Writing in Virgin's Tone of Voice





Ahoy there, writer.

Woo hooo, writing for Virgin. Welcome. We're thrilled to have you on board.

Words play a massive role for us. We love them. Always have. They're the secret sauce which makes things feel truly 'us'.

So strap in. Here come a bunch of writing guidelines. You'll be sounding totally Virgin in no time.



Sign here to begin your adventure

Our writers dream b	ig. We want to cre	eate extraordinary copy. Are you with us?		
1,	, commit to creat	ting my most extraordinary copy, ever		
We all need other people to help us get there. Who's on your side?				
l'll bounce my ideas c	off	and		



What makes brand copy brilliant?

Before we get into our voice, here are the magic ingredients behind most brands with a brilliant voice. We always aim to be up there with the best. Tick all ten and we'll be flying high.





Meet the voice



Hello there. Let's dive straight in.

Let's go deeper

Our tone is conversational and highly enjoyable to read. It's a very one-to-one voice. A lot of brands would say 'we talk to people like a friend', but we sound much more like we're giving fantastic service or being a brilliant host. We're by your side, even if you're just filling in a form. Think warm, friendly, personable, caring, inviting and all about showing you a brilliant time.

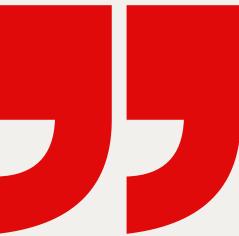
Our voice comes across as a real 'people' person, because that's who we are. We're switched on and emotionally intelligent. There's nothing we love more than connecting with people and giving them a 'wow' moment. Our best writing is when you can tell a real person had a shipload of fun creating it.

We're very welcoming. We literally love to say **hello**. And we don't leave anybody out. Everyone's invited, we strive to make everyone feel comfortable.

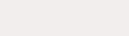
Lifting people's mood is a big one for us. We are very **feel good**.

We've got big visions, but we talk about them in a down-to-earth way. Without being self-deprecating, we pop a pin in anything that could come across as grand.

We want to be loved. We want to be remembered. We want to put fabulous words out into the world. Our bar for quality is extremely high. And that's exactly why we chose you.



Let's go deeper



The big four

Our best writing comes from the play between these four. There's push and pull. Mixing and mingling. It's all in the balance.

We're immediate. We're easy to get. Simple is far from plain, though. It's about bringing things to life by making them feel warm and human. Like saying 'let's shake on it' instead of 'sign here'.

Leave people going 'yep, got it'

We're open and honest and get to the heart of the matter, Simple without being blunt. Our straightforward nature brings people along with us. Leave people nodding along **STRAIGHTFORWARD Optimistic**

We love wordplay, but it's not all about showing off what a clever clogs we are. Our wit makes people feel warm or look twice (and be very glad they did).

Leave people going 'that's absolutely brilliant, I love it'



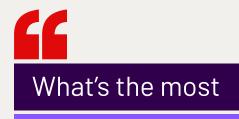
We travel through life with a super positive attitude. It can't help but shine through. The goal is always to make people feel good.

Leave people smiling



More on simple

Simple? Yes. Vanilla? Never.



immediate

way to say it?

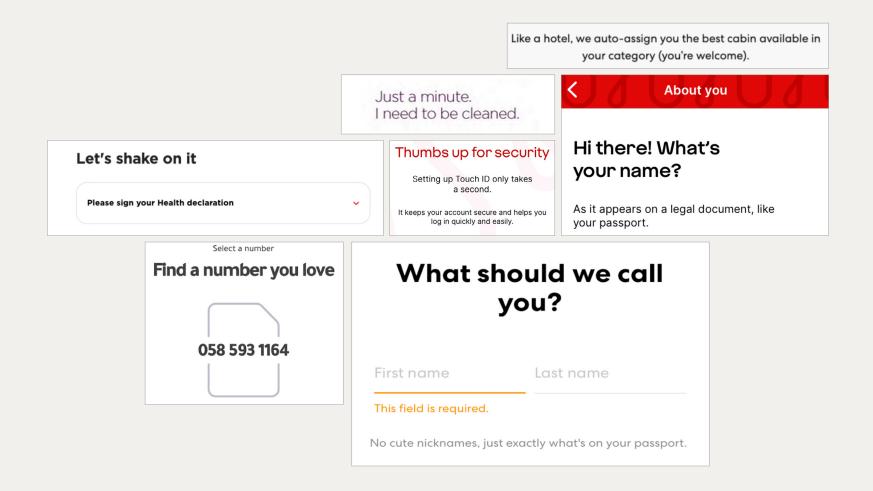


How we do it

We go for the **gloriously simple**. So instant, it's a delight.

