

Lucid content style guide

The purpose of this guide is to help Lucid employees release content and engage in written communication that's clear, compelling, and consistent with the personality we want to build around our brand. It also provides best practices for different types of content and audiences to ensure that content meets our business goals.

Follow these guidelines for any communication coming from Lucid and seen by more than one customer or media contact, including copy, social media posts, blog posts, marketing emails, newsletters, and press releases. Examples are shown in italics.

Lucid uses the [AP Stylebook](#) and the [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#) with a few notable exceptions defined in this guide. Refer to these sources for any questions about written content not answered in the style guide.

This style guide is owned and managed by the Lucid content marketing team. If you would like additional help, send a message to #brand-creative on Slack. For content reviews, submit a marketing request in Asana, [using this form for general requests](#) and [using this form for UX copy requests](#).

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Voice and tone

At Lucid, we want all of our content and written correspondence to match our brand. Our company voice describes the principles we want to follow at all times, and tone may change slightly based on the project or the audience.

Note: This guide only covers guidelines for written content. For a full breakdown of the Lucid brand, [see our brand book](#).

Personality

Our brand personality includes the human characteristics that we attribute to Lucid.

- **Smart:** We attract the best of the best—the innovators, the visionaries, the thinkers, and the builders. Together, we find better solutions, unlock hidden opportunities, and unite our strengths to achieve groundbreaking leadership within our industry.
- **Lively:** We're energetic, action-oriented, agile, and quick-paced. We infuse the Lucid brand with vibrant optimism. We don't have a job—we have a mission, and we go about achieving it with enduring passion.
- **Approachable:** We are warm, friendly, and inclusive. Despite our knowledge and expertise, we're incredibly unintimidating. We like people, and we like helping them solve their problems and turn their visions into reality. This means we meet them where they are and welcome them to join us.

Voice

Our smart, lively, and approachable personality shows in everything we say and write. This means our words are:

- **Always informative**, never robotic
- **Always friendly**, never superfluous
- **Always confident**, never boastful
- **Always smart**, never condescending

Tone

Depending on the product you're writing about, audience you're speaking to, or channel that you're writing for, you may change your tone to emphasize certain attributes of our brand personality more than others.

You want to write in a way that you can imagine your readers nodding along with each sentence you write. The only way to do that is to understand your audience. When writing smart, lively,

and approachable copy, it's helpful to imagine writing to an individual (instead of thousands of faceless strangers).

Smart

Lucid should sound like it knows what it's talking about. We're experts, pioneers in the visual collaboration space. We understand our audience and the challenges they face—and we indicate as such by speaking in their language.

We speak with authority, and we shouldn't state the obvious or talk down to our audience. We back up our claims with data, examples, expert insights, and other sources. Avoid vague language and fluff.

 Do	 Don't
<i>Nearly 82% of hybrid teams struggle with collaboration every week.</i> Why: This line adds a data point to validate something our audience is likely already experiencing.	<i>In today's hybrid world, many teams struggle with collaboration.</i> Why: Too obvious.
<i>In a hybrid environment, teams may lose some of the bonding that occurs naturally in an office setting, like water cooler talk or the playful conference room interactions that used to occur before meetings started.</i> <i>Look for ways to connect your team members and encourage bonds outside of business, such as team lunches or one-on-one meetings between team members. When the barriers start to come down, empathy grows, trust will form naturally, and collaboration will become more effective.</i> Why: These paragraphs show an understanding of a pain point the audience may be feeling, and then they provide practical examples of how to address that issue.	<i>Hybrid teams don't have chances to connect, so managers might want to provide those opportunities.</i> Why: The problem is not clearly defined, and the solution is not specific or easy to apply right away. Language like "might want to" sounds indecisive, not authoritative.

Lively

There are a few ways our copy can be lively: It helps users take action, and it's easy and enjoyable to read.

We communicate *relevant* information, features, and benefits of our products and offerings. We anticipate the concerns, questions, hopes, and dreams our users or prospective customers have. We address those in our copy. In this way, you can inspire your readers to take action because you're addressing their real pain points and self-interests.

 Do	 Don't
<i>Have you ever tried to explain an idea and failed?</i> <i>Try mapping out your next idea in Lucidchart. Sign up for a free account and start diagramming—in less than 2 minutes.</i> Why: We're speaking to a person. We've also addressed a real problem that they've likely experienced. The CTA is lively in the sense that it inspires action. It's specific ("2 minutes," "today").	<i>Visual collaboration can help teams clarify complexity in today's fast-paced world. Try diagramming with Lucidchart today. It'll save your team time during your next hybrid or remote meeting.</i> Why: It sounds like Mr. Business wrote this. Nobody talks this way. It feels like we're writing a sermon or a TED Talk.

Lively copy is also a pleasure to read. A few simple ways to accomplish this include:

- Vary sentence length throughout your copy.
- Write like you're writing to one person.
- Aim for fewer words unless a topic is particularly complex.
- Use vibrant, colorful language.

 Do	 Don't
<i>Hybrid work is too often a jarring experience. You go from quarterly planning together in the same room on Tuesday to trying to make things happen over Zoom on Wednesday.</i>	<i>Hybrid work is difficult for modern teams in nearly every industry. The most common reasons include a lack of effective tools and a poor collaboration framework. Remote teams need applications that are designed for the fast-paced world.</i>

Sometimes, fixing remote collaboration is like curing the hiccups—it feels like there’s almost nothing you can do.

But then there’s Lucid. It actually makes remote collaboration more effective (and fun) than it is in person. How? [Click here to find out](#).

Why: Sentence length is varied. Words like “jarring” and “hiccups,” as well as phrases like “it shouldn’t have to be this way” add color and life to this paragraph. The parenthetical does this also.

Sometimes, it feels impossible to fix remote collaboration. But with the right tools and the right know-how, remote teams can increase productivity across their organizations.

Lucid makes remote collaboration just as effective as in-person collaboration. [Click on this link](#) to find out how it can help your team.

Why: Read it out loud. It sounds sterile, stale. Sentences are nearly all the same length. There’s a lack of “conversational” tone—it sounds like it’s written to be informative rather than persuasive.

Approachable

Our copy is approachable in a few important ways.

Structure and layout

The overwhelming majority of our copy is viewed via the web. And most people don’t read full webpages. They prefer skimming to find relevant information.

Structure your text so that it’s easy to skim. Write shorter sentences, add in more line breaks, and use bullet points where they make sense. Your readers will digest more information, be more likely to read your copy, and be more inclined to click on CTAs.



Do

Today’s webinar will teach you how to:

- *Create flowcharts from scratch.*
- *Create flowcharts from templates.*
- *Share flowcharts with your team.*
- *Export flowcharts.*

Bonus: You’ll even learn to import Visio files into Lucidchart in just a few clicks.

Why: It’s easier to skim and read. In that way, it’s extremely approachable.



Don't

In today’s webinar, you’ll learn how to create a flowchart from scratch, how to create a flowchart from a template, how to share a flowchart with several team members, and how to export your flowchart for offline viewing. You’ll also see how to import Visio files into Lucidchart.

Why: Visually (for the web), this is really unappealing to read. I can’t easily spot the relevant information I’m looking for—it

	requires a lot of searching. It's not very approachable.
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Simplicity

Content is approachable when it's easy to understand. Avoid writing overly long sentences that contain several ideas—try to stick with a simple subject-verb-object structure. Use active voice over passive voice.

If you're unsure if your sentence is too long, read it out loud to a colleague and see if they can explain it back to you. If they can't, it's probably too long. In this way, our copy becomes easy to read and easy to approach.

 Do	 Don't
<i>Enterprise accounts get exclusive features, integrations, templates, and shape libraries.</i> Why: It's easier to skim and read.	<i>Our Enterprise account SKU provides teams with the software they need to see, plan, and build the future of their businesses, as well as collaborative, cloud-based tools that unite disparate teams across multiple departments.</i> Why: On a website, this is really unappealing to read. It's hard to spot the relevant information I'm looking for—it requires a lot of searching. It contains more than one idea.

