

Social listening

Engagement on social media

Composing engaging content

Video: Write for social media
4 min

Video: Develop your brand voice on social media
5 min

Reading: Case study: How BLK & Bold found its brand voice
20 min

Reading: Design engaging content for social media
20 min

Reading: Make social media posts accessible
20 min

Reading: What is Canva?
20 min

Practice Peer-graded Assignment: Activity: Design a social media post
1h

Video: Repurpose content on social media
4 min

Video: Catherine - Engage a social media audience through storytelling
3 min

Practice Quiz: Test your knowledge: Compose engaging content
7 questions

Review: Listening and engagement on social media

Case study: How BLK & Bold found its brand voice

Previously, you learned that **brand voice** is the distinct personality a brand takes on in a company's communications. It's how the attitudes and values of a brand are reflected in public content, including social media content. This case study describes how the founders of **BLK & Bold**, a coffee company based in Des Moines, Iowa, successfully incorporated a distinct brand voice into their social media content. You'll learn about the elements that make their brand voice unique.



Company background



BLK & Bold founders Rod Johnson and Pernell Cezar, Jr. have been lifelong friends and grew up in Gary, Indiana. They started BLK & Bold with an idea to bring their passion and taste for premium coffee and tea to the masses, and to do some good. They began roasting coffee in their garage, which grew into an online business and a 20,000 square foot production facility. Today, their coffee is featured and sold in Target stores in the U.S., and 5% of their profits support programs for youth in need.

The challenges

In the beginning, Rod and Pernell were up against a few challenges. First was the product category. Coffee is an oversaturated market with many brands. Second, they were going against an industry norm. Premium coffee and tea are usually targeted at upscale consumers, but they wanted to bring them to a much larger market—everyone. They wanted to introduce a premium product to mass retail. Lastly, they were launching a digitally-native brand at a time when most people didn't buy their coffee online. Unlike larger companies with well-known coffee shops, they didn't have brick-and-mortar stores to help drive brand recognition and online sales. On top of these challenges, neither of them had prior experience in the coffee industry, or were high-profile influencers for coffee consumption.

The approach

Despite these challenges, Rod and Pernell set out to build their business. While doing so, they became direct contributors to BLK & Bold's brand voice, the distinct personality of their brand. The main elements of their brand voice include the following:

- Company's name
- Inspiration
- Values
- Tone
- Attitude

Company's name

The company's name, BLK & Bold, is a powerful statement for their brand. **BLK** represents black coffee and tea—their products—but also represents who they are as Black business owners. **Bold** differentiates their brand from bland flavors, but also represents their bold representation as minority stakeholders in the coffee industry.

Inspiration

Their personal story is a source of inspiration to others. Rod and Pernell were first-generation college graduates and found their purpose and mission as entrepreneurs. They worked hard to build their business from the ground up and are often viewed as role models in their community.

What motivates them is their sense of purpose and mission. Their **purpose** is creating specialty coffee and joining forces with community impact. Their **mission** is to educate coffee drinkers and give back to the community.

Values

For an individual, nothing is more powerful than saying something that reflects your deepest values. The same is true for brand voice. Notice how the following statements made by the founders reflect their brand voice and related values and business practices.

- Brand voice: **"Today, people shop their values."**

Underlying value: BLK & Bold respects that you have a choice in where you shop. Shop with us because you support our mission.

- Brand voice: **"Shop with a company that does more than just sell a widget."**

Underlying value: Invest in our community by returning 5% of profits to support community programs.

- Brand voice: **"We connect the everyday ritual of drinking coffee and tea to doing good in the world."**

Underlying value: Daily beverage choices make a difference and impact others.

- Brand voice: **"We take the consumer-first approach."**

Underlying value: Break free from complicated coffee jargon and simply have an amazing cup of coffee.

Tone

Another element of brand voice is tone, which is how a brand's voice is applied. BLK & Bold's brand voice is casual, approachable, conversational, and educational.

Attitude

BLK & Bold's brand voice also shows an attitude of social engagement. In particular, BLK & Bold looks for culturally-relevant opportunities to promote its brand and mission. For example, in collaboration with the Movement for Black Lives, it partnered with Ben & Jerry's to create an ice cream flavor made with a distinct cold brew from BLK & Bold called **Change is Brewing**. BLK & Bold also produces an officially-licensed National Basketball Association (NBA) special edition coffee. For every bag of The Warm Up coffee sold, the NBA matches an additional 5% towards BLK & Bold's **For Our Youth** initiative.

The results

With its brand voice in mind, BLK & Bold has had the most success with branding using Instagram. In particular, BLK & Bold's success with Instagram videos is due in large part to an ability to capture coffee brewing and tasting sensations. One example is an [Instagram video](#) for iced coffee in which viewers can hear the sound of ice cubes going into a glass. Ads on both Instagram and Facebook target coffee drinkers between the ages of 25 and 45. These users are most likely to have the discretionary income to purchase the equipment needed to brew coffee at home. They are also the most likely to be attracted to socially responsible companies like BLK & Bold—companies that are making an impact on communities with proceeds from their profits.

The following are taglines from BLK & Bold's top-performing posts on Instagram. Can you spot BLK & Bold's brand voice in these?

- **What started as an idea turned out to be much more than we expected.**
 - Inspiration (Purpose): Specialty coffee joins forces with community impact
 - Value: Invest in our community by returning 5% of profits to support community programs
- **It's really the coffee experience that we're here for.**
 - Inspiration (Mission): Educate coffee drinkers and give back to the community
 - Value: Daily beverage choices make a difference and impact others
 - Value: Break free from complicated coffee jargon and simply have an amazing cup of coffee
- **Let us know if you can spot the different flavor characteristics and mouth feel of our light and dark roast coffee by trying the roasts side-by-side.**
 - Value: Break free from complicated coffee jargon and simply have an amazing cup of coffee
 - Tone: Casual, approachable, conversational, and educational

BLK & Bold would like to continue their successful branding on Instagram and Facebook while making better use of Twitter to reach more customers. Because tweets rely more on text than visuals, they will continue to ensure that their brand voice comes through loud and clear in their messages. Their tone and attitude of social engagement in their brand voice will play a larger role when using Twitter. Their ability to capture user interest through timely tweets about culturally-relevant events and topics will be crucial.

Conclusion

This case study on BLK & Bold's brand voice demonstrates how well a brand voice can convey a company's core values and business. Brand voice elements differ for every company, but they should be thoughtfully considered and incorporated when creating content for social media campaigns.

Mark as completed

