



Deutsche Bank

Corporate design guidelines

Illustration style

November 2025

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1. Introduction

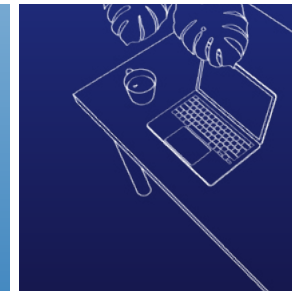
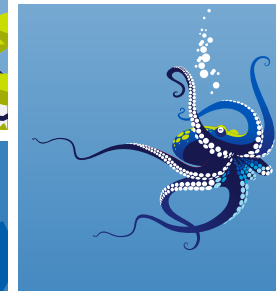
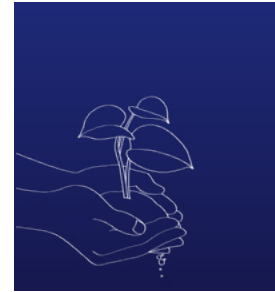
Illustration style – overview

Narrative and informative

Deutsche Bank's illustration style consists of two basic directions: a flat style and a line style. Depending on the context and communication goals, both styles can be enhanced via plus versions.

Bold, dynamic, clear and photorealistic, our illustrations aim to impress with their surprising perspectives and brand-specific colour scheme.

Illustrations can provide explanations, underline complex issues and make processes easily comprehensible. Whether used on large or small formats, they are designed to be striking and attention-grabbing.



Style spectrum

Covering every need

Deutsche Bank's illustration style is distinguished by two style directions: an informative line style and a narrative flat style.

Both styles are tailored to different communication goals and contexts, and each has an additional "plus" version to further enhance the respective benefits.

Focus Informative

Focus on information

The line style serves as an **objective** supporting element for information without changing the focus of the content. The informative style is **factual** and **less emotional**.



Line style

The simple outline style communicates information by reducing it to its essentials and focusing on the main topic.



Line style plus

If a line style illustration requires greater focus on content or extra boldness, then integrate the discreet use of flat graphic surfaces (e.g. the shadow of the coins).

Focus Narrative

Focus on storytelling

The flat style conveys content in an **emotional** and striking way. It is an **effective** style for campaigns or large formats, enhancing **storytelling** and creating **strong visual impact**.



Flat style

Flat illustrations can be implemented to increase the storytelling and emotional impact of a message.



Flat style plus

If a flat style illustration requires additional depth and authenticity, then integrate the use of simple outlines.

2. Guiding principles

Principle one – dynamic composition

The focal point

Deutsche Bank's illustrations always have a focal point, whether a single object or place of action. The focal point should always feature enough negative space around it, allowing for more graphically-striking impact.

The focal points are never centred. Rather, they are always placed in exciting ways within the image – top or bottom, left or right.

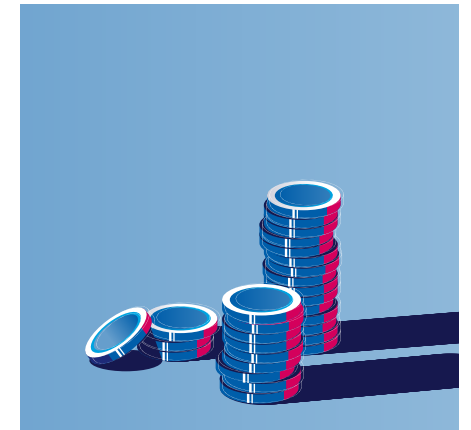
01. Vanishing point

A vanishing point with adequate depth creates a striking perspective.



02. Placement

Off-centre placement creates a more eye-catching composition.



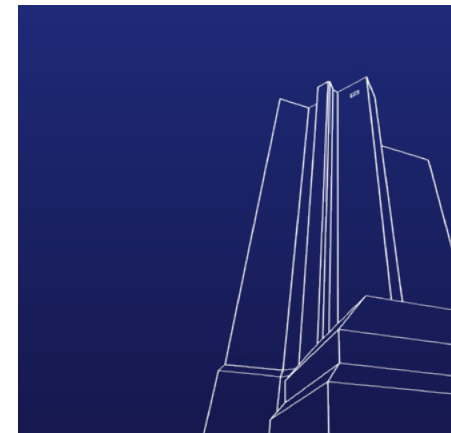
03. Shadow

A graphic shadow creates a distinctive scenery.

