How to Write to Customers in Your Airline's Brand Voice

WACRA Annual Conference

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Leslie O'Flahavan, E-WRITE

e-write. Writing for online readers

WORLDWIDE AIRLINE Customer Relations ASSOCIATION ✈ WACRA

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Today’s topics

1. What brand voice is and how it affects your relationship with customers
2. Why an unfriendly customer service voice makes customers more difficult to serve
3. How to describe your airline's brand voice so you can use it when you write to customers
4. How to understand brand voice by working with your airline's marketing department
5. How to enable your customer service agents to use your brand voice

What is this brand's personality?

DRESS
OBSESSED

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Abercrombie & Fitch

www.abercrombie.com

Abercrombie and Fitch is the next generation of All-American, effortless style.

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abercrombie Introducing All-Way Stretch: We've put performance into play with our sensational new stretch-focused fabric. // Link in profile to shop.

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kaytlynnofficial Her leg isn't even straight 😂 @heatherpierre

heatherpierre @kaytlynnofficial true ture😂👌

heatherpierre true*

kaytlynnofficial The whole pose looks off. Like a spider. @heatherpierre 😂😂

heatherpierre bwhahah😂😂

heatherpierre @kaytlynnofficial ^

its.gemma @niamh_alice_ you'll be getting these then?😂

niamh_alice_ Yeaaaaaaaa @its.gemma

its.gemma I thought the picture was

Abercrombie & Fitch @Abercrombie · Sep 11

The #ANFChallenge: Our annual 5k & bike race, which benefits the #OSU Wexner Medical Ctr. @smallpools @aauthorsmusic

Brand personality in A&F customer service writing?

info: Let us grab a rep to chat with you.

info: You are now chatting with A&F agent 'John'

John: Hey, what's up? How can I help you today?

Susan: i ordered a package on 11-26-14 and fed ex can not find it ??? tracking number is *****086367. FedEx said to contact you????

John: Yeah, sure! I can help you with that.

John: Can I have your order number please?

Susan: 1234567

John: Thanks! Can I also have your email address?

Susan: Susan123@gmail.com

John: Give me a second and I'll check into that for you.

John: Here's your tracking information. FedEx said that they don't know what happened to it?

Susan: Yeah. Nice .....now what??

John: You can email us & we can get another order out to you. Let me grab the address for you.

John: Email us at Abercrombie@abercrombie.com

Susan: Just email U and give my order number 7 tracking number???

John: Yeah. Give us your order number we'll let you know what's up with your order. If FedEx lost it, we'll make it right.

Susan: K. Thx! Bye.

Disconnect between brand personality and customer service voice?

info: Let us find a customer service representative to chat with you.

info: You are now chatting with A&F agent 'John'

John: Hello. How may I help you today?

Susan: i ordered a package on 11-26-14 and fed ex can not find it ??? tracking number is *****086367. FedEx said to contact you????

John: Certainly. I would be pleased to help you with this issue.

John: May I have your order number please?

Susan: 1234567

John: Thank you for that information. May I also have your email address?

Susan: Susan123@gmail.com

John: Please wait approximately one minute and I will investigate this situation.

John: Here is your tracking information. Please confirm that FedEx cannot locate your shipment.

Susan: Yeah. Nice .....now what??

John: Please email us so we may consider replacing your order. I will provide the required email address.

John: Email us at Abercrombie@abercrombie.com

Susan: Just email U and give my order number 7 tracking number???

