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TONE OF VOICE OF THE BRAND AND ITS IMPACT ON BUSINESS

Introduction. *Like the brands themselves, branding trends need to be updated from time to time so as not to lose touch with reality. Branding trends that once seemed modern and advanced are suddenly becoming obsolete. To stay relevant to your audience in the new year, you should consider the main trends.*

Today's customers are very picky, they have little to surprise, so you should not have high hopes for a hype slogan and a bright logo. In order to touch the heart of the audience you need to speak to her in one language.

Keywords: *marketing, brand, communication, trends, brand voice, tone of voice*

There are many contradictory events in the modern world. It has become more difficult for people to take a neutral position, and the same is true for companies. Consumers expect that the brands they prefer will take a position on some important social, environmental or economic issue. For more and more customers, brands that do not express their position cease to mean anything.

That's why one of the trends in branding in 2021 is to take a position on an important issue, ideally the same position as your target audience. Moreover, your position will be more important if you make it part of your brand identity [1].

Brand voice, or tone of voice – is your character, your tactics of communication with the client, the phrases with which you immediately mention your company. The rules apply to all channels: social networks, website, e-mails, the style of behavior of the «face» of the company, the language of the announcer in advertising, and up to phone conversations.

Methods. The research used methods: content analysis, observation, comparison, questionnaire, correlation method and statistical methods.

Tone of voice is an important component of marketing strategy, because it determines which associations the brand will evoke. «Voice» will emphasize your features, voice the values you adhere to, and highlight in a highly competitive environment.

What world-renowned companies say about the brand's «voice»: HubSpot: «The importance of tone of voice is huge. If the tone is far from the DNA of the brand, from the desires of customers, then you distance your business from achieving goals.

In order for all your actions to work for you, follow your statements». Uber: «Tone of voice is what unites the whole team. Voice and tone reveal our essence, they make it clear what values we adhere to. Thanks to them, people can say: «but it's like Uber» [2].

According to the Sprout Social Index survey, 40% of consumers single out a brand among others if its content is remembered, 33% say the content is important and 32% voted for a catchy story. And it is impossible to create convincing and unique content without a special voice of the brand.

Tone-of-voice (TOV or brand voice, tone of communication) is a style of business communication with its audience on all communication channels: in correspondence, social networks, on the site, during order confirmation, in personal interaction, in advertising and others. TOV is not just what the customer hears / reads. This is, above all, the impression he will get from interacting with the brand.

Tone-of-voice consists of:

1. Rules of communication of business with the audience

For example, how to greet the client, what questions to ask to identify the need, how to

respond to complaints and dialogue in a conflict situation, what info drives to use and whether to put emoji in messages.

2. Manners of communication

The brand is friends with the audience or keeps its distance. Communicates as a mentor or as an equal. Joking or serious. Creates an atmosphere of comfort or drive.

Compare, in both Foxtrot's Instagram and Philips, we see a friendly way of communicating with the audience. Both brands communicate on «you», on an equal footing with the client. However, Foxtrot has a more energetic presentation, with humor. He says like the same friend who at 2 o'clock in the morning will send a message and offer to jump with a parachute. Philips sounds warmer and more comfortable. As a friend who will bring home-made oranges and muffins when you are sick.

3. Values that business transmits

Because they are the basis of the rules of communication and manner of communication. For example, if a brand calls its value caring for a customer, it cannot ignore complaints or quarrel with the customer. His manner of communication should be friendly and open, no distance.

Why do businesses need their voice

Research by the Nielsen Norman Group has shown that 52% of consumers want to buy a brand if it seems reliable and trustworthy. And according to Semrush, 65% of customers feel concern for the brand when emotionally connected to it.

TOV for business is one of the tools to build relationships with the audience, build trust and emotional connection. The voice of the brand helps:

1. Be on the same wavelength with customers and potential buyers

Speak their language. Joke so that the audience understands the humor. Use slang that is present in the language of these people. Communicate on topics that are interesting and relevant to them.

For example, if your target audience is an accountant, you should not avoid professional vocabulary in communication with them. Otherwise, they will not consider you an expert. If you are developing some software, but your customers do not understand anything about it, it would not be appropriate to post jokes of programmers on social networks. Such humor simply will not reach the audience.

2. Establish uniform rules of communication

That there were no differences in the style of communication with the audience on social networks and, for example, in e-mail. If you are joking and posting memes on Instagram, you do not need to switch to a strict formal tone in the correspondence.

Imagine that a brand is a person. Would you like to communicate with someone who is simple and open today, and tomorrow behaves proudly and detachedly? Unlikely. Therefore, do not allow such mood swings in business.

In addition, uniform rules will help all employees who communicate with customers to build communication correctly and not get lost in difficult situations.

For example, your content manager will know exactly which info drive you can use for situational content. The sales manager will respond correctly to the complaint, not relying only on his emotional reaction. The copywriter will write the letter in the right company of the key, not to your liking.

3. Stand out among tons of content

Imagine walking in a crowd and dozens of strangers around saying something. Will you delve into their words? Most likely not, because it's just background noise. However, if you meet an acquaintance, then stop talking or at least greet him. Same with content from brands.

The average duration of a person's attention on the Internet is only 8 seconds, 55% of the pages hold the visitor for no more than 15 seconds (according to the GO-Gulf blog).

At the same time, tons of posts, letters, videos, podcasts and other materials appear every

moment. It's getting harder to catch and hold the audience's attention. But when a brand has its own unique voice, over time people remember it.

And they react to content much more willingly, because they see not just a store / agency / course, but someone familiar with whom you can stop and talk [3; 5-7].

Many modern trends will have a significant impact on the aesthetics of the brand. So, the main trends in brand design this year: muted colors, minimalism, asymmetry, data visualization, flat icons and illustrations, simple and classic fonts, motion logo, overlapping designs, geometric shapes, dark mode, affordable design, use of slides in social networks, text videos, natural design, authenticity [4].

Conclusions. The described tendencies testify that there was a shift towards personalization and interaction. Never before has the humanization of branding been so relevant. Now the relationship between the brand and the customer is based on friendship and emotions.

Like the brands themselves, branding trends need to be updated from time to time so as not to lose touch with reality. Branding trends that once seemed modern and advanced are suddenly becoming obsolete. To stay relevant to your audience in the new year, you should consider the main trends.

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