

# Voice and Tone

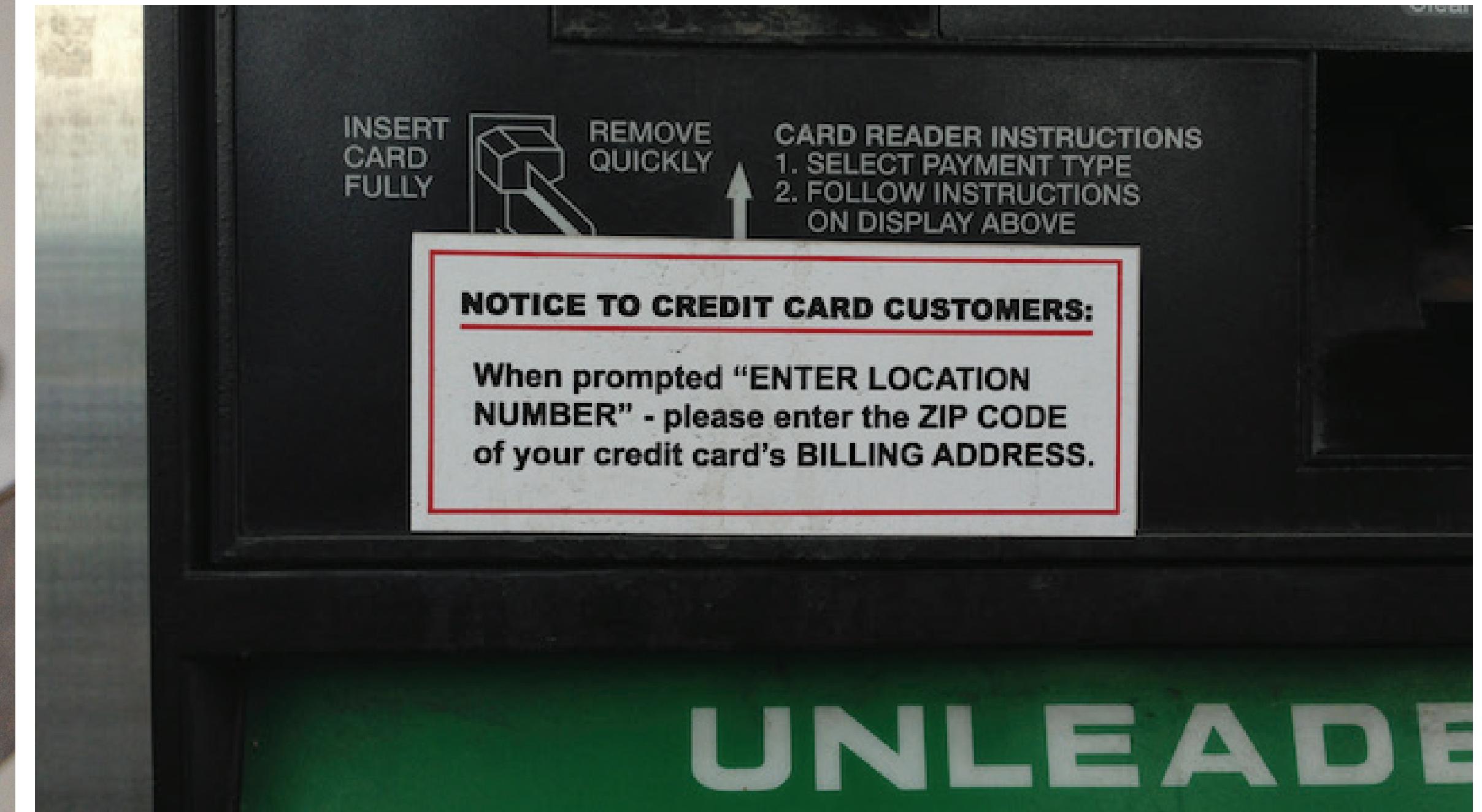
Language is just  
as important to the  
experience as the  
visuals.

