Packback Brand Book

At Packback, we believe *every* student has the potential to change the world when they become a lifelong learner.

If you're reading this, we're happy that you're here! We're glad to know that you are a part of our mission to awaken and fuel the lifelong curiosity in every student.

This book was designed to give you a better understanding of what it means to be a part of the Packback team and get to know the Packback's brand so you can communicate confidently as a member of the Packback team. Whether you're an employee, professor, designer or potential future team mate, we hope that you find this resource inspiring.

Introduction

"Brand is the sum total of how someone perceives a particular organization."

Ashley Friedlein

Marketing Expert, Entrepreneur, Investor, Speaker, Author and CEO & Founder of Guild

Importance of Brand

Packback's brand is not just our logo or a color scheme! Our brand encompasses *everything* our company is and does. Our purpose and our values are at the core of who we are as a company, and shape everything else we do. While we can work to ensure consistency in our actions and our words to help build our brand, ultimately our brand is what our customers say it is. Every single interaction matters.

How should this brand book be used?

To align our team...
To Packback's mission, core principles, differentiators, personality, and voice.

To guide and teach...
Packback's design standards to those who work with our brand both internally and externally to ensure consistency throughout the brand.

To consistently communicate...
the Packback brand to our most important audiences (our team and our customers) in the most successful way.

contents

Packback's Purpose & Product
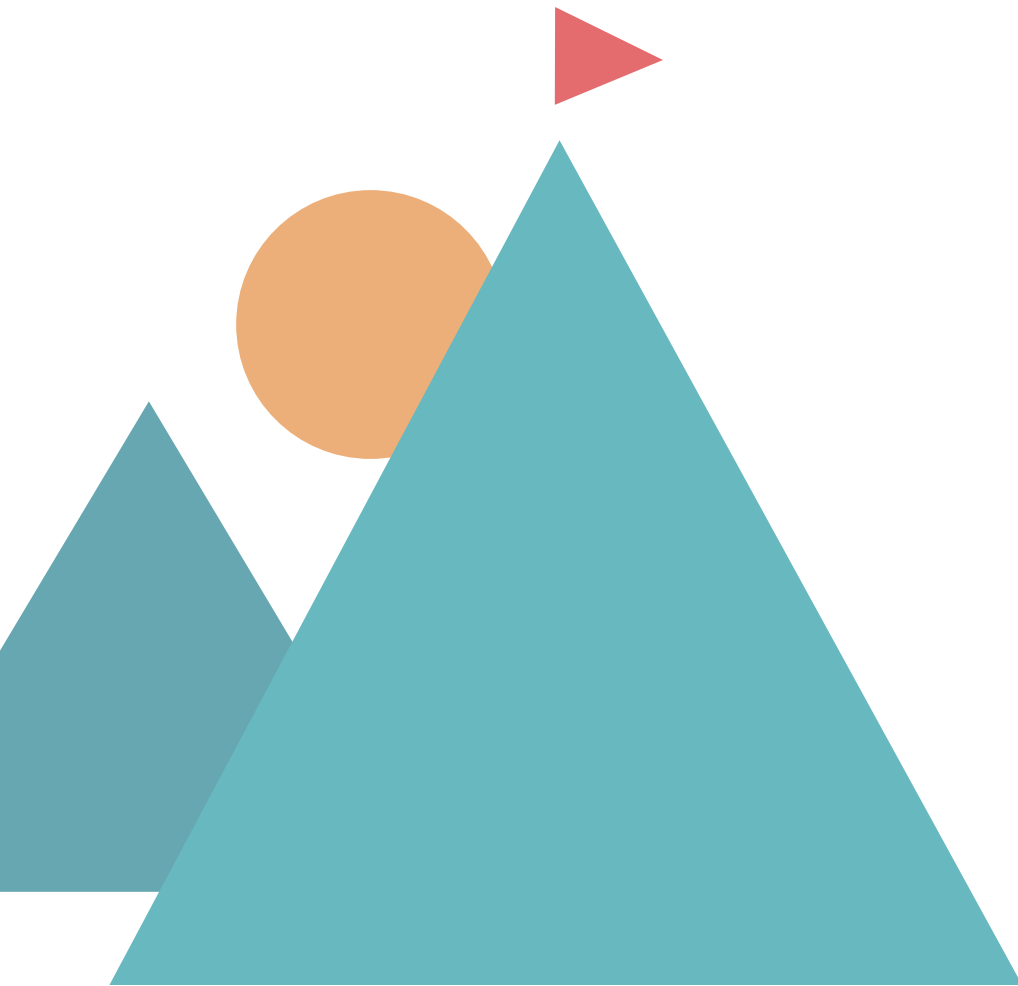
Our Purpose

Packback's company purpose is to awaken and fuel the lifelong curiosity in every student.

We believe that students have the potential to envision and enact a better future for themselves and our world, when they are equipped with the skills and confidence to ask big questions.

Our story... *so far!*

Packback was started by our founders while they were still in college. Shortly after graduation, Packback appeared on the TV show Shark Tank and gained funding from Mark Cuban to launch a model to make eTextbooks more affordable. As the eBook model grew, we added learning communities around each textbook for students to discuss questions related to their book. Initially, we expected to see students using these communities to get extra help outside of class.

But something unexpected began happened in these learning communities. We started to see a few cases of incredible, open-ended, curious questions being posted by students. Even more suprisingly, the responses on these kinds of questions were deep, interesting, and well-researched. Our team began to wonder what was inspiring students to make these curious posts, and how we might be able to inspire more students to engage in discussions like these.

Our team began to review our learning communities and coach students on how to ask these open-ended questions. Initially, all coaching and moderation on Packback was done manually by members of our team, while we observed and documented what was working. As we began to learn what *consistently* led to great discussion, we began building and training AI-based algorithms to help scale this coaching.

At this time, a focus on student inquiry wasn't an well-accepted idea in our market and many instructors had lost faith in online discussion. We had to *build* the demand ourselves for a platform like ours. But one by one, we reached out to instructors and showed them the poten-

tial of how using Packback to add inquiry-driven discussion to their curriculum could change their students' attitudes towards learning, and even their own satisfaction as a teacher. Our sales team wasn't just selling a product; they were shaping attitudes and inspiring instructors around a new approach to learning. Thanks to early visionary instructors who believed in the importance of student curiosity, Packback began to grow.

Our first year after launching Packback Questions, we had just a few dozen instructors and only 7,000 students using the platform. But by 2021, over 3,500 instructors and nearly a million students have used Packback. Our work has been shown to be well supported by academic models, like the **Communities of Inquiry** model and **Self-Determination Theory**.

At a time when most of education (and AI research) is interested in giving people **answers**, we are interested in helping students learn to ask better **questions**.

Our Product

Packback enables inquiry-driven learning through discussion at scale. Using AI, our platform acts as a Digital TA to coach students to ask their own open-ended questions, auto-moderate the discussion, and help instructors amplify the impact of their feedback.

Key Features

Automated Moderation through AI

Packback's AI reviews every student post for plagiarism, closed-endedness, profanity, and more to help scale high quality discussion.

Packback's **Instant Feedback**

AI-based Instant Feedback gives students, specific, actionable feedback as they write to support *mastery*.

Outcomes of Our Platform

Packback has been shown to increase:

Course Completion

Faculty Satisfaction

Grade Outcomes

% of Posts With Sources

Participation Rate & Consistency

Overall Word Count of Discussion

To learn about the research being performed on and about Packback's platform, check the **packback.co** website for more information.

To learn more about Packback's features in detail and look up answers to specific questions, please consult the Packback Help Center.

