

HARTMANN



Guidelines for gender-neutral communications

Corporate Communications

December 2022

Usage tips

Here are some examples of typical, everyday communications.

- **Use of singular they:**

Use the gender-neutral pronouns they/them/their(s)/themselves when describing one person as well as many persons.

- **Avoid:** If a new employee prefers, **he or she has** the option to....
- **Singular:** If a new employee prefers, **they have** the option to... (Note: the singular “they” still uses a plural verb form)
- **Plural:** If new employees prefer, **they have** the option to...

- **Don’t assume gender:**

Just because you think a name sounds male or female, does not mean you are right, e.g. “Andrea” can be a masculine or feminine name depending on the country of origin. Use the person’s full name as your default, e.g. without Mr. or Ms. Example:

- **“Dear Andrea Ferrari”**
- Andrea Ferrari said **they** would be joining later

- **Don’t state the gender, if not relevant:**

If you are referring to a person whose identity is not known or is not relevant for your communication, refer to them using gender-neutral wording. Examples:

- One **participant** joined the conference virtually as **their** train was delayed.
- The **employee** was hospitalized after the accident. **They are** now at home and **their** condition is improving daily.

Additional examples

- Each employee must fill in **his or her** travel expense form by Monday.
 - Each employee must fill in **their** travel expense form by Monday.
 - All employees must fill in **their** travel expense forms by Monday.
- During the discussion, every participant will have the opportunity to freely express **his** opinions.
 - During the discussion, every participant will have the opportunity to freely express **their** opinions.

Note on forms

- Form of address
 - In addition to checkboxes for Mr. and Ms., also include a box for Non-binary¹.
- Automatically generated emails
 - If the person has selected “Non-binary” or the gender is not known, use the full name as default:
 - Dear Cary Doe,
 - Hello Cary Doe,

1) Note: “non-binary” is the proper translation of the German word “divers”.

Additional tips

- **Job titles:** If possible, use gender-neutral job titles, unless the person's preference is known.
 - **Chairperson**, unless Chairwoman or Chairman is preferred (Note: HARTMANN CEO Britta Fünfstück prefers "Chairman")
 - **Spokesperson** (i.e. instead of **spokesman/spokeswoman**)
 - **Nurse** (e.g. instead of **male nurse**, as nurse is already considered gender-neutral)
- **Pictures:** If a document includes pictures, please keep diversity in mind.
- **Use of a disclaimer:** If you follow the guidelines in this document, there should be no need for a disclaimer in English with regard to gender neutrality.