

# CRYSTAL SKI HOLIDAYS

Tone of voice, copywriting and consistency

# TONE OF VOICE

When you speak, your personality naturally comes through.

Writing is exactly the same - you portray a personality and tone in the words that you choose.

## WHY TONE OF VOICE MATTERS

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Everything we write needs to sound like it's come from the same place.

We're a big company, with lots of staff, spread out over many countries. If there's no guidance to follow, we could easily sound very different from one person to another.

Also, we want our brand to have a personality that gets across who we are and what we do. We're a winter sports company – it's cool, it's exciting and we want our tone to reflect that.

Have a read of this copy:

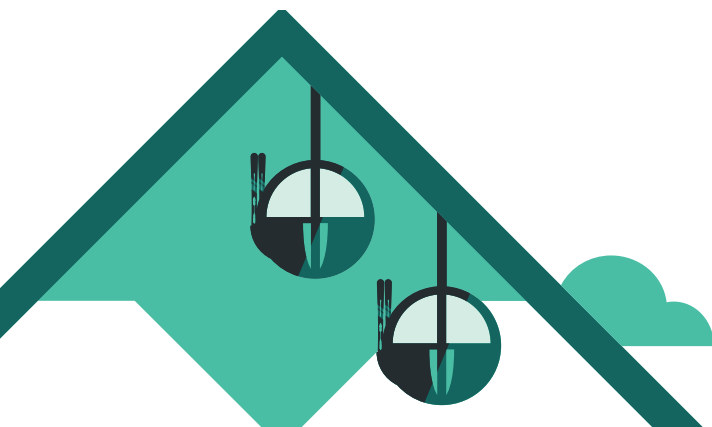
**“ABC Copywriting delivers professional, premium-quality business writing services to corporations and organisations throughout the UK. We're a cheerful lot and we're always chuffed to chinwag, so if you want to chat about your project, grab the rap-rod and give us a tinkle. With ten years' experience of developing content for clients of all types, we are ideally placed to meet your copywriting needs. Our copy's too bootylicious for ya baby!\***”

Can you identify what's wrong with it?

The tone changes with each sentence, so from one line to the next it sounds completely different. One of the tones, in isolation, might work – but not altogether.

This might seem like an exaggerated example, but think about it in the context of a large website like ours. If the tone changes from one page to the next it creates the same confusion. You don't quite know who's talking from one page to the next.

\*ABC Copywriting is a really good resource for copywriting tips and discussions. The text that they've written is intentionally confusing, to demonstrate the point about tone of voice.



# GOOD EXAMPLES OF BRAND PERSONALITY

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## Apple

### “Think different”

This was the main strapline of the ad campaign that relaunched Apple computers in the late 90s.

They were looking to revitalise their brand with a campaign that showed what makes them who they are. They wanted to appeal to creative people who think outside of the box.

It's bold, it's powerful, it's short – it's almost a command. And by bending a grammatical rule (technically it should be “differently”) they've used exactly the sort of creative twist that their target audience would aspire to.

It sums up the perception of Apple in just two words and if you go to their site you'll still find lots of short, confident, assured copy.

“Think different” would still be a really consistent bit of copy for Apple, so it shows how strong a personality they have maintained.

## Innocent

**“Now, the Spanish translation of chilli con carne is ‘peppers with meat’ so technically this recipe should be called ‘chilli sin carne’ or ‘chilli con sweet potatoes, pinto beans and Cajun spices.’ To be honest you can call it Jose Pablo Meguez the Third if you like. It'll still be a spicy hearty stew of sweet potatoes, red peppers and smoky paprika, perfect for warming you up on extra chilli days (sorry).”**

Innocent are well known for their tone of voice, and rightly so. They've created a playful, witty and silly tone that very much works for them.

This text is about one of their newer products – Innocent Veg Pots. They demonstrate their well-known tone of voice in this copy, but crucially it also informs you what you need to know about what's in the pot.

## Firebox

**“Virtually all the beer you can buy in a supermarket is mass marketed pigswill. That's a fact. The idea of ready access to a diverse selection of beers, crafted by dedicated brewers, (rather than gigantic, evil beer-robots) has always been a beautiful pipe dream. Until now. So cast off your shackles fellow beer lovers, the future is now. A future where you can have an incredible selection of beers and ales handpicked and delivered to your door.”**

This is from firebox.com, an online retailer selling “the coolest things you can buy”. Gadgets, toys, gifts. Here they're selling a box of handpicked ales and beers.

