YOU HAVE A VOICE. FIND IT. HONE IT. USE IT.

So that you can say what you need to say in ways that get you noticed.

NAT FOR WORDS

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Your brand is your most valuable asset

In a world where ferocious competition, relentless change and non-stop innovation have become the norm, your brand is:

- your anchor (keeps you upright and consistent)
- your beacon (attracts attention and helps you stand out)
- your north star (leading you forwards)
- your reputation (what people say about you)
- your most valuable asset

So your brand cannot ever just be your logo, products, services or expertise. These are just cogs in the machine.

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Brand as DNA

Your brand is your promise to provide a particular experience to a specific set of standards. Think of your brand as the DNA that shapes every single thing your company thinks, says and does:

- It’s how you conduct yourself in the public sphere
- It’s how you do things within the company, and behind closed doors
- It’s what attracts and unites staff, stakeholders, suppliers, clients, consumers, investors
- It’s what turns you from a business into something much bigger.

All these elements are carried in your voice. So what you say you say – and how – are very important.

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What is ‘tone of voice’?

Your TOV is how your brand gets heard.

TOV =

WHY (your purpose and USPs)
+
WHAT (your values and products / services / expertise)
x
PERSONALITY (your TOV)

Your WHY is key because people buy into your WHY before anything else.

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A good TOV

A good TOV expresses your brand’s personality in ways that support the brand purpose and brand values.

But only Innocent can sound like Innocent.

Find your voice: a practical guide
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Nike

Pure Nike – bold, succinct, direct, meaningful.

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Strawbees

One of Strawbees’ new brand values is ‘Learning by trying’.

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Poll 1

If you’ve written for your business or brand, e.g. website, LinkedIn, pitches, etc. did you find it:

A. Easy and love the results!

B. Easy and don’t love the results

C. Hard and love the results!

D. Hard and don’t love the results

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Common issues

Writing for your own brand is hard! Here are some common sticking points.

- Getting the facts down but failing to sound interesting or engaging

- Communicating benefits / value clearly (especially if these are abstract or hard to quantify verbally).

- Making points easy to grasp (you can’t rely too much on jargon as it can alienate)

- Compressing messages into something bitesize (being concise takes time and skill!)

- Getting the tone right (perhaps sounding too serious, longwinded, or too similar to your competition).

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Strengthen your purpose

Let’s look at what a strong purpose sounds like, and see if we can take any tips.

Greta Thunberg

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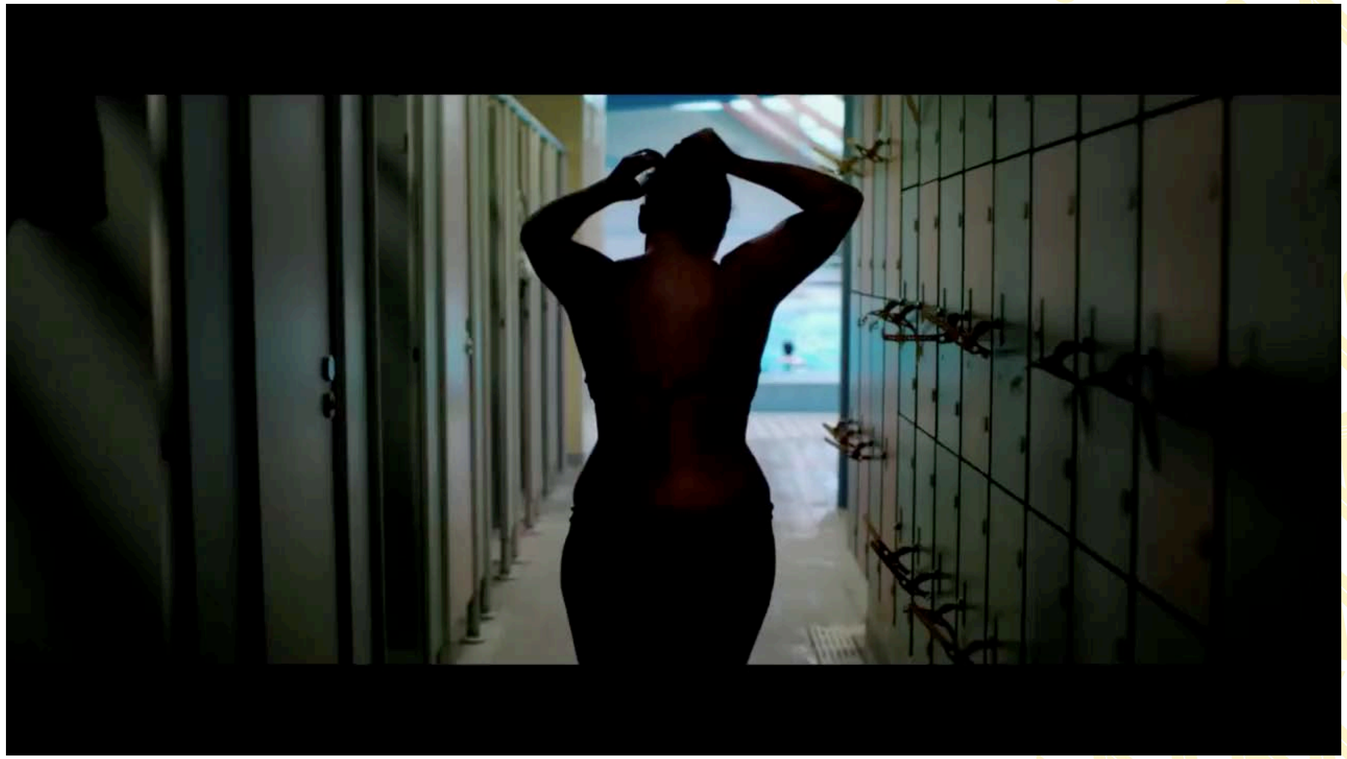
Strengthen your purpose

