**

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# Competitor Analysis

Defining an organization's position in the market requires looking at who else is occupying the space, and noting common themes, visuals, messages and claims (reasons to buy).

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▲ COMPETITOR LOGOS

## ▼ COMPETITOR ANALYSIS SPREADSHEET

COMPETITOR	DESCRIPTION	MISSION	VALUES	VISION	GOALS	STRATEGIES	KEY MESSAGES	KEY VISUALS	KEY ACTIONS
Zen Center of New York City	Fire Lotus Temple Branch of the Mountains and Rivers Order	The Center is home to a vibrant, diverse community of members and friends who provide ongoing volunteer and financial support. We are a non-profit, non-sectarian Buddhist organization. Our mission is to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Compassion, Wisdom, Mindfulness	To be a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism.	To provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.	"We are a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism."	Red and white color scheme.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.
Garrison Institute		The Center is home to a vibrant, diverse community of members and friends who provide ongoing volunteer and financial support. We are a non-profit, non-sectarian Buddhist organization. Our mission is to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Compassion, Wisdom, Mindfulness	To be a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism.	To provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.	"We are a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism."	Blue and white color scheme.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.
Spirit Rock Meditation Center	New York's Leading Center of Buddhist Learning and Mind Culture	The Center is home to a vibrant, diverse community of members and friends who provide ongoing volunteer and financial support. We are a non-profit, non-sectarian Buddhist organization. Our mission is to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Compassion, Wisdom, Mindfulness	To be a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism.	To provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.	"We are a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism."	Green and white color scheme.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.
Insight Meditation Society		The Center is home to a vibrant, diverse community of members and friends who provide ongoing volunteer and financial support. We are a non-profit, non-sectarian Buddhist organization. Our mission is to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Compassion, Wisdom, Mindfulness	To be a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism.	To provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.	"We are a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism."	Yellow and white color scheme.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.
Mindful Life Yoga		The Center is home to a vibrant, diverse community of members and friends who provide ongoing volunteer and financial support. We are a non-profit, non-sectarian Buddhist organization. Our mission is to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Compassion, Wisdom, Mindfulness	To be a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism.	To provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.	"We are a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism."	Green and white color scheme.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.
Yoga Practika		The Center is home to a vibrant, diverse community of members and friends who provide ongoing volunteer and financial support. We are a non-profit, non-sectarian Buddhist organization. Our mission is to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Compassion, Wisdom, Mindfulness	To be a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism.	To provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.	"We are a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism."	Blue and white color scheme.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.
hyp-yoga		The Center is home to a vibrant, diverse community of members and friends who provide ongoing volunteer and financial support. We are a non-profit, non-sectarian Buddhist organization. Our mission is to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Compassion, Wisdom, Mindfulness	To be a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism.	To provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all who seek to deepen their practice and understanding of Buddhism.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.	"We are a place where people can find peace, joy, and meaning in their lives through the practice of Buddhism."	Yellow and white color scheme.	Offering a variety of programs and services, including meditation classes, retreats, and workshops.

# Audience Personas

*An organization's "imaginary friend" that represents the kind of person you want to communicate with in order to make marketing decisions that attract, inform, and engage.*



## Sarah

**Age:** 42

**Location:** Brooklyn Heights

**Profession:** College Professor

**Education:** Highly Educated

**Hobbies:** Choir, Running, Reading

**Personality:** Warm, Generous

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# Validation Research

*Assumptions up to this point need to be tested with stakeholders via surveys and interviews before going public with the new brand.*

## Perception

5. Why did you choose to practice and/or study at NYI over other centers? On a scale of 1 to 5:

Not at all	A little	Neutral	Somewhat	A Lot
1	2	3	4	5

- ☐ The sense of community
- ☐ It's a peaceful retreat
- ☐ I feel welcome
- ☐ The quality of instruction
- ☐ Choice of classes
- ☐ I feel more relaxed
- ☐ Self-transformation
- ☐ I feel better physically
- ☐ Meditation instruction
- ☐ Ethical conduct
- ☐ Work, relationship, and life skills
- ☐ Other - please list:

6. What is of most value to you at NYI? On a scale of 1 to 5:

Not at all	A little	Neutral	Somewhat	A Lot
1	2	3	4	5

- ☐ The generosity of "dana"
- ☐ Teachers from within (rather than bringing in experts from the outside)
- ☐ A guiding teacher
- ☐ Diversity
- ☐ The Theravada teaching tradition

(continued)

