



Design and Technical Communicators

*A Guide by
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Introduction

Everything around us is made up of design elements that are used to draw a response from its audience. Color, balance, layout, and textual properties are all building blocks that can either make or break a product. A book can be easily compared to a machine in its actual functionality. By comparison:

Well Designed Book	Well Designed Machine
Easy to follow	Straightforward interfaces
Images that emphasize the text	Markings that define the interfaces
Equal balance of negative and positive space	Interfaces for function and not aesthetics
Clear use of styling to assist with legibility and order	Appearance that targets the user audience
Indices that maps the contents	Straightforward user controls that simplify operations

How Technical Communicators Design

A reader's first impression of a document is typically about its appearance. Though the content is equally important, the layout and design must present the information for optimal usability. It takes an experienced designer to research the user's thought processes, and come up with a functional design that allows the information to be easily absorbed.

No matter what the product market, a designer generally follows similar steps in designing a product's look and function that will attract a potential user. And that process is repeated for every piece of additional collateral that ships with the purchased item. Although marketing and technical communications are at opposite ends of the design spectrum, their main purpose is to communicate interactively with the audience.

The key to any good design is to understand the needs of the target audience, and create a product that satisfies their intellectual and emotional cravings. If this basic need is not met, then the design has failed.

Technical Communications probably has a much easier time in terms of design, because the delivery vehicle is not geared to such a wide audience, as compared to advertising collateral. But what it may lack in the actual WOW factor doesn't take away from the basic foundation that is the same for all disciplines: Design to reach your audience.

What Makes A Good Manual

A good manual has to meet its target dead-on, because it does not have the type of aesthetics that can redirect from a lack of useable content. This means that the content has to answer the audience questions, and it must be delivered in a user-friendly manner that encourages repeat usage.

The layout must allow the user to dwell in its content without becoming overly exhausted or frustrated. A clear flow of topics, in an order that will help to build upon the previous content, will bring the user to the final picture of the product as it truly operates.

Font sizes and styles, negative spaces, a readable layout, and other components must be clearly designed to help meet the mark that is set by the reader. If the design becomes the most important component to the manual, then the message that is the true key will be lost.

Design and content must co-exist with one another without overpowering each other. Its all about a complementary relationship that exists between the visual and the cerebral.

The Pen is Mightier Than The Sword

Technical Communicators are the swords of technical industries that rely heavily upon coherent and educational tools to bring understanding to a society that is starving for information.

By allowing technical communicators to use their specialized skills and tools, the end result can be a document that is both memorable in design as well as content.

This document can create a communication bridge between the public and the company that will either enter it into the annals of history, or plummet it into the depths of anonymity. The choice is yours.

How To Reach Me

My name is **Carolyn S Brajkovich**, and I'm a technical communicator.

If you want to find out more about what this technical communicator can do for your communication needs, just reach out and find me.



I'll be more than happy to help you find a customized communications solution that will fit your needs.

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