

THE INNOVATION LAB

BRAND GUIDELINES

Precision engineering for software that ships.

The visual and verbal system that carries our promise — a single source of truth for how the work looks, sounds, and feels.

Brand story & positioning

The Innovation Lab builds and rescues production software — the kind of engineering that reads as calm because the hard parts were handled up front. We work in the space between a strong idea and shippable software, for founders and teams who value precision over noise. Our promise is restraint: every colour, type choice, and interaction earns its place, or it doesn't ship.

PRECISE

Grid-based, measured, exact. Spacing, type, and colour follow a system — nothing is placed by accident, and the details hold up under inspection.

RESTRAINED

Confident without volume. We spend boldness in one place and keep everything around it quiet — minimal, not flashy; trustworthy in the detail.

AUTHENTIC

Technical honesty over marketing gloss. Real metrics, named constraints, and interfaces that feel like well-engineered systems.

CREATIVE DIRECTION

Technical excellence through restraint and intentionality. Deep navy for structure, one warm amber for what matters, and nothing decorative that doesn't carry information.

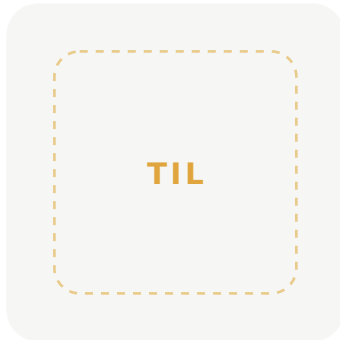
Precision engineering for software that ships.

WHAT WE ARE NOT

We are not loud, decorative for its own sake, or hype-driven. No buzzword salad, no gradient-soup dashboards, no motion that exists only to impress. Defining the anti-patterns is as useful as defining the brand: it keeps everyone aligned on what *not* to do.

The mark

The wordmark is the most protected asset in the system. It is set in the display face — **The Innovation Lab** in Navy — with an optional amber accent detail. Keep the description precise enough that someone could rebuild it from words alone: a Navy wordmark, even tracking, no effects, on an open field.



CONSTRUCTION

The mark reads in **Navy** #1b3a5b, with a single accent detail in **Amber** #e0a63d, and highlights in **Light Amber** #e9cb8c. Even tracking, flat colour, no shadow or gradient. The compact symbol is the monogram **TIL** for favicons and small spaces.

The wordmark in the full lockup is fixed — never re-typed or recreated. In running text, set the company name in the display typeface (Section 04).

CLEAR SPACE

Keep clear space equal to roughly **25% of the mark's height** on all sides. Nothing — type, imagery, or edges — enters this zone. The mark lives in open space.



MINIMUM SIZES

To keep line weights crisp and the mark legible, never reproduce it smaller than:



Digital — 24 px tall minimum; favicons may step down to the solid **TIL** monogram for legibility.



Print — 9 mm tall minimum, on coated or uncoated stock.

DO / DON'T

DO

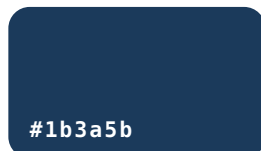
- Keep the mark flat and consistent; Navy wordmark, amber accent only.
- Place it on Paper or Soft Gray; on Navy or dark surfaces, use the reversed white mark.
- Give it room — respect the clear space and keep it airy.

DON'T

- Add glossy effects, drop shadows, or gradients to the mark.
- Introduce decorative effects or imagery that compete with the mark.
- Stretch, skew, rotate, or recolour outside the locked palette.

Colour palette

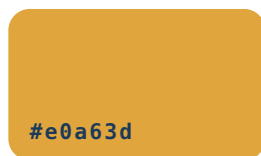
Six colours, no more. **Navy** anchors the brand and carries body text; **Amber** is the single accent and action colour; **Light Amber** lifts highlights, fills, and hairlines. Soft Gray, Reverse Navy, and White carry the surfaces.



