

Getting the most out of this copy style guide

Welcome to our copy style guide. The following guidelines and examples will help us write copy that's clear, consistent and recognisable. This guide is for you if you write any form of content for our audience. That could include blog articles, landing pages, emails, live chat messages, ads or even pitch decks.

A copy style guide can be incredibly powerful. Some of the most successful brands in the world use style guides to maintain a consistent voice across their communications. Apple, Coca-Cola and Nike are all examples of brands that use copy style guides to write copy that resonates with their audience.

Why should everyone in our team use this guide?

- **We'll deliver a consistent experience.** This will make our brand stronger, easier to recognise and help us build trust with our audience.
- **We'll be easier to understand.** This will reduce confusion and help us communicate better.
- **We'll create great content more quickly and easily.** Sharing a common understanding of our tone and writing style will result in fewer internal disagreements and revisions.

How can you get the most out of this copy style guide?

- **Familiarise yourself** with the guidelines and examples provided.
- **Refer to the guide** whenever you're writing copy.
- **Ask questions** if you're unsure about any of the guidelines.

Finally, treat this as a guide rather than a rigid set of rules. There may be times when you'll want to alter your tone depending on the context of the situation.

Our copy style guide, in brief

Our personality

We focus on providing well-researched and practical solutions to our customers, using a straightforward and grounded communication style. [REDACTED]

Our tone of voice

Casual	Serious	Respectful	Matter-of-fact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Conversational language✓ Short sentences✓ Contractions and colloquialisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Clear and concise✓ Focus on substance✓ Use of facts and data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ [REDACTED][REDACTED]✓ [REDACTED][REDACTED]✓ [REDACTED]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ [REDACTED]✓ [REDACTED]✓ [REDACTED]

Writing examples

<i>Join our monthly newsletter for the latest news and offers.</i>	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
<i>How'd we do? Let us know by completing the survey below.</i>	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Our copy style guide, in detail

The way we communicate is important. It shapes how our audience sees us and reflects the values and spirit of our company. By communicating consistently and effectively, we'll establish a valuable brand identity.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

How we talk

Put simply, our tone of voice is:

- **Casual**
- **Serious**
- **Respectful**
- **Matter-of-fact**

We focus on providing well-researched and practical solutions to our customers, using a straightforward and grounded communication style. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Brands with a similar tone of voice include 3M, Basecamp, Kickstarter, Slack and Wealthfront.

Let's look at that in more detail...

We're more **casual** than formal

When we're talking about a casual tone, we mean it's natural and easygoing. It's like having a conversation with a friend - relaxed, informal and approachable. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We can sound casual by:

- **Speaking clearly**, using short and simple words.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

We tend to use these words:

- *Hi*, not *Dear*
- *Okay*, not *Understood*
- *But*, not *However*
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

We also contract words (*You're*, not *You are*) and [REDACTED]

We're more **serious** than funny

Trust is the cornerstone of our work. To establish and uphold that trust, we approach our customers and the subjects we tackle with a serious and professional demeanour. [REDACTED]

We can sound serious by:

- **Not using puns** in titles to get people's attention.

Our commitment to a respectful tone doesn't aim to suppress open dialogue or discussion.

[Redacted]

We're more **matter-of-fact** than enthusiastic

Clarity and straightforwardness are the cornerstones of our tone. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

To maintain a matter-of-fact tone, we:

- **Use clear, precise language** that conveys information without embellishment.
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

Our emphasis on a matter-of-fact tone is designed to create trust and credibility with our audience by prioritising transparency, accuracy and objectivity in our communication. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Tips on writing well

Embracing plain language in our communication makes it more accessible, clear and easy to understand for our audience.

To achieve this, we follow these grammar and writing guidelines:

- **Use active voice:** Write sentences with the subject performing the action, e.g., "We designed the product," instead of "The product was designed by us."
- **Choose short sentences:** Aim for an average of 15-20 words per sentence to improve readability.
- **Prefer everyday words:** Use familiar, everyday language instead of jargon or complex terms.
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

By incorporating these plain language principles into our communication, we create content that's more reader-friendly, understandable and accessible to a diverse audience.

Tone of voice formula

To demonstrate how to bring each aspect of our tone of voice together, let's consider an all too familiar scenario - receiving the message, "404 error, page not found."

The table below shows a step-by-step process you can use to tailor your message. At each step, it becomes more aligned with our tone of voice. Note how each adaptation not only modifies the language used but also subtly shifts the way the message is perceived.

Step	Action	Message	Notes
1	Make it more casual	We've searched far and wide, but can't find the page you're looking for.	Using contractions like "can't" and "you're" gives it a laid-back tone, less formal than a standard error message.
2	Make it more serious	We can't find the page you're looking for.	Removing "We've searched far and wide," eliminates the light-hearted humour of the message. The directness gives it a serious tone.
3	██████████ ██████████	████████████████████ ██████████████████	████████████████████ ██████████████████ ████████████████████ ████████████████████ ██████████████████
4	██████████ ██████████	████████████████████ ████████████████████ ████████████████████	████████████████████ ████████████████████ ██████████████████ ████████████████████ ██████████████████

Writing examples

Here you'll find some examples of copy that's both on-brand and effective. The examples are written to show how our tone of voice can be used in different contexts.

What we say	Why we say it
<i>Join our monthly newsletter for the latest news and offers.</i>	This example embodies our casual, serious and respectful tone. The invitation to join the newsletter is casual and friendly. The mention of "latest news and offers" shows a serious dedication to keeping customers informed while also showing respect for their desire to stay updated.
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
<i>How'd we do? Let us know by completing the survey below.</i>	This example shows a casual, serious and respectful tone. "How'd we do?" is a casual and friendly way of asking for feedback. The request to complete a survey shows

	<p>the seriousness of our desire for customer feedback. It also shows respect for the customers by acknowledging their opinions and experience.</p>
<p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>
<p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>