Objective
To locate and analyze the visual design of a corporate identity on the web.

(Please note that due to the file size I was not able to provide the entire style guide, but the information covers the important branding specifications)

Documentation for www.northerntrust.com

Design Analysis
Elegance and Simplicity
- Approachability
Northern Trust’s site maintains consistency throughout working towards a common goal. The use of font, layout, graphics and color are used effectively per the style guide. It’s a very clean and crisp design making readability easy. Northern Trust’s style guide specifies this on pages 9-13. Please see the Appendix for further details.
• **Recognizability**
The site uses simple designs for users to immediately recognize the purpose of their use. The following is an example of how the logo, navigation bar and drop-down menu can easily be identified by the user throughout the site. Please see page 4 for further details.

![Image of Northern Trust website with logo and navigation bar]

• **Immediacy**
The use of contrast in color in text enhances the power of form and elements in the site. Page 3 in the style guide outlines the color to be used.

• **Usability**
The site is very usable in that all links work, the text is readable and all sections are clearly separated by red line dividers and dotted lines.

![Image of Northern Trust website with navigation bar and sections]

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• **Reduction**  
Overall, the site is not faced with some of the common problems of clutter and visual noise. The only exception is that the use of green and gold text on the homepage and red text on secondary and third pages. It would still have the same affect if the red and gold text were changed to black text.

• **Regularization**  
The use of regular geometric forms and simplified contours remain consistent throughout the site. The size, color and line weight of the font, the consistent use of spacing and alignment among the sections, and the texture that the dotted lines produce repeatedly on all the pages from section to section.

• **Leveraging**  
The site’s top navigation is a drop-down menu, which allows users to choose which section they would like to go to. See page 5 in the [www.northertrust.com STYLE GUIDE](http://www.northertrust.com) for further information.
It also has another navigation for users that want to only login into their account, called, Account Access. Page 4 through 7 in the www.northertrust.com STYLE GUIDE address how navigation should be designed.

Scale, Contrast and Proportion

Bertin’s Visual Variables

- **Size**
  All text is the same family and size. Please see the appendix for all the specifics about what font-family and size should be used for Northern’s site.

- **Value**
  The following is an example where the use of dark and light text is found throughout the site in the text, images and background color. Please note the green on the top left panel, green-gray background color of the drop-down menu and dark green navigation with light text.
• Hue
The color green is used throughout the site. It’s found in the logo, the navigation, text and images. This green represents the color of wealth and money. Other colors are evident such as dark red, dark blue (for unvisited link) and gold. See page 3 in the www.northerntrust.com STYLE GUIDE.
• **Shape**

The site is very simple and does not make much use of shapes. However, square and rectangular shapes are common and elements of this can be found on every page. See 4.3 in the Northern Trust Content Style Guide. It recommends to use a graphics for complex subjects. In this case, over hundred years of information are displayed in graphical format.
• **Orientation**
  There are images that overlap one another while others can be found suspended in different areas of the page layout. These images can be found on the top left, bottom right or in the center of a page.
• **Texture**  
The site uses the dotted line to divide sections on the pages consistently. It gives a feeling of perforation.

• **Position**  
The position of the logo, top, left and right navigations remain in the same position throughout the site. See pages 12 through 15 for logo specifications.
Associative Perception and Selective Perception
Perceptual layering has been used to facilitate selective and associative visual interpretation. When text is bolded or intalized or if there’s a colored background, it provides a clue to the user that it is important information. The designer’s careful use of value (warm contrast), texture (dotted lines), and color act as aids for reading enhancement. There’s also minimal design elements of orientation and shape, but when used they promote easier visual navigation (second image).
Presentation Analysis
Aesthetically, the designers used few images to avoid clutter, and that remained consistent throughout the site, but they used a fair and consistent amount of colored text. They grouped related links and information close to one another showing a relationship and separated other information into section by the use of the red 90-degree line.
The use of consistency in elements (in my opinion) has built trust. All navigation is intuitive and not complicated. Also, the designer used one mental model that I was able to see (intentionally or not) which is the use of green in the word Go next to the search box.
The user is able to answer the three localization questions. Where am I? All pages have a main header that tells the reader exactly where they are. What’s here? The header on the pages is to the point. If the user clicked on Investor Relations in About Us, the pages will tell the reader that they are on the Investor Page with a blurb about what type of information could be found in that section. Where can I go? This is answered by immediately offering links to the related topics of the section. See the ‘Northern Trust I Content Style Guide’ for the content and heading requirements that addresses this, specifically section 2.0.

Conclusion
Overall, the designers used a simple and elegant approach when they built the site. They kept in mind the identity that Northern Trust wants to represent which is simple, elegant yet, with a strong presence in the financial market. Northern Trust caters to the wealthy and provides excellent customer service. They made careful use of Bertin's Visual Variables to enhance visual appeal and maintained that approach consistently throughout the site. This is evident in the use of font, color, images and layout. A few elements can be removed such as the gold and red colors and could use different tints and tones of their green.
APPENDIX