The Marriage of Marketing and Technical Writing

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What Are the Components of Technical Writing?

- Taking technical information and making it understandable to those that need it
  --Society for Technical Communication

- Understanding the end user

- Maintaining positive relationships with subject-matter experts

- Presenting information in the best way possible

- Including all appropriate details
What Are the Components of Marketing Writing?

► Communicating value to customers and moving customers closer to making a decision to purchase

--Gary Armstrong and Phillip Kotler

• Presenting the main benefits of the product

• Generating excitement about the product

• Mapping the benefits of the product to the needs of the customer

• Diminishing reasons not to purchase
Where Do These Components Usually Fall?

Product Development
- Product Management
- Engineering
- Quality Assurance
- Technical Writing

Sales and Business Development
- Sales
- Sales Engineering
- Business Analysis
- Marketing Writing

Goal: Quality Product

Goal: Revenue Stream
Typical Problems with the “Silo” Mentality

- Little focus on feature benefits in the technical documentation
- Inaccurate information and fluff in the marketing materials
- Multiple meetings with the same content
- Writing the same data twice
- Different voices
  - The pre-sale voice
  - The after-sale voice
The Archer Approach

We’re a small company.

► Marketing and technical writers sit and work together.
  • One dedicated technical writer
  • One dedicated marketing writer
  • Two hybrid technical/marketing writers

► Marketing and technical writers have different purposes and audiences, but we drive toward a unified goal: making customers happy pre-sale and post-sale.

► Marketing writers understand the product facts, and technical writers understand the product benefits.
Benefits of This Arrangement

Technical Writer’s Perspective

► Better product knowledge
► Closer to the customer
  • Awareness of usability issues
  • Information about customers’ demands and needs
  • Development of personal relationships with customers
► Closer to the sales and product teams
  • Awareness of corporate sales goals
  • Information about product changes
  • Development of a cooperative spirit with team members who deal with clients regularly
Benefits of This Arrangement

Marketing Writer’s Perspective
► Transitioned from a technical writer to a marketing writer
► Some similarities
  • Know your audience
  • Research your subject
  • Write clearly and effectively
► Some differences
  • Persuade rather than explain
  • Turn features into benefits
  • Include a call to action
  • Create sizzle
► Versatility is key
Benefits of This Arrangement

► Home Sweet Home: Where Do Technical Communication Departments Belong?


- Developed a list of benefits and risks of the technical communication department’s being housed with the marketing department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros for the Writer</th>
<th>Possible Cons for the Writer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writers have access to information about the target audience and product purpose</td>
<td>Short-term focus of marketing assignments can mean writers become subject to the same deadline pressure as marketing</td>
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<td>The marketing department maintains focus on the customer</td>
<td>Removal from development cycle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coworkers in marketing share many of the same work issues as writers in regards to tools and methods</td>
<td>Marketing is often subject to budget cuts; growth is not tied to growth in development effort</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writers can access publications resources of marketing</td>
<td>Marketing is often located at a physical distance from development, which may lead to lack of technical depth of writers</td>
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<td>Opportunity for writers to work in other marketing functions</td>
<td>Trivialization of documentation; documentation viewed as design and layout</td>
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Questions?