



Do's and Don'ts of Job Search

By William P. Oliver

There are lots of informative books on the subject of job searching now. But, either authors aren't including a "list of don'ts" or nobody's reading because I watch lots of people make costly job search errors everyday; sending our poorly written resumes, exaggerating their skills, saying really dumb things in interviews, etc.

Human nature being what it is, I think people need boundaries in tasks that call for creativity. Resume writing, answering ads, interviewing, etc. are reasonably creative activities. In my opinion, overlooking key information in job search advice just leaves too much room for job seekers to get into trouble. I think the message needs to be strong, like my list of do's and don'ts:

Do...take your time considering the kind of position you want next and what you're most qualified to do. The two aren't necessarily the same. Talk over your alternatives and preferences with a knowledgeable person and firm up your ideas. Try to limit yourself to two alternatives; one you're sure of and the other, well, go exploring!

Don't...forget your audience when writing job search materials. Remember, the adage, "Write to inform, not to impress." We don't need to know about every one of your publications or the gory details of your ascent up the corporate ladder. Good resumes are brief, with the focus on accomplishments and skills. It's hard to justify a resume longer than two pages (yes, you read it right, t-w-o pages) in length. That means no "curriculum vitae" and a six-pager is totally out of the question!

Do...develop different resumes for different directions. For example emphasize your instruc-

tional design background and platform speaking experience on your training resume. The technical writing version should present different skills and accomplishments. When the OBJECTIVE line says one thing and the BODY tells a different story, it's the "round file" for your resume.

Don't...exaggerate your education, skills, or experience. Just because you saw someone working with GoGoHelp (isn't that the hottest and newest?) doesn't mean it belongs on your resume. It's unprofessional and could be very embarrassing if you run into a GoGoHelp expert. Invariably, they'll want to swap Release X.0 war stories and you won't have any. That opportunity will end abruptly.

Do...avoid the "starched collar" style when writing a cover letter. *"In consideration of your highly attractive advertisement regarding blah-blah, please accept this communication..."* Those are the worst! Come on, show your skill as a writer and stop lifting those old, tired sample letters from

See Job Search, cont'd on page 5

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A Note from the President	2
Are You Certifiable?	3
Chapter Notes	3
Employment Opportunities	4
Two Orlando STC Members	
Attain Senior Member Status . . .	4
Regional News	6
Admin Council	6
Eye on Language	7
Certification Survey	7
Do You Have E-mail?	7
Coming Up	8

**For the Latest
Employment and
Meeting
Information, Call
the Orlando
Chapter Hotline
at
407-262-2064**

A Note from the President . . .

Happy 1998 Fellow Chapter Members!

By Dick Hughes

At the beginning of a new year, it always seems appropriate to reflect on where we've been and where we're going. I'd like to do this by focusing your attention on two topics of major importance to the Orlando Chapter—our financial health and our future leadership.

TECH TRENDS

MANAGING EDITOR

Nadejda Bojilova 407/660-0343
nadejdab@paysys.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Gwen Thomas 407/660-0343
gthomas@paysys.com

DESIGN/LAYOUT/PRODUCTION

Alice Atkins 407/767-9016
amatkins@sundial.net
www.rhrun.com/Alice

ORLANDO CHAPTER ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

PRESIDENT

Dick Hughes 407/660-2552
hughesrl@cdm.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Gwen Thomas 407/660-0343
gthomas@paysys.com

SECRETARY

Laurie Benson 407/667-3725
laurie@magicnet.net

TREASURER

W. C. Wiese 407/356-4792
william.c.wiese@lmco.com

STC REGION 3 DIRECTOR/SPONSOR

Michelle Ratcliffe 813/920-3539
mratcliffe@msn.com

Tech Trends, published six times per year, is the official publication of the STC Orlando Chapter. We encourage letters, articles and other items from STC members for publication. Please refer to "Coming Up" for deadline information. Address submissions to Nadejda Bojilova, 974 Vineridge Run 15-308, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714; e-mail: nadejdab@paysys.com

You may reprint original material appearing in *Tech Trends* if you acknowledge the author and source and send us a copy of the publication containing the reprint.

© 1998 STC Orlando Chapter, All rights reserved.

