

Framework for:

Technical documentation

Part 1: Product

Date: _____

Company: _____

Product group: _____

Contact person: _____

Arranged by: _____

Technical communication as a competitive tool

Aftermarket communication is often neglected, often delegated to the construction department that, apart from developing the product, should also have the skills and time to present its function in a user-friendly way. The technical documentation in accordance with the EU product liability law is considered part of the product (and should thus keep the same quality as the rest of the product). Therefore the aftermarket communication should be considered an important competitive tool in the sales process.

In today's fast-moving world, the product hardware is rarely a competitive tool. And if it is, that advantage will quickly be eaten up by the competition.

Instead, most companies are looking for a competitive edge through software – to build the product into the system, provide guarantees and related services, etc. and thus create added value.

In this context, user-friendliness is often a product advantage. It is an important competitive tool in any country where the user has a direct impact on the purchase decision.

The ease of use is controlled by the product design and documentation. And of course it should be the same document requirements as for other communications. It should be tailored to the target group's information needs and pedagogically designed.

Unfortunately, the reality is different. The product is often accompanied by a 250-page manual in English with little or no images at all. No one bothers to read it, which means the product is not fully utilized and the service department will have to answer many unnecessary questions.

Upgrading aftermarket communication is an easy way to gain a competitive advantage. With modern production techniques, where a large part of the production can be automated, it is much easier today to provide customers with tailored information in a cost-effective manner.

Framework for ...

Pyramid has extensive experience in B2B branding, and we would like to share it with you.

This document summarizes the issues worthy of consideration in the development of a branding strategy. Don't expect any fixed or general solutions. Successful solutions are the result of a concerted effort, based on the right assumptions and facts.

We use a customized version of this structure when we go through projects so feel free to use the material as a checklist or as a basis for discussion.

If this seems interesting and you want to discuss marketing strategy on a deeper level, you are always welcome to contact us at info@pyramid.se

Product

Product →

Describe the product that is to be documented.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A Series production | E Component |
| B Series production, customized | F Freestanding functional unit |
| C OEM product | G Complete plant |
| D One-off production, special | H _____ |

Qualities →

Evaluate the product's qualities compared with those of our strongest competitor's product. Grade from 1 to 5, with 5 as the most positive rating.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| _____ Safety against injury | _____ Minimal maintenance |
| _____ User-friendliness | _____ Ease of service |
| _____ Ease of installation | _____ Good technical information |
| _____ Operating reliability | _____ _____ |

Faults →

What are the most common reasons that the product does not function properly?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improper handling | <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic faults |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> Programming faults |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical faults, wear | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Maintenance →

How is product maintenance carried out? Does it differ for different markets?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The customer does it all | <input type="checkbox"/> We do everything |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The customer does simple maintenance, and we do the complex work | <input type="checkbox"/> Third-party service |

Training →

What product training do we offer to customers?

User injuries →

Can careless or incorrect product handling cause personal injury?

Risks →

If it functions improperly, can the product cause injuries?

Regulatory requirements →

Do public authorities place any special requirements on this product?

Product customization →

Do we modify or customize the product before delivery? If so, how does this affect technical information?

Software →

If the product is data-based, can the customer or end-user modify the software? If so, how does this affect product use and maintenance?

The product in the system →

If the product is part of a larger system, how does it interface – physically and functionally? Who is responsible for technical information for the overall system?

Production series size →

How large is the standard production series? What is the largest saleable series size?

Price →

What does the product cost?

Guarantee →

Do we guarantee the product? What is the guarantee?

Maintenance →

Does maintenance and repair require special competence?

Reliability →

Is it possible to evaluate cost per hour of an unplanned production stop for the product (caused by product or handling defects), including sequential effects and consequences for connected systems?

Documentation today

What does the customer get? →

What technical information does the customer get about our products?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data sheets | <input type="checkbox"/> Programming handbook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technical description | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical drawings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assembly instructions | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical schematics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Installation instructions | <input type="checkbox"/> 'Product News' |
| <input type="checkbox"/> User instructions | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trouble-shooting instructions | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance instructions | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spare parts catalogue | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

The organization →

Briefly describe our organizational structure, and specify who is responsible for technical information.

Goals and strategy →

Does the company have a defined strategy, specific goal, or other measurement that steers the production and use of technical information?

Standards →

Are there company standards, or any other norms and requirements, that determine the structure and content of technical information? What are they?

Information coordination →

What degree of coordination does the company have between different information-producing activities e.g. documentation, customer training, advertising, etc?

Production. How? →

What technical aids are available to production? Is information stored in a central database? What computer programs are used internally?

Production. Who? →

Who is responsible, either within the company or externally, for our technical information's presentation and production e.g. text, illustration, layout, etc?

Production. When? →

At what stage is technical information developed for a specific product? For a specific customer delivery?

Production. What? →

Has a quality and usability evaluation ever been made for our technical information?

Production. Where? →

Is all our technical information produced in the home market, even for products produced overseas? If not, describe how it is done, and who influences the content.

In what languages do we give technical information? →

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swedish | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> German | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Media →

Which media are used to communicate technical information?

Delivery →

When and how do customers receive technical information?

Good can be better →

What shortcomings does our technical information have today?

Price →

How do we cover the internal costs of producing technical information?

Changes →

Do we supply customers with information about changes and updates? If yes, how?

Registration →

Do we keep an updated register of people or companies who receive our technical information? If so, how does this function?

Pyramid builds brands and creates remarkably profitable, cross-border communication for international companies with high ambitions and entrepreneurial spirit.

What should one do to stick out, to break through, and to do so with credibility intact? We have proven methodologies that lead to the answer.

Together we can:

- create cross-border communication beyond the expected
- attract a global market across national borders
- take advantage of all media, digital and analog, with an open mind
- bridge cultural barriers and reach professionals
- cross-fertilize knowledge and experience from different areas of industry
- integrate our skills across disciplines and coordinate the communication

In Pyramid, you have a partner who:

- spars with you on a business strategy level
- focuses on your organization
- market-adapts your offers
- positions your company
- differentiates your products and services
- builds strong brands
- stimulates your sales team
- attracts the right target groups
- gets your business to grow globally
- optimizes what you get from the Internet
i.e. boosts your growth and profitability.

