

How to Find Your Brand Voice

CARA HAWKINS-JEDLICKA: So my name is Cara Hawkins-Jedlicka. Yes, it's a very long, hyphenated name. I am an instructor in the Murrow College of Communications. I am currently teaching COMSTRAT 562 and COMSTRAT 383. And, basically, those are media strategy classes that kind of deal is a little bit PR.

I am a first-year instructor, so I just came from being the Marketing Communications Manager for the University of Idaho College of Law. And before that, I worked the front office of the communications building, communications for UI. So I did a lot of dealing with reporters when crisis happened. Yeah, when we moved out the [INAUDIBLE] subdivisions, that was a really hard day.

So I've kind of done a lot with my career, but I really like branding stuff. And right when I was leaving the University of Idaho, we were actually updating our brand. So I thought this would be a good exercise or a good webinar to go into. We're going to take the perspective today of really looking at it as a brand as a company, but you can apply a lot of these things to your personal brand. So if you are looking for how to brand your own website, how to brand your résumé, those types of things you can take these lessons from.

When you look at the worksheets that were sent out beforehand-- I'm not expecting you to have those worksheets done-- one is for a bigger brand and then one's for a personal brand. So you have a little bit of different questions, but they look very similar. Any time during this conversation, if you have questions, just go ahead and type them in, and we'll try to get to them as we go. I have about 22 slides, so we'll see how good we go through this.

OK. So what is brand voice? Brand voice, really, refers to the personality and the emotion infused into a brand or into a company's communications. So when you're looking at it, you're really thinking about what your voice sounds like. So why is this really important? So you want to think about brand recognition. There's a lot of different brands out there, and you want to cut through the clutter.

You don't want to be a Nike, like the same person as Nike, or the same person as Lululemon. You have to kind of think about who you are, and why you're different, and how your personality plays with that. You're going to lose out to better branded voices if you don't really have your own voice. So if you don't really have a point of view and you don't know who you are, you're going to lose out to your competitors pretty easily.

And it's most through that clutter. And just really kind of think about it, do you trust a friend who constantly changes who they are? If they go from liking something to disliking something on a pretty regular basis, you don't trust them as much. But as a brand, if you're speaking in a consistent voice, you're going to really learn to trust and build that relationship.

OK, so we're going to go quickly. We're going to talk a little bit about voice versus tone. So voice, as I said, really describes your company's personality. It's really consistent. It's unchanging. You think about how you kind of describe some of those bigger brands. As I said, Nike is really uplifting and empowering. It really encompasses everything your voice does. It includes also photo style, video style, and even kind of how you talk and go back and forth on social media.

So how is that different than tone? I think we've all been in trouble and we know what our parents tell us or sound like when we're in trouble, right? So, suddenly, you have a middle name. I was always, when I got in trouble, Cara Elizabeth. My parents got a little snarky with me, actually. It got a lot more serious. My dad, actually, used the same tone he used on conference calls for when I was in trouble. So kind of think of it as that emotional inflection applied to your voice. It adjusts to what's suitable for a particular piece or message.

Something you would think about is, like, Wendy's Twitter account is really snarky. So they regularly troll other accounts. But if they had a crisis, they wouldn't use that voice. They would have the same messaging that they had, but if they had a meat recall or something along those lines, they wouldn't be snarky and rude. They would be a lot more apologetic. So that's kind of where you get the difference between tone and voice. Tone is kind of how you talk about something or how you're feeling as a brand, and voice is really your viewpoint.

So we're going to do this in five easy steps, hopefully. I like having steps. So first things first is you're going to research yourself or really know who you are as a person or as a brand. So we'll give you either/or. And it's fairly easy. And the worksheets that I handed out actually will help with this a little bit.

So you want to define your core identity. So you want to know what your vision is as a company, what your mission statement is, and what values you hold dear. So vision is really, why does your company exist? Where do you see yourself in five years? How are you going to grow? Your mission statements is really, like, what does your company do? What do you hope to do? And your values are how you do business-- what do you value and who you are?