We use **everyday words and phrases** that are pleasing to read. The kind of things people genuinely say out loud. You could record yourself chatting through what you want to say.*

Simple also means **accessible** to all. We make things smooth for screen readers and filling in our forms is actually enjoyable.



More on straightforward

We get to the heart of the matter and we don't waffle on.

Let's go deeper



How we do it

We're a lot more down-to-earth than most people think. A lot of our writing is actually quite straightforward. The surprisingly simple, optimistic and witty bits are like cherries on top.

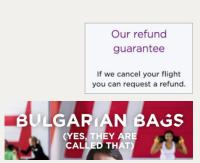
First, we use insatiable curiosity to dig deep and know what we want to say.

Then, we put things in such an uncomplicated way that it makes you look at it with fresh eyes.

For longer stories, one thing follows on another. Our sentences take you from A to B. There's no dilly-dallying.

The more urgent the message, the more no-frills we become. For example 'Your hot air balloon can't fly today. It's a weather thing. We're really sorry.'

Straightforward in action





We're here for you

High Efficiency Particular Air (HEPA) filtration (basically using science to clean the air).









Above all, what we write feels good.



How we do it

We write like a grown-up letting their hair down, for the grown-ups letting their hair down. It's confident, positive, full of life, caught in the moment, exciting and a little flamboyant.

One of our superpowers is **superlatives**. Like epic. Wonderful. Peak. Stellar. Smashing it.

We can be a bit **extra**. For example, we'll say 'VERY competitive' or 'we had what can only be described as an absolute 💥.

We often namedrop things that make life great, like waffle bathrobes and champagne.

We don't gloss over the tough issues or wring our hands. We just put things in a simple and straightforward way and always bring a solution or an action to the table.



Optimistic in action



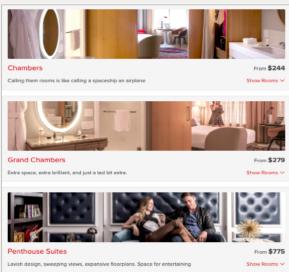


We're a sociable bunch, come visit



virginvoyages Scarlet Lady just out here making epic waves 🥶





More on a touch of wit

You might think "right, I need to make this sound really out there". But like we said, we're a lot more down-to-earth than that.

Let's go deeper



How we do it

We love **puns**. They've got to be original and make good sense both ways, like Virgin Australia saying 'we are the uptimists'. You can get away with cheesier puns on social media, but for something like an ad campaign it needs to feel really fresh and original.

We love a **big hello**. Most Virgin companies have their own way of saying it, from 'ahoy' to 'hello you' to 'you're welcome'.

Every Virgin company has a few favourite slogans we pepper around the place, like 'make ship happen'.

Putting fun phrases in unexpected places is a bit of us.

We name things brilliantly. Scarlet Lady, The Know, Ruby Slipper, 'voyages' not cruises, 'chambers' not rooms.

Even more on a touch of wit...

We use phrases that sound physical or **paint a picture in your mind**, like 'tap here for windblown hair'. It's anything that helicopters the reader straight into an experience, makes them feel like they can touch, taste, smell, hear, see it.

It's anything that helicopters the reader into an experience, and makes them feel like they can touch, taste, smell, hear or see it.

We play with words to do with our products, so Virgin Voyages might say 'let us take a deep dive with our crew'

What we write **feels 'now'**. What's bubbling up in today's culture? Does it make sense for us to tap in?

We steer well away from clichés or give them a good **twist**.



One tap closer to windblown hair







A touch of wit in action

WHERE WORK & PLAY INTERMINGLE

Connect a booking

Get all your stars aligned and connect your profile to an existing booking.















Cocktails with Altitude

The primary sailor

Grown-ups only (at least according to your birth certificate). You can add additional sailor details later on.







How do I fly this thing?

Let's go deeper

Welcome to the dashboard.

	Simple	Straightforward	Optimistic	Touch of wit
Up and running	Immediate "Am I reading? I hadn't noticed."	Real Direct and down-to- earth	Feel good Positive, inviting and full of life	Creative Whoever did this was having fun
Flying high	A joy Just a pleasure to read	Refreshing So clear it shines new light on things	Feel amazing Makes people's day	Inventive Whoever did this is utterly brilliant
Sailing too close to the wind	Plain	In your face	Spin or glossing over things	Try hard



We've got seven values. As writers, we use them as a springboard for ideas.* After writing, we use the values to do a quick check to see if our copy feels 'Virgin'.

