

Cognism's Voice & Style Framework

Your guide to writing with
clarity, personality, and impact.

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Hello and welcome!

This is your one-stop guide for writers looking to make readable and engaging content for Cognism.






What this guide covers:

- Tone of voice principles
- Writing rules and style guidelines
- Webpages and landing pages
- Writing a blog
- SEO best practices
- Writing newsletters
- Writing for social
- Personal branding
- Storytelling techniques
- Content playbook formats
- Visual and icon usage
- Jargon buster



This guide is for marketers, writers, and anyone creating content for Cognism.

How to use the guide

1. Click on the headings on the [Contents page](#) to jump to the section you need.
2. Look for callouts:
 -  = Tip
 -  = Do
 -  = Don't
 -  = Recommended to print a quick-reference PDF
 -  = Well-written example

Tone of Voice (at a glance)



Print me!

- ✓ **Informal but informative**
Write how you speak, clearly and simply.
- ✓ **Authoritative but accessible**
Demonstrate expertise while staying relatable.
- ✓ **Conversational but actionable**
Friendly grammar, real value.
- ✓ **Engaging and story-driven**
Use storytelling techniques and real-world examples.



Example of informal but informative tone of voice:

"Here's a stat to remember:
Among sales reps in the US,
41.9% are women whereas 58.1% are men.
It's quite a stark difference right?"

Informative

Informal

Tone of Voice (in detail)

Principles

A. Informal but informative

Write as if you were chatting with a colleague.

✗ At Cognism, we endeavour to communicate as succinctly as we possibly can.

✓ We write clearly at Cognism. Simple, eh!



Writing this way makes content **more accessible and easier to connect with**. Use short, clear sentences and prioritise clarity over complexity.

B. Authoritative but accessible

Show expertise without being condescending.

✗ You struggle with YYY

✓ We've heard from customers that XXX is difficult

Micro-guidelines:

- Define terms the first time you use them.
- Avoid unnecessary technical language.



C. Conversational but actionable

Grammar and tone tips to keep writing human and effective:

✓ We say	✗ We Don't (Always) Have To Say
Hey, Hi or Hello	Greetings or Dear
Thanks	Thank you or Salutations

✓ We say	✗ We Don't (Always) Have To Say
You're	You are
They're	They are
We'll	We will
You'll	You will
It'll	It will

Grammar and syntax:

- Use contractions to keep the tone friendly:
 Example: "You'll receive notifications instantly."
- Write in first and second person:
 Example: "We've designed tools that help you grow your business."
- Avoid ambiguity—each sentence should communicate one clear idea.
- You can start sentences with "And," "But," or "Because." Remember, this isn't a dissertation!

D. Engaging, humorous, and personality-driven

Let the Cognism voice shine—smart but never stiff.

Guidelines:

- Show personality with emojis, GIFs, and memes (where appropriate).
- Make it fun, not forced.

Humour checklist:

- If you wouldn't share it with your Nan, don't include it.
- Ask a colleague before posting anything borderline.

Writing with a storytelling mindset

Hooks & techniques:

- Use [Bucket Brigades](#) to keep people reading.
- Use active voice: “Cognism enables marketing teams...”
- Avoid adverbs and filler words.
- Prefer H2/H3s for clarity and structure.
- Always give a takeaway: insight, stat, or strategy.

✅ “One size fits all doesn’t work when scaling outbound teams.”

❌ “The one size fits all approach isn’t going to work...”



We should take care not to make the intellect our goal;
it has, of course, powerful muscles, but no personality.

— Albert Einstein

Concrete content examples/playbooks:

Content that educates, inspires and engages.

Formats we use:

- Ultimate Guide To...
- 7 Ways to Improve...
- Everything You Should Know About...
- How-to guides

What they deliver:

- Real tools, cold calling scripts, templates
- Expert-led tips and breakdowns

Webpages and Landing pages

Do:

- ✓ Use bullet points for clarity when listing features, steps, or benefits
- ✓ Use sentence case for headings, subheadings, and navigation (unless SEO best practice suggests otherwise)
- ✓ Maintain parallel structure within lists

Don't:

- ✗ Use inconsistent structure or Title Case when sentence case is preferred

A webpage example using sentence case and bullet points.

