

**THE GLOBAL STANDARD:  
A TOOLKIT FOR INVESTOR RELATIONS OFFICERS**

# **Earnings Call Script**

*Presented By*  
Breakwater Capital Markets



# Overview

A best-in-class earnings call script functions as a core investor relations tool—one that shapes market interpretation by clearly explaining what changed, why it changed, and what it means going forward. Rather than repeating reported results, the script translates performance into a coherent, underwriteable narrative built on consistent KPIs, disciplined language, and forward-looking context.

Across preparation, delivery, and evolution over time, the focus is on reducing uncertainty, improving model assumptions, and preserving credibility. When done to global standards, earnings scripts become a durable reference asset that aligns expectations, minimizes volatility, and compounds investor trust quarter after quarter.

1

# What is the purpose of an earnings script in a best-in-class IR system?

An earnings script is a narrative control tool that turns results into an underwriteable interpretation before the market creates its own. Investors reward scripts that reduce model dispersion and prevent rumor-driven framing.

Design the script to complement the release by providing meaning, driver bridges, and "what to watch" milestones rather than repeating printed facts.

## The global standard

The script explains what changed, why it changed, and what it implies for the forward algorithm, using stable KPIs and consistent definitions.

# 2

# What should the first minute accomplish?

The first minute should answer the market's core question: "What matters most about this quarter and what does it change going forward?" Investors decide tone and risk quickly; ambiguity increases volatility.

Open with a concise headline, a driver sentence, and a forward milestone statement so listeners immediately understand the quarter's significance.

## **The global standard**

Clarity, not ceremony—state performance versus expectations, identify the primary drivers, and frame the forward implication.

# 3

## How do we prevent the script from becoming a press release readout?

A release provides facts; a script provides interpretation. Investors value a script that improves model assumptions, not one that restates numbers.

Use bridges and context, explain key variances, and reserve detailed tables for the deck so the spoken narrative remains crisp and decision-useful.

### **The global standard**

Focus on mechanisms—mix, pricing, volume, productivity, investment cadence—and how those drivers change the path to targets.

# 4

# What is the best structure for prepared remarks?

Investors evaluate earnings by understanding results first, then translating drivers into model updates, then updating their forward view, and finally testing risk scenarios. Your script structure should mirror this decision logic.

Keep each section short and purposeful, maintain consistent definitions, and ensure every topic maps to underwriting and valuation rather than internal storytelling.

## **The global standard**

Headline performance → driver bridge → segment and KPI highlights → strategic milestones → outlook framework and assumptions → capital allocation and balance sheet → risks and monitoring → close with "what to watch."

5

# How do we address a beat without creating unrealistic extrapolation?

Explain durability, not just magnitude. Investors punish beats that later reverse because they feel misled on persistence.

Provide a clear driver explanation and tie it to your guidance framework so investors understand how the beat affects forward probability, not just the current headline.

## The global standard

Categorize the beat into structural drivers, cyclical tailwinds, and timing effects, then clarify what is repeatable and what normalizes.

# 6

# How do we address a miss while protecting credibility?

Owning the miss directly, quantify drivers, and show corrective governance. Investors tolerate negative outcomes; they punish evasiveness and shifting definitions.

Use clear language, avoid blame-shifting, maintain KPI consistency, and frame what will change in the algorithm and how investors should monitor progress.

## **The global standard**

Accountability plus a forward plan: what changed, what you learned, what actions are underway, and what milestones will prove recovery.

# 7

# How should KPIs be used in prepared remarks?

KPIs should be used to explain mechanism and signal trajectory, not to flood the call with data. Investors reward KPI discipline because it improves comprehension and reduces noise.

Use a stable KPI scoreboard, reference multi-quarter trends, and explicitly connect KPI movement to financial outcomes and guidance assumptions.

## **The global standard**

Highlight only the few KPIs that drive the quarter's result and the next period's setup, with all additional KPI detail in published materials.

# 8

# How do we handle macro commentary without sounding speculative?

Macro should be described through observed demand signals and management responses, not predictions about the world. Investors value a grounded view that preserves credibility.

Discuss leading indicators, customer behavior, and pricing dynamics in a structured way, then tie macro considerations to your scenario framework so investors can probability-weight outcomes without interpreting tone as a hidden update.

## **The global standard**

Separate what you are seeing from what you are assuming and what you are doing operationally.

9

# How should we present guidance on the call to maximize investor utility?

Guidance becomes useful when investors understand not just the range but the reasoning behind it. Anchor to published ranges, disclose key assumptions (FX, cost inflation, demand), and use stable language so investors do not infer guidance creep from nuanced phrasing differences.

Investors need to translate your guidance into their models with confidence, which requires interpretability and consistency.

## The global standard

Frame guidance through drivers and assumptions, explain what has changed since the last update, and clarify what conditions correspond to low versus high outcomes.

