Big chimpin' without big cheese on dot-com

2022–2023

V&T audit, Yachts & Speedboats

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Intro:
Where we are rn

[IMAGE TK]

Freddie's wearing a 12M tux…with his favorite cap

Under Intuit, our giggling, beloved chimp's gotten dressed up—and the tux fits.

Mailchimp's ready to toast an established, successful, and sophisticated global audience of advanced marketers.

While we will never be "corporate-speak" serious, we take our work and audience *very* seriously—and with success and seasons come **expertise, eloquence,** and **polish.**

As we raise our glasses, there are no corny jokes or filler quips. Devoid of awkward silliness, we speak **clearly, confidently,** and **persuasively** about what we do and *how* we bring it all to the table in the dot-com space.

Real talk and **accountability** are signature elements stemming from our startup days, lending well-timed wit and winks, but our dot-com tones are tuning up, and our brand, growing up.

It's a new chimp era! And one of many to come.

Currently speaking:

Our Mailchimp voice + tone

We are plainspoken

We understand the world our customers are living in: one muddled by hyperbolic language, upsells, and over-promises.

We strip all that away and value clarity above all. Because businesses come to Mailchimp to get to work, we avoid distractions like fluffy metaphors and cheap plays to emotion. We are down-to-earth, honest, and direct.

We set clear expectations about outcomes, bringing everything back to how we help customers achieve their goal: growing their brand.

We are genuine

We get small businesses because we were one not too long ago. That means we relate to customers' challenges and passions and speak to them in a familiar, conversational way.We are warm, accessible, and inviting.

That said, we're not here be their BFFs, and we avoid the temptation to be cutesy or chatty. Instead, we celebrate what makes them stand out using authentic, supportive language.

We are translators

Only experts can make what's difficult look easy, and it's our job to demystify B2B-speak and actually educate.

We make the complex simple. We know how to translate for our customer, putting the focus on how our products benefit them.

Our humor is dry

Our sense of humor is straight-faced, subtle, and a touch eccentric. We're weird but not inappropriate, smart but not snobbish. We prefer winking to shouting. We don't go out of our way to goof around, because a forced joke is almost always worse than none at all.

We're never condescending or exclusive—we always bring our customers in on the joke. Our humor is cool and casual in a way that makes other people want to be a part of it.

Proprietary & Confidential 20

Where we aspire to be: data-driven

[IMAGE TK]

The data challenges of being “Plainspoken”

Making bold, branded claims require clear context and supportive communication approaches beyond “plain” speech. The main point of being plainspoken is to be clear, but plain-speak is the vehicle—clarity, the goal.

Let’s just get to the goal.

We plain-speak to be “down-to-earth,” “honest,” and “direct,” but plainspoken language can read as **abrasive**, **unfinished,** or worse—**boring**. We seek to ignite and inspire; therefore, we must avoid disengagement risks in this critical Yachts and Speedboats moment.

How the high-value prospects findings reiterate this ^: “Proof points claiming exponential gains or high-percentage growth can be polarizing; advanced users often question their validity and **criticize the lack of context** behind the numbers.”

When plainspoken becomes a “Clear Communicator”

“Clear Communicator” Copy vs. Plainspoken Copy:

- **Do:** Drive compelling content with data OR What creates compelling content? Data. OR Compelling content starts with data.
- **Don’t:** *Get the insights you need to improve your email content

(*MC Example: This is so plainspoken that it lacks emotion/contextual information. We need to present the value to customers quicker and more dynamically.)

Clear communication *is* concise and direct. However, when it needs to provoke emotion, be buttoned up, or break down a complex problem, it does so *without* compromising the information or integrity that plain-speak might.

Related high-value prospects implication: “Ensure we 1) provide a smooth and positive user experience and 2) **make it easy to see how we’re helping them progress** toward their overall marketing goals are critical for retention and perception of success.”

The data challenges of being “Genuine”

- Empathy and persuasion are **actions**: they meet people where they are and encourage them *to go beyond* with real solutions.
- “Genuine” is an **adjective**: it softens the struggle but cannot always relay technicalities with the expected level of sophistication needed.