The screenshot displays a webpage for Cognism, a sales engagement platform. The header includes the Cognism logo and a navigation menu with links: Platform, Data, Customers, Pricing, Resources, Company, Log In, and Book a Demo. The main content area is titled "Integrations" and features the heading "Get faster workflows with integrations from Sales Companion to leading CRMs & sales tools". Below this heading are three bullet points:

- **Seamless data integration**
Easily set up integrations with key CRMs and Sales Engagement tools.
- **Faster workflows**
Keep contact data flowing smoothly across platforms and set your sales reps up for efficient prospecting.
- **Enhanced LinkedIn navigation**
Export from LinkedIn directly to your sales tools and action new data quickly.

At the bottom of the integrations section is a button that says "See our data in action, book a demo →". To the right of the text is a diagram showing the integration of various tools. It includes a central "Sales Companion" logo (a blue circle with a white 'S') connected by dashed arrows to "HubSpot", "Salesforce", "Pipedrive", and "LinkedIn". Each tool is represented by its respective logo and a small profile picture of a person, suggesting user interaction or data flow between the tools.

Tone of voice

Do's & don'ts cheat sheet

Use active voice

Use declarative statements that focus on the user's actions and the outcomes, such as 'Cognism cross-checks your data' instead of 'DNC lists are cross-checked by Cognism'.

Avoid passive voice

Use active voice to create a more engaging and direct message, rather than passive constructions that distance the user from the action.

Be user-centric

Frame the content from the user's perspective, emphasising how they can benefit from the service, such as 'You can easily track your metrics in real time' rather than technical jargon.

Avoid complex jargon

Use plain, accessible language that the target audience can easily understand, rather than technical terminology or industry-specific lingo.

Keep it concise

Use clear, straightforward language and avoid verbose or complex explanations. Stick to the key points and benefits.

Avoid exaggeration

Make claims that are accurate and supported, rather than making exaggerated or unsubstantiated statements about the service being 'the best in the world'.

Highlight benefits clearly

Clearly communicate the advantages and value that the user will receive, making it easy for them to understand why they should use the service.

Writing a blog

Why blog style matters at Cognism




As our content scales, consistency matters. This guide ensures every blog upholds our brand tone, structure, and reader expectations. From sentence length to how we quote experts, these guidelines help us create professional, trusted content—together.

Start with the right template

1. Always start with [this blog template](#)
2. Copy → Rename → Start writing

Sentences, paragraphs & readability

Dos:

-  Max 20 words per sentence
-  Max 4 lines per paragraph
-  Use short, active phrases

Don'ts:

-  Long-winded sentences
-  Dense blocks of text

Numbers & dates

Rules	Example
Zero to nine → words	three days
10 and above → numerals	42 leads

Range spans → use numerals	7 out of 20 reps
Avoid starting a sentence with a number	✅ 'Out of 50... ' not "50 reps..."
Large numbers	1 million, 5 billion
Dates	17th April 2023 or 17/04/2023

Quotes and blockquotes

Quotes

- Use full name + job title + context
- Link to LinkedIn for credibility
- Bold + "" for quotes in the main text
- Italics for speech examples
- 'Single quotes' inside "double quotes" for speech within quotes

Blockquotes

- Use for emphasis or templates
- Don't bold
- Colour contrast: white text on dark background
- Use " " or ' ' depending on context

Formatting – bold, italics & headings

Bold/Italics

- ✅ Bold = Quotes or key points
- ✅ Italics = Customer speech or nuance
- ❌ Don't overuse either
- ✅ Use both only for CTAs (e.g., Watch the video here)

Headings

- H1: Title case, no links/emojis, ≤70 characters
- H2: Section headers (based on keywords)
- H3/H4: Subsections, use sparingly

Lists, grammar & typos

Bullet points

- For unordered items
- Focused, scannable info

Numbered lists

- When order matters
- Introduce with a sentence

Typos & key spellings

- British English only
- Examples: “e-book”, “lead gen”, “kick-off”, “decision-maker”
- Avoid **✗**: “salesman” → Use “salesperson”

Acronyms, capitalisation, brackets

Acronyms

- Spell out first use (e.g., ICP = Ideal Customer Profile)
- Add helpful links
- Avoid acronym-only sentences

Capitalisation

- Capitalise: Titles, Names, Headings, Lists
- Don't capitalise: Conjunctions in titles
- **✗** NEVER WRITE FULL SENTENCES IN CAPS

Brackets

(Parentheses) = Extra info

[Square brackets] = Clarity inside quotes

Punctuation inside only if it belongs

Embeds, research & CTAs

Embedding media

- Podcasts → [Spotify](#)

- Videos → [YouTube](#)
- Use “lazy load” setting
- Centre-align all embeds

Research

- Link original source
- Consider diverse perspectives
- Only cite reputable sources

