EXCITING THE LEARNING IN EVERYONE

COMMUNICATIONS STYLE GUIDE | 2012

Smithsonian
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Dear Colleagues,

I am happy to share this Communications Style Guide with you. It contains information you need to ensure that every communication that comes from the Smithsonian—whether a speech, letter, press release or advertisement—helps bring our brand to life. The way we talk about ourselves is key to driving our public image and the perceptions people have about the Smithsonian. This style guide is a resource that will help us achieve our goals of exciting the learning in everyone and of being “Seriously Amazing.”

This guide is not the final word on communications at the Smithsonian. Rather, it is a living document, designed to grow and change as we learn more about how we can use the brand in day-to-day activities. It contains information that can be useful for anyone creating products that will be shared with the public. Among other things, the guide contains tips for press officers to help them write press releases in a more conversational tone; a new, standardized branding color palate for graphic designers to use when designing signs, advertisements and other visual elements; and suggestions for making the tone of our websites, brochures and other written materials in keeping with the brand.

We hope you will incorporate this information into the project you’re working on when you think it’s appropriate. Use this guide to be creative and to have fun.

Let us know how you’ve used this document in your work. We will use your feedback to update future editions to make them more useful.

This guide was many months in the making and it reflects the suggestions and comments from many people around the Smithsonian. Thanks to all of you for your help with this project.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Lieberman

Director of Communications and External Affairs

August 2012

This Communications Style Guide shows us how we can highlight what unites us as an organization. We are all different but we have a lot in common.

We are many. We are one.

We are Smithsonian.

Purpose Statement

The goal of the Style Guide is to establish useful parameters for communication without limiting creativity. It will help us produce effective, informative, and consistent communication materials that reflect the Smithsonian brand. We expect this guide to expand and change as new approaches to communication are tested, modified and adopted.
Our Brand

The Smithsonian brand is loved and respected, but many people do not know who we really are and why we matter. Although nearly 90 percent of Americans know the name “Smithsonian,” very few people, inside or outside, know the breadth and the depth of all we do. In order for our brand to be strong, we need to make sure that it reflects what is special about the Smithsonian and shows what we can offer the world.

The message we deliver should communicate who we are today and who we want to be tomorrow. Finding a more compelling way to tell our story will strengthen the research we do, the exhibitions we develop, and the education we facilitate. A reinvigorated brand will enable us to attract new audiences and understand what they expect. We want the world to know that Smithsonian is relevant, engaging, groundbreaking, and inclusive. In order to convey this message loudly and clearly, we must be strategic about communicating and connecting with our audiences.
Our internal purpose statement is an easy way to remind ourselves of what the Smithsonian mission means in the 21st century and the unique role we play in the world:

**EXCITING**

stimulating
energizing
inciting emotion

**THE LEARNING**

active process
iterative
continuous

**IN**

innate
in all of us
part of being human

**EVERYONE**

from pre-school to Ph.D.
from D.C. to Delhi
individually and collectively

“**SERIOUSLY AMAZING**” is not just a description

IT IS THE EXPERIENCE WE PROMISE TO DELIVER.
Our Identity

Who We Are & Who We Want to Be

We are proud to be a national institution, but we also strive to be a universal lens for learning. We showcase the American experience, but we must also reflect the American spirit. We are good at looking inside out, but we must also look outside in. We serve the public, but we must also think of our audiences as real people.

We are a special occasion visit, but we must also become an indispensable resource. We are proud of what we have, but we also need to focus on what we do. We specialize in knowledge delivery, but we must also facilitate collaborative learning.
WHAT IS SMITHSONIAN?

WE ARE A UNIVERSAL LENS FOR LEARNING.
We are a microscope: we dig deep into issues.
We are a telescope: we step back and consider the big picture.
We are a kaleidoscope: we see the world through many lenses.

WE REFLECT THE AMERICAN SPIRIT.
We discover: we foster exploration.
We are creative: we are inspired and inspiring.
We innovate: we cultivate new ideas.
We embrace diversity: we work together with all kinds of different people.

WE SPARK LEARNING IN EVERYONE.
We ask questions: we activate the curiosity innate in all of us.
We change hearts and minds: we provide transformative experiences.
We know that learning is an active process: we provide informal, interactive education for everyone.

OUR MESSAGES
Our messages define who we are and why we matter.

Think of them as suggestions to help us express the Smithsonian identity.

There is no script to follow, so use the messages verbatim or develop similar phrases for your own unit.

