TONE OF VOICE

HOW WE

SOUND

TONE OF VOICE
If you think of Virgin Mobile as a person, then our Tone of Voice is our personality. It’s how we express ourselves. It’s the thing that makes us different from every other telco business.

Like a person, our Tone of Voice has evolved a little over the years, while staying true to who we are. These days we’re a little more grown up, but we’re still fresh, friendly and fun. It just means that, instead of saying “Hi peeps”, we might say something like “Hello gorgeous” instead.

Because it’s our personality, our Tone of Voice shines through in everything we do. Of course you’ll recognise it in our ad campaigns and on our website, but you should also spot it in everything from our bill messages and internal comms to the way we talk to customers when they call or email us.

For some campaigns we’ll tweak the language to suit the character involved (think gangsta-talk for 5c; ye-olde for Robin Da Hood), but even when the style varies, it’s important to remember that the underlying tone should remain the same.

To help us think about Tone of Voice, we’ve broken it down into five bite-sized pieces. Hungry for more? Then read on.
IN A NUTSHELL

OUR TONE OF VOICE AT A GLANCE.

STAY POSITIVE
ENTHUSIASM

BE HUMAN
FRIENDLY & NATURAL

KEEP IT SIMPLE
SAY IT LIKE IT IS

MAKE IT FRESH
TALKABILITY

USE HUMOUR
CHEEKY WIT
USING HUMOUR

WE’RE FAMOUS FOR OUR CHEEKY HEADLINES BUT THESE TAKE A LOT OF TIME TO GET RIGHT.

- Use witty humour whenever possible – and appropriate
- Always solve a customer’s problem before cracking jokes
- Don’t force it – if it comes naturally, all good, otherwise just aim for friendly

From our earliest days the Virgin brand worldwide has used humour to entertain and build a relationship with the public and our customers. Humour is a great way to find new ways to say something we all relate to.

We love to be cheeky, even provocative, but we’re never crass or use innuendo gratuitously. And please, no ‘Virgin’ jokes.

Our humour should be based on honest, insightful observations of human behaviour, not cheesy gags or randomness just for the sake of standing out.

WE WANT TO BE WITTY, NOT WEIRD.
HEADLINES

Use witty, topical humour that doesn’t make fun of someone else.

Want free Voicemail, all the time? It’s your call.

This is just a photo of the new Samsung Galaxy. Imagine how awesome the actual phone is.

DO

Use bad puns, cheap gags, dad jokes, sexual or religious innuendo on the word ‘Virgin’.

Nice pair of Nokias.

At Virgin Mobile, we love first-timers.

The mobile deal is such a steal, you’ll end up in jail.

Get on the horn for a handset that will make you horny.

DO NOT
TIMING

Use humour to surprise & delight, when it’s effective to do so.

Move along, nothing to see here.
(on the bottom of a phone box with nothing else printed)

Modern art.
(online banner for the LG Renoir)

DO

DO NOT

Use humour when it’s inappropriate, like in a bill or apology letter.

Look on the bright side... no matter the size of this bill, it’s still probably not as big as your mortgage repayments!!!

This month, we’re raising our text fees. That’s why we’ve renamed it text-tember!!!
ON THE PHONE OR INSTORE

Use humour to build rapport, but let the customer take the lead.

[Customer] I live in Taree, what a hole!

[You] Well I grew up in Dubbo, so I can’t talk.

DO

Be overly familiar or make jokes at people's expense.

[You] I see you live in Taree. I spent a month there one night!

[You] So you’re calling South America quite a lot? Anything the police should be worried about?!!!
BE HUMAN

THINK OF OUR CUSTOMERS AS COLLEAGUES - A FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP, BUT WITH BOUNDARIES.

- Treat our customers with friendly respect and fairness in mind
- Be professional but not too formal or corporate
- Don’t push it - we want genuine, natural conversations, not forced ones

Our relationship with our customers is friendly and informal, but we know we’re not best friends: we don’t ask for information we don’t need, and we’re not going to ask them to help us move house.

We hope our customers will love the way we treat them, but our tone shouldn’t ever be lovey-dovey. Warm and chatty is great, but don’t cross the line.

Don’t be afraid to be human. Everyone makes mistakes; as long as we offer a genuine apology and a solution, the customer will appreciate us for it.
WELCOMING NEW CUSTOMERS

Be warm and friendly and give helpful, relevant info.

Welcome to Virgin Mobile and thanks for joining us. This little booklet should tell you everything you need to know about using your new service. So settle back, get comfy and keep reading...

DO

Get in their face, or bombard them with details.

DO NOT

Congratulations on becoming a Virgin Mobile Member! You definitely made a great choice!! We’re over the moon and know you’ll ABSOLUTELY love us too!!!