Principle two – striking perspectives

A unique way of thinking

Our illustration style features striking and unusual perspectives, which mirrors how we approach our daily business. We avoid standard frontal views and instead opt for strong bottom or top perspectives, for example, that draw attention and reinforce our brand.



Principle three – flexible style

For all communicative needs

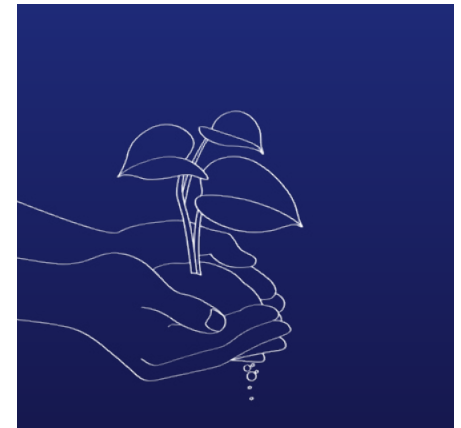
Our line and flat styles offer enough flexibility for a wide range of purposes. What's more, the styles can be slightly combined when necessary, depending on the context.

Whether used online or offline, small format or large, our illustrations provide readers with rich visuals that help communicate complex topics and showcase our unique brand identity.

Line style plus



Flat Style



Line style light

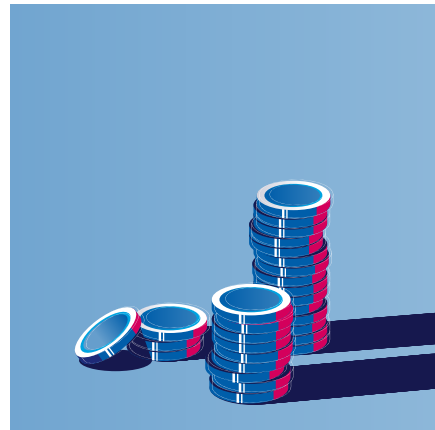
Principle four – brand-specific colours

In colour, on brand

Our primary colours always dominate our illustrations. In fact, about 70% of illustrations should feature these colours.

Through the use of our light and dark primary colours, the illustrations can be implemented on light or dark backgrounds without diminishing brand perception. In addition, accent colours can be used to complement the style and match the theme.

Accent in rubine red
for special highlights.



Authentic accent in green

for sustainability issues (only if the object is green in reality).



Accent in bright blue
for corporate branding illustration.

3. Implementation

Implementation – line style

Follow the four basic principles to successfully implement a line style illustration.

Composition

Overall scenes and individual objects are reduced to their essentials. Featuring a lot of negative space around it, the focal point is placed off-centre in one of the two vertical or horizontal halves of the object's width or height. The illustration can be freely scaled and placed but should never be more than 50% of the format.

Perspective

Always use a half-height top or bottom view for scenes or situations to create an exciting and unique perspective. For individual objects, this top or bottom view can also be exactly 90 degrees to create a clearer focus.

Style

The precise strokes are always white, but Deep Blue can be used as an alternative. By using an oval brush, the line thickness varies within an illustration, giving it a natural appearance. Avoid rounded corners and, if possible, gaps between individual lines.

The line thickness (referring to the reference format 1000 x 1000px) is:

- Brush: oval at 3pt (Adobe Illustrator preset)
- Width: 1pt

Balance is key. Avoid elements that are too small or complex but include enough elements to ensure clear contrast and to avoid an overly simplistic appearance.

Colours

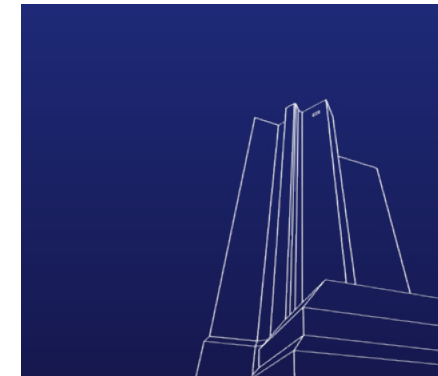
Ensure a clear brand presence by using two clear primary colour gradients from dark blue to Deep Blue and vice versa, combined with the white line stroke.

