

# AMERICAN EXPRESS

Communication Guidelines

June 2018

# How we LOOK - Essential visual identity elements



Blue Box logo



alternate logo  
Small space digital only

**AMERICAN  
EXPRESS**

**AMERICAN EXPRESS**  
logotypes

## LOGOS OR LOGOTYPE

The Blue Box logo should appear prominently on all American Express communications. The Alternate logo, (cropped to AM EX) is reserved for small scale digital use. One of the two Logotypes may be used in place of the logo, however the logo can still be used smaller, to complement the logotype.

**(Centurion Line, Standard Blue Box Line and Cobrand communications can use these)**



## BRAND COLOR

If the communications piece includes color, use only the brand color. The brand color palette is comprised of a bright blue, deep blue, and a neutrals palette.

**(Centurion Line and American Express Cobrand-led communications only)**

Aa

Guardian

Aa

Benton Sans

## BRAND TYPOGRAPHY

If the communications piece includes copy, use only the brand typography. The brand typography is comprised of the sans serif font "Benton Sans" and the serif font "Guardian". These two fonts may be used in four combinations.

**(Centurion Line and American Express Cobrand-led communications only)**

DON'T *live life* WITHOUT IT™

DON'T *do business* WITHOUT IT™

## TAGLINE

On promotional, offering, and advertising pieces the Tagline is a mandatory element.

In transactional or informational pieces where the tagline is too promotional or unnecessary, or in situations with space limitations, the tagline can be eliminated.

**(Centurion Line and American Express Cobrand-led communications only)**

# Blue Box logo



The Blue Box logo is the core visual expression of American Express. The logotype may be used in place of the Blue Box logo, where applicable.

The Logo has been drawn to maintain legibility/continuity throughout the visual identity (from small to environmental scales).

Four scale versions have been provided (see below). The logo should not be scaled below the minimum sizes (per scale) found on this page.

The Blue Box Logo can be placed on imagery as long as it maintains maximum legibility.

## SCALE SYSTEM

The Blue Box logo files have been provided at four scales: Small, Regular, Large, and Extra Large (environmental).

The height of the Blue Box logo determines the scale version (at right) that should be used.



In an application, when the Blue Box height is:

[.325 to .45" or 40 to 50 pixels](#) use the SMALL scale

[.45 to 1" or 50 to 110 pixels](#) use the REGULAR scale

[1 to 4.25" or 110 to 410 pixels](#) use the LARGE scale

[4.25" and above or 410 pixels and above](#) use the EXTRA LARGE scale

Note: If the logo's height is a shared, meeting number (e.g. .45", or 1"), please use the larger scale.

### Note

The Blue Box logo files, custom drawn (individually for print and then digital) to work at different scales, should never be recreated or modified. To maintain consistency, legibility, and brand integrity, please use only the files supplied, in their correct type (print versus digital) at their correct scales.

Use only the colors, as specified.

Use of the registration mark is not required on the logo other than:

China: on the bottom right

Cuba, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Zaire: on the bottom left

## MINIMUM SIZES

To ensure proper legibility, the Blue Box logo files should not be used in sizes smaller than those listed above, right (per scale).

For small scale applications the "SMALL" logo should never be used smaller than a height of .325" or 40 pixels.



Exception: If a Blue Box logo is needed at a height below the minimum above, the Alternate logo may be substituted: from 175" or 22 pixels, up to .325" or 40 pixels (minimum above).

## FILE TYPES

The Blue Box logo assets are available in these file-types:

### print (eps files)

PMS COATED

PMS UNCOATED

AND CMYK (4-COLOR)

Note: B/W files are supplied as well. The B/W files should ONLY be used on 1-color, black-only, print applications (like a black-and-white newspaper ad).

### digital (svg, png, jpg)

RGB

Note: EPS (and InDesign) "Digital Master Files" have been provided. These can be used, as needed, to generate any alternate SVG, PNG and JPG files.

# Blue Box logo, Alternate



The Blue Box logo, Alternate was created to make a powerful impression in a small space world. This logo should be reserved for American Express social media, app use, and mobile contexts where scale is restricted (e.g. mobile banners). It can also be used as an acceptance mark in small or hard to read spaces.

The Blue Box logo, Alternate is a supporting logo only; research indicates that our audience prefers the “American Express” logo remain foremost. The Alternate logo should only replace the core Blue Box logo in the small scale, digital environments (noted above) where its clarity and boldness excels.