Understanding people isn’t about being genuine; it’s about being empathetic. **Going beyond that, we can be persuasive in a tasteful way *because* of our empathy.**

“Supportive language,” a tenet of the current tone, “Genuine,” isn’t necessarily that—nor is it always helpful. The needs level of our advanced marketers goes beyond “Genuine” support: they want the specifics of how we can help.

How the high-value prospects findings reiterate this ^: “High-value prospects **routinely want to know the technical details** behind features and claims.”

When genuine becomes an “Empathetic Persuader”

“Empathetic Persuader” Copy vs. Genuine Copy:

- **Do:** You need a ~~membership~~ global network
- **Don’t:** *What you get just for joining

(*MC Example: I’d get to the point faster in the headline. The sub-copy of this real-world example delves into **global network** benefits.)

Because we’ve been there, we can give first-hand, **precise solutions** that are tried and true—an act of **persuasion**. As a business, we can deliver on empathy, but we can’t always deliver on “Genuine” without compromising our roles, priorities, and KPIs.

Related high-value prospects implication: “There’s a lot of emphasis on experimenting and getting the most out of high-value prospects’ email/marketing automation platforms (compared to other channels), so there’s no better time than now to try to **convince them of our value**.”

The data challenges of being a "Translator"

It's too easy to get "Lost in Translation." **When we're solely translating, we're potentially not distilling the most relevant—and exciting!—values.** We're potentially not editing ourselves. And we're not "educating" merely as a translator.

Making "the complex simple and the effortful easy" is not about translating—it's about having the confidence and expertise to discern key values deftly.

This is another example of "making the vehicle the driver": translating is the mode of transport, whereas the **V&T *pillar*** is Confident Expert.

How the high-value prospects findings reiterate this ^: "Integrations are a priority, but **advanced prospects are often skeptical that a platform can integrate cleanly** with their entire toolstack."

When a translator becomes a "Confident Expert"

"Confident Expert" Copy vs. Translator Copy:

- **Do:** Our automation vs. *their* autopilot
- **Don't:** *Automations that are always on—even when you are off

(*MC Example: This is implied automation info, not a "wow" selling point—it's also character-heavy. I'd instead concisely express **how we do automation differently.**)

A confident expert actually makes the difficult easy—not just "look easy." Confident expertise develops through trial/error experience + success. As Confident Experts, we not only guide people and "demystify B2B," we inspire them to want to be their best. We make Mailchimp an urgent, exciting priority.

Related high-value prospects implication: "For acquiring and retaining high-value prospects, **we need to focus on scalability and automation**, enabling a 360-degree view of the customer, as well as **how we might support (their) other channels."**

The data challenges of having “Dry Humor”

Humor’s a side dish, not the main course. Humor builds connections, but we can’t tell people we are funny, which is what a “Dry Humor” pillar does. Humor is subjective, which is why it’s not a solid **V&T** leg to stand on—especially as a global brand. **50% of our users are international.**

Our legacy quirkiness may be proving problematic. In an effort to tell the joke, we may be making ourselves a terribly ironic one. Advanced marketers largely perceive MC as amateur vs. the OG that we are. So, the hows/wheres/whys of humor must be **well-timed** and **subtle** on dot-com.

How the high-value prospects findings reiterate this ^: “**Mailchimp is often perceived as less technical and more limited** than advanced competitors; therefore, prospects were surprised when Mailchimp was revealed to be behind the concepts.”

When dry humor becomes a "Real Person"

"Real Person" Copy:

- **Do:** Make money *moves* with trans**action**al emails
- Don't: *Start sending transactional emails

(*MC Example: **Not a "Dry Humor" example**, but a real-world one—and an opp for a Real Person tone that's more descriptive of transaction email goals.)

"Let's just keep it real"—everyone has shared similar experiences. When we're "real" and tell things as they are, we build trustworthy relationships and convos. A "Real Person" tone allows us to communicate concisely + believably. **The data showcases that clear, *human* conversations vs. sly humor are needed rn.**

Related high-value prospects implication: "Not only do we need to ensure we come up in their informal search process as a contender, **but a human sales touch is absolutely critical for making our case; that sales process will have to be highly personalized** to show they (users) are truly leveling up in their next tool."

