

> *Compliments of Your Technical Communication Experts at Freund Associates*



Dr. Annette S. Freund,  
Managing Director

Welcome to the premiere issue of “Ask Dr. Freund”, a quarterly newsletter devoted to answering frequently asked questions from our current and potential clients. As technology becomes more prevalent and your technical communication issues become more complex, our philosophy at Freund Associates remains simple: to design and develop technical manuals, training programs, and employee manuals that make information clear and quickly accessible to you and your employees. We welcome your feedback and, of course, your questions!

**Question 1:**

*I own a company and have only a few employees. Do I really need to have an Employee Manual?*

... the importance of having a manual has nothing to do with the size of your company.

**A:** Believe it or not, the vital importance of having a written Employee Manual has nothing to do with the size of your company. According to Tedd J. Kochman, a labor and employment lawyer with the firm Grotta, Glassman & Hoffman, P.A. in Roseland, “While employers with ten or less employees may escape coverage under most federal employment laws, state anti-discrimination laws and employment policy mandates cover employers with as few as five employees. In today’s climate of heavy-handed jury awards against all sizes of employers and the tendency for certain employees to blame their employers for everything, any employer that does not have an Employee Manual, no matter how brief and basic, is playing with fire.”

An Employee Manual can help prevent an economic disaster at the hands of even one disgruntled employee. Your manual should be written by professionals and reviewed by trained labor/employment counsel since there are legal standards and provisions that must be incorporated to protect employers.

*(Tedd J. Kochman, Esq. can be reached at 973-994-7548.)*

**Question 2:**

*What is an IETM and how can it help my business?*

... one of the newest ways to link several existing manuals together for instant access to several documents at once.

**A:** IETM is the acronym for Interactive Electronic Technical Manual, and it is one of the newest (and neatest!) ways to link two or more manuals together for instant access to several documents at once. For example, your service technicians would be able to go to a job site with a laptop and have immediate access to every piece of documentation available on the product he is servicing, including repair instructions, troubleshooting flowcharts, schematic diagrams, hi-resolution photos, and even part numbers. Better yet, all of these files can be indexed and cross referenced for rapid searchability and improved access to critical information. Furthermore, because IETMs can be created in Adobe(r) Acrobat(r), pages can be printed if necessary. The bottom line? Faster repair times, increased cost savings and of course, satisfied customers can make an IETM one of the most cost-effective tools in your communication toolbox.



### Question 3:

*Our employees need training on our new product but our shrinking travel budget and their resistance to fly has forced us to reevaluate our training methods. Any suggestions?*

Dr. Annette Freund moderates a spirited discussion on e-Learning at a recent New Jersey Technical Council (NJTC) TechTalk, which was held at Novadigm in Mahwah, NJ.



Photos by Gene Gouss Photography 845-357-9028

**A:** Your company is a perfect candidate for e-Learning, which combines multimedia and telecommunications technology with the portability and affordability of the Internet. e-Learning enables anytime/anywhere connections between your teaching resources and your learners. Better yet, your employees can learn at their desktops, whenever it is most convenient for them. With a customized e-Learning program, you will be able to train your employees, whether they're across the country or around the world, and the cost savings on transportation and meeting expenses can be reallocated to other priorities.

**e-Learning: enables anytime/anywhere connections between your teaching resources and your learners.**

### Question 4:

*The costs of printing and distributing inserts for our already thick Employee Manual are getting out of control. It seems we are rewriting (and reprinting!) new pages every month and we are never sure that our employees actually insert them. Help!*

**A:** You should consider putting your Employee Manual or Policies & Procedures Manual on your company's Intranet. The information would be available to your entire workforce 24/7, and you would be able to eliminate the cost of printing, maintaining and storing those cumbersome binders. Whenever there is a change to a policy, you can notify your employees with an e-mail directing them to the appropriate URL for the policy update. A lost insert will be a thing of the past!

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