LINQ

Brand Guidelines

What are Brand Guidelines?

Keeping LINQ in Sync

From our executive team to our product experts, marketers to engineers, everyone at LINQ plays a role in the creation and expression of the LINQ brand.

This document ensures that everything we do—from communications, to graphics, to the ways we engage our customers—represents our unique and authentic LINQ brand. Our guidelines are a living, breathing document. As our business continues to evolve, so will our guidelines.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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Verbal System

Our verbal system articulates *who we are* and *why we matter*. The system includes the elements that make LINQ's written and spoken communication uniquely "us."

Position

The positioning statement captures the unique value we bring to our audiences. It celebrates our differentiated focus on accuracy, insight, and grounding in the present moment—setting us apart from competitors focused on day-to-day minutiae or far-out futures.

Putting information to work

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Putting information to work

WHY IT MATTERS

Information is the hero, a functional differentiator we build an emotional story around.

Information is our answer to why integration matters: beyond table stakes (e.g., 'saving time'), integrating business departments and products means more accuracy and insight.

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Putting information to work

WHY IT MATTERS

-to work reflects how we make information maximally meaningful and actionable to the K-12 decision-makers using it.

-to work showcases our immediacy and urgency in this moment; we're making a grounded brand for the doers of today.

Narrative

This simple story brings our brand's essence to life. It helps us grasp what our brand is all about. It inspires our people to empathize with the challenges of K-12 leaders—and to celebrate the ways in which we empower them.

While this is meant to be an internal element, parts of it can be used as outward-facing copy when appropriate.

K-12 leaders face more questions than answers. From planning menus to planning multimillion-dollar budgets, decision day is every day.

We've been there. Our team at LINQ is made up of people who sat in those same chairs and wrestled with those same questions. And we know what would've made our jobs easier—so, we created it here!

Our solutions and platform make your district or state's data as useful as possible—sharing information across departments, creating helpful analytics and reports, and sending updates directly to the ones making the decisions.

Running K-12 operations is about more than keeping the lights on. It's about leveraging mission-critical data to make impactful decisions—improving your district or state's K-12 business ecosystem.

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WHO WE'RE TARGETING

K-12 Leaders and Decision-Makers

Competitors tend to focus messaging on the users of the software or the students benefitting from better education. We're proud to explicitly call out and cater to the decision-makers, but we purposefully don't narrow this to only CFOs or Superintendents.

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HOW WE SERVE

A Team of K-12 Expert Leveraging Institutional Knowledge

From our research, we know our K-12 focus is an important choice driver for our customers—but our firsthand experience is a stronger differentiator. We highlight the fact that many LINQers have experience in same roles that we now serve—and do it in an empathetic way.

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WHAT WE'RE SELLING

An Integrated Platform That Enables Critical Links

The platform's integrations, especially between district-to-state, are a key differentiator. Others can claim integration but don't explain what it is or why it matters; we are willing to take a strong, specific stance on both.

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WHY WE EXIST

Strength and Stability Amid Constant Change and Chaos

We directly call out the chaos and change that sets the context for K-12 leaders and decision-makers. We then shift our focus to our biggest value proposition and our brand position: leveraging data to make informed, impactful decisions—ultimately making things run better over time.

Vision

If we did everything right, what would the world look like?

Our vision speaks to the big-picture impact and experience we enable for K-12 decision-makers...the way we ground them and give them tools to move forward amid constant change and challenge.

Our vision clearly addresses our most direct audience (strategic leaders), while celebrating how the strength and stability we bring those leaders permeates the entire K-12 ecosystem.

K-12 leaders bringing strength and stability to every school in America.

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LANGUAGE BREAKDOWN

We directly call out our target audience: K-12 leaders. This includes CFOs, Superintendents, Nutrition Directors, and State Agencies.

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LANGUAGE BREAKDOWN

Our insights-driven integrated platform stabilizes our clients' operations amid (what can feel like) chaos and change—ultimately strengthening their schools for whatever is on the horizon. These ideas are inspiring, while feeling grounded.

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K-12 leaders bringing strength and stability to **every school in America.**

LANGUAGE BREAKDOWN

We end on an energizing note that captures our wide-ranging ambitions to continue expanding and impacting students everywhere.

Mission

If the vision is 'why we matter', the mission is 'what we do' and 'how we do it'.

Our mission balances our functional offering with the benefits it provides. Our integrated platform spans people and product—ultimately optimizing operations in more ways than one.

LINQ's expert teams and integrated platform maximize the time, money, and potential of the K-12 ecosystem.

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LANGUAGE BREAKDOWN

In our mission, we call out exactly what we offer: the people AND the product, powered by integration.

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LANGUAGE BREAKDOWN

Here, we get specific about how this integrated platform empowers K-12: by optimizing operations and enabling greater efficiencies.

