

Write

The VELUX Group's tone of voice guide

Bringing light to life



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Hello and welcome to Write

You are reading the VELUX Group's tone of voice guide Write. Write is here to help us communicate effectively with our stakeholders.

Tone of voice is not about *what* we say but *how* we say it.

How we communicate is a key tool to building our brand image – how people perceive us. To make sure that we build a strong brand image, we

need to communicate consistently and in the right tone. Therefore it is important for us to think about the language we use and the way we construct sentences to express ourselves.

It is no good saying we are engaging if our language is not. So we need a strong verbal style that we all understand and know how to use. Together with colleagues, we have identified and described that style:

four guiding principles for how we write. Using these, we portray our brand in the right manner, which will help protect our strong brand image.

This guide is a tool to inspire you and improve your writing. Hopefully, this will serve as a fast track to sparkling and powerful writing that is as enjoyable to read as it was to write.

Our guiding principles



1st principle: Personal

Be personal e.g. use "I", "you" and "we" instead of "the company". Use the active voice rather than the passive. For example, "The design team developed the project" and not "The project was developed by the design team".

2nd principle: Simplicity

Keep your sentences short and your points clear. Prioritise one key message and focus on it. Avoid technical language wherever possible.

3rd principle: Inspire

Find an insight that helps you to connect directly with your reader. Use images and infographics. Add a little sparkle to the headline instead of just stating the obvious.

4th principle: Authentic

Be authentic and factual about what you want to say. Base communication on facts and be sure to add relevance to the reader.

If you have any questions please reach out to us in the Brand Strategy team – we are here to help.

1st principle

We want to be personal

Whether we are talking to end-users, installers, specifiers or to employees, we always strive to have a conversation. Our stakeholders sometimes feel that we write and speak in a “distant” tone. We want to be close to our stakeholders and have them feel that we understand them. To do so, we must communicate directly to them as individuals and talk in a way that is personal and relevant to them. This

means addressing them in a clear, helpful and personal tone. No matter if they encounter us via an email, sales brochure, social media post, on the intranet or in person.

We always base our communication on insights about the audience to ensure that our communication is relevant and personal.

**Principle**

1st principle: We want to be personal

DO

- **Do try**
to address the reader by name or title if possible,
for example Dear Mr Anderson
- **Do write**
"we" or "us" instead of "The VELUX Group"
if suitable for the context
- **Do use**
personal forms of address, "I" and "you"
- **Do make**
your texts personal. For example consider what matters
to the reader and address these needs

- **Don't use**
internal VELUX Group terms for target
group such as: end-user, distributor or
installer in external communication
- **Don't write**
"The company" in a text. It creates distance
between you and the reader
- **Don't be**
overly formal in your writing. It makes us
seem further away from the reader. For
instance, avoid using passive voice "The
project was implemented by HR". Rather,
use the active form: "HR implemented the
project".

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2nd principle

We want to be authentic

Being authentic means that we are not afraid to talk about challenges and lessons learned. We talk about real people and real life situations that people can relate to. We strive to be careful, consistent and balanced in our communication and we never write anything inaccurate.

We want to have long-lasting, sustainable relations with our stakeholders. To succeed in that we must create professional bonds that are productive and worth maintaining for our stakeholders as well as for us. That is why we strive to be reliable and fair and base our communication on facts. By being genuine and honest in our interaction with our stakeholders we establish trust.



Principle

2nd principle: We want to be authentic

DO

- **Do use examples and stories**
Those from real life with genuine people in actual situations are better than constructed examples
- **Do know what**
target group you are communicating to and what matters to them
- **Do be honest**
Deliver your points in a truthful, sober and straightforward way, and always base your arguments on facts

- **Don't use**
overly "selling" language as this can make us appear less trustworthy.
E.g. avoid adjectives such as "groundbreaking", "game-changing" or "cutting-edge".
- **Don't use**
exaggerations such as unbelievable, or anything that can be misleading
- Don't be arrogant**
 - E.g. don't talk badly about others to gain an advantage. And for example, always find the neutral or positive angle
- Don't communicate facts alone**
 - Facts do not convey an appealing story. We need to connect both rationally and emotionally with the reader

NOT

Principle

3rd principle

We seek to inspire

We seek to inspire people through our communication. Internally, we want to inspire the people we work with. Externally, we want to demonstrate that our knowledge/expertise has a positive impact in the world. This means we need to write in a way that is interesting for our reader and we need to add a little extra sparkle

to a text instead of just stating the obvious. We wish to communicate – not just inform.

