

A wide-angle photograph of a long, straight asphalt road stretching from the foreground into the distance. The road has a yellow dashed center line and white edge lines. The surrounding landscape is a dry, yellowish-brown desert with sparse, low-lying shrubs. In the background, several large, flat-topped red rock mesas or buttes rise against a clear blue sky. A solid green rectangular shape is visible in the top right corner of the image.

MY JOURNEY

GRAHAM FREDRICKSON

Background and Experience

- Been a Technical Writer for twenty five years.
- Graduated from Utah State University in 1999 with a Bachelor of Science in English, Professional Writing.
- Internship with Boeing, working on documentation for the Minutemen III missile maintenance software.
- Recruited to Austin by IBM shortly after I graduated.
- I've worked for a number of companies in Austin, documenting both hardware and software products.

Team Lead at Advanced Solutions International

- Joined Advanced Solutions in 2012.
- The team was two writers when I started.
- Management wanted to enhance the library:
 - We moved to new tools.
 - We developed new style guides.
 - We developed the video tutorial program: a series of videos to help demonstrate how to use the iMIS product.
- The team grew to five writers within two years, supporting eight development teams.

Lead Writer at PLAYSTUDIOS



- Joined PLAYSTUDIOS in 2022.
- Promoted to Lead Writer in 2024.
- The team remained two writers; myself and another new writer.
- We supported three development teams as well as numerous stakeholders requiring documentation.
- Began developing a new style guide, new templates, and new processes with our contributors.

Responsible Leadership



As a Lead, I was:

- Responsible for all documentation planning
- Responsible for all communication with stakeholders
- Responsible for all decisions
- Responsible for meeting all deadlines and promised deliveries

I was ultimately responsible for the success of our documentation efforts, and I relished that responsibility.

Lead Writer Skills

- Communication Skills
- Leadership and Management
- Be Detail-Oriented
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Technical Proficiency
- Adaptability
- A User-Centric Focus
- Time Management
- Collaboration Skills
- Maintain Consistency

Communication Skills

- I communicated effectively with my developers, engineers, and stakeholders to understand the product and any requirements.
- I communicated with my team to ensure they understood the product and requirements, as well as their assignments.
- Because there were different levels of knowledge across different groups, I communicated at the correct level for the audience.

Leadership and Management



- I managed teams of writers, with varying skill levels.
- I coordinated tasks and assignments across the quarter.
- I set priorities and communicated those priorities, not only to my team but to all stakeholders.
- I ensured consistent quality across all documentation projects.
- I provided mentorship, guidance and constructive feedback to the other writers on my team.

Detail-Oriented

I ensured that documentation was error-free, thorough, and accurate:

- I was the final editor for all contributors.
- I worked with my writers to help them be effective editors for each other.

I paid attention to details such as terminology, formatting, and version control:

- I ensured we adhered to the style guides.
- I ensured we were using the version control systems correctly. Where necessary, I was able to roll back versions to address issues.

Problem-Solving Skills

I would think critically and approach the documentation from the user's perspective:

- Every opportunity I had to work with the product, I wanted to take. I prefer to interact with the product before receiving any instruction from developers, to better feel like a new user.
- It was important for me to be an advocate for the user.

Technical Proficiency

I needed a solid understanding of the technologies being documented:

- I had to understand as much as possible, so that I could not only communicate that information to the end user, but also to my writers.
- That understanding allowed me to also communicate more effectively with my development teams and contributors.

Adaptability



I adapted to new tools and industry changes while maintaining documentation quality:

- At ASI, we rewrote the style guides, changed out tools from Word to Madcap Flare, and moved to a version control system.
- At PLAYSTUDIOS, the tools were stable. But the nature of the business (social casino gaming) meant that development and game designers were constantly reacting to market research and suggestions. Documentation also had to be flexible and responsive: UIs and images could change from week-to-week, and functionality could change from sprint-to-sprint.

A User-Centric Focus

- I had empathy for and understanding of the challenges users face.
- As a Lead, it was important for me to not only try to be an advocate for the user, but to also ensure the other writers on my team were employing similar viewpoints.

Time Management

- I had to manage multiple projects and tasks with varying deadlines.
- I was able to coordinate the tasks and assignments for my writers across each sprint in a quarter. That means coordinating and communicating with developers and stakeholders on timing, responsibilities, deadlines.

Collaboration Skills



- Constant collaboration with developers, engineers, product managers, stakeholders and others was necessary.
- As a Lead, I needed to gather information from subject-matter experts, resolve conflicts, and encourage contribution.

Maintain Consistency

- I created and enforced writing standards and style guides to ensure consistency across all documentation.
- At ASI, we rewrote our style guide, and I ensured my writers were making use of it.
- We were in the process of updating our style standards at PLAYSTUDIOS.

Destination

Every day as a Lead, whether at Advanced Solutions International or at PLAYSTUDIOS, I made use of those ten Lead Writer skills.

I was able to collaborate with some of the smartest, most capable engineers and developers as well as writers. As a result, we produced some excellent documentation of which I am immensely proud.

And now, I cannot wait to bring those same skills and enthusiasm for the work to my next role!