

Tone of Voice Guidelines Te Reo o Wairaka

For anyone writing or speaking for Unitec.

September 2018



Who should use this document?

Anyone speaking or writing on behalf of Unitec - whether creating content, writing a letter, an email, or speaking to a group or individual.

This guide is intended to help create a consistent communication style across Unitec.

It outlines the key elements of the Unitec brand personality, the recommended style for our communications (our voice) and advice on how to tailor the tone of our messages to specific audiences.





Creating harmony

If you think of a band - every member has their own role and plays a different instrument. Together they create music by playing together in harmony. They sing from the same song sheet. We would like to create that same harmony across all Unitec communications.

Everyone has their own personality, expertise and things to say. Our tone of voice makes sure that when we communicate on behalf of Unitec we sound like we are coming from the same place.

That is what our tone of voice guide is doing for Unitec. Creating harmony in the things we write and say.

The words and language we use when we write and speak express our values, our personality and our Kaupapa. They represent the people of Unitec - and the way we wish to be seen by our audiences.

Our tone of voice guides “how we say it” rather than “what we say”. It is the way in which we bring our brand personality to life and demonstrate what makes us unique and special.

Our aim is to be consistent and true to our values in all of our communications. Speaking in harmony.

Our brand personality

How would we describe Unitec if it were a person?

Our personality is made up of all the parts of Unitec - especially our people.

We are engaged, interested and passionate about what we do.





Whānau means the world to us.

We are like a big family. We would like people to see us as a trusted Aunt or Uncle - Mātua Whaea Kēkē - someone that offers sound advice, with caring and genuine interest.

We welcome everyone - we accept them without judgement or criticism and see people for who they are.

We are guides.

We know what we are talking about. We are smart and knowledgeable in a real-world way and also pretty practical. There is more to us than you might expect.

We are friendly and welcoming.

At Unitec we like to be really inclusive and accessible. We have the ability to help transform lives through what we do and we do our best to help our students on their personal journeys.

What we are and what we are not

Here are some cues to help
outline what makes up our
unique brand personality.



We are:

Like a wise Uncle or
Aunt - kind, trusted, honest
and cool (and good fun).

Smarter than you think.

Kaupapa driven - strongly
influenced by values.

Confident.

Caring - welcoming
and approachable.

Inclusive.

Practical - (in a "number
8 wire" kind of way).

Knowledgeable - we know
what we are talking about.

Professional.

An ITP - and proud of it.

An organisation who values
our commitment to Māori and
non-Māori through our Te Noho
Kotahitanga (TNK) partnership.



Our style is:

Informal, but not casual
- we take what we do
seriously - but we are
easy to talk to.

Conversational
in manner.

People centred -
engaging, caring, helpful
and interested in others.

Focused on the concept
of whānau - accepting of
all, friendly and inclusive.

Altruistic - genuinely
wanting to help and
assist others on their
personal journey.

We're not:

A pushy salesman.

Formal or uptight.

Judgemental or
intimidating.

Flashy.

Too casual or colloquial.

The Unitec voice

Our voice is the part of our personality that doesn't change.


Regardless of what we are saying - or who we are saying it to - these are the things that we always aspire to.

Our voice is made up of the ingredients that guide the style of our communications.

Our voice is constant and consistent - it is the steady and familiar face of Unitec and should be instantly recognisable as being from us - rather than someone else.

For example our voice is:

Personal
Supportive
Accepting
Welcoming
Knowledgeable



How do we describe the voice we use to portray the Unitec personality?

Mātua Kēkē/ Whaea Kēkē

We listen, consider and give simple, clear, and concise advice.

Informal

We care too much about what we do to be casual - but we can still be serious about our work and communicate in a friendly, informal manner.

Te Noho Kotahitanga Partnership

Our language reflects our commitment to Te Noho Kotahitanga and our partnership between Māori and non-Māori.

Customer centric

We make a personal connection - it is about you, not me. We use names rather than titles, we talk “with” not “at”, and we engage in one to one conversations where possible.

Kaupapa driven

Whānau and values are the bedrock of who we are and we reflect this in the way we act, speak and write. We focus on positive outcomes for Māori, using Māori-centred approaches to achieve these outcomes.

Whakamanawa

We are about finding solutions not problems. We engage in the spirit of encouragement, inspiration and support in a positive, active way.