Their personality isn't a million miles away from Innocent – but they're definitely a bit more brazen, a bit cocky, but they're still witty and informative. There's some humorous exaggeration in the first line which obviously isn't true, they're being intentionally biased towards their own products, almost like an overly-opinionated uncle.

They maintain this sort of personality across their whole site, and they do it very well.

# CRYSTAL'S TONE OF VOICE

APPROACHABLE

EXPERT

ENTHUSIASTIC

FUN



## HERE'S SOME LONG COPY SHOWING THE SORT OF TONE WE'RE AFTER

"For us, the mountain is everything. It's about fresh snow and crisp air. It's about spending time with family and friends in a really exhilarating place. It's about the memories, the photos, the incredible views, the big nights out and the cosy nights in. We love it as much as you do, so since 1981 we've been finding the best places to ski and the most exciting mountains to spend time in.

All the favourites are covered like the Alps and the Rockies - but we've also found amazing alternative resorts in places like Norway, Bulgaria and Finland. Whatever it is you're looking for in a ski holiday you'll find it in one of our 130+ resorts.

You'll also get loads of local tips about the place you're going to - the best places to eat, weather reports and up-to-the-minute resort news. We've got all the info on the best non-skiing activities too - awesome stuff like tobogganing, ice-skating, husky rides, snowshoe walking, swimming pools and saunas.

Feel free to ask us anything while you're researching where to go and one of our holiday experts will answer - most likely someone who's working in the resort you're interested in. You can tap into an even larger ski community on our social media pages too.

So with Crystal you can be confident that you've found exactly the holiday you want, and you'll be sure of that before you've even packed your goggles."

## HERE'S AN EXERCISE FOR YOU

Go through the Crystal copy and pick out words and phrases that you think reflect our tone of voice. Which parts are approachable, expert, enthusiastic or fun?

There will be crossovers between them, and not everyone will identify the same things, but it's a good way of analysing a piece of text to see if they fit the brand values.



# CRYSTAL'S TONE OF VOICE

## APPROACHABLE

If you wouldn't say it to a friend, then don't write it.

### Do:

- Put the customer first.
- Use conversational language and everyday words.
- Be friendly and natural.

### Don't:

- Be formal or corporate.
- Be cocky, pretentious or over-excited.
- Use slang.

Here's some examples that aren't quite what we're looking for. Each one has an edited, on-brand version to show how it can be improved.

Topic	Off-brand	On-brand
Put the customer first	Our all inclusive hotels include food and drinks as part of the package cost.	Our all inclusive hotels let you keep the costs down and help you budget for the occasional mountain lunch or evening out.
Don't be formal	We are writing to remind you that the balance of your holiday was due 12 weeks prior to departure.	Just a reminder that your holiday balance was due 12 weeks before your departure.
Don't use slang	You ain't gonna find a better après scene in the whole of France.	You'll do well to find a more exciting après scene in the whole of France.
Be friendly and natural	The groups team are available to speak to Monday-Sunday. They can phone all the individual members of the party to arrange what they need.	The groups team are available seven days a week - don't worry about phoning all your mates, we'll do that for you.
Don't be over-excited	You should definitely go on a husky ride! They're amazing!	The husky rides are a great way to see these amazing animals up close.

# CRYSTAL'S TONE OF VOICE

## APPROACHABLE

Some further notes on the approachable value.

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Everything that we write needs to show a benefit to the customer. It's not about what we sell, it's about what they can have and why it'll make their holiday better. Ask yourself why they should be interested in the thing you're writing.

If you can't think of a reason why it's good for the customer then you need to question what you're writing, or have been asked to write.

Use conversational language and everyday words, be natural and friendly - don't use complicated words when a simpler one will accomplish the job.

If you wouldn't say it to a friend, then don't write it. Imagine the conversation you would have to explain it to a friend. Have an actual conversation with a colleague.

Formal writing is very easy to slip into. We're a big company so to some it makes more sense to be formal and authoritative. This is the opposite of what we want to do.