Smart Disruption

STRAIGHT UP

Red Hot Relevance

Delightfully Surprising

Heartfelt Service

INSATIABLE CURIOSITY

We are family

^{*}Actually, you can springboard off the entire Virgin DNA. But that might be jumping in at the deep end right now.





We are deeply interested in what makes people tick and how to do things better. We like to invoke the curiosity of people with intriguing experiences that invite them in.

How we write it

We get curious before we even touch the keyboard. What's our message? How can we relate to people?

We actively talk about doing things better.

We use generous, inviting words right from that first 'hello'.

We intrigue people with words that switch on their curiosity.



Disruption

We challenge conventions, make bold and intelligent decisions and come up with different and better ways of doing business for good.

How we write it

Great copy can help us break new ground. We use some drafts to explore beyond any limits or expectations.





We are fair, transparent, honest and ethical in all we do. That is why people trust us. We don't waste time.

How we write it

We're straight with the reader. Our positivity and optimism don't tip over into spin.

Sometimes we just keep it short and sweet.



Our service is warm, friendly and effective. We love to solve problems and we treat people like family, they know we give a damn about them.

How we write it

Our writing is genuine, not corporate. What's the most personable way to say it?

We are

family

A sense of belonging, where all feel welcome, valued and respected. Everyone can take part in rewarding experiences and know they're a part of the wider Virgin family.

How we write it

We imagine we're 'by your side' and use a lot of 'we' and 'you'.

Check: might anyone feel left out by this? Bring everyone along.

Delightfully

Surprising

We always deliver the basics brilliantly but love to go the extra mile with unexpected touches that make people smile. These moments make our experiences refreshing and memorable.

How we write it

Writers, this is our time to shine.

What's the most delightful way to say it? What's the most surprising way to say it? Think about all the clichés, then wave them goodbye.

How can we add to people's overall experience? We contribute ideas beyond the brief.

Red Hot Relevance

This is our energy and contemporary edge, our agility in meeting people's needs. Whatever we create is bold, exciting and culturally progressive. This is our newest value so let's dig a bit deeper on this one.

How we write it

Firstly, we tap into what feels 'now' or 'next'.

The way we use language feels bang up-to-date.

We make references to things and ideas that feel current.

The vast majority of people will get it.

It's relevant to what we're communicating.

Look out

We don't ever want to come across as 'try hard'.

Second, we are progressive.

We use language that includes everybody and recognises people have big differences.

We're happy introducing new ideas.

We speak up on an issue if it's relevant to our brand purpose and we're doing something about it.

The world can be pretty serious... but we aren't. So we use our usual voice. For example, Virgin Voyages talks about an 'epic sea change for all'.

Look out

We don't jump on board any hot issue and we try not to sound 'worthy'.



Red Hot Relevance - from flirtatious to inviting

In the past, Virgin was known for being cheeky, bold and risqué. It was red hot. Our voice was flirty with lots of innuendo.

Now, we're a lot more inviting than flirtatious.

Let's go deeper

Our wit can still be bold or cheeky, in the right context. We're not here to offend, we're here to make people feel good. We play our cheeky side up or down depending on the context.

If in doubt, check your writing with a good range of people.





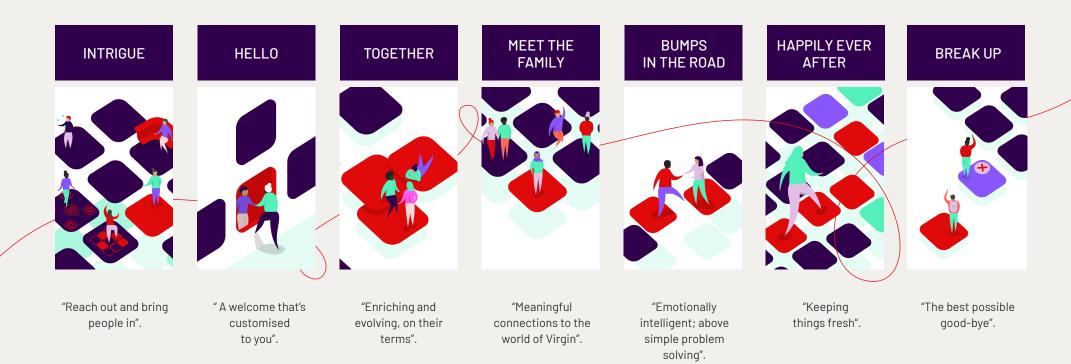
Here's a great example from Virgin Trains.

