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**TEHAMA GROUP**

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Since 1965, the American Cancer Society has been raising money and awareness through Society-owned specialty resale stores operated by volunteers and staff. Each year about 1 million men, women, and children visit a Discovery Shop. In 2007 the 40 Discovery Shops throughout California generated more than $4.9 million in net income.

Discovery Shop merchandise consists of high-quality, gently-used clothing, accessories, collectibles, furniture, jewelry, artwork, and a variety of household items including crystal and china. All Discovery Shops offer cancer information and select stores have private rooms for more extensive information and consultation about American Cancer Society programs and services.

An analysis of the Discovery Shop’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats helped to clarify what the organization has working in its favor and what aspects need improvement.

**Strengths**
- The Discovery Shops differ from other resale shops because of their boutique-like atmosphere and the high quality of their goods.
- The Discovery Shop managers are committed to their shops and the American Cancer Society’s purpose.
- Community members are able to connect with Discovery Shops and the American Cancer Society through volunteering at the shops.

**Weaknesses**
- Most Discovery Shop managers do not have any knowledge or training in the marketing or public relations fields.
- The Discovery Shops are not receiving adequate media coverage in their areas.
- As a nonprofit organization, the Discovery Shops lack funding for outreach programs.
- If the volunteers who staff most Discovery Shops are not fully committed to the shop and its cause then the organization suffers from lack of staffing.

**Opportunities**
- Because of the type of merchandise sold at the Discovery Shop, the stores may appeal to multiple demographics.
  - The Discovery Shop’s target audience includes people with a range of income levels who are looking for high-quality goods at a reasonable price.
  - The Discovery Shop’s target audience is likely to promote the Discovery Shop through word-of-mouth when telling its peers about its shopping experience, the quality of the goods and the reasonable prices.
The current state of the economy increases demand for less expensive products as personal and family incomes fall during economic pressures.

Threats
- There are more well-known nonprofit resale shops, such as the Salvation Army and the Goodwill.
Research Analysis

Tehama Group Communication’s staff conducted research on the American Cancer Society’s Discovery Shops to more thoroughly understand how the shops are run and the amount of local media coverage they receive.

Discovery Shops are typically run by a store manager and receive additional help from community volunteers who assist in shop operations. All California Discovery Shops are constantly seeking more volunteers, donations, and shoppers.

Throughout the year Discovery Shops hold community functions, such as “Summer time and the Savings are Easy,” and “Fall Preview,” in order to promote sales, awareness, and community involvement.

With thorough media coverage, these events would be much more successful. Unfortunately, the Discovery Shops are not currently receiving adequate local media coverage on their events. Discovery Shops could also become stronger through community partnerships and expanding outreach to a wider audience.

An online search for articles containing “American Cancer Society Discovery Shop” was conducted between August and September 2008. The results of this search yielded three articles published in community newspapers and multiple community event calendar entries. These results were not excellent because during this time, Discovery Shops were holding both their “Semi-Annual Sale” and their “Fall Preview” event.

Media coverage of Discovery Shop events could have the ability to boost event turnout, sales, and overall awareness.
American Cancer Society Discovery Shops strive to provide customers with an upscale, boutique-like shopping experience while promoting a universal cause: fighting cancer. For more than 40 years, Discovery Shops have helped their communities fund cancer research, advocacy, education, and services for patients and their families. Discovery Shops gladly accept quality donations and enlist the help of volunteers to further promote their cause and strengthen their communities.

When sending messages to the media and community, it is important to have a consistent image and definition of the American Cancer Society’s Discovery Shops. This repetitive message will solidify how your audience views the Discovery Shop and its mission.

The following terms are important to include in media outreach efforts:

**Advocacy**
Representing the interest of cancer patients, their families, and Discovery Shop patrons.

**Education**
Providing information to those affected by cancer, such as treatment options and news.

**Volunteerism**
Utilizing community members who care to further strengthen the Discovery Shops’ effectiveness. Volunteers won’t just benefit your store, they’ll also play a role in improving the quality of life of those the American Cancer Society aims to support.

**Community**
Discovery Shops are more than just thrift stores. They are community beacons of support for those affected by cancer.

**Upscale, boutique-like shopping experience**
Discovery Shops separate themselves from other second hand stores with the quality of the goods they sell and the service patrons receive.
A newsworthy event or issue is one that is potentially interesting to the public. It is important to remember that not all events are newsworthy. Some examples of newsworthy events are galas, Daffodil Days, and Relay for Life.

There are specific news values or “ pegs ” to take into consideration when deciding if an event is newsworthy. Many times an organization will think an event is newsworthy but the media may disagree. Analyzing the importance of the event or issue based on these seven primary news values helps to determine what is newsworthy:

**Timeliness**
An event or issue is newsworthy when it is relevant to current events or if it is recent.

**Proximity**
Readers are more interested in something that happens close to where they live, rather than something that happens far away.

**Magnitude**
The more people the story or issue affects, the more newsworthy the story becomes.

**Impact**
How the story may affect the public, whether good or bad.

**Human Interest**
A story is more newsworthy if it plays on readers’ emotions. It might focus on one person who represents a larger group.

**Celebrity**
If a well-known person or celebrity is involved in the event, it will appeal more to the reader.

**Novelty**
If a story is unusual it becomes newsworthy.
The concluding paragraph of all news releases, referred to as the boilerplate, provides a concise description of the company. It includes the company’s services, its type of business, where it does business, the number of stores, how long the company has been in business, and sometimes the number of employees and the company’s annual revenue.

Providing the basic information about Discovery Shops on all news releases is important because it gives the target audience a better understanding and background of your company, if news reporters want to write a story about the subject of your news release, they do not have to conduct research to obtain the basic information about your company because you have provided it for them. Using a boilerplate provides repetition and consistency in news releases.
Since 1965, the American Cancer Society has been raising money and awareness through specialty resale stores operated by volunteers and staff. Each year about 1 million men, women and children visit a Discovery Shop. In 2007 the 40 Discovery Shops throughout California generated more than $4.9 million in net income to help fund cancer research and awareness. All Discovery Shops offer cancer information. Select stores have private rooms for more extensive information and consultation about American Cancer Society programs and services.
F A C T S H E E T

A fact sheet is a list of important information about an organization or event. It provides the history and goals of an organization, including when and where it was founded. A fact sheet is designed to be a quick read and provide basic information about a specific topic. Fact sheets can be created about many subjects, such as basic information about the Relay for Life or Daffodil Days.

A fact sheet typically covers the basic questions of who, what, where, when, why, and how in a bulleted fashion. This piece should present the strengths of an organization and state its mission. Important points to list for American Cancer Society Discovery Shops are how long it has been in existence, the research and causes it supports, and its relationship with American Cancer Society as a whole.

A fact sheet should accompany a news release every time it is sent to the media.
Identifying Headline Tells the Editor What the Fact Sheet is About

THE BASICS  A fact sheet should follow this template. The Discovery Shop’s contact information should be posted on the top with a specific contact person, preferably the manager.

Don’t cheat—fact sheets should only be one single-spaced, 12-point font page. Choose a font that is legible. Learn to condense information. Spelling and grammar errors are unacceptable.

WHO  Know who will be receiving the fact sheet. Consider why you are sending the fact sheet to that person in particular. Be sure the media contact you have chosen will have some interest in the organization.

