

Recognition of Services

We would like to recognize Jim Laurain and **Alpha Services** for their contribution of complementary printing for this edition of *TECH comments*. We appreciate their support.

We would also like to recognize **Manhattan Mailers** for their work with distributing this edition.

Publication and Reprint Policies

TECH comments is published monthly September through June for members and friends of the Southeastern Michigan Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication. We welcome feature articles; letters to the editor; and information about meetings, courses, and workshops. We accept manuscripts in both hardcopy and electronic format with MS Word or ASCII text. Submissions will be edited as necessary.

Reprints from *TECH comments* are permitted if credit is given and a copy is sent to the managing editor.

Send submissions to:

Managing Editor

STC/SM

P.O. Box 1289

Ann Arbor, MI 48106

or E-mail to: newsletter@stc-sm.org

Editors Note: There were only two noteworthy informational pieces this month. For that reason, this edition of *TECH Comments* is abbreviated. It is intended that the May edition will return to the full eight pages.

TECH comments

STC/SM

P.O. Box 1289

Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Free Lance Translations

SPANISH LANGUAGE
TRANSLATIONS OF TECHNICAL
DOCUMENTS,

INCLUDING:

PRODUCTION MACHINE USER MANUALS,
SERVICE AND REPAIR INSTRUCTIONS,
VIDEO SCRIPTS, SOFTWARE, ASSEMBLY
MANUALS, ENGINEERING MANUALS,
BANKING AND FINANCE MATERIAL, LEGAL
AND INSURANCE DOCUMENTS, TECHNICAL
TRAINING MANUALS

(616) 669-1771

joseruiz@compuserve.com

TECH comments

The newsletter for the Southeastern Michigan Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication.

Planning for Success:

What to do Before You Start Single-Sourcing
Saturday, April 20, 2002

Workshop

Talk about single sourcing is all the rage today, especially with the economic downturn and the emphasis on saving money and improving time-to-market. We're told that single sourcing, creating content that can be used in multiple places, can efficiently create many information products (documents)-and that statement is true...sort of.

It's true if you're willing to set aside the traditional definition of a document and how it's created. You must also ignore (at least momentarily) the tools you have, the neatest new technology, the boundaries between departments, and the ever-present challenge of change management.

So how do you put a single-sourcing system in place? With attention to detail and careful planning.

At the end of this seminar, you will be able to:

- Define what single-sourcing means to you and your organization
- Learn how to make compromises when you can't do it all right now
- Identify the key components of a good plan and estimate the approximate time each component will take
- Create a sample Return on Investment (ROI) scenario
- Create a Mini Audience Profile that helps you understand what each group of users needs
- Design a basic structure for your information products
- Identify the pitfalls involved in implementing a single-source system
- Learn the basics of structuring content so that it can be reused in a variety of information products

During the workshop, we'll plan a single-sourcing project, so be prepared to dive in and ask lots of questions. We'll talk about real life situations,

compromises and possible solutions to some of the most common challenges faced during a single-sourcing project.

Registration Information

Security at AAA requires pre-registration for program participants. Walk-ins are not permitted.

Registration is by mail only. Workshop participants must pre-register and pay in advance. A check or money order must accompany your registration.

Your registration must be postmarked by Friday, April 12, 2002.

Members: \$75 Non-members: \$125 Students: \$35

Make checks payable to STC/SM.

Mail your registration and check or money order to:

Iris Communications
PMB #235
2370 E. Stadium
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Meeting Address

AAA Headquarters, 1 Auto Club Drive, Dearborn, Michigan 48126

Additional Information

Park on the south side of the building (toward Fairlane Mall and pink buildings). Handicap parking is available. All meeting participants must enter at the main entrance on the south side of the building.

The seminar ends at 4 p.m. Lunch and snacks are provided.

Direct your questions to Nancy Sock at (734) 449-8332 or iriscomms@earthlink.net

Editors note: For more information about our speaker, see the program flyer or the Chapter website

April, 2002



Volume 31, Issue 4

Resume Tips from Meeting the Economic Downturn

Written by Carolyn Otto

On January 22, 2002, the STC/SM held the Meeting the Economic Downturn (Part I) panel meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss how to create winning resumes and cover letters. The panel included Mary Hayes, Sally Paul, Jennifer Regal, Nancy Rozum, and Catherine Titta. Mary Jo David acted as facilitator.

The panel addressed five main topics: resume design, resume content, resume types, cover letters, and general tips. For each topic, panel members identified do's, don'ts, and gray areas. The following summarizes the outcome for each topic.