CTAs

Direct readers: “Keep reading” or “Watch the video”

Buttons → Use best practice from this [Asana guide](#)

Images & alt text

Image Requests

- Always brief design team [via Asana](#)

Naming conventions:

blog-title-hero-banner

blog-title-featured-banner

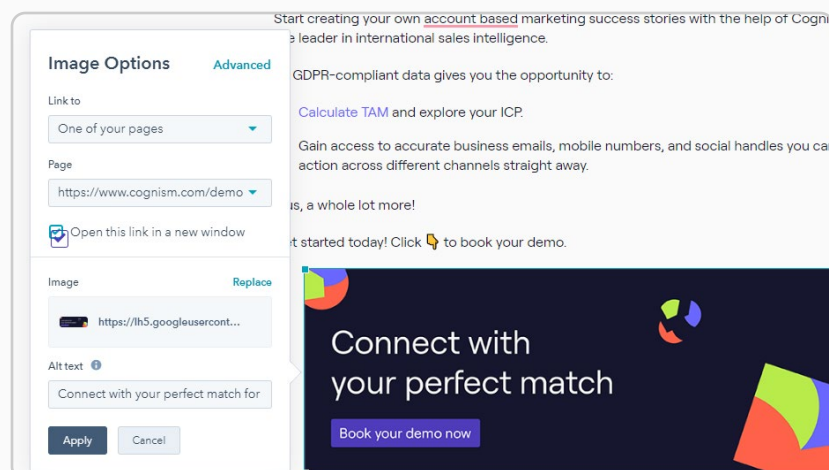
blog-title-card

keyword-infographic

💡 Check out [this blog](#) for tips on writing great alt text.

Alt Text

- Be descriptive and keyword-rich
- Support accessibility and SEO
- All image types must have alt text



An example of how to add alt text to your images in HubSpot.

Emojis

For expression:

- 🤔 = for use in the main text when a significant question is posed
- 🤝 = for use in the main text to symbolise trust or co-operation
- 🏆 = to signify success or achieving a goal
- 👏 = for use in the main text to show success or cheer someone on
- 🤔🤔 = to use in the main text to symbolise confusion or being unsure
- 💡 = to signify a top tip or highlight a good idea

For direction:

- 📌 = for pointing the reader towards specific items/sections on the blog or for highlighting CTAs
- 👉 = for pointing towards a sticky menu or a link
- 👉📺 = for encouraging the reader to play an embedded video or podcast
- 🎬 = occasionally used to highlight an embedded video
- 📻 = occasionally used to highlight an embedded podcast/webinar link
- 📻👉 = for use in the main text, highlighting an important point or link
- ✅ = used to symbolise that something is right or correct
- ❌ = used to symbolise that something is wrong or incorrect
- 📢 = used in text to alert a reader to something important

For everything else:

- 🚀 = to use in the main body of text to suggest something is amazing or out of this world
- 👁️ = to use in the main body of text to symbolise looking at something
- 😊 = used to symbolise something positive
- 😏 = to use in the main text to signify something cheeky or funny
- 💰 = to symbolise money (or use a specific currency)
- ☎️ = to use in the main body of text to symbolise sales, cold calling etc.w

Inclusive language

Writing good content is about connecting and speaking to your reader. One of the best ways to do this is to write inclusively and educate yourself so you become aware of any biases you may have. One way to do this is to take an [Implicit Association Test](#).

Writers who want to learn more about how B2B and corporate writing can still feature words and phrases rooted in colonial or racist language should check out Intuit's fantastic style guide. In particular, its sections on [inclusive](#), gender-neutral and [antiracist language](#) in business.

Below are some examples you can adopt:

- **Avoid unnecessarily gendered language in blogs and internal communication.** You can use [tools like Alex](#) to catch any potentially hurtful/gendered language in comms. For example:
 - Swap "guys" for "team" or "folks".
 - Swap "salesman" or "saleswoman" for "salesperson" / "salespeople".
 - When writing about a theoretical person (like a customer), avoid "he" or "she"; use "they".
- **Be aware of terms that put a positive connotation on words like white/light and negative or ambiguous tone on black/dark.** This reinforces anti-black stereotypes. Instead, opt for more direct language. Only use these words as literal visual descriptors (like dark mode) instead of metaphors or value judgements.

For more tips, check out this blog on [inclusive language](#) from HubSpot.

SEO

Follow these steps to optimise every Cognism blog for search engines and readers alike.

