From tech comm to marketing: a tangled journey

Michael Priestley
Michael Priestley is an information architect and enterprise content strategist, currently leading information architecture across the ibm.com website and its 40+ million pages, from marketing to support. He has experience working with and across documentation, support, training, and marketing content as an information architect and enterprise content technology strategist.

He was one of the original architects and editors of the DITA standard, was named an OASIS Distinguished Contributor in 2017, and is currently co-chairing the Lightweight DITA subcommittee.
How did I get here?

- IDEs
- DITA
- Enterprise Content Strategy
- Website product owner
- Marketing taxonomy lead
- Lead IA for ibm.com

- Dev tools
- API docs
- R&D products
- R&D strategy
- CIO
- CDO
- CMO

IBM Digital / ©2021 IBM Corporation
YEAH, WELL, YOU KNOW

THAT'S JUST LIKE, UH, YOUR OPINION MAN
Marketing vs Docs

- Content marketing
- Solution marketing
- Product marketing
- Developer relations

+ email marketing
event marketing
social media campaigns
etc.

- Getting started
- User guide/UX writing
- Reference docs
- Developer docs
### Transferable skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain knowledge</th>
<th>Project management</th>
<th>Information architecture</th>
<th>Clear, focused, understandable content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • How your product works  
• Audience needs and goals | • Scheduling tasks and tracking deliverables  
• Communicating status  
• SME relations | • Navigation  
• Linking  
• Site maps  
• Taxonomy | • Good content helps the reader |
Structured authoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tech comm</th>
<th>Marketing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single sourcing</td>
<td>Driven by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage duplicates</td>
<td>Reuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong distinction</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print legacy</td>
<td>Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsive design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eliminate duplicates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Custom interactives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
User journeys

Tech comm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product level</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Install, config, admin...</td>
<td>Phases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Measuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success may be off web</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn, try, buy...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative

“Success” may not be success

IBM Digital / ©2021 IBM Corporation
Domain knowledge is needed in both tech comm and marketing

- Content marketing
- Solution marketing
- Product marketing
- Developer relations

Apply product or audience knowledge to new content areas
Specialist roles can map across silos

Project management

Information architecture

Apply specialist skills such as project management or taxonomy in an equivalent specialist role
Content overlaps are opportunities
Who do you know?

- Build connections with your marketing team
- Join local groups with marketing focus
- Understand their language and needs
- Look for a need you can fill
It should be easier

Marketing and tech comm should be working together – along with training, support, sales, etc.

Collaborate to support entire customer journey

Coordinate on common keywords for search

Coordinate on use cases from marketing through docs

Collaboration builds bridges

Crossing silos creates new roles