



TECHNICAL COMMUNICATIONS

whitepaper



**The New Flexible Model for
Today's Complex Technical
Communication Requirements**



Situation: The Poor Economy is Increasing Demand for Skilled Outsourced Communicators

The recent economic downturn has changed the way that many firms view their technical communications resources. Firms are opting for short-term, outsourced consultants who are flexible and cost effective. As larger numbers of companies choose this approach, the demand for highly qualified outsourced technical communicators is expected to grow.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, demand for experienced technical communicators is on the rise due to the expansion of scientific and technical information and the growing presence of web-based customer service and product support networks. As this demand grows, the supply of talented, cost-effective personnel who have the flexibility to meet/support short-term communication projects becomes scarcer.

Challenge: Maintaining Resource Control while Minimizing Information Security Risks

Hiring managers' time is valuable and often spent implementing strategic enterprise decisions, not managing technical communications projects. Therefore, managers must employ responsible and professional communications experts who display a high degree of technical knowledge, integrity, and willingness to adapt to internal methodologies, without requiring a significant amount of handholding.

On parity with control is the issue of risk. As enterprises employ greater numbers of external consultants, there is a fear that sensitive, pre-release product information may be distributed to outsiders. If such breaches were to occur, they could have severe repercussions for an enterprise. As a result, enterprise information managers must be assured that outside resources can be trusted with handling sensitive corporate information.

Solution: A Network of Flexible, Highly Skilled Contractors To Address Precise Writing Needs

To maximize the use of external resources, companies need access to a flexible network of highly skilled and experienced consultants who can produce a wide range of communications deliverables as needed. These consultants may need to support strict product development schedules or marketing campaigns.

Maintaining an extensive network of highly experienced and professional consultants who have broad technical and industry-specific expertise distinguishes Clarity Technical Communications from other outsourced consulting firms. Clarity's ability to attract the best talent in the industry ensures that flexible and knowledgeable writing resources will always be available to meet the specific communication needs of its clients.

Result: Greater Resource Control, Lower Risk, and Higher Flexibility at a Lower Price

Managers gain four distinct business advantages from using Clarity Technical Communications for their technical, product, and marketing communications requirements:

- **Speed** – Just-in-time consultant deployment provides rapid responsiveness with the precise number of experienced team members necessary to quickly satisfy changing project needs.
- **Expertise** – A nationwide network of consultants excelling in all areas of communications, including writing and documentation, ensures the best possible match to address project requirements.
- **Quality** – A time-tested project-based consulting framework that ensures high quality deliverables along with a focus on accomplishing project goals without any hidden agendas, such as selling additional products or services.
- **Flexibility** – The ability to scale consulting resources up or down to meet specific project requirements.

By leveraging Clarity Technical Communications' network of communications consultants, managers gain a valuable, cost effective resource that provides a substantial competitive advantage within their respective industries.

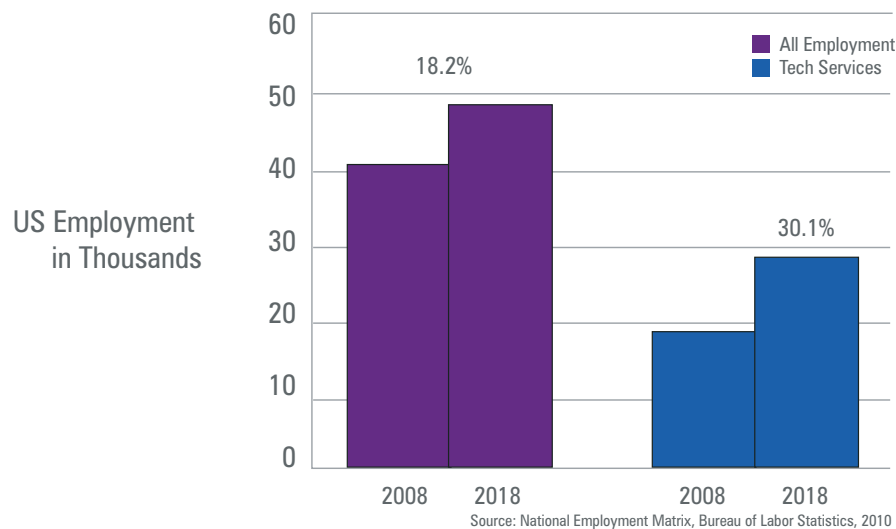
The Demand for Talented External Communication Resources is Growing

For organizations communicating with clients in the age of “real time,” a euphemism for “right now,” timing plays an important and necessary role. For example, in the product development cycle, organizations must ensure the development of communications-related deliverables on a rigid schedule to ensure timely and successful product launches without delay. If the development of key deliverables is delayed, product launches are held back, and lost sales or deferred revenue result.

Today communications departments are experiencing similar challenges as other traditional cost-sensitive business areas as a result of new cost-containment policies. Just as enterprise information, training, and support departments started using outside resources to support their initiatives, departments producing written materials and documentation are also now looking for similar cost-effective external resources to meet project and cost requirements on a short-term basis. As a result, the demand for talented external communications resources is expected to grow.

