

Brand Voice & Tone Guide

A Composite Reference Built From Internal Communications Style Work

A style guide only matters if people open it, so this one favors short rules over long explanations. It is a composite example built from internal communications style work across more than one organization, not tied to a single employer.

Voice Principles

- Direct address. Say “you,” not “employees,” when writing to employees.
- Plain language first. If a term needs a definition, either define it in the same sentence or leave it out.
- Confidence without inflation. Report what happened, and skip words that describe intentions instead of results.

Do

- Write sentences a supervisor could read out loud on the floor without translating them first.
- Name the change and the reason for it in the same paragraph.
- Use numbers when they exist. A specific date beats “soon.”

Don't

- Bury a change three paragraphs into a message about something else.
- Reach for corporate abstractions like “synergy” or “leverage” when a plain verb says the same thing.
- Promise a timeline nobody has confirmed yet.

Before & After

Before:

“As part of our ongoing commitment to operational excellence and stakeholder alignment, please be advised that beginning next quarter, all personnel will be required to leverage the newly implemented digital workflow solution in order to optimize departmental efficiencies and ensure seamless integration across all relevant business units.”

After:

“Starting next quarter, everyone will use the new digital workflow tool instead of the paper process. It cuts the average approval time from four days to one, and your manager will walk your team through it before go-live.”

The rewrite cuts the sentence count nearly in half, replaces every abstraction with a concrete detail, and answers the question every reader has: what changes for me, and when.

Tone by Moment

- Standard updates: warm, plain, and brief.
- Crisis or sensitive news: slower pace and shorter sentences, with no reassurance the facts don't support.
- Recognition and celebration: specific about who did what, not generic praise.