

LEGAL & REGULATORY RISK FROM COMMUNICATIONS

The cost of one sentence.

Thirteen real, documented cases from the US, UK, and EU in which a company or a senior decision-maker lost a lawsuit, paid a settlement, or was fined, and the trigger was a specific piece of writing. Each line was then run through the live VerbaPulse pre-send check.

13

Documented cases

9 / 13

Flagged before send

US · UK · EU

Three jurisdictions

Billions

In fines & settlements

A NOTE ON IDENTITIES

Every case in this report is a real, documented legal or regulatory outcome. **Company identities have been anonymized, and the names of any individuals have been removed or changed.** The conduct, the figures, the language patterns, and the VerbaPulse output are unchanged. A fully sourced version is available to evaluating teams on request.

WHY WE WROTE THIS

A benchmark only means something when the inputs are real

Every working day, teams send thousands of messages: emails to customers, posts from executive accounts, notes in internal chat, replies to a regulator. Most are routine. A few carry legal, regulatory, or reputational risk that no one notices until it is too late. By then the message has been sent, stored, and is sitting in an inbox waiting to be read back in a courtroom.

Most tools that deal with communication risk arrive after the message is already gone: e-discovery, monitoring, the legal review that happens once a complaint lands. VerbaPulse works at the one moment that still changes the outcome, the moment before send. It reads the draft, flags the phrase that creates exposure, and offers a safer way to say the same thing, or says plainly when the safest move is to remove the line.

So we ran the honest test. We took the actual language from cases that companies or their senior decision-makers lost, and put it through the live VerbaPulse API before send. We did not write our own lookalike text, and we did not edit the output. The identities are anonymized; the conduct, the figures, the wording patterns, and the product's response are unchanged. This is the risk your organization carries today, in language your teams already use.

METHODOLOGY

How the cases were chosen, and how they were scanned

- Each case is a documented court judgment or regulator decision in which a company or a C-level decision-maker lost, between 2020 and Q2 2026.
- The trigger is phrase-level content risk of the kind VerbaPulse addresses, a line in a message, an email, a post, an internal note.
- Only written channels a pre-send check can operate on (email, posts, internal messages and documents). Excluded: spoken testimony, broadcast, WhatsApp, SMS, trading-terminal chat.
- Every line was submitted to the live VerbaPulse production API on 21 June 2026. Each raw response was captured with a SHA-256 stamp, and the scan window was cross-checked against the server logs, which showed zero failed calls, so a "no flag" is a genuine model decision, never a silent error.
- No exaggeration. Figures and conduct are as documented; output is shown exactly as the API returned it. We anonymize identities; we do not soften, inflate, or invent the facts.

What the check returns on real text

This is the actual VerbaPulse API response on the internal messages from the aircraft-manufacturer case (Case 01), not an illustration. The product reads the draft, surfaces the single most damaging admission, marks it with a severity and a plain reason, and recommends the action.

VerbaPulse scan · internal messages, aircraft-manufacturer case · live API output, 21 Jun 2026

HIGH · LEGAL

"I basically lied to the regulators (unknowingly)."

Admission of lying to regulators.

Recommended: no compliant version preserves the intent, best removed. [\[Remove\]](#)

For each case below, the line shown is the documented language that did the damage (with any individual's name removed or changed), and the strip beneath each card is the real VerbaPulse output on that line. The lesson is the through-line a pre-send check is built to catch.

One line. The whole case turned on it.

We ran all thirteen lines through the live VerbaPulse API. **Nine were flagged** with a severity, a category, and a recommended action; **four returned no flag**. Each card shows the product's real, unedited output. The four it let pass are not misses: stripped of their surrounding thread, those lines are genuinely ambiguous, a growth statistic, an open internal question, a product claim whose falsity is only knowable from outside facts. A pre-send check earns trust by flagging committed risk, not by crying wolf on every fragment.

01 • A global aircraft manufacturer

USD 2.5B

US • 2021 • Internal instant messages

Deferred Prosecution Agreement

WHAT HAPPENED Internal messages mocking the aircraft's design and admitting the regulator had been misled.

THE LINE *"This airplane is designed by clowns. who in turn are supervised by monkeys." / "I basically lied to the regulators (unknowingly)."*

Lesson. Writing "I lied to the regulators" in an internal message, or disparaging your own product or team, becomes the heart of a criminal case years later.

VERBAPULSE SCAN • LIVE API

HIGH • LEGAL • REMOVE flagged *"I basically lied to the regulators (unknowingly)"* — Admission of lying to regulators.

02 • A US cable-news network

USD 787.5M

US • 2023 • Internal email and messages

settlement

WHAT HAPPENED Hosts privately called the on-air claims false while the network kept broadcasting them.