The logo has been drawn to maintain legibility/continuity throughout the visual identity (from extra small to regular scales). Three scale versions have been provided (see right). The logo should not be scaled below the minimum sizes (per scale) found on this page.

## SCALE SYSTEM

The Blue Box logo, Alternate files have been provided at three scales: Extra Small, Small, and Regular.

The height of the Blue Box logo determines the scale version (at right) that should be used.



Blue Box logo, Alternate,  
Height

In an application, when the Blue Box (Alternate) height is:

[.175 to .225"](#) or [22 to 32 pixels](#) use the EXTRA SMALL scale

[.225 to .45"](#) or [32 to 50 pixels](#) use the SMALL SCALE

[.45" and above](#) or [50 pixels and above](#) use the REGULAR scale

Note: If the logo's height is a shared, meeting number (e.g. .225", or .45"), please use the larger scale.

## Note

The Blue Box logo Alternate files, custom drawn to work at different scales, should never be recreated or modified. To maintain consistency, legibility, and brand integrity, please use only the files supplied at their correct scales.

## MINIMUM SIZES

To ensure proper legibility, the Blue Box logo files should not be used in sizes smaller than those listed above, right (per scale).

For small scale applications the “EXTRA SMALL” logo should never be used smaller than a height of .175" or 22 pixels.



Minimum height of EXTRA SMALL scale logo:  
.175" or 22 pixels

Exception: If a Blue Box logo is needed at a height below the minimum above, the Alternate logo may be substituted: from 175" or 22 pixels, up to .325" or 40 pixels (minimum above).

## FILE TYPES

The Blue Box logo, Alternate assets are available in these file-types:

### digital (svg, png, jpg)

RGB

Note: EPS (and InDesign) “Digital Master Files” have been provided. These can be used, as needed, to generate any alternate SVG, PNG and JPG files.

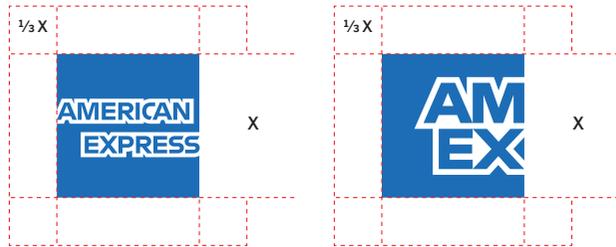
# Clearspace

Clearspace around an identity asset is critical in order to separate the asset from other communication elements and ensure clarity and prominence. The diagrams below show the minimum amount of clearspace space required.

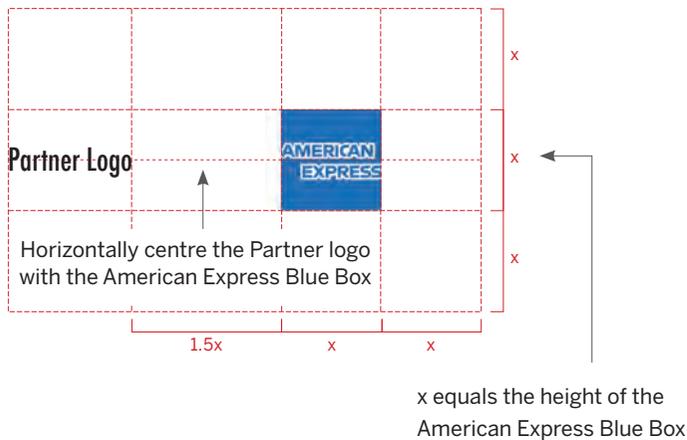
## BLUE BOX CLEARSPACE

Maintain at least  $\frac{1}{3}$  "X" (where X = height of the Blue Box logo) between the logo and any accompanying element.

Clearspace is  $\frac{1}{3}$  X (X = height of Blue Box)



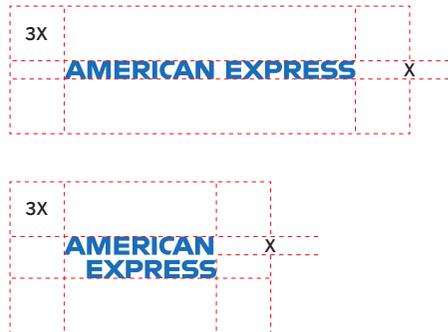
If your Bank logo is appearing next to the blue box, blank space needs to be equal to 1.5x the size of the Blue Box



## LOGOTYPE CLEARSPACE

Maintain at least 3 "X" (where X = Cap-height of the logotype) between the logotype and any accompanying element.