Whichever you decide to do, be sure that every piece of Smithsonian communications evokes some, if not all, of these concepts.
We are a universal lens for learning.

Smithsonian examples:

- Bring many perspectives to an issue
- Have far-reaching implications
- Highlight unexpected connections between different topics
- Rely on partnerships between multiple units or other organizations

Words and phrases we use to evoke this message:

- probe
- delve, dig deep
- examine
- wide-angle lens, big picture
- comprehensive
- global
- lenses, perspectives, approaches, angles, viewpoints
- interdisciplinary
- multilayered, multidimensional, multifaceted
- collaborate, collaboration
- joint, united effort, team

How are we a universal lens for learning?

We are a telescope. We step back and consider the big picture.

We are a microscope. We dig deep into issues.

We are a kaleidoscope. We see the world through many lenses.
We reflect the American spirit.

Smithsonian examples:

• Demonstrate exploration, discovery, or innovation
• Celebrate creativity and/or ask our audiences to be creative
• Embrace diversity and/or broaden access to new audiences

Words and phrases we use to evoke this message:

• innovate, innovation
• creative, creativity
• inventive, original, imaginative
• explore, discover
• foster, facilitate, cultivate
• create, enable
• forge new pathways, chart new directions
• celebrate or embrace diversity
• accessible, inclusive
• groundbreaking, cutting-edge
• pioneering, leading
• visionary
• inspire
• bright, new, fresh, modern

How do we reflect the American spirit?

Research, exhibitions, or programs that...

• We DISCOVER. We foster exploration.
• We INNOVATE. We cultivate new ideas.
• We ARE CREATIVE. We are inspired and inspiring.
• We EMBRACE DIVERSITY. We work together with all kinds of people.
We spark learning in everyone.

**Smithsonian examples:**

- Education programs or activities, especially those that broaden access to new or underserved audiences
- Programs or activities that appeal across ages, backgrounds, and learning styles
- Programs that make people think, gasp, or smile
- Programs that invite public participation
- Programs or activities that surprise our audiences

**Words and phrases we use to evoke this message:**

- ask, question, challenge, debate, analyze, engage
- explore, discover
- active engagement
- dynamic, interactive, participatory
- foster, facilitate, cultivate, promote, develop
- create, enable, empower
- activate, generate, trigger, stimulate, spark
- inspire, instill, motivate
- think critically
- accessible, inclusive
- transformative ideas and experiences

**How do we spark learning in everyone?**

**We ask questions**

We activate the curiosity in all of us.

**We know that learning is an active process**

We offer informal, interactive education for everyone.

**We change hearts and minds**

We offer transformative experiences.
As you start thinking about communications for Smithsonian, whether it is a press release, speech, PowerPoint presentation, or even an email, it is important that you ask yourself three questions:

**WHO** is my audience?

**WHAT** is my message?

**WHY** is this important to my audience?

Answering these questions will ensure every communication is effective and helps your audiences understand who we really are.

**SMITHSONIAN SHOULD BE THE MAIN CHARACTER IN EVERY STORY WE TELL.**

No matter what we are writing or speaking about, whether it is an exhibition, research finding, educational program, or website, we must emphasize that it only happens here. It is because of our people, our methods, our passions, and our treasures that the Smithsonian can deliver world-class learning experiences for everyone.

**BEFORE YOU BEGIN WRITING OR SPEAKING**

As you start thinking about communications for Smithsonian, whether it is a press release, speech, PowerPoint presentation, or even an email, it is important that you ask yourself three questions:

**WHO** is my audience?

**WHAT** is my message?

**WHY** is this important to my audience?

Answering these questions will ensure every communication is effective and helps your audiences understand who we really are.
**AUDIENCES**

We serve diverse audiences and are always striving to reach new ones. Think about the differences between each of the audiences you communicate with. How do these differences affect your language and tone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUDIENCE</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
<th>THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Visitors  | Museum visitors, website visitors, social media followers | • Make an impression. You want your message to be remembered.  
• Always offer ways to learn more.  
• Remember that people like to be surprised. |
| Media     | Newspapers, magazines, TV stations, blogs, radio | • Just give the facts, no opinions.  
• Think: What’s new? What’s cool?  
• We’ve got the experts, so we can tell the most accurate, compelling story |
| Stakeholders | Donors, Members of Congress, government officials, board members | • Maintain a formal, respectful tone.  
• Think: How does what I’m writing or presenting further the mission?  
• Don’t assume they know us as well as we know ourselves. |

