



HOWARD PRINTING NEWSLETTER



DEFINING YOUR STYLE

BY PATTY SMETANA

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MANY OF OUR CLIENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR publishing regular communication pieces for their company or organization. These pieces may be external or internal newsletters, quarterly magazines or journals, or monthly reports. Whether you are responsible for the whole process or just gathering information on disk so the graphics department can take over, you may find some relief through style sheets.

Style sheets are specific written outlines that describe the content and “look” that printed pieces will maintain. There are many good reasons for creating a style sheet. Consistency from one issue to the next, clarification of grammar and usage, accuracy to a recognized standard, and speeding the production process are only a few advantages.

Creating a style sheet for your company’s publication can be a daunting task. At best, setting up a style sheet is time-consuming. At worst, establishing a style sheet can cause sleeplessness for the dogged perfectionist. But it is worth the time and effort because your publications will be consistently professional.

The most common and user-friendly style sheet format is the grid. A grid breaks down topics by category and offers alphabetized, quick-reference sheets that an editor, designer, or proofreader can flip to for answers or clarification. Grids also take the most time to produce.

Since spare time is exactly what most of us don’t have, I’ve developed a “question and answer” method to create a simple style sheet. You should be able to complete the 20 prompts in approximately one hour. If you did not specify the original graphic guidelines, or you inherited the responsibility for your publication from a predecessor, you may need to call the graphic designer for a few font names or point sizes.

At the end of this article is a style sheet for the newsletter you are holding in your hand that will help you to define your style.

Answer these questions with as much detail as possible.

If you use a style guide book, specific dictionary, or other reference tool for grammar, abbreviations, hyphenations, capitalizations, etc., refer to the book(s) by name.

- 1) The goal for our publication is:
- 2) The audience for our publication is:
- 3) Our publishing/distribution schedule is:
- 4) The physical dimensions of the piece are:
- 5) Ink colors are:
- 6) The paper is:
- 7) Logos and logotype rules are:
- 8) The typesets, indents, and point sizes used will be
 - a) masthead:
 - b) headlines:
 - c) subheads:
 - d) paragraph body copy:
 - e) captions:
 - f) table of contents:
 - g) tables and graphs:
 - h) inset or ‘pull quote’ copy:
 - i) footnoted copy:
 - j) credits and byline copy:
 - k) bibliographies:
 - l) mailing panel:
- 9) Page margin dimensions are
 - top:
 - left:
 - right:
 - bottom:
 - space between columns:
- 10) Column alignments and width measures are:
- 11) Capitalization rules are:
- 12) Abbreviation rules are:
- 13) End-of-line word break rules are:

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PRINTING PARTNERS

BY LINDA HAGER

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FOR SALES

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PRODUCTION NOTES:

This newsletter
is printed on a 40-inch
Man Roland lithographic
four-color press
using process inks
and Eloquence Gloss Cover
Basis 80

Linda Hager owns
Clear Communication,
which offers public
relations, writing, editing,
and proofreading.

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YOUR SUCCESS WITH ANY PRINT PROJECT DEPENDS ON how successfully you manage time, quality, cost, and service. But you don't have to do all that alone!

Your printer wants to help you succeed. How can you help her/him help you?

