

BUILDING YOUR MARKETING TOOLKIT

AMANDA CHRISTIAN

Senior Content Strategist
Virginia Spirits Board Marketing Office

CASEY PRENTICE

VP, Owned and Paid Media
The Hodges Partnership



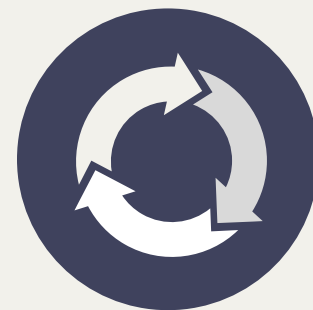
Virginia
SPIRITS

WHAT IS A MARKETING TOOLKIT?



A CENTRALIZED, READY-TO-USE COLLECTION OF BRAND MATERIALS

Logos, messaging, visuals, templates and guidelines



BUILT ONCE, REFINED OFTEN

Refreshed to stay current; Updated as the brand evolves



DESIGNED FOR INTERNAL TEAMS AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Ensures clarity & consistency

BENEFITS OF A MARKETING TOOLKIT

EFFICIENCY, CONSISTENCY AND IMPACT — WITHOUT ADDED EFFORT.



REDUCES TIME SPENT CREATING OR SEARCHING FOR ASSETS



ALIGNS STORYTELLING ACROSS MARKETING CHANNELS



ENABLES YOU TO SAY YES TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES



STRENGTHENS THE VIRGINIA SPIRITS NARRATIVE

WHAT YOU'LL USE IT FOR

EVERYDAY NEEDS AND HIGH-IMPACT MOMENTS

→ MEDIA REQUESTS

Quickly share approved logos, photos and brand messaging

→ ONBOARDING

Align partners, employees, distributors and vendors from day one

→ EVENT PROMOTIONS

Promote tastings, festivals and activations with on-brand assets

→ AWARDS SUBMISSIONS

Ensure consistent descriptions, images and brand details

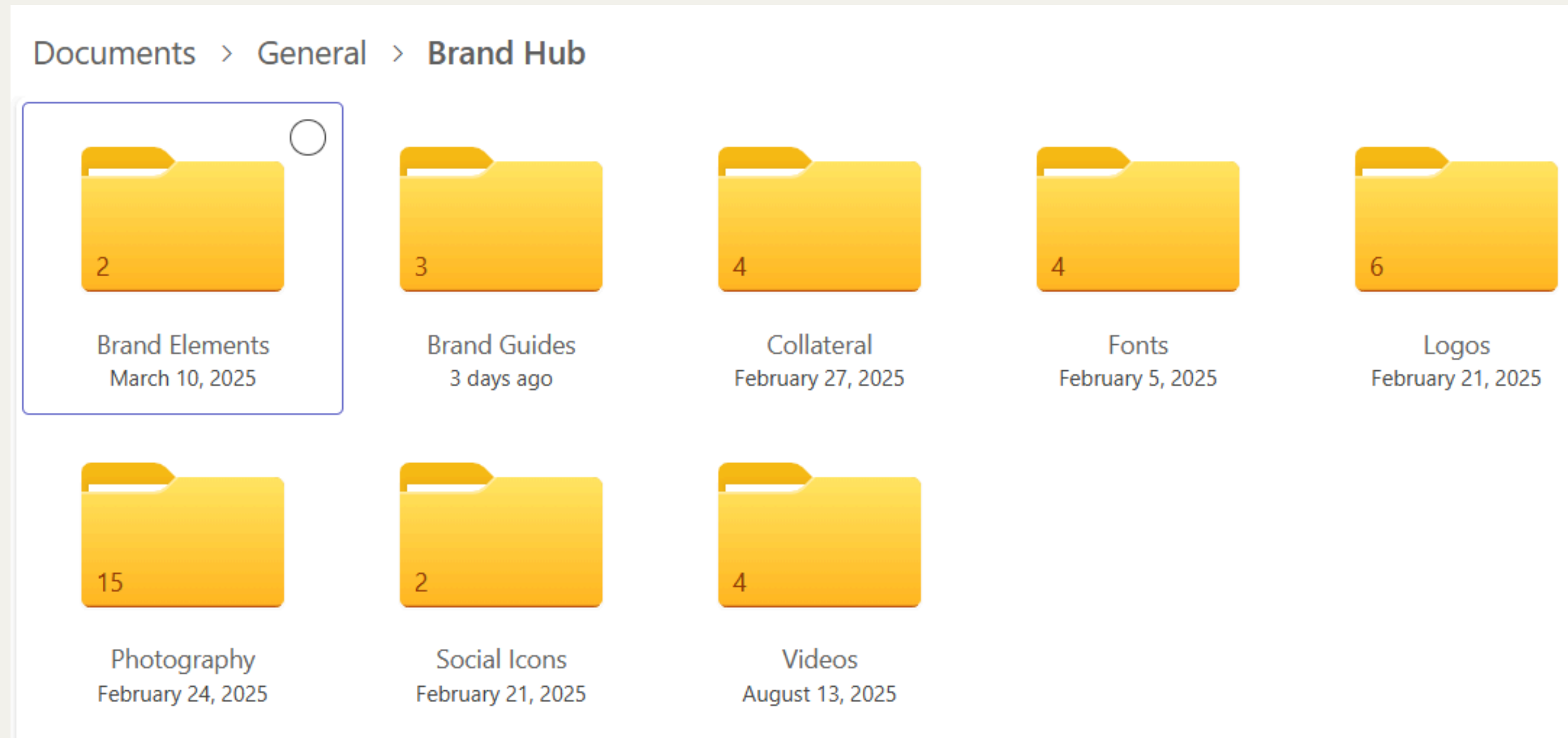
→ WEBSITE UPDATES

Keep messaging and visuals aligned as content evolves

→ CONTENT PLANNING

Support social, email and campaign planning with ready-to-use tools

FOLDER STRUCTURE EXAMPLE



SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS

OPERATIONALIZE YOUR TOOLKIT



DEFINE OWNERSHIP

Who is responsible for maintaining and approving updates?



SET A REFRESH CADENCE

How often will content be reviewed, updated or expanded?



ESTABLISH A SINGLE HOME

Where does the toolkit live?



CLARIFY ACCESS

Who can view, download or edit assets — and how?

PRO TIPS

- Keep older iterations for reference and reuse
- Label clearly, organize consistently, repeat often

KEY COMPONENTS FOR A VIRGINIA DISTILLERY

→ BRAND ASSETS

Logos, color palette, typography, visuals

→ KEY MESSAGING

Brand story, talking points, boilerplate

→ COLLATERAL & GRAPHICS

Social, advertising, event assets

→ PRESS MATERIALS

Press releases, media kits, fact sheets

→ CONTENT LIBRARY

Photos, videos

BRAND ASSETS

YOUR FOUNDATION



A brand style guide outlines the rules for using your logo, brand colors, typography, taglines and more

LOGO VARIATIONS



Include all approved logos and markings for easy, consistent use

HIGH-RESOLUTION PHOTOGRAPHY



Maintain a library of key, on-brand images ready for media and marketing



WHY IT MATTERS: Consistency builds recognition and trust

PHOTOGRAPHY EXAMPLES



KEY MESSAGING



WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT

Your differentiators — why you stand apart



HOW IT STARTED

Your origin story: the how and the why



WHAT YOU MAKE

Be specific about products and style



WHAT YOU STAND FOR

Values, place and process



WHO'S BEHIND IT

Founder, head distiller and key voices

Who is Hodges?