At the time, avocados and millennials were big trends. Railcards for young people had been delayed, so millennials were missing out on huge discounts. Virgin Trains gave them money off again in a red hot way.



The voice on a journey

Pack your bags and let's take this voice on Virgin's relationship journey.





Intrigue

We use words to reach out and bring people in.

This doesn't just mean teasers. It can mean telling people exactly who we are.

We intrigue people with words. We write to entice them in.

We **tell people who we are** in an intriguing way.

We're **curious** about people. What do they need? What's on their mind? The answers help us **connect**.

We make people smile.

Intrigue is great for...

Advertising, social media and storefronts. All are hungry for a continual stream of intrigue.

Email subject lines, website buttons, newsletter sign-ups. Any moment that calls for a bit of persuasion, where we want people to click or tap. Marketing any product that feels indulgent. We use words to make 'ooh go on then' moments happen.

Tap into...

Insatiable Curiosity, Smart Disruption, Red Hot Relevance



Let's go deeper

Hello

We use words to welcome people.

A good 'hello' goes beyond a greeting, though.

Imagine you walk into an amazing party. A great host will say hello, then offer you a drink and introduce you to a few people. So 'hello' is also about showing **people around** and taking care of them.

Find your hello. For Virgin Voyages it's 'ahoy', for Virgin Hotels it's 'you are welcome'. We all use 'hello you'.

After the first big hello come lots of smaller hellos. We put **hello moments** everywhere and anywhere: welcome desks, packages, secret compartments.

We write like we're **by your side** as we show you around any new part of the experience.

Hello is great for...

Physical spaces. Big hellos are right at home here. Websites and apps. We guide users around and help them feel at home.

Tap into...

Heartfelt Service, Delightfully Surprising



Let's get to know you

We're thrilled you want to join us on the brighter side.

We'll ask you some questions about you, your financial history, and what you do for a living.

Have a form of photo ID handy. We might need it to verify your identity, which helps protect your account.

Make sure you've got a good phone signal or WiFi connection too, and let's get going.

Let's go deeper



We use words to make every little aspect of someone's Virgin experience even more amazing.

We make **personal messages** just as thoughtful as big billboards.

Our awesome updates about products and services feel truly good to hear.

We're curious about people. We look for ways to truly connect with them, make them feel seen and show them a brilliant time.

And we go together. We work as a team and talk about ourselves as a team.

We talk about ourselves in a way that expresses togetherness. Lots of 'we' and 'the team'.

We find the **natural writers** in our wider teams, and invite them to become contributors. This could be on a WhatsApp group.

We build a 'secret stash' of words and phrases. Whenever we come up with a great slogan or phrase that feels totally Virgin, we save it. We share the stash with everyone who writes for us, so we can all use our favourites again and again.

Together is great for...

Social media, physical spaces, customer care and apps. Anywhere someone's experience can be personalised.

Tap into...

Heartfelt Service, We Are Family, Delightfully Surprising



Meet the family

We make meaningful connections between Virgin companies and the whole Virgin ecosystem.

We keep up with what's going on across Virgin and drop in **golden nuggets** of info.

We interact with other Virgin companies.

We make copy about other Virgin companies just as **sparkling** as our own.

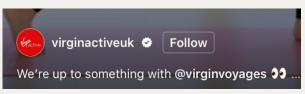
Meet the family is great for...

Social media, because all the Virgin companies are there. Don't forget **LinkedIn**: it's a great place to create a sense of family, and it doesn't have to be cheesy or corporate.

Physical spaces and email newsletters. Where can you nod to other Virgin companies?

Tap into...

We Are Family, Red Hot Relevance







Bumps in the road

Let's go deeper

When there's a bump in the road, a lot of brands become really formal. But being formal just isn't how we roll. We use our usual voice, and take a bit of extra care and judgment to dial things down.

We're **simple** and **straightforward**, especially if a problem is more urgent or serious. For example 'Your flight's delayed. Sorry for the hold up.'

We're **optimistic**, but we don't over-promise or gloss over problems. We want to leave people feeling good.

We treat people like family. Our messages feel **warm**, **friendly**, **down-to-earth** and **tailored** to the person and situation. What's the most personable way we can say it?

