

# 02 Voice + Tone

## How we tell our story

Every brand has a personality. Voice is how that personality is conveyed verbally. Word choice and tone create a distinct character that can only be Verb. This section outlines the Verb personality, and how to apply it consistently

## Verb's brand personality

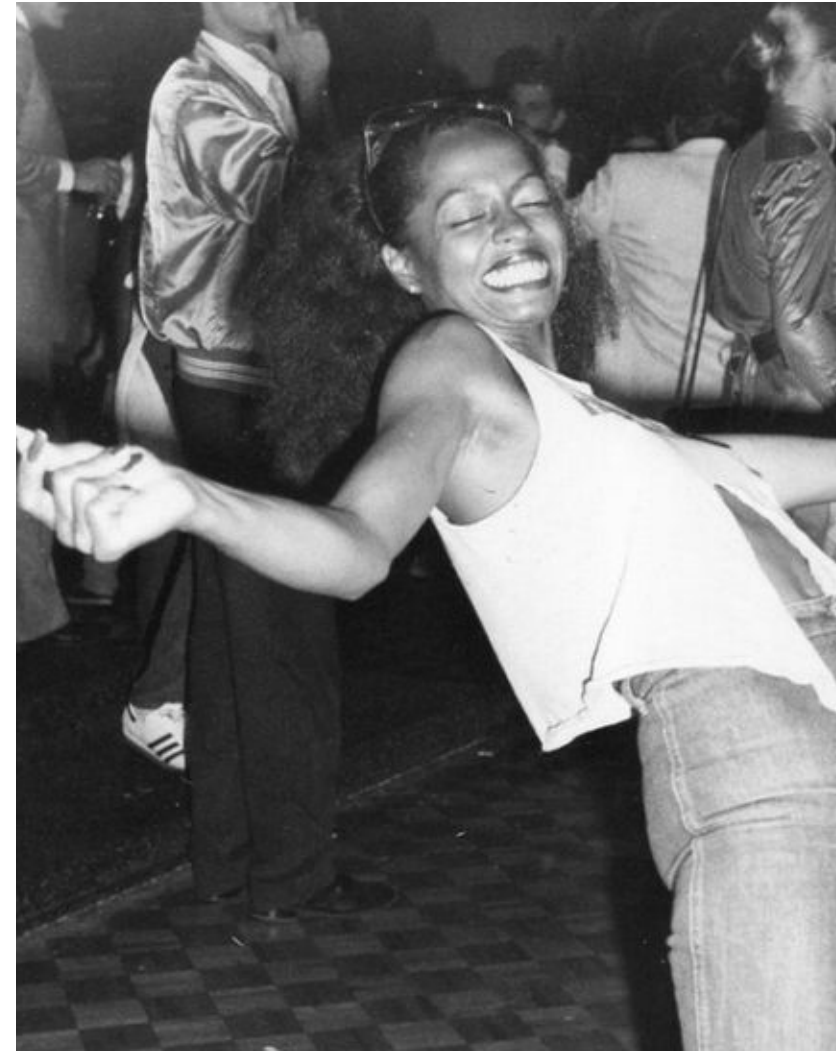
# The Playful Sage

EVERYMAN SAGE OUTLAW CAREGIVER

Wise | Grounded | Inspired | Challenging

Her philosophy is simple: live deeply, help who you can, and don't be afraid to make a little trouble. What strikes you first is her near-mystical connection with the world around her, she is present wherever she goes. She is practiced in following her truth, and rejects the idea that a fulfilling life is reserved for the lucky few. For her, life is about finding and living your purpose, the opinions of others be damned.

She moves through life confidently. Even in new situations she is grounded; stabilized by her optimism, guided by a compass of justice, and calmed by an open and accepting mind. She's as down-to-earth as she is inspiring. When she faces a challenge, the solution is always found through her well-tested values. Knowing her is to know a friend, a mentor, and a lover of life. She takes your personal growth seriously. Herself, not so much.



**We are:**

**WISE**

**GROUNDLED**

**INSPIRED**

**CHALLENGING**

## Brand Voice Principles

How do we communicate as the Playful Sage? Our voice principles help guide us in bringing her voice to life.

### 1 Lead with Insight

We've earned our wisdom and are driven to share it with others. Whether it's about our company, the state of leadership or a piece of content, sharing insight is our focus and mission. We speak from a position of knowledge, but never to show off to prove we know something. We are confident, clear, and provide knowledge people can use.