Blog titles

- Write your blog titles/H1s in title case; this is better for SEO. Use this tool to [convert your titles](#) - select "Title case".
- Your title should be no more than 70 characters long.
- Don't use full caps or emojis in headings.
- Check the Emotional Marketing Value of your blog title by [using this tool](#). The higher the score, the better!
- [Use this tool](#) to check your titles are the right length for SERPs.

Alt Text

[Alt text](#) describes images and is read by Google's search crawlers when indexing a page. It's also vital for visually-impaired readers who access web pages using screen readers (these don't process images; instead, they read out the alt text).

You should write alt text as a sentence instead of just a keyword. For example, change cold calls to, An SDR is sitting at a desk making cold calls.

If your blog has more than one image, don't reuse the same alt text. The alt text needs to describe the image. If it has the potential to rank on Google Images, include a keyword. Use the main one or a long tail keyword.

📞✅ Good Example

The alt text says:

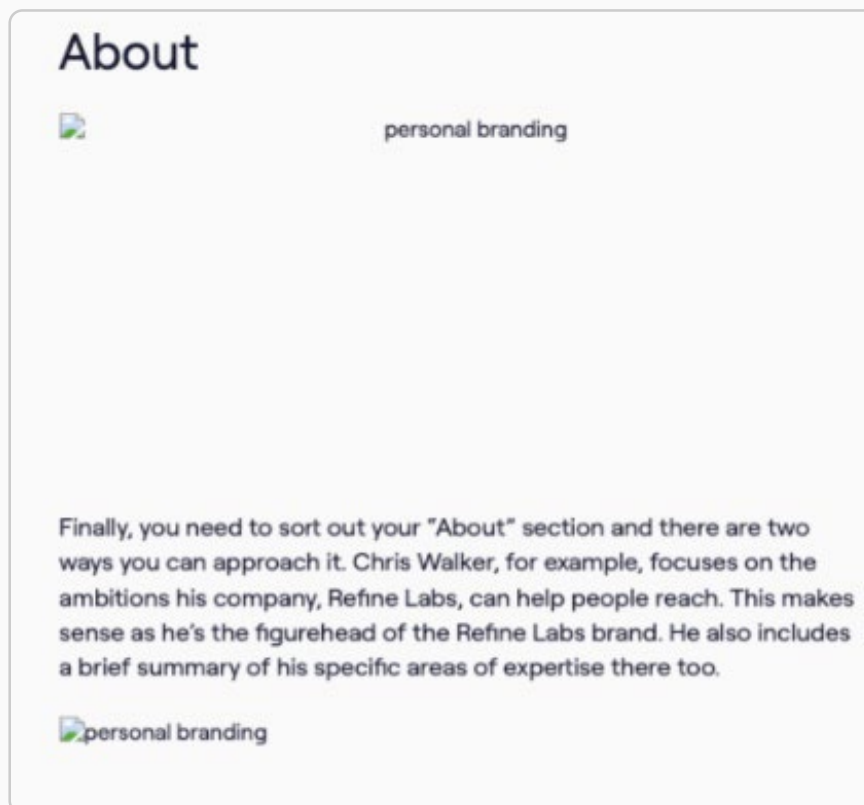
An eye-catching SaaS marketing campaign on LinkedIn from Cognism.

Text reads:

Gated lead gen boring you to death? Spend less time on lead gen and more time on real marketing.

📞❌ Bad Example

This alt text personal branding doesn't describe the image in any detail. The best practice is to write a full sentence explaining each image.



An example of bad alt text for your images and CTAs.


Meta descriptions

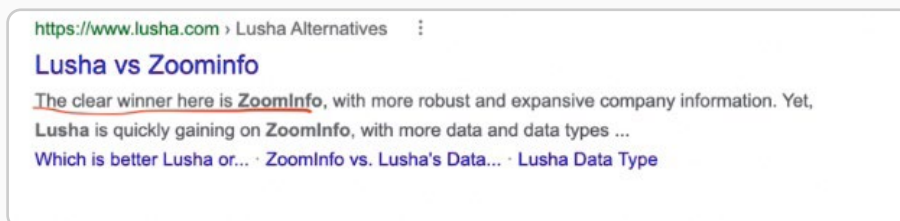
A good meta description should:

- Be no more than 155 characters long.
- Use the active voice and be as compelling as possible – the goal of a meta description is to entice the Google browser to click on your page!
- Include a call to action.
- Include your keyword/title phrase somewhere in the copy.
- Match the content of the page – don't mislead people.