The name of our agency comes from Dodgers great and former Mets manager Gil Hodges. No, he didn't start the agency, but his quiet heroics and values of decency and fair play inspired the real co-founders (who grew up in the New York area) to honor Gil by naming the agency for him. A decorated Marine serving in the Pacific in World War II, Gil had a prodigious career at the plate, with a career .273 batting average, 1,921 hits, 1,274 RBIs and 370 home runs over 18 seasons. Beloved by Dodgers fans, he was perhaps the only player never to be booed by the Ebbets Field crowds. During one hitless streak, one Brooklyn priest told his congregation, "It's too hot for a homily. Keep the Commandments and say a prayer for Gil Hodges." Among his greatest feats was managing the Miracle Mets to a World Series in 1969, a team that had finished 15 games below .500 the year before. Mostly, Gil was revered for his character and quiet discipline. Fifty years after he retired as a player, Gil was inducted into baseball's Hall of Fame in 2022.

MESSAGING FRAMEWORK

- Elevator pitch (2–3 sentences)
- Three key talking points
- One to two proof points (awards, sourcing, process)

PRO TIP:

If you don't define your message, others will.

KEY MESSAGING EXAMPLE

BRAND STORYLINES

Our genuine relationships separate us from other agencies.

Some of our clients have been with us for over 10 years, and some team members have been here since Hodges was founded. Our relationships and personnel continuity is a proof point to our ability to build and maintain trusted partnerships with whoever we work with.

We're collaborative and driven to find the best approach to meet your goals.

Partnership is part of our name for a reason. We know that we're stronger when working together. Our clients consider us an extension of their team and value our relationships with other experts in the field. We're dedicated to finding the best approach to meet your goals, even if that means bringing in other partners to get the results you're looking for.

Our team members are bright, inclusive and forward-thinking strategists that seek creative & insightful solutions.

Our diverse team members bring a wealth of expertise in niche areas of PR and communications. From graphic design to content writing, traditional media relations and beyond, our team members work together to seamlessly deliver comprehensive solutions tailored to meet our clients' unique needs.

Our agency approach is designed to raise awareness and drive action.

Through an earned, owned and paid approach (EOP), we use a combination of media relations, content marketing and paid digital advertising to get your message to the right audience, on the right platform and at the right time.

OUR DIFFERENTIATORS



Continuity



Longevity



In-house
creative team



Integrated
channel approach



Locally owned
& operated

FAQS

What does Hodges do?

Hodges is a full-service PR agency that provides strategic communications through earned, owned and paid media. We create tailored solutions for our client's unique needs through a blend of written and creative services.

Who do you work with?

We work mostly with small-to-mid-sized clients in the Mid-Atlantic. We have several clients in the nonprofit space, as well as education, tourism and hospitality and B2B sectors.

PRESS MATERIALS: PLUG-AND-PLAY

PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE TYPES

- PRODUCT LAUNCHES
- EVENTS & ACTIVATIONS
- AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS
- ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

KEY ELEMENTS

- FORMATTING
- BOILER PLATE
- QUOTES/SMES

WHAT MAKES SOMETHING NEWSWORTHY?

- **Impact** – Bigger than your distillery
- **Proximity** – Relevant to the region or audience
- **Timeliness** – Recent, now, coming soon
- **Prominence** – Notable people, brands or partnerships
- **Human Interest** – Compelling, relatable
- **Novelty** – New, unique or unexpected

PRESS RELEASE EXAMPLES



Contact: First Last
Phone with area code
Email address

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[DISTILLERY NAME] Wins Top Honors at First Landing Cup for [SPIRIT NAME]

[CITY, State] (Date) — [Distillery Name] has been recognized among Virginia's best craft spirit producers, earning [Best in Class / Medal] honors for its [Spirit Name] at the 2025 First Landing Cup, a statewide competition organized by the Virginia Distillers Association and the Virginia Spirits Board.

[Brief sentence about the winning spirit — its flavor profile, uniqueness, awards, etc.]

