The Principles of Content Design on Facebook Events:

This was written as lead content designer for the Facebook app Events product. All blue "links" originally linked to internal Meta documents and are no longer "clickable".

Why create content principles now?

We want Facebook Events to be the best place to plan and participate in shared experiences. As we reimagine the Events experience, we see a need to define a set of content principles to help us move this Events mission forward.

These principles will serve as guardrails as we strive for more YA engagement and move towards a visual-first and updated product experience. They will help us articulate our vision and drive our work. They are data driven, inspired by research, and have been a collaborative effort. *(H1'22 Events Key Learnings)*

What are content principles?

Content principles will give our team a shared understanding of our content strategy and ways of working. They'll also provide a framework for how we approach our work, while helping guide content decisions and collaboration both on our internal team and with key partners.

Who are they for?

These principles should be used by the Events team, partners who are looking to collaborate with us, and content designers in other areas of the app who want to consult and collaborate.

What we know

Our competitors are boldly innovating to respond to the needs of YA with vibrant and playful content and more casual and conversational tones. *(H2'22 CD competitive analysis)*

More and more YA are using other tools to plan and participate in events. *(Events x Young Adults 2023)*

The Events product today feels too formal for young adults. It feels high effort, heavy, and complex. YA want an event planning app that is simple to use and easy to navigate, with a tone to match. *(User Perceptions of New Lightweight Events Designs)*

We want Events to reach a broad audience and feel fresh to everyone who uses it. We need the tone to speak to YA, but keep all users in the loop.

Our process

1. We started with a thorough understanding of Events UXR and DS findings.
2. We then conducted an audit of Events competitors.
3. We ran a principles workshop with 12 key partners including CD, PD, PM, PMM and UXR.
4. We gathered feedback on a draft set of principles at Events Design Crit, CDR CD Flash and Events Design Review, as well as 1:1 with several partners.
5. We looked to these existing principles for inspiration here, here and here.
6. And we finished by asking ourselves one key question:

How do we want our users to feel?

Understanding how we want our users to feel was the driving force behind our principles work. We asked the participants who attended our working session to answer this question and this is what our answers were:

- We want Events content to help users feel included, excited, delighted, confident, and connected.
- It should feel easy, simple, casual, authentic, efficient.
- Our tone should come across as young in spirit, fun, and in the know.
- We want to avoid language that feels disorganized, formal, boring, confusing, or like it's trying too hard.

Read on to find out what our new principles are, how we'll utilize them in our work, and what they might look like in practice.

Introducing: Our content principles

Stay true to ourselves.

Facebook Events content should feel authentic, appropriate and human. We're venturing out—while still honoring our core voice and tone. Our content should feel straightforward and simple, casual and personable.

Authentic: We don't try too hard to be anyone else but ourselves. We don't try to be trendy.

Appropriate: We account for the emotional state of the user when using our product.

Human: Our content should feel casual, friendly and approachable. It should feel like a friend chatting with you.

What this might look like

- Prioritizing the delivery of accurate information to the user over other tone options
- Auditing our product for areas where updated strings could help improve the UX, and then running experiments where we can
- Signing up for voice and tone reviews with CD leadership
- Personalized messaging where it's appropriate and not forced
- Saying things out loud to make sure we sound human
- Prioritizing informal and conversational tones throughout our messaging
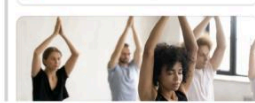- Being mindful when considering the use of colloquial language (YA relevancy GLIS discovery report 2022)

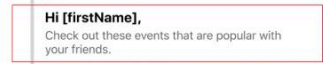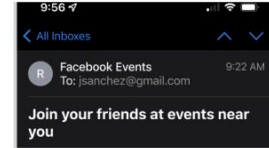# In practice
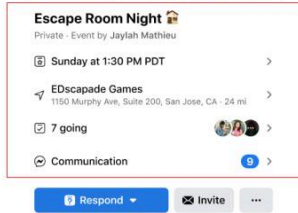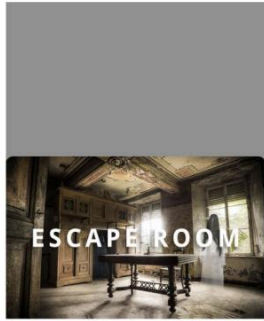
Authentic: Simple and concise, with nothing superfluous.
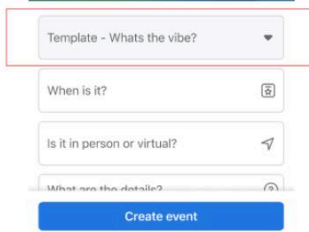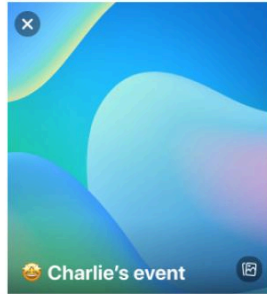
Appropriate: Choice of templates to suit user needs.

