



Splash

Brand Messaging Guidelines

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How to Use This Guide

The Brand Messaging Guidelines are a tool that help Splash tell the story of who we are and what we want to be.

This guide includes key messaging points, pre-approved language, value propositions, and information about Splash. By outlining Splash’s values, mission, vision, and desired image, we can establish consistent and effective messaging across the organization.

Staff should refer to this guide when creating content, whether it’s written materials, interactions with external stakeholders, or presentations. This ensures that the core messages are consistently conveyed across different touchpoints.

The Brand Messaging Guidelines include specific writing guidelines, such as preferred vocabulary. Staff should follow these guidelines to maintain a consistent writing style that reflects the brand’s personality.

While consistency is important, there will be times when staff need to adapt the messaging to fit specific contexts. The guidelines provide flexibility to accommodate different communication scenarios while still staying true to the brand’s essence.

Remember that the Brand Messaging Guidelines document is not static; it should evolve alongside the brand itself. By following these guidelines, staff can effectively communicate Splash’s message, values, and identity to various audiences, ensuring a consistent and impactful brand presence.



Why Brand Messaging Guidelines?

The Brand Messaging Guidelines are a resource used to explain Splash's purpose, programs, mission, and vision to new audiences. Consistency in how we represent Splash is essential for building and maintaining brand recognition, boosting engagement, and professionalizing our brand. This guide outlines a unified voice, language, rules, and talking points that demonstrate our value to the public.

Who We Are

Brand Summary

Mission

We clean water for kids.

Vision

We believe that every child deserves to have clean water, clean hands, clean toilets, and access to menstrual health support. Through partnerships with governments and other local leaders, we will demonstrate a replicable model for cost-effective citywide water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) solutions that can improve the lives of millions.

Why?

Every child deserves the opportunity to thrive. Yet, there are still millions of children lacking access to clean water, reliable infrastructure, and essential knowledge about their own well-being. As long as this need persists, Splash remains steadfast in fulfilling its vital role.

Useful Stats

- More than 20% of deaths and years lived with disabilities for children under 14 are attributable to unsafe water, inadequate sanitation, or insufficient hygiene
- 3 million people move into cities around the world every week
- By 2050, 75% of the world will live in a city
- 2.1 billion people worldwide lack access to safe drinking water

Brand Promise

Splash improves water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH), and menstrual health conditions in cities—especially for children—because every kid deserves to thrive.

Values

Our values keep us grounded as we pivot and grow. They guide everything we do and how we do it.

People: People first. People second. People third.

- Relationships are key – From staff to partners, to communities to the children we serve, strong relationships make our work possible.
- Come as you are – We value all the complexities, nurture all the uniqueness, and build on all the strengths that each new person brings to our offices and organization.
- Treat people fairly – Don't drain people of their time and energy. Make sure the needs of our own people are weighed along with the needs of Splash and the people we serve.

Quality: Beautiful products that function and last.

- Quality is non-negotiable – From the water we provide to the training we deliver—if it is simply “better than” then it simply isn't good enough.
- Everyone deserves a dignified option – The children we work for and communities we work with want and deserve aspirational solutions that last.
- Would you use it? – Would you let your child drink that water or use that toilet, without hesitation? This question is one of the best indicators of a successful product and equitable relationship.

Honesty: No drama, no surprises, no BS.

- No drama – The problems we are working to solve are real and are urgent. We don't need to invent others, and cannot let individual egos get in our way.
- No surprises – While we can't control what happens externally, we can anticipate and minimize the impact, and we can communicate clearly to avoid any internal surprises.
- No BS – Enough said.

Joy: Kids at heart, seeing potential everywhere.

- Potential, not pity – The kids we work for are not poster children for poverty. They are bright, funny, mischievous, goofy, thankful, and full of hope and tons of potential – and so are we!
- We celebrate – Whether that's a birthday or safe water in yet another school – we carve out time and space to relish achievements large and small.
- We play hard – We charge hard into this work. The kind of change we want to create requires it. We constantly pause to refresh our tanks with joy, laughter, humor, and play.

Mistakes: Make them, don't repeat them.

- Everything breaks – We know every single project we undertake will collapse at one point or another, but it is how we respond to and fix our mistakes that defines us.
- Don't forget the kids – The communities we work with are not proving grounds for experiments. They are real kids facing extreme conditions. We have an obligation to them, above anyone else, to ensure while we may make mistakes, we can't repeat them.