First our financial health. Essentially, the chapter has only one fixed source of annual income—the portion of your dues that we receive as a rebate from the Society each summer. This amount is approximately \$2,500–\$2,600, depending on the number of members as of June 30 each year. That's why it's so important to us that you renew your annual membership. The STC rebate enables us to support the many activities of the Education Committee, provide monthly meetings/programs, and publish and distribute this newsletter, *Tech Trends*. Since we've recently undertaken the sponsorship of a more ambitious two-day annual conference, Trends, we've found that though it is well worth the required time and effort; it is also much more expensive to produce. Where past one-day conferences have contributed a profit to our annual chapter budget, this past year we just broke even (which was our goal because it was our first try at a two-day event).

My commitment is to grow our successful Trends conferences into profitable ventures for the chapter. I hope some of you will join me on the 1998 Conference Committee and contribute your ideas, talents, and expertise to this challenge

The second area of our chapter's future leadership is one I'm particularly concerned about. The Orlando Chapter has a solid and successful record of slight but steady growth. Our current membership is about 120 members. What bothers me is that over the past

three years during which I have served as President, it seems that only about 20 of these 120 members are actively participating and doing all the work. I realize that we are all busy people, but if you are going to join a professional society you owe it to yourself to be active in it. Believe me, you're not getting a good return on your investment if you aren't.

This month our Nominating Committee will begin the search for candidates for the chapter's four elected offices - President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer—to be voted into office in April for the 1998–99 chapter year. Please give some serious thought to being a candidate and contributing your ideas and experience to the chapter. If you cannot serve in an elective capacity, perhaps serving on one of our committees may interest you. We always need help on the following committees: Conference, Education, Employment, Membership, Newsletter, Nominating, Programs, Publicity, Web Site. In fact, we're currently looking for a new Employment Contact/Manager to keep our telephone hotline updated.

Make it your new year's resolution to get involved! We need you. Have a wonderful and prosperous new year. ☒



Are You Certifiable?

By Gwen Thomas

As many of you may know, STC is considering a certification program. One fact STC is aware of: there are as many opinions about the advisability of instituting such a program as there are technical communicators. What STC does not know is the details of those opinions.

And so, a survey has been commissioned. Guess where the company performing the survey is located? Right here in Orlando. And guess what the company is doing to assess STC membership's feelings toward certification? They're holding focus groups. And guess who gets to be part of one of those focus groups? **You**.

Our January 28 meeting will not deal with contracting issues, as was previously announced. Instead, we're taking advantage of the opportunity to give as many members as can attend their individual two-cents' worth on this vital topic.

It's important to get a good estimate of the number of people attending this meeting, because we'll be breaking into the appropriate number of small groups. We'll have to plan accordingly. And so, if you will be attending, please R.S.V.P. as soon as possible to Gwen Thomas at (407)660-0343 x.403 or gthomas@paysys.com.

The person leading the focus group will be Dr. Cynthia Woodley of

Professional Testing. A private licensing and certification testing company, Professional Testing administers and creates state and national licensure and certification exams. It also works with companies and professional associations from "the ground up," helping them decide whether to offer certification programs, designing the programs, developing exams, and administering exams.

According to Dr. Woodley, the STC program under consideration has been modeled after the Florida Association of Code Enforcers certification program. This professional organization began offering certification on a voluntary basis a while back. While it's still technically voluntary, certification became a job requirement in most state jurisdictions, making certification virtually mandatory. Currently that organization is debating whether to turn control of the certification program over to a state agency.

So...does this sound like something you want to happen to our profession? Don't tell me—tell Dr. Woodley on January 28th! ❧



Attendees of the November meeting listen attentively to David Gillette as he talks about the internet.

Chapter Notes

By Laurie Benson

November Meeting

The November meeting at U.C.F. focused on web page design. David Gillette certainly keeps up on the most current developments in this ever-changing technology. He discussed how web developers are capitalizing on the new theory that users really want to remain passive and be entertained by a web site similarly to the way they are entertained by television and movies. Instead of requiring the viewer to choose each option and click on each event, animated sequences of pictures combined with small amounts of text can enable a web site to emulate a video experience.

