



Formatting the post

61 ways to set text in the feed: line breaks, bullets, punctuation, sound figures, emoji. With what each one costs and what it returns.

[Line breaks](#)[Punctuation](#)[Figures](#)[Accessibility](#)

The first volume is about what you say. This one is about what the text looks like once it is posted. The two interlock.

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HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

Every example is shown with its real line breaks, except where the form is a length or an image, which are described instead. The left column names where the form was seen.

61

formatting devices
described

8

families

125

characters before
Instagram truncates

2026

year of the data quoted

WHERE THE TEXT GETS CUT, BY PLATFORM

PLATFORM	CUT-OFF	USABLE LENGTH	SOURCE
Instagram	about 125 characters	100 to 300 words	SocialKit, 2026
LinkedIn	about 3 lines	150 to 300 words	SocialKit, 2026
Facebook	3 to 4 lines	40 to 80 words	SocialKit, 2026
TikTok	1 to 2 lines	50 to 150 characters	SocialKit, 2026
X	no cut-off	280 characters	platform
Carousel caption	not applicable	0 to 100 characters	AuthoredUp, 2026

WHAT THESE FIGURES ARE WORTH

Every figure in this document comes from international analysis. These are not Belgian measurements. They give an order of magnitude, not a guarantee of results with your audience. Each figure carries its source and its year. Check them against your own statistics before turning any of them into a rule.

THE EXAMPLES

The examples in this catalogue are fictional. They are set in trades that Bits & Bots works with, and they name no real company. The figures inside them illustrate a way of writing; they are not data.

MAIN FINDING

The first line is the only one you can be sure will be read. Everything else depends on it. A courtesy formula in that position burns your one chance.

01

The catalogue

61 devices in 8 families, seen in the posts of brands that write well and in the publicly analysed LinkedIn corpus.

01 Line breaks & white space

The shape of the lines is the first thing a reader sees, before the first word. It decides how long they stay on the post, and on LinkedIn that dwell time is rewarded directly.

DEC-1

The solid block

seen on Facebook, service brands

One compact paragraph, no breaks. The text owns its density.

EXAMPLE

We took over the wiring of a 1974 house last week. The owner thought the lot had to come out; in fact only the consumer unit was non-compliant. Three days of work instead of three weeks, and a bill a quarter the size.

Works

On Facebook, where short and compact is the norm and vertical breaking adds nothing.

Fails

On LinkedIn, past four full lines. The wall of text loses people before the first full stop.

DEC-2

One sentence per line

seen on LinkedIn, since 2017

Every sentence on its own line, separated by a blank one. The form stretches the post vertically. Known as broetry.

EXAMPLE

We lost a client yesterday.

Not on price.

On a four-day reply time.

We changed our process that evening.

Works

When the content really is sequential and short. The vertical stretch increases dwell time, which the LinkedIn algorithm rewards.

Fails

When every sentence is the same length. Gary Provost showed it long before social media: several short sentences in a row become monotonous. The format is now so recognisable that it signals the algorithmic intent before the content.

DEC-3

The varied rhythm

seen on classic copywriting

Short and long sentences alternated deliberately, until the rhythm becomes audible.

EXAMPLE

The board arrived creased. Not damaged, creased: one badly strapped pallet over 400 km is enough to turn an entire order into waste. We remade all of it. In three days.

Works

Almost always. It's the direct answer to the charge against broetry, and it reads without anyone noticing the technique.

Fails

When the alternation turns mechanical, short-long-short-long. The rhythm has to follow the sense, not a template.

DEC-4

The staircase

seen on TikTok, X

Sentences getting shorter until a single word. The acceleration delivers the ending.

EXAMPLE

We counted the trips back to the yard.
Three a day.
Two wasted.
Sorted.

Works

For a blunt, final conclusion. The shortening lets you hear the end coming.

Fails

Repeated post to post. The effect won't stand more than one outing a month.

DEC-5

The double line break

seen on LinkedIn

A blank line between every block, including between two sentences that belong together.

EXAMPLE

The quote went out Tuesday.

Accepted Thursday.

In between, a six-minute phone call.

Works

When the post runs under six blocks. The white space genuinely helps reading on a phone.

Fails

On TikTok and Threads, where blank lines render badly. A single break is enough there.

DEC-6

The isolated line

seen on Nike, Oatly

A dense block, then one sentence alone in the middle, surrounded by white space.

