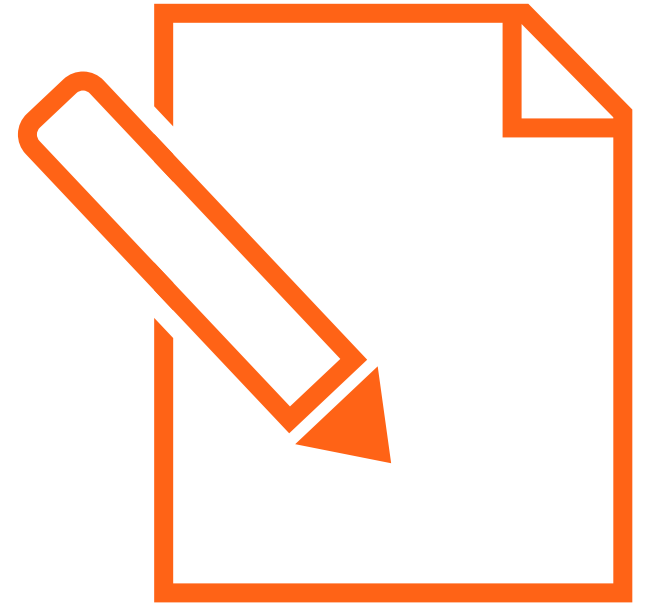


Copywriting & Language

Revised: April 19, 2023



**In-Store Environment
Standards Guide**

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Copywriting & Language

The purpose of this document is to drive standards as they pertain to messaging in our physical stores.

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Provide consumers with easy-to-read copy that highlights product benefits and will draw more attention to the product. Consumers want to know how the product will benefit their lives, not how it was manufactured. Do not assume the customer is familiar with Vendor or industry terminology. If a feature/benefit cannot be conveyed concisely in layperson’s terms, it should not be included in copy.

Consistent use of language on everything from wayfinding to “how to choose” signage reflects positively on The Home Depot brand and creates a more pleasant shopping experience. For instance, it would be confusing to visit a store where the Customer Service Desk is also referred to as “Returns,” “Information Center” and “Checkout.” Consistency should be confirmed in the following areas:

- Language on all signs in the category
- Language used on signs in other areas of the store
- Language used on the product packaging
- Industry terminology
- Online language (homedepot.com)

Benefit-Oriented Language

A list of features is never going to be as compelling to the shopper as real-world benefits, especially those that are quantifiable. Always articulate in terms of what the feature allows the consumer to achieve or how it differentiates the product from the others on offer. The number of bullets shown will visually reproduce the feature/benefit step-up story: more bullet copy means more or better features and benefits are offered.

Ordering of Features and Benefits

- Key product feature
- Next important product feature
- Color and finish options

List features in the order of importance to the consumer. Use Customer Insights and other research whenever they are available to confirm that any assumptions in this area are correct. Remember to apply that same order to all elements, including product cards and packaging.

Differentiating Feature/Benefit	Example of Effective FAB Language
Adjustable shelves	Adjustable shelves can be configured to store large items
Deep dome deck and tri-cut blade deliver finer grass clippings	Deep dome deck and tri-cut blade deliver finer grass clippings for improved mulching and a healthier lawn
Two 13.25" wheels provide stability	Two 13.25" stabilizing wheels make moving large loads easier

Title Case in POP

Title Case should be used for ALL product descriptions (MAP, Events, Promo, In-Bay, OSI, etc.).

Title Case should also be used for most Headlines and Subheads; bullets and body copy will remain sentence case.

Exceptions:

- EXCLUSIVE stays in all caps
- Words and short phrases around prices like YOUR CHOICE, STARTING AT, UP TO, SQ. FT. and EACH stay ALL CAPS, but “Was” is Title Case
- ALL CAPS is still acceptable for Squacks and Events headlines
- ALL CAPS is used sparingly/ occasionally for In-Bay headlines and subcopy
- Any other exceptions should be queried to the PM, and client approval needs to be recorded

Title Case for Brands

Title Case rules for brands follow the same rules as for all words, regardless of the logo type treatment.