WHAT  You only have one page to keep the attention of your reader. Remember that your audience is the media. They will use your information and relay it to their audience.

WHEN  Send a fact sheet about two weeks prior to an event.

WHERE  Send a fact sheet to publications that would be interested in covering information or events about your organization. A publication with a large section about cancer or supporting cancer research would be practical for the Discovery Shop.

Read different publications to get a better idea of which publications tend to write about events similar to those held by the organization.

HOW  A fact sheet should accompany a news release or broadcast news release every time one is sent out.
A news release is a communication tool that informs the media of an upcoming newsworthy event or issue.* The news release is meant to be sent to newspaper editors in order to receive print coverage, in comparison to the broadcast news release, that is sent to radio and TV stations. It should include the phone number and email of the media contact for the event or issue so writers and reporters will know who to contact with any questions.

A news release also includes any other information that may be helpful to a reporter such as quotes or facts. It should end with a boilerplate, which is a paragraph with background information about the organization. A boilerplate is provided as the last paragraph in the sample news release.

When writing a news release, it should begin with a dateline, stating the city where the event will take place. The first paragraph, also called the “lead,” should be one sentence summing up the most important facts and details about the event or issue. The lead should be no more than 30 words. The rest of the news release should be written in the form of an inverted pyramid. This means the most important information should be first and the least important information should be last.

It is important to remember to use language all readers will understand and to stick to the topic of the news release. Paragraphs typically are not more than three or four sentences long. The news release should be kept to one page in length.

A news release should be sent to the media approximately two weeks prior to an event, or within one week after an event as a summary of it.

*See “Deciding What is Newsworthy”
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date

CONTACT: Name of manager
Phone number
Street address
City, State, ZIP

CLEAR HEADLINE TELLS THE EDITOR WHAT THE RELEASE IS ABOUT

CITY, State- The lead should be one sentence summing up the most important facts and details about the release. It should be no longer than 30 words and should catch the reader’s attention.

A news release is double-spaced, size 12-point font. The news release should be written in the form of an inverted pyramid. The most important information should be first, the least important information should be last. Do not use a font that is difficult to read.

Use language all readers will understand and stick to the topic of the news release. Paragraphs typically are not more than three or four sentences.

A news release should be sent to the media approximately two weeks prior to an event or within one week after an event.

The news release should end with a boilerplate, which is a paragraph with background information about the organization. The following is a sample boilerplate:

Since 1965, the American Cancer Society has been raising money and awareness through specialty resale stores operated by volunteers and staff. Each year about 1 million men, women and children visit a Discovery Shop. In 2007 the 40 Discovery Shops throughout California generated more than $4.9 million in net income to help fund cancer research and awareness. All Discovery Shops offer cancer information. Select stores have private rooms for more extensive information and consultation about American Cancer Society programs and services.

- ### -
A broadcast news release or public service announcement is sent to TV and radio stations announcing a newsworthy event or issue*. It is read on air by the reporter and should be brief but catchy enough to attract the listener. Many American Cancer Society and Discovery Shop events and promotional projects are considered public service announcements because they go toward a cause that is both nonprofit and focused on education about cancer and prevention.

This media tool is written in a different format than other media materials. A broadcast news release should use as little punctuation as possible, but enough to help the newscaster through the copy. Short, punchy sentences are preferred and large words should be avoided. Each word is written as it should be pronounced, and hard-to-read names should be written phonetically in parentheses. For example: The winner of the race was Vicky Xoiphone (Shine-apon).

A broadcast news release should be sent to media approximately two weeks before an event.

*Discovery Shop managers should work with their communications director and/or community services director before approaching broadcast media.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Name of manager
Phone number
Street address
City, State, ZIP

CLEAR HEADLINE TELLS THE EDITOR WHAT THE RELEASE IS ABOUT

THERE ARE NO INDENTATIONS FOR PARAGRAPHS IN A BROADCAST NEWS RELEASE. TYPE IS DOUBLE SPACED, SHOULD BE WRITTEN IN ALL CAPS AND DIFFICULT WORDS ARE WRITTEN PHONETICALLY, INCLUDING NAMES OR PLACES. EXAMPLE: THE WINNER OF THE RACE WAS VICKY XOIPHONE (SHINE-APON).

ROUND OFF MOST NUMBERS. NAMES COME AFTER TITLES. IF USING A QUOTE, ATTRIBUTION COMES BEFORE THE QUOTE. DO NOT USE A.M. OR P.M. USE MORNING, AFTERNOON, TODAY, YESTERDAY, TOMORROW OR DAYS OF THE WEEK. SPELL OUT ALL NUMBERS. READ THE RELEASE OUTLOUD TO MAKE SURE IT FLOWS AND IS COHERENT.

A BROADCAST NEWS RELEASE SHOULD ONLY INCLUDE THE MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO TARGET AUDIENCES AND SHOULD BE ABOUT THIRTY SECONDS IN LENGTH.

- ### -
A media alert is a brief announcement about an event or issue generally directed to broadcast media. It outlines the elements of the event that are most important to the media. It begins with a short introductory paragraph describing the event. Then the media alert outlines names and titles of important people attending and participating in the event, specific times and locations of opportunities for the media to take video or photographs and conduct interviews, and explains the purpose of the event.

The media alert is designed to provide important facts about an event in a comprehensive fashion so editors and reporters can make decisions about news coverage. It should be sent as a reminder to all related and appropriate media sources—TV, newspapers, radio stations—two or three days prior to the event. In order to attract media coverage, the media alert must be written creatively and quickly grab the reader’s attention. This is where targeting newsworthy* information is crucial so that the media will attend. It is important to figure out the target audience for this call to action so that these media outlets will attend.

*See “Deciding What is Newsworthy”
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Name of manager
Phone number
Street address
City, State, ZIP

MEDIA ALERT

IDENTIFYING HEADLINE

WHAT  A one-or-two sentence statement about the event. Announce if there will be any opportunities to interview important people.

WHO  Names and titles of specific newsmakers attending and participating in the event. Who is the event for? Are there any important public figures or celebrities attending?

WHEN  Time and date of the event should be listed. Include exact times of opportunities for the media to take photographs or conduct interviews, if there will be any.

WHERE  Exact address of the event:
Name of the place where it will be held
Street address
City, State, ZIP
Also include specific locations at the event for the media to take photographs or conduct interviews, if there will be any.

WHY  Briefly explain the purpose of the event and why it will be beneficial for the media to attend.

- ### -
**THE IMPORTANCE OF RADIO**

Radio is a popular and far-reaching form of communication that allows organizations to inform audiences that may otherwise not be reachable. It is popular among commuters, in the workplace and at home.

With radio, it is important to inform listeners while simultaneously entertaining them. Your message should catch the audiences’ attention and encourage them to continue listening.

Radio exposure is not limited to blurbs and advertisements. Public service announcements are opportunities that Discovery Shops should take full advantage of as a nonprofit organization. Other radio opportunities include interviews and radio sponsorship, which have the ability to lead to live broadcasting from your events.

It is also important to consider the audience listening to the station your message will be aired on. Ask if that station’s audience is the same audience that you’d like to attract to Discovery Shops.
THE IMPORTANCE OF TELEVISION

In the United States, 99 percent of households have at least one television and the majority of households have even more. Many people get their news from television news broadcasts, rather than reading a traditional newspaper.

