RigUp Voice, Tone, & Style Guide

1. Communication goals and principles

RIGUP®

Through our messaging we aspire to:

Empower.

Give our customers the tools they need to be greater in everything they do.

Relate.

Make it clear that we know the energy industry and understand their struggles.

Simplify.

Make a complicated, outdated, and underserved industry not only more manageable, but tech-capable.

Build trust.

Instill confidence that we are the experts needed to connect the energy industry with the next generation workforce and technology.

Therefore our messaging should:

Be clear.
Explain the topic you're addressing in the simplest, most direct manner. Avoid the buzz and get to the goods.

Be approachable.
Speak to our customers like they're real people. Avoid being overly formal or stuffy.

Be authoritative.
Speak as an expert on the subject. Be confident and knowledgeable but not preachy.

Be outcome oriented.
Explain what we do through the lens of how it impacts our customers.

Be empathetic.
Understand their challenges and obstacles so that you can better convey how we will help.

Be honest.
They can see right through our bullshit, so don't even try it.

Voice and Tone

Together, our voice and tone make us who we are. From a first hello, through sales calls, implementation, management, and the rest of what will hopefully be a long and wonderful relationship, our messaging embodies our personality and point of view.

Both voice and tone will play their part, so it's important to understand the difference between the two characteristics.

What's the difference?

One company = one voice.
Different audience = different tone.

Voice

Voice should be consistent throughout all of our messaging. Much like a person, our voice is recognizable, individual, and unchanging. Our voice is a reliable representation of our personality. It embodies who we are and helps define our mission.

Tone

Tone will change based on who we're talking to. Just like a person varies their tone based on whatever situation they find themselves in, so too will RigUp. Our tone may become more casual, formal, or technical depending on the context. But no matter how much our tone varies, it will always stay true to our established voice.

Our voice

Voice is our style, our point of view, our personality.

Our North Star helps us find our voice - we are the champions of the energy industry workforce. We are passionate about giving them the resources and tools to make their lives better and we are genuinely excited about our their success.

Some things we are.
And some things we are not.

- We're very smart, but not pretentious.
- We're conversational, but not flippant.
- We're witty, but not silly or sarcastic.
- We're simple and clear, but not dumbed down.
- We're optimistic, but not unrealistic.
- We're forward thinking, but not impulsive.
- We're proactive, but not presumptuous.

Our tone

Tone is our attitude.

Our tone varies based on the situation – the audience we're speaking to, the placement of our message, length constraints, and the intended takeaway all change our tone.

