



Diligent Copy Style Guide

Messaging, Voice & Tone and Usage

1. Brand Promise, Brand Pillars & Messaging Principles
2. Voice & Tone
3. Diligent Copy Style
4. Accessibility & Inclusivity
5. Call for Submissions

1. BRAND PROMISE, BRAND PILLARS & MESSAGING PRINCIPLES

Diligent Brand Promise

*Draft language; **do not** use on external-facing content assets.*

As today's business landscape grows increasingly complex and stakeholder-centric, leaders must do more than respond to challenges as they arise.

They must anticipate where the market is going and get there first — ethically, sustainably and in full compliance with shifting regulations and stakeholder expectations. By building a stronger connection between the board and C-suite and the teams that run day-to-day risk, compliance and audit practices, Diligent empowers organizations to approach governance, risk and compliance (GRC) holistically, so they can be more informed, more secure, more collaborative and more purpose-driven.

Diligent equips transformational leaders and organizations with the insights to inform, the technology to act and the confidence to create positive change.

Diligent Brand Pillars

How our audiences should experience them



Customer-Centered

“Diligent understands my concerns and is helping me solve my GRC challenges. They develop their products based on what I need to do my job better.”

Innovative

“Diligent’s technology is cutting-edge and unites governance, risk and compliance into one intuitive platform with high-performing features. What Diligent is doing is unlike anything its competitors are doing.”

Expert

“I get relevant, timely intelligence and perspectives from Diligent and its partners that help me do my job better.”

Category & Market Leader

“Diligent is redefining what GRC means and is charting the path forward for GRC best practices.”

Catalyst for Change

“With Diligent, I have the confidence to create change and increase accountability within my organization, so we can make a greater impact for our stakeholders and our community.”

Authentic

“Diligent is genuinely interested in my success and in the success of my organization.”

Messaging Principles

Diligent content aims to:

- Empower
- Inform
- Empathize
- Educate/guide
- Challenge
- Connect the dots

Diligent content is:

- Knowledgeable, yet empathetic
- Professional, yet accessible
- Urgent, yet optimistic
- Customer-focused and benefit-driven

2. VOICE & TONE

Bringing the Messaging Principles to Life

Knowledgeable, Yet Empathetic

Voice & Tone Principle 1

Our expertise and best-in-class solutions come from a **deep understanding of the challenges our customers face**. Our ability to relate not only creates trust; it's what enables us to build and deliver great customer experiences. Whenever possible, we first establish rapport by acknowledging the challenges of being a modern leader — the responsibilities they assume, the pressures they face, the adversity they must overcome. Then, we follow with our insight, expertise and solutions, connecting our understanding of their work with our ability to support it.



It Is

Relatable, Perceptive, Aware

“To future-proof the organization for the challenges ahead, board performance and composition are key. Board members and their skill sets must be diverse in ways that mirror the organization’s long-term strategy. Digitizing board processes also shifts the time and energy of governance teams from administrative processes to more strategic outputs.”

It Is Not

Arrogant, Know-It-All, Dismissive

“The leading company in governance solutions, Diligent is by far the most recognized board and executive leadership product, used only by companies who expect nothing short of the best.”

Professional, Yet Accessible

Voice & Tone Principle 2

We are professionals serving other professionals, but ultimately, it's our humanity that connects us. We want our customers to not only feel they picked the right GRC solution, but a **trusted partner who'll be there with them every step of the way**. Especially for customers new to the world of digital transformation, we want them to feel they are in good hands. That's why we aim to create a sense of welcome at every engagement. We're careful not to be too casual, and we limit our use of jargon. We embrace our roles as ambassadors of the brand, using we, us, our Diligent and Diligent's interchangeably.



It Is

Earnest, Authentic, Inclusive

“Boards, executives and governance teams all regularly handle sensitive data and nonpublic information. Consequently, they require collaboration tools that protect confidential data while mirroring the way they work: on the go, across departments and with third parties. Learn more by chatting with one of our Governance Advisors.”

It Is Not

Elitist, Stiff, Slangy

“If your company does not use AES-256 encryption, it’s not taking security seriously enough. That is a big no-no for organizations trying to stay relevant.”

