SUPERCHARGE YOUR DOCUMENTATION

BY ADRIENNE BELLEHUMEUR
SUPERCHARGE YOUR DOCUMENTATION

A dynamic documentation training presentation by Adrienne Bellehumeur
Agenda

• Why documentation?
• The Documentation Process and Practical Tips to implement immediately!
• The Future of Documentation
Key Objectives of this Presentation

• Get excited about effective documentation!

• Appreciate and understand the need for effective documentation.

• Learn a few techniques to use immediately.

• Discuss the future of documentation and how it will impact our work.
What is documentation?

Definition: Any written company record.

Let’s focus on artifacts that bring more clarity, momentum and value.

- Business Processes
- Project Documentation
- Meeting Notes and Agendas
- Systems Documentation
- Training Materials
- Data Flow & Architecture Models
- SOX & Other Regulatory Documentation
Why are we talking about documentation?

• **STOP** chasing the latest technology and buzzword.

• **STOP** assuming your staff and consultants are on the same page.

• **STOP** reinventing the wheel.

• **STOP** losing your IP.

START Supercharging your Documentation!
Documentation is a tangible asset

- Capturing Intellectual Capital
- Improving Clarity
- Increasing Momentum
- Changing Behaviours
We all see documentation differently.
But we are not equal when it comes to documentation

- Documentation skill levels are not the same, even for people of the same backgrounds.
- Organizations often wait until it is too late to find this out!

What to do?
- Screen for documentation skills
- Ask for samples from potential consultants or employees
- Engage in documentation training
- Review the documentation of your resources regularly
Why are documentation skills so important to me in my work right now?

- You will be trusted
- You will drive momentum
- You will be perceived as competent
- You will be more helpful to co-workers, Management and clients
- You will be a better problem solver

Documentation skills are:
- Practical.
- Tangible.
- Transferable.
Documentation Improves our Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desired Behaviour</th>
<th>Write it down!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Want to lose weight?</td>
<td>Write down what you eat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to save money?</td>
<td>Write down what you buy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want career success?</td>
<td>Write down a plan and track your progress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE DOCUMENTATION PROCESS
How to document
Documentation is a process
Steps of the documentation process

1. Capturing
2. Structuring
3. Presenting
4. Communicating
5. Storing & Maintaining
IMPROVE YOUR DOCUMENTATION IMMEDIATELY!
STEP 1 – CAPTURING
Unlocking information from People’s Heads

- Come prepared with interview questions.
- Have your interviewee walk through their process or system.
- Get your interviewees to draw.
- Create effective meeting notes.
- Engage in active listening techniques.
- Send meeting notes within 24 hours.
- Request feedback.
- Review the edited notes.
- Begin follow-up on action items.
- Don’t use a laptop!

QUICK TIP: Start the writing and review process FAST!
STEP 2 – STRUCTURING
Structuring unstructured information

- Root cause analysis
- Cohesive reporting and conclusions
- Create bigger documents
- Effective meeting minutes

How to improve?

- Acknowledge
- Connect the dots
- Vet with others
- Practice writing
- Expand breadth & depth

Structuring information separates
Note-takers from Experts
Structuring unstructured information

- **Look for patterns in the conversation.** In order to complete effective meeting notes, you need to structure the information into logical categories, looking for “patterns” within the conversation during a meeting.

- **Get it down on paper.** You can’t rely on unstructured verbal information. Good note taking and information structuring work hand-in-hand to create effective documents. Use notes and simple diagrams and pictures.

- **Connect the dots.** Now that you have quality notes in front of you, challenge yourself to connect the dots in different ways, beyond merely a linear connection. Don’t be afraid to be imaginative and progressive.

- **Vet with others.** Get input from many people and multiple sources to improve the accuracy, depth and, ultimately, the quality of your documentation output.
STEP 3 – PRESENTING
TECHNICAL WRITING

QUICK TIPS
Cut it with the Passive Voice

Passive Voice = The subject denotes the recipient of the action.

Reduces your documentation's:
- Clarity
- Efficiency
- Tightness

START using the Active Voice to create more impact.
Which one is more effective?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passive Voice</th>
<th>Active Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The report is reviewed monthly.</td>
<td>The AR Manager reviews the report monthly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Payroll controls were tested.</td>
<td>The Internal and External audit teams tested the Payroll controls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The system is being implemented.</td>
<td>The ABC Project Team is implementing the system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUICK TIP: Use your Grammar function in Microsoft Word to check for Passive Sentences.
# Use Clear Wording

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don't Use</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utilize</td>
<td>Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commence</td>
<td>Start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peruse</td>
<td>Check</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidate</td>
<td>Combine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursue</td>
<td>Follow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VISUAL DOCUMENTATION
QUICK TIPS
Create visual documentation

Documentation = **Visual Fun**

- Use Shapes and Smart Art in Word
- Add pictures
- Use simple graphs for numbers
- Add simple process or data models
- Draw by hand
Which one is more effective?

QUICK TIP: Use graphs to illustrate numbers.
Which one is more effective?

Overview
The purpose of this document is to understand, document, and review the financial risks and controls around Major Oil Co.'s applications that have significant impact on the financial statements.