EXAMPLE

Three electricians had been before us, each replaced the RCD, each charged for the call-out.

The problem was not the RCD.

It was an immersion heater whose insulation only gave way once hot.

Works

When the isolated sentence is the most important one in the post. The space around it is the typographic equivalent of a pause.

Fails

When you isolate an ordinary sentence. White space makes a promise, and the promise has to be kept.

DEC-7

The detached ending

seen on Innocent, Ryanair

The whole post as one block, then a final line on its own, usually breaking tone.

EXAMPLE

Set-up from 6am. 140 covers, 14 tables, 320 candles, seven hours with three of us.

The couple walked in at 4pm and said "that's nice".

Works

When the ending contradicts or deflates what came before. The cheapest comic structure there is.

Fails

When the ending explains the joke. A last line that comments on the post kills it.

DEC-8

The sandwich

seen on LinkedIn B2B

Block of text, list, block of text. The list is the breathing space in the middle.

EXAMPLE

Three things turn up on nearly every proof that comes back to us:

- text upside down once the box is folded
- barcode too close to the crease
- use-by date missing

None of them costs much to fix before press. All of them cost a reprint afterwards.

Works

When the closing block draws a conclusion the list doesn't contain. Otherwise the list was enough.

Fails

When both blocks restate the list. The post triples in length and adds nothing.

DEC-9

The deliberate wall

seen on Oatly

A long text with no breaks at all, openly refusing to make reading comfortable.

EXAMPLE

We could write this as four airy lines with one sentence each and an arrow in the middle and you would read it in eight seconds and retain none of it, so we would rather write it in one block and lose the people it doesn't interest.

Works

When the density is part of the message and the brand has a voice strong enough to carry it. Oatly made it an identity marker, right down to its cartons.

Fails

Without an established brand voice. The wall then looks like clumsiness rather than a position.

02 Length & the cut-off

Every platform truncates the text in a different place. Length isn't a stylistic choice: it's a negotiation with that threshold.

LON-1

The single sentence

seen on X, Duolingo

One sentence, posted alone, with no context and no development.

EXAMPLE

An empty room lit well beats a styled room lit badly.

Works

When the sentence is dense enough to stand alone. On X, plain text remains the strongest format, at 3.6 per cent median engagement (Buffer, 2026).

Fails

When the sentence needs context you haven't given. The reader scrolls past.

LON-2

The long text

seen on LinkedIn

A thousand characters and up, structured in blocks, asking for real reading commitment.

EXAMPLE

(1,400 characters: a full job story, from diagnosis to invoice, including the two points where we got it wrong.)

Works

On LinkedIn, where this format achieves 1.18 times the reach of short posts (AuthoredUp, 2026). Length signals that something is worth reading.

Fails

On Facebook and TikTok, where the cut-off lands after three lines and almost nobody expands.

LON-3

The minimal carousel caption

seen on LinkedIn and Instagram carousels

Under a hundred characters beneath a carousel. The caption only opens the door.

EXAMPLE

The six mistakes we see on print proofs. The fifth one costs a reprint.

Works

As a rule under any carousel: in the data measured, the best-performing document captions run to between 0 and 100 characters.

Fails

When the caption repeats the first slide. The reader has read the same thing twice before starting.

LON-4

The engineered cut-off

seen on all platforms

Break the sense deliberately, just before the "see more".

EXAMPLE

We charged nothing at all for this job.

That isn't generosity, it's arithmetic, and here it is in full...

Works

When what follows keeps the promise. A well-placed cut-off is the only free lever on reach that a text has.

Fails

When the follow-through disappoints. The mechanism backfires fast: two disappointments and nobody expands anything again.

LON-5

The two-part post

seen on LinkedIn, Facebook

The post carries the essentials; the first comment carries the rest: link, technical detail, source.

EXAMPLE

The full comparison of the three detectors is in the comments.

Short version here: two of them get confused the moment there's metal in the wall.

Works

On Facebook above all, where the outbound link is the weakest format at 4.43 per cent (Buffer, 2026). Taking the link out of the post protects the reach.

Fails

When the comment holds what the post should have said. Nobody goes elsewhere for the main point.

03 Lists & bullets

The platforms have no native bullets, so everything is faked by hand. What makes a list readable isn't the character you pick but whether the items are grammatically alike.