Clearspace is 3X (X = Cap-height of logotype)



## CLEARSPACE EXCEPTIONS

These four exceptions are not bound to the above clearspace rules.

1. Bleeding the Blue Box off one or more edges. (Before producing please consult your vendor for advise.)
2. Digital apps and avatars, etc. where cropping is mandatory.
3. Emphatic use of either the logo or logotype (bleeds or tight to edges).
4. "Pattern" logotype cropping (such as on folders or totes, etc.).



BLUE BOX BLEEDS



APP AND AVATAR CROPS



EMPHATIC LOGO OR LOGOTYPE



CROPPED LOGOTYPE

# Blue Box do's and don'ts

## Blue Box do's



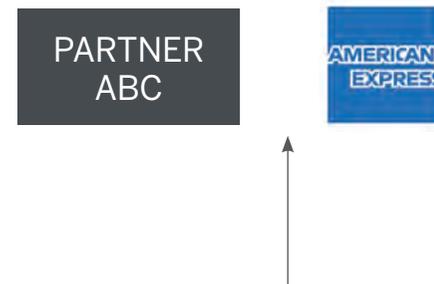
- ✓ **USE** the approved logo artwork



- ✓ **USE** contrasting background colors to enhance the contrast of the logo



- ✓ **USE** the logo over an image with contrasting background



- ✓ **MAINTAIN** the proper clear space around the logo

## Blue Box don'ts



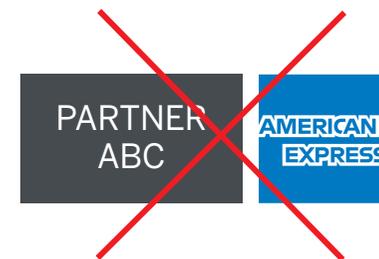
- ✗ **DO NOT** place the logo on flat blue backgrounds that are too close in color to the Blue Box



- ✗ **DO NOT** place the logo on imagery that compete



- ✗ **DO NOT** use the Blue Box as text, for example, as part of a sentence instead of the words "American Express"



- ✗ **DO NOT** violate the clear space

# Blue Box lock up with other logos

- No new logo treatments or lock ups including the Blue Box may be created for any product or service
- New logos may only be created by American Express



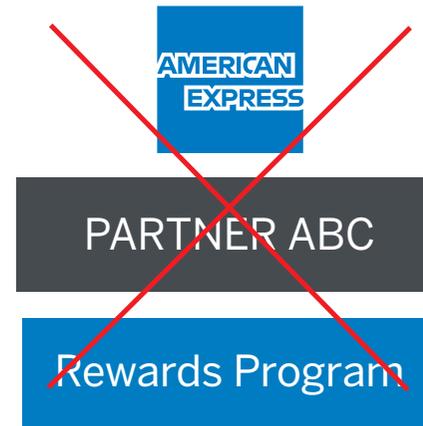
**DO** Locking up logos with a line in between is acceptable



**DO** Locking up logos without a line in between is also acceptable



**DO NOT** lock up the logo with other logos, with text or with Card art



**DO NOT** Logos should never be vertically stacked

# Taglines - Centurion Line & American Express Cobrand-led only

**DON'T** *live life* **WITHOUT IT** <sup>SM</sup>

**DON'T** *do business* **WITHOUT IT** <sup>SM</sup>

The taglines convey critical brand messaging and should be used whenever possible: promotional, offerings, services, advertising pieces, etc. It need not be a part of informational and transactional pieces in which the tagline would feel out of place, or overly promotional.

The taglines should not be scaled below the minimum size found on this page. The primary tagline files are horizontal. However, an alternate stacked version can be used in limited-space applications. The taglines can be placed on imagery as long as they maintain maximum legibility.

## SCALE SYSTEM AND MINIMUM SIZES

The taglines use a single scale version.

To ensure proper legibility, the tagline files should not be used in sizes smaller than a .05" or 7 pixels Cap-height.

(The Cap-height is determined by the height of a single line of capital letters.)

The Taglines have no maximum scale limit.