In our broader messaging we like to let a bit of our attitude and personality show. We're rugged and straightforward, while also being relatable and, at times, a little fun. We will always be conversational but, when appropriate, we will dial back the wit and be laser focused on the outcomes for our customers.
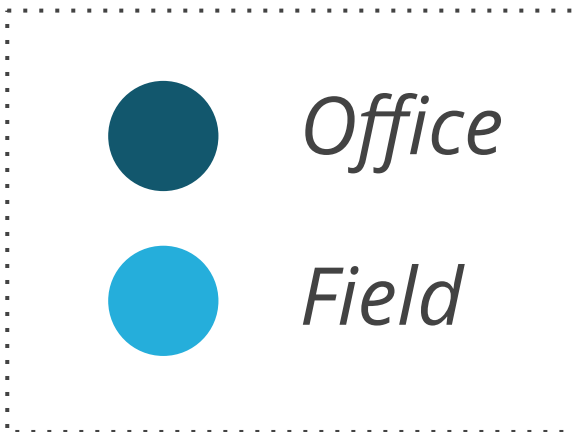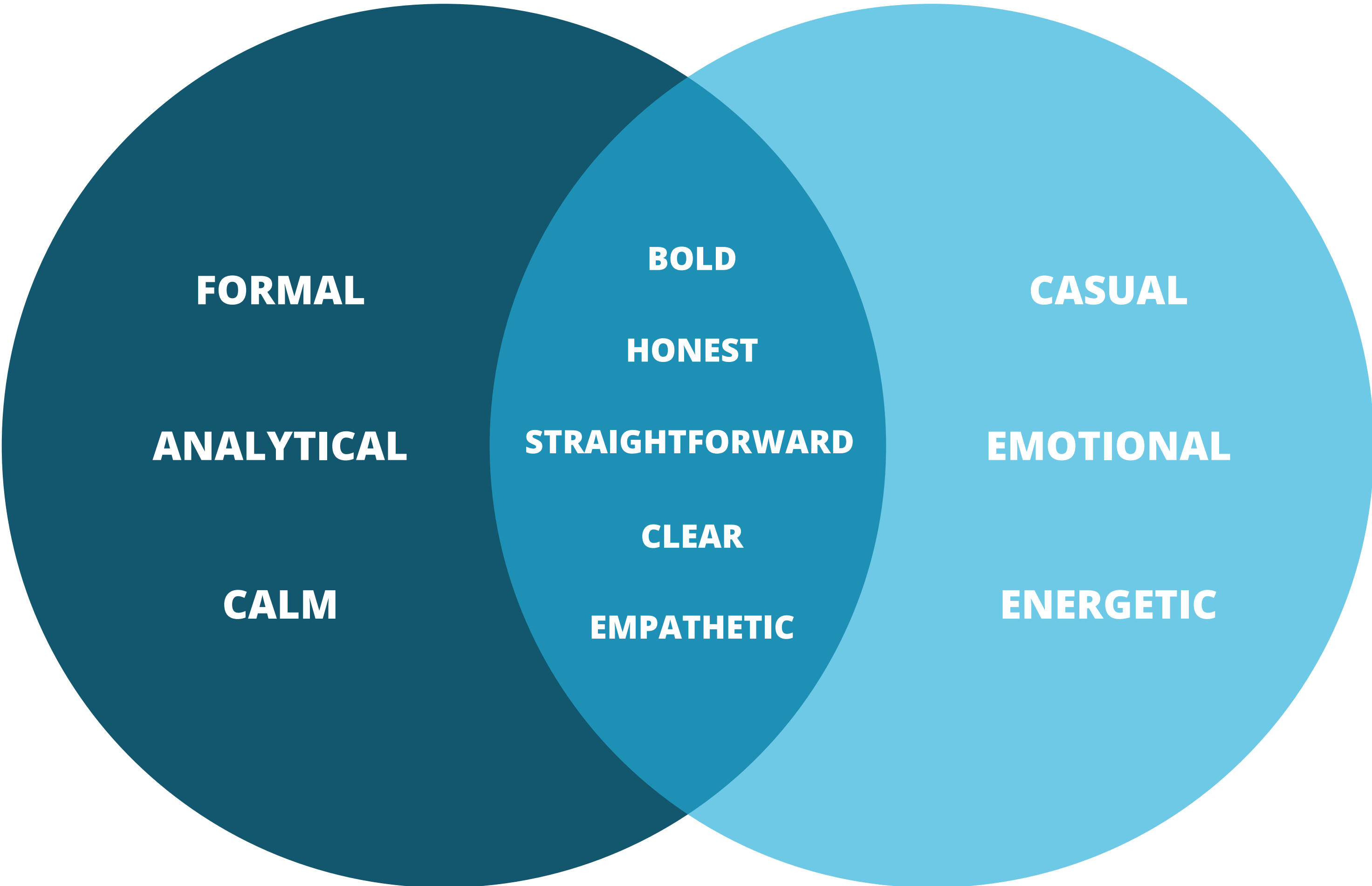
The most important thing to consider when determining tone is the mindset of the intended audience. What will they be doing when they receive this message? What information will they be looking for, how will they have come across our content, and what will their attention level be? Keep those factors in mind as you dial up or down the personality of the message.

Office vs. Field

Our industry can be split roughly into two very different halves. Consultants range from still wet-behind-the-ears roustabout to the highly skilled super who's worked his way into the trailer. On the operator side you will find well-educated engineers and business-savvy decision makers.

At times it will seem as if the two sides don't even speak the same language. Formality and nuance have very little place in consultant-facing materials whereas operator-specific messaging would feel curt or incomplete without it. Finding the right tone is critical to connecting with your intended audience.

FORMAL

ANALYTICAL

CALM

BOLD

HONEST

STRAIGHTFORWARD

CLEAR

EMPATHETIC

CASUAL

EMOTIONAL

ENERGETIC

- *Office*
- *Field*

Pop quiz!

(answers in the speaker's notes)

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Question 1:

How should RigUp apologize for an error on our part?

A. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience our recent error may have caused.

B. We're so sorry for any inconvenience we may have caused.

C. We messed up recently. Sorry about that.

D. Our bad. Still friends?

E. Man did we screw up. Here's how we fixed it...

Question 2:

How should RigUp announce a new product?