**MODES OF COMMUNICATION**

We use many different forms of communication to interact with our audiences. Consider how your mode of communication affects the language and tone you use to engage your audience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODE</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
<th>THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Written  | News releases, handouts, exhibition labels, emails, website/social media copy, journal articles, PowerPoint slides | • Paint a picture with words.  
• Proofread for clarity, grammar, and spelling twice before signing off.  
• Even minor mistakes lessen credibility. |
| Verbal   | Meeting/phone conversation, speeches, media interviews, interaction with museum visitors | • Be a good listener.  
• Be concise. Attention spans are short.  
• Be approachable and speak with confidence. |
| Visual   | Signage, videos, website layout/design, exhibition design, logos, advertisements | • Less is more. Clean lines and white space give your layout a welcoming and polished look.  
• Every visual choice sends a message.  
• Choose fonts, colors, and layout wisely.  
• Use photos. Good ones evoke emotion. |
We want the world to know us for who we really are.

We want to convey our personality to the people we care about. In order to project the best version of ourselves, we need to adopt and maintain a consistent tone.

Our tone of voice comes through in what we say and how we say it. It enables us to convey the best qualities of our brand through the language we use. Using the right tone of voice in every communication will connect us to our audiences and emphasize what is great about the Smithsonian.

The Smithsonian Tone of Voice:

- We are accessible
- We are energetic
- We are inviting
- We are genuine
- We are energetic
WE ARE ACCESSIBLE

WHAT TO DO:

• Use straightforward, consistent language.
• Make sure that the words and examples you choose are relevant to people of all backgrounds.
• Think of your audience as individual people, not as the monolithic "general public."
• Talk with the people you are trying to reach, not at them.

WHAT NOT TO DO:

• Don’t dumb-down your language.
• Don’t use incomprehensible sentences full of institutional jargon.

TIPS:

• Be informative rather than academic. Write as if you are having a conversation, not delivering a lecture.
• Try to stay away from acronyms and abbreviations.
• If you find yourself being repetitive, check your language and sentence structure. It could be a sign that your language is unclear or vague.
• Try to put yourself in your audience’s shoes. Can you easily understand the message? Is it interesting?
WE ARE GENUINE

We don’t just offer facts—we share information. The collective knowledge we have at the Smithsonian is not ours to keep. We must think of ourselves as the people who enable audiences to satisfy their curiosity and access their passions.

WHAT TO DO:

• Always ground your writing in facts.
• Be confident, authentic, and knowledgeable.
• Highlight Smithsonian expertise while encouraging exploration.

WHAT NOT TO DO:

• Don’t be a know-it-all.
• Stay away from condescending language.

TIPS:

• Show your audience you care about their learning experience by offering other ways to explore your topic. How and where can they learn more?
• Think about the significance of what you’re writing or speaking about. Why do you care about this topic? Why should your audience care?
WE ARE INVITING

WHAT TO DO:

• Be open, empathetic, and engaging.
• Be sure to encourage questions and dialogue with your audience.

WHAT NOT TO DO:

• Don’t use language that is too informal.
• Don’t downplay the importance of what you are writing about.

TIPS:

• Be colorful. Use specific descriptions to give your audience a mental picture.
• Tell a story. Use narrative language to engage your audience and get them hooked on somebody’s personal experience.
• Spark curiosity by posing an open-ended question.

• Don’t use language that is too informal.
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WE ARE ENERGETIC

We encourage everyone to engage actively with the materials in our museums and on our websites. To foster a dynamic atmosphere of exploration and creativity, we project our enthusiasm in the way we work.

WHAT TO DO:

• Be bright, optimistic, and passionate.
• Make it sound fun.

WHAT NOT TO DO:

• Don’t use excessive superlatives or exclamation points. That’s the lazy way to be energetic.

TIPS:

• Infuse energy into your writing with action verbs.
• Use compelling examples that highlight unexpected connections.

THE SMITHSONIAN LEARNING CURVE
**AT THE SMITHSONIAN, WE HAVE OUR OWN WAY OF TALKING.**

Like many workplaces, we have our own language that we use all the time. Although everybody inside the Smithsonian understands the words we use, that doesn’t mean that our audiences know what we’re talking about. We need to be strategic about how we describe our own organization. Consider your audience: Is it internal or external? What is the age range? What backgrounds are represented? What are their interests?

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**SMITHSONIAN LEXICON: WORDS WE USE**

**INSTITUTION**

*Internal:* We are the Smithsonian Institution. It’s just a part of our name.
*External:* Institution sounds like a very serious, academic place with a lot of rules.

