



# Unified writing style guide



# Welcome

This is the **single source of truth** for our approved writing style. A functional understanding of these core elements and key ideas helps ensure the delivery of consistent content across all of our communications.

While we can't anticipate every possible writing issue, our goal with this unified guide is to provide a manageable, easy-to-understand tool that helps us consistently represent the Cognizant brand and deliver the best possible content for our audiences.

Since our communications appear in a variety of channels and across different formats, you'll find channel-specific chapters that cover additional details and notable style exceptions.

As a rule, we follow the Associated Press Stylebook and Merriam-Webster. **Consider this guide a Cognizant-specific extension of those resources and a supplement to our brand guidelines.** Please start with the following for general guidance:

- Cognizant brand guidelines: strategy and verbal identity on [Brand Resources](#)
- [The Associated Press Stylebook \(AP\), current edition](#)
- [Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus online](#)

We use American English in global communications. We use British English in local communications specific to UKI and Australia (and other markets where British English is the local standard). Please refer to the [Cambridge Dictionary of English](#) if you are writing communications in those countries.

Other useful resources: [Free Online Dictionary of Computing](#)

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## Audience and brand character

Our written communications are a direct reflection of the Cognizant brand. All writing must be consistent, efficient and effective so we not only attract attention, but also engage people with relevant information about Cognizant, our clients, partners and offerings.

### Audiences

Our audiences receive and absorb information quickly and expect absolute clarity and insight from our communications. While their needs vary, we can assume our audiences are universally savvy and well informed.

- **Business decision-makers:** C-suite and high-level executives in some of the world's most influential enterprises. They focus on the big picture: business/revenue growth, return on investment, etc.
- **Technology decision-makers:** Professionals who use the technology and provide technology services and integration. They're responsible for ensuring systems are efficient, productive and working. They include IT directors and anyone who is responsible for making systems run properly 24/7.
- **Business and IT journalists, influencers, analysts and advisors:** Media professionals who report on Cognizant from all angles and all industries. It is crucial that we have a consistent voice and message to ensure Cognizant is accurately represented in all media, from small local newspapers to national/global TV networks.
- **Investors:** Current and future shareholders.
- **Associates:** Over 300,000 individuals around the world.

## Cognizant brand character

At Cognizant, *we engineer modern businesses to improve everyday life*. It is our purpose statement and represents the impact we want to create for companies and communities around the world. We're in a position to help our clients realize the beneficial promise of technology, but to do so, the Cognizant brand needs to be perceived as a global leader with a unique perspective. As part of this strategic goal, we've developed a brand character and a corresponding set of attributes to orient our writing and guide our tone.

The Cognizant brand character is **an accessible genius**

Einstein once defined genius as “taking the complex and making it simple.” As an accessible genius, the Cognizant brand makes the esoteric world of tech easy to understand so more businesses can share its benefits with their customers. This means everything we write for all audiences should sound innovative and agile, yet completely intuitive. What do we mean by that?

- An **innovative** brand taps the excitement of discovery. We're reporting live from the outer limits of business, where the technology is far-reaching and its impact is awe-inspiring. We stir our audience's imagination by describing the what-ifs and what-can-be of their potential reality. Sharing our excitement for exploration and passion for discovery, we spark wonder and open minds to what's now possible.
- Since we're **intuitive** we guide audiences to a better grasp. Speaking the language of everyday technology, we favor accessible words and engaging insights over corporate jargon and abstract concepts. Aiming to be understood, we share tangible, concrete examples to help audiences come away feeling smarter. Because in a business as complex as ours, clear and simple is bold and brilliant.
- And because we're **agile**, our writing suggests a brand that thinks fast and speaks thoughtfully. We demonstrate subject matter mastery with a fluid and definitive pace. Short, explosive sentences. Sharp statements. Active verbs. While our writing shows audiences that we're quick thinkers, we also choose our words wisely because we're thoughtful doers. Precise language sounds fast and well-informed—and this is exactly how we want our clients to feel.

## Brand voice versus your voice

At Cognizant, we “start” instead of “commence” and “use” rather than “utilize.” We avoid abstractions in favor of concrete and definitive language. Our language is concise to enhance clarity. While we may have a lot to say, we use shorter sentences to make complex ideas easier to digest and understand. Read more about our voice in our [Brand guidelines: strategy and verbal identity on Brand Resources](#).

There is a distinction between how we write for the Cognizant brand and how you write as an individual. While we encourage consistency across all communications, our brand voice is not meant to guide individual or executive writing voices.

Writing on behalf of the brand includes ads, web page copy and social posts from the Cognizant handle to name a few. Social posts from your accounts, articles written for Be.Cognizant and personal emails are some examples where your voice takes over.