A. RigUp has a new widget that adds the following 12 features to the platform...

B. RigUp's newest widget allows you to do X, Y, and Z.

C. Introducing RigUp Widget. It's pretty cool.

D. We heard that you struggle with A, so RigUp built a new widget to meet that need.

E. RigUp made a thing. Check it out.

Question 3:

What should a CTA (call to action) on an email or landing page look like?

A. Click Here to Learn More

B. Find out everything you need to know about X.

C. Learn More

D. Get The Info

E. Get Certified Today

Question 4:

RigUp employees reposting a RigUp organic social post...

A. I'm so excited to be a part of RigUp, check out what we've been up to!

B. Finally! We're pushing out the feature I've been telling them to since I got here...

C. This is so cool. What you don't see is all big logos we just landed because of this! #Winning

D. Here's a thing we did at work this week.

E. We are crushing our mission of empowering the people who power the world!

2. General guides for voice and tone

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Good writing should always be muscular.
It should move the reader — not just from
one line to the next, but it should to give
them a reason to engage with us.

Avoid flat, informational writing in intros.
Make it specific, emotional and targeted.
Flat: "Consultants today experience X"

Specific, targeted, emotional: "Non-competes cost consultants
$XXXXX in missed opportunities every year."

Be Insightful. Avoid truisms.
Being bold and confident means we aren't afraid to demonstrate
insight. Boring and data-heavy sends an implicit message: expect
information, but not thought leadership from us.

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Diction matters. So does concision.

When faced with two possible ways of phrasing something, choose the shorter, less formal way unless there's a contextual reason to do otherwise.

Being bold is not the same as bragging.

We're okay with singing our own praises at times. But what prevents it from being an empty brag is that we connect it to why it matters — solving a problem for our customers.

CORRECT:

RigUp set out to solve X by building the industry's largest online marketplace.

WRONG:

Ten percent take rate? How's that working out for you?

Avoid anything that could be perceived as condescending, snarky or egotistical.

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Helpful tips

Here are a few more tips to help you keep your voice and tone sounding like a Rhino.

- Try to write how you'd speak so your words are more authentic, honest, and natural.
- Use contractions, like "I'll," "we'll" and "haven't."
- But avoid informal spellings, like "wanna" and "gotta."
- Simplify complex phrases without diluting them.
- Short and simple is (almost) always better.
- Sentence fragments are OK when used for special emphasis. Just like this.
- And we don't mind sentences that start with conjunctions.
- Asking questions for rhetorical effect is OK as long as you answer them right away.

Use words that are...

- Helpful
- Clear
- Simple
- Understandable
- Relevant
- Inspiring
- Grounded in expertise

Avoid words that are...