As an alternative, illustrations featuring blue lines can be used on two light gradients.



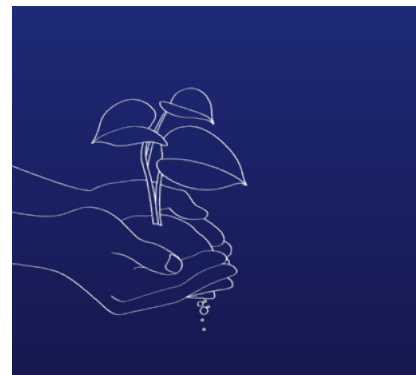
Composition

The object is placed in one of the two vertical halves.



Perspective

A clear bottom view creates an exciting impression.



Style

By using an oval brush, the line thickness varies within the illustration.

Line Style
Brush: Oval – 3 Pt. (Illustrator Basic Preset)
Width: 1 Pt.



DEEP BLUE PANTONE 662 C 100 90 0 20 30 42 120 #1E2A78	DARK BLUE PANTONE 274 C 100 95 10 50 22 24 78 #16184E	26 0 0 0 #C1E6F9	16 8 2 0 #D9E1EF
DARK BLUE PANTONE 274 C 100 95 10 50 22 24 78 #16184E	DEEP BLUE PANTONE 662 C 100 90 0 20 30 42 120 #1E2A78	2 0 0 0 #FBFDF9	1 1 0 0 #FCFDFE



Colours

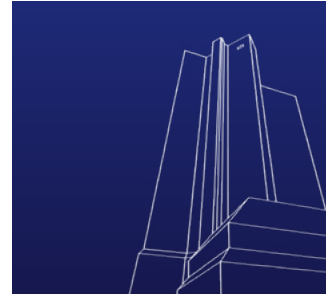
Two primary background gradients in Deep Blue and - alternatively - two light backgrounds for illustrations with a blue line can be used in both directions.

Implementation – line style dos & don'ts



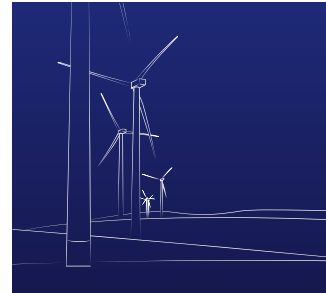
Do:

Use exciting perspectives and correct placement.



Don't:

Avoid lines that fray and tapered ends that cause visual interruptions.



Don't:

Avoid using an incorrect direction of the gradient. It should always be added vertically.



Don't:

Avoid incorrect brush and line thicknesses. For example, lines that are too thick and that partially merge.



Don't:

Avoid using the wrong colours for the line, which negatively affects brand recognition.



Don't:

Avoid using the wrong colours in the background.



Implementation – line style plus

Line style plus is based on line style and follows the same rules regarding composition, perspective, style and colours.

However, the last two principles are expanded in order to add emphasis to the content:

Style

Specific areas of an illustration can be highlighted by graphic shapes, which can be placed either freestanding (e.g. light reflections) or within an existing shape (e.g. window on a computer screen). These graphic shapes should never overlap the lines of the illustration.

The graphic shapes are used to focus attention toward specific key messages and should always reference a photorealistic impression. They should take up a maximum of 30 % of the entire illustration and should not be too complex.

Colours

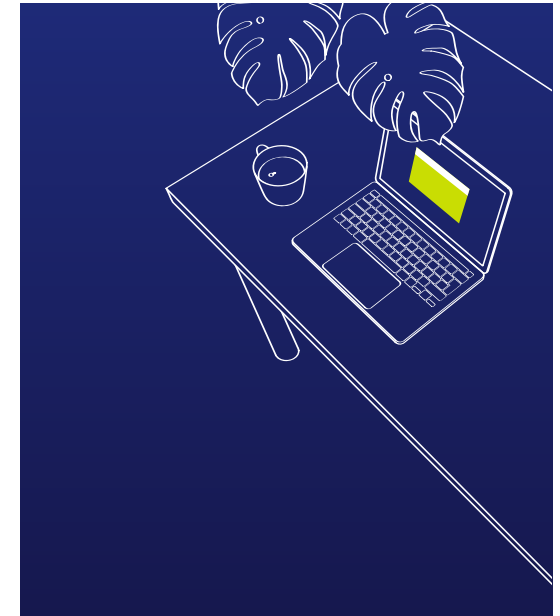
The graphic shapes primarily appear in the accent colour bright blue and can be supplemented with white.

