

# Blue pencil



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## Marketing Communications Panel Discussion

By Beverly Spagnolo

At the last STC meeting on September 10, 2003, Barb Stanton led a discussion about technical marketing communications, with Carolee Ketelaar, Alan Houser and Pam Selkar Rak as members of the panel. Each panel member has at some point performed the role of both technical writer and marketing writer, and much of the discussion focused on differences between the two as well as the what different types of marketing writing there are.

Marketing writing is seen as generally more creative than technical writing, focusing on crystallizing benefits more than just presenting straightforward information.

Marketing writing can cover a huge gamut of materials, anywhere from eye-catching postcards to a company's annual report. For instance:

- White paper—technically written to a technical audience for users and buyers of a product. In a white paper, you are making a case for someone to buy a product, make (more) money and save time/be more productive. While technical writing tends to be more procedural, in a white paper you are telling a positive story, talking about features in a more benefit, value-added way.
- Ghost writing—writing under the by-line of someone else. While it is intoxicating to be working with the top echelon of a company, the most difficult facet of ghost writing is relinquishing claim of authorship of your work.

- Technical journalism—provides an excellent stepping-stone into marketing. This includes business pages coverage in the media, writing press releases, and educating the public about your company.

Marketing pieces can serve multiple audiences, so audience analysis is very important. In a marketing piece, you may be producing for funding sources, corporate leaders, or the general public. In many cases, the audience, very simply, is who is going to pay for the product.

There are two categories of marketing pieces or collateral: sales and product. Sales collateral examples are brochures, booklets and postcards. Product collateral may include executive summaries, data sheets and white papers. Marketing collateral writing should have a strong, direct, active voice; it should avoid jargon and overused words.

When working with a new marketing client, it's important to perform an audit of what they have now to see what they do and to get an idea of what they want to do. Frequently, you may be hired to write a specific piece for a company in lieu of creating an entire campaign for them.

A marketing writer tends to deal with a different kind of people than a technical writer will. Marketing writers tend to deal with people at a higher corporate level. A marketing writer will also work closely with graphic designers, as the design and copy of a piece must work in sync with one another.

If you want to move into marketing writing, volunteer to try some pieces, read and research what's involved, and talk to marketing people.

Carolee provided a list of **Resources for Technical Marketing Communications Writing**, which follows:

### Books

*The Birth of Internet Marketing Communication* by Dan Steinbock

*Marketing Communications: Contexts, Strategies, and Application* by Chris Fill

*Marketing Communications: Principles and Practice* by Philip J. Kitchen

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### Blue Pencil

Blue Pencil is the official newsletter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC), Pittsburgh chapter. It is published monthly from September through June by the Pittsburgh chapter to inform and promote communication within the chapter and the Society. Material contained in this publication may be reprinted by other STC chapters, provided credit is given. Please send a copy of the reprint to the editor. Readers are invited to submit ads, short articles, news, reviews, and other material of interest to technical communicators by the 10th of the month prior to publication to:

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## From the President

by Nancy Ott  
President, Pittsburgh Chapter

To do:

- Buy baby shower gift
- Weed garden
- Take kids to dentist
- Write first president's column

I'm a big fan of "to do" lists. Perhaps it's because they impose a fleeting sense of order in my messy and chaotic life. Some "to do" items are tangible and immediate, easily completed and crossed off with a sense of satisfaction. Sort laundry. Clean game room. Write thank-you notes. Buy groceries. Others are less realistic: goals, long-term projects, dreams. Plan renovations. Finish curtains for my younger son's room (on hold since my sewing machine broke). Write novel. Put ten year's worth of photos into albums. Dream dreams.

As the incoming president, my job so far has been a big "to do" list. Plan the new chapter year. Recruit new board members and committee heads (more on this elsewhere). Collect the official "STC Pittsburgh" sign and official president's box of meeting items from Alan. Send invitations to chapter meetings. Learn how to manage chapter activities. Fill out forms. Write columns and announcements. The usual tasks of an incoming president.

I've also had the chance to add a couple of new items to the "to do" list this year. First is a joint meeting with the Central Pennsylvania chapter in Monroeville on Saturday, October 25. The Central PA chapter is co-hosting our annual employment roundtable meeting this year. If you are seriously looking for work, are dusting off your resume "just in case", or are simply in the mood for some career development, the employment roundtable allows you to sample a variety of employment and career-related topics.

