

How we communicate, Visit Norway, august 2015

Working document

INTRO

This document aim to help you communicate better and more effectively on Visit Norway.

The model/concepts that we are using for Tone of Voice follows Stephanie Schwab's «Finding Your Brand Voice»

(<https://www.socialmediaexplorer.com/social-media-marketing/finding-your-brand-voice/>)

Remember, this is a working document and we will iterate a lot based on editors feedback and the target audiences reaction.

VISION

Visit Norway's vision is:

Easy to choose Norway

This is not something we communicate to the world, but we use the vision internally as a benchmark for all our communication:

Does this article, picture, video, headline, fact box etc. make it easier to choose Norway?

PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR COMMUNICATION

In order to make it easier to choose Norway we need to set some **principles in order to know what we communicate.**

The principles form the basis for all our communication no matter the target audience or Tone of Voice. They are afterall our core beliefs. Our principles are:

Substantial

For us this means reporting from where it happens when it happens. We live in Norway and/or understand Norway. This means that our facts are updated, that we have been to the places we write about and talked to the people you will meet there.

Example:

“I can fill a bag with fish in less than an hour” (article from *The Atlantic Road*, 2015)



The Atlantic Road is beautiful and dramatic. But if you take a closer look, it has more to offer than just the amazing scenery.

“Out there,” says Olgunn Johansen, waving a finger past an islet further out at sea. That’s where she first learned to fish, more than 60 years ago. It is also just about where Norway ends, giving way to the open Atlantic.

“I’d go out by boat with my grandfather, who was a fisherman. He knew all the best fishing spots,” she says.

“The knowledge was passed on to my father. And then to me.”

Why this works: We have actually gone to Nordmøre, and interviewed one of the locals, Olgunn Johansen. There is nothing spectacular about the fact that she comes to fish from her regular spot at the Myrbærholm bridge

every day, but what gives the story value is how we get to know her and her explanation of how it is like to live her life with the the tourist attraction of the Atlanterhavsveien as a backdrop.

Honest

We are here to sell Norway. And we are proud of it. But we will be honest to you about what you will meet by showing you real examples of the great experiences Norway possess.

Example:

Picture from Flåmsbana (Kyrre Lien, 2015)



Why this works:

The weather is grey, you can see a monstrous cruise ship in the background and the train driver is not posing in front of the camera. In other words, it is real and it is honest.

Neutral

In order to be honest and substantial we will use neutral sources and facts that supports our claims. We will always try to link and quote from established sources that travellers trusts.

Example:

Destination: Flåm (2015)

Examples - trustworthy sources:

Lonely Planet, The Guardian, National Geographic Travel, BBC Travel, Condé Nast Traveler etc....

Why this works: Adding a source gives credibility to bold claims, that we wouldn't otherwise make ourselves. It's okay to claim that a train journey is «one of the world's most incredible» as long as it originates from a journalist working for a renowned publication, and not a PR worker from Norway.

In addition the article includes neutral and useful facts about the Flåm Railway (how long the train ride is, through what kind of landscape it takes you and what you can expect to see during the ride).

TONE OF VOICE

In order to make it easier to choose Norway we need to **determine how we communicate** and **who we communicate to**.

The model we use for finding our Tone of Voice is based on four concepts

- Personas
- Tone
- Language
- Purpose

Personas

Who are we communicating to? We define them by these keywords.

Explorers

They seek new territories and new experiences - nature, culture, society, food, traditions. They are looking to expand their horizon and gather their strength.

Active

They seek adventures that involves being physical active – hiking, skiing, cycling and so on. The activity itself is a goal and Norway's nature creates a unique and beautiful backdrop for the activities.

Curious

They seek cultural experiences in addition to nature. They are looking for an intellectual vacation and don't mind sightseeing, city travelling and guided tours.

Tone

Tone is the underlying feeling that emanates from our communication. Are we loud? Introvert? Factual? Inspiring?

Our tone is:

Personal

We communicate directly and relaxed. Think like a person who talks to someone he or she knows and likes. Visit Norway is not a machine but real persons reporting from real places with real people to real readers.

Example:

Lead in to article: Explore the viking age in modern Norway

Imagine living in Norway a thousand years ago. Were you a fierce Viking warrior, a sailor exploring the oceans, or a poet feasting with your king?

Why this works: Asking the reader to envision what it was like to live a thousand years ago, and communicating directly to the reader («Were you...»), can be an effective tool when the goal is to write more personal.

Inviting

Remember that we want people to visit us. We are someone who care about what happens to each other. Our tone is friendly, generous and lively. We want to make people relax and feel welcomed.

Example:

Destination: Fredrikstad

Warmth, is often used as a keyword when Norwegians are asked to describe Fredrikstad. Mostly, this refers to the inhabitants, who are known to be friendly, open and humorous (it's probably not a coincidence that the Norwegian Humour Museum is located in Fredrikstad, although hopefully it's not symptomatic of our sense of humour that the museum is one of Norway's smallest).