LIS-1

Typographic bullets

seen on LinkedIn B2B

Dashes, middle dots or arrows at the start of a line, standing in for the native bullets the platforms don't have.

EXAMPLE

What we check before booking a venue:

- real ceiling height
- permission to fix to the walls
- music curfew
- lorry access on the morning itself

Works

When every item has the same grammatical shape. The list then reads in one go.

Fails

When one item is a full sentence and the others are noun phrases. The break in form shows before the meaning does.

LIS-2

The numbered list

seen on LinkedIn, carousels

Numerals at the start of each line, promising an order or a count.

EXAMPLE

3 things we check on a proof:

1. which way the text reads after folding
2. the clear zone round the barcode
3. the use-by date

Works

When the numbering states something true: a priority order, a sequence, a count announced in advance.

Fails

When the numbers are decoration. An unordered list that is numbered promises a hierarchy that isn't there.

LIS-3

The bare list

seen on X, Oatly

Items stacked under each other, with no bullet and no number at all.

EXAMPLE

What we don't do:

notices published without the funeral director's sign-off
corrections after 10pm
texts proofread only once

Works

When the list is short and dropping the markers visibly lightens the block. White space does the bullets' job.

Fails

Past five items. With no marker the eye loses count and starts re-reading.

LIS-4

The two-column list

seen on Instagram, LinkedIn

Two opposed series, usually marked × and ✓, or "before" and "after".

EXAMPLE

- × "we'll call you back"
- ✓ "we'll call you Thursday before noon"

- × "from 900 euros"
- ✓ "between 900 and 1,800 euros, depending on three things"

Works

When the opposition runs word for word. The form makes the difference legible without a sentence of explanation.

Fails

When the two columns aren't about the same thing. The comparison becomes visible sleight of hand.

LIS-5

The nested list

seen on documents and carousels

Sub-levels under the main items.

EXAMPLE

- Set-up:
- furniture
 - tables
 - seating
 - lighting

Works

Almost never in a post. Reserved for carousel slides, where the hierarchy can be carried by the layout.

Fails

In feed text. The platforms have no reliable indentation: the sub-levels collapse depending on the device.

LIS-6

Emoji bullets

seen on Instagram, small business Facebook

An emoji at the head of each item, in place of the dash.

EXAMPLE

- 📦 goods in
- ✂️ die-cutting
- 🖨️ print
- 🚚 dispatch

Works

When each emoji genuinely names its item and there are fewer than five. At the start of a line, a screen reader announces it once, clearly.

Fails

When they're decorative, or worse, dropped between words: the screen reader then speaks each emoji's full name and the sentence becomes unintelligible when read aloud.

04 Punctuation

Punctuation is the only rhythm tool you have in a plain text field. It's also where the most dated habits live.

PON-1

The full stop throughout

seen on Nike, brands that write in the imperative

Every sentence ends in a full stop, however short. The rhythm turns staccato.

EXAMPLE

Diagnosis. Quote. Work. Invoice. Nothing else.

Works

For a run of steps or principles. The full stop turns a noun phrase into a statement.

Fails

Across a long text. Sustained staccato tires the reader and makes something meant as crisp read as aggressive.

PON-2

No closing punctuation

seen on younger brands, Threads

No full stops at line ends, text-message style.

EXAMPLE

we finished at 2am
the room was empty by 2.15am
nobody noticed the 320 candles

Works

When the brand already speaks like this everywhere else. Consistency of register is what makes the device read as a choice rather than carelessness.

Fails

Alternating with normally punctuated posts. The reader then sees a mistake, not a style.

PON-3

The colon as hinge

seen on LinkedIn, Oatly

A colon that pivots the sentence and announces the reveal.

EXAMPLE

The problem wasn't the RCD: it was an immersion heater that only gave way once hot.

Works

Once per post. The colon creates a very short expectation and settles it immediately.

Fails

Twice in the same post. The construction starts to feel like a tic.

PON-4

The aside in brackets

seen on Innocent, Oatly

A comment slipped into brackets, usually in a different tone from the sentence hosting it.

EXAMPLE

Set-up took seven hours (eight, but we're rounding in our own favour).

Works

When the aside contradicts or qualifies the main clause. The cheapest way there is to give a brand a voice without changing register.

Fails

When the brackets only add length. If the content would fit in the sentence, they serve no purpose.

PON-5

The em dash aside

seen on print press, generated text

An aside opened and closed with em dashes, instead of commas or brackets.