Terminology

Use the words your audience uses. Terms can vary between industry and job title. It's important that your readers know that you “get” them. Avoid jargon unless it's regularly used by your audience. Too much business jargon can make your writing lifeless and unapproachable.

We also use inclusive language and avoid any terminology that reflects prejudiced, stereotyped, or discriminatory views. See [Using inclusive language](#) for more information.

 Do	 Don't
<i>Just enter your AWS, Azure, or GCP credentials to instantly generate a diagram of your entire cloud infrastructure.</i>	<i>Just enter AWS, Azure, or GCP to make a flowchart of your cloud.</i>

One final note about being approachable: Another way to think about this personality trait in terms of the content we write is “attainable.” At Lucid, we have a big vision for the future—but we

are the kind of company that gets work done and doesn't simply talk about it. We should address our audience with a similar mindset: When we present big ideas, we want to follow them up with practical tips and solutions that our audiences can apply now, so it feels within their reach to really see and build the future.

Additional guidelines

Use positive language. Our content should sound polite, diplomatic, and non-intrusive. When you refer to competitors, partners, and third parties, be objective. Avoid name calling, bashing, or rude, insulting text.

It's important to differentiate between publications written on behalf of the company and those authored by a particular individual, such as guest posts. In regards to the latter, the writer can preserve their individual quirks, as long as they do not contradict with the goals of the Lucid brand.

Point of view

Write in first person singular ("I," "me") to speak of your own experience. This point of view is most appropriate for social media, personal emails, or blog posts grounded in personal experience and should not be used frequently.

Write in first person plural ("we," "us," "our") when you speak on behalf of the entire company. This point of view can also create a sense of shared discovery ("Let's take a look at..."). Try to avoid using these terms too often, however, as these terms pull focus away from our users and their needs.

We also use third person when describing the company or the product ("Lucid offers...").

Use second person ("you," "your") to address readers directly and make your content more personal to them. Be careful as second-person voice can sound commanding or bossy. Include words that show how Lucid products assist the reader ("you can..." or "simply click...").

Terminology

Using the right terminology will help us reinforce our brand identity and avoid confusion, both internally and with customers. This section outlines key terms created by or commonly used at Lucid.

If a term is not outlined in this content style guide, refer to the [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#) to determine how the term is spelled, capitalized, and punctuated.

Company and product names

Lucid Software or Lucid: Our company name.

- For longer pieces of content, such as company descriptions, write out the entire company name when used the first time. For subsequent uses, or in cases where there is limited space, the company name can be shortened to simply Lucid.
- Treat the company as an entity, not a collection of individuals, using “its” rather than “their.”
- The term “Lucid” may also be used to refer to our products as a whole.

Lucid Visual Collaboration Suite: Our Enterprise offering, which includes Lucidchart, Lucidspark, Team Spaces (forthcoming), and Visual Activities (forthcoming).

- Write out the entire name when used the first time. For subsequent uses, it can be shortened to “Lucid Suite.” “Suite” should not be used on its own.
- In context, this term should begin with “the,” as in “Increase clarity with the Lucid Visual Collaboration Suite.” We should never use an abbreviation such as LVCS in customer-facing materials.
- “Visual Collaboration Suite” should be capitalized, even when it’s used on its own, without “Lucid.” Avoid variations such as “Lucid’s Visual Collaboration Suite”—it’s preferable to use the full term.
- Note that this term refers to a specific offering, *not* our products as a whole. See “Lucid Visual Collaboration Platform” below for an option that includes Lucidscale and other Visual Collaboration Specialities.

Lucid Visual Collaboration Platform: Our products as a whole.

- In cases where it’s important to explain the value of our products as a whole, we can use “the Lucid Visual Collaboration Platform.” For simplicity, it’s also appropriate to use the term “Lucid” on its own or generic terms like “Lucid products” or “Lucid applications.”
- We do not use the term “tools” to refer to our products as the term limits the value that Lucid products can produce.

Lucid Visual Collaboration Specialities: Products intended for specific audiences and use cases (as opposed to products in the Lucid Visual Collaboration Suite, which are beneficial across an entire company or organization). Lucidscale is the first of these specialities.

Lucidchart: Our intelligent diagramming application.

- Lucidchart is one word, spelled with a big L and a little c.
- We should not use abbreviations such as Chart or LC in customer-facing materials.
- Because Lucidchart is our flagship product, some may still think of Lucidchart as our company name, but this is inaccurate. To avoid confusion but still capitalize on that brand equity, you can use phrases like “Lucid, the makers of Lucidchart.”
- In Lucidchart, users create documents. We should not refer to the byproduct of Lucidchart as a Lucidchart.
- For feature names and other terms related to Lucidchart, see [Lucid glossary and feature names](#).

Lucidspark: Our virtual whiteboard application.

- Lucidspark is one word, spelled with a big L and a little s.
- We should not use abbreviations such as Spark or LS in customer-facing materials.
- In Lucidspark, users create boards (or you can use the general term “documents”). We should not refer to the byproduct of Lucidspark as a Lucidspark.
- For feature names and other terms related to Lucidspark, see [Lucid glossary and feature names](#).

Lucidscale: Our cloud visualization application.

- Lucidscale is one word, spelled with a big L and a little s.
- We should not use abbreviations such as Scale in customer-facing materials.
- In Lucidscale, users create models (or you can use the general term “documents”). We should not refer to the byproduct of Lucidscale as a Lucidscale.
- For feature names and other terms related to Lucidscale, see [Lucid glossary and feature names](#).

Lucid Suite capabilities: Experiences and functionality that span across the Lucid Suite, including Team Spaces, Visual Activities, and universal canvas.

- The byproduct of Team Spaces is a space.
- The byproduct of Visual Activities is an activity.
- For feature names and other terms related to these capabilities, see [Lucid glossary and feature names](#).

Lucidite(s): An employee of Lucid Software.

Feature names

Refer to [Lucid glossary and feature names](#) to see a list of common features across Lucid products. These terms should be spelled, punctuated, and capitalized as shown in this document.

Public sector offerings

To better serve customers within the public sector, Lucid has specific offerings that are FedRAMP Authorized. Use the following terminology to talk about our FedRAMP environment.

FedRAMP Authorized at the Moderate impact level: This is the phrasing—and note which terms are capitalized—to use when discussing our FedRAMP compliance (such as “Lucid Software is FedRAMP Authorized at the Moderate impact level”). We have two offerings that are FedRAMP Authorized.

Lucid GovSuite: This term describes our offering that is essentially the Lucid Visual Collaboration Suite but FedRAMP Authorized. Refer to [this article](#) for features and integrations that are available within this environment.

Lucidscale for Gov: This term describes Lucidscale within a FedRAMP environment. Refer to [this article](#) for features and integrations that are available within this environment.

Lucid for public sector: This term can be used to describe the Lucid Visual Collaboration Suite when we are talking to public sector customers or prospects. It does *not* describe our FedRAMP Authorized offerings.

Sections of Lucid websites

Sections of Lucid websites should not be capitalized (such as help center, learning campus, developer portal, marketplace, etc.) unless otherwise noted below:

- Lucid Community (capitalize when referring to the full name, but lowercase when the term “community” is used on its own, such as “Give us your product feedback in our new community!”)
- Lucid Training Labs

Other companies and products

When you refer to other companies or their products, use the names from their official websites. Full product names or shortened terms are both acceptable. Some partners and competitors that we often name (and that are easy to get wrong) include:

draw.io (formerly diagrams.net)

iOS, iPhone, iPad
Google Workspace (formerly G Suite)
Microsoft Visio, Visio
monday.com
Mural (no longer MURAL)
OmniGraffle

Diagram names

Unless a specific keyword requires you to write it another way for SEO purposes, prefer these spellings of terms common to our industry:

entity-relationship diagram, ERD, ER diagram (not "ERD diagram")
flowchart (not "flow chart")
mind map
swimlane (not "swim lane")
timeline (not "time line")
wireframe (not "wire frame")

Don't capitalize diagram names, except when they are named after a person, as in Venn diagram or Gantt chart.