# Words as material

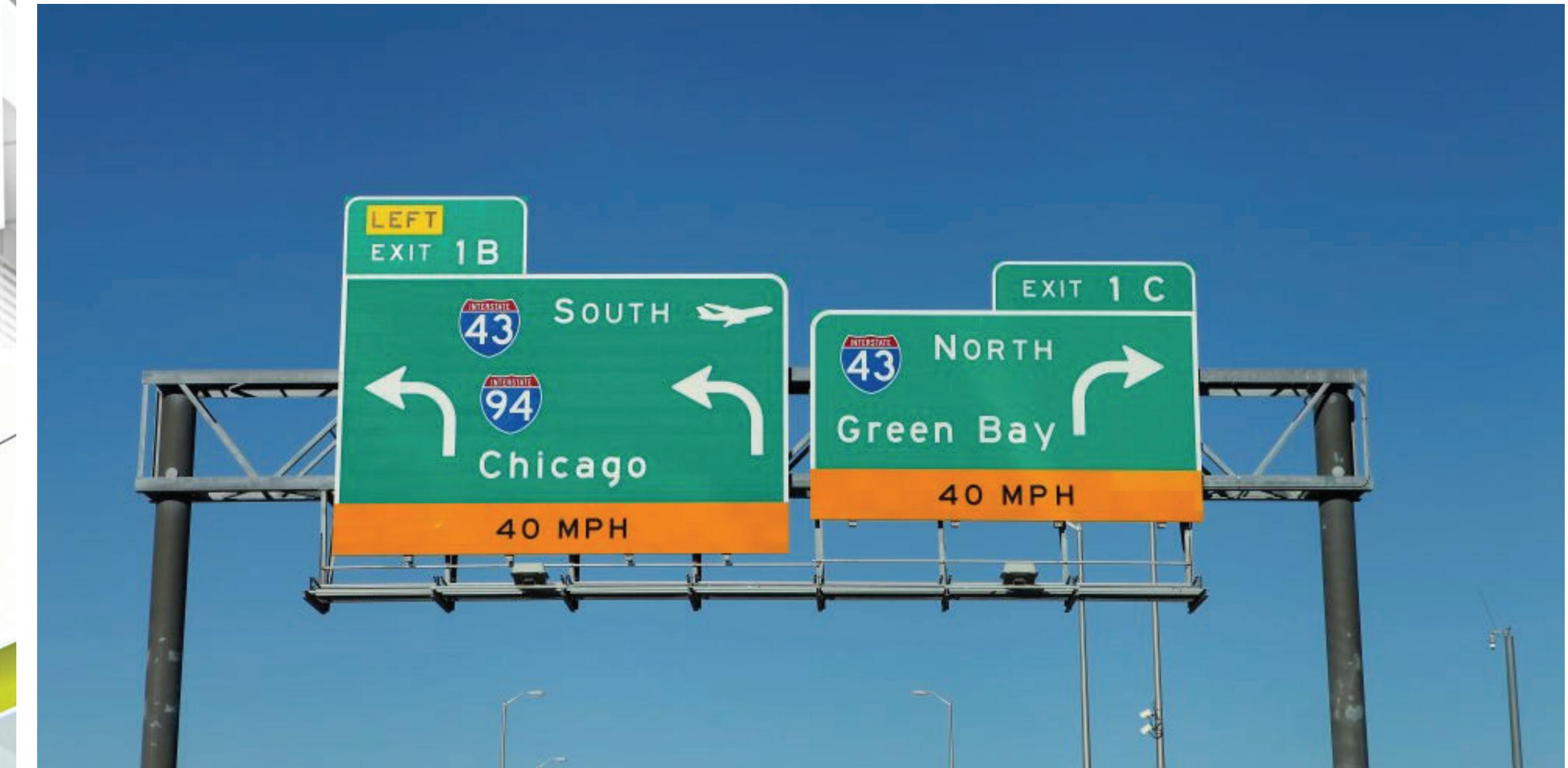
Everywhere you go,  
signs and people  
are telling you  
what to do.