Human: Focusing on the user and their connections.

Principle #2

Support our users.

Facebook Events content should be helpful, supportive and inclusive. We amplify the voices of creators, providing a canvas for their event ideas. Our content should help creators and users understand the experience, and should support their visual experience in a complimentary way.

Helpful: We make complicated things simple and relatable. We're clear and concise. The content should compliment a visual-first app experience by being useful and functional and letting the visuals lead.

Supportive: We are there for our users when they need support; whether that is planning a family member's 60th birthday party, finding a street art mural tour on a last minute trip to NYC, or planning a virtual memorial to honor a loved one.

**Inclusive:** We help users feel welcome by using inclusive language.

What this might look like

- Giving creators the tools they need and helping them understand how to use them
- Providing easy ways to help people find and participate in events that match their interests and goals (categories, EYML)
- Removing content where it's not needed and ensuring that we are solving problems through design/UX before adding extraneous content as a quick solution
- Conducting audits to catch usability, localization and accessibility issues
- Incorporating accessibility labels for screen readers into all of our flows
- Conducting accessibility dogfooding sessions to ensure that our products are as effective and easy to use for people with disabilities as they are for people without
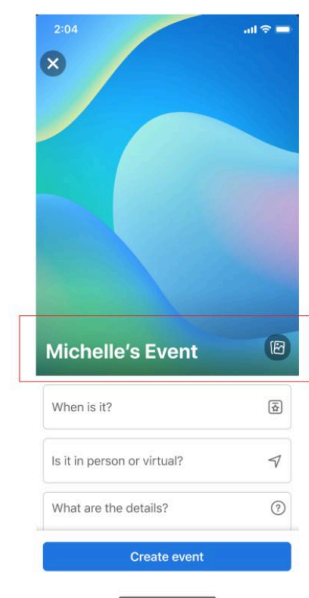
In practice

Helpful: Introducing a new feature with helpful language.
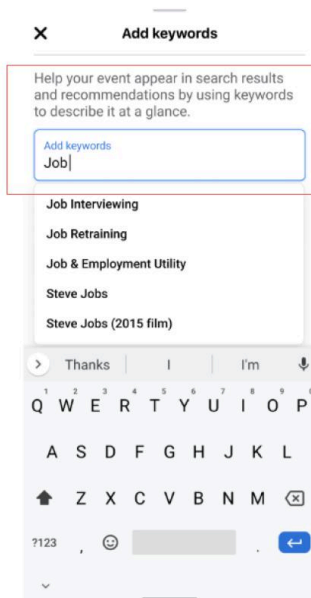
Supportive: Transparent and descriptive language.

Inclusive: Welcoming a user with a personalized default event title.

Try new things.

Facebook Events content should be inspiring, delightful and responsive. We push the envelope when it feels appropriate. We're positive. We're confident. We try new things to help our content feel fresh.

Inspiring: We're are always up for trying something new and different, and helping our users do the same.

Delightful: We know how to celebrate the important stuff, the big milestones and the little moments. Our content helps the user celebrate these moments in our product too.

Responsive: We meet people where they are by using a range of tones that are responsive to user needs. We find the balance between fun and playful tones, with clear and informative messaging.