TV is a great way to reach your target audience because of its ability to stimulate a viewer both visually and audibly. News broadcasts are often played repeatedly throughout the day, which gives your message the opportunity to be aired multiple times. When distributing your materials to the media, provide news stations with a broadcast news release accompanied by a fact sheet.

Extended segments are also available in the TV market. Local news anchors may offer an in-depth interview with a Discovery Shop store manager or other American Cancer Society representative. A media alert can be sent to a TV station to announce a special event, often leading to video being shot- providing further exposure.
THE IMPORTANCE OF PRINT

Print media includes anything published on paper, including newspapers, magazines, and special interest publications. Currently, print is on the decline from its traditionally dominant role. Newspapers and magazines are now online where readers can access them anytime.

The depth of coverage may vary among newspapers. Stories can range from a few sentences to a few pages, depending on the relevance and timeliness of the story topic. Local weekly publications have community event calendars that can be utilized. Also, because many magazines and newspapers are online, your message will often be published in print and on the Internet.

Although print is on the decline, it is important to remember that there is still a generation of readers who are more comfortable with a newspaper or magazine.
There’s no denying that the Internet has become a critical tool for organizations around the world. Print, radio, and television outlets all have their media online in addition to their primary medium.

One convenient aspect about the Internet is that fact sheets or news releases do not have to accompany the material you publish. Anyone with a Web site or blog can be considered part of the media. Most people have access to the Internet, guaranteeing that a message you send out is likely to be seen by a significant audience.

In recent years, we’ve seen the rise of online social media sites like Myspace and Facebook. The development of interactive, interpersonal media has demonstrated the interest among consumers to connect instantly with like-minded people to chat, shop, or simply share information. This information is often shared through blogs, which are basically opinion postings.

The power of blogging should not be underestimated. Viewing a blogger’s review of a product or service and their readers’ thoughts are a great way to get your thumb on the pulse of your audience. You might even consider popular blogs to be acting as traditional opinion/editorial pages.

The Internet offers many opportunities for low cost advertising. You can easily post an announcement for a sale or special event on your company Web site and follow-up with email notices to your customers. This is more cost-effective than posting traditional newspapers advertisements.
HOW TO EFFECTIVELY PITCH TO THE MEDIA

• Be very creative with your message and keep it short. You want to stand out from all of the other organizations pitching for coverage in one written page or less.

• To be effective at pitching, you must first know the media. Read the papers, watch local broadcasts, etc.

• Focus on the media’s audience—why should their readers care about your topic?

• Email news releases 14 to 18 days prior to the event, accompanied by a general fact sheet.

• Follow up with a phone call within 24 hours and be confident when speaking with reporters.

• Send a media alert three to four days prior to the event.

• Supply the media with a media kit on the day of the event in both print and electronic form. A media kit should consist of the following:
  ✓ Press release
  ✓ Fact sheet
  ✓ Media alert
  ✓ Any other relevant media materials, including brochure, background information about Discovery Shop and/or the event, etc.

• Make it as easy as possible to cover the event. Special accommodations should be made for the news media at events.
  ✓ Do not charge admission to media representatives.
  ✓ Give access to parking close to the event.
  ✓ Have a media check-in table with updated media materials (your media kit) on both print and CD.
  ✓ The check-in table also gives staff an opportunity to confirm or discuss interviews or photography needs of the press attending the event.

• Write a follow-up article and send it to the media who didn’t show up to your event.
**How to be a Good Media Representative**

**Follow Through**  
If you send materials to the media you need to follow up with a phone call no more than 24 hours later.

**Be Truthful**  
If a media representative asks you a question and you don’t know the answer, tell them you do not know but will try to find it by the deadline. Ask when would be a good time for you to call back with that information.

**Be Prepared**  
You never know what a media representative will ask you. Review your facts.

**Respond in a Timely Manner**  
Media are extremely busy and constantly working to meet a deadline. Be sure to respond quickly, through their preferred form of communication (phone, email, etc.) and at a time that works well for them.

**Direct Media Inquiries to the Representative**  
If you are holding an event, make sure everyone else at the event knows to tell reporters whom to speak with for any questions they might have.

**Be Confident**  
You know your organization. When talking to reporters, be sure to highlight the best parts of your organization.

**Speak Clearly**  
Reporters are trying to remember what you say, form new questions and write down your answer all at the same time. Speak slowly and clearly to be sure you aren’t misquoted. Think about what you say before you say it so you have the ability to articulate yourself. If you feel there is a discrepancy, repeat yourself. Remember that your exact words are what will be printed.

**Look Presentable**  
As the leader of your organization, you need to look professional. If you know you are going to be on camera, wear solid colors. Avoid wearing stripes and designs, which look different on television than in real life and avoid white, which washes out a person’s skin tone on camera. It is important for a woman to wear a high-collared shirt while on camera because the cut of the shirt will look lower on TV.
Stick to Key Talking Points
Key talking points are relevant to the event or issue being discussed. You have only a few seconds to get your point across. Stay on one topic and sell it.

Be Professional
Your organization will remain credible if you are professional and reporters are able to contact you when they need information.
1. **Don’t be afraid to pitch your news and events.**
   Reporters are extremely busy and constantly up against deadlines, but they’re usually willing to listen to what you have to say. Find out what time is best to contact the reporter and make your message short and sweet.

2. **Don’t email a news release right before an event.**
   It’s best to e-mail a news release between two and three weeks prior to an event. Writers need ample time and notification of an event to plan accordingly. Emailing a news release within a couple of days of the event does not give enough notice.

3. **Don’t give the wrong information.**
   This applies to interviews, news releases, media alerts, and fact sheets. All written content must be fact-checked to prevent giving the wrong information. It is important for a media representative to know all possible information about an event.

4. **Don’t lie or fabricate information if you don’t know the answer to a question.**
   If you don’t know the answer to a question, don’t answer. It is better to not answer the question than to make up a lie or fabrication. Lying may cause the organization or the person to lose credibility.

5. **Don’t have any AP, grammar or spelling errors.**
   It is important for the writer to review their writing multiple times and to have others check for errors before sending materials out to the media. The Associated Press has guidelines many people are not familiar with. The AP Stylebook is an important reference to check writing.

6. **Don’t send out any information without three sets of eyes seeing it.**
   Proofread, proofread, proofread! Before sending out any media content, it is vital that three people see and approve it. The more people that read the content, the more likely mistakes will be caught.

7. **Don’t forget to update your media list.**
   Contacts must be up-to-date to prevent sending information to the wrong person which hinders event coverage.

8. **Don’t be a pest.**
   After sending a news release, follow up with one phone call and a media alert a couple of days before the event and hope for the best. It may be frustrating if you don’t think a publication will feature your story, but it is important to remember that nagging them will not make it any more likely for them to cover an event.

9. **Don’t confuse non-news with news.**
   Not all events are newsworthy. Even though it may seem important to you and your organization, it may not be something that will interest the public. Always consider “What is Newsworthy.”
10. Don’t expect that your story will always run.
Even if a story is newsworthy, it will not always be featured. Reporters may be busy or be covering another story.
Useful Books and Sources

American Cancer Society Editorial Style Guide
• This style guide is used by all branches of American Cancer Society and helps to maintain consistency among these branches. This guide is available online in PDF version and must be referenced for all materials that will be published and issued to the media and the public.
• Frequently reviewing this style guide and memorizing these rules will help make American Cancer Society Discovery Shop materials more professional and consistent.