While we continually seek inspiration in the world around us, we also aim to be a source of inspiration for the building industry and the people we work with.



3rd principle: We seek to inspire

DO

- **Do use cases and examples**
Exemplifying usually benefits our reasoning
- **Do encourage dialogue**
and sharing of knowledge and opinions
- **Do make the audience feel**
and not just understand – what you have to say. Seek to establish a strong connection with the reader. And make good use of imagery to catch the attention of your audience
- **Do use call-to-action**
to explain what possibilities the readers have. Explain to them what they can do and how

- **Don't forget your reader**
What is in it for the reader?
Put yourself in the position of the receiver and shape the message with your target group in mind
- **Don't use corporate jargon**
such as "low-hanging fruits",
"think outside the box", "leverage" or
"thought leader".
Business buzzwords tend to annoy the reader and create distance
- **Don't over-promise**
We may not be able to deliver on promises. And of course, never lie or twist the truth

NOT

4th principle

We strive for simplicity

Striving for simplicity is about making things easy to understand. We cut away the unnecessary information and tell people what they need to know – in a clear and straightforward way.

But being straightforward doesn't mean that we are over-simplifying or being condescending. It means that we avoid over-complicated terminology and jargon that is exclusive to our sector or discipline. We make our language as understandable as possible. People don't have time to wade through complex and long-winded explanations. We stand a much better chance of getting our message across if we keep it simple.

When we focus on simplicity we break down barriers and get closer to our target group.

Whenever we communicate we need to keep our audience in mind. Consider whom you are talking to? How much time have they got? What's important to them? Use these questions to focus and simplify your language. Good writing is accessible to all its audiences. Also, ask yourself if you can remove a word, sentence or paragraph without compromising the meaning. Less is almost always better.

Principle



4th principle: We strive for simplicity

DO

- **Do prioritise**
and focus on one key message.
If you don't, the reader may be
distracted and not remember the
most important point
- **Do use everyday language**
when possible - and only use
technical language when you are
in no doubt that the target group
understands it
- **Do make**
sentences and paragraphs as short
and to the point as possible

- **Don't use**
foreign words and phrases or
unnecessary abbreviations in
communication
- **Don't use**
technical language unless the target
group is qualified to understand it
- **Don't include**
too many details

NOT

How the principles shape our writing

The tone of voice principles affect our communication to all target groups.

These examples show how we use the guiding principles in our communication.

1 Internal magazine

6
ORGANISATION

Work locally, think globally



Erik Lund, Accessories.

The new organisation of VELUX Production will boost the teamwork within the six production areas across the factories. The largest change is a departure from division by geography.

By Anita Sge Beilin

"If one of the factories gets a good idea for how to optimise the business, the intention is that it should be shared with the other factories. And we believe our new organisation will make that easier," says Søren Christian Dahl, overall responsible of VELUX Production.

The new production organisation is divided in accordance with our production areas – the old organisation was divided by geographical location. The objective is to enhance the teamwork between functions in a way that transcends factory and business area systems, so that everybody works in the most efficient way.

We must reinforce each other

"We have to help each other in making our production more efficient. And we must work on how we can best develop our skills," continues Søren Chr. Dahl.

"We want to see a much higher degree of teamwork and knowledge sharing within each production area, and we want to sharpen the focus on optimising the business in terms of quality, delivery and cost.

We will achieve much closer involvement by the factories, allowing us to learn from those that do things in a smart and rational way in terms of efficient processes, more effective use of technology and sharing knowledge and experience about safety at the workplace. It will become clearer to everyone that although they work at a local factory, they are part of a global team."

The new structure brings with it new roles and new areas of responsibility. Six new Production Area Managers (PAMs) will be responsible for the business management of a particular area of production across all factories. The individual general managers will still be responsible for running their own factories on a day-to-day basis. 'view' has spoken to three of the new Production Area Managers.