What this might look like

- Running content tests with strings ranging in tone to find the one that resonates the best with our target users
- A fun and celebratory toast message after the creation flow is complete
- Providing creative prompts to inspire people to participate in or create events
- Understanding the user journey and responding to people where they are in the moment
- Providing opportunities for creators to customize their events with a vibe that reflects the spirit of the event
- Considering new ways to surprise our users with moments of delight
- Working closely with the visual systems team on the voice and tone of Events
- Using the People Super Fan voice when it fits
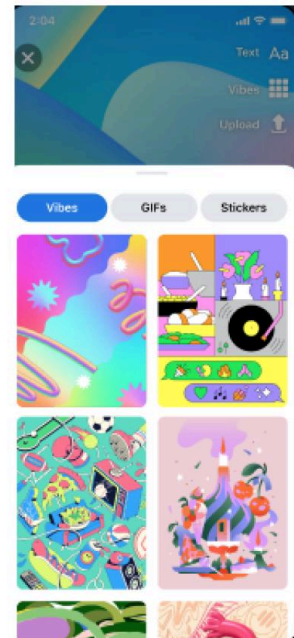
In practice
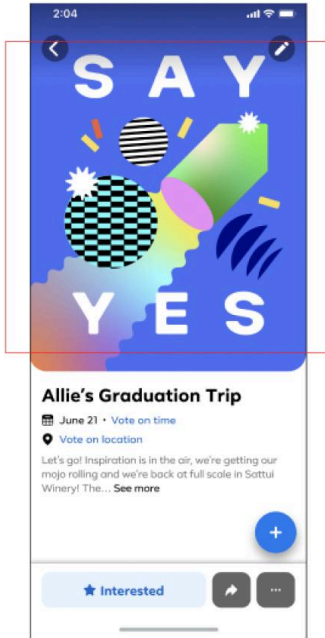
Inspiring: Blending content and visuals.
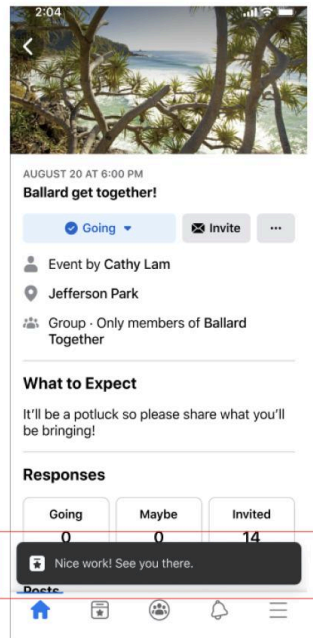
Delightful: Fun toast language.

Responsive: Using minimal content, letting the visuals lead.

Last thoughts

Where we are (and where we want to be)

Below is a visual of the FB app tone framework. Facebook Events has historically fallen right in the middle of the "FB spectrum" - usually landing in the "informative" bucket. We should look at this spectrum as a rainbow of opportunity and consider how we can best respond with these tones in mind, while also keeping our above principles at the forefront of our decision making. We think this might mean moving further to the left, incorporating more encouraging, inspiring, and celebratory tones where we think they fit.

The tone framework [Collapse]

| Celebratory | Inspiring | Encouraging | Helpful | Informative | Educational | Reassuring | Supportive | Sympathetic |

Another piece of guidance we'll be using to help shape our voice and tone is the FB app-wide People Superfan principles. These principles have laid out a baseline for what a shift in tone might look like. They instruct us to speak from a place of positivity, to keep things straightforward, and to be empathetic. People Superfan "empowers us to express more emotion, more value and more humanity when the moment calls for it." This mentality fits incredibly well with the Events-specific principles we've laid out above. The two will build on

each other and help us make decisions that are positive for the Events product specifically, as well as the app as a whole. *(How to Be a People Superfan)*

As part of our working session early in this process we asked our team to rate the Events content on a scale of "Snooze fest" to "Overly awesome". With everyone's input, we landed somewhere near the middle. As we work to implement these new principles, our goal is to consistently land on the right side of this - closer to "Overly awesome", but with enough breathing room to still feel true to the FB app brand.

Events should make you feel like you have what you need to connect with people—friends, family, or even strangers with similar interests. Ultimately, when you spend time in the Events product, you feel like you belong.

Thanks!

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Thanks to all who helped us shape these principles. Elizabeth Hui, Mili Dutta, Emily Czech, Emily Campbell, Jessica Lian, Gagan Jindal, Allie Kornstein, Mia Salas, Lauren Murphy, Jake Mayoral, Ke Zhao, Chris Lockwood, Jevaun Howell and the entire Events team!
If you have questions, reach out to:

- **Alyssa Morrison**, *Events Creation and Participation CD*
- **Sara Nagy**, *Events Discovery CD*

Resources:

- H1'22 key learnings by Events DS/UXR
- Report: YA Communications Around and Attitudes Toward Events by Mary Hoyt Kearns
- Opportunities for Facebook Events with US Young Adult Users April 2022 by Emily Campbell
- Events content competitor audit August 2022
  - TLDR: We like how brands like Airbnb, Partiful, IRL, and Geneva are using simple, clear, and fun language.
- Content Principles working session Figjam

- How to be a People Superfan: The Note by Katie Heller
- Light(weight) Studies by Alex Tsai