Take note!

Google often rewrites the descriptions on SERPs depending on the search query. It will sometimes pull text from your article to include there. It usually turns out ok, but it's worth checking the live result for important keywords.

 See the example below. The resulting meta description was likely not Lusha's intention!



An example of a bad meta description.

 Below is an example of what not to do when writing meta descriptions based on [this blog](#):

A CTO is building product and executing. Ryan Reisert explains how to build a champion, what makes them tick, and how to get them on your side.

This meta description is vague; it doesn't explain what the blog is about or what the reader can expect from it. It's missing a call to action. What you want the reader to do is click the link on the SERP, so encourage them to do that!

Improved version:

**How should you speak to a CTO? How should you engage with them?
What works best – relevance or personalisation? Read our cold calling
script to find out!**

For more resources on writing great meta descriptions, check out the following links.

<https://yoast.com/meta-descriptions/>

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/how-to-write-a-meta-description>

<https://ahrefs.com/blog/meta-description/>

Keywords

Prior to publishing, go through your blog and add relevant internal links from the [keyword sheet](#).

Remember to spread them throughout your blog (5-10 per every 2,000 words) and only add ones which fit your topic.

Adding schema

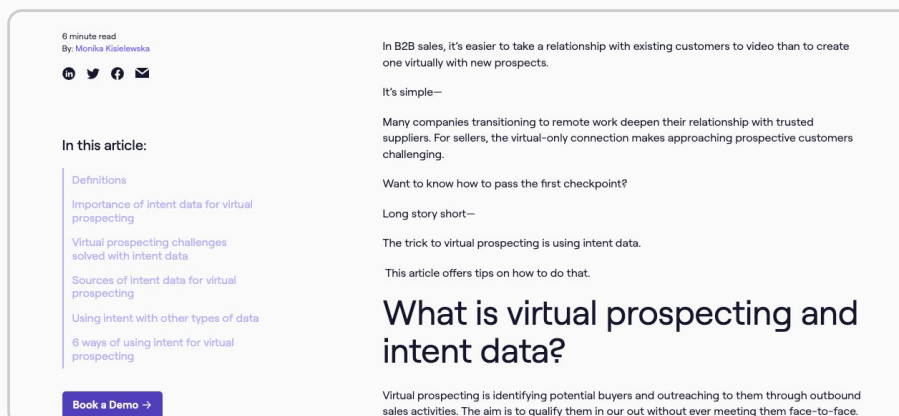
Writers must add schema to their blogs once they've been published. Follow the process [explained in the video](#) on Asana.

Sticky menus

In HubSpot, we use sticky menus to help readers navigate blogs easily.

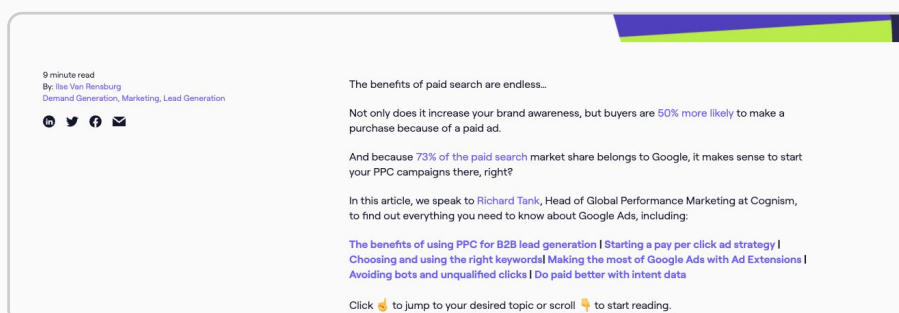
[Watch this video](#) on Asana, which explains how to add one.

This is what a well-crafted sticky menu looks like:



An example of a new style sticky menu in HubSpot.

This is an example of an older-style sticky menu. If you're updating a post and see the menu laid out like this, please amend it to the newer style.



An example of an old-style sticky menu in HubSpot. Please change to the new style.

Links in text

Using links in text is a great way to give your reader more information and build trust.