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LANGUAGE BREAKDOWN

Our partnership with K-12 district and state leaders ultimately impacts the larger K-12 community—and sets standards for the whole industry.

Category Descriptor

Our category descriptor helps us clarify our industry and competitive context. We're category creators— defining our specific focus on the K-12 world and our impact on the business ecosystem.

K-12 Business Platform

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Our category descriptor helps us clarify our industry and competitive context. We're category creators—defining our specific focus on the K-12 world and our impact on the business ecosystem.

K-12
Business Platform

LANGUAGE BREAKDOWN

K-12 casts the right net around who we serve and is readily understood by that audience. It's also underleveraged in competitors' category descriptors.

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K-12
Business
Platform

LANGUAGE BREAKDOWN

Business clarifies our focus on the back-office of K-12, not the educational aspect. The focus is also strategic, speaking directly to our key decision-making audiences.

Category Descriptor

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K-12 Business
Platform

LANGUAGE BREAKDOWN

Platform is holistic and tech-forward. It encompasses the people, processes, and technology that LINQ offers while implying a unified, integrated solution.

Values

Our values are the foundational beliefs of the LINQ brand. They define our culture and drive our behavior, both towards each other and to our K-12 clients. They should be used as a filter for business decisions and brand activations.

Count on Us

We're ready and reliable.

We show up for each other and our partners with efficiency and respect for their time—because we know how busy our space can get!

Class of Our Own

We have high standards.

We're proud of our team and solutions, and hold ourselves accountable for delivering excellence to our clients and communities.

Fair and Square

Integrity is tablestakes—we never cheat the system for an Easy A.

Mutual respect—for each other and our clients—is part of being a LINQer.

Nourish Connection

We're in the business of creating links, not just for operations—but people, too.

Our culture of teamwork and trust makes every collaboration more productive and fun.

Educated Advancement

Experience is a superpower – and while we're always looking ahead, our deep knowledge and rich history fuel each step forward.

This approach to innovation maximizes the value we create for our clients.

Personality

If LINQ was a person walking into a room, this is how we would come across. Our personality traits guide the creative expressions of our brand, from written to spoken to visual.

The combination of these traits ensures that, like a person, our brand feels dynamic and multi-faceted. It strikes a balance, as we appeal to strategic, professional decision-makers while maintaining the authenticity and warmth appropriate for the K-12 space.

	Should Feel	Shouldn't Feel
Expert ↗ Our firsthand experience in the K-12 industry informs everything we do: from the solutions we build to the way we guide you through challenges.	**Smart** **Experienced** We created an integrated platform built to solve for everyday K-12 challenges.	**Academic** **Revolutionary** Our game changing platform solution is the first and only of its kind.
Intentional ↗ If you ask us why, we have an answer. We take strategic steps forward with energy, purpose, and a clear sense of our destination.	**Focused** **Insightful** We're actively testing and prototyping a module for more effecient menu creation.	**Calculated** **Meditative** A series of regorous tests will pinpoint the exact number of effective platform modules.
Grounded ↗ We exemplify the calm and confidence we instill in our audiences, showing up as a force of reliability and steadiness for our partners.	**Confident** **Approachable** Our expert team is here to support your transition to the new reporting requirements.	**Commanding** **Formal** There are new requirements in the state of NC. It's imperitive that you plan for them.
Inspired ↗ We're moved by the commitment and heart of everyday heroes in education. We hold ourselves to that same standard.	**Earnest** **Optimistic** K-12 leaders — we see your hard work and its impact. We made this platform for you.	**Devoted** **Idealistic** We work tirelessly alongside you to give kids the education they deserve.

Messaging

Our messaging themes serve as a guide to ensure we are consistently conveying LINQ's core elements across audiences.

Our Messaging Themes

Compliance

Our years of history in education mean we deeply understand this unique industry and the differences in state-by-state requirements.

We help you meet compliance standards with a platform that's built for K-12 needs.

Integration

At LINQ, we provide a single source of truth for the greater K-12 ecosystem.

Our product & services platform is built with integrations between departments, links from state-to-district, and the support, implementation, training, and professional services needed to create seamless efficiencies throughout the entire K-12 business ecosystem.

Partnership

Our K-12 experts are a proactive extension of your team.

Our knowledge, experience, and technology lay the foundation for a dependable partnership, so you can feel confident and strategic in the decisions you make.

Visual System

The LINQ visual system is our creative toolkit. It's a set of elements that, in combination, reinforces our brand identity across visual communications.

Color

Our spectrum of blues instills the feeling of illumination that comes with the dawn of a new day. This usage of blue with varying levels of brightness maintains contrast for all forms of colorblindness and creates flexibility to design according to ADA specifications.

Spark gives us an opportunity to add an accent to our layouts. It directs viewers in both dark and light environments by highlighting the topic of discussion or moving the reader forward. Please be intentional and reserved when using it.

