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# tone of voice and writing guidelines



At Q-Park, we write in a business-friendly **tone of voice**. We talk to the reader. This means the message should meet the recipients' needs, whether they are a customer, a partner or a prospect.

In this style guide we explain our preferred writing style and **tone of voice**, and how we work with visual elements, including space, to convey our message to customers, prospects, business partners and colleagues.

Q-Park is about space – space for parking. So, we also use a lot of space in our communications. Space in your communications reflects the space we offer in our parking facilities.

## Writing about Q-Park

- When referring to the company, the company is singular so write: 'Q-Park is...'

- When writing on behalf of the company, write: 'We are...'
- Never write 'Q-Park are...'

In your text, ensure that our name is NEVER split across two lines. Our content management system (CMS) Tangelo is programmed to prevent this from happening. In other documents, use a 'non-breaking hyphen'.

When referring to the Q-Park countries, always present in this sequence. The appropriate currency and currency code are included here for your convenience:

Country	Abbreviation	Currency	Currency code
Netherlands	NL	euro	EUR
Germany	DE	euro	EUR
France	FR	euro	EUR
Belgium	BE	euro	EUR
United Kingdom	UK	pound, pound sterling	GBP

Country	Abbreviation	Currency	Currency code
Ireland	IE	euro	EUR
Denmark	DK	kroner	DKK

## Writing for Q-Park

### Basic guidelines

All Q-Park communications should be clear and concise, and easy to understand at a glance – for visuals, and on first reading for texts. Follow your country/language ‘plain language’ guidelines.

- | Use **inclusive language** so not to offend
- | Use the **active voice** to communicate in a direct, concise and dynamic tone
- | Be **positive** and emphasise what can be done
- | **Give credit** for sources and images used and respect copyright.

### Writing for the digital world

Text for web pages should be brief and to the point:

- | Each page deals with a **single topic** or one **specific key word**
- | Use approximately 200-250 words per section/heading/screen, yet ensure the **information** you provide **is complete**
- | Use **short sentences** but do not oversimplify.

Website visitors scan rather than read:

- | Structure the information using **headings** and **subheadings**
- | Always mention the **key word** of the page in the **first heading** of your text
- | Ensure that headings, paragraphs and colours are used consistently
- | Use bullets to convey information concisely
- | Use FuturaTDem to emphasise (never bold).  
Note: The Content Management System (CMS) for adding content to the corporate and country websites does this automatically, as do the Q-Park MS Office templates.

Make the text inviting and attractive:

- | Use the **key word** of the page in the **title**

- | Keep titles brief
- | Avoid superlatives in titles.
- | When placing links in text, inform visitors what they will find
- | Split **sentences** so each contains only **one idea**
- | Alternate short and longer sentences to recreate the rhythm of natural speech
- | Use WE when speaking about Q-Park and YOU when referring to the customer or partner
- | Use everyday language that resonates with the target audience
- | Avoid using jargon. If you must, use a specific term and make sure you give an explanation.

### Reports

When writing **reports** and **printed (PDF) documents** take these guidelines into consideration:

- | Don't leave just one word on a line, no widows/orphans.
- | Figures and charts:
  - | align to the left or right margin
  - | add a caption
  - | number figures and charts for easy reference
  - | credit the copyright owner, if applicable.
- | Tables:
  - | Align to the left margin
  - | add title above the table
  - | number tables for easy reference.
- | In long documents, such as annual reports:
  - | Use headings to help the reader navigate through the document
  - | number the figures, charts and tables for easy reference
  - | credit the copyright owner, if applicable
  - | create a table of contents using the top heading levels
  - | create a list of figures, charts and table as part of the table of contents.

## Social media

When writing for **social media**:

**I** Use **CamelCase** for **hashtags** because:

**I** your audience can see meaning at a glance;

**I** screen readers can pronounce the words.

### Do

#QParkNews

#PrideWeekHamburg

#CityCentre

#MeetTheTeam

### Don't

#qparknews

#prideweekhamburg

#Citycentre #CITYCENTRE #citycentre

#meettheteam #MEETTHETEAM #Meettheteam

## Writing recommendations

All Q-Park communications should be clear and concise, and easy to understand at a glance – for visuals, and on first reading for texts. Follow your country/language 'plain language' guidelines.

**I** Use **inclusive language** so not to offend

**I** Use the **active voice** to communicate in a direct, concise and dynamic tone

**I** Be **positive** and emphasise what can be done

**I** **Give credit** for sources and images used and respect copyright

### Use meaningful headings

Keep headings to a single line. Write a meaningful phrase that informs the reader about what's coming next. The ideal heading length will depend on where the text will be published. Remember that website texts must also be easy to read on smaller devices such as tablets and smartphones.

### Good style

Use meaningful headings:

How to read this report

Summary of our findings

### Try to avoid

Heading using just one or two words:

Introduction

Conclusion

### Write in the active voice

Wherever possible, write in the present tense. This creates an active narrative which is attractive to read. This usually generates a more compact text.

### Good style

Q-Park Windsor Yards renovation is now complete.

### Try to avoid

The renovation of the Q-Park Windsor Yard car park has now been completed.