We prioritise messages and focus on the purpose of the reorganisation

We use real VELUX employees as case for the new organisation

We address what is important for the employee in a short and simple way

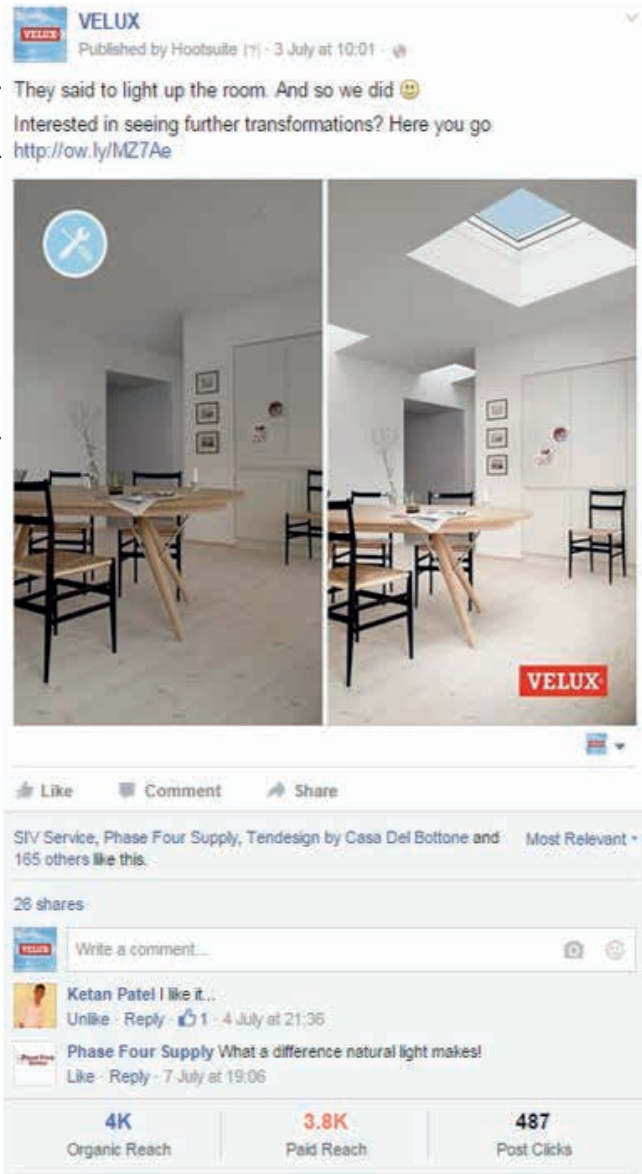
We connect with the reader by using "We" instead of the "VELUX Group". Notice how the headings for the article and paragraph function as calls to action to inspire and engage the reader

2 Social media post

We **inspire people to improve their own home**. We add enthusiasm to the language in a personal and fun way.

We finish the post with a **call to action** on how people can find more inspiration.

Instead of just saying it in words we use **powerful images to illustrate the difference that daylight makes**.



We show **authentic enthusiasm** for spring and daylight. We seek to inspire people to commence on a new project themselves maybe with a VELUX product.

We finish the post with a **call to action** and encourage readers to post their plans for a new spring project.

We use the **picture of a roof window in a birdhouse** to communicate a clear product benefit; roof windows can let in daylight in a room that was previously dark and unwelcoming.



We are **authentic about addressing today's challenges** and telling the world about our goals.

We communicate **openly and honestly** about how close to/far from we are to reaching our goal.

As an added value to the info bite we finish the tweet with **a link** to further information on the topic.

We show commitment to creating a sustainable tomorrow.

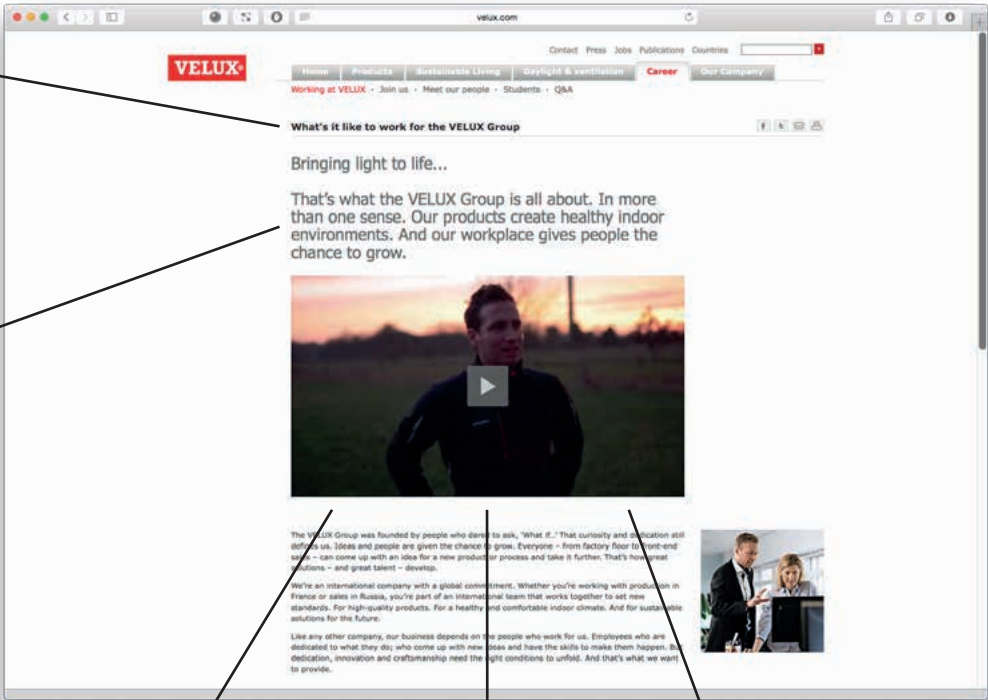
We talk about what matters and we do it in a straightforward way.