2022 data-driven Mailchimp voice tones for dot-com

Attaching human roles (**communicator**, **persuader, expert**, **person**) to the new tones vs. one-word adjectives allows people to “get into character” to execute with the utmost clarity.

Clear Communicator → plainspoken. We speak clearly, not just plainly, giving dimension + context to concepts that may be difficult to understand.

Empathetic Persuader → genuine. Genuine isn’t enough to persuade people to join us, and persuasion alone is too coarse for a brand of our tenure—so we are *empathetically* persuasive.

Confident Expert → translators. We’re experts in our field and have the confidence to deliver tailored, critical points deftly, believably, and clearly.

Real Person → dry humor. We’re Big Tech, but our users should feel like they’re speaking with an authentic, grounded person on dot-com. Believable, human language that ranges from wry to candid to quirky adds dashes of flavor vs. forced “weird” moments that aren’t always globally understood or professional.

High-value prospects data slide 6

		Finding	Implication
1	GOALS	Top marketing goals centered around increasing **efficiency** and **effectiveness**, **content**, and **branding**. Platform-level goals were related to **retention** and **personalization**.	There is a lot of emphasis on experimenting and getting the most out of their email / marketing automation platforms (compared to other channels), so there is no better time than now to try to **convince them of our value**. Platform goals are not achievable without the **data to power campaigns / journeys** and **understand and optimize**, so ensuring we have the integrations to enable the data flow as well as customizable, actionable reporting is key.
2	TRIGGERS	Tool must-haves: **automated flows** and **connected data** between tools with ability to easily analyze and action. Platform **switches** motivated by the recognition of a **bottleneck or feature / toolstack limitation** (often related to the aforementioned must-haves) as they scale. Barriers to platform switching included **budget concerns**, **entrenchment** with current tools, and concern over the **disruption** and **lift of migration.**	Connecting data from across their tool stacks, in order to **more easily action AND evaluate efforts** as they pursue more **personalization** across the funnel, is a 'sweet spot' of need for mid-market SMBs. For acquiring and retaining these users we need to focus on **scalability**, **automation**, enabling a **360 degree view of the customer**, as well as how we might support **other channels**. We can win if we show how these prospects can **capture more value with Mailchimp** and dedicated **migration services** are a must to ease the time and effort it takes to transition.
3	PROCESS	A new marketing platform evaluation involves a **structured process** of need identification, platform research, vetting, and assessing fit & proof of value. Most marketing leaders claimed a **high degree of influence** and control over tool and platform decisions, but did still require **buy-in from senior leadership.**	Not only do we need to ensure we come up in their informal **search process** as a contender, but a **human sales touch** is absolutely critical for making our case, that sales process will have to be **highly personalized** to show they are truly leveling up in their next tool. It is important for our sales teams to provide information and perspective that compels not just marketing leaders / specialists, but technical leads and C-suite leaders as well, since all three lanes are often involved in consideration & conversion.
4	ROI	Evaluation of platform effectiveness is based on **stakeholder & end-user perceptions and experiences**, not calculated ROI analysis.	Ensuring we 1) provide a smooth and positive **user experience**, and 2) **make it easy to see how we're helping them progress toward their overall marketing goals** are critical for retention and perception of success. clear

