

# THE IN-HOUSE TRAINING COMPANY

## Specification writing (introduction)

### Overview

This intensive one-day training programme has been developed to help those involved in producing specifications create high quality documents in an organised and effective way.

The programme explains the primary purpose of specifications and the importance of understanding the context in which they are used. It focuses particularly on how to develop and structure content and write requirements that are clear and concise. The methods and techniques presented will provide a practical foundation course for those new to the topic whilst offering new insights to those with more experience.

### Learning objectives

The objectives of the workshop are to:

- Review and discuss the role and purpose of specifications
- Present a structured approach for organising and producing specifications
- Explain each of the key steps involved in creating effective specifications
- Review some methods for assisting in defining requirements
- Explain how to define the scope and develop the structure for a specification
- Present methods to assist the writing and editing of specifications
- Review how specifications should be issued and controlled

### Who should attend?

The workshop is designed for approximately 10-12 participants who are, or will be, involved in writing or contributing to the preparation and management of specifications.

### Format

This one-day workshop comprises a mix of tutorials and practical exercises. The tutorials explain the key principles, methods and techniques for writing specifications, while the exercises illustrate how to apply them in practice.

The programme structure will be participative and session timings may be adapted to match the particular training needs and pace required by the group.

### **Special features**

This programme can be tailored to your specific requirements, including use of your organisation's own sample specifications, if appropriate.

### **Expert trainer**

**John** is a highly qualified (BSc, MSc, CEng, MIMechE, MAPM, AMInstP) independent consultant specialising in project and change management. He established his consultancy practice in 1990, following 20 years of industrial management experience, and now offers a wide range of management training and team development programmes. He also provides facilitation and consultancy services to help clients with specific projects or to assist them with staff and management development programmes.

Before setting up his consultancy and training business, John was a senior manager with Ilford Limited, a leading manufacturer of specialist photographic products. Having starting as a development engineer, he progressed through technical and team leadership roles and was appointed Manager of Engineering Development in 1980. In this role he was directly involved in a major company restructuring programme whilst managing a diverse portfolio of multi-disciplinary engineering projects. His project management role subsequently grew to include a range of business projects, including manufacturing improvement programmes and new product introductions. John was also involved in co-ordinating international technology transfer activities and in strategic business development studies within the Ilford Group.

John's project management experience includes the design and installation of new manufacturing equipment, the development of new products, the improvement of manufacturing procedures, the relocation of offices and staff and organisation restructuring. John has also co-ordinated international project teams and carried out assignments in support of strategic business development programmes.

Prior to joining Ilford Limited, John trained in the automotive industry and gained an honours degree in Applied Physics. He went on to conduct post-graduate research in cryogenics at Oxford University for which he was awarded an MSc in Engineering Science. John is a member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, The Institute of Physics and The Association of Project Management.

John's client base includes leading organisations in Engineering, Manufacturing, Construction, Defence, IS/IT and Education. He is an associate with Loughborough Business School and is a senior consultant and course director with a number of well-known training organisations. Whilst his work is centred in the UK, he frequently works internationally in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

A highly experienced, popular and professional trainer, John's courses are always much appreciated by the participants, as the following comments show:

'I really liked the practical exercises'

'There was certainly a lot to think about'

'John's experience was excellent'

'The group was encouraged to interact very well'

'The examples and exercises make the course very interactive'

'Excellent content beyond Specification Writing. Definitely a must for Project Managers and anyone dealing with contracts.'

'Good real world examples - very relevant. Exercises were good.'

'Good mix of time between practical and theoretical'

'Good general connection between spec writing and project life cycle/management'

'Trainer very knowledgeable and delivered the course well'

'Good discussion. Lots of practical exercises.'

'Good delivery / professionalism'

'A very useful course'

'Course handbook will be a useful source of reference material'

'I like the clear handouts and John is very good at holding people's attention'

## Workshop outline

### 1 Introduction

- Course objectives
- Review of participants' needs and objectives

### 2 Specifications in perspective

- The role and purpose of specifications
- The impact of specifications on commercial performance
- The qualities of an effective specification
- The five key steps of 'POWER' writing: prepare-organise-write-edit-release

### 3 Step 1: Preparing to write

- Defining the purpose the specification; integrating the specification and contract
- Deciding how to specify: when to specify in functional and technical terms
- Getting the right people involved at the right time; engaging stakeholders
- Applying procedures for writing, issuing and controlling specifications

### 4 Step 2: Organising the specification content

- Scoping the document: scope maps, check lists, structured brainstorming
- Clarifying requirements; separating needs and desires
- Dealing with requirements that are difficult to quantify
- Useful techniques: cost benefit analysis, Pareto analysis
- Deciding what goes where; typical contents and layout for a specification
- Creating and using model forms: typical sections and sub sections

### 5 Step 3: Writing the specification

- Identifying and understanding the readers needs
- Choosing and using the right words; dealing with jargon
- Important words; will, shall, must; building a glossary
- Using sentence structure and punctuation to best effect
- Understanding the impact of style, format and appearance
- Avoiding common causes of ambiguity; being concise and ensuring clarity

### 6 Step 4: Editing the specification

- Why editing is difficult; how to develop a personal editing strategy
- Key areas to review: structure, content, accuracy, clarity, style and grammar
- Editing tools and techniques

**7 Step 5: Releasing and controlling the specification**

- Key requirements for document issue and control
- Final formatting and publication issues; document approval
- Requirements management: managing revisions and changes

**8 Course review and action planning**

- What actions should be implemented to improve specifications?
- Conclusion

**Any questions?**

**Please just give us a call on 01582 463463 – we're here to help!**  
**Or visit [www.theinhousetrainingcompany.com](http://www.theinhousetrainingcompany.com)**