

A Generic Editorial Style Guide

What is the Editorial Style Guide?

The Editorial Style Guide is a document published by the communications team to help team members send out accurate and consistent written communications. Special sections have been added to address capitalization of names, titles and departments. You will also find a current list of business units, partnerships and subsidiaries along with the status of their federal registration symbols.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

The following abbreviations and acronyms are approved for all written communications and do not need to be spelled out on first reference. All other abbreviations or acronyms should be spelled out on first reference with the acronym in parentheses following. For example, “positive financial impact (PFI).” Abbreviations/acronyms are used when the phrase will be used multiple times in your document, report or presentation.

AIP	Authorization for Inventory Purchase (Abbreviation)
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (Mad Cow Disease) (Abbreviation)
COB	Close Of Business & Chicken On the Bone (Abbreviation)
COGS	Cost Of Goods Sold (Acronym)
CRM	Customer Relationship Management (Abbreviation)
DC	Distribution Center (Abbreviation)
EAP	Employee Assistance Program (Abbreviation)
FDA	Food and Drug Administration (Abbreviation)
FOB	Freight On Board (Abbreviation)
PO	Purchase Order (Abbreviation)
POP	Point of Purchase (Abbreviation)
QA	Quality Assurance (Abbreviation)
QSR	Quick-Service Restaurant (Abbreviation)
RFP	Request for Proposal (Abbreviation)
R&D	Research and Development (Abbreviation)
SKU	Stock Keeping Unit (Abbreviation)
STAR	Supplier Tracking Assessment and Recognition (Acronym)
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture (Abbreviation)
URL	Uniform Resource Locator (Abbreviation)

There is a difference between acronyms and abbreviations. Taking the first initials of a phrase and using those initials to form a word that stands for something forms an acronym. (NATO, which we pronounce NATOH, is an acronym for North Atlantic Treaty Organization.) Some two-letter abbreviations require periods between the letters, while abbreviations of three or more letters do not.

Biofuel vs. Biofuels

Biofuel is singular (no “s”) when it is part of a compound noun.

- The U.S. Senate has increased the biofuel mandate for 2015.
- U.S. lawmakers often change biofuel policy when oil prices rise.

Biofuels (plural) is used when the word stands alone.

- Ethanol and other biofuels are in high demand.
- The auto industry should explore the use of biofuels.
- The effect of biofuels on U.S. agriculture policy is increasing.

Boards, capitalization of

Excessive capitalization makes writing more difficult to read and is stylistically incorrect. To conform to standard business and journalistic styles, please follow the guidelines set forth in the Associated Press Stylebook.

Board or Boards

Use uppercase when referring to a specific board of directors — even if abbreviating to “board.”

- Example: Acme’s Board of Directors

Use lowercase in secondary references that refer to “the board” or “the board of directors.”

Use lowercase in referring to multiple boards. The plural of “board of directors” is “boards of directors.”

Computer Terminology

As the use of electronic communications increases, computer-related terms regarding hyperlinks, menus and so on will likely see more use in written material. Our official guidelines below set forth the rules regarding proper use of these terms.

- Hyperlinks, E-mail Addresses and Web Sites: Use a clickable, live link where possible.
- Menu Items, Field Labels, Toolbars, etc.: Use initial caps. Enclose menu picks within quotation marks.
- Icons, Links and Buttons: Set the word in boldface. Match the capitalization of the hardware or software in use. For icons, use initial caps.
 - Click the back button to return to the previous page.
 - Click the Arrow icon to navigate to the login page.
 - Click the Privacy Policy link at the bottom for more information.

- Commands or Keystrokes: Use initial caps separated by a plus sign where needed.
 - Press Ctrl+Alt+R to generate the ® symbol.
 - Hit Enter after you type your password.
- Text Entered in a Field: Type the word lowercase and in boldface.
 - Type login at the prompt.

Departments

Departments should always be uppercase — whether the word “department” is stated or implied. When discussing multiple departments, uppercase the name but lowercase the word “departments.”

- (Single Department) The Centralized Casting Department manages the procurement of temporary staff.
- (Multiple Departments) The Finance Department requested that the Distribution and Equipment Purchasing departments take them to a Louisville Bats game this Sunday.

Food

Trade names and menu items should be uppercase. Generic food names should be lowercase.

Internet vs. intranet

Uppercase the word Internet when referring to the World Wide Web. Lowercase the word “intranet” to refer to an internal Web site within an organization.

- Google is an Internet Web site used for searching millions of Web pages.
- You can search for team members by name, title and department on our intranet.

Names and Titles

It is not uncommon to see different styles for names and titles. Press releases, newsletter features, Web pages, presentations and letters may vary depending on the layout and guidelines. Many organizations adopt a “house style” beyond Associated Press guidelines — depending on the standards established by corporate communications or public affairs. Our primary goal is to ensure a consistent application of style across any single communication vehicle.

Examples with direct quotes:

- “Investment in the individual is a catalyst for an organization’s success,” said President and Chief Executive Officer John Doe.
- “Our commitment to diversity helps drive all aspects of our business,” said Jane Doe, Chairman, CEO and President, Acme Inc.

Examples in text/copy:

- John Smith, President and CEO, announced a major organizational realignment to meet the needs of the organization's growing customer base.
- Jane Smith, Senior Vice President, says her team works to build a stronger and more emotional connection to customers.

Examples of names/titles in listings: (Capitalize and use commas to separate.)

- James Doe, Senior Vice President, General Manager
- Mary Doe, Vice President, Distribution
- John Smith, Vice President, Sales Management
- Jill Brown, Senior Director, Ancillary Services

Teams, naming

Teams are usually descriptive of an area of responsibility and are always lowercase. In casual use, departments may sometimes be referred to as teams (i.e., the equipment team). If a department is referred to as a team, it should be lowercase.

- The management team is building a production plan.
- The communications team is creating a new publication.
- The equipment team organized last year's event.