## Style guidelines

### Ampersands (&)

Avoid the ampersand symbol in both naming and writing.

#### Exception:

- If character count limitations are tight (e.g., social post copy, column headings)—but try re-working the sentence first to avoid its use.
- When the symbol is part of a product, service or company name (e.g., Procter & Gamble)

### Abbreviations and acronyms

Spell out at first mention, then follow with the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses. If the abbreviation or acronym is well known, such as CEO, GPS or IT, you don't need to spell it out. In fact, spelling out certain technologies such as AI or IoT can make us seem underinformed.

After you spell out the first occurrence, you don't need to spell it out again.

Do not put abbreviations or acronyms in headers and titles unless they are recognizable on first reference.

Do not begin a sentence with an abbreviation like "E.g." or "I.e." Use "For example" or "That is" instead.

### Active voice

Use the active voice whenever possible. Avoid using the passive voice.

"Active voice" means the subject of the sentence does the action. Passive voice is when the subject of the sentence has the action done to it. The active voice is more direct and easier for a global audience to understand.

- **Active:** Insurers decided to implement digital technology to improve customer service.
- **Passive:** Digital technology was implemented by insurers. Customer service is improved by this.

## Associates

Use “associate” versus “employee” when talking about someone who works at Cognizant. Associate should be lowercase (except of course when starting a sentence or a headline), as it is a general descriptor of multiple positions and is not unique to Cognizant.

## Be.Cognizant

The official name of our intranet. Use the period when referring to it by name.

## Bulleted and numbered lists

As a brand that makes complex ideas more accessible, we use bulleted lists to organize information clearly and concisely.

Numbered lists are used to indicate step-by-step actions or relative rankings.

Always capitalize the first word of each item in a list.

Make sure each entry in a list is parallel with the others. This means if the first statement in your list starts with a verb, the rest should too. Be consistent.

Keep each list entry short—ideally limited to a word, phrase or single sentence. Instead of using multiple sentences for a longer idea, try breaking it up with a semicolon.

Do not punctuate bullet or number entries.

### **Exception:**

When more than one sentence is unavoidable, use a period at the end of each entry in the list—consistency is key.

Sentences or phrases that introduce a bulleted or numbered list should be in sentence case, not title case.

## Capitalization

We use sentence case in headlines, buttons, column headings and other labels. Do not use Title Case or ALL CAPS (except in web when ALL CAPS can be used sparingly to aid in navigation).

### **Note:**

Sentence case means capitalizing only the first letter of the **first** word of a headline or name—just like in regular sentences.

Title case means capitalizing the first letter of **each** word.



Because we're using sentence case, after the first letter you'll only capitalize proper nouns and branded terms including Cognizant business units and practice areas (Healthcare, Digital Business & Technology, etc.).

Do not capitalize technologies, services, industry names or common nouns.

At Cognizant, many content creators want to capitalize general technology terms, like data, cloud and artificial intelligence. Please resist this urge. Just because it is "important" doesn't mean it should be capitalized.

**Note:** Simply adding "Cognizant" to a common noun does not make it a branded term.

To determine if a term is branded or not, ask yourself "Do other companies sell this?"

- If the answer is "yes," the term should appear in lowercase in copy and in headlines. Examples include: data modernization, cloud, artificial intelligence

Headlines and body copy would look like this:

Better business outcomes start with data modernization

And not this:

Better business outcomes start with **Data Modernization**

- If the answer is "no," then the term should be capitalized (title case) in copy and in headlines. Examples include: Intelligent Data Works and Evolutionary AI

Headlines and body copy would look like this:

Make your data work smarter and harder—with Intelligent Data Works from Cognizant

And not this:

Make your data work smarter and harder—with **intelligent data works** from Cognizant.

## CEO name

You can refer to our CEO by first name in internal communications when the article is mainly about the CEO or includes their photo. Otherwise, use their first and last name in headlines and copy (e.g., CEO Ravi Kumar S).

## Client

Use “client” when talking about the companies we serve. Customers are the people *they* serve.

- **Example:** “We delivered a solution to a major healthcare client that helped it process customer claims 80% faster.”

We prefer not to refer to our clients as “logos” or “accounts.”

## Commas

Cognizant is an agile brand, so we try to create momentum in our writing whenever possible. Excessive comma use is the verbal equivalent of pumping your brakes.

As a general rule, we avoid using the Oxford (serial) comma because it adds a layer of formality to our writing and slows us down. We want to maintain a sense of urgency in an era defined by speed.

