

**FREE**  
**BRAND-BUILDER TOOLKIT**

*100% free resources to help **your branding** become **more outstanding***

**@outstandbrand**



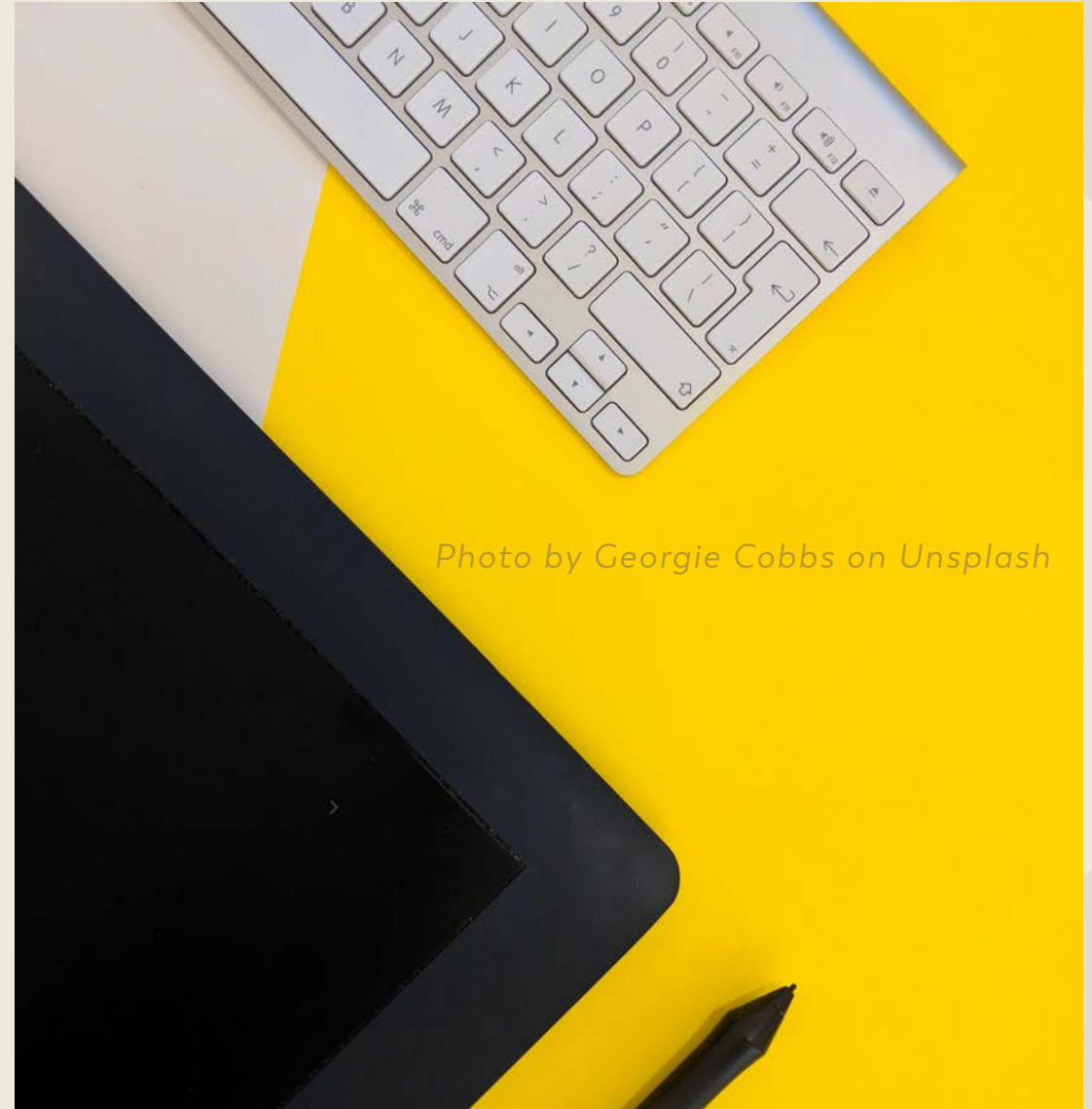
**outstandbrand.com**

# So, what are we gonna build?



*Chances are you already spend more than you care to think about on software, apps, and services for your business or brand. Good workmanship requires good tools and materials, and it's always worth investing in great people and talent. But you don't always need a \$1,000 dollar tool to do every task. Here are my top 24 tools that cost nothing and have saved me countless hours and dollars. Enjoy!*

