

Method M

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MENTORING FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATORS



Training
By
Method
M

Help Technical Writers Become More Effective

If your company has new and promising technical writers, but insufficient available resources to train and mentor the writers, Method M's mentoring program can help. The goals – improve the ability of your staff to produce better technical and business documents, produce better online help, and to enable your staff to grow within your company.

Mentoring for Technical Communicators

LEARNING HOW TO DELIVER BETTER TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS

Benefits for in-house staff

The Method M mentor can provide the support, skills and confidence that many of us need at the start of a career. Mentoring opens the door to professional growth and accomplishment. For sole authors and small teams, mentoring provides objective feedback and benchmarking – critical tools to measure success.

Benefits for the company

Mentoring can help your company fully leverage your investment in your staff. Why have your team working below par, or reinventing the wheel?

The biggest investment that you make in technical writers is the time needed to learn your technology and products. Providing them with mentoring opportunities for professional growth means that your investment will be leveraged to the maximum – and the best and brightest of your hires will be more likely to stay and grow in your company.

Method M mentoring helps you better utilize your resources, increase productivity to alleviate the pressure on your team, and enables you to provide content that your readers use more efficiently.

How is the mentoring program delivered and structured?

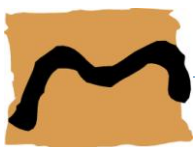
You can choose between a crash course for new writers, with the number of days that you specify. Crash courses are most effective done face-to-face, either at your location or at Method M headquarters.

You can also select a monthly review session, where goals are set, progress is measured, and productivity and quality issues are dealt with. While the initial review sessions are most effective in-person, follow-up sessions can be via telephone and e-mail.

Configuring the mentoring program

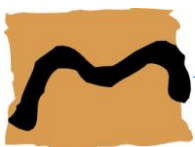
Each mentoring program is custom built to your needs – for the type of documents do you need to produce, for the formats you need to support, and for the tools that are used in your company.

To start we will interview you to jointly define the goals of the mentoring. The goals will determine what topics are covered.



Topics

Organization and Management	Starting a Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining deliverables • Setting schedules • Outlining • Estimating resources (budgeting) • Templates, templates, templates • Planning for production • For online help – planning context sensitivity
	Managing a Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When resources change • When the content needs to change • Measuring progress and catching problems early • Staying in the loop for product changes • Quality control and proofreading • Managing recalcitrant SMEs • Learning lessons from finished projects
	Lifecycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From creation to maintenance mode • Updates and the product lifecycle
Core Skills	Organizing Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task Oriented documentation • Task Information vs. Reference Information • Identify and Cull Extraneous Information
	User Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining the user (who, how skilled, where) • Defining what the user needs
	Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct language • Identify and avoid jargon • Red flags • Minimalism (bare bones)
	Templates – Looking Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Templates in your authoring tool. • Templates when content is converted. • Styles vs. local formatting. • Consistency. • Corporate branding and templates. • Guidelines for attractive outputs. • Matching guidelines to your needs.
Advanced skills	Translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing to anticipate translation. • Managing translation.
	Single sourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits, costs, and when it makes sense. • Techniques for print/PDF, help and other formats.



Topic-based authoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benefits, costs, and when it makes sense.• How to do it.
Tool specific mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Word style sheets• Word macros/VBA• Word – books from multiple files.• FrameMaker – books and chapters.• FrameMaker conditional text.• FrameScript.• DITA and XML editing.• Acrobat.• WebWorks.

Cost

Method M mentoring is billed hourly. The cost is the same if one or multiple writers are mentored.