As evidence of this trend, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Employment Matrix, has indicated that the demand for technical services is expected to grow by over 30 percent between 2008 and 2018 as a result of the growing reliance on technologically sophisticated products and the increasing complexity of information. This compares to over 18 percent for all employment during the same period. However, the report also states that increased demand and limited supply of technical communicators will create greater competition among companies that depend on these services¹.

Figure 1: Technical Services Growth Rate (Next 10 years)



Besides the issue of cost containment and resource availability, managers are also concerned with control. They must employ responsible and professional communications consultants who provide a high degree of technical knowledge, integrity, and willingness to adapt to internal methodologies, without a significant amount of handholding during the information development process.

Given these and other issues, managers need highly trained and flexible outsourced communications consultants who can meet their strict deliverable requirements. These resources must provide a high degree of professionalism, integrity, and value, along with high levels of productivity and technical knowledge that will ensure that all product launch and communications schedules are meeting enterprise business goals.

1. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition, “Projections Data”. March 2010

The Top Three Managers' Concerns Associated with Using External Technical Communicators

While most business professionals agree that using external consultants can result in dramatic cost savings, managers are aware that the consultants' experience can vary greatly and the right set of skills is not easy to identify. There is a need to select the right consultants through the right partners.

Among potential partners there are technical consulting firms run by independent proprietors. In these firms, the owner is often the sole writing resource or the business has a limited number of communicators who simultaneously produce a large quantity of diverse communication deliverables. On the other end, large national recruiters employ many types of consultants but not necessarily communicators with the precise experience or knowledge needed to support the communications projects. Both types of firms are ill equipped to address the wide variety of communications projects that exist within a multi-departmental enterprise.



Managers must now consider an outsourced communications model in order to maintain tight deliverable development deadlines on a reduced operating budget.

communication consultants may increase the risk that sensitive information may be either accidentally or purposely released prior to an official product launch date, for example. To prevent information breaches managers must be reassured that external consultants can be trusted to follow enterprise security protocols to minimize information risks.

3. Flexibility – Today's enterprise has a wide variety of technical and business communication needs across departments such as marketing, engineering, finance, support, and others. Each project requires communicators to use different skills and technical/product knowledge. When this need for expertise is coupled with the short-term nature of these projects, experienced consultants must also be extremely flexible to meet rigid product deadlines. Unfortunately not all external communicators have the professional skills to meet these challenges, and managers often must make budgetary sacrifices in order to retain talented individuals who will produce their communication projects on time.

These issues point to the need for a cost-effective, professional, experienced pool of flexible external communications consultants who can address today's project management challenges. Such a pool is now available through the Clarity Technical Communications Writing Network.

Managers have three objectives in using external communications providers:

1. Cost – The expression “doing more with less” has become a common phrase within many business circles today, especially in the large enterprise sector. Managers are now considering the outsourced technical communications model in order to meet tight deliverable development deadlines on a reduced operating budget. Unfortunately, highly talented external resources that are available on a short-term basis are expensive, and managers must balance cost, productivity, and quality in order to satisfy strict production deadlines.

2. Control & Risk – As enterprise managers move away from retaining full time employees, resource and information control becomes more difficult to maintain. Managers must ensure that their documentation projects are kept on schedule without a significant amount of time-consuming ‘handholding’.

Additionally, CIOs are concerned that using external

The Benefits of a National Network of Experienced Communications Consultants

Clarity Technical Communications employs a unique strategy for communications and consulting services. It offers a network comprised of talented consultants who can quickly meet its clients' specific communications demands.

The Clarity Technical Communications Writing Network incorporates a unique value-added methodology that distinguishes it from other outsourced consulting service providers. This methodology is comprised of four key principles: speed, expertise, quality, and flexibility.

1. Speed – When a new communications initiative is launched, disseminating timely mission-critical information can play a significant role with time-to-market readiness and the ultimate success of the campaign. Clarity Technical Communications understands this important relationship and has made rapid and responsive customer service a cornerstone of its organization. As part of its commitment to fulfill customer needs, Clarity Technical Communications provides its clients with the precise number of experienced specialists necessary to satisfy the requirements of any communications project, often within two to four business days. Each customer is presented with a selection of potential candidates, their detailed background information, and their experience as it relates to the project's requirements. This allows the client to select the best candidate who can be up and running immediately in support of a communications project.

The reason that Clarity can ensure high-quality consultants is their ability to attract and retain the most experienced and talented resources within the industry.



2. Expertise – One of the reasons that Clarity Technical Communications can ensure high-quality consultants is that it is able to attract and retain the most experienced consultants within the industry. Clarity provides highly competitive compensation plans and support services, which attracts the best consulting talent across the country. The emphasis on rewarding the best talent is one way in which Clarity can build and retain an extensive network comprised of thousands of highly trained consultants who consistently exceed customer expectations. This ensures the best possible match to address all communication project requirements.