- **Correct:** David bought oranges, apples, bananas and pears.
- **Incorrect:** David bought oranges, apples, bananas, and pears.

Refer to the [AP Stylebook](#) entry on commas for instances where using a serial comma is not only useful, but necessary.

## Companies

Companies are entities, not people. Refer to a company as “it” not “they.” Use pronouns such as “that” rather than “who.”

Companies take the singular form.

- **Correct:**
  - One automotive firm that breaks the mold is Tesla.
  - Tesla is an automotive company. It sells thousands of cars per week.
- **Incorrect:**
  - One automotive firm who breaks the mold are Tesla.
  - Tesla are an automotive company. They sell thousands of cars per week.

When referring to the people we work with at a company, use “client” or “they.”

- **Correct:** Tesla is one of the most advanced automakers. As our client, they expect...
- **Incorrect:** Tesla is one of the most advanced automakers. As our client, it expects...

## Cognizant

Use first-person “we,” “us” or “our” to describe the company, your team or associates. This helps us sound more relatable than a 300,000-person organization typically would. If in doubt, let message clarity and an accessible tone be your guide.

## The Cognizant Agenda

Use uppercase when referencing the Cognizant Agenda (note that “the” is lowercase, except of course when starting a sentence).

Capitalize Purpose, Vision, Bold Moves and Values only when referencing them as part of the Cognizant Agenda. List them in that order.

The items within the Cognizant Agenda—our Purpose statement, specific Values or individual Bold Moves, etc.—should be sentence case and in italics.

### Examples:

- At Cognizant, we aim to *create conditions for everyone to thrive* and we want to ensure your work schedule does not inhibit your personal right to vote.
- When we *work as one* to provide innovative value to our clients, everyone is a winner.
- Our Purpose—*we engineer modern businesses to improve everyday life*—is the lens we use to make decisions.

## Contractions

Contractions help our writing sound conversational and contribute to agile communications as long as they don’t compromise the tone of the content—consider the context and audience.

## Currency

Use symbols to signal currencies as appropriate in our various markets around the world. For example, use \$, £, €, ¥, etc., where applicable.

### Exception:

Use US\$ or USD in instances where there could be some ambiguity.

Write euro(s) not Euro(s).

Spell out million, billion and trillion. For example, US\$5 billion.

### Exception:

Use M/B/T in headings or in regular text where applicable to save space. For example, US\$5B.

## Dashes

Use em dashes with no spaces to show a pause or break. To insert using auto-formatting, without adding a space after the word, type the (-) key twice and then type the next word—again without adding a space.

- **Correct:** Cognizant is a dynamic brand—we move with speed and efficiency.

Use en dashes with no spaces to show numerical, date or time ranges. To insert using auto-formatting, type the number, then a space, then another space and then the next number. After that, remove the space before and after the en dash.

- **Example:** June 3–6, 9–10 a.m.

## Days of the week

If you're referencing an event less than a week in the future, you can use a specific day of the week. Avoid "today" or "tomorrow" unless you're communicating to an isolated group. Keep in mind that Cognizant is a global company and that one person's today can be someone else's tomorrow.

- **Example:** Please submit your form by Thursday, January 16.

## Email subject lines

Use sentence case. Capitalize the first word and proper nouns only. No punctuation at the end unless it's a rare situation that calls for multiple sentences.

### Examples:

- Please join us for a video town hall
- The time has come. Register for the video town hall.

## Emphasis

The structure and strength of our writing alone creates emphasis. In copy, avoid italics, boldface, underline, exclamation marks and quotes when emphasizing a word or idea.

- **Correct:** Artificial intelligence can contribute to compassionate decisions.
- **Incorrect:** Artificial intelligence can contribute to *compassionate decisions*.

## Gerunds

Words that use the “-ing” construction can cause confusion for translators and non-native English speakers. Since we want to be accessible for a wide audience, we typically avoid gerunds.

- **Correct:** They seek to...
- **Incorrect:** They are seeking to...

### Exception:

Gerunds may be used in web and thought leadership headlines: “Using AI to fight the pandemic”

## Headlines, headers and subheads

Use sentence case for headlines and headers—copy that appears at the top of a page. The same applies to subheads.

As a rule, we do not punctuate headers or subheads. However, the use of “?” and “!” is acceptable for emphasis or to denote a question.

- **Example:** Are you ready for artificial intelligence? Ready, set, go!

Periods may be used to separate two or more complete thoughts or sentences.

- **Example:** Reduce costs. Increase agility.

If headline or header contains a colon, consider rewriting it to remove this punctuation. If a colon is unavoidable, capitalize the first word after the colon in the headline or header.