And then you're really going to define some really important things, too. So you want to define your target audiences. Segment your audiences. So know who you're advertising or talking to, how they communicate, if they're using certain social media channels, if you might have to use a little bit different slang. If NPR started using memes, we'd be all confused, right? So really understand who your target audience is.

Know your competitors. And you want to know how you are different than your competitors. So you want to make sure you understand where those differences lie and what makes you stand out from them. If you're in marketing or any of the comm classes, you know what a SWOT analysis is. You probably have done these a billion times.

But for those who haven't, it's really just understanding what your strengths are, so what makes you a really good company or brand. Your weaknesses, so, really, where could you improve? What are you not doing so well? Your opportunities, which are kind of taking those strengths and understanding where you can kind of go in the field or the market.

So where's your opportunity to grow, and think, and really be the best brand you can be? And then in your threats might be something that's coming along the way that would harm your business. A good example of this is, like, newspaper businesses that didn't go digital got really threatened by the internet. You can also see this now in the newspaper industry. In the magazine industry, there's starting to be a lot more paywalls.

I was really surprised, [? Reuters ?] [INAUDIBLE] paywall this week. And it was something I was not expecting. So, really, those kind of threats to your identity as a whole.

Now I'm going to briefly talk about keywords and SEO. I could talk for like three hours about SEO. So when we're talking keywords, really, thinking about the words that if you were to be on a search engine, what people would maybe look up for you guys and how that would help with your rankings. So when you're doing your website, you're incorporating those in-- and also who you are, what area you're in, the who, what, when, where, and why will all be part of those keywords-- basically, trying to define yourself in very simple phrases. So you can kind of work those into your identity.

So this is a lot of research. People run a lot of analysis on this. But if you can kind of do this at least at the very start of this process, you'll have a really good base. And you might not have to do it as in-depth as this. You can really maybe knock this out very quickly. But if you know your brand and know yourself really well, this won't take super long.

SPEAKER: Do you recommend using CEO tools or just using the free Google Analytics?

CARA HAWKINS-JEDLICKA: So I use just Google Analytics. I can understand the back end of it. But you can always just look up some really good-- I don't have any off the top of my head, but some just good material of really understanding how those keywords work. So you want to use your Google Analytics to see how it would adapt and see what they want to think. But I wouldn't go out and buy a tool. But that's just me. I hate paying for anything.

As a PR professional, I never had a big budget, so I always just kind of did stuff myself. And Google will teach you a lot. They have enough videos that you can learn quite a bit from them, too.

So let me give you an example. And I'm just going to kind of show you vision, and values, and mission statements. So Ben & Jerry's is really good at keeping their brand voice and brand identity across different platforms. Particularly on their website, they have a whole section just defining their values, what they really care about, so you can kind of see here how they really

kind of think about linking their mission to their values and the prosperity of their customers and their community.

You can see here they have their mission statement very front and center. And then they really go into their three parts of their mission guide. And if you click on any of these, this goes into much more detail. But they really have this really drawn out to make sure they're really sticking with their values and knowing who they are. And they're one of the few companies that gets political. And the reason is because they do know who they are and how their values match up with it.

And you can see here they really even go way more into it. So when we were talking about values or how you do business, they literally go into very, very key details on how they do business from sourcing and purchasing their ingredients, to their manufacturing practices, and how they give back to the community. So they have this on the back end knowing who they are. So when you see their messaging, it comes through.

Last step on the research. So the last thing that I really want you guys to do, if you already have your brand, is do a communications audit of yourself. So really look at the content you already have, pick out some common threads. And this could be like if you kept a blog for your company, what kept coming up over and over again. If you're on Facebook, what gets the most likes and shares?