Agile terminology

Because Lucid customers are primarily teams who build and implement technology, we often write about Agile, Scrum, or other software development and project management approaches (for a basic description of what Agile is, [see this blog post](#)). Use the following spelling and punctuation for these terms.

When referring to Agile software development practices, including the Agile values and principles as defined by the Agile Manifesto, capitalize Agile.

The goal of Agile is to help teams deliver better work, faster.

When using agile as an adjective, keep it lowercase.

When teams are hybrid, they face a new set of challenges that makes it difficult to remain agile.

One of the biggest ways to model agile transformation is through an agile mindset. This is a key part of becoming an agile leader.

Capitalize the names of specific methodologies or frameworks. For example:

Scrum

Kanban
Lean
Extreme Programming

Do *not* capitalize roles, artifacts, and meetings in Scrum, other than the word Scrum. For example:

Scrum master
Scrum team
product owner
daily Scrum
product backlog
sprint review

Additional terms

Use the following spelling and punctuation for these terms related to the tech industry.

A/B tests
add-on (noun)
co-worker
e-book
email
freeform
front-end development; back-end development
home page
hotspot
infographic
internet
log-in (noun); log in (verb)
markup
onboarding
plugin (noun)
pop-up
real-time (adjective before noun); in real time (adverb)
setup (noun); set up (verb)
smartphone
username
webpage
website
workflow

For terms not found in this list, defer to the [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#).

Grammar and mechanics

At Lucid, we adhere to certain grammatical rules to keep our writing clear and consistent across channels. These guidelines apply to every content type, unless otherwise noted in later sections. We use the [AP Stylebook](#) with a few notable exceptions defined in this guide. Refer to this resource for any questions not answered in the style guide.

Capitalization

Titles and headers

Lucid uses [AP-style sentence case](#) for nearly all titles and headings in the products themselves, on our marketing websites, and in other written collateral. This means that you capitalize the first word of the title or heading; the first word of a subtitle; the first word after a colon, em dash, or end punctuation in a heading; and proper nouns. Everything else should be in lowercase.

 Do	 Don't
<i>How to import AWS data in Lucidscale</i>	<i>How to Import AWS Data in Lucidscale</i> <i>How To Import AWS Data In Lucidscale</i> <i>How to import aws data in lucidscale</i>
<i>Beyond the buzzword: What is visual collaboration?</i>	<i>Beyond the Buzzword: What Is Visual Collaboration?</i> <i>Beyond the buzzword: what is visual collaboration?</i>
<i>8 time management techniques to help you work efficiently</i>	<i>8 Time Management Techniques to Help You Work Efficiently</i>
<i>New feature: Lucidchart now integrates with ServiceNow</i>	<i>New Feature: Lucidchart Now Integrates With ServiceNow</i>
<i>User research and journey mapping template</i>	<i>User Research and Journey Mapping Template</i>
<i>Ideation and brainstorming</i>	<i>Ideation & Brainstorming</i>

There are a few exceptions to this rule:

- Title tags—the title that shows up in search results—should be in title case. See [“Writing for SEO”](#) for more details.
- If you are referencing a title that the creator or publisher ordinarily styles in title case (e.g., *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*), use [AP-style title case](#). Essentially, capitalize everything except for prepositions (e.g., to, in), articles (e.g., a, and, the), and conjunctions (e.g., and, but, if).

When in doubt, use sentence case.

Buttons

All buttons also follow AP-style sentence case.

 Do	 Don't
<i>Read more</i>	<i>Read More</i> <i>READ MORE</i>
<i>Sign up for a free trial</i>	<i>Sign Up for a Free Trial</i> <i>Sign Up For A Free Trial</i>

Features

In general, features within Lucid products should be capitalized if they are unique to our products, as if we are trying to brand or trademark the term, such as Breakout Boards or Note Panel. Features that are common to SaaS should not be capitalized, such as revision history or search.

See [Lucid glossary and feature names](#) for specifics.

File extensions

When mentioning file extensions, we prefer all uppercase letters with a lowercase s for plural terms. If you need to refer to a specific file, keep the entire file name in lowercase.

PDFs, not .pdf files
lucidsoftware.pdf

Job titles and team names

Capitalize an individual's title only when it's used directly before their name. Titles written as acronyms should always be capitalized, regardless of their position in the sentence.

Ben Dilts is the co-founder of Lucid Software.
Co-founder Ben Dilts

Team names should be written in lowercase.

If you'd like more information about our Enterprise accounts, contact the sales team.

Formatting

Citations

Typically, we prefer citing sources naturally within the sentence where the data is given or simply providing a link to the source to avoid having our content appear too academic and less approachable. However, if you need to identify a source separately, include it in parenthesis at the end of the sentence, before the period.

According to [research by Smartsheet](#), over 40% of workers spend at least one-quarter of their work week on manual, repetitive tasks, with email, data collection, and data entry as the primary time sinks.

Over 40% of workers spend at least one-quarter of their work week on manual, repetitive tasks, with email, data collection, and data entry as the primary time sinks ([Smartsheet](#)).

Headings

Headings at the same level on a page should be parallel to one another. Headings do not require ending punctuation.

Communication strategies for leaders
Tell the truth
Choose the appropriate time to communicate
Make communications meaningful
Be consistent
Encourage feedback

Examples

If you would like to give a quick example within a sentence, you can use “for example” or “e.g.” (which stands for *exempli gratia* in Latin and means “for example”) followed by a comma. These phrases are often placed inside em dashes or parentheses.

We should not use “ex:” or any other variation to denote an example.

Despite the benefits of remote work (e.g., higher productivity, greater job satisfaction, and reduced employee turnover), it can be difficult to build relationships from afar.

Note that “i.e.” (which stands for *id est* in Latin and means “that is”) has a different meaning: It is used to introduce a word or phrase that restates what has been said previously.

In dot voting, the idea with the most dots—i.e., votes—next to it wins.

Lists

Use a colon to end the sentence that introduces a bulleted list. Each list item should use sentence case—capitalize the first letter and keep the remaining words in lowercase unless you include proper nouns.

Use periods at the end of list items if they are complete phrases or complete the phrase leading into the list items.

With Lucidchart, you can:

- *Pull up your work at any time, on any platform.*
- *Create diagrams easily with drag-and-drop functionality.*
- *Invite others to edit your document in real time.*

Use bulleted lists to group items or ideas together. Use numbered lists to explain the steps of a process or list items where the order makes a difference.

Items within the same list should be parallel to one another.

Spaces

Use only a single space after a period.

Units of measure

Do not use periods after units of measure (in, ft, lb).

UI elements

Lucid content often describes buttons, menus, and other items to explain how to perform actions within the software. When describing a button or an option the user will need to press, capitalize the word and bold it. Use the same punctuation and capitalization as the actual button on the editor.

*In a Lucidchart document, click **Insert** from the menu bar.*

*Select **Import Page**.*

Note that, while our standard is to have buttons in sentence case, there are still a lot of buttons added in title case. It's more important to match the copy that's in product to avoid confusion.

It is preferable to separate the steps of an action for clarity, but if you are short on space (for example, if you are writing up a product tip for social or our monthly newsletter), you can use angle brackets to show how someone would navigate through the website. Continue to bold text describing a button or clickable option.

*Did you know that you can bring all of your Visio files into Lucidchart? From your documents page, click **+ New > Lucidchart > Import > Visio**.*

Note: If you are writing content for the help center, there are more specific guidelines for explaining actions within Lucid products. Refer to the [help center style guide](#).

Block quotes

When using block quotes, use quotation marks around the quote itself unless the design already implements quotation marks in some way. Include the citation on a separate line with an em dash before the name and/or title and any other information about the person quoted.

"I don't think enough people know how helpful this technology can be, but I do—I drew some of the original architecture and product sketches for Okta using Lucidchart."