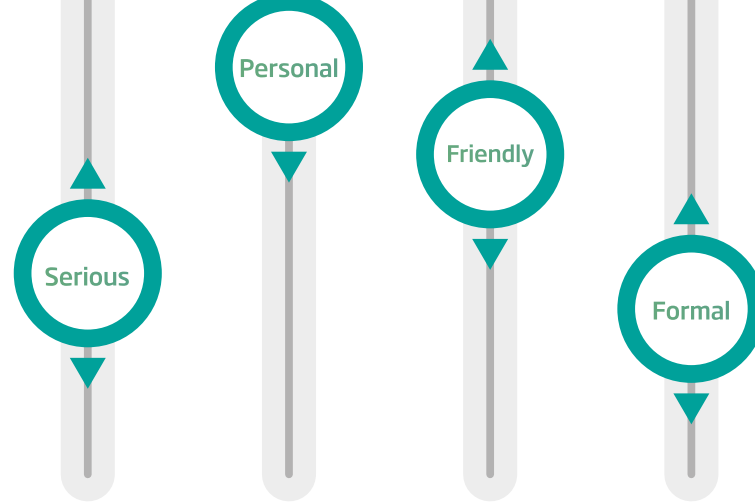
Altruistic

We assume the best in people - we’re empathetic, supportive and genuine.

Knowledgeable

We provide practical, useful and insightful advice and support.

See the person
and know your
audience



The Unitec tone

Our Tone is how we adjust our voice to suit our audience and the situation we are in.

It may change depending on what we are trying to communicate - sometimes more formal, sometimes less so, sometimes loud, sometimes quiet - but always reflective of our personality.

Our tone is important because it reflects the type of relationship we have with our audience.

If we use the right tone we improve our ability to engage with our audience and more effectively communicate what we want to say.

For example - depending on the situation we may be:

- More or less formal
- More or less personal
- More or less serious
- Use simple or more complex language
- Be more friendly or more direct

Te Noho Kotahitanga

Our partnership between Māori and non-Māori

Using Te Reo Māori everyday demonstrates our commitment to Te Noho Kotahitanga and our partnership between Māori and non-Māori.

We do this by using Te Reo alongside English (and other languages) as an integral and blended part of the language we use when we speak and write on behalf of Unitec - not as translations - but as part of the conversation.

We use Te Reo on purpose - as an intentional and meaningful demonstration of our relationship.

Building confidence.

We can help each other to understand and appreciate Te Reo by using key words and phrases as part of our language.

For non-English speakers we can also use Te Reo alongside their own language. This is a great opportunity for us to share our unique New Zealand heritage and culture.

Some helpful
hints for building
Te Reo into
our everyday
language

Te Reo Māori

Greetings

Formal letter or email:

Tēnā koe (Name) - Dear (Name) – greeting one person.

Tēnā kōrua - Greeting two people. Don't insert the names.

Tēnā koutou - Greeting three or more people.

Informal letter or email:

Kia ora - Hello, any number of people.

Kia ora kōrua - Hello to two people.

Kia ora koutou - Hello to three or more people.

Mōrena or Ata mārie - Good morning.

(Note: kia ora can mean hello, good morning, good afternoon and thank you).

Other:

Ngā mihi - Thank you.

Ngā mihi nui - Thank you very much.

Ngā mihi maioha - Thank you with appreciation.

Kei te pēhea koe? - How are you? (one person).

Kei te pēhea kōrua? - How are you? (two people).

Kei te pēhea koutou? - How are you? (three or more people).

Sign-offs

Nā - From.

Nāku, nā - Yours faithfully.

Nāku iti noa, nā - Yours sincerely.

Ngā mihi - Kind regards or thank you.

Ngā mihi nui - Kind regards (with more emphasis on gratitude).

Hei konā mai - Goodbye for now.

Mā te wā - Bye for now, see you later.

Noho ora mai - Stay well, look after yourself, good bye.

Kia pai tō rā - Have a nice day.

Kia pai tō kōrua rā - Have a nice day (two people).

Kia pai tō koutou rā - Have a nice day (three or more people).

Kia pai tō rā whakatā - Have a great weekend (for one person).