Clarity Technical Communications internal team of Business Development Managers and Recruiters has a proven track record in the communications industry, which translates into an extensive knowledge base. Clarity's internal staff is supported by Clarity's management team, which has over 30 years of experience in the communications industry.

3. Quality – Clarity Technical Communications has three internal teams that work together to ensure complete customer satisfaction. These teams form a cohesive consulting framework that matches precise consulting talent with the unique requirements of each customer engagement. They are as follows:

- **A Business Development Team** which partners with each client to determine an exact project scope and related requirements needed for success.

- **A Recruiting Team** which uses the proprietary Clarity Assessment Methodology (CAM) to identify the best consultant for each job. When the recruiting team's assessment has been completed, a customer is presented with a list of consultants whose expertise and experience match the project's requirements. In the end, clients decide which consultant(s) to assign to their communications projects.
- **A Customer Relationship Team** which represents the first point of contact for a consultant assigned to a communications project. This team handles all of the issues, questions and human resource elements pertaining to a consultant while on assignment. The customer relationship team also ensures that a consultant has the schedules, tools, and resources necessary to complete each project successfully.

Clarity Technical Communications' responsibility doesn't end once a consultant has been assigned to the project. Clarity Technical Communications continues to monitor the quality of a consultant's work during the entire life of a project and after an assignment, providing support when necessary.

Most importantly, there are no conflicts of interest with Clarity Technical Communications. Clarity is not a value-added reseller of hardware or software projects, services or solutions. This ensures that the client is never pressured into additional purchases and that the total cost of a communications project is not increased.

Clarity's communication consultants are also professionals that understand the importance of following strict enterprise security policies and protocols. Clarity maintains strict adherence to all customer Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs), and as a result, poses less of an information flight risk to enterprise security breaches than comparable internal employees.

Clarity also holds no predispositions to specific writing styles or authoring tools. Moreover once a project has been completed, a client owns the entire work product with no additional licensing fees or joint ownership of intellectual property.

4. Flexibility – Flexibility is a central ingredient of the working relationship that Clarity Technical Communications offers to each client. This flexibility ensures that a client is not locked in with any individual consultant. By using a flexible approach, the number of consultants can either grow or shrink at any point in a project's lifecycle as requirements change, budgets fluctuate, or if project deadlines unexpectedly shift.

How Clarity Addresses Common Management Concerns with External Technical Resources

Clarity's four-part business model solves the most common concerns that managers have with external communications resources in the following ways:

1. Clarity Addresses Cost Concerns – By employing an hourly pricing structure Clarity Technical Communications ensures that the customer only pays for content development, nothing else. There are no minimum commitments. The hourly fee stops once the project is completed, maximizing cost effectiveness. In addition, the implementation of highly skilled candidates means that the best resources are assigned to projects to maximize productivity as quickly as possible, avoiding additional costs related to training or orientation.

2. Clarity Solves Control Concerns – The Clarity Technical Communications' team of Customer Relationship Managers handle extraneous issues related to administration, development, and project management, freeing enterprise managers from wasting valuable time micro-managing consultants. As part of these duties, Customer Relationship Managers also provide detailed reporting on project status with each consultant, ensuring that the communications project meets its scheduled deadline.

3. Clarity Answers Flexibility Concerns – Clarity can scale communications resources up or down to fit specific needs of a project. In the event that requirements change mid-cycle, for instance with additional projects or workloads, or there is a change in content direction or strategy, supplemental communication resources can be immediately assigned to meet those needs and ensure that strict production timelines are still met.

Through this combination of strategies, resources, and consulting talent, Clarity Technical Communications provides a superior and cost effective approach to solving today's communications challenges.

Concluding Summary

Increased demand for quality communications and documentation requires flexible external consultants, available precisely when needed. Choosing the right external resource partner can play a significant role in meeting strict project deadlines and lead to faster market penetration and revenue generation.

Management time is extremely valuable. External consultants must now have the depth of product knowledge and professionalism to get communication projects done quickly, with minimal assistance from management.

The Clarity Technical Communications Writing Network provides a flexible pool of talented consultants who ensure that corporate communications projects across the various enterprise divisions meet strategic business needs.

In summary, there are three primary business advantages when using The Clarity Technical Communications Writing Network for enterprise communications projects:

- **Fitting Expertise for Project Needs** – Clarity attracts the most qualified communications and writing consultants, enabling enterprise managers to choose the best candidates who will meet the needs of their challenging projects.
- **Flexibility that Ensures Complete Control** – A customer is always in control at every stage of a communications project from resource selection to content development and delivery/deployment. Clarity Technical Communications' flexible approach to project management ensures that a client can make changes quickly when needed.
- **Measurable Cost Effectiveness** – Clarity's network of talented communicators and writers ensures a high degree of accuracy and efficiency without the need for additional project development cycles or costly management involvement. Clarity's approach saves enterprise clients from incurring additional and expensive development costs associated with project delays and/or missed deadlines.

For more information about Clarity's project-based approach to writing and communications projects, please visit the Clarity Technical Communications website at www.claritytechwriters.com or contact us at 1-800-481-5700.





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