# Instructions



# Directions



# Interactions

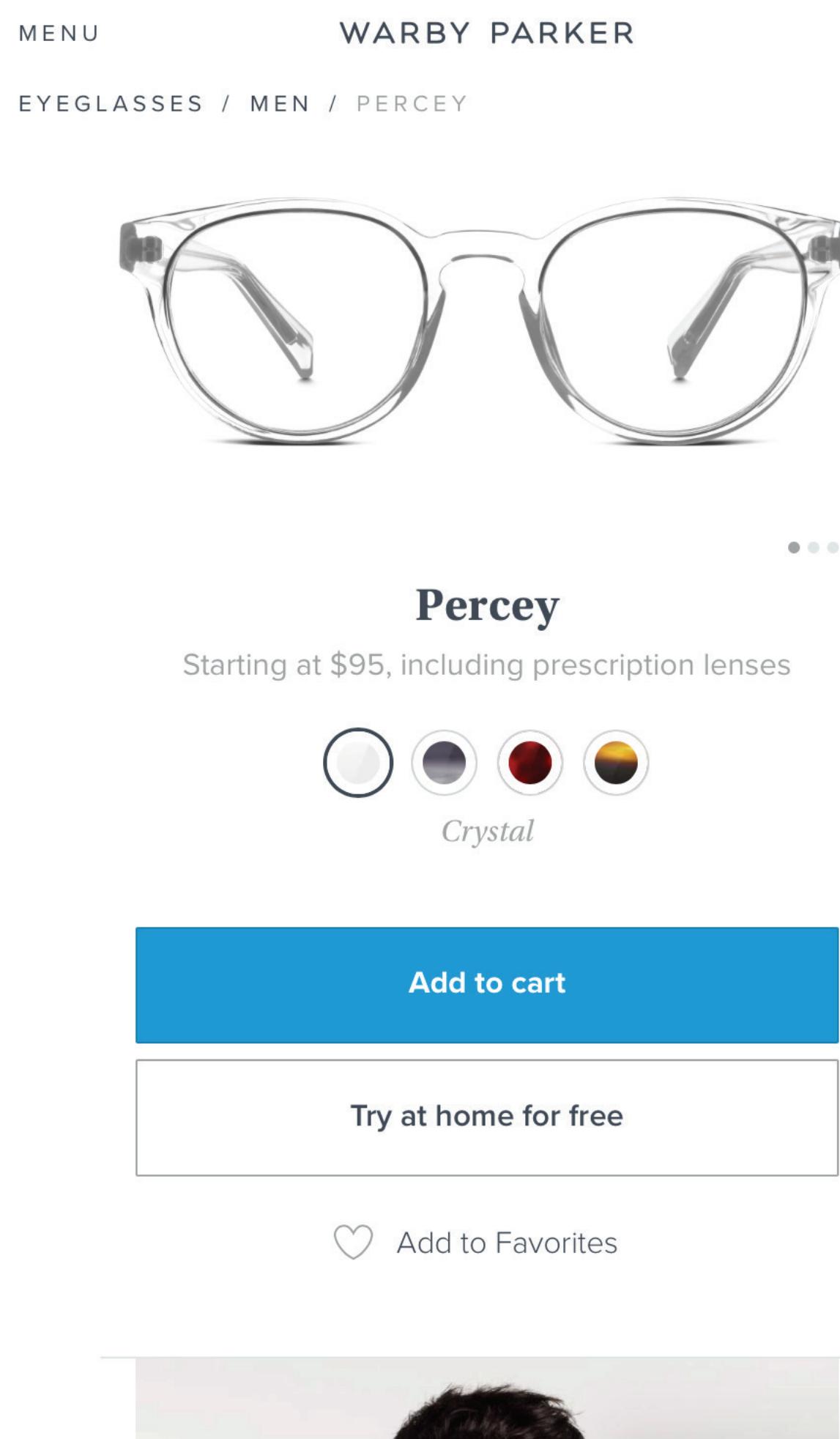


Words are central  
to how we interact  
with the world.

