



SOROPTIMIST

Best for Women

Graphic Identity & Style Manual

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Introduction

The communications department at Soroptimist International of the Americas' headquarters created this Graphic Identity & Style Manual to foster federation-wide unity and accuracy with regard to writing and design. In order to brand Soroptimist as an organization that improves the lives of women and girls, and to create a strong and consistent visual identity, all clubs should have the same look as the federation. Writing and design are two important channels of communication that not only affect the way Soroptimist projects its character and personality, but shape the public's attitudes and behaviors toward the organization. Therefore, writing and design are fundamental to branding the organization's identity (who an organization is) and image (how an organization is perceived)—two prime concerns that drive communications activities in the majority of both nonprofit and for-profit entities.

Soroptimist members should follow the guidelines offered in this manual to:

- Use Soroptimist's visual or graphic “identifiers”—the new “S” logo, tagline “Best for Women” and mission statement.
- Communicate effectively through proper writing and design.
- Foster federation-wide unity and accuracy with regard to how Soroptimist portayed to the public.

Words on Graphic Identity

The graphic identity (also known as “corporate identity” and “visual identity”) portion of this manual provides official guidelines for how the logo should be treated and used in all of the organization's visual communications. In addition, basic design principles and standard templates contribute to an overall graphic identity system that enables SIA to properly express and differentiate itself. A consistent graphic identity system reflects an organization's “tone” visually—not only in terms of its graphic identifier (its logo), but also the environment in which it is used. In other words, the fonts, colors, design elements, photos/graphics, etc.—in addition to the logo used on Soroptimist materials—should contribute to an overall packaged “look” that Soroptimist desires. Using the following suggestions and ideas, Soroptimist members can contribute to a professionally packaged look for the organization that is both contemporary and creative. Consistent application of the logotype is the most important part of a graphic identity program. A strong graphic identity, haphazardly applied, can be less effective than a weak graphic identity applied with diligence.

Words on Style

The style section of this manual spells out the basics of SIA’s style for editorial and business writing. Professional editors and writers have produced hundreds, if not thousands, of books about grammar, structure, word usage and common misspellings. These basic guidelines do not seek to replicate their content. For those with “sticky” grammar and usage questions, *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law* (AP stylebook), *The Chicago Manual of Style* and *Woe is I* are all excellent sources of information and answers.

Graphic Identity

Logo, Tagline and Mission Statement

The official Soroptimist logo serves as the “face” of the organization. In 2003, SIA commissioned a major membership/marketing study to help the organization remain competitive in today’s climate. Kerr-Downs Research provided SIA with several recommendations, one of which was to establish a firm branding strategy in order to boost awareness of SIA and its work. Establishing and reinforcing a branding strategy is the cornerstone of all SIA public awareness activities. An organization’s brand is its “essence”—what it does, how it does it, what value that brings to the public, and how well it delivers on its mission.

A strong visual identity is an important branding strategy and one that must be undertaken with careful consideration. In this regard, Kerr-Downs recommended that SIA reconsider its previous logotype and tagline, as both failed to distinguish the organization. It was also recommended that SIA discontinue using the Soroptimist emblem on its materials—as the emblem has limited appeal, particularly among younger women and women of diverse nationalities.

Consequently, SIA unveiled a new logo as part of its Renaissance Campaign, a five-year plan to renew the organization. This new logo, which incorporates the tagline, “Best for Women,” identifies the work and personality of Soroptimist. SIA now uses the “S” logo on all materials, including stationery, business cards, SIA documents and the SIA website. It is important that clubs and regions also use the new logo as their graphic identifier. Please follow the guidelines below for accurate and consistent use of the logo to foster cohesion throughout the federation. The new logo is available for free in the Library of the members-only site at <www.soroptimist.org>.