- Jargon-y
- Marketing-speak
- Corporate-sounding
- Needlessly complex
- Confusing
- Extraneous
- Sleep-inducing
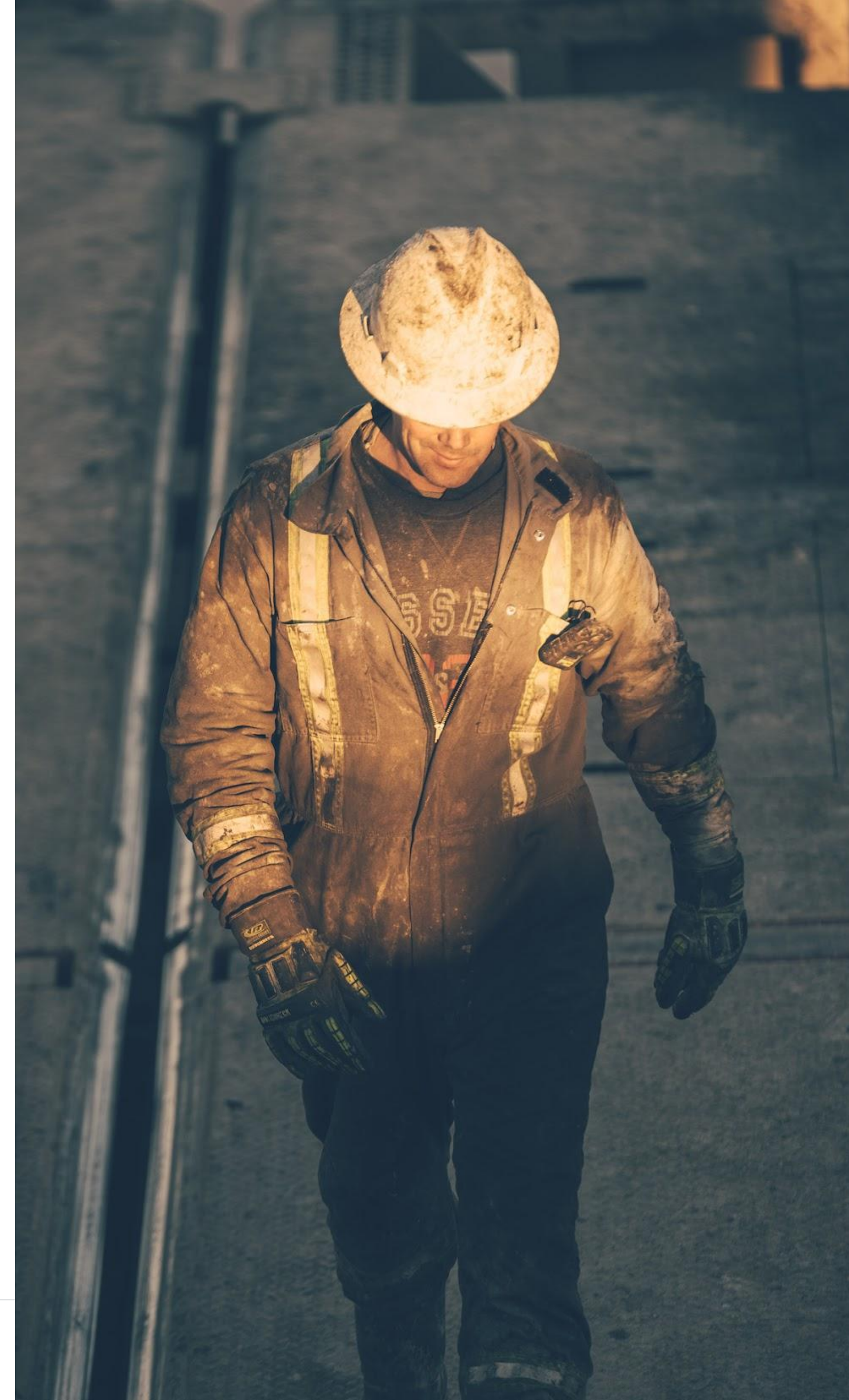
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3. Style and punctuation

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Style Guide

RigUp communications will follow the AP style guide whenever possible, with specific deviations or callouts listed below. Please reach out to any RigUp copywriter for guidance on RigUp style distinctives or AP style in general.

Some basics

Possessive

It's never RigUp's. Never. It can be "the RigUp Network" or "our network" but never "RigUp's Network".

Oxford comma

For consistency and clarity, RigUp prefers to use the "Oxford comma" or "serial comma." That means if you're listing three or more things, default to using a comma to precede the last item in the list.

Acronyms

Unless something is always referred to by an acronym or abbreviation — like E&P or OFS — define the acronym or abbreviation parenthetically after its first use.

Exclamation

We like to choose words that are so compelling that we don't need exclamation marks. But if you absolutely must use it, one is always enough.

Trademarks

Include a superscript trademark symbol (® or TM) on the most prominent usage of a trademark in either the body content or subtitle. This is typically the first usage of a term. Do not include any trademark symbols in headlines.

Headlines and CTAs

Headlines

Our tone is conversational, therefore our headlines use sentence case - capitalize the first letter of the first word, any proper nouns, and the first letter of the first word after a colon. Use terminal punctuation only when using complete sentences.

Try to keep headlines under 60 characters, true to the content, and exciting enough for readers to continue reading the content.

CTAs

Our content should drive further engagement. Whenever appropriate, include a call-to-action (CTA). Our CTAs should be short, action-oriented sentence fragments that do not require punctuation. If they are 2-3 words (and they should be), **use Title Case**. If it has to be closer to sentence length, use sentence case.

Correct:
- Learn More
- Dive Deeper
- Sign In Now

Incorrect:
- Click this button for more information.
- Contact us to see how we help you save time and money now!

Terminal punctuation and dashes

Terminal punctuation & spacing

We always put punctuation at the end of our sentences and bullet list entries, but when it comes to headlines, titles, captions, callouts, and other shortened phrases **not in body copy**, you only need a period at the end if the phrase has a verb in it.

And we only use one space after periods. Period.