EXAMPLE

The consumer unit — the original one — had not been opened since 1998.

Against the comma version: the consumer unit, the original one, had not been opened since 1998.

Works

Rarely. Commas and brackets do exactly the same job with no side effect, as the second line of the example shows.

Fails

In two years the em dash has become the most recognisable marker of AI-written text. On a brand account it costs credibility for no typographic gain.

PON-6

The trailing ellipsis

seen on Facebook, teasing

A sentence left open to hold the reader through to the "see more".

EXAMPLE

We thought we'd seen everything behind a skirting board...

Works

Now and then, when what follows genuinely surprises.

Fails

As a habit. It's the most overused teasing device on social media: it tells the reader outright that you're trying to hold them.

PON-7

The isolated question

seen on LinkedIn, Facebook

A question alone on its line, at the opening or the close.

EXAMPLE

How long does your supplier take to turn round a quote?

Ours averaged 1.8 days in September.

Works

When the post answers its own question. The form steers the reading instead of begging for a comment.

Fails

As a pure closing line with no answer. That's the textbook definition of engagement bait, which Meta has demoted since 2017.

PON-8

Scare quotes

seen on press, brands with an edge

Quotation marks round a word to mark reservation or irony rather than a quotation.

EXAMPLE

It was a "quick fix", apparently. There were 14 circuits on a board designed for six.

Works

When the marks carry real distance. Used this way they do a whole sentence of commentary in two characters.

Fails

When you frame an ordinary word. The reader looks for the irony, doesn't find it, and starts doubting the rest.

PON-9

Capitals for emphasis

seen on Oatly

One word, one line or an entire post in capitals.

EXAMPLE

WE PUBLISH NOTHING BETWEEN 10PM AND 6AM.

At those hours nobody is proofreading.

Works

On one or two words, or a short isolated line. Oatly made it a signature by saving capitals for complete statements, never for ordinary emphasis.

Fails

Across a whole paragraph. Capitals are slower to read for everyone, and accessibility guidance advises against them in blocks.

PON-10

The asterisk

seen on X, brands with irony

An asterisk in the text and its note at the foot of the post.

EXAMPLE

Installation finished in three days*.

*four. The supplier's lorry got lost on the way.

Works

When the note gently contradicts the body. It rewards the reader who gets to the bottom.

Fails

When it only adds a detail. A note with no turn in it should have stayed in the sentence.

05 Quotation & voice

Who is speaking, and how you show it. The pronoun you choose and the way you report speech do more for a brand's voice than its vocabulary.

VOI-1

The quote as opener

seen on LinkedIn, testimonials

A quotation standing alone at the top, with no introduction.

EXAMPLE

"We were completely lost and in the end it was one form to fill in."

Nathalie wrote that to us on Tuesday. It describes what we build better than we do.

Works

When the quote keeps its awkwardness. A customer sentence that is too well turned sounds like a line written in-house.

Fails

When it's complimentary but not specific. "Great service, highly recommend" gives nobody anything.

VOI-2

The attributed pull quote

seen on B2B, press

Quote, line break, dash and name. The journalistic form.

EXAMPLE

"The board didn't break, it deformed. That's worse, because you only see it on arrival."

– Sabine, machine setter, eleven years in the trade

Works

When the person quoted isn't the boss. A voice from the shop floor carries more than a voice from management.

Fails

When the attribution is vague, along the lines of "a client". With no name and no role the quote proves nothing.

VOI-3

The dashed dialogue

seen on Instagram, X

A two-voice exchange, one line per turn, marked with a dash. English feeds more often use quotation marks; the dash reads as deliberately literary.

EXAMPLE

- Can you deliver by Friday?
- Next Friday.
- No, this Friday.
- It's Wednesday, 4pm.
- Exactly.

Works

When the turns are short and the punchline sits in the last one. The fastest form to read in the catalogue.

Fails

Past six turns. With no speaker marked, the reader loses track of who is talking.

VOI-4

The screenshot

seen on Duolingo, Ryanair

The text isn't in the post: it's an image of a chat, an email or a comment.

EXAMPLE

(Screenshot of a customer message at 11.12pm reading "this is urgent", with the reply sent at 7.02am underneath.)

Works

When the image is backed by the text in the post itself. Otherwise half the message is invisible to screen readers and to search.

Fails

When you post a screenshot without permission. The virality never covers the risk to the relationship, least of all with local customers.

