Seminar Fact Sheet

EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL WRITING

An intense training session on how to write clear, crisp, technically accurate copy for letters, memos, proposals, reports, articles, papers, and other technical documents.

⑦ Contents

Here is a partial listing of topics covered. Your seminar can cover all topics or just the ones that are most important to your business.

Module 1: Elements of Technical Writing

Module 2: Tasks of the Technical Writer

Module 3: How to Write Numbers, Units, Equations, and Symbols

Module 4: Fundamentals of Grammar

Module 5: Principles of Technical Composition

Module 6: Use of Words and Phrases

Module 7: Principles of Organization

Module 8: Principles of Communication and Persuasion

Module 9: Special Concerns of the Technical Writer

CTC, 590 Delcina Drive, River Vale, NJ 07675
Phone (201) 505-9451 • Fax (201) 573-4094

Module 1: Elements of Technical Writing

- Differences between technical and nontechnical communication
- 7 characteristics of good technical writing

Module 2: Tasks of the Technical Writer

- Letters
- E-Mail
- Software documentation
- Reports
- Technical papers
- White papers
- Web pages
- Product information
- Audio-visual presentation
- Memos
- Manuals
- Proposals
- Abstracts
- Articles
- Manuals

Module 3: How to Write Numbers, Units, Equations, and Symbols

- Proper formats for using numbers and units of measure in written documents
- How to write equations and symbols
- Alternatives to narrative form for handling presentation of numerical data
- Additional tips for handling nontext (graphic) material in your copy

Module 4: Fundamentals of Grammar

- Key grammatical rules for technical writers
- Proper use of punctuation marks
- Guidelines for proper use of abbreviations
- Guidelines for capitalization
- Basic spelling rules

Module 5: Principles of Technical Composition

- Use of active vs. passive voice
- Use of simple vs. complex language
- How to write more concisely
- Use of specific and concrete terms vs. vague, general language
- Making writing more powerful with visual description
- Rules for handling tenses
- Making writing more readable by keeping sections, paragraphs, and sentences short
- How to keep ideas parallel
- Informal vs. formal, professional vs. conversational—which style is best?

Module 6: Use of Words and Phrases

- How to tell the difference between correct technical terminology vs. unnecessary jargon
- Why you should substitute small words for big words
- How to eliminate wordy phrases and redundancy from your writing
- Why you should avoid clichés, corporatese, and overblown phrases
- Rules for using nouns as adjectives
- Misused and troublesome words and phrases
- How to avoid sexist language
- How to achieve a contemporary style

Module 7: Principles of Organization

- How to organize your material to suit the reader's needs
- 9 ways to organize a technical document for easy reading
- Use and misuse of executive summaries, leads, and warm-up paragraphs
- How to separate fact from opinion in your writing
- Use of headings and subheads to organize technical documents

Module 8: Principles of Communication and Persuasion

- Do technical documents merely inform—or do they also persuade?
- How to gain your reader's attention in the first paragraph
- Use of facts, opinions, and statistics to prove your case
- How to determine when you are giving too much detail
- How to get the reader on your side
- How to get the reader to take the next step

Module 9: Special Concerns of the Technical Writer

- How to quickly gain specialized background knowledge in technical fields
- The collaboration between the writer and the client/technical expert—who does what?
- How to write effectively within the guidelines determined by your supervisor or corporate style guide
- What to do if the subject matter is too technical for you to understand
- What to do if technical experts you must work with or interview are uncooperative, arrogant, or poor communicators
- Tips for making a boring topic more exciting
- How to write for a specific audience

Preparation and Customization

All clients must submit a completed questionnaire along with writing samples from students in advance of the seminar date. The seminar is tailored to your specific needs based on this information. Actual samples are used throughout the presentation as examples, for critiques, as exercises, and to illustrate and dramatize techniques presented in the classroom.

In addition, we further customize by going through the course agenda with you and having you tell us which items you want stressed and emphasized. There is no extra charge for this customization.

Number of Students

Recommended number of students per session is 6 to 20; however, you may send up to 25 attendees for the base price.

Terms

50% nonrefundable deposit authorizing CTC to begin preparation of your seminar and put a firm hold over the date. Balance due after presentation of seminar.

Expenses

Client is billed at cost for all out-of-pocket expenses including long-distance telephone calls, fax transmissions, Federal Express, and messenger service.

Client provides prepaid hotel reservations and prepaid round-trip plane tickets from Newark Airport (Newark, NJ) for out-of-town engagements.

Workbook

Each student should have a copy of our 50-page workbook Effective Technical Writing. CTC provides a master of the workbook as a PDF which you can duplicate and distribute to your trainees at no charge. Or you may purchase print copies from us for $29 each.

