

# Tone of voice guide

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# Why tone of voice matters

Our tone of voice is how we express our **personality** in words, both written and spoken. It's not what we say but the way we say it.

Having a clearly defined, consistent and recognisable tone of voice helps to:

1

Make us stand out from the crowd

2

Build emotional connection and trust

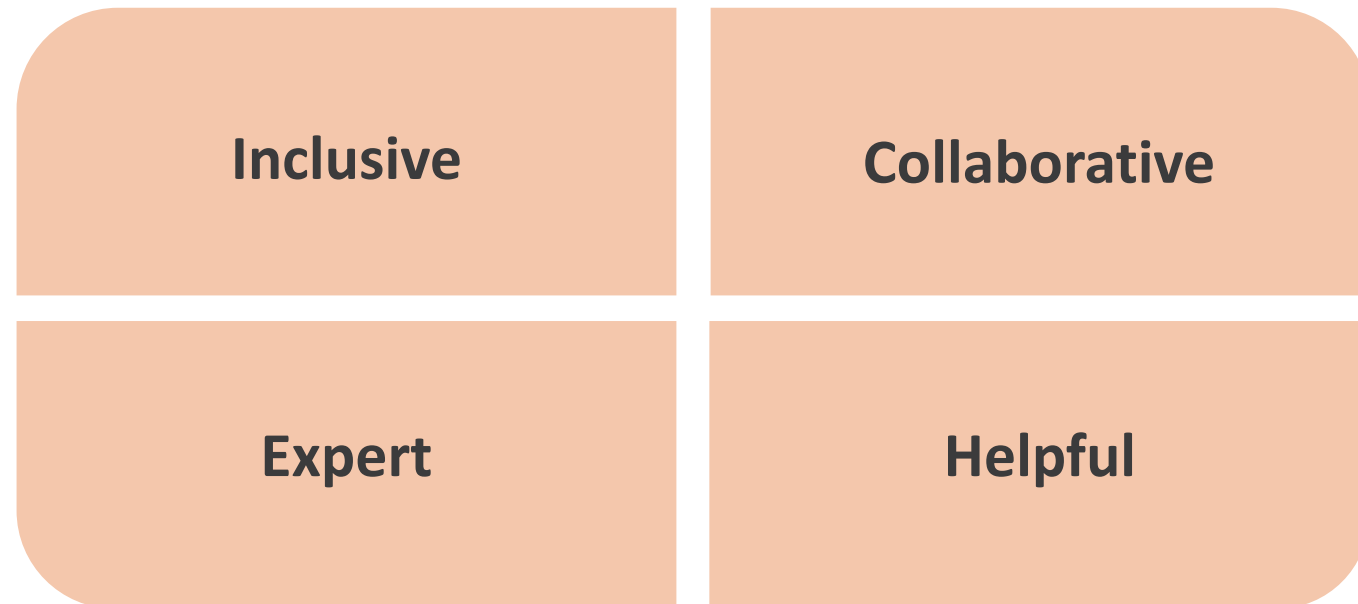
3

Guide strategic focus

# Our brand personality

Like a person, what we say is dictated by our values, culture, experiences and knowledge. How we say it is informed by our personality.

Itad's personality is:



These brand personality traits guide how we talk and write for Itad.

## Our values

- Making a difference
- Technical excellence and innovation
- Collaboration and learning
- Double bottom line
- Environmental action
- Inclusion and diversity
- Shared rewards
- Personal development

Our brand personality complements our values.  
Our values represent our beliefs.

## Consistency and context

The more consistent we are in our tone of voice, the more likely it is that people will understand what makes us special.

However, we do moderate our tone, depending on who we are talking to and the context. This way, we help different audiences to engage with us.

By following some simple principles, we can speak with a common voice that identifies who we are and defines the relationship between us and our audiences.

### **Tone of Voice + House Style = Verbal Identity**

Our verbal identity comprises our Tone of Voice and our House Style, which includes guidance on punctuation, spelling, word choice and formatting. Together, these tools support consistency in our brand.

# Putting it into practice

# Inclusive

## We are inclusive:

We aspire for better lives for everyone, everywhere.

## What we mean:

Just, unbiased, considerate, non prejudiced, nondiscriminatory, and respectful.

## How does 'inclusive' sound?

- We use **inclusive and person-centric** language that is respectful.
- We are **considerate and current** when writing about race, culture, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. We choose words carefully to consider cultural sensitivities and contexts.
- We **avoid jargon**.
- We are conscious of the global nature of our audience - we use **plain English** and avoid long, complicated sentences.
- We use an **active voice** to invite participation and add clarity.
- We clearly **signpost** to relevant work that represents a **diversity of voices**.

# Inclusive - examples

We use inclusive and person-centric language that is respectful.

Before	After
Human trafficking is a challenge for the global south. There are huge numbers of men and women across Africa who are modern slaves.	As of 2016, there are an estimated 7.7 people in every 1000 living in modern slavery in Nigeria.