# 10

## How do we address risks without weakening confidence?

Risks should be structured, owned, and paired with mitigation and monitoring. Investors are reassured by governance over uncertainty.

Avoid generic lists and use risk framing to improve underwriteability, showing how the company manages downside scenarios while preserving long-term strategy.

### **The global standard**

Name the few material risks, explain exposure, describe actions, and share early indicators you watch.

11

# How do we prevent executives from drifting in language quarter to quarter?

Consistency requires a messaging system, not personal memory. Drift is interpreted as hidden information.

Maintain a language library, run pre-call briefings, and use post-call debriefs to identify any unintended phrasing changes that could create market confusion or selective disclosure risk.

## **The global standard**

Use repeat lines, stable definitions, and rehearsed phrasing for sensitive topics.

# 12

## What is best practice for segment commentary in the script?

Segment commentary should focus on economics and drivers, not operational minutiae. Investors value comparability and clear translation to the total company model.

Keep segment sections short, highlight only the most decision-relevant deltas, and push deep detail to the deck and appendices.

### **The global standard**

Explain what changed, why it changed, and what it implies for the consolidated algorithm, using consistent segment KPIs where disclosed.

# 13

## How should we handle investment phases that pressure margins?

Investment should be framed as a governed trade-off with measurable milestones. Investors accept margin pressure when they can underwrite the payoff.

Tie investment to KPIs, provide timing ranges, and reinforce that capital allocation remains disciplined and aligned to long-term returns.

### **The global standard**

Explain what you are investing in, why it creates durable value, how you will measure progress, and when returns should emerge in the financial algorithm.

# 14

## How do we manage Q&A expectations through prepared remarks?

The best way to improve Q&A is to pre-answer the inevitable questions. Investors interpret unanswered issues as avoidance.

Use a quarterly "top questions" review, insert short clarifying passages on the most likely debates, and maintain strict alignment with public materials to avoid disclosure creep.

### **The global standard**

Address top investor concerns in prepared remarks with clear framing so Q&A focuses on refinement rather than correction.

# 15

## How do we reduce Reg FD risk during the call itself?

Use published materials, rehearsed answers, and clear red lines. Investors will treat any novelty as new information.

Pre-clear sensitive areas, train speakers to bridge back to public frameworks, and ensure all supporting materials are available publicly to preserve fairness and reduce selective disclosure risk.

### **The global standard**

Avoid introducing new KPIs, incremental intra-quarter trend color, or undisclosed customer information in live remarks or Q&A.

# 16

## What is the ideal length for prepared remarks?

Prepared remarks should be long enough to deliver meaning and short enough to preserve attention and Q&A quality.

Investors reward clarity and discipline. Enforce ruthless editing, focus on decision-useful content, and use the deck and appendix for data depth so the spoken portion stays coherent and globally accessible.

### **The global standard**

Typically 10–15 minutes, depending on complexity, with deep detail available in written materials.

17

## How should we close prepared remarks?

The close should reinforce the thesis, summarize the quarter's proof points, and state what investors should watch next. Investors remember the close and use it to brief internal teams.

End with a concise "three things to watch" that aligns with your messaging framework and guidance philosophy to reduce post-call confusion.

### **The global standard**

A forward monitoring frame: key KPIs, milestones, and risks that will determine trajectory.

18

# How do we make the script globally usable across time zones and audiences?

Use plain, precise language, define terms consistently, and avoid idioms that do not translate.

Ensure transcripts and replays are published quickly, and align language across all channels so the script becomes a reliable reference asset, not a one-time performance.

## **The global standard**

Content designed for replay: clear structure, stable definitions, and minimal jargon so global investors and analysts can consume and quote accurately.

19

# How do we improve scripts over time without changing the story every quarter?

Improve through refinement, not reinvention.  
Investors reward stability and penalize drift.

Run a quarterly debrief, track recurring confusion points, and update the script framework and FAQs so each call increases clarity and reduces the need for repetitive questions.

## The global standard

Keep the narrative spine stable while using feedback from Q&A themes and misinterpretations to clarify driver bridges and definitions.

# 20

# What does “global standard” earnings scripting look like

It is concise, driver-based, and model-enabling, with consistent definitions and disciplined forward framing.

The global standard leaves investors with reduced uncertainty, clearer assumptions, and a stable monitoring framework that supports valuation resilience.

Operationally, it is governed through preparation, rehearsal, and disclosure discipline, and it compounds trust over time by making your communication predictably useful across cycles and environments

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We bring distinctive judgment and deep market insight to the decisions that shape valuation, command investor confidence, and position companies for enduring leadership.

*Contact Mark Hayes for more information*  
[mark@breakwaterstrategy.com](mailto:mark@breakwaterstrategy.com)

<https://breakwaterstrategy.com/capital-markets/>