Soroptimist’s new logo is modern and professional. The bold, yet graceful “S” is symbolic of the feminine form. The logo incorporates the tagline “Best for Women,” which is the translation of the word “Soroptimist.” The difficulty of Soroptimist’s name is mitigated by having a tagline that is the translation of the word. The “Best for Women” tagline describes both the qualities of Soroptimist membership and the work Soroptimists do on behalf of other women. Together, the “S” and the tagline create the visual element that represent the organization, and distinguish it from other organizations.

The new mission statement reads: **“Improving the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world.”** This statement best describes what the organization seeks to accomplish.

To brand Soroptimist as an organization that improves the lives of women and girls, SIA regions and clubs should use the new logo, tagline and mission statement on all internal and external materials. It is important to Soroptimist’s branding effort that all levels of the organization use them consistently. It is even more important that clubs and regions embody the brand by being who the organization says it is and doing what the organization says it does.

Usage

Consistent and proper use of the logo communicates a professional and organized identity for Soroptimist. It also helps to brand the organization as one that improves the lives of women and girls. The federation, regions and clubs should use the new logo on **all** printed and electronic materials and promotional items to cultivate a graphic identity that connects all levels of the organization, thus delivering one image of Soroptimist. A unique club or region logo should not be used because it will interfere and compete with the graphic identifiers chosen to distinguish the Soroptimist organization from other organizations. Outdated versions of the logo should not be used either.

New Logo Stationery Templates



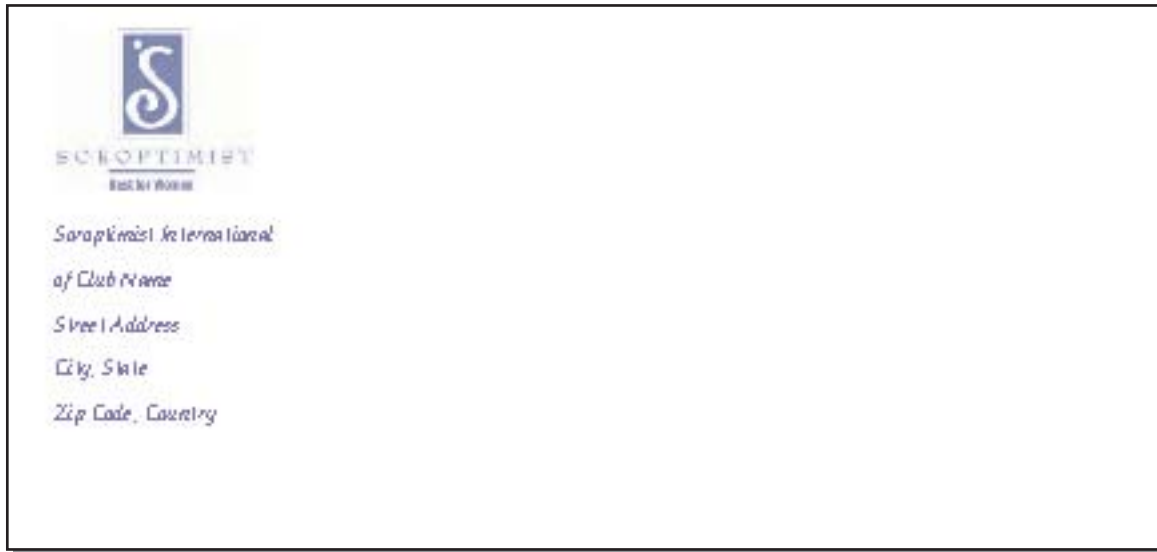
Letterhead Template



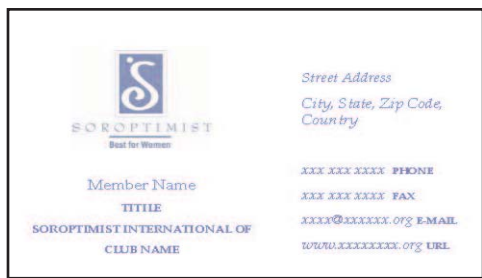
News Release Template

Stationery Templates

The organization's stationery plays a major part in the overall look that Soroptimist displays through its visual communication. The Library on the members-only site contains club and region stationery templates with the new logo. News release, media advisory, PSA and fact sheet templates for publicizing projects that benefit women and girls, are also available in the Library.