The same thing with Twitter and Instagram. Is there a certain way that you describe yourself? Are there phrases or descriptions that really jumped out at you? And then, again, what works best with your current audience? If you already have that built-in brand on any of your social channels, there's definitely going to be something else that you can see that kind of works for your messaging.

So, yeah, audit yourself. And then understand, too, what doesn't work. You have the back end of your Google Analytics and seeing what parts of your website are not being visited. You could probably figure out why they're not being visited and figure out maybe the common threads there-- so review your content before you start changing all your messaging. You might be doing just fine and you have no idea.

So this probably my favorite stuff. You're going to brainstorm. You're going to do a lot of fun activities and really get your messaging-- get those ideas really ahead of time of what you want to do.

So there's a lot of different exercises to find your voice. One of them-- and I think I actually put this on one of the worksheets-- is describing what your brand would be like if they were a person. Are they like Shaggy from Scooby Doo? Know who they are, what they look like, what they do, what their job is, where they live, and really maybe just describe them as a person and draw it out. This helps you really think of your brand as somebody.

So if you were to describe maybe Lululemon-- I'll just use that example off the top of my head, you probably have a very particular look to who they are. They wear the athleisure clothes. They might be a mom. They might not be. They go to a lot of yoga. And they look like they're healthy. They're probably drinking juice, and they probably live somewhere in the Northwest. Maybe not. But you know who they are if you had to draw them. So think about your brand in that particular way.

And then there's this one that I love, especially if you have a bigger company. And the people who provide these cards you can print out are called Cafe [? Pixio. ?] Google it. They're pretty out there. But you do this card sort activity. And you're going to get a group of your stakeholders together. It'll take about 45 minutes to an hour.

And you 75 different adjectives on the screen, right? So these are literally 75 different adjectives. And what you're going to do is sort them as a group. And you'll probably be the moderator in this case, if you are working with a group of stakeholders. So you're going to have them sort it into who we are, who we're not, and then who would we like to be? And there's also blank ones if you want to put other words on there.

So once you sort these through, you'll go through that, give them 15 minutes, listen to them, understand why they're putting certain words in certain ways. And then you're going to take away the "who we're not." And you're going to make them rank the who we are and who we'd like to be. After they rank those, you give them the top three from those two sides, and you tell them to decide on three.

And those three words or those three adjectives are going to help you figure out your voice a little bit better. Because, as the stakeholders are going to kind of figure it out from the outside, you'll see it from the inside. And then just keep doing it. If you want to have more people help you out with this, make sure they're important to the company, but make sure you can do it multiple times over.

Along with your personify your brand, choose your ideal spokesperson. Is it The Rock? Is it Amy Schumer for some reason? Kind of think who your ideal spokesperson for your company would be and why that would happen. Is it randomly Lin Manuel Miranda because you love Hamilton? I don't know. But think that through and kind of describe why you like that person.

And this kind of goes to the card sort activity, but it's a little bit simpler. You kind of say-- like, we are blank, but we're not blank. So we are funny, but we're not sarcastic. So kind of think that through. And then from all these different exercises, you can really see the threads and figure out who you want to be at this point.

So we'll talk a little bit about archetypes. If you do literature or if you've done reading, an archetype is a recurrent symbol or motif in literature, or art, or mythology. You can see here we've got 12. And most brands align with these archetypes. You have quite a few. But you can

see, like, Skittles is considered a jester because they think they're funny. You can also see how the North Face is considered an explorer, Apple the creator.

So what I'm going to do is, I'll read through what each of these are. And, yes, I have to read them because I cannot remember them all off the top of my head. But I'm going to have you guys take a quiz. And then, we're going to poll. Two of these are missing on the poll. So if you're one of those, don't feel bad. We just kind of put all the words in. So I'll give you the link.

So here's the quiz. And we'll open up the poll, too. And the poll is here, and I'll launch it. And you guys can take this quiz. It shouldn't take too long. And I'll just read through these.

