

Workshop at the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference, Canberra, 20-23 April 2001 hosted by AusSI ACT Branch and the Canberra Society of Editors.

Editing for the corporate client workshop

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Patricia Hoyle from Patricia Hoyle and Associates led the 'Editing for the corporate client' workshop, where the focus was on marketing editorial services to business and government sectors. Patricia's expertise is enhancing the effectiveness of written communication in the workplace so as to promote efficiency, productivity, quality, and a striking public image for a business or government department. She offers professional consultation in writing, editing, and proofreading, and conducts business writing workshops. She has worked for the health, insurance, finance, manufacturing, retail and maritime industries; trade unions; small businesses and local, state and federal government organisations.

The question 'What is marketing?' was posed by Patricia. It is not about advertising or the 'hard sell'. Hard selling to potential or existing customers can make you look like a pest rather than a help to an organisation. Marketing is about building relationships. This is achieved by networking with people in professional associations and in the workplace. See yourself as a resource and a partner rather than a vendor. Marketing is about defining for yourself and for others what is unique about the services you offer. It is also about explaining to others the importance of and need for the work we do.

Learn how to ask questions of the client about what they really need: 'If your customers were holding this document in their hands, what would you like them to do with it?' These sorts of questions will help you and your client analyse and determine who is the target audience for the document and the proposed use for the document. 'Listen to your client,' stresses Patricia. 'You won't learn anything if you don't stop talking!'

'When you quote on a job, follow up with a phone call after a reasonable period.' A story was told about one consultant whom Patricia thought could be a future, useful resource for her organisation, but who was inappropriate for the current job on offer. When Patricia told the consultant that her initial quote was unsuccessful, the woman responded with such poor grace that Hoyle decided she was not an appropriate resource for future use, after all. The moral of the story: accept 'no' graciously; stay in occasional contact with a potential client, and you may be contracted at a later date.

Patricia also stressed the need for editors to make the pie bigger for everyone. Don't be reticent about cross-networking with 'competitors'. If you don't have the time to do a job, or the job is inappropriate for your skills and knowledge base, help your client by recommending others.

The workshop contained role plays for participants, who played editors, indexers, or clients. The purpose of the role plays was to highlight the sorts of issues that need to be discussed when quoting, and what to do when the client changes the parameters part-way through the job. Body language and the issues of personal contact and trust were also explored in a game and its follow-up discussion.

Among a number of other pieces of advice offered by Patricia were the golden rules of treating people the way you would like to be treated and never underestimating your value or worth.

At the conclusion of the two-hour workshop, Patricia Hoyle gave generously of her time – another hour – to answer participants' questions on a one-to-one basis.