



BRAND VOICE

Using words to drive positive outcomes

Intro

People rely on Shutterstock for beautiful photos, illustrations, and videos—an experience that should be fun and engaging. Copy is one part of an experience designed to delight customers and artists, and earn their loyalty. As a brand, we use positive, forward-focused writing to set clear, beneficial expectations, which we then fulfill.

General Guidelines

Frame ideas positively and confidently. When you find yourself saying “don’t” or “never,” or starting a paragraph with a statement that expresses uncertainty, try rewriting.

Respect the reader’s time. Get to the point as fast as you can. Avoid jargon and complicated sentences.

Put the customer or contributor first. Every action Shutterstock takes should be explained in terms of how it helps our audiences.

Be persuasive. Use facts and emotion in tandem to build a case for why a customer should buy a desirable product, or an contributor should upload high-quality work.

Be human. Shutterstock usually speaks as a collective “we,” as a team of people working together and in unison. We can use “I” when an individual is signing a piece of writing. Informal and casual language is usually appropriate for Shutterstock, but always be polite.

Be consistent with grammar and style rules. Consult the Shutterstock Voice and Style Guide Google Doc (<http://bit.ly/V4t8XB>), Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary and the Chicago Manual of Style to resolve spelling, grammar or style questions.

Break rules when necessary. Clarity and common sense always come first. If something feels “off,” rewrite it.

Brand Voice Attributes

Genuine. Avoid vagueness, caginess, and insincerity.

Efficient. Choose simple, economical language.

Passionate. We’re enthusiastic about work and play. Let it show.

Savvy. Be an expert. Display credibility and dependability.

Lighthearted. Use warm, positive humor where it works.

Branded Content

Be an expert. Shutterstock sets the agenda for visual communication. Our writing should convey this without hesitation.

Be inclusive. Shutterstock’s audience includes readers all over the world, from luddites to techies, students to business leaders. Seek creative ways to make everyone feel welcome when they read our content. For example, when writing a post that requires technical knowledge, state in the first paragraph what skills someone should have to understand it. Work explanations into your copy for any obscure references, inside jokes, Internet memes, and anything regionally specific.

Keep it positive. Avoid engaging in fights, poking fun at bad design, or putting anybody down.

Emails and Conversion

Clear an easy path. Copy should guide the reader toward a positive outcome (such as a purchase) like water flowing downhill. Emails should be easy to skim. Use short, proven call-to-action lines. Heed test results.

International

When preparing English copy for translation, keep the copy simple and free of idioms. Consult with country managers and translators for guidance on cultural sensitivity.

When preparing copy for a specific market, localize it based on our best facts about what customers expect from us. For example, a more specific explanation of the product is appropriate in countries with lower awareness of Shutterstock.

Shutterstock Brand Values

Fresh

Simple

Dynamic

Respectful