

GLOBAL  
EDITION



# Technical Communication Strategies for Today

SECOND EDITION

Richard Johnson-Sheehan



ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON

# Brief Contents

Preface 15

## Part 1 Elements of Technical Communication

- 1 Communicating in the Technical Workplace 21
- 2 Readers and Contexts of Use 39
- 3 Working in Teams 64
- 4 Ethics in the Technical Workplace 88

## Part 2 Genres of Technical Communication

- 5 Letters, Memos, and E-Mails 111
- 6 Technical Descriptions and Specifications 148
- 7 Instructions and Documentation 179
- 8 Proposals 218
- 9 Activity Reports 258
- 10 Analytical Reports 280
- 11 Starting Your Career 324

## Part 3 Researching, Designing, Presenting

- 12 Researching and Research Methods 362
- 13 Designing Documents and Interfaces 387
- 14 Creating and Using Graphics 417
- 15 Preparing and Giving Presentations 441

## Appendixes

- A Grammar and Punctuation Guide 479
- B Documentation Guide 497

References 513

Credits 515

Index 517

Sample Documents *Inside Back Cover*

# Technical Communication Strategies for Today, Global Edition

## Table of Contents

Cover

Title

Copyright

Contents

Preface

Whats New in the Second Edition?

Guiding Themes

Computers as Thinking Tools

Genres as Pathways for Interpretation and Expression

Visual-Spatial Reading, Thinking, and Composing

The International, Cross-Cultural Workplace

The Activity of Technical Communication

Acknowledgments

Part 1: Elements of Technical Communication

Chapter 1 Communicating in the Technical Workplace

Developing a Workplace Writing Process

Genres and the Technical Writing Process

Stage 1: Planning and Researching

Stage 2: Organizing and Drafting

Stage 3: Improving the Style

Stage 4: Designing

Stage 5: Revising and Editing

What Is Technical Communication?

# Table of Contents

Technical Communication Is Interactive and Adaptable

Technical Communication Is Reader Centered

Technical Communication Relies on Teamwork

Technical Communication Is Visual

Technical Communication Has Ethical, Legal, and Political Dimensions

Technical Communication Is International and Cross-Cultural

How Important Is Technical Communication?

Chapter Review

Exercises and Projects

## Chapter 2 Readers and Contexts of Use

Profiling Your Readers

Identifying Your Readers

Profiling Your Readers Needs, Values, and Attitudes

Profiling Contexts of Use

Identifying the Context of Use

Using Profiles to Your Own Advantage

International and Cross-Cultural Communication

Differences in Content

Differences in Organization

Differences in Style

Differences in Design

Listen and Learn: The Key to International and Cross-Cultural Communication

At Work: What Are Some Strategies for Communicating with People from Another Culture?

Chapter Review

Exercises and Projects

Case Study: Installing a Medical Waste Incinerator

## Chapter 3 Working in Teams

The Stages of Teaming

Forming: Strategic Planning

Step 1: Define the Project Mission and Objectives

Step 2: Identify Project Outcomes

# Table of Contents

Step 3: Define Team Member Responsibilities

Step 4: Create a Project Calendar

Step 5: Write Out a Work Plan

Step 6: Agree on How Conflicts Will Be Resolved

## Storming: Managing Conflict

Running Effective Meetings

Mediating Conflicts

Firing a Team Member

## Norming: Determining Team Roles

Revising Objectives and Outcomes

Help: Virtual Teaming

Identifying Team Roles

Using Groupware to Facilitate Work

## Performing: Improving Quality

## The Keys to Teaming

## Chapter Review

## Exercises and Projects

## Case Study: Not a Sunny Day

## Chapter 4 Ethics in the Technical Workplace

### What Are Ethics?

### Where Do Ethics Come From?

Personal Ethics

Social Ethics

Conservation Ethics

### Resolving Ethical Dilemmas

Help: Stopping Cyberbullying and Computer Harassment

Confronting an Ethical Dilemma

Resolving an Ethical Dilemma

When You Disagree with the Company

### Ethics in the Technical Workplace

Copyright Law

Trademarks

# Table of Contents

At Work: Why Should Technical Professionals Learn About Ethics?

