

tone of voice

The CTC's brand is not restricted to its visual representation—the written and spoken word should also reflect the core values of the brand.

The tone of voice should be informal, personal, revealing and concise—like one traveller talking to another traveller. It should sound as though you are telling a good friend about your unique experience in Canada.

This section provides more guidance on how to achieve this tone of voice.



Our new tone of voice is personal. Speak from the heart and provide a launch pad for experience and imagination.

What is Brand Canada?

A brand is a distinguishing symbol, mark, logo, name, word, sentence or combination of these that companies use to distinguish their product.

In our case, Canada is the Brand.

“Keep Exploring” is the tagline.

The Brand Promise is what the consumer can expect from the brand. Ours is: When you come to Canada, you can create your own unique and extraordinary personal experiences. We call these “wow” experiences.

The Brand personality is confident, youthful, informal, warm, witty, intriguing, authentic (real) and open. The idea behind having a consistent style of writing in CTC communication is to continually reinforce that refreshed Brand personality.

Who is our audience?

The curious traveller.

We are talking to people who believe in participating in life, not sitting on the sidelines; people who are inquisitive, who want to learn about themselves and the world around them. Quite simply, we are speaking to the curious traveller.

Why are we doing this?

- Canada is currently a destination of consideration. We want to be a destination of choice, and we want curious travellers to choose Canada now!
- To attract high-yield visitors to Canada.

What is the Brand tone of voice?

If our Brand could speak, what would it sound like? Brand Canada’s tone is informal and personal, intimate and revealing, straightforward and concise. And the source is a trusted confidante, not a government entity.

Writing in the brand tone of voice is like telling a story to a good friend. It’s a conversation, speaking traveller to traveller.

The underlying message

Freedom...

... to explore.

... to be yourself.

... to experience Canada in a personal way.

Canada is the blank canvas on which the traveller has the freedom to paint his/her own unprescribed experience.

Your exploration could be a series of encounters, moments in which you create personally exclusive memories by doing things that spark your imagination and ignite your passion. Canada enables you to try new things, hang out with people you never thought you would, find yourself speaking French, discover something new, gain perspective and knowledge. You will be more than you were before.

Convey emotion.

This is not factual downloading, it's personal. Speak from the heart. Tell what your mind is sensing, not what your body is doing. Traditional destination marketing is brain to heart—listing a grocery list of activities, places and events in hopes of connecting with the traveller. Now, we're talking heart to heart, providing a launch pad for experience and imagination. We are fulfilling that deep personal need for profound and unique life experiences.

But, keep it light.

Sprinkle your text with some signature Canadian humour and wit. Have fun.

Take me with you!

The reader needs to feel as if he is in the place with you, and believe it:

What does the beach in Tofino smell like?

What do the Prairies sound like?

What does a tourtière taste like in Montréal on Christmas eve?

What does a sea cucumber feel like?

Put yourself there.

Then tell us about it. Any place can offer buildings and mountains and oceans. It's how the experience of being in our country makes you feel that distinguishes us from every other travel destination. Don't forget your sense of humour; i.e., "My first mistake was thinking I could use a sea cucumber in a salad."

Know the place you're describing.

Don't fake it. Do your research. Get on the phone. Read a blog. Talk to the locals. Get on an airplane. See it with your own eyes. Blend knowledge with personality, insight with passion, confidence with a fresh, optimistic perspective.

When you write, hit on one or all of these:

1. Personal sense of connection to a place: This can be quite sensual ("I became a part of this mountain, or at least a little piece of it").
2. Personal sense of accomplishment: You've done things you've never done before, perhaps risk-taking ("Watching my dad on his 79th birthday jump in a raft and go whitewater rafting down the Kokanee river-rapids at level 3!").

3. Personal sense of growth: You've learned something about yourself; seen the world from a different perspective ("With the forest floor 80 feet below, moving quietly alone through the tree canopy, I gained a genuine appreciation for our fragile ecosystem").
4. Personal sense of contribution: You volunteered to clean up Jasper National Park on World Environment Day. You joined a highway crew picking up litter in the Yukon Territory.

Get to the point early.

This is Canada. We don't ramble on here—unless we're in a pub in Newfoundland. That's a whole other story.

Keep it simple.

We're straightforward people. Our writing should reflect this.

Stay away from the hard sell.

You may be selling a hotel room or a rental car, but to the traveller, you are providing the chance for a personal experience—the sale is merely a byproduct. Traditionally, you might say, “Hertz vacation special \$300” in your headline and in the main text explain what the traveller can see from his car. We are flipping that around. Now we are hooking the traveller with the experience and then saying, by the way, now you can do it thanks to this great offer from Hertz.

Soften your verbs.

We’re trying to soften the use of imperative verbs, as in “discover,” “experience,” and “visit,” in our writing. We’ll still be using them, but maybe not at the beginning of a sentence; rather woven into a sentence. Feel free to involve the reader by saying, “You might discover...” for instance. Of course, it’s easy to overdo the use of the word “you.” That’s why we’re trying to make it subtle; i.e., “You thought you’d seen it all when you roughed it beside a glacier lake. It might take a week before the grin leaves your face. And the grit leaves your teeth.”

Speak to the curious traveller.

Here’s an example: Canada’s regional, multicultural culinary traditions use fresh, locally sourced ingredients in original, unexpected ways that you will only find here. But instead of the usual anecdotes of dining on pristine fare in a three-star restaurant, we tell the individual’s story of shopping with a chef—hunting for morels in the forest or selecting the plumpest oyster at a public market—and learning how to squeeze the essence out of each salmonberry and heirloom tomato.

Here’s your check list.

When you’ve finished, read it out loud. Ask yourself:

- Does this sound personal?
- Does it feel natural?
- Does it feel intimate?
- Does it feel unique?
- Does it feel authentic (real)?
- Does it give me a tingle?
- Would it motivate me to book a trip to Canada?