***Disclaimer: I am not being compensated in any way for promoting any of the companies, services, or products in this guide. Many of these services offer paid features, and I'd encourage you to upgrade or subscribe if you find them useful!***



*Photo by Georgie Cobbs on Unsplash*



Photo by Markus Spiske on Unsplash

# Stock Photography

“THE SOUL NEVER THINKS WITHOUT AN IMAGE.” -ARISTOTLE

*Have you ever found stock photos to be too, well, “stock”? It’s time-consuming to find beautiful, authentic photos that meet your brand standards without breaking the bank. Here are my best royalty-free (and actual FREE) stock sites just for you.*

## **UNSPLASH**

*The biggest and (in my opinion) best site for freely available photography. If you don't know about Unsplash, you've been missing out! You can download and use photos from this site personally or professionally without restriction—although providing credit to the photographer is always a common courtesy.*

• [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com) •

## **BURST**

*This one was a new discovery for me, but I was blown away by the selection and searchability with Burst from Shopify. Like Unsplash, Burst allows you to search a vast library of stock photos that are freely available to use however—providing credit whenever-possible is suggested.*

• [burst.shopify.com](https://burst.shopify.com) •

## **NEUESTOCK**

*Neuestock by creative agency, Rocket Republic, provides a collection of hip, moody photography organized into albums by subject. Their authentic, raw style and subject matter will especially appeal if you are trying to reach a younger audience.*

• [rocketrepublic.com/neuestock](https://rocketrepublic.com/neuestock) •

## **STARTUP STOCK PHOTOS**

*If you run a small business or startup, the selection from Startup Stock Photos will probably appeal to you. Subject matter includes trendy professionals, modern tech, sleek urban workspaces, and cool conference room meetings. My one caution: Don't try to portray you're a business that you're not (run out of your living room in Iowa, but showing a New York high rise in on your website).*

• [startupstockphotos.com](https://startupstockphotos.com) •

## **DEATH TO THE STOCK PHOTO**

*This one is a little different than others on this list. Instead of offering a freely downloadable library of photos, Death to The Stock Photo emails subscribers a curated collection of 20—or more—photos to your inbox each month. DTS Photographers have worked for the likes of NIKE, ADIDAS, and VOGUE, so you know quality will be top-notch!*

• [deathtothestockphoto.com](https://deathtothestockphoto.com) •

## **GRATISOGRAPHY**

*Gratisography provides some of the most creative and zany stock photos of any of the other sites in this toolkit. Each picture portrays a personality and life of its own. The only downside is that every photo tends to communicate a very specific message, which may or may not be what you're trying to convey. Still always worth a look and a laugh!*

• [gratisography.com](https://gratisography.com) •



# Productivity & Goals

“AN INNOVATOR WHO HAS BRILLIANT IDEAS  
BUT LACKS THE DISCIPLINE AND PERSISTENCE  
TO CARRY THEM OUT IS MERELY A DREAMER.”  
-MALCOLM GLADWELL

*On the next page are apps and services  
designed to help you breathe easier even as  
you hustle to grow your brand.*

*Photo by Rodion Kutsaev on Unsplash*



## **BEAR:** NOTE-TAKING

*I've heard it said that, "note-takers are world-changers." As a visual/hands-on learner who struggles to retain info and details unless I write or type them out, a great note-taking system is a lifeline for me. I recently switched from Evernote to this faster, more-streamlined app, and it's quickly become one of my Top 3 most-used phone apps. You can use it 100% free, but the paid version unlocks some super-helpful extra features like syncing across all your devices.*

• [bear.app](#) •

## **SLACK:** TEAM COMMUNICATION

*Every great team requires great communication. Email is great for incoming and outbound messages, but not ideal for team communication. How do you cut down on sidebar conversations and emails that start with "FWD: RE: RE:?" Enter Slack. Messages are organized by topics (called "channels"), and the chat-like interface makes group conversations feel free-flowing and natural. Check it out!*