## Names and job titles

Use first and last name on first reference, then first name afterward.

Always capitalize individual job titles when referencing a specific role. However, if referring the role in general, there’s no need to capitalize.

## Non-English words

Limit the use of words or phrases from other languages, including Latin, since they can create a barrier to understanding. When those words or phrases must be used, be sure to clearly define each term parenthetically or in another way.

## Considerations for localizing communications for a global audience

Our content is consumed by people from all corners of the globe. Most content will not be translated due to cost and/or time constraints. So, when writing for international audiences, we try to prioritize the “accessible” in “accessible genius.” Remember to:

- Focus on the most direct way of communicating.
- Keep it crisp and simple without sacrificing substance. Make sure your message still carries weight.
- Avoid jargon, slang and idioms. Steer clear of sporting analogies, cultural references and humor that may not play well internationally. Remember, what is funny or culturally relevant in one region may be viewed very differently in another.
- Allow extra space in layouts. Depending on the language and character sets used, translated content can use up to one-third more space.
- Provide text in Word. Translations are much easier when text is provided in a Word document rather than in a completed layout.

## Numbers

In general, spell out the numbers one through nine and use numerals for 10 and up.

### Exception:

We may use numerals when space is limited, as in some social media posts, charts and display ads.

## Photo captions

Use captions when the context of a photo is not immediately clear. In photos of two to five people, list their names with a direction, such as “Left to right:...” Photos of more than five people can have a general caption such as “A group of associates from Life Sciences...”

### Exception:

Images on the web to complement copy don’t include captions.

## People

The people we address in and through our communications are as diverse as humanity itself. Whether you're writing for an internal or external audience, write about people in a way that's compassionate, inclusive and respectful to all.

Gender should not be assumed. To be as inclusive as possible, try to use "they/them/their" instead of "he or she," "him or her" and "his or hers." If specified, refer to people by their preferred pronouns (he, she, they, etc.).

- **Correct:** Every coder will refer to their style sheet.
- **Correct:** Jamie comes to their new role after 11 years of consulting experience.

Use "humankind" instead of "mankind" and other gender-neutral language where possible.

If you're writing about race or ethnicity, always consider the historical context and today's current events, then err on the side of cultural sensitivity.

If you have any doubt about the potential impact of your words, consider sharing it with an associate from the referenced culture/ethnicity/background or Cognizant's Diversity & Inclusion team for their insight and feedback. For additional information, learn more at [Be.Cognizant](#).

## Quarterly and annual comparisons

For quarterly and annual comparisons, be sure to specify "year-on-year" and "quarter-on-quarter" to make the reference specific. To refer to a particular quarter, name the quarter and the full year, e.g., Q1 2024 or Q2 2024.

## Spacing

Use only one space after punctuation and between all sentences.

## Time, time zones and time of day

Write all times as numerals except “noon” and “midnight.”

Use all caps without periods for time zones, as in GMT.

Use two-letter abbreviations for US time zones, as in PT or ET.

Avoid using three-letter abbreviations for US time zones, as they may create confusion between standard time (ST) and daylight saving time (DST) outside of the US and in states that do not participate in seasonal time changes.

Use a.m. and p.m. (lowercase with periods) to indicate hours before and after noon. Do not use AM or PM.

## Trademarks and copyrights

Use the appropriate trademark symbols (i.e., ®, TM or SM) when referencing Cognizant’s products and services.

Our product or service names should never be abbreviated or varied.

Do not use trademark or copyright symbols in headers or titles. Use them on first mention in body text; no need to do so thereafter.

### Exceptions:

Product web page headings use the full name with the registration symbol after “Cognizant,” as in Cognizant® Returnship Program.

Press releases do not use trademark symbols since they might not be rendered properly.

Use third-party names only with permission.

## United States

Abbreviate as US without periods to remain consistent with UK and EU.

Use two-letter abbreviations for states (e.g., CA, VA, OH). Spell out when used alone or where appropriate: He was from Massachusetts. He was from Waltham, MA.

## URLs and links

It is not necessary to include http:// at the start of the URL or a slash (/) at the end. When possible, strip tracking tags and other unnecessary parameters from URLs.

Text links should invite action and be clear where they lead. Avoid generic calls to action such as “Click here” in favor of more descriptive and actionable wording, such as “Explore more,” “Read more on our Insurance page” or “Watch the video.”



## Top 10 points of style: A proofing checklist

Keep this list handy and always check written communications to ensure these top 10 points of style are being followed consistently.

