

Technical Documentation Solution for a Financial Service Provider

"We are very pleased with the documents your writers' team created for us and really appreciate your flexible approach. Thank you for being very responsive to our needs."

Michael Steffmann
Project Manager

Customer

The customer is a Germany-based leader in the field of secure electronic transactions. It primarily offers financial and technical solutions for e-business, such as online payment gateways integrable with existing merchant solutions. The company interacts with major financial institutions, including Deutsche Bank, and serves more than 20,000 customers worldwide.

Company	<i>E-Business Service Provider</i>
Country	<i>Germany</i>
Business Domain	<i>E-Commerce</i>
Services Used	<i>Technical Writing</i>
Cooperation Model	<i>Technical Writing Outsourcing</i>
Duration	<i>12 months</i>
Efforts	<i>700 man-hours</i>

Project

The customer was preparing to launch its new product developed as part of a large-scale project for online credit card payments. The product was a web-based Java application integrated, on the one hand, with merchants' online marketplaces and, on the other hand, with acquirer banks.

Challenge

Initially, in support of the upcoming product release, the customer needed a high-quality multi-functional user guide targeted to different types of users.

Half a year later, the customer decided to address specific needs of the target audiences and requested two manuals—one for merchants and the other for operators.

As the product had several releases, A1QA made updates of the existing documentation in the delivery phase of each iteration. In this situation, the team of technical writers had to coordinate with the development and quality assurance teams.

Shortly before the product release, the documentation had to be delivered on paper, which necessitated a new layout.

After successful completion of the documentation project, the customer turned to the writer's team with a request to produce marketing communications that could be used as part of the product promotional campaign.

Solution

The documentation delivery cycle included several phases.

Phase 1 Writing

The writing phase included developing an initial document, splitting the document in two user manuals, and adjusting them to different target audiences.

Upon approval of the suggested procedure, the team of writers proceeded to content development. After 80% of the content was developed, the customer requested to split the document into two separate documents:

- The Merchant User Guide was geared towards users who primarily dealt with merchandise and order management, risk monitoring, reporting, and system customization.

- The Operator User Guide focused on the needs of operators who required information on profile management, transaction processing, user access management, and end-user support.

Screenshots, graphs, and detailed charts were extensively used in the documentation to illustrate various product features and allow users to quickly and easily capture the knowledge they required.

Further, the user guides were handed over to the QA team for a technical accuracy check.

Phase 2 Updating documentation

The product had several iterations, and the documentation was updated accordingly to reflect all changes, additions, and improvements to the product.

Phase 3 Producing a professional visual design

After the customer made a request for a printed full-color version of the documentation, a team of designers developed a visually appealing template for the user manuals, and the writers' team changed the layout of the manuals on the basis of the new template.

Phase 4 Developing promotional materials

Satisfied with how its initial order for technical order was completed, the customer placed an order for promotional copywriting. As a result, the technical writers' team produced promotional leaflets that communicated the benefits of the product to a wide audience.

Technologies used

Design tools: Adobe Photoshop Pro 5.5

Writing and editing tools: Microsoft Office Word 2003

Screen capture tools: TechSmith SnagIt v. 8.0

Success

- A1QA supplied print-ready user guides on schedule, allowing the customer to meet its product release deadline.
- Consistent, detailed, and logically structured user documentation helped to reduce the load on the customer support service—the number of request tickets registered in the post-release period was far below expected levels.
- The user feedback survey showed that most users found the documentation content understandable and easy to use.
- The highly professional design of the documentation was instrumental to the success of the product launch.