Voice, Tone, and Style Guide for Shado Design

Introduction

The purpose of Shado Design is to provide easy to use, immediately informative, designed-with-humans-in-mind, delightful experience and product designs for companies of all sizes and industries. The designs enable users to seamlessly accomplish what they need to do and provide the business insights that help enable business goals.

Through interviews with user teams, marketing, management, and IT, the intent is to arrive at common goals. Using these common goals, Shado Design creates delightful, informative, client-specific solutions that help customers and propel businesses.

Persona

If Shado Design were a person what would they be like? How would they speak? How would they interact with others?

> Shado Design is confident and a great communicator--expressive and an effective listener. They stand out, are welcoming, and memorable. Shado Design is a free spirit, like a kid with a smile on his face, sometimes a smirk. He's got a sparkle in his eye. Shado Design wants to understand others, solve problems, and genuinely help people.

Audience

Shado Design communicates with Influencers and Decision Makers. This includes: Product Directors, Sr Product Managers, Product Managers, Project Managers, Developers, UX professionals, Marketing Managers, among others.

Principles

Principles or core attributes Shado Design is committed to:

Clients:

- Treating everyone with kindness and respect.
- Work with integrity. Provide quality work on time, every time.
- Client satisfaction.
- Sound business processes. You'll know what to expect.
- Value: you're getting a great product for your investment.
- Leaving a lasting impression with work quality, style, and expertise.

Product:

- Helpful, but not in the way
- Clear, but not pushy
- Detailed, but not extraneous

Voice

Based on the principles above, Shado Design's voice is:

- **Human**: We may design technical products that deal with a lot of data, but there's no reason to talk that way to you. The data is important, but doesn't mean much unless it's assigned meaning by a human.
- **Lively:** We're passionate about design, but know how to hold things lightly and have fun.
- **Helpful** but not in the way. We'll let you know the important stuff, and bow out once that's accomplished.
- **Clear**: Plainspoken and direct. We say what we mean.
- **Detailed** but not extraneous.

Voice Chart*, based on the product principles above.

	Helpful	Clear	Detailed
Concepts	Organized, always an answer (tool tips)	Shows the right data for the need; no extraneous words	Get the info you need; offers multiple levels of data
Vocabulary	Nothing that obscures meaning	Simple sentence structure, less is more, use clear identifiers (nouns) and actions (verbs)	Be specific about references to specific parts or functions -- design-centric words
Verbosity	Provide clear direction where necessary	As few words as possible, be brief and be gone	Full but simple sentences are ok, use a tool tip for further explanations
Grammar	Simple sentences or phrases, with a smile	Simple sentences or phrases	Chicago Manual of Style guidelines
Punctuation	Periods with multiple sentences, none where there is just one	None needed, unless for clarity	Proper punctuation for each detailed statement
Capitalization	Sentence case	Sentence case	Sentence case

*Thanks to Torrey Podmajersky for the above table referenced in *Strategic Writing for UX*, O'Reilly Media, © 2019.

Tone

Shado Design's tone is direct and also Informal; it doesn't waste any time. We know there's work to be done. But, we take cues from the users' emotional state. They are curious about who we are; they want to learn from our work, they're eager to start up a conversation with us. All of this directs how we address our customers.

Content Forms

Content will fit certain modes on pages in order to be uniform and reusable.

Information architecture: list what the page is in a word or two. List it left to right in the upper navigation based on its importance. The more important, the closer it should be to the Home page. Also think about a customer journey through the site. What page were they just on, and where should they go next?

Home page: When listing a short description of a page, use a 5-7 word headline to introduce what the page is. Use a single sentence to describe what the page contains, and use a two to three word button that echos the headline and is action oriented.

Our Process and About us pages: update as needed. Keep the ideas simple and straightforward. Remember, a user's attention will be short, so keep the important information "above the fold" for less scrolling, or listed first in the sentence or paragraph.

Case Studies: Create these with the perspective of answering:
- What was the challenge or problem?
- What were proposed and chosen solutions?
- What were the outcomes?

These three questions will help create a compelling narrative of any project. Be sure to choose engaging images that add to the story. Any time you can present data, changed behaviors or attitudes, it strengthens the story and the outcome.

Ideal Journey

It is preferable that a user or visitor has the following experience with Shado Design. Understand instantly what the business is → Interested, they want to stay and look more → Should be able to get more information as they stay → Should feel some inspiration → Should be easy to reach out → click link to *Contact Shado Design* → Send a message requesting to meet, talk, or share.

Buttons

Buttons are the direct actions that a user takes by clicking them. Buttons are like a road sign to the next place they're headed. The button explains quickly and succinctly the action one is taking and (or) where they're headed next.

Forms

Forms should be simple, clear about their purpose, and logically organized. Forms should have clearly labeled form boxes, and the labels should provide the clearest meaning of what is needed for the input box. If a piece of input needs to be in a certain format (phone numbers, dates, etc.) a shadow example should be provided:

Phone

> *(x x x) x x x – x x x x*

Success messages

Affirmation of an action should clearly communicate that the intended action was accomplished.

- *Your message has been sent!*
- *Thanks for sending us a note. We'll get back to you shortly.*

Empty states

If certain functionality exists but has not been started by a user, use a statement to communicate what the space or functionality is for, and how to take advantage of it.

Write your message here...

SEO

SEO helps improve how easy it is for search engines (Google) to find, crawl, and index your website and individual pages.

1. Page Title
   a. Page titles/title tags should not exceed 60 characters. Explore Moz SEO basics for [title tags](#) for more info.
   b. Page titles should all include Shado Design at the beginning, following by a bar (|), i.e. Shado Design | Home
2. Meta Keywords
   a. Keywords should be as specific as possible.
      i. Consider using [long-tail keywords](#) (search terms that contain three or more words) where possible to [improve site traffic.](#)
      ii. Ask yourself these questions when generating keywords: Is the keyword relevant to your content? Will searchers find what they are looking for on your site when they search using these keywords? Will they be happy with what they find? Will this traffic result in financial rewards or other organizational goals? The answer to all of these questions should be a clear "Yes!" to the best of your knowledge.
   b. All keywords should be lowercase with the exception of titles and acronyms
   c. Include as many as you think are relevant to the page
3. Meta Description
   a. About 300 characters
   b. Write full sentences that you think someone would find helpful if they found the page in a Google search
   c. Try to include some keywords

4. Example:

Page title: Shado Design | Home
Meta keywords: design, UX design, design thinking, design principles, design thinking solutions, UX design for enterprise, UX design for dashboards, design for complex business challenges, visual data design, great design agencies, best global design agencies, global design agency, helpful user experience, detailed design, clear UX design
Meta description: Shado Design is a global design studio that works to resolve your UX design business challenges. We provide helpful, clear, and detailed solutions that tell your story through bold ideas and bold designs.

Loading indicators

Let the user know that the information they're looking for or just clicked on is loading or coming to the page soon. For Shado Design, that could be a phrase, or that could be an animated design that repeats.

404 pages

This let's the user know gently that they've entered a wrong address, or that the content they're looking for is no longer there. This is a chance to show a little character and be fun with the message. But don't take too long.
Also, always provide a path forward to the home page, a search bar, or related topics.

- *That page hasn't been designed yet! But we're working on some great ideas.*
- *That content is no longer available, or is being redesigned. Check back again!*

Appendix

- ★ For those things not covered in this style guide, please refer to [Mailchimp's style guide](#).