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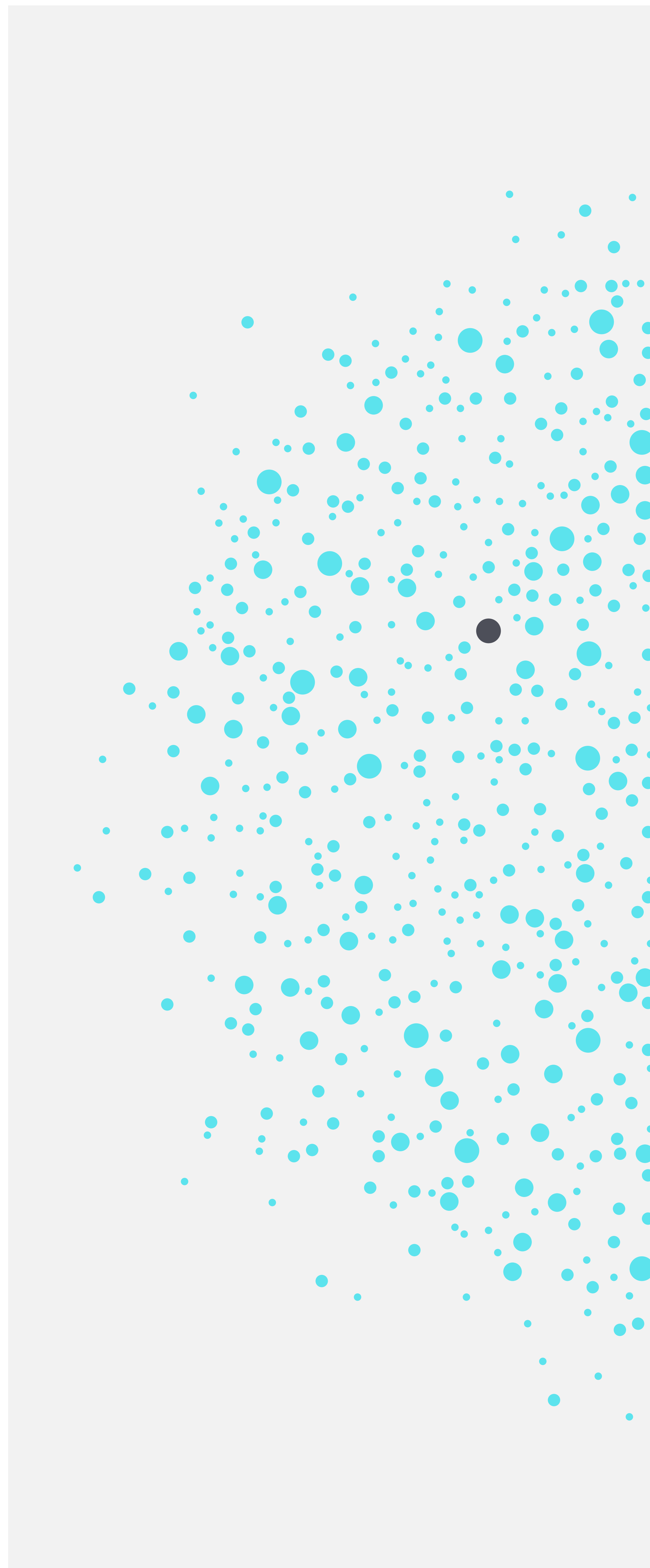
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# Setting a tone

Why do you choose one product over another? Because you've tested every option, and found Product X to be head and shoulders above the rest? May be, but more than likely not.

Today's consumers have a lot of choice, and not a lot of time. They're not going to try every product before buying one of them. Life's too short. Instead, they look for clues and cues from brands.

Whether consciously or not, consumers are continually assessing the way a brand looks and sounds, working out whether they can trust it or not.



## Why words matter

Say you follow Coca-Cola on Twitter, and Coca-Cola tweets twice a day. Unless you're a very big Coke drinker, you probably consume more of its words than its product. And that's just Twitter. Think of all the other words you see and hear from a brand like Coke – on everything from a poster to a TV ad or a web page.

Our brand's voice – the way we speak, in every channel and medium – really matters. It shapes how people feel about us. And in a crowded market, it helps us stand out. It helps us convince those busy consumers that we're a brand they can trust.

This isn't just about posters and ads. Every website page, customer service email, product brochure and Facebook post we write contributes to the whole. So let's get every one of them right.

Share a **Coke**  
with





## On song

How should a company talk?