Who
We Serve

Packback may sell our platform to schools and instructors, but students are our end customers. It's our job to make sure that students get value from Packback, and to do this, it matters that students feel genuinely inspired and curious when using the platform.

Students

Our core customers are the students that use Packback. This isn't just lip service; although we "sell" to professors and schools by getting them to adopt Packback, the person who matters most to Packback's growth are our students. Our platform depends on students being *motivated* by the Packback platform, interested in the experience, and excited to write their own questions. That doesn't mean we say "yes" to everything from a student; rather, it means we prioritize transparency, quick support, and a clear explanation of the "why" behind Packback.

Faculty

We work closely with every instructor using Packback to ensure they implement Packback using the Packback pedagogy which has been shown to lead to successful outcomes. We serve our professors and strive for excellence in every interaction, but *never* at the expense of what will lead to the best outcomes for students. This means we are kind (not just nice) and will push back on usage plans or ideas that may lead to a poor outcome for students.

Packback also works with a wide range of different campus instructional designers, department heads, and administrators, particularly when working with institutional partnerships.

Packback's Values

Our Core Values

Our values are inspired by the real actions of our teammates. The words of our values mean nothing on their own; we give them meaning through our behaviors and choices. Our values are our team "contract" for what makes someone successful at Packback, and what we believe will make Packback successful.

Curi-
osity

1. We are fearlessly curious.

We are fearlessly and relentlessly curious, and excited to share our unique knowledge. We take time to fully understand important problems at their root causes, not just the symptoms. We ask the questions of ourselves, our team, and our business that are the *most* uncomfortable. We constantly seek to deepen our understanding of our business and of the communities we serve to create a solution that truly supports students.

A real world example of our value: "We are fearlessly curious."

He developed our first plagiarism checker over a weekend...because he was curious if he could.

"For the first two years of its existence, the Packback platform did not have any plagiarism checking capabilities. When our team was still very small, a Strategy Consultant was on the phone with an instructor who was concerned with the fact that we could not check for plagiarism...and Eric Tendian from our engineering team overheard the conversation.

He became curious if there was a way he could create a simple plagiarism checker algorithm. No one at Packback knew how to solve this problem, and there was no roadmap for where to start. But over a weekend of research and work, Eric created a functional prototype of a plagiarism checking algorithm that pulled keywords from posts and searched Bing (a search engine) to find matching results. This became Packback's first plagiarism checker and it was borne entirely out of Eric's own curiosity, not a planned project."

Craig B.
Chief Technology Officer

Kind-
ness

2. We are
radically kind.

We optimize toward truly supporting the best outcomes for our customers through kindness instead of niceness. We are radically kind to our teammates. That means we are thoughtful about how we communicate and do not hold back on sharing feedback that could help. And we are kind to ourselves as we grow, focusing on growth and progress instead of perfection.

A real world example of our value: "We are radically kind."

My manager taught me how to be radically kind to myself and others...

"When I first started at Packback and didn't realize how impactful this value would be in my life and for my fellow teammates. I've always struggled with being "too nice" and not being able to provide effective feedback for myself or team. My manager, Anne, taught me how to be radically kind to myself and others through her management style and call shadowing.

Every week we are required to submit a call to be shadowed by our manager or peer. The feedback that has been given to has led to my success at Packback. Its insightful and powerful. It always includes things I did well and areas of improvement. Learning from peers has never been easier because they provide consistent examples of how to be better. I also get action steps to follow to help implement the feedback instead of being left in the dark. Being able to give someone impactful feedback is hard and my peers and manager have been helpful in making that process easier for me and not only helped me but allowed me to support my peers and set them up for success."

M. M.
Experience Manager, Customer Success

3. We do what we say we **will do.**

Stories that look like overnight successes are actually the sum of thousands of tiny decisions to follow through on commitments to ourselves and our team. When we commit to a personal goal, we hold ourselves to that goal rigorously, even if we think no one else is looking. We take pride in consistently delivering on the personal goals we set because our individual choices are what add up to team-level success or failure.

A real world example of our value: "We do what we say we will do"

He did the "impossible"...and Packback is here today because of it.

"Eric Hogenkamp began as a sales intern at Packback, then became a member of our Strategy Consultant team. In 2017, Packback had recently shifted to focusing on our discussion platform, Packback Questions. Despite being confident in our pivot, we had a "cash zero" date where we knew that funds would run out if we didn't raise a Series A...and soon.

We had an ultimatum from our future investors who led our Series A; "Hit your Fall sales goal...and we'll fund your Series A." Eric Hogenkamp took this goal to heart and made it his mission to "break the ceiling" of our record at the time for how many instructors a sales rep could close. He'd come in first thing in the morning, stay late in the evening, and created the idea of "winning time"; the final push before a big campaign ends. But Eric didn't just focus on making himself win. He worked to make sure the whole team won. Eric would cold call other reps' territories who were falling behind and help set demos for them so they could hit their quota. He shared his scripts. His commitment is the embodiment of this company value."

Jessica T.
Cofounder & Chief Product Officer

Mindset

4. We never stop **moving forward** (no matter how small the step).

Building an organization is like running a marathon; many people dream of the finish line but don't put in the hundreds of thousands of steps to reach it. We take pride in every small step. Our growth rate is far more important than where we are right now. Today should simultaneously be the best we have ever been, and the worst we will ever be.

A real world example of our value: "We never stop moving forward."

...[We] went from being the kids to the adults in the room essentially overnight out of necessity and we haven't slowed down since.

"In 2018, the Customer Support team lost, in one week, our team lead and our first Experience Manager. This was with four weeks left in the campaign as well. It forced Taylor to become a manager overnight, and it caused Kelsey and I to have to take on two times the number of professors we were working with to close. And had to close in order to hit goal and remain a competitive company. Kelsey, Taylor, Anh and I went from being the kids to the adults in the room essentially overnight out of necessity and we haven't slowed down since."

Anne O.
Executive Curriculum Manager, Customer Success

5. We earn leadership through ownership, optimism, and humility.

No one has ever been (or will ever be) simply given a leadership role at Packback. Leadership and respect are earned by taking responsibility. Leadership is something that we continuously earn through our choices, not something any of us permanently have. Every small task, action or decision is an opportunity to be an owner.

PACKBACK

A real world example of our value: "We earn leadership through humility, ownership, and optimism."

I've never worked with so many selfless people who did what they did because they believed in what they were doing.

"I worked in a non-profit before coming here. To be honest, as I was looking for the next thing, I was nervous about moving into the for-profit realm. I was so used to mission driven work that carried its own moral imperative. How was I going to get that in a system that focuses so much on profit?

But Packback proved my fears wrong. I've never worked with so many selfless people who did what they did because they believed in what they were doing. We're here to make an intervention in classrooms across the country, and we're earnestly invested in the success of the students and the instructors we support. There is very little ego and so much leadership here, and it makes it such an enjoyable place to be."

Christa H.
Experience Manager, Customer Success

Invest-
ment

6. We employ an investor's mindset.

As an education company, it is our duty to students and instructors to invest our time and resources in a way that will create the greatest impact. We have to act as investors with every dollar we earn (and every minute we have) to bring greater value back into the lives of students in their education. Because time and resources are limited, we focus on what differentiates us and creates the most impact on students.

*A real world example of our value: "We employ an investor's mindset."*

[He brainstormed] ways we could 'teach the instructor to fish' instead of 'fishing' for them.

"Nico, our Product Support Manager, helps create custom reports for instructors. When I submitted a request for an instructor asking to put their grades in the correct format for upload to D2L, he began questioning me, "Why should we do this on a weekly basis for instructors when they would be able to reformat themselves?" Nico was transparent that this report would take valuable time away from answering emails and other more urgent requests that could not be completed independently by an instructor. He declined by request, but only after brainstorming ways we could 'teach the instructor to fish' instead of 'fishing' for him.