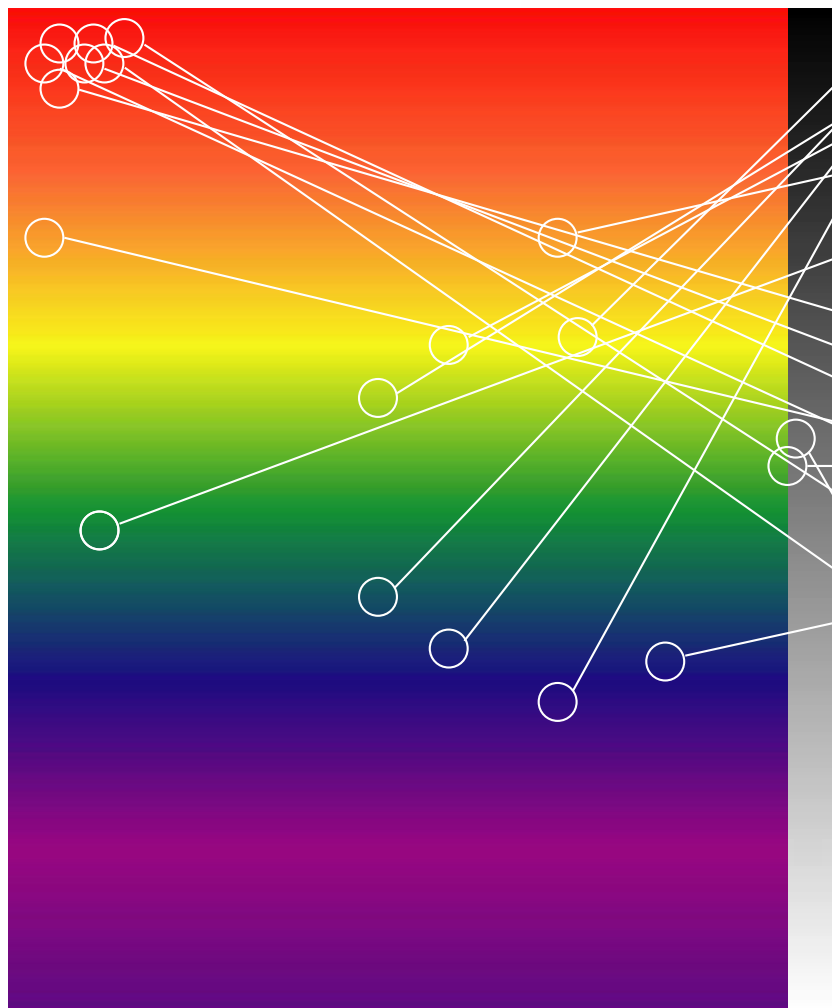
▲ EXCERPT OF SURVEY DISTRIBUTED TO STUDENTS AT THE CENTER

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# Color Analysis

*Discovering a color opportunity allows the brand to own their own color, another point of differentiation.*



Shambhala  
New York Open Center  
Garrison Institute  
Self-Realization Fellowship  
New York Zen Center  
Downtown NY Meditation  
Center  
Interdependence Project  
Village Zendo  
Dharma Punx  
Tibet House  
Insight Meditation Society  
Rigpa  
Eckhart Tolle  
Buddhist Global Relief  
Gaia House

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# Internal Audit

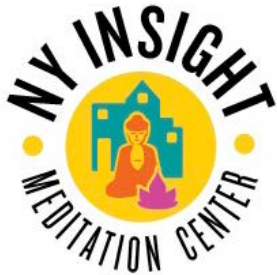
The next step involves gathering all the uses of NYI's existing brand visuals and logos. We want to discover what their attitude is to the existing brand visuals. We are looking for consistencies and inconsistencies. Being consistent with your brand is critical to its success.

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# Logo Design (1)

*NYI needed a new logo, which would eventually be included in the Brand Guide. Internally, we worked on several preliminary designs...*



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STEP 8

## Logo Design (2)

*...until we settled on three strong directions to present, hitting on several key concepts, each with a rationale for choice of color, typeface and graphics.*



▲ CONCEPT A  
**AWAKENING BUDDHA**



▲ CONCEPT B  
**URBAN SANCTUARY**

*However, none of the logos seemed entirely appropriate yet. The branding team was drawn to Concept B, but felt the cityscape was too generic and the overall feel was too 'lightweight'. They preferred the boldness of the type and rich, warm colors from Concept A. We were told:*

*"The ideas behind these logos are in sync with our values and personality, but their execution is a little off..."*

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## Logo Design (3)

*...so we kept refining with rounds of feedback from the branding team, until we had our final logo (and tagline).*

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**New York Insight**  
**MEDITATION CENTER**

Where Hearts & Minds Awaken

▲ NEW LOGO AND TAGLINE

# Logo Design (4)

*Elements and concepts from the mood board were integrated from earlier in the process.*

- **Color** A palette of warm gold, orange, and deep red tones is evocative of the spice-color robes of Theravada monks in southeast Asia.
- **Type** Prokyon is a humanist typeface – quirky, clean and modern in appearance.
- **Graphics** A New York cityscape emerges from—and is elevated by—a lotus flower, a strong Buddhist symbol representing purity and enlightenment.

The logo execution is bold, to emphasize the strength and commitment necessary to practicing meditation and following the teachings.



