HBA Style Guide

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1. The Basics

The HBA

- Always identify the HBA as the "Healthcare Businesswomen's Association" the first time it is mentioned.
- Don't forget the "the" before HBA.
- Businesswomen's is always plural and always a compound word.

Chapters and Regions

- HBA always precedes a chapter or regional name.
- Components must distinguish themselves from the global-level HBA. They may be referred to as their location name without specifying region or chapter at the end, except in cases where a specific leadership title calls for it. Note that HBA precedes the chapter/region name. Please be clear when referring to a chapter/regional board member in a press release:
  - HBA San Diego not San Diego HBA
  - HBA Europe and HBA Europe regional chair
  - HBA St. Louis and HBA St. Louis chapter president

Identifying Subjects

- Always identify someone by both first and last name the first time they are mentioned.
- After they have been appropriately named, default to the first name alone unless referring to someone outside of the HBA community. Implied intimacy of first name usage is encouraged, but we do not want to suggest familiarity if a guest or speaker is from outside the HBA.
- If you are uncertain of the gender of the subject you are writing about or are writing about multiple subjects, default to the nonbinary pronoun "they/them."

2. Acronyms and Abbreviations

General

- Generally, acronyms do not require periods.
  - GIF, JPEG, PDF, BA, MA, PhD
- However, abbreviations sometimes do.
  - e.g., i.e., a.k.a., etc.
- City, state, and country abbreviations do not require periods. Use two-letter Postal ZIP Code abbreviations or within text

use AP Style state abbreviations if they are used with the name of a city or town.

The HBA

- Always identify the HBA as the "Healthcare Businesswomen's Association" the first time it is mentioned.
- To emphasize our abbreviation, please display our URL as HBAnet.org

Important Acronym-ism

- As with names and the HBA itself, please contextualize acronyms and abbreviations the first time they appear by spelling them out. Commonplace acronyms may not require this, but please consider your audience.

The HBA's Commonly Used Abbreviations

Click here to view the complete list.

Internet Abbreviations

- Please do not use internet abbreviations outside of Teams chats and informal emails. Ever. We don't care how solid a millennial you are.
  - BRB, LOL, TTYL, and others, just to name a few.
- Few words still use "e" at the start to represent the digital version. However, words like "email," do not capitalize the word following "e" — email, not eMail.

3. Numbers

Numerals

Spell out zero to nine, any numbers that start a sentence (with the exception of a year), and first through ninth.

Ages

Numerals rule, plus hyphens.

- A nine-year-old
- A nine-year-old child
- A group of seven- to nine-year-old children
- The child was three years old.

Dates

- Use the European convention, which lists the date, month, then year: 14 April, 2021 or 14 April 2021. Either is acceptable, just be consistent throughout.
- No need to use ordinal number in a date. The event is 10 November. Don't bother with the th, it adds no clarity.

Time

- Use numerals or 12-hour time.
- AM and PM do not require punctuation. Clearly state time zone abbreviation.
  - 3:00 PM CET or 3 PM CET
  - Avoid "S" in time zones — ET, PT, CET — as not all places recognize daylight savings time.

Percentages

- Spell out the word "percent" and use numerals for the number.
- The rare exception here is to save space in a graphic, lists, bullets or other short-form situation.

Telephone Numbers

Area code-exchange-number for U.S./Canadian numbers and use only spaces for numbers outside the U.S. and Canada.

- 215-646-9300 for use within the U.S.
- +1-215-646-9300 for materials used both in and out of the U.S.
- +41 61 696 7169 for European numbers.

4. Titles and Capitalizations

Names and Professional Titles

All professional/job titles, committee, group and program names are capitalized for consistency.

- Phil George, HBA Marketing Associate Director
- Phil George, HBA Associate Director, Marketing
- HBA Associate Director of Marketing Phil George

Committees, Groups and Program Names

All of the above are capitalized for consistency and for recognition of their formal presence in the HBA.

- i.e., HBA Board of Directors vs. HBA board of directors

Headlines and Subheaders

- Avoid "click-bait" titles. Instead, be as clear and succinct; include the HBA component, subject of the article, event topic, speaker, etc.
- Use AP style title case.
- Do not capitalize prepositions, conjunctions, and articles with four or fewer letters — the words *the, a, an, of, but, for, from, with*, etc. are not in caps, but the words *above, within, about, however*, etc. are.
    - "Female Workforce Fares Better Working for Committed Equity Advocates in Pharma"
    - "Learn More About the HBA Southwest's Role of Member Experience"
- Use hyphens instead of colons whenever possible.
- Replace double quotes and italics with single quotes.

