



# Section 3

## Our brand content

Brand-led communication relies on a focused strategy to create content with a clearly aligned message, consistent language use and an engaging tone of voice. Tailoring our content to reflect our brand personality has a significant impact on our design and brand consistency.


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3.1 Our content platform

3.2 Our content anchors

3.3 Getting to know our audience

3.4 Using our tone of voice



# Our content platform

This platform is an expression of our positioning. It contains our content anchors, which are fixed statements that our communication can be built around. Our content anchors are connected to the strategic themes of our Vision 2040, ensuring that our actions align with what we communicate.

## Brand essence

Pursue. Discover. Together.

### Brand content anchors

1. Together, we are an inclusive and inspired community.
2. We grow and develop together.
3. Together, we are connected through curiosity.
4. We learn together.
5. We create meaningful change.
6. We foster growth.

### Key strategic themes

1. A thriving Stellenbosch University
2. A transformative student experience
3. Purposeful partnerships and inclusive networks
4. Networked and collaborative teaching and learning
5. Research for impact
6. Employer of choice

# Our content anchors

These anchors should structure our communication. They should inform the way we talk, write and produce our visual content to represent a reputable higher education institution with a global footprint.

## Brand content anchors

### 1. Together, we are an inclusive and inspired community.

We are vibrant and connect people across diverse societal spectrums and fields of knowledge to create bold new possibilities – to boost careers, intellectual endeavours, our country, and the general prosperity of humankind.

### 4. We learn together.

We are innately collaborative and willing to build learning communities that leverage the latest technologies to create connected, networked and interactive environments.

### 2. We grow and develop together.

We understand that we are not all the same - we are diverse in our makeup and our outlook. We are committed to a transformative experience and access to an engaged environment that drives the discovery of impactful solutions.

### 5. We create meaningful change.

We are enthusiastic about new ideas – made for a time when problems are complex and systemic, discovery is interdisciplinary and diverse, and sustainable solutions depend on collaborative partnerships bringing new perspectives to the table.

### 3. Together, we are connected through curiosity.

We are global citizens deeply engaged with real-world problems and opportunities. We create platforms to uncover solutions that change our country, Africa and the world.

### 6. We foster growth.

We create an enabling environment of engaged, innovative and like-minded people who, through teaching, learning and co-creation, stimulate institutional and economic prosperity.



**How to** apply our content anchors

Use our strategic themes and content anchors as the basis of your communication. Highlight our triumphs, our inspiring people, our solution-driven research, our innovation and our partnerships with world-renowned collaborators who are aligned with our brand positioning.

# Getting to know our audience

We communicate with diverse audiences. Once we understand who we are talking to, we can deliver relevant information in a meaningful way.

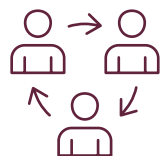
## Who are we trying to reach?

### a. Internal

The strongest, most credible ambassadors, who experience the brand first-hand.

#### Who?

Current students  
Staff  
Rectorate  
Council and substructures  
Statutory bodies



#### Why engage?

1. To educate about our brand and how to make it succeed.
2. To align our brand message with the experience we deliver.
3. To equip our community with the necessary brand tools, resources and support.

### b. Prospective market

Most likely learners and busy working adults intent on furthering their education. Employable professionals may also fall into this category as prospective employees.

#### Who?

Prospective students  
Prospective employees  
Parents and families  
Postgraduate market



#### Why engage?

1. To educate about our brand and how to make it succeed.
2. To create enthusiasm about our brand and what sets us apart.
3. To convince those best fit to the University to join us.

### c. Alumni and donors

Individuals and businesses who have an interest in seeing the University succeed.

#### Who?

Graduates  
Former students  
Donors  
Private sector



#### Why engage?

1. To foster pride by giving our audience a reason to promote our institution.
2. To generate buy-in, promote collaboration, and leverage strategic partnerships with optimal reach and impact.
3. To solicit stories about, and advocacy and volunteering for, the University, strengthening ties in the process.



## How to define your audience

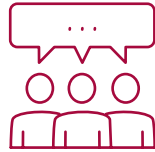
One way of defining your audience is to decide who your audience is not. Another is to use the data available from digital platforms such as social media and websites to identify and assess who interacts with your communication, at what time, and what their objectives are. This will help you create the perfect communication, on the appropriate platform, at the most opportune time.