**DON'T** *live life* **WITHOUT IT** <sup>SM</sup> Cap-height

**DON'T** *do business* **WITHOUT IT** <sup>SM</sup> Minimum Size of Taglines:  
.05" or 7 pixels  
Cap-height

## ALTERNATE CONFIGURATION

When horizontal space is limited an alternate three-line vertical configuration may be used. The single-line configuration is always preferred, when possible.

**DON'T**  
*live life*  
**WITHOUT IT** <sup>SM</sup>

**DON'T**  
*do business*  
**WITHOUT IT** <sup>SM</sup>

## FILE TYPES

The tagline assets are available in these file-types:

### print (eps files)

PMS COATED  
PMS UNCOATED  
CMYK (4-COLOR)  
AND REVERSE\_WHITE

Note: B/W files are supplied as well. The B/W files should ONLY be used on 1-color, black-only, print applications (like a black-and-white newspaper ad).

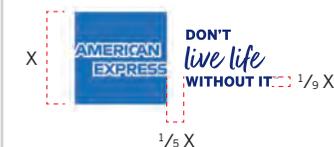
### digital (svg, png, jpg)

RGB

Note: EPS "Digital Master Files" have been provided. These can be used, as needed, to generate any alternate SVG, PNG and JPG files.

## LOCK-UPS

When a lock-up (Blue Box and tagline in close proximity) is preferred, please use the relationships designated here:



### horizontal lock-up

Where X = the height of the Blue Box: 1/3 "X" space between "don't" and the Blue Box; 1/6 "X" cap-height; "don't" centered to Blue Box.

### alternate lock-up

Where X = the height of the Blue Box: 1/5 "X" space between "Don't" and the Blue Box; 1/9 "X" Cap-height; tagline configuration centered to Blue Box.

**Note:** The tagline files should never be recreated or modified. To maintain consistency and brand integrity, please use only the files supplied. Use only the sizes and colors, as specified.

# Taglines: Don'ts



**Don't** – Use a color not from the final core colors



**Don't** – Use a different font



**Don't** – Use over an image with a busy background



**Don't** – Use a different font for 'live life'



**Don't** – Lock up Issuer logo with tagline horizontally



**Don't** – Lock up Issuer logo with tagline. Maintain clear space around the tagline

# How we LOOK

## How we LOOK: dos and don'ts

### DO

- ✓ Use the essential elements in all communications.
- ✓ Be creative with the flexible elements.
- ✓ Use Card art to enhance Card-specific marketing.
- ✓ Refer to the Visual Identity Guidelines for details and specifications.
- ✓ Use only Benton Sans or Guardian fonts for Centurion Line or Cobranded American Express-led communications.

### DON'T

- ✗ Use colors other than the approved brand colors, except in photography or illustration. Not applicable for Blue Box Line.
- ✗ Use the tagline in communications that are not promotional.
- ✗ Use script except in the tagline.
- ✗ Alter the elements in any way.

For specific rules on how to use these elements, please see *Visual Identity Guidelines*.

# Photography - for Centurion Line & Cobrand American Express-led only

## Strategic point of view

All content should have a **character who is the hero/American Express Cardmember**, surrounded by the Relationship Device.

Subject matter should feel **authentic, real, and captured in the middle of a moment**. Not overly staged.

Scenarios should feel **aspirational but attainable**.

Scenarios should feature **shared experiences and social moments**, not people alone.\*

People should represent **modern Cardmembers**:

- Represent diversity in gender, ethnicity and age
- Avoid stereotypes in age and gender roles (i.e., women shopping, men in suits, etc)
- Should feature real people of all shapes and sizes.

## Composition

Photography composition is extremely important in conveying the American Express brand messages. Please follow the rules below:

1. Images should be uncluttered to maximize legibility of advertising elements. Consider how the Relationship Device, headline + body copy, logo lockup will appear.
2. Images should be rich in color. Avoid muted or black and white photography.
3. Avoid extreme close-ups which do not have clearspace for the Relationship Device.

\*Note: Vista and locations images are sometimes needed to inspire travel but not typically used by themselves.

# Photography: Do's



**Do** – use images with aspirational but attainable subject matter



**Do** – use shots with at least two people interacting and sharing experiences



**Do** – use images that represent the modern Cardmember (diversity in gender, ethnicity, age, shapes and sizes)



**Do** – use shots with subject matter that is authentic, real, and less stereotypical



**Do** – use images that are uncluttered to maximize legibility of advertising elements



**Do** – use images that have a clear role for American Express (the Cardmember is the hero and the Card/service is the enabler)



**Do** – use images that are rich in color



**Do** – make the moment the focal point (people enjoying a concert rather than the concert itself; people having an adventure, rather than a scenic shot of a city or landscape)

**Note:** Global photo library is available to access imagery, please ask your American Express representative for details.