How We Communicate

Voice and Tone

Through the language we use, voice and tone elements guide the personality of our brand. Voice is your personality and tone is your mood. Voice is what you say and tone is how you say it.

Voice

Voice communicates personality and values. It's a distilled representation of the organization and does not change.

- Honest and transparent
- Kind and thoughtful
- Realistic yet optimistic
- Ambitious and bold

Tone

Tone is a subset of voice and may change depending on the audience or the content.

Playful but not silly

- We can use emojis in social posts and emails
- We can make lighthearted jokes
- We can convey that we are enthusiastic and cheerful

Concise and conversational We want to relate to people and not read like an academic journal – try to keep written pieces shorter and to the point

- If you can edit for clarity, please do so
- Try to avoid colloquial phrases that may be culture-specific
- Try to avoid industry jargon if your audience is external

Trustworthy

- Use facts and figures to back up claims as appropriate
- Own up to mistakes and learnings – don't shy away from them
- Speak authoritatively but remain open and warm

Proud and Excited

- We share impact stories and are proud of the people at the heart of them
- We are excited about our impact and where we're going and we want our audience to be excited too
- We believe in what we do

Collaborative

- We partner, we co-design, we co-manage, and we don't take full credit where full credit isn't due

Respectful

- We recognize the individuality of everyone we work with, from children to teachers to staff and beyond
- We portray people in a positive light and never echo stereotypes
- We consider the meaning and implications of what we say before we say it
- We use inclusive language
- We strive to do better if we make mistakes

Style and Wording

Our Name

Splash (preferred)

Splash International (accepted)

Splash [Country Name] refers to the staff or entity working within said country; e.g. Splash Ethiopia or Splash US.

Terms

Sub-Saharan Africa

We avoid using the term sub-Saharan Africa, as it encompasses such a large area it's meaningless and disrespectful to lump disparate regions together. Use city and country names if possible; otherwise use more regional names like East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, etc.

Developing/Developed Countries or the Global South

Try to avoid and instead name the countries or the regions themselves, use the phrase "low- and middle-income countries," "global majority/minority," or "majority world/minority world."

Kids/Students/Children

Kids/children: Use these terms interchangeably

Students: May use this as well, but make sure if you are referring to data you use the correct terminology – we count kids and students differently in Salesforce because we serve both child and adult students.

Acronyms

Try not to use them if possible, but if you do, always define acronyms the first time you use them in any given piece or page.

Gender Inclusive Language

Girls and boys – use these terms primarily when we are talking about menstrual health and behavior change programming where gender delineation is important (boys' puberty workshop, girl-friendly toilets, etc.).

Depending on the context, you can also include language to the effect of "We recognize that not everyone who menstruates identifies as a woman and that not all women menstruate."

Jargon

When writing for audiences not in the WASH or academic sector, try to simplify language and translate jargon into easier to understand language. Aim for what you say to be easily understood by a 16-year-old.



What We Communicate

Splash's Story

About

Splash is at the forefront of a growing movement to ensure that children in urban poverty have the resources they need to thrive and realize their full potential. We design and implement child-focused water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH), and menstrual health solutions with governments in some of the world's biggest cities. And then we get out of the way: our goal is to demonstrate that our model works, build local capacity, and transition management to local organizations and governments. Founded in 2007, Splash has worked in eight countries and served more than one million kids worldwide.

Short Narrative

At Splash, we know a world where every child has the basic building blocks they need to thrive and be healthy, including clean water, sanitation, and hygiene, is possible. Over the past 15 years, we have improved water, sanitation, hygiene, and menstrual health for one million kids in urban poverty in eight countries in Asia and Africa.

Now, we're building a model of providing services to kids in schools that can be replicated and scaled in some of the world's largest and rapidly-growing cities. Our goal is to prove this model works, support in its adoption, and let local organizations, businesses, and governments take it from there.

Founding Story

In 2006 at a roadside café in Cambodia, Eric Stowe penned a manifesto about everything wrong with charity. As he had a hundred times before across a dozen countries, he had spent that day at an orphanage helping to provide clean water for children. This time, he was overwhelmed at how the approach was so unsustainable. To help change the narrative, he launched his own organization.

The first goal was to ensure safe water at every orphanage in China. Splash succeeded in 2017 – working across every province, serving 1,100 orphanages and 200,000 people.

