

Telstra brand voice guidelines

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Section 1: Introduction

Brand voice

Why do we have a new brand voice?

Our words say a lot about who we are. So it's important we all use them the same way whenever we write or speak as Telstra.

Our tone of voice helps people know it's us speaking to them. It guides us when we're writing, to make what we're saying more engaging. And it's a golden opportunity to build our brand's character and personality.

Our brand voice also brings to life Telstra's 3.0 positioning:

Telstra creates better ways to empower everyone to thrive in a connected world.

Our voice will help us become known for empowering people to thrive, not just for the seemingly magic things we enable, but also because of our practical approach. When we take the complexity out of the complicated, magic becomes reality.

It's ... **practical magic.**

Practical Magic

So what is ‘Practical Magic’?

‘Practical Magic’ is the way we help customers thrive, through our words. It’s how we use everyday language to express incredible things. How we can be both plain-spoken and poetic at the same time. How we always transform cold technical jargon into real-world, real-people benefits.

It’s important to understand that ‘Practical Magic’ is an *attitude* – a manner of approaching topics, and a style of delivery that creates the personality of our brand. Rather than a linguistic construct, or set of inviolable rules, it’s a sensibility – but one that’s underpinned with key principles, and guiding rails, so it can be learnt and replicated.

Positioning statement

Telstra creates better ways What
to empower How everyone to
thrive Why in a connected world.

Our persona

Helping people thrive in a connected world is why we're in business. But how do we make that happen? What is it in the way we behave that makes us different, makes us better, makes us Telstra? Clarifying that 'how' is the purpose of our persona – five qualities that define the way we interact with the world.

Brand qualities

Innovative

We're innovators – but in an entirely different way. We're tech architects, able to transform complex advancements into simple human benefits. So that the connected world of tomorrow, is available to our customers today.

Imaginative

We believe that advancement starts by living in the world of what could be, rather than what is. We're 'imagineers', creating and curating new possibilities – and lighting the way to a brighter future, through just the power of our imagination.

Human

We've moved beyond form and function, to engage with people on an emotional level. We're about connection – listening to our customers and delivering on their needs, in an intuitive, natural, empathetic way.

Optimistic

Wherever we look, we see opportunity – whether it's in what we offer, where we can grow, or how we engage. We know we're on the road from good to great, and with every step we take, we're excited by the brighter future we're striding into.

Trusted

As one of Australia's longest-standing, best-known, and intrinsically trusted brands, we've become synonymous with reliability, security and coverage. And we draw on this proud heritage as we guide our customers into a new, more connected world, in a way that's not only exciting, but safe.

Our voice principles

Intelligent

Intuitive

Intrepid

Our voice principles

We're intelligent

We deal with some of the most sophisticated and complex technology available to humans. But we communicate our technical advancements in simple, poetic language – because we know there's nothing more clever than simplification.

How to make it happen:

- Remember shorter is always sweeter.
- Avoid jargon and cliché.
- Synthesise complex information into plain English.
- Write with a sense of the poetic.

We're intuitive

The whole point of technology is to improve people's lives. And so every time we write about our products, services and initiatives, we're really thinking about people. We come at subjects from a human perspective, and speak in an engaging and inspiring way that shows just how much we 'get it'.

How to make it happen:

- Don't talk about us, talk about them!
- Write about benefits, not features.
- Show genuine enthusiasm and care for your audience.
- Ask: 'How can this help our customers thrive?'

We're intrepid

We believe in doing what hasn't been done before. We're optimists, asking what if, seeking out new solutions, and finding inventive ways to transform our customers' lives. It's an attitude of courage and originality that we reflect in our words, by coming at subjects in fresh, impactful and poetic ways – no matter the subject or context.

How to make it happen:

- Whatever you say, say it with confidence.
- Be willing to take risks to make an impact.
- Be inventive – especially in your headlines.
- Go beyond the expected, to be original.

Do's and don'ts

The basics: 5 big do's and don't's

1.

Do use the active voice

ie. 'Download it now'; rather than 'It is available for download.'

Don't be bossy or overbearing

Remember, we're trying to help people.

2.

Do speak conversationally

You can use contractions, and even start sentences with 'And' or 'But'. It's also good to refer to 'us' rather than 'Telstra', and talk to 'you' rather than 'customers'.

Don't speak casually.

Always take care not to alienate people. We can be bold without being offensive, and colloquial without resorting to slang.

3.

Do be poetic

That means write in a way that rings particularly true, is efficient, witty and creates a smile in the mind

Don't overdo it

Poetry, unless it's very good, tends to feel forced and manufactured.

There will be times when we want to use wordplay, but there will be others when we want to be more direct. Regardless of this, we must always be authentic, but in a powerful, clever way.

4.