There's no one answer to that question. A company's tone of voice needs to suit its brand - and every brand is different



For example, Nike use a direct, inspirational tone that appeals to every would-be sports star. This is perfect for the brand and its 'Just do it' identity.



Innocent Smoothies, meanwhile, have a playful, chatty, light-hearted brand. This is reflected in the way the company writes.



**“Sometimes getting to the starting line proves just as much as getting to the finish line”**

**“A gym doesn't have to have four walls”**

**“You can grab our juice on buy one get one free in Waitrose right now. Fill your boots”**

**“Innocent smoothies, from the makers of trees and stuff”**



# Sounds like skyscanner

If Skyscanner was a person you met at a party, what would he or she be like? Knowledgeable, eloquent, but a bit stuffy (like British Airways)? Or cheerful, cheeky and laid-back (like Easyjet)?

Strong characters have distinctive voices. That’s true of brands too. You know the sort of voice British Airways has, or easyJet. You could describe the Nike brand, or the The Paddy Power brand, just in terms of the language they use without any visuals at all.

This is something every brand has to work at. Many businesses still have grey, uninspiring voices that just fade into the background. Like a wallflower at the party. We can’t afford to be a wallflower. We need a voice people notice, and are attracted to.



## Our personality should show that:

### We are crystal clear

We make things clear and intuitive. It has to be easy to understand.

### We draw you in

We may be a technology company, but everything we do must feel inviting. It has to draw you in.

### We have a sense of wonder

Travel is wonderful. We try to capture part of the magic, encouraging people to try new things.

### We are a brain box

We can’t claim authority. We have to earn it. To become the world’s natural reference point for travel, we prove our expertise every day and give confidence.

## Personality

To show we're **Crystal Clear**  
we need to be...

To show we **Draw you in**  
we need to be...

To show we're a **Brain Box**  
we need to be...

To show we have a **Sense  
of Wonder** we need to be...

## How we talk

So, we're a crystal clear brain box that draws you in and we have a sense of wonder... But how does that sound, exactly? How do we talk in a way that's all about 'wonder'? And what's 'crystal clear' about a trip to Bali?

We've boiled those personality traits down to four little linguistic pointers. If we all follow them, we'll establish a distinctive Skyscanner voice. A voice that stands out.

## Tone of Voice

**Clear:** Use simple, everyday language. Don't waffle on, or use complicated industry terms. Cut the crap. For example, use **holiday** not **travel experience**, and **airlines** not **carriers**.

**Friendly:** We're not a faceless machine. The things we say should feel conversational and friendly. Don't be afraid to put a smile into your writing. Little informal asides like **right?** or **you get the idea** make a big difference. Always talk about **we** and **you** - not **Skyscanner**, **customers** or (ugh) **users**.

**Factual:** We give people the information they want, simply and easily. This doesn't just apply to our search tools. It's about the way we talk, too.

So cut out woolly claims. **Many more people are enjoying Croatia these days** - many more than what? **These days** as opposed to when? Use real facts and figures. For example **Tourism in Croatia has grown ten-fold in the last 20 years**, or **In 1999, 400,000 people visited Croatia. In 2013, it was almost two million**.

**Encouraging:** Travel sites are full of waffle. No one's impressed by **crystal-clear water** or **snow-capped mountains**. They've heard it all before. We want to excite people, to give people a sense of place beyond hackneyed and lazy clichés. Instead of calling India a **country of contrasts**, let's really wow people:

'To understand India, you have to submit to it. Let it take you on a ride which may, at times, scare you. Suck in the street smells of jasmine and diesel. Devour a dish of roadside daal, and experience the assault of noise, crowds and colour. India is incredible, yet overwhelming at the same time but will burn itself deeply on to your memory banks.'



# Adapt to your audience

We all adjust the way we speak depending on the situation we're in. You don't speak to your parents the same way you speak to your friends in a bar. And you adapt again when you're in a job interview.

As a brand, we need to do the same: remember who we're primarily talking to, and make sure we 'dial up' (or down) the relevant aspects of our voice for that audience.

Think of it like a graphic equalizer on a music system. If you're having a party, you turn up the bass. If you really want to hear the vocals, you add more treble. But whatever adjustments you make, you're still hearing the same song.

So, if you're addressing a **business audience in China**, you're likely to be a crystal clear brain box. We should still draw people in, but this audience may well require more formality than another.

For an **ad campaign targeted at twentysomethings**, we might dial right up on the sense of wonder, and calm down the brain box side.

Sometimes, we may even silence part of the voice entirely. That's okay – as long as we don't actively work against those elements of our personality (for example, you might not include any authoritative facts at all, which is fine. But if you slip into vague waffle, you start undermining that element of who we are).

