

Example Style Guide for BabyUGo
(First draft 21/07/14)

Content style guide.

Introduction.

This is an example content style guide.

Created for a fictional company, BabyUGo (a baby car seat company), this guide illustrates how each section of your own style guide could look.

Table of contents.

1. Pick an external style guide.
2. Grammar and punctuation.
3. Structure and tone.
4. Personas.
5. Content types.
6. Formatting.
7. Approved and unapproved content.

1. Pick an external style guide.

Name of your external style guide : AP Stylebook - <https://www.apstylebook.com/>

Login credentials.

Username : BabyUgo#1

Password : safeandcosy

2. Grammar and punctuation.

Most of your general grammar and punctuation instructions will be outlined in your external style guide. Consult AP Stylebook - <https://www.apstylebook.com/> for an overview.

BabyUgo - Differences and additions.

Rule #1 - Use British English not American English.

Good examples (Like this) ;

- 'All BabyUgo products are available in a range of colours. What will be your favourite?'

Bad examples (Not like this) ;

- "All BabyUgo products are available in a range of colors. What will be your favorite?'

Rule #2 - Do not use the Oxford Comma.

Good examples (Like this) ;

- 'BabyUgo stock buggies, car seats and high chairs'.

Bad examples (Not like this) ;

- 'BabyUgo stock buggies, car seats, and high chairs'.

Rule #3 - Never use exclamation marks (!) and icons such as smiley faces :)

Good examples (Like this) ;

- 'BabyUgo are excited to welcome you to our family. Happy times ahead'.

Bad examples (Not like this) ;

- 'Welcome you to our family! :)'.

Common team grammar and punctuation questions.

Q1. What do I capitalise?

Answer - All product names and titles are to be capitalised.

Q2. What do I abbreviate and how?

Answer - There should be little need to abbreviate terms as BabyUgo avoids the use of jargon. If there is a causal need, i.e. 'aka' or 'a.k.a.', then opt for no periods - 'aka' would be the right usage.

Q3. Do I spell out numeric mentions?

Answer - Spell out all numeric mentions, i.e. two not 2.

Q4. How do I spell industry words that have no definitive spelling, i.e. websites or web sites? ebooks or e-books?

Answer - We always opt for the most commonly used version. In this instance, websites or ebooks would be our preferred option.

3. Style and tone.

Voice hot points.

- BabyUgo -Trusted experts who understand what it's like to be a parent.
- Stay formal but friendly - Remember we are informing not scaremongering.
- Do not use slang words/trend abbreviations of any kind - Totes, fave etc are banned.
- Always use first person - 'We' and 'you'.

- Keep language simple, clear and active.

Messaging hot points.

- Our product is safe.
- Your baby will be safe.
- We understand that this is your baby's safety we're talking about.

BabyUgo Pillars.

1. Straight-talking.

- What does it mean? - Clear, concise and direct.
- What it doesn't mean - Rude, dumbed down or aggressive.

How do I convey straight-taking? Tips & Tricks.

- Be focused and get to the point. Be sure to plan your key messages and action points before you create the content. Stick to one theme at a time.
- Think about the audience - Is price, service or reputation important to them? How can you be as simple as possible without losing impact?
- Consider your content options - A straight-taking voice wouldn't be suited to long-winded articles or hour long seminars. Think direct and opt for short videos or snippets of copy.

How not to convey straight-talking!

- Using a passive tone - Stay active and use first person.
- Avoid repetition and try and keep bodies of copy to short paragraphs and no jargon.
- Steer clear of cliches and overused metaphors - they will dilute your voice.

2. Reassuring.

- What does it mean? - Relatable, sincere and understanding.
- What it doesn't mean - Floaty, overly emotional or passive.

How do I convey reassuring? Tips & Tricks.

- Identify with the audiences' (parents) daily concerns and needs. Be on their side and honest.
- Use phrases and language that is commonly used in child care circles to encourage trust. Avoid jargon at all costs.

How not to convey reassuring!

- Using a passive tone - Stay active and use first person.
- Talking sales - Don't project a 'buy this now' vibe. Overusing sales talk will discredit the brand.