Don't allude to information, don't use in-jokes or infer information. Be clear and concise.

Be conversational but don't go as far as to use street slang like "ain't" "fam" "gotcha" "you get me" or "twerking". It might be funny to use a topical, amusing word like twerking, but it can also be a bit alienating. Plus it'll look stale and outdated when it's not in vogue any more.

Be careful with ski slang - we want to show our expertise but we don't want to alienate people who are new to it. Be confident about your knowledge but use your ski knowledge, your common sense, and err on the side of caution when using certain words.



# CRYSTAL'S TONE OF VOICE

## EXPERT

### Do:

- Demonstrate your knowledge.
- Back up your adjectives with specific detail.

### Don't:

- Be vague.
- Explicitly say "we're experts".

Here's some examples that aren't quite what we're looking for. Each one has an edited, on-brand version to show how it can be improved.

Topic	Off-brand	On-brand
Don't be vague	La Plagne has a large selection of runs, great nightlife and a good range of places to stay.	La Plagne is one of the most famous resorts in the world. It offers a wide variety of great skiing, from tree-lined runs to skiing above the clouds on the Bellecote glacier.
Demonstrate knowledge	Learn to ski or board by having some lessons, then hit the slopes.	Lessons are the fastest way to pick up all the basics of skiing or boarding. After just a few sessions you'll probably be able to tackle some of the easier slopes.
Back up your adjectives with detail	The spa here is amazing.	The spa here is amazing. It was completely refurbished in 2012 with marble walls and state of the art baths, saunas and whirlpools.

## SOME FURTHER NOTES ON THE EXPERT VALUE

Show specific detail. Describe the thing you're talking about in clear language. Show that we understand holidays and what our customers are looking for in them.

Adjectives - when we use describing words, we back them up with details to justify what we've said. Don't just use an adjective like beautiful or spectacular alone - describe the elements that justify the use of that word.

Don't be vague. Think about what you've written - if the hotel name or resort name is removed, does your description still apply? If so then your description is probably a bit vague.

We show naturally that we're experts, we don't say it explicitly.

# CRYSTAL'S TONE OF VOICE

## ENTHUSIASTIC AND FUN

### Do:

- Show energy and passion in your copy.
- Be honest and positive.
- Bring details to life.
- Use short sentences and contractions.

### Don't:

- Get over-excited - it makes us sound like we're trying too hard.
- Use exclamation marks, ever.
- Be flowery and poetic.

Here's some examples that aren't quite what we're looking for. Each one has an edited, on-brand version to show how it can be improved.

Topic	Off-brand	On-brand
Short sentences and contractions	You will need some warm clothes for your ski trip so the best thing to do is to buy some before you go or ask a friend to lend them to you.	Ski clothes - you'll need to pick up these things before you go or maybe borrow them from a mate.
Don't be flowery or poetic	Indulge in a range of luxurious treatments as you enjoy a holiday that will live long in your memory.	There's a luxury spa here - no better way to relax after a day on the slopes.
Be positive and honest	This resort is best for beginner and intermediate skiers, but there's also black runs too, so really there's something for everyone.	The resort is best for beginner and intermediate skiers. If you're part of a varied ability group then there are some decent black runs too, but maybe try [resort] or [resort] if you're after a week of new, challenging runs.

### SOME FURTHER NOTES ON THE VALUES.

We describe things in a way that shows why it's relevant and fun. We provide context and we draw on our own experiences of why we like ski holidays.

Use short sentences to make your copy punchy and memorable. Contractions like "you're" "you've" and "it's" give your copy an informal rhythm.

We don't get over-excited, it sounds like we've got no objectivity for what we're trying to sell. Be honest, positive, but don't go too far.

Don't use exclamation marks, ever.

It's a huge cliché in the whole travel industry to be poetic and flowery. It's very easy to slip into this style of writing, but it is to be avoided entirely.



