

Tutoring Guide for Technical Writing: Marketing & Informational Materials

The Assignment in General

The term *marketing and informational materials* covers a broad range of writing projects. Marketing documents include news releases, brochures, and promotional material, while informational materials deal with résumés, memos, and newsletters. Generally speaking, these items make up the communication methods of the business world.

The Paper's Structure and Development

Technical writers follow three stages in their writing process. Tutors can assist writers in any of these three stages.

1. Planning

- » Encourage the writer to write down facts about the audience and keep them in mind throughout the entire process
- » Ask questions that will help the writer clarify the purpose of the document
- » Help the writer vocalize the purpose

2. Organizing

- » Remind the writer that headings do not eliminate the need for smooth transitions and logical organization
- » Identify and help the writer eliminate clichés, flowery language, and metaphors
- » Make sure the document's purpose drives its organization
- » Ask the writer questions about the audience to ensure the writer is truly familiar with his audience

3. Revising

- » Fill the role of a usability tester
- » Point out unclear/confusing language

Of Special Note

Technical writers frequently conduct usability tests. In a usability test, sample audience members who are unrelated to the project use the document and provide feedback on its accuracy, clarity, readability. A good usability tester asks questions about anything that seems confusing or unclear. Tutors can, therefore, act as usability testers in sessions.