

Handshake Style Guide

UX content principles

These content principles will help make the user experience helpful and simple for our users.

When writing for users, you should:

1. **Make sure user questions are answered with tooltips or microcopy.**
2. Use the same names for things throughout the app to reassure the user that they can trust us.
3. Never tell the user off for getting it wrong.
4. Imagine yourself using the app. Is it clear what's going to happen, what you have to do?

Voice

When we write for the Handshake app, we want to use a consistent voice. Here's how to sound like Handshake.

Voice characteristics

To personify Handshake, I have in mind my accountant from when I was a freelancer, Glyn. Glyn was businesslike but approachable and not at all intimidatingly austere or too serious.

Voice attributes

- attentive, e.g. "How's the business going?"
- knowledgeable, e.g. "This is the way to do it"
- supportive, e.g. "Yes!" "That's it!"

Word choice

USE THESE WORDS	DON'T USE THESE WORDS	RATIONALE
Project Owner	Client	Too ambiguous - who is the client in this relationship?
Freelancer / Project Worker	Client, Contractor	
Track (time)	Monitor	Track is active and neutral; Monitor suggests surveillance and lack of trust
Payment	Invoice; Bill	More modern and doesn't sound like boring paperwork. *Research to check this*
Manage	Do	The words to use are more active
Organize		
Project	Job	More modern, creative, and flexible.

Tone

- Positive situations, such as completed actions, can be less businesslike but shouldn't be too casual. The tone should be reassuring and supportive.
- Negative situations, such as error messages, shouldn't blame or shame, but instead instruct and educate.

Styles

Follow these style rules throughout the app interface.

Page titles

- Capitalize each word if it is the name of features/people specific to the app: Project Profile, Project List, Dashboard, Project Owner, Project Worker
- Text size: 30pt
- No punctuation at the end
- Style: should start with a verb in infinitive/imperative (a command, e.g. Manage the project, Organize the payment). Avoid questions apart from where confirmation of an action is needed.

Headings

- Initial capital (only first letter), except the names of features/people specific to the app: Project Profile, Project Owner, Project Worker

- Text size: 24pt
- No punctuation at the end, unless an exclamation mark (!) but don't use these too much.
- Style: should start with a verb in infinitive/imperative (a command, e.g. Manage the project, Organize the payment). Avoid questions apart from where confirmation of an action is needed.

Instructions

- Text size: 18pt
- Use standard sentence punctuation and capitalization.
- Style: Use our brand's voice and tone. Instructions should be short, clear, supportive, encouraging, and authoritative.

Tooltips

- Text size 18pt
- Use standard sentence punctuation and capitalization.
- Style: Use our brand's voice and tone. Instructions should be short, clear, supportive, encouraging, and authoritative.
- When to use:
 - to make it clear what information is required and how it should be formatted.
 - to outline what will happen next where the buttons do not do this.
 - to add legal requirements.
 - To reinforce how Handshake is doing the admin work on behalf of the user.

Button text

- Initial capital (only first letter)
- Text size 20pt
- No punctuation at the end
- Style: Use only 1 or 2 words

Date formats

DAY (2 numbers) - MONTH (full in letters) - YEAR (4 numbers)

(*unless the app is for the US market, then it should be MONTH - DAY, YEAR)

Writing the month as a word makes it easier to understand at a glance

Time formats

Partial hours shown as decimals, e.g. 2.5 for 2 and a half, 1.75 for 1 and three quarters etc.

Currency formats

Currency symbol (\$ etc) - comma after the thousands, no decimal places unless they contain a number above 0.