—Todd McKinnon, CEO and co-founder of Okta

Numbers

General practices

Spell out the numbers one through nine, and use numerals for numbers 10 or higher. For large numbers (millions, billions, trillions), use a combination of numerals and words, such as *8 million people*. You should also use numerals for:

- Addresses: *221B Baker Street*
- Dates, years, and decades: *July 31, 1980; the 2000s*

- Titles and headings: *17 brainstorming activities to spark innovation*

As noted above, you can use numerals—even for numbers one through nine and especially at the start of a phrase—in title, headings, and other short-form copy where space is an issue or where we’re trying to make the number stand out to pull in readers.

Time

Use a.m. and p.m., along with numerals, to indicate times of the day, aside from noon and midnight. To describe measurements of time, spell out numbers less than 10.

Would you rather meet at 11:30 a.m. or at noon?

Let’s just meet in five minutes.

Percentages

When you include a percentage, use numerals followed by the percentage sign (%).

Punctuation

Ampersands

Avoid ampersands unless they are part of a brand name you use or part of a common acronym.

Johnson & Johnson is among Lucid’s many high-profile customers.

Our L&D team has created a Bridge course that will be required for all Lucid employees.

Colons

Use a colon to:

- Introduce a bulleted list (see [Lists](#)).
- Introduce a list or series of items at the end of a sentence.

You can use our bracket template to rate all sorts of items: best ice cream brands, best fall movies, best songs about Denver, etc.

- Introduce a complete sentence that clarifies or expands on the original sentence.

Just take a look at this study from McKinsey: Most workers spend 37% of their time making decisions, and more than half of this time was thought to be spent ineffectively.

- Call attention to the word or phrase that follows it.

We have the solution to help you promote clarity and align teams: visual collaboration.

If the phrase that follows the colon is a complete sentence, capitalize the first word of that phrase.

Commas

In a series of three or more items, separate the items with commas. Contrary to the guidelines in the AP Stylebook, include the Oxford comma (the comma before the final list item). You can also use commas to:

- Separate adjectives equal in rank.

Lucidspark is a flexible, dynamic space for teams to brainstorm.

- Set off nonessential clauses.

For example, if your co-worker uses a Mac, he or she can't edit Visio files.

- Set off introductory phrases.

Since Lucidchart is a cloud-based software, it requires no downloads or software updates.

- Separate two independent clauses joined by a conjunction.

Scroll through pages using the arrows, or select a specific page with the drop-down arrow.

- Set off years within dates.

On November 9, 2016, we released our Google Slides integration.

- Set off states or nations used after city names.

Join us in Las Vegas, Nevada, for AWS re:Invent.

Contractions

Based on our company voice, everyday contractions are appropriate in all situations but in press releases. We do not use regional contractions, such as “ain’t” or “y’all.”

Ellipsis

Ellipsis should be used sparingly, most often to indicate the removal of words in a quote. If you need to use an ellipsis, use the ellipsis symbol in your word processor or text editor (...) rather than three separate periods (. . .).

Exclamation points

Use exclamation points to express strong emotion, but use them sparingly to avoid a bubbly tone. The amount of exclamation points that are acceptable depends on the audience and channel. For example, we would use more exclamation points on social media or in emails driving end-user engagement. We are less likely to use exclamation points when talking to decision-makers.

Marvel fans, assemble! In honor of Doctor Strange, we present a flowchart to determine your Marvel destiny.

Hyphens and dashes

Use hyphens to show ranges of numbers, dates, pages, etc. You can also use hyphens to construct compound adjectives when they appear before the noun. Compound adjectives that begin with “very” or an -ly word do not require a hyphen.

We will attend the conference September 10-14.

Try out our in-editor chat feature, and collaborate with your co-workers in real time. (Note that “real time” in this instance occurs after the noun, so it does not contain a hyphen, where a phrase like “real-time collaboration” would contain a hyphen.)

Use em dashes to interrupt a sentence, similar to a semicolon, but less formal. Do not include spaces on either side of the hyphen. Don’t use two hyphens (--) in the place of an em dash. Be careful about overusing em dashes: They can unnecessarily complicate or lengthen a sentence that could just be broken into two.

Learn how leaders can use one of the most impactful communication techniques—visuals—to effectively lead their organizations through change.

Documentation makes it easier to onboard new hires—simply share a Lucidchart document or Lucidspark board, and they can gain the context necessary to feel a part of the team and get to work.

Parentheses

Use parentheses in pairs to provide examples, add an aside, or introduce an abbreviation. While parentheses can make your content sound more lively and conversational, use these sparingly.

Let the dated activities of the past go (looking at you, human knot) and embrace a new generation of workplace connection.

An entity-relationship diagram (ERD) can help you visualize the relationships between components in your database.

Quotation marks

Use double quotation marks to denote quoted phrases or call out specific terms. Single quotation marks should only be used for a quote within a quote. Periods and commas go within the quotation marks, and other punctuation (such as exclamation marks, question marks, and colons) go outside closing quotation marks unless they are part of the quote.

Lucid's Chief Evangelist, Bryan Stallings, explains, "The word 'agility' is everywhere today. Organizations are adapting to incorporate agility in response to unprecedented uncertainty and complexity."

Semicolons

Semicolons can be used to interrupt a sentence, but they come across as a bit stuffy and formal in online content, so we try to avoid them in favor of [commas](#) or [em dashes](#). Better yet, try simplifying the sentence.

Writing in-product messaging

On Lucid's product team, there is no designated individual who owns copywriting and messaging. Instead, each team does their best to craft messaging that they feel makes the most sense to their target user base. All messaging should be critiqued with these guidelines in mind before releasing to the public.

We also recommend that all UX copy be submitted for review with the content marketing team before it goes live in the product. Fill out [this Asana form](#) to request a content review.

Types of voice

Understanding into which category your project falls can help you which voice guidelines to apply to your work.

Inform	Back up your documents for safekeeping and restore them at any time.
---------------	--

Instruct	Add users to your team (who will then share your subscription) by setting up their accounts yourself or sending them email invites from this page.
Warn	This could take several minutes depending on the file size.
Convince	It's easy to connect Lucidchart or Lucidspark to Google Drive and make Drive your home base.
Approve	Your payment was successful!

When you need to write messaging but don't have much space (such as floating growls or mobile), Lucid voice can be modified to be more brief. Possessives and actors can be removed (instead of "We can't load your template," try "Can't load template").

Character

Character helps describe what messaging should *do* instead of what it says. In line with our [voice and tone guidelines](#) earlier in this style guide, these additional guidelines help address the "why" and "when" of product voice.

1. Lucid is encouraging and supportive when a user completes an important task (payment, inviting team members, etc.).

 Do	 Don't
Sent! We invited 1 person to join your team.	Add by Email - Results: 1 invited to team.

2. Lucid reveals value when it's time to make a decision.

This messaging is presented when a user first encounters the ability to link Lucidchart to Google Drive. See how much more convincing the first example is?

 Do	 Don't

Connect Lucidchart to Google Drive to create, open, and share your Lucidchart diagrams from Drive. You can also schedule automatic backups to your Drive. [Learn more.](#)

Connect Lucidchart to Google Drive to use our Drive integration.

3. Lucid presents information only when it's needed and doesn't preemptively explain problems.

 Do	 Don't
Upload fonts to share with every member of your team. You must have permission to share the font.	Team fonts are shared with the entire team. They show up in each team member's fonts list. You, as the admin, must have permission to share the font. The font file needs to be in TTF or OTF and cannot be a right-to-left font.

4. Lucid explains why problems may have occurred, empowering the user to avoid problems.

The 80/20 rule: Some errors may occur for several reasons. Instead of flooding the user with messages of possible errors, consider what the most likely (80%) problem might be, and provide alternative for the rest (20%).

 Do	 Don't
The font you uploaded wasn't the right file type. Make sure your font is TTF or OTF and try again.	Error: upload failed

5. Lucid doesn't state the obvious.

 Do	 Don't
--	---

Back up your documents for safe keeping and restore them at any time.

