

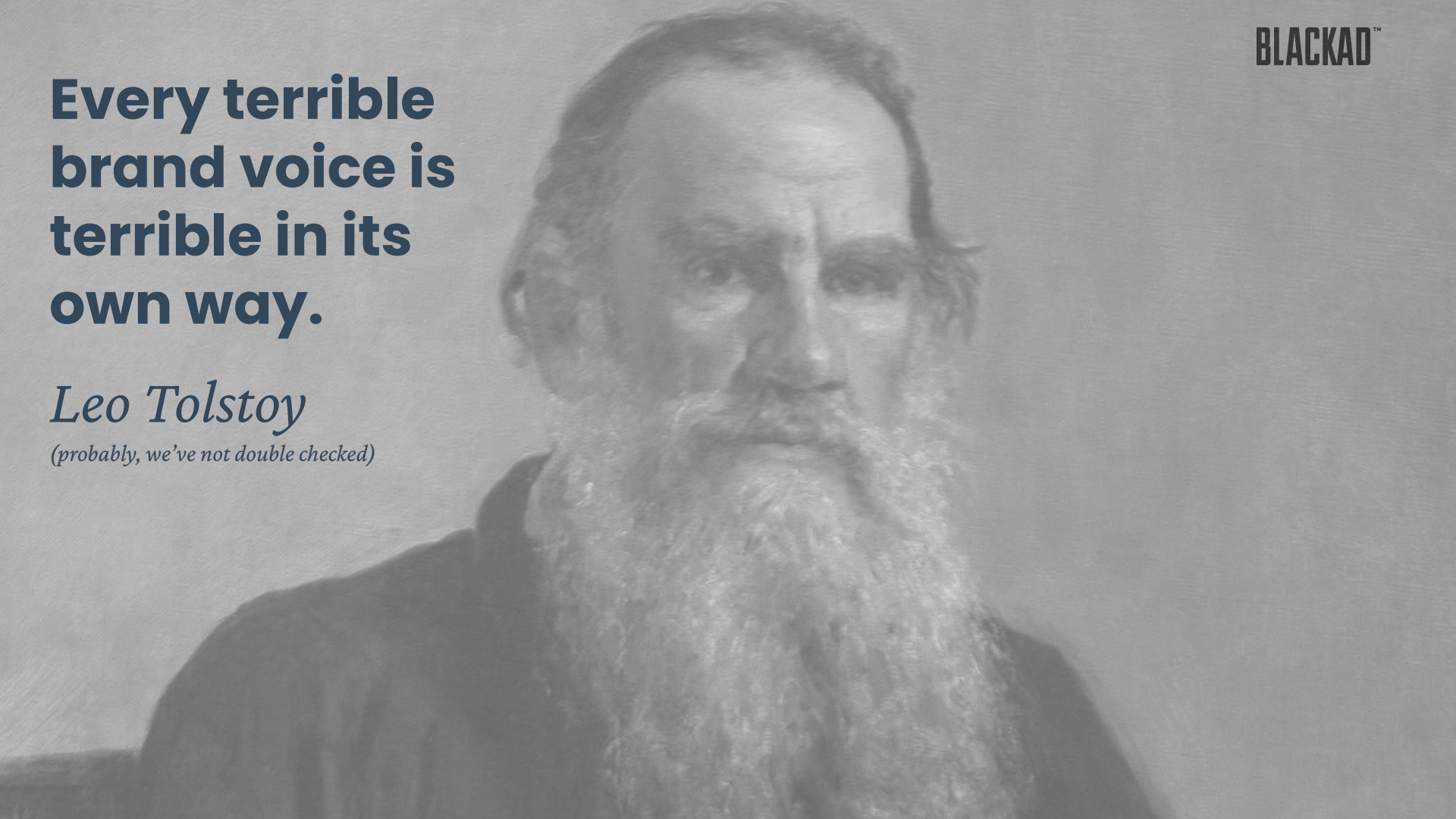
The Terrible Tone of Voice Playbook

Create an insufferable, wholly unusable
voice for your obnoxious brand

**Every terrible
brand voice is
terrible in its
own way.**

Leo Tolstoy

(probably, we've not double checked)



He's not wrong. **Terrible**
brand voices get it wrong in
so many ways...