Example:
- The Permian today (has no verb)
- Get paid faster. (has a verb)

Dashes

Use em dashes (the long ones, —) when you need to create a pause in a sentence or attribute a quote. Include a space before and after the em dash. Use hyphens (the really short one, -) to join words or number ranges together, with no space on either side. For simplicity's sake we'll agree with the AP guide to skip en dashes (the midsized one, –).

Em dashes can be created on a Mac by typing option+hyphen and on Windows by holding alt and typing 0151.

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Bulleted lists

Bullets

Bulleted lists are used to organize content in a way that is quickly and easily absorbed by the reader. This means bulleted lists can come in many different varieties – the key is consistency. For consistency across RigUp please use the following guidelines.

Use a short intro statement on each list, followed by a colon:
- Put a space between the bullet and the first word of each item.
- Capitalize the first word following the bullet.
- Use periods at the end of each section, whether it is a full sentence or a fragment.
- Use a filled in circle for the first level bullet.
  - Use an outlined circle for level two.
    - Alternate between those two types only.

Use parallel construction for each item in a list:
- Start with the same part of speech (in this example, a verb).
- Use the same voice (active or passive).
- Use the same verb tense.
- Use the same sentence type (statement or question).
- Use just a sentence fragment, if desired.

Remember bulleted lists are designed to be consumed quickly – keep complete sentences short and don't use bulleted paragraphs. Finally, do not use numbered or ordered lists unless you are describing a sequence.

Numbers

Numbers can be used in many, many ways. In general your grade school guidance is still valid: write out numbers one through nine or any number appearing at the beginning of a sentence. All other uses can be in numerical form. However, we have headlines, dates and times, phone numbers, and a few other considerations. Let's tackle them one at a time.

Headlines

Numbers in headlines should be in numerical form unless they're a generalization:

Correct headline examples:
- RigUp helps thousands of contractors... (vs 1000s)
- RigUp added 6 new operators to its roster.

Dates

Dates should typically be written out to avoid confusion with the order of months and days. Abbreviate only the following months: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. Spell out all months when using alone or with only a year.

Correct date examples:
- Jan. 1, 2019 [in a sentence, use a comma after the year]
- Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019
- Tuesday, Jan. 1 [in a sentence, use a comma after the day]
- January 2019

Numbers

Times

Times should be expressed numerically. Drop minutes on full hours and avoid "o'clock". Use lowercase without periods to express am/pm, with a space between the numbers and letters. Omit am/pm in the first half of a time range if all times fall on the same side of noon. Don't use numerals for 12:00. Use noon or midnight instead.

Correct time examples:
- 9:15 am
- 9 am
- 9 - 10:30 am
- 9 am - 5:30 pm

Note: When communicating about an event, the correct order is [event name], [time], [date], [place].

Example: Happy Hour, 5 - 6:30 pm, Jan. 1, 2019, at Houlihan's.

Numbers

Phone numbers

Use this format: (512) 555-8442 [note the space after the parenthesis, but not around the hyphen].

Multiple numbers in a sentence

Utilize numerals for all numbers in any sentence containing multiple numbers if any one of them requires a numeral.

Examples:
- The plant grew one inch.
- It grew one inch the first month, and four inches the second.
- It grew 1 inch in the first month and 12 inches in the first quarter.

Numbers next to each other

When writing a sentence with two numbers next to each other, write one of them out and use numerals for the other to increase readability.

Example: Building the staircase required 42 six-inch nails.

For any number usages not covered by this, lean on simplicity and readability as your guide - we're writing to communicate and if people can't read or understand what you've written, we didn't accomplish that.

Style of common phrases or terms

Always two words and never hyphenated:
- service provider
- independent contractor
- job sheet(s)
- job site

Always shown exactly as follows:
- exploration & production (or E&P)
- oil & gas (or O&G)
- W-2 workers
- non-compete
- 24/7 (never include 365 or use xs)
- around-the-clock

Always one word and never hyphenated:
- workover
- website (OK to use "web" too, but never "Web" or "the Web")

Can be either one word or two words:
- log in (verb) or login (noun and adjective)
- sign up (verb) or signup (noun and adjective)
- on board (with an idea) or onboard(ing) (the process or action of adding a person to a team/our network)

Industry Terms

Our company and our industry uses its own special jargon. We need to make sure we are using those terms correctly, because our customers will know when we get them wrong. Please make liberal use of our glossary to avoid embarrassing mistakes and false claims.