- 1.** Ensure your writing is intuitive, innovative and agile—like an accessible genius
- 2.** Use sentence case for headers and subheads
- 3.** Do not use periods on headers and subheads
- 4.** Spell out abbreviations and acronyms on first mention
- 5.** Do not use serial (Oxford) commas and no unnecessary comma use, please
- 6.** Represent technologies in lowercase and branded products in uppercase
- 7.** Use em dashes for a pause or break, en dashes for a range (both without spaces)
- 8.** Ensure embedded links point to the right places
- 9.** Follow word/character counts (where applicable)
- 10.** Perform a final spellcheck after all changes are made

## Writing do's and don'ts

### Do:

- Be clear and direct. Bigger words/longer sentences don't always equal better writing.
- Put your most important point at the start. Tell readers why they should care or take action.
- Break up long blocks of content with bullet points, subheads, etc.
- Use exclamation points, bold and italics sparingly in text, such as bolding a main **"you must do this"** message. Underlines should not be used anywhere except in URLs.
- Have someone review your writing before sending/publishing.

### Don't:

- Use all caps
- Use jargon that a majority of your audience wouldn't understand
- Send "coming soon" messages unless it's really creating interest
- Overpromise or stretch the truth
- Be aggressive or defensive when asking someone to take action
- Coerce audiences with "must" or "should"

## Writing marketing materials

Our marketing materials communicate the meaning of the Cognizant brand. What we share is an expression of our personality and an opportunity to build relationships with our audiences.

As an accessible genius in the world of technology, we show an understanding of the challenges our prospects and clients face, and we communicate modern solutions that address these problems in the most efficient, effective and innovative ways.

We draw proof points from client case studies to demonstrate our expertise. We do not mention our competition or their solutions by name to further our cause, but instead relentlessly educate audiences about the benefits of our own products and services, the vision of our thought leaders and the relevance of our technology in today's world.

### Marketing guidelines

The following list of best practices will help you adhere to Cognizant's preferred style, ensuring all marketing copy is not only intuitive, innovative and agile, but substantive as well.

- Be sure you're telling your audience something new, unique or valuable
- Answer the basics of who, what, where, when, why and how
- Convey enthusiasm with honesty and transparency
- Avoid overstatements and exaggeration—and remember, all claims must be legally verifiable
- Make it about the clients—be honest but humble about our contributions and celebrate progress as the client's success—not our own
- Do not use formal or academic language
- Avoid redundant phrases and repeated words—use synonyms and vary your word choices
- Close with a strong, clear call to action—your audience should never wonder what action to take next

To ensure consistency, please use the relevant design templates for fact sheets, sell sheets, brochures, whitepapers and solution overviews. Unsure of what they are—or where to find them? Just reach out to [Brand Questions](#).

## Claims verification process

A marketing claim is any assertion made about our organization, brand or offerings. Claims can show up in traditional marketing or advertising, digital promotions, public statements or even sales enablement materials. Verifying claims with appropriate evidence is critical to ensuring validity and credibility, protecting our brand reputation and providing transparency to our clients and stakeholders. Marketing claims must be approved by the business unit and legal department. Please refer to the [Claims Approval Process](#) for further guidance.

### Examples of claims:

- Accelerate deployment by as much as 75%
- 60% improvement in time to market

Any information source should be cited in externally facing material, however, sources like Gartner and Forrester require citation approval. For claims related to client results, the relevant content creation team is accountable for providing legally verified claims. The claim repository is maintained by the content operations team.

**Note:**

When referencing vendor ratings or assessments from analyst reports, use an asterisk in the document with a footnote at the bottom with the report name and date

For any quote from a source in the public domain, use an asterisk in the document with a footnote at the bottom with the source details.

## Writing global communications/public relations

The written and spoken word represents our brand just as much as key visuals. Our goal is to stay current with the conversations happening in the world today, be competitive and connect our technology to people who never stand still. Global communications should:

- Use conversational words
- Focus the story by keeping a distinct message in mind
- Keep it short, breaking down complex concepts
- Ensure authenticity
- Make the content applicable to real-world concerns
- Feature verifiable facts and claims
- Use bold adjectives and active verbs

### Press release guidelines

Our messages should be consistent across all points of contact. They should all point back to our overall message of being the go-to partner for the new generation of digital-industrial leaders. Press releases adhere to the following principles:

- Identify strategic messages. These messages are based on:
  - How readers might benefit from a report, not just that a report was released
  - The major point the person made in a speech, not just that someone gave a speech
  - Important outcomes/result of a meeting, not just that a meeting took place
- Lead with the news, preferably in one simple, easy-to-understand sentence.
- Humanize copy with:
  - Proper nouns (e.g., Senthil Kumar)
  - Common nouns describing groups of people (e.g., clients, customers, researchers, IT directors)
  - Personal and possessive pronouns (e.g., we, us, our, ours, you, their)
- Limit sentences to 30 words or less. Break longer sentences into several shorter sentences.