Resume Design

The panel agreed that when designing a resume, parallel phrasing is a must for bulleted lists and lists within sentences. Other musts include consistent abbreviation and punctuation, clean organization, and a maximum length of two pages. The panel also reminded the audience to check electronic formatting when sending a resume electronically. Reviewers may be checking your electronic formatting skills!

Common design errors include using unprofessional fonts, failing to line up bullets, and having widows and orphans. The panel also suggested avoiding small font size. Six points, even for personal information, is too small.

Using a creative format for your resume can be a risk, depending on the type of position you are

**High volume
High quality
Inkjet addressing**

**MANHATTAN
MAILERS**
Complete Direct Mail Satisfaction

51132 Milano Dr. • Macomb, MI 48042
Phone (810) 786-6100 • Fax (810) 786-6137

seeking. Although tasteful use of color and an unusual design may make your resume stand out, it will not necessarily increase your chances of obtaining an interview. Before formatting creatively, research the company to determine how your creativity may be received.

Resume Content

For resume content, the panel agreed that concisely quantifying and qualifying verifiable accomplishments should be your first priority. Always use active voice, and identify your accomplishments with short, outcome-oriented phrases. Outcomes should support your ability to make a company competitive, profitable, and smooth-running. You should also include items illustrating recognition you have received, such as being personally selected by a supervisor to attend a seminar.

When determining content for your resume, do not include long lists of software. If you are listing software, the list should include your level of expertise and indicate what you have used the software to develop. Do not leave unexplained gaps on your resume. Indicate valid reasons for gaps within your resume or in a cover letter. Finally, do not limit yourself with your objective.

Whether or not resumes should include objectives is a gray area. Some panel members felt objectives are only necessary when changing careers or career paths; others felt objectives neither add to nor subtract from resumes. All agreed that an objective is required when a company's template calls for one. All also agreed that you could identify your objective in a cover letter.

Resume Types

The panel discussed three main resume types: chronological, functional, and chrono-functional. Chronological resumes answer what, how, and where questions by listing in reverse chronological order a description of each position you've held and an account of your education. Most businesses prefer chronological resumes because they illustrate progression and work history. One disadvantage of the chronological resume is that it reveals gaps and demotions. If you are making a career change or have had an unconventional work history, you may want to use a functional resume instead of a chronological one.

Functional resumes list your skills and accomplishments in essential areas. A functional resume can

hide gaps, lack of experience, and over-qualification. One disadvantage of the functional resume is that a company may wonder what you are hiding. Companies also will not be able to see the progression of your career.

Chrono-functional resumes include both a list of your skills and accomplishments in essential areas and chronological accounts of positions you've held and your education history. The panel prefers chrono-functional resumes to strictly functional ones.

Cover Letters

The panel agreed that you should always submit a cover letter with your resume, and that cover letters should never be generic. Cover letters should provide all information requested by the company, including salary expectations. If you do not want to provide exact figures, provide ranges and your criteria for each range. Cover letters should also demonstrate that you have researched the company and have determined how you can contribute. Show how your skills fit their needs, and parrot back to the potential employer key phrases from the job posting.

General Tips

The panel finished off their informative session with the following general tips:

- Read your resume aloud to verify grammar and flow.
- Ask a fellow writer to proofread and provide feedback on your resume.
- Don't apply for a job using your current employer E-mail.
- Use a professional-sounding E-mail address.
- Don't assume a technical communicator will be reviewing your resume.
- Don't try to hide things (such as leaving off dates on education).
- Include months (not just years) in descriptions of positions held.
- Always quantify your contribution as a technical communicator.

Resources

- Visit <http://www.cloudnet.com/~pdunham/technicalwritingresumes.html> for additional resume advice for technical writers.
- Refer to *Resume Magic: Trade Secrets of a Professional Resume Writer* by Susan Britton Whitcomb for additional resume help.
- Visit www.CertifiedResumeWriters.com for information on certified resume writers.

Editor's note: Kudos to Carolyn Otto for submitting this article as part of her course work at LTU.

Priority Given to STC Members

Printing compliments of

ALPHA SERVICES

DOCUMENT DUPLICATION

22967 Woodward Ferndale, MI 48220-1739
Ph: 248-548-3210 email: alphasvcs@earthlink.net Fx: 248-548-3218

On-demand Printing

High-speed Multi-page Document Duplication

Color Copies and Digital Output

Binding

Training Manuals are Our Specialty!

Call Mark at 248-548-3210 ext 23