Envelope Template



Business Card Front Template



Business Card Back Template

Appearance

The logo should appear proportional and unmanipulated. Its color is Pantone (PMS) 659, but can also appear in a comparable blue color or black. Avoid making the logo smaller than .75” in height because doing so will make the “Best for Women” tagline hard to read.

Compatible colors

The official “Soroptimist blue” (PMS 659) has several complementary colors that can be used in materials, such as PMS 507 (mauve), PMS 521 (purple) and PMS 556 (green).

Logo Variations



Vertical PMS 659

Vertical Black



Horizontal PMS 659



Horizontal Black



JPEG and EPS File Types

SIA offers the logo to members in two types of files—**JPEG** and **EPS** files. File type refers to how graphic information is formatted.

- **JPEG (developed by Joint Photographic Experts Group)** JPEGs are a popular high resolution format for graphic files. Due to extreme compression, JPEG files can easily be transmitted over the Internet and viewed using home computers. JPEGs are best used for fliers, newsletters and brochures made on personal computers and websites.
- **EPS (Encapsulated Post Script)** A high resolution or vector file containing object-oriented information, EPS files are used for printing T-shirts, banners, large posters and other items where large, high-resolution graphics are needed. Since most home computers do not contain the program in which EPS files are created (often Adobe Illustrator), members may not be able to view EPS files posted on the members-only website. Instead, the files should be saved to disk and taken to professional printers.

Basic Design Principles

The prevalence of computers and sophisticated desktop publishing software has opened the door to easier production of visual communications. Unfortunately, it has also created more opportunities for printing and distributing poorly designed materials. Another problem lies in the use of many fonts, or typefaces, to “dress up” pages, all because the computer includes a menu full of fonts. This strategy can lead to documents that look more like “ransom notes” than professional materials. The following design principles can be applied to brochures, newsletters, fliers, posters, advertisements, or any other printed promotional materials.

Typesetting

- Type set “Caps and Lowercase” is preferred to material set in “ALL CAPS.” All caps, which take up a significant amount of space, decrease readability (the ease at which text is read) because they interrupt the flow of text. When using all caps, every word is rectangularly shaped and of similar size, which forces the eyes to read each word letter by letter. The eyes-and brain-actually read words by their shapes. A small amount of all caps (less than 10 words) can work well in headlines or display matter. Avoid using all caps with these kinds of fonts: **OLD ENGLISH** or *SCRIPT*.
- **Bold** type is often used to show contrast. However, reserve bold type for highlighting key words or ideas rather than using it over an extended amount of text.
- Avoid underlining text for emphasis because the bottom halves of letters often bump into the underline, which interrupts the eyes' natural reading flow.
- The tight spacing, curves and slants of *italics* and *scripts* make them difficult to read. Instead, limit italic use to creating effective contrast on a limited amount of text. Also, adjust letterspacing or tracking with script typefaces so that letters connect.
- Reversed type (white type on a black or solid background) affects readability in many ways. Reversed type appears to be smaller than black type on a white background, so a heavier typeface and larger point size are required. Also, a sans serif typeface works better reversed because a serif typeface's thin lines and serifs get lost in the background color. When running black text in a gray box, use no darker than a 40 percent shade of black for the box.
- Vary type sizes to draw interest to the most important pieces of information first (such as a headline, which has a point size anywhere from 18 to 60, depending on the particular piece) and then to supplementary information. Body text usually has a point size between 10 and 12.