Welcome to your Cap 29 plan over 24 months with $150** value on a Nokia N82 handset. Your billing cycle starts on the 3rd Monday of the month, unless that day falls on a public holiday, in which case...

16 BE HUMAN
BILLS, CONTRACTS & APOLOGY LETTERS

**DO**

Admit mistakes and quickly move to the solution.

Whoops, we had a small glitch with our invoicing system and this bill shows a charge you didn’t actually incur. Our sincere apologies – we’ll be sending you a correctly revised bill soon.

**DO NOT**

Make inappropriate gags or comments.

Look, we stuffed up your last bill, but get over it because we’ve credited the amount to this one. Nobody’s perfect okay?

Welcome to your Virgin Mobile Contract. Before we get into the serious questions, are you a dog or a cat person? Boxers or briefs? Ha! Just kidding...
FAMILIARITY

Treat our data with respect, using them for great offers.

Hey Matthew,

It’s been a couple of months since you recharged, so here’s an exclusive bonus just for you.

DO

Make privacy-invading, Big Brother comments.

DO NOT

Dear Matthew,

We know you live in Newtown and make lots of long calls to 1800 numbers, so Matthew, we wanted to offer you a special deal to make those calls cheaper.

And by the way Matt, the Nokia handset you bought in the Pitt St Mall is now 6 years old so don’t you think it’s time you upgraded?
ON THE PHONE OR IN STORE

**DO**
Be friendly, yet courteous and professional at all times.

*Hi, how can I help you? Not a problem, I’ll just look that up for you now.*

**DO NOT**
Be irrelevant or make overly personal comments.

*So how does it feel to be forty? Married with kids eh, that’s gotta be tough!*
KEEP IT SIMPLE

BY KEEPING OUR LANGUAGE EASY TO DIGEST, WE CAN CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO OF CONFUSION.

- Explain complex things in simple ways, like telling a mate how it works
- Use everyday terms, avoid jargon or acronyms
- Short, simple sentences are always better than long, difficult ones

As a Virgin business, we connect with real people by using a tone of voice they can relate to. Simplicity cuts through the bewildering mess of information every customer faces and offers them a refreshingly genuine alternative.

If you can say the same thing with fewer (or shorter) words, do it. Just think: what am I really trying to say? Then say it, and stop. Don’t add anything more, unless you have a really good reason. Hint: there is almost never a good reason.

But...concise shouldn’t mean abrupt. Be thoughtful about finding the right words. Mark Twain once said: “I would have written you a shorter letter, but I didn’t have the time.”

Take the time to make it simple. Our customers deserve it.
SIMPLE, CLEAR LANGUAGE

Be concise without sounding abrupt.

Call us on 1300 555 100 any day, 7am to 11pm, and ask us about it.

If you have a complaint, we'll do everything we can to sort it out as soon as possible.

DO

Use longer words, sentences or paragraphs than needed.

Contact our Customer Service department by calling 1300 555 100 between 7am and 11pm, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, and asking one of our customer service representatives about your issue.

Your complaint is very important to our feedback processes, we will treat your enquiry with the utmost care and diligence to ensure the ideal resolution to your issue.

DO NOT
USING SIMPLICITY TO CHALLENGE

Keep the focus on us, even when implying a challenge.

At Virgin Mobile, Unlimited means Unlimited. Talk about freedom of speech.

Other companies charge you for Voicemail. Beep that.

DO

DO NOT

Be too abrupt or negative.

Thinking about staying with Vodafone? Well they can have you.

Sick of mobile phone company crap? Join us.
STAY POSITIVE
WE WANT OUR CUSTOMERS TO FEEL OUR GENUINE PASSION FOR EVERYTHING WE DO.

• Communicate with enthusiasm and energy, use action words
• Focus issues on what we can do, not on what we can’t do
• Think of our offers in terms of overall value, not just price

We're passionate about our brand, and it shows.

Our enthusiasm is contagious because it's genuine. We love what we do, so our energy is natural and engaging. We don’t need to shout, because we know we offer real value.

We're positive & confident – without putting our customers to sleep. We’re energetic & enthusiastic – without assaulting the senses.

In an overcrowded & stuffy marketplace, we are a breath of fresh air.
KEEPING IT POSITIVE
Convey enthusiasm with confidence and charm.

**DO**

Thanks so much for being with us, did we mention that you rock?

Actually, we’re a bit excited about this phone.

**DO NOT**

Shout with capital letters, exclamations, bold, underlining.

Thanks SOOOO much, we LOVE having you with us!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

OMG this phone is IT baby!
ON THE PHONE OR IN STORE

Be enthusiastic but not forced or fake.

Good to hear.

Nice one.

Absolutely, I can do that.

I know what you mean.

DO

Be over-the-top and in-your-face, or bored and distracted.

He-l-lo gorgeous, how ARE you?

Tell me EVERYTHING!


