Flower and Bees

The Coldcode Si Labs Library voice guide

COURAGE GARIKAI

Second edition · Version 2.0 · November 2026

Coldcode Si Labs Library, Harare

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The Coldcode Si Labs Library voice guide: how every page, product and message should feel

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Hype is invented feeling. Emotion is real feeling, named accurately. Almost everything in this book follows from that one distinction.

A note on what this edition is

The first edition of this book was written while the studio wa called something else, and its worked examples were the s ventures that studio ran. The method did not change when t name did. The examples had to.

This edition keeps every chapter and every rule, and replac the worked material: Part Six now walks through six books a papers from the Coldcode Si Labs Library, the toolkit's promise Codex and venture map are rebuilt around what press actually promises a reader, and the front matter is t press's own. Where the first edition named a venture, this o names a title. Where it described a feature, this one describe page of a book — which is the harder test, because a boo cannot demo anything. Its proof is the writing on the page y are already reading.

One thing carries over unchanged, and it is the part wor protecting: the rule that no example is invented to win a argument. Every quoted line of reader complaint in Part Six constructed, and it is constructed the way the book asks you construct one — from the shape of a sentence people actua say, with no number attached that nobody counted. The bool own figures are the figures in their manifests, and those a checkable.

A note on the examples in this book

Every example of bad copy and good copy in these pages i
constructed. None of them quotes a customer. None of the
describes a real person, a real business, a real price or a r
result. They were written to show a failure and its repair, in
way a carpentry book shows a bad joint and a good one. Th
matters, because the book argues at length that you may ne
invent a customer, a testimonial, a number of users or a res
It would be a poor beginning to break that rule on page four
order to explain it. Where an example is drawn from th
author’s own work, it is named as such and no figure is
attached to it that cannot be checked. Where it is invented, i
marked. The invented ones are the majority, and the read
should assume so throughout, on every page, without having
look for a label. The book is therefore a set of instrument
rather than a set of case studies. A case study tells you wh
happened to somebody else. An instrument lets you find ou
what is happening to you.

How to read this book

This is a manual, and manuals are read in the order the rea
needs them. There are three reasonable orders and o
unreasonable one. The first order is straight through. Abo
five hours of reading, at the pace of a person who is thinki
while reading rather than skimming. It builds: the argume
first, then the five-part structure of a page, then the rules, t
the surfaces where pages are actually made, then the resea
that makes the writing true, then the six products, then t
upkeep. Read this way, the book is an education. The secon
order is by surface. If you have a landing page to write th
week, read Part Four and Part Two and stop. The page will
better by Thursday. Come back for the rest when the deadli
is not standing over you. The third order is by audit. If yo
suspect that your existing pages are quietly costing yo
something and you want to find out where, read the toolkit
the back first. It is twelve pages of checklists, templates an
lexicon of banned words. Then work backwards from whatev
fails. The unreasonable order is to read it as encourageme
This book is not here to tell you that your marketing is fine.
is here to tell you, calmly, that a good deal of it is doing th
opposite of what you intended, and that the repair is most
subtraction.

The one tension a careful reader will notice

The rule at the centre of this book is that no message should sendable, unchanged, to two people. Each one is written for single recipient, and contains something only that recipie would recognise. This book is one message sent to many thousands of people. I am not going to pretend the contradiction is not there, because you would have found it the second chapter and then wondered what else I had glos over. So here is the resolution, and it is not a clever one. It simply the truth about what you are holding. A message is a interruption. It arrives in your inbox, or on your screen unbidden. You did not ask for it, you do not know how it foun you, and it is asking for something before it has given yo anything. For an interruption, the rule holds absolutely: spe to one person, or do not speak. A book is not an interruptio You picked it up. You opened it. You are reading it on purpos because you have a problem with the words your organisati publishes and you want a method. That is closer to a worksh than to an email. So the rule changes shape rather tha disappearing. A manual addressed to many readers must written so that each reader can find themselves in it, on eve page, in their own situation. Not “many businesses strugg with urgency” but “you have a countdown timer on your offe page and you know, in the quiet part of the evening, that resets when nobody is looking.” If a page of this book coul only ever have been written about somebody else’s compan that page is wrong and should have been cut. There is one m thing in the same spirit. The rules in this book govern what y publish for customers. They do not govern this book’s

grammar. The book is allowed longer sentences, scenes
hesitation and doubt, because a book that never doubts itsel
a book that is selling. But the book is not allowed to sound li
it is selling itself. No urgency. No countdown. No promise
about what will happen to your revenue if you finish it. Yo
would be right to stop reading.

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PART ONE

The flower and the bee

Hype is invented feeling. Emotion is real feeling, named accurately. Almost everything in this book follows from that one distinction.