Next on the list is a one-day, regional conference to be held on Saturday, April 17, 2004. The conference theme is "Writers without Borders." It's going to focus on the upheavals, new technologies and new

courses that technical communication has taken on over the past few years. We are currently in the planning stages and are busy lining up speakers, vendors, and a venue. However, much remains to be done. We need your help! If you want to get more involved with STC but don't have time for a long-term commitment, working on the conference is a great way to start. Watch the newsletter and the STCPGH mailing list for more information!

Finally, I'm looking forward to working with you to make this year interesting, enlightening, and entertaining. I hope that you enjoy the slate of meeting topics that vice president Barb Stanton has put together. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any comments or suggestions, or would just like to talk.

Another item crossed off the "to do" list ... whew!

## New Committee Chairs

By Nancy Ott, President

I'm delighted to announce the following new committee chairs for the 2003-2004 chapter year:

- Linda Rachul-Rymniak is taking on the job of Publicity chair. She will publicize chapter events to the media, such as meeting announcements in local newspapers.
- Marlene Miller is taking on the job of chapter web site coordinator. She will maintain the stcpgh.org web site and the STCPGH mailing list.
- Heather Lum is taking on the job of publications competition coordinator, with the assistance of Beverly Spagnolo. She will organize and run the chapter's print and online technical publications competition. Winners of the chapter competition can advance to STC's international competition.

## Marketing Communications Panel Discussion

(continued from page 1)

*Technical Marketing Communication*  
by Sandra Harner, Tom Zimmerman,  
And Sam Dragger

*Writing High-Tech Copy That Sells*  
by Janice King

Good on-line source for books about marketing communications:

[www.writersbookmall.com](http://www.writersbookmall.com)

### Websites

MarCommWise  
[www.marcommwise.com](http://www.marcommwise.com)

STC Marketing Communications SIG  
[www.stcsig.org/mc](http://www.stcsig.org/mc)

STC publications  
[www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org)  
(Need to be a member. Go to Members Only page and select Publications Search.)

TECHWR-L  
[www.raycomm.com/techwhirl/archives](http://www.raycomm.com/techwhirl/archives)  
(put "technical marketing communications" in the search field)

Thomson Learning EMEA  
[www.thomsonlearning.co.uk/marketing](http://www.thomsonlearning.co.uk/marketing)

### Professional Societies

American Marketing Association  
[www.marketingpower.com](http://www.marketingpower.com)

International Association of Business Communicators  
[www.iabc.com](http://www.iabc.com)

Public Relations Society of America  
[www.prsa.org](http://www.prsa.org)

Society for Technical Communication  
[www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org)

## We Want Your Ideas!

by Meg Papa, Blue Pencil Managing Editor

The Blue Pencil, at its best, should be a resource for chapter members, providing you not only with information about upcoming events, but also with ideas and tips you can use in your profession. Our regular columns and features are focused on the latter. Currently, we run Bob Mohr's column where he shares ways to better utilize common software packages. In addition, we publish the WorkQuest meeting summaries which contain a wealth of information for job searches and related areas.

I would like to add an additional regular column to the Blue Pencil that would address an issue of importance to chapter members. But I need your input. Please, let me know - what issues are important to you? What kind of information would help you be more competitive in your field? Let your thinking run wild. For example, do you want to see additional articles that address technical issues? Articles about the business climate for Tech Comms? Grammar or style information? Anecdotal personal success stories? Brainstorm and send me your ideas, please.

Sending me ideas of topics in no way obligates you to write anything. However, if anyone is interested in contributing to a column, please let me know that as well. It would not necessarily need to be every month - the more chapter members we have contributing to the Blue Pencil, the better it will serve the chapter.

I hope to hear from you soon!

[mv0t@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:mv0t@andrew.cmu.edu)

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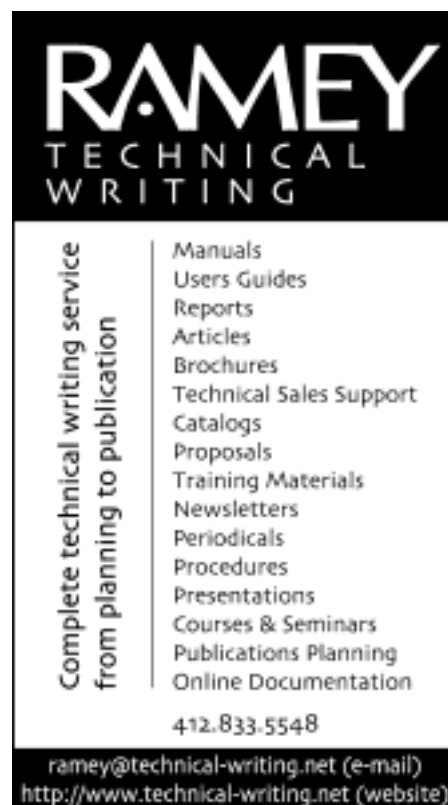
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<http://www.technical-writing.net> (website)