Glass can be used over white for non-critical UI components or subtle call-outs. **Steel** is seen as thin lines in charts and tables, and **Flint** provides high contrast for copy.

Midnight
HEX #0F2D4A
RGB 15 45 74
CMYK 98 82 44 44
Pantone 289 C

Twilight
HEX #005070
RGB 0 80 112
CMYK 96 65 37 19
Pantone 308 C

Daybreak
HEX #007897
RGB 0 120 151
CMYK 88 42 29 4
Pantone 633 C

Sky
HEX #1BAAC1
RGB 27 170 193
CMYK 74 12 21 0
Pantone 2228 C

Beam
HEX #6EE4EB
RGB 110 228 235
CMYK 47 0 13 0
Pantone 310 C

Spark
HEX #FF8823
RGB 255 136 35
CMYK 0 58 95 0
Pantone 1495 C

Flint
HEX #141414
RGB 20 20 20
CMYK 73 67 65 81
Pantone Black 6 C

Steel
HEX #7C8080
RGB 124 128 128
**CMYK** 54 42 44 7
Pantone 424 C

Glass
HEX #E4ECED
RGB 228 236 237
CMYK 10 3 5 0
Pantone 649 C

Color & Data

For data visualization, we primarily utilize monochromatic design techniques—segmenting by brightness rather than hue. This striking style allows our Spark accent color to shine through clearly, strategically highlighting specific metrics or other topics of conversation.