If the topic references sustainability, then the two green tones autumn green and spring green can be used.



Style

Flat shadows and lights are integrated in the main accent colour and create depth.



Colouring

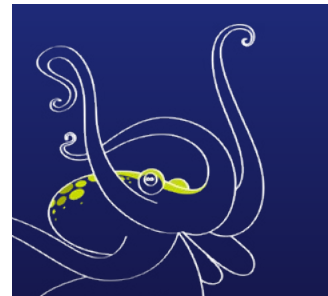
Autumn green as an accent colour highlights the sustainability message.

Implementation – line style plus dos & don'ts



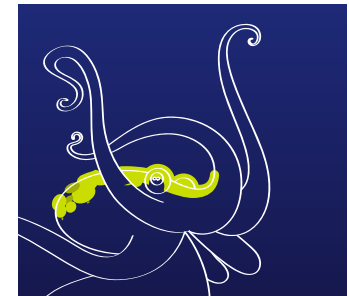
Do:

Ensure the highlight does not overlap the outline.



Don't:

Avoid adding highlights that overlap the outline.



Don't:

Avoid incorrect filling in which the highlight does not take up the entire enclosed area and thus loses precision.



Don't:

Never use gradients as a highlight.



Use case – line style

The line style is primarily used to support text-heavy information. This can apply to business reports as well as social media content. In these cases, illustration plays a subordinate role.

Use cases Line style



Use cases Line style plus



Implementation – flat style

Follow the four basic principles to successfully implement a flat style illustration.

Composition

Overall scenes and individual objects are reduced to their essentials. Featuring ample negative space around it, the focal point is placed off-centre in one of the two vertical or horizontal halves of the object's width or height.

Perspective

Create an exciting and attention-grabbing image by using an unusual perspective. This can be a strong bottom or top view, but also the integration of extreme depth by staggering the objects.

For individual objects, this top or bottom view can also be exactly 90 degrees to create a clearer focus.

Style

The flat style avoids small and complex elements while working with clear graphic surfaces and small areas with gradients. It is complemented by graphic shadows that give the illustration additional dynamism and depth.

Colours

Please view the following page for colour details.



Composition

The main motive is placed in the bottom half and has a lot of negative space around.



Perspective

An exciting top view is used.



Style

Shades and light reflections create depth and impact.

Implementation – flat style

Colours

The dominant colours of each focal point are white and our blue primary colours, including bright blue.

Highlights can be integrated using rubine red and rubine red shadow. In cases that reference sustainability, use spring green or autumn green. These accent colours should take up a maximum of 30% of the entire illustration.

There are four defined background gradients that use different shades of sky blue as the base. Each gradient can be used in all four directions, but should always provide enough contrast to the focal point and support its lighting.

Specific swatches are available for all colour spaces for illustrations. Due to technical reasons, only the colour gradations based on the global main colour need to be created additionally after loading the “ase” swatches into the document.

The CMYK and RGB values are optimised for the following colour spaces:

CMYK: PsoCoatedV3/FOGRA51
RGB/HEX: sRGB IEC61699-2.1

Colours

Each of the three areas of the illustration (main motif, accent and background) uses specific colours::

Focal point colours

White	Dark grey IC PANTONE 433 C 77 57 40 75 26 37 45 #1A252B	Dark blue PANTONE 274 C 100 95 10 50 22 24 78 #16184E	Deep Blue PANTONE 662 C 100 90 0 20 30 42 120 #1E2A78	Sky blue IC PANTONE 2935 C 100 58 0 0 0 94 170 #005EAA	Bright blue PANTONE 2191 C 70 15 0 0 52 166 220 #34A6DC
	Dark grey IC 80%	Dark blue 80%	Deep Blue 80%	Sky blue IC 80%	Bright blue 80%
	Dark grey IC 60%	Dark blue 60%	Deep Blue 60%	Sky blue IC 60%	Bright blue 60%
	Dark grey IC 40%	Dark blue 40%	Deep Blue 40%	Sky blue IC 40%	Bright blue 40%
	Dark grey IC 20%	Dark blue 20%	Deep Blue 20%	Sky blue IC 20%	Bright blue 20%

