

The Instant Brands Content Style Guide

This is how we say It

This Content Style Guide covers how we at Instant Brands communicate with words. When people say “it’s not what you say but how you say it,” this is how we say it.

What we say is also very important, but that’s Brand Messaging, and it’s for a different document.

How it looks is also very important, but that’s the Visual Style, also not covered here.

The Instant Voice

The Instant voice is honest, visionary, helpful, and caring — this is a direct reflection of our brand personality: genuine, innovative, useful, and involved. Our words should foster an emotional connection between customers and the Instant brand. We seek to make life – and the world around us -- better.

We are direct and confident, bold yet not boastful. Above all, we are humble. We do not engage in denigrating others to inflate ourselves. We don’t need to compare ourselves to the competition, that’s their job.

We speak conversationally. Our written word should sound like the spoken word. We have a strong voice that understands customer needs, leads changes, and commands trust. We revolutionize the way people engage with their most primal need: food. We represent evolution. Ease. Convenience. Health. Time well spent.

Our first point of contact with the audience should focus on real-world value rather than technical features. Technology is important, but those details should be made available for those who desire to seek it out, not overwhelming people at first glance. It is more important to tell the audience what we can do for them, not how we do it.

We express a passion for technology but an understanding that innovation is nothing without customer benefit. Tangible benefits > gadgetry.

Picky Details

- Use bulleted lists liberally
- End each point without punctuation
- Keep points concise
- Use active voice (passive voice should not be used)
- Employ verbs that engage the audience
- Avoid repetition
- Repetition is okay if used strategically

- Mostly, repetition is bad
- Paragraphs should be kept short
- One sentence paragraphs are okay, sometimes
- Vary sentence lengths, because it lends more punch to shorter sentences when surrounded by longer ones
- Keep sentences to one thought, avoid too many commas, and if you don't know how to use colons and semi-colons avoid them...ellipses are also to be used sparingly – if you need to separate thoughts, use em dashes -- but don't use too many dashes, because it gets confusing
- (Parentheses are rarely appropriate – if a thought is important enough to state, state it boldly in its own sentence)
- If you really need to separate a clause out – like this – sandwich it between em dashes
- In comma-separated lists, put the most important element first, try to have 3 elements, and use the Oxford comma before a coordinating conjunction in the final element
- Use numerals like 3 rather than spelling out three, even for numbers under 10
- Use “since” properly, because a lot of people don't
- Trademarks are tricky
 - Use the correct symbol -- ® or ™
 - Instant Pot®
 - Instant™
 - Use them like you would an acronym -- put the symbol after the first appearance of the Trademark in a document, but only after the first
- Always. Be. Consistent.
- Spelling matters
- Use hierarchy
 - Like this in lists
 - Also in headers
 - Use headers liberally
- Only capitalize the first word in headers and titles, unless the word should properly be capitalized
- Avoid capitalizing words that don't need it, such as internet and email
- Alliteration can be awesome
- Exclamation points are so overused!!
- Rhetorical questions are fine, right?
 - They are when you use them sparingly, to good emotional effect, and answer them
- Actively search out adverbs and ask yourself honestly if you absolutely need them
- **Bold** and *italics* may be use for emphasis, though sparingly
- Use “double” quotes when you must quote something
- Colloquialisms are totally okay, but, like, don't piss anyone off
- Swearing is not okay
- It's good to use contractions
- Be funny, but not at anyone's expense
- Don't use negative statements
- More is not always better; know when to stop