TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION – TOOL FOR PROFESSIONALS

Technical Communication – Tool for Professionals

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Abstract – Technical communication plays a pivotal role in an organization, whether it is a business enterprise, an industry, or an academic institution. All managerial or administrative activities involve communication, be it planning, organizing, recruiting, coordinating, or decision- making. When you write reports, give instructions, or read brochures and manuals, you are involved in the process of communication. Communication serves as an instrument to measure the success or growth of an organization. The success of any organization is largely recognized by the quality and quantity of information flowing through its personnel. The various types of communication not only help an organization to grow, but also enable the communicators to develop certain attributes.

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Technical Communication is a varied field and people have always needed to communicate on technical matters and the amount of Technical Communication now taking place is staggering. Engineers and other technical people communicate on a daily basis in writing, speech, and graphics through a variety of means. so the gain in technology has to be mastered by the skill of efficient technical communication. Technical Communication is a large and important field of study and professional activity. Professionals are either technical communicators or produce technical communication documents as part of their jobs. Technical Communication is "writing that aims to get work done, to change people by changing the way they do things". Authors use this kind of writing "to empower readers by preparing them for and moving them toward effective action" Technical Communication is an extremely broad field. It encompasses a wide range of writing types. For instance, each year Society for Technical Communication, a 25,000-member professional organization, sponsors a contest to recognize excellence in technical communication. You can see the breadth of the field in this list of 18 categories, all of which count as technical communication:-

Annual Reports, Books, Computer Hardware Guides, Documentation Sets, Hardware/Software Combination Guides, Informational Materials, Magazines, Newsletters, Non computer Equipment Guides, Organizational Manuals, Promotional Materials, Quick Reference Guides, Scholarly/Professional Articles, Scholarly/ Professional Journals, Software Guides, Technical Reports, Trade/News Articles, Training Materials,

Saul Carliner, a former president of the Society for Technical Communication, points out that technical communication create such diverse documents as manuals technical reports, articles, books, proposals, catalogs, brochures, videotapes, audiotapes, online cue cards and online coaches, newsletters, magazines, e-zines, websites, and multimedia CDs (Carliner). With such a variety, technical communication is a part of almost everyone's lives on a regular basis.

Two different types of writers create technical communication-technical communication professionals and those professionals who write as part of their jobs. Professional technical communication are hired to write the documents that companies need to explain their products or services, usually to help customers interact efficiently with the product or service. For instance, computer manuals are a major component of this aspect of technical communication; technical communication work with software engineers to understand the program and then write the manual that users need. But as the list above indicate, technical communication produce all kinds of materials. Whatever is needed to make information available to help people with their work, technical communication produce. technical communication are also those professionals who write about problems in their specific field or workplace. Sometime these experts write for others experts. For instance, an engineer might write a report explaining the feasibility of a new airplane design; a dietitian could write a proposal to fund a new low-fat breakfast program at a hospital; a packaging engineer may offer a solution for an

inefficient method of filling and boxing jars of perfume. Sometimes these experts write to help non experts with technical material. Dieticians, for instance, often write brochures explaining the components of a healthy diet to hospital patients. Engineers write manuals for nontechnical managers. Both group and their activities center on the basic definition of technical writing given by Killings worth and Gilbertson. The goal is to empower readers who depend on the information for success.

Communication duties are a critical part of most jobs. Survey after survey has revealed that every week people spend the equivalent of one or more days communicating. In one survey, professionals in the aerospace industry revealed that they spend 68 percent of their time-three and one-half days- communicating (Pinelli et al.9). Bob Collins, a corporate manager, put it this way: "The most critical skill required in today's business world is the ability to communicate, both verbally and in writing. Effective communication has a direct impact on one's potential within an organization." Holy Jeske, an assistant technical designer for a department store chain, says "communication is my job." Her comments demonstrate the importance and complexity of everyday, on-the-job writing: I have to say that I depend a lot on my computer and e-mail for communicating with our overseas offices. I send and receive a lot of e-mails daily. A huge part of my job depends on writing and communicating in that way. I don't get the chance to top on a plane every time there is a fit issue so that I can verbally communicate with them or even call them on the phone......if I were never able to communicate through writing what I want the factory to change about a garment, I probably never would be moving from my current position. Communication is my job pretty much anyone's job. Especially now that e-mail is huge part of the corporate world.

According to Killing worth and Gilbertson, it is helpful to view technical writing as" writing that authors use to empower readers by preparing them for and moving them toward effective action" (Signs 221-222). "Effective action" means that readers act in a way that satisfies their needs. Their needs include anything that they must know or do to carry out a practical activity. Technical writers enable their readers to act in three ways: by instructing, and by persuading. Most writers use technical writing to inform. To carry out job responsibilities, people must supply or receive information constantly. They need to know or explain the scheduled time for a meeting, the division's projected profits, the physical description of a new machine, the steps in a process, or the results of an experiment. Writers instruct when they give readers directions for using equipment and for performing mainframe computer. Writing tells medical personal exactly what to do when a patient has a heart attack. Technical writers use design to help their readers both find information and understand it. Design has two ingredients-the appearance on the page and the structure of the content. Technical communicators

design both the appearance and the content. technical writing is an ethical endeavor. They key principle here is to take responsibility for your writing (Mathes). In short, technical communicators must act ethically as they create and present documents. "What we write does have consequences, and we must accept responsibility for our words. The same is true for our images, sounds, web sites, or any other elements of communication" The ethical dimension of writing is best expressed in this quote from Karen Schriver, an expert in document design: since people rely documents to make decisions that influence their safety, livelihood, health, and education, the highest ethical standards must be brought to bear in making textual choices-in deciding what to say and what not to say, in what to picture and what not to picture. Taking responsibility for these choices is central to the practice of document design. Expert practitioners distinguish themselves by skillfully selecting, structuring, and emphasizing content with the reader's needs in focus.

Today, business is international, and so too are writing and communication. As a result, people must now deal with the many language and cultures throughout the world on a regular basis. For instance, since the passage of the North American Free Trade Act(NAFTA), any manuals for user products routinely appear in three language-English, French, and Spanish. Workers, even at relatively small firms, indicate that they must e-mail colleagues across the globe. Websites, easily accessible to anyone in the world with a computer, must now be understandable to people who may speak many different languages and be of many different cultures. All of these factors mean that you as a technical communicator must understand the strategies of effective international communication. While the goal of all communication is to use words and forms that enable the receiver to grasp your meaning, in intercultural communication you need to give special consideration to cultural factors and to strategies for adapting communication for a variety of audiences. The basic strategy for adapting writing and communication to other cultures is localization Walter Bacah says, "Localization involves translating content, but also graphics, colors, time and date formats, units of measurement, currency, and symbols".

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