So the first archetype is a magician. This is someone who really wants you to have all your dreams come true. Perfect. They don't want to just build a better toothbrush. They want to help you keep your house clean. And they really try to bring those wildest dreams to life.

So think Disney. Disney is a perfect example of a magical brand. Like, they're trying to really make sure you are everything you could possibly want in your life. Then you have the sage. And this is a person who is seeking truth or wisdom and thinks research and knowledge is really the key to success. Harvard University, most universities like to be the sage.

The innocent is everything is free and virtuous. And an innocent brand will never guilt you or try to convince you excessively of something. They usually try to do a little bit more nostalgia. So you can think about Orville Redenbacher popcorn. You have that outlaw. This is a person who wants to do revolution. They really want you to be hard, and be who you want to be, but be different. We have the gesture, who happens to be really silly-- but a little bit of seriousness. Old Spice and Skittles is really good at this. They just want you to live in the moment-- trying to see if we have-- OK, we've got a couple more.

We have the lover. It looks like we have a lover on here. They really are about passion, pleasure, and sensuality. They want to brandwash you to associate them with intimate moments. So Godiva chocolate's really good there. The explorer, so this one's kind of interesting. This is actually something we we're trying to decide if we were or were not over at U of I. I mean, it's really talking about how freedom is the top priority. They want you to build a home. They might try to help you build a home, but this brand really wants you to get out of the home and to explore.

Subaru is probably the best one for this. I'm a big Subaru fan. But Subaru is probably the best explorer brand you can think of. The ruler is really about luxury and being exclusive-- so Mercedes Benz is really a good example of this. Then you have the caregiver. That person really nurtures you. They're trying to build that trust-- so think Johnson & Johnson.

The hero, this is the one I always tend to get, which is kind of-- I always think it's weird. The hero makes the world better by being the best. They're really not really concerned with being nurturing. They're there to challenge you. The US Army is a really good example of this one.

Then, the last two, we have the regular guy, girl, person-- they're not trying to be pretentious. So they're really trying to get a really good product and not put you off. So think about Folgers instead of Starbucks. That's kind of where they're going.

And then, finally, you have the creator. This person kind of craves perfection. They're not really worried about the cost of production or making things upscale. They strive to create a product you can't live without. So they gave me LEGO in here, but I think Apple's a really good example of that, too. So those are kind of the 12 archetypes.

And brands fit really easily into that, but you can definitely find different ways of maybe taking bits of that archetype and applying it to your brand. And so it's kind of funny. I'm looking at this poll, and we're pretty spread out across the board. I think everyone has taken it now. And I'm sure some of you were probably pretty surprised at what you got, but it's always interesting just to see.

But, yeah, we've got a wide variety of people in here. Surprisingly, we don't have a jester. I feel like, in my undergrad classes, I get a lot of jesters. Yeah. Oh, this person's super surprised. Why were you super surprised? Oh, Heather. I'll read that later, but we'll end the poll and keep moving on here.

SPEAKER: "I got ruler, and I wouldn't associate myself with luxury, lol."

CARA HAWKINS-JEDLICKA: Oh. You just never know what you're going to get. OK. What's the next thing here? Perfect OK. So now, we kind of gathered a lot of different data points of who we are and what we think we are. And you're probably, at this time, really refining who you are, kind of understanding the brand a little bit better and can probably get down to the next step. I had another photo, guys. Sorry.

So you want to document your verbal identity. So most brands will have a brand book. And this book, pretty thick, it's either on the internet or they'll hand it to you. And it documents how like your fonts, your colors, your logos-- and oftentimes, they won't maybe include the verbal identity, but you want to make sure you're actually doing it.

So you're really just going to create something really simple. It's called a brand voice chart. So you're going to really list your brand characteristics on the left, which you've kind of seen from both the exercises and your research. So you know what you need to hit, and what your audience values, and what your company already has working for them.

And then you're going to include a brief explanation of each of those traits in the next column. And then, you're going to explain how to use and not use this trait in the next two columns. So this is kind of an example. So the trait is, you're funny.

