

Rebecca Firestone

Technical Writing, Illustration, Business Content

Summary: Recently employed as a Senior Technical Writer by Zep Solar/SolarCity, creating mechanical installation manuals for a series of patented roof-mounting solutions for PV solar arrays. Previous experience includes writing and energy evaluations for design-oriented San Francisco architects, and 15 years as a software technical writer and trainer working on enterprise software systems. During that time, I also collaborated with business consultants on specialized topics such as the use of expert systems for supply-chain optimization.

Experience

Mark English Architects, 2016

Independent Feature Writer

Create full-length interviews and feature articles for The Architects' Take, a San Francisco-based design blog sponsored by Mark English Architects.

Zep Solar, Inc., 2012 - 2016

Senior Technical Writer

Created over 100 product-level instruction sheets and 20 full-length mechanical installation manuals for Zep Solar's unique hardware mounting solution for residential and commercial solar installations. Following Zep Solar's acquisition by SolarCity in 2013, explored project-based resourcing strategies in response to new corporate goals within a rapidly scaling organization. Advocated for the value of documentation, and fostered new writers to build a small and close-knit Technical Publications group. Worked with cross-functional project teams on highly accelerated development schedules. Reduced Tech Pubs development times from 30-50% through adoption of new skills, tools, work processes, and methodologies.

One challenge in this position was the highly graphical nature of the content, requiring extensive collaboration with SolidWorks engineers to export 3D renderings of component assemblies. Initially, renders were heavily processed in Photoshop; later, we would convert the SolidWorks assembly files into high-quality illustrations using SolidWorks Composer for use in manuals alongside minimal text. Primary authoring tools were Adobe FrameMaker, Adobe Creative Suite (InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator), and SolidWorks Composer. Devising effective content re-use strategies with a mainly graphical library presented unique challenges as well.

Mark English Architects, 2009 - 2011

Marketing Manager and Title 24 Energy Compliance

At this design-oriented residential architectural firm based in San Francisco, I provided California energy compliance analysis services, including sales development and project delivery. I also researched and wrote over 90 full-length articles and features for our two SEO-featured Wordpress blogs, The Architects' Take and Green Compliance Plus. Blog articles are in-depth interviews and illustrated treatments of technical topics for non-technical audiences. I also designed printed brochures and other marketing collateral, and participated in active business outreach with professional organizations.

BRU Architects, 2006 - 2009

Business Manager/Operations

Provided all of the office's legal and business writing, including contracts and design proposals. Managed invoicing and payables. Assisted in marketing and client relations. Designed and produced full-scale company brochures showing the firm's project portfolio. Represented the firm at the AIA-SF Small Firms Committee.

Expert Support, Inc, 1998 - 2006

Senior Technical Writer

Projects for numerous Bay Area software companies included documentation suites, online help systems, tutorials,

training courses, technical articles and white papers. Companies included Clarify (now Nortel), Excite@Home, Hewlett-Packard's Strategic Planning and Modeling Group, Liquid Engines, and VocalPoint Technologies. Applications included CRM, cable and Internet provisioning, supply-chain optimization, tax optimization, and a voice-activated browser server and development platform.

Kenan Systems Corporation (formerly Consultants for Management Decisions) 1990-1997

Trainer/Course Developer, Cambridge, MA

Developed and delivered a suite of training courses for Arbor/BP, an emerging convergence billing platform. Courses included Introduction, Billing Operations, Customer Care, Data Modeling, Journaling and General Ledger, and API for Developers. The client training programs were designed to support very aggressive implementation deadlines, while meeting detailed customization requirements in limited development windows. Subsequently delivered courses to channel partners and internal consultants as part of a train-the-trainer program, and collaborated closely with project teams during client training to deliver a consistent message.

Senior Technical Writer, Cambridge, MA

Worked with a small documentation team to create and maintain multiple customized documentation suites for the Arbor/BP telecom billing platform. Managed FrameMaker document templates, created several new book titles, and maintained over 600 pages of existing documentation.

Documentation Specialist, Washington, D.C.

Consultants for Management Decisions, later to become Kenan Systems Corporation, was a management consulting firm providing specialized Operations Research simulation and modeling services to the United States Postal Service as it sought to determine the optimal equipment investments for all U.S. mail operations. I supported software documentation for the custom-built analysis tools, and also storyboarded and designed presentations made to upper management in support of the analysis methodology and our subsequent recommendations.

Software Packages: Adobe FrameMaker, Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator), SolidWorks Composer, WebWorks, RoboHelp, Wordpress, ArchiOffice, Micropas energy modeler, and the usual Microsoft Office Suite. Operating systems working knowledge: Mac OS, Windows, UNIX.

Professional Associations: Society for Technical Communicators (STC), American Association of Architects Small Firms Committee.

Honors and Awards:

2013, Society for Technical Communication, Touchstone Competition, Excellence (4 submissions)

2014, Society for Technical Communication, International Award of Excellence (1 award)

2015, Touchstone Competition, Excellence, *Material Hoist Operations Manual* and *ZS Peak Installation Manual*

2016, Society for Technical Communication, International Award of Distinguished, *ZS Peak Installation Manual*

2016, Contributor to Best In Show, *Material Hoist Training Video* (submitted by Brett Millar)

Education

B.A., East Asian Studies, Oberlin College

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