
Finding and Using Executive Voice

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Executive voice



Executive voice

You cannot create a voice for a leader.

You can only help them find their own.

Connecting your story to the larger project

"My parents shared not only an improbable love; they shared an abiding faith in the possibilities of this nation. They would give me an African name, Barack, or "blessed," **believing that in a tolerant America your name is no barrier to success.** They imagined me going to the best schools in the land, even though they weren't rich, because **in a generous America you don't have to be rich to achieve your potential...**

I stand here today, grateful for the diversity of my heritage, aware that my parents' dreams live on in my precious daughters. I stand here knowing that **my story is part of the larger American story**, that I owe a debt to all of those who came before me, and that, **in no other country on earth, is my story even possible."**

- Sen. Barack Obama, 2004 DNC Convention

Connecting your story to the larger project

Executive voice in obviously executive moments



Executive voice in obviously executive moments



And less executive moments



Maintaining executive voice

“Jazz is perhaps the most honest reflection of who we are as a nation. Because after all, has there ever been any greater improvisation than America itself? We do it in our own way. We move forward even when the road ahead is uncertain, stubbornly insistent that we’ll get to somewhere better, and confident that we’ve got all the right notes up our sleeve.”

- Remarks at White House Jazz Festival, April 29, 2016

“This team taught all America’s children that “playing like a girl” means you’re a badass... It means drawing the largest TV audience for a soccer match -- men or women’s -- in American history. It means wearing our nation’s crest on your jersey, taking yourself and your country to the top of the world. That’s what American women do. That’s what American girls do.”

- Remarks Honoring the U.S. National Women’s Soccer Team, October 27, 2015

Deploying your executive's voice

Just because a CEO can talk (or email, Tweet, blog) doesn't mean he should.

Be strategic

Delegate

Tips for writing and speaking with your best voice

Tip 1: Say one thing, honestly



Tip 2: Use human English



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- Instead of talking about **numbers**, talk about **people**.
- Instead of talking about **features**, talk about **benefits**.

Tip 3: Tell a story

- ❑ A story has **structure**.
 - ❑ Gives the audience a sense of order and momentum
- ❑ A story has **characters**.
 - ❑ Gives the audience someone to identify with (or not)
- ❑ A story has **conflict**.
 - ❑ Gives the audience something to root for (or against)

Tip 4: Listen

To be persuasive, you need to be persuadable.

“Nations with allies thrive, and those without allies decline — it’s that simple,” Mr. Mattis told airmen assembled before him at a conference outside Washington on Wednesday.

“We must be willing to do more than to listen to our allies. **We must be willing to be persuaded by them.**”



What else?