THE LINE *A host. privately: "She is lying by the way. I caught her. It's insane. She is a complete nut. No one will work with her."*

Lesson. Saying "this is a lie" in private while broadcasting it publicly turns your internal messages into direct proof of liability.

VERBAPULSE SCAN • LIVE API

HIGH • REPUTATIONAL • REMOVE flagged 4 spans, incl. *"[name] is lying"* · *"[name] is a complete nut"* — Defamatory claims about a person.

03 · A crypto-exchange founder

Fraud

US · 2022 · Public post

conviction, 25-year sentence

WHAT HAPPENED	A public reassurance that customer assets were safe, days before collapse, when they were not.
THE LINE	<i>"We're fine. Assets are fine. We have enough to cover all client holdings." (deleted the next day)</i>

Lesson. A crisis-moment "everything is fine" reassurance, if untrue, becomes fraud evidence on its own.

VERBAPULSE SCAN · LIVE API

MEDIUM · FINANCIAL · REPHRASE flagged *"...enough to cover all client holdings"* — Unqualified financial assurance. Suggests "we are working to cover client holdings."

04 · A sports-betting company (CEO)

USD 200K

US · 2024 · Executive social post

SEC penalty · Reg FD

WHAT HAPPENED	The CEO's personal account posted material growth figures before results were officially released.
THE LINE	<i>"Our 2018-2019 state vintage grew over 80% on the revenue basis year-over-year in Q1... we expect robust growth even without new states opening."</i>

Lesson. An executive posting material financial performance from a personal account can become a corporate disclosure violation.

VERBAPULSE SCAN · LIVE API

NO FLAG ON THIS LINE — The figure reads as ordinary growth commentary; here the violation was the channel and timing of disclosure, not the wording itself.

05 · A dominant ad-tech platform

Monopoly

US · 2025 · Internal email

finding

WHAT HAPPENED	An internal email questioning the company's conflicted position across the whole ad-tech stack, cited as monopoly evidence.
THE LINE	<i>"Is there a deeper issue with us owning the platform. the exchange. and a huge network? The analogy would be if a major bank owned the stock exchange."</i>

Lesson. A candid internal email spelling out your own conflict of interest hands regulators their monopoly narrative.

VERBAPULSE SCAN · LIVE API

NO FLAG ON THIS LINE — It raises a concern as an open question rather than committing to conduct; there is no statement here to act on.

06 · A US college (sued by a local bakery)

US · 2022 · Written flyer

USD 36.59M

paid in total · defamation

WHAT HAPPENED

A protest flyer accusing the bakery of being racist, found defamatory.

THE LINE

"Don't Buy This is a RACIST establishment with a LONG ACCOUNT of RACIAL PROFILING and DISCRIMINATION."

Lesson. Distributing an unproven "racist" accusation in writing creates tens of millions in defamation liability for the institution.

[VERBAPULSE SCAN · LIVE API](#)

HIGH · REPUTATIONAL · REMOVE flagged *"RACIST establishment with a LONG ACCOUNT of RACIAL PROFILING and DISCRIMINATION"* — Negative factual claims about a named target.

07 · A pharmaceutical company executive

US · 2021–2022 · Internal email

Billions

in settlements

WHAT HAPPENED

An internal email shifting blame for a public-health crisis onto the people who misused the product.

THE LINE

"We have to hammer on the abusers in every way possible. They are the culprits and the problem."

Lesson. An internal email line that blames the customer or victim becomes the center of the liability narrative.

[VERBAPULSE SCAN · LIVE API](#)

MEDIUM · TOXIC CULTURE · REPHRASE flagged *"hammer on the abusers in every way possible"* — Aggressive language promoting hostility. Suggests "address the abusers appropriately."

08 · A celebrity-founded sports company

US · 2025 · Company statements

USD 50M

defamation verdict

WHAT HAPPENED

False statements that the founder was mentally unfit and had pursued a deal he disputed.

THE LINE

As described at trial: that his age had "resulted in dementia" and that "you need to have the keys taken away."

Lesson. Spreading unverified "he has dementia" claims about a person yields a USD 50M defamation verdict.

[VERBAPULSE SCAN · LIVE API](#)

NO FLAG ON THIS ISOLATED SENTENCE — A borderline reputational claim that sits near the model's threshold; in context, with the named target, this is the kind of line the check is built to surface.

09 · A blood-testing startup

US · 2022 · Investor communications

Fraud

conviction (investors)

WHAT HAPPENED Representations that the analyzer could run comprehensive tests from a few drops of blood, which it could not.

THE LINE *That the analyzer "could conduct comprehensive blood tests from finger drops of blood."*

Lesson. Inflated or false technical claims sent to investors turn into individual fraud counts one by one.

VERBAPULSE SCAN · LIVE API

NO FLAG ON THIS LINE — A product-capability claim whose falsity cannot be known from the text alone, only from outside facts about the device.