AP Stylebook
• The Associated Press Stylebook is updated each year and can be purchased in print form at local bookstores and many college bookstores. Online subscriptions are also available at http://www.apstylebook.com/.
• The Associated Press Stylebook provides rules for all materials submitted to the media. This should be the second reference for questions regarding media materials, following the American Cancer Society Style Guide.

PR Style Guide
• The PR Style Guide, by Barbara Diggs-Brown and Jodi L.G. Glou, can be purchased at local bookstores and many college bookstores.
• The PR Style Guide helps to answer any questions regarding public relations and writing media materials. It provides samples, formats and writing guidelines for various media relations tools.
THE IMPORTANCE OF A STYLE GUIDE

The purpose of a style guide is to maintain a level of consistency throughout written materials produced by an organization. The AP Stylebook, used by journalists worldwide, is important so that all journalists understand and abide by the same rules. In the case of the American Cancer Society Style Guide, this manual is used by all branches and organizations affiliated with American Cancer Society to ensure accuracy and consistency as well.

Discovery Shop managers must also follow the American Cancer Society Style Guide. It is helpful to look over the entire style guide frequently so that rules become easier to remember and understand. Following the outlined rules will ensure that all written materials are appropriate and consistent to maintain credibility for American Cancer Society.
Welcome to the American Cancer Society’s editorial style guide. This guide was created for writing professionals within the Society, freelance writers drafting Society materials, and any staff members who need a convenient writing reference tool. Just as visual design elements communicate our brand identity, so do the words we use.

Select from the categories at left to find the information you need. Content is divided into sections you can access quickly and easily.

This guide is maintained by the Corporate Communications department in the National Home Office of the American Cancer Society. If you have any questions, contact Michelle Boone via email at michelle.boone@cancer.org or call 404.417.5841.

**Common Terms, Grammar, and Mechanics**
For definitions of these terms or for more information, consult the American Cancer Society Web site, www.cancer.org, or a regular or medical dictionary.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

**Additional Sections:**
- Writing and Editing
- Professional Manuel Recommendations
- Spanish Translations

*ACS owned & operated **ACS collaborative program
Acronyms

On first use, spell out the term and abbreviate in parentheses. Afterwards, the abbreviation may be used. If the abbreviation will only be used once, just use the full term.

- Acronyms should be used only when helpful and kept to a minimum. Reading “alphabet soup” can be frustrating.
- Do not put periods between letters of an acronym.

Example: We got this information from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The NIH provides this data every year.

ACS (Use as seldom as possible as abbreviation for American Cancer Society. Preferred reference is full name, followed by “Society” as abbreviation when needed. Use “ACS” only when “Society” would be misleading or confusing to reader.)

*ACS News Today™

*ACS Teens

*ACSONline

*Active for Life™

acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL)
acute nonlymphocytic leukemia (ANLL)
African American

**AirLifeLine

all right (not alright)

a.m. or p.m.

*American Cancer Society® (Because this term is used so frequently, there is no need to use the registration mark in text, as long as the registered logo is featured somewhere in the piece.)

*American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network™ (ACS CAN is a sister organization to the Society. It is an issue advocacy organization.)

*American Cancer Society Cancer Survivors Network® (Takes registration mark when used with American Cancer Society. Takes service mark when used alone: Cancer Survivors Network™)

American Indian and Alaska Native

anticancer

anticarcinogen(ic)

anticigarette

antismoking

anti-tobacco

*ACS owned & operated

**ACS collaborative program
antitumor

Apostrophe

• For words that end in s, add an apostrophe to form the possessive. (*Example: James’)
• For two possessives in a series, use apostrophe only on the last one. (*Example: Bill and Joe’s mistake)
• For plural nouns, add apostrophe after the s. (*Example: puppies’ tails)
• Do not use an apostrophe to form the plural of an acronym or any numeral. (*Examples: PSAs, 1960s, man in his 40s)

Asian American and Pacific Islander audiovisual

autumn (not Autumn)
B

*Beauty for Life®
*Behavioral Research Center (abbreviated internally as BRC; no “the” before BRC)
beta carotene
biologic response modifiers
*Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC)
*Board of Directors (capitalized when referring to our own)
breast cancer

Boldface
Do not use boldface type to emphasize words within copy. Reserve it for headlines and subheads.

*Breast Cancer Network (BCN)
breast self-examination (BSE)
bylaws

Bulleted Lists
For simple lists or tables of words and phrases, do not use periods after each item.
Example: I like the following fruits:
- Apples
- Bananas
- Oranges

If entire sentences are bulleted, use periods after each item that forms a sentence.
Example: We are the best agency for the following reasons:
- We arrive on time.
- We observe corporate culture.
- We pay attention to detail.
*California Division, Inc. ("Inc." not necessary internally or on second reference externally)

*Campaign Against Cancer®

**Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CFTFK)

*Cancer Control (capitalize when referring to the department)

Cancer control (lower case when referring to the control of cancer)

*Cancer Information Database (CID)

*Cancer Information Specialist (CIS)

cancer patient (or cancer survivor, person living with cancer – not cancer victim)

Cancer Prevention Study I; II (CPS I; CPS II)

Cancer Survivors Day

*Cancer Survivors Network™ (CSN) (Takes servicemark when used alone. Takes registration mark when used with full name: American Cancer Society Cancer Survivors Network®)

cancer-related checkup

Capitalization

When in doubt, do not capitalize. Below are some basic guidelines.

• Do capitalize the following:
  ✓ Names (of people or organizations)
  ✓ Months
  ✓ Holidays
  ✓ Days of the week
  ✓ Principal words in headlines/titles
  ✓ First word of a quotation that forms a sentence (Example: Jack said, “The show is a success.”)
  ✓ Titles that precede a name (Example: I will introduce Vice Chairman Bill Jackson.)

• Do not capitalize the following:
  ✓ Arbitrary words or phrases just for emphasis
  ✓ Titles that follow a name or stand alone (Example: We will hire a new vice chairman to replace Dr. Smith, vice chairman of finance.)
  ✓ Directions such as north, south, east, west unless referring to specific regions of the country (Example: Here in the South, we advise folks to drive slowly on the road that leads west, because they might encounter slow-moving turtles.)
  ✓ Seasons such as spring, summer, winter, and fall

*Cars for a Cure®

Castleman disease

*Cattle Baron’s Ball®

cause-related marketing

*ACS owned & operated

**ACS collaborative program
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
CEO
Chairman of the Board
chairperson or chair
*Changing the Course
checklist
checkup
Childhood Cancer Month
chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML)
*Circle of LifeSM
clinical breast examination (CBE)
**Coaches vs. Cancer® (CvC)
**Coaches vs. Cancer® Champion Award
*Colleges Against CancerSM
Colon
• Use a colon to introduce a series of results or a list. (Example: The following officers were elected: Olaf Olafson, president; John Johnson, vice president;...)
• A colon should fall outside quotation marks or parenthesis. (Example: The following steps will help you fit in with the “in crowd”: ...)
• Use a colon before a quotation of more than one sentence.
colon cancer
colony-stimulating factor
colorectal cancer
Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)
Comma
• Use a comma in the following situations:
  ✓ Before the last in a series (Example: I like chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry.)
  ✓ To set off elements in an address or geographical places (Example: Write to the American Cancer Society at 1599 Clifton Road, NE, Atlanta, Georgia.)
  ✓ To set off the year in a month-day-year sequence (Example: We were married on June 14, 1997, in California.)
  ✓ After abbreviations that end with a period (Inc., etc., Jr.) if the abbreviation is not at the end of a sentence (Example: I ordered the video from Wondermuscles, Inc., the company that knows exercise.)
  ✓ When two numbers occur together (Example: In 2001, 28 people were on staff.)
  ✓ When two or more independent clauses form a compound sentence (Example: I got out of bed, and I wondered whether it was day or night.)
• Do not use a comma in the following situations:
  ✓ In expressions of time or height (Example: 12 hours 25 minutes, 6 ft. 3 inches)
  ✓ When a sentence contains two or more verbs with the same subject (Example: I tried to remember but kept losing track of the important details.)
*Commit to Quit
Community Connection: Resources, Information, and Guidance
complementary and alternative medicine (CAM)
*Cowboys Crusade Against Cancer
coworkers
*CSHE (Comprehensive School Health Education)
D