*The right audience:* donors, government officials, academic journal readers
*The wrong audience:* kids, museum/website visitors, program participants

*What to say instead:* just “Smithsonian”

**UNIT**

*Internal:* I work at the (insert unit here). What’s your unit?
*External:* What’s a unit? A part of a whole? A measurement?

*The right audience:* internal
*The wrong audience:* external

*What to say instead:* organization, museum, research center, department, program, office

**COLLECTIONS**

*Internal:* The Smithsonian has more than 137 million items in its collections.
*External:* Collections sounds like a bunch of old relics in a glass case.

*The right audience:* curators, donors, academic journal readers
*The wrong audience:* kids, museum/website visitors, education program participants

*What to say instead:* treasures, artifacts, artworks, specimens, discoveries
HOW WE WRITE MEDIA RELEASES

Our news releases have a specific purpose—to keep reporters informed about what is happening at the Smithsonian. But even with this defined purpose, there is room within the architecture of a release to incorporate the brand guidelines. While a release must contain certain information presented in a specific way to make it useful to reporters, it also needs to follow the Smithsonian’s tone of voice and brand guidelines. Below are some suggestions on how it can do that:

HEADLINES
- 50 to 170 characters, including spaces.
- Keywords should go at the beginning of a headline.
- Use subheads to add more details.
- Use a verb! Something should be happening in a headline.
- Headlines should be tweetable.

LEADS
- 25 words or fewer. Include who, what, when, where, why and how.
- Repeat keywords from the headline.
- Answer the questions “what happened?” and “why should I care?”

LENGTH
- Four hundred to six hundred words.
- Readers spend more time on shorter releases (source: Newsdesk).
- Use bullets. They are easy to read and can contain phrases that are tweetable.

BOILERPLATES
- Use them. They contain helpful information.
- If space is tight, use the website instead. (i.e., To learn more about the [unit name], visit www.XX.si.edu).

QUOTES
- Quotes should be short, only one to two sentences.
- Quotes must add value to the text.
- Avoid saying things like someone is “happy,” “pleased,” “excited” or “proud.”
- You shouldn’t lead with a quote, but it should be high up in a press release.
- A good quote entices a reporter to want to interview your subject.
- A quote should bring out someone’s personality and express their point-of-view.

LOGOS
- The Smithsonian does not issue joint media releases, so the Smithsonian logo should always stand alone at the top of a release.
- Recognizing that the brand tells us to be more collaborative, it’s ok to include your partner’s logos at the end of a media release (print, email or online).
- If a partner wants to use the Smithsonian logo on a media release, that use must be approved by the Office of Public Affairs.

LINKS AND TINY URLs
- Hyperlinks and tiny URLs are a must because they give reporters immediate, easy access to more information.
- A maximum of one link per 100 words is recommended.
- Hyperlinks and tiny URLs improve your search engine optimization, especially if you link to partner sites.

TONE AND CONTENT
- This is all about the brand.
- Media releases should tell a story when appropriate.
- Avoid jargon in a press release—it’s elitist and can be confusing.
- Explain complicated topics so people can understand. Explain what we’re doing, don’t just tell reporters what we have.
- Give resources to go find more information—don’t make the reporter work too hard.
- Be careful not to go on and on and on—get to the point—tell the reporter why they should care.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN NEWS RELEASES
- Use live text links to social media within stories.
- For media contacts, add your Email address.
- News release titles should be Twitter friendly.
- QR codes are not recommended because they often require giving people instructions on how to use them and they take up too much space in a release.
- For images, think about adding a Pinterest button, a Tumblr button, a StumbleUpon button (etc).
- Sharing capability plug-ins such as Facebook buttons or Twitter buttons with customized, pre-filled, editable text are a good idea.
SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION
• For best SEO results, you need a clear, concise headline.
• Headlines of 65 characters or fewer will completely fit in Google Search results.
• Lead should be 25 words or fewer because most search engines display only the first 20 words.
• Pick two to three keywords and use them early in the headline and again in the lead.
• Link early, link often (about once for every 100 words). Linking to external sources is good; it shows collaboration and trust.
• Use appropriate tags.
• Avoid hyperbole (e.g., most unique), superlatives (e.g., awesome, amazing, incredible) and buzzwords (e.g., cutting-edge, world-class). Search engines recognize these and devalue your content.

