



Sequence for Product Descriptions

Introduction

Product information should always be clear and accurate. Initially when computerised product files with limited character fields were being sent via electronic data exchange, the office products industry recognised that the use of abbreviations may be required.

For consistency an agreed industry-wide standard was created by the BOSS Industry Standards Committee and was then maintained by its successor, the BOSS Standardisation and Technical Committee.

As more and more computer systems have either increased the length of the product description fields or even made them unlimited, the need for standard abbreviations has decreased. However as well creating agreed industry-wide standard abbreviations the Committee established an agreed sequence of the data included in product descriptions.

The Committee is issuing this briefing as a reminder of the sequence to ensure understanding and compatibility of data from different sources.

Increasingly dealers need to be able to output their data numerous different ways and it is recommended that data is held so that different product description sequences can be supported.

This briefing also contains the recommended sequence for those listing products on non-industry specific sites, such as Amazon.

BOSS Standard Sequence

The overriding rule for the product description sequence is maximum understanding for the reader.

The following elements and order should be used:

1. Company Brand (e.g. Avery)
2. Product Brand (e.g. QuickPEEL)
3. Product Description (e.g. Laser Addressing Labels)
4. Size of Product
5. Colour
6. Pack Quantity
7. Pick Code (that is, the code on the pack outer – usually the manufacturers code)

Example: Snopake Polyfile Ring Binder Wallet A4 Clear Pack10 12566

Amazon Standard Sequence

For those who may be listing products on Amazon, for example, their sequence is similar to the BOSS recommended sequence. Amazon calls Product Descriptions 'Titles'

Again the overriding rule is that they need to be clear and concise to ensure maximum understanding of the reader.

The following elements and order are the sequence for an ideal title:

1. Brand – e.g. Avery
2. Sub-Brand – e.g. QuickPEEL (this is the name of a specific product range)
3. Model Number/Manufacturers Code (Optional) – only use if customers are likely to search for a product by this number)
4. Size (or capacity): only include if relevant
5. Product Description: a basic and clear description of your products primary function – e.g. Laser Addressing Labels
6. Defining Characteristics – used to distinguish this specific product from its closer siblings

Example: Snopake Polyfile 12566 A4 Ring Binder Wallet (Clear)

Colours should be separated from the main title with brackets
e.g. 3M Post-It Notes™ 100 sheets 76x76mm (Yellow)

Colours are only to be included where the product comes in multiple colours.

Defining Characteristics needs to be identified at SKU-based level. It cannot be defined at a product type level.

General Rules

- All words should be capitalised, ie the first letter of each word should be in capitals
- Words like feet and inches should be spelt out when describing size.
- do not use symbols (unless the item being listed is a registered trade mark)
- All numbers should be numerals – e.g. 1 not One except when it is part of the product name
- Separate number and units of measurement with a single space (2 cm NOT 2cm)
- Any ampersands (&) must be replaced with lower case 'and' except where it is part of a brand name
- If a product does not come in multiple colours, do not include a colour.

Differences between the two recommended sequences

The main difference relates to when colour is added to the product description and how it should be denoted. For example, according to the Amazon rules Colours should be separated from the main title with brackets – such as: 3M Post-It Notes™ 100 sheets 76x76mm (Yellow). In addition colours are only to be included where the product comes in multiple colours.

Defining Characteristics needs to be identified at SKU-based level. It cannot be defined at a product type level.