

The Disappearing Brand

*How luxury businesses lose their voice
one template at a time.*

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Where your service becomes assets.

Try this

Open your website. Read the homepage out loud. Notice the tone, the warmth, the confidence. That's the voice you've invested in. That's the brand.

Now open your auto-reply email. Read that out loud.

Now your booking confirmation.

Now your most recent Google review response.

Now a text message your team sent to a client last week.

Same voice? Same personality? Same warmth?

In almost every premium business I've looked at, the answer is no. The brand voice (the one that was carefully crafted, maybe by an agency, maybe over years of refining) disappears the moment it leaves the homepage. It drifts, one communication at a time, until the thing your clients actually experience sounds nothing like the thing you built.

Where the drift starts

I was looking at a boutique financial advisory recently. Their philosophy page is compelling. They write about the emotional relationship people have with money: genuine insight, not platitudes. You read it and think: these people get it.

Then you click through to the services page and it reads like it was written by a different company. Formal. Generic. The kind of language that sounds professional but says nothing. The warmth is gone. The personality is gone. Two clicks and the brand has already fractured.

I see the same thing in hospitality. A wellness retreat with a homepage that's poetic and inviting, and then a terms and conditions page that reads like it was written by a lawyer having a bad day. Or a boutique hotel where the Instagram captions are warm and personal, but the booking confirmation email is a wall of text that could have come from any hotel on the planet.

Nobody sets out to do this. It happens because brand guides (the ones with the logo specs and colour codes and typography rules) tell you how your brand looks. They almost never tell you how your brand talks.

What it's actually costing you

Kapferer's first rule of luxury marketing is blunt: 'Forget about positioning. Luxury is not comparative. Luxury IS the identity.'

Think about what that means. Your brand isn't a position relative to competitors. It's a declaration of who you are. And if who you are changes depending on which channel someone contacts you through, you don't have an identity. You have a collection of templates written by whoever happened to be on shift.

That inconsistency costs you in ways that don't show up on a report.

It costs you trust

When your website sounds confident and your emails sound uncertain, people sense it. They might not be able to say what's wrong, but the feeling is: these people aren't quite in control.

It costs you referrals

When someone recommends you, they're lending you their reputation. If their referral's first experience doesn't match the experience they described, the next referral doesn't come.

It costs you pricing power

Templates don't command premium pricing. A consistent, unmistakable voice does.

It costs you time

Every time a team member writes from scratch. Every time a manager rewrites a social post. Every time you personally check a communication because you don't trust anyone else to get the tone right. That's a problem you're solving manually, over and over, that should be solved once.

The ten-minute test

Pick up your phone. Find five different communications your business sent this week. A website page. An email. A social post. A review response. A text or WhatsApp message.

Read them out loud, one after another.

Do they sound like the same person? Not the same information. The same personality? The same warmth, the same confidence, the same way of being in the world?

If they don't, the problem isn't your marketing strategy. It's not your content calendar. It's that nobody has ever defined how your brand communicates (really defined it, in a way that's specific enough for any team member to pick up and use) and then written every template and response script to match.

Brand guides tell you what font to use. They don't tell you what to say when a guest leaves a three-star review. They don't tell you how to write a follow-up email that sounds like your brand. They don't tell the new person on reception what words to use and what words to avoid.

The drift doesn't happen in the big public moments. It happens in the small private ones.

THE AUTO-REPLY. THE BOOKING CONFIRMATION.
THE PLACES WHERE YOUR BRAND MEETS YOUR
CLIENT WHEN NOBODY'S WATCHING.

— THE FIX

What actually fixes it

It's not another brand guide. It's a set of practical tools your team can use tomorrow.

A voice document

Defines not just what you sound like, but what you never sound like. Tone rules. Word choices. A list specific enough that someone on their first day could send an email that sounds right.

A complete template set

Covers every communication your business sends regularly: email templates, auto-reply language, social media response frameworks, review response scripts, booking confirmations, follow-ups, check-in messages. All written in your actual voice. Ready to use.

A simple set of rules

Who can say what, how often the voice gets reviewed, and what happens when someone goes off-script. Not a bureaucracy. Just enough structure that consistency doesn't depend on you personally checking every message.

This isn't about controlling every word anyone says. It's about giving your team a frame they can work within confidently, so they stop checking with you every time and you stop rewriting their work every night.

— NEXT STEP

What to do about it

You don't have to define your whole voice in a week. You start by finding out where it's drifting: which channels still sound like you, and which sound like anyone.

That's what a Second Opinion is. A structured review of your marketing and communications setup, including how consistently your brand communicates across every channel. You get a written report: where you are now, what's leaking, and what to fix first. It takes about 90 minutes of your time, and you keep the report whether or not we work together.

Let me review your marketing setup.

You'll get a written report showing what's leaking and what to fix first.

From \$750. Yours to keep either way.

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— ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Malissa Thorpe builds marketing systems for luxury and premium businesses. She connects every channel into one view, defines how brands communicate, and makes sure the infrastructure actually delivers on the promise. She has done this across multiple industries and markets for more than a decade.

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