Navy #1b3a5b

Body text · headings · anchor · dark surfaces

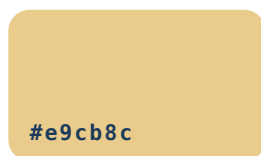
AA: White on Navy passes AA (large & body). Primary text colour.



Amber #e0a63d

Accent · action · fills · marks

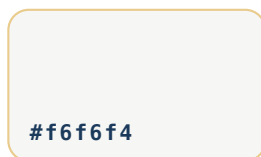
AA: Bright Amber is decorative — too light for text on White. For small accent text & links, use the darkened Amber ink #9a6613.



Light Amber #e9cb8c

Highlights · fills · hairlines

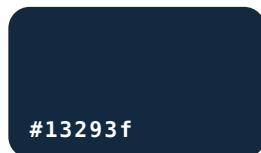
AA: Decorative only — too light for body text on White.



Soft Gray #f6f6f4

Page background wash · muted sections

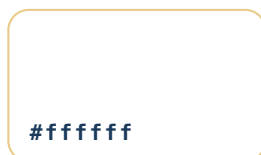
AA: Navy text on Soft Gray passes AA comfortably.



Reverse Navy #13293f

Reversed lockups · dark hero surfaces

AA: White text on Reverse Navy passes AA (large & body).



White #ffffff

Cards · elevated surfaces · primary canvas

AA: Pair with Navy for text; Amber for accents & fills.

USAGE DISCIPLINE

Hold roughly a **60 / 30 / 10** balance — Soft Gray & White surfaces, Navy for structure and text, and a disciplined 10% of Amber for accent and action with Light Amber for highlights. Because bright Amber on White is decorative, **body text is always Navy**; Amber carries fills, marks, and large accents, and its darkened ink (#9a6613) carries small labels and links.

Typography

Three faces, each with one job. **Syne** — a confident geometric display face — carries headings. **Instrument Sans** carries body text: clean, even, legible at every size. **JetBrains Mono** carries the technical layer — labels, data, and code. The pairing reads as engineered rather than decorated.

DISPLAY — SYNE

Precise and clear

Specimen set in Syne (falls back to Montserrat, then a bundled sans, if Syne is not installed).

BODY — INSTRUMENT SANS

Even, legible, and calm at every size — clean body copy that keeps the message clear and the voice human.

Specimen set in Instrument Sans (falls back to Montserrat, then a bundled sans).

THE EYEBROW CONVENTION

Every section opens with an uppercase, letter-spaced **eyebrow** set in JetBrains Mono, sitting above a Syne display title. It is the system's connective tissue — a small, consistent signal of order and precision.

TECHNICAL — JETBRAINS MONO

label-mono · 60/30/10 ·
<Component />

Monospace carries labels, metrics, code, and UI detail — the mark of a system built by engineers. Never set long-form body copy in mono.

Brand lockup hierarchy

The full type lockup, role by role — the connective system that keeps every touchpoint consistent. Syne for display, Instrument Sans for body, JetBrains Mono for the technical layer.

ROLE	TREATMENT	SPECIMEN
Company name	Syne · Bold · tracking +120 · Navy	THE INNOVATION LAB
Monogram	Syne · Bold · Amber	TIL
Tagline	Instrument Sans · Italic · Amber ink	Precision engineering for software that ships.
Name	Syne · Bold · Navy	Sam Carter
Title	JetBrains Mono · Amber ink	Principal Engineer
Body	Instrument Sans · 10.5 pt · Navy	Calm, clear copy for a technical reader.
Eyebrow	JetBrains Mono · 8 pt · tracked · Amber ink	SECTION LABEL



Voice & tone

We sound **precise, restrained, and direct**. We speak to technical people as technical people: confident without hype, clear without coldness. We explain the tradeoff, name the constraint, and stand behind specifics. Adapt these three words to context and keep them consistent.

PRECISE

Specific claims, named numbers, real constraints. Specifics over superlatives.

RESTRAINED

Composed and unhurried. We never shout, pad, or overclaim.

DIRECT

Plain language, active voice. We say what happens and what to do next.