## Membership at a Glance (as of September 30)

**National  
Total Members: 19,684**

**Total Chapters: 150**

**Pittsburgh Chapter**

**Total Members: 159**

**New Members:**

John Allwein

Peter Cameon

**Reinstated Member:**

Marcie Simons Milletary

## Notes from the National Office

### Upcoming Telephone Seminars

Wednesday, November 5

*Technical Communication Departments:  
Establishing a Baseline of Performance* –  
Saul Carliner

Wednesday, December 10

*Adding Panache to Your Procedures* –  
Leah Guren

All telephone seminars are held from 1:00-2:30 p.m. EST. Members can register for the seminars at [www.stc.org/seminars.asp](http://www.stc.org/seminars.asp). Cost for a seminar is per site, not per person. U.S. sites: \$145; Canadian sites: \$160.

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### Scholarships for Technical Communication

STC is now offering four scholarships (two for undergraduates and two for graduate students) for the 2004-2005 academic year. Each scholarship is worth \$1,000, paid directly to the school attended.

STC awards scholarships to students who are enrolled full-time in undergraduate or graduate technical communication programs and studying for an academic or commercial career in technical communication. Applicants need not be STC members or American citizens. They must be enrolled in a full-time technical communication program and have completed one year of postsecondary education before fall 2003. Students completing an undergraduate degree are eligible to apply for their first year of graduate school.

To apply, students must submit a completed application package, including a description of their accomplishments and goals. The package must be received by February 16, 2004. Students can obtain application information from their department chairs, the STC Web site ([www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org)), or the STC office in Arlington, Virginia, or they can contact Lenore Ridgway at the address below.

Please promote the use of STC scholarships by applying or encouraging others to do so. The scholarships are one of the ways we can continue to improve our profession.

Lenore S. Ridgway  
19 Johnston Avenue  
Kingston, NY 12401  
(845) 339-4927  
[stcleer@cs.com](mailto:stcleer@cs.com)

Society for Technical Communication  
Attn: Scholarships  
901 N. Stuart St., Suite 904  
Arlington, VA 22203-1822  
(703) 522-4114  
[stc@stc.org](mailto:stc@stc.org)  
\*\*\*\*\*

### Procedures for STC's 2004 Election

The annual STC election will be held in early 2004, and only members who have paid their dues by February 28, 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 April 15. Be sure to renew by February 28 to have a say in STC's future!

\*\*\*\*\*

### Mark Your Calendars!

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

#### Society for Technical Communication

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Fax: 703-522-2075

## WorkQuest™ Group Shares Information, Ideas

The Pittsburgh Chapter's WorkQuest™ group continues to hold its weekly meetings.

June 9—"Presenting Yourself at a Job Fair"

WorkQuest™ member Shelle Taylor, a recruiter at North Shore Technology, gave an informative talk on a subject many of us know little about: how to present (i.e., market) yourself at a job fair. Fortunately, many of the most successful techniques will be familiar to anyone who's had a job interview lately:

- Prepare ahead of time
- Identify in advance the company or companies whose representatives you'll want to talk to
- Have several copies of your resume with you
- Be open, honest, and enthusiastic
- Ask a lot of questions

The main differences between a formal interview and presenting yourself at a job fair is that job fairs provide opportunities to talk one-on-one with representatives from

numerous companies. However, the downside from the job seekers perspective is that there's usually far less time available for you to talk about yourself and your credentials. Hone your personal profile and skills so that you can tell a prospective employer the highpoints of your career and abilities in no more than a minute or two. Later, follow up with a personal letter that reiterates the skills you mentioned in person.

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# Alternative to Word's Auto-Numbering

by Robert P. Mohr

Sometimes Word gets a little confused with its numbered lists. You can overcome this shortcoming by using SEQ (sequence) field codes (as AutoText entries) in combination with one or more styles and a few simple macros to create your own numbered lists. The macros can be assigned to an existing toolbar for quick access.

