

From Tina to Xena II: Strategic Communication in the Corporate Jungle

By Dan Voss and W.C. Wiese

Technical communicators have long wrung their hands about their often lowly position in the food chain within the corporate jungle. Emblematic of this “doormat syndrome” was Scott Adams’ creation of “Tina the Brittle Technical Communicator” in the Dilbert strip. The way for technical communicators to overcome doormat syndrome is to work proactively to forge strategic partnerships with other business disciplines, including the technical and marketing communities and senior management—and in the process demonstrate their ability to add value to information. This workshop helps empower technical communicators to take a more assertive professional position with clients and customers by leveraging advanced communication technology and—especially—their unique capability to develop effective multi-pronged solutions to business communication challenges.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY/OBJECTIVES

In this motivational and practical workshop, a sequel to the successful “The Tina/Xena Transformation: A Recipe for Professional Empowerment” session at the 49th Conference in Nashville with all new scenarios, the presenters provide useful tips and a systematic process by which to avoid the dreaded “doormat syndrome” that produced the immortal Tina the Brittle Technical Communicator. The workshop provides realistic training in the martial art of technical communication—integrated strategic communication. Teams of technical communicators develop integrated communication plans to meet business challenges, then share their solutions via brief presentations to the group. Participants graduate as fully empowered Xenas—armed with a toolkit to become respected strategic partners in the business enterprise.

OUTLINE OF WORKSHOP

Part 1. Mobilizing Resources via Integrated Strategic Communication

- Tips on how to enhance professional image and avoid doormat syndrome
- Focus on the importance of adding value to information
- Explanation of integrated strategic communication process: planning and implementation
- Demonstration of multimedia integrated strategic communication plan and campaign
- Instructions for groupwork

Part 2: Groupwork

Teams of 8 to 10 technical communicators attack action scenarios calling for them to develop integrated strategic communication plans to solve challenging situations. Teams will choose from 4 scenarios:

- “The PEPSI Challenge”
- “The Case of the Attack Lawn Mower”
- “Communications CPR for Honest Harry’s”
- “Educational Outreach in the Inner City”

Products are simple blueprints—rough storyboards, outlines, sketches, hand-made visual aids—designed to be presented to the group.

Part 3: Sharing

Teams present their integrated strategic communication plans to the large group and exchange ideas.

Dan Voss

Communications Manager, Anti-Armor Weapons

Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control - Orlando
5600 Sand Lake Road, Orlando, FL 32819
407-356-6508

daniel.w.voss@lmco.com

Dan Voss has 25 years’ experience in aerospace at LMMFC-O, and he has also taught in high school and college. He is a Fellow in the Society and is a member of STC’s Orlando Chapter, where he manages the Education Committee. He has received the Chapter’s Distinguished Service Award. He currently manages STC’s Special Needs SIG and has served on STC’s Professionalism, Ethics, Certification, and Strategic Planning committees. Voss has presented at 13 international and 9 regional STC conferences. With Lori Allen, he co-authored *Ethics in Technical Communication: Shades of Gray* (Wiley, 1997). He is the only non-engineer ever to earn LMMFC-O’s coveted Author-of-the-Year award.

W.C. Wiese

Communications Manager, Air and Missile Defense

Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control - Orlando
5600 Sand Lake Road, Orlando, FL 32819
407-356-6508

william.c.wiese@lmco.com

W.C. has 31 years’ experience in aerospace at LMMFC-O. He is Immediate Past President of STC’s Orlando Chapter, following a 5-year tenure as its treasure, and has twice run for STC national offices. He has extensive experience in product marketing and proposal support activities, including responsibilities for preparing major proposals involving military simulation systems, millimeter wave radar, electro-optics, strategic defense, automated target recognition systems, and several precision-guided munitions systems proposed by multi-national teams. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*. W.C. has presented at 8 previous STC Annual Conferences.