VOI-5

The choice of pronoun

seen on small firms

I, we, or the company name in the third person: the pronoun carrying the brand in every sentence.

EXAMPLE

We replaced the board on Tuesday.

(rather than: "Our team carried out the replacement of the distribution board.")

Works

"We" is the default voice of a small firm: close without being matey. "I" suits a sole trader; the third person almost never works.

Fails

When the pronoun changes from post to post. The commonest and most visible inconsistency on a company page.

VOI-6

Reported speech, unmarked

seen on narrative brands

Reporting what someone said with no quotation marks and no reporting verb.

EXAMPLE

The customer rings. It's smelled of burning for two years, he opens the window, it goes away.

Works

When the speech is short and the context makes the speaker obvious. Dropping the marks speeds the reading up considerably.

Fails

When two people are talking. With nothing marked, you can't tell who says what.

VOI-7

Direct address

seen on Nike, Duolingo

The text speaks to the reader in the second person, start to finish.

EXAMPLE

You've got an old consumer unit. You know you have. You're waiting for it to fail before you deal with it.

Works

When the situation described really is the target reader's. "You" does the work of identification on its own.

Fails

When the address turns accusing. Three reproachful sentences in and the reader is defending themselves instead of reading.

06 Sound & figures of speech

The classical figures still work, but in small doses. A figure you can hear is a figure that failed: the reader sees the technique before the message.

SON-1

Rhyme

seen on Innocent, playful brands

Two or three sentence endings that rhyme, inside a text that is otherwise prose.

EXAMPLE

No surprises on the day, no surprises on the way, and nothing extra to pay.

Works

On a single line, at the close. Rhyme makes the sentence sound like a maxim, which is what makes it stick.

Fails

Across a whole post. Fully rhymed text reads like 1990s advertising and pulls attention off the content.

SON-2

Alliteration

seen on slogans, headlines

The same consonant repeated across a short run.

EXAMPLE

Cable, conduit, compliance.

Works

Across three words at most, in a headline or an opening. The ear hears it without the reader identifying the technique.

Fails

Across a whole sentence. The effect becomes audible, and anything audible in a commercial text reads as a device.

SON-3

Anaphora

seen on LinkedIn, speeches

Several lines opening on the same word or phrase.

EXAMPLE

No quote without a site visit.
No site visit without an appointment.
No appointment without a budget in mind.

Works

Up to three occurrences. Repetition at the head of a line structures the post visually as much as rhythmically.

Fails

Past three. The long anaphora tips into a sermon.

SON-4

Parallel construction

seen on classic copywriting

Two sentences built on identical syntax, set side by side.

EXAMPLE

Good packaging protects the product. Very good packaging also protects the person opening it.

Works

When the second sentence adds something. The parallel puts the difference on display.

Fails

When both sentences say the same thing. The symmetry then underlines the emptiness.

SON-5

Antithesis

seen on Oatly, Nike

A claim built on a refusal: X, not Y.

EXAMPLE

We sell machine time, not cardboard.

Works

Almost always. The most efficient construction there is for setting out a position in one sentence.

Fails

When the negation attacks a position nobody held. "Quality, not mediocrity" says nothing at all.

SON-6

The rule of three

seen on all brands

Three elements, not two and not four, in a short run.

EXAMPLE

Survey, set-up, strike.

Works

As a matter of course. Three is the most stable rhythm in the language and nobody tires of it.

Fails

When the third item exists only to make three. Padding shows instantly in that position.

SON-7

The verbless sentence

seen on Nike, Oatly

A sentence with no verb, reduced to a noun phrase.

EXAMPLE

Four hours of set-up. Two minutes of looking.

Works

At the opening or the close, to set a frame without narrating. The missing verb gives a poster effect.

Fails

In a run. Three verbless sentences together and the text stops having syntax, and therefore precise meaning.

SON-8

Chiasmus

seen on slogans

An inversion: A then B, then B then A.

EXAMPLE

It isn't the room that makes the party, it's the party that makes the room.

Works

Once a quarter, on an idea worth hitting hard. The form makes a sentence quotable.

Fails

When the inversion produces no new meaning. The empty chiasmus is the most recognisable tic of a failed slogan.

SON-9

The add-on after the full stop

seen on literary brands

A fragment added after a full stop, extending a sentence that was already finished.