# Photography: Don'ts



**Don't** – Use images with a busy background



**Don't** – Use stereotypical images



**Don't** – Use images that have artificial filters



**Don't** – Show ostentatious subject matter such as silver service dining and butlers



**Don't** – Have images with people posing for the camera

# Relationship Device - Centurion Line and American Express-led Cobrands

The Relationship Device (or RD) is a graphic element that is used repeatedly across American Express platform communications. It can only be used once in any communication. This asset symbolizes the relationship between American Express and Cardmembers, merchants, and business owners.

## AMERICAN EXPRESS LOGOTYPE

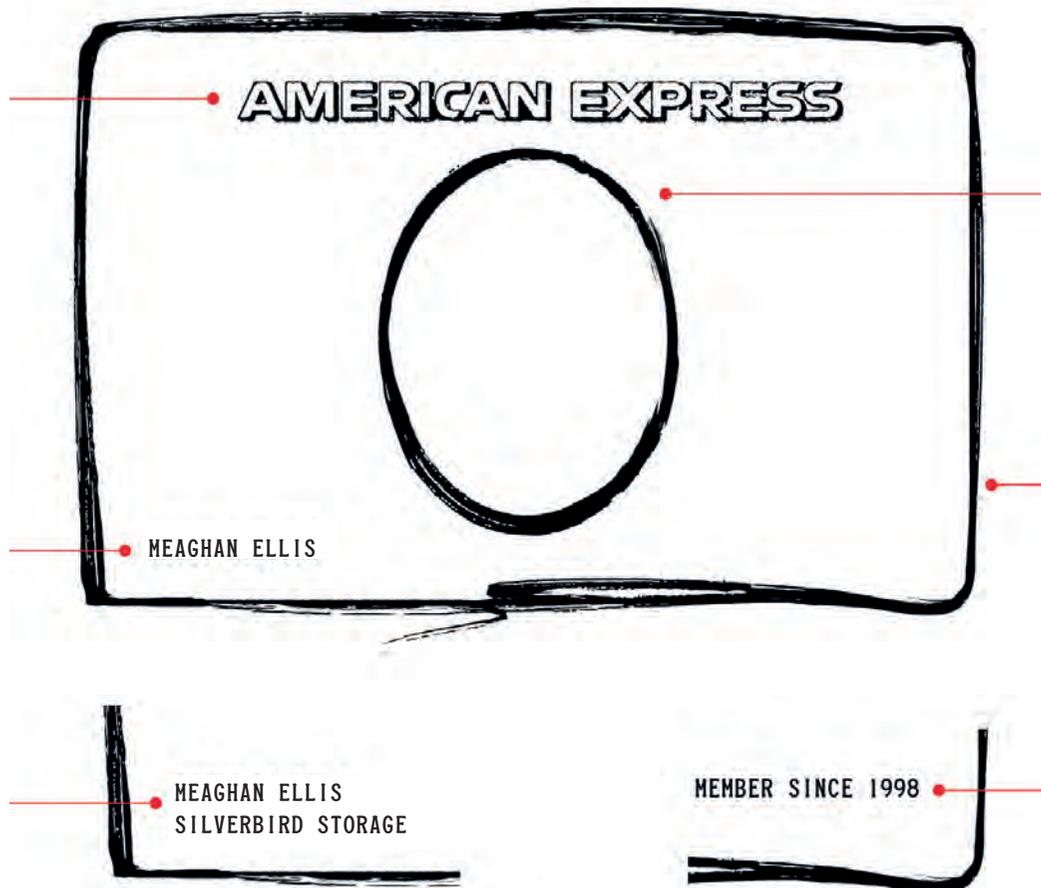
A hand-drawn asset that matches the expressiveness of the Relationship Device. It should always be fully visible and never cropped.

## CUSTOMER NAME

Customer and business names are used to reinforce the individuality of the design. Names should be customized per execution to match the gender and diversity of the featured person. Countries to insert regionally nuanced customer and/or business names.