Nico is good at looking where time should be spent (because time is money, and that is truly an investor's mindset) and saying "no" when necessary. I made the instructor a video and a template they could use on a weekly basis, and now the task is off of both of our hands and the instructor can do it on their own time."

Blair G.
Senior Experience Manager, Customer Success
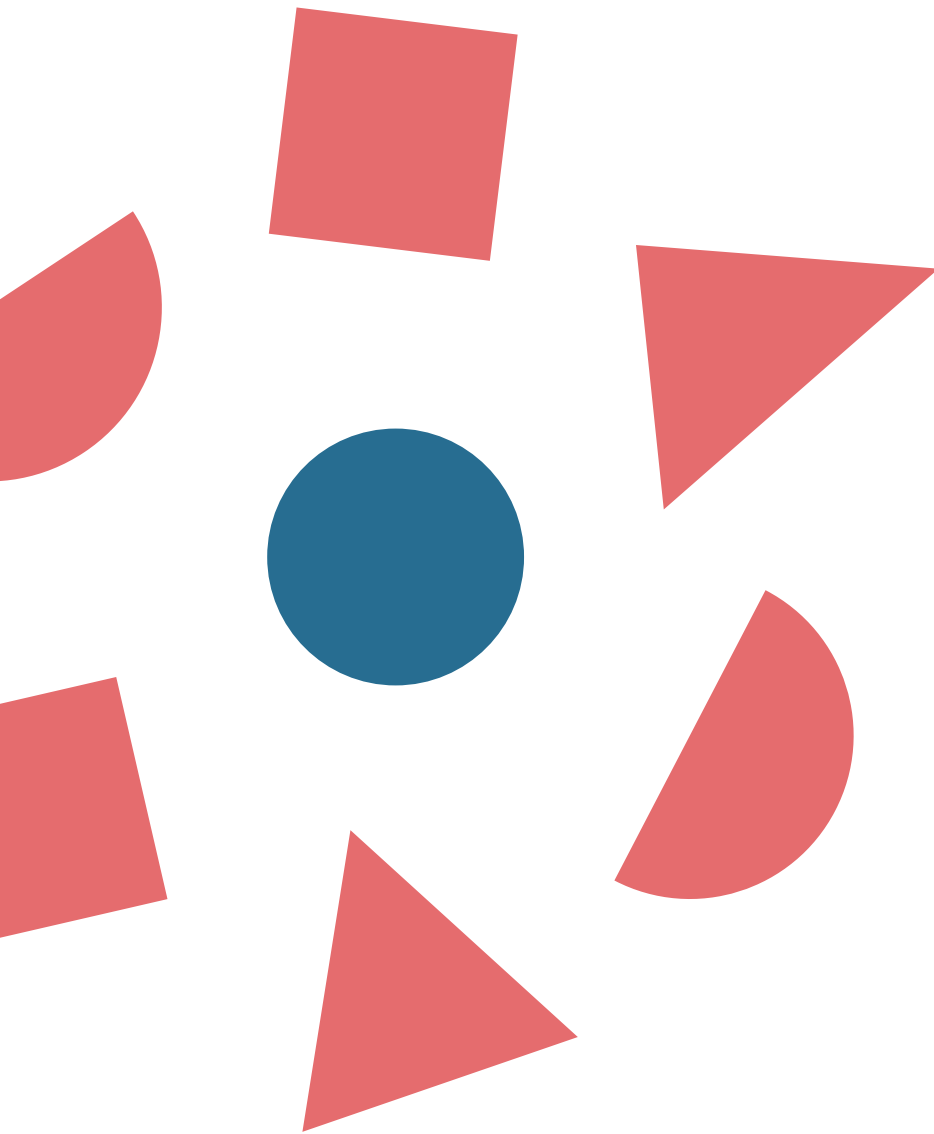
Our Stance on Diversity

Working in the education technology space, it is an ethical necessity for us to build a diverse and inclusive team in order to better consider the needs of our audience's wide range of backgrounds and educational experiences.
We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, veteran status, or disability status.

Packback's stance on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Packback is an education company committed to helping students learn how to critically question their world.

The educational system has massive influence in society. What we learn in schools shapes our worldviews. And in a very real way, our worldviews shape our world. As such, education has been used to prop up and reinforce systems of hegemony and oppression- despite the best of intentions of hardworking and committed instructors nationwide. The inequitable distribution of resources, the lack of integration or diversity in schools; and what our textbooks choose to focus on all shape the information students are exposed to. As an educational tech company Packback has a responsibility to be a force against systematic oppression through education and information.

We as a team are fully committed to doing the work to earn and maintain a diverse team; one that supports and uplifts and includes all voices. All members of Packback's team regardless of gender identity, race, sexual orientation, family history, age, nationality, disability, religion, background and perspectives, should feel safe, equally valued, and equally able to grow in their roles and influence the direction of our company.

Packback's full policies around anti-discrimination, inclusion, and diversity can be found in the Packback's HR platform and in the policies signed by all employees at Packback.

Zero-Tolerance Policy
for Abuse and Harassment

Racism, sexism, homophobia, religious harassment, sexual harassment, or any pattern of words or actions that harms the safety, dignity, and opportunities of another team member will not be tolerated.

If you take an action that is blatant, extreme, or overt or if your intention is to achieve personal gain at the expense or harm of another person--this is harassment. A few examples of obvious, direct, and blatant cases of harassment and abuse are listed here for reference:

- E.g. Blatant or direct physical or verbal harassment.
- E.g. The use of derogatory terms, towards someone's race, gender, appearance, relationship status, sexual orientation, or other protected status.
- E.g. The use or promotion of terms or imagery that has been associated with hate speech.

But many cases of harassment are not as overt as these examples.

Even if your intentions start out good (for example complimenting someone, giving someone a hug, or using a term like "guys"), but you receive feedback from a team member that this makes them uncomfortable and you do not stop...this is also harassment.

- Not all feedback is verbal! Be aware of a team member avoiding you, shrinking back from you, or acting uncomfortable in your presence.
- If you are worried you may have unintentionally made someone uncomfortable, check on your impact, offer genuine apology immediately, and most important, immediately adjust your behavior before good intentions become harassment.

Example 1

A question about gender or race, asked in good faith with an open mind to learn from feedback (and after you've done some of the work yourself to seek an answer), is not harassment. But repeatedly directing questions related to a team member after receiving feedback that they do not feel comfortable would be harassment.

Example 2

Accidentally misgendering someone in conversation, catching your mistake, apologizing, and immediately correcting yourself is not harassment. A repeated pattern of misgendering or dismissiveness towards the gender identity of teammates would be harassment.

Example 3

Complimenting someone's hair or makeup or outfit, at an appropriate time (e.g. not while they are giving a presentation) without any leering, is likely not harassment. But singling a team member out with compliments or continuing to make comments about someone's looks after you have been told to stop would be harassment.

This policy is not to make anyone afraid of engaging with their team members; in fact, it is to make everyone on the team feel safe in their work environment.

> *To learn more about what constitutes harassment, please reference the full Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy in our HR platform.*

How to share concerns around diversity, equity, and inclusion or report an incident of harassment or discrimination

If you ever experience or witness an act of harassment or discrimination–or if you ever feel that Packback is not living up to our ideals–please make a report to a member of the Packback executive team with whom you feel most comfortable.

Your report will be investigated with the urgency and with care by Packback's People Operations Team. Depending on the findings, a range of actions may be taken, including counseling, mediation, a performance improvement plan, unpaid leave, or termination.

