

NEW KIND TOOLKIT

Developing brand voice in tech



Why voice?

You've sprinted to build your MVP. You've assembled a capable team to support and scale it. Now you need compelling messaging to convince customers to care.

The goal for any tech marketer should be to translate tech specs into language that will resonate with target audiences.

For enterprise-scale content teams or one-person outfits alike, crafting messaging that sticks isn't just what you say, but how you say it.

Your company's voice plays a significant role in shaping how your customers perceive and interact with your brand. It defines the personality they will come to know, recognize, and trust.

This toolkit includes two frameworks to help define and deliver your company's voice. So you can speak clearly, stand out, and scale with confidence.

FRAMEWORK 1

Voice Attributes

Defining your unique personality

The strongest voice is one that feels authentic to your organization. It should align to the needs and values of your target audiences. And it should support your positioning.

For example: A company that creates software to detect and de-escalate international security threats shouldn't communicate with the same voice as a startup that develops apps to connect students to summer employment and volunteer opportunities.

Codifying your company's voice starts with identifying your voice attributes, or how you would describe your company's personality if it were a person.

STEP ONE

Gather Materials

STEP TWO

Analyze

STEP THREE

Get Fresh Eyes

STEP FOUR

Edit and Expand

FRAMEWORK 1

Voice Attributes

Step One: Gather Materials

Collect a broad sampling of written and recorded brand materials. Including:

- Blogs
- Whitepapers
- Social media posts and updates
- Marketing collateral (brochures, one-pagers, brand presentations)
- Brand videos
- Sales materials (leave-behinds, sales and pitch presentations)
- Internal training documents
- Brand and employee handbooks

Focus on pulling materials that feel most relevant to your organization today. The goal here isn't to gather an overwhelming collection of assets, but rather to get a balanced look at how your company communicates across an array of executions.

Begin identifying what's working well and what could use improvement.

And get your materials into a digital format, if possible. This makes organization and synthesis easier for everyone.

FRAMEWORK 1

Voice Attributes

Step Two: Analyze

Audit the materials you gathered, paying close attention to prevailing themes, but also any personality outliers you uncover. Highlight, crop, label, and organize what you're seeing.

Group your audited materials by theme. Choose one-word adjectives for your themes—like “warm,” “reliable,” “knowledgeable,” or “inclusive”—these will serve as a starting point for your team to further hone your attributes.

FRAMEWORK 1

Voice Attributes

Step Three: Get Fresh Eyes

Bring your writers and content creators together to review your findings. Have an open and honest dialog about what you're seeing—what's working, what isn't.

Some questions to help guide your discussion:

- Does our voice feel consistent throughout these materials?
- Are there stark differences in our voice across different channels?
- Is our voice resonant, engaging, and uniquely ours?
- Does the summary of our voice feel true to our positioning?
- Does it reflect how we want our organization to be known and remembered?
- Will our target audiences trust this voice?
- What aspects of our voice are important for us to keep moving forward? What aspects can we leave behind?

The goal is to leave the workshop with consensus and clear direction for your company's voice. From here, it's a simple editing exercise to refine your final list of attributes.

Aim for 3-4 voice attributes, and no more than 5. The simpler and more concise you can keep your voice guidelines, the easier they'll be for your team to understand, internalize, and stick to.

FRAMEWORK 1

Voice Attributes

Step Four: Edit and Expand

Add guiding context to your voice attributes. While it may seem easy for tenured writers to translate traits like “empathetic,” “credible,” or “pragmatic” into written voice, don’t leave too much room for interpretation. Particularly if your content team is widely dispersed, or if it includes people who aren’t writers by trade.

Tips and best practices for expressing each attribute help make them real, and grounds them in actionable takeaways that are easy to remember. Consider a “dos and dont’s” list as well.

Here’s an example of how you might translate an attribute like “bold” from an esoteric idea into actionable guidelines:

Bold

- Use short words and sentences to convey confidence
- Communicate one idea per sentence, paragraph, or piece
- Take a stance and lean into it
- Avoid words like “could,” “may,” or “might”—they feel passive

Organize all of your voice traits—and their accompanying context—into one page or slide. You’ll find a template you can use to get started on the next page. You can also use this template in your team working session (see step three) to workshop ideas together.

