

The Brand Desf

PREMIER ISSUE

• MARKETING TEAM EDITION •

THE VOICE ISSUE

INSIDE

Voice vs tone. One personality, many moods.
Section I

Do and don't. Rewrite pairs your team can copy.
Section II

Rolling it out. Templates, reviews and a shared doc.
Back page

BRAND AND CONTENT STRATEGY

How to Write a Brand Voice Guide

A short, practical guide that helps every writer on the team sound like the same company.

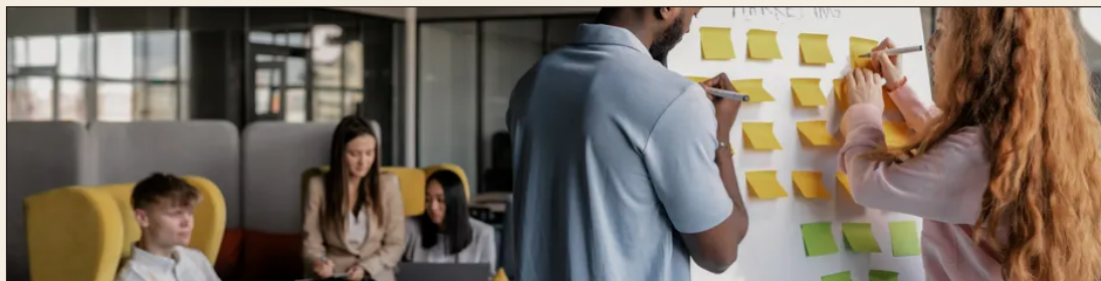


FIG. Voice starts as a team decision.

Most brands do not have a voice problem. They have a consistency problem: the website, the emails and the social posts each sound like a different writer.

This issue walks through the four parts of a voice guide: the traits, the tone shifts, the rewrite examples and the word list.

Continued inside.

CONTENTS

In This Issue

SECTION I: VOICE TRAITS

Pick three traits · Define each in one line · Say what it is not

SECTION II: TONE BY CHANNEL

Website · Email · Social · Support replies

SECTION III: REWRITES

Before and after pairs · Headlines · Error messages

SECTION IV: WORD LIST

Words we use · Words we avoid · Product names



PLATE I. *Keep the guide short enough to read in ten minutes.*

THE BACK PAGE HAS A GLOSSARY AND A READING LIST.

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I

THE SECTION

Voice Traits

Three adjectives, each with a one-line definition and a clear note on what the trait does not mean.

THE LEAD ARTICLE

Three Traits, Not Ten

A voice guide works when a new writer can remember it without opening it.

Start by collecting twenty pieces of your best writing. Ask the team which ones sound most like the company, and look for what they share.

Name three traits from that pile, such as clear, warm and direct. More than three and nobody remembers them.

For each trait, write one line on what it means and one on what it is not. Warm does not mean chatty. Direct does not mean blunt.

Then add a short before and after rewrite for each trait, taken from real copy your team has published.

If a trait cannot be shown in a rewrite, it is not a trait yet.



FIG. Real rewrites teach faster than rules.

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II

THE SECTION

Tone by Channel

The voice stays the same everywhere, while tone shifts for a launch email, a support reply or a social post.

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GLOSSARY

Voice — The fixed personality of the brand in writing.

Tone — How that voice adjusts to the reader's situation.

Trait — One adjective that describes the voice, with limits.

Word list — Approved and banned words, plus product name spelling.

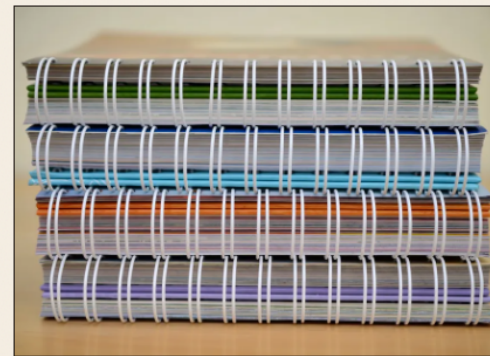
FURTHER READING

Mailchimp Content Style Guide, voice and tone section

Nicely Said by Nicole Fenton and Kate Kiefer Lee

GOV.UK style guide, plain English rules

On Writing Well by William Zinsser



COLOPHON. Borrow structure from guides that work.

SHARE THIS DECK WITH THE TEAM AND REVIEW THE GUIDE EVERY QUARTER.

END OF ISSUE. THANK YOU FOR READING

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