3 Website

We prioritise messages and highlight what the potential employee can find on this page

We strive for simplicity by making the subheading short and to the point



We inspire potential employees and show pride by telling how our products and services make a difference

We use real VELUX employees as cases and finish the video with a call to action: "Find your next job on velux.com/career"

We keep our communication personal by using "we" instead of "the VELUX Group" and by using "you" about our reader.

4 Intranet post

Who is Kenneth?

And who is Peter, Karina and Mette? The employees in VFI try to answer this and much more questions when they receive invoices which they are going to forward for approval. Help your colleagues and your invoice along by following three good pieces of advice.

Our colleagues in VELUX Finance India (VFI) look in the GVMO, search @Work, call and mail to other colleagues in their search for the proper intended approver of an invoice. It delays the approval and payment processes and is – in the end – a costly process – both in terms of time and money.

An example found in VFI is an invoice issued for repair of a thicknesser (an industrial plane). The supplier had only addressed the invoice for "Kenneth".

There are 19 persons named Kenneth in the VELUX Group, so it might take a great deal of time for the VFI employee to find the right Kenneth:

– This is a nuisance to both Kenneth, who lacks the invoice for his accounts, and the supplier, who does not receive his payment. In addition, it is a waste of time and resources as both VFI and Front Office need to spend time on identifying the right approver of an invoice, Jette Mølgaard, leader of Front Office Denmark, says. Front Office Denmark assists VFI with those tasks they cannot solve themselves.

Insufficient invoices have always been a challenge to the local finance people, but the challenge has grown even bigger and clearer now tasks are moving even further away.

Help your invoice along

Jette Mølgaard from Front Office admits that the Finance department has not always informed its employees and suppliers which and how much information is needed when ordering goods or services, but now a new era has started. Follow these three pieces of advice to help your invoice along:

- State your full name and initials when ordering goods or services and ask the supplier to state name and initials on the invoice.
- Ask to receive the invoice electronically. It will save postage, protect the environment and saves time as VFI does not need to scan the invoice.
- Ask the supplier to send the electronic invoice directly to VFI. You can see all email addresses here.

– It will of course take a while for us and our suppliers to get used to the new procedures, but if we pay attention to this new process, the transition to the new system will be shorter - and a much more effective process is for the benefit of all, Jette Mølgaard says.

Who is Kenneth then? You may ask yourself: "who is this Kenneth then? And did they find him?" Yes, Kenneth was indeed found. You can see him below along with the aforementioned thicknesser:

Kenneth's surname is Abrahamsen, he works in Østbirk and really appreciates that his invoice can be processed quickly and properly by following the three pieces of advice.

By Line Møller Hansen

We use real VELUX people as the example

We are not afraid to talk about challenges and learnings

We use call to action

We use everyday language, short and simple words and sentences and no technical language



General tips for writing

What's on your mind?

Take a few moments to make it clear for yourself what you are trying to say. Write down your thoughts. Don't worry about structure; you can always organize your ideas later.

Who are you talking to?

People are more interested in hearing from someone they know and someone who knows them. So get to know your audience. What gets them excited, interests them and what concerns them? The more you know about them, the easier it will be for you to write to them. Imagine your audience sitting right in front of you. Read what you have written aloud. Would you talk to a person like this?

Prioritise your content

What is the most important piece of information you want to convey? List the things you want to say, prioritise them and find the ONE thing that they absolutely must remember after reading your text.

Create a clear structure

Organize your writing into smaller paragraphs, with ONE single idea in each. This helps you tell a story that people can easily comprehend and helps the audience absorb your message.

