

# How to Define **YOUR BRAND'S TONE OF VOICE**





# Define Your TONE OF VOICE

**"Tone of voice describes how your brand communicates with your audience and thus influences how people perceive your message and brand." - Semrush**

Defining your brand's tone of voice is essential to writing captivating copy for your website, social media messages, newsletters and emails, is to decide on your writing style, or tone of voice.

This is important because your "tone of voice reflects your brand's personality, helps you connect with your audience, and makes you different from the rest." (Distilled.net)

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## WHAT IS "TONE OF VOICE"

**Your brand's tone of voice is less about *what* you say, rather *how* you say it.**

The tone of voice describes how your brand communicates with your target audience, the manner in which you write and the overall emotion your writing style evokes. This in turn influences how people perceive your business.

Your company's tone of voice represents your brand's personality and values. This includes the words you choose and the order in which you put them and applies to all the content you deliver — website content, social media posts, emails, and any other formats.

As always, consistency is key because it provides a clear message, builds brand recognition and customer trust.

In order to be successful, it's important to write in your defined tone of voice in all of your copy and content.

## WHY DOES YOUR BUSINESS NEED A TONE OF VOICE?

65%

### **BUILDS CONNECTION**

65% of customers say that they're emotionally connected to a brand that makes them feel like the company cares about them.

64%

### **BUILDS TRUST**

64% of customers cited that shared values is the primary reason to trust a company.

23%

### **INCREASES YOUR SALES REVENUE**

The surveys show that the average revenue increased by 23% when a brand is presented consistently.

86%

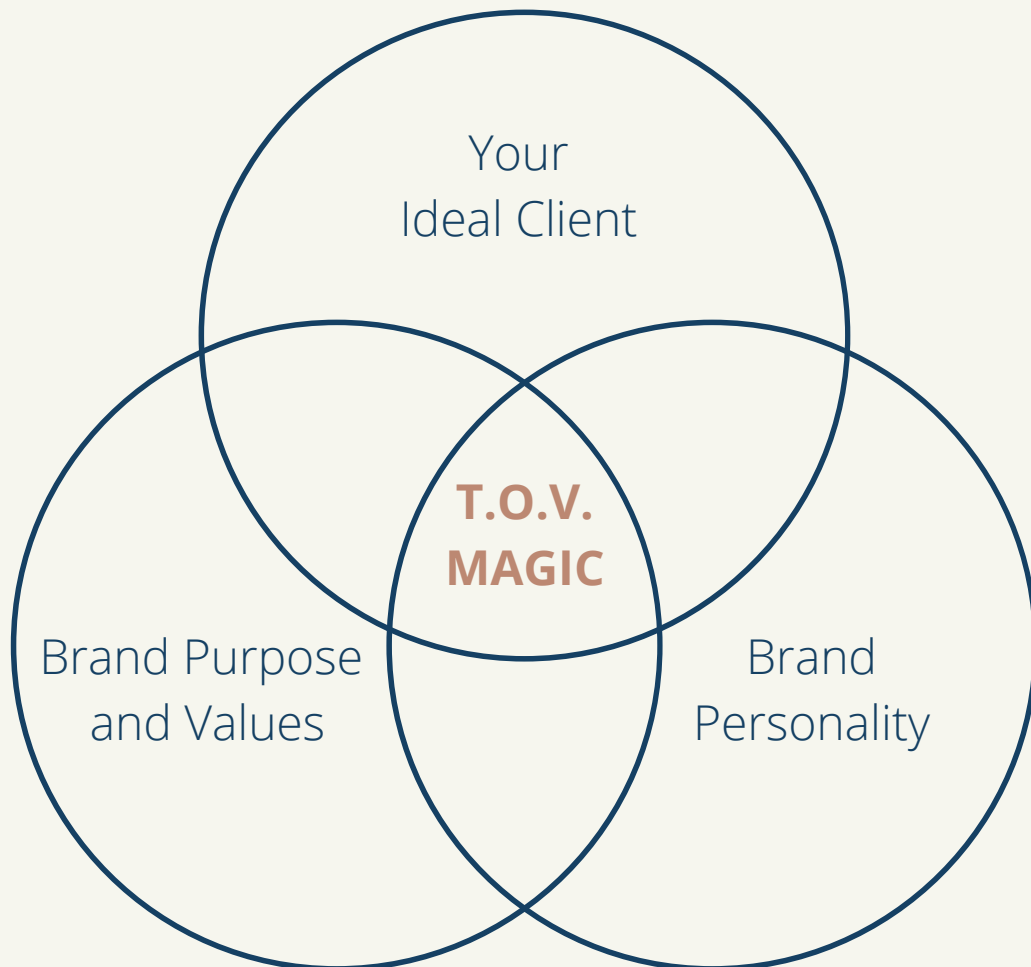
### **MAKES YOUR BRAND MEMORABLE**

Brand recognition improves by 80% based on consistently implementing your brand colors and tone of voice in your copy.

