

BRAND VOICE GUIDELINES



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What is a Brand Voice?

The way we speak or write as a brand not only expresses the personality of CUSTOMatrix, but also helps set us apart from other executive consultants and allows people to get to know us. That's why it's important that we all speak, write and communicate on behalf of the brand using the same brand voice.

Our previous brand voice was inconsistent in its tone and style; at times firm, tight and professional, while at others conversational and highly-peppered with colloquialisms. This inconsistency in voice leads to confusion in brand perception.

Through CUSTOMatrix's voice we're actively demonstrating who we are to our consumers in the way we communicate. The time has come for a contemporary conversation with the rest of the world.



1. Brand Personality

Every brand has personality traits

These are the human characteristics of your brand - and they should be expressed through every aspect of your identity. If CUSTOMatrix was a real person, for example - what would they be like? What would they wear? What would they think? How would they express themselves?

In order for the CUSTOMatrix brand to have depth, we need to ensure that our Brand Personality is both authentic and interesting - and reflects and inspires our target audience.

Intelligent

Down to Earth

Courageous

Sincere

Responsive

Friendly

Innovative

Direct



2. Conveying Our Personality

An Authentic Voice: Intelligent

Creating an authentic voice that conveys the brand personality is as much about content as it is about tone, sentence structure and word choice. Next are some recommendations for conveying CUSTOMatrix's Brand Personality.

Conveying an intelligent tone

- Intelligence is portrayed in the voice by utilizing language that is geared toward a highly educated audience, but is not overly complex or complicated.
- Content should convey a strong knowledge of the service area and, where relevant, briefly explain industry-specific words or key concepts to both demonstrate mastery of the concept in addition to accessibility.
- Avoid conveying a tone that is condescending, elitist or assuming, in addition to sentences that are verbose or heavy on jargon.

Conveying a courageous tone

- CUSTOMatrix is not afraid to ask the difficult questions, and helps leaders courageously look at the situations they are facing. We convey this attribute in the brand voice through the use of short, dynamic statements that are meant to reveal a willingness to confront issues and move through them.
- Utilize statements that are inspiring in nature, but not sanguine, affected or trite.
- Include content that calls out the challenges and fears that executives experience, underscoring the message that CUSTOMatrix provides courageous solutions.

Conveying a responsive tone

- At the core of CUSTOMatrix's responsiveness is the focus on providing clients with a committed team that is available, addresses their unique needs and does what it takes to get the job done.
- This quality is conveyed in the voice by creating content that speaks to CUSTOMatrix's proactiveness, and gives a feeling of being open, available and engaged with the reader.
- Questions may be utilized to demonstrate CUSTOMatrix's desire to understand and respond to client needs.

**An Authentic Voice:
“Down to Earth”**

Conveying a down to earth tone

- Down to earth is best expressed in CUSTOMatrix’s tone as creating a feeling of trust and accessibility for the reader.
- This attribute should strike a balance with intelligence, meaning the tone should avoid any level of condescension and the language should be direct and understandable to the reader.
- A touch of tongue-in-cheek humor regarding the down to earth, “ruggedness” of CUSTOMatrix can also be played with, as our approachability factor is a key differentiator from similar brands that often appear lofty, superior and elitist.

Conveying a friendly tone

- Friendliness can best be portrayed through an upbeat and positive tone of voice that is inviting, open and accessible.
- Toning down the overly professional and jargon-based language that is often portrayed in our competitors' brand voices is another way of demonstrating friendliness.
- A conversational tone should also be adopted, so as to avoid being tight, firm or terse.



3. Creating Our Tone

Voice Mapping

As you've seen, we already have a distinctive set of personality traits. But given we can dial up and down certain traits in specific situations, it's essential that our tone (how we express our personality) remains consistent.

Our VoiceMap allows us to define what we sound like - and more importantly what we DON'T sound like.

Defining our tone:

Volume	Whispered	Softly Spoken	▶ Conversational	Loud	In Ya Face!
Energy	Chilled	▶ Relaxed & Easy Going	Switched-On	Effervescent	Manic
Sociability	1 on 1	Inclusive Club	▶ Colleagues & Friends	Community	Universal
Attitude	Safe	Conventional	Politely Opinionated	▶ Provocative	Polarizing

Volume

Conversational: CUSTOMatrix's voice volume falls in the middle at the "conversational" realm. This means it's a balance between a soft, gentle and quiet tone and an irreverent, jarring and purposefully inciting tone. Because our overall brand personality combines intelligence, sincerity and directness with responsiveness, friendliness and being down to earth, it makes sense to speak at a balanced and moderated volume.

Energy

Relaxed & Easy Going: In keeping with our brand attributes of being friendly, responsive and down to earth, the energy behind the writing style should be relaxed and easy going. This means avoiding an overly professional, formal or stuffy style, and sentence structure should flow clearly and easily.