Event Titles

- Use title case and use hyphens instead of colons whenever possible.
- Words to omit from titles: o"virtual" or "webinar" — these will be reflected in the location and event copy
    - "HBA Chapter/Region:" or "HBA Chapter/Region presents" — our system will reflect which location is hosting the event

Captions

End captions with a period only if it is a complete sentence. The only exception to this is if a fragment precedes a photo credit.

The Internet

Yes, in title case it is capitalized. Otherwise, the HBA preference is to spell *internet* with a lowercase i.

All Caps

Writing in all caps on the internet translates to yelling. Unless you are using capitalization as part of the typography in graphic design, please avoid using all caps colloquially.

5. Serial Commas and Myriad Dashes

Serial Commas

Use the serial comma. Always. (Oxford comma.)

- "France, Italy, or Spain" not "France, Italy or Spain"
- "Nancy, Phil, and Tammy" not "Nancy, Phil and Tammy"

Dashes
- There are three styles of dashes that can be used:
    - Hyphen (next to the zero on your keyboard) "-" is used to form compound words, in certain prefixes and suffixes, and as a separator between non-inclusive numbers
        - examples include *mini-series*, *pre-conference*, etc.
        - En dash (ALT + hyphen) "–" is used to connect numbers and sometimes words. If you can replace a dash with the word "to," you can use an en dash.
    - Em dash (SHIFT + ALT + hyphen) "—" is used to set up information that is explanatory or requiring particular emphasis. It can function as an alternative to parentheses or a colon. This one is pretty stylistic; if you aren't comfortable using it, don't.
- When in doubt, stick with the defaults in Microsoft Word or other word processors.

6. Other Punctuation

UK, US and EU

U.S. and U.K. have periods in text, not in headlines (US, UK), and you never use periods in EU anywhere.

- Be mindful of compounding punctuation; "The HBA has chapters in the U.S., Europe…"

Names with initials

F. Scott Fitzgerald and E. B. White, with a space between the period and the next initial, but FDR and JFK. Some names with initials do not require periods.

Underlining

In the age of the internet, underlining means hyperlinked. Do not use underlining unless you intend for the word/phrase to be linked.

Emphatic punctuation

- Use exclamation points sparingly.
- Sometimes more is just more. Word choice and brevity can be more impactful than unnecessary descriptors or punctuation.

Ellipses

There should be no spaces before or after an ellipsis: "…"

Ampersand

Write out the word "and" unless it is a registered company name. (Suzie leads the research and development at Johnson & Johnson.)

Spacing

Double-spacing is wholly unnecessary and, in digital spaces, takes away from the limited available word count.

Lists

The HBA style is to capitalize the first word of the bullet and only use punctuation if the bullet is a complete sentence.

Scare Quotes

- Scare quotes are those quotation marks used to indicate that the word in use is either incorrect or nonstandard. More often than not, it also indicates to readers that the author doesn't agree with how the term is applied.
  - Example: I don't understand what "mansplaining" is, but there seems to be a lot of complaining about it.
- If you remove scare quotes and feel inclined to add in the word so-called, don't.

7. When in Doubt

AP Style

For any style questions that are unanswered in this guide, reference the latest AP style guide.

Spelling

Consult the Merriam-Webster dictionary primarily. The HBA uses American spellings for corporate and most component materials; HBA Europe and (most) chapters within use British spellings.

Writing Style

If vocabulary or vernacular comes into question, reach out to a member of the communications or marketing teams. Consistency in voice is important and they can provide you either the best use-case of the vocabulary in question or can clarify vernacular already in use among HBA opus.

HBA Style Miscellany

- best seller (n.)
- best-selling (adj.)
- e-book

- email
- Google/google (capitalized as a noun, lowercase as a verb)
- hashtag
- homepage
- myriad
  - (n.) – Nancy's preference
  - (adj.) – Tammy's preference
  - both correct
- non-member
- voicemail
- voiceover
- WiFi

- email
- Google/google (capitalized as a noun, lowercase as a verb)
- hashtag
- homepage
- myriad
  - (n.) – Nancy's preference
  - (adj.) – Tammy's preference
  - both correct