Click the button below to save a backup of all your Lucid documents. You can use the backup to restore your documents at any time.

6. Lucid explains what the user needs to do on their end and what we'll do as a result.

 **Do**

Upload a backup file and we'll put the documents in a folder called "restore-<date>."

 **Don't**

To restore your documents, select your backup file and click the restore documents button. Your documents will appear in your document list under a new folder with the name "restore-<date>."

7. Lucid addresses the most common user base.

Remember the 80/20 rule?

 **Do**

Try dragging out a shape to get started!

 **Don't**

Try dragging out a shape, importing data, or sharing this diagram with a friend.

8. Lucid is concise and isn't concerned with frivolous details.

 **Do**

 **Don't**

Automatically add and delete users from your team as you manage your Google Apps domain. We'll transfer any documents from automatically deleted users to the admin's account.

Google Provisioning: As the team administrator, you can decide if new users from your Google Apps domain are automatically added to the Team. You can also decide if users deleted from your Google Apps domain are automatically deleted from the Team, which will transfer their documents to the admin's account.

Tone

Tone deals more with the grammar and word choice of product messaging. These guidelines are a bit easier to follow as they function as the dos and don'ts of copy.

See [UI terms](#) for additional guidelines on how to refer to specific parts of or buttons within the product.

1. Lucid sounds like a person, not like a robot.

If your messaging sounds like C-3PO, you're doing it wrong.

 Do	 Don't
This user will have to change their password the next time they log in.	The selected user will be required to change their password upon next login.

2. Lucid uses pronouns and names.

Remember: We're not robots. Remind customers that there are real humans behind the interface. Don't be afraid to say names like John, you, we, us, etc.

 Do	 Don't
Hey Rob, let's make a brochure you can be proud of.	Start by creating a brochure.

3. Lucid is not overly polite or cloy, and we don't always need to say sorry or please.

As a rule of thumb, we should only say “sorry” and “please” when it's our fault. For example, if a user uploads a file, and there's an error with the upload, we can say, "Sorry, the upload didn't work. Please try again."

 Do	 Don't
To get started, upload your document.	Before beginning, please select the document you would like to upload.

4. Lucid uses the active voice (not passive).

Active voice always has a clear actor. Compare the two following examples:

You renamed your file.

The file name was changed.

The first example uses active voice because it clearly identifies who performed the action. The second example uses passive voice. The second example suggests that an ambiguous third party made the change, when, in reality, we are simply confirming that the user's action worked. Consider another example:

We couldn't upload your file.

Your file couldn't be uploaded.

The first uses the active voice, and the second uses the passive voice. The first example accepts responsibility and builds trust (we couldn't complete this action, and we know it's our fault) while the second example pushes off responsibility as if it was out of our control. By accepting responsibility, we convey ourselves as being a trustworthy partner in users' work.

By default, Lucid always uses active voice with a few notable exceptions:

- If the messaging portrays Lucid in a negative way (e.g., instead of “We’re ignoring your filters because...,” try “Your filters are being ignored because...”)
- If we can’t confidently identify who triggered an action because of collaboration or other technical reasons (e.g., instead of “You changed Jill to Jane,” try “Jill was changed to Jane”)
- If the messaging appears accusatory or critical of the user (e.g., instead of “You typed your password in wrong,” try “The password was incorrect”)

 Do	 Don't
If this user already has an account, we'll send them an invitation to join your team.	If the user already has an account, an invitation to join your team will be emailed to them.

5. Lucid uses contractions (except for some business and legal cases).

 Do	 Don't
Can't see your image? Make sure you've adjusted your sharing permissions.	If you cannot see the uploaded image, you will need to adjust your sharing permissions.

6. Lucid says "can" instead of "may" or neither.

 Do	 Don't
Add users to your team (who will then share your subscription) by setting up their accounts yourself or sending them email invites from this page.	To add users to your team, who will then share all the benefits of your own subscription, you may either set up their accounts yourself, or you may invite them via email on this page.

7. Lucid is declarative.

Starting your copy with a verb is a good way to write declarative, action-oriented messaging.

 Do	 Don't
Upload a backup file and we'll place the documents in a folder called "restore-<date>." This could take several minutes depending on the size.	To restore your documents, select your backup file and click the restore documents button. Your documents will appear in your

	document list under a new folder with the name "restore-<date>."
--	--

8. Lucid emphasizes action instead of "Click here."

 Do	 Don't
If you're a professor or faculty member, request a free Team account for you and your students.	If you're a professor or faculty member, click here to request a free Team account for you and your students.

Capitalization

Lucid uses [AP-style sentence case](#) for all titles, headers, buttons, menu items, actions, and paragraph text. This means that you capitalize the first word of the title or heading; the first word of a subtitle; the first word after a colon, em dash, or end punctuation in a heading; and proper nouns. Everything else should be in lowercase.

See [Capitalization](#) under Grammar and mechanics for further details.

 Do	 Don't
New feature: Import your diagrams from Miro and Mural	New Feature: Import Your Diagrams from Miro and MURAL
Get started in Lucidspark	Get Started in Lucidspark
Try it out	Try It Out TRY IT OUT

Dates and times

For in-product messaging specifically, use three-letter abbreviations for months without a period at the end: Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec. For times, omit periods after am and pm. Other than these exceptions, follow [AP style guidelines](#) for dates and times.

Writing help center content

When writing content for the Lucid help center, we honor AP style as well as Lucid brand and copywriting style guidelines first. There are some instances where we rely on unique rules outlined in the [help center style guide](#).

Generally, those rules are:

- **Use plain, simple language** in all help content. Aim for an eighth-grade reading level. Lucid users are busy, and we want to help them find their answer quickly so they can get back to work.
- In a **list of numbered steps**, write one step per list item. This applies even when the list of steps gets long. Some users may be stuck in the middle of a process—with this approach, they can quickly scan through the list and find the next step.
- **Add screenshots** only when they are helpful and necessary. Alongside clear copy, screenshots help to add clarity to a process.
- **Don't use colors to describe** icons and buttons. Instead, take screenshots of individual icons to show (in addition to tell) users what they should click. This guideline makes our content more accessible—providing a screenshot in addition to clear instructions helps readers with visual and cognitive conditions.
- **Provide additional resources** using content blocks to call out tips, notes, and article links to learn more. Seamlessly surface tips and other important information for users who want or need more resources.
- **Implement [SEO best practices](#)** in Zendesk Guide article titles and HTML. Keywords and a good SEO strategy increases the likelihood that the right help content is ranked higher in organic search.

Writing marketing emails

The following guidelines apply to HTML marketing emails sent via Marketo. These include newsletters, transactional emails, onboarding flows, nurture flows, reactivation flows, and the like.

Emails that come from an individual at Lucid are typically in plain text and therefore don't include the same elements as HTML emails. However, we do still recommend following best practices for email communication. See guides such as "[How to Write Better Emails at Work](#)" and "[How to Write a Perfect Professional Email in English: 7 Useful Tips](#)."

Copy elements of an email

- **Subject line:** Arguably the most important element because we won't get anywhere without readers opening the email in the first place. Subject lines should be clear first, catchy second, and they should entice the reader to learn more.
 - The subject line should ideally be 30-50 characters, with a max of about 60 characters.
 - The subject line should be in sentence case.
 - Include a CTA with strong verbs and active voice.
 - We tend not to use emojis because they are more commonly used with B2C companies and lifestyle brands, but there's not a hard-and-fast rule.
 - *Examples:*
- **Preheader:** The text that displays after the subject line in someone's inbox but is invisible in the email itself. The preheader should answer the "why" or "how" of the subject line.
 - Aim for 90 characters or less for your preheader. There's not a strict character count for the preheader, but it needs to have the most important information at the beginning in case some providers cut it off.
- **Header:** The bold text at the top of some marketing emails.
- **Body text:** The main message you want to deliver to this audience.
 - Keep the text as brief and scannable as possible. Use short paragraphs. Bullet points are also a great option to help readers quickly consume the key points or elements of your message.
 - Bold any items that you want to stand out when a reader quickly scans your email content, such as dates and times.
 - Try to limit the number of links you're including in the email (not applicable to newsletters).
- **CTA:** The call to action at the end of the email.
 - Keep the CTA clear and brief, about two or four words.
 - In most emails aside from newsletters, we typically only include one call to action. If there are multiple CTAs, optimize for the most important one based on the goal of the email.

