

# Did You Know You Can Rent a Doc Manager?

*Jan Clayton*

## Do you need a documentation manager, but just for a few weeks out of the year?

Documentation is vital when presenting products to customers, but small companies can't afford to have a full-time documentation expert on staff. Many small companies need a senior documentation development expert, but only during critical product development planning and execution.

## All product companies need someone who can:

- Design a suite of documentation to support that particular product's users
- Clearly articulate documentation design tradeoffs and costs
- Establish priorities for what documentation is developed and when
- Establish and track the documentation development budget
- Determine the particular writing resources you need to execute the plan and when you need them
- Hire capable and easy-to-work-with documentation staff (writers, editors, and illustrators)
- Select documentation development tools that match the objectives and needs of the organization and the documentation

The VP of Marketing or the VP of Engineering are often asked to take on these tasks, but it's not really their specialty. They know how to plan in their world for their responsibilities, but usually they can only make guesses about the right way to execute documentation tasks.

Sometimes, a staff writer is asked to perform these activities. But many staff writers don't know how to plan large projects, such as full documentation suites, which need to accommodate product marketing plans, product development plans, and product development budgets. And staff

writers are often too junior to come up with estimates that have any basis in reality. Frequently, they just decide to do what they know how to do, regardless of what the product actually needs. And they generally aren't very good at determining the kinds of writers needed and they don't know how to interview writers for the task at hand.

These are issues that a documentation manager can resolve. The problem for most small companies is that they can't afford a full-time documentation executive. But they can afford to call Expert Support and rent one. We have experienced documentation managers available for hours, days, weeks, or months—whatever you need to get the job done.



## Our documentation managers:

- Design and specify complete document sets
- Understand both writing and budgeting
- Set or suggest priorities when the budget can't support the entire doc wish list
- Accurately determine the skill level necessary to write the documents and then find those resources for you
- Track progress, report back when there are issues, and suggest remedies for the problems
- Do as much or as little as you need or your budget allows

Your documentation is critical to the success of your product. Don't let it be anything less than a competitive advantage for you.

Want to know more? Give us a call at 650-941-9778 or send email to [webinquiry@xs.com](mailto:webinquiry@xs.com).

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