So the description is, our coffee is unafraid to make people laugh. We want to use humor with care, but we do not want to be too goofy. We might think we're authoritative. So our content

should be well researched and sound confident in its accuracy. We do want to cite sources and sound sure of ourselves when writing. But we don't want to be condescending or cocky.

Maybe the trait's helpful. Our voice should sound like someone who generally wants to help or solve a customer's problem. We can reassure our consumer that it's OK, it might be challenging, but we don't want to sound overly friendly. So you really have to think about what your voice sounds like. The personification really helps, especially if you're even going towards the tone. You can almost think of someone in your life who kind of sounds that way. But having this chart will help you really keep it so that everyone's on the same page.

So you want to make sure that if you have multiple writers in the company, they understand how to write your voice. You want to make sure the social media matches up with what your website sounds like, and you're promoting the same things.

So you want to include it in your brand guidelines. So you want to include your voice, maybe how the different tones play across different channels-- that brand persona that you might have put at the front and have perfected and really kind of figured that out. Your vocabulary-- so language guidelines for words you do and do not use. Don't use a word maybe "flagship." When you're referring to the university, you use a different word. And then maybe your messaging architecture.

So this includes positioning. How do we kind of position ourselves against our competitors? How do we differentiate ourselves? [INAUDIBLE] value proposition. If you have a tagline for your company, put it in there. And maybe some really good examples of stories that you already have that show what the company is. So you want to make sure you kind of have that all in your brand guidelines so everyone across the way understands how to communicate.

It's really easy in a company of four. But once you start getting bigger, you really need to have something that people can reference, and see on the internet, and really understand. If you go to WSU, they have a brand page. I am actually not using the branding from WSU tonight. You guys can probably notice. This slide deck is very on brand for me, probably not so much for WSU-- but really kind of learning where to put things, and understanding how it works together, and making sure everyone's really on that same page.

So we'll look at another example. Skype did a really good job in their brand guidelines, looking at kind of explaining, in very simple terms, their voice. So words we like-- free, whole world-- and it kind of got silly, because they kind of have a silly voice-- baboon, share, calls. But they also did words they don't like, words they don't want people to use-- so "peer-to-peer."

SPEAKER: Would you recommend developing a clear brand before you start a business, or is this something that you should do after you've gotten a feel for what your brand is after it's been in practice?

CARA HAWKINS-JEDLICKA: OK. So that's a good question, because you don't want to launch with something that's going to just fail you. You want to launch with something that you think is pretty good. So I would say you definitely want to do the research part of this, make sure you kind of have it down into what you think might work. Play with it for maybe a month or two. Maybe don't do a quick launch, do a soft launch. See if that works for you, and then adjust.

It's funny because you'll see a lot of companies go through a rebrand. Airbnb went through a huge one recently, and it really was-- because it started that they just had a really good idea, they launched a business, and their branding was just funky. So they've kind of reposition themselves in the marketplace a little bit more, but they've also rebranded colors to make themselves look a little hipper and go to a younger demographic. It's not about the Airbnb clouds around it.

So the good thing is you can always reposition and update. But I would say you want to start having a pretty decent idea of your brand beforehand. So does that help at all? OK, and what was the other one?

SPEAKER: If you're in an established business, how would you recommend handling rebrand? Should you transition and now it's a rebrand? Just abruptly change?

CARA HAWKINS-JEDLICKA: So U of I was kind of doing this when I was leaving. And it's easier, especially-- I don't want to use them too much as an example, but it is a little easier to slowly just update all your materials if you have a lot. So you can start kind of morphing towards a newer brand. If you're a bigger company-- so Airbnb announced their rebrand, and they launched everything at one time and announced it as a rebrand. But you can also kind of announce it as maybe an update. So if it's not huge changes, I would just kind of slowly roll it out.

