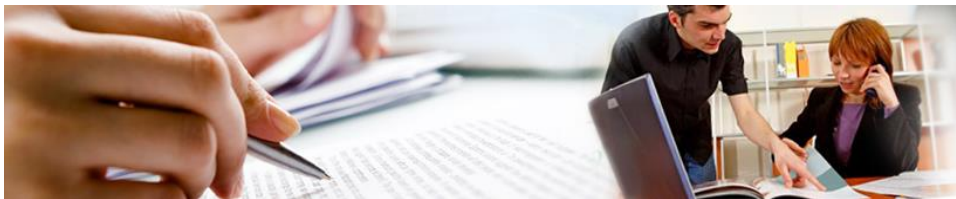


## Six Good Reasons To Hire A Professional Technical Writer

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Many small to medium-size engineering, manufacturing, or start-up companies do not have a technical writer on-staff. Subsequently, when the need arises to find a technical writer, stake-holders often make the mistake of assigning the documentation project to an engineer, technician, or marketing communications employee inside the company.

Another common mistake is that when the decision is finally made to bring in outside help, that project owners frequently hire "too low". This means that when price becomes the only priority, this often blinds hiring managers to the risks of securing professional talent that is too low on the experience scale—or, the wrong skill set match.



All the before-mentioned solutions are bad ideas. Why? Because a) everyone in the company is already overloaded with their own projects, b) you can't just expect professional results from a non-professional, c) you can't get quality results at bargain prices.

We propose that hiring a technical writing consultant is well worth "the spend", especially hiring a writing professional with the type of experience needed to complete the job accurately, efficiently, and on time.

Here are six reasons why it is a good idea to hire an experienced technical writer:

1. A professional technical writer will devote 100% of their time to the project. Assigning technical communication projects to other internal employees is unrealistic and will bring disappointing results.
2. Technical writers are trained to assess the content strategy (audience, objective, delivery options, etc.), plan, time-line, and deliver in a timely fashion.
3. Technical communicators have the awareness and experience of the various content development tools which are available, as well as all the methodologies and delivery options which can provide the most cost-effective, accurate, and complete delivery of documentation as possible. Many project owners are not aware or have not been exposed to this tech. comm. knowledge.
4. Experienced technical writers have the organizational and grammatical skills to communicate complex concepts, procedures, and knowledge for a wide variety of audiences, reading levels, and comprehension levels. And let's not forget the project management and negotiation skills. A major misperception of technical writers is that they spend 100% of their project time clicking away on a keyboard! What about project management, SME interviews, research, status meetings, collaboration time, review meetings, and so on?
5. Technical writers are "far enough removed" from the engineering and design of a product or technology so as to have the advantage of viewing a project from an "macro-perspective", in it's totality, versus viewing it from a "micro-perspective—from the inside.
6. Professional writers offer additional value in providing feedback on usability, user-experience, and user-interface to designers, engineers and software developers which can bring big dividends in product improvements up to final product release.

### In Summary

Remember the old saying "penny wise, and pound foolish", or "you get what you pay for"? Well, this also applies to the technical communication profession. It may seem like a good idea to assign it inside, or to hire cheap. However, in the long-run, it may cost you more in terms of redoes, lost time of delivery, and exposure to legal liabilities due to oversights, omissions, and/or inaccuracies in the final documentation.