Other:

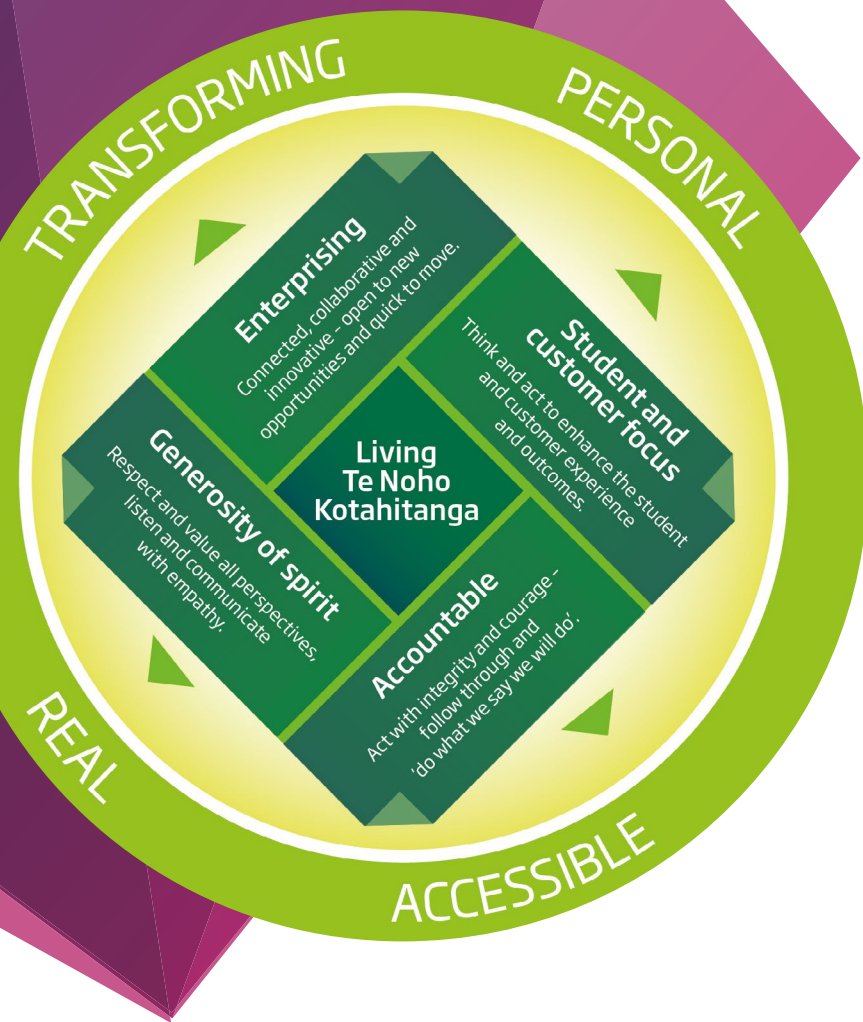
Aroha mai - Sorry, I'm sorry, my apologies.

Kei te pai - I'm well.

Tino pai - I'm very well.

Kia manahau! - Enjoy!

Ka mau te wehi! - Awesome! Fantastic!



Amplifying our Values

- See the person and not the number.
- Be authentic and genuine.
- Look for opportunities to change people's lives for the better.
- Welcome and encourage - there is a place for everyone at Unitec.
- Be inspiring problem solvers.
- Mātua Kēkē/ Whaea Kēkē - respectful and not judgemental.
- Be altruistic - focused on "you" not "me".
- Take our job seriously.
- Use Te Reo Māori on purpose.
- Demonstrate our commitment to Te Noho Kotahitanga every day through our language and values.
- Be Whānau and Kaupapa driven.



Using the right language

Language that reflects our voice
and sets the right tone.

Simplicity (less is more)

Be clear and concise in your message. It is easier to have one key focus point of the communication and deliver that message clearly, than try to do too many things at once.

Simplicity means knowing who your audience is and making sure they understand what you are saying.

Communicating complex ideas and information in a simple way makes your knowledge more accessible to more people.



Being personal.

Where possible, try to communicate with each person as an individual. You can do this by using names rather than titles. Try to acknowledge personal circumstances rather than sounding like a generic message that goes out to everyone.

Take the opportunity to show a bit of yourself to your audience - let them see you as a person too.

We communicate as people - not as an organisation. Rather than saying "Unitec needs this" - perhaps say "**we need this**" or instead of saying "Unitec can help" - perhaps say "**I can help**". When signing off documents, use your own name instead of "from the Team at Unitec".

Engaging with your audience.

Welcome feedback and make sure the reader knows how to contact you for more information or to ask questions. Make it easy to engage in a two-way conversation.

Try to use language such as "**you/me/us**" and make the engagement personal - rather than being from an impersonal organisation.

Setting standards.

When **we use language correctly** (spelling, punctuation, grammar), we set a good example and convey the right impression about the quality of our organisation and the standards we adhere to.