David showed us some examples of outstanding web site designs located at www.killersites.com and www.high-five.com. A web site does not have to be a linear sequence of slide presentations. Using animated gifs, java scripts, and metaphors in a creative design can create an impressive experience for the audience.

December Meeting

The December meeting was a small gathering at the 4th Fighter Group restaurant in Orlando. Although there was no planned agenda for this meeting, we had a chance to network and empathize with those who experience similar situations of job stress and political pressure. No one can understand these situations as well as another technical communicator. ❧



Employment Opportunities

By Loretta Lott

Here are the additions to our employment hotline. Remember to check the hotline (262-2064) for the latest employment opportunity information.

Position: Technical Writer (1 yr +)
 Location: Longwood
 Contact: Felicia Slattery and Richard Phipps,
 ciberorl@worldramp.net

Technical Recruiter 800-800-0682
 Ciber, Inc. 407-682-1300 2180
 fax: 407.682.6564
 West S.R. 434, Ste. 4148, Longwood, FL
 32779-5011

Description: TW 1: This is a long-term career opportunity for a self-starter professional with experience in software documentation in a MS Word and FrameMaker environment. Responsibilities will include development and maintenance of design, diagnostic, and customer documentation training materials, and software interfaces.

TW 2: Technical Writer to interface with a QA department, working with Internet applications and ISO 9000 standards. Must be a self-starter, able to describe complex business, operational and engineering processes in simple terms. Authoring methods and procedures, user's guides and job aids for multiple hardware and software tools in support of electronic commerce, network management, inventory, and provisioning. Expert level knowledge of: MS Office Suite, MS Project, Visio,

Powerpoint, HTML,
 Transit, Robohelp, and
 Internet required.



Position: Senior Writer/Manager of Technical
 Communications
 Location: Ft. Lauderdale
 Contact: Motorola's Media and Communications
 Department

Description: Candidates must have an advanced degree. The ideal candidate would be proficient in Frame, Quark, HTML and Microsoft Office applications. Some experience in advanced database software and multimedia would be helpful. He/she should have 6-8 years experience. Duties: *team coaching, leadership, supervision, project management *higher levels of efficiency, quality, service *integration of new technologies in electronic publishing, data management, etc. Compensation: Salary: \$65,000 + Motorola benefits are on par with the best in the US. Send resumes or contact: Don West Senior Manager, Media and Communications Motorola e-mail: Don_West-FDW004@email.mot.com fax :(954) 723-5754.

Two Orlando STC Chapter Members Attain Senior Member Status

By Nadejda Bojilova

Thomas J. Perhai and Debra Y. Winter, members of our chapter, were recently conferred the grade of Senior Member of the Society.

According to the STC bylaws, senior member status is given automatically to each member after five years in the grade of member in the Society. The new senior members will receive certificates from STC

and their names will be published in TIELINE. Congratulations to Debra and Thomas! ❖

Job Search, *cont'd from page 1*

that job search book. Effective cover letters are short, relaxed, friendly, and right to the point.

Don't... "shoot from the hip" during interviews. The best way to handle difficult interview questions is to practice your responses out loud. Be brief, (30–40 seconds is good) speak confidently and get to the point. Running on about how miserable your ex-employer/boss/spouse was will never help your case, I promise.

Do... always act professionally. Confirm appointments, be on time, dress appropriately, mind your manners, and follow up with everybody. Short, informal follow-up notes or e-mail messages seem to work the best. Even in the face of gross incompetence (they didn't hire you) maintain your composure. Grit your teeth, try to smile, and move forward no matter what the news.

Don't... get overconfident just because you've received a few phone calls.

The job market has a way of humbling just about everyone at some point. And when it's your turn to visit a "dark place" during your search, try to get through it quickly. Force yourself to make ten calls and send out ten resumes everyday until things brighten. Action will always help, I guarantee it.

Do... work on your portfolio. Get hold of your best writings and put them in a binder. Use plastic copy protectors so that samples don't get soiled. You don't need to carry thirty pounds of samples to make a good impression so update your portfolio at least once year. After a few years, if your samples don't look so hot, maybe it's time to rethink your decision and invest in that "Biggie Burger" franchise.