- **Footer:** Standard information that follows CAN-SPAM rules. This section includes a link to email preferences and Lucid's mailing address.

Note: For more information, use the Litmus guide "Foundations of Email Design" as a resource, which is available in the content style guide folder on Google Drive.

Additional guidelines

- We should not write marketing emails as if they're coming from a specific person. We reserve this approach for emails that will actually come from someone at Lucid, such as product outreach, sales, customer success, etc., in a text-only format.
- Due to the previous point, we don't typically use greetings in marketing emails.
- We should not include "First name" anywhere in the email because our data is not reliable enough.

Writing blog posts and long-form content

Blog posts and other long-form content often include more flexibility than some other types of content mentioned in this guide. However, there are still guidelines to be mindful of.

Blog posts

For the purpose of this style guide, “blog posts” refers to 1) organic, SEO-driven blog posts, 2) thought leadership blog posts, and 3) bottom-of-funnel, product-centric blog posts. It does not refer to guest or ghostwritten blog posts.

Blog posts should typically be written from a second- or third-person point of review. First-person point of view is not used for the majority of blog posts (there may be some exceptions). See [Point of view](#) for more information.

Introductions of blog posts should aim to be to the point and match the intent of the reader.

Don’t include an author unless you want to designate that the blog post is coming from someone specific.

SEO

Organic blog posts should follow SEO best practices. Thought leadership and product-centric blog posts should also aim to follow SEO best practices, but in these cases, SEO comes second to clarity and reader experience. See [Writing for SEO](#) for more details on what this looks like.

In all blog posts, be mindful of opportunities for [internal linking](#) and choose SEO-friendly anchor text.

Calls to action, templates, and images

Always include a call to action (CTA) at the end of the post. CTAs should be active, remain succinct, and progress the reader further down the marketing funnel. You can also use in-text links to link out to other relevant sources and data.

Include clickable template images with captions where it makes sense. Note that a clickable template should link to the respective template page, not the in-app template.

The only images that are always added to blog posts are a header image and a CTA image—both of which are pulled from a library of images. Opt for additional images in the body of the blog post only if they will enhance the copy. All images should include alt text.

Other long-form content

Other long-form content outside of blog posts could include e-books or SEO-driven pages such as consideration pages and discovery pages.

For SEO-driven pages, you should refer to [Writing for SEO](#) and implement SEO best practices while also keeping the reader experience in mind.

E-books are used primarily for demand generation. They are ideally a blend of:

- Setting up the background of the topic
- Thought leadership around the topic
- Actionable tips a reader could put into practice

Depending on the goal of the specific e-book, include Lucid messaging and CTAs as it makes sense for the particular audience.

Additional guidelines

For all types of long-form content:

- Cut down wordiness where possible.
- Use clear headers that make the content easy to skim.
- Em dashes are preferred to semicolons—just don't overuse them!
- It is okay to start some sentences with conjunctions such as, so, and, but, etc.

Writing website copy

This section is all about webpages that try to get users to *do* something that contributes to Lucid's bottom line or puts viewers into our sales pipeline. This includes solutions pages, home pages, integration pages, webinar registration pages, and URLs that push people to sign up, upgrade, renew, purchase, download, or talk with a salesperson, etc.

The majority of the time, clarity is more important than cleverness in website copy. Be clear in regard to our tone and voice, the audience we're addressing, the benefits our features offer, and the action we want our audiences to take.

Copy elements of a webpage

Website copy consists of four main categories: **headers**, **subheaders** (i.e., subheadlines), **body copy**, and **CTAs** (calls to action).

Headers and subheaders

Think of headers as "attention grabbers." Their main purpose is to:

- 1) Get viewers to continue down the page and consume more of the page's content.
- 2) Communicate value that's relevant for the intended audience.

The headers in hero sections (H1s) are especially important. They are the first thing a website visitor sees, and if you lose them there, they likely won't continue. Remember, clarity tends to trump cleverness.

Scenario: header for a landing page. The CTA is to get viewers to sign up for a free account.

 **Do**

Create a professional diagram in less than 5 minutes

Why: The value is clear: You can create a professional diagram, and you can do it *quickly*. "Create" is also actionable. It's clear what viewers can *do* with our software.

 **Don't**

*You'll love our diagramming software with all your **chart***

Why: There's really no value communicated here other than "love." A heading like this might be better for an email subject line or as a display ad tagline, where the only goal is to get the reader to open or click something.

Headers further down the page should aim to get viewers to read subheaders and body copy. They can focus on important, unique features or the relevant benefits features make possible.

Subheaders are typically positioned below headers. They add important context to headers and also aim to get viewers to read the body copy.

 Do	 Don't
Header: <i>Create a professional diagram in less than 5 minutes</i> Subheader: <i>Build process flowcharts, mind maps, and anything else with a free account</i> Why: In the subheader, we clearly define what some of those diagrams are. We also make it clear that a free account is available.	Header: <i>You'll love our diagramming software with all your chart</i> Subheader: <i>Build the flowcharts of your dreams</i> Why: Flowcharts aren't typically something people dream about. It doesn't add any context to the header at all either. It's all fluff and no stuff.

Body copy

Body copy is where we can get more specific with what we offer. You still want to keep things concise, but this is the place to be more detailed in the value a particular feature offers.

 Do	 Don't
Header: <i>Create a professional diagram in less than 5 minutes</i> Subheader: <i>Build process flowcharts, mind maps, and anything else with a free account</i> Body copy: <i>It's easy to get started in Lucidchart, thanks to:</i> • <i>Easy-to-navigate UI</i> • <i>Dozens of shape libraries</i> • <i>Useful templates</i> • <i>In-product feature search</i> Why: Most of the time, it's not okay to just list features <i>unless</i> you have clearly	Header: <i>You'll love our diagramming software with all your chart</i> Subheader: <i>Build the flowcharts of your dreams</i> Body copy: <i>Get started quickly and build flowcharts, process maps, org charts, system diagrams and more with intuitive UI, shape libraries, templates, help center articles, and more!</i> Why: This sentence is long and contains multiple ideas and several features. It'd be

communicated their accompanying value(s). The first part of the body copy does this (getting started is easy), so it's fine. Bullet points are also helpful to break up copy and make it skimmable.	better to parse this out into two or three sentences.
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CTAs

Calls to action are a must for pretty much every page. Typically they'll be on buttons or as linked text. Several typical CTAs include:

- Sign up
- Log in
- Try now
- Try free today
- Download XYZ (PDF, e-book, etc.)
- Share
- Read more
- Learn more
- Get started
- Register
- Talk to sales
- Watch now

Feel free to use CTAs outside of this list. But CTAs should be concise. Avoid more than three to four words when you can.

 Do	 Don't
CTA: <i>Download free e-book now</i> Why: It's clear, it's concise, and it implies taking action sooner rather than later.	CTA: <i>Download your copy of this all-in-one guide today before it's too late!</i> Why: It's too long and contains more than one idea. Consider including text like "all-in-one guide" in your header, subheader, or body copy. If that information is important, don't leave it for the CTA.

Your first focus should be to make your headers, subheaders, and body copy relevant and easy to read. As a result, the wording for the CTA becomes less important. If you've written your other copy in such a way that your user is excited to take action, the CTA merely functions as a way for them to do that (click).

A viewer should know what kind of content they'll see after they click on CTA. "Read more" implies there will be something like a blog post or e-book. If "Read more" takes someone to a video, that's misleading.

Writing for social media

These guidelines are specific to those writing social media posts from our corporate accounts or as Lucid Software. Lucid employees who are posting from their personal accounts as themselves are not held to the same standard, although many of these principles are simply best practice for social media and can be used to write some approachable, successful posts.

