

Brand & Editorial Guidelines Builder

**Your content should sound like *you*.
Let's build the blueprint.**

At ClearVoice, we believe that one essential element of creating consistent, impactful content that resonates with your audience is thoroughly understanding and documenting a brand's voice, tone, audience personas, goals, and editorial preferences.

You might already have these guidelines fully defined, or you may need to start from scratch. This guide will help you build or evolve your brand and editorial guidelines to ensure you create quality, effective content that aligns with who you truly are.

Let's get started.



Step 1

The Brand & Editorial Guidelines Questionnaire

There are many ways you can build your brand and editorial guidelines, from manually pulling the details together to using tools like ChatGPT to create an in-depth guide. Either way, all great brand and editorial guides start with the questions below.

Creating your brand and editorial guidelines from scratch? Take a moment to answer these questions in full. Be sure to include anyone on the team who may have input of value (sales, product marketing, etc.)

Are you using this guide to revitalize your brand and editorial guidelines? We encourage you to look at these questions as a 'start from scratch' exercise. We'll combine the information into your current guidelines in Step 2b.

Remember, the more detailed and descriptive you are in your responses, the better you can represent your brand. Think of this as your brand's blueprint — the clearer it is, the easier it is for any content creator to build something that reflects your identity.

QUESTIONNAIRE TEMPLATES:

[Google Doc](#)[Microsoft Word](#)

Step 2

Formalizing Your Brand and Editorial Guidelines

You're likely in one of two places in creating your guidelines: Creating from Scratch (use section 2a) OR Elevating Your Existing Guidelines (use section 2b). Either way, we've got you covered!

2a: Creating From Scratch

So, you're starting from a blank slate. No worries — this is where the magic begins. Crafting your brand and editorial guidelines from scratch might sound daunting, but we've got you covered.

You have two main options:



1. Manual Creation:

Prefer a hands-on approach? Use our customizable templates. We've provided a structured Google Doc and/or a slide deck format that you can fill in, step-by-step. This way, you have full control over every detail.

GUIDELINES TEMPLATES:



Google Doc



Google Slides



Microsoft Word



2. AI Assisted:

Want to streamline the process? We've got a ready-made prompt for you. Simply input your questionnaire responses into an AI tool like ChatGPT, and let it generate a comprehensive set of guidelines for you. You can then refine and format them as you see fit.

AI PROMPT:

Act as an expert in content marketing and help me create brand and editorial guidelines for my content. Using the responses from the brand and editorial questionnaire below, generate a comprehensive set of brand and editorial guidelines. The guidelines should clearly outline our brand voice, tone, target audience, content preferences, key SEO goals, and other nuanced items. Ensure the final output is cohesive, actionable, and reflects the brand's unique identity. I've included an example output outline as a guide.

Questionnaire: *[insert completed questionnaire]*

Branding Guideline Template: *[insert brand guideline template]*

2b: Elevate Your Existing Guidelines

So, you already have a brand and editorial guideline in place — that's fantastic! But we know that evolving and refining those guidelines can feel daunting. No worries — we got you. With the valuable insights you've gathered from our questionnaire, we can help you blend and elevate your existing guidelines into something even more powerful and cohesive.

Whether you prefer a hands-on approach or want to leverage AI, we have options to fit your workflow:



1. Manual Integration:

Dive into your existing guidelines with the new insights and weave them together for a refreshed and enhanced framework.

EXAMPLE:

Before Enhancement

Target Audience:

- **Marketers:**
 - **Roles:** Director, VP, CMO, CEO (small companies)
 - **Needs:** Improve and optimize content production and distribution at scale
 - **Interests:** Original statistics, examples, fresh insights

After Enhancement

Target Audience:

- **Marketers:**
 - **Roles:** Directors, VPs, CMOs, and CEOs in small companies. Agency leaders looking to scale services.
 - **Needs:** Overcoming content bottlenecks, maintaining quality at scale, proving ROI, and managing freelancer relationships.
 - **Interests:** Original statistics, examples, fresh insights
 - **Refined Approach:** Highlight solutions for balancing in-house and outsourced content, offer thought leadership on emerging trends, and provide frameworks for seamless content operations.



1. AI-Assisted Update

Use our pre-made AI prompt to quickly generate a comprehensive, refined set of guidelines based on your updated responses.

AI PROMPT:

Please merge the responses provided from the brand questionnaire with our attached current brand and editorial guidelines to create a more refined and robust set of guidelines. The final output should enhance our existing framework with the new, detailed insights, ensuring a cohesive and comprehensive foundation for our brand and editorial strategy.

Questionnaire: *[Insert questionnaire responses]*

Include your brand guidelines attached to the prompt before submitting.

Step 3

Implementing Your Brand and Editorial Guidelines

Now that you've defined your brand and editorial guidelines, here are some crucial ways to put them into action:

1. Incorporate into Daily Workflow



Create a Centralized Hub:

Store the guidelines in a shared drive or internal wiki. Ensure it's easy to access for everyone.

EXAMPLE:

Create a dedicated "Brand Guidelines" folder in Google Drive, with subfolders for voice, tone, and SEO resources.



Embed in Content Tools:

Integrate guideline reminders into your CMS or project management tools like Asana or Trello.

EXAMPLE:

Add a checklist item for "Review against brand guidelines" in every content task.

2. Integrate into Onboarding and Training

Onboarding Checklist:

New hires complete a brand guidelines module within their first week.

EXAMPLE:

Include a short video walkthrough of the guidelines and a quick quiz to reinforce key points.

Regular Training Sessions:

Schedule quarterly refreshers or workshops to go over updates and best practices.

EXAMPLE:

Host a "Guidelines in Action" workshop with real examples of content that aligns well with the brand.

3. Make It a Part of Your Editorial Workflow

Editorial Checkpoints:

Implement a step in the editorial process where drafts are reviewed against the guidelines.

EXAMPLE:

Editors use a checklist to ensure the content meets voice, tone, and SEO criteria before approval.

Feedback Loops:

Establish a routine feedback mechanism where team members can suggest improvements or flag inconsistencies.

EXAMPLE:

Use a shared form or Slack channel for guideline-related feedback.

4. Align with Marketing Strategy



Cross-Functional Collaboration:

Schedule monthly syncs between content, marketing, and sales teams to ensure alignment.

EXAMPLE:

Review recent content pieces in these meetings to see how well they adhere to the guidelines.



Performance Metrics:

Track metrics like content engagement, brand consistency scores, and SEO performance.

EXAMPLE:

Use a dashboard to visualize how well content aligns with guidelines and its impact on KPIs.

5. Keep Everyone Up to Speed



Guideline Guardians:

Assign team members to be the go-to for guideline questions and updates.

EXAMPLE:

Designate a "Guideline Guardian" in each department who hosts monthly Q&A sessions.



Regular Audits:

Conduct bi-annual content audits to ensure adherence and identify gaps.

EXAMPLE:

Use a scoring system to rate content alignment and share results with the team for continuous improvement.

Ready to Get Started?



We've got you covered if you have any questions or need inspiration. Check out our resources on the importance of brand profiles and guidelines, and see examples of how strong branding transforms content:

- [Comprehensive Brand Guideline Training](#)
- [How to Create a Conversational Brand Voice](#)
- [Guidelines with an SEO Focus: What to Include](#)

The blueprint's in your hands.

You've asked the right questions. You've gathered the right inputs.
Now it's time to turn those insights into action.

Build it. Share it. Use it.

Whether you're onboarding a new team member, launching a campaign, or publishing your next piece — your brand and editorial guidelines should be the go-to source for clarity and consistency.