Why this works: We work with a lot of texts with similar content, but should sometimes challenge ourselves to vary a little bit. A touch of self-deprecating humor give the text more personality.

Informal

We are who we are – for better or worse. The narration of a movie could for instance be done by the person who made the film, even if his/her English is not perfect. Perfect vocabulary and pronunciation is not necessary, as long as the language is understandable.

Example:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/58r654jnfy9yqf4/N%C3%A6r%C3%B8yfor den.mp4?dl=0>

Why it works: The fact that the main character doesn't speak fluently English is more than compensated for with his enthusiasm. It feels natural and down to earth - and it is obvious that we are not trying to be something that we are not.

Language

Establishing appropriate language will give us a foundation for the types of words, phrases and jargon to be used in our communications.

Our language is:

Open

We don't use words and jargon that normal people will not understand. We want to communicate for everybody, and you don't need to be an expert to understand what we talk about.

Example:

Article: Behind the Façade, on Bryggen (2015)

To the outside world, Bryggen is, first and foremost, a façade. An iconic one, at that: the tall and slim wooden townhouses standing gable to gable along the quayside, seemingly leaning on each other, are instantly recognizable as a symbol of Bergen and its history. Not to say of Norway as a whole.

But for the people who actually spend their days working here, in the very real and very vivid community behind the postcard motif, it's important to emphasize that this is no museum.

"We are open all year. There's a lot of small, exciting events going on that even locals should pay much more attention to," says Brudvik, who even stresses that she does not adapt her style to serve the tourists in summer. "I don't make souvenirs. I do my own thing."

Why this works: The fact that we have visited Bryggen and talked to the actual people that work there gives an opportunity to give a wider context to a site most people outside of Norway only have superficial knowledge. It's nice to see a text about Bryggen without a reference to the legacy of the

Hansa era in the first few paragraphs (do most people know anything at all about the Hanseatic League? Probably not).

Exemplify

The more specific we can be, the more convincing they will be. Think of specific examples instead of vague descriptions that really say nothing.

Example:

Destination: Hadeland

“The number of museums in Hadeland is nothing but quite impressive. At Hadeland Folkemuseum, an open air museum set in a scenic culture landscape, you can witness the burial ground of the Norwegian viking king Halvdan Svarte and exhibitions of 25 restored buildings and a beautiful medieval church, St. Petri, from 1120 - and at the Kistefos Museum you can get an insight in the Norwegian industrial history and admire exhibitions by both Norwegian and international artists. How many places in the world can actually boast of having its own comic museum? Well, at least Hadeland can.”

Why this works: Instead of just claiming that the destination offers a variety of museums, and by mention some specific examples, the text appears more convincing and useful for the reader.

Destination: Drammen

“In the late 1980s and 1990s, Drammen had a reputation as a bleak city because of industry and heavy traffic, but the last few decades a lot has been done to visually improve the city center. A new Ypsilon bridge which is for pedestrians and cyclists only has opened, the traffic was redirected, a new city beach was constructed, and the river was cleaned. The facelift has been a success, and today Drammen is one of Norway’s fastest growing cities.”

Why this works: So the city has experienced a facelift, but what does that actually mean? By listing up some specific examples on different improvements, the reader get a better understanding of how the city is today compared to how it used to be.

Purpose

In the end, what's the point of Visit Norway and how we communicate? Remember that we want to make it easy to choose Norway. So our purpose is:

Inspiring

We will try to communicate in a way that makes you see yourself visiting us.

Example:

Destination: Bodø

“Enjoy your beer or a glass of Chablis outdoors on the quayside, as sea eagles sail across the horizon. Stamp your feet to a hard-hitting rock concert in the city park or go shopping in the city’s modern malls or small specialist shops”.

Why it works: Who doesn't like Chablis? Sea eagles? Or hard-hitting rock? Seriously?

Guiding

We want to help you. Our communication should give you the information you need to make informed choices as well giving you practical information that will make your stay here in Norway easier.

Example:

Destination: Alta

“Alta boasts a large assortment of activities - all framed against the brilliant blue light and contrasts which are so distinctive of Finnmark in the middle of winter. Try for example dog sledging or go on a snowmobile safari. The world's first Northern Light observatory was built here at the end of the 19th century and has earned Alta the name The Town of the Northern Lights.

A natural highlight in Alta is the protected rock carvings in Hjemmeluft. This group of rock carvings bears the traces of a settlement dating from c. 4200 to

500 B.C. It constitutes the most important piece of evidence documenting the existence of human activity on the fringes of the Far North in prehistoric times - hence its status as a UNESCO world heritage site”.

Why it works: Let’s be honest, Alta is no Paris or Tokyo. But it is possible to write informative and kind of inspiring about smaller destinations. And the texts are so much more credible when they are guiding the reader, based on facts, rather than empty slogans.