Informal language is ok.

We want to come across as approachable and friendly (remember our role as a Mātua Kēkē/ Whaea Kēkē - or that favourite Aunt or Uncle that provides good, sound, advice) - but we don't want to come across as casual.

We can be informal and approachable - and still convey that we take our role and work seriously - but it is difficult to do this if we are casual.

Try to **set the tone of being personal** - but don't use slang or a joking manner. We are **friendly and easy to talk to** - but still professional.

Being respectful.

When thinking about what we say and how we say it - **be respectful, honest and non-judgemental**. We want everyone to feel valued and welcomed.

Using Te Reo Māori.

Go on - give it a go!

Ask for help if you need it - or see our simple guide for some ideas.

Learning how to open and close emails and letters with Māori greetings and sign-offs is a great place to start.

Learn a mihi or a pepeha so that you can make a personal introduction at your next hui.

A close-up photograph of a hand with light skin adjusting a black, ribbed knob on a blue electronic device. The device has various other knobs and labels, including 'VOLUME' and 'TUNING'. The image is partially obscured by a large, semi-transparent yellow and orange geometric shape that covers the right side of the page.

Some language to avoid

What should we try not to do?

Please

Don't swear.

Don't be rude.

Don't lie.

Don't guess or make up an answer.

If you are unsure of the right answer, then be honest and get back to them later when you have found out the right answer.

Try not to be confusing.

Use a simple, concise manner and avoid jargon and acronyms (remember our goal of being accessible). Let's make it easy for people to understand exactly what we are saying and doing.

Don't judge or accuse.

We don't know everything that is going on in people's lives - so don't assume that we know all the answers or the circumstances affecting someone's behaviour. Seek first to understand - and then to help and guide.

Don't use deficit language.

People do not want to feel excluded, or to be labelled inferior - either as individuals, or as members of a group. See the person first and communicate with them as an individual and avoid group based stereotypes and assumptions.

Quick Reference Guide

Personality, Tone and Voice.

Creating harmony.

This tone of voice guide seeks to help us communicate in a consistent manner - and to clearly reflect Unitec values and brand personality.

Our goal is to bring all of the individual voices of Unitec together into a common communication style - so that our audiences can understand and appreciate what makes Unitec unique. Creating harmony in our communications can help to amplify our brand and our messages in a way that is instantly recognisable as Unitec .

The Unitec Voice - these things always stay the same.

A trusted adviser - knowledgeable, approachable and caring.

Incorporate Te Reo Māori - alongside English and other languages as a genuine expression of our commitment to Te Noho Kotahitanga.

Informal and conversational - we speak in an easy, confident manner - friendly and engaging but not too casual or colloquial.

It's about you, not me - we are focused on our audience and their needs rather than our own.


Whānau driven - our values and concept of whānau underpin our behaviour and our inclusive approach to communicating with others - be inclusive.

Whakamanawa - we try to be encouraging, inspiring and supportive. We look to build trust and find solutions rather than find blame or excuses.

Generosity of spirit - we demonstrate empathy and understanding. We are accepting, welcoming and non-judgemental.

Personal - we look to create personal connections; use names rather than titles; be authentic and engage in one-to-one conversations where possible.

Authentic - we communicate in clear, honest, concise language that makes it easy to understand what we mean.



The Unitec Tone - how we adjust our delivery to meet the needs of our audience.

Adaptable - while our personality and voice remains constant - we can adjust the tone of our delivery to suit the audience we are communicating with.

Language - our tone is friendly and positive. Sometimes we may need to be more serious - but we can still be open, honest and empathetic.

Formality - for some audiences we may need to be more formal, and for some we can be less formal. When being formal we can still be true to our voice - caring and genuine.

Personal - our language and tone should reflect a desire to communicate at a personal level - not as a faceless organisation. Use your own name and terms such as I, we, us and you.

Informative - our tone should be clear, simple and concise - not complex and confusing. Use plain language where possible and avoid jargon and acronyms.

Knowledgeable - we can be confident - and show that we know what we are talking about without being "smart" or condescending.

Patience - whatever the circumstances, we should avoid being confrontational or angry - listen, understand and communicate clearly and with confidence.

Accepting - our language and tone should show acceptance and welcome for all. We are here to help and guide regardless of race, gender, or circumstance.

Ngā mihi

**This document is the result of consultation
with Unitec stake holders. If you have any
questions please contact...**

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