There will be no retaliation against any employee who files a complaint in good faith, even if the result of the investigation produces insufficient evidence to support the compliant. Giving feedback on how we can better live up to our values and how we can be a more inclusive workplace is a gift to Packback and will be treated as such.

You may also report unwanted behavior and any possible policy violations anonymously via email at **packbacktips@packback.co**

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Hiring policies to support diversity and inclusion

It is a necessity for an education company to build a representative and diverse team; one that reflects the diverse range of students and professors we work with as a company. Building a diverse team is not just the right thing to do; it is also the smart thing to do because it ensures that we are building a company that can serve **all** students equitably.

Packback is committed to publishing our diversity goals alongside our hiring plans each year. But goals are only valuable if we are held accountable to them, and willing to take on a cost to achieve them.

All new hires start at optimal start dates or they are supported with additional training

We have seen that the start date for a role (if the role is delayed for any reason) impacts the individual's success in the role, particularly on our revenue teams. New hires in sales our customer success roles will be started alongside a cohort for training or have quotas set that reflect the challenges of starting outside of a cohort.

Budgeted recruiting funds to support building a diverse and representative pipeline

Packback has made a commitment to allocate funds towards recruiting, promotion, and partnerships to ensure that a diverse and representative pipeline can be built for each role and systems, and establishes large-scale research partnerships.

Representative interview mandate and tracking of diversity metrics

Packback has made a commitment to track diversity metrics for all new roles and for our current team. Packback has made a commitment that a role cannot be filled if we have not made every effort to interview a diverse set of candidates in accordance with our diversity goals.

Accountability to our inclusion and diversity goals

When we say we "value" something, what this literally means is that we ascribe **worth** to it. To attain something we value, we must be willing to pay the cost to achieve it.

Our company must be held accountable for us to succeed at our goal of a diverse and thriving team. Diversity and inclusion takes ongoing, intentional, and thoughtful work.

Team Leads, Managers, Executives, and Founders are to be evaluated on a trimesterly basis in their performance reviews on:

Their qualitative "upwards" feedback provided by their team on how effective they are at creating	**Their quantitative effectiveness at retaining or promoting diverse team members**	**Their quantitative effectiveness at building a diverse team**
As measured by upwards feedback sources both at review time and any documented feedback from team members throughout the year	*As measured by team retention and promotions, broken down by ethnicity, gender, and sexual identity (when this information is available)..*	*As measured by performance against diversity goals for new hires and retention.*

A manager, executive, or founder who under-performs on these goals will be placed on a performance improvement plan. Inaction or a pattern of under-performance will result in employment consequences, including a dock in pay, removal from management position, or termination.

Working
at Packback

Quick Facts

The Packback brand book is only a summary of the most important aspects of our company's approach to work. There are many Packback company resources that expand on topics found in this book where more detailed information can be found.

Different teams have different core work hours based on the type of work each team is doing. Consult your manager for detailed information about your team's work hours.

If you are looking for information about how to do your job, please consult the **Packback intranet**.

Team member reviews happen 3X per year aligned with the end of each trimester, and involve self-reviews, manager reviews, and upwards reviews of managers.

If you are looking for resources on employee life (vacation policy, benefits, time off, parental leave, commuter benefits, etc) please refer to **Rippling**.

Packback operates on a "Trimester" schedule:
Trimester 1 aligns with the Spring Term
Trimester 2 aligns with the Summer Term
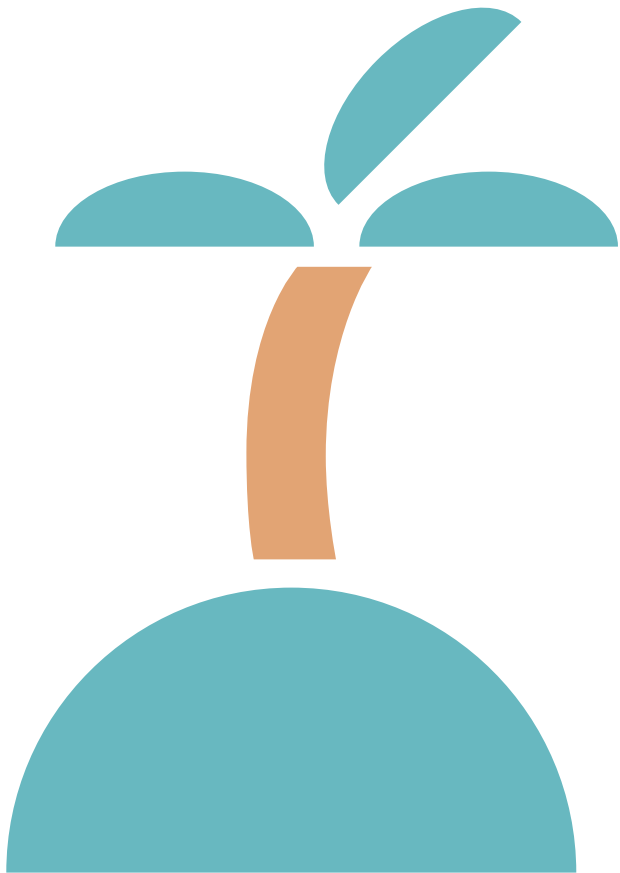**Trimester 3 aligns with the Fall Term**

If you are looking for resources related to onboarding, policies, reviews, or accountability structures please consult the HR team at Packback and **Rippling**.

If you are looking for more information about our product please consult the help center at help.packback.co

Benefits Overview

At Packback, we're working hard to create amazing benefits that support our team members both inside and outside of work. As our company grows, our benefits grow, too! Always check the Packback Employee Handbook for the most up-to-date details on all of our benefits and policies.

Leave Benefits

Packback provides several different leave policies to support employees' personal lives. Refer to the Packback Employee Handbook for full details.

Parental Leave

- 12 weeks of paid parental leave for primary caregivers
- 8 weeks of paid parental leave for secondary caregivers
- Available for all eligible employees welcoming a child through birth, adoption, or fostering.

Bereavement Leave

- For team members mourning the loss of a pregnancy, child, spouse, or immediate family member, Bereavement Leave is available to all eligible employees.

Family and Medical Leave

- Packback also provides leave for many other medical and family needs. Please consult the Employee Handbook for details.

Vacation Benefits

Packback offers unlimited paid vacation for all employees in good standing. Most Packback folks take off between 2-4 weeks each year.

401K Matching Benefits

Packback provides partial 401K matching for eligible employees. Please refer to the Packback Employee Handbook for full details.

Health & Insurance Benefits

Packback aims to offer excellent coverage for employee's mental and physical health, including:

- Access to a range of employer-sponsored health, vision, and dental insurance options
- Access to no-cost counseling services through EAP
- Access to employer-sponsored commuter benefits
- Company-provided life insurance policy options

Other Benefits

- Remote work flexibility and stipend for work-from-home employees.
- Additional benefits that change annually based on team feedback.