Use headlines

A headline for chapters, pages, sub-sections and paragraphs helps the reader easily navigate the text. Headlines will also ensure that even the busy reader will skim and take away some meaning from the text.

Edit, edit, edit

Write a lot and then edit, edit, edit. Rewrite, rearrange and rethink. Editing is striving for concision and finding the strongest points in the text. Be brutal. Your text will benefit from it.

Don't be passive

Passive writing sounds weaker, is less direct, more formal and impersonal. Instead of saying: "Your letter will be replied to in due course", say "We'll reply as soon as we can". The second sentence seems to be written by some one who cares and is on the case.

Get to the point

People are not interested in reading a long-winded text to find out what's on your mind. Get to the point. And quickly. If the reader knows what they are about to read early, and why, they are more likely to read it. Be clear and stick to the point.

You and we

To become more personal don't say "The company wants to involve its customers to create a strong relationship"; instead say "You can get involved". The emphasis here is on "you" rather than "the company". Write directly to the reader, and put the reader at the centre of the story.

Get feedback

We can only be successful at this if we cooperate and share. Get feedback on your text from a colleague. And get their opinion on how you can improve it so it becomes more inspirational, creative, balanced and on brand.

Use British English

We use British English in our communications. Think about how you use -ise vs. -ize e.g. prioritise instead of prioritize. Also check spelling on nouns like center vs. centre.

Protecting the VELUX brand

We are lucky to have built a very strong brand in the industry – the VELUX brand is one that most target groups know. This gives us a unique position and a great starting point for building strong stakeholder relationships.

BUT we are at risk. When a product dominates the market, its brand name is at risk of becoming an everyday word for similar products made by any company. If this happens, we say that the brand has degenerated. And when a brand degenerates, or becomes generic, the trademark or brand name can be used to describe any related products on the market. The consequences of this can be devastating for the brand, the company and its customers. In the worst case scenario, the original trademark owners can lose all legal rights to the exclusive use of the trademark.

In order for this not to happen we must work dedicated on building the VELUX brand in all aspects of our communication efforts. That is why we have a brand protection site on intranet. Here you can find tools to help protect the VELUX brand

Read more about brand protection on the intranet.

In practical terms for you this means four simple rules

- **Write**
VELUX in CAPITAL letters.
- **Connect**
the VELUX name with a product or a descriptor.
So, instead of letting VELUX stand alone, write VELUX roof windows or the VELUX Group.
The first time you write VELUX it must be followed by the registered symbol (®)
- **Check**
the Do's & Dont's when in doubt on VELUX intranet.
Search in the VELUX brand tab.
- **Be alert**
– let us know if you see the VELUX brand name misused

VELUX

communication

review tool

The purpose of the review tool is to help you assess if you communicate in accordance to the VELUX tone of voice principles and if your communication supports how we want to be perceived.

The tool help you steer communication deliverables in a project. You can use it as part of a project start-up or end phase and to review communication material developed by colleagues or external partners.

How do we use it?

This document is seen as a basis for discussion and evaluation rather than auditing. Please see the dimensions below as a checklist to ensure we communicate in a consistent way across audiences.

How we write

To what extent does your text communicate your key message in a personal, authentic, inspirational and simple way? In general, our communication should score high across all four tone of voice principles.

How we want to be perceived

To what extent does the communication express our brand values. All brand values don't need to be present to the same extent in your communication. But we need to be clear about why we prioritise certain messages above others.

We are personal

Ask yourself: Do I succeed in addressing the needs of the reader and do I avoid being too formal or corporate?

Lesser extent  Greater extent

1

2

3

4

5

We are authentic

Ask yourself: Do I succeed being relevant to the reader? Do I communicate facts in a honest and engaging way?

1

2

3

4

5

We seek to inspire

Ask yourself: Do I succeed in finding insights that helps me connect with the reader? Is my text memorable?

1

2

3

4

5

We strive for simplicity

Ask yourself: Do I succeed in making my text "to the point" and easy to understand for the reader.

1

2

3

4

5

Lesser extent  Greater extent

1

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1

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Trusted

Ask yourself: Do I promise anything that we cannot deliver?

Inventive

Ask yourself: Do I describe our inventiveness? That we constantly develop and improve our products and how we work.

Sustainable

Ask yourself: Do I communicate that the VELUX Group is both an environmentally and socially responsible company?

Value for money

Ask yourself: Do I succeed in communicating that we offer high quality products at a reasonable price? Or that interacting with us is worthwhile?

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