## THE MAGIC FORMULA

### **Aim for writing in a tone of voice that:**

- Resonates with your ideal client
- Speaks to your brand purpose and values
- Infuses your brand personality



## WHAT IS YOUR BRAND'S PURPOSE AND VALUES?

### Your Brand's Purpose and Values

All of your messaging should align with your brand's purpose and values.

What is it that you want to tell the world? Being clear on your purpose and values will help you decide which topics to write about.

#### Write your Brand Purpose Statement

#### List your top 5 values



## WHO IS YOUR IDEAL CLIENT AND HOW DO THEY SPEAK?

A It's very important to choose the right language so that your ideal client can connect and resonate with it.

"Empathy is key, focus on your customer's voice, and make it part of your brand tone of voice to build trust and credibility.

Experts say that mimicking the vocabulary of a particular group allows members to feel a sense of belonging.

Mirroring your audience's language will make your content pieces more relatable and bring your brand closer to them.

If done right, this will eventually lead you to an increase in sales." - Distilled



## CONNECT WITH YOUR IDEAL CLIENT'S GENERATION

Review the ideal client section of your Brand Guidelines and think about what kind of communication style they use most often in personal friendly situations and professional settings?

Specifically note which generation you're targeting. Are they boomers or millennials? There is a big difference in each generation's communication styles and preferences.

According to a survey by Yes Lifecycle Marketing:  
Babyboomers look at content as sources for debate.

Millennial shoppers (22-37 y.o.) value emails more than any other generation and seek personalized interactions. If you target millennials, try to be entertaining, yet informative.

Centennials (18-21 y.o.) use Instagram and Snapchat as their primary channel for shopping and expect quality experiences across all channels,.

## DISCOVER KEY VOCABULARY + PHRASES THAT CONNECT WITH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

**Ideal Client:** List their Generation and Basic Description

**How do they communicate with each other?** Brainstorm slang words, colloquialisms, vocabulary and phrases that you can incorporate into your speech. List ones that feel like a natural fit for your brand. (If your ideal client is a part of your generation, and overall social circles, you will most likely naturally write in a way that connects with them!)

## WHAT IS THE PERSONALITY OF YOUR BRAND?

### How can you set your business apart from the rest?

Let your personality shine through! Infuse your personality into your writing style in a way that also connects with your ideal target audience.

**List 5 adjectives that describe the personality of your brand.**

**Write down some expressions and phrases that you use** when talking to friends and in a professional setting.

# Tone of Voice

## PERSONALITY TRAITS

Circle the personality traits that feel right for your brand.

FUNNY

CHEERFUL

FUN

HUMOUROUS

PLAYFUL

SERIOUS

INFORMATIVE

QUIRKY

WITTY

FEMININE

TRUSTWORTHY

CONVERSATIONAL

CASUAL

FORMAL

PROFESSIONAL

FRANK

SYMPATHETIC

FRIENDLY

SMART

SEXY

AUTHORITATIVE

CARING

PROVACATIVE

RESPECTFUL

EDGY

UNAPOLOGETIC

SARCASTIC

SNARKY

COARSE

NEUTRAL

DRY

ENTHUSIASTIC

MATTER-OF-FACT

PASSIONATE

UPBEAT

TRENDY

NOSTALGIC

ROMANTIC

SPIRITUAL

INSPIRATIONAL

# Examples of PERSONALITY + BRAND VOICE

Voice Characteristic	Description	Do's	Don'ts
<b>PASSIONATE</b>	We're passionate about changing the way the world works	Use strong verbs. Be champions for your industry. Be a cheerleader for your clients.	Be lukewarm, wishy-washy. Use a passive voice.
<b>QUIRKY</b>	We're not afraid to challenge the status quo and be ourselves	Use unexpected examples. Take the contrarian view. Express yourself	Use too much slang or too many obscure references. Use jargon, overplay examples. Lose sight of the audience and core message.
<b>IRREVERENT</b>	We take our product seriously, not ourselves!	Be playful, Use colorful illustrations or examples. .	Be too casual, Use too many obscure, pop culture examples.
<b>AUTHENTIC</b>	We're going to give you the tools and insight you need to make your job easier. That may not always be through our product.	Use strong verbs. Be champions for your industry. Be a cheerleader for your clients.	Be lukewarm, wishy-washy. Use a passive voice.