*Daffodil Days®

**Dashes**
Dashes are not the same as hyphens (see “Hyphen”). There are two types of dashes. While the en dash is preferred over the em dash for everyday use in setting off a phrase within a sentence, the most important thing is consistency within a written piece.

- **En Dash**
The en dash is longer than a hyphen and has a space on either side. In Microsoft Word, the en dash can be formed in text by typing a space, two hyphens, and another space before the next word. (Example: We are relying on you – our leader – to light the way.)

- **Em Dash**
Double the length of the en dash, the em dash is sometimes used for the same purpose. It is not the preferred dash in our house style, but is preferred by some professional manuals for particular publications. (Example: The em dash—a really long dash—looks like this.)

database
decision maker (noun)
decision making (noun)
decision-making (adjective)
dietitian
digital rectal examination (DRE)
disease-free

**Disease Names**
For eponymic disease names – that is, diseases named after people – the trend is moving away from using the possessive forms. (Examples: Hodgkin disease [not “Hodgkin’s”] and Kaposi sarcoma [not “Kaposi’s”])

*Distinguished Service Award Division (capitalize when referring to an American Cancer Society Division)
E

*Eastern Division, Inc. ("Inc." not necessary internally or on second reference externally)
e-business
e-commerce
email
estrogen replacement therapy (ERT)
Everyday Choices for a Healthier Life™
EVP (internal abbreviation for executive vice president)
Ewing family of tumors (EFT) / tumors of the Ewing family (TEF)
ex-smoker
Exclamation Point
To avoid detracting from its effectiveness, use the exclamation point sparingly.
five-year survival rate
fall (not Fall)
fecal occult blood test (FOBT)
federal government
*Field Notice (FN)
*Florida Division, Inc. ("Inc." not necessary internally or on second reference externally)
follow up (noun or verb)
follow-up (adjective)
foodservice
*Freshstart®
fundraiser
fundraising
Gender-neutral Words
Writers should be sensitive to gender stereotypes and biased language. A quick search on “gender neutral language” on the Internet can surface a variety of lists helpful when choosing a neutral word for more traditional terms (for example, “executive” rather than “businessman”).
*Generation FitSM
grassroots
*Great American Smokeout® (abbreviated internally as GAS)
**Great American Weigh In®
*Great Lakes Division, Inc. ("Inc." not necessary internally or on second reference externally)
*Great West Division, Inc. ("Inc." not necessary internally or on second reference externally)
gynecologic (not gynecological)
Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month
half-million (*or a half-million; not half a million*)

Headlines
Do not capitalize articles, prepositions, or conjunctions in headlines and titles (unless they occur as the first word).

health care
health care professional
*Health for Success®
*Healthy Kids Network
*Heartland Division, Inc. (*“Inc.” not necessary internally or on second reference externally*)
high-fat (*adjective*)
high-fiber (*adjective*)
Hispanic/Latino
HMO (*abbreviation for health care management organization*)
Hodgkin disease
home page
*Hope Lodge®
hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
*Hope. Progress. Answers.® (*In copy, spaces are used after the periods, although the brand “signature” on the back/bottom of collateral materials does not use spaces.*)
*Humanitarian Award

Hyphens
* Use a hyphen in the following situations:
  ✓ With prefixes to proper names (*Example: un-American, anti-Catholic*)
  ✓ In measurements only if used as adjectives (*Example: 3-in. valves, 7-ft. plank*)
  ✓ Between the letters of a spelled word (*Example: W-a-l-t-e-r*)
  ✓ With fractions (*Example: one-sixth, three-fourths*)
  ✓ To avoid ambiguity (*Example: re-form to mean form again, vs. reform*)
  ✓ To connect continuing or inclusive numbers when no preposition has been used. (*Example: 1997-99*)
  ✓ In an adjective-noun phrase (*Example: a low-income woman*)
* Do not use a hyphen in the following situations:
  ✓ After an adverb that ends in *ly* (*Example: poorly written*)
  ✓ In titles that contain two words (*Example: vice president, attorney general*)
  ✓ To connect numbers when a preposition has been used (*Example: from 1997 to 1999*)
  ✓ When an adjective is simply described by an adverb (*Example: This instance is somewhat less likely.*)

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I

*I Can Cope®
*Illinois Division, Inc. ("Inc." not necessary internally or on second reference externally)
*Income Development (capitalized when referring to the department)
income development (lowercase when referring to the activity of generating income)
inpatient
in-service
interleukin-2
Internet
Intranet

Italics
• Italicize words or phrases sparingly to lend emphasis.
• Italicize the titles of books, plays, television series, movies, brochures, essays, symphonies, poems, pamphlets, newspapers, journals, and periodicals.
K

Kaposi sarcoma
kick off (*verb*)
kickoff (*noun*)
L

*Lane W. Adams Award
laryngectomee (person whose larynx has been removed)
laryngectomy (operation to remove larynx)
**Let’s Talk About It®
*Lifelink®
lifesaving
lifestyle
lifetime
log in (verb)
log off (verb)
log on (verb)
log out (verb)
log-in (noun and adjective)
log-off (noun and adjective)
log-on (noun and adjective)
log-out (noun and adjective)
long-term
**Look Good...Feel Better® (LGFB)
**Look Good...Feel Better® Sunrise Award
**Look Good...Feel Better® Years of Service Award
look-alike
low-fat
low-fiber
low-nicotine cigarette
low-tar cigarette
*Luther L. Terry Awards for Exemplary Leadership in Tobacco Control

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**M**

*Make Yours A Fresh Start Family™
makeover
makeup
*Making Strides Against Breast Cancer® (MSABC)
malignant mesothelioma
*Man to Man®
mastectomy
*Medal of Honor Award
*Meeting Well™
Melanoma Monday
metastatic cancer
*Mid-South Division, Inc. (“Inc.” not necessary internally or on second reference externally)
*Midwest Division, Inc. (“Inc.” not necessary internally or on second reference externally)
*mission statement (reads as follows: The American Cancer Society is the nationwide community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from the disease, through research, education, advocacy, and service.)
myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS)
N

