A Practical Brand Voice Framework

For Defining Your Voice, Scaling Your Content, And Helping Writers Nail Your Copy On The First Shot

Justin Blackman

PRETTYFLY
C O P Y W R I T I N G

Let's clear up one big misperception about voice. Voice isn't some hippy-dippy, woo-woo concept that involves deep soul work, inner reflection, or choosing the color of your aura. Voice is measurable. It's an identifiable pattern that can be used to ensure consistency across your platforms and help you scale.

Voice is a science.

And while there are some elusive elements to nailing your brand's writing, these tools will show you how to track what you can and train your team to hit the mark.

Now...

WTF is Voice?

No. WTF _is_ voice.

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Voice is comprised of three essential components:

Words

The level of vocabulary and phrases you choose

Tone

The emotions, outlooks, and views within your copy

Frequency

The cadence and rhythm of your writing

WTF is the Brand Ventriloquist® Framework for measuring and duplicating any writing style—be it corporate, punchy, practical, or personal. By establishing parameters around each element of your voice, you'll create boundaries that keep your writers on track. This means you'll receive better drafts and can give actionable and direct feedback to all your content creators.

This is how you scale your content.

Here are 3 tools you can use to identify & standardize your brand voice (in ways that _actually_ mean something).

Words

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Establish an average readability level (with acceptable leeway on either side) so you can give specific feedback to keep your vocabulary and content consistent. Luckily, there's an app for that…

THE HEMINGWAY APP
www.hemingwayapp.com

The Hemingway App identifies long, complex sentences and common writing errors. Use it to review copy and grade content's readability. The lower the score, the easier it is to read.

(Note: Comprehension and conversion begin to suffer above grade 7. Depending on your industry, you may not be able to avoid this—sometimes technical terms are a must. But keep it in mind as you create.)
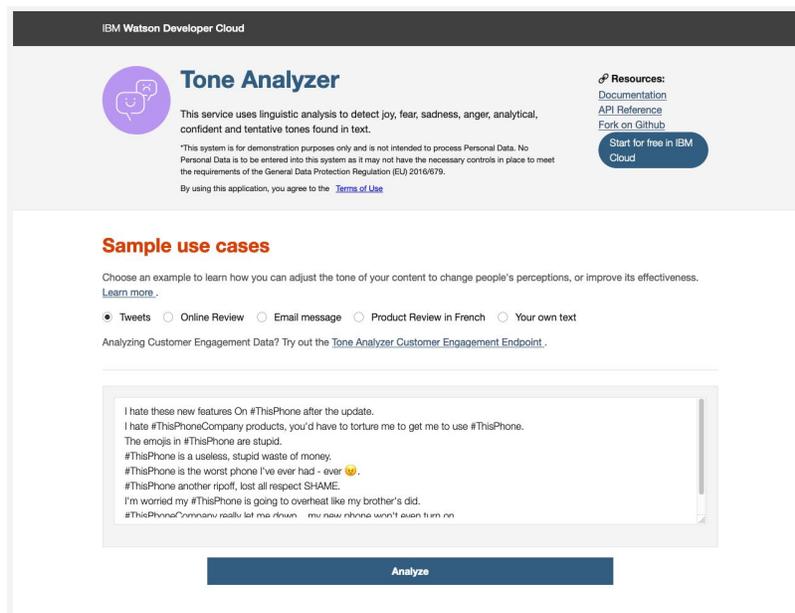
Tone
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There's no rule for what emotions you can and can't use (as long as you're not a jerk about it). Depending on your views, your audience, your social stance, and what feelings you want your readers to experience, you can focus your content in relevant ways.

Document your views on topics, people, resources, industries, and big ideas. When you define your values, your writer will know how to approach each area.

TONE ANALYZER

https://tone-analyzer-demo.mybluemix.net

This IBM Watson tool uses linguistic analysis to detect and interpret emotional language. Use it to identify joy, fear, sadness, anger, analytical, confident, and tentative words in your content.

(Note: If it fits your brand, don't be afraid to go big with feelings. Without dark, there would be no light. Play around and find your balance. You set your own rules.)

Frequency

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The cadence of your writing determines how fast your sentences are read. Short sentences go quick. Long, drawn-out sentences with multiple punctuation marks, hyphenated words, and vibrant descriptions can pull in readers and make them pay attention to every word... But they can also be exhausting.

Find your average sentence lengths, comma counts, and general punctuation per 100 sentences, and give your writer a baseline.

ANALYZE MY WRITING
www.analyzemywriting.com

This robust tool gives word and character counts, word and sentence lengths, punctuation counts, and can even show you word clouds for frequently used language. Don't hold writers to an exact count, but help them understand the way you want your copy to read. (More commas mean longer and more complex sentences.)

(Note: Sentence length not only controls the speed, it also defines the way your content looks on the page. This is a big factor for mobile viewing.)

Set boundaries around your content—but allow flexibility.

Use these measurements to guide each writer and keep them on brand, without stifling their talent. And don't be afraid to test. There are differences between channels and It takes time to define your role across each one. Allow your voice to evolve over time.

Give your voice room to grow—and your audience will grow with it.

Want more?
Here's how I can help...

Brand Ventriloquist® Voice Guides lay out how your copy should look, sound, and read in every format. Your writers will have all the information they need to nail your voice, slash your editing time, and hammer home your copy on the first try.

Need to create your brand voice from scratch? Have it done by a real, live writer, rather than an overpriced corporate agency that generates fluffy, flowery, sappy pap to appease the CMO, but doesn't really mean bupkis.

I'll define your voice, outline your do's and don'ts, and put actual parameters around your voice so your team can create with consistency. And your life will be easier.

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> **"I've never seen anyone put as much thought into the process of voice and tone guides as Justin."**
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> "Audience avatars, lexicons, examples, practical tips, customer considerations... I TRIED to find a hole in his documentation, and I absolutely couldn't. Whether you're a company scaling up your content efforts with multiple writers, an international team struggling to keep voice and tone consistent, or even a small company trying to define what makes your voice your own, I have every confidence Justin's voice guide will help you meet those goals."
>
> **Joel Klettke**
> Founder, Case Study Buddy

For details and packages, please visit: www.PrettyFlyCopy.com/VoiceGuides
For my Write More Personality-er writing workshop, visit: www.JustinBlackman.com
Or email Justin Blackman at Justin@PrettyFlyCopy.com