Keeping your project on track

Congratulations! You have hired your technical communications service provider and are keen to make a start. But how can you ensure the success of your project?

If you've never worked with a technical communicator before, you may not know what to expect from this service and wonder how to best manage your interaction with the assigned communicator.

It's all about teamwork

The technical communicator assigned to the project will be joining your team and working with you to ensure the success of the project.

The cooperation of everyone on the team is essential, and the technical communicator will need your help with information, source material and access to appropriate systems.

Finding the time

You will need to set aside time and resource to support the technical communicator, who may not be familiar with your business or new to the project. You should view their service as an asset, and the time you invest as a benefit to your business.

Clarifying expectations

At the start of the project, be clear in your mind about what you hope to achieve and what you expect the technical communicator to deliver.

Normally, the technical communicator will draft a brief or project scoping document, outlining the project requirements. They may also provide a schedule of deliverables, outlining dates for delivery of key milestones.

Read these documents carefully to check that they adequately reflect your requirements.

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Careful planning

As with most endeavours, careful planning will ensure that your project is properly scoped and budgeted and that sufficient resources are made available. Your technical communicator can provide advice as to the amount of subject matter expert time, drafting and review resources required, and should be able to assist in putting together the project plan.

Communication

Provide feedback as the project progresses. Tell the assigned communicator when they are doing well, and let them know when you have concerns.

It is up to the team of reviewers in your business to ensure that drafts are fully reviewed for accuracy, comprehensiveness and appropriateness.

Realizing the value of the service

You have hired professionals who are there to help you communicate clearly and effectively with your customers.

They will bring an objective, neutral viewpoint that focuses on your customers' needs. For example:

- Organising information in a logical and consistent manner that will make sense to users
- Simplifying complex information and breaking this down into easily manageable chunks
- Ensuring that instructions and descriptions are clear, logical and easy to follow
- Making sure that information can be easily located and retrieved
- Supporting explanations with diagrams, flowcharts and graphics

Their service can be a benefit to your business.

Checklist

Thank you for reading this short summary. We hope that it has been helpful. Why not complete the checklist on the next page, to keep track of your project?

	What to check for:
□	Have you allowed for sufficient resource and time for meetings with the technical communicator and reviewing drafts?
□	Does the project scoping document or brief provide an accurate reflection of your project's requirements?
□	Has the project, including milestones, delivery dates and available resources, been planned?
□	Have you provided the technical communicator with the information and access to systems required for the project?
□	Are you reviewing drafts and providing feedback when requested by the technical communicator?
□	Are you monitoring progress and identifying/resolving issues that arise?