Style Guide Checklist

Consider each topic and sub-topic with your team and determine what you will include in the company style guide.

☐ Introduction

Introduce the style guide, including why and how to use it at the company.

- Rationale for using style guide
- Company introduction
- Company contact for style guide questions
- Industry style guide hyperlink & access information

☐ Grammar, Puntuation, & Capitalization

Outline rules that digress from your industry style guide or come up frequently.

- Abbreviations
- Apostrophe for nouns that end in 's'
- Bulleted and numbered lists
- Capitalization of company and product names
- Em dash use
- Oxford comma use
- Sentence structure specifications
- Spaces after periods
- Spelling of commonly misused words
- Spelling out numbers

☐ Content Format and Design

Define formatting and design standards for each type of content.

- Define each document or content type and its format specifications
- Branding: logo, font, and color palate
- Images: photographs, screenshots, tables (borders, text wrapping, etc.)
- Cross references: internal & external document references & hyperlinks
- Page setup: layout, paragraphs, spacing
- Tip: Hyperlink content templates in this area of the style guide

☐ Style & Tone

Help employees understand the voice they're aiming to convey through writing.

Style

- Active voice vs. passive voice
- Clichés and metaphors
- First person (us, we, our team) vs. third person perspective
- Formal vs. conversational writing

Tone

- Describe your company's personality in 3-5 words—e.g., fun, compassionate, relatable, witty, forward-thinking, dependable, casual, efficient, available.
- Summarize the message you want employees to send readers through their writing—e.g., "We want written content to feel accessible to readers; therefore, we avoid industry jargon they may not understand and write in a clear, conversational way."

☐ Additional Topics

Add other topics to existing sections, or create new sections that works for you.

- Guidelines for attributing credit or citing sources
- Social media communication standards
- Target audience or persona information
- Approved and unapproved content for citation

Style Guide Writing Tips

- Hyperlink to any internal or external web resources mentioned in the style guide.
- Provide examples to make your points clear.
- After finalizing your style guide, consider customizing an abbreviated version for agencies or certain employee groups who only need portions of the info.

Need help creating a customized style guide?

Visit stephmaries.com | Email stephanie@stephmaries.com