The process for creating a custom numbering scheme involves three operations:

- Create a SEQ field code to *start* a numbered list and a SEQ field code to *continue* a numbered list.
- Create AutoText entries for the start and continue SEQ field codes.
- Create one or more styles to format the list items.

It's usually at this point in an article where I take you step by step through the gory details of the processes involved. This time, however, I'm going to spare you the nitty gritty. Instead, I've spared you the hassle by preparing a Word template that already contains a style, AutoText entries, macros, and a custom toolbar that you can download at your convenience. Simply point your browser to <http://www.writemohr.com> and download the Word template from the **Utilities** section. More information is provided in the template. The remainder of this article contains an overview of what the alternative numbering is all about.

At the heart of the numbering operation is the SEQ field code. Using SEQ, you create two numbering schemes. One is configured to *start* a numbered list and the other is configured to *continue* a numbered list.

Here's an example of a *start* list:

```
{SEQ numberedlist \* Arabic \r 1
\MERGEFORMAT}
```

It breaks down this way:

**numberedlist** is a mnemonic name used to identify the numbering scheme.

**Arabic** refers to the appearance of the numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.).

**\r** resets or restarts the numbering.

**1** is the number that **\r** uses to restart the numbering sequence.

Here's an example of a *continue* list:

```
{SEQ numberedlist \* Arabic \n
\MERGEFORMAT}
```

It breaks down this way:

**numberedlist** is a mnemonic name used to identify the numbering scheme.

**Arabic** refers to the appearance of the numerals.

**\n** creates the next number based on the number before it.

After creating the SEQ fields, create an appropriate paragraph style to format the list items. With a style you can specify the amount of indent, the font, and the paragraph space following each list item.

Next, create AutoText entries. One for the start SEQ code and one for the continue SEQ code. Both AutoText entries can use the same style.

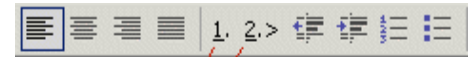
To create an AutoText entry (one entry for *start* and one for *continue*):

1. Add a period and Tab immediately following each SEQ field code (or whatever formatting you want to separate the list item number from the list item text). To make it easier to see the field code text you can toggle between code view and text view by highlighting the code and pressing **Shift+F9**.
2. Highlight the entire SEQ field code line—excluding the paragraph mark!
3. Select **Insert > AutoText > New**.
4. Enter a name for the AutoText entry in the box provided. I used short, abbreviated names like *nls* and *nlc* for numbered list *start* and numbered list *continued*. You can use whatever names you want, just be sure those names are used in the macros described later in this article.

5. Click **OK**.

Once the AutoText entries are complete, you could stop there. When you want to start a new list, just type *nls* and press **F3**. A number **1** will appear and you can type the list item text. To continue the list, move to a new line and type *nlc* and press **F3**. The next number in sequence will appear. Repeat as needed.

However, as a proponent of macros, and as a way to apply these SEQ fields quicker and easier in the future, I went a little further and created macros and assigned the macros to a toolbar so they would “apply” the AutoText entries for me with just a mouse click. For example:



My Start and Continue macros placed between Word's standard icons

The macros and a utilities toolbar are included in the downloadable template mentioned earlier in this article. (To view the macro code, open the template and press **Alt+F11**.)

Using the macros to create a numbered list:

6. Click the **1.** icon and type your item text, or type the first list item text, and with the insertion point still in the text, click the **1.** icon. Either way, the list item is prefixed with a **1**.
7. Move to a new line.
8. Click the **2.>** icon and type your item text, or type the list item text, and with the insertion point still in the text, click the **2.>** icon. Either way, the list item is prefixed with a **2**.
9. Repeat step 3 to create additional list items. Each new item is numbered based on the item preceding it.

(continued on page 7)

## Alternative to Word's Auto-Numbering

(continued from page 6)

There's one important thing to remember when using numbering methods based on the SEQ field code: Unlike Word's Auto-Number feature, the SEQ field codes do not automatically renumber themselves. When list items are rearranged, deleted, or new items are inserted into an existing list, you must manually update them. However, this is very easy to do and doesn't require much more than a key press or two.

To update/renumber an existing list:

10. Make sure the first item in the list starts with 1. If necessary, click on it and re-reply the 1. macro.
11. Select (highlight) all remaining items in the list beginning with the second item.
12. Press **F9**. This causes Word to update the selected SEQ codes.

