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The heart of Oulu is the city and its people. The brand is the feeling that Oulu evokes in people's minds. It conveys how Oulu and its people are seen and what the experience of our city is like.

This brand book is a guide – or a collection of glimpses – into how to tell Oulu's story in images and words. The manual outlines the most important aspects of Oulu's brand, steers message and communications design, and provides instructions for using visual identifiers.

The people of Oulu participated in creating this new brand. Every action, idea, answer, comment, and feedback has made the new brand somewhat more Oulu. When we do what we do to a higher degree, a change for the better always takes place.

Higher grade°

The brand should talk to the residents of Oulu and serve the needs of the city organization and Oulu-based actors. It needs to be real, meaningful, and interesting.

The aim of the brand renewal was to create a unified image and message of Oulu. Oulu2026 – the approaching stint as the European Capital of Culture in 2026 – has also had an impact on the brand.

A higher grade of living°

Päivi Laajala
Mayor
Brand building blocks

The brand consists primarily of actions and messages. They are steered by Oulu’s proven strengths, which form the basis of the brand.

Positioning differentiation: a down-to-earth growth center living off the power of the North.
The positioning differentiation is the brand’s target image, which sets it apart from the competition. Positioning is not the same as a slogan or a brand promise.

Supporting factors: Northern nature and character / humane energy / world-class expertise
Supporting factors are the building blocks for positioning differentiation. They sharpen the focus on how we are going to create the desired positioning and strengthen it.

Values: bold, fair, responsible
Values steer the brand and form the basis for all action.
Brand cores

Oulu’s brand is encapsulated by the city’s strengths – or the core thoughts that define Oulu and differentiate the city from others.

North
North is both a geographic location and an attitude. At its rawest, it is the proximity and impact of the rugged, beautiful, and varied nature of Oulu, the number one city for half Finland. Our feet are steady on the northern ground: what we do, we do properly and our own way. Oulu is bold, it influences more than it is influenced.

Humane
The humane nature of Oulu is encapsulated in a community that welcomes you. People are encountered honestly, in a relaxed way. Working and doing things are important, but not the most important things in life – space and opportunities are provided for family, home, and self-expression. It just feels like there’s more time in Oulu.

Smart
Oulu is home to a unique combination of intelligence and creativity. It manifests itself in the high level of educational attainment that forms a basis for the ability to solve problems and as a company culture that encourages experimentation. It may show as urban infrastructure that improves the quality of life, too. Oulu’s insightfulness is clever and captivating.
Oulu's brand promise is based on the city's strengths. It has the courage to reach for the future and create something new. Our Higher grade of philosophy tells us not only about Oulu's location, but also environmental responsibility, technology, change, and urban development.

The promise is not a slogan and it will not be written out in conjunction with a logo. It can be present in the city's content and materials, where the promise must always be justified and fulfilled visually, verbally, or experientially. Repeating the promise is not an end in itself.

Oulu is Finland's fifth largest city and very well known nationally, so there is no need for Oulu to advertise itself with a clever and facile little slogan. Oulu's brand promise is primarily an internal tool that steers all activities towards the desired future.

The Higher grade of philosophy means that the promise lives and adapts to context. The comparative adjectives that supplement the primary adjectives are chosen so that they are real or attainable and right for each specific theme. And that they embody Oulu. The adjective comparatives are compatible with the stated cores of the Oulu brand, linked to the key messages, and in line with instructions provided on the tone of voice.
Key messages

What should we tell anyone out there who is interested in Oulu?

The first, general key message opens up the Oulu brand promise and functions as a signature for the brand cores. Chosen strengths, on the other hand, are listed based on the target group: we can all use the messages as they are to start conversations or augment them with additional observations.

Oulu offers a higher grade of living. It’s a future European Capital of Culture with humane energy and buzzing with forward-looking high tech.

Companies in Finland and internationally

Oulu is a model city for cooperation: a hub of established and developing networks. The business-friendly environment puts all the opportunity in the world at your fingertips.