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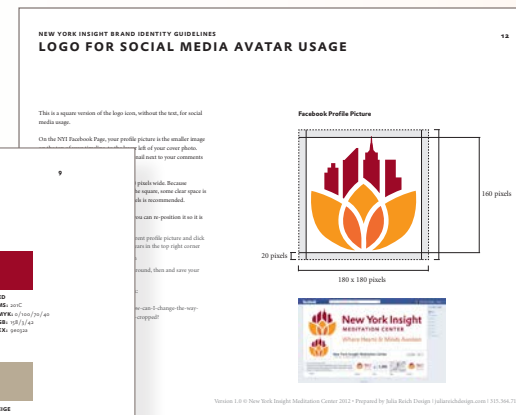
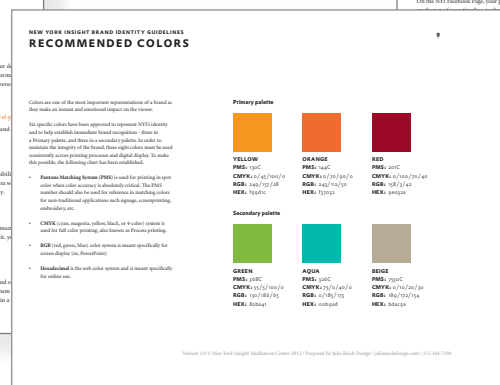
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# Brand Guide

*This manual provided the files, tools & guidance NYI needed to start producing their own polished, consistent marketing materials.*

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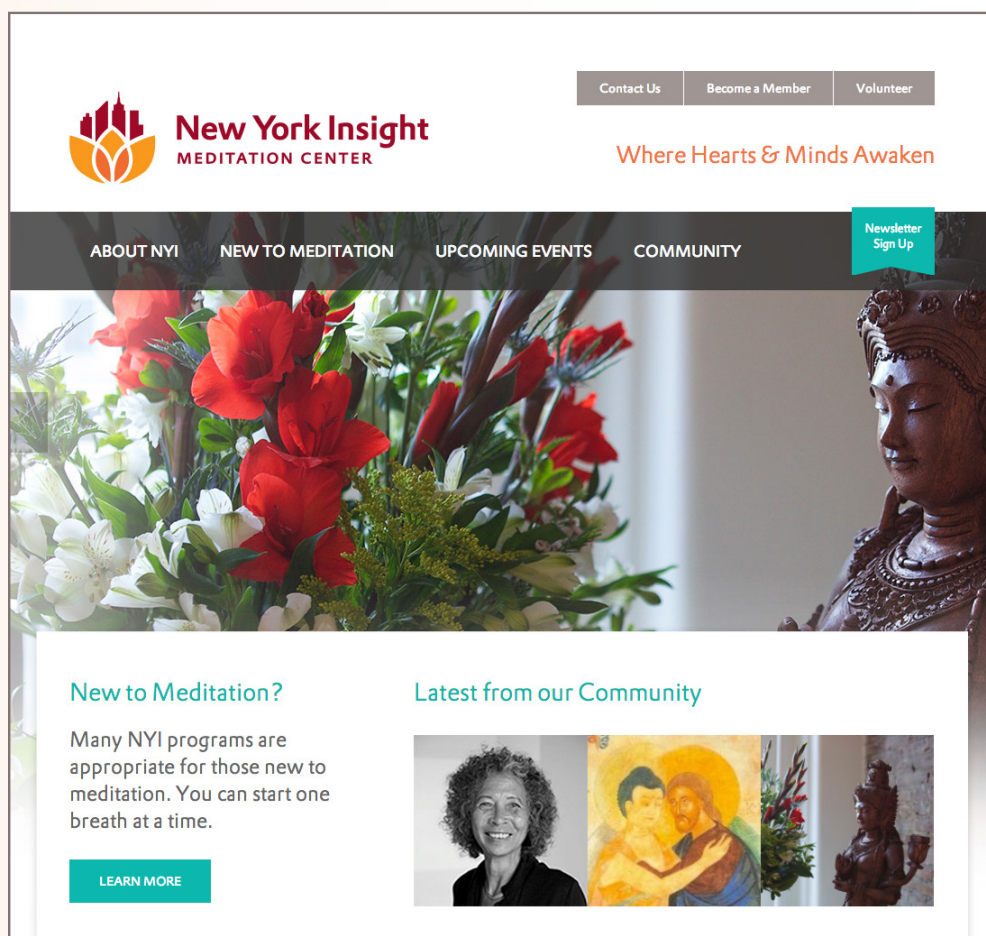
## 8. Brand Guide



- ▲ THE BRAND GUIDE REITERATES FINDINGS FROM THE BRAND RECIPE PROCESS AND PROVIDES GUIDANCE ON WRITTEN AND VISUAL BRAND ELEMENTS.

# Building on the Benefits

*Soon after our branding project concluded, NYI began successfully applying their new visual identity and messaging to a series of communication materials, including an email newsletter campaign, website and Facebook page.*





# Outcomes

“Our new logo blends the vibrancy of the city with the beauty and grace of the lotus flower... and the tagline **where hearts & minds awaken** reflects a much more profound and holistic message about us now. Thank you for a beautiful brand identity. I always appreciate your process and its caring and careful qualities. Very much like mindfulness. ☸



— SEBENE SELASSIE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEW YORK INSIGHT



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