FACT SHEETS AND MEDIA ADVISORIES
• Fact sheets are a good thing and we should keep doing them.
• They should be included (when appropriate) with videos and photos as part of the additional information provided to journalists with a news release.
• Fact sheets should be updated once a year.
• Media advisories are also good - they give reporters a quick overview of an event, such as a press preview.

FORMAT
• Media releases should be in a template.
• Consensus is that the current Smithsonian template works.
• Fonts should be easily readable.
• When posting online, use something in the sans-serif family (e.g., Arial or Verdana). OPA uses Verdana on Newsdesk. Use Times New Roman on printed releases.
• If you’re going mobile with your releases or press room, be sure to have simple navigation and links in the release to important information.

STYLE AND EDITING PROCESS
• AP style is the Smithsonian style for media releases. It is easier for journalists who are the primary target for releases and it provides consistency to SI releases.
• SI has exceptions to AP in place, but other exceptions can be considered on case-by-case basis. You can discuss with the OPA editor during the editing process.
• The current SI editing process works like this:
  o Send to opareleases@si.edu.
  o Edits made and faxed back.
  o Two-day turnaround.
• OPA also handles posting to Newsdesk.
• OPA does not edit calendars or personnel announcements below director level, but units are free to write those types of releases.

NEWS RELEASE DISTRIBUTION
• Email is best.
• Emails should be to individual reporters because CCs or BCCs come across as disrespectful.
• Short pitch is best.
• Explain to reporters why you think they need this release and why they should care.
• Do not include attachments.
• Use a link to the full release in pitch.
• Avoid fancy HTML—plain text is best.
• Embedded images don’t work well—link to a Flickr site.
• The subject line should be newsworthy.
• Try to include “Smithsonian” in the subject line as it increases credibility.

ELECTRONIC TEMPLATES
• Electronic templates are tough to use and not recommended.
• They are not good for mobile format.
• Too many things in an email template can cause releases to get spammed.
• Pages don’t show up correctly in an email.
• A simple template is better.
• Emulate the template we have, leaving out the lockup.
• Include social media widgets.
• Incorporate some things we already do such as live links to relevant material, including information from partners.

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Electronic templates are tough to use and not recommended. They are not good for mobile format. Too many things in an email template can cause releases to get spammed. Pages don’t show up correctly in an email. A simple template is better. Emulate the template we have, leaving out the lockup. Include social media widgets. Incorporate some things we already do such as live links to relevant material, including information from partners.
The Smithsonian visual identity

Our visual identity adds an important dimension to our written and verbal messages. When all of our communications share a consistent look, we project our personality even before anything is read. Just like our tone of voice, the way we communicate through images and design needs to be accessible, energetic, inviting, and genuine.

Our logo: the Smithsonian sunburst

Our logo is the image that embodies who we are and the visual signifier that the world has come to trust. The sunburst has universal significance that unites the many organizations within the Smithsonian under an emblem of light and knowledge.

The sunburst was adapted from the coat of arms of Hugh Smithson, the father of Smithsonian founder James Smithson. In British heraldry “the sun in his splendor” represented “the fountain of life” and “the light of heaven.” The sunburst will always symbolize the Smithsonian’s dedication to enlightening audiences everywhere.

The crucial nature of the sunburst to our identity is the reason we have rules about when, where, and how we can use it. For more information about logo guidelines, please visit www.logo.si.edu or contact the Office of Public Affairs.
We are accessible

- Use main body text that is 12 point or larger.
- Black body text is always best.
- Avoid extended or condensed typefaces that are difficult to read.
- To emphasize certain words or phrases, use bold fonts or different text colors instead of distracting underlining and shadowing.

We are energetic

- Always use images if they are available.
- Photographs should show active engagement and interaction.
- The best photos are those that relate meaning without a caption.
- Though captions are sometimes necessary, an image should be able to stand alone.

We are inviting

- White space is welcoming. Don’t clutter your page with so much visual and written information that your audience has to guess your main message.
- You can control where your audience looks by leaving space between headlines and body text, around images, margins, and at the edges of your pages.

We are genuine

- Create a professional, modern look with a sans serif font.
- Try not to use more than two fonts per page in more than three sizes.
- Make sure the design of your communication is consistent with the story it needs to tell. Is the content academic? Is it creative? How does your design illustrate the message the text is trying to convey?