## BUSINESS NAME

Business names should be included in applicable executions. These should also be customized per execution to match the represented business type. Countries to insert regionally nuanced customer and/or business name within the device.



## CENTER OVAL

The customer replaces the Centurion and becomes the hero of the communication. This strengthens the concept of relationships and American Express putting its customers first. Oval should be organically integrated with photo, not stamped on top.

## OUTER FRAME

A hand-drawn asset which can be scaled to frame hero of communication. Brush strokes cannot be altered but multiple expressions are available. Only two sides may be cropped off of a picture.

## MEMBER SINCE

Can be used in Cardmember communications to reinforce the value of loyalty.

# Relationship Device: cropping and placement

The Relationship Device is a flexible asset that can be used on a variety of images. It can be placed off-center and cropped as long as the American Express logotype, the customer name, the oval, and at least two sides remain visible.

## CROP RULES

The American Express logotype, the customer name, the oval, and at least two sides must remain visible.

## INTEGRATING THE RD

The RD should be integrated into the photographic scene, going over/around parts of the featured person.

## LOGOTYPE RULES

The American Express logotype may never be cropped; use alternate RD.



Top edge



Right edge



Centred



Edges



Bottom edge



Left edge

# Relationship Device: Don'ts



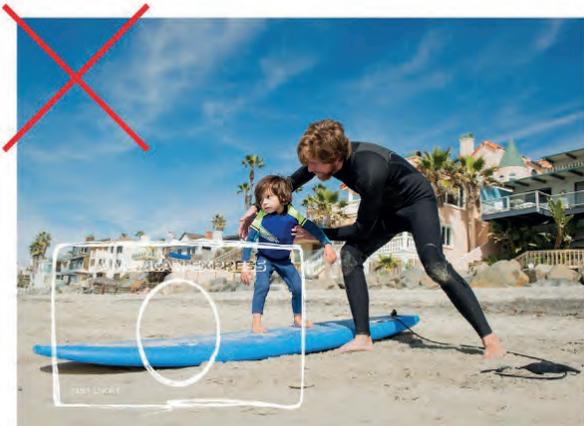
**Don't** – use RDs around someone's hand or other body parts; RDs go around people's heads only



**Don't** – use more than one RD in a single piece of creative



**Don't** – use RDs around more than one person's head in one photo



**Don't** – use RDs around non-human objects



**Don't** – use RDs around non-human objects



**Don't** – use RDs around a child

# 7. Card art in marketing

**THE CARD IN MARKETING.** Card plastic is the most visible touch point of the American Express brand. More than any other form of marketing and communications, the Card physically connects you to Cardmembers and is a very important expression of both of our brands.

Follow these guidelines when using Card art:

- **Aim to show the full Card.** If necessary, show Cards stacked or in partial view – as long as the Blue Box or Centurion on the front is fully visible.
- Make sure the words “American Express” within the Blue Box logo are legible when the Card is reproduced.
- The Card artwork should **not be reduced by more than 50%**.
- Position Card artwork in a **prominent place** in printed materials.
- **Use a non-valid account number** for security and fraud prevention.
- If a name is used on the Card front, make sure you have permission and a release.
- **Always depict Cards accurately.**
- Avoid making the Card part of another object.
- No marketing text or other imagery should be added to Card art.
- Do not rotate the Card sideways or display it upside down.
- Do not use mirror imaging of the Card in communications.

## Mock cards

Mock cards, also known as faux cards, are either paper or plastic cards that are typically adhered inside an acquisition direct mail package. To ensure that mock cards are not mistaken for real Cards, these guidelines must be followed:

- Issuer clarity should be maintained on the card front as required in the Card Design Guidelines (applicable per contractual agreement with partner).
- Either on the face (bottom or side) or on the card back, include “SAMPLE”, “VOID”, “This is not an actual charge/credit card” or “This is not a valid charge/credit card”.
- Do not include a 4 digit CID number, an Expiration Date, a Valid through date or a magnetic stripe.
- A marketing message may be added but only on the back of the card. Make sure the words “American Express” within the Blue Box logo are legible when the card is reproduced – card artwork should not be reduced by more than 50%.
- Print – or for plastic, can be embossed – “Your Name Here” or “Cardmember Name” in the name field.

Please note that mock cards should never be used in Centurion or Platinum Card marketing.