• [slack.com](#) •

## **TODOIST:** TO-DO LIST

*Tim Challies, productivity guru, suggests that only three tools and apps are truly essential to being productive: A calendar (for events), notebook (for details), and a checklist (for tasks). Todoist is a digital checklist that syncs across all my devices and helps keep me stay focused and efficient each day.*

• [todoist.com](#) •

## **BUFFER:** SOCIAL MEDIA SCHEDULING

*If you use social media for your business at all, chances are you're also on more than one network. If you find yourself spending lots of time copying and pasting posts to each account, a social media scheduler like Buffer could be perfect for you! You can create a single post, and Buffer will post it to each of your networks. Voila! If you run more than one account, you just cut your posting time in half.*

• [buffer.com](#) •

## **AND CO.:** PROPOSALS & INVOICING

*And Co. is a small business owner's Swiss army knife that allows you to send project proposals, track your time and expenses, invoice customers (one-time or recurring), all from one simple interface. I've been using it for a year and already can't live without it!*

• [and.co](#) •

## **LIBBY/HOOPLA:** READING

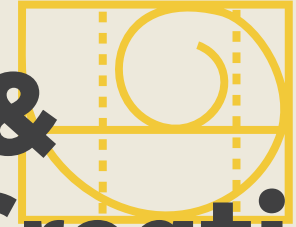
*I am a huge fan of public libraries, but in my current life phase I don't have a lot of time to get there and browse. Libby by Overdrive and Hoopla are apps that let you "check out" audiobooks and e-books for free on your device of choice using your library card. Not does it make regular reading simpler, but you'll save time, money, and shelf-space!*

• [overdrive.com](#) • [hoopladigital.com](#) •

Photo by Joanna Kosinska on Unsplash



# Graphics & Content Creation



“IF YOU THINK GOOD DESIGN IS EXPENSIVE, YOU SHOULD LOOK AT THE COST OF BAD DESIGN.” -RALF SPETH

*It's worth the price of admission for design and content creation apps, but if you need something in a pinch—especially on mobile—start here.*

## **CANVA:** GRAPHIC DESIGN

*Canva is a simple web and mobile app content creation tool. It's feature-rich with a beautifully designed interface and curated templates available for free. You can design for specific digital or print layouts: Desktop, poster-size, postcard, Facebook cover, and many more. If you're feeling fancy, you can even purchase stock photos to incorporate into your designs for just \$1. Don't forget about this one.*

• [canva.com](https://canva.com) •

## **ADOBE SPARK:** GRAPHICS & MOTION

*If you subscribe to the Adobe suite, you're paying for power, but many people don't know about their free tool for mobile called Adobe Spark. By default, graphics created in Spark have a watermark, but by sharing the app you remove it for free. It's perfect for quotes, infographics, quick social content, and even some light video!*

• [spark.adobe.com](https://spark.adobe.com) •

## **RNI FILMS:** PHOTOGRAPHY

*With the dawn of Instagram, everyone started "filtering" their entire world. Vintage-inspired filters make snapshots look instantly nostalgic. And while Instagram has some great built-in tools, you'll serve your brand better by using consistent, professionally-made filters. Try RNI Films for a minimalistic film-emulating camera/editor that will give your photos a consistent, professional, branded look!*

• [reallyniceimages.com](https://reallyniceimages.com) •

## **OVER:** GRAPHIC DESIGN

*If you run a small business or startup, the selection from Startup Stock Photos will probably appeal to you. Subject matter includes trendy professionals, modern tech, sleek urban workspaces, and cool conference room meetings. My one caution: Don't try to portray you're a business that you're not (run out of your living room in Iowa, but showing a New York high rise in on your website).*

• [startupstockphotos.com](https://startupstockphotos.com) •

## **INSHOT:** MOBILE VIDEO

*Once upon a time, the idea of editing quality video on your phone was laughable in creative circles. But now the mobile revolution is here! With it comes vertical video, InShot that let you cut together quick, professional-looking clips with titles, transitions, effects, stickers, and more. Ready to amp up your Insta-game? InShot is a must-have.*

