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Fall is Here!

Ryan Martin, STC Snake River Chapter President



Fall is here, bringing along with it pumpkins, cooler evenings, and a feeling of age for me personally because my daughter is turning 5 this month.

If any of you would like to make donations to my funeral fund, please feel free to contact me.

In October, I like to ask that all of you check and make sure that your contact information is correct. If you hear another STC member mention that he or she has not received any emails from the STC, please suggest to them that they also check their information on the STC website. Also, be sure to check your SPAM filters on your personal email accounts to ensure that one or two emails from us have not been accidentally caught.

If you have not done so already, I ask that you sign up for our STC-SRC Discussion Board at <http://groups.google.com/group/stc-src>. You do not need to create a separate Google email address. You can also tailor your settings to have an email sent each time a post is made, sent as one email a month, or you can have no emails sent at all. The discussion board is completely voluntary, but it does provide you will announcements and discussions that are happening in your local community.

Thank you,
Ryan Martin

October

Please join us on October 10th for: Choosing the Right Tools for Your Virtual Team: Evaluating Wikis, Blogs, and other Collaborative Tools presented by Kit Brown. (Originally presented at IPCC by Brenda Huettnner and Kit Brown).

As many of you know, Kit Brown has been a faithful member of this chapter for many years. In the months ahead, Kit will move to Denver, and we all wish her the best. Don't miss this chance to learn from a consummate professional.

Date: Wednesday, October 10, 2007

Time: 7:00pm

Location: Smokey Mountain Pizza and Pasta at Parkcenter

If you are interested, please also join us for dinner at 6:15 before the presentation. Please RSVP by October 8th to programs@stc-src.org.

November

Our speaker for the November meeting is Shaun Loughney, Founder and Chief Executive Officer for Lytic, LLC. For over 17 years, Shaun has worked closely with top leadership, middle management and project teams to dramatically improve their business results.

She has extensive experience providing business systems analysis and successful project implementation covering innovative information technology, web application development, business automation and customer service solutions.

Topic: "What Does a Business Analyst Do Anyways?"

Location: TBA at Boise State University

Date: Monday, November 12, 2007

Time: 7:00pm

December

We are all looking forward to this year's chapter Christmas party! Sherry Hamilton has graciously offered her house this year for our STC Christmas party. A snug cottage located a hop, skip, and a Smurf from the Eagle exit in Meridian (directions TBA). Those attending can BYOB as long as Sherry doesn't hear the phrase, "Hey, your tree won't flush."

Date: Saturday, December 8, 2007

Time: TBA

Location: Sherry Hamilton's house

SIDENOTES

Corporate Partners

We would like to thank ExecuTrain, H&W, iLevel by Weyerhaeuser (formerly Trus Joist), and Barnes & Noble for generously donating their facilities for chapter functions. We would also like to thank SolutionPro for hosting our website.

Advertising

Limited advertising space is available in The Sidebar. For rates and guidelines, send us an e-mail (council@stc-src.org) with the words ADVERTISE STC-SRC in the subject line.

Should You Pay for a Resume Writer?

from the STC Puget Sound Chapter, March-April Newsletter 2007

I have to confess - I'm terrible at writing resumes. Sure, I can help someone who is mostly illiterate pull SOMETHING together, but when it comes to writing my own resume, I needed help.

So I got it. In the form of Jill Walser, a local resume writer and interview coach. Jill was able to parse the important information out of my cluttered, 4-page resume, and massage it into a concise, 2-page resume that highlighted my strengths and accomplishments. Immediately after Jill reworked my resume, I got the first job that I applied to.

But the idea of using someone to write your resume, even if it's just a tweak here and there, sort of bugs me. I'm a writer. Shouldn't I be able to write something as simple as a resume?

I finally asked Jill to give me her opinion on some of my more burning questions regarding resumes and resume writers. And this is what she said.

Why should someone hire a resume writer?

People who obtain a professionally written resume are (hopefully!) ensured of several things. Primarily, they are ensured that there are no glaring NO's on the resume like misspellings, misused words, lack of focus, lack of discernible achievements, etc. Additionally, a reader other than oneself is an absolute requirement when it comes to knowing if one's resume is understandable by others. People get into patterns of expressing themselves that make perfect sense to them and to their niche industry, but no sense at all to others.