3. Expert.

- What does it mean? - Knowledgeable, respected, informative and trusted.
- What it doesn't mean - Overly scientific, pretentious or without a human side.

How do I convey expert? Tips & Tricks.

- Explain research, don't just state facts - Put expert knowledge and research into a human, recognisable context for parents to understand.
- Keep sentences short and concise, no long speeches.
- Limit jargon. If you do have to explain legal terms or medical phrases, do it visually or cite external sources to explore.

How not to convey expert!

- Using a passive tone - Stay active and use first person.
- Limited referral to trusted sources - Include renowned and recognised sources of research and reference. This intensifies your status as expert.

4. Personas.

Who are our target audience?

Parents (first time or otherwise, healthcare professionals, childcare specialists and professionals.

What are their pain points?

- Finding affordable, value-based products.
- Sourcing trusted suppliers of baby care products.
- Understanding current medical and scientific research.
- Not being overwhelmed or scared of the connotations of baby care.
- Establishing a bank of renowned childcare resources.

How do they like to be communicated with?

- Examples - Everyday case studies.
- Interviews - Personal insight.
- Infographics - Stats and figures presented at glance.
- Testimonials - Give real-life weight to our product's relevance.
- Reviews - Offer an in-tune overview of the market's views and opinions.
- How-to guides - Guide audiences through the ease and function of BabyUgo products.

5. Content types.

What do the BabyUgo audience want and need?

- Information - Clear and professional. Fact-driven and confirmed by industry bodies.
- Reassurance - This is their child's safety so they need to feel an affinity and sincerity.
- Validation - They want to know that other parents have used and trust this product.

Although this content and tone might drift between emotional and functional, the voice remains consistent.

What content types fulfill this?

Text.

- Industry testimonials.
- Consumer reviews.
- Blog posts.
- Articles and newsletters.
- Case studies.

Video.

- How-to guides.

- Promo videos.
- Consumer and industry body interviews.
- User POV stories.

Images.

- Infographics.
- Images.
- Promo stills.

Audiobooks / podcasts.

- A weekly, collaborative news cast filled with industry-relevant chat and insight.

6. Formatting.

Formatting Dos.

- Keep content titles short and under 6 words.
- Keep paragraphs to 4 lines or less.
- Use bullet points to list features or addition points.
- Include source references and author details as footer text. (Author name, publication/source, year)
- Italicise quotations.
- Align images to the right of each page.
- Only use bold type for headlines and hyperlinks.

Formatting Don'ts.

- Never use dashes (-) to list features or addition points.
- Use more than two SEO keywords per sentence.
- Never wrap text around images.
- Don't use underlining or bold font to emphasise content messaging.

7. Approved and unapproved content.

Approved content.

Specialised blogs.

- Sticky Fingers - <http://www.thestickyfingersblog.com/>

- Me, you and the kids - <http://umeandthekids.com/>
- Mummy, Daddy, Me - <http://www.mummydaddyandmemakesthree.co.uk>
- Family Fever - <http://myfamilyfever.co.uk/>

Industry publications/resources.

- Mother & Baby - <http://www.motherandbaby.co.uk/>
- Junior - <http://www.juniormagazine.co.uk/>
- My Family Magazine - <http://www.myfamilymagazine.co.uk/>

Key brands / competitors.

- Mothercare - <http://www.mothercare.com/>
- Kiddicare - <http://www.kiddicare.com/>
- Baby Centre - <http://www.babycenter.com/>
- Mamas and Papas - <http://www.mamasandpapas.com/>
- Britax - <http://www.britax.co.uk/>

Market research sources.

- 4Children - <http://www.4children.org.uk/>
- Parenta - <http://www.parenta.com/>
- Child seat expert - <http://www.childcarseatexpert.com/>
- Merton PDF - http://www.merton.gov.uk/child_car_seats.pdf

Unapproved content.

Industry reviews/community dialogue.

- Consult which.com for yearly overview of worth performing products - <http://www.which.co.uk/>
- Refer to the Baby Centre Community page for latest product chat and reviews - <http://community.babycentre.co.uk/>

Taboo competitors.

- Evenflo - <http://www.evenflo.com/>
- Graco Baby - <http://www.gracobaby.com/>