Patents

Privacy

Information Sharing

Proprietary Information

Libel and Slander

Fraud

Chapter Review

Exercises and Projects

Case Study: This Company Is Bugging Me

## Part 2: Genres of Technical Communication

### Chapter 5 Letters, Memos, and E-Mails

Features of Letters, Memos, and E-Mails

Planning and Researching

Determining the Rhetorical Situation

Organizing and Drafting

Introduction with a Purpose and a Main Point

Body That Provides Need-to-Know Information

Conclusion That Restates the Main Point

Types of Letters, Memos, and E-Mails

Inquiries

Responses

Claims or Complaints

Adjustments

Refusals

Using Style and Design

Strategies for Developing an Appropriate Style

Designing and Formatting Letters, Envelopes, and Memos

Using E-Mail Internationally

Microgenre: Texting at Work

Chapter Review

# Table of Contents

Exercises and Projects

Case Study: The Nastygram

## Chapter 6 Technical Descriptions and Specifications

Planning and Researching

Planning

Quick Start: Technical Descriptions and Specifications

Researching

Partitioning the Subject

At Work: How Does Computer-Aided Drafting (CAD) Help Write Descriptions?

Organizing and Drafting

Specific and Precise Title

Introduction with an Overall Description

Description by Features, Functions, or Stages

Description by Senses, Similes, Analogies, and Metaphors

Conclusion

Help: Using Digital Photography in Descriptions

Using Style and Design

Plain, Simple Style

Page Layout That Fits

Graphics That Illustrate

Microgenre: Technical Definitions

Chapter Review

Exercises and Projects

Case Study: In the Vapor

## Chapter 7 Instructions and Documentation

Planning and Researching

Quick Start: Instructions and Documentation

Planning

Researching

Planning for Cross-Cultural Readers and Contexts

Verbal Considerations

# Table of Contents

Design Considerations

## Organizing and Drafting

Specific and Precise Title

Introduction

List of Parts, Tools, and Conditions Required

Sequentially Ordered Steps

Safety Information

Conclusion That Signals Completion of Task

## Using Style and Design

Help: On-Screen Documentation

Plain Style with a Touch of Emotion

Functional, Attractive Page Layout

Graphics That Reinforce Written Text

User-Testing Your Documentation

## Microgenre: Emergency Instructions

## Chapter Review

## Exercises and Projects

## Case Study: The Flame

## Chapter 8 Proposals

## Planning and Researching

Planning

## Quick Start: Proposals

Researching

## Organizing and Drafting

Writing the Introduction

Describing the Current Situation

Describing the Project Plan

Describing Qualifications

Concluding with Costs and Benefits

## Using Style and Design

A Balance of Plain and Persuasive Styles

An Attractive, Functional Design



# Table of Contents

Microgenre: The Elevator Pitch

Chapter Review

Exercises and Projects

Case Study: The Mole

## Chapter 9 Activity Reports

Types of Activity Reports

Progress Reports

Briefings and White Papers

Quick Start: Activity Reports

Incident Reports

Laboratory Reports

Planning and Researching

Analyzing the Rhetorical Situation

Organizing and Drafting

Writing the Introduction

Writing the Body

Writing the Conclusion

Using Style and Design

Using a Plain Style

Using Design and Graphics

Microgenre: The Status Report

Chapter Review

Exercises and Projects

Case Study: Bad Chemistry

## Chapter 10 Analytical Reports

Types of Analytical Reports

Quick Start: Analytical Report

Planning and Researching

Planning

Researching

Organizing and Drafting

# **Table of Contents**

Writing the Introduction

At Work: What Is the Most Efficient Way to Write a Report?

Describing Your Methodology

Summarizing the Results of the Study

Discussing Your Results

Stating Your Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

Help: Using Google Drive to Collaborate with International Teams

## **Drafting Front Matter and Back Matter**

Developing Front Matter

Developing Back Matter

## **Using Style and Design**

Using Plain Style in a Persuasive Way

A Straightforward Design

## **Microgenre: The Poster Presentation**

## **Chapter Review**

## **Exercises and Projects**

## **Case Study: The X-File**

## **Chapter 11 Starting Your Career**

### **Setting Goals, Making a Plan**

Setting Goals

Using a Variety of Job-Seeking Paths

### **Quick Start: Career Materials**

### **Preparing a Résumé**

Types of Résumés

Chronological Résumé

At Work: How Has the Internet Changed the Job Search Process?