Do be informative

We often have a lot to tell people – but the trick is to do it efficiently, and to tuck the information in around human insights.

Don't download information

No matter how important it is, people won't listen if we don't tell them in an interesting way. So never succumb to information dumps, and never prioritise features over benefits.

5.

Do sound intelligent

We're experts, and we show our understanding by making complex technology simple-to-understand and enjoy for our customers.

Don't sound intimidating

Big words and lots of jargon aren't intelligent – they're just distancing. Everything we say should be in English, just used cleverly!

Section 2:

Key elements

Headlines

Constructing our headlines

Practical Magic is particularly evident in the way we write headlines. This is where we really have licence to be brave, and to go beyond saying it straight, to saying it great!

For headlines, you should be drawing on all three of our voice principles – Intelligent, Intuitive and Intrepid – to come up with eye-catching and meaningful ways to introduce our topics.

The key to it lies in first finding the benefit of what we're selling, and then communicating that in a witty, poetic way. Ideally, there should be a sense of transformation from the expected way (or everyday life) to our better way (or thriving).

Even in emails, in point of sale, in B2B messaging, it's vital to sprinkle even a little bit of practical magic in your headlines. It is so important because when you introduce your subject this way, it allows the copy that follows to be a little more factual and 'straight'.

Headlines

Headline messaging hierarchy

One of the most practical changes in our headlines is structural. That's not to say this is an unbreakable rule – but it is a very clear priority shift in the way that we communicate our most important messages.

We want to express our new personality every time we write a headline – and so we always lead with a poetic lead message, and only then reinforce that with relevant information.

Thrive On is a campaign line that lives only in our level 1 brand communications. It is not a sign off that lives outside of those communications.

Campaign advertising construct: **Level 1**

1. Differentiated benefit

2. Substantiation

3. Thrive On

It looks like this:

Lose yourself,
not your signal.

On Australia's most reliable network

Thrive On

Campaign advertising construct: **Levels 2 and 3**

1. Differentiated benefit

2. Substantiation

It looks like this:

Lose yourself,
not your signal.

On Australia's most reliable network

Product advertising construct: **Levels 3 and 4**

1. Differentiated benefit

2. Substantiation

3. Call to action (Optional)

It looks like this:

Data? Tada!

Get 10GB on the Samsung Galaxy Tab

Visit www.telstra.com/xyz

Body copy

Body copy

Body copy plays a very different role from our headlines, and for that reason it needs to be treated a little differently.

In one sense you could say that if the stress for headlines is the 'magic' in 'practical magic', then for body copy, you want to lean towards 'practical'.

Another way of looking at it is that of our three voice principles, body copy wants to prioritise Intuitive and Intelligent. This is where we want to be genuinely interested in our customers' lives, and be active and engaging in helping them to go from living to thriving.

Practical
Body copy**Magic**
Heading

Body copy

Being human

It's most important in body copy to focus on being human – showing an intuitive understanding not just of our products and services, but our customers' lives, and how we can make a real difference.

We show our intelligence by distilling all the things we have to say into clear, user-friendly language, and ensuring that in every piece of communication, all the elements relate (rather than simply listing disparate elements that we want to feature).

In doing this, we become more human, more believable, more trusted and more valued. It's not quite working miracles, but in this age of disconnected tech speak and thoughtless information dumps, it's practically magic.

Body copy

What do you want to say?

It's important too that we don't try to templatised certain phrases. Body copy made up of 'hero' phrases looks like exactly that – something manufactured, and organised by committee.

There is always more than one way to say the same thing – so allow yourself to look into the meaning of the words you use, rather than just copying them verbatim. What is it that you really want to say? What is it that you want the reader to think, feel or do?

Subheadings

A word on subheads

Subheads play a big role in our body copy – particularly at the longer end of the spectrum. If you're writing more than two or three paragraphs, you really want to employ subheads.

The reasons are two-fold:

- The first being simply to break up the copy, and to give your reader some rest-spots. Subheads make long-copy much more inviting, appearing like a lot less effort to read.
- The second reason is that your subheads are a great place to apply some Practical Magic. The most effective (and simplest) way to do this is have them echo the headline in some way.

This creates a lovely thematic throughline across your piece of communication, and ensures the whole piece feels like it's in brand voice.

Section 3:

Examples

The best way to get to grips with our brand voice is to see it in action. And over the following pages you'll see the voice in several contexts, dealing with a broad range of topics. But while you'll notice a variety of delivery methods – such as short, two-pronged headlines – remember, it's not the form that matters so much as the sense of Practical Magic it creates.

Examples

Print ad

This is a good example of the philosophy of Practical Magic in action. Using simple, everyday language, we show a ‘better way’ being made possible.

From the clunky, inefficient, and wholly functional approach of the original, now there’s a poetic simplicity and pithiness, creating the effect of magic being made in everyday ways.