Urgent, Yet Optimistic

Voice & Tone Principle 3

We speak with a sense of urgency; the nature of our business demands it. But the way we frame it matters. **We speak to the possibilities enabled by Diligent, rather than dwell on downsides of inaction.** In this fast-paced world, we want to be the voice that reassures our customers and prospects that Diligent can help them realize new opportunities, not just remind them of all the ways failure looms. We keep our communications rooted in optimism and focused on the potential that lies ahead.



It Is

Forward-Looking, Purposeful, Encouraging

“Companies who embrace modern governance are well positioned to emerge from a crisis stronger on the other side.”

It Is Not

Ominous, Pessimistic, Extreme

“Companies who fail to embrace modern governance risk losing market share and industry relevance.”

Customer-First and Benefit-Driven

Voice & Tone Principle 4

We address our customers' needs, desires, priorities and challenges. Wherever possible, we lead with the benefit or use case — how the customer can make their GRC practices easier, faster, more successful, more competitive or more advantageous by using Diligent. We put the customer at the center of the story. The customer is the hero, a hero who is more effective when equipped with the Diligent platform. We do not focus on what we have produced or released into market. Instead, **we focus on how the customer can leverage the Diligent platform to create more success within their organization.**



It Is

Helpful, Benefit-Led, Customer-Centric

“Share sensitive information securely with trusted third parties — particularly in cases of M&A, external audits, and legal or compensation discussions.”

It Is Not

Boastful, Congratulatory, Diligent-Centric

“Diligent’s new features enable your company to provide important information to directors while keeping it safe from hackers.”

Online Messaging Principles

Additional tips to keep in mind when writing for online properties



ONLINE COPY DO'S

Do be scannable and instantly understood

E.G.

“Manage sensitive meetings, workflows and crisis communications”

“Protect budgeting, forecasting and other financial information”

“Maintain closed-loop communication on M&A and strategic growth operations”

Do highlight the benefit

E.G.

“Turn ESG Promises into Action with Diligent’s ESG Solutions”

Do answer the question, “Why will the reader care?”

E.G.

“Start, Scale and IPO with Confidence”



ONLINE COPY DON'TS

Don't be dense, long-winded or rambling

E.G.

“Diligent Entities enables organizations to centralize and manage their corporate subsidiary data management to simplify entity governance throughout the entire organization improving compliance and mitigating risk”

Don't bury the benefit

E.G.

“Diligent’s Leadership Collaboration Suite enables secure work on critical matters”

Don't be overly focused on Diligent

E.G.

“Diligent & Manufacturing Industries: Powering Modern Governance”

2. DILIGENT COPY STYLE

Usage, Mechanics & Common Copy Needs

Diligent Usage



1. Write in **active voice** wherever possible, not passive voice.
2. Be **concise and direct**. Avoid jargon.
3. Use Title Case (also known as Headline Case) for most **headlines and subheads**. Use Sentence case when Title Case reads awkwardly. In Title Case, capitalize the first and last words, and all nouns, pronouns, verbs and adverbs. Do not end Title Case with a period. **Additional notes on Title Case.**
4. Do not use the **serial (Oxford) comma** unless the sentence requires it for clarity.
5. Use the **% symbol** instead of “percent.”
6. Use **contractions** when the alternative sounds stiff.
7. Put spaces — like this — **around em dashes and ellipses**.
8. Capitalize **job titles** only before a person’s name (“Chairperson Jones”); otherwise, do not capitalize.
9. Do not capitalize **business departments** (compliance, audit, tax, finance, marketing, etc.)
10. Do not put periods on **bulleted lists** unless one or more of the bulleted items is multiple sentences; in that case, punctuate them all.
11. If a complete sentence follows a **colon**, capitalize the first word after the colon.
12. After introducing an individual in copy, refer to them by their **last name** only on subsequent mentions.
13. Avoid putting **possessives on trademarked brands** and names, including Diligent, unless the alternative is awkward.
14. For U.S.-facing content, use **double quotation marks**, with most punctuation inside the marks. Queen’s English typically puts quotes in single quotation marks.
15. Capitalize Diligent **product names**.
16. Italicize the names of original **Diligent programs** such as *Inside America’s Boardrooms*.
17. Write **phone numbers** with the country code and spaces: +1 877 434 5443, +44 (0) 20 7605 7400.
18. Write **dates** in this format: June 17, 2021.
19. Write **times** in this format: 9am - 1pm EDT.