73%

March Spend

Q1   Q2   Q3   Q4

■ Group 1
■ Group 2
■ Group 3
■ Group 4
■ Group 5
■ Target Metric
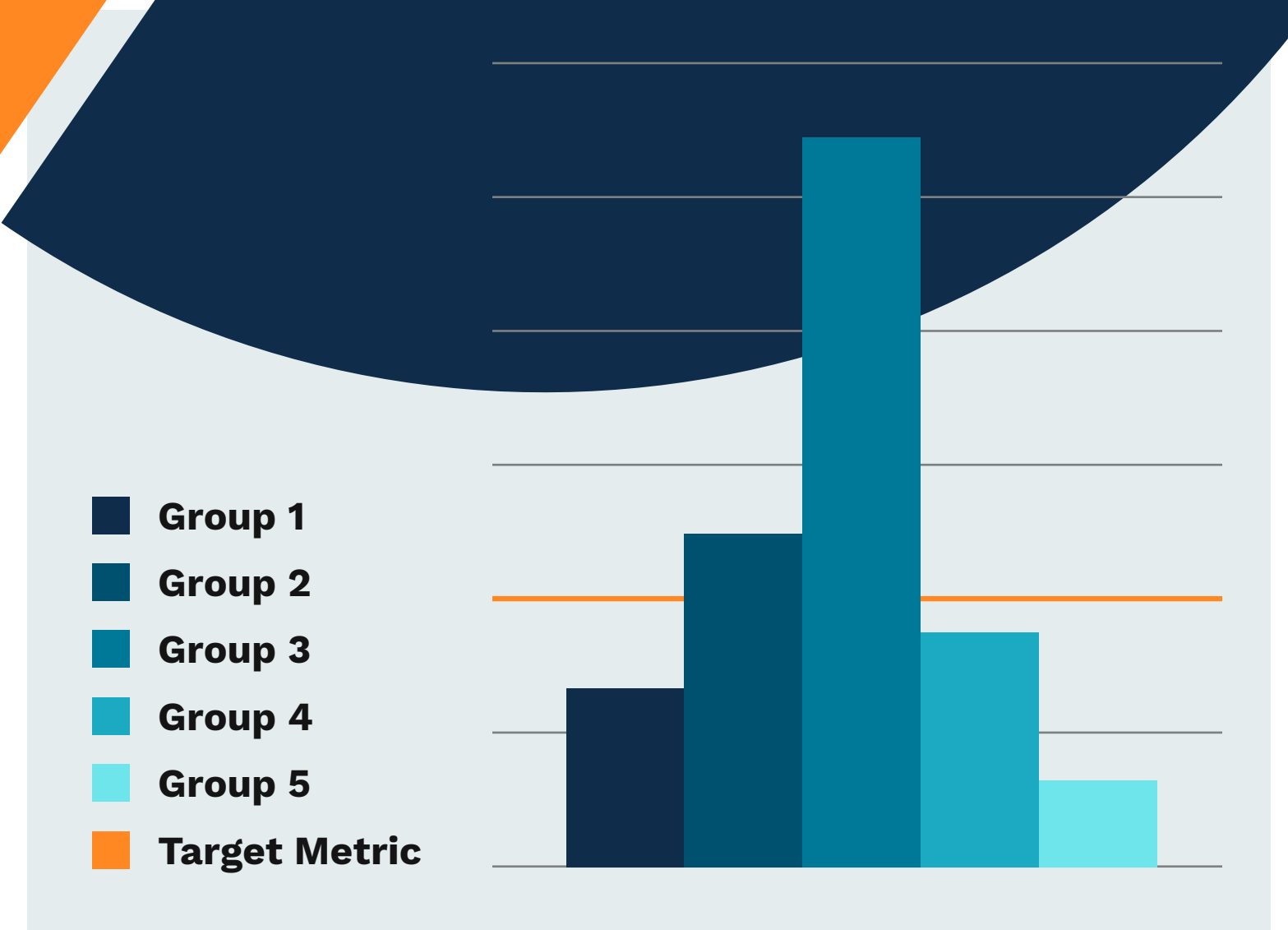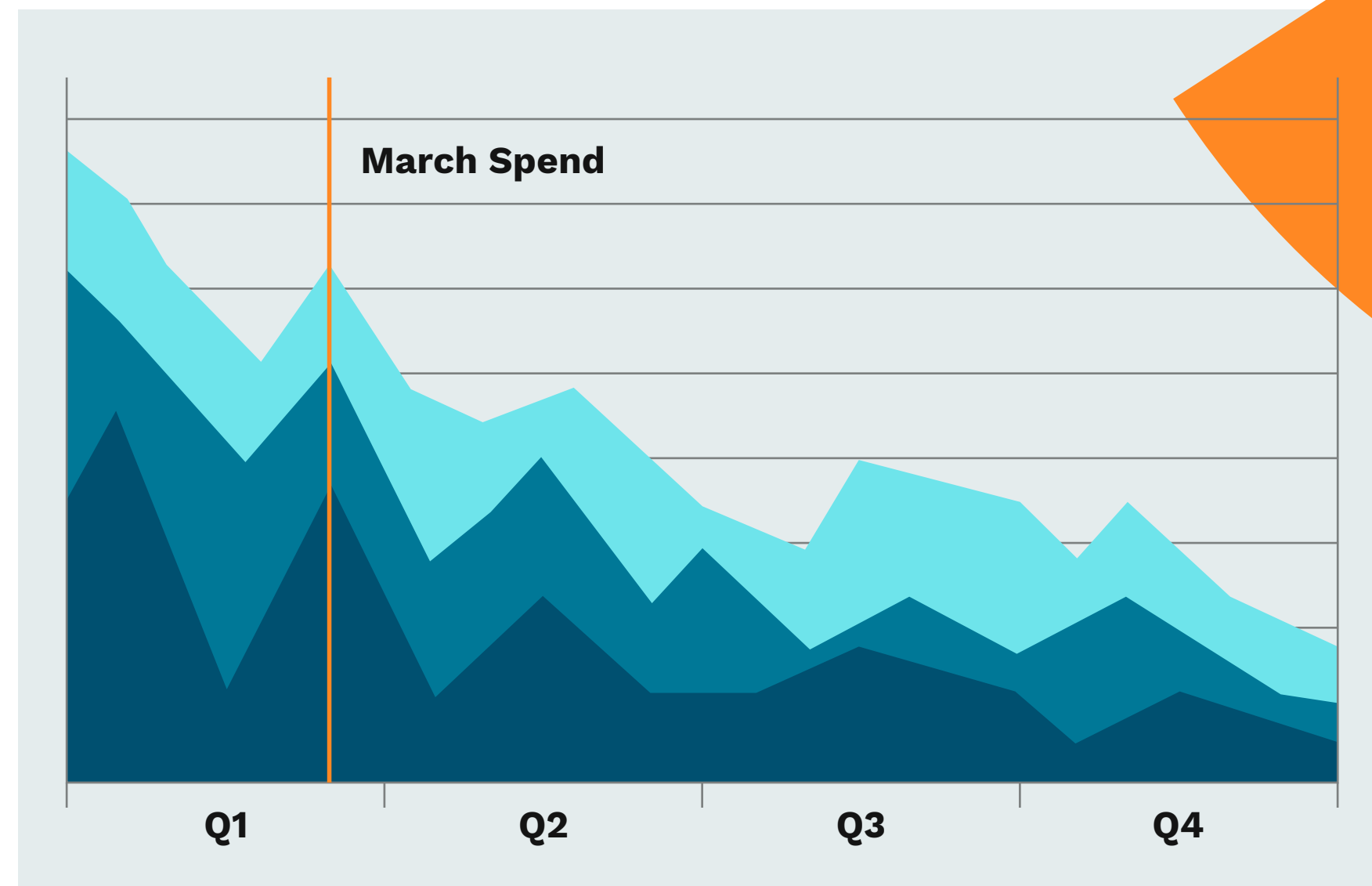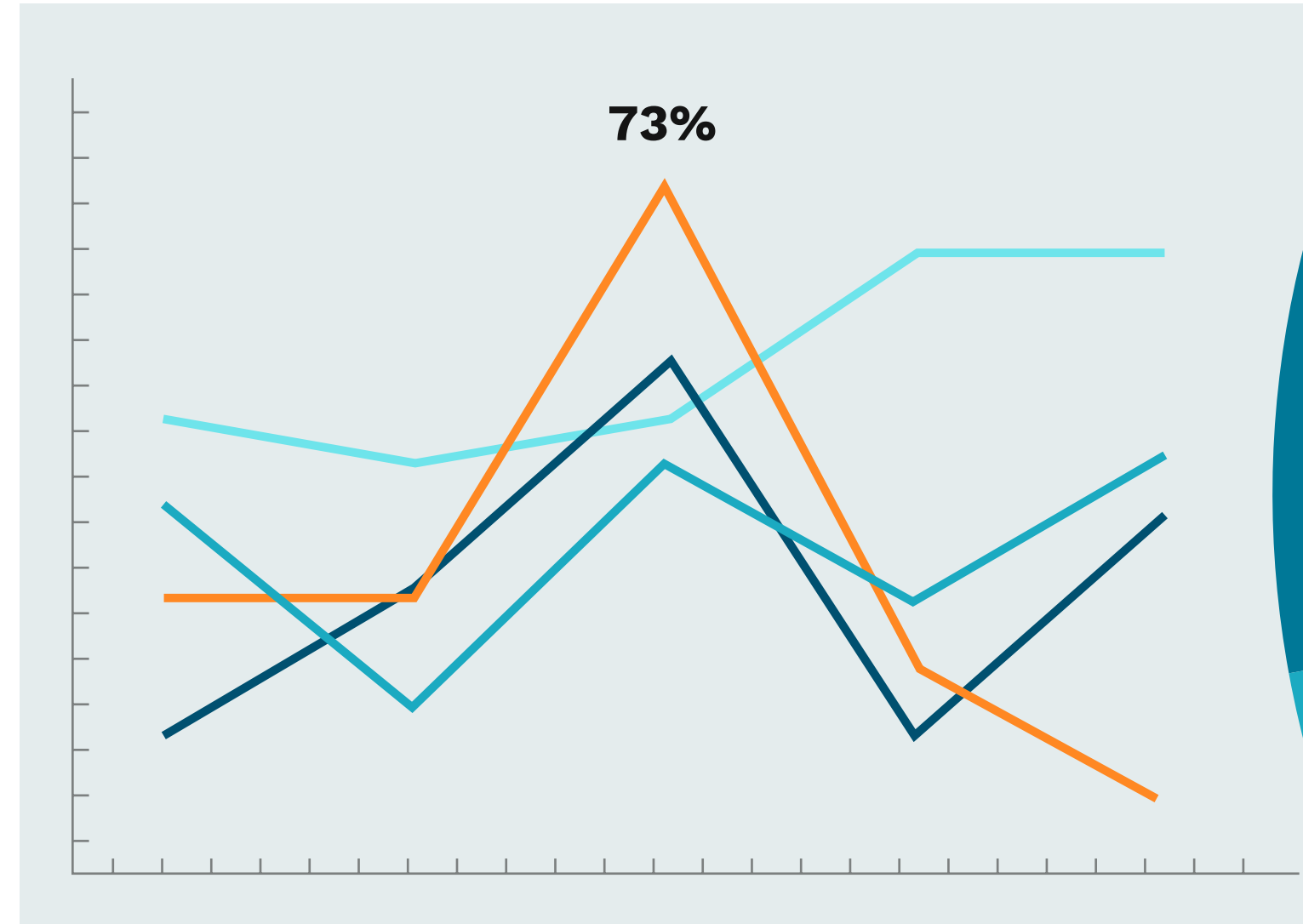
Typography

