
Core Identity

This details the foundational elements of your brand.

Business name

The HC Companies

What you do Briefly describe your business.

HC manufactures a comprehensive portfolio of resin growing containers ideal for greenhouse, nursery, cannabis, retail, and commercial markets. HC also supports a full line of sustainably sourced solutions including protective packaging, growing containers, and more.

Brand heart Outline your purpose, vision, mission, and values.

Our Mission:

From grower to gardener, improving our world.

Our Values:

Safety, Integrity, Commitment to Excellence, Team, Service, Can-do

Audience Who are your target personas?

Our audience covers a wide spectrum of the horticultural market. The majority of our customers are greenhouse and nursery growers who buy products through both our distributor network and direct throughout North America. Cannabis growers are a new customer for HC - utilizing our nursery containers for cultivation. Within the greenhouse, nursery, and even the cannabis segments is a sub-set of growers utilizing sustainable growing containers in order to satisfy an increasing customer demand for more environmentally friendly options.

Competition Who are your top 3-5 competitors?

East Jordan, Summit Plastic, NSI, Landmark Plastics, Poppelmann, Western Pulp, Online and Overseas Distributors

Key differentiators What makes you different/better than your competition?

- One-stop-shop for a variety of growing containers
- Sustainable offerings
- North American distributor network
- Modern manufacturing technologies
- Multiple manufacturing facilities throughout North America
- Legacy brands/products
- Modern and user-friendly website

Brand personality How do you describe your brand?

When HC was formed around the year 2017 by combining many legacy brands with incredible presence in the market, customers had no idea who HC was and assumed they were a new player in the horticultural arena. It took a great deal of time and effort, through various marketing channels and communications, to assure customers that HC was still the manufacturer of growing containers they've come to trust and rely on through the years. I believe our brand is strong and solid - conveying to customers that we understand their pain points and believe a strong partnership is critical to overall success.

Verbal Identity

This is how you speak about your brand.

Tagline How do you sum up what you do in a single sentence?

Current tagline - From Grower to Gardener, Improving Our World.

I do not believe this tagline accurately defines what we do as a company. It's too vague and sounds more fitting for someone growing organic foods.

Value proposition What unique value do customers get from purchasing your product/service?

Quality products that are locally made and focused on the features and benefits today's growers demand.

Key messaging What are your main selling points or messaging pillars?

HC utilizes the latest innovations, resources, and technologies to manufacture our full line of planters and pots whether it's blow mold, thermoform, injection, co-ex, or vacuum formed. Additionally, our sustainable fiber containers are created in a closed-loop water recycling facility to eliminate waste.

Voice How do you speak in your content?

Understanding that we service various segments and sizes of the horticultural industry, and our website often attracts consumers and homeowners to our product pages, our content needs to be applicable to many different audiences. Therefore, language needs to be carefully crafted in order to appeal to the needs of these various segments. Breaking out the segments with unique pages helps accomplish that.

Visual Identity

If you already have a visual identity, audit your existing identity and document what does or doesn't work about each element.

Logo

The original intent was for the HC logo to appear as though we were staring down at the top of one of our growing containers. That was never fully flushed out and the current logo appears simply as a "circle". The original design concept would have created a stronger visual tie-in with the brand.

Color palette

The original colors were typical of what you might expect from a manufacturer of growing containers - greens and browns. Over the last few years, we've tried to go beyond the norm and add accent colors to help differentiate the brand - most recently, blue and orange, which compliment the original color pallet nicely.

Typography

Jubilat (new with website refresh), Effra, Avenir Next, Fertigo Pro (logo only). The typography is clean and clear.

Other

Photography, illustration, etc.

Does your current identity...

Reflect your personality?

I think the logo is a bit dated and does not align with our tagline of being a "leader" in the horticultural industry. The artwork should be more creative and thoughtful to reflect our commitment towards modernization in all areas of the business.

Align with/communicate your values?

The lack of attention paid to the overall creativity of the logo does not fully align with our values, which are well thought out and descriptive. The logo is very non-descript.

Differentiate your brand?

Yes, I think the colors help to differentiate the brand.

What are your biggest opportunities to improve?

Identify the things you would like your new visual identity to communicate.

- A more professional logo would help support our leadership claims in the industry
- Having all the brands on the same familial page, while still using unique design elements and language
- Standardizing copy concerning HC's history and other generic information across all segments

To complete this exercise, you'll audit the brand identities of your top 3-5 competitors. Review one competitor at a time and document your findings as you go. To get a sense of each brand's identity, take a look at their website), social media profiles, etc.

	Competitor 1	Competitor 2	Competitor 3
	East Jordan	NSI Supplies	Landmark Plastic
Logo: What shapes/imagery do they use? Do they use a word mark, logo mark, or both?	They use word and logo marks (similar to a "yield" sign in shape)	They use word and logo marks (similar to a "yield" sign in shape)	They use word and logo marks (similar to a "yield" sign in shape)
Typography: What dominant typefaces do they use (serif vs. sans serif)? What weights do they use (light, regular, bold)?	Sans serif regular	Sans serif regular	Sans serif regular
Color palette: What dominant colors do they use? Are they similar to other competitors?	Black and green	Dark blue and green	Green and white
Photography: Are they using stock photography or custom photography?	Stock and custom	Stock and custom	Stock and custom
Illustration: What style do they use? Are humans depicted in their illustration style?	Humans are included	No humans	Humans are included
Brand story: Do you "get" their personality, positioning, etc. through their visual presentation?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Copy: What's the tone (humorous, witty, serious, lighthearted)?	Professional	Professional	Professional

	Competitor 4	Competitor 5	
	Western Pulp _____	Summit Plastic _____	
Logo: What shapes/imagery do they use? Do they use a word mark, logo mark, or both?	They use word and logo marks (similar to a "yield" sign in shape)	They use word and logo marks (similar to a "yield" sign in shape)	
Typography: What dominant typefaces do they use (serif vs. sans serif)? What weights do they use (light, regular, bold)?	Sans serif	Sans serif	
Color palette: What dominant colors do they use? Are they similar to other competitors?	Gold/orange and black	Dark blue and green	
Photography: Are they using stock photography or custom photography?	Custom	Stock and custom	
Illustration: What style do they use? Are humans depicted in their illustration style?	Humans are included	Humans are included	
Brand story: Do you "get" their personality, positioning, etc. through their visual presentation?	Yes	Yes	
Copy: What's the tone (humorous, witty, serious, lighthearted)?	Professional	Professional	

Key Takeaways

Based on your audit, document the insights that will help you design a strong and unique identity to compete.

What common visual themes did you observe?

With the exception of the color pallet, there are very similar visual themes among our competitors. While there are similarities, each brand certainly applies the principals differently in order to differentiate themselves. Content is where things start to differ as some are spending more time than others on making sure they are providing relevant education to customers with keyword applications.

What are your biggest opportunities to differentiate?

- Our logo
- Content consistency
- Portfolio of products
- Website design/user experience