Follow-Up Programs

To maximize the effectiveness of training you may want to consider one of these two follow-up programs.

E-Mail Hotline: E-mail consultation is available for $350 per hour. However, the seminar fee provides for up to 4 hours of FREE e-mail consultation (a $1,400 value) for seminar attendees within 30 days of the session. Students get specific advice and information on how to solve writing problems; however, CTC does not write or rewrite copy for you under this arrangement.

Clinics: Some clients request a follow-up clinic at one or more locations. The clinics typically have 6 to 15 attendees and provide hands-on analysis and problem-solving for specific projects in progress. Fee and length are the same as for the full-day training seminar.

Clients *(A PARTIAL LIST)* *

Airco
Associated Distribution Logistics
Atech Software
Brooklyn Union Gas
Cambridge Scientific Abstracts
Chemical Bank
The Conference Board
Convergent Solutions
Core States Financial Corporation
Creative Group, Inc.
Crest Ultrasonics
Dow Chemical
Drake Beam Morin
EBI Medical Systems
Executive Enterprises
Fala Direct Marketing
Fielder's Choice
Foxboro
Grey Advertising
Howard Lanin Productions
IBM
IEEE
ITT
International Tile Exposition
The Institute of Management
   Accountants
JMW Consultants
J. Walter Thompson
Leviton Manufacturing
Metrum Instruments
Midlantic

M&T Chemicals
On-Line Software
Optical Data Corporation
Prentice Hall
PSE&G
Read Travel Group
Sony
Siemens
Specialty Steel & Forge
Thompson Professional Publishing
Timeplex
Union Camp
Value Rent-a-Car
Wallace & Tiernan
Wolfram Research
And many, many others…

* The firms and associations listed here have retained the seminar, training, writing, or consulting services of CTC, Bob Bly, or The Center for Technical Marketing.

What clients and attendees say about CTC seminars and services...

"Thanks for the seminar. Besides clarifying technical points, you gave me insight into my position, and my abilities as a writer. And observing you in action was excellent training."
—Mike Goldscheitier, technical writer
Loveland Controls

"Thanks again for joining us in Atlantic City. I and the entire group found your thoughts insightful and right on target."
—Edward H. Moore, editor
communications briefings

"Your presentation for our seminar was sparkling, enthusiastic, and informative. The audience response was wonderful to see and hear. Our group benefited greatly and were quite vocal in their praise of you."
— Wendy Ward, program chair
Women in Communications

"The first issue of the spinal newsletter is enclosed. The sales force was very receptive to the newsletter and its contents. Thank you for helping us launch this important project."
—Mary Ellen Coleman, product manager
EBI Medical Systems

" I just wanted to thank you personally for the energy and effort you put into your two days with us. We are now far better equipped to do direct mail for our clients and ourselves that will have a greater impact and get measurable results."
—Greta Bolger, account executive
Sefton Associates Inc.

"I just finished reading the copy for our CERTIN-COAT system brochure and I was very happy with it. You did an excellent job of editing a large amount of information, much of it extraneous, into a strong, cohesive selling message."
—La Lavenda, .advertising manager
MST Chemicals Inc.

"I found the seminar helpful and noticed a definite greater awareness of style afterwards. Your presen¬tation was lively, and kept the participants' attention well into the afternoon and longer than I had expect¬ed beforehand."
—J.E. Koschei, editorial director
Thompson Professional Publishing

About CTC's director

Bob Bly, director of the Center for Technical Communication, has been a technical writer and technical writing instructor full-time since 1979.

He taught technical writing at New York University and has presented training sessions to such groups as the American Chemical Society, the American Marketing Association, and the American Institute of Chemical Engineers.

Mr. Bly is the author of 25 books including *Technical Writing: Structure, Standards, and Style* (McGraw-Hill), *The Copywriter's Handbook* (Henry Holt), and *The Elements of Business Writing* (Macmillan).

Bob Bly has worked as a staff technical writer for the Westinghouse Electric Corporation and also as an independent technical writer handling projects for dozens of firms including Brooklyn Union Gas, Crest Ultrasonics, On-Line Software, and M&T Chemicals.

Mr. Bly holds a B.S. in engineering from the University of Rochester. He is a member of the Society for Technical Communication, American Institute of Chemical Engineers, and the American Society for Training and Development.

The Next Step

For more information on any of the services described in this brochure, or to discuss scheduling a technical writing or business writing seminar for your organization, call CTC at (201) ' " ' -+&' #. Or write us today.

THE CENTER FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION
590 Delcina Drive
River Vale, NJ 07675
PHONE (201) 505-9451
FAX (201) 573-4094