Examples:

“nest” becomes “Nest”
“DeWALT” becomes “DeWalt”
“HUSKY” becomes “Husky”
“BEHR” becomes “Behr”

Exception:

- iPhone, iPad and other “i” products

When to Use “and” vs. “&”

For all channels, “&” is used in ALL CAPS copy; “and” is used in body copy.

Use “and” in sentence case except when part of an abbreviation or brand name (Q&A, Arm & Hammer) or in short sentence case copy for the Home Depot Design Center.

For In-Bay POP, “and” should be used for most copy, but “&” should be used in product descriptions to align with other channels.

For MAP/Events/Promo POP, use “&” with Title Case, including product descriptions. Ampersands should also be used in online CTAs, which should be sentence case and italicized.

Exception:

For HDDC POP, “&” is used in Title Case, ALL CAPS and short sentence case copy.

Caps vs. Lowercase Words

In Title Case, all words with four or more letters should be capitalized except for “from” and “with.” Only the words listed below are lowercased in Title Case.

Articles, prepositions and conjunctions of three or fewer letters should generally be lowercase unless the first word in a headline, subhead or sentence. “From” and “with” should also be lowercase:

a	an	and	at	by
for	from	in	of	off
on	or	per	the	to
up	vs.	with		

ALL verbs, pronouns and other words not listed above should be capitalized. The list below shows examples of short words that are often mistakenly lowercased:

All	Am	As	Be	But
Do	He	Her	His	If
Is	It	Its	My	Out
She	So	This	That	Who

Exceptions:

- Capitalize normally lowercase prepositions when part of a phrasal verb (Turn In, Pick Up, etc.) or a two-word hyphenated phrase (In-Store Selection, How-To Clinic, Built-In Cabinets, etc.)
- Use initial caps for “Up To” if it appears in a long phrase before an offer number (Get the Card, Save Up To \$500).

Title Case with Hyphens

In Title Case copy, capitalize words that come after a hyphen (Pre-Lit Tree, Touch-Free Technology, Built-In Cabinets, etc.), including words like “In” that are normally lowercase.

Exception:

- Use lowercase for articles and prepositions between two hyphens (Over-the-Range Microwave, End-to-End Service, etc.)

Title Case for Abbreviations

Abbreviations should not be capitalized in Title Case unless they are capitalized in THD’s approved abbreviations list.

Refer to the abbreviations list on page 14 of this volume.

Note that capitalization, punctuation and spacing vary based on the abbreviation.

Examples:

5 mm	12 oz.	4.0Ah
5 kHz	5:30 p.m.	2 lb.
50 RPM	5 amp	1,000 sq. ft.
2,000K	1000 PSI	100°F
CO2	16 cu. ft.	

Spelled-out measurements should be capitalized in Title Case product descriptions:

5-Gallon, 20-Volt, 60-Watt, etc.

WELCOME TO WELL-BEING.

Steam showers can turn the usual morning prep into a luxury spa experience and do wonders for the mind and body.



HEALTH

Steam is well-known for soothing the symptoms of arthritis, allergies and asthma. And it can boost the immune system, increase metabolism and improve breathing for a more restful night's sleep.

RELAXATION

Steam improves blood flow and circulation to relieve stress and relax stiff joints and muscles. Adding aromatherapy and bath oils will awaken the senses.

BEAUTY

Feeling relaxed, healthy and well-rested looks good on everyone. Steam also hydrates the skin for a glowing complexion and a smoother shave.

TECHNOLOGY

Digital displays and custom presets ensure the perfect temperature, steam level, music and more—and with app control, that's even before stepping out of bed.

DID YOU KNOW?

Steam showers heat up to 118°F and require only 12 to 20 minutes to achieve health-promoting benefits.

End Punctuation

Except in disclaimers, end punctuation should be kept to a minimum.

- Use periods in headers, subheads and taglines when necessary for clarity (e.g., “Smarter. Faster. Better.”) or when part of existing THD messaging that requires periods (e.g., “How does get more done.”). Also frequently used after headlines and subheads for the Home Depot Design Center.
- Periods are also frequently used after headlines and subheads for the Home Depot Design Center.
- Bullets should be short phrases that receive no end punctuation (preferred for all in-store signage); however, if one bullet needs to be multi-sentence, it requires an end period, and all other bullets in the series need a period for consistency.