The Packback Employee Handbook

This list is only a brief summary of Packback's benefits, Please refer to the Packback Employee Handbook for the details of each policy.
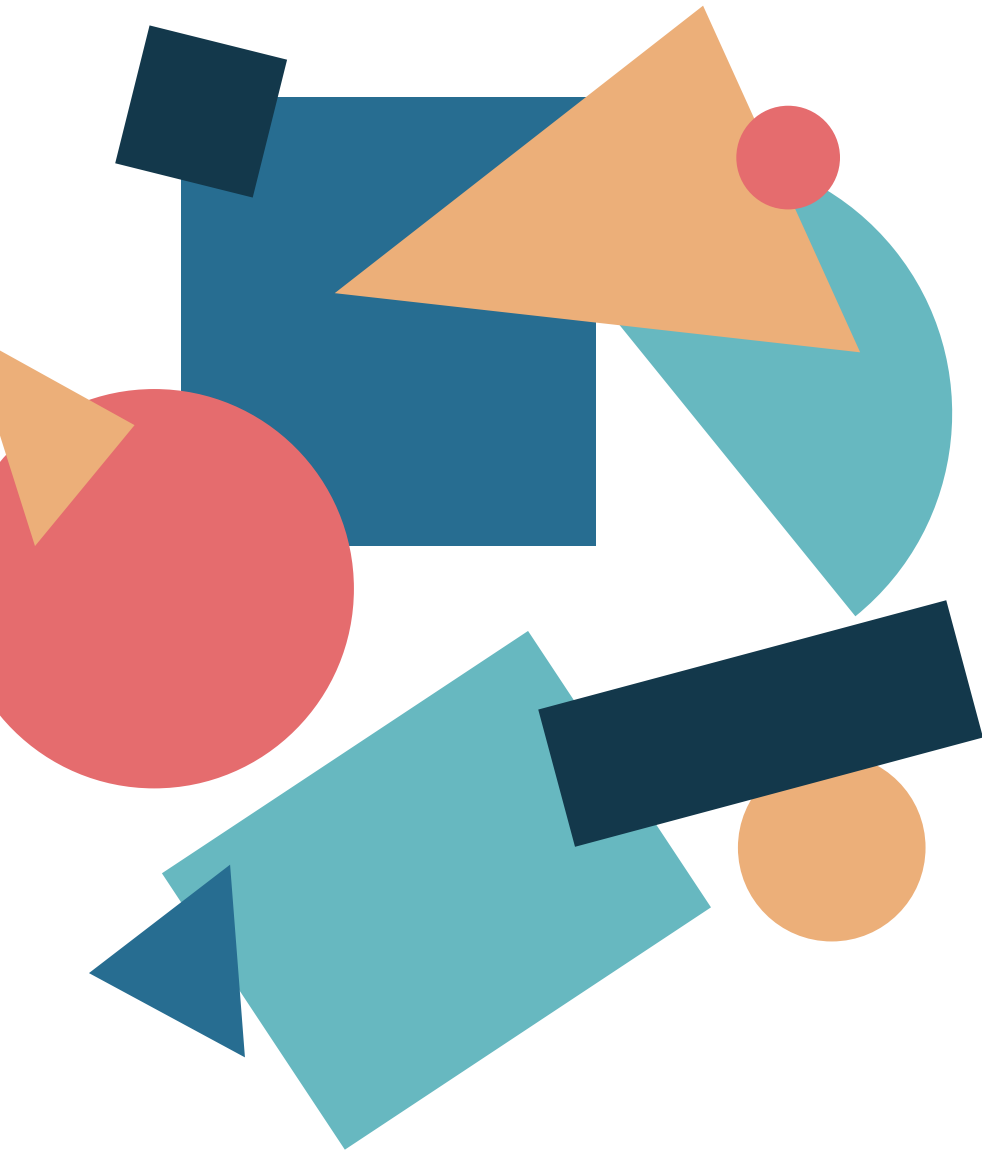
Meet the Team

We know that the single most important part of any company is its people. The Packback team made up of creative and energetic people who love to learn and want to grow together. We work hard to maintain a conscious and intentional culture of open communication, curiosity, and leadership.

Product Division

Product Management & Design

The product managers and designers who develop our company product roadmap, interview our customers, and design the requirements and user experience for new features.

Platform Development

The engineers who build our Packback platform, develop new features from the Product Roadmap, and ensure our platform code is stable and reliable.

Data Team

The engineers and designers who maintain our data integrity, make our data usable for the team, and experiment to develop new AI-based algorithms for our platform.

Revenue Division

Experience Managers

The team that supports our professor customers with curriculum consulting, support, and opportunities to grow across campuses.

Sales

The team that secures partnerships with many individual instructors, through direct outreach, webinars, and partnerships with influencers on campus like CTLT.

Product Support

The support specialists who provide technical support to students and tasks related to the ongoing operation of our product (moderation queue review, surveys).

Enterprise Sales

The team who secures large institutional partnerships with colleges and systems, and establishes large-scale research partnerships.

Marketing Division

Marketing Team

The team that helps us scale, automate, and strategize new ways to reach new schools and instructors who can become future Packback partners.

Brand & Content Team

The team that develops our product positioning, brand messaging, and thought leadership content to position our product as a category defining company in the space of "inquiry-driven learning".

Operations Division

People Operations

The team that supports our internal team through human resources, policy creation, benefits design and administration, hiring, and leadership around our diversity goals and commitments.

Revenue Operations

The team that combines functions of Sales Ops, Marketing Ops, Customer Success Ops, and Finance Ops into a single team with a strategy focused on driving revenue impact

Business Operations

The team that ensures the bills are paid, the office is functioning, records are maintained, and partners (like school bookstores) are supported.

Executive Team

Our executive team consists of the division and team heads at Packback and is cross-functional. This team's duty is to ensure that all of our teams are working together towards the most important problems and communicating effectively.

Our Board

Packback has been careful to only accept investment from people who understand that building a great education company takes time, requires the utmost commitment to ethical standards, and a deep care for the community we serve. Our board reviews and approves company strategy, financial plans, and major personnel decisions to help ensure a system of checks-and-balances.

Our Board includes:

Michael Shannon, Representing Packback

Kesav Gandham, Representing Packback
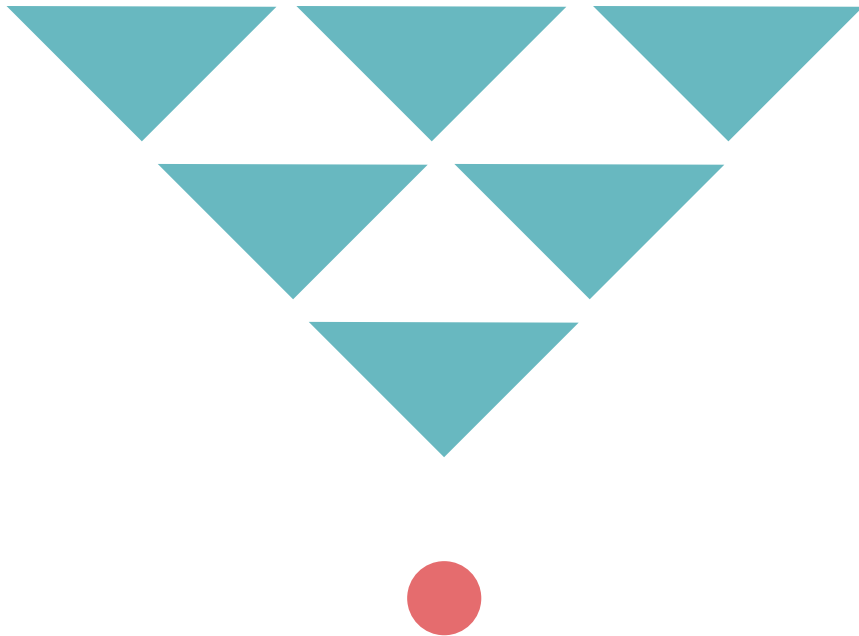
Troy Williams, Representing University Ventures

Corey Ferengul, Representing Hyde Park Angels

Dr. Muriel Howard, Independent Board Seat

Dr. James Caras, CEO, Independent Board Seat

Brand Standards

Our Positioning

Packback is the leader in our field in the space of inquiry-driven discussion, and we were the first to champion the idea that discussion (when implemented with autonomy, inquiry, and mastery in mind) can transform a classroom. This section breaks down how Packback positions ourselves in the market and how we strategically approach our branding.

