

**love
has
no
labels**

What we believe.

Love is the only force powerful enough to transcend biases.

Why we're here.

**To overcome bias and promote inclusion,
with love.**

We'll spark positivity about what we are "for"

Love
Acceptance
Diversity
Inclusion
Positive action

We'll ask people to question labels

We'll be uplifting, surprising and inclusive

We won't shame people about what we're "against"

Prejudice
Exclusion
Racism
Homophobia
Ageism

We won't ask them to reject labels entirely

We won't be depressing, alarming or accusatory

LHNL is flexible and adaptable.

It can be activated at the right cultural moments, and by brands to fit with their passions.

Who we're talking to.

Armchair supporters

We want to reach Americans outside our “echo chamber” who believe in equality but undermine it through complacency and unconscious bias. They’re uncomfortable around the concept of bias and may think the word itself has an accusatory connotation.

They’re tired of #thoughtsandprayers, debates, and confrontations. They need simple, positive outlets that don’t require heady analysis.

How our brand is perceived

Love Has No Labels

26%

LHNL brand awareness

92%

Positive or neutral feeling towards LHNL

70%

Consider our cause important



What we want to accomplish.

Shine a light on everyday demonstrations of love that combat moments of bias and discrimination

Move people to be more empathetic and accepting

Empower armchair supporters to contribute to a more inclusive community

A word about politics.

The topics of inclusion and bias touch on hot-button issues: race, sexual preference, gender identity, ethnic background, and more. The conversation is inescapably political—we can't pretend otherwise. In theory, there's nothing wrong with that. Principled political discussion is how society changes and moves forward.

What we *can't* be is *partisan*. Yes, we have a point of view. But we aren't explicitly taking a "side," we're looking for solutions. This isn't about left vs right, or even right vs wrong. It's about action vs complacency. Inclusion vs exclusion. Fairness vs bias.

The problem isn't the people with bias. It's the bias itself. Frame the conversation around positive action, and people will listen. But if it feels adversarial, it becomes "tribal." Minds close, defenses go up, and the conversation gets much harder.

What we sound like.

Our voice.

Explained simply, our voice is how we speak to people. In our films, at events, in social, in advertising, and on our website, our voice represents our personality, our beliefs, and the way we engage. It influences word choice, sentence structure, how much or how little we say, even rhythm.

Since we're talking about things that some audiences may consider controversial, our voice and tone can make all the difference in whether someone is willing to listen and be persuaded by what we have to say, or just tune us out as another nag in a cacophony of "political correctness."

This guide will help you sound like Love Has No Labels, whenever you write and speak, to anyone, about anything. You'll find some general writing guidelines, too.

Our voice personality traits.

Purposeful

Optimistic

Empathetic

Respectful

Knowledgeable

We're purposeful.

We're trying to create positive change. And that's never easy. Especially when the obstacles are deeply rooted and elusive. But we're determined to succeed, and we're confident we will, because the things we're saying, the stories we're telling, are true.

Urging people to be more inclusive of those who are different may make some people uncomfortable, but that won't keep us from speaking directly and honestly about the impact exclusion has on people's lives, or ways to take positive action.

How to be purposeful:

- Be honest and direct.
- Speak with conviction. It's OK, because you're talking about things that are true.
- Frame the conversation as being about positive things people *can do*, not negative things they *shouldn't*.
- Don't be confrontational, but at the same time, don't sidestep awkward topics just to protect people's feelings.
- Don't be apologetic for what we're asking people to do.

In *We Are America*, John Cena perfectly demonstrates how we're purposeful.

We're optimistic.

Here's why: love wins. People can change. Most people do the right thing when given the chance. Look at the progress that's been made in recent years. Even when the journey is slow or difficult, the endings are happy. Because underneath it all, people just want to live, love, and be loved, for who they are.

To help people become more inclusive, we need to look forward. Let's not criticize past behavior. We believe once people see individual stories that highlight basic human truths, they'll join us. We look forward to a day we don't need to do this anymore.

How to be optimistic:

- Assume the best of our audience. Assume kindness. Assume intelligence.
- Speak as if people will do the right thing once their eyes are opened.
- Every time someone becomes accepting of people who are different, it's a joyful moment. So when we encourage people to take action, and when we see the results, we can write with happiness, excitement, even some humor. Levity is contagious.
- Optimistic doesn't mean we have rose-colored glasses. Don't pretend it'll be easy, don't be shallow or bubbly or saccharine. We aren't cheerleaders, we're doing the work.

We're empathetic.

We understand how exclusion hurts its victims, but we *also* understand how hard it can be to reflect on—and change—one's own long-held feelings and beliefs. Being empathetic will help us find the right ways to connect people to the positive actions they can take.

How to be empathetic:

- Focus on the personal, real-world effects of inclusivity: the joy for families and individuals, as well as the pain that's possible in its absence.
- The enemies are exclusion and complacency. Not the people who have that behavior.
- Show awareness that overcoming long-held beliefs usually isn't instantaneous, but a journey that's different for every individual.
- Show awareness that people might feel uncomfortable being more inclusive, or might believe they already are.
- Don't presume to know another person's background or experience. (That's one definition of bias, btw.)
- Don't patronize or condescend to people we're trying to persuade.

