



Tone of Voice

At Whiddon, we are passionate about enriching lives and keeping people connected to what matters most to them in life.

The way we speak, both verbally and in writing, to and with our colleagues should always reflect that purpose, our values and our culture.

In delivering communications to Whiddon employees, a number of underlying principles should be considered.

Consistency

Tone and language used in communications should have a level of consistency that speaks back to the Whiddon purpose and values.


Even though we say many different things to all kinds of people, having a clear, consistent voice can not only ensure accurate delivery of messaging but can help build rapport, create a feeling of belonging and ultimately, actively promote and maintain a proud sense of community.

Simplicity and clarity

Given the broad backgrounds and roles of Whiddon employees, it is important that communications are clear and concise to ensure inclusivity at all levels including employees who may have a primary language other than English or who may have accessibility requirements. Using simple, easy to understand language and avoiding complex, rarely used words or jargon is essential to all employees receiving information.

Warmth

While tone will sometimes vary dependent on the content and who we are speaking to, through internal communications, it is not only important to provide necessary instruction and information, but to also build an emotional connection with all employees, who in turn build that valuable connection with customers. Delivering messages through a warm, non-judgmental, conversational tone of voice can bring a greater sense of belonging, community and teamwork among employees, key components to consider are natural, approachable, positive and authentic.





Voice Characteristics

How we communicate to and with our fellow employees is essential to an inclusive and positive culture.

The below outlines voice characteristics to be considered when writing internal communications or speaking to colleagues.


- **People to People**

At Whiddon, people are at the heart of everything we do, so it is important that our communications reflect that we are real people, having real conversations in the real world.

- DO
 - Communicate like you would in a face-to-face conversation.
 - Use friendly language that speaks directly to people such as you and we.
 - Use inclusive language that makes everyone feel like they belong.
 - Reference employees by first names where possible
 - Includes words we use on a daily basis which are the most clear and genuine.
- DON'T
 - Use marketing jargon or business speak.
 - Use overly complex or rarely used words.
- Examples:
 - **Preferred:** "A huge thanks to all the team who rolled up their sleeves to make this event happen..."
 - **Not preferred:** "Our appreciation to employees who were involved in the delivery and coordination of the recent event"
 - **Preferred:** "We've recently updated our policy for employees who work at more than one site due to Government requirements."
 - **Not preferred:** "Our multi-site policy has been revised in alignment with mandatory legislation"

- **Short & Sweet**

Our team members and internal/external suppliers are often quite busy and time poor, so it is important that messages are direct and to the point with the most important information at the beginning.

- DO
 - Use short sentences.
 - Embrace subheadings and bullet points to help people skim read.
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- Use visuals to assist in storytelling.
- DON'T
 - Over complicate communications, use long sentences or paragraphs.
 - Try to fit too much information into one message.
 - Use long form communication where short form is available and appropriate.
- EXAMPLES
 - “We’re in business to enrich lives and we’re passionate about this.”
 - “We aim to understand each team member.”
 - “All team members should use the kiosk at their site to complete their necessary training.”

- **Empowering**


We’re not just here to tell it like it is but to inspire, give hope and reassurance particularly when it comes to difficult situations or decisions. We want to make all employees feel included, supported, valued and valuable.

- DO
 - Use empowering language such as ‘we will’, ‘we intend to’
 - Use more positive language such as ‘challenge’ vs ‘issue’
 - Include motivational words such as accomplish, ambition, opportunity, possibilities etc
- DON'T
 - Use words or phrases that are directive such as ‘have to’, ‘must’ or ‘can’t’
 - Use absolutes such as ‘always’ or ‘never’ (unless in situations of compliance or regulation)
- STORY SAMPLE – “We believe that the best innovations are the ones that push us forward as a community and help us understand each person, building important relationships with them, their family and their community.”

- **Trusted authority (but never patronising)**


While overall we want to ensure we are inclusive, being innovative or bringing change with a new way of doing things and new technology will mean that we sometimes need to educate our residents/clients, employees and interested parties. In these instances, we want to be seen as a trusted advisor, speaking with authority on the subject matter.

- DO
 - Be humble.

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- Be concise and to the point.
 - Use accurate statistics and datapoints to validate our claims.
 - Ensure communicated messages are helpful and useful.
 - DON'T
 - Over-explain.
 - Include opinion over fact.
 - Overuse exclamation marks or other punctuation.
 - STORY SAMPLE - "Our partnerships enable us to care for all our resident's needs—social, emotional and physical – so that they can continue to learn, live, love and enjoy every day with your help".

- **Walk the Walk**

We're only ever as good as our word, we believe in action, transparency and accountability so it is important that employees and residents/clients can see this throughout communications.

- DO
 - Use 'doing' language.
 - LESS nouns and more verbs; from 'we made a decision' to 'we provided help to residents'.
 - Focus on 'story doing' rather than 'storytelling'.
 - Talk about the things we have done, and not just the things we're going to do.
 - DON'T
 - Overpromise or exaggerate what will be or has been done.
 - Take a stand on issues unless there are clear action steps.
 - EXAMPLE
 - "We have collected feedback from team members on the quality of their working conditions through our recent survey and those findings will be part of a full review with outcomes presented by the end of November."
 - "We helped residents reconnect with the local community by organising a gardening club where they will be taking care of local public gardens with other members of the community".
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Acronyms

At Whiddon we use a number of acronyms to simplify communications, particularly in relation to the unique and specific roles and departments within the organisation.

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

DCEO – Deputy Chief Executive Officer

EGM – Executive General Manager

HOD – Head of department

PAC – People and Culture

CCC – Community Care Coordinator OR Clinical Care Coordinator (RAC)

CCM – Community Care Manager

SCCC – Senior Community Care Coordinator

DCS – Director Care Services

DDCS – Deputy Director Care Services

TAS – Talent Acquisition Specialist

SME – Subject matter expert

ICT – Information Communications Technology

IMT – Incident Management Team

L & OD – Learning and Organisational Development

HLT - Home Leadership Team

CCC – Community Care Coordinator

R&PA – Research and Positive Ageing