Functional Résumé

Designing the Résumé

### **Writing Effective Application Letters**

Content and Organization

Help: Designing a Scannable/Searchable Résumé

Style

# **Table of Contents**

Revising and Proofreading the Résumé and Letter

## **Creating a Professional Portfolio**

Collecting Materials

Organizing Your Portfolio

Assembling the Portfolio in a Binder

Creating an Electronic Portfolio

## **Interviewing Strategies**

Preparing for the Interview

At the Interview

Writing Thank You Letters and/or E-Mails

## **Microgenre: The Bio**

## **Chapter Review**

## **Exercises and Projects**

## **Case Study: The Lie**

# **Part 3: Researching, Designing, Presenting**

## **Chapter 12 Researching and Research Methods**

### **Beginning Your Research**

### **Defining Your Research Subject**

Narrowing Your Research Subject

### **Formulating a Research Question and Hypothesis**

### **Developing a Research Methodology**

Mapping Out a Methodology

Describing Your Methodology

Using and Revising Your Methodology

### **Triangulating Materials**

Using Electronic Sources

Using Print Sources

Using Empirical Sources

### **Managing Information and Taking Notes**

Managing Information

Careful Note Taking

# **Table of Contents**

Documenting Sources

Avoiding Plagiarism

Chapter Review

Exercises and Projects

Case Study: The Patchwriter

## **Chapter 13 Designing Documents and Interfaces**

Five Principles of Design

Design Principle 1: Balance

Weighting a Page or Screen

Using Grids to Balance a Page Layout

Design Principle 2: Alignment

Design Principle 3: Grouping

Using Headings

Using Borders and Rules

Design Principle 4: Consistency

Choosing Typefaces

Labeling Graphics

Creating Sequential and Nonsequential Lists

Inserting Headers and Footers

Design Principle 5: Contrast

Cross-Cultural Design

Chapter Review

Exercises and Projects

Case Study: Scorpions Invade

## **Chapter 14 Creating and Using Graphics**

Guidelines for Using Graphics

Guideline One: A Graphic Should Tell a Simple Story

Guideline Two: A Graphic Should Reinforce the Written Text, Not Replace It

Guideline Three: A Graphic Should Be Ethical

Guideline Four: A Graphic Should Be Labeled and Placed Properly

Displaying Data with Graphs, Tables, and Charts

# Table of Contents

Line Graphs

Bar Charts

Tables

Pie Charts

Flowcharts

## Using Pictures and Drawings

Photographs

Inserting Photographs and Other Images

Illustrations

## Using Cross-Cultural Symbols

## Chapter Review

## Exercises and Projects

## Case Study: Looking Guilty

# Chapter 15 Preparing and Giving Presentations

## Planning and Researching Your Presentation

Defining the Rhetorical Situation

Allotting Your Time

## Choosing the Right Presentation Technology

## Organizing the Content of Your Presentation

Building the Presentation

The Introduction: Tell Them What You're Going to Tell Them

Help: Giving Presentations with your iPod, MP3, or Mobile Phone

The Body: Tell Them

At Work: How Can I Overcome My Fear of Speaking in Public?

The Conclusion: Tell Them What You Told Them

Preparing to Answer Questions

## Choosing Your Presentation Style

## Creating Visuals

Designing Visual Aids

Using Graphics

Slides to Avoid

## Delivering the Presentation

# Table of Contents

Body Language

Voice, Rhythm, and Tone

Using Your Notes

Rehearsing

Evaluating Your Performance

Working Cross-Culturally with Translators

Chapter Review

Exercises and Projects

Case Study: The Coward

## Appendix A: Grammar and Punctuation Guide

### The Top Ten Grammar Mistakes

Comma Splice

Run-On Sentence

Fragment

Dangling Modifier

Subject-Verb Disagreement

Pronoun-Antecedent Disagreement

Faulty Parallelism

Pronoun Case Error (I and Me, We and Us)

Shifted Tense

Vague Pronoun

### Punctuation Refresher

Period, Exclamation Point, Question Mark

Commas

Semicolon and Colon

Apostrophe

Quotation Marks

Dashes and Hyphens

Parentheses and Brackets

Ellipses

# **Table of Contents**

## **Appendix B: Documentation Guide**

### **APA Documentation Style**

APA In-Text Citations

The References List for APA Style

Creating the APA References List

### **CSE Documentation Style (Citation-Sequence)**

The References List for CSE Citation-Sequence Style

Creating the CSE References List (Citation-Sequence Style)

### **MLA Documentation Style**

MLA In-Text Citations

The Works Cited List for MLA Style

Creating the MLA Works Cited List

## **References**

## **Credits**

## **Index**

## **Sample Documents**