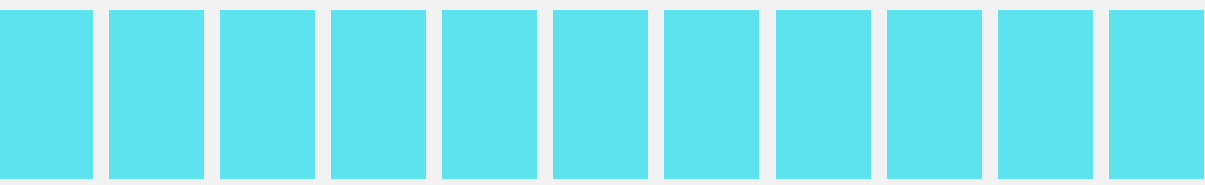
## Formal



Clear



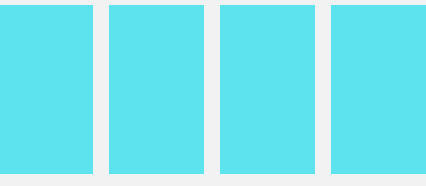
Factual



Friendly



Encouraging



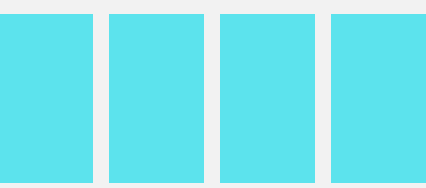
## Informal



Clear



Factual



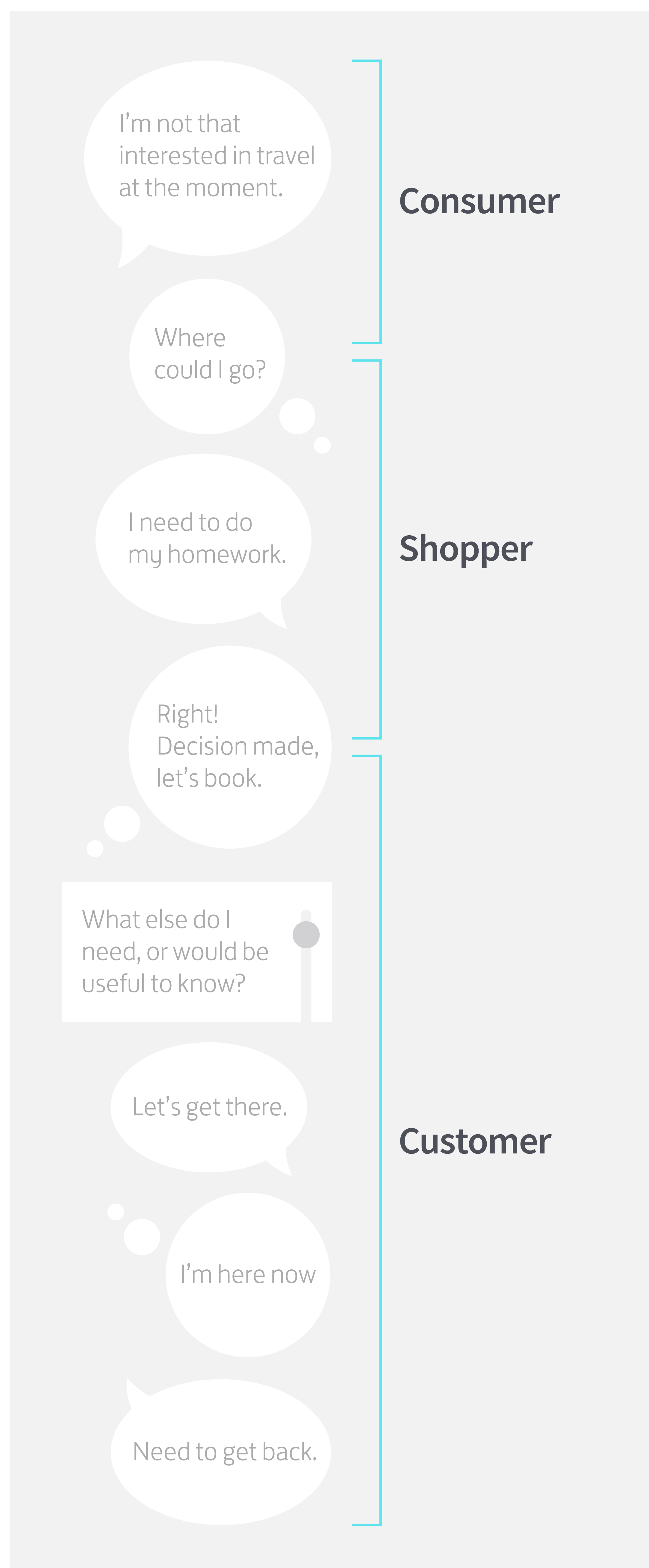
Friendly



Encouraging







## What do they need?

Another important thing to think about is the reader or listener's relationship with us at the time we're talking to them. Is this their first encounter with Skyscanner? Are they half-way through booking a holiday? Or trying to make a complaint?

