

Clarity Helps Strengthen a Medical Device Company's Documentation Capabilities

Challenge

A FORTUNE® 500 medical device company needed to develop the technical writing capabilities of three of its scientists. For many of the company's scientists, English was a second language, yet the scientists were responsible for writing various documents, including medical testing documentation, medical equipment procedures, proposals, and medical journal articles.

Opportunity

Although the three scientists communicated regularly with physicians and other scientists about highly technical subjects, writing technical documents in a nonnative language posed a challenge. Clarity Technical Communications provided a consultant with significant experience as a technical writer, medical writer, and, most importantly, a writing instructor who had worked with professionals before.

Results

The consultant worked with the scientists over a period of nine months on a part-time basis to gradually improve their ability to write technical documentation in English. The consultant used several techniques to accomplish this goal. First she facilitated short but intense training sessions on professional writing techniques. These classes were conducted to accommodate the scientists' schedules. The consultant then conducted one-on-one coaching sessions with each scientist, held whenever the scientist's schedule permitted it.

The coaching sessions focused on critiquing technical documents written by the scientists. The focus on existing writing assignments enabled the scientists to get immediate feedback from a writing coach and, combined with the classroom sessions, improved their ability to write technical documentation in English.

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Clarity enabled the client to:

- Have three scientists trained in technical writing best practices.
- Generate a higher volume of technical documentation.

“When I get material from a scientist I'm very careful never to compromise scientific information and to maintain the meaning as I make it more understandable. It's common in writing like this by less experienced writers to advocate or editorialize inadvertently, which is impermissible in science writing.”

Marlene H., Consultant