

# Uniform customer-oriented article descriptions

Recommendation of the standardization committee of the  
Industrieverband Büro und Arbeitswelt e.V. (IBA)\*

Document version 1.2

Editor: Thomas Gerth, EasternGraphics GmbH

October 13th, 2020

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\*Interior Business Association) (IBA)

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## 1 Introduction

OCD (OFML Part IV) is used for the creation of product data required in the business processes of the furniture trade. This includes processes on the manufacturer side as well as on the sales side (retailers). From the sales point of view (customer orientation), there are two basic requirements for article descriptions, which consist of text modules that are stored in the product data:

- The descriptions must be understandable for the customer.
- Since offers and similar business forms can contain articles from multiple manufactures, the form of article descriptions should be consistent across manufactures.

The rules presented in this document provide a guideline for the creation of uniform customer-oriented article descriptions. However, as the ultimate design authority lies with the manufacturers, the guidelines only can have the character of recommendations.

Some of the guidelines not only influence the creation and design of the text modules in the product data itself, but also their processing by the layout modules of the various sales software systems. This is indicated at the appropriate places in the following sections.

In drawing up the guidelines, the standardization committee has made use of the preparatory and supplementary work of the following working groups and individuals:

- Bundesverband Bürowirtschaft
- Working group of wegscheider office solution gmbh, Dauphin HumanDesign Group and Vitra Holding GmbH
- Mr. Köppchen, Kirsch & Lütjohann GmbH & Co. KG
- Survey on measurements via the pCon information distribution list
- Working Group of the IT Committee of the IBA, October 7th, 2020

## 2 General recommendation(s)

- Since the end user (customer) usually is not a furniture specialist, the descriptions and texts must be understandable even for non-experts.  
For the internal sales team at the manufacturers, it is conceivable and useful to have shorter texts. However, since normally no separate texts for the back office and the sales department are created in the master data, the customer-friendliness of the texts should be given priority.

### 3 Structure of the article descriptions

An article description basically consists of the following sections:

1. Manufacturer and series name (can be switched off)
2. Article short or long text (incl. dimensions)
3. Variant text (description of configurable properties)
4. Text for custom-made product (optional)

No blank lines should be inserted between the individual sections, not even by the layout modules of the applications.

The following subsections contain notes and guidelines for the individual sections.

#### 3.1 Manufacturer and series name

- The application obtains the manufacturer and series name from the higher-level data registration files. (Currently, proprietary formats are used for this.)
- Both names are written into one line by the layout module of the application separated by a space. If both names together (including the space) do not fit into one line, a break occurs at the 1st character of the series name.
- For the design of manufacturer-neutral offers the user (retailer) should have the possibility to suppress the display of manufacturer and series names. This has to be supported by the application.

#### 3.2 Article short or long text

- The application gets the article short and long text from OCD tables `ArtShortText` resp. `ArtLongText`.
- The article short text usually is displayed in overviews of all articles of a project (for example in the article tree)  
In article lists and forms, usually the article long text is printed. (The short text is used there only in exceptional cases.)
- The article short text should contain a short description of the basic article and should consist only of one line (50 characters).
- The article long text must be understandable independently of the short text and should describe all essential characteristics of the article that cannot be configured by the customer. This includes information about the fixed dimensions (see below).
- The individual lines of the long text in the OCD table are considered as paragraphs, i.e. each line can be wrapped as required by the layout module of the application (continuous text). Each new line forces a line break by the application<sup>1</sup>.
- If necessary, the fixed dimensions of the article should be described in the last line of the article long text.  
The recommended unit of measurement for Germany is millimeter (mm), otherwise centimeter (cm) can/should be used<sup>2</sup>. In the USA, inches can be used instead.

The dimensions are specified in the following order: width, depth, height.

Example: 800 x 430 x 720 mm (WxDxH)

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<sup>1</sup>Long texts that already have been created may have to be revised in order to optimally support the continuous text display.

<sup>2</sup>This results from the majority ratios determined by the survey mentioned in the introduction.

If a dimension is configurable by the customer, it is omitted in the dimension description within the article long text (and is described instead in the following variant text).

Example with configurable table height: 1600 x 800 mm (WxD)

### 3.3 Variant text

- The variant text complements the article long text and describes the properties of the article that can be configured by the customer (variants).  
The application gets the text modules for this from OCD tables `PropertyText` (property names) and `PropValueText` (value descriptions).
- In the standard case (OCD property text control code 0), the description of a variant is composed of the property name and the value description, separated by the layout module using a colon and a space character (taking into account a colon which may already be present at the end of the property name).
- The individual lines of the variant text created according to the OCD property text control are considered as paragraphs, i.e., each line can be wrapped as required by the layout module of the application (continuous text). Each new line forces a line break by the applications.
- The variant text should not contain codes (abbreviations) for properties and/or values, at least not exclusively.  
The applications can optionally enable the user to also display the codes.

### 3.4 Text for custom-made product

The content for this text is entered by the retailer himself.