ZAIDYN Design System (ZDS) Content Guide

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Purpose

The primary goal of this guide is establishing a consistent voice and tone for UX writing for all ZAIDYN products. This goal creates a cohesive and consistent user experience for ZAIDYN users.

Scope & Context

These guidelines are inspired from existing ZS documentation, such as *ZS Editorial Guideline, ZS SD Documentation Style Guide,* and *ZS Brand Message House Tone Guide.* These guides all work together to ensure alignment with the overall brand voice and tone for ZS. We have designed the ZDS Content Guide to be narrow in scope to focus on the context that appears on ZAIDYN applications. The primary audience for this documentation is members of the ZAIDYN Design Team.

What is Voice & Tone?

Voice = Personality, Tone = Mood

"Voice is the personality that your brand, product, or digital interface manifest … Tone is the way that voice is expressed in certain context." - *Michael J Metts & Andy Welfle, Writing is Designing.*

Just as individuals can possess multiple personality traits, a UX writing voice can exhibit various traits that determine how it communicates with users. In ZDS Voice & Tone Guide, we have outlined four voice principles that collectively shape the personality of ZAIDYN.

Like how people experience emotions like anger or happiness, UX writing tones can also vary depending on specific scenarios. We have identified four distinct tones for various use cases, such as error messages, form labels, and AI-triggered messages.

Consideration

We have researched existing ZS Writing related documentation to ensure the ZDS Content Guide aligns with the overall brand voice & tone. The ZDS Voice principles are the extension of the ones in *ZS Brand Message House Tone Guide* with a narrower focus on UX writing.

ZS Brand Message House Tone Guide	ZDS Voice Principles
More educational than self-promotional	Helpful, but not dumbed down
More human than corporate	Conversational, but professional
More factual than flashy	Clear, but not verbose
More personable than academic	Direct, but personable

Usage

When it comes to ZDS writings, there isn't a language that fits all scenarios. That's why our ZDS Content Guide were designed to be broad to accommodate different use cases, while still providing a guide for consistent language. ZAIDYN users have unique goals, varying degrees of technical expertise, and a range of other characteristics. To create content that's appropriate for our users, it's crucial to understand who they are, what their goals are, and what context they're in.

Here are some things to consider along with the ZDS Content Guide to create good writing for your users and applications.

User

Who are they, what do they know, what are their barriers, and what are their goals?

Context

Why are they seeing this message? What's the scenario?

State of Mind

How might they perceive this message and how receptive might they be?

Intent

What is the business goal? What is the user flow's goal? What do you want the users to accomplish?

Voice Principles

Helpful, but Not Dumbed Down

We provide necessary, useful, and predictable information to guide users through their tasks.

Instead of this   **Try this**

Move your cursor to the top-right corner, then click on the teal Create New button to create a new algorithm.

→ The users probably know how to move the cursor to click on an item. This might be redundant for them.

Click *Create New* to create a new algorithm.

→ It's clear, concise, and aligned with the users' technical understanding.

Conversational, but Professional

We sound human rather than robotic. We use simple and easy-to-understand language while being professional.

Instead of this   **Try this**

Please enter the ballpark of the records.

→ There's no need to be too polite.

→ Avoid using slang, as they are too casual and don't translate well into other languages.

What's the estimated number of records?

→ Simple, straightforward, and conversational, nice!

Clear, but not Verbose

Use clear, precise, and factual language, even if it takes a few more words to get the message across. But don't use more words than necessary.

Instead of this   **Try this**

Deleting this user role will affect some users.

→ This sentence is concise but pretty ambiguous about the implication of the action.

Deleting this user role will remove it from its assigned users. This might change the users access/permission.

→ This is a bit longer, but it clearly explains the implication of the action to the users.

Direct, but Personable

We are straightforward and concise but not unnecessarily confrontational or rude.

Instead of this   **Try this**

The setting cannot be changed after it's submitted. Don't make any mistakes!

→ Sounds like we are yelling at the users.

→ We can be more direct with active voice. It's easier to read this way.

You can't change the settings once you submit them. Please make sure they are accurate before submitting.

→ Direct and refer the users in the second person. Nice and easier to read.

Tone Variants

Informative & Neutral

We provide factual and objective information without personal biases and emotions.

Use Case Examples: form instructions, tooltip messages, form labels, and factual statements.

Instead of this   **Try this**

Oh no! This resource might be vulnerable since it's been inactive for 30+ days.

↳ We don't have to be emotional for a factual statement like this one.

This resource might be vulnerable since it's been inactive for 30+ days.

Polite & Supportive

We are positive and encouraging towards the user to help them navigate through errors or inconveniences.

Use Case Examples: error messages, 404 pages, and validation messages.

Instead of this   **Try this**

Something went wrong. Try again.

→ We can be more empathetic toward the users to help them resolve this error.

Sorry, something went wrong. Please try again.