Too **generic**

Too **chummy**

Too **brand-like**

We could go on. And we will.
For precisely the length of
this playbook.

**We'll explain how you can
stand out for all the wrong
reasons.**

Let's **start** with the tone of
voice guide.

Teaching a terrible voice

What are you shouting about?

Explaining brand.

You'll notice we opened this guide with a pretentious epigraph. This justifies the amount of the marketing budget you spent on defining nothing.

Stuck for inspiration? We've got you covered...

“A brand is an idea of an idea within a slightly larger idea.”

**Perfect. We've stepped over
into the land of abstract
marketing warble. You can
say anything now.**

**“For me, personally, a brand
is a sort of societal fever
dream...”**

Malcolm, your web developer

“Yeah, stick that in the guide. Sounds cool. Sort of anti-brand, sort of punk? We can be the Sex Pistols of financial services?”

**Forget
reality...**



Just align yourself with brands you've heard are good. Don't worry about trifling details like industry or audience.

***“Have you heard of
Innocent Smoothies? We’re
chirpy too, which really
makes us stand out from
other **funeral homes.**”***

“Our culture is a lot like Apple’s – if Apple was reinventing the future of pickled onions.”

POWERFUL
BRAND
GOBBLEDYGOOK

Obscure your lack of purpose by using
oversized typefaces for single-word
sentences that mean very little.

**What is it you actually do?
You need to keep it snappy.**

Tech brand?

**Always describe
your offer as 'X for Y'**

Uber for colonoscopies

Deliveroo for spare socks

Mailchimp for actual chimps

But if you're not in tech, just say you 'deliver a solution'.

Leave the what and how to the sales team.

BLACKAD™

**This is more
than a product.**

It's a lifestyle.



What is it that you believe?

A brand needs values.

All the best brands want to change the world.

You need a mission.

Don't worry about making sure it's relevant.
It just needs to sound ambitious as hell.

**Changing the world
with stock cubes?**

That works.

Leading a revolution
through **fabric softener?**

You bet.

Collapsing space and time with beetroot?

Great.

Bonus points section...

**The worst guides employ
lots of puns about voice.**

**It's what makes them
really sing.**

Warm up your pipes.

Unleash your dulcet tones.

Keep your brand in tune.

**These never get
monotonous.**

Don't forget to put **some words** in a different colour.

To imply emphasis at **random.**

Boiling down the brand

How to describe 'the brand'

It's a simple eighteen-step
formula of course.