Whatever stage on the 'user journey' they're at, make sure you adapt the voice to their needs. If they're just looking for simple, factual information, focus on that (although there might be room for a wonderful suggestion).

If it's a situation where people want to get the feel for a destination, you can be more emotive, draw people in with a sense of adventure. But don't forget the factual details.

You get the idea. Common sense is your most powerful tool here. Just think about how you'd want to be spoken to in any situation, and adapt the four elements of our voice to those needs.

# Quick guide

## Our voice is clear



### Do

- Use short everyday words
- Keep sentences short
- Get to the point
- Be transparent

### Do say

- Trip or holiday/vacation
- Airline
- Estimated arrival time
- Leg/part
- Sorry
- Problem
- To
- Also
- Extra

### Don't

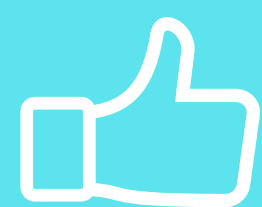
- Be long-winded
- Use jargon and technical terms
- Waffle
- Try to hide anything

### Don't say

- Travel experience
- Carrier
- ETA
- Segment
- This is due to conditions outside our control
- Issue
- In order to
- Additionally
- Supplementary

# Quick guide

Our voice is friendly



## Do

- Be conversational
- Talk to the reader directly: use you, we and us
- Use contractions (we'll, you'd, can't, etc.)

## Do say

- Hello
- Can we help?
- Enjoy!
- Thanks for your letter

## Don't

- Be formal
- Automatically default to 'skyscanner' etc.

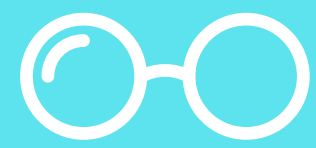
## Don't say

- This document introduces you to our...
- If we can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to ask
- Skyscanner wishes you a pleasant trip
- We are in receipt of your letter
- Overuse exclamation marks!!!



# Quick guide

## Our voice is factual



### Do

- Be specific and back things up with facts
- Use relevant facts and figures

### Do say

- Normally 25° or more
- XX% more people trust us than any other site
- Survey A found that 75% of travellers prefer...
- If you want to sample Scottish food in Edinburgh, try The Kilt on the Royal Mile, where you'll get haggis, neeps and tatties (that's parsnips and potatoes) with a single malt whisky, for under £15

### Don't

- Make vague claims
- Just throw statistics in to look clever

### Don't say

- Normally nice and warm
- We're more popular than any other site
- Most people prefer...
- There are many places you can try Scottish food in Edinburgh, so you'll be sure to find somewhere that suits your budget

# Quick guide

Our voice is encouraging



## Do

- Be positive and lively
- Suggest specific ideas
- Encourage readers to try new things
- Find relevant ideas for the audience

## Do say

- Why not get up early and try the fish market?  
It's fascinating, crazy and you'll never taste fresher fish

## Don't

- Stick to the obvious and average
- Be vague
- Suggest anything reckless or unsafe
- Suggest things just because they're different

## Don't say

- You'll love the beach, and there's a wealth of things to do in town

## Never say

- Something for everyone
- Breath-taking
- Paradise on earth
- Rich in culture/history
- To die for

# Some Examples

Think about everything you write. Does it match up to our personality? Not every piece of writing will reflect all four qualities, of course. But nothing should ever go against any of them. Here are some examples of what we mean.

## Standard response

This paragraph is taken from one of our automated responses:



“Due to international practice and business considerations, most airline tickets are only available 12 months in advance. Skyscanner shows airline prices 12 months ahead, although there might be airlines that have not yet released complete schedules for the full period. If you have a query about a specific route far in advance, I can recommend that you check which airlines do this particular route and contact them directly with your query.”

It’s pretty long-winded, and a little impersonal. Does a crystal clear organisation that draws you in speak like this? Let’s keep it clear and friendly.



“Most airlines only allow you to book up to 12 months ahead – some even less. Sorry about that.