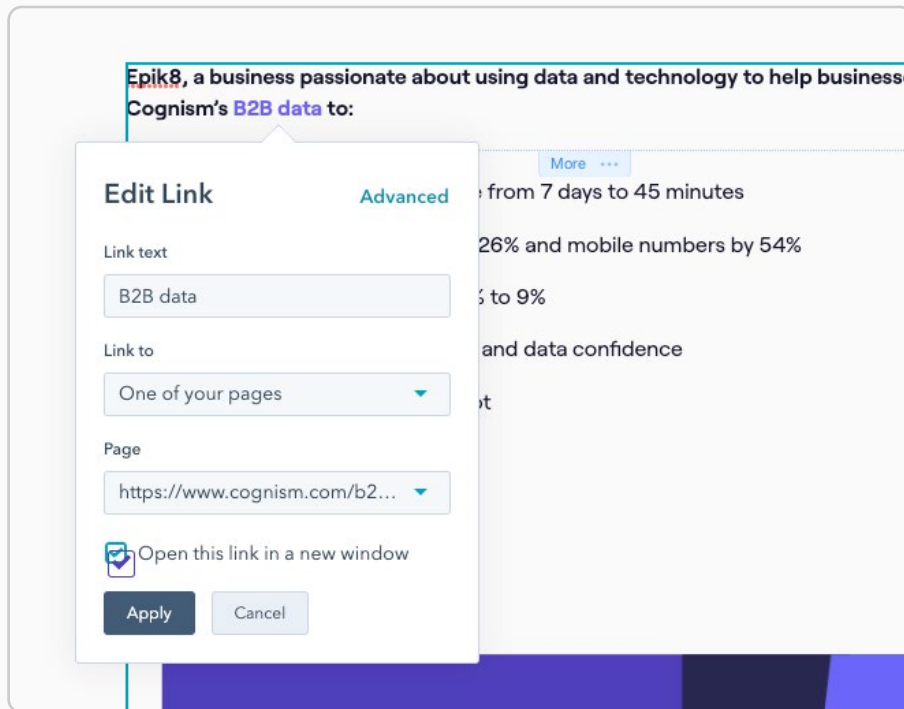
We use links to refer to other professionals, companies, research and reports. As well as linking internally to our own content where it's appropriate.

When adding links, only **highlight the relevant keywords** and sprinkle them throughout your text. Use the [Keywords List](#) to find relevant links

that you can add to your article.

Don't keyword stuff! 5 to 10 internal links per every 2,000-word blog is a good number to aim for.

In HubSpot, set links to open in a new window; this helps to stop readers from leaving the page so quickly.



An example of how to set a link to open in a new window in HubSpot.

Sometimes, you might have internal links you'd like to add to your blog, but they don't fit the flow.

Don't worry! Use the 💡 emoji and suggest a "pro tip" for your reader on a new line.

What is the best type of intent data for virtual prospecting?

Co-op data is considered the best type of intent data for virtual prospecting. For example, [Bombora](#), Cognism's partner, offers data collected from a highly trafficked network of B2B sites, user groups, and product review websites. What's more important they record visitors' behavior with their consent.

💡 Learn the [difference between co-op and bidstream data](#).

An example of how to write a 'pro tip' using the lightbulb emoji.

1. Reach prospects early in the buying process

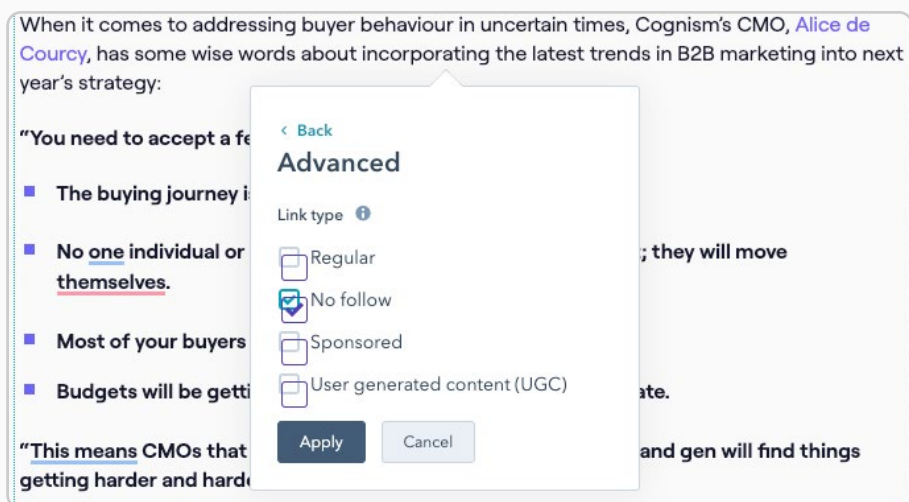
In prospecting virtually, intent data helps you reach out to new clients at the right stage of their buyers' journey. It helps to get a proactive approach and get in front of buyers before they start considering your competitors.