Don't... shortchange yourself by being unprepared to negotiate with your new employer. Read a book on negotiating, develop a game plan and practice out loud. Salary negotiations are usually over

in seconds so whoever hesitates or fumbles for words first, normally comes out the poorer. Preparation here pays, literally.

What's the single most important piece of advice I give to those new to the game or those experiencing difficulty in job search? I always say, "Go to the library, check out three books on the subject and read them cover to cover before doing anything." Next, give yourself some boundaries by remembering my list of do's and don'ts. Now work hard and good luck on your search.

Editors Note: William P. Oliver is President of Techwrights, inc., a Randolph, NJ based technical writing and instructional design firm. This marks his 20th article for the NY STC Chapter newsletter since 1991. You can reach Bill with comments or questions at (201) 786-7244. ☒

XEROGRAPHICS AD

Regional News:

STC Actively Celebrates Autumn

By Michelle Ratcliffe

Region 3 is breaking into the new year with a flurry of activity. There are several opportunities to learn and celebrate (two of my favorite things) throughout our area.

To Learn!

There are two conferences scheduled for the early spring, Currents in Atlanta, GA, on March 20 and 21 and the Region 3 Student Conference in Melbourne, FL, on March 28. Plan now to attend both if you can. I am not trying to be diplomatic in my recommendations, I am telling you they are both well worth the effort!

In its tenth year, Currents offers a fantastic opportunity to consume, peruse, and contemplate timely information relevant to your current (pun intended) projects and challenges. This year's conference theme is Informing the World, which represents our mission as translators who explain complex concepts to citizens of the world at large. Conference highlights include a pre-conference workshop called Writing for Usability and many fantastic sessions. For details, take a look at the conference web site:

<http://www.stc.org/region3/atl/www/>.



In its third year, the Region 3 Student Conference has developed a tremendous opportunity for both students and professionals. This conference is a forum to share insights into our industry and career options and to explore new territory through great presentations like:

- Copy Rights and Wrongs: Intellectual Property and Digital Communication
- Contract Technical Writing: What you need to get started and succeed as a consultant
- Creating Great Indexes
- Web Site Development

Students can see some great presentations, network with professionals, and participate in a resume and portfolio review session. Professionals can see some great presentations, do some recruiting, and rejuvenate your spirit as you contribute to the experience of students. For more information you can look at the conference web site:

http://www.stc.org/region3/pbc/Student_Conference/student_conf.html.

To Celebrate!

It is award banquet time in several chapters and areas. Check your local calendar for a party near you. These events are always a great chance to share accomplishments, learn from the practices of others, and view the top examples of work in our industry. Congratulations to all competition participants and good luck to all Distinguished Technical Communications winners at the International level of competition!

The Winter Board meeting is January 22-25. Please let me know if you have any

messages or questions you'd like me to pass on to the Board. I will be at the WinWriters Conference in February and Currents and the Region 3 Student Conference in March. I hope to see you there.

Michelle Ratcliffe
8942 Bayaud Drive
Tampa, FL 33626
813/920-3539
Ratcliffe@msn.com ✉

Admin Council

By Laurie Benson

The administrative council has been dealing with financial and budgetary matters as well as continuing to work on program development for the current year. In the near future we will be looking for volunteers to help produce the 1998 Trends conference. And as always, later this spring, the elections will be held for next year's STC officers. If you would like to take a more active role in our chapter, opportunities will soon be available. ✉



on Language

A Home for Wayward Modifiers?

By Mary Kendig

Simply put, modifiers (words or phrases that describe something) are “misplaced” if they appear in the wrong place in a sentence. No, they’re not missing, they’ve just ended up in the wrong location (kind of like making a wrong turn while driving) and need some direction to “get home.” On the hypothetical Grand Scale of Criticality, misplacing a modifier isn’t as critical as misplacing a wallet or a set of car keys. Nevertheless, a problem exists if you’re trying to make someone understand something but all you’ve done is confuse the heck out of him or her.

