


STC Instructional Design & Learning
Special Interest Group


Welcome to our webinar!
This Adobe Connect session is for
What I Would Have Liked to Know When I Started Out by John Hedtke
John will begin his session in just a few minutes.



Speaker Background

John Hedtke has been working in high tech for over 30 years and writes documentation and books for many leading software products. John owns and operates *Double Tall Consulting*, a company providing writing, consulting, and training services to private and government clients in all fields. He also runs <http://tradebookauthor.com>, a blog for people who want to become authors.

John lives near Tacoma, WA. When not otherwise occupied, he plays the banjo, writes magazine articles, and writes slogans for a button company. John is a Fellow of the STC.



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by John Hedtke, www.hedtke.com

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What I Would Have Liked to Know When I Started Out

A presentation by John Hedtke
john@hedtke.com
www.hedtke.com




What this presentation covers

- I had no training as a technical communicator.
- I was smart and learned some things fast...
- ...but there was a lot I didn't know.
- I'm going to give you a summary of the things I've learned.

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Who Are You?




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1. Figure out what you want.

- Talk to a life coach, mentor, or therapist.
- Figure out what matters to you in a job.
- Do you prefer captive or freelance?




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2. If you like something, do it.

- "Do what you love and the money will follow."
- Take some risks.
- Don't be afraid to fail.




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Career Development




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3. Network!

- Be active in the STC at all levels.
- Join at least one other professional organization.




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4. Getting exposure.

- You work because you're getting paid.
- If the pay is low, consider the intangibles.
- Watch out if someone justifies being cheap by saying "It'll be good exposure for you."



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5. Sometimes you just have to do what's available.

- Some jobs suck.
- Be professional, but keep looking.
- Grit your teeth and keep your perspective.



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6. Always be looking for your next job.

- Start looking for your next job the day you start your current job.
- Think about what you'd like to do next.
- Cultivate agencies and recruiters.




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7. Keep a day log.

- Keep a day log.
- Build a vocabulary of emotional concepts.
- Record everything you do.



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8. Save copies of everything.

- Keep copies of everything.
- Keep copies of everything digital, too.
- When I say “copies,” I really mean more than one copy of each thing.
- Keep a list of your accomplishments.




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9. Read!

- Read books and magazines in your field.
- Read things completely outside your skill set and career focus.




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People Skills




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10. Dress for success.

- Dress for success.
- It's a game of symbols.




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11. Learn to be an extrovert.

- Lots of technical communicators are introverts.
- Develop the ability to act like an extrovert.
- Learn your communication style.




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12. You really *are* going to have to bribe people for info.

- Yes, you sometimes have to bring in chocolate chip cookies.
- Just deal with it.




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13. Some people cheat.

- Some people cheat. They're the bad ones.
- Trust your tummy.
- Use your day log.



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The Really Important Stuff




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14. Protect your hearing.

- We work in surprisingly noisy environments.
- Turn off all the gear in your office sometime.




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15. Don't overwork.

- You're only granted a finite amount of immortality.
- Get enough sleep, exercise, and don't smoke. I am *not* kidding.




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16. Keep in touch with everyone you've liked.

- Life is best when you have lots of old friends.
- Be prepared to lose some people along the way.
- Never dump someone because they're "kind of inconvenient" at that moment.




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17. Be optimistic.

- Ask the right question.
- Don't be right; be happy.



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To summarize....



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18. It's always about fun and bucks.

- Everything in life is always some combination of fun and bucks.
- It's never too late to start saving for retirement.
- Buy a long-term disability policy.
- Buy life insurance, too.



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Thank you!

John Hedtke
Double Tall Consulting
230 Summit Ave.
Fircrest, WA 98466
541-554-2189
john@hedtke.com



Email or ping me on LinkedIn if you have questions.



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