

Introduction

Like in any profession, becoming a technical writer requires a mastery of certain skill sets. The following are the top six skills a modern day technical writer needs to bring to the table to be a successfully develop technical documentation:

Source: <http://www.novatek.com/blog/bid/330465/6-skill-sets-every-modern-day-technical-writer-needs-to-succeed>

1. Writes clearly, concisely, and precisely.

The ability to write well and convey information to the intended audience in an easily understood manner is the primary prerequisite. Documentation usability significantly decreases if readers struggle with the content.

2. Proficient in using the tools of the trade.

Being computer savvy is a given. Technical writers and instructional designers also need to be able to learn quickly and become proficient in using computer applications associated with producing documentation.

3. Able to select the proper support visuals

Able to select the proper support visuals needed to enhance the written word. In the digital era, it's important for the technical writer to be able to contribute to graphics and formatting as well as illustration skills. This adds to the writer's skill set. It's common for the technical writer to collaborate with the subject matter expert (SME) to obtain engineering drawings and the illustrator to design and develop the needed support graphics. Technical writers are often responsible for taking their own photographs too..

4. Natural curiosity for learning how things work.

Has a natural curiosity for learning how things work. The technical documentation skill of a technical writer depends greatly on the subject matter, product, or service that requires documentation. Most writers expand their knowledge through experience in the profession or by taking specialized technical writing training

Technical Writing-Management



Source: <https://www.slideshare.net/shivoo.koteshwar/book-summary-technical-writing>

5. Knows how to ask questions and learn

Knows how to ask questions and learn from the answers. Interacting with SMEs is one the most overlooked skills. Technical writers have to be part journalist and part investigative reporter. Not being too proud to ask the "dumb technical questions" that make engineers do double-takes is how you get to the bottom of creating documentation that's truly beneficial to end users. When setting up an interview or review, consider the personalities and preferences of your SMEs. Make sure you have all your questions ready up front and that you understand the answers before you leave the meeting. If a follow up is needed, schedule it then..

6. Refine the art of patience and persistence.

Refine the art of patience and persistence. Unless you have patience, you'll never make it as a technical communicator. When it comes to timely turnaround for reviews, most SMEs tend to drag their feet. It's a delicate balance, but with a little persistence, deadlines can be more easily met