# Digital

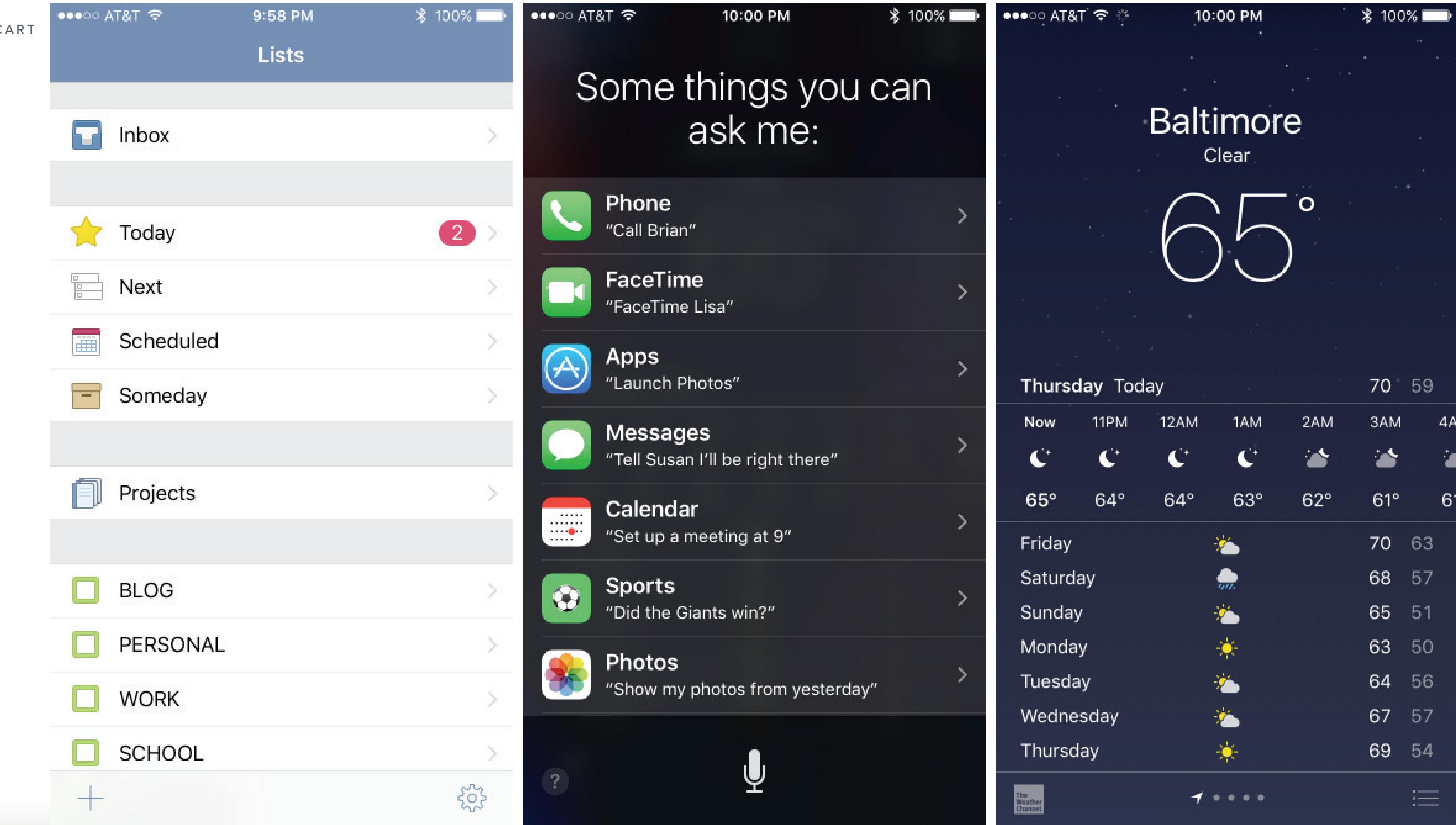
MENU            WARBY PARKER            CART

EYEGLASSES / MEN / PERCEY



A Warby Parker product page for the 'Percy' glasses. It features a large image of the glasses, a color palette, and a 'Crystal' label. Buttons for 'Add to cart' and 'Try at home for free' are present, along with an 'Add to Favorites' link.