You can also find prospects who aren't aware of their problem and offer your product or service as their solution.

💡 Find out [how to use video prospecting](#) for outreach and stand out amongst your competitors.

An example of how to write a 'pro tip' using the lightbulb emoji.

If you're linking to a competitor or someone's company or personal LinkedIn page, set the link as a no follow link. Follow the same process on HubSpot but click the Advanced button and select 'No follow' link.



An example of how to create a no-follow link in HubSpot.

Optimising URLs/ Making URLs SEO Friendly

URL structure isn't a ranking factor but can be a signal to Google. Best

practice is to keep the URLs short and include the main keyword.



Take note!

HubSpot has an automatic function where it turns your entire title into a URL. This is bad! Use common sense when it comes to making your URL SEO-friendly.



Don't do this:

cognism.com/blog/every-marketing-metric-you-need-to-track



Instead, do this:

cognism.com/blog/marketing-metrics

More good examples are:

<https://www.cognism.com/blog/b2b-marketing-strategies>

<https://www.cognism.com/blog/mql>

<https://www.cognism.com/blog/voicemail-scripts>

Writing newsletters

Start with strategy

Before writing, ask yourself:

1. What newsletters do you read? What inspires you?
2. What's your “**why**” for this newsletter?
3. Keep it value-led: **90% educational, 10% promotional**
4. Make your purpose clear. Include **easy-to-find subscribe/unsubscribe** links.

For deeper tips, [check out this blog](#) and explore these [examples](#).

Tips from Joe (writing from your perspective)

Voice & tone:

- ✓ Use first-person voice – keep it personal and engaging.
- ✓ Be authentic and direct.

Structure & format:

- Ideal length: 600–800 words. Max: 1,000 words
- Use short paragraphs (max 3–4 lines)
- Break content with subheadings
- Use bullets or numbered lists for clarity
- Add images, screenshots, GIFs or infographics for visual engagement
- Use emojis sparingly – ✓ in body text, ✗ not in headings

Subject Line:

- Best practice: 21–40 characters / 4–6 words
- Test it with a [Subject Line Tester](#) – higher score = better!

Links & Sources:

Link to relevant stats, sources, tools

CTA & Community Building:

- End with a call to action
Ask readers to reply — you can feature their responses in future editions
 - This builds a sense of community
 - [See example here](#)

Proofing:

- Always run copy through Grammarly
- You can't edit a newsletter once it's sent – no room for mistakes!

Tips from Amy (Ghostwriting for Sales Digest)

Interviewing:

- Interview your subject matter expert (currently Morgan)
- Capture any interesting stories/anecdotes

Content Type:

- Great for small ideas that don't merit full blogs
- Ideal for bold or controversial takes (Ryan's style was often provocative)

Timing:

- Write your copy ahead of the send date
- The Demand Gen team needs time to build, review, and test the newsletter.

When writing for socials, always adhere to Cognism's tone of voice:

- ✅ Confident, clear, helpful
- ❌ Corporate, boring, or outdated

Writing for social

Our social platforms

[LinkedIn](#) is our primary social media channel. But we also have [Tik Tok](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

These guidelines are primarily for writing LinkedIn posts, either for Cognism or for building your personal brand. Over time we may add more best practices for the other platforms we use.

LinkedIn: Our primary channel

LinkedIn is where we **engage** with our industry.

💡 **Engagement is key** – our goal is to spark conversation.

We do this by:

- ✅ Celebrating success & promoting Cognism's values
- ✅ Sharing content in an entertaining, digestible way
- ✅ Adding value with actionable insights and tips
- ✅ Keeping a tone that is light, positive, and respectful