Typefaces



- For maximum readability, use serif fonts (letters that have little lines on the ends) for extended text, as in body copy. The serifs lead the eye from one character to the next, linking the letters into words.
- Sans serif fonts (letters that don't have little lines on the ends) are more instantly recognizable when there is a small amount of text, such as in headlines, because the characters tend to be direct and clear, with no serifs to add unnecessary intricacies to the shapes.

• Use different fonts to create contrast. The best combination is to use a sans serif font for headlines and a serif font for long runs of text. As a general rule, no more than three fonts should be used on a page or throughout a document. In addition, two or more fonts that look similar should not be on the same page (notice the subtle differences between these three fonts: Palatia, Times New Roman and Bookman).

• **Extra bold**, *extra light*, *condensed* or *expanded* type are less readable than regular weight type.

Alignment

• The way in which elements are aligned affects the look and organization of the page. Nothing should be placed on the page arbitrarily. Every element and group of information should have a visual connection with something else on the page. To make all the elements on the page appear unified, connected and interrelated, visual ties must exist between the separate elements. When elements are aligned, an invisible line connects them. For instance, flush left or flush right text has a stronger connection (because of a defined invisible line) than text aligned down the center.

• Text aligned to the left is ideal because readers find it easier to keep their places in the text when lines end at different spots. A flush right alignment slows readers down because the left edge (where the eye returns to find the next line to read) is inconsistent. A center alignment lowers readability as well. Justified (aligned on both margins) text interrupts reading and creates rivers of white space.

A flyer for Soroptimist International of the Americas. The headline "Improving the lives of women and girls" is in a very bold serif font. The body text is in a thin serif font. The Soroptimist logo is on the right. A callout box points to the headline and body text, stating: "Very bold serif font for the headline contrasts the thin, serif font used for the copy." At the bottom, there is a box labeled "For more information:".

Very bold serif font for the headline contrasts the thin, serif font used for the copy.

Improving the lives of women and girls

SOROPTIMIST
Rest for Women

Soroptimist is an international volunteer organization for business and professional women who work to improve the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world.

- Soroptimist club projects address issues of importance to women, such as pay equity, literacy and breast cancer.
- Soroptimist offers Women's Opportunity Awards for training or education.
- Soroptimist works to prevent and end domestic violence.

For more information:

Spacing

- A page's texture and tone are affected by the spacing of letters, words and lines. Uneven letter and word spacing disturbs the eyes' natural reading flow. Avoid type that is extremely close together or far apart.
- As lines of text get long, readability suffers because it's more difficult for the eyes to move from the end of one line to the beginning of the next. But short line lengths break up text and tend to interrupt the reader. Therefore, opt for a column of text that is proportional to the point size of the type, using this formula: a column of text in inches is approximately .33 times the point size of the font used.

Example: 12 point type x .33 = 2 inch column widths

White space

- White space is an effective design strategy that reduces clutter and presents a clean page layout. Create white space by grouping related items (graphics, sections of text, etc.) together instead of spreading them apart to fill each corner of a page.
- A small amount of white space, equal to one pica or 1/6 of an inch, should separate adjacent elements, such as blocks of text, graphics, lines and boxes. This consistency in spacing between elements will ensure that the finished piece looks organized.

Graphics

- Graphics include photos, logos and drawings, and add interest to a designed piece. If more than one graphic is being used on a page, contrast their sizes so that they don't all compete for the eye. There should always be a dominant graphic, and then smaller ones.
- Low-resolution graphics should not be used because they print with pixelated edges. Opt for graphics that print out with smooth edges.
- When using photos, use captions. Captions are short explanations that describe what's happening in the photo. Captions should say something of substance about the photo that might not be found in the body of the text.

Website design

The design of a website is just as important as its content. The overall look speaks volumes about the professionalism of the club and its commitment to volunteer service. The colors, graphics, photos, fonts and other elements should be selected carefully to ensure a clean and readable presentation. Interestingly, most design principles used for printed materials do not apply to websites because the eye views computer monitors differently than it views paper.