**Percy**  
Starting at \$95, including prescription lenses  
 Crystal  
**Add to cart**  
**Try at home for free**  
 Add to Favorites



Three screenshots of digital interfaces:

- Lists**: An iPhone screen showing a list of tasks: Inbox, Today (with a red notification badge '2'), Next, Scheduled, Someday, Projects, BLOG, PERSONAL, WORK, and SCHOOL.
- Siri interface**: A dark-themed Siri interface asking "Some things you can ask me:" followed by a list of suggestions: Phone ("Call Brian"), FaceTime ("FaceTime Lisa"), Apps ("Launch Photos"), Messages ("Tell Susan I'll be right there"), Calendar ("Set up a meeting at 9"), Sports ("Did the Giants win?"), and Photos ("Show my photos from yesterday").
- Weather Channel app**: A weather forecast for Baltimore, Maryland, showing clear skies and a temperature of 65°. The forecast includes daily temperatures and weather icons for Thursday through Wednesday, followed by a weekly summary.

How do you talk  
to your user?

buttons  
notifications  
errors and alerts  
forms  
in-app disclosures  
links  
navigation  
product tours  
setting names  
tooltips  
transactional emails

What actions can people take?

What are you asking them to do?

What are you allowing them to do?

What are the rules and dead-ends?

What sort of language do you use  
to guide people?

1. Clarity, not  
simplicity.

Watch for jargon and abbreviations.

website / site

“beta”

“cloud”

“ROI”

“B2B”

Front-load your labels.

Continue

Click to continue

Don't be lazy.

Okay

Cancel

**2. Be specific.**

**Next >**

**Page 3 >**

“Search” vs. “Filter”

“Save” vs. “Submit”

“Close” vs. “Cancel”

“Buy” vs. “Add to Cart”

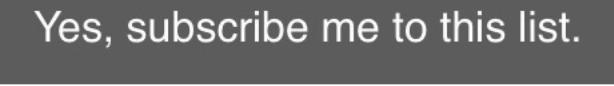
A Mailing List for Humans: Please Confirm Subscription  Trash  

 **Hodgman** hodgman@maximumfun.org via mail2.mcsignup.com  
to me 

Oct 3 (2 days ago)  

# H John Hodgman

**Please Confirm Subscription**

 Yes, subscribe me to this list.

If you received this email by mistake, simply delete it. You won't be subscribed if you don't click the confirmation link above.

For questions about this list, please contact:  
[hodgman@maximumfun.org](mailto:hodgman@maximumfun.org)

 **Hodgman** hodgman@maximumfun.org via mail5.mcsignup.com  
to me 

Oct 3 (2 days ago)  

# H John Hodgman

Your subscription to our list has been confirmed.

For your records, here is a copy of the information you submitted to us...

**Email Address:** [jarrettfuller@gmail.com](mailto:jarrettfuller@gmail.com)  
**First Name:** Jarrett  
**Last Name:** Fuller

