



SOCIETY FOR
TECHNICAL
COMMUNICATION

Oklahoma Chapter Dialog

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To design the future of
Oklahoma's technical
communicators

President's Corner

by *Betsy Callahan*

President, Oklahoma Chapter



Happy New Year to you all! I hope you found the holidays to be a time of joy, rest, and rejuvenation.

Last month at work, my two Technical Communications team members and I met with our boss for what we thought would be a routine weekly meeting. However, he opened the meeting by announcing that he was leaving the company and taking a position at another business in town. There are many reactions one can have when he or she is told an immediate supervisor will be gone soon, depending on the people and situation. It so happens that all three of us hold this person in very high regard and counted ourselves as fortunate to have had him leading us, so, after hearing his news, we experienced several stages of grief within just a few minutes. It's not like we can't go on without him. We can, and we will do fine. It's just that we were comfortable, and now we have to adjust -- darn it -- *yet again*.

Change really seems to bother human beings. It often creates uncertainty and anxiety in us. It is also a given, and we can choose what the change is going to look like. Our businesses and organizations can create a vision, generate trust, and provide direction. Change is not an event. It is an ongoing process that should be incorporated into the culture.

This is why the STC leaders created the Transformation Team. The current climate has caused an urgency for STC to create a new, long-term vision. This team is our "change agent." If you have not heard about the Transformation initiative yet, I recommend that you read about it at <http://www.stc.org/transformation.asp> and see the article, *The Team*, in this issue.

It is essential that STC keep you, the members, in the loop by keeping you informed and receiving your input. I mean "you" as in *you*. To facilitate this, the team created a blog (a web log at <http://trans4mation.typepad.com/>) so members can present and discuss their ideas, concerns, and issues. Please check it out.

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Upcoming STC Events

January Meetings

Saturday, January 10, 2004

Location: OKC, Francis Tuttle Vocational Center
Time: 10:30am–noon
Topic: Robohelp Standardization
Speaker: TBA

Wednesday, January 14, 2004

Location: Tulsa, Deco Restaurant meeting room at
Adams Mark Hotel
Time: 11:30am–1:00pm
Topic: Building a Contract Business
Speaker: Beth Brooks

Statewide Chapter Meeting

Saturday, February 21, 2004

Location: Oklahoma State University, Stillwater
Time: 1:00pm–TBA
Topics: Management and Leadership
Speaker: Linda Ostreich (Region 5 Director-Sponsor),
Rachel Hutchinson, Jim Wolf

*Oklahoma City meetings are
held at:*

*Francis Tuttle Vocational
Center*

*BIS Training Room
Economic Development
Building*

*12777 North Rockwell Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73142*

March Meetings

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Location: Tulsa, Deco Restaurant meeting room at
Adams Mark Hotel
Time: 11:30am–1:00pm
Topic: Usability
Speaker: Fran Danner

Saturday, March 13, 2004

Location: OKC, Francis Tuttle Vocational Center
Time: 10:30am–noon
Topic: Editing Process/Levels/Practicum
Speaker: TBA

Tulsa meetings are held at:

*Adams Mark Hotel
Second Floor*

*Deco Restaurant Meeting Room
100 East 2nd Street
Tulsa, OK 74103*

April Meetings

Saturday, April 10, 2004

Location: OKC, Francis Tuttle Vocational Center
Time: 10:30am–noon
Topic: Single Sourcing
Speaker: TBA

Wednesday, April 14, 2004

Location: Tulsa, Deco Restaurant meeting room at
Adams Mark Hotel
Time: 11:30am–1:00pm
Topic: RoboHelp
Speaker: Denise Tillery

51st Annual STC Conference

May 9–12, 2004

Location: Baltimore, Maryland

4th Annual Spring Statewide Half-Day Workshop

The Oklahoma Chapter is holding the spring statewide meeting at Oklahoma State University Saturday, February 21, 2004 in the OSU Student Union in Stillwater. Here is a sneak peek at the program:

Commodity Writer or Strategic Contributor:

Are you a nuts-and-bolts technical writer or someone who acts from a deeper understanding of your client's business?

Linda Oestreich, our Region 5 Director–Sponsor, will talk about making the transition from someone who just “pushes the words around” to being a valuable advisor and consultant.

Personal Best and Leadership Exercises:

Want to get the most out of your career? **Linda** will also lead a discussion and exercise on how to find your “personal best.”

