

Forrester Style Guide: An Overview

Our house style guide is based on guidance from the **Associated Press Stylebook** and the **Merriam-Webster dictionary**. It includes guidance on usage, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and brand-specific recommendations. Our house style guide is continuously managed by Forrester editors, so it's current with the Associated Press Stylebook's latest updates.

Every piece of externally facing Forrester content is edited in accordance with our house style guide — from Total Economic Impact™ studies, to events presentations such as those featured in CX North America, to Forrester Waves™ and Forrester Decisions research. The content of Forrester Consulting deliverables reflects this global set of standards.

Each Forrester Consulting deliverable undergoes several rounds of internal revision and review prior to its delivery to customers. This document answers some of the more common style questions Forrester clients ask.

CAPITALIZATION

Forrester style determines capitalization through two sets of distinctions:

1) title case vs. sentence case and 2) proper nouns vs. common nouns.

- Title case capitalizes the first letter of each word **including prepositions, conjunctions, and articles**. This applies to all titles, subtitles, and headers.

Examples: The Future Of Digital Banking Is Now

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- Sentence case capitalizes the first letter of the first word and nothing else.

Forrester style **does not** capitalize:

- Job titles that appear after or without individuals' names (e.g., senior VP, digital channel manager).
- Department or team names (e.g., IT services team, human resources).
- Generic capabilities of a specific product (e.g., real-time chatbot, automated messaging).

Forrester style **does** capitalize:

- Company and subsidiary names.
- Client and Forrester product names.
- Job titles when used directly before an individual's name.
- City, state, province, and country names.
- Internet protocols (e.g., FTP, HTTP, REST, and RESTful).

COMMAS

Forrester uses the Oxford (or serial) comma across all Forrester content to reduce ambiguity in sentence structure.

Example: The team included analysts, research associates, and salespeople.

HYPHENATION

Adjective phrases: When an adjective phrase comes before a noun, it's hyphenated. If it comes after a noun, it's not hyphenated.

Examples: My organization's long-term strategies will enhance its ROI.

My organization's strategies to enhance our ROI are long term.

Shared base words: Hyphens are used to ensure that two or more compounds share a single base word.

Example: The company was searching for both full- and part-time employees.

Compound nouns: Forrester uses hyphens to clearly distinguish these grammatical constructions.

Example: Decision-maker, decision-making, time-to-market

Additional hyphenation notes:

- Forrester style includes definitive guidance for whether or not certain prefixes and suffixes are hyphenated. Some of those distinctions are detailed below. Exceptions may occur if the second word begins with a repeated vowel or the resulting compound is ambiguous or unwieldy.

Prefixes/Suffixes	Examples
cyber-	cybercrime, cyberthreat, cyberspace
multi-	multimedia, multicloud
pre-	prepackage, presuppose
re-	revisit, redo
-wide	enterprisewide, companywide
-ly	fully burdened salary

NUMBERS

Forrester spells out whole numbers from one to nine and uses numerals for 10 and above.

Numerals are used for all units of measure including units of time.

Example: Acme’s chatbots enable a 7-second improvement in response rates for the call center.

When a number appears at the beginning of a sentence, heading, or subheading, it’s always spelled out. Data callouts are an exception to this rule.

PERCENTAGES

Percentage symbols (%) are used in all instances except when a percentage begins a sentence.

Examples: Fifty-two percent of respondents reported that their organization needed to invest more in eco-friendly processes, as compared to the 34% who chose to reinvest elsewhere.

Numerals are used when referring to percentage points.

QUOTES

If an interviewee quote is just one sentence, a comma is used to introduce it.

Example: The CIO at a healthcare organization said, “This solution allows my team to focus on what’s important, rather than on menial tasks.”

If an interviewee quote is two or more sentences, a colon is used to introduce it.

Example: The product manager at a retailer stated: “We are working better together. This solution makes it easier to collaborate.”

ACRONYMS/INITIALISMS

Commonly accepted acronyms are not spelled out (e.g., AI, ATM, B2B, B2C, CRM, CPU, etc.). Forrester editors and analysts manage and curate this list of commonly accepted acronyms.

Less-common acronyms are spelled out on first use in the body copy with the acronym in parentheses following the term.

Example: personally identifiable information (PII)

BULLETS

Bulleted content ends with a period, regardless of whether or not the text is a complete sentence.

All bullets should have a parallel structure, with each bullet beginning with a noun/verb/participle/etc.

Example: The benefits this solution provides include:

- **Increased visibility.**
- **Enhanced customer communication.**
- **Improved flexibility.**

TERMS

Our house style guide and glossary contains Forrester-specific rules for content formatting.

- Forrester lowercases the terms “capex” and “opex” (short for capital expenditure and operating expenditure).
- For terms like “software as a service” and “infrastructure as a service,” hyphens aren’t used unless the term functions like an adjective (e.g., infrastructure-as-a-service platform).
- Forrester follows the grammatically correct approach for the use of “on-premises,” including both the hyphen and the plural form of “premise.”

ABOUT FORRESTER CONSULTING

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