Sociability

Colleagues & Friends: Because our voice speaks both to our consultants as well as clients, our sociability also falls in the center. Our services aren't for everyone, and our consultants are a select group of individuals. As such we aren't speaking to the community at large, however, the tone and language should avoid conveying a sense of exclusivity. We want to remain as open and engaging as one would to colleagues and friends.

Attitude

Provocative: While our energy is relaxed and easy going, our attitude is provocative, which gets at the key attribute of courage. We're friendly, open and conversational, but our attitude has a hint of edge to it, demonstrating that we're not afraid to do the work and push our clients outside of their comfort zone. Our provocative attitude can be demonstrated by using thought-provoking questions or gently challenging statements.



4. Best Practice Examples

Best Practice Example 1: Team Bio

Before

Jordan Goldrich is responsible for the CUSTOMatrix Organization and Leadership Development practice. He helps senior leadership teams develop and implement strategies, improve individual and organizational performance, and prepare the next generation of leadership. He specializes in resolving workplace conflict by guiding valuable executives to work more effectively with customers, peers and direct reports. His success can be measured in improved productivity and profits.

After

Heading up our Leadership Development and Business Performance division, Jordan draws on a diverse skillset acquired from his background as a Chief Operations Officer, Executive Coach with the Center for Creative Leadership and licensed therapist. His talent lies in an ability to assist senior executives in achieving business results while simultaneously developing their organizations, employees and themselves. A specialist in resolving workplace conflict, he assists executives and their teams in collaborating more effectively, repairing the leaks that drain money, people and productivity. Jordan also works with middle managers to gain the skills and edge they need to excel in their careers, most notably through promotions to senior management positions.

Best Practice Example 2: Services Overview

Before

Strategic Services

Bridging Strategic Thinking with Just Make it Happen Execution

CUSTOMatrix Strategic Services provide a balance of strategic thinking and a sense of urgency to “just make it happen” quickly and efficiently.

- Immediately assess business situations
- Quickly develop and execute plans of action
- Operate with a balance of strategic thinking and sense of urgency
- Application of industry best practices
- Access to cross functional talent to address cross functional issues
- Focused leverage to break through stagnant growth and profitability inflection points

After

Strategic Services

Balancing Strategy and Action

CUSTOMatrix’s Strategic Services balance strategy with action to deliver effective and efficient results.

- Immediately assess the core of business dilemmas
- Quickly develop and execute plans of action
- Apply industry best practices to customized solutions
- Access a multidisciplinary team to address complex issues
- Implement concrete tactics to improve growth and increase profits

Best Practice Example 3: Website - “History”

Before

CUSTOMatrix, Inc. has recruited the Best-of-the Best of proven, cross-functional, executive-consultants into one organization. This unique composition was inspired and driven by the vision of Eric Chriss, the founder of CUSTOMatrix™.

Since its incorporation in 2005, CUSTOMatrix’s principals have interviewed extensively to identify and induct top-performing and customer-oriented consultants. The objective has been to develop a diverse team with the capability and proven track record of delivering optimal business solutions to clients, regardless of the area of focus.

After

CUSTOMatrix recruits and retains expert executive consultants in a full range of industries to provide integrated solutions to your business needs. Inspired by the vision of CUSOMatrix’s founder, Eric Chriss, our comprehensive model gives you access to a dynamic, multidisciplinary team.

Since incorporating in 2005, we’ve hand-selected consultants who are leaders in their fields, combining their expertise for the privately owned businesses we serve. Not only do our consultants have proven track records of success, but they are also inspiring and innovative team players committed to helping you solve your unique business challenges.



5. Clarifying Words and Adjectives

Commitment

CUSTOMatrix maintains a firm commitment to our clients, which includes meeting the client where they are, being available and responsive to client needs and doing whatever it takes to get the job done. Some adjectives to use to convey this include:

- Accountable
- Attentive
- Dedicated
- Engaged

Secondary adjectives that speak to the “responsiveness” of our commitment to our clients include:

- Versatile
- Resourceful
- Adaptable
- Flexible

Multi-disciplinary

The multi-disciplinary nature of CUSTOMatrix’s approach speaks to the wide variety of fields that CUSTOMatrix consultants encompass. Some additional adjectives to use to convey this include:

- Integrated
- Comprehensive
- Holistic
- Multifaceted



6. Conclusion

You're not alone

Communicating effectively, as a unified voice, is the responsibility of each CUSTOMatrix team member. Even so, you're not alone in implementing these Brand Voice guidelines. If you have questions, need some clarity, or want to make sure you're speaking "in voice", don't hesitate to contact us:

 858.240.5040

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