We are not a technology company.
We are a pedagogy company.

What Packback sells isn't just a 'better discussion board".

We are selling a **new approach to learning** that places the student at the center, and helps instructors to become inquiry-focused instructors.

We are really selling a new pedagogy, and then offering the Packback platform as the best and easiest tool for implementing and scaling that pedagogical approach.

What is Pedagogy?

—

"The method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept."

Packback is a "category definer".

What that means...

- We have a vision of the future of education that centers student autonomy, inquiry, and mastery

- We are a partner for instructors who also want to help create this future.

- Our approach will <u>not</u> work for every instructor.

- Adopting Packback requires change. But it will be worth it.

- Even for instructors who Packback is a good match for... it may not be intuitive to them right away. What we are presenting to is **different** than what they are used to.

- This means that Packback rarely services existing demand for our product; **we have to create the demand by showing people what's possible.**

- But category defining companies change the direction of whole industries.

So, how do we create demand and build our category?

- Thought leadership around our key concepts and terms (via Webinars, OpEds, Press)

- A Comprehensive Press Strategy not just to get coverage for Packback but to show the case for our approach

- Championing research into Inquiry-Driven Learning

- Partnering with established industry influencers to establish credibility for the ideas

- Using brand messaging and design that is internally consistent with our positioning and approach (e.g. a simple, usable platform = simplicity and friendliness in our graphic design)

Core Brand Messages

Consistency is key! Packback has a set of core brand messages which explain the Why, What, and How of what we do. Whether someone sees an ad from Packback, or reads an email from marketing, or hears a pitch from a sales team member on the phone, they should get a consistent explanation of Packback.

Why

Inspire self-motivated, critical thinkers through inquiry-driven discussion.

What

Packback is an inquiry-driven online discussion pedagogy and platform which develops student motivation and critical thinking through discussion.

How

Packback is a *different* **approach** to online discussion, informed by research in learning science and motivation.

Packback centers three core tenets in our work: **Student Inquiry, Student Autonomy, and Mastery Learning.**

Who

For instructors who are dissatisfied with student engagement, Packback is a different kind of discussion that teaches students how to ask great questions.

Unlike the discussion in the Learning Management System– which requires a lot of time spent managing and moderating the discussion–Packback uses AI to act like an instructor's Digital TA, so instructors can spend less time grading and more time engaging with students.

The 3 Key Benefits of the Packback Platform

1. More Engaging Discussion

More Rigorous Discussion: 2X more posts on Packback contain a source citation compared to the LMS, shown in multiple studies.

More Active Conversations: Posts on Packback received 1.3X more responses per question compared to LMS discussion in a recent study.

2. Better Student Outcomes

More A's and B's, and fewer D's, F's, and Withdrawals: Students on Packback showed improved overall course grade outcomes when compared to students using the LMS in a recent study.

Improved student satisfaction: In a recent study, 90% of students responded positively when asked if they prefered Packback over LMS discussion.

3. Happier Instructors and Students

Instructors Save TIme with Packback: In a recent study, instructors reported spending less time moderating posts on Packback versus LMS discussion.

Instructors enjoy teaching with Packback: 90% of professors who use Packback once keep using for future classes.

Design Guidelines

These guidelines exist to ensure that Packback always has a consistent, professional, on-brand visual appearance across all platforms where someone may interact with us. Any time you are representing Packback visually (even a quick flyer for a conference!) you should use Packback's brand guidelines for how to use our logo, colors, typeface, and images.

Our Logo

The Packback logo represents us as the face of our company. It is both a key signature and identifier for anyone who communicates with our brand. Our logo should, and always, be the most consistent asset to our brand. Following these few simple guidelines will help to maintain this component's consistency throughout all of our communications.

Packback Logo Full

Packback Logo Symbol

Packback Logo Full Vertical

Packback Logo

Packback Logo Wordmark

Packback Questions

Packback Canada

Do's

Spacing

All logos should always be given some breathing room.

Backgrounds

Only place the logo on its designated background colors.

Partner Logos

Use a line or extra space in situations with multiple logos.

Dont's

Never Ever

Don't rotate, change the colors, stretch, skew, or alter the logo.

My Eyes!

Other background colors can make the logo illegible.

One Color

Don't ever show the logo in only one color except PB Blue.

Dont's

Font Changes

Don't ever try to change the font or recreate the logo.

Decorating

Don't add any elements to the logo unless approved.

Busy Backgrounds

Don't place the logo on busy or distracting backgrounds.

Other Colors

Don't ever use any colors other than those specified in this guide.

Effects

Don't add drop shadows, strokes, or other visual effects.

Flipping or Rearranging

Don't rearrange or manipulate logo.
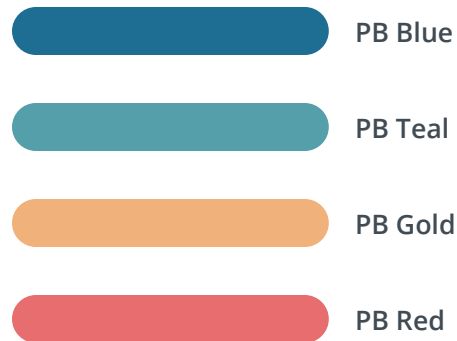
Our Color Palette

Next to our logo, our color palette is a key element to Packback's visual brand. Our brand is extremely colorful, using modified primary colors to evoke a sense of childlike play and wonder. The heavy use of color in our illustrations, graphics, and website create a friendly, approachable feeling and allow our graphics to feel both simple and playful at the same time.

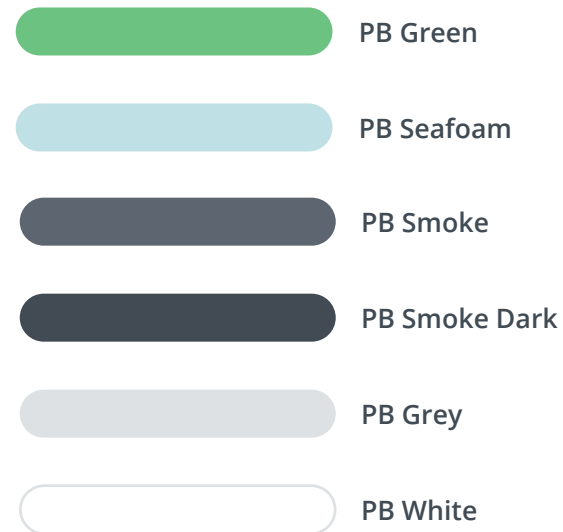The following pages break down each of our colors and their uses.

Accessibility Note

Color and contrast choices are essential to accessibility-friendly communications. If you are unsure if a color pairing is ADA contrast complaint, check it with a contrast tool like contrast-ratio.com.

Core Brand Colors

PB Blue
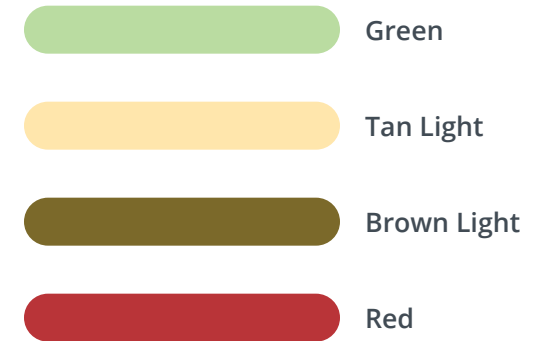
PB Teal

PB Gold

PB Red

Secondary Colors

PB Green

PB Seafoam

PB Smoke

PB Smoke Dark

PB Grey

PB White

Functional Colors

Green

Tan Light

Brown Light

Red

These should be typically used as backgrounds when highlighting text.