Also~

Managers Aren't Born, They Are Made:

Rachel Hutchinson will discuss tips and techniques to use in your workplace to improve morale and productivity. These pointers will help you:

- Delegate successfully
- Manage projects
- Motivate employees
- Hire "the right fit" employees
- Improve productivity
- Improve interpersonal relationships

Don't miss this enjoyable and informative afternoon!

Oklahoma Chapter Web Site Has a Fresh Face

We are currently updating and redesigning the Oklahoma STC Chapter Website to deliver greater value to our members and our community. We appreciate your patience as we carry out this process.

This Website is intended as an online resource for our members and for others interested in the technical communications profession. We welcome any feedback or suggestions that you may have about this site. Please send any comments to gailbeyers@msn.com.

Please check back soon as we continue to update this site. Thanks for your interest in STC!

Date and Time:

Saturday, February 21

1:00–4:00pm

Location:

Oklahoma State University

OSU Student Union

Stillwater, OK

Directions will be provided

Project and Time Management

Thomas L. Warren, Oklahoma State University
Presented to the Oklahoma Chapter, 12 November 2003

Managing a project means controlling the resources connected to a unique and temporary event to achieve a specific result. Historically, anyone who writes learns that a document has three parts: Introduction, Body, and Conclusion. Prudence, when assigned such a document, dictates that the writer have some idea of the length of each section as well as how long it should take to write. Further, learning that first drafts rarely fulfill the assignment, writers add time and resources for reviewing, editing/revising, and preparing additional drafts. These are the rudiments of project management.

Resources

Any documentation event requires resources including people, money, materials, and time. As a guide to developing management plans, the author has the Scope statement. This statement establishes parameters and identifies the deliverables required by the assignment. Once established, the Scope statement leads the author to developing a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), where each deliverable is divided and subdivided into smaller and smaller activities. The WBS also allows the technical communicator to assign resources, including time, to each activity.

Event

A *project* is unique in that it differs in some respects from any other event. It is also time-bound—that is, it has a beginning and an ending. This definition applies to each of the activities identified in the WBS, further allowing the manager to assign and monitor resources.

Conclusion

Technical Communicators have been managing their projects since the day they learned that a document has logical parts. Project management is only a formalizing of the same process. As suggested above, the project plan is a fluid document that must be responsive not only to Scope creep, but also to changes in resources. If documentation may be described as attempting to change a flat tire on a moving car, project management must be something like trying to replace an empty fuel tank on a moving rocket.

Resources

• *A Guide to Project Management Body of Knowledge* (PMBOK). Newtown Square, PA: Project Management Institute, 2000.

<http://www.pmi.org/>;

<http://www.pmibookstore.org/>

• Penner, Donald D. *The Project Manager's Survival Guide: The Handbook for Real-World Project Management*, 2nd edition. Columbus, OH: Battelle Press, 2002.

<http://www.battelle.org/bookstore>

... the project plan is a fluid document that must be responsive not only to Scope creep, but also to changes in resources...

U.S. Members: Deduct Your STC Dues

Reprinted from Timeline (November 2003)

If you pay taxes in the United States, keep in mind that STC dues are tax deductible. You can claim dues as a deduction in several ways.

Charitable Expense

All STC members who pay taxes in the United States can deduct at least a portion of their STC dues if they claim this portion as a charitable donation. IRS publication 526 (rev. 2000) defines this option: You may be able to deduct membership fees or dues you pay to a qualified organization. However, you can deduct only the amount that is more than the value of the benefits you receive. As a 501(c)(3) organization, STC is a qualified organization. The only determination you need to make is the amount that is more than the value of the benefits you receive. STC's tangible benefits can be estimated at \$30 (\$15 for the Society's quarterly journal, *Technical Communication*, and \$15 for the magazine, *Intercom*). The difference between the cost of membership (\$125 for 2003) and tangible benefits (\$30) is \$95, and members may claim that amount as charitable contribution.

Members who have questions should contact their local IRS representatives or their accountants.

Business Expense

Employees and self-employed consultants may claim the full amount of dues as a business expense.

Miscellaneous Deduction

Those who do not fall into the categories defined above may claim the amount of the dues as a miscellaneous deduction (for miscellaneous deductions that can affect taxes, the total amount of miscellaneous deductions must exceed 2 percent of your adjusted gross income). If dues are deducted as a charitable expense, business expense, or miscellaneous deduction, they must be deducted from the tax return filed for the year in which they were paid. In other words, dues paid in 2003 may be deducted only on 2003 tax returns. Members who have questions should contact their local IRS representatives or their accountants.