- Avoid a black background or a light one with a pattern. These backgrounds make reading text and printing pages from the site difficult. Opt for a white background or a solid, light-colored one.

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- The official Soroptimist blue (Pantone 659) used for printed materials can be created for the site by converting it to RGB (Red-Green-blue) mode. This color could be used with the logotype and other design elements.
 - Use a sans serif font such as Arial, Tahoma or Verdana (specifically created for the web) because it is easier to read on the screen. Keep in mind that an individual's computer must have the designated font in order to read the site. Therefore, stick with these three fonts or select ones that come with most people's computers. Another problem is that some people configure their browsers to override the site's fonts with ones they selected. One way to gain control is by creating words with a certain font, then saving this as a graphic. This is particularly useful for section headings and subheads in the text.
 - Organize text in small paragraphs or as bullets. Studies show that people read 25 percent slower on the web than they do print. Because people navigate through websites so quickly, they comprehend less, so it's best to display information in small, digestible portions. Also, avoid displaying text in ALL CAPS because it's difficult to read and will be perceived as shouting to the reader.
 - Photos and graphics should be placed on the site in JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) or GIF (Graphics Interchange Format) file formats, which enable people to view high-quality images at minimal download time. A JPEG format works best with photographs or scanned images. A GIF format works best with clipart. A graphic or photo only needs to be 72 ppi (pixels per inch). Try to keep the file size of graphics or photos between 20 and 30K (kilobytes).
 - Keep in mind that since everything on a computer screen is made up of square pixels, rounded edges will appear slightly jagged.
 - Use only the special effects that enhance communication on the site. Flashing and flip-flopping graphics, sound and video capabilities, and other high-tech goodies can either appear tacky or inventive, depending on their context and use.

For more informaton about website design, see the Club and Region Website Guidelines, available in the Library of the members-only site.

Style

Based on the rules for journalistic style in *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*, Soroptimist International of the Americas' style is continually evolving to adapt to the ever-increasing number of languages used in the federation; new technological terms; and new Soroptimist terminology. The style guidelines on the next few pages are designed to make all communication within the organization as consistent and clear as possible.

The most important determinants of Soroptimist style, and the inspiration for producing this manual, are consistency and clarity.

Consistency

To brand an organization, consistency is a key factor. To brand Soroptimist as an international volunteer organization for business and professional women who work to improve the lives of women and girls, it is important that the disseminated messages be consistent at all levels of the organization.

To be consistent, clubs must participate in and publicize programs that benefit women and girls to reinforce Soroptimist's mission. The Women's Opportunity Awards program is Soroptimist's major project. All clubs should participate in and help increase awareness about this award, as well as other programs that benefit women and girls. If clubs are not consistent with the types of projects they do, the public will never know what Soroptimists really do.

When communicating, the federation, regions and clubs must be consistent in language to cultivate unity throughout the organization. The federation, for example uses Soroptimist, rather than Soroptimist of the Americas or SIA, when talking about the organization to external audiences. Use this description in all external pieces—Soroptimist is an international volunteer organization for business and professional women who work to improve the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world.

All members should also use the new logo, which includes the tagline, “Best for Women” on all materials. If used consistently over time, people will begin to recognize it. Use Soroptimist blue when creating T-shirts and other promotional items. Organizations adopt certain colors as a branding tool to make themselves recognizable to their publics. Soroptimist has chosen blue, PMS 659. Blue is a color that connotes water and sky, and translates well across cultures (as opposed to other colors, which are perceived negatively in some areas of the world).

Clarity

When communicating, remember the acronym K.I.S.S., which stands for “Keep It Simple Sister.” Simplicity is always better. The more commas, clauses, abbreviations and jargon in a sentence, the more difficult it is to understand. People seem to think that a sentence sounds more intelligent if it contains a lot of twists and turns. The secret of style is that it doesn't matter how intelligent a sentence sound if readers can't understand what the sentence says.