We're respectful.

We assume the best about the people we're trying to persuade, so we speak to them in good faith without judgment, accusation, or condescension. We speak like adults, to adults. And we don't act as if we have the moral high ground. We place ourselves on the same level as the people we're speaking to.

How to be respectful:

- Speak to our audience like equals. Like adults.
- Don't judge. Don't accuse. Don't condescend.
- Persuade. Don't argue.
- Assume the best intentions, but don't assume we know them or their history.
- Beliefs may originate in family history, religion, personal experience, or simply not knowing better. If at any time we acknowledge those reasons, never criticize them.
- Be calm.
- Focus on this simple truth: people want to love and be loved for who they are.

We're knowledgeable.

We aren't just saying "be nice" and leaving it at that. We understand how damaging it can be for people and society when individuals or groups are excluded from participating fully and freely in today's culture. We have research and social science to back up what we're doing. So we can speak confidently, because we know what we're saying is true and will work.

How to write knowledgeably:

- Choose strategic moments to offer research-driven evidence; don't intrude on emotional moments.
- Frame it as evidence that anyone would understand.
- Use plain, simple language, to make it clear and relatable; don't be pretentious, condescending or academic.
- When possible, use a human story to illustrate any research points.
- Don't hold our knowledge over people like "we know something you don't," or "believe us, we're the experts."

The original implicit bias quiz was a good example of how we showed we're knowledgeable, without diminishing our emotional impact.

Some rules of engagement.

Keep it apolitical.

As we mentioned earlier, the issues addressed by Love Has No Labels are often culturally and politically charged, with passions running high on all sides. We risk being less effective, or tuned out altogether, if we appear politically partisan or like we're explicitly taking a side in an argument.

To stay apolitical, avoid commenting on the specific substance of an issue or incident, and focus instead on what positive actions can be taken to promote inclusion, fairness, understanding, and love, and help people come together.

We also avoid commenting on moments that are by definition political, like elections, or protests about a specific cause. Again, if the underlying principle is about inclusion or fairness or acceptance, we can call attention to positive actions and outcomes, but don't wade into politically charged specifics, e.g., immigration law or reproductive rights.

Responding to moments of crisis.

Although we will handle each situation on a case-by-case basis, as a general guideline for moments of tragedy and crisis, like the violence in Charlottesville, Charleston, or Orlando or the natural disasters in Houston or Puerto Rico, we recommend *not* responding right away with “thoughts and prayers” or other similar sentiments; we risk not being heard amid the public outpouring of condolences, and it would accomplish little.

Instead, we recommend a brief pause of one to three days to gain a more complete picture of what’s happened, followed by an assessment about whether it’s appropriate to comment at all. If we decide it is, postings should be about specific positive actions that people can take to promote inclusion, fairness, acceptance, and love, and to help those affected by the crisis. We also can highlight stories about brave people whose actions show just what those things mean, at their very best.

Brand partnership language.

Partners are free to create materials that are in their own brand voice so that it feels authentic to that brand, but the tone must also match the spirit of the LHNL campaign they're participating in.

All partner materials must be cleared with Ad Council/LHNL.

Some style basics.

Style basics

Speak in second person and plural first person.

We're speaking directly to people, challenging them to be more inclusive and to be aware of the impact exclusion and implicit bias have. So let's address the audience as "you" whenever it's appropriate, and use "we" in the broadest sense—you, me, us, everyone.

Use active voice.

Becoming more inclusive isn't a passive act, and neither is persuading people to do it. So let's make sure our language is active. "When we embrace diversity..." instead of "When diversity is embraced..."

Keep it conversational.

We're talking here. Not yelling, not arguing. Write like people talk, like you'd want to be spoken to. Especially if someone was telling you about something unfamiliar or uncomfortable. When in doubt, read it out loud to see how it feels.

Use simpler words. And fewer words.

Be clear and concise. "Use" instead of "utilize" or "leverage." "Improve" instead of "optimize." "To..." instead of "In order to..." "This situation" instead of "This particular type of situation..."

Use contractions.

It'll make for a more conversational tone, except for when you need to create emphasis. "We're working together..." instead of "We are working together..."

Avoid clichés.

"Think outside the box," "push the envelope," "win-win situation." And so on. Fresh language shows we're actually thinking about things in a new way, not just checking boxes on autopilot. It's more fun for the audience to read, too.

Style basics

Keep it real.

Support your points with real-life details, human stories, and solid statistics, when appropriate. That'll help make your communications effective. If you speak in the abstract, it'll be easier for doubters to shrug off.

Use positive language to frame what you're saying.

Whenever you can, say what *will* happen when people *do* something, not what *won't* happen if they *don't*. "If you become more inclusive, people will be happy," instead of, "If you don't become more inclusive, people won't be happy."

Vary your sentence length and rhythm.

Sometimes, you might write longer sentences that convey what you're saying in lots of detail, with examples, anecdotes, suggestions, or whatever other items you hope to communicate to your audience in that moment. Other times, not. All good. Just mix it up, so your copy doesn't get monotonous.

And, to repeat, read your writing out loud. It helps reveal awkward phrasing, too-long sentences, ambiguous meanings, and more.



Thank you.