Key points to consider in communication:
- Oulu is, in all ways, a Smart City and a center for world-class expertise and innovation. 5G and 6G, radio and health tech, printed intelligence, and the world's smartest hospital are just a few examples of Oulu know-how.
- The steadily growing expertise hub of northern Finland is at your disposal, as are the networking opportunities, influential people, and communities of a multidisciplinary university and research city.
- In a city with a high quality of life, recruitment works, and people settle down. Oulu supports companies in finding the right experts, in Finland and internationally.
- Oulu offers an innovative environment, an intelligent platform for experimentation, and all the support needed to start something new. Solutions to the problems of the future will be discovered in Oulu.

Experts here and elsewhere

Discover, get inspired, and fulfil your potential in Oulu. You’ll have the space and opportunity for a chilled-out, unhurried life, and meaningful work and career. In Oulu, the days roll by on people’s terms – and at nowhere near the same financial cost as in the other big cities.

Key points to consider in communications:
- The fearless creation of something new and world-class education enable a particularly Oulu kind of happiness and work that has meaning and impact on a global scale.
- Oulu is a place where you can live a high-quality life with moderate costs. We are all continuously engaged in building a better, more inspiring, and more meaningful Oulu – together. The growing future European Capital of Culture offers events, culture, well-being, and things to do for us all.
- Everyday benchmarks and bigger dreams are reached easily and ecologically in a lively biking city. Sustainability underscores everything: nature is present in the city and it is treasured. Oulu is committed to the goals of Agenda 2030 as well as the European Circular Cities Declaration.
- Oulu welcomes people from all over the world, treats all equally, and welcomes them into the community.
Key messages

Students and youth
In Oulu, children grow up to be global citizens with deep roots. The city brings together creativity, nature, know-how, and caring in a way that helps people grow up to be strong and balanced, able to stand on their own two feet.

Key points to consider in communications:
- In Oulu, development and collaboration help create meaning and surprising connections using culture, science, and technology: a European Capital of Culture continuously generates more jobs and well-being for the region.
- Not only does Oulu offer the highest quality and most diverse education on all levels available in the North, but it also offers you the world: jobs in half of Finland are within reach, as well as opportunities for postgraduate education and the power of our extensive international networks.
- In Oulu, you can continue developing yourself: the city is committed to its youth and lifelong learning – education and expertise from Oulu are global exports.
- Taking care of oneself and connecting to nature is easy. Oulu invests ecologically and socially in the future and offers a high quality of life in all its phases.

Travelers
Oulu offers northern experiences and opportunities. The region draws strength from bodies of water and urban nature, offering a higher grade of surprising thrills. Come as you are and be yourself – we are, too!

Key points to consider in communications:
- Oulu is an excellent destination for sustainable travel. Our natural and cultural values are reason enough to visit Oulu, and the four real and changing seasons offer even more options for things to do.
- Irresistible and responsible cultural events of all stripes are available: events combining madness, culture, sports, and innovations with just the right touch really stick with you.
- Whether you're a tourist, a travel operator, or attending a conference, the travel services and experiences Oulu offers are constantly developing. All visitors are offered an opportunity to experience their own kinds of Oulu moments.
- Oulu's restaurant scene offers a northern experience and clean tastes, whether you're looking for street food on hot tarmac or fried vendace and potatoes on the shore.
Elevator pitch

The elevator pitch for Oulu evokes the desired first impression the city wants to make. Our purpose is to distill and maybe even exaggerate a little to be suitably provocative. When we are creating an elevator pitch, we must always be aware of who we are talking to and adapt it for the audience – on the fly, if necessary. The most important thing is to establish a connection. Here's an example:

Oulu. Born in the gentle embrace of the waters, a down-to-earth city with its feet planted in the northern soil, developing in nature's terms to become the best in the world. In many ways, we are the most insightful place in the northern hemisphere: we take advantage of the infinite know-how of our region, so we can best share our good fortune with the rest of Finland and the world.