We use **insatiable curiosity** to get to the heart of the problem and arrive at the best solution.

We use a **touch of wit** if we think the customer is open to it and the situation is light enough. Usually, it's phrases to do with our products. It can be subtle like 'we'll do that moving forwards', 'how does two months free sound?' or 'it should all be smooth sailing from here'.

We build a 'secret stash' of phrases for the team to use regularly. Include ways to say 'hello' and sign off. For example: 'let's get you on your way', 'see you on board soon.'

Bumps in the road is great for...

Customer care, but also **physical spaces**, **social media, websites** and sometimes **advertising**. Any medium we can use to put things right.

Tap into...

Straight Up, Heartfelt Service

Hi, it's Virgin Media. Just a reminder that we'll be carrying out essential works on our network on Wed 06 Oct, which could interrupt your services. We're sorry about that & will try and get you back online as soon as possible.



Virgin Voyages 🕂 🗸 @VirginVoyages · May 13

Hi Jennifer, please send us a DM with your booking number and feedback, and we'll take a deeper dive with our Crew.



Bumps in the road when we've got more to say

When we've got more to say about a bump in the road, we lean into 'simple'.

Everyday words and phrases that are pleasing to read.

Conversational, one-to-one, by your side copy.

Use lots of 'we' and 'you'.

Simple and straightforward about what's going on.

Broken into chunks so it's easy to get:

- Short paragraphs
- Bullet points
- Subheadings written like signposts

How do we land optimism and a touch of wit?

We sometimes do the 'sandwich approach' where you open and close with something positive. Virgin Voyages start with a witty 'ooops!' and end on a jolly note with 'We can't wait to sea you soon!'.

Optimism means we're reassuring so people still feel good.

We're still excited and optimistic about our products, and leave people feeling that way too.



We're thrilled to welcome you aboard Scarlet Lady on our June 10th voyage.

Unfortunately, we made a minor hiccup in your voyage confirmation email — we stated you'd be sailing away on June 10th at 6:30 am EST but you'll actually be leaving PortMiami on June 10th at 7:00 pm EST. Sorry about that!

Typing too fast, you know how it goes.

You should have already received an updated confirmation email with the correct date and time, but if you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact <u>Sailor Services</u>.

We can't wait to sea you soon!

There's an exciting year ahead with us. But if you decide you'd rather change or cancel your package, no problem. You can do so any time before 12 August without paying any cancellation fees. Click here to find out more.

Longer examples are on the next page.

Jump on board

Bumps in the road when we've got more to say



A quick follow-up about your upcoming voyage dates.

We're thrilled to welcome you aboard Scarlet Lady on our June 10th voyage.

Unfortunately, we made a minor hiccup in your voyage confirmation email — we stated you'd be sailing away on June 10th at 6:30 am EST but you'll actually be leaving PortMiami on June 10th at 7:00 pm EST. Sorry about that!

Typing too fast, you know how it goes.

You should have already received an updated confirmation email with the correct date and time, but if you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact Sailor Services.

We can't wait to sea you soon!

Hello <First Name>

Your flight has changed

Your flight has been changed but we've been working to get you (and anyone travelling with you) on your way as soon as possible.

For starters, we've got your new itinerary ready to go:

The details				
			Depart	Arrive
	Previous	VA1320	Melbourne (MEL) 10:40 Thu, 30 Sep	Hobart (HBA) 11:55 Thu, 30 Sep
	New	VA1328	Melbourne (MEL) 16:10 Thu, 30 Sep	Hobart (HBA) 17:25 Thu, 30Sep

What you'll need to do now

- Firstly, you'll want to review your new flight details. If everything looks ok, just click "Accept Change"
- If you'd rather cancel and get a credit, click "Accept Change", then "Manage your booking", then "Cancel". It's as easy as that

The important stuff

Clicking the button below means you (and anyone flying with you) accept the changes.

[ACCEPT CHANGE]

You may have other options

In the <u>Virgin Australia Guest Compensation Policy</u>, we outline our commitment to get you to your destination safely and on time. If your new flight details don't work for you, you can give our Guest Contact Centre a call to talk about alternative options. For bookings made on or before 20 April 2020 or made using Future Flight credits, you will be eligible to receive a Future Flight credit for the value of your booking. Read about the Consumer Guarantees here.

Need to talk to us?

If you're currently in Australia give us a call on 13 67 89.

Calling from overseas? You can reach us on +61 732 952 296.

See our full list of contact numbers here.

Thanks for flying with us and apologies for this change.