Looking for something else? Check the **AP Stylebook**.



- **URL:** apstylebook.com
- **User ID:** styleguide@diligent.com
- **Password:** Diligent1\$

Diligent Brands, Solutions, Products & Initiatives



Use full formal names of products (e.g., Diligent Board & Leadership Collaboration) in headlines and on first mention in body. “Diligent” can be dropped from most product names on subsequent references.

- BoardDocs, a Diligent brand
- BoardEffect, a Diligent brand
- BoardMax, a Diligent brand
- Boardpacks, a Diligent brand
- BoardPaq, a Diligent brand
- CGLytics, a Diligent brand
- Cyber Risk Scorecard
- Community by Diligent
- The Corporate Director Podcast
- Diligent Advanced Governance Analytics
- Diligent Board & Leadership Collaboration
- Diligent Boards
- Diligent Compliance
- Diligent Director Network
- Diligent Entities
- Diligent Equity (*formerly Equity Effect*)
- Diligent ESG Solutions (*always plural*)
- Diligent Executive Compensation Solutions (*always plural*)
- Diligent Governance Cloud
- Diligent Governance Intel
- Diligent Insights
- Diligent Institute (*or the Diligent Institute*)
- Diligent Leadership Collaboration Suite
- Diligent Messenger
- Diligent Minutes
- Diligent Nominations (*formerly Diligent NomGov*)
- Diligent Operational Governance
- Diligent Premium Questionnaires
- Diligent Secure Collaboration
- Diligent Secure File Sharing
- Diligent Secure Meeting Workflow
- Diligent Workflow (*formerly DotApprove*)
- Directorpoint, a Diligent brand
- The Directors’ Experience
- eShare, a Diligent brand
- Galvanize, a Diligent brand
- iCompass, a Diligent brand
- Info4c, a Diligent brand
- Inside America’s Boardrooms
- Manzama, a Diligent brand
- Mission Driven Organizations
- modern audit (*not capitalized unless in a headline*)
- modern compliance (*not capitalized unless in a headline*)
- modern governance (*not capitalized unless in a headline*)
- modern risk (*not capitalized unless in a headline*)
- Modern Governance 100
- Modern Governance Event Europe
- Modern Governance Summit
- Modern Leadership
- SecurityScorecard
- Simplifie
- Steele, a Diligent brand
- vbr, a Diligent brand

Diligent Spelling & Capitalization of Common Terms



For terms not listed here, refer to [AP Stylebook](#). If not in AP, refer to [Merriam-Webster](#).

- 409A
- 501(c)(3)
- add-on
- board member
- boardroom
- COVID, COVID-19
- coronavirus
- C-suite (*C always capitalized, s lowercase unless in a headline*)
- cyberattack
- cybercrime, cybercriminal
- cyber risk
- cybersecurity
- cyberthreat
- decision-making
- director
- diversity and inclusion (*use “&” in headlines; D&I acceptable on subsequent mentions*)
- diversity, equity and inclusion (*use “&” in headlines; DEI or DE&I acceptable on subsequent mentions*)
- diversity, equity, inclusion and intersectionality (*use “&” in headlines; DEI or DEI&I acceptable on subsequent mentions*)
- eBook
- ERM (*define as “enterprise risk management” on first mention*)
- ESG (*define as “environmental, social and governance” on first mention*)
- EU (*no periods*)
- future-proof (*adjective and verb*)
- GRC (*define as “governance, risk and compliance” or “governance, risk management and compliance” on first mention*)
- IRM (*define as “integrated risk management” on first mention*)
- login (*noun*)
- log in (*verb*)
- midcap
- midsize
- nonpublic
- nonprofit (*no hyphen or space, lowercase p*)
- purpose-driven
- real time (*noun*)
- real-time (*adjective*)
- shareholder
- sign-up (*noun, adjective*)
- sign up (*verb*)
- skill set
- stakeholder
- stakeholder-centric
- startup (*noun, adjective*)
- start up (*verb*)
- stockholder
- stockowner
- toward (*U.S. usage*) / towards (*Queen’s English usage only*)
- U.K. (*use periods*)
- unsecure (*not “insecure” when referring to technology or processes*)
- U.S. (*use periods*)
- videoconference (*one word*)
- white paper (*two words*)

Looking for something else? Check the [AP Stylebook](#).



