



DELIVERING RESULTS

What Makes Great Product Documentation?

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California

North Carolina

Oregon

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Your customers don't really want to read your documentation. But unless you offer an extremely simple product, sooner or later, your customers are going to seek out your documentation. When they do, you'll want them to have the best experience possible. That's why your product documentation matters.

Based on our experience developing all types of product documentation for all types of products, InfoPros offers the following guidelines and advice.

"Great" product documentation is:

Part of the product, part of the brand

Your customers do not want to search for your documentation. Make it easy for them. Software needs integrated online help. Hardware and manufactured products need printed documentation suitable to the environment in which the product is used. Great documentation assures your customers that you're thinking about them beyond point of purchase.

Useful to its specific audience

Technicians need one kind of documentation, casual users another. Some customers need more training and step-by-step instructions, while others need comprehensive and detailed reference information. Great documentation delivers just what each type of audience needs and no more.

Easy to navigate

Help your customers find what they need, quickly. Different navigational principles apply to print versus online documentation. Does the print copy include a table of contents, an index and reference pointers? Does the online copy include effective links, search mechanisms and related topic entries? Do both versions feature consistent layout, logical headings, "skimmable" content and effective illustrations?

Complete and accurate

There is nothing more frustrating than to read documentation that has information on everything except what you're looking for. Great documentation is tested and validated along with the product. Customer questions are anticipated and answered.

Concise

More words do not necessarily bring better comprehension. And more sections do not mean better documentation. Does every feature really require description? Great technical writers can help you trim the fat from your content.

Easy to update and re-publish

If you've made the investment in great documentation, you need to keep it current. The best documentation is part of a product deployment plan. Great documentation is designed for regular maintenance. It supports quick product release cycles, marketing and sales needs, customer service, and internal training needs.

Easy to translate and re-use

Many products are sold globally. Writing for global audiences requires specific techniques for reducing word count, eliminating jargon, and modularizing documentation for downstream automation and management. Documentation content can be re-used across a spectrum of

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venues such as product support literature, user manuals, marketing presentations, Web-casting and more.

Appealing to the eye

You may have great content, but if it's poorly designed, difficult to read, or visually disorganized, the documentation will not meet its goals. Effective layout and presentation support great content.

InfoPros would like to show you how to put your product documentation on the road to greatness. Call us today! 800-493-7370.

About InfoPros

InfoPros develops technical content helps large organizations to promote, launch, and support complex products and processes. Our writers, editors and project managers design technical documentation, training materials, and technical marketing communications material for companies in a wide range of industries.

From complete single source documentation to a supplement for your internal operations—unique to this industry, InfoPros has the ability to give you positive assurance of the long-term success of all your projects. We have five offices spanning the United States. And, each location can draw upon the measurable resources of our company as a whole, delivering flexibility, convenience, and control.

Contact

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