### PRIMARY BRAND COLOR

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>PMS 3135C AND UC</td>
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<td>R=0, G=255, B=255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMITHSONIAN BLACK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PMS 255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C=0, M=120, Y=0, K=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R=0, G=128, B=197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMITHSONIAN BLACK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PMS 109C AND UC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C=0, M=15, Y=100, K=0</td>
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<tr>
<td>R=255, G=216, B=38</td>
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### SPECTRUM COLOR PALETTE

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C=0, M=120, Y=0, K=100</td>
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<td>R=0, G=128, B=197</td>
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<td>R=255, G=216, B=38</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

When choosing colors for a publication or website, consider using colors in the Smithsonian color guide. The traditional colors on the left are from our sunburst logo. The colors on the right are a more modern twist on that color family.
Our tagline serves as a promise of the experience we know we can deliver.

Tagline FAQ

Our tagline sets high expectations, and it is our job to make sure they are met with flying colors.

**When can I use it?**

Anything that bears the “Seriously Amazing” tagline has to earn that banner. We need to use “Seriously Amazing” only on communications for projects that meet a very high standard. If not, we dilute the meaning of the phrase and risk losing our audiences. So, before it is used in association with a program, exhibition, research, or facility, we must assess whether its intended use meets the objectives of the brand strategy. Use the Tagline Questionnaire shown on the following page to help you decide when to use the tagline.

**How can I use it?**

The tagline should...

- always appear in conjunction with the Smithsonian name.
- only be used in the approved logo lockup.
- not be used as a description in Smithsonian communications.

Use quotation marks if you need to refer to “Seriously Amazing” in a sentence.

**Who regulates the use of the tagline?**

YOU DO. We all own the tagline and should use it to our advantage. Only you know what most deserves the tagline in your own unit. The Office of Communications and External Affairs asks that you share your Tagline Questionnaire with them so they can be aware of when “Seriously Amazing” is being used, but the power is in your hands to use the tagline appropriately and selectively.
“SERIOUSLY AMAZING”

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:
Tagline usage for programs, exhibitions, research, and other Smithsonian endeavors—our offer.

When is it appropriate to use the tagline? If you can answer “yes” to all or most of these questions, then it is appropriate to use.

**Creating transformative ideas and experiences**
Will this offer help people discover something new about themselves or their world?
Will it change the way people think or feel about an object, person, and/or idea?

**Inspiring and inviting participation**
Will this offer allow people to use our knowledge to create their own learning experiences?
Does it enable us to ask questions and/or engage in a dialogue with our audiences?

**Connecting across ages, places, and spaces**
Does this offer make connections between disciplines, Smithsonian units, and/or other organizations?
Will it enable people who can’t physically visit a Smithsonian facility to learn from us in another way?
Does it appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:
Tagline usage on any type of Smithsonian communication.

When is it appropriate to use the tagline? If you can answer “yes” to all or most of these questions, then it is appropriate to use.

**Telling stories and asking questions**
Does this communication let people know that we welcome their own stories and questions?
Does it give the Smithsonian a face by sharing our personal stories in narrative form?

**Talking with people, not at “the public”**
Does this communication take into account the individual interests of our audiences?
Does it use a tone of voice that is accessible, energetic, and/or inviting?
Does it reflect our expertise and authority without being impersonal or condescending?

**Offering infinite options to explore**
Does this communication offer the opportunity to learn more?
Does it encourage the audience to explore within or beyond the Smithsonian?
OCEA IS HERE TO HELP

We believe that there are no stupid questions. Feel free to call or email us about any questions or concerns you might have regarding Smithsonian communications, media relations, the brand, or anything else.

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Alex di Giovanni, carrier of the Torch  
Aurélie Beatley, Photoshop jockey  
Becky Haberacker, jack of all trades  
Brian Ireley, resident techie  
Carolyn Martin, ringmaster  
Dana Small, online architect  
Dave Haddock, investigative columnist  
Emily Grebenstein, news clip countess  
Evelyn Lieberman, queen bee  
Jess Sadeq, blogstar  
John Barrat, logo police  
John Yahner, ghostwriter  
Johnny Gibbons, science media overlord  
Linda St. Thomas, speaker of the house  
Marilyn Epstein, grammar whiz  
Pherabe Kolb, brand czarina  
Sarah Sulick, master Tweeter  
Sherri Wheeler, Miss Moneybags  
Suleyka Lozins, boss wrangler  

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grebensteinE@si.edu  
liebermanE@si.edu  
sadeqJ@si.edu  
barratJ@si.edu  
yahnerJ@si.edu  
gibbonsJP@si.edu  
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epsteinM@si.edu  
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Written by Rachel Wexler  
Designed by Aurélie Beatley  
with the help of the entire OCEA team  
2012