# Card art: Multiple Centurion Line Cards

When including multiple Centurion Line Card products in communications, order Cards from left to right or top to bottom, ranked by tier. If Cards are overlapped (which is not preferred), ensure that the Centurion head is visible.



If Cards are shown stacked or in partial view keep as much of the Card in view. (Centurion head must be visible)



Rank Cards by tier

# Card art: Communications with other brands

## Positioning with other portfolio products

To be consistent with our brand positioning, American Express-branded Card products should be marketed as targeted, high value offerings. Wherever possible, they should stand alone in communications. At a minimum, if American Express products are shown with your card products issued on other networks, American Express products must be placed so that our premium positioning is highlighted with the differentiated product benefits made prominent.

### When Cards are overlapping

- Show the full Card on top



### When Cards or logos are in full view

- When Cards or Blue Box logos are shown besides competitor products or logos, place American Express logo in a preferred or equal position.

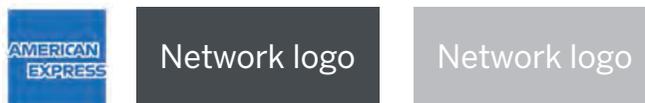
Either to the far left:



Or to the far right:



Either to the far left:



Or to the far right:



Additional rules may apply to specific types of product offerings and may differ by country and by contractual agreement. For additional guidance on dual Cards, please consult your American Express representative.

# Card art: Don'ts



 **DO NOT** alter or distort its image in any way



 **DO NOT** add marketing text or imagery to the Card art



 **DO NOT** make the Card part of another object/build an object



 **DO NOT** rotate the Card sideways or displaying it upside down

# How is ATL defined?

Above the Line is classified as all mass media advertising where American Express is visible in the public eye. These can include but not restricted to:

- TV Commercials
- Videos
- Digital Videos
- Print (in branch, magazines, newspapers, etc)
- Out of Home
- Web banners
- Digital banners
- New AXP Homepages
- New Microsites, New Platform sites, New mobile app, Facebook page launch.

# At what touchpoints do our marketing materials require review?

All marketing materials must be submitted to your American Express representative for review and approval per the BOP policy.

**Brand Approval is required at the following touchpoints prior to the next stage of creative development:**

<b>ATL</b>	<b>New Product Launch or N2N* BTL</b>	<b>Card Design</b>	<b>Exceptions</b>
<p><b>All ATL besides TVC/Videos</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Campaign communications brief</li><li>2. Concept/creative proposals</li><li>3. Final execution</li></ol> <p><b>TVC/Videos:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Communications brief</li><li>2. Storyboard</li><li>3. Rough cut</li><li>4. Final execution</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Product positioning</li><li>2. Campaign communications brief</li><li>3. Initial creative concept</li><li>4. Creative amends</li><li>5. Final executions</li></ol>	<p><b>New plastic (via email)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Initial design/concept</li><li>2. Revised Card design</li><li>3. Final design approval</li></ol> <p><b>Reprints (via email)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Only if changes or updates to existing designs</li></ol>	<p>Case by case management based on enterprise and Issuer specific policies</p>

\*N2N (New to Network) is defined as: Account Cards, Dual

# Reviews

## When to submit for review

### NEW MATERIALS

You are required to submit materials in their final layout form prior to production. For television commercials or video, please submit the agency's creative brief for approval, followed by concepts in storyboard format. Then resubmit rough-cut film format for approval before proceeding to final production.

### EXISTING MATERIALS

You are required to resubmit all communications that have been in the marketplace for more than one year for review and approval.

### THE PROCESS

Once we receive your materials, we will evaluate them based on brand standards, marketing policies and contractual requirements, **Make sure to build extra time into your schedule to accommodate this review process and potential revisions.** Our Service Level Agreement with you for review is **3-5 business days.**

We will respond in one of four ways:

#### STATUS

#### THIS MEANS

Approved as is

No changes are required and you may proceed with production.

Approved with comments

These comments will be recommendations, not mandatory.

Approved with changes

You must make the required changes before proceeding with production and materials need to be re-submitted for review.

Not approved/resubmission

You need to address all mandatory comments and resubmit the piece with revisions for an additional review and required approval before proceeding with production. We will review resubmissions within the contractually agreed-upon review period (generally 3 business days).

**Note:** It is not possible to create guidelines for every situation that may occur in marketing communications. For this reason, if a submission runs the risk of doing damage to the brand but does not explicitly violate a guideline, we may flag the piece for revision.