See you onboard soon,

Virgin Australia





Happily ever after

We keep things fresh.

We use words to make every bit of copy feel as special as that first intriguing advert.

Any interaction with us is a joy, even the small stuff like app updates. It's all about consistency.

We **support local teams** by giving them great lines to use.

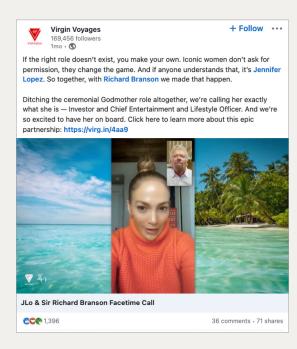
We get across the **excitement and benefits** of any new product launch.

Happily ever after is great for...

Apps, physical spaces, customer care, social media, email newsletters... pretty much everything!

Tap into...

Insatiable Curiosity, Delightfully Surprising



App update 2.44

Lots of tidying up for the holiday season



Happily ever after and together when we've got more to say

When we've got more to say about something positive, we go big on optimism.

More superlatives than ever.

The most amazing way to say it.

Pinpoint exactly why we're excited.

Bring people in on our thinking, share how and why we made it here.

Say it again, express how brilliant this is in lots of different ways.

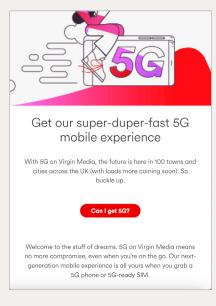
Get in quick with answers to obvious questions.

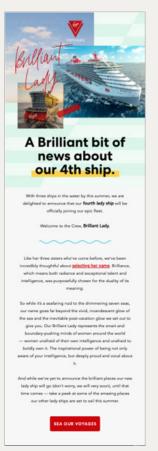
Give people clear calls to action.

Bring our positive outlook to any niggles.

Think, hey: could we actually make this short and sweet?







Break up

We use words to deliver the best possible goodbye. We leave people feeling as good as we possibly can.

It's simple, straightforward and heartfelt.

Some break ups can be done with a big dollop of **wit**, too, like the tweets we put out when Virgin Trains came to the end of the line.

Break up is great for...

Customer care

Tap into...

Straight Up, Heartfelt Service











Your packing list

Got some of these? You've got it in the bag.

Easy to get

Leaves people feeling good

The essentials

Is absolutely brilliant*

Accessible to all

Virgin values at heart

The extras

Superlatives

Namedropping things that make life great

Original puns

Phrases that paint a picture in your mind

Playing with words to do with our products

A big or small hello

A favourite slogan

Naming something brilliantly

^{*}Here, have a free pass to believing your writing is absolutely brilliant





Gold star if you...

Write Virgin company names in full. So it's 'Virgin Atlantic', not 'VA' or 'Atlantic'.

Use the active voice. It's 'you can fly the hot air balloon at dawn', not 'the hot air balloon can be flown at dawn'.

Use headings to break up long copy.

Write links that are meaningful and descriptive. So it's 'go on a secret tour of Scarlet Lady', not 'click here for a secret tour of Scarlet Lady'.



We steer away from...

Exclamation marks!

TOO MANY ALL CAPS for emphasis

Clichés

Any kind of bias

Anything that could cause offence or make someone feel excluded

Being negative about Virgin companies

Being negative about products or services to do with Virgin companies

Anything that conflicts with Richard's advocacy

Anything that conflicts with Virgin's advocacy

Let's go deeper

Last word

You can trace Virgin's personality back to our founder, Richard Branson. So here are a few examples of him talking. He nails the big four, pops a pin into anything that could come across as grand and uses lots of superlatives. If in doubt, think: 'how would Richard say it?'



I just had a wonderful time at the Head Office and now I'm off to see the Secretary of State for Transport, and hopefully he'll sign a little bit of paper about the trains.

We're hoping that this film will make a big difference in stopping thousands of people from being locked up and even executed in many countries, for a problem which we feel should be treated as a health problem, not a criminal problem.

We want many, many, many, many people around the world to be able to go to space, but without paying anything, apart from a ten dollar raffle ticket. So we've gone to a charitable foundation. Amaze will run a global competition and if you win, you and a friend will go to space on one of our early flights, and I will take you around the space board. I'll do one of those Chocolate Factory walkabouts.



Richard Branson

Now we're handing you the keys

Great news. You're ready to write.

You should have everything you need. Just shout if there's anything else.

We can't wait to see what you come up with.



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