### Vary the sentence length

Another aspect that makes writing attractive to read is varying sentence length. Sentences with 15 to 20 words are generally easy to read and understand. Try to avoid

sentences with 30 or more words, split such sentences or create a bullet list. Short sentences convey information quickly and reliably.

### Write compact sentences

	Good style	Try to avoid
... of the ...	the car park's entrance	entrance of the car park
the ... of	renovating	the renovation of

### Using abbreviations

- I When using these terms and abbreviations always add an explanation and put the abbreviation in brackets, then you can use the abbreviation in your text.
- I When writing for a website or report, repeat the full term at the start of an article, section or chapter, as the reader may be jumping in without having read the previous explanation.

You will find a list of abbreviations including their meaning and use within Q-Park in the Q-Park terminology section.

### Gender sensitivity

We use gender-neutral and gender-inclusive language. So, when referring to individuals use the 'singular they' (they/them/their) or similar device in your language, such as a general plural.

We use gender neutral form for professions and professionals

#### Do

Parking Host

Parking Attendant

QCR operator

Colleague, coworker (different section)

salesperson, sales executive

chair, chairperson

athlete

firefighter

#### Don't

parking hostess

parking attendant

employee

salesman, saleswoman

chairman, chairwoman

sportsman, sportswoman

fireman, firewoman

**Job titles**

We always use a gender-neutral term for job titles and positions.

If a job title has multiple words, then all parts start with an uppercase letter, for example

| Parking Host

| Parking Attendant

**Proper names**

Take care to write people's name correctly. In Dutch, family names with 'de' or 'van' in the middle take a lowercase letter; in Belgium, this is usually an uppercase letter.

**Do**

Frank **De** Moor

Philip **De** Brabanter

**Don't**

not Frank **de** Moor

not Philip **de** Brabanter

**Currency conventions**

Each language has its own conventions when writing money amounts which you should follow when writing in your local language. Also follow these general guidelines:

| In reports (B2B) use ISO three letter currency code

| For websites and e-mails and other communications with customers (B2C) use the currency symbol

| When writing negative money amounts use a minus sign

Country	Abbreviation	Currency	Currency code	Currency symbol
Netherlands	NL	euro	EUR	€
Germany	DE	euro	EUR	€
France	FR	euro	EUR	€
Belgium	BE	euro	EUR	€
United Kingdom	UK	pound sterling	GBP	£
Ireland	IE	euro	EUR	€
Denmark	DK	kroner	DKK	kr.

**Currency dos and don'ts**

	Do	Don't
<b>B2B examples</b>	EUR 129.3 million	€129.3 million
	EUR -18.6 million	€-18.6 million €(18.6) million
	EUR 18.6 million	€18,600,000.00
<b>B2C examples</b>	€ 25.5 per day	EUR 25.5 per day
	€ 0.75 per hour	EUR 0.75 per hour

## Phone number styles

Always include the country code, omit the leading zero, and leave a space between blocks of 3 or 4 digits for easy reading. This is also known as international style.

	Do	Don't
Phone numbers	+31 6 1234 5678 +44 20 1234 1234	+31612345678 +4402012341234 +31(0)612341234

## Quality check

Use this checklist before publishing or sending out anything you have written. After all, we're only human and humans make typos, and we have tools to help us.

- | Is the spelling and grammar correct. Use the spelling checker but don't rely on it blindly.
- | Is the text well-structured and logical
- | Is everything covered
- | Is the content accurate

- | Is the level of detail appropriate
- | Is there irrelevant information that can be omitted
- | Is the communication:
  - | specific
  - | concise
  - | consistent
  - | unbiased
- | Do use the spelling checker. Be aware that it may suggest splitting or joining words when they should be written together or separately:

### Do

cybersecurity

healthcare

multistorey

ongoing

rooftop

wellbeing

### Don't

cyber security

health care

multi-storey

on-going

roof top

well-being

- | If time allows, use the **read aloud function** to listen to what you have written.
  - | you simply left out the last letter:  
**made, mad**
  - | you may accidentally type **form** when you mean **from**

- | you may use the incorrect spelling with a totally different meaning. Here are some examples of these **confusable words**:

**advice** (noun, suggestions or encouragement)

**advise** (verb, to suggest or encourage)

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<b>board</b> (group of decision makers; a thin or flat piece of wood)	<b>bored</b> (uninterested or lacking challenge)
<b>complement</b> (match or complete)	<b>compliment</b> (praise or flattering remark)
<b>counsellor</b> (therapist or advisor)	<b>councillor</b> (local government officer)
<b>licence</b> (noun, a document that allows you to do something)	<b>license</b> (verb, the act of allowing someone to do something) Example: license to operate
<b>weather</b> (rain, sunshine etc.)	<b>whether</b> (a query or option)
<b>you're</b> (you are)	<b>your</b> (belonging to you)
<b>roll out</b> (Q-Park rolled out its EV charging programme)	<b>roll-out</b> (roll-out of digital services)
<b>their</b> (belonging to)	<b>there</b> (there are; over there) <b>they're</b> (they are)