Accent colours

Rubine red PANTONE RUBIN RED C 0 100 28 10 212 0 92 #D4005C
Rubine red 80%
Rubine red shadow IC PANTONE 220 C 0 100 28 35 168 0 72 #A80047

Additional accent colours

Spring green PANTONE 381 C 27 0 95 0 201 221 3 #C9DD03
Autumn green PANTONE 2305 C 30 5 95 20 161 172 5 #A1AC05

For sustainability issues and only if the object is green in reality.

Background gradients

Sky blue IC 90%	Sky blue IC 80%
Sky blue IC 60%	Sky blue IC 40%
Sky blue IC 60%	Sky blue IC 80%
Sky blue IC 40%	Sky blue IC 60%



The colours marked with IC are to be used for illustration purposes only.

Implementation – flat style dos & don'ts



Do:

Use the correct gradient.



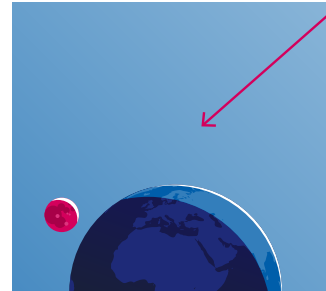
Don't:

Avoid using a flat background colour, as it lacks depth and emotion.



Don't:

Avoid implementing a wrong direction for the gradient. It should always be integrated vertically.



Don't:

Avoid using the wrong background colour, as it negatively affects brand recognition.



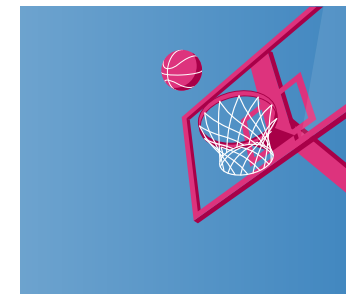
Don't:

Avoid using the incorrect accent colours for highlights.



Don't:

Avoid using a disproportionate amount of an accent colour. Blue should always be the dominant colour with at least 70% use.



Implementation – flat style plus

Flat style plus is based on flat style and follows the same rules regarding composition, perspective, style and colours.

However, the style principle is expanded in order to add emphasis to the content. This makes flat style plus particularly suitable for large-scale and expansive use, e.g. roll-up banners, posters, placards and magazine covers.

Style

To highlight an element and create more atmosphere, a variant of the line style can be integrated. This is implemented slightly offset in two directions (5–10 pt), resulting in additional depth.

By using an oval brush, the line thickness varies within an illustration, giving it a natural appearance. The line thickness (referring to the reference format) is:

- Brush: oval at 3pt (Adobe Illustrator preset)
- Width: 0.25pt

Reference format: 1000x1000 px



Style

Simple outlines enrich the theme and create atmosphere.



Style

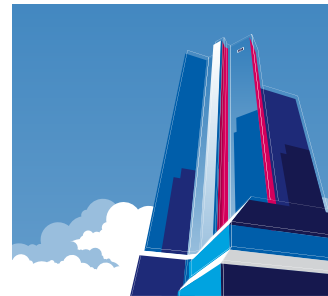
The details add to the natural appearance of the scene.

Implementation – flat style plus dos & don'ts



Do:

Use the correct gradient style.



Don't:

Never make the lines too thick, which overpowers the illustration.



Don't:

Avoid using an incorrect offset of the outline. When it is too large, then the illustration no longer appears compact.



Don't:

Avoid using the wrong colour for the line. It should always be white.



Use case – flat style

Flat style

The flat style was developed for use in social media, moving images and as a basis for animations. The flat style attracts attention and conveys messages in a striking and effective way.

Flat style plus

Thanks to the addition of the line stroke, flat style plus is particularly recommended for large-scale and expansive use, such as roll-up banners, posters, placards and magazine covers.