We avoid jargon, use plain English and avoid long, complicated sentences.

Before	After
Itad proposed a theory-based evaluation design that seeks to articulate the theories and hypotheses behind the GrowthAfrica programme, collect and synthesise triangulated quantitative and qualitative data from a range of sources, including benchmarking with enterprise data collected by the Global Accelerator Learning Initiative (GALI), and use this information to answer the key evaluation questions. These questions address the appropriateness and effectiveness of GrowthAfrica's delivery model and GrowthAfrica's learning processes and contribution to sector learning.	<p>Our evaluation asks how effective and contextually-appropriate the GrowthAfrica programme is. It also seeks to understand what contributions the programme has made to learning within the impact investing sector.</p> <p>To do this, we will collect and review data from a range of quantitative and qualitative sources. We will also use benchmark data collected by the Global Accelerator Learning Initiative (GALI).</p>



# Collaborative

**We are collaborative:** committed to working with others to have a positive impact on people and planet.

**What we mean:** Supportive, engaged, enabling, dynamic, respectful, open, cooperative.

## How does 'collaborative' sound?

- **Positive, active and dynamic** – like our approach to seeking out new partnerships and strengthening existing ones.
- When working in partnership, we **use the pronoun 'we'** to evoke positivity and collaboration – inviting mutual participation toward a shared goal.
- We **show our appreciation of others' perspectives** and skills, while acknowledging our own.
- Where relevant and appropriate, we **show that we are listening** to partners by reflecting their language in our own.
- We **address readers directly** to help to create a connection and a sense of being involved.

# Collaborative - examples

When working in partnership, we use the pronoun 'we' to evoke positivity and collaboration

Before	After
Itad, OPM and GAIN used a mixed-methods design to evaluate the impact of the interventions. Itad findings assessed the capacity building of regulatory bodies.	In partnership with Oxford Policy Management and the Global Agricultural Information Network, we evaluated the impact of the interventions. Our findings look at the capacity building of regulatory bodies.

We use positive, active and dynamic language

Before	After
This evaluation finds that benefits from the intervention were minimal and did not live up to the potential outlined in the theory of change.  A project report is to be written by Itad to share findings.	Although the Government did not meet their intervention goals, the theory of change contains valuable groundwork and learning for future projects.  We are writing a project report to share our findings.

# Expert

## We are expert:

We have outstanding knowledge and skills in our field.

## What we mean:

Professional, specialist, trusted, reliable, accurate, confident, authentic, practical, credible, authoritative.

## How does 'expert' sound?

- We always use accurate and appropriate evidence to **back up our points**.
- We are **concise** and to the point.
- We **articulate our own views clearly** and explicitly – we neither underexplain nor overexplain.
- We use **accessible language**.
- We don't hedge or moderate – we are **confident** and communicate in an **open and authentic** way.

# Expert - examples

We articulate our own views clearly and explicitly – we neither underexplain nor overexplain. We use accessible language.

Before	After
To support fair transitions to a regenerative agricultural system, programme partners who work with similar actors should identify and share effective influencing approaches.	To help achieve more inclusive, climate-friendly agricultural systems, programme partners should share learning with similar organisations (such as government bodies and farmers' collectives) on what policy-influencing strategies work.

We always use accurate and appropriate evidence to back up our points.

Before	After
Somalia has been crippled by 30 years of conflict.	30 years of armed conflict and recurring humanitarian crises, have devastated the lives of Somalia's citizens. Currently, it is home to around <u>2.6 million internally displaced people</u> , many living <u>unassisted</u> and vulnerable to abuse.

# Helpful

## We are helpful:

We strive to help partners drive positive change for people and planet.

## What we mean:

empowering,  
action-oriented,  
supportive,  
cooperative,  
friendly,  
empathetic,  
constructive.

## How does 'helpful' sound?

- We offer constructive, **solutions-focused** advice on how things can be done better.
- We **show rather than tell** how our work is helpful – we explain the effects of our work and what we have learned and why it is important.
- When challenged, our language is **reassuring and practical**.
- We provide **clear and direct follow-up actions** for our audiences, such as whom to contact for more information.

# Helpful - examples

We show rather than tell how our work is helpful – we explain the effects of our work and what we have learned and why it is important.

Before	After
We work with organisations to implement systems and processes that facilitate evidence-based reflection and adaptation.	We work with governments, global alliances and philanthropic foundations to support their organisational and programmatic learning. For example, our work with the Porticus Foundation has helped to generate much needed evidence on how civil society organisations can maximise inclusive citizen engagement in the policymaking process. This learning has contributed to Porticus's efforts to improve the lives of millions of marginalised citizens in Asia, Latin America and Europe.

We offer constructive, solutions-focused advice on how things can be done better.

Before	After
Savings groups were seen as especially important contributors to members' ability to manage day to day finances, maintain consumption in the face of shocks, and build confidence.	Policymakers and programme designers should consider actively promoting citizen engagement with savings groups as a key tool to help people improve their financial health.