• [instagram.com/inshot.app](https://instagram.com/inshot.app) •

## **UNSPLASH**

*OK, so this is a winner in two categories. Not only is Unsplash a fantastic resource for free, use-however stock photography, but their mobile app is a great companion for quickly downloading, favoriting, and organizing photos into collections. I'm creating an "Outstand Brand" collection to assemble a series of on-brand shots for later use.*

• [unsplash.com/apps/ios](https://unsplash.com/apps/ios) •



# Ideas & Inspiration



“CREATIVITY IS A LOT LIKE HAPPINESS. IT SHOWS UP WHEN YOU’RE THINKING OF SOMETHING ELSE.” –BERT DODSON

*We’ve all gotten stuck—whether that looks like a flashing cursor on a blank doc, an empty canvas in Photoshop, or a crumpled paper pile of rejected drafts. Here are some easy creativity kickstarters for when un-inspiration strikes.*



Photo by Sarah Pflug on Burst

## **FROMUPNORTH: DESIGN**

*One day I was browsing Pinterest for some visual inspiration, and I noticed most of my pins came from a single site: From Up North. It's quickly become one of my go-to's for fresh inspiration and ideas from across the design sphere. Even if you're not a designer, it might just spark an idea for your next product package, website, or re-brand.*

• [fromupnorth.com](http://fromupnorth.com) •

## **THE MUSIC BED: SOUNDTRACKS**

*If you're like me, you love listening to music while you work. And if you're VERY like me, your brain gets off-track with familiar tracks. The Music Bed is a stock music site made for filmmakers, but anyone can create an account, listen, and create playlists for free. The quality and selection is incredible, and it's the perfect, customizable soundtrack for work. Whether you need tunes to chill or get pumped, it's all here.*

• [themusicbed.com](http://themusicbed.com) •

## **PINSTAGRAMBBBLEHANCE: IDEAS**

*No, this isn't the latest social network/viral YouTube dance challenge. There were just too many good sources for business ideas and inspiration to pick one. Go follow your favorite creators on **Pinterest**, **Instagram**, **Dribbble**, or **Behance**. But be SUPER picky; don't get lost down the rabbit hole! Curate your feed with the best of the best, so your timeline is filled with those who truly inspire you.*

## **GOOD GOOD GOOD: POSITIVE STORIES**

*At a time when it can seem like everything is going wrong, it's important to hear inspiring stories of uplifting change in the world. The Good Good Good Co. newsletter is a daily dose of hope for humanity and encouragement for your soul direct to your inbox. If you love the stories, you can pick up a physical edition of their "Goodnewspaper" or tune into the "Sounds Good" podcast.*

• [goodgoodgood.co](http://goodgoodgood.co) •

## **RADIOPUBLIC: PODCASTS**

*Listening to podcasts is a source of cheap, easy knowledge. Radio Public is a beautiful, free podcast app for both iPhone and Android—no sign-up required. A few personal picks right now are **Building a StoryBrand** by Donald Miller, **How I Built This** by NPR, **99% Invisible** by Roman Mars, and **The Learning Leader** by Ryan Hawk.*

• [radiopublic.com](http://radiopublic.com) •

## **GO FOR A WALK: SELF-CARE**

*So maybe this is a bit of a cop-out, but it's only the EASIEST EVER self-care tip. It can change up your whole day in just 10-25 minutes. For best results, get outside, and choose a different route to walk than yesterday. Steve Jobs was known to walk around the Apple Campus daily and had some of his best meetings and insights while out on a leisurely loop. Who knows what it could do for you?*

Now go build an outstanding brand!

@outstandbrand

*outstand*  
BRAND

outstandbrand.com

**Do you need some help  
figuring out what's next?**

**I'D LOVE TO WORK TOGETHER!**

**@outstandbrand**

**outstand**  
BRAND

**outstandbrand.com**

# I believe every brand should be clear, memorable, and timeless.



*Communicate clearly. Avoid cluttered communication and messy marketing. The world needs your strongest value, voice, and visuals.*



*Make it memorable. Stay in people's brains like a sticky note. Forget forgettable. Everyone should remember exactly what you offer.*



*Transmit something timeless. Build something worth preserving. Don't get tossed in the tides of time and trends. Your brand should out-stand.*

**@outstandbrand**

**outstand**  
BRAND

**outstandbrand.com**