

Length & word count

- Blog posts should have at least 300 words
- Blog posts with 2100-2400 words do better for SEO
- We need all sizes of posts—short, medium, and long
- Write until you've said what you have to say, then stop
- Be as succinct yet explanatory as possible

Map your plan before you write

- Establish the topic
 - o Campaign calendar topics will be detailed in your Jira task
 - o Additional topics can be found on your department tab
- Target audience
 - o Before you begin writing, identify who you're writing for
 - o These will be identified in the Jira stories/tasks
 - o Reference [persona slides](#)—the more you know about them, the better
- Outline your content
 - o Before you start writing, outline your intro, key points, and closing
 - Use the [Duarte method](#) if you like
 - o Identify any resources you want to reference (include links wherever appropriate)
- Any questions, ask a member of the marketing team

Tone

Conversational

We are storytellers, not scholars.

DO

- Reference personas to consider the needs and expectations of the identified target audience
- Use the simplest form of a word ("said" instead of "expressed" or "used" instead of "utilized")
- Write simple sentences. When in doubt, plug your copy into the [Hemingway App](#)
 - o Yellow sentences are hard to read
 - o Red sentences are very hard to read
 - o Identify any standouts and simplify your language as needed
- Use active voice (i.e., the subject performs the action stated by the verb)
 - o YES: Ntara developers built the site
 - o NO: The website was built by Ntara developers
 - o When in doubt, plug your copy into the [Hemingway App](#)
 - Green sentences are passive voice
- Use second person (you, you're) and first person (we, I)
 - o YES: We've taken a deep dive into Google Analytics 4 and here is what we found.
 - o NO: The Ntara experts took a deep dive into Google Analytics 4 and here is what they found.
 - o YES: Ntara received top honor at PIMpoint. Our team is so happy to have been named North American Partner of the Year.
- Use contractions (it's, we're) whenever it makes sense

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- Use sentence case (only capitalize the first word of a title and proper nouns)
 - o This goes copy, headlines, and every piece of content on a PowerPoint slide
 - o YES: Titles should look like this
 - o NO: Titles Should Not Look Like This

DON'T

- Use words that people will have to Google (if the content requires it, either define it or link to a definition)
- Refer to Ntara as "they" — you are part of the tribe, so Ntara is always "we"

Consultative

We are knowledgeable, not condescending.

DO

- Focus on making the reader's life easier
- Read and re-read what you've written
- Ask someone else how a phrase or sentence sounds if you have any question about the tone

DON'T

- Explain things that are common knowledge
- Tell readers what they need to do—focus on how "we" can do this together
- Think of us or yourself as superior for knowing something the reader doesn't

Authentic

We write about what we know and sell, not the things we don't.

DO

- Speak from your own area of expertise
- Conduct online research or interview internal SMEs to fill your knowledge gaps
- Reference sources with links

DON'T

- Write as an "expert" about services we don't offer
- Make educated guesses or assumptions

Ntara terminology, spellings, and other general rules

Ntara

- Not Ntara, inc.; N-tara; or nTara
- When something belongs to the agency, add an apostrophe S
 - o EX: Ntara's CEO Jeff Morris

Roadmapping study

- Formerly the blueprint study
- Also, for a short time, the GuidePoint Study
- Not a proper noun; does not need to be capitalized

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- Roadmapping study, roadmapping project, roadmapping engagement, roadmapping process—all acceptable usages

Customer segmentation study

- Formerly the nSight study
- Not a proper noun; does not need to be capitalized
- Customer segmentation engagement, customer segmentation process -- all acceptable usages

Multichannel manufacturers

- Companies who build tangible products and sell them through more than one channel
 - o EX: Medical manufacturer who sells through its own B2B ecommerce website and through distribution
 - o EX: Food manufacturer who sells through distribution partners, Amazon, and Walmart

Ecommerce

- No dash (just like email no longer has a dash in it)
- Yes, we know AP Style still uses it—but even they admit they're behind the times
- Ecomm is acceptable on subsequent references but ecommerce is always preferred
- No capitalization required so within a sentence, use ecommerce or ecomm

Product information management

- PIM acceptable on subsequent references

Number formatting

- Spell out numbers one through nine
 - o We have done three of these studies in the last six months
 - o We recommend a roadmapping study every three years
- Use the numeral if it's 0, 10, or greater than 10
 - o If your PIM team has 10 or more people
 - o Ntara has been in business for more than 20 years
- When discussing money, use a dollar sign and numerals
 - o \$2500 search budget
 - o \$15 million in annual revenue

Punctuation & spacing

- Only one space after each sentence. Ever. Period.
 - o Multiple spaces causes weird line breaks in digital applications
 - o And we no longer type on typewriters
- We use the Oxford comma (AKA the serial comma)
 - o Put commas between the first thing, the middle thing, and the last thing.
 - o EX: Ntara sells research, strategy, digital transformation, and managed services.
 - o EX: We partner with inRiver, Kentico, Znode, and Virto.
- Use exclamation points sparingly
 - o They're great at communicating emotion! But we want to keep our copy simple and straightforward.
- Quotation marks and punctuation
 - o Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks
 - EX: We want to give our client the "white glove experience."

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- EX: If you're looking for "quick, cheap, and easy," we're not a good fit.
- Question mark at the end of a sentence goes outside
 - EX: How do I know if we've reached the point of "good enough"?
- If the question mark is part of the quote, it goes inside
 - EX: Our client asked, "What is my expected ROI?"

Words to use sparingly

- Always/never
 - Before we claim always or never, we better be sure of it
 - Typically, the more accurate approach is to use often, typically, seldom, or rarely
- Strategy/strategic
 - Many writers (and agencies) use these words ad nauseum
 - Often, the reader will assign his or her own meaning to these words
 - Challenge yourself to explain what you mean by these words instead of using them as crutches

Formatting

- SEO headings
 - The marketing team will select h1, h2s, h3s, etc., as appropriate to help search bots crawl our content
 - If you have specifics in mind for these, note as comments in the copy

Judgment calls

- The Associated Press Stylebook (AP style)
- Merriam-Webster.com (online dictionary)

Illustrations & infographics

- The marketing team may identify opportunities to create visuals that complement your writing
- If you have an idea, note as a comment in your writing