High-value prospects data slide 7

	Finding	Implication
1	High value prospects routinely **want to know the technical details behind features and claims.** Desire to **evaluate claims in the context of their own businesses,** and to **test and compare against** their **current solutions,** is common. [Details]	Focus on show vs. tell for these prospects, offering **resources that can help them explore, understand, compare, and test our offering against their current platform.** Our sales team should be prepared and equipped (ie. have a technical expert on hand) to help **answer technical questions and relate the benefits and fit of advanced features to different industries and business models.**
2	**Proof points** claiming exponential gains or high-percentage growth **can be polarizing**; advanced users often **question their validity** and **criticize the lack of context** behind the numbers. [Details]	When leveraging proof points and testimonials to attract high value businesses, we should **be mindful of numbers that sound 'too good to be true'** and **look to contextualize data** on at least a basic level, as Yachts and Speedboats **want to be able to relate** such claims to their own business models / industries. It's also important for us to have **relatable case studies** that support the claims we include in promotional materials, as there's often a desire for **evidence and transparency** in considering the **merit of claims**.
3	**Integrations are a priority**, but advanced prospects are often **skeptical** that a platform can **integrate cleanly with their entire toolstack.** [Details]	Most Yachts & Speedboats **have experience with integrations – and have been frustrated** by their logistics or a **lack of connectivity** with tools they've used. **We can set ourselves apart** with an easy-to-use, comprehensive integrations offering, but it's important to **help prospects easily evaluate** how effectively we can integrate with **their unique toolstacks.**
4	Mailchimp is often perceived as **less technical**, and **more limited**, than advanced competitors, and therefore prospects were surprised when Mailchimp was revealed to be behind the concepts. However, our brand ***is*** **widely recognized** for **experience** and access to significant **email and user data.** [Details]	Our brand identity presents **both challenges and potential ways-in** for upmarket users, who know we were **an early leader in the category and have a wealth of historical data** to draw from – but also perceive us as **smaller-scale and more simplistic** than advanced category offerings. Our **experience and historical data may be a way to get our foot in the door** as we promote our sophisticated features and their value - great news for our Fall Guesswork campaign!

Tuned-up tones in action

[IMAGE TK]

Tones *can* turn off switching triggers

How so? New proposed tones + content strategies ensure grounded, approachable, and trustworthy messaging that doesn't sacrifice sophistication or context. **The new tones level up to the marketers we seek and invite conversations vs. cancellations.**

We can't change others' circumstances or immediately deliver products we don't have, but we can mitigate confirmed **"switching triggers" such as:**

1. **A need for greater scalability, efficiency, and sophistication.**
2. **Price considerations and budget limitations.**
3. **Aversion to potential operational lifts/disruptions.**

High-value prospects data: why it matters

The following concept summary slides reflect the notes and observations showcased in the High-Value Prospect Interviews deck. **This data comes directly from the people whose business we seek most:** *Yachts and Speedboats.*

The proposed tones of **Clear Communicator**, **Empathetic Persuader**, **Confident Expert**, and **Real Person** can apply everywhere, but pulling out specific tones for specific issues helps us tune our voice in the most precise way—**so content absorbs in its intended way**.

Concept A: Current platform positioning

How tone(s) make it work: When the content is not aligning with the user(s), **Real Person** + **Confident Expert** tones *personally* shift the convo, so it does: they relate, encourage, and offer possibility, giving pause for reconsideration.

Elements that didn't work

- **Several participants voiced skepticism or concerns about the mechanics behind out-of-the-box personalized suggestion, predictive segments and category benchmarking features.**
- **Several participants commented that this positioning (*focusing on RTB bullets #2 & #3*) seems aimed largely at businesses who are reliant on repeat customers, and that doesn't fit their model**

Concept B: Efficiency + high ROI

Elements that didn't work

- Claims of exponential ROI ('65x') led to questions, and some implied skepticism, about how proof points were calculated, and a desire for more supporting detail.
- Some criticism of the language used containing a lot of jargon but not painting a clear picture of what's being offered

How tone(s) make it work: When content is doubtfully received, the narrative dots aren't connecting — and that's on us. **Clear Communicator** + **Confident Expert** tones validate and assure, going beyond "plainspoken" and "translator" to distill the most important messages, the ROI, through **clear, believable** language that supports our goals and content strategies.

Concept C: Multichannel campaigns

Elements that didn't work

- "One tool" positioning received some pushback from decision-makers who felt no tools really live up to that promise
- Several participants perceived this concept as very similar to other marketing automation tools, commenting that the capabilities being touted (*cross-channel campaigns, insights*) are things they would inherently expect from a platform

How tone(s) make it work: Content can't always be king. When it's not, it's easy to flex hyperbolics or repetition. **Empathetic Persuader** + **Real Person** tones add FOMO *and* grounding to content by creating genuine, evolving conversations around our initiatives. They clearly distinguish "what is" from "what will be" so we can believably showcase our claims and aspirations.