The First Landing Cup celebrates Virginia-made spirits that exemplify excellence in craftsmanship, innovation and quality. Named after the historic 1607 landing at Cape Henry—the birthplace of American distilling—the competition drew 108 entries across multiple categories, all judged blind by a panel of 21 nationally recognized spirits experts.

"[Quote from Distillery Representative, e.g., 'We are honored to receive this recognition among so many talented peers across Virginia. Our team works hard to create spirits that reflect our passion and dedication to the craft,']" said [Name, Title] of [Distillery Name].

In addition to this recognition, First Landing Cup gold medalists—including [Distillery Name]—are being featured in the [Virginia Spirits Passport](#) Gold Medal Trail, a self-guided tasting experience designed to connect visitors with award-winning distilleries across the commonwealth.

Virginia ABC will also be showcasing First Landing Cup medalists, including [Winning Spirit Name], in select retail stores statewide.

For a full list of winners or to learn more about the First Landing Cup, visit [virginiaspirts.org/first-landing-cup](#).

...

About [Distillery Name]
[Insert distillery boilerplate]

[INSERT CONTACT NAME]
[INSERT DISTILLERY NAME]
[INSERT PHONE NUMBER]
[INSERT EMAIL]

[INSERT DISTILLERY LOGO]

[INSERT DISTILLERY NAME] Celebrates Virginia Spirits Month

Take advantage of tastings, events and 20% off select [INSERT DISTILLERY NAME] products

[INSERT CITY] Va. (MONTH, XX, 2025) – Virginia Spirits Month celebrates its eighth year this year. The month serves as a time to recognize the Commonwealth's rich history as the birthplace of American spirits and highlight the innovation and passion of local distillers today.

To celebrate this September, [INSERT DISTILLERY NAME] will host tastings and events throughout September. The events will include XX, XX and more.

[INSERT ADDITIONAL EVENT / TASTING DETAILS]

As part of the celebration, Virginia ABC is hosting the Virginia Spirits Sale-A-Bration. This means throughout September, customers can save 20% on select Virginia spirits purchases made in Virginia ABC stores, distilleries and online stores, including the entire collection from [INSERT DISTILLERY NAME].

"Virginia has a rich history of producing craft spirits, and we're proud to celebrate alongside other talented producers in the Commonwealth as part of Virginia Spirits Month," [INSERT NAME, JOB TITLE]. "We hope the promotions will introduce some new customers to our line of products and inspire more Virginia spirits enthusiasts."

For more information on [INSERT DISTILLERY NAME], visit [INSERT DISTILLERY WEBSITE] and follow us on [INSERT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM] at [INSERT SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLE AND HYPERLINK].

...

About [INSERT DISTILLERY NAME]
[INSERT COMPANY BOILERPLATE]

###



MARKETING COLLATERAL & GRAPHICS



EVENT FLYERS

Consistent formats for ongoing storytelling



SELL SHEETS, TASTING NOTES & MENUS

Brand story, talking points, boilerplate and voice guidelines



SOCIAL GRAPHICS (THINK CONTENT SERIES)

Consistent formats for ongoing storytelling

- Product launches
- Distillery profiles
- Education / Did You Know (DYK)



Virginia
SPIRITS

**DID YOU
KNOW?**



Rye whiskey earns its spice. 🌶️
By law, it must be made from at
least 51% rye grain.

VirginiaSpirits.org/Whiskey-101

CONTENT LIBRARY

WRITTEN CONTENT

→ **PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS**
Consistent, ready-to-use copy for web, retail and media