Use cases Flat style



Detail



YouTube paid ad



Instagram post

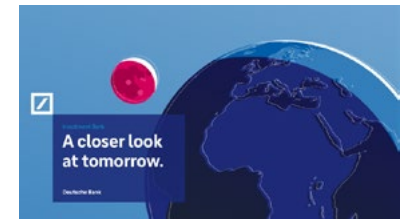


Instagram story

Use cases Flat style plus



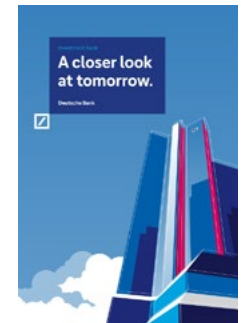
Detail



Billboard



Postcard



Billboard

4. Technical requirements

Technical requirements – formats, structure & naming

Workflow for illustrations (including print versions)

As illustrations are primarily used in digital content, the source data is created as Adobe Illustrator files (*.ai) in the sRGB IEC61699-2.1 colour profile using the corresponding sRGB colour swatches, which are available for download as “*.ase” swatches. The required file formats (png, svg) are exported from this base file. This data package (ai, png, svg) is made available in the image database at Deutsche Bank MMC.

In exceptional cases when a printable version of the illustration is required, the existing Illustrator file (colour profile sRGB IEC61699-2.1) is simply duplicated and the document colour mode is changed to CMYK (colour profile PS0coatedV3 Fogra51). Then replace the sRGB colour fields originally used in the file one-to-one with the corresponding CMYK colour fields. Specific swatches are available for all colour spaces for the illustrations. Printable CMYK versions must only be delivered as “*.ai” and “*.eps”, as SVG and PNG do not support CMYK.

Colour designations

sRGB: Red Green Blue (sRGB IEC61699-2.1 is a standardized colour space that is used for displaying colours on screens)

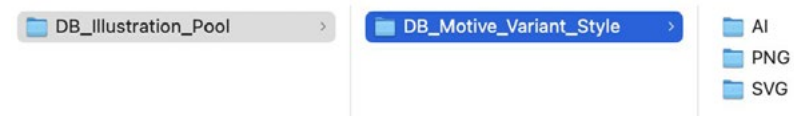
CMYK_PS0CoatedV3: Cyan Magenta Yellow Black (PS0coatedV3 Fogra51 is a printing standard for sheet-fed offset printing on coated paper)

SC: Spot Colour/Special Colour (e.g. Pantone, HKS)

Format designations

- **.ai (Adobe Illustrator)**
Colour profiles are embedded in AI files. Although this creates larger file sizes, this feature is essential for professional printing with colour management.
- **.png (Portable Network Graphic)**
Pixel-based file format that supports transparencies. Used for web, office applications and general screen use.
- **.svg (Scalable Vector Graphics)**
Preferred file format for web and general screen use, when supported by the appropriate software and operating system. When necessary, PNG and JPG files can be used instead of SVG files.

Folder structure



Focus on information

The file names of the individual illustrations are structured as follows:

DB_Motive_Variant_Style

Example:

DB_Globe_1_Line.png



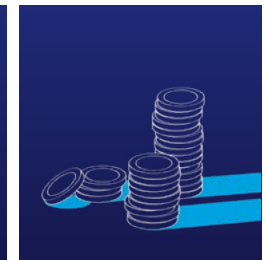
DB_Coins_1_Line.png



DB_Coins_1b_Line-Plus.png



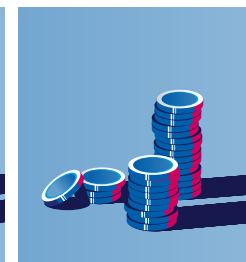
DB_Coins_2_Line-Light.png



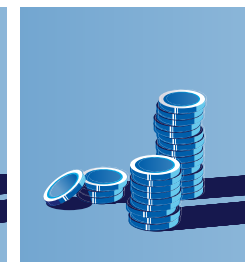
DB_Coins_2b_Line-Light-Plus.png



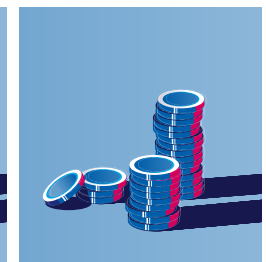
DB_Coins_4_Flat.png



DB_Coins_4b_Flat-Red.png



DB_Coins_3_Flat-Plus.png



DB_Coins_3_Flat-Plus-Red.png

5. From brief to illustration

Bringing a motif to life

With our illustration styles, it's our goal to create a new visual environment, never imitating stock photography. We aim to create so-called content translations of themes and topics that are both contemporary and more on a deeper, meta level.