And those are really color changes and things like that. People might not notice voice changes as much. A voice change could almost happen internally without anyone really noticing unless you're pivoting completely from something where you're kind and lovely to snarky and mean. I don't know if you have to announce that. Words are a little bit easier to just slowly integrate into your items.

And we'll talk a little bit more about how you kind of apply this later on. But it really depends on how big of a change and how big of a company you are. So if you don't already have a lot of followers on social media and you're kind of underground, you could probably just kind of update your look, and no one's going to notice-- or if they notice they're happy with it. But if you have a ton of followers, and they love what you do, and you're going to pivot largely, you want to come up with a message why you're pivoting and why you're doing this. So I hope that kind of explains it a little bit more.

Colors are a really big thing. So we don't talk really a lot about color in here, but that can be a big issue for people. So if WSU suddenly went to a different red, it would be really hard. So

think about colors, too. If you have a lot of t-shirts and things, that can be really hard to rebrand and update-- or if you have a logo that you've always used.

Universities are really interesting to study when it comes to rebranding because they've been around so long. You can kind of see how it worked and didn't work along the way. If you guys ever want to dig into that, it's really fascinating, especially when you have universities that are like 100, 200 years old, because you have to update the brand.

So as we're looking at Skype, we can kind of see they show you the words they like, the words they don't like, so this is really telling people how to write about themselves. And they go into their tone of voice. And theirs is really talking about tone. They want to make sure that the voice is always plain speaking and human.

[INAUDIBLE] really explained in the simplest of terms. You want to make sure, like, your mom understands. This is a little bit more UK, as you can tell with the humor and "mum" in here. And it's really kind of gentle wit. So they do joke around, but they don't joke around at the expense of the customer.

But this is in their brand guidelines. They don't go too deep into it, but it's enough to make sure that the writers understand how to write about themselves when they're doing spec sheets to stories, maybe even producing videos about how Skype works for people.

All right, so step 4, this is where you kind of get into things. So we're going to apply it to the messaging. We'll go kind of into this, but we won't go super deep. But you can kind of really figure out how you apply it to the messaging and how you apply it to different channels.

So first of all, again, with like the brand guidebook, you want to make sure everyone is on the same page. You want to demonstrate how you can apply it to different departments. So how does HR use it when they're talking in their HR guidebook to how you put it on the marketing side of things. Show them just kind of how maybe you take a really simple piece of content and apply the voice and the tone to that.

Make sure there's an easy access to the copy of either the brand book or those voice guidelines that you have. If you've just, like, seriously [? laminate it ?] and put it on the internet, it will help. Show examples that you already have that hit the mark. Maybe your social media was kind of where it was the whole way. So Facebook is like knocking out of the park. Take a couple of those posts and just show it. And as I say, don't go overboard, don't be someone who's dictatorish and how that should sound.

But make sure that they're hitting the right notes. You don't want to turn people off before they even start. And there might be some things that just don't fit in the tone, but you can really sit down with that department and kind of understand what they're doing and how that works through. And make sure it can fit to everybody. So make sure that's something that just

doesn't seem right. Make sure you understand how you can maybe manipulate that archetype to fit to that voice.

And then you want to revise your current content. So if you're new, don't worry about this. You can just start from [INAUDIBLE]. But you really want to make sure-- because your website typically is your front page to the internet. You want to incorporate keywords and voice to your website.

So make sure that voice that you have-- say if it's light-hearted, or serious, or authoritative, is present on your website, update the content. It could be as simple as updating your home page to feature a story that you think is better, maybe even your menu options are a little bit funnier, if you're trying to go for that lighthearted feel. Or your 404 page is suddenly something hilarious or something goes wrong. I know [INAUDIBLE] got a very lighthearted branding voice. And so when something goes wrong on [INAUDIBLE], it's always really funny. They can kind of do it in some small ways.