→ **QUOTES**
Pull quotes from founders, head distillers and leadership

→ **FAQS**
Clear answers to common consumer and trade questions

→ **SEASONAL & ANNUAL THEMES**
Holidays, sales, summer and recurring moments

IMAGERY

→ **BOTTLES & PRODUCT USE**
Hero shots, pours, cocktails and serving moments

→ **PRODUCTION & PROCESS**
Still shots, barrels, grain, hands-at-work details

→ **PEOPLE**
Makers and consumers — faces behind the brand

→ **PLACE & EXPERIENCE**
Tasting room, landscape and sense of place

PHOTOGRAPHY 101



GOOD LIGHTING MATTERS MORE THAN CAMERA QUALITY



KEEP IT CLEAN & SIMPLE

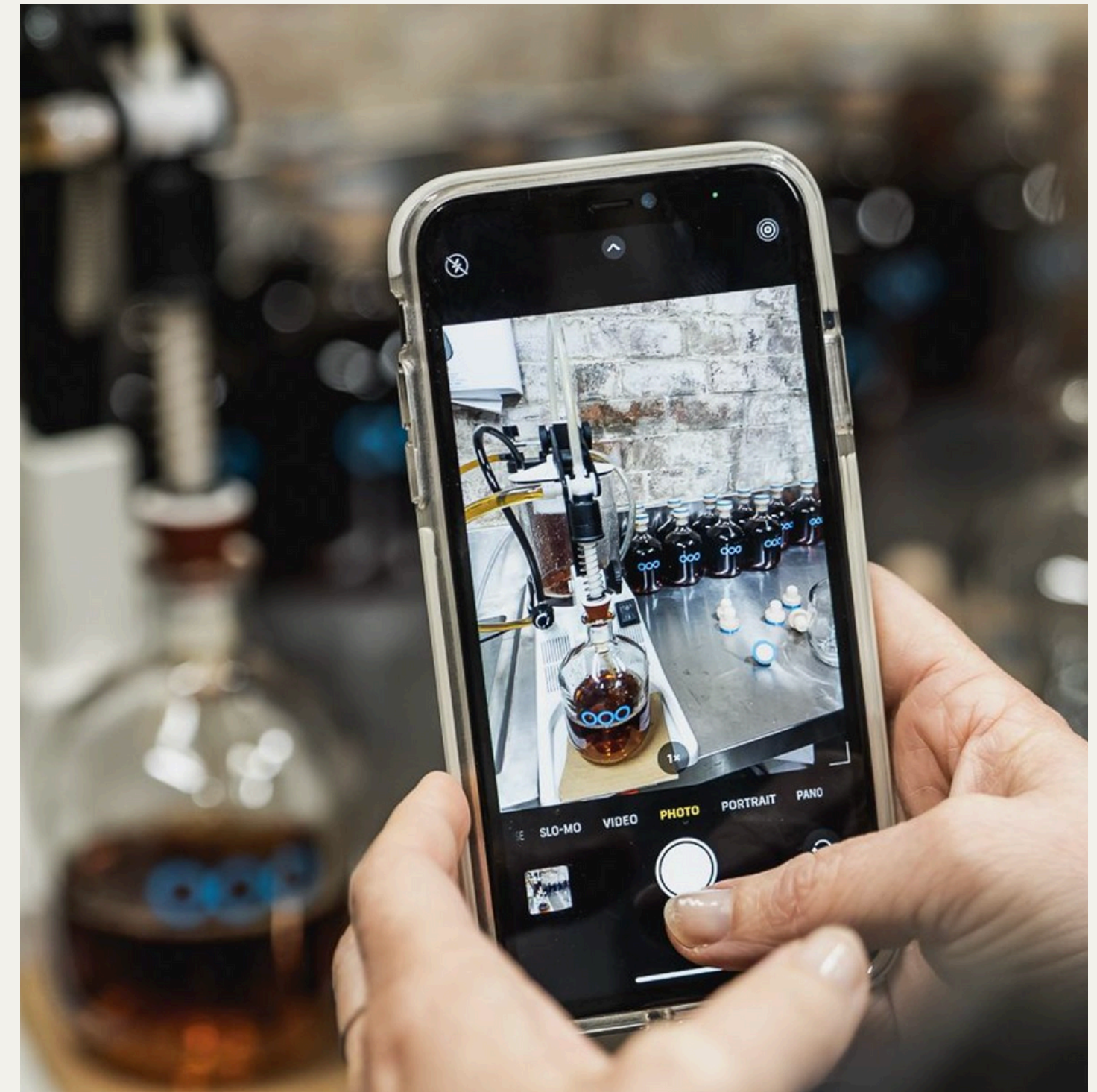


BUILD VARIETY, INTENTIONALLY



THINK “AND,” NOT “OR”