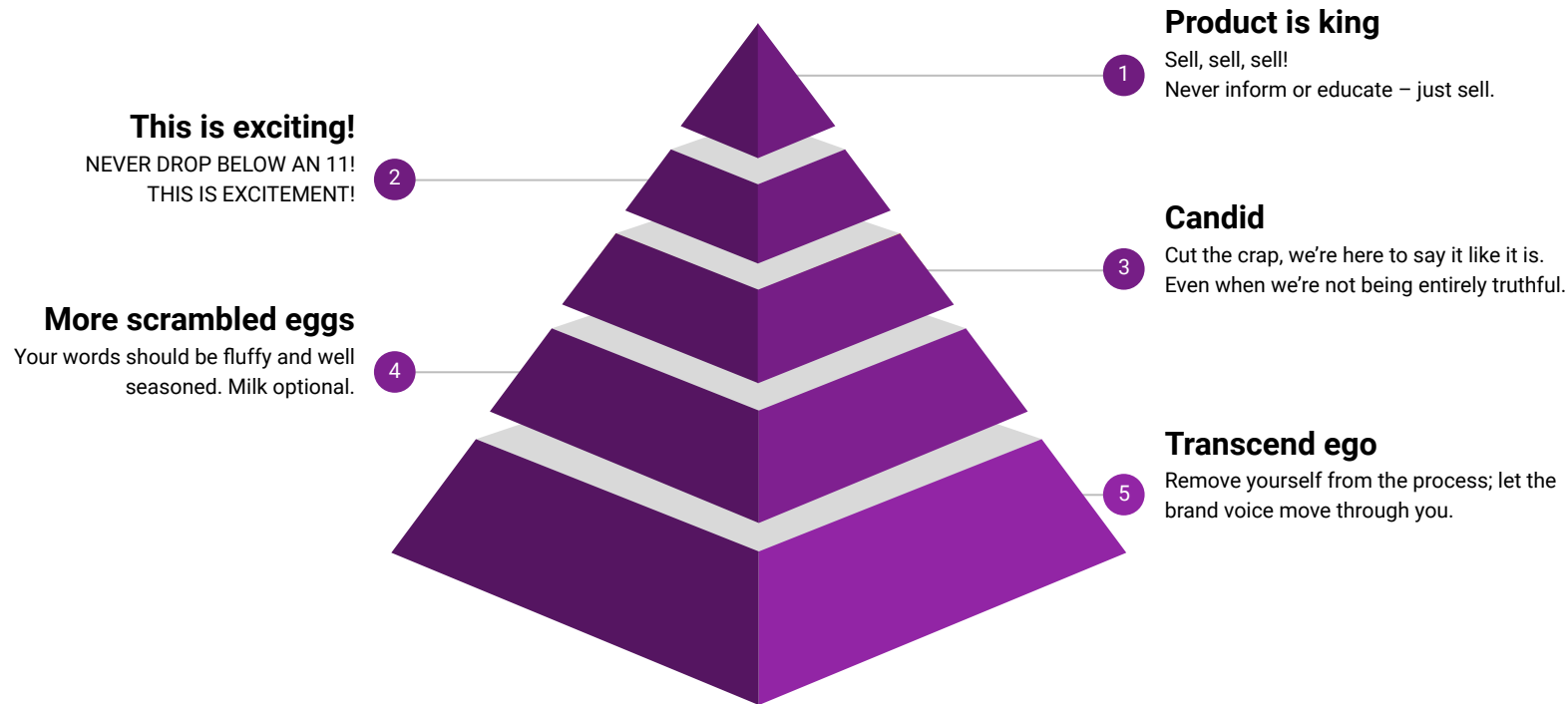
Your brand voice should have a minimum of
twenty seven elements. Nobody knows why.

These should guide everything you do.
But also be impossible for anyone to remember.

You'll know you've nailed it when you need an
elaborate cryptogram to unlock its potential.

**Present your brand
elements in a confusing
graphic.**

Pyramids are best.



**Hello
jargonmeister**

Nothing means anything.

You are the marketing team.
Wield your jargon with authority.

If people can't understand it,
they can't criticise it.

We need to triangulate the tonal mufflers to achieve brand meridian.

**Take the adjective highway
to build **hyperlocal**
engagement in the brand
cortex.**

**The people will ask for
examples.**

**'Show us how it's done,'
they'll say.**

Ignore them.

Real life is remote.

**The guide exists in a
beautifully-designed
vacuum.**

Notes on grammar

Bamboozled by grammar

Semicolons are important.

Dangling participles. Intransitive verbs.
Subordinate clauses.

This is all VERY important stuff. Step away from the keyboard and don't think about writing a single word until you can explain these in your sleep.

