

TWU Local 556

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

In all cases, effective communication is contingent upon clarity and simplicity. In other words, the message must not be obscured by unnecessary elements that prevent understanding by the audience. This is especially true in business communications, and it is a skill worth developing.

One of the ways we facilitate clarity and understanding is through the use of a set of stylistic conventions that promote consistency. There have been many such conventions over the years, some better than others. This all-new Transport Workers Union Local 556 style

guide draws on some of these, such as Strunk and White's famous *Elements of Style*, Thomas and Turner's *Clear and Simple as the Truth*, Truss' *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*, and Fogarty's more recent *Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing*. More often than not, however, our own experience of what constitutes good writing has guided the development of this document.

What we present here may be different from what is often taught in high school and college English classes. We believe in fact, it's better, because it takes into account one very important

factor: the Flight Attendants of Southwest Airlines, hard-working, intelligent people who—believe it or not—care that their Union can produce well-written communications materials that promote our goals of clarity and simplicity, with an eye for the details. The role of the TWU Local 556 Communications Coordinator is to ensure these goals are met.

Therefore, what follows are the stylistic conventions that we follow for *Unity*, *Unity Update*, *E-Connections*, and all other communications materials for our Local.

ABBREVIATIONS

In general, do not abbreviate. For example, write "Flight Attendant" rather than "F/A." Other words that should be spelled out include but are not limited to: Supervisor, aircraft, city names (e.g. Dallas, not DAL), months of the year, days of the week, etc.

Some abbreviations, on the other hand, are perfectly acceptable, as they are commonly used in the English language. These include:

1. **e.g.** (from the Latin *exempli gratia*), meaning "for example"
2. **i.e.** (from the Latin *id est*), meaning "that is to say"
3. **a.m.** and **p.m.** (from the Latin *ante merideim* and *post merideim* respectively), meaning, of course, morning and afternoon.
4. **etc.** (from the Latin *et cetera*), meaning "and more"

Note: none of the above abbreviations are ever capitalized, and should always include the periods after each letter.

CAPITALIZATION

The following words should always be capitalized:

1. **Board and Executive Board**, when referring to the TWU Local 556 Executive Board
2. **Brand names and registered trademarks** (e.g. Roller Blades, Kleenex, Corn Flakes, Turtle Wax, etc.)
3. **Company**, when referring to Southwest Airlines
4. **Contract**, when referring to TWU Local 556's Contract with Southwest Airlines
5. **Departments within Southwest Airlines** (e.g. Scheduling, Crew Planning, Ground Operations, etc.)
6. **Flight Attendant(s)**
7. **Member and Membership**
8. **New Hire**
9. **Officer**, when referring to an Officer of TWU Local 556.
10. **Open Time**
11. **Titles** (e.g. Base Manager, Shop Steward, Chairperson,

Reservations Agent, Supervisor etc.)

12. **Website** is one word and is capitalized when referring to the TWU Local 556 Website.
13. **Grievant and Grievance**
14. **Management**
15. **Fact-Finding Meeting**
16. **Step Two Meeting**
17. **E-Connection**
18. **Base Page**
19. **Appearance Standards**
20. **Union Red Rack**
21. **Chicago Lounge** (all lounges)
22. **Emergency Officer on-Call**
23. **Unity Magazine**
24. **Uniform Report**
25. **Board Member**
26. **Board Member at Large**
27. **Chicago Base Report** (all bases)
28. **Uniform Steering Committee**
29. **Crew Member**
30. **Co-worker** (when referring to SWA employees)
31. Never capitalize entire words for emphasis, and never underline words. Use bold or italics for emphasis (but never both at once).

NUMBERS

There are various style rules for using numbers in written documents, many contradictory. For the sake of clarification, this is the preferred convention for use in *Unity*, *Unity Update*, and *E-Connections*:

1. The numbers zero through twenty should always be written out in words, as should numbers above twenty that can be written out using a single word (e.g. thirty, forty, fifty, etc.)
2. Numbers above twenty that are hyphenated in written form or consist of two or more words in written form should be written in numerals (e.g. 25, 37, 100, 392, etc.)
3. Years, of course, should be written as numerals (*but* see the following)
4. In all cases, numbers that appear at the beginning of a sentence must be spelled out in words, as in the following examples:
 - Twenty-seven Flight Attendants were present at the rally.
 - Two thousand seven was a fantastic year for our Union.
 - One hundred ninety-one thousand four hundred thirty-two people were affected by the recent power outages.
 - Fifty dollars is the suggested donation.
5. An exception to the above two rules concerns decimals. Use numerals when expressing quantities using decimals. For example: *In 2007, the top twenty Flight Attendants at Southwest Airlines earned 4.3 percent more per year than all other employees combined.*
6. Another exception to these rules is when a dollar (or other currency) amount is being expressed. For example: *Only two Flight Attendants at Southwest Airlines earned more than \$1 million in 1993. In comparison, Flight Attendants of the French*

budget airline Sud-Ouest Airways routinely earn in excess of €2 million (around \$2.8 million) annually.

7. There is no exception to the rule concerning numbers that appear at the beginning of sentences, so it is best to structure your sentence in such a way to avoid awkward wording, or wording that would put decimals at the beginning of a sentence.
8. Always write ordinal numbers in words (e.g. first, second, third, thirty-fifth, one hundredth, etc.)
9. Dates should always be in this form: January 1, 2015. When the day of the week is also included, it is written as Thursday, January 1, 2015. Never write “January 1st,” “March 19th,” etc.
10. It is fine to use numerals when referring to parts a legal or other similar document (e.g. *Article 5, Section 3 of the Contract states...*)

GENERAL NOTES

1. Reports, articles, and other documents should be as concise as possible.
2. Confidential information should never be included in written documents.
3. Written documents that contain extensive details, including confidential information, should be marked “Confidential—not for publication.” Shorter versions with confidential information removed may be submitted for minutes or other publication, if necessary.
4. Do not use special formatting (e.g. text boxes, complicated bullet points, tables, unusual fonts, font sizes, or font colors, etc.) in your written documents, especially documents intended for publication in *Unity*, *Unity Update*, *E-Connections*, or the minutes.
5. Do not interpret Contract language.