



Say Goodbye to the Panic Button and Develop a Company Style Guide for Clarity and Inclusion



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< With the increased pace and explosion of communications platforms, style guides provide a haven for marketers, journalists and savvy businesses. Style guides formalize company preferences on naming conventions, grammar and punctuation, tone and voice, and other nuances that a business must consider, such as scrubbing content for compliance with legal bar rules. >

Many organizations, including Poston Communications, follow tried-and-true standards set in place by The Associated Press Stylebook, Chicago Manual of Style, Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* and others. But every organization has its own content needs, and now readers can get a peek at one media outlet's internal handbook on word choice. [Mother Jones](#), a notable investigative reporting magazine, recently published its [style guide](#) for the first time in its 44-year history earlier in February.

DIALOGUE FOR DIVERSITY

The nonprofit newsroom is also opening a dialogue with its readers on where the publication needs to "better reflect the choices and changes in language that shape our reporting." In entries on race and ethnicity, gender and nationalities, and *Mother Jones*' unique style preferences, the magazine is asking readers to weigh in on where they stand on certain style guide topics.

As companies and corporate cultures take a critical look at their diversity and inclusion practices, a style guide is a crucial document and centerpiece of how a business speaks and interacts with its target audiences.

As generations of new readers come on board and older generations rise to a position of power and decision-making, it is worth a business' time to review its style guide for relevance and inclusion. *Mother Jones*, for example, now "asks sources how to identify their racial and ethnic identities if it's relevant to the story and appropriate to ask." This proactive measure shows that the

magazine wants to accurately reflect their target audiences by using the language that resonates with them and reflects cultural sensitivity. These important distinctions can then be incorporated into a living style guide that is in a continuous state of improvement.

STYLE GUIDES TAILORED FOR YOUR BUSINESS

The [Poston Content](#) team has helped many law firms, professional service organizations and marketing departments create, revise and improve style guides. When our team of [editors and writers](#) develops style guides, we learn from key stakeholders what best practices can be implemented to improve a company's communication on [websites](#), social media and more. Our content team then produces a style guide tailored for your organization to promote quality and consistency, which supports the high standards of client experience included in the brand promise. In online platforms, handouts at conferences and email communications, our style guides help companies be more efficient in crafting communications. These quick-view guides set various style rules in motion. Outreach to colleagues, clients, potential clients, media sources and others becomes an easier endeavor. No need to hit the panic button on word choice if you have set guidance on style.

Joseph Pulitzer, of the famous Pulitzer Prize and renowned from his newspaper publishing crusades in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, captures the essence of clear, effective communications, "Put it before them briefly so they will read it, clearly so they will appreciate it, picturesquely so they will remember it and, above all, accurately so they will be guided by its light." Style guides serve as an important tool for audience engagement and business development. Dovetailing a commitment to excellence in communications and diversity efforts reaps many benefits, so it's a good time for businesses to look at their practices for inclusion, relevancy, and invite external and internal feedback to move the needle forward.

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