#### d. Partners, employers and the national market

External entities or individuals who add value to our educational offerings or extend our reach.

##### Who?

Academic partners  
Research funders  
Service providers  
Private sector  
Government  
Media



##### Why engage?

1. To inform through proactive communication.
2. To facilitate seamless partnership and collaboration.
3. To generate demand for our graduates, and so promote a healthy job market and economy.

#### e. Broader academic fraternity

Most likely connected to the University through teaching, research or business.

##### Who?

Faculty networks  
Research collaborators  
Student communities  
Postgraduate market  
Private sector  
Research publications



##### Why engage?

1. To promote our high-impact activities and accomplishments.
2. To showcase our research-intensive focus.
3. To lead by example.

#### f. International market

International, cross-border and inter-institutional collaborations.

##### Who?

International students  
Friends and families  
Prospective employees  
Staff networks  
Academic partners  
University networks



##### Why engage?

1. To facilitate seamless partnership and collaboration.
2. To promote our innovation, digitalisation and integrated disciplines.
3. To showcase our research-intensive focus.

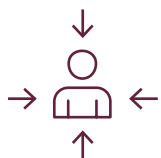
# Using our tone of voice

What we say is just as important as how we say it. Our tone of voice is the style of communication we use to reach our audience and ultimately influence how they perceive what we say. Our tone also allows us to adapt to different situations, while still communicating in a consistent way.

## Our tone of voice may vary slightly depending on ...

### 1. Our target audience

We adjust our tone depending on who we are communicating with. For example, the tone we use when communicating with prospective students would differ from our tone with donors, or with academic collaborators. The end goal is to tailor our content to our different audiences so as to engage meaningfully and promote further interest.



### 2. The platform and medium

The length and format of our content is determined by the platform and medium we use to deliver it. For example, social media content would differ notably from newsletter content. Our tone should match the platform we will be using to convey our content.



### 3. Our objectives

Our tone is determined by the objectives of our communication. For example, the objective of a newsletter is to inform, while an advert encourages the audience to act. These different objectives will require different tones.



## How to apply our tone of voice

Use a mix of short, punchy sentences and slightly longer sentences to give your content rhythm and flow. Present simple, factual information in a digestible way. Avoid ambiguity and technical jargon when communicating complex concepts. Begin sentences or paragraphs with a fact that is generally known, and then introduce new content. This eases the audience into the topic and draws maximum attention to what is new. Use an authoritative tone without being pompous – a considered approach.

# Using our tone of voice

While we adjust our tone depending on the target audience, platform and objectives of our communication, our overall tone must still be consistent. This means we must always be concise, factual, trustworthy, respectful, and representative of the University's excellent reputation.

Let's keep in mind these **key words** when we create content to ensure that our communication remains consistent:

Inclusive  
**Authentic**  
Considered  
**Influential**  
Inspiring  
**Vibrant**



**How to** maintain a consistent brand

Always refer to the Language and Content Style Guide, which has been compiled by our Language Centre. This guide helps us speak with one voice and portray a consistent identity by following a uniform set of language principles. Email [branding@sun.ac.za](mailto:branding@sun.ac.za) with your style guide queries.

# Using our tone of voice

It is up to us to bring our brand tone to life. This we can do by applying the following principles in all our communication:

## Be relatable

Talk to people as if they are part of a community, all dealing with the same issues and experiences that shape our society.

## Be conversational

Adopt a welcoming, conversational tone that would create a sense of comfort and trust in our institution.

## Inspire

Establish an emotional connection with our audiences by engaging, moving and challenging them to pursue and discover, together.

## Be direct

Use a combination of first-person plural 'we' and 'our' and second-person singular 'you' to close the gap between our institution and those we wish to engage with. Use short, punchy sentences to create an impact.

## Be clear

Keep language simple, concise and less verbose. Be vivid, but not so detailed that you lose your audience.

## Be engaging

Include sentences that entice and captivate your audience, for example: 'Are you ready? There's so much to discover!'



## How to amplify our brand tone

The tone of your content can have an even greater impact with a complementary design that brings your words to life. Professional graphic designers can help you achieve a consistent tone with appropriate graphics. Contact our Brand Unit ([branding@sun.ac.za](mailto:branding@sun.ac.za)) for advice on graphic design. For assistance with language, grammar and tone, contact the Language Centre ([languagecentre.sun.ac.za](http://languagecentre.sun.ac.za)).





Open conversation  
moves us forward together