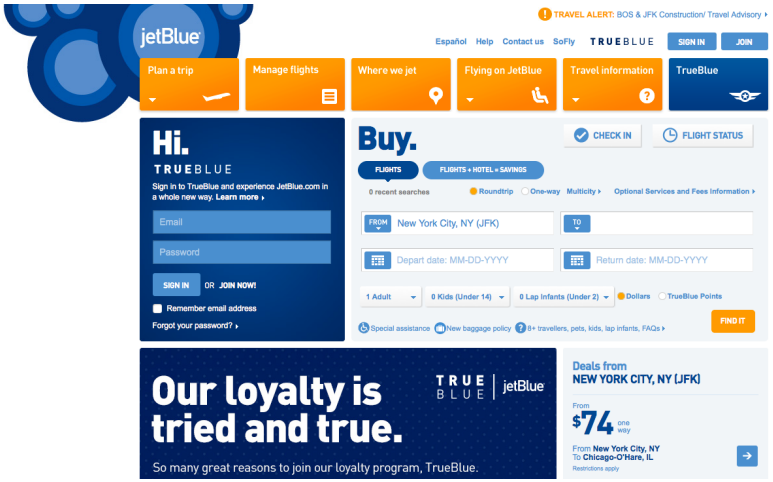
John: You must provide your tracking number in the email to enable us to find or replace your order.

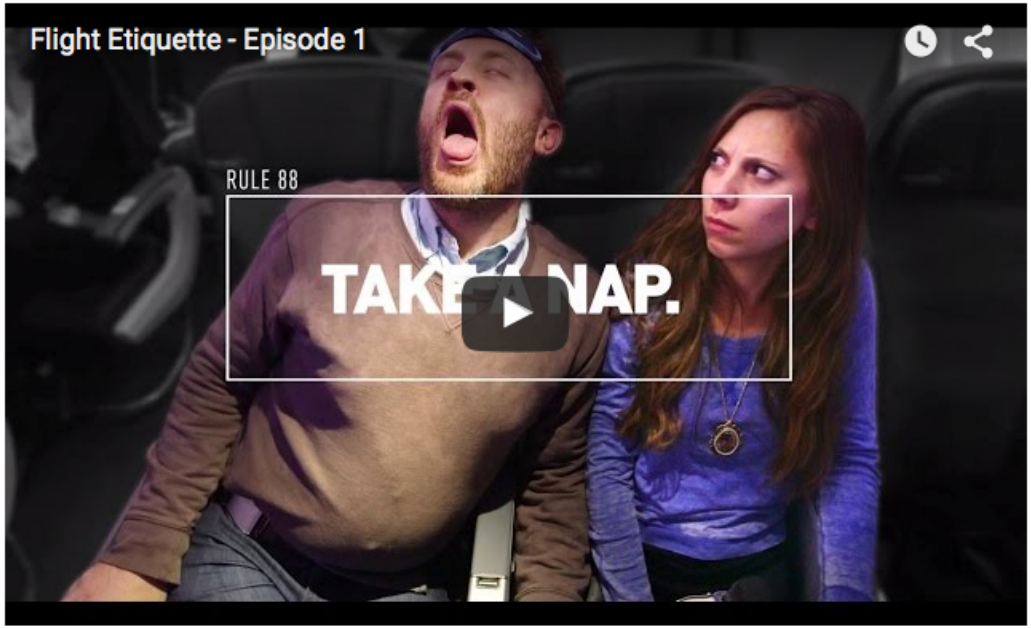
Susan: K. Thx! Bye.

Your airline has a brand personality.

That brand personality has a voice.

If this is your airline's brand personality…





Then this is your customer care brand voice…

Emily Ingebretsen @emilyinyc · 13h

@JetBlue How hard would it be to switch JFK flight to RDU this Thursday to a CLT one?

JetBlue Airways @JetBlue · 13h

@emilyinyc We'd be happy to check out the options with you, Emily! Give us a call so we can take a look: 1-800-JETBLUE

9:29 PM - 27 Sep 2015 · Details

Your airline conveys its brand personality through…

- Print ads
- TV and radio ads
- Social media channels
- Loyalty program marketing
- Logo, color palette, livery, uniforms
- Tagline
- Email blasts
- Safety and other videos

Five words that describe your airline's brand personality

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

When your customer service voice doesn't match your airline's brand personality,

your customers become more difficult to serve

Your airline sounds like this person

Your Customer Care team writes like this person

Which words give this email its voice?

Dear Mr. Roberts,

Your inquiry of 17 February has been received through our Customer Care Line.

Our records indicate that your original ticket (Las Vegas to New York on 14 February 2015) was purchased through a travel agency. The ticket issued by said travel agency issued was a coach ticket for $1,254.99.