Soroptimist Semantics

Effective communication means constructing messages that inform or persuade a target audience. Careful thought and strategy went into crafting the following ideas and phrases to effectively communicate the Soroptimist mission to Soroptimists, non-Soroptimists, media, and the general public.

Organizational Mission Statement

Soroptimist is an international volunteer organization for business and professional women who work to improve the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world.

Slogan/Tagline

Best for Women—Loosely translated, Soroptimist means “best for women.”

Boilerplate Paragraph

This is a “definition” of Soroptimist that the federation uses as a standard paragraph at the end of news releases or other materials that require explanation of what Soroptimist is:

Founded in 1921, Soroptimist is an international volunteer organization for business and professional women who work to improve the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world. Soroptimist comprises approximately 95,000 members in more than 120 countries and territories worldwide who contribute time and financial support to community-based projects that benefit women and girls. The Women’s Opportunity Awards program, which provides cash grants for head-of-household women seeking to improve their economic situation through additional education and training, is Soroptimist’s major project. Soroptimist International of the Americas, a 501(c)(3) organization, is a recipient of the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations’ Seal of Excellence. For more information, visit <www.soroptimist.org>.

Jargon and “Buzz” Words

When organizations and companies develop their own internal dictionary of jargon, these words often spill over into materials that are meant for the eyes and ears of an external audience. For instance:

- A non-Soroptimist audience will not understand words such as “federation” and “region” without having some further explanation.
- While phrases such as “international goodwill and understanding” and “advocacy, awareness and action” have become part of the Soroptimist vernacular, they present more internal information than a person in an “outside” audience needs to know. Instead, use the mission statement.
- Use the words “business and professional women” to describe who Soroptimists are. Previously used phrases, such as “executive and professional women,” “executive and professional business women” and “executive and business women” do not clearly define Soroptimist’s members.
- Use the words “international volunteer organization” to describe what Soroptimists do, rather than “international vounteer service organization.” In this day and age, service and civic clubs are perceived to be a dying breed, and Soroptimist does not want to be included in that category.

Basic Writing Guidelines

The following rules represent the standard style used in *Best for Women* magazine, and should also be applied to the style in other materials, such as newsletter articles and publicity materials. Notice the differences between internal and external language. When writing for an internal audience, it is okay to use abbreviations, but when communicating to the public, it is important to spell everything out.

Federation Names

- The word “federation” is not capitalized. It does not appear in the official federation name of Soroptimist International of the Americas, nor is it a proper name.
- Internal: Abbreviate federation names, except for Soroptimist International of the Americas, with slashes. Abbreviate Soroptimist International of the Americas to SIA.

Example: Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland = SI/GBI

Soroptimist International of South West Pacific = SI/SWP

Soroptimist International of Europe = SI/E

- External: When speaking about Soroptimist International of the Americas to an external audience, call it “Soroptimist.” If speaking about one of the other three federations spell them out.

Region Names

- Capitalize the word “Region” when part of the full region name, such as “The Desert Coast Region recently held its region-level Women’s Opportunity Awards ceremony.”
- When used as an adjective, lowercase it, such as “The Soroptimists held their region conference at the Marriot Hotel last week.”
- Never use the word “regional” in any reference.

Club Names

- Internal: Club names can be written in one of two ways—Soroptimist International of Center City or SI/Center City.
- External: On first reference, write the full name. On second reference, use the phrase “the Anytown Soroptimists” as an alternative to the full club name.

Board of Directors

- When referring to Soroptimist's Board of Directors, capitalize the words “Board” and “Directors.” However, when using the word “board” as an adjective, such as in “board members” or “board decision,” lowercase it.

Titles

- Titles, Soroptimist and otherwise, are only capitalized when they appear before an individual's name. Always lowercase a title when it appears after an individual's name, is set off from a name with commas, or is used without an individual's name.

