

Handshake Style Guide

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 straightforward but reassuring language.
3. Ensure that the main topic/function of each slide is clear immediately.
4. Make sure users feel confident in what will happen after they select a navigation prompt.
5. Use the second-person imperative when giving prompts.

Voice

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

Voice characteristics

- Enthusiastic, but not hyper (ex. "Now you're rolling! Let's set up your project!")
- Straightforward, but not boring (ex. "Thank you! Payment sent!")
- Matter-of-fact, but empathetic. (ex. "You can set up the payment method later if you want..")

Word choice

Provide at least 8 examples that describe the preferred terms to use in the Handshake app.

USE THIS WORD	DON'T USE THESE WORDS	SAY WHY (RATIONALE)
Business Owner	Client	Mostly to avoid confusion from both users. "Business owner" means working with an individual while "client" could mean working with a large organization. This app is geared toward individuals.
Freelancer	Contractor	Mostly to avoid confusion from both users. Also "freelancer" usually means an individual working on a project while "contractor" could mean an organization working for an organization.

Invoice	Bill	Invoices are requests for payment for a service that is not built into regular business budgets.. Bills are like utility bills that fall under expected cost of doing business. If freelancers were needed on a regular basis, they would be employees.
Hourly Rate	Payment Rate	By breaking it into hours, it will be easier for both users to get a handle on what to expect as well as keeping it straightforward. "Payment rate" could be subjective and less clear.
Project	Work	Freelancers are typically hired to complete a task, something with a definite end. Work is (or can be) endless.
Project Details	Details	We need to keep it specific to the project. "Details" is too broad and could mean preferred payment method, which is separate and could span over different projects if the two users work together again.
Description	Scope	Description is a more straightforward, less "corporate speak" way to describe the same information.
Details	Dashboard	Dashboard implies something more comprehensive whereas this frame just goes over the details of the money, time and description. Other frames are available for other areas of specifics.
See	View	More simple and lower cognitive burden

Tone

- Professionally positive when the user navigates a step. Ex. "Congratulations! You have a new project!"
- Matter of fact when the user needs to be informed about a choice.. Ex. "Cancel Invoice? If you cancel this invoice, the business owner will no longer see this request. No worries, you will have the option to resend this invoice later."

Styles

Follow these style rules throughout the app interface.

Page (screen) headings

- Title case capitalization
- Use punctuation only if an exclamation point or a question mark.

- The headings will be questions that should address where the user is in the process of the app.

Subheadings

- Title case capitalization
- Use punctuation only if an exclamation point or a question mark
- Use a mix of questions or statements, depending on the function of the component.

Onscreen instructions

- Sentence-case capitalization.
- Use punctuation.
- Keep these instructions simple and direct.

Tooltips

- Sentence-case capitalization.
- Use punctuation.
- Keep it simple and only add if there are other navigation options in the frame or user testing shows it's needed.

Button text

- Title case capitalization.
- No punctuation.
- Use a verb first when it makes sense. Two words at most.

Date formats

MM/DD/YY: Numbers are easier to comprehend quickly and lessens the cognitive burden.

Currency formats

\$00.00: Numbers are easier to comprehend quickly and lessens the cognitive burden.