Voice vs Tone

When working with Vertafore's products, we must adhere to the following voice and tone guidelines:

Voice is a consistent personality. Vertafore is providing enterprise insurance software to people that *live in insurance*. Therefore, we understand industry terms and acronyms. We understand most users are knowledgeable about our software and need clear instructions when they encounter a problem.

Tone varies based on circumstance. Although enterprise software often evokes a professional tone, providing conversational assistance when the user encounters a problem can help even the most stuck user.

Voice principles

Vertafore's voice is how we talk to people. When it comes to the Titan platform, Vertafore's voice shows in our software microcopy. Every line and every button is an opportunity to guide, excite, and reassure users.

Our voice is:

Crisp and clear
We write for scanning. Our content prioritizes simplicity.

Useful and insightful
Our users know *how* to do their jobs, so we aren't going to teach them. Our mission is to show how Vertafore products can make their jobs easier and more efficient.

Conversational but professional
We are professional colleagues – we maintain a level of formality, but we are friendly and familiar.

A few key elements:

1. **Be human**. Choose conversational language and everyday words. Avoid flashy vocabulary, acronyms, and technical terms, unless directly related to the insurance industry (i.e., NAIC).
2. **Get to the point**. Put the most important content in the most noticeable spots. Prioritize key takeaways and make options obvious. Revise to eliminate every unnecessary word.
3. **Be helpful**. Give users the info they need to make decisions confidently and show they the ropes without being condescending or overbearing. Anticipate their questions and answer them.

Tone principles

Vertafore's tone anticipates users' emotions within each work flow. Consider if they are in a long and complicated workflow - if so, use encouraging language and present their progress towards the conclusion. Provide congratulations at the end!

Our tone is:

Positive and empathetic
We know insurance can get complicated and is often bland; therefore, provide the most painless experience you can. Be encouraging. Be understanding.

Transparent and action-oriented
When things go wrong, inform the users with thoughtful error messages that don't point blame and give actionable solutions to solve the error.

Personal
Vertafore provides the software, but users feel ownership over their data and workflows. Be a partner working towards a common goal of accurate and efficient insurance services.

Helpful resources

Content Guides

Mailchimp's Voice & Tone guidelines - excellent resource for all things content

Google's Voice & Tone guidelines - excellent resource for examining clear, concise language

Salesforce's Voice & Tone guidelines - excellent resource for enterprise software

Miscellaneous

An incomplete guide to inclusive language for startups and tech - this article details specific principles and terminology that puts inclusive language first and how to eliminate those that don't.

The nonviolent communication (NVC) framework for feelings - this list can help ideate types of emotions users might be feeling when their needs are met, and when they aren't.