Further, the ABC Airlines gate agent collected a First Class upgrade fee of $349, thus you were accommodated in our First Class Cabin on your scheduled flight. Therefore, the applicable service fee was collected.

In addition, our First Class passengers are allowed to check up to two bags without charge. We have, therefore, have authorized our Refunds Department to credit the account (card number ending in 3478) for $25 that you paid for your bag fee. This refund amount will be posted to your next credit card statement or the one thereafter. Please allow up to 15 business days for this refund to appear.

We continue to hope that ABC Airlines remains your carrier of choice.

Sincerely,
Lawrence Webster
ABC Airlines, Customer Care

Write the same ideas in a warmer voice

Dear Mr. Roberts,

Your inquiry of 17 February has been received through our Customer

Got your email

Our records indicate that your original ticket (Las Vegas to New York on 14 February 2015) was purchased through a travel agency. The ticket issued by said travel agency issued was a coach ticket for $1,254.99.

Further, the ABC Airlines gate agent collected a First Class upgr
thus you were accommodated in our First Class Cabin on your scheduled flight.
Therefore, the applicable service fee was collected.

Did our research

In addition, our First Class passengers are allowed to check up to two bags without charge. We have, therefore, have authorized our Re
credit the account (card number ending in 3478) for $25 tha
bag fee. This refund amount will be posted to your next credit card statement or the one thereafter. Please allow up to 15 business days for this refund to appear.

We owe you money

We continue to hope that ABC Airlines remains your carrier of

We like you & hope you like us

Sincerely,

Lawrence Webster
ABC Airlines, Customer Care

Describe your airline's brand voice so you can use it in customer service writing

Complete this sentence…

To our customers, our airline is a _____.

(a noun; a type of person)

Complete this sentence…

To our customers, our airline is a _____

(adjective)

_____.

(a noun; a type of person)

How does an *adjective noun* reply to this customer?

Dear ABC Airlines,

Thank you for your courtesy authorization to waive the $150 change fee due to my son's surgery and to give me the opportunity to use the LAX to IAD portion of the flight as a credit towards another flight.

However, I haven't had time to firm up my plans to use the one way credit of $130 towards a LAX to IAD flight as of today. Is there any possibility that I can you can extend this credit that I could have more time to make my plans to use it? If you could give me 30 to 60 more days I would really appreciate it and then I'll know that it can be put to good use for a future flight.

This is for Ticket 123 1234 123 123 and reservation number ABCDEF.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Monica Morris

Does this reply sound like an *adjective noun*?

Dear Ms. Morris,

Although it is our sincere desire to assist our guests with their requests, because an expired ticket is purged from our system one month after its expiration, we are unable to grant your request.

Our records show that your ticket is still in our system as of December 27. Please call our Reservations Department and rebook your return flight ASAP. Please refer to your ticket number: 123 1234 123 123.

Thank you for taking the time to contact us.

Bob Smith, ABC Airlines Customer Care

Work with your marketing department to understand your airline's brand voice

Review your airline's brand book

Most brand books include some advice about writing style, tone, and word choice

lingo

tone of voice

Don't over complicate.
Tell it like it is.

Be direct and get to the point.

Always look for the simplest way to say what you want.

We believe that a message is better read when it's simple to understand.

Be direct and talk the language of **your** customer. They will appreciate your honesty and simplicity.

Do not be afraid to use colloquialisms – or should we say... Do not be afraid to use plain and simple phrases?

We're never sexist, after all, **easyGroup** is for the many, not the few but we're often cheeky and always try to raise a smile.

For example, **easyJet** cabin crew have said,
"If you have enjoyed your flight today, thank you for choosing **easyJet**. If you haven't thank you for flying Ryanair!" and
"It is a routine regulation that we dim the cabin lights for landing, it also enhances the beauty of our senior cabin crew!"

The editorial voice is honest, visionary, smart, and caring — editorial analogues to our brand personality attributes: genuine, innovative, exceptional, and involved. The editorial voice seeks to foster an emotional connection between customers and the Adobe brand. Therefore, it must contain life and compel a reaction.