- Talk to your printing professional early in your project. You can avoid wasting time, energy, and money by discussing schedules, technical requirements, and budget while the project is in the conceptual stages.
- Share with your print expert the purpose, audience, and desired outcome of the piece you are planning to print. You will benefit from his/her wealth of experience, and you might even save some money.
- Remember that—regardless of the claims of some hungry salespeople—not every printer can do a great job on every kind of project. Most print shops are geared to meeting the needs of a certain market niche. Ask if the printer you are considering works regularly with companies—and on projects—like yours. Look at samples of work they've done that is similar to what you need. Be sure that the printer can meet your drop-dead delivery date, and that the shop is neither too small nor too large to meet your needs.
- Work with your print specialist to select the paper that will meet your objectives for the printed piece. Asking for “a nice soft blue” or “something recycled that will look good with four-color process” sets you up for disappointment. Ask to see swatch books and printed samples of the stock best suited to the needs of the job. Paper can be the single largest cost factor in a print project, so it's especially important that when you get bids, every printer is bidding on exactly the same paper.
- Express your time requirements clearly and specifically. Give exact dates instead of “ASAP.” Your print job is important to you—and to your printer. But it is only one of many to come in on any given day. Typically, jobs will be processed by specific due date, and the one labeled “ASAP” will go to the bottom of the pile.
- Check with your print specialist at the beginning of your project to be sure that the software you are planning to use is compatible with the printer's prepress technology. You can't always believe software claims about compatibility with print technology. Surprises can cost you time, money, labor—and stress!
- Ask questions. Don't pretend to know more than you do. Graphic arts vocabulary is full of ever-changing acronyms, computerese, and jargon. And different printers use the same terms to mean different things. No one likes to look stupid, but pretending to understand something can lead to major egg on the face. It's always better to ask!
- If you order four-color printing, ask what “level” of color you will be getting. With all the new digital options, many printers tell you they can produce “full-color.” You should *know* if you will be getting less than A-1 color.
- Make sure your printer knows who's the decision-maker for every stage of production. Does the printer respond to the comments of the buyer, the marketing director, the writer, the agency rep, the designer, or the accounting department? You can avoid confusion and minimize delays, mistakes, and expense if your printer knows when to listen to whom. It is especially important to be clear about who signs off on the proof and press check.
- Ask your print specialist to recommend a professional editor/proofreader, and budget for her/his services. No one—NO ONE!—can do a good job of checking his/her own work, and Spellcheck is not enough! You can save yourself embarrassment and expense by making sure your copy is perfect before it goes to the printer. Finding errors at the press check—or after delivery or even distribution—is much more expensive—and embarrassing—than paying a professional to catch the errors that creep into everyone's work.
- Remember that every printed piece is custom-designed and manufactured. It aims to distinguish your business from all the others in the marketplace. Let your printer be your partner in the production decisions that will help determine the success of your project—and your success.

YOUR STYLE Continued from page 1

- 14) Hyphenation rules are:
- 15) Number usage rules are:
- 16) Possessive rules are:
- 17) Pluralization rules are:
- 18) Dates and times are designated as:
- 19) Trademark, service mark, and copyright mark usage rules are:
- 20) Special inclusions and miscellaneous
 - Unique spellings:
 - Proprietary copy handling:
 - Italic usage:
 - Font usage:
 - Series comma usage:
 - Tables and graphs guidelines:
 - Tracking (overall character and word spacing):
 - Kerning (individual letter combination spacing):
 - Word spacing (space between each word):
 - Letter spacing (space between each letter of every word):
 - Leading (vertical space between lines of type):
 - Use of dashes and spaces:
 - Placement of rules, borders, and boxes around photographs:
 - Image bleed or size restrictions:
 - Use of photography (source, cropping, and size restrictions):

Left-brained editors will rejoice in an exercise that finally brings law and order to their publications. Right-brainers will most likely suffer and grumble through the process, realizing only later how grateful they are that an end has come to persistent proof-reader's burning questions like: "Do you want the circle-R register trademark designation to be one-third of the x-height of the headline's point size when it first appears on each page? Or, should we disregard it in headlines, include it with each product mention, dropping it only when that inclusion involves a table or graph?"

(For more specifics on style sheet development, I recommend the purchase of Laura Killen Anderson's *Handbook for Proofreading*. In addition to her discussion on style sheets, she provides an excellent and comprehensive guide to all aspects of proofreading.)

EXAMPLE STYLE SHEET FOR HOWARD PRINTING'S NEWSLETTER

- 1) The goal of Howard Printing's newsletter is to educate all readers about printing and graphic arts-related issues and to update clients and prospects about equipment, capabilities, services, and accomplishments.
- 2) The audience is clients, prospects, suppliers, and anyone who requests it.
- 3) Our publishing schedule is two or three times per year. Distribution is via USPS and on our website. There is no charge for the newsletter.
- 4) The trim size is usually 17x11. Occasionally a perforated, removable reply card is attached to the inside right panel, increasing the overall trim size to 21x11. When necessary, the newsletter can be expanded to a six-panel format with a trim size of 25-1/4x11. The newsletter bi-folds or tri-folds to a final size of 8-1/2x11.
- 5) The newsletter is printed in process (CMYK) color throughout. The masthead colors do not change from one issue to the next. Side-bar boxes and headlines are always black ink. Subhead colors are variable and changed to add interest to the layout. Boxed copy can have colored backgrounds and/or headlines. A fifth or sixth ink color, or varnish can be added as needed for content or special effect.
- 6) The paper is white Potlach Eloquence Gloss 80# Cover.
- 7) A four-color (1-7/32 inch wide) logo appears once on the outside front cover, bleeding off the top.
 - 8(a) Masthead: does not change from issue-to-issue, includes the logo, and the word "NEWSLETTER" screened back to 15% black.
 - 8(b) Headlines: 24 pt., Lithos Bold, all caps, centered.
 - 8(c) Subheads: 18 pt., Futura Condensed Bold, caps and lower case, flush left/ragged right.
 - 8(d) Paragraph body copy: 11 pt., Futura Condensed Light, caps and lower case, flush left/ragged right. Each article begins with a three-line, colored, initial drop-cap character, and follows with all-cap copy for the first line of text only. Paragraph indents are .25 inch at the beginning of subsequent paragraphs.
 - 8(e) Captions: 11 pt., Futura Condensed Light Italic, caps and lower case, flush left/ragged right.
 - 8(f) not applicable.
 - 8(g) not applicable.
 - 8(h) not applicable.
 - 8(i) not applicable.
 - 8(j) Credits are centered and reversed out of a black background in 14 pt. Lithos Bold and 18 pt. Industria Solid Alternate. Both are placed in side-bar boxes on the outside front cover and inside front cover. Bylines are placed below the article's headline in Lithos Bold 14 pt.