*Note: An alternative method of updating the fields is to press **Ctrl+A** then press **F9**. This selects the whole document then updates all codes within it at once. The choice is yours.*

Regardless of how you choose to update, you'll find that using the SEQ field code is extremely reliable and will not "break" the way Word's Auto-Numbering sometimes does. You will also find that this simple solution will work in several versions of Word: 95, 97, 2000, and 2002/XP. Download the template and give it a try.

*Bob Mohr is a senior STC member and the author of The Elements of Word. He can be reached via e-mail at [rpmohr@writemohr.com](mailto:rpmohr@writemohr.com).*

## Chapter Meeting Schedule

Here is a tentative schedule of 2003-2004 meetings for the chapter. More details for each meeting will be published on the [stcpgh.org](http://stcpgh.org) website and in this newsletter as the date draws closer.

Date: Monday, November 10, 2003 (see more details in this issue)  
Topic: The Value of a Writer  
Speaker: John Clark

Date: March 2004  
Topic: FrameMaker/XML workshop  
Speaker: Joint Meeting with NE Ohio/YSU chapters

Date: Tuesday, December 9, 2003  
Topic: Style Guide/UI Style Standards  
Speaker: TBA

Date: April 2004  
Topic: Mini-Conference: Writers Without Borders: Trends in Technical Communication  
Speaker: Various

Date: Tuesday, January 13, 2004  
Topic: Online Help  
Speaker: Component One personnel

Date: May 2004  
Topic: Awards and Recognition Dinner

Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2004  
Topic: XML and Single Sourcing  
Speaker: Rob Franklin from Rascal Software

Date: June 2004  
Topic: Year-End Happy Hour

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Director, MAPW Program  
[krs@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:krs@andrew.cmu.edu)  
412.268.2659

# November Chapter Meeting: How Technical Writers Add Value

Date: Monday, November 10  
 Time: 6:00-8:00 pm

Many of us are faced with the challenge of proving our worth, of proving the value of our work and our contributions to our employers and clients. How can we provide a significant return on investment? How do we prove how valuable we are?

Join us at our November meeting for a discussion about how technical writers add value. We will talk about how we can increase the return on the investment that our employers and clients are making in us and we'll discuss how we can increase and prove our market value to future employers and clients.

This meeting will be relevant to both full-time employees and freelance writers.

John Clark, a technical writer with over 20 years of experience in both freelance and employed positions, and a senior member of the STC Pittsburgh chapter will lead the discussion.

The meeting format will be that of a workshop. This will not be a lecture; you won't see any PowerPoint presentations. The intent is for this to be an open discussion, a positive sharing of practical ideas that you can start using the next morning.

Remember, even if you get just one good idea, this is a meeting worth attending.

The meeting will be held on Monday, November 10, 2003 from 6-8 p.m. at the Pittsburgh Technology Council 2000 Technology Drive, which is located off of Second Avenue. You can get directions at:

<http://www.pghtech.org/contact/directions.html>

The cost is \$5 members and \$2 for students and unemployed. Deli sandwiches, snacks, pop and desert will be served, plus all those in attendance will be eligible to win the door prize raffle drawing.

Please RSVP to Darlene Mullenix at [dmullenix@federatedinv.com](mailto:dmullenix@federatedinv.com) or call 412-288-8676 by Thursday, November 6. Please remember that you are expected to pay if you RSVP and do not attend.

## Editorial Calendar

Meetings for the Pittsburgh Chapter of the STC will be held the second week of the month for the 2003-2004 year. It is our hope to have a profile of the speaker and subject of each upcoming meeting in the Blue Pencil. In addition to a speaker profile, the newsletter will include periodic columns on em-

ployment issues, writing tools and tips, and other topics. Finally, we want to include articles written by you, the members of the chapter.

For newsletter information to be timely for members, we plan to publish the newsletter

two weeks before the meeting. In order to publish on time, we would like to have all articles two weeks before the publication date (or four weeks before the meeting). A tentative schedule for the year is below:

Meeting Date	Blue Pencil Publication Date (Monday)	Article Submission Deadline (Monday)
Week of December 8	November 24	November 10
Week of January 12	December 29	December 15
Week of February 9	January 26	January 12
Week of March 8	February 23	February 9
Week of April 12	March 29	March 15
Week of May 10	April 26	April 12

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