If you want to book a long way in advance, I’d suggest you search here to see which airlines fly that route and contact them directly. Good luck!”



## Error message

Right now, if your search comes back empty, you get this message:



No results found for your selection. Change your filter settings or **show all 75 results**

Again, it doesn't sound like a human brand. Our voice should be friendlier:



Sorry – there aren't any flights that fit the brief. You can edit your search or **show all 75 results**

## T&Cs

A snapshot of our terms & conditions:

Prices shown always include an estimate of all mandatory taxes and charges, but remember to check ALL ticket detail, final prices and terms and conditions on the booking website before you book.



### Check for extra fees

Some airlines / agents charge extra for baggage, insurance or use of credit cards.

### Check T&Cs for travellers aged 12-16

Restrictions may apply to young passengers travelling alone.

It's a great message – we're doing our best for you. So let's make it as friendly, clear and original as possible:

We do our best to show you the total travel price – but some airlines add extra charges at the checkout. Make sure you check the small print before you book.



### Check for extra fees

Some airlines charge extra for baggage, insurance or use of credit cards.

### Check T&Cs for travellers aged 12-16

Sadly, not all airlines allow young adventurers to travel alone.

## Welcome email

Here's an excerpt from our welcome email text:

### Why use Skyscanner?

#### For clear prices

Flexible and unbiased travel search. Find the cheapest flights for a specific date, a whole month or year with no hidden charges.

#### For all travel options

Save time and money with an unrivalled choice so you can find the best flights, hotels and car hire deals in seconds.

#### For inspiration

Search from your nearest airport to 'everywhere' to see where you could go next.

#### Keep us handy. Get our apps.

We have great apps for flights, hotels and car hire. And they're all free.

#### Other ways to stay in touch

Get travel deals, tips and inspiration

Sign up for our free email newsletter

Find us on Facebook [[www.facebook.com/Skyscanner](https://www.facebook.com/Skyscanner)]

Follow us on Twitter [[www.twitter.com/Skyscanner](https://www.twitter.com/Skyscanner)]

Happy travels,  
The Skyscanner Team



It's already quite friendly, which is great. It sounds human. But it also sounds a bit like every travel business. Could it be more encouraging? Clearer?

### Oh, not another travel service

There are a lot of them, aren't there? They all seem pretty similar, funny names aside. So why should you take any notice of us?

#### No hidden charges

We don't add any nasty surprises. We just find you the cheapest flights to match your search. That's it.

#### Everything in one place

Everything you need for your flight, hotel or car hire deal is right here. So we save you time as well as money.

#### Great ideas

Want to travel, but not sure where? Search for flights from your nearest airport to 'everywhere' and we'll show where you could be jetting off to.

### Free apps to makes things easy

Check out our free, simple apps that make flights, hotels and car hire a breeze.

#### Never miss a deal

Get travel deals, tips and inspiration

Sign up for our free email newsletter

Find us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter

Happy travels,  
The Skyscanner Team



## Front page



### Skyscanner is Free!

When you find your flights and click to book, we link you through directly to the airline or travel agent. No hidden charges, no added fees. So you get the cheapest flights every time!

This could be clearer and more factual:



### Skyscanner is Free!

You won't pay a penny extra booking through us. We just link you directly to the airline or travel agent, so you get the cheapest flights on offer (we make our money from ads and a small referral fee, never from charging you).



## Hidden charges guide

### Skyscanner's guide to hidden charges

#### Common terms used by car hire companies

Check out our simple explanations for the most common terminology and jargon used by car hire companies! To help you choose the cheapest and most suitable car hire deal we've also highlighted some of the hidden charges and extra fees that car hire companies may add.



#### Young driver surcharge

Drivers under 25 years old may be charged an extra daily fee. Check with the hire company for the exact amount. You will normally be asked to pay this fee when you pick up the car.

#### One-way surcharge

If you are dropping the car off at a different location to where you picked it up you may be charged an extra fee. Check with the hire company for the exact amount. You will normally be asked to pay this fee when you pick up the car. Note that this fee can be very large if you are dropping the car off in a different country or state to where you picked it up.

But this version is clearer and friendlier:

### Our guide to hidden charges

#### Common car hire terms

Car hire companies often use jargon to disguise their charges. Keep an eye out for the following:



#### Young driver surcharge

Younger drivers – usually under-25s – often pay extra. Check with the hire company for the exact amount. You'll normally be asked to pay this when you pick up the car.

#### One-way surcharge

If you're not dropping off where you picked up, you may be charged more – particularly if your destination is in a different country or state. Make sure you check before you book.