You'd hire a professional resume writer for the same reason that you'd hire an attorney to write up your will. Yes, you could probably write it yourself, but you might forget something important and you only get one chance to get it right. Either way, you're dead.

How hard can it possibly be to write a resume?

Writing one's own resume can be excruciatingly painful. Like pulling your own teeth. Hours and hours of wandering through websites, reading books, looking at other people's resumes, getting 10 different and conflicting ideas about what must be included, struggling. Doing a "pretty good" job might be OK if one is an engineer, or software developer. As long as they get the basic facts down and don't look like they have third-grade writing skills, their resumes are probably OK. If, however, one is a marketing, sales or administrative professional or *gasp* someone who writes for a living, having a less-than-perfect resume can be the kiss of death.

I have a copywriter opening at work this week. You can bet that the first thing I'll look at is resume quality, even before the quality of their experience. Resumes have to do so much. They are a marketing piece, a business document, a way to convey your personality, and your only opportunity to brand yourself as perfect for the job before the hiring manager meets you. How hard could that be? Exactly.

Continued on next page...

Resume Writer, Continued...

Isn't having someone else write your resume kind of... dishonest?

Resume writing has become one of the last professional tasks that people feel should still be clandestine. I'm pro-professional. Why should I fix my own car, put 18 million of those little foil things in my hair, give myself a massage, etc.? Sure, I could do all those things myself, but why on earth would I want to? A professional spends hours and hours training and experimenting on other, unsuspecting victims, before she has her craft perfected enough to start charging for it.

On the other hand, I have no problem with people pretending that they wrote their own resume. Its sort of like me telling my mom that I spent hours cleaning before she came by for a visit. Its *kind of* true.

What kind of mistakes do people usually make on their resumes?

What kind of mistakes DON'T they make? Trite objectives, self-aggrandisement, segments that "break" in the wrong places. My personal favorites are those who spell "detail oriented" incorrectly and those who claim to be Mangers. Once a month, I do a search on Craigslist's resume section for Mangers and randomly pick a resume to rewrite and email to the person for free. Reactions are amazingly mixed! Of note, I have yet to meet an actual professional Manger. I keep hoping.

What kind of results do YOU typically get with your reworked resumes?

My customer's resumes get results! They are called in for interviews and offered jobs. They are more confident in their application documents and it shows! The coolest part of this gig is that every single week I get at least one, "I got the job!" email. It's very thrilling to me. The act of going over the resume, answering my homework questions, talking about networking and their career vision makes them better at interviewing, so they get more job offers.

How important is a cover letter?

Its crucial. Its the best way of showing a little glimpse of your personality and demonstrating that you have done your research and really want to work for THAT company. Its a way of showing that you have gone the extra mile to spell their name right. I cannot tell you how disinterested I am in hiring people who cannot even cut and paste my name correctly. There are NO Ms. Waslers that work for my company people! Plus, in the bulleted world of resumes, it's a nice way of showing that you (well, I) can put a few sentences together.

What's the most that someone should pay to have their resume professionally written?

A million dollars. That would definitely be too much. Pricing is all over the place with resume writers. It's hard to know what to charge. Resume writer's qualifications and backgrounds are quite varied as well. I've met resume writers who were actually out-of-work novelists, trying to make some extra money. I may be the only corporate recruiter with a resume business out there. I haven't yet met another.

Continued on next page...

Resume Writer, Continued...

There's one woman out there who writes "How-to" resume books for a living. From what I've seen, she's not so hot at actually writing resumes. And personality fit is crucial. If you don't feel your resume writer "gets" you, it's going to be a frustrating experience. So it's hard to compare value.

I will say that every time I've raised my prices, it's had absolutely no impact on customer traffic. My rates currently range between \$95 - \$245, depending on employment level. I've done resumes for people with horror stories about paying \$400 for a resume that looks terrible. I feel their pain. \$400 for a resume that looks fabulous and gets results is not too much. \$95 for a resume that sucks and lands in the trash is too much.