- Limit paragraphs to two to three sentences. Break longer paragraphs into several shorter paragraphs. It's okay to occasionally use sentence fragments, a dash, an ellipsis or a bulleted list.
- Tell a story. How would you present this information to a friend?
- Include our differentiation. What sets us apart from the competition?
- Focus on why we are doing something versus what we are doing.
- Include a call to action or direction for more information.
- Be global and local—we are a global brand with a local perspective in almost every market. Our content should reflect a global voice and be localized to best reach our audience. English-language press releases are being issued by a US company and should reflect American (US) English unless specifically for UK English audiences.

#### What not to do:

- Do not lead with marketing hype, hyperbole, industry-specific jargon or the rationale for the news.
- Do not overpromise or make unsubstantiated claims (e.g., “in record time”).
- Do not reference competitors by name.
- Do not get overly detailed or technical.
- Do not resort to consulting jargon.

#### Length guidelines

- Releases should be short and include the following:
  - Introduction
  - One or two explanatory paragraphs
  - One or two quotes
- Press releases should be concise and to the point, so ensure key messages are the main focus.
- Limit the release to approximately 500–600 words, not including boilerplates or disclaimers.

## Timing

- Non-event press releases should be issued at 6 a.m. ET, unless the news is directly tied to an event. This accommodates all geographies on the same business day.
- Event-timed releases must be discussed and approved in advance.
- Releases issued during trading hours need Investor Relations and Legal consent and review. Such releases may also require pre-notification to Nasdaq by Investor Relations.

## Quotes and client references

All executive quotes should be senior vice president or higher and must be approved by the executive who is quoted.

Client quotes may also be included in press releases. However, in many instances, we are contractually prohibited from naming specific clients. Any client references or quotes in a news release require client permission—preferably from the client’s communications team.

## Other types of content

In addition to press releases, the Corporate Communications team also produces:

### **Cognizant in the news**

These write-ups are placed on our externally facing website, [news.cognizant.com/news](https://news.cognizant.com/news). Some are posted in conjunction with a press release, some are not. Please see the Cognizant in the News Guidelines.

### **Cognizant in the media**

These are brief internal announcements that alert internal stakeholders of any features or news about Cognizant that the corporate communications team has earned. They include the media source, the Cognizant employee who was quoted, why Cognizant was mentioned in the piece, a link to the full story and suggested LinkedIn and Twitter posts for employees to share.

### **Media advisory**

A media advisory is an announcement that we send directly to a specific group of journalists for specialized or local news.

## Special cases and style exceptions for global communications

- **Datelines** for press releases from Cognizant in Teaneck, New Jersey, use:  
TEANECK, NJ – June 25, 2022 – [Cognizant](#) (Nasdaq: CTSH) has been named...
- **Datelines** for more than one location use:  
TEANECK, NJ, and HYDERABAD, India. Dec. 25, 2022 – [Cognizant](#) (Nasdaq: CTSH)
- **Trademark symbols** are not used in news releases unless there is a special exception (usually from a partner). Trademark symbols do not always render correctly on wire services and news sites. However, if necessary, you can add a clause at the end of the press release about trademark usage.



## Writing internal communications

When writing internally, whether for an email, script, town hall deck, Be.Cognizant article, newsletter, Yammer post, leader blog, etc., ensure that your communications:

- Make it human
- Connect to the big picture
- Deliver value

Keep in mind: Show, don't tell.

### How to make it human

We work in the digital world, but our business revolves around our people. Your internal communications should:

- Sound like they're coming from a person, talking to another person
  - **Example:** [During a recent family dinner, Randal Kenworthy, VP, Corporate Strategy, learned a lesson the hard way about emerging technology—and parenting](#)
- Highlight the people involved and the people our work affects
  - **Example:** [Program Director Gayle Flynn was sitting at her kitchen table one morning when she had a thought...](#)
- Celebrate associates who go above and beyond, for clients or our communities
  - **Example:** [As he began to notice the interest among his close circle to feed the homeless, Nathan decided to form Community Seva Inc.](#)

### How to connect to the big picture

Our Purpose is *We engineer modern businesses to improve everyday lives*. Those last four words, especially, should drive your internal communications. They should:

- Show the “why” behind the topic, whether it's an element of the Cognizant Agenda, our business strategy or culture
  - **Example:** [Because AI is transforming all areas of a business, it's opening doors for us for growth with both prospects and current clients](#)

