

Greetings!

Springing to Action

The Ides are upon us, but we're thinking more about warm weather than Caesar. While we're on the subject of murder, why not talk about how we often butcher the official, trademarked names of our companies' products and services? This installment of *KB CommEntary* will discuss the whys and wherefores of using trademarked terms correctly.

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:

- Formatting and revising periodically reviewed manufacturing standard operating procedures and work instructions for a pharmaceutical company
- Writing upstream-manufacturing summary reports for a pharmaceutical company
- Creating and revising job descriptions for the Careers website of a high-tech manufacturer
- Developing technical documentation for a provider of web-based transaction-processing products and services
- 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
- Reviewing and editing for consistency and accuracy response documents and associated modules for electronic submission to FDA and other health authorities on behalf of a medical device 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

What's in a Name™?

If your company has trademarked products or services, it's important that your communications support those trademarks accurately and consistently. Failure to do so can contribute to the possibility of losing trademark protection. You don't want that to happen, do you? Well then, listen up!

The first important consideration is to use product or service names correctly as trademarked. In addition to spelling the name correctly, you must ensure that all the little details are correct. This could include uppercase vs. lowercase letters, hyphens or other punctuation, and spaces or lack thereof between certain characters. Your company's Legal department should be able to give you a list of any trademarked names and their official spelling and usage.

For example, let's look at a hypothetical product name. The Acme Safe Company's best-selling product is trademarked as the Burglar-Buster™ SUPERVault. Right away, you can see how easily this name could be used incorrectly. There's a hyphen. There's a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters. And there's no space between SUPER and Vault. To protect this trademark, you need to get all that correct, every time you use it.

But wait, there's more! Notice the ™ after Burglar-Buster. That means that Burglar-Buster is a registered trademark. You need to include that ™ symbol in the product name at least once in the body text of whatever communication the name appears in. Note that there are different kinds of trademarks, too. The one you see most often is ™ but there are other designations as well. And to further complicate things, some product names include more than one trademark symbol (e.g., the Burglar-Buster™ Centurion™ EverSafe System). Make sure you use the correct symbol(s) in the correct place(s) in the product name. Check with your Legal department if you aren't sure.

Also note that the trademark symbols mentioned above are superscripted. That's the correct way to do it. And here's how the pros insert those trademark symbols. For ®, hold the Alt key and enter 0174 on the keypad. Then highlight the ® that results and select Font, Superscript. The ™ is even easier. Hold the Alt key and enter 0153 on the keypad. Voila! It's already superscripted! Pretty slick, huh?

Companies often have policies about whether or not you must include the trademark symbol every time you use a trademarked name. Some require it every time; others stipulate the symbol must be included the first time the product name appears in body text and thereafter may be omitted. Similar policies address whether or not trademark symbols are used in titles, headers, headlines, displays, and other forms of electronic and printed communications. If you don't know, check with your Communications department.

You also need to consider how you use other companies' trademarked names in your communications. Again, this is usually addressed in a company policy. Some companies include blanket statements that say something like "the product names used in this document are the trademarks of their respective companies." Sometimes they list all the "other" product names along with the names of the companies that own the trademarks. In still other cases, the policy is to include the trademark symbol(s) every time a trademarked name is used.

Proper trademark usage is an important element in nurturing and sustaining your company's brand. As always, the devil is in the details. Take the time to familiarize yourself with your company's trademarks and the policies governing their use. It's all part of getting things right.

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

Sincerely,

Kathy

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KB COMM

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