Packback Blue

HEX: # 1B6D91

RGB: R 27 G 109 B 145

CMYK: C 88 M 25 Y 0 K 43

Packback Teal

HEX: # 549DA9

RGB: R 84 G 157 B 169

CMYK: C 50 M 7 Y 0 K 34

Packback Gold

HEX: # F0B07B

RGB: R 240 G 176 B 123

CMYK: C 0 M 27 Y 49 K 6

Packback Blue Light	# 28789B
Packback Blue Dark	# 1C516A
Packback Blue Extra Dark	# 13384B

Packback Teal Extra Light	# 8EDFE3
Packback Teal Light	# 6EB8C1
Packback Teal Dark	# 28788D

Packback Gold Extra Light	# FFF9E9
Packback Gold Light	# FCCA93
Packback Gold Dark	# 1E28F60

Packback Red

HEX: # E66E6F

RGB: **R** 230 **G** 110 **B** 111

CMYK: C 0 **M** 52 **Y** 52 **K** 10

Packback Green

HEX: # 5FD384

RGB: **R** 95 **G** 211 **B** 132

CMYK: C 55 **M** 0 **Y** 37 **K** 17

Packback Seafoam

HEX: # BFE1E5

RGB: **R** 191 **G** 225 **B** 229

CMYK: C 17 **M** 2 **Y** 0 **K** 10

Packback Red Extra Light	# FFF7F6

Packback Green Extra Light	# F3F8EA

Packback Seafoam Extra Light	# F6FEFF

Packback Red Light	# FD877B

Packback Green Light	# B5F8A7

Packback Seafoam Light	# D9EBED

Packback Red Dark	# CB4848

Packback Green Dark	# 00856C

Packback Seafoam Dark	# 96BBC6

Packback
Grey Dark

HEX: # B6C1C6

RGB: R 182 G 193 B 198

CMYK: C 8 M 3 Y 0 K 22

Packback
Grey

HEX: # DCE2E5

RGB: R 220 G 226 B 229

CMYK: C 4 M 1 Y 0 K 10

Packback
Grey Light

HEX: # FBFBFC

RGB: R 251 G 251 B 252

CMYK: C 0 M 0 Y 0 K 1

**Packback
Smoke Dark**

RGB: **R** 66 **G** 75 **B** 83
CMYK: **C** 20 **M** 10 **Y** 0 **K** 67

**Packback
Smoke**

RGB: **R** 93 **G** 101 **B** 111
CMYK: **C** 16 **M** 9 **Y** 0 **K** 56

**Packback
Smoke Light**

RGB: **R** 105 **G** 117 **B** 131
CMYK: **C** 20 **M** 11 **Y** 0 **K** 49

Highlight Green

HEX: # B5F8A7
RGB: **R** 181 **G** 248 **B** 167
CMYK: **C** 27 **M** 0 **Y** 33 **K** 3

Highlight Tan Light

HEX: # FFE6AC
RGB: **R** 255 **G** 230 **B** 172
CMYK: **C** 0 **M** 10 **Y** 33 **K** 0

Highlight Brown Light

HEX: # 7B670D
RGB: **R** 123 **G** 103 **B** 13
CMYK: **C** 0 **M** 16 **Y** 89 **K** 52

Highlight Red

HEX: # B83338
RGB: **R** 184 **G** 51 **B** 56
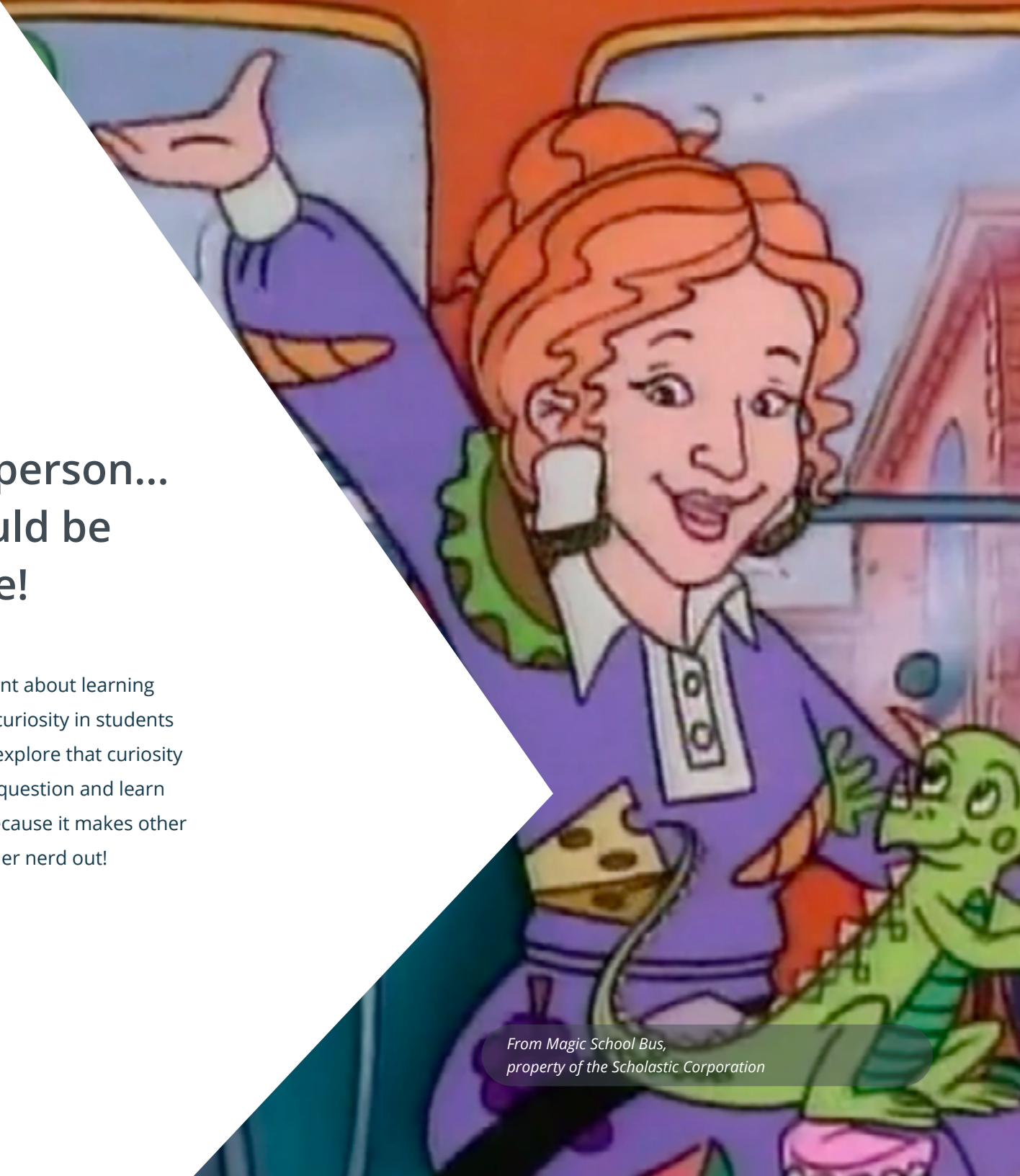CMYK: **C** 0 **M** 72 **Y** 70 **K** 28

Brand Voice

When communicating as Packback (as we do on social media, in the copy of our platform, in automated emails generated by the platform, in whitepapers, in webinars, or in other company-produced media), individual members of our team should speak in one consistent "Packback" voice.