Work Sans strikes a balance between strength and humanity. It's professional, editorial, yet personal: speaking to K-12 leadership without alienating parents. While we mainly limit our usage to Medium and Bold styles, the family features 9 weights to help maintain legibility for every niche application.

As a Google font, Work Sans is free to **download** by anyone at any time. However, for emergencies when custom fonts aren't an option, the default font Franklin Gothic can also be substituted.

Work Sans

Medium

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPp
QqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz0123456789!?

Bold

**AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPp
QqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz0123456789!?**

Title in Flint

EYEBROW IN SKY

Headline in Flint

Subhead in Twilight

Body copy in Flint. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Duis leo erat, tristique sit amet auctor nec, auctor pellentesque sem. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur.

Button in Spark

Legal in Flint. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.

Title in White

EYEBROW IN SKY

Headline in White

Subhead in Beam

Body copy in White. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Duis leo erat, tristique sit amet auctor nec, auctor pellentesque sem. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur.

Button in Spark

Legal in White. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.

Photography

Our photography focuses on K-12 leaders embodying the spirit of collaboration and the act of putting information to work. This can manifest as mentor/mentee dynamics, teams working together, and the individual getting things done.

Using bright, warm environments and eye-level angles, our photography style comes across as direct and approachable. Shots should feel modern, friendly, positive, and professional—set in environments that feel real.

For areas where images of children are expected, we apply these same guidelines to photography featuring older students. This differentiates us in the competitive landscape and reinforces our capabilities to handle the most complex of K-12 business operations.

Graphic Elements: Layers of Insight

Brightly glowing against our Midnight blue, these layers can be used to highlight photos, containers, or text—illuminating content as it gets closer to the viewer. Photos should completely replace the white layer, becoming framed by the others (see Page 3).

When cropped off the edge of layouts, this system reinforces our data-driven positioning by transitioning to a bar graph appearance.

Graphic Elements: Connecting the Dots

Zig-zagging behind elements or around copy, our dot matrix mimics the stairstep aesthetic of our layer system and provides geometric structure to layouts. It is used to focus in on typography, border floating containers, and increase visual depth.

This pattern should only appear as Glass on top of White or as Twilight on top of Midnight.

Graphic Elements: Sparking Direction

We use Spark to accent layouts in three primary ways:

The most subtle of our trio, our orange line is incorporated to increase readability, providing a simple visual buffer to our system of typographical elements.

Our arrow lives in the intersections, creating a resonant pop of orange against a field of blues and grays. Thematically giving positive direction to our stairstep of layers, it can also be used to direct viewers forward, indicate a connection between elements, or promote interactivity.

For more reserved compositions that need a touch of personality, our light meter graphic can incorporate the visual tone of our brand into otherwise flat layouts—illuminating before sparking into action.
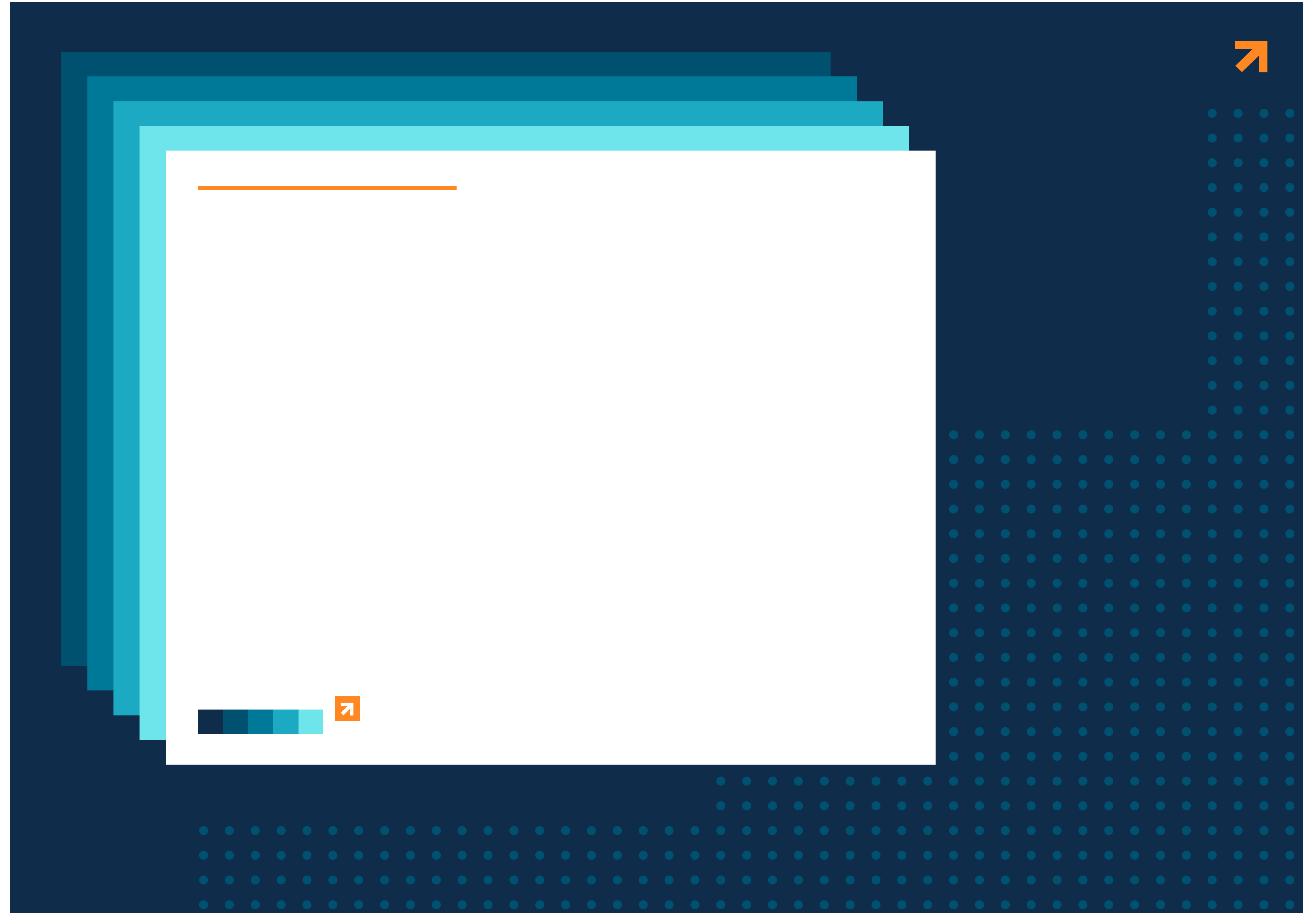
Graphic Elements: Iconic Impression