Our northernness is manifested in our relaxed hospitality, bold deeds, and tenacity – the keys to success for individuals and companies. Our superpowers are the different people, neighborhoods, and Oulu’s rich and varied nature. We have the space, time, and opportunities for authentic encounters – of a higher grade\(^\circ\), naturally – that may change your life.
Brand persona

For us to be able to relate to a brand and find ourselves in it, it must have human characteristics. For that reason, Oulu has a brand persona that reflects us and what we consider important to us.

If you ran into Oulu on the street or in social media, you’d feel you’ve met a trustworthy and charming, intelligent person who is pleasant company. Oulu likes to meet all kinds of people. Oulu might have a cheeky look on its face and ask you about you and your life, while sharing amusing stories about itself. With a twinkle in its eye, Oulu would challenge your perceptions. You notice that Oulu is actually quite worldly, even though it doesn’t rub it in your face.

It’s not until it tells you about its experiences that you realize how knowledgeable about the world it is and how willing to learn more. Oulu is creative and persistent, looking to work and succeed together. The two of you could hop on your bikes and head to a nearby brewery to sample their wares and talk for hours.
The tone of voice matters every bit as much as the story. That's why we've defined a unified tone of voice for Oulu and one that differentiates it from others by accentuating its unique characteristics. We use the tone of voice in all of Oulu's communications – internally and externally.

Oulu is fair, trustworthy, and natural, so it talks HONESTLY and tells it like it is.

How is it seen and heard?
Our messages are understandable and inclusive. We talk about us, but in a way that signals we are also open to others. We include current and future inhabitants of Oulu. We are excited and exciting!

What's the impact?
We strengthen our pull and grip by approaching the recipient and by being stoked about our city.

Oulu is intelligent, responsible, and bold, so it talks WITHOUT FEAR.

How is it seen and heard?
We give it to you straight. We are proud of our expertise, but we don't hide our mistakes. We are open about how we learn. We have the courage to display thought leadership, to challenge and lead by example.

What's the impact?
We take our place in the urban discourse and define our own place nationally and internationally.

Oulu is northern, lively, and relaxed, so it speaks in a GOOD-NATURED manner.

How is it seen and heard?
We describe things in a joyous way and even use superlatives, as long as we do it with thought. In the right context, we will talk about ourselves, but with a twinkle in our eye: we have the guts to be almost incisively self-deprecating, but we never ridicule others. We do not get stuck in negativity but communicate with humor. We learn to talk about Oulu in a positive manner in all situations.

What's the impact?
We sound like our people and attract more and more recipients to be influenced by our messaging.
Oulu's logo combines the old and the new. The familiar and unique shade of purple is joined by a maritime blue. Together they form a gradient that illustrates the different sides of Oulu – its contrasts. When the color is combined with the name Oulu in its familiar typography, Oulu's logo is born: unique, familiar, fresh, and all Oulu.
The letter O is the basis for the logo. The letter provides the logo with its elliptical shape as well as the degree symbol used as a part of it. They are united by an organic shape that lives atop the ellipse and adapts to the situation: when the world changes, so does Oulu.
There are different sizes with vertical and horizontal orientations available for different situations. The different versions are named by size.
We do not combine the logo with other elements. It's always clear and clean. That's why we have defined protected areas around the logo and no other elements should be placed within that area.
If, under special circumstances, we use the Oulu logo without the gradient, we use a version that combines black, white, and shades of grey. A black and white gradient version combining shades of grey has also been defined.
Oulu’s colors are fresh. The familiar shade of purple is combined with a pleasant, maritime blue as well as the gradient created by combining the two colors.

When we create the gradient, it requires a secondary color to preserve the brightness of the gradient. The secondary color, too, is one of Oulu’s colors.
Mostly we use secondary colors in visual identities for the various public utilities and departments. The identities are born as variations on the Oulu logo. Public utilities and departments can use a secondary color in line with their visual identity in different campaigns and events. Secondary colors are happy and bright, and their two different shades are used to create gradients.
When we mold the living form of the logo and use secondary colors, we create unique signs for Oulu's public utilities and departments. The colors characterize the functions of the public utilities and departments. The white degree symbol creates a connection to the Oulu logo.
The different departments of the city of Oulu use colors and elements of the Oulu logo in their materials. There are four versions of the logo for each department: two vertical and two horizontal. One of the horizontal versions can be combined with the Oulu word from the Oulu logo.