Money, Not Time

Please be aware that, while dues, contributions, and out-of-pocket expenses may be deducted, personal services may not.

Procedures for STC's 2004 Election

Reprinted from Timeline (December 2003)

The annual STC election will be held in early 2004, and only members who have paid their dues by February 27, 2004, will be eligible to vote. An option on the dues renewal forms and new membership applications for 2004 allows members to receive their election materials via e-mail. In March, members who selected this option will be e-mailed the slate, candidate biographies, and voting instructions. Members who did not select this option will receive these materials by first-class mail. The election closes at 12:00 noon EDT on April 15. Be sure to renew by February 27 to have a say in STC's future!

Be sure to renew by February 27

Transformation: The Team

Leadership can be quite a challenge. One reason is that in STC, our leaders are all volunteers who must also earn a living—even those members you elect to the board of directors. In addition, STC leaders are dedicated to making a difference in this diverse group of professions that we call technical communication. With that commitment in mind, the board of directors continues to implement the various phases of the STC transformation that actually began with the branding initiative. We realize that transformation is not really “new” to our profession, because we’ve been evolving for the last 50 years, but everyone knows that for our profession to survive and for STC to provide the best value as a professional organization, we must constantly strive to improve.

The board of directors realized that it would take a specialized team to lead this effort, so at the May 2003 board meeting, a “core” Transformation Team was appointed. That team developed a vision, goals, and principles to guide them. The people involved represent many of the communities of practice within STC. Two past Society presidents, the current president, and the two current vice presidents (who will be STC presidents over the next two years) are all working closely together so any recommended programs and improvements can be implemented consistently in the future.

The board also felt it was necessary to provide the membership with a means of responding to and submitting ideas related to the transformation. The team created a blog (this web log is at <http://trans4mation.typepad.com>) so members can present and discuss their ideas, concerns, and issues.

The Transformation Team then added representatives who could provide the chapter, SIG, international, marketing, management, financial, business owner, and historical perspectives to their committee. They called this “extended group” the Stakeholders. Let me introduce each of our 20 Transformation Team members and share the perspective they each bring to the team (see the table on the next page).

As the team grew, we realized that a Steering committee was needed to facilitate and approve the critical activities of the Transformation Team, including John Nardone’s work. Members of the Steering committee are Mary Jo Stark, Peter Herbst, Thea Teich, Ed See, Andrea Ames, and Suzanna Laurent.

The board of directors has engaged John Nardone, a strategy and marketing consultant, to give us professional assistance in our transformation process. In addition to being a “friend of the Society,” John brings us a wealth of experience. That experience will help us ensure the transformation is successful. He has developed a structure for the entire process, is facilitating the process, and is providing unbiased experience and perspective. You can read about his credentials at <http://trans4mation.typepad.com> under “The transformation process.”

...everyone knows that for our profession to survive and for STC to provide the best value as a professional organization, we must constantly strive to improve...

In the next communication, we will share the Transformation principles and explain the transformation process.

Team Component	Individual (alphabetical by last name)	Society Position	Perspective Brought to the Team
Core, Steering	Andrea Ames	First vice president President 2004-2005	Corporate management, education, large chapter
Core	Rahel Bailie	Director-Sponsor Region 7	Canadian, business owner, medium chapter
Core	Jon Baker	Director-Sponsor Region 1	Regional, financial, large chapter
Stakeholder	Mike Bates	Director-Sponsor Region 4	Proposal writer, corporate management, medium chapter
Stakeholder	Judy Glick-Smith	President 2001-2002, Member of SAC	Management, business owner, Senior Advisory Council (SAC), large chapter. Judy started the Leadership initiative.
Core	Bonni Graham	Director-Sponsor Region 8	Regional, business owner, metrics, medium chapter
Stakeholder	Sandra Harner	Assistant to the President for Academic and Research Programs	Educator, faculty advisor to a student chapter
Stakeholder, Steering	Peter Herbst	Executive Director	Historical, office 20 years, management
Stakeholder	Vici Koster-Lenhardt	Director-Sponsor Region 2	Regional, international (European), corporate management, small chapter
Core, Steering	Suzanna Laurent	Second vice president, President 2005-2006	Management, business owner, small chapter
Stakeholder	Taryn Light	Boston chapter past president	Large chapter, former president
Stakeholder	Whitney Quesenbery	Usability SIG and helped establish UPA (Usability Professionals Association)	SIG, large chapter
Stakeholder	Ginny Redish	Founder and former president of the Usability SIG	Former board member, SIG, added value, large chapter
Core	Jim Romano	Assistant to the President for Membership Development	International, business owner, metrics, large chapter
Stakeholder	Fred Sampson	Silicon Valley chapter president	Large chapter, current president, offshoring
Core, Steering	Ed See	Immediate Past President, President 2002-2003, SAC	Corporate management, marketing executive, large chapter
Core, Steering	Mary Jo Stark	Transformation Team Manager, Board Treasurer	Financial, subject-matter expert, education, large chapter
Stakeholder	Bill Stolgitis	Former Executive Director	Legal, historical, management, office
Stakeholder, Steering	Thea Teich	President 2003-2004	Management, marketing, business owner, finance, medium chapter
Stakeholder	Debbie Wiles	Lone Star chapter president	Large chapter, current president