Restrained and easy to interpret, our icon style feels right at home for both the K–12 executive and the parent checking the lunch calendar.

Comprised primarily of geometric angles, this library blends right in with our modular system and keeps us grounded in professionalism. Carrying through the design language of Work Sans, the low-complexity line art with a uniform stroke keeps icons feeling airy and open, projecting the simplicity our solutions are designed to provide.

Logo

At LINQ, we are illuminators: proven experts who champion today's K-12 leaders and shine a light on the information they need.

Our icon manifests the "Torch of Knowledge", a centuries-old symbol for learning and education. This flame is elevated above a pie chart data point—a handle that highlights our foundation in information and represents our commitment to teamwork.

Alternating between white and Midnight, our wordmark is adaptable for both dark and light environments and carries through the shape language of our icon.

Logo Spacing

The clearspace for our logo and torch icon illustrates the minimum space that should exist between these marks and any other visual elements. This will create plenty of breathing room and prevent our symbols from feeling crowded.
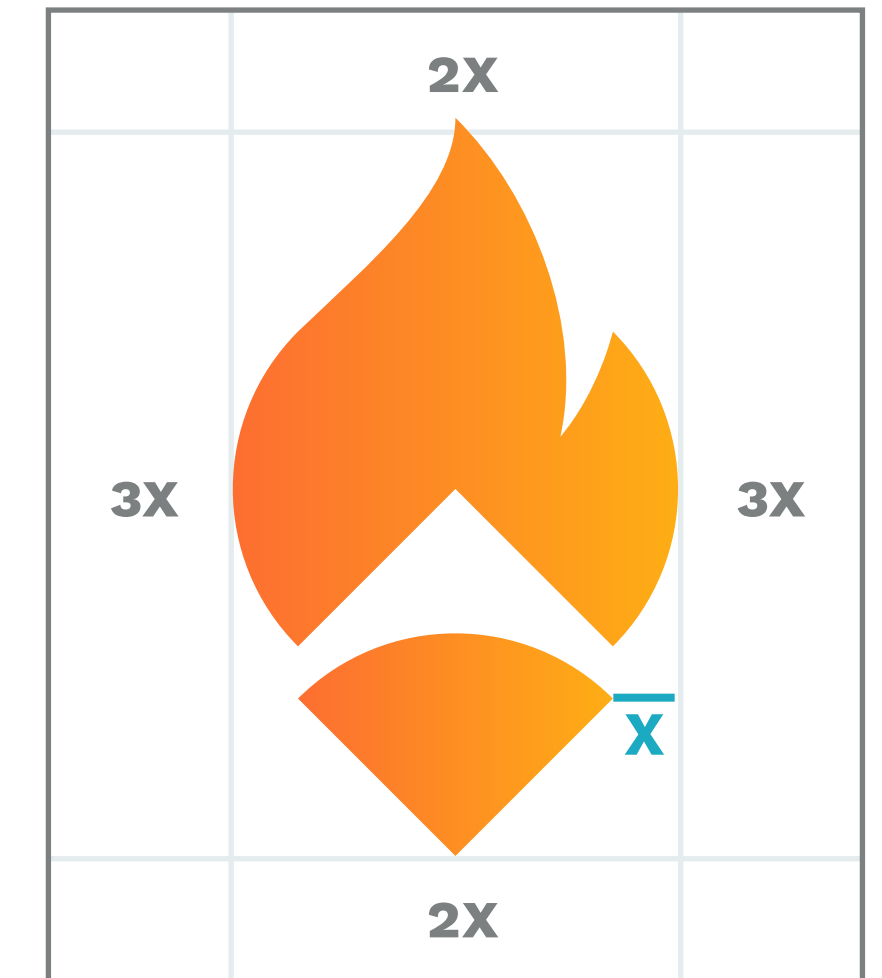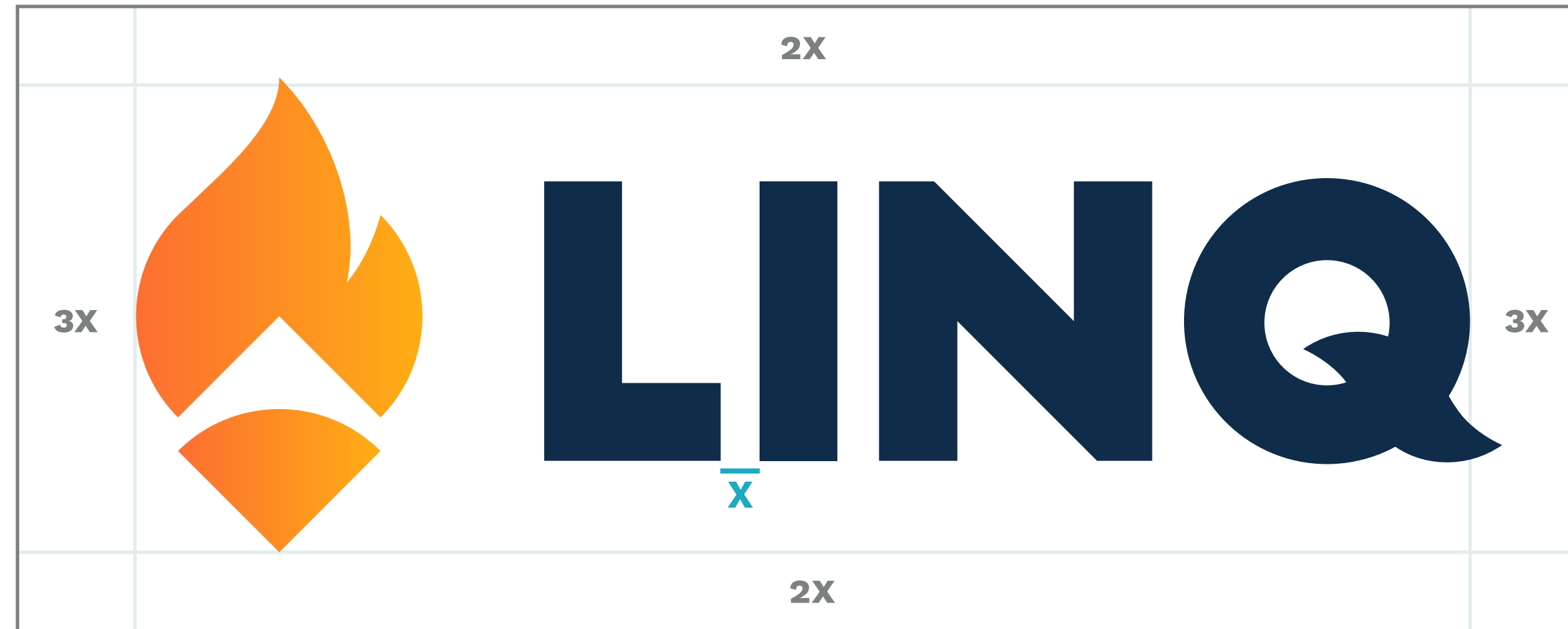
Logo Violations