When we create visual identities for ventures, events, or other initiatives with a close connection to Oulu or its public utilities, using Oulu’s main colors as well as its own Oulun Graadi typography is strongly recommended. This way, the identities are unified and easily recognizable as a part of the Oulu identity.
Public utilities

Public utilities or departments that need their own differentiating and unique identity use their own secondary color and a variation on the living form of the logo. In the materials, we use Oulu’s identity augmented with the chosen secondary color. Using the white degree symbol creates a connection to the Oulu logo.

There are four versions of the logo for each public utility: two vertical and two horizontal. One of the horizontal versions can be combined with the Oulu word from the Oulu logo.
Oulun Graadi is the unique font of Oulu. Its nature is a higher grade" of gentle. There are ever so slight changes in the thickness of the line and the line endings are oblique, like in Oulu’s logo. Instead of straight diagonals, there are flatter arcs, and the tighter interior corners open up to a slight smile. The font's unique forms are warm and abundant with a human touch. The creatively combined oblique forms make the font lively and idiosyncratic.
LOREM IPSUM IS SIMPLY DUMMY TEXT OF THE PRINTING AND TYPESETTING INDUSTRY. LOREM IPSUM HAS BEEN THE INDUSTRY'S STANDARD DUMMY TEXT EVER SINCE THE 1500S, WHEN AN UNKNOWN PRINTER TOOK A GALLEY OF TYPE AND SCRAMBLED IT TO MAKE A TYPE SPECIMEN BOOK. IT HAS SURVIVED NOT ONLY FIVE CENTURIES, BUT ALSO THE LEAP INTO ELECTRONIC TYPESetting, REMAINING ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED. IT WAS POPULARISED IN THE 1960S WITH THE RELEASE OF LETRASET SHEETS CONTAINING LOREM IPSUM PASSAGES, AND MORE RECENTLY WITH DESKTOP PUBLISHING SOFTWARE LIKE ADOBE PHOTOSHOP INCLUDING VERSIONS OF LOREM IPSUM.

Contrary to popular belief, Lorem Ipsum is not simply random text. It has roots in a piece of classical Latin literature from 45 BC.

Body text font is Barlow. 
http://fonts.google.com/specimen/Barlow

Heading font is Oulun Graadi.

Secondary font is Segoe UI, used e.g., in PowerPoint templates

For Cyrillic letters, the Frutiger Neue font is used.
The Oulu degree symbol is not a logo and can't be used as such alone. The degree symbol stands for the Higher grade philosophy and we use it as a graphic element to increase interest in different situations and surfaces. The degree symbol is usually placed in the upper right-hand corner of materials or elements.

The pattern inside the degree symbol is composed of the elements of Oulu’s logo and it can be altered by moving said elements. This way, we create a variety of living surfaces. Public utilities and departments that use their own secondary color in their materials can use the degree symbol in said color.

We can also use the white degree symbol on surfaces where appropriate. Otherwise, the degree symbol is never used in a single color, but always with a live pattern inside it.

Using the degree symbol
Examples of how to use the degree symbol
The starting point of the image concept for Oulu’s brand is to connect the brand’s core facets with real life and Oulu itself. The images lean on the differentiation of Oulu’s brand promise and the way the city delivers on it – in a fun way. Images should show Oulu as a whole and in whole, proud of its different neighborhoods and people. All of us who live in Oulu can find something to relate to and people who look like us in the city’s visual narrative. The pictures provide us with the opportunity to augment our ideas of what it means to be in or from Oulu and the roles different people can play in the life of the city.