**All writers DEFINITELY
understand this stuff.
Don't @ us.**

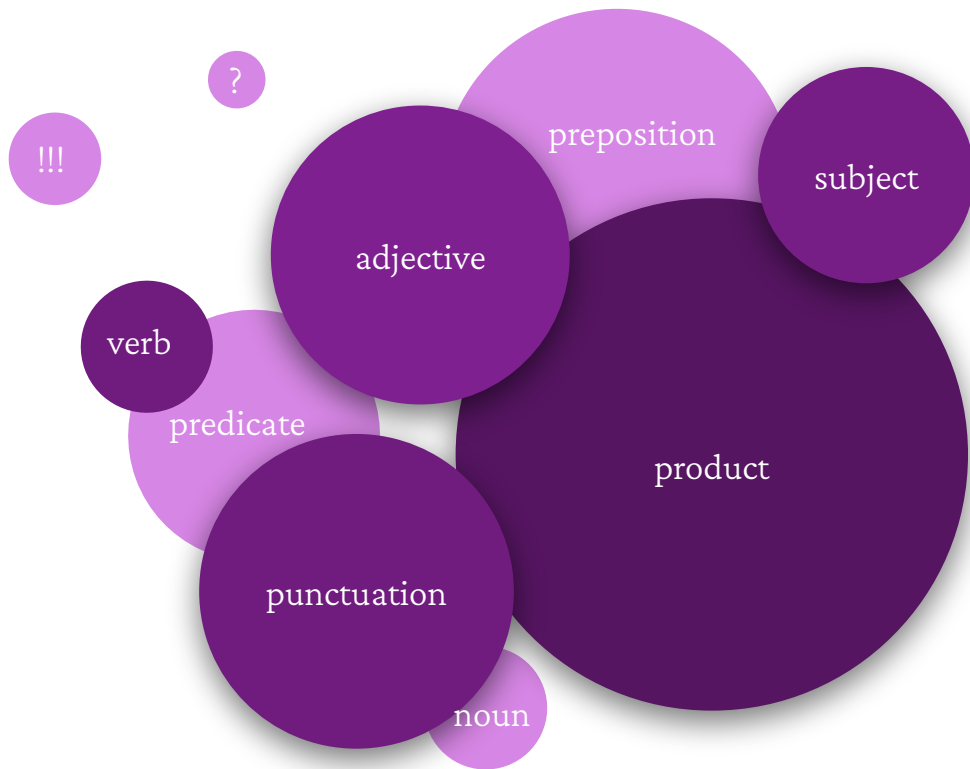
Mix advanced linguistic theory with everything you learned about grammar in primary school.

**Never start a sentence with
'And' or 'But'.**

**Lest you **summon the
eternal curse** upon your
family.**

But how do you structure a sentence in the brand voice?

This
should
clear
things
up.



**Of course, rules are there to
be broken. If you know how.**

Use **passive voice**.

Write **day-long** sentences.

Mix tenses like your **metaphors**.

Just follow the rules.
Until you don't.
Capiche?

Remember, in some countries it's still **illegal** to discuss writing without using an image of a **typewriter**.



Putting it all into words

A voice... it lives!

How do you put it on the page?

When writing in the brand voice, cut loose.
Show off your personality!

But not too much... we don't want to alienate anyone. Keep it safe. Just not too safe.

You get it.

**Don't use the same boring
old words as everyone else.
It's **humdrum**.**

**So make up some new
ones...**

**Infantilise your brand
language so people know
it's, like, **quirky** and
different.**

Oopsie.

Customeroso.

Quirkalicious toneballs.

Just never **lose sight of the
fact that you are here to
show off your **expertise**.**

**We all know long words
make you sound smart.**

And perspicacious.

**Embrace your
inner thesaurus.**

**Never explain your
acronyms or initialisms.**

It ruins your brand's DPC.

**And don't get us started on
how it impacts the CRO.**

Most of all...

Don't worry about how **real
people speak.**

You are a brand.

**Above mere mortals in the
real world.**

**Got questions about brand
voice? Just shout into the
void...**

unmonitoredmailbox@terribleTOV.com

**Alternatively, get some
good advice:**

copywriters@blackad.co.uk

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