Define your tone for different channels. So, for example we'll take Wendy's again. Wendy's has a very certain tone to their Twitter. So maybe you go across the way and look at either departments or different channels and how your voice is kind of adapted there, and make sure you kind of have a definition. I don't say you have to do this with all your pieces, but pieces that are very up front and center-- so maybe about your founding, or about your owner, or about your product, you might want to rewrite that copy to make sure it matches everything. And it's just really making sure you have that voice across all channels so it's the same. Consumers are going to trust you more if you have the same voice?

What are your thoughts on Wendy's and their frequent interaction with competing brands on Twitter? They do it well. And they get good publicity from it. So I can't really fault them, but they know what they're doing. Whoever their copywriter is, their social media manager is for Twitter, has it on point and understands it. And they get news stories off of it, which is a huge thing. So if they're getting publicity from their Twitter account, that's good for them.

Now the thing that always kind of weirdly juxtaposes for me is that I remember Wendy's for all the good stuff that their founder did. And so like I sometimes have a hard time figuring out how their Twitter incorporates with it. But they do stick to their talking points on Twitter, too. So when they are calling out the brands, they're talking about how their meat's better and how their food's better, so they're sticking to that voice. It's just a very interesting take on it.

So, yeah, I would say you have to be really confident in your social media manager. When I was in a social media manager role, I would have never done that in my life. I had a hard enough time just like responding to people who were angry at me.

So when I was controlling the University of Idaho's Twitter or Facebook account, my tone of voice was maybe coming from a caring, authoritative point of view. Like, we know what we're doing, but we'll also help you. So, yeah, I have thoughts about it, but I don't know if they're real

or fake. I think it's interesting. I like watching them do it. But, yeah, you have to be a pretty brave social media manager and really confident in your copywriting skills to really do that well. All right, so we're going to get to the last one. We'll have plenty of time for questions.

Last thing on this one, though, before we move on. You want to be consistent and stick to it. So don't just randomly change it after you don't think it's working. It takes a little bit for people to sometimes pick up on it. And make sure things match. As I said before, consumers will likely trust you a little bit more if you have the same voice and you see the same person doing things.

Weirdly enough, I think we're starting to think of brands as people, especially with the way we interact with them on different channels. And consumers don't want to be reminded that it might be different, they might be working with different people. They want to think of a brand as the same person. I think we get kind of weirded out when there's conflicting messages on different channels and different tones. So, as I said, it was almost the Wendy's one. It kind of is a weird conflict sometimes when it's not the same.

OK, so let's see if this will pull up for me here. We'll look at a couple of these. We're just going to look at Blue Apron. So we can kind of see here that Blue Apron-- they're trying to get me to get a coupon-- is really talking about that family atmosphere and showing you how to cook healthy recipes. They do a really good job of showing you how simple it is on their home page. So you have something that's kind of easy. So they're looking kind of at that easy voice, talking about family, and really making sure you're sharing healthy, easy meals.

There we go. OK, so we'll see on Facebook here, they do, really, a lot of the same-- we're not logged in here. You can see they do a lot of the same. They show you that the recipe highlights are simple. Man, they got the pop-ups going tonight. But they also stage their food looking really nice.

And they want you to show you how simple it is and how easy it is. We won't go through all of them. But if you do look up Blue Apron on Twitter and Pinterest, they do a lot of very similar type of messaging. So they're really keeping it-- they keep it simple, they keep it family friendly, and they want to keep it healthy, and delicious, at the same time. None of this food looks bad.

We'll go to the last slide here. And this one is really something that we kind of talked about anyways with the branding. It's really just revisit and revise as the company changes over time. Airbnb changed who they were and who they were kind of targeting. Most universities change over their 200-year history. So you can always kind of revisit. And maybe your business has grown into something else. Or maybe it's got a little bit more of a voice that's working for it better, that you might see on Twitter or you might see on your Facebook account.