Voice and tone

Our voice on social media should stay consistent with all other content we produce as a company. We speak in a way that's smart and informative, yet friendly, approachable, and occasionally witty. See [Voice and tone](#) for more information.

Due to the nature and goals of social media, we *do* adjust our tone. We take a more playful, conversational approach with a mix of informative and lighthearted posts—but always tying back to the business and our key messages. We are approachable, authentic, and social humans behind the screen.

Social is primarily an awareness channel instead of a performance channel, and social content should feel conversational and helpful—like a friend messaging you with a link to an article they liked or a colleague sharing a helpful resource during a daily standup that the team could use in their work.

 Do	 Don't
<i>Another round of Lucid Live Training Labs is heading your way this December 🎉</i> Why: Uses professional but informal, casual language (“another round,” “heading your way”)	<i>We have added new Lucid Live Training Labs for December to our webinar calendar. Sign up for them here:</i> Why: Too formal <i>Tell us we've added new training labs to our calendar without telling us.</i> Why: Too youthful and trendy; trying to force a viral meme format where it doesn't fit

Hooks

Good social media copy stops people from scrolling. Being bold without lying, acknowledging a poignantly felt pain point, or asking a thoughtful audience-focused question are great ways to start a post.

When writing hooks, don't use clickbait or bait-and-switch tactics: Give people value, information, and/or entertainment up front and immediately (either in the post copy or the image copy), even if you're promoting a longer piece like a blog or an e-book.

✓ Do	✗ Don't
<i>Tired of awkward silence on Zoom calls? 🪲</i> <i>Check out our guide for 5 practical tips for re-energizing a dead meeting.</i> Why: Uses a common pain point in the form of a rhetorical question, plus an emoji to humorously convey the idea of “crickets” during a virtual meeting, to drive interest in our relevant guide	<i>We bet you can't guess our 5 tips for making your meeting more effective!</i> Why: Focused on drawing more attention to the existence of our post instead of the message it contains; clickbaity; cheesy

Length

A general rule of thumb is to keep copy as short as possible without losing the key message.

- Twitter character limit is 280 characters, including links.
- For LinkedIn, try to keep characters roughly the same as our Twitter copy when possible. If you need to go longer, use line breaks liberally in order to break up the copy.

Copy that seems short in a Google Doc can look much longer when posted in a short-form platform like Twitter. Pasting your copy into the composer on the actual platform is a good way to get a sense of how it will look when published.

When writing about feature releases or new integrations, resist the urge to just include a lengthy bulleted list of every new feature—look for ways you can group or consolidate features that have similar end benefits in order to keep bulleted lists to two or three short lines.

Avoid using the same copy in the post as you do in the image, and look for other opportunities to cut redundant copy.

Emojis

Use emojis sparingly. Use emojis only for added effect or to underscore an emotion, not as a replacement for words (replacing words with emojis creates accessibility issues for screen readers).

Other dos and don'ts

Do:

- Lead with customer benefits.
- Use active voice, not passive.
- Refer to ourselves as “Lucid” in copy, not “Lucid Software” (they already have enough context clues from our account name to know which Lucid company we are).
- Write list items or titles in sentence case, not title case.
- Use pronouns and names.
- Use language commonly used by our audience and users.
- Tap into current happenings and trending topics when appropriate while staying on brand.
- Discuss relevant topics and situations happening among users (e.g., Q4 finishing, fiscal year, current world situations).

Don't:

- Put the product and company first (it comes off self-serving, salesy, and out of touch).
- Use ampersands instead of “and” or break grammar rules to get under a character limit—find another way to shorten what you’re saying.
- Use overly complex jargon or internal Lucid terms our audience wouldn’t understand.
- Use unprofessional slang, use dirty humor, engage with political or religious discussion, or make drug or sexual references.
- Use company-specific numbers (like revenue).

Writing for SEO

Even if a blog post or webpage isn't written for the specific purpose of targeting keywords and bringing in organic traffic, there are a lot of page elements that you can optimize to perform better in search results.

See "[Blog SEO: The Complete Guide](#)" from ahrefs for more insights.

Keywords

Use the following guidelines to optimize your piece with relevant keywords.

- Use keywords exactly as provided, modifying only for grammatical correctness (e.g. changing "what is sales funnel" to "what is the sales funnel").
- Include the primary keyword in the actual title, title tag, and URL slug for the page.
- Include the primary keyword within the first 100 words of the piece.
- Use the primary keyword at least two additional times within 1000 words.
- Use any secondary keywords at least one time each.
- Where applicable, include keywords within the alt text and captions of images.
- If possible and natural, use keywords as anchor text and in headings.

Links

Internal links should direct readers to pages or posts that push readers further down the funnel. Place the link on relevant keywords (e.g. "Read our latest post to learn [how to make a Venn diagram in Google Docs](#)") rather than include unnatural anchor text (e.g. "Click here!"). Do not include any punctuation following the anchor text as part of the link.

We discourage external links since we don't want to drive visitors away from our website and away from conversion. We will allow contributors (guest writers, case study subjects, experts who contribute a quote, etc.) one external link with branded anchor text. The link should direct to their homepage, with rare exceptions.

Additional elements

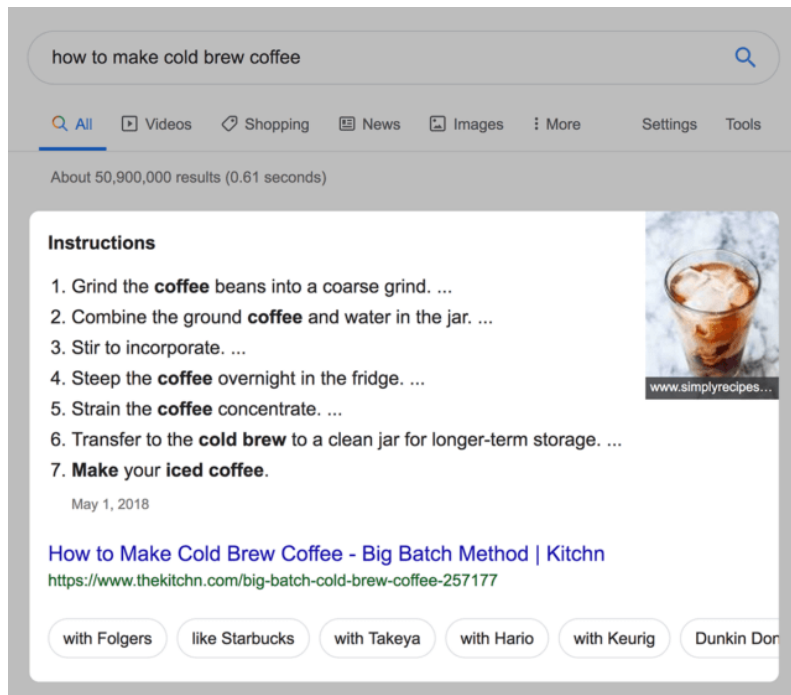
- **Title tag:** The title that shows up in search results. It's usually a slight modification from the actual title on the blog itself to optimize for search.
 - Use title case. (This is one of the few areas at Lucid where it's allowed!)
 - After the main title, include a vertical bar (|) and then the name of the site, such as "20 Brainstorming Techniques | Lucidspark."
 - Keep to 70 characters or less because the SERP (search engine results page) will cut off your title past that point. You can use a [SERP snippet optimizer](#) to see how it'll look.

- Try to position the primary keyword as close to the start of the title as possible.
 - Keep it simple. Your actual title might be “Caught in a brainstorm: 20 brainstorming activities to get your team’s juices flowing,” but “20 brainstorming activities” will more clearly show the user why the result was relevant to their search term.
- **Meta description:** A short description of the webpage that displays underneath the title tag and URL in search results.
 - Keep to 170 characters or less.
 - Include the primary keyword as it will be bolded in the SERP and help readers see how our content is relevant to their search term.
- **URL slug:** The final part of the URL, which describes the individual page.
 - A shortened version of the blog title (or whatever you use for the title tag) is typically sufficient for the URL slug. Make sure that you have included the primary keyword.
 - Use hyphens to separate each word.
 - Use lowercase letters.
 - Remove any numbers or dates to keep the URL evergreen, even through updates.
 - If you need to change the URL after publishing a post for any reason, make sure to contact the SEO team about setting up a redirect, otherwise it will negatively impact the article’s SEO rankings for a time.