National Assembly
National Association of Breast Cancer Organizations (NABCO)
National Board of Directors
National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM)
National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC)
National Cancer Control Month
*National Cancer Information Center (NCIC)
National Cancer Institute (NCI)
National Cancer Survivor’s Day
National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
National Family Caregivers Month
*National Home Office (NHO)
National Institutes of Health (NIH)
National Mammography Day
National Minority Cancer Awareness Week
National Nutrition Month
National Physical Activity Month
National Skin Cancer Awareness Month
*National Volunteer Leadership Award
National Volunteer Week
Nationwide Distribution Center
Nationwide Objectives
nationwide (meaning “across the nation” – preferred over “national” due to internal connotation that “national” means related to the NHO)
NCCRT® (The full name, National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable, does not take a registration mark.)
*New England Division, Inc. (“Inc.” not necessary internally or on second reference externally)
NexCure
Nobel Prize
noncancerous
noncarcinogen/noncarcinogenic
nonfat
non-Hodgkin Lymphoma
nonmelanoma skin cancer
nonprofit
*ACS owned & operated

**ACS collaborative program
nonsmoker
nonsmoking
*Notes to Neighbors®
not-for-profit

Numbers
✓ Spell out numbers from one through nine; use figures for 10 and above.
✓ Avoid beginning a sentence with a number. If you must, spell it out. If you must begin a sentence with a year (such as 2001), it’s fine to leave it as a figure; spelling out years can be cumbersome.
✓ Ages, times of day, dates, dimensions, prices, sports scores, votes, temperature, and percentages all require figures.
✓ Spell out ordinals from first through ninth; use figures for 10th and higher (22nd, 23rd, etc.)
✓ Use numbers, not ordinals, for dates (September 3, not September 3rd)
✓ When referring to quantities, use “more than” instead of “over.” (Example: More than 3,000 communities participated in Relay For Life® in 2002, raising more than $200 million.)
Office of Smoking and Health (at the CDC)
offline
*Ohio Division, Inc. (“Inc.” not necessary internally or on second reference externally)
online
outpatient

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**ACS collaborative program
Pap test (or Pap smear) partner *(Avoid using “partner,” because it has legal meaning. Use preferred synonyms such as “collaborator” or “ally.”)*

Pathways to Freedom peer-reviewed *(adjective)* peer-to-peerSM

Pennsylvania Division, Inc. *(“Inc.” not necessary internally or on second reference externally)*

**Percentages**

- When to use the % symbol:
  - In scientific and statistical copy (Example: Results show the death rate for this type of cancer fell by 16%).
  - When several percentages are used within a small space of copy where it would become unwieldy to repeat “percent” several times.
  - In graphic charts, tables, etc.
- When to use the word “percent”:
  - In humanistic copy referring to non-scientific portions (Example: His profit had decreased from 40 percent to 35 percent.).

**Period**

- Do not use periods in acronyms or titles *(Examples: CDC, MD, PhD)*
- Use a series of three periods (ellipses) to indicate omitted quoted matter. At the end of a sentence use four. *(Example: “She said she... didn’t want to go home....”)*
- See “Bulleted Lists” for guidelines on using periods in lists.

**phase** *(lowercase, as in “phase 1 of a clinical trial”)*

Picture a CureSM p.m. or a.m.

Polyp Man® postdoctoral postmastectomy postoperative preoperative preschool preventive *(not preventative)*

Prostate Cancer Awareness Week prostate-specific antigen (PSA) psycho-oncology psychosocial

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*Puerto Rico, Inc. (Part of the Florida Division. “Inc.” not necessary internally or on second reference externally)
Q

quality of life (noun)
quality-of-life (adjective)

*Quitline®

Quotation Marks

• Place marks of punctuation inside quotation marks, with the exception of the colon, semicolon, question mark, and exclamation point, all of which go outside the quotation marks unless they are part of the quoted material. (Example: You asked, “What measles are you taking?” but did you mean to say “measures”?)

• Use quotation marks to enclose misnomers, slang expressions, and words of unusual meaning. (Example: Some people like to use the term “webify” for the idea of running our business on the Internet.)

• Quoted words, phrases, and sentences run into the text are enclosed in double quote marks. Quotations within quotations use single quote marks; quotations within those use double marks; etc. (Example: “You remember what she told us: ‘Never use “I just assumed” as your explanation for anything.’”)

• Do not use quotation marks for programs. (Example: Look Good...Feel Better, Reach to Recovery)
R

Race and Ethnicity
When writing about a research study in which particular ethnic labels were used for the study groups, use those same labels in your writing. For example, if a study compares cancer rates in “White males” and “Black males,” use those terms.

For general writing, choose a single set of terms and be consistent within a piece. Allow flexibility and be sensitive to your audience’s regional/cultural backgrounds and preferences. The following are some commonly accepted terms that can be used as adjectives or made plural for nouns referring to groups of people:

• White (or Caucasian if necessary to match terminology in a scientific study)
• African American or Black
• Asian American (or more specific Chinese American, Korean American, etc. – but not Oriental)
• Native American (or American Eskimo, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, etc.)
• Pacific Islander
• Hispanic/Latino

When referring to two ethnic groups, please join them with the word “and” rather than a slash (American Indian and Alaska Native or Asian American and Pacific Islander).

Radio News Service (RNS)
*Reach to Recovery®

Registered Trademarks
When using a trademarked name that isn’t owned by the American Cancer Society, capitalize or otherwise make a reasonable effort to represent the trademarked spelling of the term. There is no need to use the ® or ™ symbols with non-Society trademarked terms. (Example: I’ll buy you a box of Kleenex, since you’re out of tissues.)

For terms and programs that are registered by the Society, the registration symbol should appear at least once on the piece but should not be distracting. If the mark appears as part of the program logo used prominently on the piece, that is sufficient. If no logo is included for the registered program/term or if the logo appears only on a back page or other insignificant location, the registration symbol should be used on first reference in text, in a sensible place – either first reference in running text or headline. Subsequent references do not require the symbol. (Example: Reach to Recovery® is a unique, one-on-one support system for people facing breast cancer.)

*Relay For Life® (preferred term on first reference is American Cancer Society Relay For Life®)
*Relay For Life® Gordy Klatt Awards
*Relay For Life® Hall of Fame
*Relay For Life® Heart of Relay Awards
*Relay For Life® Per Capita Awards
*Road to RecoverySM

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Round Table (refers to Excalibur)
**S**

*Science Writers Seminar (SWS)
SCS-I
SCS-II
Secondhand smoke (*Tobacco control advocates endorse the term "passive smoking," so this phrase is an acceptable substitute when writing for that audience. For general readers who may not recognize the term, please use the more familiar "secondhand smoke" or offer a brief explanation of the term "passive smoking."*)

self-examination

Semicolon
• Use a semicolon when independent clauses are not joined by a conjunction.  
  (*Example: We cannot depend on him; we must get a trustworthy person.*)
• The following words should be preceded by a semicolon when used to transition between clauses of a compound sentence: *then, however, thus, hence, indeed, accordingly, besides, therefore.* (*Example: I want to finish this draft; therefore, I won’t stop to eat lunch.*)
• Avoid using a semicolon when a comma will suffice.
• Use a semicolon to break up groups of words or phrases separated by commas in series. (*Example: Jack Doe, president; Art Smith, vice president;…*)

*Skin Protection Federation℠
*Slip! Slop! Slap!®
*Smartmove
smoke-free
*Sociedad Americana del Cancer® (*Spanish translation for American Cancer Society*)
socioeconomic
sourcebook
*South Atlantic, Inc. ("Inc." not necessary internally or on second reference externally)
*Special Touch®
spokesperson
spring (*not Spring*)
*St. George National Award
statewide
subcommittee
summer (*not Summer*)
sun protection factor (SPF)
*Sun Safe Community
sunscreen
Susan G. Komen Foundation