At the time of each individual briefing, rely on any information or content that is already available to help you meet this requirement.

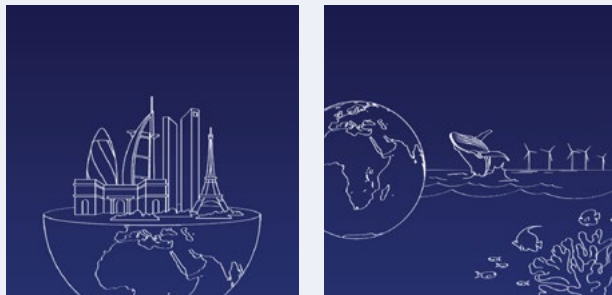
If no specific visual templates are referred to – or need to be referred to – then you can comprehensively dive into each topic according to our standards.

Exception: compositions

If photorealistic motifs cannot be realised, then compositions from individual elements can be created in exceptional cases.

Because these compositions cannot use realistic perspectives, it is even more important to consider the principles of placement, style and colour.

Examples:



Be clear about the content requirements

1. Aim and purpose

Purpose:
where and how will the illustration be used? E.g. printed article, website, social media.

Target group:
who will see the illustration? E.g. professionals, children, general public.

2. Context and themes

Main theme:
what is the central concept or meta-message to be communicated?

Relevant concepts:
are there specific themes or ideas that should be considered?

Tone and attitude:
how can the meta-level message be presented without being too didactic or obvious?

3. Visual references

References:
are there existing illustrations that could serve as a source of inspiration?

Hazards:
are there certain styles or elements that should not be used?

4. Additional instructions

Text integration:
should text be integrated into the illustration? If so, what is the message?

Cultural and thematic sensitivity:
are there any special cultural or thematic considerations that need to be taken into account?

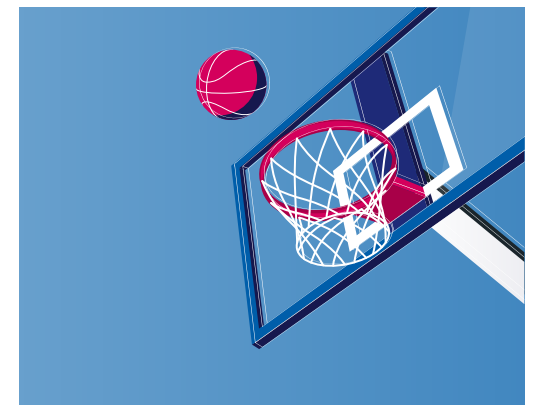
Example: Achieving goals

Briefing 1:1: People pointing to a goal



Avoid this motif, as it summarises the topic too descriptively. There is no room for the viewer's imagination, which leads to less inspiring moments and weaker overall impact.