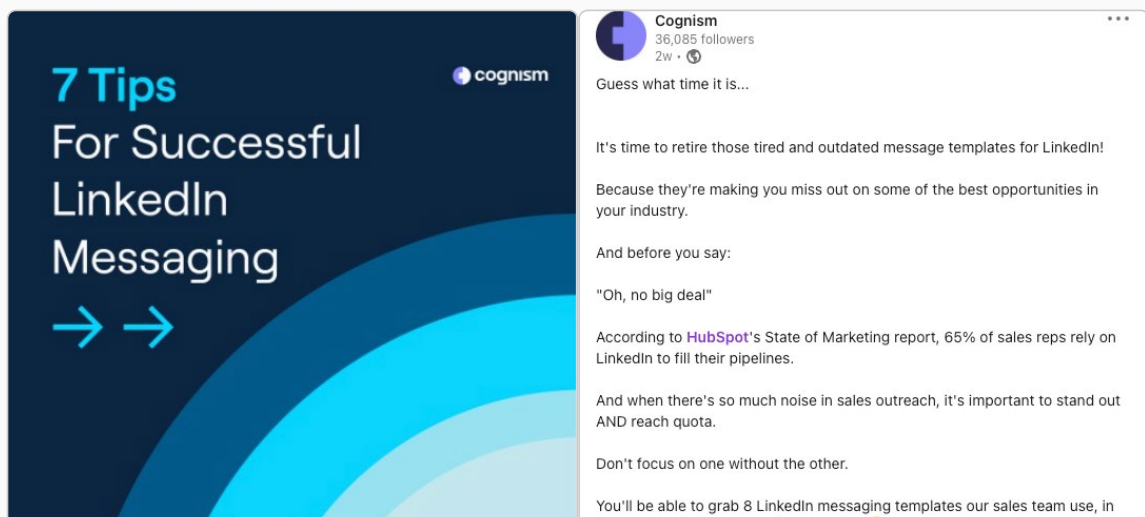
We do not:

- ❌ Post corporate or generic content
- ❌ Engage in negativity, insults, or reactive drama
- ❌ Use cheap tricks, misinformation, or outdated takes

What Cognism is not:

Here's what we avoid on LinkedIn and other platforms:

- ✗ Corporate
- ✗ Boring
- ✗ Reactionary
- ✗ Offensive
- ✗ Cheap
- ✗ Out-of-date
- ✗ Uncaring
- ✗ Inaccurate
- ✗ Complacent
- ✗ Unreliable



An example of a Cognism LinkedIn post.

Personal branding

Creating a personal brand on social can be powerful—especially in B2B marketing and sales. Just remember: everything you share should reflect Cognism's values.

Tips from the team

At Cognism, we're big fans of developing [personal brands](#). And below are some tips:

- Understand your audience and who you're targeting.
- Think about what you're good at.
- Make content that helps to solve problems for your audience.
- Engage with posts (and people) often.
- DM people that have around the same audience as you.
- Post regularly. Start by committing to post 3x a week. Then you can build it up to 5x if you have something meaningful to contribute.
- Find creators who you want to be like. Study their content and learn from what they're doing.
- Whenever you get an idea, make a note of it somewhere.

Helpful apps & tools

Here are some tools the content team regularly uses to research, write, and polish their work—plus a few favourites for SEO and optimisation.

Writing tools

App	Great for:
Hemingway	Simplifying and tightening up your writing
Descript	Transcribing and editing audio/video content fast
Otter.ai	Recording meetings, interviews, or voice notes on the go
Grammarly blog	Tips, inspo, and real-time editing help (don't forget to activate your business subscription!)
LinkedIn Post Inspector	Seeing how your posts will preview before publishing
Headline Analyzer	Testing your headlines for clarity and impact
Subject Line Tester	Your email subject lines
Convert Case	Quick fixes for title case, sentence case, etc.

SEO tools

App	Great for:
Google Doc SEO Assistant	Combining writing and SEO suggestions in one place
Google SERP Simulator	Real-time SEO tips while you write
Schema Markup Generator	Adding rich data to your content easily
Video Schema Generator	Optimising video content
Ahrefs beginner's guide	A must-read for SEO fundamentals



Pro tip: Bookmark these tools or create a shared folder with quick links to save time across the team.

Appendix

Jargon Buster

✗ Jargony words	✓ Preferred words
Leverage	Use / Apply
Seamless	Smooth / Easy
Synergy	Collaboration / Working together
Scalable	Grows with you / Flexible
Robust	Strong / Reliable
End-to-end	Complete / Comprehensive
Best-in-class	Trusted / Industry-leading
Cutting-edge	Advanced / Innovative
Game-changer	Significant / Transformative
Holistic	Complete / All-in-one
Revolutionary	New / Improved
Disruptive	Innovative / Forward-thinking
Turnkey	Ready-to-use / Simple setup
Ecosystem	Network / System
Granular	Detailed / Specific
Monetization	Earning revenue / Payments
Actionable insights	Useful data / Key takeaways
Unparalleled	Unique / Distinctive
Drive engagement	Encourage interaction
Optimize	Improve / Make better
Agile	Fast / Adaptable
Hyper-growth	Rapid growth
Omnichannel	Multiple channels / Integrated
Customer-centric	Focused on customers
Thought leadership	Expertise / Industry insights