# TRAVEL CLICHÉS

Some words and phrases make us sound bland and meaningless. They should be avoided.

you will discover  
unspoilt scenery  
quaint  
plentiful  
charming  
lively après ski  
lively nightlife  
lively village  
sit back and enjoy  
stunning vistas  
pretty village  
boasts  
blessed with  
something for everyone  
once in a lifetime  
just steps away  
is home to

delicious cuisine  
picturesque views and scenery  
numerous activities  
numerous fashionable cafes  
nightlife running into the early hours  
offers a wealth of shops  
breathtaking  
a range of dining and accommodations options to suit all tastes and budgets  
enjoy the  
explore the

# COPYWRITING TIPS

## A couple of general points:

- **Summarise what you're writing.**  
**Use it as a basis.**
- **Then start writing - it's easier to edit copy than to write it.**

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## USE THIS 3-SENTENCE STRUCTURE FOR PARAGRAPHS

1. First sentence introduces an idea.
2. Second sentence develops or explains it.
3. Third sentence adds proof or punch.

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## HERE IT IS IN ACTION

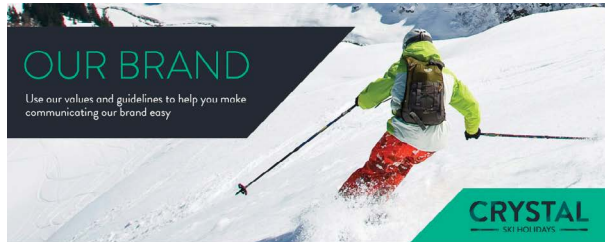
Booking a holiday with us is easy - and that goes for everyone (1). As an independent, disabled skier you'll want knowledgeable recommendations and a bit of extra support, but other than that you just want to hit the slopes and have fun with your family and friends (2). Crystal Adaptive makes that happen (3).

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## TOP 10 TIPS

1. Use contractions - you're, you've, I'm, you'll... etc etc.
2. Use short sentences.
3. Use commas, dashes and full stops to break up your copy.
4. Never use exclamation marks.
5. Using one idea per sentence is a good way to simplify long copy.
6. Don't use formal language.
7. Speak directly to the reader.
8. Leave the text alone, come back to it later and re-read.
9. Even better, get someone else to read and edit it.
10. Make sure you're paying attention to spellcheck.

# CONSISTENCY



Our brand Brand guidelines Tone of voice **General consistency** Grammar

## General consistency

It's really important that we're consistent when we use certain terms and phrases. We also need to be sure that we're not undermining our expertise by spelling things incorrectly. This table contains brand and snowsports terms, plus words and phrases that are easily confused. It shows how to, and how not to, refer to them all.

Use this table to find what you're looking for. Use the find function on your browser - **ctrl+f** on a PC or **command+f** on a Mac.

If you disagree with something, if you'd like to add anything, or if something doesn't make sense - search out **John Williams** who likes discussing these things more than is healthy.

Initial	Term	Notes
&	&	In normal sentences always write <b>and</b> , do not use <b>&amp;</b> .  If space is an issue, it's okay to use <b>&amp;</b> . It's also okay to use <b>&amp;</b> in headlines and sub-headers to save space, or for design reasons.  If in doubt, use <b>and</b> .
!	!	Do not use exclamation marks. They make us sound overexcited and biased towards our product. Never, ever use them.
/	/	Slashes - don't use them in normal text. e.g. Say <b>ski</b> or <b>snowboard</b> rather than <b>ski/snowboard</b> .
A	à la carte	Note the grave accent on the first word.
A	accents	Make sure you use accents correctly, especially in place names. It undermines our expertise if we get them wrong - take the time to double check if you're unsure. You can use the very helpful <a href="http://www.coppypastecharacter.com">www.coppypastecharacter.com</a> to find the letters and symbols you need.
A	activities	Includes paid and free activities: excursions, après ski, social skiing with your Crystal Rep, walking escort service etc.

Make sure you're aware of our consistency guidelines, available here:

<http://specialistdivision.ad.tuispecialist.com/crystalski/brand-guidelines/>

## KEY THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

- Symbols and abbreviations - & ! €.
- Ages, dates, times, numbers and heights.
- Using capitals or not - lift pass, Crystal Chalet, Crystal Rep.
- Adding the right accents in the right places.
- Use [www.coppypastecharacter.com](http://www.coppypastecharacter.com) to easily grab the right accents.
- Use of the apostrophe.
- Nouns, verbs, adjectives, proper nouns.