Suggestion agency/illustrator: Basketball hoop with a ball

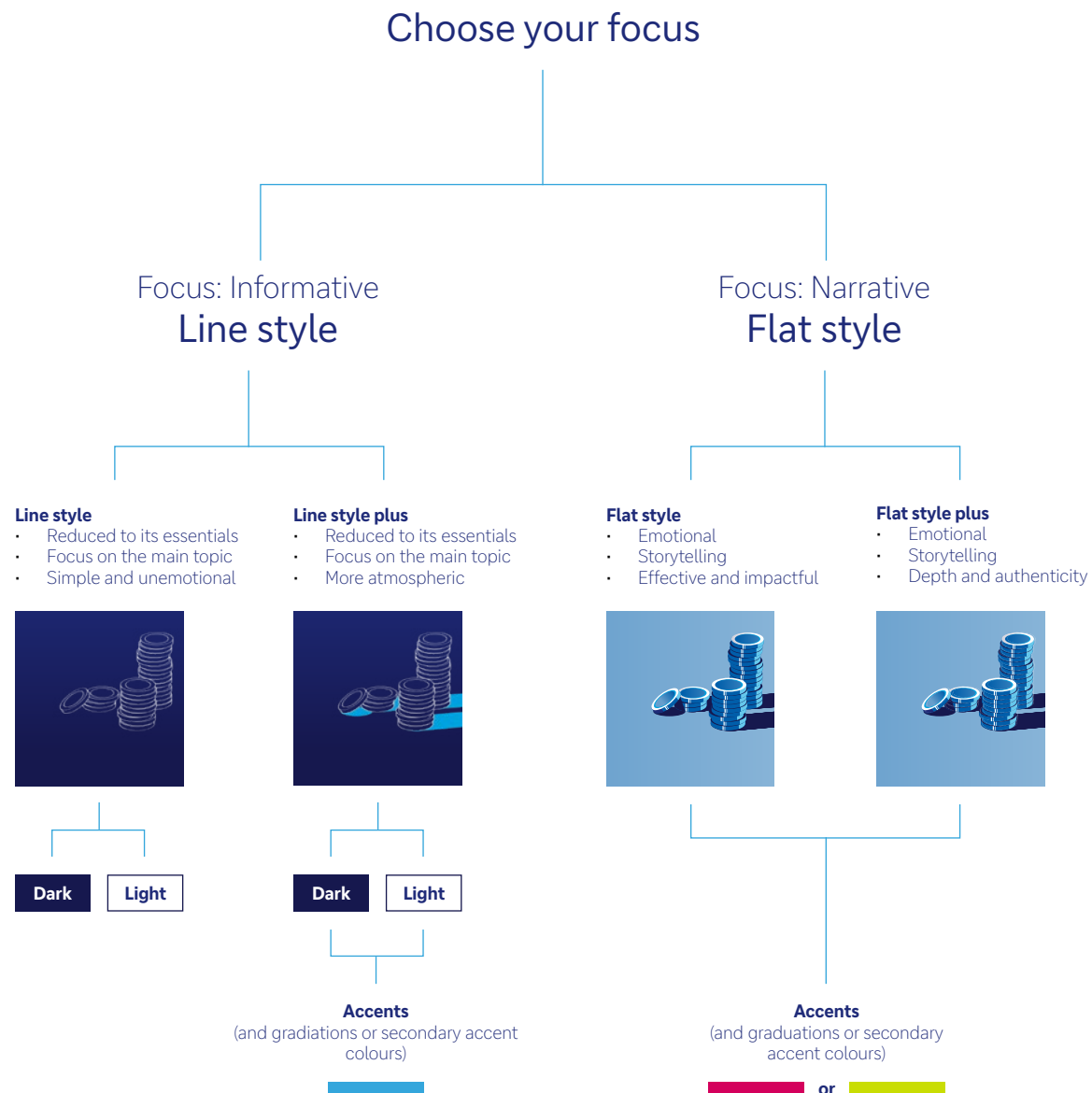


Subtle and multi-layered, this motif allows the viewer to grasp the theme on a deeper, meta level. This approach encourages creativity and personal interpretation, which leads to inspiring moments and a lasting impression.

Line or flat

The illustration style is determined by various parameters and/or departmental preferences.

To help you find a suitable style, follow this illustration roadmap.



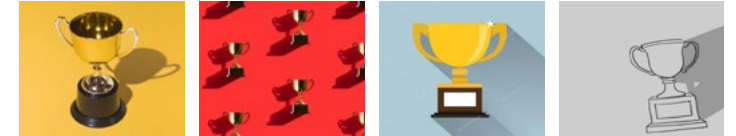
Use case – Award

It's ideal to create a complete set of an illustration motif during the creation process. This way, you can implement an illustration on any medium within a short time frame, as well as add it to the illustration pool. At the very least, consider different styles during the creation process, even if only one specific style is needed at that time.

Step 1 Briefing

- ✓ Check content requirements
- ✓ Check visual requirements
- ✓ Create image description (for AI)
Motif: Cup
Keywords: Award, cup

Step 2 Moodboard/ Scribble



Important: If photographs will be heavily used for templates, then **image rights must be purchased.**

Step 3 Final illustration



Important: When illustrations are finished, they must always be made **available in the illustration pool** so that everyone has an overview of the motifs produced at all times.

Step 4 Complete set



Contact

Imprint

All of the images shown in this guideline are the property of Deutsche Bank and may not be used for other purposes without approval.

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