## WRITING STYLE CHARACTERISTICS

### FORMAL VERSUS CASUAL LANGUAGE:

Think about how formal or informal you want your tone to be? Of course, even though it will vary over different platforms and the context in which you're writing, it's a good idea to have a general baseline.

#### Formal language

- Conveys a sense of authority, respectfulness and professionalism.
- On the other hand, it can run the risk of sounding boring and stiff.

#### Informal language

- It's easier to infuse personality, warmth and charm.
- If you go overboard though, it may seem as though you lack professionalism.

## Four Dimensions OF TONE OF VOICES

*The Nielsen Norman Group identified four dimensions that can be used to analyze or develop your website's tone of voice. Assess where you aim to be and how it can reflect your values the best way.*

### FORMAL

**Vs.**

### CASUAL

- + Gives a sense of professionalism and authority.
- Lacks personality, gives a sense of indifference or building barriers.

- + Conveys personality and friendliness.
- May be seen as lacking expertise.

### FUNNY

**Vs.**

### SERIOUS

- + Results in the audience's higher recall and more social shares.
- May backfire and leave the impression of unprofessionalism.

- + Gives the feeling of credibility and trust.
- Give a feeling of tension.



## WRITING STYLE CHARACTERISTICS

### TECHNICAL LANGUAGE

It is always best to try to write simply and clearly so that your audience can easily understand what you are communicating.

There are times though when it is necessary to use technical terms because they are specific in their meaning.

"Studies show that customers then to customers tend to prefer more naturalistic language in marketing copy. Using obscure or unknown terms may alienate a customer who may find the text difficult to read and comprehend."

While it's a good rule of thumb to write in laymen's terms, you must always consider your audience to determine what level of technical language to use.

## WRITING STYLE CHARACTERISTICS

### **SWEAR WORDS**

It's unusual to find businesses that use swear words as part of their everyday marketing copy. So, it is very attention grabbing when a you do see it. It seems to be a trend among younger generations.

It's interesting to note that "using mild curse words have been shown to lend emails an evocative and honest feel." - *Amelia Showalter spoke about her findings from working as Director of Digital Analytics for Barack Obama's re-election campaign.*

## WRITING STYLE CHARACTERISTICS

### GRAMMAR RULES

It's a good idea to follow grammar rules while not stressing out over them, since keeping your written copy conversational is key to creating connection.

It's also okay to break the rules once in a while.

- It's fine to use 'And' at the beginning of a sentence. For example, if you want to make a long sentence shorter and more punchy, it's fine to shorten it into 2 phrases, and begin the second sentence with the word "And."
- Letting go of the "who / whom" rule if you worry you're copy will sound pretentious to use 'whom'.
- Using bullet points is another great way to make the information easier to absorb.

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Determining the tone of voice for your brand and using it consistently in all of your content and copy is actually quite easy ... All it requires is being mindful.

So, as you write, just keep in mind these things, and you'll be good as gold.

- Write about topics that speak to your brand purpose and values.
- Think of your ideal customer, and write in a way that is both natural for you and will also resonate with them too.
- Infuse your brand personality and enjoy the process!

## An Examples Of A TONE OF VOICE PROFILE

<b>Funny</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Serious</b>
<b>Casual</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Formal</b>
<b>Irreverent</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Respectful</b>
<b>Enthusiastic</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Matter-of-Fact</b>

## THE TOP 8 TIPS TO WRITE COMPELLING COPY

01. Write content that **aligns with your brand's purpose and values.**
02. Write in a way that **connects with your target audience.**  
Pepper words and phrases your ideal client uses throughout your copy. (Only if it feels like a natural fit for your brand)
03. **Infuse your brand's personality** into your writing!  
For example, if your brand is fun and playful, use humor.
04. **Write in a way that is conversational.** I suggest writing in the first person.
05. **Keep it personal.** Compose your copy as if you are writing directly to your ideal client avatar, and use words like you, your, etc. (For example, The mission of XYZ is to deliver high-value content. VS. The mission of XYX is to deliver high-value content to you.)
06. **Keep it short!** Edit your copy down to the bare minimum for maximum comprehension
07. **Tell stories.** Storytelling! "If told well, a story will embody a company's beliefs and personality but in a way that is, first and foremost, entertaining and memorable for the audience." - *Distilled*
08. **Consistently write in your brand voice** in all of your communications and content.