



Canva Best Practice Guide

Canva is a free-to-use online design tool that allows small and local businesses to create professional marketing materials with minimal experience. From social media graphics to print-ready posters, Canva provides a wide selection of templates, fonts, and design elements that can support brand consistency and elevate the quality of your visual content.

In this guide created by Whitewall Marketing, we share helpful tips on how you can utilise Canva to create high quality content.

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Benefits of Using Canva Effectively

- Ease of use – Canva’s drag-and-drop interface, intuitive layout, and prebuilt templates allow non-designers to produce professional visuals quickly. You don’t need prior graphic design experience.
- Time savings – Templates, design elements, and presets reduce the time needed to create graphics from scratch. Features like resizing designs for different platforms or converting templates streamline workflow.
- Brand consistency – You can create Brand Kits within Canva which store your brand assets (colours, logos, fonts) so that every design stays consistent, even when multiple team members contribute.
- Access to a large content library – Canva gives access to stock images, illustrations, videos, icons, and graphics, reducing the need to source externally. Paid plans further expand this library.
- Collaboration and sharing – Canva enables multiple users to view, comment, or edit designs in real time. Feedback cycles can be faster and more transparent.
- Design flexibility across formats – You can create designs for a range of outputs such as social posts, flyers, business cards, presentations, videos, and print collateral, all in one platform.
- Scalability and cost efficiency – For many small businesses, Canva eliminates or reduces the need to hire external designers. Upgrading to paid tiers is optional and scalable as your needs grow.
- Integrated publishing and scheduling – Some plans allow you to publish or schedule social media posts directly from Canva, combining design and campaign execution.
- Regular updates and improvements – Canva frequently releases new features, templates, and AI tools to keep its platform modern and competitive. From visuals to sound effects and music.
- Cross-device and cloud based – As a web-based tool Canva allows you to work from anywhere, on multiple devices, with your files stored in the cloud. Canva’s interface is most user friendly on desktop however the mobile app allows for easy reviewing and simple edits.

How to Use Canva Effectively

- Set up your brand kit – The brand kit feature allows you to upload your logo, select your colour palette, and set fonts for consistent use across all assets. Even with a free account, you can customise your designs by saving frequently used brand elements.
- Choose templates strategically – Start with pre-designed templates that match the format you need, for example Instagram posts, flyers, or business cards. Templates can be customised with your colours, images, and text to align with your brand identity.
- Use high-quality images – Canva offers free stock images, but it is recommended to upload your own photos when possible. This ensures your content reflects your business authentically. Always ensure images are clear and high resolution.
- Optimise for platform requirements – Each social media platform has specific size requirements for post, profile pictures etc. Canva provides preset dimensions to simplify this process. Select the correct size before starting a design to avoid distortion or cropping.
- Save and organise projects – Use Canva's folder system to keep projects organised by campaign or content type. This will help you quickly locate past designs for updates or reuse.

Tips and Tricks

- Duplicate existing designs to keep a consistent visual identity across campaigns while saving time.
- Explore Canva's built-in elements such as charts, icons, and shapes for creating more engaging content.
- Use the alignment and spacing tools to ensure balance in your design.
- Export files in the correct format: PNG for social media graphics, JPG for web use, and PDF for print materials.
- Take advantage of Canva's animation feature for simple motion graphics in reels or stories.

What to Avoid

- Avoid overloading designs with too much text or multiple fonts. This can make content appear cluttered and unprofessional.
- Do not rely exclusively on Canva's free stock images. They can be widely used by other businesses and reduce originality.
- Avoid inconsistent branding by mixing colours, logos, or fonts across different designs.
- Do not stretch or distort images when resizing. Always maintain aspect ratios to ensure quality.
- Avoid downloading at low resolution if the content is intended for print.

Other Free Tools for Asset Design

While Canva is highly versatile, other free tools are available which may be better suited to your business needs.

- Adobe Express – A simplified design platform by Adobe, offering easy-to-use templates for social media posts, flyers, and logos. It also integrates with Adobe's Creative Cloud for businesses considering advanced tools in the future such as Photoshop or InDesign.
- Crello (vistacreate) – Similar to Canva, this platform provides templates, animations, and branding tools. It is particularly useful for creating animated content for social media.
- Pixlr – An online photo editor ideal for quick image adjustments. It is a lightweight alternative to Photoshop and allows for tasks such as background removal, cropping, and retouching.
- Figma – A collaborative design tool primarily used for web and interface design. Its free plan allows teams to co-create visuals in real time, making it a strong choice for businesses managing projects together.
- Unsplash – A free stock photography platform that offers high-quality, royalty-free images. These can be downloaded and imported into Canva or other design tools for authentic and visually striking content.
- Pexels – Similar to Unsplash, Pexels provides free stock images and video clips that can enhance content creation, particularly for businesses requiring professional visual assets without licensing costs.

Canva Pricing Options – UK Example 2025

- Free Plan – £0
 - Basic templates and elements
 - 5 GB cloud storage
 - Real-time collaboration
 - Standard export options
- Pro Plan – Around £10.99/Month or £99.99/Year
 - Full access to premium images, videos, and graphics
 - Annual billing saves on total cost
 - Brand Kit for saving colours, logos, and fonts
 - Background remover tool
 - Magic Resize (quickly adapt designs for different platforms)
 - Ability to save designs as templates
 - 1 TB of cloud storage
 - Content scheduling and publishing
- Teams Plan – Price Varies Per User
 - Everything in Pro
 - Advanced collaboration tools
 - User roles and permissions
 - Shared asset libraries
 - Version control and approval workflows
- Enterprise Plan – Custom Pricing
 - All Teams features
 - Advanced security and compliance
 - Single Sign-On (SSO)
 - Audit logs and admin controls
 - Dedicated onboarding and support
- Special Plans
 - Nonprofit: Free access to Canva Pro for eligible charities
 - Education: Free or discounted versions of Pro features for schools, teachers, and students

Further Support

If you require further support with Canva, please contact your dedicated adviser directly, or email invest@westlothian.gov.uk.

