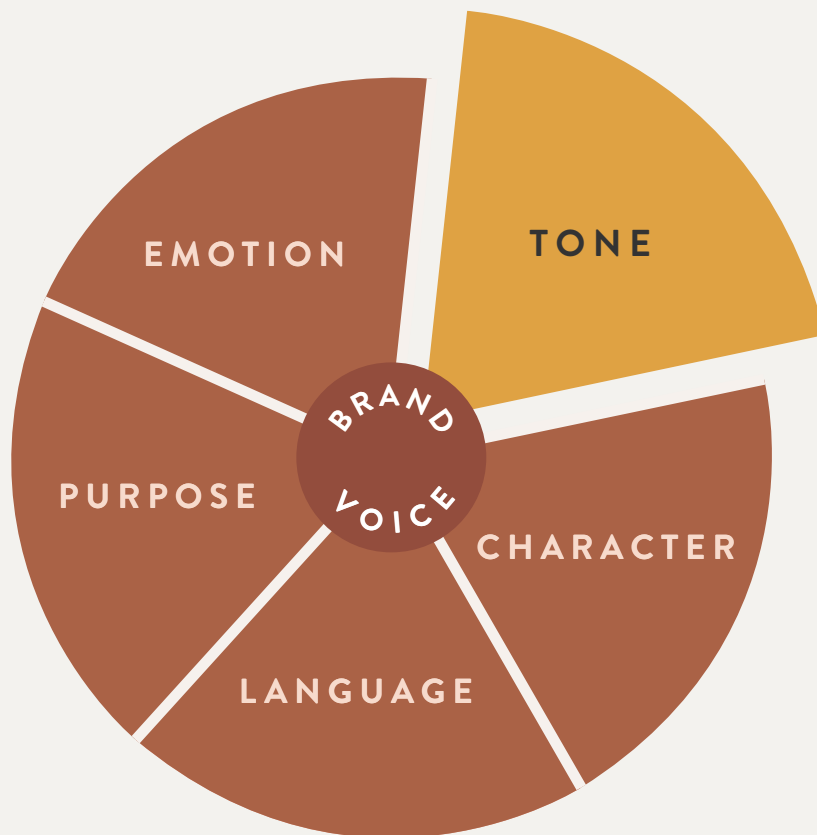# finding your
TONE
of VOICE

You're probably more familar with the concept of "brand voice" than you are with "brand tone."

"Brand voice" is made up of multiple elements.
As with so many other aspects of doing business online, the world of copywriting & content strategy is a blend of art and science. Some individuals/agencies argue there are 6 elements of brand voice. Others claim 4 elements. Both are valid.

Here, we go with *5 elements* that make up brand voice. One of those is **TONE**.

Brand tone is HOW you SOUND.

It goes beyond just the collection of words you put on a page, or within an Instagram caption.

Tone dives into how we show people **how we feel about our own message**, which **influences the way they will feel about our message**, too.

Why should you care?

How many times have you heard the same "Always use your AUTHENTIC brand voice! Be authentic! Be true to you! Be unique! Oh, and be authentic!" advice?

Easier said than done, right?

Because brand voice is made up of multiple elements, it can be difficult to find yours and use it consistently if you don't first **break it down, element-by-element.**

Plus, if you get brand tone WRONG — like it's out of alignment with your content or your overall purpose — you risk damaging your business. Imagine spending all the time building your brand up, and then it ends up not really catching on because the tone you're using in your messaging is off-putting.

I've seen that happen. Don't let it be you.

Oh, and **brand tone barely takes any time to uncover**. So why not?

1 Establish your Tone Of Voice Profile

Nielsen Norman Group has been researching user experience in the digital world way longer than any of us have, so I'm letting their work guide us.

Based on **4 dimensions**, use their framework to plan the tone of voice your messaging will use.

USE THE 4 DIMENSIONS OF BRAND TONE

Filling this out is easy: simply locate where your tone falls for each dimension. It's a sliding scale. You don't have to be ALL funny or ALL serious. You can be somewhere in the middle!

FUNNY   SERIOUS

CASUAL   FORMAL

SASSY   IRREVERENT

ENTHUSIASTIC   MATTER OF FACT
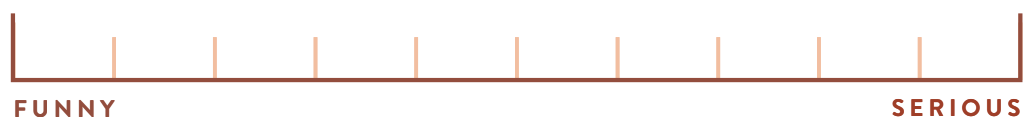
2 Elaborate on the WHY

This will **add more context** to your Tone of Voice Profile and make it stronger.

EXAMPLE: *We're a meditation studio, and our tone is more serious than funny because we are working with people going though major life transitions, getting to the root of heavy emotional turmoil.*

WHY #1

WHY #2

WHY #3

WHY #4

3 Identify any other helpful words

Are there other words that properly describe your tone? Jot 'em down! You can also include words that DON'T describe it.

EXAMPLE: *"We're gruff, but not scary"*
"We're informative, but still empathetic"

WORDS THAT DESCRIBE MY TONE

WORDS THAT DO NOT DESCRIBE MY TONE

Your tone can change

Your tone isn't cemented in stone and can—and should—change depending on the situation.

Think of the **Tone of Voice Profile as a baseline** which can be modified if necessary.

Change it up to **fit the end reader's emotional state**, as well as the topic at hand.

> *For example: my tone in my website content may be "funny," but if I'm chasing down a client who hasn't paid me in a month, that tone is going to be a bit different.*

You can always EDIT

Words are FREE. If you find your tone of voice needs to be modified in something you already have out there in the world, you can just go back through and edit!

Tone is only ONE element

We're not going over the other elements of brand voice here, but that doesn't mean they aren't important!

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