But always keep it in mind that you don't have to keep the same brand. I wouldn't do it a lot, but make sure you're just revisiting it. Make sure it's still working for you. You don't want to be stale. So that's really all I have for you guys. We've got 15-ish minutes, I think, for questions. So if you guys have anything else, let me know.

SPEAKER: Is there a time frame that you would suggest? Because you don't want to consistently change your brand, but you want to give it some time to catch. Is it an annual thing?

CARA HAWKINS-JEDLICKA: I would revisit it annually just see if it's working. But I really wouldn't change my brand more than every three years, I think. Like, that seems like that's a lot.

SPEAKER: Heather says it's insightful. Thank you so much.

CARA HAWKINS-JEDLICKA: Yeah, so I think really just making sure you're keeping it stable. But, yeah, make sure you're actually doing it, too. That's when you revisit things. I think it's always helpful to revisit things as time moves on. Yeah, it was really weird.

SPEAKER: How would you suggest measuring success? I know analytics are helpful, but should you use a snapshot over a certain period of time?

CARA HAWKINS-JEDLICKA: Yeah, there's a lot of ways of measuring success, right? So if you're a brand who is trying to move product, suddenly your product's moving better when you've got a new voice, that's obviously something that might be working for you. But, yeah, I would definitely make sure you have the analytics from social and from Google Analytics, your website traffic. In your cells, for about a six-month period before you change the brand, and then compare it to six months after and see if there's a change. Oh, it has changed everything.
[LAUGHS]

SPEAKER: How do you think social media has changed the way brands need to shape their voice or tone?

CARA HAWKINS-JEDLICKA: So I think it has changed so much. Coming from-- God, I feel ancient, and, no, I'm not. But I think I was one of the first people to get a Twitter account in 2008 or when it first started out. I was in college. I ended up teaching a class on Twitter because my professors didn't understand it. And now, I'm here. So, really, I think it's because people want to interact with you. You really need to make sure you're consistent. It's really because you're more-- you're so client-facing with Facebook, and Twitter, and Instagram.

Like, you have to be able to respond in the same voice and understand how you're responding. Because, if not, it's going to blow up. People who do really big brands-- I mean, even if you look at WSU Pullman, for example, if you say one wrong thing, it can really blow up on you.

So you want to make sure you have those consistent messaging points, your tone's correct, and people expect consumers-- and people who interact with you expect the same voice, because it is so front-facing. It is so direct. I mean, yeah, it's ridiculous how the level of-- how customer service has changed, too. So I mean, we think when we work with Delta or something like that, we expect a certain level of back and forth.

SPEAKER: How do you think brand voice will be impacted by the new shifts towards business to consumer-direct messaging?

CARA HAWKINS-JEDLICKA: I think it's already-- that happened. I mean, take Nike, for example, with the newish Colin Kaepernick ad. Oh, one-on-one communication-wise. Well, you can measure your audience and what they like better, A, because you are shifting towards that business-to-consumer model. So that changes a lot of what you do.

And then voice shifts because it becomes more personable. You're not going to have a lot of brands-- and I think you kind of see this now-- with a newsy tone. You kind of see them talking like a human.

Proper grammar is a necessary thing. And, really, you're trying to really understand your audience from the one on one, and you can talk to them directly. You can cut out that middle man. You know, if you look at the old way-- we've talked about this in public relations-- the old way public relations worked, you used to have to go through a medium of basically any news outlet. Now, you don't have to do that. And that changes everything. So you really have to think that through quite a bit. So, yeah, I think it's impacted it a lot. I hope I answered that question OK. Yeah.

OK, we'll wrap it up. If you guys have questions, you can really easily find me in the email here. I don't think I'm on the Murrow website, but I am just c.hawkins-jedlicka@wsu.edu. It's really long. C.hawkins-jedlicka. Yeah. D-L-I-C-K-A @wsu.edu. If you happen to see another Jedlicka in there, that's my husband. So he would get the message to me, but you probably don't want to do that. So, yeah. And thanks, you guys, for your time, too.