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T

*Taking Charge of Money Matters

**Telephone Numbers**
Within text, separate telephone numbers with hyphens. Only use periods in our standard sign-off printed on the back covers of publications.
*Tell A Friend®
*Telling Fact From Fiction
*Terese Lasser Award
*Terry Zahn Award
testicular self-examination (TSE)
Texas Division, Inc. / Hawaii Pacific, Inc. ("Inc." not necessary internally or on second reference externally)

**“tlc” Tender Loving Care®** (or if used as shortened name with the trademark: “tlc”TM)

**Time Zones**
• When referring to a time zone without a clock reading, spell it out and capitalize it. (Example: Atlanta follows Eastern Standard Time.)
• When the time zone is accompanied by a clock reading, abbreviate it. (Example: We will meet at 2 p.m. EST.)
toll free (adverb, as in “Call toll free anytime.”)
toll-free (adjective, as in “Call our toll-free number.”)
toward (not towards)
*Tribute to Courage®

*ACS owned & operated **ACS collaborative program
U

UICC (International Union Against Cancer)
Unit (capitalized when referring to a Unit of the American Cancer Society)
unproven
videocassette
videotape
voluntarism *(anything voluntary in society; basically refers to voluntary agencies)*
volunteerism *(anything related to volunteers, volunteer programs or volunteer management)*
W

Waldenstrom macroglobulinemia
Web site
well-being
whole grain
whole wheat
Wilms tumor
winter (not Winter)
workgroup
workload
workplace
worksite
World Wide Web
www.cancer.org (for external use, with some approved advertising exceptions; simply “cancer.org” is acceptable for internal use)
x-ray
Y

*Y2Kidz, Y2Kidz.org
ZIP code
Writing and Editing

The best writing advice can be summed up in one word: clarity.

If your message gets lost in your writing, your time – and your readers’ time – is wasted. These writing and editing reminders are intended for anyone striving to represent the American Cancer Society in a clear way that supports our brand identity and mission.

Branding with Words
A brand is more than a logo. It’s the overall consistency of experience that an organization brings to everyone who comes in contact with it. In a perfectly “brand-friendly” piece, the design, writing, and content all reflect our brand identity.

The Society’s brand vision is the unspoken statement that should come through in every contact with our organization: Building relationships that empower people is the key to victory over cancer. It may be easier for writers to think of that vision in terms of three expressive themes: Strength. Spirit. Action.

Using words, phrases, and construction that illustrate these themes helps weave our brand identity into material. For example, these themes are applied below to a simple statement: “The American Cancer Society’s goal is to reduce the rates of cancer incidence and cancer mortality.”

Strength: The American Cancer Society is building a powerful network of individuals and organizations who together can have the greatest possible impact on cancer incidence and mortality.

Spirit: If you have ever looked in the eyes of someone with cancer, you know why we’re here; we are dedicated to reducing the death rate and the very occurrence of cancer.

Action: We are moving forward swiftly and strategically to cut the rates of cancer incidence and mortality.

Editing
No piece of writing is inconsequential enough to skip the editing process. When reviewing and revising text, print it and read it aloud to catch awkward phrases or sections. Copy should flow naturally and make sense. It may help to review your work twice.

Conceptual Edit – Consider the length of the piece and overall arrangement of information, as well as tone. It’s not unusual to rearrange, rewrite, or delete copy during this phase. Questions to ask include the following:
• Does the hierarchy of information make sense?
• Does it have a solid lead, a good conclusion, and a workable structure?

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**ACS collaborative program
Substantive Edit – Next, narrow your focus to individual sentences and words, scouring text for mechanical and wording errors. Common tasks during this edit include the following:

- Correcting faulty spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- Correcting usage and diction (such as “can” versus “may”)
- Ensuring consistency in spelling, hyphenation, numerals, and capitalization
- Checking for proper sequencing in numbered or alphabetized lists or pages
- Changing text and headings to achieve parallel structure (for example “How to Drive” and “How to Park,” rather than “How to Drive” and “Parking”)
- Changing passive voice to active voice, if appropriate
- Flagging unclear or incorrect statements
- Eliminating wordiness, trite phrases, and jargon
- Smoothing transitions and moving sentences and phrases to improve readability
- Correcting any departures from the style guide and/or appropriate professional manual

Accuracy
Double-check all names, phone numbers, facts, and figures. Do not rely on someone else to catch mistakes.

Active Voice and Verbs
Use active voice (“The American Cancer Society recommends...”) and active verbs (“decide”). Passive voice (“It is recommended by the American Cancer Society that...”) and indirect verb phrases (“make a decision”) should be used only sparingly, for the sake of variety, emphasis, or clarity.

Brevity
Make the point once, quickly and effectively. Then move on.

Clarity
Use plain English. Write to reach the reader, not to exhibit your personal skills. Make every word count, and use concrete, familiar vocabulary when possible.

Headlines
Write clear, concise headlines and subheads. Catch phrases and wordplays are useful only if they are meaningful. Readers should be able to tell what the message/article is about from a glance at the headline.

Jargon
Seek fresh forms of expression. Use buzzwords, clichés, and slang only when the copy idea demands it.

Also avoid trite or overly dramatic cancer-related language that casts people with cancer as victims. Rather than “cancer victim” or “suffering from cancer,” use phrases such as “cancer patient” and “living with cancer.”

**Proof Marks**
Most editors and designers recognize a standard set of proofreading marks. You can find these marks in most style manuals or by running a search on the Web.

**Thoroughness**
Anticipate reader questions. Answer them in the text.

**Variety**
Mix sentence and paragraph length for cadence and emphasis. Avoid over-using the same words or phrases.

**Vocabulary**

“Colon” and “Colorectal”
Colon cancer and rectal cancer are often referred to by the combined term “colorectal cancer.” This term is used in many of our scientific documents and information for the medical community.

Because this disease has such high death rates, yet is so preventable, the Society has embarked on a communications campaign to get people talking to their doctors about getting tested. Time and again, we have found that it’s specifically the term “rectal” that makes people uncomfortable and hesitant to bring up the subject. So, for general communications to raise public awareness, the Society chooses to use the term “colon cancer” to refer to colon and rectal cancers combined. This approach lends itself to media campaigns as well, where short words such as “colon” are more likely to appear in journalistic headlines.

To ensure that statistical references are still correct when using the simplified term “colon cancer,” any reference to the disease in a piece that also cites statistical data for colorectal (combined) cancers should include this phrase on first reference: “Colorectal cancer (commonly known as 'colon cancer')...” After that qualifying statement, “colon cancer” can be used throughout.

“Testing” and “Screening”
Research and experience show that lay audiences do not fully understand the term “screening,” and we risk losing our message on the public when we use that term alone. For general communications to raise awareness of prevention/early detection, the Society chooses to use the term “testing” – preferably as “early detection testing”
on first reference. Using the term “screening tests” is also acceptable when the early detection context is clear.

For scientific, medical, and public health audiences, “screening” does have a widely understood meaning and is appropriate for use.
Writing for the Web

The key to effective Web writing can be summed up as “users first.” Getting information from the Internet is different from reading copy on a printed page. The Web has become an interactive, virtual environment where users can choose what and how much they want to see.