Transformation Team Members

STC's 51st Annual Conference Registration Rates

Reprinted from Timeline (October 2003)

Members can register for the conference using the form provided in the Preliminary Program, which will be mailed with the February issue of Intercom, or online. Online registration will open in mid-February. Advance full-conference and one-day registration rates appear below. The last day to register for the conference at the advance rate is April 23, 2004.



STC's 51st Annual Conference will be held in Baltimore, Maryland, May 9-12, 2004.

Member.....	\$495
Nonmember	\$650
Student/Retired	\$120
Member, One-Day	\$255
Nonmember, One-Day	\$335
Student/Retired, One-Day	\$120



Dues Renewal Invoices in the Mail

Reprinted from Timeline (December 2003)

Dues renewal invoices for the 2004 Society year were mailed in late November to all STC members who had not renewed their memberships online at <http://www.stc.org/renew.asp>. For membership dues, STC accepts checks in U.S. dollars or Canadian equivalent, and American Express, MasterCard, and VISA payments. Dues payments must be received by January 1, 2004 (a grace period extends to February 27, 2004). Note that only members who have paid their dues by February 27 will be eligible to vote in next year's STC elections.

Dues Prorating Schedule Affects Invoices for New Members

According to the STC dues prorating schedule, all new members who joined STC on or after February 1, 2003, receive prorated "credit" towards their membership renewals. The credit, a percentage of the 2003 membership rate of \$125 USD, will appear on new members' renewal invoices. The amount of credit depends on the month a new member joined the Society. For example, new members who joined STC in February 2003 will receive a \$12.50 USD credit (or 10 percent of \$125) on their renewal invoice. Those who joined in March 2003 will receive a \$25 USD credit (20 percent of \$125), and so on. These credits will be applied toward the 2004 renewal rate of \$140.

As part of STC's traditional fall membership discount, members who join between November 1 and December 31 receive 100 percent or full credit on their renewals. These members were not sent a renewal invoice in November. The chart below lists the renewal rates for new members who joined STC in 2003.

Other Rates for 2004

Regular members who joined STC before February 1, 2003 are not affected by the prorating schedule. For these members, the rate for 2004 dues is \$140 USD. The student member rate for 2004 dues is \$56 USD.

Don't Lose Touch with STC

The Society office encourages all STC members to update their membership information with home addresses, home phone numbers, or home e-mail addresses. Many members provide only their work contact information, and the office often loses track of these members when they change jobs. To update your membership information, complete the STC address change form at <http://www.stc.org/formAddressChange.asp> or contact the office at (703) 522-4114.

Renewal Credits for New STC Members (in USD)		
Month Joined	Credit Toward 2004	2004 Dues Renewal Rate
January '03	\$0.00	\$140.00
February '03	12.50	127.50
March '03	25.00	115.00
April '03	37.50	102.50
May '03	50.00	90.00
June '03	62.50	77.50
July '03	75.00	65.00
August '03	87.50	52.50
September '03	100.00	40.00
October '03	112.50	27.50
November '03	N/A	0.00
December '03	N/A	0.00

Many members provide only their work contact information, and the office often loses track of these members when they change jobs.

Dialog is written and published monthly and e-mailed to members by the Newsletter Committee of the Oklahoma Chapter of STC. Submit entries to the editor by the first of each month. Information may be reproduced for recruitment and educational purposes, if credit is given. Contributions to content were made by various members and STC's International Society Office.

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