### 2 Keep it Simple

It is a magical thing to take challenging concepts and make them so gettable they can't be misunderstood. We cast spells of simplicity throughout everything we communicate - through clear explanation, a little humor, and simple storytelling. With the spirit of invitation and hospitality, we invite folks into knowledge, making it easier and making it make sense.

### 3 Describe What's Possible

We tip the scale towards a positive, bright outlook because we believe with the right knowledge we can create a better future. We frequently help our audiences imagine the results of their work and the progress they make along the way -- always driving towards a future that looks better than our present.

### 4 Challenge Assumptions

Often, the barrier between ignorance and knowledge is a wrongly held assumption. Couched in the right level of care and confidence, challenging assumptions can create clarity. When the time is right, we push our clients' thinking on process, outcomes, and understanding by pushing on old assumptions or unhelpful cultural stories.

## How we deliver our voice

### How do we “Lead with Insight”

#### DO

Share our knowledge openly, providing value to audiences as quickly as possible

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Provoke insight with rhetorical questions, declarative statements, and sharing of scientifically-backed information.

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Stand confidently in our expertise, remaining declarative with data, insight, and thought leadership

#### DON'T

Overshare, keeping insights singular and brief

Be showy or arrogant with knowledge sharing, always framing through how it helps/informs audiences

Share insight that is beyond the purview of the leaders/audiences were engaging, avoiding specific political stances or subjects as broad as “world hunger,” etc.

## How we deliver our voice

# Helpful tools: **Lead with Insight**

### We use this principle to

When starting new conversations with all audiences introducing them to our brand

When introducing a challenging or counterintuitive piece of learning content, beginning with a valuable insight as a way to broach the topic

When we want to make a bold statement that invites audiences to frame a problem or topic differently

#### Potential Use Cases:

Website homepage

Sales introductions

Introductory presentations and speaking events

Informative social media posts

### We use words and phrases like

Help

Inform

Change

Discovery

Latest science

Data shows

Consider the following...

Did you know?...

Our company was started because...

X percentage of leaders XYZ on a daily basis

What's your definition of leadership?

How do you leaders lead from behind?

There is a science to building trust

### Tactical applications can include:

Introduce the concept of conscious leadership with scientifically-back data about employees' changing expectations and the kinds of companies and leadership that attracts them

Set up and intentionally bust myths about commonly held leadership ideas, e.g. leaders must be extroverts or leaders have all the knowledge

Begin contact with a rhetorical question that intrigues audiences to dive deeper into a particular topic, e.g. "Does empowering employees mean giving them everything they want?"

## How we deliver our voice

### How do we “Keep it Simple”

#### DO

Say things plainly, avoiding jargon and slang. If the need does arise, couch vocabulary in simple explanation

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Make connections easy, link ideas to common understanding e.g., the necessity of teamwork, the ubiquity of personal growth, etc.

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Get to the heart of the matter quickly  
Tell simple stories, building a beginning middle and end that makes content more digestible

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Use simple puns and repetition to keep things light hearted, e.g. “mentorship without the bullship” or “wink wink” when sharing a short cut, mnemonic device or some other “insider” knowledge

#### DON'T

Don't bury the lede

Talk down to audiences by over explaining or prefacing new content with needless clauses, e.g. “In case you didn't know,” “In fact, xyz

Be silly or slap stick with humor, and channel puns, etc sparingly

## How we deliver our voice

### How do we “Describe What’s Possible”

#### DO

Describe in specific terms what positive outcomes can result from our training, e.g. greater respect and trust among teams, clearer communication between leadership and teammates, less turnover

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Share our aspirations for societal impact as a company, e.g. less burn out, more empowerment for employees, more empathetic leadership around the world, less exploitation, pro-human businesses

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Encourage learners along the way by reminding them of their goals, and their ability to persevere when challenges arise

#### DON'T

Describe “what’s possible” in intangible, utopian platitudes, e.g. “a better world,” “peace on earth.”

Use exclamation points too frequently to show our optimism and excitement about the future, e.g. describing “saving time with clearer communication” vs “work smarter!”