- Vertical **and** horizontal
- Photos **and** video
- Zoomed in **and** zoomed out
- Before **and** after
- Inside the bottle **and** outside the bottle
- Authentic **and** staged



TOOLS YOU CAN USE (FREE OR LOW-COST)

SIMPLE TOOLS THAT MAKE CREATING CONTENT EASIER AND MORE EFFICIENT



CANVA

Editing, design templates and brand kits



LOOMLY

Free social scheduling and content planning



SNAPSEED

Quick, powerful edits right from your phone



AI TOOLS

Outlines, brainstorming and content ideation



LIGHT/WHITE BOX

Clean, consistent product shots



BACKDROPS

Neutral or textured options for variety (but also make use of your unique environment)



LAV MIC

Clear audio for video and interviews



TRIPOD OR SELFIE STICK

Stable shots for photos and video



DIY DIFFUSERS

Parchment paper or tissue paper to soften harsh lighting

WHEN TO PULL IN EXTRA HANDS



BIG BRAND MOMENTS

Brand refreshes, rebrands, new logos or new product lines



PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Periodic shoots to refresh your core visual library



MAJOR PRODUCT LAUNCHES

One-off launches or ongoing support through a retainer



BRAND AUDITS & RESEARCH

Outside perspective to evaluate consistency and opportunities



WEBSITE REBUILDS & STORYTELLING

Production work where strategy, copy and visuals intersect



INTERN OR CONTRACT SUPPORT

Extra hands for content creation, organization and execution

Pro Tip

You can do a lot in-house with practice — but a professional shoot every few years can go a long way. Come prepared with a clear shot list to get the most value for your investment.

LET THE VSBMO HELP



ASSETS FOR MAJOR ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS

- First Landing Cup
- Virginia Cocktail Games
- Virginia Spirits Month



GOT SOMETHING TO SHARE?

Launching a product, winning an award, hosting an event or telling a great story? Let us know—we may be able to amplify it.



KEEP YOUR DISTILLERY PROFILE CURRENT

Update your listing on VirginiaSpirits.org, so media, consumers and partners have accurate information.



STAY IN THE LOOP

Subscribe to our newsletter for tips, industry updates, upcoming campaigns and opportunities to get involved.



WHAT'S NEXT

1 GET ORGANIZED: Audit what you have and place it in a shareable system (Google, Dropbox, Teams, etc.)

2 ASSIGN OWNERSHIP: Designate a toolkit owner to maintain and update assets

3 IDENTIFY THE GAPS: Create a wish list of what's missing or outdated

4 SET A REALISTIC TIMELINE: Build it over time, not all at once

5 START SMALL: Pick one section to tackle this month



QUESTIONS?

VirginiaSpirits.org

FOLDER STRUCTURE EXAMPLE



BRAND BASICS

- Brand overview (short + long)
- Founding story & mission
- Brand boilerplate (50–75 words + extended version)
- Fact Sheet (location, founding year, focus)



LOGOS & VISUAL IDENTITY

- Primary logo (color, black, white)
- Alternate logos or badges (if applicable)
- Web + print-ready files
- Quick logo usage guidelines (1 page)



PRODUCT INFORMATION

- Product fact sheets
- Tasting notes & production details
- Awards, ratings, or recognitions



PRESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Latest press release
- Past press releases (organized by date/topic)
- Product launch announcements



PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

- High-resolution product images
- Lifestyle imagery
- Event or activation photos
- B-roll or video assets (if available)



AWARDS & COVERAGE

- Awards list (by year)
- Press mentions or notable coverage
- Award logos (if permitted)