

CP Style Cheat Sheet for Canadian Tech Companies

Is it Series A or series a? Agtech or agtech? Artificial intelligence or AI?

If you're drafting a press release for your tech company, you'll need to follow Canadian Press style. Most Canadian media follow CP style including the Globe and Mail, National Post and CBC.

While not an exhaustive guide, these quick tips can help you navigate some of the common challenges of drafting press releases and media advisories for Canadian tech companies.

Spelling

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary is the authority for CP Style but note there are the occasional exceptions. Use "Canadian" spellings not American.

Common mistake	Correct CP style
labor	Labour
center	Centre
kilometer	Kilometre

Names and titles

- Capitalize formal titles when they directly precede a name. Lowercase if the title appears after the name or is used without the name. For example, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will attend. The prime minister, Justin Trudeau, will attend.
- Occupational job titles should always be lowercase. For example, Joe Smith, chief executive officer.
- In general, do not use the courtesy titles of Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms.
- First names may be used on the second reference for children and youths under 18, except in sports stories. They may also be used for adults for deliberate informality.
- For common or indeterminate gender references, the use of he (or him, his) is generally not recommended. "His or her" can be used but may be awkward in some situations. They (or them, their) is an increasingly acceptable alternative to he (or him, his).
- Other gender considerations include avoiding words that use the generic "man" such as mankind, manmade or manpower. It is recommended to use gender-neutral alternatives such as humankind, constructed or human energy.

Common mistake	Correct CP style
The Prime Minister attended.	The prime minister attended.
Mr. Brown received the award on Tuesday.	Brown received the award on Tuesday.
There was no comment from the company's spokesman.	There was no comment from the company's spokesperson.

Capitalization

CP style follows a modified down style. This means you capitalize proper names such as organizations, places, and addresses. Lowercase is favoured where a reasonable option exists.

- Areas of technology or types of technology should be lowercase unless they are part of an official name such as a fund. For example, BDC launches \$200-million Deep Tech fund.
- Funding rounds are capitalized. For example, use Seed (not seed) or Series A (not series a).
- Specific geographic regions and features are capitalized, but those that are not known as specific areas are not. For example, Western Canada.

Common mistake	Correct CP style
The company raised its series a funding last June.	The company raised its Series A funding last June.
Recognized as one of the top Agtech companies in Canada.	Recognized as one of the top agtech companies in Canada.
The company is expanding its services to Eastern Alberta.	The company is expanding its services to eastern Alberta.

Abbreviations

- In general, do not put a bracketed abbreviation after the name of the organization
- Omit periods in all-capital abbreviations unless it's geographical or refers to a person
- Use only abbreviations and acronyms that are familiar to ordinary readers. The full word or phrase may make for easier reading, so that is why you'll see uses of both "artificial intelligence" as well as "AI".

Common mistake	Correct CP style
Vancouver, BC	Vancouver, B.C.
With plans to enter the US market.	With plans to enter the U.S. market.
Transportation Safety Board (TSB)	Transportation Safety Board

Numbers

- Spell out numbers nine and below. Use figures for those 10 and above.
- Always spell out the number if a number starts the sentence
- Use numbers with fractions and decimals and for decisions, votes and scores, even if the number is below 10. For example, 9.5. The Calgary Flames won 5-4 over the Edmonton Oilers.
- Use commas to set off numbers with four or more figures, except for addresses, telephone numbers, page or year
- Do not use %, write out the word as “per cent”. Yes, that’s two words!

Common mistake	Correct CP style
We had 9 minutes and 30 seconds of preparation time.	We had nine minutes and 30 seconds of preparation time.
11 people died in the fire.	Eleven people died in the fire.
Sales fell 10% to \$5,000.	Sales fell 10 per cent to \$5,000.

Money

- Unless used in a headline, spell out the word million or billion, rather than use the abbreviation. For example, use \$20 million (not \$20M)
- You do not have to specify if the amount is in Canadian dollars. If the amount is in a foreign currency including U.S. dollars, you need to specify the currency.
- Unless the dollar amount has specific cents, do not include cents as part of the number For example, the donation was \$50,000.

Common mistake	Correct CP style
The donation was \$50,000.00	The donation was \$50,000.
The company’s total funds raised to date is \$5M.	The company’s total funds raised to date is \$5 million.
The fund closed at \$10M USD.	The fund closed at USD \$10 million.
The company announced that it has closed \$9 million CAD for its Fund I.	The company announced that it has closed CAD \$9 million for its Fund I.



Material Insight is a full-service digital marketing agency dedicated to growing tech businesses in Canada. We provide fractional CMO and full-service marketing including PR and media relations to help you scale.

See materialinsight.com for more information.