EXAMPLE

We remade the lot. In three days. Without charging for travel.

Works

For two add-ons at most. Each full stop creates a beat, and the last fragment carries the weight.

Fails

Past three fragments. The sentence falls apart and you read a list, not a sentence.

07 Visible marks

Emoji, arrows, hashtags, fake bold. This is the family where choices carry a real, measurable accessibility cost, and where most brands improvise.

SIG-1

Emoji as separators

seen on small business Facebook

One or more emoji used as a dividing rule between blocks.

EXAMPLE

New die cutter installed.



First runs next week.

Works

Rarely, and with a single character. On Facebook a quiet divider helps break up a compact post.

Fails

When the divider runs past three characters. A screen reader lists them one by one and the result is absurd to listen to.

SIG-2

Emoji at the end of a sentence

seen on all platforms

An emoji placed after the full stop, never between words.

EXAMPLE

Van's loaded, we're away at 6. 🚚

Works

At the end of a sentence and in small numbers. Accessibility guidance recommends one or two emoji per post, placed at the end of a sentence.

Fails

Between words. The screen reader speaks the emoji's full name mid-sentence, and the sentence stops making sense when it is read aloud.

SIG-3

Arrows

seen on LinkedIn B2B

Arrows → or ↓ marking a consequence or a progression.

EXAMPLE

Pallet badly strapped → 400 km of vibration → 480 boxes to redo

Works

When the arrow genuinely replaces a linking word. It compresses a causal chain into one character.

Fails

When it decorates an ordinary list. An arrow promises a sequence: with no sequence, it's a dash in costume.

SIG-4

Unicode fake bold

seen on to be avoided

Bold or italics faked with mathematical Unicode characters.

EXAMPLE

We're hiring an electrician

Works

Never. There is no case where the visual gain covers the cost.

Fails

These characters are not letters. Screen readers spell them out or skip them, and platform search doesn't index them: the post becomes unreadable for part of the audience and invisible in platform search.

SIG-5

Hashtags at the end

seen on Instagram, LinkedIn

Hashtags grouped at the foot of the post, separated from the text.

EXAMPLE

...we're away at 6.

#EventDesign #Ostbelgien

Works

At the end and in small numbers. Accessibility guidance recommends one or two hashtags, placed at the end.

Fails

When they're built into the sentences. The text comes out chopped up, on the page and when read aloud.

SIG-6

CamelCase hashtags

seen on accessibility rule

A capital at the start of every word inside the hashtag.

EXAMPLE

#EventDesignBelgium

rather than #eventdesignbelgium

Works

Always, the moment a hashtag holds more than one word. The screen reader then splits the words correctly.

Fails

There is no argument against it. The cheapest formatting rule there is, and the most reliably ignored.

SIG-7

Inline separators

seen on B2B, announcements

Pipes or middle dots lining up information on a single line.

EXAMPLE

Village hall · 6am · 140 covers · 3 people

Works

For a line of factual detail, at the head or foot of a post. It reads like a photo caption.

Fails

Inside a sentence. Separators break the syntax and get read aloud as characters.

SIG-8

The character frame

seen on rare, graphic brands

Rules or blocks of characters drawing a frame round the text.

EXAMPLE

CLOSED 21 TO 28

Works

For a service notice nobody should miss, now and then.

Fails

As a habit. A character frame ages badly and warps depending on screen width.

08 Opening & closing

The first line is the only one you can be sure will be read. The last is the one people keep. In between, the reader decides.

OUV-1

The first line as hook

seen on all platforms

A first line written to be read alone, before the "see more".

EXAMPLE

We charged nothing at all for this job.

Works

Always. It's the only line you can be sure will be read: it carries the decision to expand on its own.

Fails

When it opens with a courtesy or a bit of scene-setting. "Dear customers, we are delighted to..." burns the one visible line.

OUV-2

Opening on a number

seen on LinkedIn, X

The post starts with a figure, alone or almost alone.

EXAMPLE

480 boxes.

Rewrapped between 4.20pm and 7.05pm.

Works

When the figure is precise and slightly odd. A number that isn't round stops the eye better than a word.

Fails

When the figure is round and expected. "100% satisfied customers" stops nobody.

OUV-3

Opening on a quote

seen on LinkedIn

The post opens on a quoted sentence, said by somebody else.

EXAMPLE

"This is urgent."

Message at 11.12pm. Reply at 7.02am. On site at 9am.