Today, Splash has reached more than 1 million kids across eight countries, deploying tens of millions of dollars, with local staff leading the work. But from the very beginning, the goal was not simply to grow the organization exponentially.

In 2013, Eric gave a TEDx talk, "How to Kill Your Charity (Yes, That's a Good Thing)," where he shared his vision for catalyzing change so that local organizations could ultimately take the work forward. This idea has continued to flourish. Rather than transition Splash's work to local communities at the end of a project, we want to help catalyze local organizations to take the lead from the beginning.

We hope to make this vision a reality: proving that 100% coverage of school WASH is possible, cost-effective, and sustainable across multiple cities in multiple countries through local organizations. By doing so, we aim to provide a model for other international NGOs amidst growing demand for proximate leadership.

Founding Story (Annotated)

In 2006 at a roadside café in Cambodia, Eric Stowe penned a **manifesto about everything wrong with charity**. As he had a hundred times before across a dozen countries, he had spent that day at an orphanage helping to **provide clean water for children**. This time, he was **overwhelmed at how the approach was so unsustainable**. To help change the narrative, he **launched his own organization**.

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Honest and transparent

Kind and thoughtful

Realistic yet optimistic

Ambitious and bold



Going out of Business... ...of Direct Implementation

We design our work to have clear end dates with sustainability at the forefront, allowing our partners to carry on the work independent of Splash for the long term.

This is a new balance between the ways INGOs have operated in the past and the shift to localization. We see this pivot as an exciting opportunity to expand on our success to date and scale our work through local partners – faster, broader, cheaper, and more appropriately co-designed for the communities we serve. Rather than seek perpetual growth of our organization's footprint, we see the imperative of having a clear exit strategy.

After handing over direct implementation to local agencies, Splash would then play a support or a technical advisor role to organizations best poised to implement WASH in schools. We will make all of our materials, designs, plans, and learnings open-source and free to use.

In this way, we can make ourselves obsolete and to exit the places that we work in a sustainable way.



Splash Initiatives



Water

Because all children deserve safe, clean water

Clean water is critical for maintaining health, yet public schools in big cities often lack safe water due to contamination or insufficient access. Splash uses commercial-grade water filtration systems to provide clean water to schools and installs custom-designed drinking stations. Staff are trained in the operation and maintenance of the system and Splash provides technical assistance and water quality testing post-installation to make sure the water stays clean.



Sanitation

Child-friendly toilets for basic health and dignity

Functional, safe, and child-friendly toilets are fundamental to improved health and development outcomes for children, yet many schools lack a sufficient number of toilets, especially for girls. No matter what, kids need access to a decent toilet — it's a matter of basic health and dignity. We create child-friendly sanitation facilities by repairing and redesigning existing toilets and building brand new ones. Splash ensures school toilets have high-quality parts and other measures to meet global standards for safety, privacy, cleanliness, and accessibility.



Hygiene

Clean Hands, Healthy Habits, and Brighter Futures

Safe water and child-friendly toilets alone can't eliminate water-borne illness: handwashing with soap is critical. It is also one of

the most effective and inexpensive ways to prevent the spread of diseases, bacteria, and viruses that can negatively affect health, nutrition, and development. Many schools lack handwashing stations, and students do not routinely wash their hands before eating or after using the toilet. Splash combines our custom-designed handwashing and drinking stations with education to encourage kids to adopt and sustain healthy behaviors.



Menstrual Health

Empowering Girls. Transforming Lives. Period.

Splash strengthens school-based menstrual health services by improving infrastructure and providing age- and culturally-appropriate education around periods and puberty. We create workshops and resources for parents and guardians around these topics as well. By engaging all students (even boys) and families, we aim to reduce the stigma girls face around their periods.



Behavior Change

Building healthy kids and communities

Splash developed a robust behavior change program to encourage children to adopt healthy habits and to collaborate with adults to sustain the program. Our hygiene education programs are developed with local partners in each city to ensure they are relevant and reflective of the kids we reach. These programs teach kids about menstrual health, proper handwashing, and keeping each other safe. Hygiene Clubs at each school give kids leadership opportunities to teach each other about health and hygiene, and we support teachers in being advisors and advocates for their students. We engage school leaders, parents, teachers, janitors, and student hygiene clubs to promote healthy hygiene behaviors school-wide.

