

*Compliments of Your Technical Communication Experts at Freund Associates*



The image to the left is the logo of the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC). Freund Associates recently received national certification as a women-business enterprise and can now display it on our marketing materials. Also, national certification makes us eligible to receive RFPs from more than 400 government, non-profit, and corporate buyers who subscribe to the WBENC database to find vendors to bid on their contract opportunities. Because it is one of the most widely recognized and respected certifications in the nation, WBENC will allow Freund Associates to expand our visibility among decision makers in corporate supplier diversity programs.

How does our WBENC certification benefit you? By choosing a certified WBE to handle your project, you may be eligible for special tax advantages for *your* business. You can also benefit by becoming certified yourself. If you're interested, we'll be happy to share our certification experience and answer any questions we can. Please call, write, and of course, send your RFPs any time!

*Dr. Annette S. Freund, Managing Director*

**Question 1:**

I was looking at your web site and noticed that Freund Associates writes web content. How is writing for the web different from the copy in my marketing brochure?

**...if your content isn't well organized, easy to find, and clearly written, you can lose your audience in the time it takes them to click.**

**A:** This is a good question that too few people ask before designing and launching their new web site. It is critical that you understand that online audiences have different needs and expectations – and quite often very little patience – than the audience for your brochure. If your content isn't well organized, easy to find, and clearly written, you can lose your audience in the time it takes them to click. Writing for the Web goes hand-in-hand with creating a strategic plan that should include research on your target audience and their specific needs. Additionally, your content should effectively incorporate your company's branding, while persuading your clients that your products and services are exactly what they need. In short, your web site must show prospective customers the benefits of working with you, the benefits of buying your products, and/or the benefits of employing your services.

**Question 2:**

I've recently come across the term *Learning Audit*. Exactly what is a learning audit and how might my company benefit from one?

**... A Learning Audit is a comprehensive evaluation of your company's training strategy and programs along with specific recommendations for achieving your training and business goals.**

**A:** A Learning Audit is a comprehensive evaluation of your company's training strategy and programs along with specific recommendations for achieving your training and business goals. It allows you to know for sure that your current training and education programs are achieving their objectives. The audit will produce the data you need to make informed decisions about how to best train your employees — from sales people to production personnel, from project managers to executives. Some of the things Freund Associates addresses in a Learning Audit are methods of delivery as well as the costs of using the latest eLearning technologies; that is, Web-based training that harnesses the power of the Internet to enable anytime, anywhere connections between learners and resources. Our clients have saved significant time, money, and resources by allowing Freund Associates to help with their training projects. We would be happy to share with you how your company can benefit from a Learning Audit as well.

## Question 3:

I'm a product manager who has recently been asked to write my own product marketing sheets. Where do I start? Any advice for a novice like me?

**... If you don't have a Marketing Communications Department, you risk producing product sheets that look like they've been written by different companies.**

**A:** I sometimes call this problem, "Who's minding the store?" If you don't have a Marketing Communications Department (or at least a designated Marketing Manager), you risk producing product sheets that look like they've been written by different companies, yet alone different product managers! If you must write your own product sheets, then start by answering some key questions: How does your product meet the needs of your target customer? How can your product benefit their business? Hooked on the "bells and whistles" (features) of your product? Unless you can explain the business benefit of each feature, bulleted lists of features will just take up space. Is your tone/voice consistent with other product sheets in your company? Or is it consistent with your company's voice in general? Could exaggerated claims about your product (e.g., best, unparalleled, unmatched, industry-leading, future-proof) get your company into legal trouble? You may need several people to help write, edit, and manage all of these issues. Outsource your marketing communications to Freund Associates. Let us write your product sheets and "mind the store," while you manage your product line – and your business.

## Question 4:

I narrowly avoided a lawsuit by an employee who challenged one of our policies. I don't have an employee handbook but this incident has convinced me that I should. How much can I expect to spend?

**... It depends who you ask to write it!**

**A:** The simple answer? It depends who you ask to write it! Our research revealed that you can download software and a template for an employee handbook for as little as \$19.95, and for as much \$1,000 you can receive a comprehensive product that covers just about every imaginable area of business. These online companies claim to take the hassle out of researching, drafting, formatting, and editing your manual, and for the most part they do. However, *you* must still do the work of determining what your specific policies are and modify the template to fit your business. This is not as easy as it seems, especially if you've never had a manual before. And if there are multiple owners and several departments, the challenge only grows. Of course, these online companies assume no liability and suggest you have the final product reviewed by your attorney before declaring your policies. You can, for as little as \$1,500, have a labor attorney write and review your manual for compliance. But you can usually expect to pay more in legal fees to address the issues that writing your manual uncovers. Then there is printing, distribution and the problems of keeping them updated. In other words, will your employees be able to access it easily and find the information they need quickly, in print or online? The project is not as simple as some make it appear. Call us with your questions. We can help.