- **URL:** apstylebook.com
- **User ID:** styleguide@diligent.com
- **Password:** Diligent1\$

Common Diligent Personas



Lowercase titles except when using in a headline or in front of a person's name.

- board administrator, board admin
- board chair
- board director
- board member
- CoSec: corporate secretary (*also "company secretary"*)
- CAO: chief audit officer (*CAO may also indicate chief administrative officer; clarify on first mention*)
- CEO: chief executive officer (*"CEO" acceptable in all instances*)
- CDO: chief data officer
- CFO: chief financial officer (*"CFO" acceptable in all instances*)
- CHRO: chief human resources officer
- CIO: chief information officer
- CISO: chief information security officer
- CLO: chief legal officer
- CMO: chief marketing officer
- COO: chief operating officer
- CRO: chief risk officer (*CRO may also indicate chief revenue officer or chief rewards officer; clarify on first mention*)
- CTO: chief technology officer
- committee chair
- committee member
- executive assistant
- GC: general counsel
- governance professional
- legal operations (*also "legal ops"*)
- paralegal
- rewards officer



“About Diligent” Press Boilerplate



Use as written; do not change.

About Diligent

Diligent is the largest governance, risk and compliance (GRC) SaaS provider, serving more than one million users from over 25,000 organizations around the globe. Our modern GRC platform ensures boards, executives and other leaders have a holistic, integrated view of audit, risk, information security, ethics and compliance across the organization.

Diligent brings technology, insights and confidence to leaders so they can build more effective, equitable and successful organizations. We empower 79% of the Fortune 500, 90% of the FTSE 100 and 83% of the ASX 200 to improve their bottom line, keep pace with stakeholder expectations and create lasting, positive impact on the world.

For more information visit www.diligent.com.

3. ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSIVITY

Guidelines

Accessibility



Use plain language. Consider whether your copy would make sense to someone who does not work at Diligent. If not, rewrite.

- Use the **Gunning Fog Index** to gauge readability and comprehension. A score of 12 indicates a reader needs a 12th-grade education to comprehend the content. Diligent content should aim to score approximately 11. (Exceptions will occur.)



Consider whether the message would still be clear if someone cannot see the colors, images or video.



Explain abbreviations and acronyms on first reference for people who may not be familiar.



Use alt text on all images. Describe the image in detail in the alt text.

- If the image is a chart or graph, include the information in the alt text.



Use hierarchies to improve scannability.

- The most important information should come first. Separate different topics with headings.



Use descriptive calls to action (CTAs) such as “Download,” “Register,” “Read Report,” etc., to provide information on the action or destination that will result.

- Never use “Click here” and try to avoid generic CTAs such as “learn more,” space permitting.

Inclusivity



Avoid “simple” and “simply.”

- What might be simple for you might not be simple for others.



Avoid bias and harm when discussing disability and accessibility.



Use diverse and inclusive examples.



Use diverse names, genders, ages and locations in examples.



Avoid vague and confusing references between a pronoun and its antecedent.

- Not recommended: “If you type text in the field, it doesn’t change.”
- Recommended: “If you type text in the field, the text doesn’t change.”



Use gender-neutral pronouns.

- Use the singular “they” pronoun unless referring to a person who identifies as a specific gender.



Avoid disability bias and ableist language; don’t describe people without disabilities as “normal” or “healthy.”

- Instead, use terms such as: nondisabled person, sighted person, hearing person, person without disabilities, neurotypical person, etc.

4. CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

This Is an Evolving Style Guide

Help improve the next iteration.



The Content Strategy team will regularly revise and update this guide to reflect Diligent's ongoing evolution as the world's largest GRC SaaS provider.



Please send suggestions for inclusion, questions on usage or other copy style items to [**styleguide@diligent.com**](mailto:styleguide@diligent.com).