10 · A video-game publisher

US · 2023 · Internal messages

USD 54M

settlement

WHAT HAPPENED Messages from a harassment culture cited in the state civil-rights complaint.

THE LINE *Harassment-culture chat quoted in the complaint: "Gathering hot chixx for the [exec]. Bring 'em."*

Lesson. Harassment or demeaning language normalized in internal messages becomes the core evidence in a discrimination case.

VERBAPULSE SCAN · LIVE API

HIGH · OFF-BRAND · REPHRASE flagged "hot chixx" — Inappropriate language for a formal context. Suggests "enthusiastic participants."

11 · A group of UK broadcasters

UK · 2025 · Email and messaging

GBP 4.2M

UK's first labour-market cartel

WHAT HAPPENED A message to a competitor proposing to align freelancer pay rather than compete for talent.

THE LINE *"...we have no intention of getting into a bidding war, just want to be aligned and benchmark the rates."*

Lesson. Telling a competitor "let's align rates," however well-intentioned it sounds, is punished as a labour-market cartel.

VERBAPULSE SCAN · LIVE API

CRITICAL · ANTITRUST · REMOVE flagged "just want to be aligned and benchmark the rates" — Price fixing or alignment proposal.

12 · A pharmaceutical company (France)

EUR 25M

France · 2022 · Sales-force messages

disparagement · upheld on appeal

WHAT HAPPENED Reps were instructed to tell healthcare professionals the generic differed, overstating the risk of switching.

THE LINE | *The generic: "does not have the same composition, nor the same quantity of active ingredient, nor the same size."*

Lesson. Telling doctors "the generic is not the same, switching is risky" without an evidence basis is a court-upheld disparagement fine.

VERBAPULSE SCAN · LIVE API

MEDIUM · LEGAL · REPHRASE flagged "do not have the same composition" — Potentially misleading comparison. Suggests "may differ in composition."

13 · Two EU food-delivery platforms

EUR 329M

EU · 2025 · Inter-company email

EU's first labour-market cartel

WHAT HAPPENED A senior executive proposed a no-poach pact with a competitor by email; it grew into a general ban on hiring each other's staff.

THE LINE | *A senior executive: "Let's find some kind of non-solicitation agreement so we don't poach each other's staff."*

Lesson. A "let's not poach each other's staff" email to a competitor drew the EU's first labour-market cartel fine.

VERBAPULSE SCAN · LIVE API

CRITICAL · ANTITRUST · REMOVE flagged "Let's find some kind of non-solicitation agreement so we don't poach each other's staff." — No-poach or wage-fixing proposal.

WHAT THE PATTERN SHOWS

The same shape, across every category

Defamation, antitrust and labour-market collusion, securities disclosure, product-liability admissions, workplace conduct. Different laws, one through-line: an ordinary message, written in seconds, that became the centerpiece of the case.

- The damage is phrase-level. A single sentence, not a whole document, carries the exposure, and the scan strips above land on exactly that sentence.
- The writer was thinking about the reader, not the rulebook. The risk was invisible at the moment of writing.
- The channel is one people use every day: internal messages, email, a post from an executive account.
- Once sent, the only tools left are remediation and paperwork. The message is already in an inbox.
- A check at the point of writing is the cheapest moment at which any of these stories could have ended differently.

TRANSPARENCY

What we left out, and what the check let pass

A benchmark you can trust means showing the cases we excluded, and the lines the product did not flag, as clearly as the wins.

- Four of the thirteen lines returned no flag. Shown openly on each card, with the reason: a growth statistic, an open internal question, a borderline claim, and a product claim whose falsity needs outside facts. A pre-send check that flagged all four would be one that flags everything, and gets switched off.
- Removed for no documented text, only a regulator's characterization: several disparagement and cartel matters where only the official summary exists, not the actual message.
- Removed because the content was conduct or testimony, not a scannable outbound message.
- Off-channel, beyond what a pre-send check can reach: WhatsApp, SMS, spoken testimony, broadcast, trading-terminal chat.
- Won on appeal, or the company did not ultimately lose; or unverified by a search summary, removed on sight.

See it on the messages your team actually sends.

VerbaPulse is a pre-send communication-risk check for business writing. It reviews a draft in Outlook, Gmail, and the browser, flags the words that create legal, regulatory, or reputational exposure, and suggests a safer line before the message leaves. Email content is never stored or used to train models. A check at that moment is the cheapest point at which any of these stories could have ended differently.

[Book a walkthrough — verbapulse.com](https://verbapulse.com)

VerbaPulse · Benchmark Report 2025 · Companies anonymized; individuals' names removed or changed. Conduct, figures, and language patterns unchanged. Every "VerbaPulse scan" strip is real, unedited output from the live production API, captured 21 Jun 2026 and SHA-256 stamped. Confidential, for the named recipient. A fully sourced version is available on request.