DO NOT
BE CAREFUL ABOUT COMPARISONS

Talk up the many great things about us, ask questions, know your facts.

At Virgin Mobile, you’ll get free Voicemail whatever your plan is, because we figure you shouldn’t have to pay for missing a call.

Do you get free Voicemail with your current provider?

According to the latest Roy Morgan survey (and a few before that), we rate No. 1 for customer satisfaction amongst telco businesses in Australia.

DO

DO NOT

Go into detail about competitor’s offer without checking very very carefully! If you do, include our positives alongside their negatives.

Telstra! Huh, they practically charge you for turning your phone on.

Our plans are 30% cheaper than Vodaphones, and with more features.

With Optus’s Fusion plans, you pay $1.27/minute for calls to Mongolia.
MAKE IT FRESH

MAKE IT FRESH

IF YOU REMOVED OUR LOGO, WOULD THE CUSTOMER STILL KNOW IT’S VIRGIN MOBILE?

• Always aim to surprise and delight our customers
• Avoid clichés, be spontaneous and natural
• Tell people something they didn’t know

Call it the secret ingredient. Call it the ‘V’ factor. Whatever you call it, the art of making it fresh is how we get people interested in, and talking about, our brand. Making it fresh is our way of spending less, but getting noticed more.

It’s also the best way for us to deliver red hot and remarkable experiences to our customers.

So how do we keep it fresh? There’s as many ways as there are ideas. In the past, well-chosen celebrity-driven campaigns have worked brilliantly for us, from giving out Jason Donovan’s phone number and asking people not to call it, to getting Vanilla Ice to apologise for his crimes against music, to our favourite cele-bro-ty, Doug Pitt.

Timing is crucial. We become part of the conversation by posing hot questions that people are interested in debating, by saying how it is, or simply by making people laugh with a piece of cheeky, witty, inventive humour.

At Virgin Mobile, we can afford to be a little different. Challenging the status quo is in our DNA; that means we never rest on our laurels. What worked yesterday may be irrelevant today, and the only thing we know is that by making it fresh, we give ourselves a fighting chance against competitors with budgets many times bigger than ours.

Remember: we don’t want to just play the game, we want to change it for good.
OUR NAME
As a company we’re Virgin Mobile Australia, aka Virgin Mobile. We’re not just ‘Virgin!’ However you can refer to the Virgin brand with things like ‘this plan is simple, great value, in true Virgin style’. We can also say ‘Virgin to Virgin calls’. Best of all, make it personal and use pronouns such as ‘us’, ‘you’, ‘I’ & ‘we’ when you can.

CAPITAL LETTERS
Capitalise specific product and process names (Irresistible Plan, Mobile Internet, Late Payment Fee), as well as people (Richard Branson), places (Australia, Oz), companies (Virgin Mobile, Optus) and acronyms (PUK, SIM).
Don’t capitalise generic words such as internet, mobile phone, account, credit card, local calls and so on.

DATES
The best way to format dates is: 1 January 2012, which keeps a nice number-word-number order. No need for 1st, 2nd, etc. Add the day to the front if needed: Sunday 1 January 2012. To save space, shorten words to three letters: Sun 1 Jan 2012.

SPELLING
Because of our heritage (as a country, and as a company) we use the English spellings of words: centre not center, colour not color, and so on. Don’t be afraid to use Aussie expressions, but don’t go nuts with sheilas & cobbers.
TIP: Set your PC dictionary to ‘UK English’ - sometimes the ‘Australian English’ setting uses American spelling.

WEB ADDRESSES
## COMMON TERMS

- Powered by the Optus 4G Plus network
- Free Voicemail in Oz
- Rollover unused data, calls & text
- Unlimited mobile calls & text Virgin to Virgin within Oz
- Earn Velocity Points

### WE PREFER TO SAY* | NOT
--- | ---
Bill | Invoice
Calls & text | Talks & text
Data as singular (10GB is heaps of data) | Data as plural (10GB are heaps of data)
Data Packs | Data Value-Adds, Data Plans
Flagfall | Call connection
In-store | In store, instore
International Roaming | Global Roaming, Globetrotting
internet | Internet
Oz | Australia
Phone | Handset
Plan | Rateplan
Postpaid | Post-paid, Post-Paid, post-Paid, monthly
Prepaid | Pre-paid, Pre-Paid, pre-Paid
Rollover (product) | Roll Over, Roll over
Stores | Retail outlets
Text | SMS
The Fine Print | Terms & Conditions
Virgin Mobile, Virgin Mobile Australia | VMA, Virgin
Voicemail | Voice message
WiFi | Wi-Fi

* There are exceptions. For example, we wouldn’t say ‘text’ if something applied to SMS but not MMS. And in a formal letter, ‘Australia’ might be more appropriate than ‘Oz’.
ANY QUESTIONS? LET’S TALK!

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