Examples: President Jean Barth attended the dinner.

Jean Barth, president of Soroptimist, attended the dinner.

Soroptimist's president, Jean Barth, attended the dinner.

Soroptimist's president attended the dinner.

References to other Soroptimists

- Internal: To promote friendship and goodwill, Soroptimists should refer to each other by first name in materials intended for a Soroptimist audience. For instance, Lynn Dunning is called "SI President Lynn" throughout an article, rather than "Dunning." When referring to non-Soroptimists in internal materials, follow AP style when using their names. For example, if mentioning a speaker named Patricia Shriver, do not refer to her as "Pat" or "Patricia." Once her full name is used in the first reference, refer to her as "Shriver."
- External: When referring to a Soroptimist in materials intended for an external audience, such as a news release or media advisory, follow AP style and refer to her by her last name only (see "Patricia Shriver" example above).

Soroptimist Programs

- Always capitalize the names of Soroptimist programs. Do not abbreviate program names (Women's Opportunity Awards, Violet Richardson Award, Soroptimist Club Grants for Women and Girls, Making a Difference for Women Awards, etc.), or put the names in quotation marks. Note that Founders Day and Governors Round Table do not use an apostrophe. In this context, the word "founders" is plural, not possessive.

Web Addresses

- When writing web addresses, it is not necessary to include the "http://" beginning portion. However, include the "www" portion if the address starts that way, because there are now web addresses that start in other ways. Also, web addresses should appear in greater than/less than brackets. If the address falls next to a punctuation mark, the brackets let the reader know that the punctuation is not part of the address.

Example: For more information, please visit <www.soroptimist.org>.

Contact Information

- The words "e-mail" and "fax" are lowercase and do not appear in all capital letters. Capitalize the words "World Wide Web," "Internet" and "the Web," but keep the word "web" lowercased when using it as an adjective, such as "web address."

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- Capitalize the first letters of “Phone,” “Fax,” “E-mail” and “Web” and list them in that order.
 - Phone and fax numbers should always appear with the area code in parentheses. There is a space after the area code, and a dash in the middle. If the phone number is already inside a set of parentheses, the area code is separated with a slash and without spaces. Overseas phone numbers appear with the country code in parentheses and follow the same rule as U.S. and Canada phone numbers.
 - When writing Soroptimist contact information or club information, follow this example:

Soroptimist International of the Americas
1709 Spruce St.
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 893-9000
Fax: (215) 893-5200
E-mail: siahq@soroptimist.org
Web: www.soroptimist.org

United States

- The abbreviation for the words “United States” (U.S.) may be used when the phrase is used as an adjective. When the phrase is used as a noun, it should be spelled out.

Examples: I have U.S. citizenship. [U.S. describes citizenship.]

The United States is a member of the United Nations. [United States is the subject.]

Numbers

- Spell out numbers less than 10 and use figures for numbers more than 10.

Examples: seven, eight, nine, 10, 11, 64, 125

- Use figures with times except for “noon” and “midnight.”

- Use “a.m.” and “p.m.” lowercased to express time of day.

Examples: 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m.

- Spell out “first” through “ninth.” Starting with 10, use figures.

Examples: first, ninth, 10th, 22nd, 33rd, 41st

- Do not use “st,” “nd,” “rd,” or “th” with dates.

Examples: “Soroptimist’s Live Your Dream campaign will launch on March 8.”

Note: There are exceptions to the number rule:

- Numbers used with units of measurement are always figures. Always spell out the word “percent” as one word, not two.

Examples: 1 percent, 6 miles

- Numbers that begin sentences are always spelled out.

Examples: Twenty-five years ago, the year was 1980.

- Numbers expressing age are always figures.

Examples: I am 25 years old. My 2-year-old cousin is named Alex.

Members who have questions about any of the information in this manual can contact the Communications Department at siahq@soroptimist.org.