We expect a certain level of intelligence from our audience, avoiding lowest-common-denominator communication. Visuals and type should not compete, but support each other. We are direct and confident, bold yet not boastful. In display type, the voice should speak peer to peer and focus on real-world value rather than technical features.

We speak conversationally. We express a passion for technology but an understanding that innovation is nothing without customer benefit. We have a strong voice that understands customer needs, leads changes, and commands trust. We revolutionize the way people communicate with ideas and information. We are revolutionaries.

BRAND BOOK

Updated June 1, 2013

HAWAIIAN AIRLINES

CONSUMER AFFAIRS OFFICE EMAIL STYLE GUIDE

Updated July 1, 2014

HAWAIIAN AIRLINES

How to enable your customer service agents to use your airline’s brand voice when the write to customers

Your agents can write in your airline's brand voice if…

- The Customer Care team understands what the brand voice is
- Management reduces the distance between Marketing and Customer Care
- Your templates are written in the brand voice
- You allow (require) agents to freetext
- You help agents see the brand voice "zones" in written communications

Some “zones” of an email are richer in brand voice

Dear Ms. Morris,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Mauris quis ligula vehicula tortor pulvinar malesuada non at purus. Curabitur a metus dignissim orci aliquet consequat eu et libero. Nullam pretium lectus enim, eget scelerisque erat rutrum quis.

Ut ultrices ligula non turpis mollis maximus. Mauris malesuada odio vel felis ornare venenatis.

- Morbi tincidunt placerat velit quis ultrices. Sed quis tellus vel enim fermentum egestas non vitae diam.
- Phasellus interdum metus quis erat fringilla aliquet. Nulla luctus sapien ut est blandit hendrerit.

Donec sed nunc pretium, hendrerit purus ac, pretium dolor.

Nullam in nunc vel urna pellentesque sollicitudin. Etiam sit amet dapibus turpis. Aliquam imperdiet lorem et lectus ultrices, at fermentum purus tempor.

Pellentesque imperdiet rhoncus eleifend. Proin efficitur nulla id ullamcorper viverra. Maecenas at tincidunt ipsum. Sedommodo@ABCAirlines.com or 1-800-123-4567.

Placerat nisl vel accumsan. Nunc quis neque dui. Nam aliquet lacus ut mauris malesuada, et sollicitudin felis scelerisque.

Sincerely,

John Smith, ABC Airlines

Dear Ms. Morris,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Mauris quis ligula vehicula tortor pulvinar malesuada non at purus. Curabitur a metus dignissim orci aliquet consequat eu et libero. Nullam pretium lectus enim, eget scelerisque erat rutrum quis.

Ut ultrices ligula non turpis mollis maximus. Mauris malesuada odio vel felis ornare venenatis.

- Morbi tincidunt placerat velit quis ultrices. Sed quis tellus vel enim fermentum egestas non vitae diam.
- Phasellus interdum metus quis erat fringilla aliquet. Nulla luctus sapien ut est blandit hendrerit.

Donec sed nunc pretium, hendrerit purus ac, pretium dolor.

Nullam in nunc vel urna pellentesque sollicitudin. Etiam sit amet dapibus turpis. Aliquam imperdiet lorem et lectus ultrices, at fermentum purus tempor.

Pellentesque imperdiet rhoncus eleifend. Proin efficitur nulla id ullamcorper viverra. Maecenas at tincidunt ipsum. Sedommodo@ABCAirlines.com or 1-800-123-4567.

Placerat nisl vel accumsan. Nunc quis neque dui. Nam aliquet lacus ut mauris malesuada, et sollicitudin felis scelerisque.

Sincerely,

John Smith, ABC Airlines

3 things you can do right away to help your Customer Care team write in your airline's brand voice

1. Get your airline's brand book and review the writing guidance it contains
2. Ask your agents to complete the *adjective noun* exercise we did today. Discuss the results.
3. Consider updating the email's opening and closing to make it closer to your airline's brand voice

Questions? Comments?

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