If at any time you wish to stop receiving our emails, you can:

 unsubscribe here

3. Don't force  
personality.

**Submit**

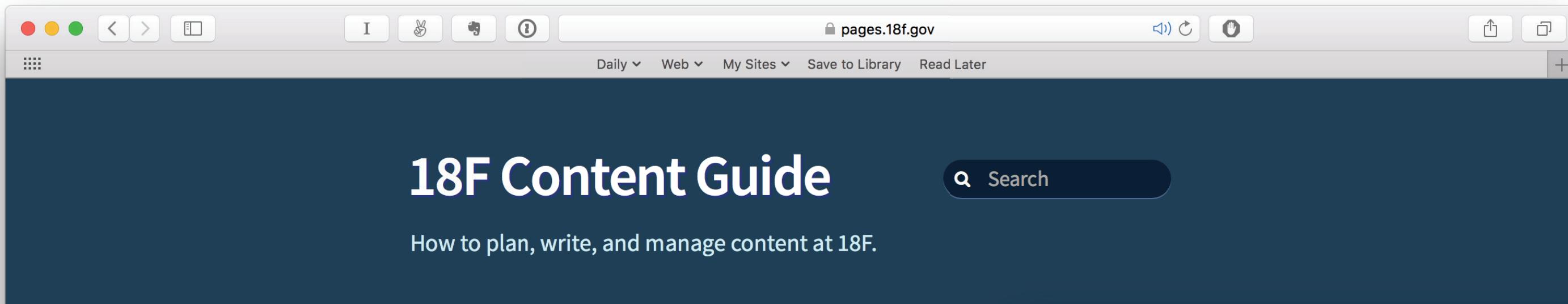
**Go for it!**

Friendly / Authority  
Playful / Serious  
Casual / Formal  
Cold / Warm



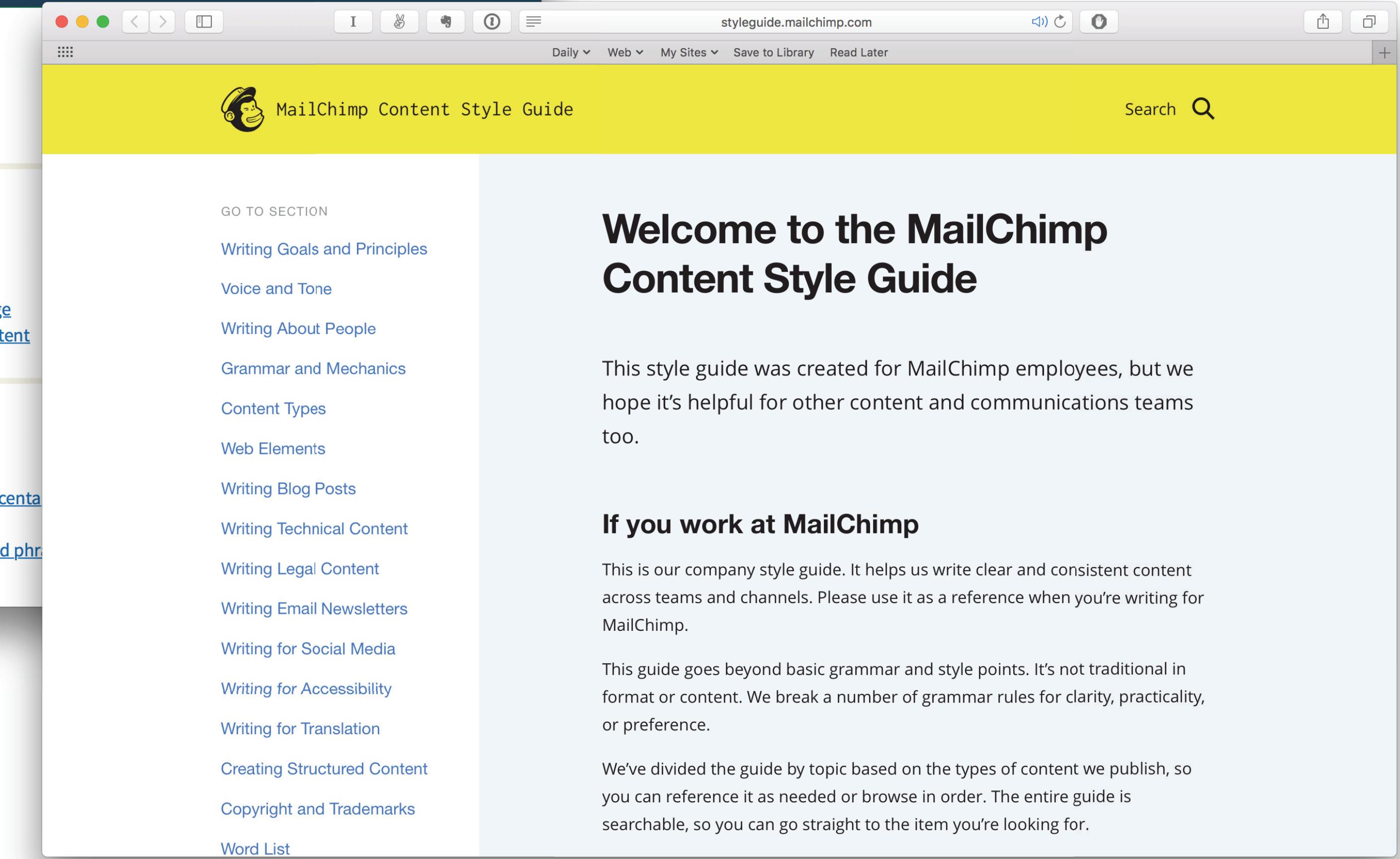
4. Talk to your user,  
not at them.