Off brand

**Take your home broadband
data wherever you go.
Telstra Air is how.**

On brand

**Data.
Now available in
take-away.**

Examples

Small business ad

Even when we're addressing a more business-focussed audience, we still want to bring the same philosophy.

This example shows how the tone can become more sophisticated, while still remaining wholly on-brand.

Off brand

**Blue sky thinking isn't
always enough.**

Choose Telstra cloud solutions.

On brand

**Build a business
out of thin air.**

With Telstra cloud solutions.

Thrive On

Examples

Key messaging ad – outdoor

These examples show how particular key messages can be addressed using Practical Magic. Here we're highlighting our network on public transport – focussing on the benefits of its speed and consistency.

Off brand

Be home in a heartbeat.

With Australia's fastest mobile network.

On brand

**At home.
In traffic.**

Australia's fastest mobile network.

Thrive On

Examples

Key messaging ad – outdoor

Here we're promoting the reliability of our network through the metaphor of speed bumps – a very relevant concept to our audience while driving.

Using metaphors and speaking to customers in specific moments makes for more engaging, relevant and magical messages.

Off brand

**Leave patchy signals
in the past.**

On Australia's most
reliable network.

On brand

**Say goodbye to
speed bumps.**

On Australia's most
reliable network.

Examples

Vantage invitation eDM
– Subject and body

Off brand

Subject:

Create better ways to thrive at Vantage™ 2016

Body:

Co-Create & Thrive

Solve your business problems in real time with Telstra and our world-leading partner ecosystem.

**Telstra Vantage™ –
unlike any other technology
experience in the world**

Hi <Firstname>

You're invited to Vantage™ 2016 – a world-class experience that brings the best thought leadership, advice, technology and solution providers together in one place.

where you can connect and collaborate with our people and partners in order to create bespoke technology-led solutions that will help your business thrive in a connected world.

Don't miss out on this premium, invitation-only experience. Register now to secure your place.

On brand

Subject:

Change or Be Changed

Body:

Become an agent of change

Connect with the people, technology and collaborative spirit you need to transform your business into tomorrow's market leader.

Hi <Firstname>,

There are two kinds of company in the world today. Those in front of the curve – that are leading the way to the new, to the different, to the better – and those that are playing catch up.

Have you asked yourself which one your company is? Or what you need to do to ensure you're an agent of change, and not a victim of it?

The answers are coming.

This year, Telstra Vantage™ – Australasia's world-class business, ideas and technology experience – will be putting the spotlight on change and how to master it. With a dynamic line-up of keynote speakers and technology demonstrations you will discover the tools and techniques to change the way you do business.

Vantage invitation eDM
- Body (cont.)

Before

Body (cont.):

We look forward to helping you create better ways for your business to thrive at Vantage™ 2016. If you have any questions please contact the Vantage™ Team.

Kind regards,

Martin Blanken
Group Managing Director and Chief Customer Officer
Global Enterprise Services
Telstra

After

Body (cont.):

Vantage™ is far more than speeches and technology experiences – it's an opportunity to connect with our people and our partners to collaborate on solutions to your business challenges, and create an action plan that will transform your business.

Your chance to change.

If you stand still, you might as well be going backwards. And if you want to stand out in today's market place, the first step has to be attending Vantage™ 2016. It'll change the way you look at doing business.

To accept your exclusive invitation, simply [click here](#).

I look forward to seeing you there.

Martin Blanken
Group Managing Director and Chief Customer Officer
Global Enterprise Services
Telstra

Section 4:

One last thing

Best to avoid

A few traps to avoid

1. Not just any magic

It's about *practical* magic. Which is different. This is about having the insight and intelligence to deliver incredible experiences, easily and efficiently. Far from magic spells and blue-sky 'what-ifs', this is making things happen before your very eyes.

4. Don't explain everything

Not every detail is needed – especially not right away. Remember that so often, what we're trying to create is desire. So think about what you want to include from the sense of how it might spark a want in your reader. Headlines especially should focus on the sizzle, and not the whole sausage.

2. Don't try to sound 'professional'

This is a common trap, that just makes you sound stilted and unfeeling. Whatever the context, always write like you speak – conversational, relaxed, human. You should try to use contractions whenever you can. And do start sentences with And or But!

5. Try not to nominalise

This is where actions, or verbs, tend to become things, or nouns. For instance 'going shopping' becomes 'a shopping experience', and a meeting where a lot was achieved, becomes 'a results-led meeting'. They often involve a compound adjective, and they always feel forced, corporate, and bizarrely unnatural and inhuman.

3. Don't tell me how great it is

Show me. Give me a sense of how it will turn living into thriving. How it's just the thing to solve the problem I was experiencing. Show me an example of how it could change things. Fire my imagination by showing me how I might thrive.