Objectives
The key objectives of this project are to:

- Create comprehensive high-level documentation for in-scope applications that will serve as reference point for stakeholders including the SOX Compliance Team, IS Compliance Team, external auditors, management, and applications owners.
- Assess the financial risks relating to the data transfers to and from Major Oil Co.'s in-scope SOX applications.
- Identify the controls and processes around data transfers to and from Major Oil Co.'s in-scope SOX applications.
- Document other significant aspects relating to in-scope applications, including key logic and other risks.

In scope
- Key applications with significant financial impact identified for SOX purposes
- Input and output processes and controls around in-scope applications
- Supporting documentation around inputs and outputs

Out of Scope
- Applications with no or minimal financial impact
- Access Management (covered under separate projects and documentation)
- Change Management (covered under separate projects and documentation)
- Detailed testing of interfaces and data transfers (covered under separate projects and documentation)

Overview
The purpose of this document is to understand, document, and review the financial risks and controls around Major Oil Co.'s applications that have significant impact on the financial statements.

Objectives
The key objectives of this project are to:

- Create comprehensive high-level documentation for in-scope applications that will serve as reference point for stakeholders including the SOX Compliance Team, IS Compliance Team, external auditors, management, and applications owners.
- Assess the financial risks relating to the data transfers to and from Major Oil Co.'s in-scope SOX applications.
- Identify the controls and processes around data transfers to and from Major Oil Co.'s in-scope SOX applications.
- Document other significant aspects relating to in-scope applications, including key logic and other risks.

In scope
- Key applications with significant financial impact identified for SOX purposes
- Input and output processes and controls around in-scope applications
- Supporting documentation around inputs and outputs

Out of Scope
- Applications with no or minimal financial impact
- Access Management (covered under separate projects and documentation)
- Change Management (covered under separate projects and documentation)
- Detailed testing of interfaces and data transfers (covered under separate projects and documentation)

QUICK TIP: Use Smart Art to add punch.
Which one is more effective?

QUICK TIP: Use diagrams to illustrate processes.
Which one is more effective?

QUICK TIP: Add pictures to meeting minutes.
4 – COMMUNICATING
Create effective meeting minutes

• Have a clear purpose.
• Structure information into logical categories.
• Practice active listening.
• Label action items and decisions.
• Make them engaging!
4 – STORING AND MAINTAINING
What about technology?

The quality of your documentation has little to do with having a slick system.

Stop wasting time and money on impractical technologies!
Create better documentation and you won't lose it

Why?
1) Employees are using it regularly.
2) It is important to job functions.
3) People keep it as reference.
4) Departments or teams share the documentation regularly.
5) Management regards the documentation as valuable.
THE FUTURE OF DOCUMENTATION

And how it will impact our work
Is Documentation disappearing?

- Is documentation going to disappear?
- What are the implications of auditing in a real time environment?

**Scenario: New ERP environment, now all in real-time.**
- Vendor invoices are submitted online (with no actual invoices)
- Approvals are automatic
- Cash is transferred instantaneously
- Interfaces are all in real time
- No paper trail to audit!

**Scenario: Plant documentation is no longer required, only electronic CAD files.**
- CAD file with 3D models
- Only 3D computer models are now handed over from EPs to Oil & Gas companies
Is Documentation Disappearing?

• How do we audit in a real-time environment with no paper trail?

• How will this change the skills that we need in audit?

• How will this change our audit planning?
iPhonization of Documentation

• Our personal lives have so many cool toys. But where is my user experience at work???

• How is the next generation going to approach documentation? Are we going to keep them engaged?
• Will video documentation become an acceptable form of evidence?
• Will automation documentation become an acceptable form of evidence?
• Will it become more socially acceptable to film meetings/walkthroughs for the next generation?
Big Data - what the heck does this mean?

• “Big data is a term for data sets that are so large or complex that traditional data processing applications are inadequate. Big data can be analyzed for insights that lead to better decisions and strategic business moves.”

• Combining data across databases to support decision making.

Does it really mean anything different than what we have been doing for years?

What are the implications?
So, what is the future of documentation?

• Is our need for documentation going up or down?
• Is the awareness increasing in your organization?
• Are the tools going to change?
• Is the user experience going to change?
• How are the roles and responsibilities going to change?
SUMMARY
Summary

1) Documentation creates a tangible asset.

2) Documentation is a dynamic process.

3) Organizations can’t assume that their staff or their consultants know how to document effectively.

4) Organizations must regularly monitor their staff and consultants and audit their documentation systems.

5) Changes to our documentation practices are expected in the future but the fundamental skills of Capturing, Structuring, Presenting, Communicating and Storing and Maintaining will stay.
Have fun documenting!

Questions or Comments?

adrienne@riskoversight.ca
www.riskoversight.ca
To continue this conversation....

If you have any questions, comments or feedback, I’d love to hear from you. I am always looking to talk to people about documentation best practices - contact me!

Adrienne Bellehumeur
Director, Risk Oversight
adrienne@riskoversight.ca
www.riskoversight.ca
(403) 478-6643

Check out my BLOG on documentation best practices
www.leadersinbusinessanalysis.com