

Ep 80: How to Translate your Brand's Tone-of-Voice into Messaging

Putting your brand character and TOV into action



- Audit your existing materials.
 - Auditing is often part of the process at various steps when you are revamping your brand, and it is an important step here. It helps you identify areas where you might have been inconsistent or non-existent when it came to an effective TOV.
 - Existing materials come in all forms and can include: website copy, marketing materials, internal messaging/documents to employees, speeches that have been given, social media, ads, talking points for PR, etc.
 - When you are auditing, look very specifically for:
 - messaging that does not match up/is said in a variety of ways. Pick one!
 - messaging that anyone could say- this is what we call 'commodity text'. If your competitors could say it, it shouldn't be there
 - messaging that fails to connect on an emotional level- again back to the commodity space and the important brand questions we always ask. Who am I? Why would you want me? How am I different?
 - You are also looking for things that are fundamental to who you are and that you want to pull forward, even if the tone is not right. These can be things like:
 - facts and figures that tell the story of your brand and support why someone should choose you
 - lines of copy that DO get at the emotional connection, even if they need to be tweaked to fit the tone
 - messaging that DOES make you different from the competition and answers those three key brand questions we outlined above
- Define the messaging pillars.
 - This is where you are going to 'action' against your tone of voice. When we or our clients do the audit portion, what we often find is that they didn't go 'high enough' in elevating their text.
 - Now that you have the TOV and you have done the audit, you can start to define pillars of messaging that can assist in getting your communications back on track.
 - We recommend 3-5 pillars of communication. Anything more than that gets unwieldy and often sets you back to the place of inconsistency. What are the main areas you want to communicate to your audiences? What do you want them to understand and take away from you? What are you providing to them at a higher level than just the functional items? You can use your existing communications and the pieces you have pulled forth from the audit to help you here.
 - What is the single statement that encompasses what you are trying to communicate with this pillar?
 - Is it big enough to stand as a pillar? Does it encompass enough and will it stand the test of time?
 - Is it one of the main 3-5 areas you want to hang your hat on? Why is it this important?
 - It is emotional enough that your consumer will FEEL something and connect with you?
- Utilize before and afters.
 - You can't tackle it all at once, so pick a couple of pieces (hint: the ones that live in the middle as far as content goes) What you are looking to do here is put the messaging strategy into practice. Here are some things to think about:
 - You don't have to use every single aspect of your tone and messaging strategy in every communication. Just like the personalities of people are multi-dimensional, so is your brand character and tone.
 - Think about the audience you are trying to communicate to with the piece and what the MAIN message is.
 - Make sure it ALWAYS connects emotionally.
 - Do use the proof points (facts, figures, functional items) to back up the emotional 'stuff'. You do need to show your expertise and that you can deliver, this is not the place you want to start.
 - Once you write something, go back and check to make sure you have been consistent in the communication.
- Stay active and engaged.
 - This is not a 'set it and forget it' situation. You do have to always be creating new content and make sure you stay fresh with information your audience wants and needs from you. Always go back to your brand character, TOV and messaging strategy.
 - You have built these tools for the primary reason of being able to build consistency and richness so they should always be close at hand and remain your guideposts. This becomes especially important when:
 - You are bringing on new team members, you have any sort of innovation/new offerings you are announcing, the marketplace shifts, you are coming up on a major event.
 - This should be front and center in your day to day as well. Consider appointing or hiring someone that is in charge of your brand communications.