Continued on back page

YOUR STYLE Continued from page 3

- 8(k) not applicable.
- 8(l) The mailing panel is always 8-1/2 inches wide and a minimum of three inches in height. The mailing panel height can be enlarged to 5-1/2 inches for copy-fitting purposes. Once a year, “address service requested” copy is added to the return address to update the mailing list database.
- 9) Page margins are: 1/2-inch on top, left, and right and 5/8-inch at bottom. Space between columns is 1/4-inch.
- 10) The newsletter uses a combination of single-column, double-column, and half-page column widths to add variety and flexibility to the layout. Single columns measure 2-3/4 inches. Double columns measure 4-1/2 inches. Half-page columns measure 3-5/8 inches. Columns are flush left/ragged right unless copy is put inside a box.
- Boxed copy can be one, two, or three columns wide. The type can be set flush left, centered, or justified within the box.
- 11) Headlines and bylines are all caps. Subheads, body copy, and captions are caps and lower case. Proper nouns, abbreviations, and acronyms follow 1998 *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* rules.
- 12) Abbreviations use 1998 *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* rules.
- 13) End-of-line word break rules are, *do not break*:
words on more than two consecutive lines of type
the first or last words of any column
already-hyphenated words
proper nouns
before any dash
phone numbers or strings of dates
words if the result would be less than three characters remaining on either side of the break (e.g. description, not de-scription).
- 14) Hyphenation is used for end-of-line word divisions, to express a single unit, to make compound adjectives, and to connect some numerals for clarification (It was a two-year program).
- 15) Numbers are spelled out for one through nine. Use numerals for 10 and above.
- 16) Possessives use 1998 *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* rules.
- 17) Pluralization follows 1998 *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* rules.
- 18) Dates are designated as:
Nov. 12, 1998 (not: November 12, 1998 or 11/12/98)
January 1999 (not: Jan., 1999 or January, 1999)
1900s (not: 1900’s)
21st century (not: twenty-first century).
Time designations appear as:
10:15 a.m. (not: 10:15 am)
3 p.m. (not: 3:00 p.m. or 3:00 pm).
- 19) Trademark and service marks are not applicable. Copyright information appears in the side-bar, at the bottom of the inside front cover.
- 20) Special inclusions and miscellaneous information:
- The volume and number of each issue appear at the bottom of the outside front cover.
 - Any special credits appear in the black side-bar on the inside front cover.
 - The Lithos font requires increased word spacing in headlines.
 - Continuation notice for articles that jump “to” and “from” another page are designated in Futura Condensed Bold, flush left; 8 pt. (Continued on back page/Continued from page 1).
 - An abbreviated headline is repeated above the “continued from” column in Lithos Bold, flush left; 14 pt. to help readers find their place again (e.g. Your Style).
 - Em dashes are used to change a thought in the middle of a sentence. (It was a rush job — so what’s new — when it finally arrived in the mail.) or to connect two independent thoughts within the same sentence (She was panicky about getting the brochures on Tuesday — and who wouldn’t be, knowing her boss?).
 - Do not place a space before or after an em dash.
 - En dashes are used to connect dates and page numbers (January 18–23, pages 9–11).
 - Do not place a space before or after an en dash.
 - Paragraph indents are .25 inches and bullet indents are 1-em.
 - Photography can be reproduced using full-color (CMYK), black halftones, or duotones. All photos are drum-scanned, using 175-line screens.



HOWARD PRINTING COMPANY

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Address Service Requested

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US POSTAGE
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