

Very Bad Wizards

a philosopher and a psychologist ponder human morality



Brand and Style

The Very Bad Wizards brand is not something that marketers or communicators made. It's something the podcast itself made—Paul Bloom, Tamler's stepmother, Amazon affiliate marketing before they cut us off, and BootyBootyFartFart—over the course of its entire history.

Our brand is the research we vaguely summarize, the commutes we fill with white noise. It's the hundreds of Patreon donors who forget we're charging their credit card for every episode. It's our mission. It's how we treat each other now that we don't have to re-tape episodes due to angry arguments. As communicators, we don't create the VBW brand. We stroke it. We iterate it. We caress it.

The Six Tone Words

Insulting

Yes, this character quality means we should be disrespectful or disparaging. We can dial this quality up to attract Sam Harris listeners. Or dial it down for Givewell money men, or meal boxes or mattresses or whatever.

Progressl've

Yes we're progressive. But we prefer to see this this as "Progress Ive." As in "Progressive l've." As in "Progress I have." At VBW we're not just progressive. We *have* progress. Every minute. Every day. Progressl've.

Borges

Simply put, there is no Borges we don't understand here. Which is uncommon. And something that we must be comfortable touting. Usually with the help of confident, straightforward messaging and the unsubtle design of the Library of Babel. We never want to come across as arrogant or conceited to The Purifiers. Some say the Crimson Hexagon is unfindable, a needle in the haystack of the entire universe. We say it's Just Over The Horizon™.

Sex Stuff

Whether it's humans fucking robots, humans fucking animals, or professors propositioning students, VBW prides itself on innovating new sex synergies, on looking on the horizon of sex's horizon. When Paul Bloom asks "Do I need to have an opinion on this?" on the topic robot brothels? That's Discovery. That's Facilitation. *That's VBW.*

Content

It's about content, yes. But it's also about being *content*. We want our audience to consume our content, and that content to make them content. Contenting content. We want our content to content I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE PLEASE GOD HELP ME.

Content *and contented*. That's VBW.

Inclusive

SECTION MISSING

Tone Mixes by Audience

The brand tone is designed to flex for different audiences. For example, here's an episode dialed without a bunch of weird deviant sex conversation, and with a last-minute paper taken from Neuroskeptic as an intro, and, whatever, the Coen Brothers adapting a Borges short story or something.



Tone and Voice

Here's some easily followable guidelines on matching our tone.

"Good."

- If it isn't good, it'll be bad.
- Good: it's what we want.
- Good will make people happy.

We need to understand the voice for our brand.

The brand voice that was developed for VBW is "good." A quick test to see if you're on the right track tonally is to ask yourself, "Does it sound 'good'?" But remember, never too good. Just enough good.

Headline Tone

Headlines must be interesting enough to get someone's attention—and a commitment to listening. If a headline doesn't do that, nothing that comes after it matters. Nothing, you hear me you piece of shit? I'll iterate you out of a job if you don't get this.

But what about podcast headlines? Let's look at a few types.

For a guest

Christina Hoff Sommers: She's Still Got The Same Shtick.

For a movie episode

We View. We Re-View. We Review.

For a paper discussion

Tamler Wishes Death on Edmund Gettier So He Can Piss On His Grave.

See how they seem to come from the same place? The same voice? They get in your head. Make you want to listen to the ads without fast-forwarding only to end up at a Patreon ask. Do this or I'll burn your communications degree in front of you.

Body Copy Tone

This is the place we can really use phrases that may or may not mean something. Try some of the below -- they're just enough to pique the viewer's interest, but not enough to commit to any belief or even a discernible meaning.

Don't Make the Good the Enemy of Even Better.

Do something unexpected. Go off path. Rob a homeless man. Combine sushi with cat litter. Get fired for uncontrollable fits of rage. Futilely try to replicate your social

psychology study.

The Grass Is Never Greener When You're Sitting on the Fence.

Sure, Tom Sawyer might have tricked his friends into painting a fence for him. Here at VBW, we're about painting each other's fences, and then iterating those fences.

Podcasters Don't Need to Be in a Pod

We might be "pod"casters, but we're always trying to butter"fly" our way out of our pod. The pod is a chrysalis and we're butterflies flying our way out, every day. Today. Tomorrow. Yesterday. Butterfly. Very Bad Wizards. Brand.