Many of the most amusing kinds of grammatical errors occur when words or phrases end up in the wrong part of a sentence. Witness the following examples (courtesy of *Anguished English*, by

Richard Lederer) with editorial comments courtesy of me:

- ❑ Two cars were reported stolen by the Groveland Police yesterday. (Apparently, corruption is rampant within the Groveland Police Department.)
- ❑ The woman was referred to a psychiatrist with a severe emotional problem. (Uh, I guess she’ll be wanting a second opinion?)
- ❑ Here are suggestions for handling obscene telephone calls from the New England Telephone Company. (You know, I’ve noticed that a lot of telephone operators do tend to breathe kind of heavy...)
- ❑ No one was injured in the fire, which was attributed to a buildup of gas by one town official. (Must’ve been the five-alarm chili he had for lunch.)

If you haven’t guessed by now, the key to putting all these wayward modifiers in their rightful places is to ensure that they are positioned either next to or as close as

possible to the word or words they modify. As if this weren’t difficult enough, we also have to accomplish this without making the sentences sound too awkward.

Here are all of the above examples, with modifiers put in their proper places:

- ❑ Yesterday, the Groveland Police reported that two cars were stolen. *Or*
- ❑ The Groveland Police reported yesterday that two cars were stolen. *Or, depending on your meaning:*
- ❑ The Groveland Police reported that two cars were stolen yesterday. (In the original version, it’s not clear whether the cars were stolen yesterday or the police reported the theft yesterday.)
- ❑ The woman with a severe emotional problem was referred to a psychiatrist.
- ❑ Here are the New England Telephone Company’s suggestions for handling obscene telephone calls.
- ❑ No one was injured in the fire, which one town official attributed to a buildup of gas.

Voilà! That wasn’t so difficult after all. A little strategic shuffling of words and phrases is all it takes. Now, if I could only find my car keys...☒

Certification Survey

By Gwen Thomas

STC members should be receiving a survey in January regarding members’ feelings toward certification programs for technical communicators. Please take the time to complete this survey and mail it back promptly. Certification is a very hot topic with significant impact on all our careers. Please be a part of this decision. ☒

Do You Have E-mail?

By Nadejda Bojilova

The Orlando STC chapter is in the process of creating a new address database that will include not only the physical addresses of our members, but also their e-mail addresses. The chapter plans to use e-mail as a quick, cheap, and convenient medium for the distribution of STC- and chapter-related news, for example, meeting announcements.

To ensure that you continue receiving this newsletter and other chapter materials, please contact our Membership Director Alicia Baskin at 660-0343 x. 812 or abaskin@paysys.com and give her your postal and electronic addresses. Please let her know if you’d prefer not to receive e-mail announcements. ☒



Coming Up . . .

DATE	TOPIC	LOCATION
JAN. 28	<p>Chapter Meeting: Focus group discussion on the pros and cons of a certification program for the technical communicator led by Dr. Cynthia Woodley. 6:30 p.m. — Members: \$5.00 / Nonmembers: \$7.00. R.S.V.P. to Gwen Thomas at (407) 660-8807 x 403 or gthomas@paysys.com.</p>	<p>Winter Park Civic Center 1050 W. Morse Blvd. Winter Park, Florida</p>
FEB. 8–11	<p>6th Annual Online Help Conference. For more information, contact WinWriters at 800-838-8999 or www.winwriters.com</p>	<p>Seattle, Washington</p>
FEB. 25	<p>Chapter Meeting: RoboHelp Demonstration. Presented by Blue Skies Software. 6:30 p.m. — Members: \$5.00 / Nonmembers: \$7.00. R.S.V.P. to Gwen Thomas at (407) 660-8807 x 403 or gthomas@paysys.com.</p>	<p>Winter Park Civic Center 1050 W. Morse Blvd. Winter Park, Florida</p>
MAR. 4	<p>Deadline for submitting articles for the March/April issue of <i>Tech Trends</i>.</p>	
MAR. 20–21	<p>Tenth Annual Currents Conference. This year's theme is "Informing the World." Includes preconference workshop called "Writing for Usability." For more information refer to www.stc.org/region3/atl/www/.</p>	<p>Atlanta Marriott Perimeter Center 246 Perimeter Center Pkwy. N.E. Atlanta, Georgia</p>
MAR. 28	<p>1998 Region 3 Student Conference. Hosted by the STC Space Tech Chapter. For more information refer to www.stc.org/region3/pbc/Student_Conference/student_conf.html.</p>	<p>Florida Institute of Technology 150 West University Blvd. Melbourne, Florida</p>