

## ***Style Guide – Winkle Widget Corporation***

### **Guidelines to ensuring company-wide consistency in written documents**

The first time you refer to our company in a document, call it by its full name – Winkle Widget Corporation – unless you are writing someone who is quite familiar with us. Afterward, you may use “corporation,” “company,” or “firm” (each in lower case) – or “Winkle” or “Winkle Widgets.” We do not use “WWC.”

Use initial caps for specific references to our products and lower case for general references.

*Winkle has patented the Whirly Widget, Wiry Widget, and Wacky Widget.*

*Winkle began manufacturing widgets in Wichita.*

Note the comma after “Wiry Widget” in the above example. This comma (called the “serial comma” or “Oxford comma”) before the “and” in a series of three or more items is optional. In other words, you are correct whether you use it or omit it in your non-work writing, but for consistency and clarity we use the serial comma.

Similarly, you are correct whether you use one space between sentences or two, but we use one.

We do not capitalize titles of officers unless they immediately precede the officer’s name. An exception is always using uppercase for “CEO” and “CFO.”

*In May, President and CEO Dale Roberts announced a new overtime policy.*

*Liz Farrell became vice president and CFO in 1998. (No hyphen in “vice president.”)*

Use initial caps when giving the full name of a department, but not in a general reference.

*You can get that data from the Human Resources Department.*

*The folks in human resources will have to make that decision.*

In general, do not use capital letters unless they are clearly called for.

We do not use a hyphen in “email,” we capitalize “Internet,” and we spell “website” as one word (lowercase).

### **A few tips on avoiding common errors and writing more effectively**

Don’t get seduced into making a basic grammar mistake because “I” and “myself” seem classier than “me.” When “me” is the correct pronoun, use it.

Wrong: *Please give your completed form to Frank or myself.*

Right: *Please give your completed form to Frank or me.*

(You don’t have to know the rules of grammar to get this right. If you read the sentence without the words “Frank or,” you’ll realize “me” is correct.)

Make sure your noun and pronoun agree.

Wrong: *The company had their annual picnic yesterday.*

Right: *The company had its annual picnic yesterday.*

Right: *The company employees had their annual picnic yesterday.*

Make sure your subject and verb agree.

Wrong: *The array of possible solutions were impressive.*

Right: *The array of possible solutions was impressive.*

When you use a comma to set off a part of the sentence that is not essential, don't forget the second comma.

Wrong: *Jane, my neighbor since a year ago is our new bookkeeper.*

Right: *Jane, my neighbor since a year ago, is our new bookkeeper.*

When specifying a date that includes the year, remember that you need punctuation before and after the year.

*The first conference was on June 11, 2005, in Atlanta.*

If you are stating just the month and year, use no comma.

*The first conference was in June 2005 in Atlanta.*

When naming a city and state, don't forget that you need punctuation after the state.

*We decided Columbus, Ohio, would be an ideal setting for the all-day meeting.*

Don't insert an apostrophe when pluralizing a name; names are pluralized in the same way as other words.

Wrong: *We invited the Brown's to our open house.*

Right: *We invited the Browns to our open house.*

Wrong: *The Ross's always invite new Americans to their Thanksgiving dinner.*

Right: *The Rosses always invite new Americans to their Thanksgiving dinner.*

Although your writing should sound natural, watch out for adjectives like "awesome," "fabulous," "incredible," and "tremendous." They can make writing seem less professional, and they aren't specific. Why was the staff retreat "tremendous"?