Let’s look at what a strong purpose sounds like, and see if we can take any tips.



Sport England

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Strengthen your purpose

Let’s look at what a strong purpose sounds like, and see if we can take any tips.

Nike

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Find your why

Improve your WHY statement and shorten to SEVEN WORDS from your original 15…

- make it tight and single-minded (no fluff or fancy words)
- emotive (people buy into emotion)
- funny or lively (everyone likes to smile)
- useful or meaningful (don't be abstract)
- snappy (get to the meat)
- everyday English (lose the corporate-speak)
- be 'you' (it can't sound like anyone else)
- keep it honest (the best brands represent their businesses honestly)
- THIS IS FOR YOUR EYES ONLY SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT SHARING

Helpful trick 1:

What are you in a nutshell?

- Doctors save lives
- Teachers shape minds
- Apple thinks different
- Nike brings inspiration and innovation to all athletes.
- Air BnB helps people to belong anywhere

Helpful trick 2:

Imagine your mum has asked you what you offer the world? She wants a simple answer. What do you say to her?

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Identify your values

Nike

Purpose

To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world

Values

- Inspiration
- Innovation

Ben & Jerry’s

Purpose

Make the best possible ice cream in the nicest possible way

Values

- Make fantastic ice cream for its own sake
- Manage our Company for sustainable financial growth
- Make the world a better place

General Electric

Purpose

Imagination at work

Values

- Imagine
- Solve
- Build
- Lead

What three things do you believe in? A good starting point is to first define what you definitely don’t believe in (in your industry context), then offer the opposite.

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What’s your brand personality?

Nike

Purpose
To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world.

Values
Inspiration and Innovation.

Personality
Authentic, connected, distinctive

Choose a brand ambassador

Choose the brand ambassador of your dreams. Pick someone famous – from any walk of life – that you feel embodies your brand, and whose personality and character fits your purpose and values. Name them and choose three traits inspired by them.

(Hint: avoid obvious traits such as Approachable, Honest, Professional.)

Find your voice: a practical guide
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Well done!

You now have (the beginnings of!):

- a clear, succinct brand purpose
- three strong brand values
- three distinctive personality traits

Spend some time tinkering with these, research your competition, your audiences, and see if you can refine it further.

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In summary

A strong voice will help you…

… shine
… turn heads
… be honest and consistent

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Books worth reading

- Why Brands with a Purpose Do Better and Matter More by David Hieatt

- Change the Status Quo. Or Become It. by Mark Shayler

- Brilliant Copywriting by Roger Horberry

- The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding by Al Ries and Laura Ries

- Anything written by Paul Arden

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THANKS!

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