Share more than one to two examples of what’s possible in a single instance, the goal is to intrigue not overwhelm



## How we deliver our voice

# How do we “Challenge Assumptions”

## DO

Articulate what societal stories we are for and against, eg, against hierarchy among races, genders, classes, etc, for pluralism and employee empowerment, against employees being submissive to leadership

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Make challenging statements that evolve the meaning of a good leader, e.g. Soft spoken leaders are powerful, leadership is not control, teams must be nurtured, etc

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Include content/speakers/points of reference that are BIPOC, unrecognized heroes, women, sources that disrupt conventional categorization – men as scientists / women as only mothers, etc

## DON'T

Use often, people don't like to be constantly challenged

Exclude white men from resources and references entirely, simply balance those references with a more complete picture of scholarship and thinking

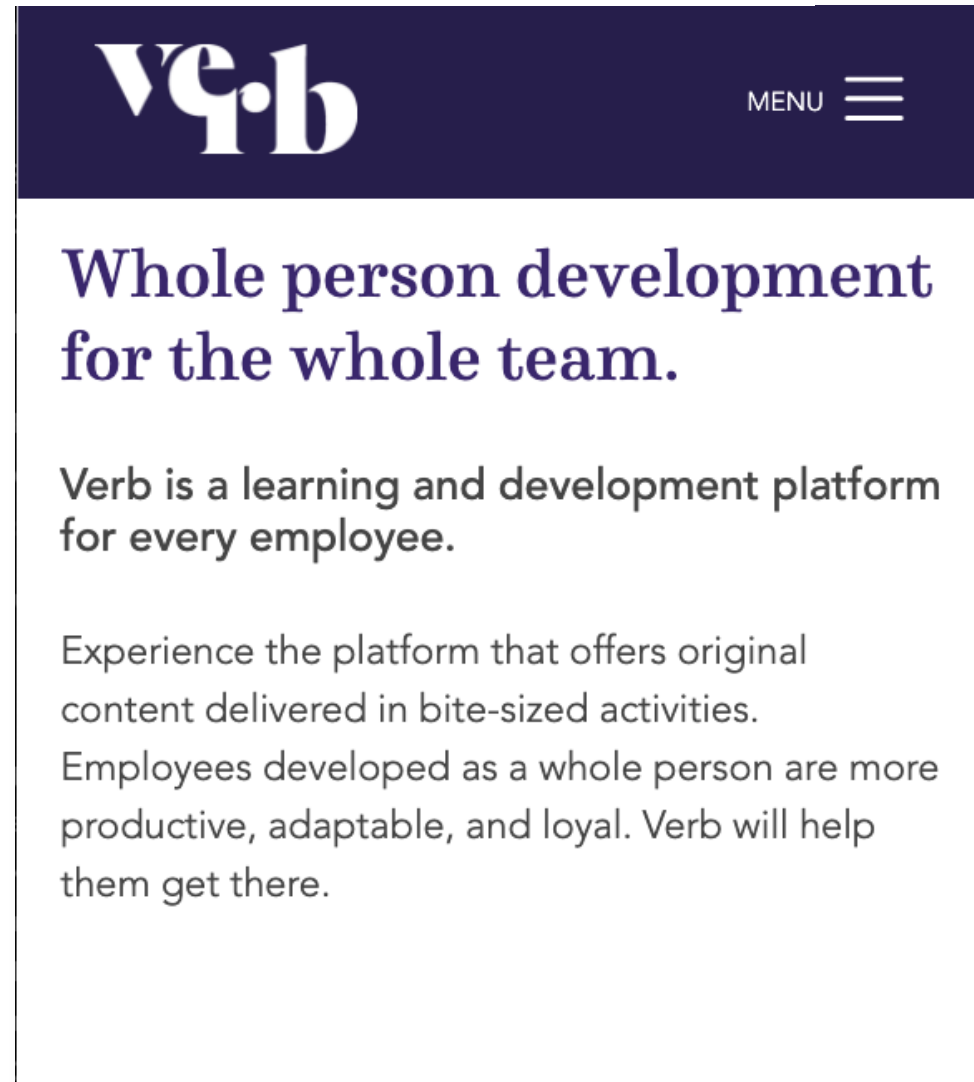
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Get overly narrow with leadership statements, avoiding mentions of particular leaders or demographics of leaders, e.g. “women leaders should xyz” or “Be like Elon Musk”

## Before + after

# New voice + tone in play

### Before



**verb** MENU

## Whole person development for the whole team.

Verb is a learning and development platform for every employee.

Experience the platform that offers original content delivered in bite-sized activities. Employees developed as a whole person are more productive, adaptable, and loyal. Verb will help them get there.

### After

## Developing the whole person is a whole lot better

Verb is a learning platform for all employees to develop as people not just workers.

We call it "whole person" development. We go beyond technical skills, exploring emotional awareness, bias, and communication. Because learners developed as whole people are more productive, flexible and they stick around longer.

#### Lead with insight

We hint at the effectiveness of our approach, inspiring further reading

#### Keep it simple

Introducing the term helps establish clarity

#### Describe What's Possible

Describing the tangible outcomes of our work, in an approachable way