Concept D: Reliability for any scale

How tone(s) make it work: We need to defy people's assumptions that they've "seen/heard/know it all" by finding fresh, personalized ways to persuade. **Empathetic Persuader** + **Confident Expert** tones shine a *personalized* persuasive light on MC and content. They meet people where they are and ignite enthusiasm for using MC to achieve their future goals.

Elements that didn't work

- **Scalability & deliverability were specifically noted as being both less important and assumed as capabilities that could be delivered by the bigger players in the space**

Concept E: Klaviyo One, (Unbranded)

How tone(s) make it work: When talking to diverse audiences, it's inevitable that we, as a tech company, will not be understood by all and/or met with skepticism. **Clear Communicator** + **Real Person** tones break down complex info. and make it relevant to the holistic narrative.

Elements that didn't work

- **The combined emphasis on detailed personalization, data connectivity, and developer empowerment led several respondents to voice concerns about potential complexity and perception of being meant for larger, enterprise organizations**
- **Developer empowerment was perceived as irrelevant to some respondents who don't have dedicated developer resources**
- **Several respondents voiced skepticism about the '280x ROI' claim that was included in several tests of Concept E**

Concept F: Power your personalization

How tone(s) make it work: Introductions to new concepts need to be broken down with clear, believable language that mitigates mistrust of the unfamiliar. **Clear Communicator** + **Confident Expert** tones exude precision and patience that assures doubt.

Elements that didn't work

- **Phrasing and meaning of integrations positioning was questioned; participants were interested, but unsure how far those integrations extended** *(ad platforms? social tools? …)*
- **Some perception that these capabilities would be expensive and suited primarily for businesses with high scale and revenue**
- **A few comments reflected skepticism of claims and numbers**

Future opps to infuse the new tones

1. **Dot-com:** Our site offers an unmatched opportunity to persuade and inspire. With these new tones, upgrade persuasions will be believable and sophisticated—not salesy.
2. **App (smart/AI copy templates + audits),** i.e., Subject Line Generator, Social Media Playbook, etc., to ensure we're speaking in the right tones on related platforms.

Rules to (always) write by

[IMAGE TK]

Universal V&T standards

1. **Be honest.** No business ever admits it's anything but.
2. **Be smart.** We should never overplay—or downplay—our intelligence.
3. **Be customer-focused.** All businesses are—if they're profitable.
4. **Be inclusive**. Use respectful, correct words that account for **all** pronouns and terms pertaining to race, religion, sexuality, culture, identity, etc. **Be mindful that many common terms are *exclusive* and shouldn't be used.** Explore Intuit's robust guidelines here.

These may not be as obvious—but they're just as important.

1. **Use an active voice.** The past is the past; let's talk about the here and now.
2. **Use a positive voice.** As a biz, we look upward—and speak positively.
3. **Use data—deliberately.** We use data as an unbiased truth to back up our claims, but it always supports human insights.
4. ***Don't* use slang or jargon.** We are global professionals who don't need to flex or cringe with look-it-up terms—never assume everyone understands you.

Testing plan: getting a proper sound check

[IMAGE TK]

Do the work, test the work

The challenge with generating work in-house is that it's often not taken outside *before* out in the world.

The only way we can be sure that our tones target the right people is if the right people (Y&S) find our voice resonant — before it hits the pavement (site).

IMO, all V&T pillars should be reviewed/revised, at minimum, every 2–3 years, depending on biz/global shifts; however, if the business priorities shift, test more frequently; if things are going well, still, 2–3 years there should be a review.

This testing service may be good for MC, too.

Proposed high-level testing plan:

1. **Refine the current HP** with new tones and showcase an A/B scenario with targeted Y&S priorities (slides 16–17 in this deck + others).
2. **Create revised site-page mockups** per the current nav in order of priority **(Pricing Resources, Inspo, Products)** to showcase the new tones vs. the current ones in place (A/B).
3. **Refine current qual tests in place** with questions that circle back to these new Y&S-centric tones of voice.
4. Since Marketing, Product Design, and Product Marketing have signed off on these new tones, we may **utilize their cross-team test processes as further checkpoints. Then, we operationalize!**
5. **In 2–3 years, rinse/repeat**. These regular/meticulous V&T audits are a great way to incorporate simultaneous copy-editing/content updates.

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Thank you