While our icon may be used as a standalone element, our full logo composition should not be changed. Shown here are some examples of improper logo modifications.

Do not alter the color scheme.

Do not add an outline, shadow, or glow.

Do not adjust the icon/wordmark ratio or placement.

Whenever possible, refrain from using the wordmark on its own. Likewise, refrain from using the torch icon on its own.

Examples

These mockups illustrate ways that various activations *could* come to life, incorporating brand language and showcasing the flexibility of visual elements.

LINQ

CASE STUDY

Nutrition Management Solutions

How One District Boosted Effeciency

LINQ

NOV 19, 2019

K–12 District Saves Time and Money with Free & Reduced Management Software

Client Summary

Westerville City School District (WCSD) is one of distinction in the state of Ohio; it is the 12th largest district in the state, educating 15,500 K–12 students across 22 schools.

WCSD also has a mountain of accolades and a reputation for excellence. The district has a long history of being identified as a high-performing school district by the Ohio Department of Education.

Even Newsweek Magazine identified all three district high schools as among the best in the country. The performance of their students shows just how hard they work to cultivate a culture of excellence.

> "One of the biggest improvements I've seen since implementing MealsPlus is the cost savings to the district in the amount of overtime hours required at the start of the school for processing free and reduced lunch."
>
> **Wanda Myers**
> Nutrition Secretary, WCSD

The Problem

The Child Nutrition Secretary for WCSD, Wanda Myers, managed all aspects of the Free and Reduced program applications manually. Myers and her team performed manual import and export process every day because of their antiquated analog system.

As a result, there was a one-day delay to any student's Free and Reduced status. And that caused a delay in offering Free and Reduced meals to students.

Secretaries had to help process applications manually, send them in for review, wait for approval, and then put the data into the point of sale system by hand. On top of all of the delays, the system was not user-friendly, and customer support became "pretty much non-existent," according to Myers.

LINQ.COM　**01**

WE DELIVER

Strength and Stability

Expert   Inspired   Grounded   Intentional

Thank You