

Greetings!

Sunshine Daydream

The lawnmowers are growling, the caps and gowns are coming out, and the air is heating up. Summer's on its way, but your business doesn't have to suffer just because those dreams of vacation getaways are starting to crop up. In this issue of *KB CommEntary*, we dive into the use of acronyms, which can be a business's best friend or worst enemy.

What's Up at KB COMM?

At KB COMM, we provide mission-critical communication and learning services to clients in a variety of industries. Thanks to our established and new clients for keeping us busy. Recent and ongoing projects include:

- Creating technical documentation for a financial-transaction system developer
- Creating and revising job descriptions for the Careers website of a high-tech manufacturer
- Writing and editing numerous information products for a healthcare diagnostics manufacturer, including communications to employees from the CEO and executive leadership team, customer letters, trade show presentations and materials, and product marketing brochures
- Writing, formatting, and performing quality control reviews of large, complex chemical residue studies intended for regulatory submission on behalf of a federally funded, cooperative research organization
- Writing supplements and formatting modules of electronic submissions to FDA for a pharmaceutical manufacturing company

KB COMM LLC is a certified Women's Business Enterprise. We are officially qualified to participate in corporations' woman- and minority-owned vendor programs.

Please keep us in mind for your communication or training projects.

Tips and Tales

Two, Four, Six, Eight, When Do I Abbreviate?

Acronyms are the shortcuts that the business world loves to hate and hates to love. We've all combed through documents and emails spilling over with ASPs, FIFOs, ROIs, B2Bs, TPSs, RBIs, UFOs, AARPs, and on and on and on. We love them because they keep us from writing out "limited liability company" every time, but we hate them because they end up being just as annoying as the phrases they're meant to replace. So what's a business-savvy guy or gal to do?

To begin, there are three basic types of acronyms:

Universal acronyms are known by nearly everyone, both inside and outside of the business world. These include common abbreviations (like TV and OK) and well-known titles, names, and organizations (like PhD, UCLA, and NATO).

Universal acronyms are usually fair game, since almost all readers will know what they mean. So if you find yourself needing to mention the FBI or an ATM, there's probably no need to define each term.

Jargon acronyms are well-known in the environment that creates them but are generally irrelevant outside of it. The business and military worlds are full of jargon acronyms, such as BDI (brand development index) or FTX (field training exercise).

Jargon acronyms should be avoided whenever possible. They're annoying, confusing, and generally don't save any time. Note, however, that not all business-related acronyms are unnecessary jargon—CEO, CPA, IT, and similarly well-known abbreviations are usually appropriate to use without definition.

Specific acronyms are created and used for a limited and highly specific purpose, often a single project. A lab report, for example, may use the acronym HPLC (for high performance liquid chromatography), which wouldn't mean much to someone not familiar with the research.

Specific acronyms are useful when documented correctly. In general, this means spelling out the full phrase the first time the acronym is introduced, with the acronym itself following the phrase in parentheses:

“The samples' Total Hypothetical Residue (THR) was then measured...”

After this initial specification, it is appropriate to use the acronym throughout the rest of the document. However, the process should be repeated in each separate document—don't assume that defining the acronym once gives it a pass forever.

Finally, consider that the same acronym can mean different things in different contexts—GPA, for instance, simultaneously means grade point average, gallons per acre, and Gaelic Players Association.

Don't persevere about when to abbreviate. If you are in doubt, define! It's always better to be safe than sorry. Follow the basic guidelines above and you'll be on your way to making sense—which might sound like it shouldn't be hard, but things can get confusing in a world of NSAP, INBM, and MMORPGs.

And please remember, *when it has to be right*, KB COMM is here to help.

Sincerely,

Kathy

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KB COMM

kbcommllc.com