Note: “Bullet statements” that are left-justified and do not have bullet glyphs, such as in decks, will often require periods for clarity; if one page in a deck uses this style, then all pages should use this style.

- In longer pieces, it's OK for bullets to use complete sentences with end punctuation (brochures, pamphlets, booklets, etc.).

- Question marks and exclamation marks are normally never used. Exclamation marks should always be marked up as off-standard, but question marks are becoming more common in store copy, especially in Home Services headlines: “Need Help?” etc.

Miscellaneous Punctuation

For in-store signage, avoid colons, parentheses, ellipses and semicolons, except in disclaimers. Parentheses are occasionally used with numbers in bulleted copy, as explained on the next page.

For brand claims (“#1 Power Tool Retailer in America,” etc.) use the number symbol (#), not the abbreviation “no.” On product cards, “Model# 452” should have a space after but not before, with no colon. The word “SKU” does not need “#” after it.

A

affect/effect

“Affect” is a verb that means to influence (e.g., The game will affect the standings). “Effect” is a noun that means result (e.g., He misjudged the effect of his actions).

all-purpose

Hyphenated when used as an adjective modifying a noun. (e.g., “All-purpose cleaning product”). Not hyphenated when used after the noun (e.g., “The product is all purpose”). Follow packaging when part of a product name.

anytime/any time

Use “anytime” when modifying/qualifying a word or phrase (e.g., “Anytime Shopping”). “Any time” follows a word or phrase to indicate a time period and is used when “at any time” is implied (e.g., “Buy Any Time”).

Associate/Assistant

Never abbreviate; always capitalize

at vs. @

Do not use the @ symbol in copy; reserved for email addresses only

B

bagless

Not “bag-less”

ball bearing

Not “ball-bearing”

barbecue

Not “barbeque”; can abbreviate BBQ

best-in-class

Two hyphens whether used as a noun or adjective; lowercase

bifold

Not “bi-fold”

bookshelf

Not “book shelf”

BOPIS

Buy online, pick up in store

BOSS

Buy online, ship to store

BODFS

Buy online, deliver from store

briquettes

Not “briquets.” Do not use “charcoal briquettes”—use “charcoal” alone.

built-in

Not “built in.” When in title case, capitalize “I” (“Built-In”).

burned

Not “burnt” (e.g., “burned-out bulbs”)

C

cactuses

Not “cacti”

cell phone

Not “cellphone”

centerset

Not “center set”

Certified Nursery Consultants

Always title case

chain-link fence

Not “chainlink fence”

chain saw

Not “chainsaw”

cleanup vs. clean up

As a noun, one word (“job site cleanup”). As a verb, two words (“clean up your yard”). As an adjective, hyphenated (“Clean-up days are here”).

compliment/complement

“Compliment” is an expression of praise or courtesy; “complement” means to complete or supplement.

complimentary/complementary

“Complimentary” means free of charge; “complementary” means compatible or matching.

comprise/consist of

Never “is comprised of”; the verb “comprises” by itself has the same meaning as “consists of.”

cordless

Not “cord-less”

countertop

Not “counter top”

cutout vs. cut out

Spelled “cutout” when used as a noun (e.g., countertop sink cutout) and “cut out” when used as a verb (e.g., cut out a section of drywall)

D

deal (not used)

Instead, use terms such as “value,” “savings” and “low prices.” Also see entry for “savings vs. value.”

decor

Not “décor”—no accent

dishdrawer

Not “dish drawer”

downtime

Not “down time”

dual flush toilet

Not “dual-flush”

dual mount faucet

Not “dual-mount”

E

each

Use when a single price is given but multiple items are shown in the image, to clarify that the price is for only one of the items.

effect/affect

“Effect” is a noun that means result (e.g., He misjudged the effect of his actions). “Affect” is a verb that means to influence (e.g., The game will affect the standings).

Eco Options®

Title case, two words; exclusive THD program consisting of products that save energy, conserve water, improve air quality, reduce household hazardous waste and dangerous toxins, and utilize sustainable forestry (includes WaterSense®, ENERGY STAR®)

email

Only capitalize “e” if it begins a sentence; no hyphen

engine/motor

An engine creates its own energy through internal combustion or some other means; a motor needs an outside energy source to operate