IN PRACTICE

DO

- “Here’s the tradeoff, and the option we chose.”
- “96% faster loads — 8000 ms down to 300 ms.”
- “Plain language for a technical reader.”

DON'T

- “A revolutionary, game-changing breakthrough!”
- “Next-gen, AI-powered, disruptive synergy.”
- “We’re passionate about excellence and innovation.”

tone shifts by context

Technical and engineering materials lean fully **precise** — evidence-led and exact. Marketing and educational pieces warm toward **direct** and plain. The restrained baseline never changes, whatever the context.

Layout & spacing

Our layouts breathe. Generous whitespace, a clear reading column, and a grid-based rhythm keep the system minimal and precise — never busy, never loud.

CONTAINER WIDTHS

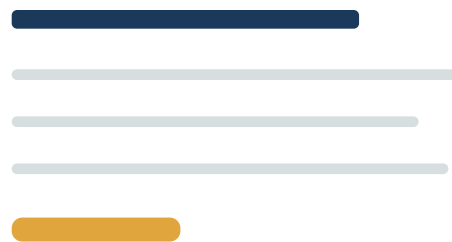
The primary content container caps near **72rem (≈ 1152 px)** and centres on wide screens. Text columns hold a comfortable **60-75 character** measure. Section padding scales from 6 (mobile) to 10 (desktop).

SECTION RHYTHM

Vertical rhythm is built on a consistent scale. Sections are separated by large, even spacing and an optional Light Amber hairline — the eye always knows where one idea ends and the next begins.

GRID + EYEBROW MOTIF

EYEBROW



A tracked mono eyebrow opens the block; Navy structure; a single amber action. Measured, grid-based, deliberate.

Components

A small, consistent kit. Soft radii, no drop shadows, Amber for action, Light Amber for edges, and a small line-art accent as a recurring detail.

BUTTONS

Primary action

Secondary

Amber solid for the single primary action; Navy outline for secondary.

CARDS

Card title

White surface lifted above the Soft Gray wash, with a hair-thin border — no shadow.

EYEBROWS & HAIRLINES

EYEBROW LABEL

A tracked mono label over a Light Amber hairline opens every section.

ACCENT MARKS

◊ ◊ ◊

A small line-art accent recurs as a quiet bullet, divider, or footer detail — flat and sparing.

Imagery & motion

Imagery is **technical, clean, and calm** — blueprint motifs, structured diagrams, and generous negative space rather than busy or literal stock clichés. Motion is restrained and always optional.

IMAGERY

Favour blueprint and schematic motifs, structured diagrams, and generous negative space. Avoid literal category clichés, busy compositions, and harsh stock photography. When colour appears, keep it to flat fields of the palette — no gradients.



MOTION

Motion is **subtle and mechanical**: gentle fades and a few pixels of lift on hover. Nothing bounces, spins, or demands attention.

ACCESSIBILITY

Always honour `prefers-reduced-motion` — when set, animation is removed, not merely slowed. Never convey meaning through motion alone.

Do / Don't summary

A single page to keep close. When in doubt, choose the precise, restrained, technically-honest option.

DO

- Lead with **Navy**; use **Amber** only for accent and action; let **Light Amber** light the edges.
- Keep the mark consistent; Navy wordmark, amber accent, no effects.
- Set display in **Syne**, body in **Instrument Sans**, technical detail in **JetBrains Mono**; open sections with a mono eyebrow.
- Write **precise, restrained, and direct** — explain the tradeoff, name the numbers.
- Keep layouts open, grid-based, and minimal.
- Use Navy for body text; honour reduced-motion and AA contrast everywhere.

DON'T

- Introduce colours outside the six locked tokens.
- Add glossy effects, drop shadows, or gradients to the mark or imagery.
- Swap the type system or drop the eyebrow convention.
- Use hype, buzzwords, or unsupported superlatives.
- Feel loud, generic, or corporate-cold.
- Rely on motion or colour alone to carry meaning.

TIL

Precision engineering for software that ships.

The Innovation Lab — Brand Guidelines · Version 1.0 · 2026 · Public reference