FRAMEWORK 1

Voice Attributes

Beneath each **Voice Attribute**, list tips or prompts to bring each trait to life in written materials. This list doesn't need to be exhaustive. The goal is to provide clear direction and serve as an easily skimmable reference for anyone creating content on behalf of your organization.

How we express our personality traits in writing

[Voice Attribute]	[Voice Attribute]	[Voice Attribute]	[Voice Attribute]
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FRAMEWORK 2

Celebrity Spokesperson

Bringing your voice to life

Another useful framework you can use to ease your team into creating content in the voice of your brand is one we call the Celebrity Spokesperson. Simply put, choosing an imaginary celebrity spokesperson who writes and speaks the way you'd want your organization to sound.

Content creators often find it helpful to imagine the voice of your brand as that of a real person. Taking inspiration from the character of someone that's widely recognized helps improve the consistency of your voice—creating a shared reference point that's easy for anyone to emulate.

Brainstorm possible celebrity spokespeople as a team.

Remember to keep your voice attributes in mind—and make sure the celebrities you suggest embody the traits you worked hard to develop. You want this person to be someone you could, perhaps one day, see in an advertisement representing your organization.

FRAMEWORK 2

Celebrity Spokesperson

Weigh the pros and cons of each candidate.

And if possible, find video or audio clips of each of these candidates speaking. It'll give you a good sense for their vocal style and help inform your decision.

Here are a few questions to guide your thinking:

- What are you hearing or reading? Is there anything that stands out to you?
- How would you describe this celebrity's spoken style? Does it align with our voice attributes?
- What does this person do to bring the substance of what they say to life?
- If you were to write a piece in the voice of this person, would your strategy change?

Take a vote to narrow down your options and make a final decision.

Include your chosen celebrity spokesperson in your voice guidelines, alongside links or reference examples of their communication style.

And just like your voice attributes, add additional context to your celebrity's dedicated page or slide in your voice guidelines document. Briefly explain why this person was chosen, describe their voice and how it aligns with that of your organization, and create skimmable bullets to help translate their voice into actionable advice for your writers.

FRAMEWORK 2

Celebrity Spokesperson

Taking inspiration from the character of someone that's widely recognized helps improve the consistency of your voice—creating a shared reference point that's easy for anyone to emulate.

[Photo of your celebrity spokesperson]



[Spokesperson name]

Why we chose them

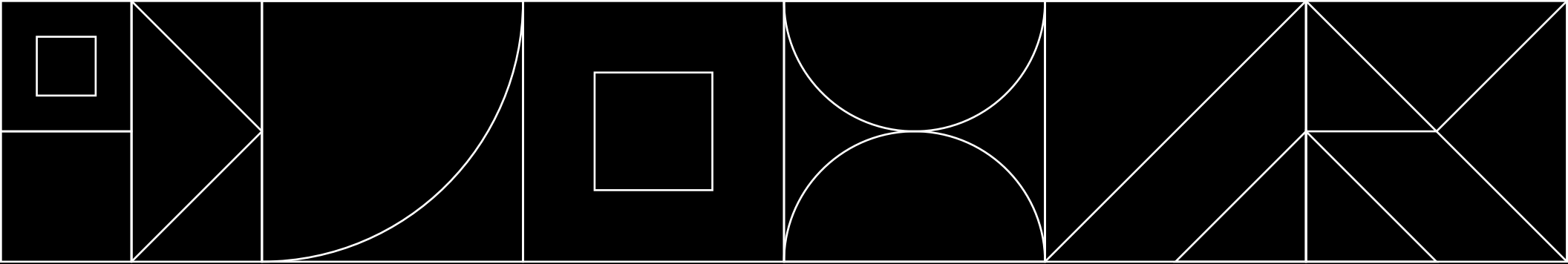
A brief description of why this person was chosen to be our imaginary celebrity spokesperson. What's working best about their communication style? How does their voice align with our own?

How to emulate their voice

A list of tips and actionable advice for translating their voice into written content.

Reference links and materials

Links to written or recorded materials that provide examples of their voice in action.



NEW KIND

New Kind is a brand strategy and marketing consultancy with a specialization in B2B SaaS and open source technology.
Building brands that inspire, compete, and scale.

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