

# New Manager's To-Do List

Marty Williamson  
IMCI Technologies

JoAnn Hackos  
Comtech Services, Inc.



# After this presentation, you'll

- Have a deeper understanding of the strategic priorities for how to spend your time
- Have a concrete example of a “To-Do” list for twelve weeks of your life as a manager
- Have the basis of a strategy for your group's long-term success
- Have some ideas on how to increase the corporate value added by your group

# The transition to management can be rough...

- Most Publications Managers come up from the ranks of technical writing
- Most do not have degrees in business management
- Many are not provided with specific management training
- Some are just thrown into a “sink or swim” situation

# And Tech Pubs management is challenging!

- Your manager may understand little about the publications function
- Tech pub budgets tend to be cut early in downturns
- Tech pub groups are prone to destabilizing reorganization
- Tech pubs groups are highly vulnerable to outsourcing

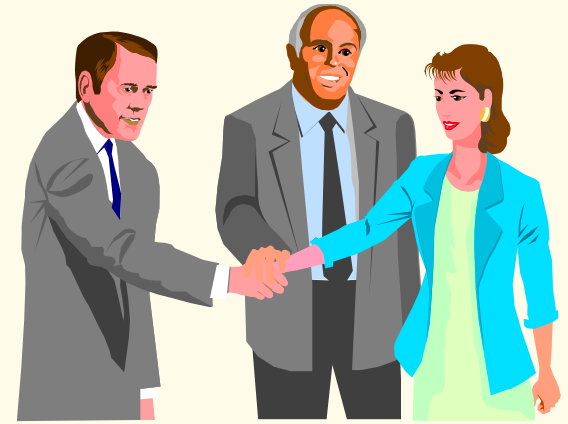
# The new manager's To Do list

- Build **trust** with your team, your manager
- Start keeping **statistics**
- Start developing a content /architecture **specification**
- Learn your group's **skills, training needs**
- Start building a **network** of potential supporters

# To Do list... (more)

- Start profiling your target **users**
- Start implementing the documentation **life cycle** (IPMM)
- Identify and use opportunities for **increasing value** beyond technical publications
- *Bonus points for:*  
*Stampi**N**g **O**ut **WHINING** about grammar and engineers*

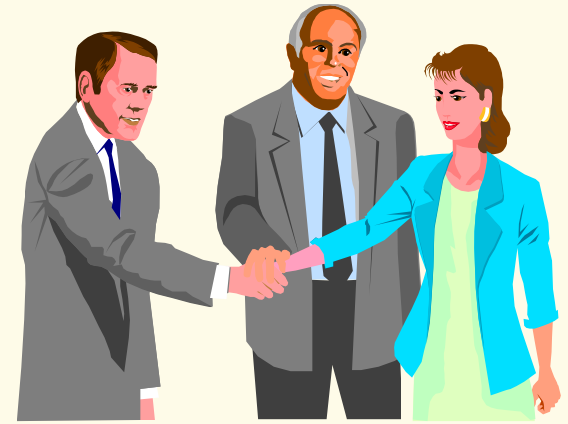
# 1. Build trust with your team



***Your team's commitment is the foundation of your success***

- Get to know your team members, one-on-one
- Share your vision for short- and medium-term goals, get their input
- Pass along all the management information you can

## 2. Build trust with your manager



### ***Your manager's support is the key to resources***

- Learn your company's objectives and strategy
- Develop a plan to support those objectives
- Start informing your manager about your group's activities. Be persistent.
- Learn and respect your manager's communication style.

# 3. Start keeping statistics



***Statistics are the starting point for process improvement***

- Ask writers to isolate and report the time spent on each activity (design, writing, fixing, finalizing)
- Set up a simple spreadsheet for that information
- Ask developers and testers to report the time spent on technical review and testing.

# 4. Develop a specification

## ***Specs are the key to cost-effective development***

- Start by identifying your current Best Practices
- Focus on specifying:
  - **information architecture (User Guides, Help Screens...)**
  - **information modules (procedures, definitions...)**
- Don't focus on spelling and grammar
- Appoint a writer to lead the project

## 5. Identify skills, training needs



### ***Training motivates and prepares for the future***

- Understand the needs of your technology environment
- Identify your team's skills and weaknesses
- Develop learning plan to support corporate goals

***No training budget?*** Use independent study

## 6. Build a support network



### *Supporters will look out for your interests*

- Identify the key players in your world
  - **engineers, marketers, trainers, call center, financial controllers**
- Establish a direct relationship with each one
- Give information about your activities
- Identify how you can help them (and they can help you)

# 7. Build user profiles



*Knowing your users is  
THE key added value*

- Get information from your friends in training and customer support
- Mine the Internet
- Create a set of user profile matrices

## 8. Implement the IPMM

*The IPMM is a road map for improvement*

- Learn your company's position in the CMM
- Where is your group now in the IPMM?
- Set your goal to move to the next step of the IPMM

# 9. Find opportunities for increasing value

*Providing a broader range of services makes your group more “bomb-proof”*

- Think “information development”, not “documentation”
- Establish competence and credibility in key areas
  - software requirements analysis
  - proposal development
  - business plan development
  - Web content development

How to make it happen?  
One step at a time.

- **Here's that practical To-Do list**