- **Headings:** In the body text, use H2, H3, and subsequent tags to denote headings and subheadings rather than bold or italic text (H1 is already used for the blog or page title). Use keywords within headings when practical.
- **Images:** Since our company promotes visual collaboration, we encourage the use of images throughout a blog post—particularly templates, as they encourage readers to sign up for and use our products.
 - Use descriptive file names when uploading the image into Cashy (e.g., “current state flowchart” instead of “IMG_95742”).
 - Include alt text on every image. Describe your images in a few words, using keywords where appropriate, to help visually impaired users that use screen readers. See [Writing for accessibility](#) for more information.
- **Featured snippet:** A short snippet of text that appears at the top of Google’s search results pages in order to quickly answer a searcher’s query. These snippets appear above the traditional number-one spot.

- On blog posts, you can answer a specific search term (e.g., “how to make a flowchart” or “what is an org chart”) before the introduction to try and get the featured snippet. Use [specific HTML](#) to set this answer apart.



Writing for translation

As Lucid expands globally, we need to write content—particularly website copy, forms, in-product messaging, and automated emails—that translators and international audiences can easily understand and translate into languages other than American English. We should strive to be as inclusive as possible.

Many of the principles discussed previously will help in this endeavor:

- Use active voice over passive voice.
- Use simple sentence structures.
- Use positive language.

Consider these additional guidelines ([adapted from Mailchimp](#)) if you are writing content specifically to be translated for international audiences.

- **Prioritize clarity.** Keep your copy brief, but don't sacrifice clarity for brevity. You may need to repeat or add words to make the meaning of your sentences clear to a translator.
- **Avoid vague pronouns.** The pronouns you use should clearly refer to a previous noun in the sentence. "It," "this," "which," and "that" could all be vague pronouns.
- **Avoid words ending in -ing.** Many types of English words end in -ing (nouns, adjectives, progressive verbs, etc.), and translators may have difficulty distinguishing the various types.
- **Avoid words with multiple meanings.** Try to use a more specific term. For example, you could replace "select the right image" with "select the appropriate image."
- **Avoid the following words and mechanics:**
 - Idioms, metaphors, slang, cliches, or examples specific to one country
 - Shortened words, even if they're common in English (use "application," not "app")
 - Uncommon foreign words (use "genuine," not "bona fide")
 - Unnecessary abbreviations (use "for example," not "e.g.")
 - Converting one part of speech into another if it isn't already commonly used (use "Send us an email" instead of "message us")
 - Non-standard or indirect verb usage (use "he says," not "he's like" or "he was all")
 - Double negatives
 - Synonyms, generally. Don't use a lot of different words for the same thing in a single piece of writing. Instead of mixing it up with "campaign," "newsletter," "bulletin," etc., pick one term and stick with it.

Writing for accessibility

At Lucid, we want to help *everyone* collaborate more effectively—but that means our content needs to be accessible to a broad and diverse audience, including users of all mental and physical capacities. Follow these guidelines ([adapted from Mailchimp](#)) to make content accessible to anyone using a screen reader, keyboard navigation, or Braille interface.

Include alt text

The alt tag is the most basic form of image description, and it should be included on all images. The language will depend on the purpose of the image:

- If it's a creative photo or supports a story, describe the image in detail in a brief caption.
- If the image is serving a specific function, describe what's inside the image in detail. People who don't see the image should come away with the same information as if they had.
- If the text in the image is essential to understanding the image (e.g., infographics), include that text as part of the alt text.
- If you're sharing a chart or graph, include the data in the alt text so people have all the important information.

Some additional tips:

- Keep alt text shorter than 120 characters.
- Separate words with underscores or hyphens.
- Don't use special characters like ampersands, apostrophes, etc.

Each browser handles alt text differently. Supplement images with standard captions when possible.

Avoid directional language

Avoid directional instructions and any language that requires the reader to see the layout or design of the page. This is helpful for many reasons, including layout changes on mobile.

 Do	 Don't
Select from these options: (with the steps listed after the title)	Select from the options in the right sidebar.

Use headers

Headers should always be nested and consecutive. Never skip a header level for styling reasons. To help group sections, be sure the page title is H1, top-level sections are H2s, and subsequent inside those are H3 and beyond. Avoid excessive nesting.

Label forms

Label inputs with clear names, and use appropriate tags. Think carefully about what fields are necessary, and especially which ones you mark as required. Label required fields clearly. The shorter the form, the better.

Use descriptive links

Links should provide information on the associated action or destination. Try to avoid “click here” or “learn more.”

Using inclusive language

As noted in our brand personality, Lucid is warm, friendly, and inclusive. We want to help *everyone* solve problems and turn their best ideas into reality, which means that we do not use words that reflect prejudiced, stereotyped, or discriminatory views and could potentially alienate certain people. This applies to culture, religion, race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, veteran status, disability, size, age, socio-economic status, and more.

Going a step further, we want to discard any inhumane language and language that “others” people. Slurs and other blatantly discriminatory language are never acceptable. We speak and write in a way that creates an environment where everyone is able to feel respected, safe, and included.

Referring back to the [Writing for Translation](#) section of this guide, we also don’t use idioms, metaphors, slang, cliches, or examples specific to one country. We have Lucid users all around the world, and our content should be mindful of that.

The following are other phrases that we should avoid in an effort to be more inclusive.

 Don't	 Do
We don't use the word “resources” when referring to people.	We are people, team members, Lucidites, colleagues, participants, humans, folks, etc.
We don't use language that “others” people such as “offshore teams.”	We use terms that are more specific (when needed) rather than exclusive, such as “APAC team,” “EMEA team,” “North Carolina office,” etc.
We don't “drive” human activities. We don't drive people, meetings, or projects.	We lead people, facilitate meetings, and manage projects.
We don't use gendered language, such as “boys,” “girls,” “guys,” “men,” “women,” “ladies,” “gentleman,” “his or her,” etc.	We use gender-neutral language, such as “everyone,” “their,” “team members,” “team,” “developers,” “folks,” etc.

When checking for inclusive language, it may be useful to keep the following questions in mind:

- Do you need to refer to personal characteristics such as gender, religion, race, disability, or age at all? (Most often, probably not.)
- Are the references to group characteristics expressed in inclusive terms?
- Do the references to people reflect the diversity of that audience?
- Does your use of jargon and acronyms exclude people who may not have specialized knowledge of a particular subject?

Remember to lead with respect and inclusivity, and if you're not sure whether something is inclusive language or not—ask!

Points to add

- ~~Capitalize “Lean”~~
- ~~Leave trademark off Visio~~
- ~~FedRAMP; capitalization and how we write “In Process” and other statuses~~
- ~~Lucid GovSuite, Lucid for public sector~~
- ~~Add caveat about ampersands~~
- ~~Add caveat about numerals (okay to use in titles/headings/short form copy where space is an issue and you want the number to stand out)~~
- ~~Style for block quotes~~
- ~~Do we write lifecycle as one word or two? Merriam Webster says two, but I’ve commonly seen it as one~~
- ~~Diagrams.net is back to being draw.io~~
- ~~What case we write help center, community, and developer portal in~~
- How do we write roadmapping? Merriam Webster doesn’t recognize that as a word, but “roadmapping” seems to be used other places
- Is Design Thinking capitalized?
- Do we write dataset as one or two words?
- May need a note about whether prepositions are capitalized in title tags because the Notebook tool gave a different answer for capitalization than an AP title case converter did
- Do we capitalize professional services? In general, I know we lowercase team names, but I see professional services specifically capitalized in different places