

Grammar/spelling

- Sentence case for titles and headings
- Capitalise only for official titles and names. In this case do not capitalise articles (a/an/the), prepositions (to/on/for etc) and conjunctions (but/and/or etc)
- Use lower case for job titles. For example, Buddy Bayer, chief commercial officer
- Capitalise full, formal team names. For example, the Central Marketing and Communications Office. But not if used informally, for example, the marketing team.
- No full stops after bullet points or headings
 - Except for emphasis after a full caps heading or title slide, mainly used in advertising copy
- UK spelling e.g. fibre not fiber (pro tip: check the language in Microsoft Word in the bottom-left corner of your screen)
- Note that there is no comma between the penultimate item in a list and 'and'/'or', unless required to prevent ambiguity – this is sometimes referred to as the 'Oxford comma'. However, insert a comma in this position if it would help prevent confusion.
- Explain acronyms the first time they are used in a sentence, thereafter use the acronym only. Acronyms without being spelt out are ok in a headline, if readers will know what it means. Keep acronyms to a minimum.
- Apostrophe to indicate possession - Use ' after plural nouns ending in s. For example, *several students'* books were missing. Remember the exception to this is 'its' - so 'Colt and its services' is correct, not 'Colt and it's services'.
- Use a colon to introduce something which follows logically from the text before it, is not a new concept and follows logically on the preceding text. For example, 'to prepare for our trip we need: bags, maps and new shoes.'
- Do not use a colon if the two parts of the sentence are not logically connected
- Use a semicolon to link two related parts of a sentence, neither of which depends logically on the other and each of which could stand alone as a grammatically complete sentence. For example, my car broke down this morning; it's being fixed at the garage now
- Don't use 'em' or 'en' dashes as in some cultures this can be indicative of quotations and AI-generated text (Co Pilot uses these)
- Do not use exclamation marks unless necessary
- Use double quotation marks for direct speech or a quote
- Use a single space after a full stop
- Spell out 'and' in body copy but you can use an ampersand (&) in a headline or if it's part of a formal name or title

Full caps

Using full caps in can be a powerful design and communication tool for Colt advertising material, but should be used intentionally and sparingly to maintain clarity and impact. Here's when they are typically appropriate:

- **Advertising copy headlines**
 - To make a message bold and unmissable
- **Callouts or highlights**
For short, impactful phrases that need to stand out visually

When to avoid full caps

- **Body text or long paragraphs:** Full caps reduce readability and can feel aggressive or overwhelming
- **Tone-sensitive content:** When writing sensitive messages, full caps are inappropriate
- **Overuse:** Using full caps too frequently can dilute their impact and make the document feel cluttered

Numbers and dates

- Write out numbers up to ten and then use figures for numbers above ten
- Write out million/billion etc in full
- Spell out words for 'first', 'second' and so on up to and including 'tenth'; use numbers and 'st'/'nd'/'rd'/'th' for larger ordinal numbers
- Always use figures and symbols for percentages, measurements and currency. Use commas to punctuate large numbers after every hundred e.g. 1,300; 1,300,000
- Please use UK/EU date formats when writing full dates, for example March 27th 2023 would be 27/03/2023
- Unless you need to use the full date, it's clearer to use the day and date, only mentioning the year if needed. For example, please complete the training by Friday 27 March
- For times, use the 24-hour clock format
- Use % rather than writing 'per cent' (which is a US preference)

Formatting and accessibility

- Use our darker brand colours for links. It's better for accessibility.
- Make the wording for links descriptive. If people use screen readers and want to jump immediately to a link and they all just say 'click here' then the person has no idea what the content will be about. So say things like 'click here for the latest communications plan'
- When talking about Colt and one of its partners, always list Colt as the prominent member of the duo i.e. 'Colt and Versa', never 'Versa and Colt'.

Writing tips

- Use as little punctuation as necessary while retaining the meaning of the sentence
- Use contractions: I'm, we're, they're etc instead of I am, we are, they are etc. It's how we naturally speak
- Don't use the name Colt unless we really need to. We all know who we work for. Say we're doing this, we won that etc - unless it's for external, in which case use third person and say "Colt is" rather than "Colt are"
- Read your work out loud. Is the sentence too long? If you struggled to read it, then it probably is. It's much better to have more shorter sentences than one big long one which makes it hard for readers to process all the information
- Use headers to break things up
- Steer away from expected sentences which don't add anything. Particularly openers such as: 'We're delighted to announce', 'As you may be aware from the announcement yesterday' 'I wanted to let you know'. Just cut to the chase
- You almost always never need to use the word 'that'. It's an easy one to edit out
- "At Colt, we..." is an overused opening clause. Simply say "We..."

Common words and phrases:

Cloud	Lower case unless part of a company or product name	Off-net	Two words, with a hyphen
Colt-owned	Two words, hyphenated	On-net	Two words, with a hyphen
Data centre	Two words	On Demand services	Capitalised and two words when referring to Colt's product
Digital infrastructure	Lower case and not singular – for example; Colt provides digital infrastructure, not 'a digital infrastructure'	On-demand	When referring to the concept, lower case and hyphenated
High bandwidth	No hyphen, two words		
Internet	Lower case unless part of a product name	Real-time	With a hyphen
Low latency	No hyphen	SD WAN	Two words, no hyphen
MarketPrizm	Single word, capital P	Subsea	One word, no hyphen