Words. Visual design. Navigation. Content. Technical architecture. They all must work in concert to create an intuitive setting in which the user is instantly engaged and driven to act. The impulse must be to keep clicking. Writers can enhance this experience by creating copy that is clear, warm, and compelling.

These tips represent best practices and recommended exceptions to standard style to make your writing best suited for the unique editorial environment of the Internet. They should be used alongside the rest of the American Cancer Society editorial style guide.

Branding on the Web

For the enhanced www.cancer.org Web site, its creators took the Society’s brand vision and expanded it into a statement that represents how our brand translates into our Web site.

For families coping with cancer, and the donors, volunteers, and advocates who support them, the American Cancer Society provides the appropriate knowledge, guidance, support, community, and inspiration to help them gain a sense of hope and control as they navigate the cancer experience.

One way to make sure the brand identity comes through the tone of your writing is to think of the Web site as an entity with human traits. If it had a personality, it could be described in several words:

- Understanding
- Warm
- Trustworthy
- Authoritative
- Inspiring

For a consistent American Cancer Society brand experience, users should feel these personality traits come through the tone of all text as they navigate the site.

Blurbs

Readers may not know what to expect under the heading “News” unless you follow it with brief context, such as “Our latest news releases, newsletter, and health news coverage.”
Concise Text Blocks
Most users only scan, rather than read. Limit each block of copy to three or four concise sentences for a total of 50 words or fewer. When possible, limit each screen to three text blocks to reduce the number of times users have to scroll down. If they have to work to get information, you risk losing their attention.

Digestible Portions
Break information into small, easily grasped pieces. Bulleted lists, subheadings, and other visual cues help eliminate large “gray areas” of text and make information more manageable. Consider interactive functions such as sidebars, hyperlinks that open longer text, tables, and Q&A formats to break up copy and make it easy for users to make selections at a glance.

Global Reach
Even more than printed materials, information on the Web has the ability to reach anyone, anywhere. Beware of language that shows bias in ethnicity, race, gender, age, or physical ability. Assume your readers are proficient in English, but be careful about using dialect or unfamiliar abbreviations.

Interwoven Messages
Every page on the Web site should serve a specific purpose and impart new information. Add substance to marketing messages by incorporating them into program/product information.

Clutter-free Zone
When graphics need prominence, reduce the amount of copy that accompanies them. When a written message requires emphasis, work with the designer to minimize distracting graphic elements. Keep the page clean.

No Screaming
Avoid exclamatory sentences, overly aggressive messages, and bolded or all-capped type.

No Third Person References
Do not write or adapt copy that directs readers to “go to www.cancer.org,” tells them they can find information on our Web site, or provides a link to the site. They’re already there.

Numbers
For Web writing, use numerals for all numbers. Spell out numbers that begin a sentence. Spell out number rankings (first, second, third rather than 1st, 2nd, 3rd).

Order of Information
Position the essential, most engaging information near the top of the screen, keeping in mind that screen size varies on different computers. Follow with supporting information
ordered logically, so users can follow a clear path to the information they want. Presentation can make the difference between a user who stays to learn more and a user who abandons the site.

**Percentages**
For Web writing, use the % sign – not the word “percent.”

**Proofreading**
In addition to the regular editorial process, proof your final copy after it is posted to the live site. When proofing Web pages, look for repeated or missing copy, links that don’t work as they should, and incorrect spacing among text blocks. Don’t forget to check copy in graphic elements.

**Talking to Users**
Instead of talking at users, talk to them by using “we” sometimes instead of “the American Cancer Society” and “you” instead of “the user” or “the patient.” This subtle distinction reinforces the personal relationship and allows the Web site to speak for the Society in an expert, yet approachable, way.

**Time References**
Avoid unclear time perspectives, such as “last year” or “to be determined soon.” If there is no publication date on the Web page, time references must be specific. Timely information helps the site appear relevant and trustworthy.
Professional Manual Recommendations

For general use, the American Cancer Society house style outlined in this online guide should be sufficient. For more detailed reference, the Chicago Manual of Style is also recommended.

The house style should also be followed for promotional materials – such as brochures, posters, and other items. For design purposes, it may occasionally be necessary to make adjustments to these standards for purposes of clarity, brevity, or aesthetics. These exceptions should be made with the judgment and approval of an American Cancer Society communications professional.

Exceptions
When writing for a particular journal or publication, follow the style and mechanical guidelines outlined by that publication, including the use of its preferred professional editorial manual. The five professional manuals most commonly used at the American Cancer Society have appropriate uses for different specific audiences and contexts.

American Medical Association Manual of Style
Used commonly for medical journals, as well as for the Society’s annual Facts and Figures publication.

Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual
Accepted as the style manual for most newspapers and used in all media relations writing.

Chicago Manual of Style
Widely used by many organizations for books, some academic publishing, and a variety of other writing contexts.

Council of Biology Editors Style Manual
Also popular for medical writing and preferred by some publications, including CA – A Cancer Journal for Clinicians.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association
Used for articles and copy in psychological and psychosocial journals and for much of the material produced by the Society’s Behavioral Research Center.
Spanish Translations of Common American Cancer Society Terms

American Cancer Society
Sociedad Americana del Cáncer®

1-800-ACS-2345
1-800-227-2345 (Do use numerals rather than “ACS” in Spanish translations.)

The American Cancer Society is the nationwide community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy, and service.
La Sociedad Americana del Cáncer es la organización nacional de la salud que, basada en el servicio comunitario y voluntario, se dedica, mediante la investigación, educación, defensa de su causa y prestación de servicios, a prevenir el cáncer, salvar vidas y reducir el sufrimiento causado por el cáncer a fin de eliminarlo como uno de los principales problemas de salud.

For more information, contact us any time, day or night, at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.
Para más información, contáctenos a cualquier hora, de día o de noche, al 1-800-227-2345 o visítenos en www.cancer.org.

This is the American Cancer Society.
Esta es la Sociedad Americana del Cáncer.

This is where to go for help.
Aquí recibirá ayuda.

Hope.Progress.Answers.®

We’ll give you information, support, and ways to get involved in the fight. Together, we will conquer cancer.
Le daremos información, apoyo y los medios para unirse a la lucha. Juntos, venceremos al cáncer.

1-800-ACS-2345
www.cancer.org
Cancer information, support services, events, donations, and volunteer opportunities
1-800-227-2345
www.cancer.org

*ACS owned & operated **ACS collaborative program
Información sobre el cáncer, servicios de apoyo, eventos, donaciones, y oportunidades para hacer labores voluntarias

1-800-ACS-1885
Estate planning and planned gift assistance
1-800-227-1885
Planificación de patrimonio y asistencia con donativos planeados

1-877-333-4673
www.cancer.org
Cancer Survivors NetworkSM – recorded discussions and online support groups
1-877-333-4673
www.cancer.org
Red de Sobrevivientes del Cáncer (Cancer Survivors NetworkSM) – discusiones grabadas y grupos de apoyo en línea

Tell a Friend®
Aconseje a su Amiga®

Reach to Recovery®
Recuperación a su Alcance®

Slip! Slop! Slap! ®
Slip on a shirt! Slop on sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher! Slap on a hat!
¡Pon! ¡Pon! ¡Pon! ®
¡Pónte una camisa! ¡Pónte protección solar con un protector de 15 o más! ¡Pónte un sombrero!