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Proposal: [Product Name] System Engineer Documentation

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Introduction

Now that the online help for [Product Name] users is well on its way to completion, I would like the opportunity to document what system engineers will need to know in order to install, troubleshoot, and maintain [Product Name] systems. This document outlines what I propose to produce and how.

Audience

This project addresses one audience: system engineers who will install, troubleshoot, and maintain [Product Name] systems. By providing them with accessible information, [Client] hopes to maximize their effectiveness.

This audience knows [Product Line] systems, networking, and warehouse operations. They are highly technical. They are also highly mobile, and scattered worldwide. This documentation will need to be easily portable and thorough, and it will need to provide fast access to specific information on demand.

Recommended Documentation

In order for installations to go smoothly, [Client] should support its system engineers with complete and accurate information they need to do their jobs.

I would like the opportunity to work with the Professional Services team to determine the most effective means of delivering this information. Paper documents have some advantages over electronic methods of delivery, but if the system engineers will have laptops with CD-ROM drives available to

them, a CD-ROM-based option, in a help format or standard HTML, offers some significant benefits. I would need to discuss the options with the people who will use this information in order to make the best recommendation.

Based on the requirements for the current version of the application, I estimate approximately 132 procedures to document. Procedures typically take two to four hours each to write, including research, writing, revisions, basic graphics, and integration with other materials. This project is slightly larger (about 30 percent) than the online help, so will probably take a bit longer.

Documentation Process

I will follow the same document development cycle as I have been following for the online help to create each document section.

1. Collect data from the available existing resources, including interviewing subject matter experts, to develop the document.
2. Brainstorm to generate potential document content.
3. Organize content and data into an outline, revising the preliminary outline as needed.
4. Write a document draft, according to the document profile, style guide, and outline. Incorporate photographs and other graphics as appropriate.
5. Review the document draft. Reviewers may include other members of the writing team, one or more subject matter experts, one or more members of the technical support or system engineering team, and one or more members of the quality assurance team. At least one subject matter expert will review every document; it need not always be the same person reviewing every document. The development lead will identify appropriate reviewers for each document.
6. Revise document draft.

7. Sign off final version. Reviewers sign a form the team will provide and return it with any remaining markups to me.
8. Produce and deliver electronic files of final versions.

Next Steps

I have provided in this proposal the overall structure and content of the recommended documentation. [Client] has some raw information available in the requirements database. However, I have a lot of work ahead to write procedures and compile them for easy access.

Responsibilities

If [Client] engages me to development this documentation, [Client] responsibilities would include the following:

- Providing an employee, as a main contact, on whom I can rely to provide information and answer questions, and who can help locate necessary resources within Vocollect
- Providing copies of the requirements database or reports generated therefrom
- Providing access to the tools listed herein for production for the duration of the project, including a laptop on which to run them
- Supplying publication-quality photographs and other images in the required formats; alternatively, I can produce those at the same hourly rate listed above
- Providing a work area with a desk, chair, phone, Internet access, printer, and access to shared files (currently housed at _____)