If Packback were a person... our personality would be similar to Ms. Frizzle!

Why? We are okay showing off our excitement about learning and sharing knowledge! We see the natural curiosity in students and think it is our job to give them space to explore that curiosity (and get out of their way!) Our eagerness to question and learn should be so earnest that it is contagious, because it makes other people feel comfortable letting their own inner nerd out!

From Magic School Bus, property of the Scholastic Corporation

Confident in our purpose and value, but never condescending or cocky.

Just Right

✔ Sharing strong and informed opinions--backed by experience and research--on our core areas of expertise.
E.g. *"The implementation pedagogy and platform used for Online Discussion makes a significant difference on the value to students' learning. Our most important recommendation? Students having autonomy to post their own discussion questions."*

✔ Being proud and gracious (not "fake humble") when Packback drives meaningful outcomes or has a big event.
E.g. *"UNT studied Packback versus LMS discussion and found some exciting results. Students on Packback were shown to cite sources over 2X as often."*

Too Passive

✘ E.g. *"We think that discussion can be helpful in classes. If you're open to trying something new, you might like Packback."*

Too Cocky / Condescending

✘ E.g. *"Worried about your job security? Packback helps teachers be even better at teaching."*

✘ E.g. *"Blackboard? More like totally bored. Packback is where the action's at."*

✘ E.g. *"This student hit the top of the leaderboard. Looks like homework can be fun after all! Victory is sweet."*

Earnest, eager, and excited about learning and sharing interesting and unexpected knowledge.

We are so excited to talk about what we are learning and so eager to share it that we don't worry about looking cool or hip. Packback should sound so earnestly nerdy, that it becomes irresistible to not get excited too.

Just Right

✔ If your posts sounds like something like Neil DeGrasse Tyson (or Ms. Frizzle) might post on their Twitter, you're in the ideal zone.

✔ We share news about our company, interesting and unexpected facts, and ideas for how to support fearless curiosity in the classroom.

Trying Too Hard to be Cool or Serious

✖ Jumping on a "viral" social media trend just to be "relevant".

✖ Using slang to be funny, sarcastic, or rude.

✖ Taking ourselves too seriously; acting like we are too academic to actually enjoy education.

Approachable and down-to-earth, even when sharing complex ideas and research.

Just Right

✓   E.g. "Students writing their own discussion prompts might seem impossible, but the value is supported by research. And we've seen it ourselves; there are over 4 million student-posted discussion prompts on Packback!"

✓   E.g. "Packback's platform aligns to the "Communities of Inquiry" model, prioritizing inquiry, autonomy, and mastery-focused feedback."

Too Casual

✗   "If your class is bland, spice it up with Packback."

Too Academic

✗   E.g. "Recent research into Computer-mediated communication has revealed that higher rates of student-student interaction can lead to an elevated rate of students attaining posts at higher levels of metacognition."

Social Media Content

When we post on social media, we are speaking as Packback in a more casual setting that reaches students, professors, administrators, and potential team members. We personify our brand by: Asking big questions, excitedly pursuing our curiosity and bringing our followers along on the journey of discovery, and showing people what we stand for as a company.

Approved Content Types

We should aim for a balance of the following content types:

Announcements

Announcing important events like Webinars, product feature updates, case studies, sharing press features.

Packback's Purpose

Content that inspires curiosity by asking "big questions" about commonly misunderstood topics, interesting topics, or key issues.

- These posts should include a question and then share easy-to-digest factual information about the topic. They should encourage discussion. While these may often be about topics related to motivation, learning, or education...they do not have to be. They can and should raise questions about social, societal, and environmental issues. When we post about general educational topics we should typically try to use this format; we are not an expert on everything in education.
- Highlighting curious minds who have pushed their fields forward through questioning.

Thought Leadership

Demonstrate and share our expertise in student engagement, motivation, and discussion. *These posts should be approved by CPO, if referencing a study that has not already been summarized and cited by Packback.*

- Highlighting incredible student posts from the platform (once anonymized) demonstrate the types of posts achieved on Packback.
- Sharing research about the Packback platform
- Sharing OpEds written about Packback or Packback's pedagogy
- Sharing value-adding tips about how to improve motivation/engagement in the classroom
- Sharing tips on how to improve engagement through inquiry
- Citing and summarizing existing research studies that we reference

Culture

Show our culture through Team Culture & Customer Stories

- Customer stories that are particularly unique and meaningful (get permission from the highlighted customer member)
- Team members doing amazing, above and beyond things for each other and customers (get permission from the highlighted team member)
- Pepper being curious
- Stories from events at Packback like Makespace
- Statements on events
- Posts that cite our values along with an example of the value in action within our team (get permission from the highlighted team member)

Approved Content Types

Reacting or responding to others' posts...

Professor-Posted Content

Show our culture through Team Culture & Customer Stories

- **When a professor is seeking general recommendations for edtech tools, jumping into the thread is fine if...**
  - The thread was made publicly; i.e. not a conversation between specific instructors.
  - The professor specifically asked for recommendations
  - If the approach to interjecting fits our brand voice.
- **When a professor is seeking specific recommendations on online discussion, jumping into the thread is fine if...**
  - The thread was made publicly; i.e. not a conversation between specific instructors.
  - The professor specifically asked for recommendations
  - If the approach to interjecting fits our brand voice.
- **Professor feedback about Packback**
  - Always fair game to interact respectfully and using brand voice. Retweet only if you have engaged directly with the professor and thanked them first.

Student-Posted Content

Show our culture through Team Culture & Customer Stories

- **Student-posted Content about Packback:** If interacting with content posted by a student about Packback on social media, engage carefully. We want to respect students' privacy. A direct and non-sarcastic "I love Packback" tweet can certainly be shared, but should always be done in a way that aligns with the voice.
  - A good rule of thumb is if Packback is tagged we are "meant" to see it. If we are not tagged, it could feel invasive for Packback to interact. Engage thoughtfully and respectfully.

- Student content topically relevant to Packback

Celebrating academic wins of other members of our community
E.g. Earning a PHD, publishing a book, publishing research, a classroom win.

When sharing or retweeting existing content…

Retweeting or sharing other topical articles

When we share articles related to online discussion, questions, engagement, our caption can share an opinion. When sharing articles meant to spread news or on topics which we are less expert, we should aim for more objective captions or questions to our followers.

Retweeting or sharing student or professors' opinions

When someone else online shares an interesting opinion or first hand account.

Content Standards
and Checklists by platform

All Platforms

☐   Posts should be scheduled a minimum of one week in advance whenever possible

☐   Interacting with schools: Tag a school/system in a public post **only** if we have a contractual relationship with them

☐   Check all names and titles for accuracy: On any posts containing names, titles, or roles of individuals, these should be double-checked against their CV.

☐   Fact check any sources or information shared

☐   Ensure Image Standards are met

Image Standards

- **Illustrations (Should constitute 70% of our images)**
  - Should predominantly use Packback brand colors;
  - Should use simple vector-based illustrations

- **Photographs (Should constitute 30% of our images)**
  - **Brand photographs**: Must be high resolution, crisp, minimal, and use colorful backgrounds when possible.
  - **Historical or Editorial Photographs:** If using a historical or editorial photo, ensure that the image is shared under creative commons license or we have obtained appropriate rights for the photo.
  - **Stock photos:** Should be approved by Brand Team before use. Stock photos are **strongly** discouraged.
  - **Or the image associated with an article we are sharing.**

For platform-specific requirements, please contact the Packback Brand team at Jessica@Packback.co