- Demonstrate how our work affects both our clients and the customers they serve (or our internal stakeholders and the people they serve)
  - **Example:** [Protocol Creator helps our clients move drugs through clinical trials so they get to patients faster. Our software could save lives.](#)
- Tell stories with a “cool factor” that breaks through the noise of an associate’s average day
  - **Example:** [Cognizant AI grows the tastiest basil ever](#)

### How to deliver value

Make your communications relevant, actionable and useful. Think about how many emails, newsletters, links, etc. you get in a day. Your audience experiences the same thing. Put your audience first, the same way we put our clients first. Your internal communications should:

- Answer the “why should I care,” and include direct calls to action
  - **Example:** [Add or update your email signature. Here’s how.](#)
- Create opportunities for your audience to respond or share ideas through comments or surveys
  - **Example:** [If you could choose only one word to describe Cognizant, what would it be?](#)
- Offer facts, insights or resources that others can use
  - **Example:** [You can give your colleagues a virtual “extra key” to unlock your WebEx personal room without you there](#)

### Additional resources on the [Internal Communications Be.Cognizant](#) page

- Be.Cognizant homepage article submission guide
- Email template
- Be.Cognizant article template
- Digital Reading Behavior Guide
- Writing for Results training
- Mass Mail Guidelines

## Writing for the web

Our audience is looking for information when they visit our website. We know they're more likely to skim content than to read it deeply. So our writing should make it easy to scan, find and act on information. Since we want to make what we do more accessible to more people, we create user-friendly, personalized and targeted content that makes every interaction feel quick and easy.

### Web guidelines

Best practices and tips to create a user experience that is engaging, convincing, genuine and able to capture—and keep people's attention.

#### Keep it short to assist with scanning

Time is always of the essence, especially for a busy audience like ours. Concise content—a feature of our brand voice—makes it easier to scan and translate.

Scannable content:

- Helps audiences understand the *why* in addition to the *how*
- Emphasizes the essential *need-to-know* information
- Integrates keywords—SEO friendly terms—to maximize organic search, interest and engagement
- Uses simple words and language, avoiding slang, jargon and idioms

Research shows that users scan content on the web in an F-shaped pattern. They read in a horizontal motion across the upper content, scan up and down the page, then scan the next line of content. This forms the two bars of the “F”. Then, they scan the left side of the page, forming the “F”. Users spend the most time looking at and scanning the content on the top and left side of the page. Take a look at [this article of the F-shaped pattern \(with heatmap images\)](#) for reading web content.

### Use headings

A heading, sometimes called a header, is the title you give to different sections of content. Headings create a first impression that can either pull a reader in or push them away. They make content easy to scan and find—and act as signposts that tell users where to go from one place to another.

Engaging and memorable headings:

- Start with strong keywords
- Keep it short, 4-6 words is ideal
- Focus on specifics and get to the point
- Avoid jargon

Research shows that concise, authentic and relevant headings get noticed and are critical to the success of the website.

### Write to your audience

Identify and understand your audience before you write so that you can create content that meets their needs and holds their attention. People engage in and respond to relatable content.

We're writing for our audience when we:

- Use plain language
- Inform with facts and data
- Come off as genuine and real
- Address users as “you” and “we”
- Don't use the third person

### Break up paragraphs

Many users don't have the time to read long paragraphs, while others simply prefer not to. If your content needs to be longer to fully express an idea, use shorter paragraphs and include subtopics. This makes it easier for users to scan the information quickly and decide if they want to keep reading.

As a general rule, paragraphs on the web should be limited to 3–5 lines or 2–3 sentences.

Research shows that when you break up paragraphs, users have an easier time scanning for information they need and expect, which increases engagement, trust, and retention on the website.

## Word list

The following is a list of frequently used words or phrases according to Cognizant style. Some of these words or terms might differ from dictionary usage. When there is a divergence, defer to this list.

Word	Notes
24/7	
3D	
aka	also known as
acknowledgment(s)	no <i>e</i> after the <i>g</i>
agile	capitalize when referring to the methodology
AI, generative AI	AI is widely understood acronym for artificial intelligence <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• no periods in AI (don't use A.I.)</li><li>• do not combine into one word (don't use genAI or generativeAI)</li><li>• capitalize AI, use "generative" in lowercase unless it begins a sentence or headline</li><li>• spell out "generative AI" wherever space permits; use gen AI in the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ gen AI can be used in headlines or other space-contained areas</li><li>○ for longer content, if you prefer to use gen AI, use generative AI ("gen AI") on first mention and gen AI subsequently</li></ul></li></ul>
amid	not "amidst"
among	not "amongst"
as-a-service/as a service	Don't hyphenate when used as part of a phrase: "software as a service (SaaS)." Do hyphenate when used as an adjective or on its own: "as-a-service models."
baby boomers	lowercase
backup (noun, adj.); back up (verb)	
barcode	one word
big data	lowercase
bitcoin	lowercase, one word
blockchain	lowercase, one word

