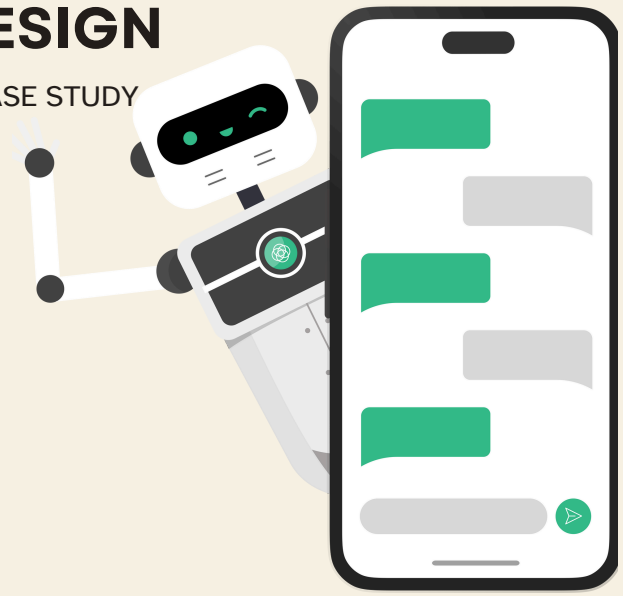
DEVELOPING AN AI AGENT'S VOICE & APPROACH TO CONVERSATIONAL DESIGN

A CASE STUDY



THE CHALLENGE

- Mezo needed to create an AI assistant that could efficiently help residents with property issues while delivering a positive user experience. The challenge was to develop a distinctive voice for Dex that balanced several competing needs:
- Being conversational and friendly while remaining efficient
- Providing technical assistance without using jargon
- Creating accessible interactions for users of varying literacy levels
- Being clearly identifiable as an AI while providing a human-like experience
- Adjusting tone appropriately based on the severity of the situation

MY ROLE

As the Conversation Designer and Voice Developer for Dex, I was responsible for the following:

- Creating and documenting Dex's core voice principles
- Developing the script review framework for quality assurance
- Establishing best practices for conversation flows
- Training team members on maintaining consistent voice quality
- Ensuring all conversations met accessibility standards

THE PROCESS

PHASE 1: VOICE DEFINITION

I led the initiative to define what makes Dex's voice unique. This involved analyzing user needs, studying conversation patterns, and testing various approaches with stakeholders.

PHASE 2: DOCUMENTATION

I developed comprehensive documentation, including "Dex's Voice: A Primer," "Script Review Checklist," and "Scripting Do's and Don'ts," to ensure consistency across all teams.

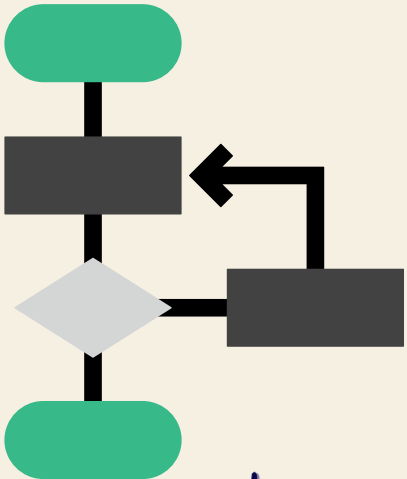
PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION

I worked with engineers and content creators to implement these principles in Dex's conversation design, focusing on:

- Creating lean conversation flows that ask only essential questions
- Developing a taxonomy of technical terms converted to accessible language
- Crafting safety protocols with appropriate formality when needed

PHASE 4: TESTING & REFINEMENT

We conducted extensive user testing to refine Dex's voice and conversational patterns, paying close attention to abandonment rates and user satisfaction.

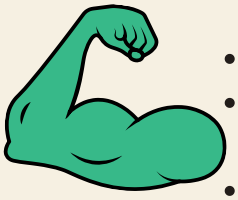


KEY PRINCIPLES APPLIED

CONVERSATIONAL & FRIENDLY

- Used contractions consistently (it's vs. it is)
- Employed natural language patterns
- Created a warm, approachable tone

LEAN & EFFICIENT



- Eliminated unnecessary questions
- Developed the "necessary question" framework (e.x. the question must provide taxonomy-related details or routing information)
- Reduced conversation abandonment by streamlining interactions

ACCESSIBLE

- Maintained Grade 6 reading level across all scripts (verified using Hemingway App)
- Avoided jargon, technical terms, and "10-cent words"
- Created clear, straightforward instructions

CONTEXT-AWARE

- Developed tone variations based on situation severity
- Created special protocols for emergencies
- Eliminated contractions in safety instructions for Deximum clarity

RESULT AND BENEFITS

The implementation of Dex's voice principles resulted in:

- 30% reduction in conversation abandonment rates
- 25% increase in first-contact resolution
- Positive user feedback on Dex's approachability and helpfulness
- Consistent experience across all property management interactions
- Improved accessibility for residents of all backgrounds

TAKEAWAYS

This project demonstrated the critical importance of intentional voice design in conversational AI. The principles we established for Dex created a foundation for efficient, accessible, and user-friendly interactions that successfully balanced the technical requirements of property management with the human need for clear, empathetic communication.