New Funding Model, Dues Structure Cont'd...

from Cindi Currie, STC Second Vice President, Chair of the Community Advocacy Committee

What does STC do with member dues?

STC works to deliver the best possible services and benefits to its members. Therefore, it spends the money it receives on things that are necessary to reach this goal. Publications require editing, design, and printing. Conferences require advertising and meeting room rentals. Live Web seminars require an IT infrastructure. Just keeping a non-profit organization running requires a staff, which means salaries and office space rental.

Because this is a question STC members are naturally interested in, the STC staff is putting together an article titled "Where do my STC dues go?" This will provide more detail on STC finances--look for it on the STC Web site soon.

Can't you lower my dues instead of raising them?

Unfortunately, no. Even if STC were not creating new services and benefits for its members, the increased costs of doing business would require a dues increase. The fact is that STC dues have not kept up with the increase in costs.

Currently, STC spends about \$300 per member. If STC was 100% dues dependent, each member would need to pay \$300 in dues. However, STC has other sources of revenues: conference registration, exhibits, sponsorships, advertising, royalties, and interest from investments. These other sources bring the costs down to about \$150 per member; therefore, STC needs \$150 to cover the rest of the costs. The new dues structure packages membership in STC with membership in STC communities, bringing the prices to what you see in the table above.

If I renew now, can I get the old renewal rate?

Unfortunately, STC cannot afford to offer renewal at the old rates for the reasons cited above. The renewal page of the STC Web site is currently disabled; it will go live with the new rates in October.

Letter from the President

from Linda Oestreich, STC President

Dear STC Members,

The Society is embarking on some of its most exciting improvements ever--and that's hard to believe considering all the progress we've made in the last few years! But it's true: From the revamped Annual Conference to the soon-to-be-released Salary Database, STC has significantly upgraded its services.

In fact, many of you sent notes to the STC office saying how much you enjoyed the new, expanded content of our e-mail newsletter, News & Notes. I'm glad to hear it!

But, in STC, just as in the rest of our lives, improved services and normal inflation add costs. So, to support those and other rising expenses and to pay for needed capital improvements to the technology that supports the STC office, STC's Board of Directors decided at its August 2007 meeting to raise membership dues for calendar year 2008.

I'm sure your first question is "how much?" Although it's approximately 15% for the majority of members, the change does vary according to your location and the category of membership you choose. I've asked the STC office to put together a Q&A titled STC's New Dues Structure. This Q&A also goes into much more detail about those rising expenses I mentioned.

It's also natural for members to wonder how their dues are spent. That's why STC has posted an article titled Where Do My STC Dues Go? As you'll see, even with the increase, STC dues are in line with those of similar organizations.

Chapter presidents and treasurers have already been informed of another Board decision regarding changes to our chapter funding model. If you're interested in the details of how chapters are funded, you can read this message sent recently to chapter leaders.

If you would like to discuss the dues and funding changes with other members of STC, including STC Board members, I invite you to do so on the STC Member Forum at stcforum.org/viewtopic.php?pid=4182. When you use the discussion topic on the forum, it gives Society leaders a chance to see and respond to all comments.

As a member of the STC Board of Directors, I'm quite proud of the priorities we've set, the decisions we've made, the financial responsibility we've exercised, and the value we've delivered to STC members. Decisions to increase dues are never easy, but I am confident that the value you receive for your dues dollars is worth every penny.

I thank each of you for being an important part of this Society that has supported our profession for more than 50 years. The support you give to your Society in turn strengthens our profession.

Linda Oestreich
STC President

ABOUT THE SNAKE RIVER CHAPTER



Ryan Martin



Kit Brown



Russell Willerton



Darla Scott

Elected Council Members

President: Ryan Martin (president@stc-src.org)

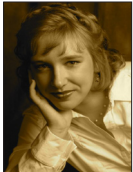
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Adrienne Martin



Angela Fleischmann

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ABOUT THE SIDEBAR NEWSLETTER

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The *Sidebar* invites writers to submit articles that they wish to be considered for publication. We welcome contributions, book and product reviews, letters, and articles that are relevant to the field of technical communication. Content is due the 26th of every month. Your text may be edited to conform to the style guidelines and space restrictions of the newsletter.

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