# Style guides



The screenshot shows a web browser window for pages.18f.gov. The title bar says "pages.18f.gov". The main content area has a dark blue header with the text "18F Content Guide" and "How to plan, write, and manage content at 18F." Below this is a search bar with the placeholder "Search". The main content area is divided into sections: "Introduction", "Our approach", and "Our style".

- Introduction**
  - [How to use this guide](#)
  - [License](#)
- Our approach**
  - Tips and standards for developing user-centered content.
  - [Content principles](#)
  - [Address the user](#)
  - [Avoid duplication](#)
  - [Be concise](#)
  - [Use plain language](#)
  - [Structure the content](#)
- Our style**
  - Grammar, spelling, and mechanics.
  - [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)
  - [Active voice](#)
  - [Capitalization](#)
  - [Conscious style](#)
  - [Numbers and percenta](#)
  - [Punctuation](#)
  - [Specific words and phr](#)
  - [Voice and tone](#)



The screenshot shows a web browser window for styleguide.mailchimp.com. The title bar says "styleguide.mailchimp.com". The main content area has a yellow header with the text "MailChimp Content Style Guide" and a MailChimp logo. Below this is a search bar with the placeholder "Search". The main content area is divided into sections: "GO TO SECTION" and "Welcome to the MailChimp Content Style Guide".

- GO TO SECTION**
  - [Writing Goals and Principles](#)
  - [Voice and Tone](#)
  - [Writing About People](#)
  - [Grammar and Mechanics](#)
  - [Content Types](#)
  - [Web Elements](#)
  - [Writing Blog Posts](#)
  - [Writing Technical Content](#)
  - [Writing Legal Content](#)
  - [Writing Email Newsletters](#)
  - [Writing for Social Media](#)
  - [Writing for Accessibility](#)
  - [Writing for Translation](#)
  - [Creating Structured Content](#)
  - [Copyright and Trademarks](#)
  - [Word List](#)
- Welcome to the MailChimp Content Style Guide**

This style guide was created for MailChimp employees, but we hope it's helpful for other content and communications teams too.

**If you work at MailChimp**  
This is our company style guide. It helps us write clear and consistent content across teams and channels. Please use it as a reference when you're writing for MailChimp.

This guide goes beyond basic grammar and style points. It's not traditional in format or content. We break a number of grammar rules for clarity, practicality, or preference.

We've divided the guide by topic based on the types of content we publish, so you can reference it as needed or browse in order. The entire guide is searchable, so you can go straight to the item you're looking for.

Good writing is  
good design.

# Nicely Said

WRITING FOR THE WEB WITH STYLE AND PURPOSE

Nicole Fenton and Kate Kiefer Lee