Photographs and visual narratives
The images we use in our communications represent Oulu in an honest and inspiring way. The images may manifest the Higher grade°... philosophy: something is askew, better, in the wrong place, as chaos in order or just different in an abstract manner. In Oulu, the unique and different, ugly or unconventional are all a higher grade° of pretty!
The images we use in our communications make an impression and stand out from the mass. We show Oulu as authentic and sincere. All kinds of emotions, special and interesting attractions, and people, as well as the rough and edgy side of Oulu can be shown in the visual depictions of the city. We use the images to bring its development and layers to life.

Images help us attract attention and evoke feelings. They could even have a documentary feel to them. We don't process them to the point where they look too clean or plastic but depict – in addition to the core facets of the Oulu brand – culture, the urban city, and nature, as well as the many ways in which people can thrive in Oulu. We bring into the images our real four seasons and the city’s many contrasts.
Layout principles and template

By following the layout principles, we make sure that Oulu’s publications are unified and recognizable. The main layout principle is a grid that helps users place elements and texts in the proper locations. The basic ideas are large margins, clear picture areas, and high readability. We can use the Oulu degree symbol to increase the recognizability of the materials.
Hemingway was back in Ketchum in April 1961, three months after being released from the Mayo Clinic, when Mary "found Hemingway holding a shotgun" in the kitchen one morning. She called Saviers, who sedated him and admitted him to the Sun Valley Hospital; and once the weather cleared Saviers flew again to Rochester with his patient. Hemingway underwent three electroshock treatments during that visit. He was released at the end of June and was home in Ketchum on June 30. Two days later he "quite deliberately" shot himself with his favorite shotgun in the early morning hours of July 2, 1961. He had unlocked the basement storeroom where his guns were kept, gone upstairs to the front entrance foyer, and shot
shotgun in the early morning hours of July 2, 1961. He had

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months after being released from the Mayo Clinic, when

Hemingway was back in Ketchum in April 1961, three

unlocked the basement storeroom where his guns were

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Mary “found Hemingway holding a shotgun” in the kitchen

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Hemingway underwent three electroshock treatments during that visit. He was released at the end of the patient. Hemingway was back in Ketchum in April 1961, three months after being released from the Mayo Clinic, when it “did not seem to her a conscious lie” when she told the funeral and travel arrangements. Bernice Kert writes that it “did not seem to her a conscious lie” when she told the press that his death had been accidental. In a press interview five years later, Mary confirmed that he had shot himself.

Mary “found Hemingway holding a shotgun” in the kitchen unlocked the basement storeroom where his guns were kept, gone upstairs to the front entrance foyer, and shot the shotgun in the early morning hours of July 2, 1961. He had himself.
Inspiration
Inspiration
The Oulu brand was made by the people of Oulu

A brand is not born from nothing, but from the city and all its inhabitants. The residents of Oulu must recognize Oulu’s brand as their own and be able to relate to it. That’s why we created it together with the people. We’ve combined the familiar and the recognized with new things like a fresh attitude and a more sharply defined personality. The brand reaches towards the future while coming to life on the level of discernible actions.

Oulu’s new brand was created together with the people of Oulu, formed through questionnaires, interviews, and polls. Every idea, thought, and comment was significant and used as a building block for the brand. Here are a few examples of how people from Oulu have described our city:

“Oulu is the city of contrasts, filled with a good kind of strangeness, amiability and then also a bit of edge.”

“Weird, idiosyncratic, self-sufficient, participatory. Got everything from reindeer husbandry to hi-tech!”

“Clear and reachable, crazy and fun, it’s better to overdo it!”

“The pulse of the city meets the peace of the country, people’s smiles and boldness, attitude, gentleness. That’s what Oulu is to me.”

“For me, Oulu reflects contrasts. City and nature, development and historical, relaxed and vibrant.”

“The wind. It brings otherwise silent people together when they say to a stranger ‘it’s very windy’.”
Contact information

In all matters related to Oulu’s brand, you’ll be helped by:

Sari Valppu, Communications Manager
sari.valppu@ouka.fi

Niina Teräslahti, AD
niina.teraslalhti@ouka.fi