Word	Notes
bots	lowercase, one word
brick-and-mortar	Preferable to bricks-and-mortar when used as a modifier; no hyphen when used on its own, e.g., “The cybermall is not made of brick and mortar.”
built-in (adj.)	
business unit	Lowercase
business-to-business/B2B	use hyphens when spelled out
capex	widely understood abbreviation
cellphone	one word
chatbot	one word
checkup (noun); check up (verb)	
click-through (noun); click through (verb)	
cloud	lowercase
collocate	
copay	
core banking	lowercase
coronavirus	lowercase since it is a common noun
COVID-19	all caps
cross-sell	
crowdsource	
C-suite	
cybercrime	
cybersecurity	
data	singular: The data is useful.
data center	
database	one word
dataset	one word
decision-maker, decision-making	
DevOps	software development operations
ebook	

Word	Notes
e-commerce, e-wallet	
edge	use lowercase when referring to edge computing
email	
end user	
end-to-end	
fail-safe	
fine-tune	
fintech	
Fit for Growth	capitalize
future-proof	
Gen X/Gen Y/Gen Z	widely understood abbreviation
generative AI	(see AI above)
headcount	
healthcare	use one word when referring to the industry or BU; if referring to actual care of patients, use two words (health care)
horizontal	lowercase
hypervisor	
Industry 4.0	capitalize I (it's a proper noun)
in-house	
inquiry	not "enquiry"
insurtech	
internet	lowercase
IoT	widely understood acronym
Lean	capitalize when referring to management method
life span	
Lifecycle	
log in, log on/login, logon	log in/log on/log off/log out (verb use spaces); login/logon/etc. (nouns do not use spaces)
Manufacturing 4.0	capitalize M (it's a proper noun)
market share	
m-commerce, m-wallet	

Word	Notes
metadata	
metaverse	lowercase
millennial(s)	lowercase
mindset, mindshare	
multichannel, multitenant	One word
net zero	not capitalized or hyphenated
omnichannel	not hyphenated
on premises (adverb); on-premises (adj.)	can be shortened to on-prem
onboard(ing)	
onsite/offsite	
Opex	widely understood abbreviation
outcome-based	not “outcomes-based”
pharmaceutical(s)	“the pharmaceutical industry,” “industries such as pharmaceuticals”
point of sale (noun); point-of-sale (adj.)	
policy-maker	
printout (noun); print out (verb)	
problem-solving (adj.)	
real time (noun); real-time (adj.)	
re-architect	use hyphen for readability
Roadmap	
rollout (noun); roll out (verb)	
run-time	
Scrum	capitalize when referring to the method
Scope	In the context of sustainability, for Greenhouse Gas Protocol, use capital (e.g., Scope 1 emissions)
service level agreement (SLA)	may use abbreviation after first mention
setup (noun, adj.); set up (verb)	
siloed	not “silo’d”
Six Sigma	capitalize



Word	Notes
Sizable	not “sizeable”
skill set	
small and medium-sized business (SMB)	sometimes “small and midsized business”
Smartphone	
Smartwatch	
social media	
software as a service (SaaS)	spell out on first reference. No hyphens, unless used as an adjective: software-as-a-service application.
Sprint	capitalize when referring to Agile processes
stand-alone (adj.)	
startup	
such as	use instead of “like” when providing specific examples of something you're talking about
systems integrators	not “system integrators”
telecom	
timeframe	
time-to-market; time-to-value; time-to-revenue	
tool kit	
tool set	
touchpoint	
touchscreen	
toward	American usage. British usage is “towards.”
tweet(s)	lowercase
underway	
upfront	
upsell	
vertical	lowercase
web	
web browser	

Word	Notes
website	
while	not “whilst”
white paper	
WiFi	capital W and F
wish list	
work-around	
workflow	
workforce	
workstream	
year end (noun); year-end (adj.)	

## Have questions? Need help?

Thank you for writing in the Cognizant style.

If you have questions or suggestions for additions to this guide, please contact [Brand Questions](#).

You can download the following guides—and other templates, logos and assets—from [Brand Resources on Be.Cognizant](#).

- Strategy and verbal identity
- Visual identity
- Naming
- Cobranding and logo usage