4

What is the Reboot Tone of Voice?

Bold and brave – We are a great University, we have a lot to shout about. Let's tell / show the world how good we are.

Clear and informative – Everything they read / watch / engage with, on every page, should leave them knowing exactly what they need to do next.

Helping them on their journey – By giving them the content they want, in the way they want, when they want it.

Warm and friendly – it uses words that engage with people's emotions. We understand what they are going through and we talk to them directly using 'you' and 'us'. We want to leave them with a feeling. That feeling helps to build our brand. We are here to help.

Proposed Tonal Values

Differentiating our tone of voice doesn't mean using a different voice for each one of our audiences. Rather, it means highlighting particular aspects of the NTU personality - the voice for our principles.

Our main customer groups – and the distinct tonal values that we'd look to employ, when engaging with them – can be characterised thus:

Students and Alumni

Familiar, Straightforward, Friendly, Empathetic

We're confident and we're experts in what we do, but we're not overbearing. We use contractions ("we'll, you'll") and personal pronouns in order to convey our sense of community, our conversational tone, and our commitment to acknowledging the student as an individual.

Our tone should be encouraging, rather than bossy, easing our students' nerves and empowering them towards self-sufficiency.

e.g. instead of: "*Students must complete their enrolment and log in to NOW before they are allowed to view their timetable.*"

try

"*Looking for your timetable? Once you've completed your enrolment, just log in to NOW.*"

Parents

Supportive, Smart, Educating

We want to satisfy the parents' expectations of academic rigour, whilst assuring them that we're sincere, and that the students are being supported. Parents will mainly be using the NTU website for guidance purposes – our writing in these areas therefore needs to be smart, but not stodgy.

We should approach this instructional content with an attitude and a tone that addresses questions before they've been asked; that educates and empowers, without confusing, patronizing, or dumbing down. The tone is slightly more formal, with fewer contractions, and more use of the third person, but we avoid jargon wherever possible. We're active, and not passive, demonstrating our expertise and confidence.

Employers and Businesses

Innovative, Dynamic, Confident, Creative

Our tone in the employability-related and research elements of the website should reflect confidence, a sense of imagination, and our willingness to do things differently. Content focuses upon specific examples, achievements, and factual information - we use case studies, reports, and knowledge-based articles.

Our tone is confident, persuasive, and easy to buy into – everything that we say is defensible. We use dynamic, imaginative headlines and opening sentences, to show that we're genuinely different, and open to new ideas.

We play by proper grammatical conventions and rules when working with our other audiences – this is where we can break them, showing our willingness to do things differently. We can create idiosyncratic aspects to our tone, that express bold new business principles e.g. 'Eat Fresh', 'Be More Dog', 'Impossible is Nothing.'

Schools and Colleges

Possibilities, Excitement, Pre-emptive, Lively, Inquisitive

A real focus on plain English, for a predominantly younger audience – a lot of this information is going to be flagged up and circulated throughout schools. Key questions are identified and addressed, as accessibly as possible.

Content is intuitively signposted, and delivered in small, punchy chunks. The tone is exciting, and enticing – full of promise for the next step in young students' academic journeys. We don't have the reliance on stats that we do for businesses – our video testimonies and interactive guides speak for themselves.

Action-orientated content all points towards Open Day bookings (individual and group), the prospectus, and the virtual tour, all of which are clearly and colourfully identified. There's also easy access to portals for the Student Union, and the university's many social functions. It's engaging, conversational, and fun.

University Staff

Celebratory, Proud, Technical, Accomplished

Our writing should be as inclusive of our staff as it is of our students. Staff throughout the university are 'you' – there's specific reference to individual teams, too. The tone is perhaps more emotive than it might be for parents, schools and businesses, without being pompous, or self-important.

We're helpful, without being overbearing. We continually ensure that our colleagues understand that their good work will be recognised, and celebrated.

Our instructional and support materials can accommodate a little more in the way of technical jargon.

Local Community

Warm, Colloquial, Collaborative, Stimulating, Inclusive

We're rooted, and proud of where we are – our tone reflects the symbiotic relationship between the university and the city. There's judicious use of colloquialisms (whilst being careful not to patronise), and NTU is identified as 'we', rather than 'the university'.

Success stories and video testimonies from our many voluntary schemes – including AICP, and NTU in the Community – reflect a commitment to local needs, and our responsive nature: we encourage feedback, and a broader social engagement beyond academia, and a good deal of action-orientated content.

Our writing is straightforward, and honest. More than any other audience, we write as we speak.