Works

When the quote is short and raw. An outside voice at the top makes a clean break with the rest of the feed.

Fails

When it's a famous quotation. Opening on Steve Jobs signals a generic post before the second line.

OUV-4

The closing question

seen on Facebook, LinkedIn

The post ends on a question put to the reader.

EXAMPLE

Do you show your prices?

Works

When the question concerns a decision the reader is actually in the middle of making and the comments get answered within the hour.

Fails

When it gets tacked onto every post by reflex. The clearest sign of a calendar written on a production line.

OUV-5

The blunt call to action

seen on direct brands

One line, one imperative verb, no justification.

EXAMPLE

Write to us before Thursday.

Works

When the post has already given all the reasons. The blunt CTA closes; it doesn't persuade.

Fails

When it asks for something free for the brand and costly for the reader. "Share if you agree" is engagement bait and is explicitly demoted.

OUV-6

The postscript

seen on email, LinkedIn

A line added after the post's apparent ending, introduced by PS.

EXAMPLE

PS The fifth mistake in the carousel is one we made ourselves in 2024.

Works

When the PS holds the admission or the most interesting detail. After the first line, it's the most-read line in a post.

Fails

When it repeats the call to action. A commercial PS cancels exactly the confiding effect that makes the form work.

OUV-7

The recurring sign-off

seen on slots, personal accounts

The same closing line under every post in a series.

EXAMPLE

– The Thursday consumer unit. Back every Thursday.

Works

On a named slot. The sign-off turns isolated posts into an appointment.

Fails

Under every post on a page. Outside a series it becomes a footer nobody reads any more.

02

Guardrails and crossover

The formatting that costs more than it returns, and how it pairs with the rhetorical forms in the first volume.

Six widespread habits, two of which carry a measurable accessibility cost.

UNREADABLE

Unicode fake bold

Screen readers spell these characters out or skip them. Platform search doesn't index them. No visual gain covers that.

DATED

The em dash everywhere

In two years it has become the most recognisable marker of generated text. Commas and brackets do the same job.

INAUDIBLE

Emoji between words

The screen reader speaks the full name mid-sentence. At the end of a sentence, one or two per post, it bothers nobody.

MONOTONOUS

Uniform broetry

One sentence per line works when the sentences differ in length. All the same length, they produce exactly the drop-off they were meant to avoid.

DEMOTED

The reflex closing question

A question the post doesn't answer is engagement bait. Meta has demoted it since 2017.

WASTED

Courtesy in line one

The cut-off lands at about 125 characters on Instagram, after three lines on LinkedIn. An opening formula burns the only visible line.

Nearly every rhetorical form has one piece of formatting that serves it and one that kills it.

RHETORICAL FORM	FORMATTING THAT SERVES	FORMATTING THAT KILLS
REC-1 The short case story	Varied rhythm, isolated line on the turn	Bullet list, which destroys the chronology
LIS-1 The checklist	Consistent bullets, one grammatical shape	Solid block, which makes the list unusable
COR-1 Myth, corrected	Two-column list, or the colon as hinge	Capitals, which turn the correction into a reproach
CHI-1 One number, centred	Open on the figure, then two lines	Emoji bullets, which drown the number in decoration
CRT-1 The one-liner	A single sentence, sober punctuation	Trailing ellipsis, promising a follow-up that doesn't exist
PRV-2 The customer, word for word	Attributed pull quote, name and role	Tidy paraphrase, which erases the proof of authenticity
CRT-9 The service notice	Solid block, no stylistic effort	Detached ending or pun, which blur the information
COR-3 The clear opinion	Antithesis, then anaphora across three lines	Closing question, which weakens the position just taken

THREE CHECKS YOU CAN AUTOMATE

Unicode characters outside the Latin alphabet, emoji mid-sentence, hashtags without internal capitals. All three are caught by a regular expression and fixed in ten seconds.

SOURCES

Buffer, analysis of 45 million posts, 2026. SocialKit, lengths and cut-off points by platform, 2026. AuthoredUp, LinkedIn content, 2026. Content Marketing Institute, on broetry. Mencap, accessibility guidance for posts. Copy Style Guide, Oatly's tone of voice.



The first line does the rest of the work.

Bits & Bots is an AI automation studio for small and medium-sized firms, based in Kelmis, Belgium. We build content pipelines that hold up over time, not one-off campaigns.