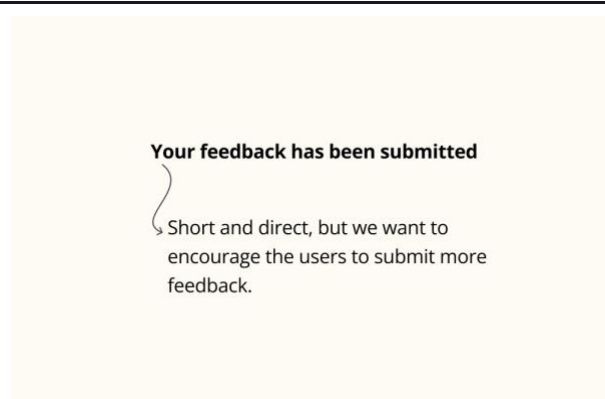→ It's polite and more empathetic toward the users.
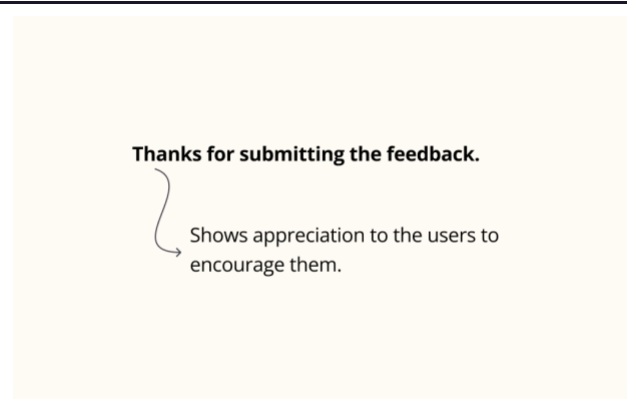
Appreciative & Warm

We express gratitude and kindness towards the user to establish interpersonal connections and encourage them to complete optional tasks.

Use Case Examples: welcome messages, Net Promoter Scores (NPS), feedback confirmation messages, and insights feedback confirmation messages.

Instead of this   **Try this**

Your feedback has been submitted

Short and direct, but we want to encourage the users to submit more feedback.

Thanks for submitting the feedback.
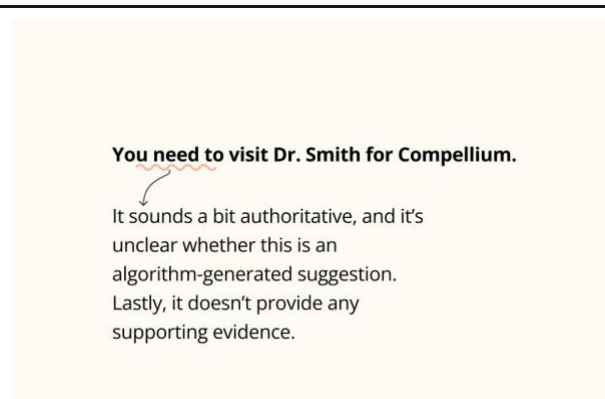
Shows appreciation to the users to encourage them.
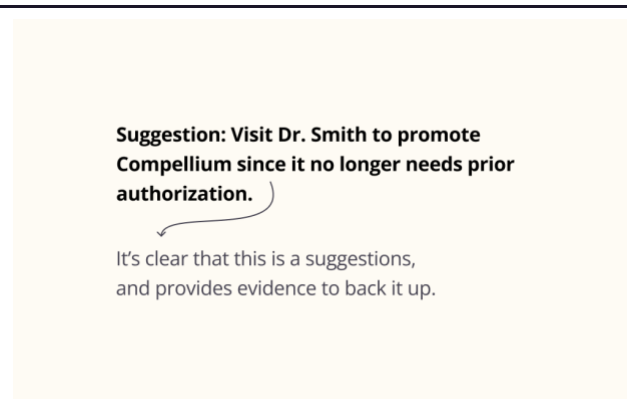
Collaborative & Candid

We're transparent about the evidence and confidence level behind our Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML) insights and suggestions, and we treat users as collaborators rather than subordinates.

Use Case Examples: AI/ML-triggered templated messages (excluding AI chatbots, and factual statements).

Instead of this   **Try this**

You need to visit Dr. Smith for Compellium.

It sounds a bit authoritative, and it's unclear whether this is an algorithm-generated suggestion. Lastly, it doesn't provide any supporting evidence.

Suggestion: Visit Dr. Smith to promote Compellium since it no longer needs prior authorization.

It's clear that this is a suggestions, and provides evidence to back it up.

References

1. *[Messaging and Brand Voice Guidelines](#)*
2. *[ZS Style Guide](#)*
3. *[ZS SD Documentation Style Guide](#)*
4. *Writing is Designing by Michael J Metts and Andy Welfle*
5. *Strategic writing for UX by Torrey Podmajersky*
6. *Microcopy: The Complete Guide by Kinneret Yifrah*